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EDGE

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Wipeout:

Psygnosis enters the fast lane



Voted Magazine of the year

Industry awards

Psygnosis makes its PlayStation debut in September with *Wipeout* – one of four titles due at the UK machine's launch. Given the shortage of outstanding PlayStation titles, the balance of power could soon be shifting from Japan to the UK...

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PlayStation holds sway at Game Expo '95

Sony got its chance to shine at Japan's new software event

Game Expo, Japan's latest games event, took place this spring amidst a frenzy of hype and glitz. Promoted as the first dedicated next-generation exhibition, it was expected to feature the three major players in the field – Sega, Nintendo and Sony – in a head-on clash. But, for reasons of its own, Sega elected to remain absent, fuelling gossip that it was concerned about its ability to compete on the same terms as its peers.

The exhibition was relatively under-attended by Japanese game show standards, with only 49 companies taking floorspace. The reduction in interest could be attributed principally to the decline in the 16bit market – although Japan is suffering less than the West in this respect. Without the glut of SNES and Mega Drive games which has characterised recent shows, the way was clear for Sony to take centre stage, with demonstrations of in-house and thirdparty software accounting for some 60% of the available floorspace.

Unprolific publisher Zoom received the most attention over the show's three-day run, unveiling an almost finished version of *Zero Divide*, its contribution to the burgeoning 3D fighting game scene. Offering robotic characters as combatants, it wowed audiences with *Toh Shin Den*-style graphics but its gameplay failed to impress to the same extent as the Namco game's. 'Unresponsive' was the general appraisal of Japan's beat 'em up-crazy gaming fraternity.

Conversely, *Tekken* covered all bases by delivering both knockout visuals and fast and fluid gameplay. Namco projected the game onto a vast screen during the show and – in typical Japanese fashion – organised several competitions to further build interest in the game that's becoming its biggest PlayStation title yet.

Sharing space with *Tekken* was an early version of *Ace Combat*. The coin-op conversion generates fully texture-mapped backgrounds but, although it runs and plays smoothly, **Edge** found it too slow at this stage of development to be very exciting.

SCE itself presented the finished version of the much anticipated 3D platform title *Jumping Flash*, along with *Gunner's Heaven*. Both attracted appreciative audiences, although the two games are very different: *Flash* is a →





Nintendo's presence was marked by a huge Virtual Boy push. The 'VR' console is still generating a significant amount of interest in Japan







Namco's stand played host to its amazing home version of *Tekken*, but the premier PlayStation softco wasn't neglecting its other glories...

Release schedule

A selection of the 25 PlayStation games scheduled for release up to the end of June 1995.

April 21	• *Crying Gyoyo* (X-ing/Irem) ¥6800 • *Kanazawa Shogi '95* (Seta) ¥9700
April 28	• *Missland* (Altron) ¥5800 • *Gunner's Heaven* (SCE) ¥5800 • *Jumping Flash* (SCE) ¥5800
May 19	• *Pro-Tournament At Senior Girls High School* (Nihon Bussan) ¥6800
May 26	• *Goku Legend* (Arume) ¥5800
Middle May	• *Boxer's Road* (New) ¥5800
End May	• *Master Of Game* (Sunsoft) ¥8900 • *Night Striker* (Ving) ¥6400
May	• *Metal Jacket* (Pony Canyon) ¥5800
June 30	• *Ace Combat* (Namco) ¥5800
End June	• *Arc The Lad* (SCE) ¥5800 • *In The Hunt* (X-ing/Irem) ¥5800
June	• *Rayman* (UBI Soft) ¥5800 • *Kidosenshi Gundam* (Bandai) ¥TBA



PlayStation software premièred at Game Expo included (clockwise from top left): SCE's ambitious RPG, *Arc The Lad*; Namco's conversion of coin-op *Air Combat*, retitled *Ace Combat*; Human's *Hyper Formation Soccer*; stylish shoot 'em up *Philosoma* by SCE; *Wizardry VII*, another RPG (this time in 3D) from SCE; *Jumping Flash*; *V-Tennis* from Super Famicom *Super Tennis* creator Tonkin House; Zoom's attractive but sluggish *Zero Divide*



Among the speakers in Game Expo's conference hall were Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux (above) and Shigeru Miyamoto

→ fast polygon effort while *Heaven* is a traditional dedicated sprite shifter. *Wizardry VII* also gained its first airing and proved that the sombre tones evident in titles like *Kileak The Blood* and *Space Gryphon* aren't the last word in *Doom*-type environments – a bright, vivid palette distinguished the PlayStation continuation of the successful PC RPG series.

The biggest disappointment was the non-appearance of *Philosoma*, a game initially scheduled for release earlier this year. It's gaining almost legendary status now, with the time delay generating high expectations for its mix of vertical, horizontal and realtime 3D shoot 'em up sections. Instead of a playable demo, SCE presented a brief video-wall presentation just to keep gamers' interest piqued until the game's eventual release in June.

Elsewhere, Pony Canyon held the first demonstration of multiplayer linked PlayStation software with *Metal Jacket* and Tomy unveiled a 3D wrestling title with beefy fighters looking remarkably similar to those of *Boxer's Road*.



SCE's very smooth-looking *Jumping Flash* adorned a gigantic video wall



***Zero Divide*'s graphics gained it a sizeable audience of 3D-hungry showgoers**

Nintendo had a strong presence, although no new Ultra 64 demos were forthcoming, leaving consumers waiting until E³ for news of the initial software line-up to break. Instead, Virtual Boy headlined (again), in a dedicated area where 3D projections of new games *Mario's Dream Tennis* and T&E Soft's *Red Alarm* were shown.

Several conferences took place during the course of the exhibition. Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux spoke on the 'imagination of humanities', while Will Wright's address concerned the game design techniques employed on the *Sim City* series – a popular choice among Japanese strategy gamers – and Lou Adams (creator of *Wizardry* and *Ultima IV*) waxed lyrical about plot development.



Publisher New provided playable consoles to demonstrate its sports title, *Boxer's Road* (see page 38)