

Pikachu Plans for World Domination

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PIKACHU'S PLANS FOR WORLD DOMINATION

LOVE 'EM OR LOATHE 'EM, POKÉMON RULE THE PLANET—AND THESE NEW GAMES FOR THE N64 AND GAME BOY COLOR WILL ONLY SERVE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ADORABLE REIGN.

BY DAN ELEKTRO

POKÉMON STADIUM



Pokémon Stadium will offer something old and something new, bringing your Pokémon to life in the 64-bit realm!

POKÉMON STADIUM IS taking the one-on-one, turn-based combat of the Pokémon Game Boy games into the 3D realm this March. There will be no character level-building, item collection, or evolution here, just good old-fashioned melee battles with jaw-dropping 64-bit graphics.

The faces should look familiar to gamers—the entire stable of pocket monsters will be represented, from Abra to Zubat—but the lush surroundings and colorful attacks in the preview version were far from the teeny pixelated world of the Game Boy. Raichu's lightning attacks crackled with power; Charizard fired up the playfield with red-hot flames; poison-powder and stun-spore assaults filled the screen with colored snow—even Lickitung's horrible tongue received the 3D treatment.



Too...psychédelic...getting...very...sleepy...

FIGHT CLUB

Watching pre-loaded Pokémon duke it out in full 3D is neat, but seeing the ones you've captured and raised locked in battle is even better. For the first time, thanks to a special adapter that comes with Stadium, you'll be able to import the Pokémon from your Game Boy Red, Blue, and Yellow cartridges directly into the 64-bit cartridge and then let 'em fight to see who's the best.

Another of Stadium's many features will be the "GB Tower"—a built-in Game Boy emulator that enables you to play your handheld Pokémon games

► During battle, attack selection will be simple: Press the appropriate yellow C-button, and you're done.



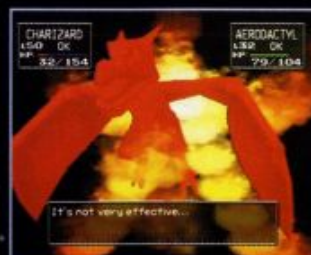
Two words can accurately describe Jigglypuff's song: pretty colors.



With gorgeous 3D attacks like these, you'll really see Pokémon like you've never seen them before!



Even a maxed-out 100-level Pokémon won't guarantee a successful attack!



Funny, Charizard's flaming attack certainly looks effective...

in color on the big screen. (Sorry, it'll work only with Pokémon Red, Blue, and Yellow.) If you visit a Pokémon center and save your game through the N64's converter, a little extra data will be added to your cart that enables Stadium to read all your saved characters. Don't worry, your Game Boy cart will be otherwise unaffected—the game will play fine next time you pop it into your portable.

ALL THIS AND MEW, TOO (AND MEWTWO)

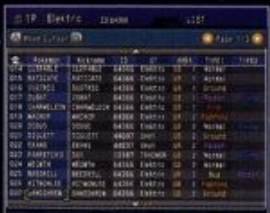
If you're one of the lucky trainers who has captured Mew (the 151st Pokémon, available only in the Japanese version of the Game Boy games and through special promotions offered by Nintendo and Toys 'R' Us), you'll find that Pokémon Stadium lets you bring him into battle, too. In fact, even if some of your Pokémon are so powerful they won't obey you in the Game Boy games, they'll listen to your every command in Stadium. It's also worth noting that if you do use your own creatures in Stadium, their stats won't go up when they win battles; you'll still have to help them level up in your Game Boy adventures. If you don't own any of the Game Boy games, don't worry—all 150 Pokémon will come pre-loaded as "rentals" for you to use at any time.



As in Pokémon Snap, gamers will be able to save snapshots, and then print them as stickers.



Mew doesn't come with Pokémon Stadium, but can be imported if you've already captured him in your Game Boy.



Managing your Game Boy Pokémon and items will be much easier with Stadium's simple interface.



So your own Charmander isn't a Charizard! In Stadium, you'll be able to play with a maxed-out one.



Plug in your Game Boy Pokémon to play them in color on a big screen!

Stadium battles. Most will be button-mashing races or Simon Says-style memory tests, but with wonderfully weird names like Sushi-Go-Round, Dig! Dig! Dig!, and Thundering Dynamo, they'll be worth investigating.

Another perk is that Stadium will make managing your Pokémon easy. Professor Oak's research lab featured simple menus and interfaces for doing basic GB cart maintenance that used to be a chore—trading creatures, organizing your storage boxes, finding details about attacks and game items, and administering TM and HM boosts (you can then use them immediately in Stadium battles)—all these tasks will now be pleasures. You'll also be able to save your Pokémon to the cart's memory while you retrieve more.

GET IN THE RING

In a word, Pokémon Stadium will be huge—both in terms of content and in its potential impact. The preview version was extremely polished, even many months away from its March release. It's clear Nintendo is taking no chances with its most popular franchise—do faithful fans of Pokémon deserve anything less?

► Even defensive and power-up moves look spectacular in 3D.



In Tower battles, you'll have to defeat tough opponents to earn badges.



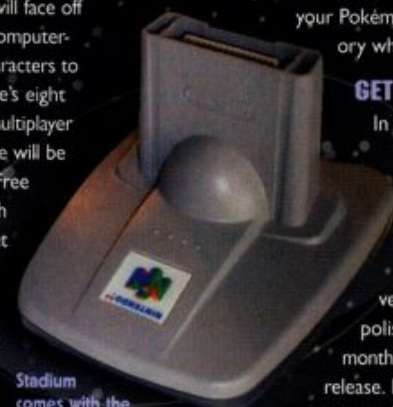
Disease never looked so good! Purple goo (poison attacks) rains down on opponents.



In three- and four-player games, each trainer will select three creatures for a six-Pokémon team.



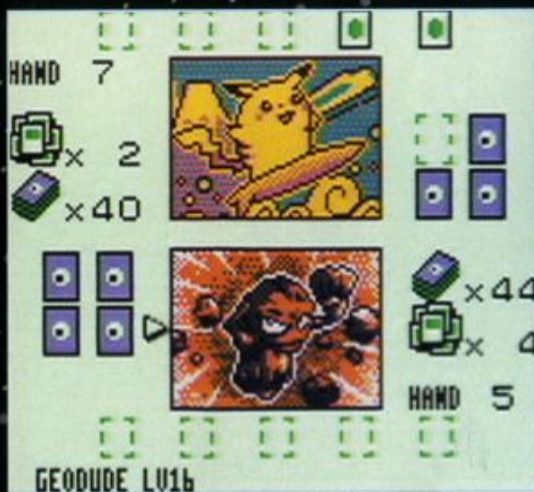
Ninetales will be instantly available in Stadium as one of the pre-loaded "rental" Pokémon.



Stadium comes with the Transfer Pak, which enables Game Boy Pokémon to be uploaded to the N64.

And, like Mario Party, Stadium will contain a collection of mini-games that can be played at any time, independent of the

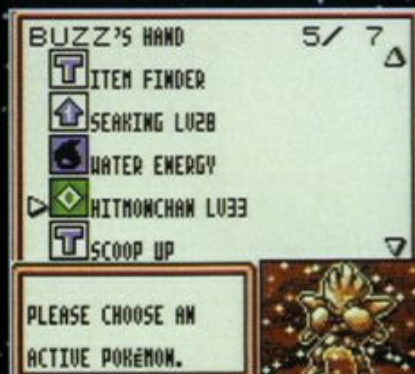
POKÉMON TRADING CARD



◀ The full Pokémon layout, as you'd see in official tournaments, has been re-created on the Game Boy.



A few button taps will reveal the cards you own.



Don't know the card game's icons? You'll have to learn them—they'll be used as onscreen shorthand.



You'll work from club to club before taking on bigger opponents.



Computer players may offer card trades...but will you get a good deal?



You can't win 'em all, but you'll learn new strategies by losing.



Explore the island—the Legendary Cards are around here somewhere...



VIDEO GAME ADAPTATIONS of card games generally don't cause too much of a stir, but, as usual, Pokémon is breaking the rules. When it's popular enough to be banned in schools across the country, there has to be something to it! How do you cram all those valuable trading cards into a tiny Game Boy cartridge in time for a February release? Carefully, very carefully.

CARD TRICKS

The uninitiated probably need a brief explanation: The card game challenges each player to build a deck of exactly 60 cards composed of diverse creatures, a variety of energy upits, and special events and items like healing potions. Once the deck is assembled, players square off in Pokémon creature-to-creature battles. Gamers familiar with Magic: The Gathering will find that the Pokémon card game is similar, if simpler.

A Game Boy version seems only natural, but with so many rules and details, one small mistake could upset the whole play balance. Nintendo has already managed to pull it off in Japan, however, so indications for the American version are good.

WHEELIN' AND DEALIN'

Every game will start with a tutorial that explains the gameplay. Your goal in the digital game will be to find the Legendary Cards by working your way up through the ranks and defeating the Grand Masters. Gamers will be able to read e-mail from characters and customize their decks via the in-game personal computer. In the real world, you'll be able to use a Game Boy Printer to generate hard copies of your deck lists and even print out replicas of your favorite cards.

Oh, of course, there will be an exclusive card packed with each cartridge for playing the actual card game, too.

POP GOES THE WEEDLE

Part of the physical card game's appeal is trading cards with friends, buying booster packs, and seeking out rare creatures to enhance your deck. But if everybody has the same mass-produced cartridges, how can any card be rare?

The answer is simple, yet revolutionary: a feature called "Card Pop." As





POKÉMON GOLD & SILVER

UPDATE

in the original Pokémon, every copy of the game will feature its own unique ID number. When two Game Boy Color users connect via their infrared ports, the game will compare the ID numbers, do a little math magic, and give both players a new, unique card. Each pair of cards will be able to perform a Card Pop only once together; to obtain more Pop cards, you'll have to seek out other Poké-players.

All Nintendo really has to do now is translate this game from Japanese into English and crank up the marketing machine. The game hits in February—don't tell your teacher.



Attacks are displayed through small animations, such as impact bursts or wiggling borders.



Of course, you can't play without Trainer and Energy cards—and some sweet ones will be included in Pokémon Trading Card.

WHILE THE NEXT Pokémon RPGs are a ways off for the U.S.—don't look for them until September or so—Japanese gamers are enjoying them now. Because GamePro has already previewed these games (see December '99), we're providing a quick rundown of the more common questions we've been asked since then. (Thanks to Polar Paul and Pokémaxx for their help in answering!)

Q: Given that these games use internal clocks and some creatures come out only at night, will I have to get up at 3 a.m. to catch them?

A: Probably not. It's not Nintendo's style to encourage fans to stay up all night. However, there will be special events that occur on certain calendar days and specific objectives to complete in a certain amount of time.

CONTINUED ►



Hou-Hou, the owl, squares off against Rediba the ladybug in Pokémon Gold.



What will hatch from the egg in your inventory? Wait and see...



There will be a lot of ground to cover in Pokémon Gold and Silver, and Pokémon will be hiding everywhere.



Q: Will I be able to use my Red, Blue, and Yellow Pokémon with Gold and Silver?

A: Yes, you'll be able to import your old Pokémon into the new games in the Time Capsule area, but you won't be able to transfer creatures from Gold and Silver to the earlier games.

Q: In GamePro, I saw a blue mouse Pokémon with a balloon on its tail [see page 124, December '99]. I heard his name is Pikablu. Is that true?

A: Nope—that's a clever Internet rumor. His Japanese name is Mariru ("marine blue"), and as Pikachu's Vacation established, his American name is Marril.

Q: Which Pokémon will breed?

A: That has yet to be determined.

Q: Will Gold and Silver work with Pokémon Stadium?

A: Nope. If the first Stadium does well, though, Nintendo may create a second one that supports Gold and Silver.

Q: What are some of the new creatures?

A: Naturally, most, if not all, of the names will be changed and translated before the games hit America, and Nintendo is playing it very close to the vest. Below, however, are some of the new creature names we've been able to piece together:

Chikorita (Grass type, one of the player's first Pokémon choices)

Denryu (Dragon, Electric type)

Derubiru (Dog, Devil type)

Doburu (Cartoonish dog, Normal type. An artist, it draws pictures with its tail.)

Donfan (Elephant with a wheel-like attack—seen in Pokémon: the Movie)

Eipamu (Monkey)

Elekid (Looks like a young version of Electabuzz)

Guraiga (Flying type, similar to Golbat)

Haganeru (Steel type, similar to Onix)

Hapinasu (Looks like an evolved Chansey)

Hassamu (Similar to Scyther)

Hanekko (Grass type)

Herakurosu (Beetle)

Himanuts (Grass type)

Hinaratsu (Hedgehog, Fire type, one of the player's first Pokémon choices)

Hou-Hou (Owl, Night Pokémon)

Houou (One of the Legendary Birds—Ash saw Houou in the first episode of the TV show.)

Itomiaru (Spider)

Kapoera (Fighting type, attacks with dance moves)

Kireihana (Grass type)

Kunudigama (Steel type, may be similar to Valtorb)

Lugia (One of the Legendary Birds—Lugia will appear in the movie sequel.)

Marril (Mouse; Water type—seen in Pikachu's Vacation, also called Mariru)

Mereep (Sheep, Electric type)

Mirutanku (Cow—literally, "milk tank")

Nuoh (Water type)

Odoshihi (Deer)

Otachi (Squirrel)

Pi (Clefairy's earlier stage of evolution)

Pichu (Pikachu's earlier stage of evolution)

Pupurin (Jigglypuff's earlier stage of evolution)

Rediba (Ladybug)

Snubble (Dog, Fighting type—seen in Pikachu's Vacation, also called Buru)

Suikun (Water type)

Togepi (Normal type, baby in egg shell—seen in the TV show and Pikachu's Vacation)

Usotsuki (Grass type, may be similar to Exeggutor)

Waninoko (Crocodile, Water type, one of the player's first Pokémon choices)

Yadoking (Water, Psychic type—a new evolution from Yadoran/Slowbro)

Yamikarasu (Bird, Flying type, Night Pokémon)



America, meet Otachi, a new squirrel-style Pokémon.



Togepi will definitely be in Gold and Silver...but will Misty make the cut?

BUT I HATE POKÉMON!

If the mere sight of Pikachu makes you want to hit him hard with a hammer, take heart—you're not alone. Thousands of other people not only refuse to succumb to Pokémania, but they're also striking back.

"Every parent, every older brother, every older sister is just a bit tired of this little yellow Pikachu," states the homepage at Must Be Destroyed (www.mustbedestroyed.com). Whether you hate the games, the cards, the movie, the TV show, the merchandise—or just the whole concept!—this Web site (run by none other than Threshold Entertainment, which produced the Mortal Kombat movies) does things to Pokémon you only dream about. For example, if you download the QuickTime movies, you'll see a nasty way to dispose of your least favorite Nintendo mascot. How about Pikachu vs. The FedEx Truck? Guess who wins. Swinging for the fences with Pikachu in a batting cage? It's a long fly furball, folks. Pikachu drawn and quartered then doused in gasoline and burnt to a crisp? Toasty! Mauled by chainsaws, tied to car bumpers, crushed by flying watermelon... did we mention you can vote on how the fuzzy fiend is whacked in future mini-movies?

But even the Web site Must Be Destroyed can't batter Pokémon forever; the site's authors are thinking of taking on boy bands when the fad fizzles. In other words, if Pokémon makes you want to hurl, jump on the backlash bandwagon while you still have that gag reflex... 