

J LEAGUE PERFECT

Ninformation



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami

Game Type: Sport Sim
Cart size: 8MB

Release Date: Now [import]
Price: £100 [import]



The N⁶⁴'s debut **SOCCER** sim matches **GLORIOUS** graphics with **PELE-LIKE** skills

36

\$64,000 Question

TO BE FAIR, THIS ISN'T THE SORT OF TECHNICALLY STUNNING 64-BIT TITLE TO MAKE OWNERS OF RIVAL MACHINES GREEN WITH ENVY. THE MOTION-CAPTURED PLAYERS AND 3-D VIEWS ARE PAR FOR COURSE IN NEXT-GEN SOCCER SIMS. INDEED KONAMI IS ALREADY BUSILY CONVERTING THE GAME FOR THE SONY PLAYSTATION, WHICH SHOULD PLAY IDENTICALLY, IF LACKING SOME OF THE N64'S GRAPHICAL DETAIL AND SMOOTHNESS.



Football may be a funny old game, Saint, but it's also an essential genre for any new console to exploit – in both Europe and currently footy-mad Japan. Well, finally the N64 finally has the necessary balls! Those soccer supremos at Konami have taken the legendary playability of their Super NES blockbuster *International Superstar Soccer* and transplanted it, with extras and enhancements, into an polished polygon 3-D engine for the

N64. Undoubtedly the star of the last Shoshenkai show when previewed there last autumn, *J League Perfect Striker* has a strong claim to the accolade of best football game ever, combining the elusive twin towers of skilful gameplay and highly impressive visuals.

The latter are surely the most detailed and realistic of any soccer sim. Never mind motion-capturing the polygon players' countless varied

movements for supremely fluid animation – they've even done the same for their many authentic gestures. These include appealing for free kicks and penalties, helping a floored player up, squaring up to an opponent who's just fouled a teammate, and raging at the ref after being booked. The substitutes even limber up before coming onto the field. Such incredible attention to detail really adds to the authentic big-match atmosphere, the 15 different goal celebrations proving particularly satisfying. The only aspects missing from the real sport are the ability to gob phlegm all over the pitch and make Nazi salutes to the crowd – probably a good thing then.

Great!

64
SIZZLER



AFTER A BLATANT FOUL ON THE GOALIE, THE SAN FRECCIE FORWARD IS DISMISSED BY THE STRICTEST OF THE THREE REFEREES IN THE GAME. NO WONDER HE'S WAVING HIS ARMS IN FRUSTRATION.



THE DEFENDERS LINE UP IN A WALL FOR THE FREE KICK. THIS IS AIMED BY ROTATING THE ARROW, SETTING THE POWER AND APPLYING AFTERTOUCH TO SWERVE THE SHOT.



AEROPLANE

AS POPULARISED BY JAN AAGE FJORTOFT, THE SCORER RUNS DOWN THE PITCH WITH ARMS HELD OUT, PRETENDING TO BE A PLANE.



HANDS UP

THERE ARE SOME SUBTLE VARIATIONS ON THIS ONE, INCLUDING BLOWING KISSES TO THE CROWD BEFORE RAISING ARMS ALOFT.



PICK UP BALL

WHEN THE TEAM ARE LOSING WITH LITTLE TIME LEFT IN THE MATCH, THE SCORER PICKS THE BALL OUT OF THE NET FOR A QUICK RESTART.



SIDE PRANCE

OBVIOUSLY RECREATING SOME BIZARRE TRAINING ROUTINE, THE SCORER PRANCES SIDWAYS DOWN THE TOUCHLINE.

CT STRIKER

Bound for Europe

THE GREAT NEWS FOR ASPIRING EUROPEAN N64 OWNERS IS THAT WE'LL ONLY HAVE TO WAIT A COUPLE OF MONTHS AFTER THE MACHINE'S OFFICIAL LAUNCH FOR OUR OWN REVISED VERSION OF THE GAME. TITLED INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO, IT'LL PLAY IDENTICALLY BUT REPLACE THE JAPANESE VERSION'S J LEAGUE SETUP WITH INTERNATIONAL SIDES AND FICTIONAL TOURNAMENTS: A 36-TEAM LEAGUE AND WORLD CUP-STYLE COMPETITION. IT'LL ALSO FEATURE A FULL ENGLISH COMMENTARY INCLUDING WITTY ONE-LINERS AND CRIES OF "SCORCHIO!" AND "GODDAAAAAAL!"

We say: Footy's coming home!

Memory Options

MEMORY:
SAVE LEAGUE, TOURNAMENT AND SCENARIO, PLUS CUSTOM PLAYERS, FORMATIONS AND TEAMS.

CONTROLLER PAK:
NOTHING EXTRA



INSTANT REPLAY

Naturally, the 3-D graphics can be viewed from a choice of distances and vertical tilts. Although you can't rotate the pitch for an upfield view as in many next-generation soccer sims, it would have been detrimental to the skilful passing action anyway.

However, you can rotate the view to watch goals and interesting incidents on the instant replay, complete with slow-motion and freeze-frame facilities.

The sole graphical flaw is the slowdown in the action which sometimes occurs when the penalty area is packed with men, particularly in four-player mode. It's a minor and occasional problem, though, which fails to mar the scintillating gameplay.

Choosing from the selection of real J League teams it's possible to play an exhibition, league season, cup tournament or one of several scenarios (eg one down with a minute

to play). A whole netful of match options enable you to fine-tune the game. As well as toggling various rules, such as offside, on/off you can select from 16 stadiums and three different refs (including a card-happy one). A day or night game can also be chosen, along with weather conditions which do make a difference to the play: for instance, the players can slip on a snowy pitch when trying to turn quickly!

IN THE DUGOUT

Even more impressive is the tactical side of the game which features just about every formation and strategy any manager could dream of. You can

even fiddle with individual player positions and defence/midfield/forward zones to create your own custom tactics which can be saved to Controller Pak, along with edited players and teams. Up to four strategies, such as offside trap and pressing game, can be allocated to buttons for instant activation during the match – so if you're one down with

ing, supremely playable and brilliant fun!



THE GOALIE MAKES A STUNNING SAVE, PARRYING THE BALL OUT – LUCKILY TO A NEARBY DEFENDER. ON THE HIGHEST OF FIVE SKILL SETTINGS, THESE KEEPERS TAKE SOME BEATING.



SWINGING ARMS

ORIGINATED BY BRAZILIAN BEBETO, THIS IS MEANT TO EMULATE ROCKING A BABY TO SLEEP. YOU'RE NOT HOLDING MY KID, MATE.

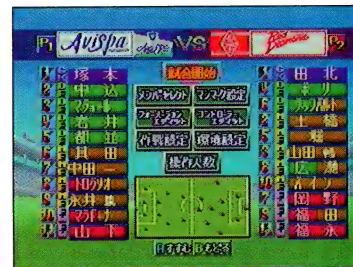


TWIN ROLL

THIS TIME THE SCORER IS JOINED BY A TEAMMATE FOR A SIMULTANEOUS FORWARD ROLL. I WOULDN'T TRY THIS ON A MUDDY PITCH.

Celebrate in Style

NOT CONTENT WITH THE TRADITIONAL HANDS UP OR SNOGGING TEAMMATES, THE PLAYERS IN PERFECT STRIKER EMULATE THEIR REAL-LIFE COUNTERPARTS WITH BIZARRE DISPLAYS OF JOY AFTER SCORING A GOAL. THERE ARE NO LESS THAN 15 DIFFERENT CELEBRATIONS TO ENJOY, CHOSEN AT RANDOM OR DEPENDING ON THE GAME SITUATION. HERE'S JUST A FEW...



THE MAIN STRATEGIC MENU LETS YOU MAKE SUBSTITUTIONS, SWITCH FORMATIONS, ALLOCATE STRATEGIES, ORGANISE MAN-TO-MAN MARKING AND MUCH MORE.



Oi! Keegan! No!

YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PITCH IS INFLUENCED CONSIDERABLY BY A WHOLE RANGE OF MANAGERIAL DECISIONS. IN ADDITION TO A HUGE SELECTION OF CUSTOMISABLE FORMATIONS, THERE ARE STRATEGIES FOR EVERY OCCASION, TACTICAL SUBSTITUTIONS, MAN-MARKING AND SPECIAL PLAYER ROLES.



A FREE KICK IS GIVEN AFTER AN OFFSIDE DECISION – YOU CAN TURN THIS RULE OFF.



LINE-UP

THE DEFAULT TEAM LINE-UP IS NOT NECESSARILY THE BEST. THE COLOURED FACE NEXT TO EACH PLAYER INDICATES HIS CURRENT FORM, WHILE THE BAR REPRESENTS STAMINA. IF EITHER IS LOW, IT'S PROBABLY A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE HIM ON THE BENCH.



SUBSTITUTIONS

UP TO THREE SUBSTITUTIONS CAN BE MADE DURING A MATCH, WHILE THE BALL IS DEAD. YOU MAY WANT TO SUBSTITUTE A BOOKED OR TIRED MAN – OR BE FORCED TO REPLACE AN INJURED ONE. YOU CAN ALSO SWITCH PLAYERS AROUND IF ONE IS SENT OFF, SO A HOLE ISN'T LEFT IN THE DEFENCE.

a minute to play, you can easily switch to all-out attack without flicking through any menus. Individual players can also be assigned special roles,

such as sweeper and striker; or made to man-mark opposing star players. Strategic substitutions also prove vital as players become tired or are stretchered off after a bad tackle.

Don't worry if you're not a tactical anorak, though, as the arcade-style gameplay is simplicity to get to grips with. The controls are surprisingly instinctive, despite the impressive number of skills which can be performed. You name it, these players can do it: intricate passing, powerful

A Quick One-Two

Although not as easy to perform as the through ball, the one-two function can be very effective and satisfying when pulled off. A quick double-pass, it's great for getting around stubborn defenders.

1. THE DEFENSIVE LINE IS HOLDING FIRM, SO THE FORWARD PASSES TO THE UNMARKED NUMBER 3.
2. HE AUTOMATICALLY FLICKS THE BALL FORWARD FOR THE ORIGINAL PLAYER TO RUN BACK ONTO.
3. RECEIVING THE BALL, HE'S WELL CLEAR OF THE DEFENDERS WITH ONLY THE KEEPER TO BEAT.



THE KEEPER GUARDS THE NEAR POST AS AN OPPOSING STRIKER DRIBBLES INTO THE PENALTY AREA. SOMEONE BETTER MAKE A CHALLENGE SOON OR HE'LL HAVE A CLEAR SHOT AT GOAL.



THE PLAYERS CELEBRATE WITH SOME JUBILANT FANS AFTER ANOTHER GOAL. THERE ARE 15 DIFFERENT CELEBRATION ANIMATIONS TO ENJOY.



BARGE

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE LEGITIMATE BARGE TACKLE, THIS IS A BLATANT BODY-CHECK TO KNOCK AN OPPONENT OFF THE BALL. DEPENDING ON THE REFEREE, AND THE POSITION ON THE FIELD, IT CAN RESULT IN A YELLOW OR EVEN RED CARD, SO IS BEST KEPT AS A LAST RESORT.



CHIP

WITH DEFENDERS RARELY MISSING HEADERS, THE LONG BALL UP FRONT ISN'T THAT PRODUCTIVE. HOWEVER, A DEFT LITTLE CHIP HERE AND THERE CAN BE USEFUL. IN ADDITION, THE CHIP BUTTON AUTOMATICALLY RESULTS IN A GOAL-MOUTH CROSS FROM POSITIONS NEAR THE BY-LINE.



HEADER

THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF HEADER IN THE GAME: FLICK UPWARDS, NOD DOWNWARDS, AND POWER. IF THE BALL IS ONLY JUST WITHIN RANGE, THE PLAYER WILL ALSO DIVE FOR IT. THE HEADER CAN BE ACCURATELY DIRECTED WITH POWER INCREASED BY HOLDING THE BUTTON.

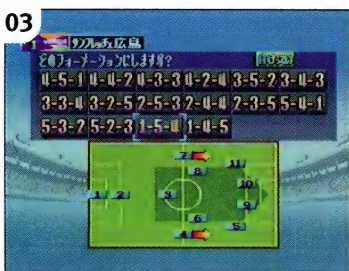


LIFT

NO, NOT SOMETHING THE STAR STRIKER GETS FROM HIS PAGE 3 GIRLFRIEND AFTER THE GAME! THE PLAYER IN POSSESSION CLEVERLY LIFTS THE BALL STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR WITH HIS LEG, THUS ENABLING HIM TO HEAD OR VOLLEY IT. A CHEEKY MOVE TO ANNOY OPPONENTS.

J League Perfect Striker

We say: Footy's coming home!



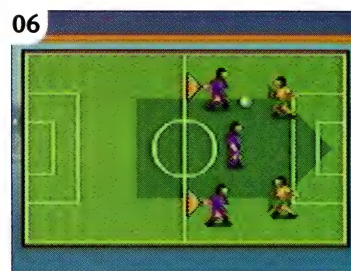
03 FORMATIONS
THERE ARE 16 STANDARD FORMATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM, SO THERE SHOULD BE ONE TO SUIT YOUR STYLE OF PLAY. THEY RANGE FROM THE STANDARD 4-4-2, 5-3-2 AND 4-3-3, TO EXOTIC ONES LIKE 1-5-4 – BLIMEY, HAVEN'T THEY EVER HEARD OF DEFENCE?!



04 ZONE POSITIONING
ANY OF THE SET FORMATIONS CAN BE TWEAKED BY ALTERING THE DEFENSIVE, MIDFIELD AND FORWARD ZONES. SO IF YOU PREFER TO PLAY YOUR DEFENDERS DEEP TO BETTER GUARD THE GOAL-MOUTH, YOU CAN SIMPLY MOVE THEM FURTHER BACK ON THE PITCH MAP.



05 PLAYER POSITIONING
IN ADDITION TO MOVING THE ZONES, YOU CAN REPOSITION ANY INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS IN A FORMATION. FOR INSTANCE, YOU MAY WANT ONE CENTRAL MIDFIELDER TO STAY DEEP WHILE THE OTHER PUSHES FORWARD. CUSTOM FORMATIONS CAN BE SAVED TO CONTROLLER PAK.



06 STRATEGIES
EVEN WITH THE IDEAL FORMATION, YOU'LL NEED A RANGE OF SPECIAL TACTICS TO DEAL WITH DIFFERENT OPPONENTS AND MATCH SITUATIONS. UP TO FOUR OF THE EIGHT STRATEGIES CAN BE ASSIGNED TO BUTTONS FOR INSTANT ACTIVATION DURING PLAY.

shots, delicate chips, overhead kicks, shuffling dummies, heel flicks, and no less than three types of header.

Aftershot can also be applied to swerve shots and chips, although the effect is quite subtle. For once, decent one-twos are actually achievable in a football game, but the real star of the show is the through-ball facility, sending a defence-splitting pass for a forward to chase.



scored here. Although many come from rebounds – leading to exciting goal-mouth scrambles as the defenders frantically try to clear – you need to string decent moves together in the first place. This is particularly satisfying in multi-player mode, requiring a good deal of co-operation from team-mates; although switching of control between on-field players can be perilously confusing when defending, resulting in silly mistakes and accusations of bung-taking!

Great-looking, supremely playable and brilliant fun with a group of friends, *Perfect Striker* has already set a league-topping standard which subsequent soccer rivals will find very hard to emulate.



ANY BRAZILIAN WOULD BE PROUD OF THE BALL SKILLS IN THIS GAME. OVERHEAD KICKS ARE PARTICULARLY SPECTACULAR – AND THE ULTIMATE WAY OF SCORING A GOAL.

NOT PERFECT BUT...

The final result is a realistically varied game with no shortage of skilful play. Five levels of CPU intelligence provide plenty of challenge, along with the same number of keeper settings. There are no easy sure-fire 'bug' goals

Silky Skills

One of the game's most impressive aspects is the number of ball skills at your disposal. Here are just some of the ones you'll need in order to score.



OVERHEAD
WHEN TRYING TO HEAD A BALL IN THE AIR, THIS IS ACTIVATED INSTEAD WHEN THE FORWARD'S GOT HIS BACK TO GOAL, WHEREUPON HE SWINGS HIS LEGS SKYWARDS. IT'S NOT THAT EASY TO SCORE WITH, HOWEVER, AND CAN BE DEAD EMBARRASSING IF YOU MISS THE BALL ALTOGETHER!



SHUFFLE
THIS NIFTY MOVE IS GREAT FOR FOOLING DEFENDERS, PARTICULARLY JUST BEFORE TRYING TO RUN STRAIGHT PAST THEM. TAPPING THE DASH BUTTON MAKES THE PLAYER IN POSSESSION SHUFFLE HIS FEET OVER THE BALL A COUPLE OF TIMES. FLASHY STUFF.



SHOT
ALTHOUGH PRESSING THE SHOOT BUTTON AUTOMATICALLY HOOFS THE BALL TOWARDS GOAL (EVEN IF YOU'RE SLIDING BACKWARDS!), YOU'LL NEED TO ALTER THE DIRECTION TO SWERVE IT PAST THE KEEPER. THE POWER DEPENDS ON HOW LONG YOU HOLD THE BUTTON.



SLIDE
AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE STANDARD BARGE TACKLE, THIS CAN RESULT IN A FOUL IF MISTIMED OR DONE FROM BEHIND – THUS IT'S NOT ADVISABLE IN YOUR OWN PENALTY AREA. YOU CAN ALSO SLIDE FOR A LOOSE BALL TO INTERCEPT PASSES AND EVEN SCORE GOALS.



THE PLAYERS GO BANANAS AFTER ANOTHER SUPERB GOAL. THANKFULLY THE REF NEVER BOOKS ANYONE FOR OVER-CELEBRATING, OTHERWISE THEY'D ALL BE OFF!



Playing it Through

One of the most useful facilities in the game is the through ball. Instead of passing straight to a team-mate, the ball is sent ahead of him to chase. If timed well this can split the defence, but you've got to watch out for off-sides.

1. ABOUT TO BE TACKLED BY AN OPPONENT, THE PLAYER PASSES TO A TEAM-MATE RUNNING FORWARD.
2. THE BALL IS DELIVERED FAR ENOUGH AHEAD FOR THE RECIPIENT TO KEEP RUNNING ONTO IT.
3. COLLECTING THE PASS, HE'S ALREADY PAST ANOTHER OPPONENT AND CAN GALLOP INTO OPEN SPACE.



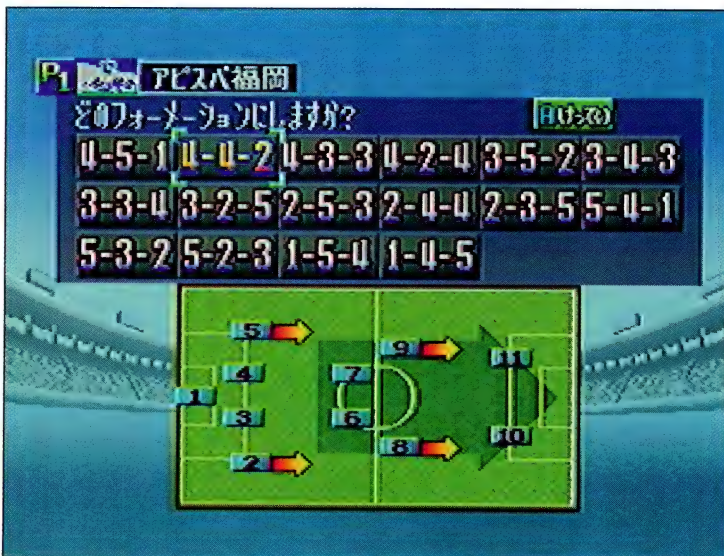
ONE AND ONE WITH THE KEEPER, HE SLOTS IT CALMLY INTO THE CORNER. IT'S ALSO POSSIBLE TO GO ROUND THE GOALIE OR, TO BE REALLY FLASHY, FLICK IT RIGHT OVER HIS HEAD.



(ABOVE) A DEFENDER PANICS AND HOOPS IT INTO THE STAND. (BELOW) CORNER KICKS CAN BE IN-OR OUT-SWINGERS.



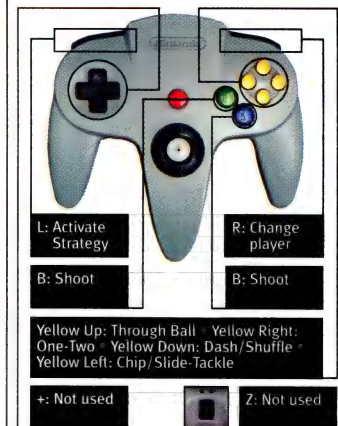
THERE ARE OFTEN FRANTIC GOAL-MOUTH SCRAMBLES AS PLAYERS PACK THE PENALTY AREA, PARTICULARLY AFTER SHOT REBOUNDS. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS ALSO THE OCCASIONAL SLOWDOWN IN THE GRAPHICS WHEN THIS HAPPENS.



THERE ARE A LARGE RANGE OF FORMATIONS TO SUIT EVERY PLAYING STYLE. THESE CAN ALSO BE CUSTOMISED BY MOVING PLAYERS AROUND AND THEN SAVED TO CONTROLLER PAK.

64 THE BOTTOM LINE

Keys



Combos

A+B: Push
L + U/R/D/L: Activate any of four strategies

Rating

Graphics



Audio



Gameplay



Lasting Challenge



Overall

91%

Summing up:

THE MOST PLAYABLE FOOTBALL GAME AROUND. WELL WORTH SWAPPING THAT BROWN ENVELOPE FOR.