





**SAMMY**

The mighty midget — and an extremely fast one, too! Sammy's got a kick like a horse, and neat line in acrobatic throws and kicks (the corkscrew kick is particularly good). Sadly, he's a bit of a weakling and cries easily when he gets hit back. Probably.



▲ "Well, I told you my Dad was bigger than yours..."



▲ "I want skates like Zan, Daddy — now! Ooh, I hate you, I hate you, I hate you (sob)."



One thing worth mentioning is that each of the team now possesses a run mode, which is activated by tapping the D-pad twice in the required direction.



**COMMENT**



After Sonic comes the 'Rage. In common with the blue hedgehog, Sega's approach has been to make it more lav-

**GUS**

ish than its two predecessors. Note that this doesn't mean more game: it takes about the same amount of time to tromp through SOR3 that it does for SOR2. All that extra memory (equivalent to the size of Sonic 2) has been spent on larger sprites, more backdrops, a smat-



▲ The old 'push 'em over a crouching mate' trick...

tering of new moves and music. What can be seen is the 'law of diminishing returns': Sega are putting vastly more in, and only getting slight improvements for it. However SOR3 looks and plays great — with a better feel than SOR2, and is only marred by exceptional easiness. Axel, in particular has been made too powerful. With this in mind, I still think SOR2 is the definitive Megadrive beat 'em up.



## COMMENT



This third addition to the Streets Of Rage series wipes the floor with the previous two in terms of graphics

### STEVE

and presentation. Axel and Blaze have never looked so beefy, and with equally huge enemy sprites, the game is the best-looking scrolling beat 'em up available for the Megadrive. That said, if only Sega had lavished the same care on the gameplay, and added a few new elements. The same bad guy formations roll on for a quick bundle, with the bosses adding the only real variety to the proceedings. To me Streets Of Rage 3 doesn't take enough risks. There are moments of inspiration, but it isn't until later in the game that any originality shows its face. In X's lair, a puzzle-solving element is added as the players search for him, and must find and smash the terminals which seal off certain areas. If these ideas had been littered throughout the game, SOR3 would easily be a Megagame. Don't get me wrong, I'm not slating the game as it's extremely playable — if a tad easy — but with the proposed SOR4 already on the cards, let's hope Sega start looking for a few new ideas...

## SPECIAL AKA

Each fighter's special moves are accessed via the A button. However, overuse should be avoided as it can prove hazardous to their health! Located at the top of the screen are a series of silver lozenges. If the word 'OK' is shown above, a special can be pulled off without effort. However, if the player uses such a move when the bar isn't quite powered-up, the move is pulled off at the expense of the character's energy bar — the lower the bar, the more energy lost!



▲ Three men sneezing as the flowers give them hayfever.

## HARVEY WALL BANGERS

Fancy a break from the beat 'em up jape? If so, Streets Of Rage III has the answer. Ten walls stand between your character and freedom, and must be smashed using whatever combination of kicks and punches you deem necessary. By the way, did we mention there's a JCB chasing you just to hurry you along a little...



▲ Hmm, they've obviously been to the 'Scooby Doo School Of Dancing'.



▲ "Hey, get out the road, you silly old fool!"

## BLAZE

Blaze's long legs are her special weapon, and she uses them with gay abandon to perform all manner of fancy special kicks and throws. A cartwheel kick is her speciality, but also keep an eye out for her deadly firebolt.



▲ Honestly, these new dance crazes just go over my head.



▲ Blaze performs her all-new 'James Horriot' move.



## KNUCKLE SHUFFLE

In Japan, Blaze and co's adventures are known as the 'Bare Knuckle' series of games. However, due to Sega's control over what we see in the UK, there are a few odd differences between what we see and what our Japanese counterparts get. The main loss is that the end of the second level sees the arrival of a dodgy-looking Leather Boy dressed in a cap and stockings! In the UK version he's conspicuous by his absence (washing his hair, perhaps?) and has been replaced by a group of thugs instead. Similarly, Bare Knuckle III's



## AXEL

Axel has taken his Dragon Smash to new limits to create a punch which wipes the floor with anyone in the area. He also has a 'Dragon Wing' punch which is equally powerful, and if these fail he can simply nut them all!



▲ Human caber tossing — ban this evil sport. NOW!



▲ "No, no, no... Not the Nike's of doom Anything but that..."



## GREAT X-PECTATIONS

As with the second game, Streets Of Rage 3's plot unfolds as each level is completed. Still pictures and text messages keep Axel and co updated on what X is up to, and as the game progresses, so the plot gets stranger and stranger. Things start getting a little weird when X appears at the end of level five. No sooner have you defeated his cronies then 'X' is revealed to be a robot duplicate! There's also a cyborg Axel to deal with, and X himself is revealed to be completely out of his head — literally!



▲ Behind Yoocooool!

red-dressed Blade becomes our silver-skirted Blaze, Skate becomes Sammy over here, and the music in the UK version is far better than that of the eastern game.



▲ Fame!  
I'm gonna live for ever!  
Ask yer Mums...

### GRAPHICS

▲ A good selection of sprites, each with a host of well animated moves.  
▲ The backdrops are brilliant — keep an eye out for the Disco level!

**93**

### SOUND

▲ Rumpy-tump music suits the action perfectly, and the in-flight sound effects are suitably noisy.

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### PLAYABILITY

▲ Hey, this is a Streets Of Rage game — they're always playable!  
▼ Zan is a welcome addition.

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### LASTABILITY

▲ The scenario which unfolds between stages will keep you hooked, as will the twist at the end.  
▼ It's rather too easy.

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### VFM

▲ 24MEG, spread across seven fairly lengthy stages.  
▼ Those extra MEG cost money, and £60 for a game you'll complete in no time.

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### OVERALL

**83**

A stylish continuation of the series, but not all it could — and should — be. A classic case of 'If only they had...'