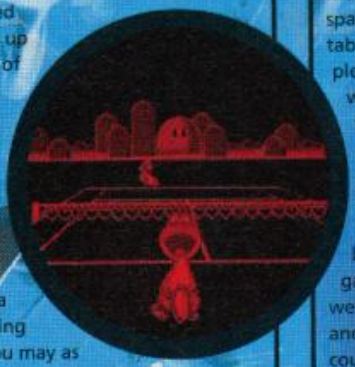
In The Red

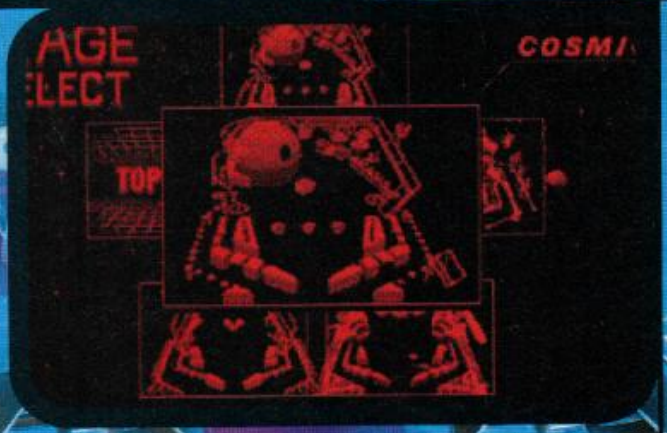
Mario Tennis

A simple but addictive little game in which our moustached plumber friend takes up tennis along with six of his platform chums. Very few surprises with this one, but it's very playable and benefits from a two-player link-up option. Described by many as 3D *Pong*. If you're going to buy a Virtual Boy this is going to come with it so you may as well get used to it anyway.



Galactic Pinball

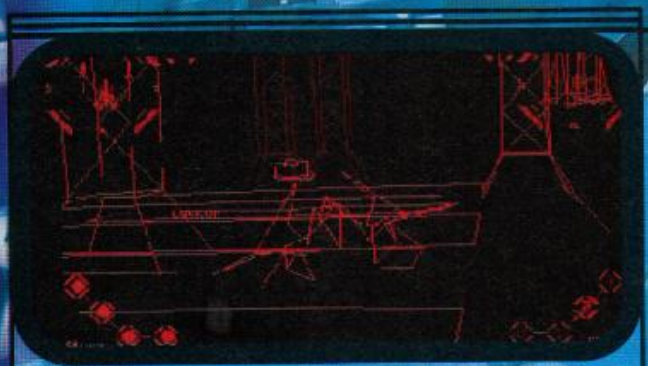
A solid and reliable game in which pinball meets outer space. Four tables boast plenty of wild features together with special hidden bonus games. Graphically this is great and with its weird and wonderful special effects and addictive gameplay this could be an early purchase for your Virtual Boy.



Red

I heard the news today, oh boy. It's a virtual relaunch for the red-eyed little monster. Loads of new games and a fresh new outlook. Rob happily sees red as the boy becomes a man.





The TOTAL! jury is split in two on this title. One camp will try to convince you it's an impressive futuristic shoot-'em-up. The other say it's a mess of polygons which only leads to headaches not to fun. As pilot of the Tech-Wing fighter you battle the forces of KAOS, a 21st century artificial intelligence system. With shields, missiles and turbo boosts at your disposal and gauges everywhere there is everything you need to have a good time. The things is, you rarely do.

Red Alarm

By far the best Virtual Boy game on the market, this sees Wario go on an underground adventure in search of treasure. Very close to *Super Mario Bros 2* in terms of gameplay, the aim is to find keys to open doorways. The action flows freely and the graphics are good. And for once the Virtual Boy's 3D potential is reached. The only criticism is that it's far too easy. Nevertheless, in years to come this may well be the game that finally launched the Virtual Boy big time.

Wario Land

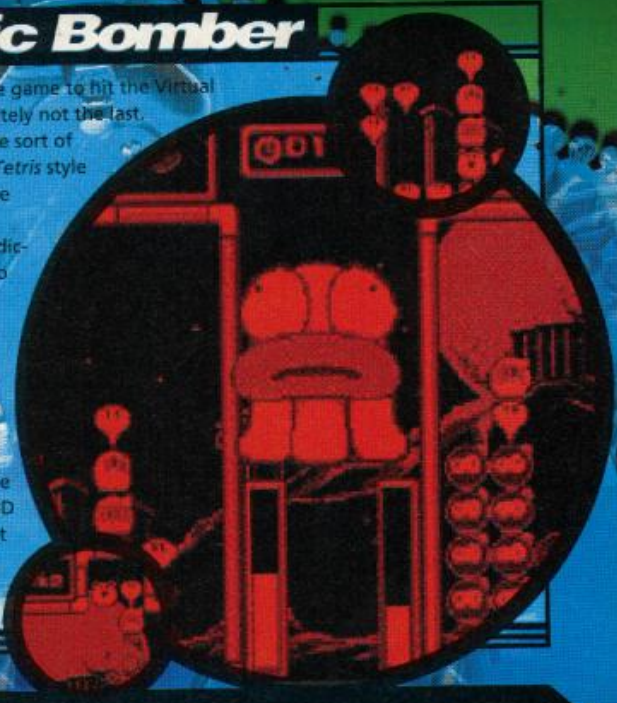
Teleroboxer

This is a futuristic boxing sim in which robots created for hazardous duties are entered into a worldwide robotic boxing tournament by their inventors. Unfortunately for the Virtual Boy only eight of them turn up. A novel idea, with action that isn't a million miles away from *Super Punch Out!!*, but there simply aren't enough characters to maintain your interest.



Panic Bomber

The first puzzle game to hit the Virtual Boy, but definitely not the last. It's basically the sort of *Puyo/Popoon/Tetris* style game which we always find completely addictive. This is also fast, big and clever and a must-buy. Unfortunately it suffers from not having a two-player link-up and the fact that the 3D images are not exploited to their full potential.

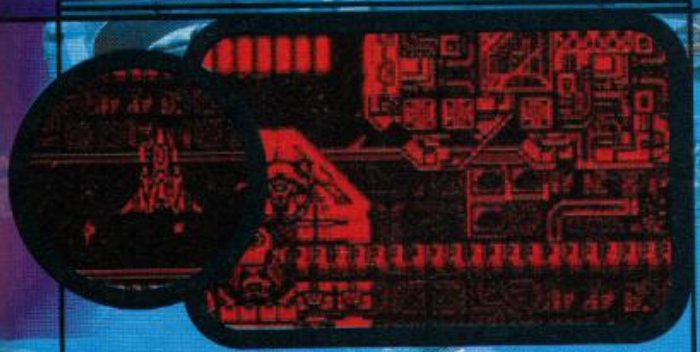


Or Dead

After a disappointing start to its life the Virtual Boy is to be given a second chance. The price is gradually coming down and Nintendo have announced exciting new plans for the console with legs. In America and Japan a host of new games are about to hit the streets which will hopefully give new impetus to the virtual boy's sales. And a marketing push by the company will hopefully back this up.

We have word of seven new titles to add to the 12 which are already available and some of them – *Wario Land* in particular – will finally make us realise what all the fuss concerning the Virtual Boy was about.

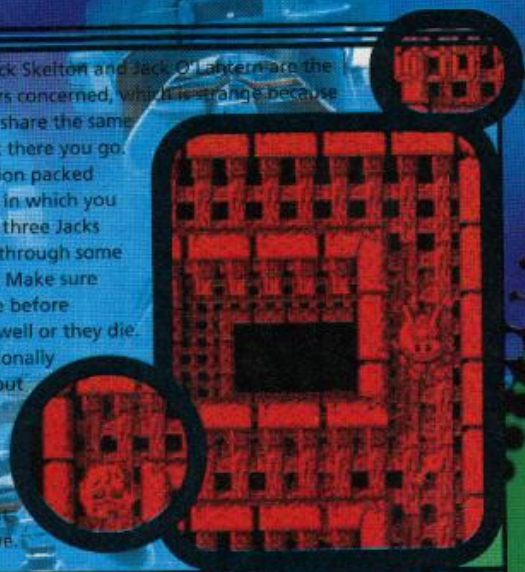
So with no further ado, here's what's available and virtually available for the Virtual Boy. Isn't it time you saw red?



This is an overhead shooter in the style of the old arcade game *Raiden*. The main benefit it gains from its 3D environment is the ability to switch between two planes of action. This essentially gives you three different directions of movement rather than the two normally found in 2D games. Incredible bosses make up for the poor sounds and the only major drawback is the confusion that arises in later levels. Still a great game though.

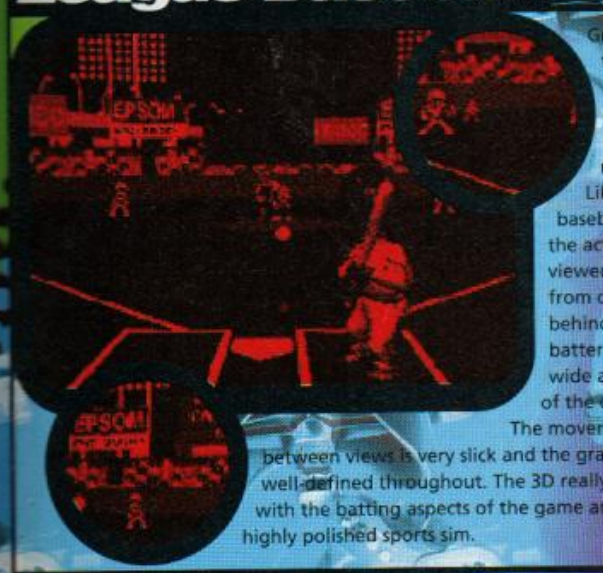
Vertical Force

Jack Frost, Jack Skelton and Jack O'Lantern are the three brothers concerned, which is strange because non of them share the same surname, but there you go. This is an action packed puzzle game in which you must see the three Jacks safely home through some tricky mazes. Make sure they're home before midnight as well or they die. Nasty. Occasionally frustrating, but good fun all the same. Not an essential purchase, but not a bad one.



Jack Bros

League Baseball

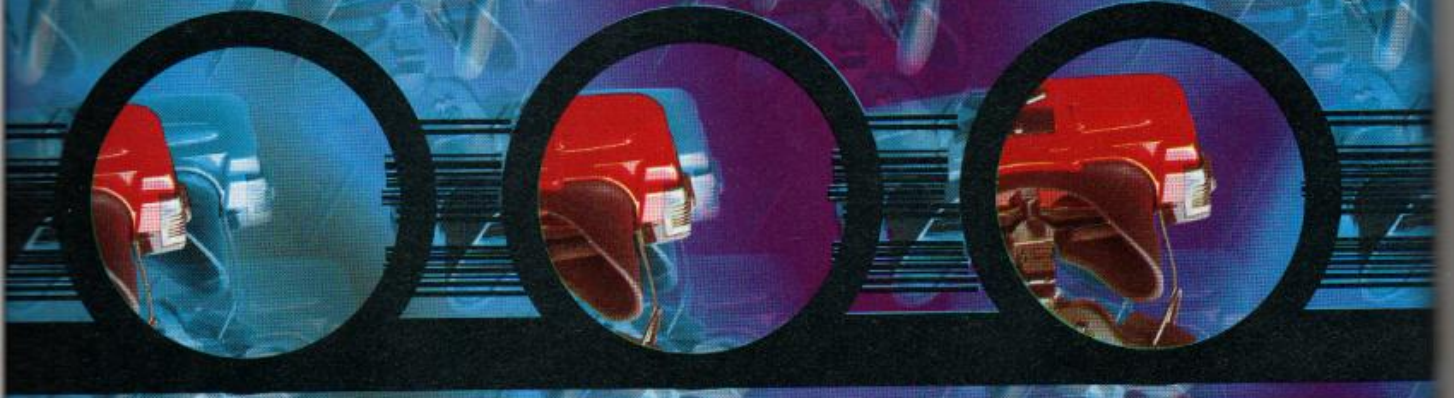


Great fun this one, especially in two-player mode. Like most baseball sims the action is viewed either from close in behind the batter or in a wide angle view of the outfield. The movement between views is very slick and the graphics are well-defined throughout. The 3D really helps with the batting aspects of the game and this is a highly polished sports sim.

Mario Clash



This is one frantic round of bombardment in which you have to fight off hoards of enemies including whole armies of Koopas on the march. It looks very similar to the Mario Bros game first seen in arcades year ago. Working on platforms in three dimensions you have to knock them off into oblivion either from the front, back or side. Not a great game, but the ability to act in three dimensions is well worth trying out.



Virtually Here

Virtual Fishing
Category: Er, fishing sim
Release: TBC
This is a basic fishing sim but has some brilliant 3D effects that give a superb feeling that you really are looking at fish underwater. Again, it is perhaps not the most exciting concept, but somehow it works beautifully in the Virtual Boy environment. This is definitely one to look forward to.

D-Hopper
Category: Platform Adventure
Release : June
Not as first thought a role playing game based on the life of Dennis Hopper, this is instead a platform adventure romp involving a dragon (hence the 'D') with spring-loaded legs (the 'Hopper' bit). Viewed from over-head, you bounce around multiple layers killing enemies and having a great old time. Loads of hidden levels and extras but as yet unfinished, this could prove to be a great addition to the virtual boy scene.

Tetris 3D
Category: Puzzle Game
Release: May 1996
I think the title says it all really. It doesn't take an expert to work out that this is the basic *Tetris* game in a 3D format. Sure to be as addictive as any previous incarnations we just hope it uses the 3D abilities properly.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers
Category: Platform adventure
Release: Soon
Quite a strange one to push through considering their appeal is on the wane, but I'm sure they'll do the virtual boy proud. Details are sketchy at present, but a platform adventure is most likely.

Bound High
Category: Unknown
Release: TBC
Nothing known about this one at present, but we'd guess it was a flight sim on the basis of the name. Then again it could be about rock climbing.

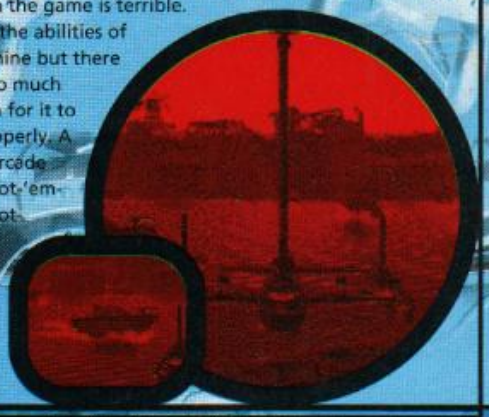
Faceball
Category: Sports sim
Release: TBC
Likewise there is nothing known about faceball other than the fact it's a sports sim. Expect futuristic violent confrontation though. And the odd ball in the face.

Technically

They say that little boys are made from frogs and snails and puppy dogs' tails. Well there's a saying in the computer games industry that says Virtual Boys are made from 32-bit RISC CPU processors and Dual mirror scan high resolution LED displays - it doesn't rhyme, but there's certainly more truth in it. I've seen plenty of

Waterworld

You play the Mariner who, just like in the film, has to protect Enola and the Atollers. You control the Mariners ship in a first-person perspective (ie behind the ship) and must destroy enemies as you protect the innocent in the water. The graphics are very detailed and sharp but unfortunately the 3D in the game is terrible. It shows the abilities of the machine but there is just too much going on for it to work properly. A decent arcade style shoot-'em-up but not one of the better Virtual games.



Golf



Nothing fancy to this one, just very basic golf. There aren't loads of courses, no fancy options, just golf. Never has a game been so well named. One word. Golf.

Unfortunately it is one of the worst examples of 3D we've seen in a virtual boy game to date. The graphics are fairly well detailed but the effects are awful. This is really just for the most avid golf fans out there.



peaking

medical programmes and nowhere have I seen a snail-transplant. So for all of you tech-freaks out there this is what the Virtual Boy is made of.

Processor: 32 Bit RISC CPU
Speed: 15 MHz display
Display: RTI Dual mirror-scan, high resolution LED displays
Resolution: 384 x 224 pixels for each eye
Software: 8-16 Megabit ROM pack
Sound: Digital Stereo (self-contained speakers)
Power: Six AA batteries/SNES adaptor/rechargable battery adaptor
Two-Player Playlink cable
Price: $150 (Approx £100)
Comes with *Mario's Tennis*

How Do They Do That?

The 3D effect in the Virtual Boy is achieved by using two mirror scan LED displays to create a stereoscopic 3-D environment. Basically, because they are differently set, each eye sees the image from a slightly different angle, which is what makes things look closer or further away. So, for once, it is actually all done with mirrors.

Seeing Red

So how come we don't get to see these great games in colour? How come we have to cover the gorgeous pages of TOTAL! with these horrible red pictures? Okay, so love sees no colour, but why – as the joke goes – is everything red all over?

The reason is that the resolution and sharpness of picture is three times better than it would be if blue and green arrays had been included to make up the image. And the system would also be three times more expensive as a result. Here at TOTAL! we're firmly in the red corner.

