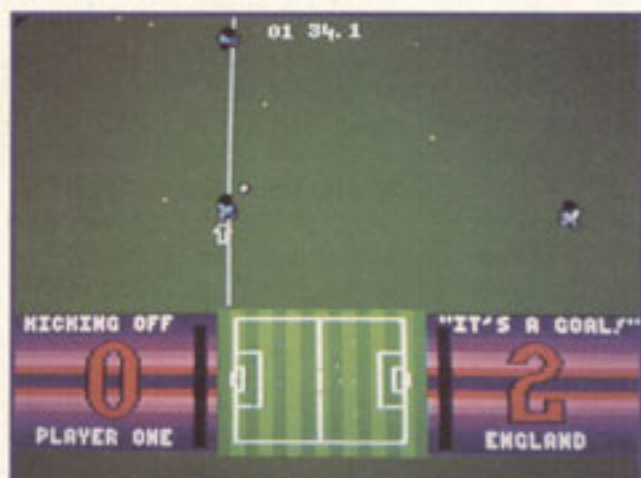




Back in the summer, during the World Cup, one player hit the headlines for crying. Noted for the outstanding quality of his football, the short, chubby man has made millions from his cult following as well as his footballing skills. But enough about Maradona, this game stars Gazza, or Paul Gascoigne as he's known to his fans, in Empire's second title featuring the jocular grinning Geordie.

The pitch is viewed from the side (as if the viewers were in the expensive seats), with the pitch horizontally scrolling as the ball is kicked around. At the bottom of the screen lies the radar, which is useful in determining the position of players when the ball is kicked beyond the part of the pitch being shown.

An arrow shows which player is currently under control, and the direction the ball travels when passed. A useful "boot-o-meter" measures the strength of each shot by the length of time the button is depressed (poor thing). If in one-player mode, the choice of opposition includes teams as wide-ranging in talent as Rumania and Brazil. Kick offs, corners, and goal kicks are all included, so don't get lost in the fog on the Tyne - just yer toongue oot!



▲ England winning? It must be a computer fantasy game!

COMMENT

When you first see this, it looks like a super horizontally scrolling Kick Off II - the action is fast and the graphics are very smooth! However, start playing and some major shortfalls become apparent. The goalies are hopeless - shoot diagonally and a goal is guaranteed, and the way the players patrol the pitch is completely unintelligent. There

aren't any penalties or free kicks either, which is another negative point. I also don't like the way the ball sticks to the players' feet - but I suppose that's just personal preference. It's a shame these niggles are present, because they detract from the great graphics and excellent control method. Football-starved GX4000 owners might like to give this a go - but don't expect the world.

JULIAN



Gazza



STOP YOUR SOBBING

Paul Gascoigne first caught the public eye when he started playing with Newcastle United as an apprentice in the mid 'eighties. He moved to Tottenham Hotspur in the 1988 season where he soon became a star player, and he was chosen for the England squad in the 1990 World Cup. His abilities, together with his natural self-promotion, soon made him a national hero - especially when he cried after his booking in the semi-finals. Since then, he has made a fortune through licensing and endorsements, as well as personal appearances and even "singing" on records. But, as Bobby Robson said, he's still as daft as a brush.



RADAR LOVE

The radar is located at the bottom of the screen, between the two scorecards. Each team is shown in a particular colour, although sometimes the colours are fairly similar, causing confusion. The radar allows the player to see where his or her team is located, so that passes can be made without the opposition intercepting the ball - well, that's the theory at least!

▼ Cameroon begin their attack in the midfield.



COMMENT



MATT

Haway, mon, de ye leek me geem? Well, sorry Gazza, it's a little disappointing in some respects. The lack of intelligent zoning and goalkeeping means that none of the players are where you'd like them to be (especially the goalie). Despite this, the game has some excellent features too; the boot-o-meter allows reasonable control over the power of shots, and the radar, when the colours don't merge too much, helps to plan passes and attacks. The tackling is fairly well implemented, preventing a player from just strolling down the middle of the pitch and taking a shot (a fault in many other footie games). So the game has its strengths, but it's a shame that the weaknesses prevent this from being a classic.



BY: EMPIRE

PRICE: £24.99

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

LIVES: N/A

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: FAST

1-2

PLAYERS



PRESENTATION 78%

A digitised piccie of Gazza lets you know the star of the game. Weird option screen though.

GRAPHICS 83%

The straightforward sprites and pitch add clarity, although they tend to be somewhat basic.

SOUND 75%

Simple effects, such as booting the ball, are unintrusive - but the tune is as melodic as Gazza's single (ie not at all).

PLAYABILITY 80%

The control method takes some getting used to, but works well.

LASTABILITY 72%

With a World Cup-style option and variable match length, this is a game with balls.

OVERALL 76%

A potentially brilliant football game let down by several annoying faults.

