



ROAD FIGHTER

If you asked most people what their idea of a steady job was, you'd be likely to hear answers such as "working in a bank" or "being an accountant". Not so the dangerous road racers of the world. Their idea of a steady job is racing their fast cars all around the freeways of the world in a rather dangerous fashion. The winners get a fat pile o' cash, and the losers get horribly mangled as they crash into road barriers, off cliffs and into each other.

If this is the sort of thing which appeals to you, Road Fighter is your chance to put yourself in the hot seat and take on the best racers around in a horizontally scrolling viewed-from-above drive 'em up. To win each race you must cross the finishing line before your meagre amount of fuel runs out, dodging oil slicks, other cars and incidental traffic such as huge lorries. Many tortuous courses await your vehicle. Win them all and a fortune is yours.

COMMENT



Although I was warned that Road Fighter was bad, I wasn't quite prepared for the grotesque malformation of a game that assaulted my senses. Right from the cheap title screen and lack of options, Road Fighter just screams "low quality". Press the accelerate button and the speedo leaps up to several hundred kph, but your car doesn't move until the other racers are out of sight. The fuel allowance

is horrendously imbalanced - you're not given enough fuel to complete the race to start with. The opposition are another flaw of Road Fighter. Half of them don't move at all, and the other half almost teleport into you as soon as they sense your presence, sending your car spinning off the road. Likewise, the hazards (namely poorly-defined oil spills) are similarly unavoidable and tend to bring about a certain death without exception. Perhaps this would be more tolerable if your fuel didn't keep counting down even when you're stationary. Control of the car is totally unrealistic, you seem to be on castors or some kind of four-wheel steering, as your car doesn't turn, it just slides across the road. Speaking of which, the courses must be the most feeble ever. Each track features about three shallow bends which a blind person could negotiate with their hands behind their back. Road Fighter is a game which induces sheer hatred within minutes of play. I know it's easy to put the boot in, but Road Fighter really does justify it.



▲ If only this fab picture did the game justice...



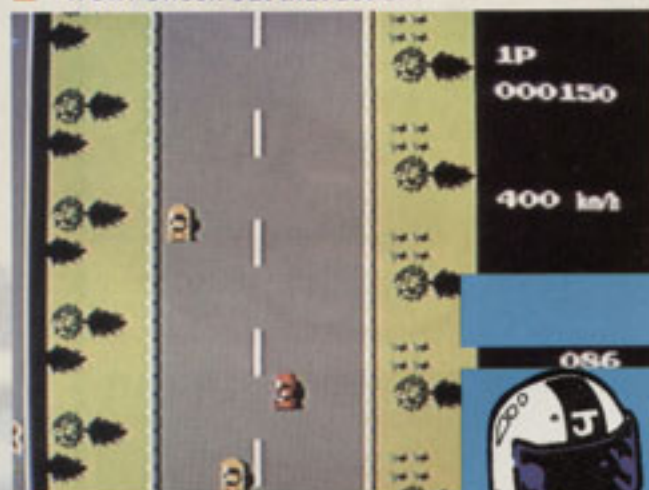
Your car also has an interesting fuel consumption system. The engine burns fuel at almost the same rate whatever speed you are travelling at. This would probably be very handy if you were an ordinary motorway driver, but it means you have to get your skates on if you want to cross that line without drying your tank. Luckily, gaudily coloured fuel cars appear at random occasions in the race. These dish out an equally random amount of fuel, but it can mean life or death in tight situations.

RANDOM FUEL AHOY!





▲ Wow! Check out that action!



THE COURSE OF COURSE



The nail-biting tension of whether or not you'll make it to the finish can be tempered by a single glance at the course meter. Although this doesn't actually show the course itself, it does mark your progress along the road. This allows you to see how long it's going to be before you reach that chequered line conveniently painted in the middle of the road.

GEAR JAPES

Being a top racing man, you are of course in command of a top racing car. Not only has it got rear seatbelts and a tinted sunroof, but it also has a selection of two different gears! First gear powers you up to a piffling two hundred-odd km/h, whilst the top gear pushes your automobile to almost unheard of speeds of over four hundred km/h! So you don't get them confused! First gear (good acceleration to mid speed) is accessed with button B, and A is used for second gear (mad turbo speed).



IS IT A BIRD?

Driving this powerful car you may think you're the fastest thing around. But think on, matey. Superman himself appears from time to time, doling out a thousand points every time he reaches the top of the screen! What a hero! But hang on, if these races are so illegal, why doesn't he stop everyone and have them arrested?

COMMENT



JULIAN

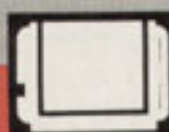
Appalling, ruinous, awful, dire, hideous, tragic, frightful and ghastly are just some of the words you could use to accurately describe this festering catastrophe of a shambling mockery of a sick parody of a game cartridge. I quite honestly haven't seen a game so fantastically bad for many, many years, and the only ones I recollect being as disgustingly rubbish as this were old computer budget games that cost £1.99 each. This pustulent title costs ten times more! What's wrong with it? Well, apart from the game being unbelievably simple - there were better and more complex race games than this on the VCS in 1979 - it's also very badly designed and incredibly frustrating. The fuel limit is extremely tight, and one mistake is all you need to bring up the game over message! This is irksome enough on the early levels, but later on it's so annoying it makes you want to smash the cartridge up with anger! Heaping several more generous helpings of irritation is a totally rubbish control method. There's no inertia on the car, the brakes are hopeless and unless you've got astonishingly amazing mega-reflexes, it's almost impossible to avoid crashing into a blue car if it's on your side of the road when it comes onto the screen. Even if you remove the gameplay, there are no redeeming features. As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics are a woeful joke, with infantile sprites, brain-dead backdrops and no animation on the cars. And if you think it looks bad, wait until you hear the sad, booming cacophony of naff effects and chronic, wheezing, inept tunes. Ugh! It's definitely Black Armband day for Nintendo owners everywhere.



NINTENDO REVIEW



BY: PALCOM
PRICE: £19.99
RELEASE DATE: MAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH



PRESENTATION 51%

Crap title screen, no options, but two skill levels to challenge you.

GRAPHICS 19%

Small, feeble sprites, sad backgrounds and drab colours make Road Fighter a visual corpse.

SOUND 12%

A dreadful drone simulates a throbbing engine and there's little else besides.

PLAYABILITY 10%

Frustrating controls, an amazingly tight fuel limit and totally naff gameplay causes hatred within minutes...

LASTABILITY 9%

...and that sheer annoyance and frustration coupled with the shallow and completely unrewarding gameplay results in this being binned almost immediately.

OVERALL 9%

Utterly dreadful graphics, sound and gameplay make this the worst console game yet seen!