

Shoshinkai

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Nintendo unveils new disk drive and 50 additional japanese N64 games.

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SHOSHINKAI

NINTENDO UNVEILS NEW DISK DRIVE AND 50 ADDITIONAL JAPANESE N64 GAMES.

Nintendo very seldomly talks about new games, peripherals and hardware that it has in development. For Japan the only time this happens is at their annual Shoshinkai Trade Show. This year marked the eighth anniversary of the show and it was held from November 22 through November 24 at Makuhari Messe in Chiba Japan. Of course, the EGM editors were there to get the latest information.

There was a lot of anticipation leading up to the show but just like last year Nintendo remained very conservative, secretive and tight lipped about what products they have in development. Staying true to form, Nintendo only allowed everybody to play three of their new N64 games - Mario Kart 64, Blastdozer (Blastcorps in the U.S.) and Star Fox 64. Also, just like last year's show, the only peek into the future the press got was through Nintendo's 10 minute promo tape. Even then the amount of actual new game footage was minimal - usually about 10 seconds per game. Still,

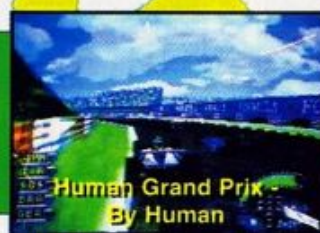


we were able to catch quick glimpses of Yoshi's Island 64, Zelda 64, Kirby's Air Ride, Golden Eye 007, Mother 3, Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire and a few teasers of some of their new third party games. Other known games like Killer Instinct, Cruis'n U.S.A., Mortal Kombat Trilogy and Gretzky Hockey were not at the show.

Even the new disk drive (which still doesn't have an official name) was shrouded in mystery. There was a prototype on display but officials stated that none of the games were far enough along to be playable. Instead Nintendo staged a

unique demonstration where their people would go around the booth taking digital pictures of the press. These images were inputted into their disk drive and stored on their readable/writable optical disc. The photographs then appeared as images on each of the faces of a cube which twisted and turned on the large screen TV. Since the disk drive isn't scheduled to be out until sometime in 1997, it looks like we will have to wait until E3 before we see what the machine can really do. Presently Nintendo would only say that the disk drive would cost less than the Nintendo 64 system; and that a RAM memory cartridge would be packed in with the disk drive.

There were a few new peripherals at Shoshinkai. Most impressive was Nintendo's "Shaker" or "Jolting Pack" - a





plug in module that fits into the memory cartridge slot on the controller. When played with either Blastcorps or Starfox the controller would vibrate when an enemy would shoot you. The effect actually did work (there was a slight time lag and Nintendo reps said that it would be fixed) and it gave us a sense of really being in a battle. The cartridge will sell for about \$12 and will be out when Starfox is released later this quarter.

Nintendo also announced a new 'bicolor' controller that will be out when Mario Kart 64 is released. While functionally not any different than the normal controller, players in Japan have been making their

Capcom was at the show but only demonstrating Super Famicom games. They stated that they were not ready to disclose any N64 titles. This announcement would be made at the Atlanta E3 Show. Square was rumored to be back in the Nintendo fold but neither they nor Namco were at the show. Even the games that were being shown were uneventful. Since this



was a Japan only show, there were a lot of games that never would make it to the states. The dozen or so mahjong and 'go' board games were yawns as were some of the baseball and soccer games that featured the cute squat players.

On the positive side based on the few seconds of taped footage that we saw, Nintendo's



own multicolored controllers by combining the tops and bottoms from different colored sticks, so Nintendo decided to add more fuel to this popular fire by bringing out their own color combination. The top will be black and the bottom grey. The controller will be packed in with Mario Kart 64.

Finally, Seta will be bringing out an N64 modem cartridge which will allow players from all over Japan to play mahjong against each other. No other games were announced for this peripheral.

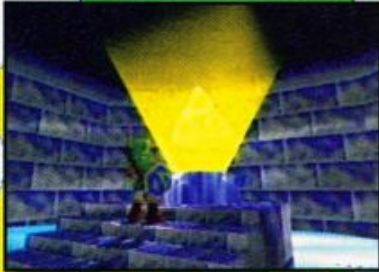
With regards to third party licensees there wasn't any new and exciting news.

Yoshi's Island 64 and Kirby's Air Ride (first half 1997) were titles that were quite impressive and could be hit titles. Zelda and Golden Eye 007 (first half 1997) on the other hand, looked about as far along as they did at the Shoshinkai show last year.

Next month we will get into more detail on each of the products.



NINTENDO UNVEILS N64 DISK DRIVE



The long awaited Nintendo 64 DD (Disk Drive) made its debut at this show...sort of anyway. As mentioned earlier the lights flashed on the DD and information appeared to pass through the system but since there wasn't an actual game loaded up we just had to trust Nintendo that the DD was actually working.

Nintendo did issue a white paper on the DD. In this they stated that the 64 DD will have about 64 Megabytes (512 megabits) of memory. As much as half of it could be rewritable but the amount allocated for

rewriting could be anywhere from zero to 32 Megabytes. Nintendo calls it a cross between a ROM cartridge and a hard disk.

While not compatible with existing 3 1/2" magnetic optical discs, Nintendo's disk reportedly offers a very high recording density. They state that their disc is roughly equivalent to 45 floppy discs. To look at it another way, the Nintendo disk holds less information than a Sony or Sega CD game, but a lot more than an N64 cartridge game.

One point that Nintendo has been making for several years now is the fact that normal CD-ROM drives transfer data from the CD to the game system's memory at a very slow rate. This we all can attest to because of the "now loading" we see at the beginning of each of our PS and Saturn games. Nintendo wanted to minimize this data access time and

decided to go with the fastest machine possible. They state that their DD is the equivalent of a 5.4X speed CD-ROM drive. While CD-ROM drives are now available at a 6X or 8X speed, getting one that also writes data and still costs less than \$200 would be difficult.

System memory expansion is another benefit that Nintendo is claiming can be done with their 64DD. They plan on using special "ultra high speed" Rambus RDRAM in the memory cartridge. This is the same type of memory that is used in the N64. The memory cartridge would plug into the top front of the Nintendo 64. While Nintendo reps declined to state how much memory would be included with the DD, earlier reports stated that it would be around two Mbytes.

The DD will plug into the bottom of the N64. This means that it is possible to use the DD in conjunction with a game cartridge. Nintendo suggested that for example, a baseball game could be released as a cartridge and updates that would include such things as revised statistics or player changes could be made available each year as a disc.

64 DD TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:

Memory capability:	64 megabytes
Data Transfer Rate:	81 seconds for 64 megabytes
Seek Time:	about 75 ms
Motor Drive Time:	less than 1.9 sec.
Size:	250 mm wide x 190 mm deep x 78.7 mm high
Weight:	drive: 1.6 kg. disk: 43 gm.

SHOSHINKAI SPECIAL FEATURE



SUPER MARIO KART 64



Mario Kart 64 is one of the most highly anticipated N64 games yet. Why is everyone so excited about this title? Mainly one reason: four player battle races!

Sure the graphics are leaps and bounds over its 16-bit predecessor. And sure the kart handling will be all the much better with the N64 analogue controls. But you can't have more fun than racing (and pushing off the road) three of your friends.

You can play a strict race, where the first player to finish all the laps win. But as any Mario Kart fan could tell you, that's not where the true fun is. The battle mode is a type of race as well, but this is a race

to beat up your opponents the quickest. You can run around the track and pick up various power-ups and weapons to help in this goal.

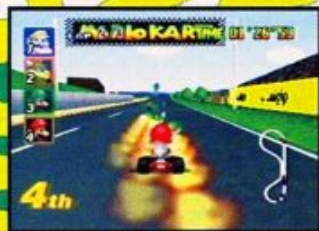
One notable improvement over the old Mario Kart is that you can now gather more than one weapon. For example, you can carry six bananas around at a time.

There are over 20 courses in Mario Kart 64, some more interesting than others.

One of the more impressive locations is the inside of the Princess' castle. Imagine racing around, trying to avoid big Thwomp Blocks at the same time.

To coincide with the release of Mario Kart 64, Nintendo will be shipping a special edition controller. What's so special about this new joypad? So far, absolutely nothing except that it will be split colored (black on top, gray on the bottom). These controllers are to be bundled with the Japanese version; we'll have to wait to see if the American version will get a pack-in controller as well.

Mario Kart 64 should be hitting American shores by February 1997.



STARFOX 64



Fans of the original Super Nintendo game Star Fox were cheated out of a 16-bit sequel (which was unfortunately dropped). But they don't have to fret as they are to be treated to a marvelous looking 64-bit update of the popular game instead.

Fox McCloud and his cast of domestic farm animal friends return in Star Fox 64. This new title goes beyond just graphically improving an old game. For example, Star Fox 64 will have a brand new four player-split screen mode! Now, you and three other friends (or enemies) can dog-fight, or rather, fox-fight it out in the sleek Star Fox space crafts.

controller (where the memory cart is plugged in) and will shake your controller every time your ship takes a hit. Imagine feeling the damage and impulse of the shock of real combat! This revolutionary device will bring you much closer to the action.

Still not satisfied? How about a new vehicle? In addition to the Star Fox space-ship, a new battle tank will be available for the times when the fights take place on the ground.



Another addition that should excite Star Fox fans and critics alike is open flight. In certain levels only, you can fly around in completely open 3-D areas! This is a welcome feature that people complained was missing in the original cart.

One of the biggest new features of Star Fox 64 will be sold separately. It will either be called the Shaker or Jolting Pack. This add-on will plug into the back of the N64

Besides all these new features, the game designers put in extra little graphical tidbits that will impress you. Some of the things you'll see are the awesome reflection of your ship over water, laser shots making blackened marks on the ground and the fire and smoke spewing from the cracks of your damaged ship.

StarFox 64 looks to be a hot addition to the Nintendo 64 library. You can expect it to hit the United States sometime in March of 1997.





BLAST CORPS



Despite being surrounded by 64-bit rehashes of successful Super Nintendo games (Zelda 64, Mario Kart 64, etc.), Blast Corps manages to keep its head above water. It is one of the higher profile games to come out for the Nintendo 64 that is a brand new, totally unique creation.

The game's about mass destruction (though once you see this game in action, you think that "mass destruction" is a bit understated). A nuclear missile carrier has gone A.W.O.L. in a big way. It threatens to destroy everything if it ever runs into something. Your mission is to destroy

everything (and we mean everything) in its path to insure that the carrier runs around unobstructed. You'll have to do everything from demolishing entire buildings to cutting down trees to accomplish this goal. You simply have to make sure that this carrier never hits a standing object!

You'll start the game out with a bulldozer. Pretty standard demolition equipment, right? Well, as you progress through the levels and succeed, you'll earn money that you'll be able to spend on various upgrades. You can purchase heavier armor or new weapons to help reach your goals. Eventually, you'll graduate from the bulldozer and move on to bigger (and badder) vehicles. Some of those include dump trucks, giant robot mechs (which you can control PilotWings-jet-pack style) and dune

buggies (don't ask us why dune buggies are great demolition vehicles!).

Blast Corps shows off some pretty impressive explosion effects. The play will be enhanced by the Shaker/Jolting add-on (which was mentioned in the Star Fox 64 section above). But is this enough to satisfy gamers? After all, the gameplay, though interesting, seems rather shallow (but to be fair, we haven't gotten our grubby little hands on a finished copy of Blast Corps yet). Who knows? Blast Corps may have just what it takes to stand out amongst its higher profile brethren (all those 64-bit sequels to great 16-bit games).



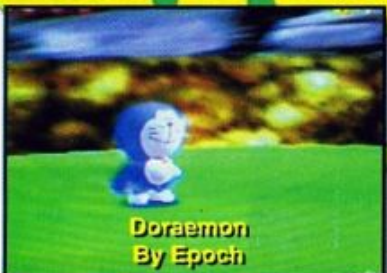
THIRD PARTY LICENSEES GAMES



Pro Wrestling
By Hudson



Pro Baseball King
By Imagineer



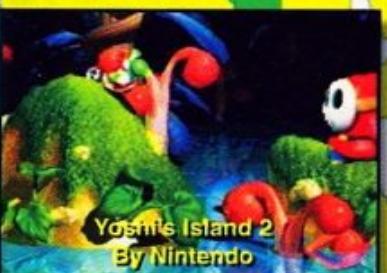
Doraemon
By Epoch



Wonder Project J2
By Enix



Go! Go! Trouble Makers
By Enix



Yoshi's Island 2
By Nintendo

While Nintendo only had three playable games their third party licensees made up the majority of the show with another 40 N64 titles on display. Some, like Bottom's Up sumo wrestling game or Banpresto's Super Robot Spirits were created exclusively for the Japanese market but others such as Kemco's Blade and Barrel or Seta's Rev Limit and Wild Choppers were designed with universal appeal and have already been picked up by American companies. Below is a list of what was at the show:



Powerful Pro Baseball 4
By Konami

Acclaim is no stranger to game players and their game Turok was really looking good with smooth character animation, great battles and huge levels. It should be out in March.

Asmik will be bringing out a new wrestling title called Virtual Pro Wrestling which the company claims will set new standards in number of moves and smoothness of motion. It is scheduled to be released in February.

Athena will be starting their N64 work with a Japan only game entitled Pro-Mahjong Kiwame 64.



J-League Perfect Striker
By Konami

Imagineer has been working on N64 games for some time now. Their first half '97 releases include Pro Baseball King; J-League Dynamite Soccer 64; Multi Racing Championship and a yet unnamed action adventure game similar in design to Mario.

Enix, long known for their popular Dragon quest series will be continuing the simulation line with Wonder Project J2 and a new action game tentatively called Go! Go! Trouble Makers.

Epoch is taking their well known Doraemon series from the Super Famicom



Goemon
By Konami

up to the Nintendo 64. Their next in the series should be out in March.

Electronic Arts has teamed up with Victor in Japan and will be bringing out their FIFA soccer game on the N64. The game name will use the J-League title.

While Game Bank is not a very well known company in the U.S. they certainly know a good game when they see one. Their first N64 game will be Hexen.

Kemco has been working on Blade and Barrel for some time and it is ready for release. It played perfectly and should do well when it comes out in the U.S. next month.



Mahjong Master
By Konami

Koei's first N64 game will be a Japan only release entitled Mahjong 64.

Konami had a large booth at the show and rightfully so. Their first few games include Powerful Pro Baseball; J-League Perfect Striker; Mahjong Master and Mystical Ninja Goemon 64. Konami officials would not confirm whether the Castlevania series would be coming to the N64.

Seta was one of the first of the third party licensees. Their new games include the racing game Rev Limit; Wild Choppers; St. Andrews Golf; Marita's Shogi 64; Like



Wonder Project J2
By Enix

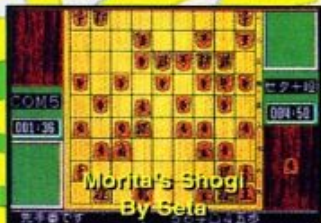
SHOSHINKAI SPECIAL FEATURE



Golden Eye
By Nintendo



Like Thunder 'Go'
By Seta



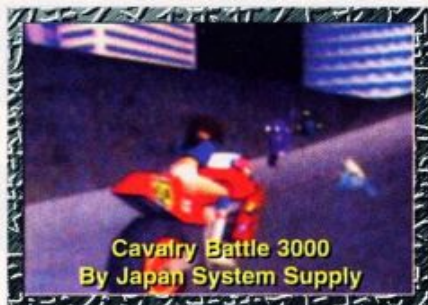
Morita's Shogi
By Seta



Chameleon Twist
By Japan System Supply



Mother 3
By Nintendo



Cavalry Battle 3000
By Japan System Supply



Seta's N64 Modem
By Seta

Thunder "Go" and a simulation game called Super Real Island. Seta also will be bringing out an N64 cartridge modem so that players can challenge others anywhere in the country.

Tommy is another not very well known company but their S.D.F. Macross cart will be recognizable to all fans of that series.

Japan System Supply is a new N64 licensee and they have just begun to program their two games - Cavalry Battle 3000 and Chameleon Twist. Both should be out in November.

Hudson has decided to throw their hat into the N64 ring and we really were hoping to see a new version of Bomberman but it was nowhere in sight. It is on their schedule so we'll check back with them in a couple of months. Bomberman 5 for the Super Famicom was great though! Also on their N64 list is Power League 64; a new fighting game called Dual Heroes; a great looking pro wrestling cart and another fighting game called New Hagane.

Banpresto will start working on an anime based game called Super Robot Spirits.

Ocean's game Mission Impossible is coming to Japan from Victor Interactive. While not playable the demo cart looked exceptional and this is one game to look for later this year.

Sonic Wings is a popular arcade shooter in Japan. Video Systems will do the conversion and the first level played perfectly

version had all the geometry in and moved along at a very rapid frame rate. This was the most realistic racing game at the show.

Finally there was the new company called Bottom Up. They are the ones who are making a Sumo wrestling game for the N64.



Dual Heroes
By Hudson Soft.



Goemon
By Konami

with no slowdown at all. They are also working on a new Mahjong game.

Human is channeling their programming skills into making the most realistic Grand Prix simulation possible. The 80 percent

That wraps up the show. We will continue the coverage next issue when we blow out Mario Kart and come back for a detailed look at the other hot titles like Zelda, Yoshi's Island, Mission Impossible.



SDF Macross
By Tommy



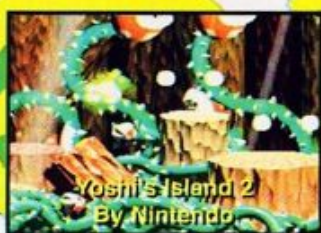
Sumo 64
By Bottom Up



Baseball 64
By Hudson Soft.



Turok the Dinosaur Hunter Acclaim



Yoshi's Island 2
By Nintendo



Unnamed RPG
By Imagineer



SDF Macross
By Tommy