

# **Retrogaming Times** **Monthly**

*Issue #28 - September 2006*

## **Table of Contents**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 01. | <a href="#"><u>Press Fire to Start</u></a>          |
| 02. | <a href="#"><u>The Many Faces of ... Kaboom</u></a> |
| 03. | <a href="#"><u>ColecoNation</u></a>                 |
| 04. | <a href="#"><u>NEScade</u></a>                      |
| 05. | <a href="#"><u>Nintendo Realm</u></a>               |
| 06. | <a href="#"><u>Game Over</u></a>                    |

### ***Press Fire to Start***

*by Adam King*

Once again we present another issue of Retrogaming Times Monthly. I really don't have much to say this month so let's get right to the articles.

### ***The Many Faces of . . . Kaboom!***

*by Alan Hewston*

We continue our string of honoring titles that are now 25 years old - in the Many Faces of Kaboom! Yes, with that explanation mark! Take on the Mad Bomber, decked out in classic prison apparel, and watch him frown while you catch and defuse his bombs with your three water buckets. But let any one of his Bombs drop and he will turn on that smile while all remaining bombs quickly explode in rapid succession - Kaboom!. Of course you will lose your lowest remaining bucket until the game is finally over.

Based on Dennis Kolbe's Atari arcade game "Avalanche", Activision's Larry Kaplan struck gold with Kaboom! Adapting the same game principles to the best of the 2600's capabilities with a cartoonish mad bomber running back and forth across the top of the screen dropping bombs. It is simple, action packed, fun and addicting. In fact the action can drive you mad unless you can immerse yourself into the "Zone". The gaming "Zone" Just blot out everything and focus on turning that paddle to catch all 150 bombs in a row. What? No pause button on the 2600? No problem. Larry may have given us a significant challenge, but he is not without mercy as the action pauses after completing each bomb group, or after each Kaboom! When you are ready to take on the next group, simply press the fire button and the frenzy is on again. David Crane helped play test the game and added much of the graphical effects. If you scored 3,000 points you could earn the "Bucket Brigade" patch from Activision by sending them your screenshot. As the manual says, "if you ever reach the maximum 999,999 points, please send us a photo! Such a remarkable achievement must be recognized. And Larry has actually done this too. Note that the Kaboom! scoring system is in a league of its own in that any score from 1 to 999,999 is actually possible.

For more screenshots see: <http://www.mobygames.com/game/kaboom/screenshots>

All releases by Activision

Original release: Atari 2600 - 1981 - Larry Kaplan, with Graphics by David Crane

Atari 5200 & 8 bit computer - 1983 - Paul Wilson

Home Version Similarities - except those in < > all home versions: a choice of 1 or 2 players; narrow or wide buckets (difficulty); 2 players using either difficulty setting; 2 players simultaneous <2600> - taking turns pitching (playing the mad bomber) and catching (the buckets); choice of playing with paddles or joystick <2600>; each bomb is worth the same point value in each bomb group, beginning at 1 point in the first bomb group, and incrementing by one point so that you earn 8 points in bomb group 8; in bomb group 1, the bombs fall slowly as is the pace of the mad bomber; the Bomber's horizontal speed and the gravity gradually increases to the maximum at bomb group 8; you then continue at the greatest skill level (bomb group 8) for the duration of the game - save when you have a kaboom!; there are only 10 bombs in group 1, increasing to 20, 30, 40, 50, 75, 100 & 150 bombs dropped in groups 2 through 8 respectfully; if you miss a bomb - it hits the bottom of the screen and you'll hear kaboom!; during a kaboom! all bombs explode from lowest to highest followed by a flash of the entire screen; during a kaboom! the mad bomber changes from a frown to a smile and you lose your lowest bucket; after a kaboom! you drop back to the previous bomb group and only face one half of the bombs normally seen in that bomb group; when all 3 buckets are gone the game ends; fortunately, each time the score hits increments of 1,000 points, you receive a replacement bucket, but only if a bucket is missing; no extras buckets are stored; a pause in the action occurs each time you complete a bomb group, or have a kaboom!; restart the action of the next bomb group with a press of the fire button; during the action you'll hear the mad bomber dashing, the bomb fuses sizzling and then the splash of each bomb hitting the water; some music is heard when you catch each bomb <2600>; your 3 letter initials can be entered <2600> if you earn the high score; there is no demo. None of these 3 carts are rare, or hard to find.



Kaboom on Atari 2600



Kaboom on Atari 5200 & Atari 8-bit

### **Bronze Medal: Atari 5200 (34)**

My first reaction was I could not find a way to control this version. Kaboom! has possibly the fastest action, demands a good degree of precision and probably requires more focus to play than any other video game ever. You simply must have a great paddle controller. There is only a joystick option and no paddle option. I tried the Masterplay Interface, Wico, Trackball and standard controllers and had problems everywhere - such as the analog self-centering and incompatibilities. My only success was (and my scores are based upon) turning off the self-centering on the Wico. Even then, the Wico is such a tall stick that the (analog) range of motion back and forth sweeping the entire range is just too great for the human hands to deal with. Maybe if there was an Amiga stick (small sized) controller - that would help. I scored the Controls (5) as I really struggled and you need paddles to do well

anyhow. On a good note, the 5200 cartridge artwork is great, and with the cart in the slot, the Mad Bomber peeks out at you. As you probably know, this version and Atari 8 bit computer are essentially the same game with the controls interface being the only difference. All the scores and descriptions will be the same for the remaining categories - as described by the gold medal winner.

### **Silver Medal: Atari 2600 (35)**

My first reaction was that I finally scored 3,000 points - enough to earn the patch. I never really made the effort before, figuring this was just one of the few games that I'd never be good at, or not know until I forced myself to play it and write this review. I'm glad that I did, and hope that anyone else who may have put this title off will give it another try. You have to get in that zone. Another key was in finding the best grip and hand placement on the paddles so that you always hold it the same way and can then just focus on the visuals. You do not want to turn the knob too far CW or CCW and waste your effort. I have to be honest and note that the gameplay is only average (5) when compared to other very in depth games covered here. Kaboom! is simply a reaction game or pitch and catch with only a tiny bit of strategy - purposefully drop a bomb when just under the next 1,000 point threshold. But it does make for a very effective paddle game with addictiveness (8) that is quite enjoyable. The game begins easy enough and then has an excellent progression of difficulty through the 8 bomb groups. Kaboom! could be a love it or leave it type of game. If you love it, you can easily pick it back up and get hooked again and again. If you have never made it to 3,000 or not recently, the challenge and thrill is there to give it a try again - just one more game, to prove you can still do it. The pause in the action and use of the fire button to start back up makes this pause feature as good as any other game's pause button. The graphics are pretty good (7) with plenty of high speed action and bombs in motion. There's good, but limited amount of detail, adequate color, graphic variety, good backgrounds, and nice use of multi-color for the bombs, the Mad Bomber and the buckets. The explosions and animation are all pretty good and the score/display is adequate. The sound is fair (5) with good effects, but very limited and repetitive. There is the noise for the bomber when in motion, the bucket splashes and the eventual kaboom! and bombs exploding. The sound of the extra bucket being added is among the best. The controls are perfect (10). Kudos to Kaplan and Activision for using the full width of the screen and matching that screen range to the range of the controls - the full rotational motion (approx. 140 degrees) of the ulna and radius bones in the human arm. The rotation of the paddle, about 14 clicks (lines on the paddle edges) covers the full range of the screen. Likewise the Atari 8 bit matches this exactly.

### **Gold Medal: Atari 8 bit (39)**

My first reaction was that I have finally played a paddle game on my Atari computer and I'm glad it was Kaboom! This game is designed primarily for the paddle, but a good job for allowing a joystick option. I think that it is harder to play with a joystick and that you'd not be able to marathon as well with a stick. If that is the consensus, then we can consider the joystick option as another means of providing a handicap for an opponent, or yourself. Gameplay is good (6), faithful to the original and adding in more depth to the game with the simultaneous two-player pitch and catch option. The code appears to be pretty well copied (ported) from the 2600 with the same scoring and same sized playfield (to within 1 pixel on the screen - yes I counted) and range of motion used for the paddles. Addictiveness (9) is superb, also scoring better than the original with the same options and handicaps, but now those are combined with the already mentioned simultaneous gameplay option. This, plus the added controller choices (joystick can be considered a handicap or variation) and the original bucket sizing handicaps gives you even more mileage playing this cart than the 2600. Granted, you can only set one player to difficulty and the other to normal, but then you still have more flexibility than the 2600. There's an added a high score (three letters) feature that keeps track of who had the highest score since the system was turned on, and of course there's still the same pause feature. I could not score the addictiveness as a 10, since the game is pretty much the same game from 3,000 points up to 999,999. The graphics are sharper (8) than the original, with about the same amount of background, multi-color, high speed and number of objects in motion. All are done well, but with a wee bit more color variety, detail and animation here, enough to justify a higher score. Also there's a nice scrolling title page giving us the credits. The sound is just as good (6) as the 2600, but a bit more

added as every bomb (or so) adds in a musical note, playing out music as it were. Unfortunately the same song is played every time. The music plays in the sequence you catch the bombs, so try to catch a few slower bombs out of sequence on purpose to hear it misplay. The controls are perfect (10) using the paddles. Overall, I'd say this version is about 2 points better than the 2600, but due to the limited 50 points in 5 scoring categories - I had to draw the line somewhere it finishes 4 points higher overall, as it is just a bit better in 4 categories.

### **Acknowledgements, Updates and Errata since last month.**

Sorry for shifting gears this month, but my Apple ][ copy of Lock 'N Chase does no longer works, so I was out of luck and way behind schedule. Maybe I'll find a working copy on ebay soon.

**Come back next month:** We'll try to visit most of the Many Faces of "Super Cobra" for the Atari 2600, 5200, 8 bit computer, Colecovision, Odyssey 2 and Intellivision. Note that I do not have the Inty version, so if you have one to loan, trade or sell to me or can help with my review, please let me know. Contact Alan at: [Hewston95@NOSPAMstratos.net](mailto:Hewston95@NOSPAMstratos.net) or visit the Many Faces of site: <http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/RT/ManyFacesHome.htm>

## **ColecoNation**

by [Nathan Kozlowski](#)

### **Deflektor Kollektion review**

While Deflektor Kollektion debuted at the Oklahoma Video Game Expo in June 2005, this was not its first release. The game initially debuted at PhillyClassic 5 in March 2004 as Double Breakout and it was self-published by Daniel Bienvenu before that. The reason for AtariAge's name change was due to the people at Atari. It turns out that Atari has a game also by the name of Breakout and they didn't want to share. So on March 2005 a rename-the-game contest was held and the winner was, you guessed it, "Deflektor Kollektion."

In Deflektor, as in Breakout, the player uses a paddle to guide a ball towards a group of bricks. As the ball hits the bricks they disappear and the ball bounces back to the bottom of the screen where your paddle is waiting. The goal is to move back and forth and prevent the ball from getting past you by deflecting it back up to smash more bricks. Once all the bricks are cleared, the screen is completed and the player continues to the next level with more bricks and a faster moving ball.

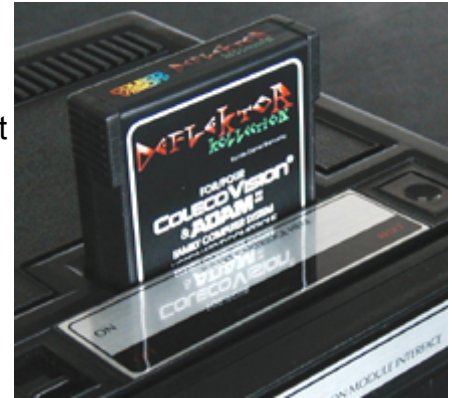


Deflektor II (released as Double Breakout in 2001) is essentially a more sophisticated version of Deflektor I, Bienvenu's first ColecoVision game, originally programmed in 1999 as Breakout. Aside from the historical value of the game, there really is no reason in spending much time playing the first version. Deflektor I has one brick layout that remains the same on every level, with a bouncing ball that progressively moves faster with every screen cleared. Deflektor II features ten different brick layouts that change with every level and a bouncing ball that moves faster once all have been completed. Version one allows the option of starting with ten, twenty, or thirty balls, while the second version has a larger number of options ranging from ten to forty balls and everything in between (at intervals of five). Both reward the player an extra ball with the completion of a screen. Game statistics are unfortunately not displayed, so you never know how many lives you have left until only one remains and you only find out your score once the game ends.

The controls work nicely with the Roller Controller and Steering Wheel. I personally had more success with the Steering Wheel. By grabbing the wheel at its center pivot, it's similar in operation as Atari's paddle controller and allowed for quicker movement. The graphics in the game are fairly simple, which is due to it being programmed five years ago. The constantly moving background is tough to stare at

during long plays. You can change the graphics by selecting game option two (Deflektor II), then pushing "8" and then "9" on the keypad. The background will change to a cool, vertically scrolling purple grid, but it's just as numbing on the eyes.

Dacflektor!, a hidden game on Dacman (2000) as DacPong!, is a two-player version of Pong. Both players control a vertically moving paddle (one on each side) and take turns bouncing a miniature Dacman (Pac-Man) back and forth. A point is scored when one gets the Dacman past the other and the first to score nine wins. Space Trainer, a hidden game, was a 2005 MiniGame Competition entry. It can be unlocked by selecting game option five (Paddle Test), then pushing the second controller's left fire button twice. Another two-player challenge, Space Trainer is similar to Space War but without shooting. The object is to maneuver your ship so that it will pass over the moving bubble. Points are earned every time your ship comes in contact with the target and the player who reaches 10,000 wins.



Deflektor Kollection is a good collection of games, but if you're not a fan of Breakout or Pong then you might be disappointed. I've never been able to get into paddle games. The pace of gameplay seems drawn out and repetitive. The majority of the screen's bricks get cleared in the first few minutes, but then it takes at least double the time to get the last few bricks. However, the video game industry pretty much was born from Pong and paddle games, so maybe I'm just crazy. A lot of credit needs to be given to Daniel Bienvenu for the programming that was required to allow this game to be so fluidly controlled with the Roller Controller and Steering Wheel. The alternate controllers work very well and make these games a lot more enjoyable. While a little primitive in the graphics department, if you're a Breakout fan or a ColecoVision completist then you should definitely get yourself a copy.

Be sure to check out <http://www.coleconation.com/> for more great ColecoVision articles including an interview with Paul Jaquays, Director of Game Design at Coleco from 1981 to 1985.

## **NEScade -- Sky Shark**

**by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)**

Shooters have always been a mainstay of the arcade and home gaming industry. In fact the first commercially released arcade game, Computer Space, was technically a shooter. With the NES hardware bringing enhanced graphics over the joystick era consoles to the masses, it made perfect sense to see more accurate ports of popular arcade shooters on store shelves. Nearly every shooter of the previous or current era of the time saw release on the NES, from the most popular to the most obscure. So far I've attempted to broaden the horizons of NES gamers with some obscure titles in this column. However this time I'll broaden my own and return to a nearly forgotten game from my youth, Sky Shark. Released in American arcades in 1987 by then arcade powerhouse Taito, Sky Shark followed along the same vein of shooters such as Xevious and 1942. Top down and vertically scrolling, Sky Shark put players behind the stick of a P-40 Warhawk fighter in the middle of World War II. Your mission: fly from airstrip to airstrip, deep into enemy territory to locate American prisoners of war.

Sky Shark plays like any other shooter of the day - shoot everything and avoid what you cannot. The P-40's guns can be upgraded by picking up floating "S" powerups, dropped by shooting groups of special red enemy planes. These increase the coverage area and spray of your shots but do not increase their destructive power. The only other weapon your plane is equipped with is the standard bomb, which cuts a circular inferno of carnage through anything in its blast radius. Plane control is governed via a single joystick and all of this transfers over perfectly to the NES control pad - it's all very intuitive. The audio package is fine on the NES, I don't know of anyone that fondly remembers the music from Sky Shark so it really isn't something that is important. The arcade original is

graphically beautiful yet the level of graphic detail is often overlooked. The level of detail in this game is incredible for 1987 and it can easily be mistaken for a game of the early 1990's. Over on the NES things get a little rough but there is still a decent level of color depth and sprite resolution. Things look as they should, just not as detailed, but the graphics are recreated well enough.



However all is not well with the arcade Sky Shark and it wasn't until playing it again that memories of frustration returned. The inherent problem here is that enemy shots move so much faster than your plane can maneuver. This is a problem that plagued many earlier shooters as well but when the rest of the game is so well done it's like being shot in the foot. You simply cannot move fast enough to avoid cheap deaths. Imagine playing through Gradius without a single "Speed Up" powerup, it's almost that bad. This is great for arcade operators since it makes Sky Shark quite the quarter muncher but it lead to an awful lot of smacks to the control panel in my younger days. Thankfully in the NES version your plane moves at a rate more along the lines of the rest of the action, making things more about reaction rather than memorization.

It plays proficiently, a lot of fun, a good challenge, accurate to the arcade original - so why isn't Sky Shark an arcade or NES title most people remember? The answer, Capcom's sequel to 1942, the retrogaming shooter juggernaut that is 1943. 1943 was released in 1987, the same year as Sky Shark, and it took arcades by storm with it's fast gameplay and interchangeable weapon system. It made Sky Shark's slow gameplay look stale and unresponsive. While not as visually impressive as Sky Shark; the changing gameplay, the varied missions, the huge boss battles, and the fast strategy of 1943 made it an all time classic. Then when 1943 came over to the NES, that became the vertical arcade shooter of choice for the platform. Sky Shark never had a chance. It's still a fun game, a solid port, and I personally enjoy the NES version more than the arcade original due to the better speed balance. For this game it's more about personal preference - a nice game to pick up but you won't miss anything if you don't.

"InsaneDavid" also runs a slowly growing gaming site at <http://www.classicplastic.net/dvqi>.

## ***Nintendo Realm - September to November 1985***

***by [Scott Jacobi](#)***

After last month's Super Mario bonanza, we're back to our regularly scheduled programming. This month's selection of games is a mixed bag of obscure titles, some good and some not so good, but we're here to cover them all. This month's article also contains a number of references to previous RTMs and to Rally-X. I don't know why, it just happened that way. We start with four arcade conversions in a row.

**Pooyan** released by Hudson Soft on September 20th, 1985

Pooyan is a cute game that borrows quite a bit from the three little pigs fairy tale. In the game, all but one of Mama's little pigs get captured by wolves. The remaining piglet runs home and the ultimate battle of pig vs. wolf begins. Wolves begin descending from the treetop on balloons, attempting to reach the ground before Mama pig (that's you) can break the balloons with her bow and arrow. If all else fails, Mama can rise to the very top to grab a slab of meat that she can throw at the wolves and pop several balloons simultaneously. If a wolf makes it to the ground, he will run in to the caves behind her and attempt to eat her. On the way down, the wolves will also throw projectiles at Mama, but her elevator contraption can shield her. If she defeats all of the wolves in the first stage, they begin their second assault. They grab on to balloons floating upward in an effort to reach a boulder that requires a lot of force to push over the ledge. If the wolves succeed in getting enough reinforcements at the top to push the boulder over, it's light's out for Mama. Konami made the arcade game, but for some reason, Hudson Soft handled the conversion, and they did a good job.

**City Connection** released by Jaleco on September 27th, 1985 and in the United States on May of 1988

I could give no better a review of City Connection than RTM's own David Lundin Jr. did just two months ago. So if you really want to know more about the game and how the Famicom and NES conversion stack up to the original arcade game, also by Jaleco, check out RTM #26. It just so happens that we've come upon the chronological release for City Connection at Nintendo Realm. And among the releases that I discuss this week, it's one of the more enjoyable titles, and one of the few that made it stateside. (Warning: incoming obscure title references) It's a little bit like Rally-X meets Miner 2049er. You must cover every inch of lane on every stage while jumping or falling from one level to the next, and avoiding cop cars and cats. Your only weapons are cans of oil (and not the oil inside of them) that you pick up from the road and fire at cop cars to make them spin out of control. You can then collide in to the spinning cars and send them flying for bonus points. Definitely worth a shot if you've never tried it before.



Pooyan



City Connection

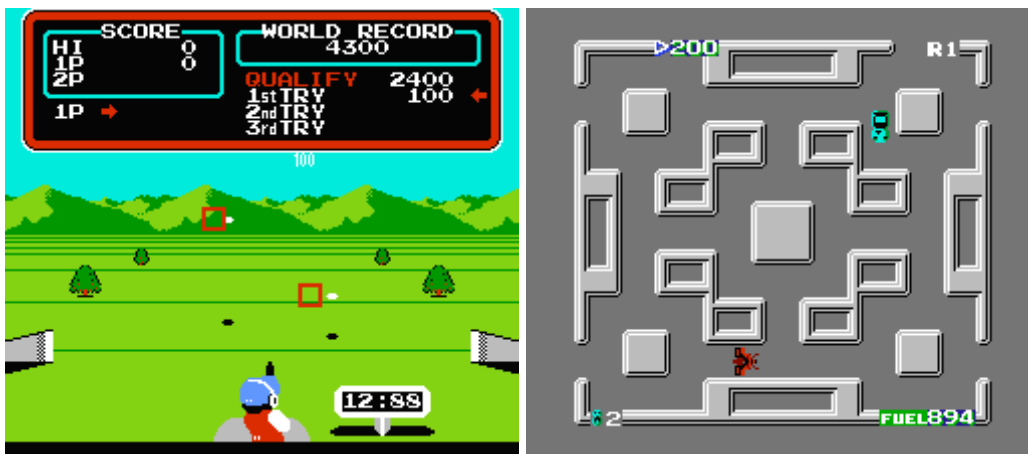
**Hyper Sports** released by Konami on September 27th, 1985. Released as the second half of Track & Field in the U.S. on April 1987

Just three months ago, I covered the release of Hyper Olympics for the Famicom which, in Japan, only contained four games. Hyper Sports contains just four games as well: Skeet Shooting, Triple Jump, Archery, and High Jump. All but the last event were new events contained in the Hyper Sports arcade game. When Konami wanted to release a Track & Field game in America, they combined these two games in to one cartridge. For a deeper look in to this series of games, take a look at RTM #25. As for the gameplay, Hyper Sports is a combination of traditional button mashing sports events (Triple Jump and High Jump) with some more timing sensitive events (Skeet Shooting and Archery). The mechanics of the Jump event will be familiar: mash the run button as fast as possible and press and hold the jump button to time and control the angle of your jumps, but don't pass the foul line. The

shooting events feel decidedly different, and Track & Field fans can only relate it to the hammer throw contained in the original arcade games. In Skeet Shooting, you must press the B or A button to fire left or right respectively at the clay discs being fired from either direction. In the Archery event, you must time your shot at a moving bulls eye while hold the button to down account for the vertical angle of your shot.

### Route 16 Turbo released by SunSoft on October 4th, 1985

Route 16 will probably be one of the most obscure titles of this month's selection. But it is also, in my opinion, the most fun out of the bunch. This a port of an arcade game that seems to have been a collaboration between Tehkan (later known as Tecmo) and Sunsoft. It was licensed to Centuri for manufacture in the U.S., but I never saw one growing up. This game is a combination of Rally-X and Venture. You control a car that must drive through various mazes which are contained in a larger environment arranged as city blocks. Your goal is collect every treasure that can be found in those city blocks. When you are driving within a block, the view is zoomed in so you can see the layout of the maze. When you leave a block and head for another one, the view is zoomed out, and your car along with all the enemy cars are simple squares. Collision with any of the other cars, as well as a number of other odd occurrences in the blocks like footsteps, results in death. You can press the A button down for as long as you like for a burst of Turbo, but while it doubles your speed, it triples or quadruples your fuel consumption, so it's wise to use it sparingly. Run out of fuel and it's game over. Due to the simplicity of the game, you might not believe that this game can be very addictive, but if you give it a shot, I'm sure you'll be saying to yourself, "I can do better next time."



Hyper Sports

Route 16 Turbo

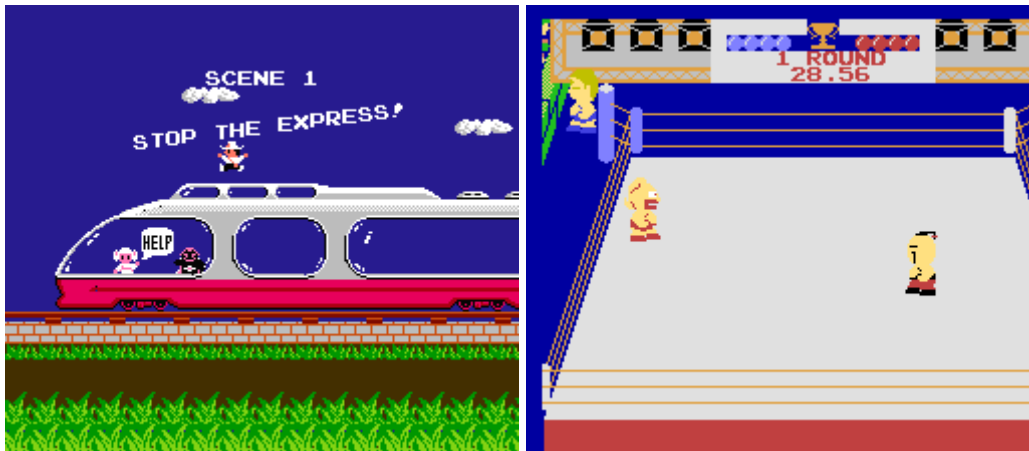
### Challenger released by Hudson Soft on October 15th, 1985

It seems to me that Hudson Soft was thinking along similar lines as Nintendo was when Nintendo came up with Super Mario Bros. Hudson also wanted to make a game that broke the mold and transcended what a typical video game was like. However, where Nintendo succeeded, Hudson Soft wasn't quite as lucky. Billed as a "Realtime Action Adventure" by the introduction screen, Challenger is more like a mish mosh of average game concepts that don't necessarily have much to do with one another other than the "rescue your girlfriend" theme present throughout the game. You start out attempt to rescue your girlfriend from a speeding train. At the beginning, you get a glimpse of your gal and the man kidnapping her. She looks like Princess Leia, and the man looks like a midget Darth Vader. In a side scrolling fashion, you run along the top of the train dodging birds and henchmen and thunder storms, armed with your throwing knife. Once you make it from the front of the train to the back, you drop inside and must reverse your trek. When you make it back to the front, you are summarily shoved off the train and deposited in a new mode of play that is more of a top down view like the Legend of Zelda. Here you must dodge more bad men and... butterflies of all things, and attempt to find the cave that will lead you to a "password." While wandering outside, you have a health bar (although you didn't have one on the train,) which for some reasons refills itself whenever a whale is present on the screen. I promise you, I'm not making this stuff up. Once you find a cave that doesn't

have the entrance barred by a skeleton, you may enter and start a third scene which takes place on a screen that doesn't scroll, where you must jump from geyser to geyser in order to collect an item on the other side, and return. If there's more, I didn't have the time to investigate further, and frankly, I don't advise spending much time with this one yourselves.

**Kinnikuman: Muscle Tag Match** released by Hudson Soft on November 8th, 1985. Released in the U.S. as **M.U.S.C.L.E.** by Bandai on October 1986

Maybe you're a kid or the parent of a kid today who is familiar with the cartoon series Ultimate Muscle. When I was a child, there was a slightly different, more popular variation of this theme called M.U.S.C.L.E. which stood for Millions of Unusual Small Creature Lurking Everywhere, and were just tiny small pink toys of fictitious wrestlers. Along with Voltron, Robotech, and the Transformers, it was another attempt to take a popular license in Japan and Americanize it some way to make it palatable to U.S. children. If you were a fan of M.U.S.C.L.E., or if you are a fan of it's current American incarnation, Ultimate Muscle, than playing the Famicom game is a nostalgic look at the series roots. Aside from that however, it's not a very good game. I mean, it's good for a laugh, and it can be funny if you enjoy the series, and see how the characters translate to the 8-bit screen, but beyond that, it's not very fun to play. You choose two out of eight selectable wrestlers to enter a tag team match. You must wear your opponent's stamina down, and keep yours up. It has the stilted stuttering gameplay of many early wrestling video games. So, check it out if you were a fan, but otherwise, steer clear.



Challenger

Kinnikuman (M.U.S.C.L.E.)

**Sky Destroyer** released by Taito on November 14th, 1985

This game is an original concept by Taito, as opposed to an arcade conversion. Think After Burner with a greater degree of vertical freedom. You pilot a Japanese fighter aircraft that was in use between 1940 and 1945, and must fight against what appear to be American aircraft. Your primary weapon is a machine gun that can fire rapidly if the button is held down. However, if you hold the button down for too long, the rapid fire slows down significantly. Your secondary weapon is a torpedo which drops in to the water and speeds off in a straight line. You use these to hit the ships that appear from time to time, but for the most part, you will be defending the skies. You can climb rather high, to the point where you no longer see the water. Enemy planes come in waves, firing a downward shot at you. You are generally safe as long as you stay above them. Time goes by as indicated by the changing color of the sky, from daylight to dusk to evening and back again. The game doesn't have tremendous depth, and I found that it requires a bit of patience to proceed farther than the initial scenes. Still, it's well done for an early Famicom game, and worth a try if planes are your thing. This game, like many early Famicom games, appears frequently on pirate cartridges that contain many games on a menu.

**Ninja Jajamaru Kun** released by Jaleco on November 15th, 1985

I didn't enjoy any of the first Jaleco releases until I got to Ninja Kun, released on May 10th of 1985. In practically half a year, Jaleco published a sequel to the game, and it's just as fun! This time around, your playground scrolls horizontally instead of vertically. You must defeat every enemy in the stage in

order to advance to the next. You can safely collide with any enemy, and you can jump on top of them to stun them, but it's the enemies' shots that pose a threat to you. There is usually one enemy among the group that is different and more difficult to fight. After a few rounds, this enemy becomes the dominant participant in the force and new and more difficult enemy is introduced in the singular place. You fling shuriken at your opponents in order to dispose of them, and this time around, you can find bonuses and power ups in sections of the platforms if you break them with your head (although occasionally, you might find a bomb, represented by two black circles, so look before you leap.) From time to time, your captured beloved will throw a bonus item to you as well. This game takes the basic mechanics from the first game and reapplies them in a new environment, and it does so very successfully.



Sky Destroyer



Ninja Jajamaru Kun

**Game Over**

Time to bring another issue to a close. Thanks for reading and we hope to see you next month!

- [Adam King](#), Chief Editor

*Copyright © 2006 Adam King & Alan Hewston. All related copyrights and trademarks are acknowledged.*