

Collecting Virtual Boy



Created by Gunpei Yokoi—the man behind the Game Boy—Nintendo's Virtual Boy was released in the U.S. on August 14, 1995...and was officially pronounced dead just seven months later. The console is packed with 32-bit processing power and true 3-D effects, running on either batteries or AC power. At 14 inches in height, 10 inches in width, and seven inches in depth, it's small enough to call a portable system but too big to be considered a handheld. Other than its unusual appearance (well, YOU look more unusual playing it than it does on its own, take my word for it), the console is well-known for its monochrome red graphics. With only 14



This 3-D screen shot of *Tetris* shows just can't convey the depth of the Virtual Boy's 3-D graphics.

games released in the USA and 19 in Japan, the system is considered a "flop" by many...but to a collector, this hardly matters. In this humble collector's opinion, the Virtual Boy is as much a fun system to play as it is an interesting conversation piece. Let's take a look at the library of games and the relative difficulty of tracking each one down. I've consulted with the folks at Digital Press to provide some scarcity ratings, on a one-to-ten scale with one meaning "readily available" and ten meaning "impossible to find." (Note that Japanese Virtual Boy games are 100% compatible with American VB consoles, and vice versa.)

U.S. Game Releases

- ☐ **3-D Tetris (Nintendo)**
Yep, it's three-dimensional Tetris. This was the last Virtual Boy title released [in March of '96]. Somewhat sought after by collectors in Japan, where the game was announced (under the title *Poly-gotk*) but never released. **Rarity: 5**



- ☐ **Galactic Pinball (Nintendo)**
This was a launch title. **Rarity: 3**
- ☐ **Golf (Nintendo)**
The same game as the Japanese cart T&E Virtual Golf. **Rarity: 4**

- ☐ **Jack Bros. (Atari)**
The 3rd character in the U.S. version is "Jack Shellen." Definitely the hardest U.S. title to find. **Rarity: 6**

- ☐ **Mario Clash (Nintendo)**
This was a launch title. **Rarity: 4**

- ☐ **Mario's Tennis (Nintendo)**
This was the pack-in game with the Virtual Boy; it came only in a small plastic bag. Nintendo did manufacture a quantity of mock-up Mario's Tennis boxes so Blockbuster Video could display the game along with others that were available for rent; these have long since been snapped up by savvy collectors. **Rarity: 5**

- ☐ **Nester's Funky Bowling (Nintendo)**
Not the same as the Japanese title *Virtual Bowling*. Not released in Japan. **Rarity: 5**



- ☐ **Panic Bomber (Nintendo)**
A Tetris-style puzzle game featuring Bombmen. Developed by Hudson Soft. **Rarity: 3**

- ☐ **Red Alarm (Nintendo)**
Developed by T&E Soft, this game's vector-style graphics really showed off the system's 3-D capabilities. **Rarity: 3**

- ☐ **Robobauer (Nintendo)**
This was a launch title. **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **Vertical Force (Nintendo)**
The U.S. version is set to an easier skill level than the Japanese version. Developed by Hudson Soft. **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **Virtual Boy Wario Land (Nintendo)**
Rarity: 4
- ☐ **Virtual League Baseball (Kemco)**
Essentially the same game as the Japanese title *Virtual Pro Yakyu '95*, but with taller, more realistically proportioned players. **Rarity: 1**

- ☐ **Waterworld (Ocean)**
Based on the action-adventure film starring Kevin Costner. (Any one else see the irony in the fact that this game was manufactured by Ocean? What? Waterworld? Ah, forget it.) The only Virtual Boy game developed in the U.S., *Waterworld* was never released in Japan. **Rarity: 5**

Non-U.S. Game Releases

- ☐ **Galactic Pinball (Nintendo)**
Rarity: 4
- ☐ **Inomouse no Yakata (Tmax)**
a.k.a. *Inomouse Mansion*. Not released in North America. **Rarity: 7**

- ☐ **Jack Bros. (Atari)**
The 3rd character in the Japanese version is "Jack Ripper." **Rarity: 4**

- ☐ **Mario Clash (Nintendo)** **Rarity: 4**

- ☐ **Mario's Tennis (Nintendo)**
Sold separately in Japan, the Japanese Virtual Boy came with no pack-in game. **Rarity: 3**

- ☐ **Red Alarm (T&E Soft)**
Rarity: 2

- ☐ **SD Gundam Discussion War (Bandai)**
The last Virtual Boy game to be released in Japan (along with *Virtual Bowling*); highly sought after by both Virtual Boy collectors and Gundam fans. Although the going price has come down in recent months, we've seen this game sell for over \$1,000 in online auctions. Not released in North America. **Rarity: 9**

- ☐ **Space Invaders Virtual Collection (Taito)**
Based on the classic 1978 Taito coin-op. Not released in North America. **Rarity: 8**

- ☐ **Spare Squash (Coconuts)**
Not released in North America. **Rarity: 7**

- ☐ **T&E Virtual Golf (T&E Soft)**
The same game as Nintendo's USA release *Golf*. **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **Telenovauer (Nintendo)** **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **Tobidase! Para-Bomb (Hudson)**
The Japanese version of *Panic Bomber*. **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **V-Tetris (Bullet Proof)**
Not the same as Tetris 3-D; this is a more traditional interpretation of the classic action/puzzle game. Never officially released in the U.S.; however, in 1996, thousands of copies of *V-Tetris* and several other Japanese VB games were imported by game retailer Electronics Boutique and sold for just \$10! **Rarity: 2**



- ☐ **Vertical Force (Hudson)**
The Japanese version is set to a harder skill level than the U.S. version. **Rarity: 2**

- ☐ **Virtual Bowling (Athens)**
Released in December

of '95 (on the same day as SD Gundam Discussion War), this Japan-only title is not the same game as *Nester's Funky Bowling*. The hardest Virtual Boy game to find; complete copies have changed hands for over \$1,000. **Rarity: 10**

- ☐ **Virtual Boy Wario Land (Nintendo)**
The last first-party Virtual Boy game in Japan; Nintendo released only five titles there. **Rarity: 6**

- ☐ **Virtual Fishing (Pack-In Video)**
Not released in North America. **Rarity: 6**

- ☐ **Virtual Lab (J-Wing)**
Not released in North America. **Rarity: 8**

- ☐ **Virtual Pro Yakyu '95 (Kemco)**
Essentially the same as *Virtual League Baseball*, but with cuter, "super-deformed" players and Japanese pro teams. **Rarity: 2**

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