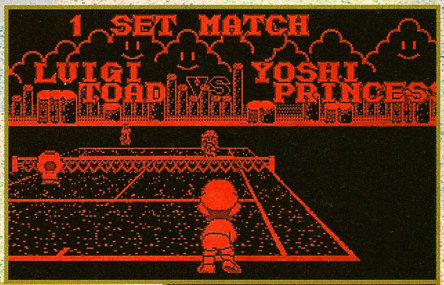
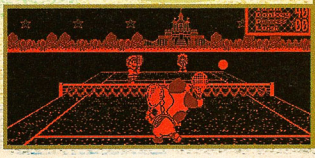
# BEST VIRTUAL BOY GAME

## Mario's Dream Tennis

While playing a game of tennis with Mario and Donkey Kong may not have been your first thought of what 3-D 'Virtual' gaming would be like, it's hard to deny the title's 'just-plain-fun' gameplay. It's by no means a good tennis *sim*, but it's simply a great game for gaming's sake. Ease of control, addictive gameplay, and a genuinely cool (if not very necessary) 3-D effect make *Mario's Dream Tennis* a real winner.

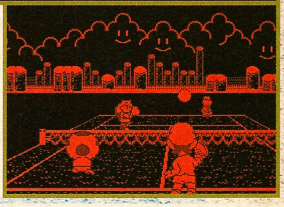


## RUNNERS-UP

***Mario Clash***
***Teleboxer***
***Virtual League Baseball***

**JEFF SEZ:** 'Hey, this is the pack-in. Cool!'
**BILL SEZ:** 'Looks nice on any table!'
**MIKE SEZ:** 'You feel like you're on the court!'
**PATRICK SEZ:** 'Donkey has a real mean serve!'
**CHRIS SEZ:** 'My dreams look just like this.'




Clap-n-hands

"Prepare for complete testosterone pumping mayhem."
— Diehard Game Fan

When I find F.U.B. I'm gonna plunder his liver and pump his scurvy belly full o' gunshot... just after I make him swab the deck with his tongue.

Create Huge Explosions!

15 Enormous Levels To Explore

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Interplay BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

Gremlin

WEAPON OF CHOICE: Flintlocks
SUPER WEAPON: Buckshot

KILLER TIP: Fire up double shotguns and keep enemies at bay with long range attack.

# VIRTUAL BOY

## ANALYSIS

**MSRP: $179**
**Pack-ins: *Mario's Dream Tennis***
**Release Date: August '95**
**Est. Installed Base: 100,000 (in-store, in-home N/A)**
**Estimated Number of Games: 10**

TECH SPECS

- CPU: 10Mhz 32-bit NEC V810
- 16-bit sound • Format: cartridge

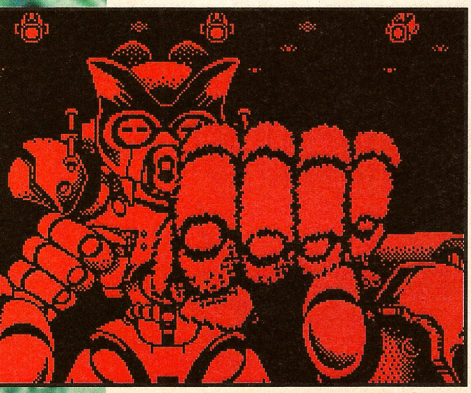
Previewed amid much fanfare at the Shoshinkai show in late 1994, Nintendo has attempted to introduce the world's first mass-market virtual reality system. Utilizing a single LED and a series of linear arrays developed by the American-based company, Reflection Technology, it delivers a red monochrome 3-D display to immerse the player in a virtual gaming world.

However, the system's Japanese launch in June of this year went over with a hush. A less-than-stellar number of units were sold, and rumors persist that as many as half of the VBs bought in Japan were brought back to stores within two weeks of purchase. This is almost certainly an exaggeration, but the true facts can't be far behind — in the four months following the launch, the price of the system had dropped by almost half.

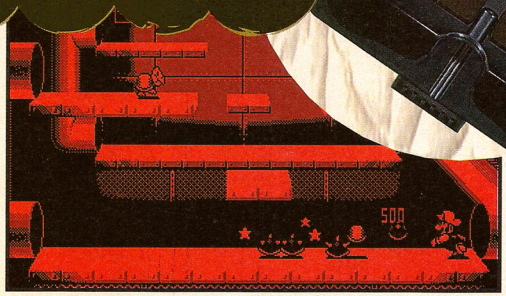
In the US, sales weren't quite that bad, but Nintendo's claims of 100,000 units sold during the system's first month are based solely on the number shipped to stores. As of this writing, there's little hard data on the actual number of units placed in US homes, and neither Nintendo nor any of the retailers we contacted would provide sales figures.

### What does this system have that the others don't?

Outside of PC headsets costing many hundreds of dollars, Virtual Boy is the only system to offer anything approaching a VR experience. The unique dual-joypad controller certainly shows the promise of some interesting and very different gaming.



*Teleroboxer* — Sort of a first person *Punch Out* in 3-D. The graphics are amazingly crisp, and the boxing action includes everything from blocks and ducks to jabs and uppercuts.



*Mario Clash* — The first game to star Mario all by himself in four years. Although the 3-D experience is rudimentary, the simple, addictive gameplay puts this one at the top.

### What are the system's weaknesses?

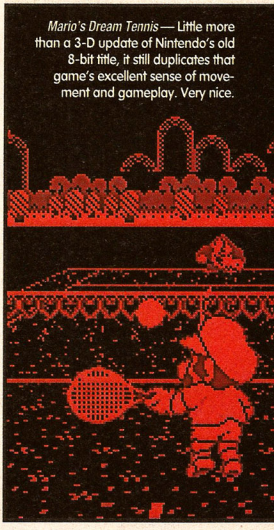
While the idea of mass-market VR is promising, the gaming public at large seems largely unaware of the potential, and the first crop of games for the system has done little to showcase what the VB may be capable of. While the 3-D worked, it was largely used as a gimmicky special effect, and added little to gameplay. Also, while Nintendo claims eleven VB titles out by Christmas, after the initial half-dozen released at launch, no further titles have materialized in videogame stores.

### How long will it be supported?

Unclear. Although eight companies had signed on to design VB games, the total number of titles announced by third parties would barely double the amount of available software. As of this writing, not a single third party game actually been released, and even Nintendo hasn't announced any additional new titles.

### How strong is the software library?

Well, not very. Although *Mario Clash*, *Mario's Tennis*, and *Teleroboxer* were all pretty good, certainly none of them were great, and none offered much you couldn't have seen on other systems. The use of 3-D amounted to little more than a special effect for what was at heart a 2-D experience. The system may be capable of more, but so far the software hasn't shown it.



*Mario's Dream Tennis* — Little more than a 3-D update of Nintendo's old 8-bit title, it still duplicates that game's excellent sense of movement and gameplay. Very nice.

### GP RECOMMENDATION

The idea of a low-cost VR system is certainly attractive, and we'd love to give it a hearty thumbs-up, but the lack of quality games and the fact that few more seem to be coming means that not only is the system failing to live up to its potential, but there's a chance it never will. Nintendo has pulled off miracles before — we all laughed at the idea of a black and white hand held system with a two-inch screen, but today there are nearly twenty million Game Boys out there. However, the simple fact that there's literally no way we can show you, in the pages of this magazine, what the games really look like, points out the difficulties in marketing a 3-D product. Play this one kind of cagey — wait and see how it develops before sinking any cash into it. GP

# GAME PLAYERS

## PRIZES

### 1st prize
Ten winners will each receive a Virtual Boy video game by Nintendo (bet you didn't see that coming) and Virutal League Baseball from Kemco.

### 2nd Prize
Fifteen of you will win a year's subscription to Game Players.

### 3rd Prize
Twenty-five winners receive the outlawed-in-respectable-communities Game Players T-shirt.

### 4th Prize
(Actually more of a penalty than a prize). Fifty "lucky" people will receive an autographed picture of BILL and CHRIS.

## CONTEST RULES

To Enter: No purchase necessary. Send your answers on a postcard to: Contest O' Virtual Boy, Imagine Publishing, Inc., 1350 Old Bayshore Hwy, Suite 210, Burlingame, CA 94010. And don't forget your name, phone number, and address! One entry per person. Entries must arrive no later than 2/26/96. Eligibility: You must be at least 7 years of age to enter (the approximate age at which contestants stop screaming out loud if they don't win). This contest is open to all U.S. residents, except employees and immediate family members of Nintendo and Imagine Publishing, Inc., their affiliates, subsidiaries, sales representatives, distributors, advertising agencies, promotional agencies, printers, and little green men. Selection: Winners will be selected by 3/31/96 and notified by mail or phone.

Virtual Boy System includes Mario's Tennis. Batteries not included. © 1995 Nintendo of America, Inc. Kemco and Virtual League Baseball™ are seperate from Nintendo.

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# CONTEST! Win a Virtual Boy!™

YOU SEE?

You don't have to climb Everest, but you will have to put down your bag of chips and turn off Gilligan's Island reruns long enough to send us a postcard naming three of Virtual Boy's excellent games. That's it! No purchase is necessary, but we wouldn't blame you if you bought it anyway. Virtual Boy is for Game Players 7 years of age and older. No entry can be made if under the age of 7.

In case you live in a cave and haven't heard of Virtual Boy, then you owe it to yourself to check out this 32-bit video game system featuring:

- **Phase Linear Array Technology**
  Also used by plastic surgeons.
- **Digital Stereo Sound**
  Expect a call from your neighbors.
- **Two High-resolution Visual Displays**
  In other words, it's pretty freakin' cool to look at.
- **3-D Graphics**
  There's nothing like a gaming system that gets in your face!
- **Coming soon: Stereo Headphones and Game Link®**
  Head-to-head action that will win you more friends than you'll know what to do with —better get a pit bull.

KEMCO

Nintendo®