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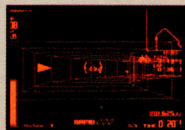
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144

G-Zero

Bet you forgot about this one, eh? That's right—Nintendo was actually planning on releasing an F-Zero-inspired flight racing game for the Virtual Boy called G-Zero before the system met with its untimely demise. Too bad it never made it out—it might've been one of the few VB games actually worth checking out.



Multiplayer play in F-Zero X is surprisingly smooth, even with the four-player split screen. Once you open up the X Cup, things get real exciting, as the random tracks make each race an entirely new experience for each player involved.

Ghost and then race against it on the second run-through. This is very cool; unfortunately, you can only save one Ghost at a time, so if you want to save a new one, you'll have to overwrite your old one.

Then there's the ultra-cool Death Race Mode. This mode pits you against the other 29 racers on a relatively small track. The object is simple: Destroy all of your opponents as fast as you can. You get as much time as you need to get the job done, and the game will save your best time so you can compete against your friends. This Mode is very cool, but it's got two downsides: 1) Your opponents aren't very aggressive at all, so you don't have to worry about yourself dying unless you fly off the track, and 2) You can only play this mode with one player. D'oh! This mode'd've made for a great variation on regular Multiplayer play.

Next up is Vs. Battle. If you've got friends to race with, this mode rocks. You can race with two, three or four players on any of the tracks you've opened up so far, and the game will keep track of who's got the most wins via a point system (first place gets five points, second gets three, etc.). To add to the excitement, you can switch on the Slot option in the Options Screen. This'll let players who've lost (either by exploding or falling off the track) play a special slot machine that can cause lots of trouble for the racers still on the track. It's a great way to exact revenge on an unsuspecting opponent.

Finally, there's the Practice Mode. This is pretty simple—you just pick a difficulty level and a track from any of the Cups you've opened up so far and go. You'll still have 29 other racers to race against, it just won't count in the end. There's no lap limit here, so you can just race over and over until you've perfected the track.

So there you have it. Nintendo's been up and down in recent months, but F-Zero X is definitely a major up.

It's one of the best N64 games to date, with great gameplay, slick visuals and immense replayability. Add to that the major challenge (especially on the Expert and Master difficulties), and a rockin' soundtrack (easily the best we've heard from Nintendo on the N64 so far), and you've got another must-own Miyamoto title. Just be prepared to wait a bit—the U.S. version isn't scheduled for release until late October.

More F-Zero? BS!

That's right, it is BS. BS Satellaview, that is—Nintendo's Super Famicom satellite add-on that was only released in Japan. Over there, gamers were treated to two special updates of the original F-Zero that were available for play on the special satellite service. The first one, BS F-Zero Grand Prix, featured the original F-Zero's 15 tracks, plus an all-new track to race on. There were four new Machines to race as too—Blue Thunder, Luna Bomber, Green Amazon and Fire Scorpion. In BS F-Zero Grand Prix 2, there were five all-new tracks to race on, and the same batch of new racers as the first BS F-Zero. Both games featured Practice Modes that let you practice the tracks either alone, with a CPU racer, or an exceptional Ghost racer. These games featured the same graphics and music as the original F-Zero, but some of the new tracks were very cool (and challenging), and the vehicles looked slightly different (they were all rendered, like the characters in Mario RPG or DKC).

