

OPINION & COMMENTARY

The Midnight Club

The Wave's Underground World of Pride Foosball

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Reporter

The Wave's Underground World of Pride Foosball

Wednesday, 10:47 pm: It's exactly like the opening scene from *Rounders*. My family is asleep and I'm tiptoeing around my house, collecting cash from anywhere I can. My McDonald's change, my father's swear jar, my brother's shoplifting jar. I find enough to keep myself going for the night, stumble out the door and take off towards UPEI.

It all happens right under everyone's nose, but very few people know exactly how intense the underground culture of Foosball is at the Wave on Wednesday nights. There's a small corner of the bar that is absolutely riddled with Foosball fever, and a metric load of pride is won and lost every week. For instance, getting blanked, not managing to score once after all 9 balls, means getting viciously berated and being told to "sign the table¹," the Foosball equivalent of

getting pantsed at recess.

There's a whole glossary (counters, middle goals) and a short rule book (defenders tip, spins) that need to be understood. Wednesday nights are all played King of the Ring style, meaning that winners stay at the table and don't need to pony up quarters until someone takes them down. Some of the players around are unhealthily good at Foosball. When the two guys who are generally understood to be the top ranked defence and offence respectively, a lot of what would otherwise be tipped to the bartenders will be spent knocking them off the table. Highlight reel plays, if that is possible in Foosball, happen every week at the Wave.

The next time your team is derailing at Trivia, scrape together some quarters and throw down against the Foosball crowd. Just don't spin.

¹ You don't actually sign the table.

Victory Through Sheer Volume: Multi-Pak for NES

(CW) Lonelyboy 15
Contributor

The first cartridge in this series of reviews wasn't so much a single game, but a collection of games. After a few minutes of alternately blowing on the cartridge and into the system, I successfully fired up my sparkling new Multi-Pak for the Nintendo Entertainment System. This wouldn't have been possible, however, without the troubleshooting steps printed on the cartridge label. The following is how they appear, verbatim, on the cartridge:

Trouble Shooting

DO NOT PANIC OR RUSH THE CASSETTE PLEASE

- a) Load Firmly. Power Up.
- b) Wait 30 seconds to warm up.
- c) FLASHING. Hold in reset 10 seconds. Then wait 10 seconds or flick the select switch on the hand pedal. *jiggle the cassette for a clean contact while its in the machine (You are not fully loaded or you are not warmed up)
- d) Plain screen or alphabet soup.

NOTE: Every cassette is played before we ship. (To ensure the problem is not your machine you may try a friends machine to eliminate this possibility).

Thankfully, I was able to eliminate countless instances of plain screen and a few cases of alphabet soup, picked up my hand pedal and examined the myriad of titles to choose from. The cartridge (cassette) advertises 40 Games in One; however, in reality there are only twenty original games with the remaining twenty being Ultra or Super versions of the first twenty. These versions are essentially the same games with increased difficulty or alternate character colours.

The titles include the original Bomber Man, the ship scaling classic Arabian and the tank shooter Battle

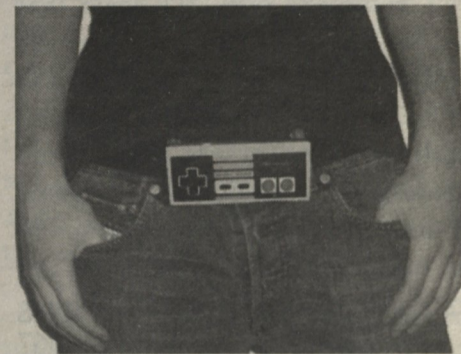


Photo from google
Lonelyboy 15 gears up for a day of hectic gaming. Pants included, thank god.

City (which includes a map editor that one can only assume to be very cutting edge at the time).

Arguably one of the weakest titles to choose from, Milk Nuts (and Ultra Milk Nuts), deserves credit for having absolutely nothing to do with its title (to avoid confusion: Milk Nuts appears in the cartridge menu, Nuts & Milk appears on the in-game title screen). Gameplay involves moving what we figure to be a pig around a 2D landscape and using ladders and springboards to collect various pieces of fruit. Once all the fruit is collected, a house that was previously merely decoration springs to life and a lady-pig (or pink ball with a face) appears which you need to reach to complete the level. Watch out though! A blue pig/ball/ruiner-of-worlds will chase you around and kill you if it touches you. Milk Nuts can be played solo or by taking turns with a friend, which can lead to some pretty intense competitions for who can get the furthest!

While the actual release date of Multi-Pak remains a mystery to me, most of the titles were released around 1984 to 1985 so one can assume that it was likely released in the late 80s, early 90s as a budget package for older games.

If you stick to Bomber Man and Battle City – really as long as you steer clear of Milk Nuts – there are actually a couple great games and some solid variety. In the end, Multi-Pak was well worth the \$0.75 garage sale price tag. However, lacking anything particularly standout, I give it only four excitebikes out of ten.

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