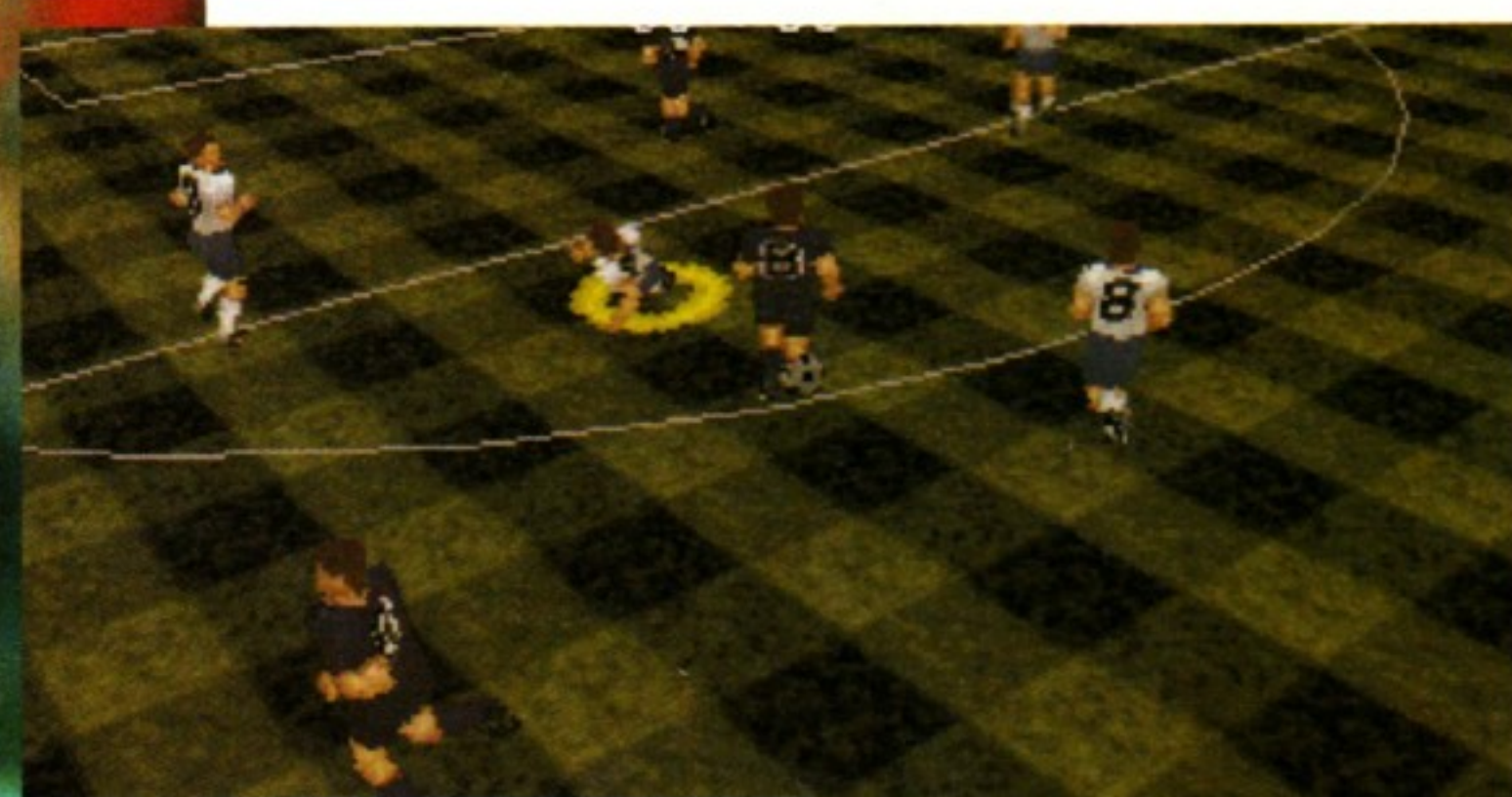
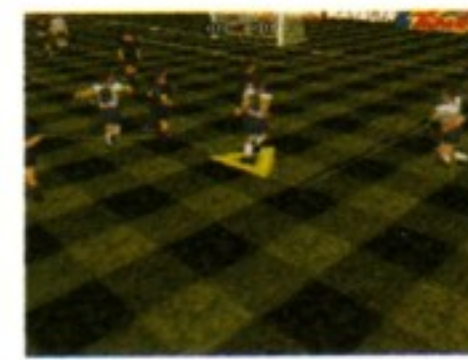


ROY OF THE EUROOVERS





In June, the **atmosphere in England**, from the tiniest hamlet to the sprawling metropolis, will be one devoted to the **trials and triumphs** of the national football team. Scotland will be no different either. **ROB BRIGHT** swings his rattle for **Euro '96** and dreams of an **escape to victory!**

b OREDOM MOVED LIKE A FOG THROUGH THE EMPTY TERRACE STREETS. FACTORY CHIMNEYS CAST MONOLITHIC SHADOWS OVER THE ROOF TOPS, SPUMING SMOKE INTO AN IMPLACABLY GREY SKY. HIGH RISE FLATS, FORSAKEN BY A FUTURE THAT HAD COME TO PASS, ENTOMBED THE BRITTLE SOULS OF A THOUSAND WEARY LIVES. DREAMS WASHED ALONG THE GUTTERS, DESPAIR FROTHED AMONG THE REFUSE OF THE OILY WET PAVEMENT... BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS ONE DAY IN THE WEEK WHEN THIS WASTELAND WOULD SEEM TO AWAKEN FROM ITS SOPORIFIC HAZE. DOORS WOULD OPEN AND FAMILIES WOULD EMERGE, RED AND WHITE SCARVES WRAPPED ABOUT THEIR EXCITED FACES. AND THEY WOULD MAKE THEIR WAY ALONG THE SAME CROWDED ROUTE, MAYBE STOPPING FOR A HOTDOG, OR A PINT, OR TO BUY A PROGRAMME. AND AT ABOUT A QUARTER TO THREE THE SOUND OF VOICES, A HUGE CONGREGATION OF VOICES, WOULD RISE UP IN MELODIC UNISON AND CHALLENGE THE FUTILITY OF IT ALL. AND THE ECHO OF THOSE VOICES WOULD FIND ITS WAY DOWN EVERY ROAD AND EVERY STREET, REMINDING THOSE STILL AT HOME THAT WE ARE HERE, THAT LIFE EXISTS, AND THAT IF NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST WE HAVE FOOTBALL! AHhhh...

Ok, so it's a bit rosy, a bit romantic, and maybe it is just 22 people kicking an inflated pigs bladder around a patch of grass, but it's also the most popular sport on planet Earth which is justification enough for a spot of purple prose.

Things at Saturn F.C. however have been decidedly less grandiose. Victory Goal was frankly closer to an own goal, and with the match in shambles it took a desperate equaliser from FIFA '96 to redress the balance. Now a late winner is on the cards in the shape of the sensational Euro '96. The astute among you will recognise this as the PC and PlayStation title known as Actua Soccer. However, it's arrival on the Saturn heralds some considerable changes, least of which is its suggestive new name.

With Euro '96 taking place in England this June, the developers at Sega have created what is essentially Actua Soccer 2. Instead of fielding it as an indiscriminate affair between international sides, Euro '96 will stick very closely to this summers cup competition. This means that all the respective groups are in there and that the sides themselves will largely match their present status. Even extra commentary has been added by Barry Davies, picking up on issues that are particularly relevant to the competition.

Actua Soccer was created by Gremlin and wowed people with its stunning graphics and animation coupled with its instant playability. It uses larger sprites than FIFA '96 and early impressions suggest it plays faster too. While there's nothing especially innovative in the gameplay, it's the attention to detail that has provided Actua with a reputation as the best football sim to date. With Euro '96's arrival on the Saturn, this reputation is likely to be further enhanced with improvements in animation and game logic, as well as some extras thrown in to celebrate this illustrious cup competition.

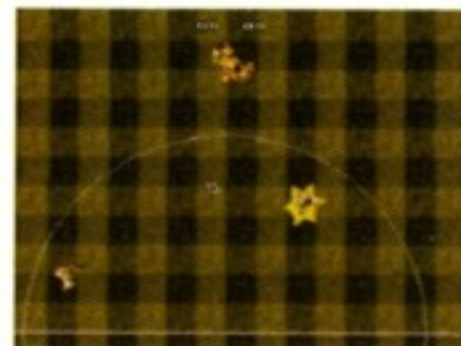
Well cut pitches, that's what you need for a good game of football. And some players of course. And a ball. Fortunately, Euro '96 forgets none of these, and even throws in some extras like a stadium and crowd.

SHOWCASE



MOTSON OR DAVIES?

Motson or Davies? The ardent football fan has a favourite. Let's look at their credentials. John Motson has a near encyclopedic knowledge of football, but his obvious bias towards Liverpool proves irritating in the extreme. Barry Davies, a lot cooler, is the moral backbone of football, recognising its more profound roots. Of course, this is pub wisdom speaking, but if I'm asked to choose between the two, Davies is the man. Likewise with the commentary in Euro '96. Davies' approach is more sedate and sparse and as a result more effective than Motson's in FIFA '96. He might throw in the odd jape at a players expense or get all fired up when the action moves into the 18 yard box, but it doesn't have that sad manic quality that Motson seems to adopt. What's more, in keeping with the continental feel of Euro '96, Sega have also secured the commentary of Germany, France and Spain's great commentators so, if you want, you can listen to the action latino style!



Details like how the goal net looks are as yet still to be completed.



THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER!

The infamous commentary that came at the the end of England's victory in the 1966 World Cup seems to have rung true. As far as major sporting events are concerned, it's been all over for the last 30 years. Now, at last, a major sporting event has finally found its way to these shores. Euro '96 takes place in June and has a reputation for being the most important football event outside the World Cup. After the qualifying groups have been decided, the top 16 international European sides battle it out for the coveted trophy.

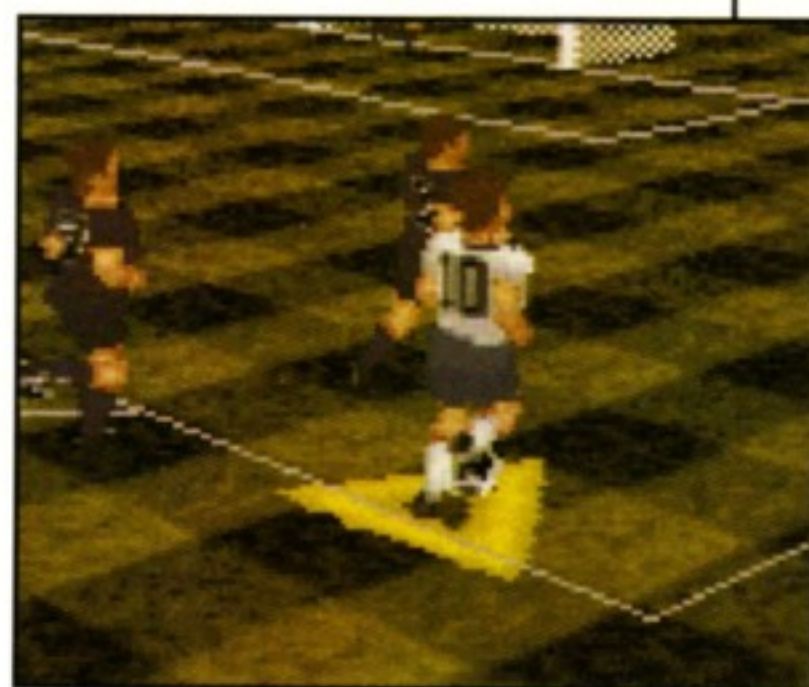
As hosts, England didn't have to qualify, which is a bit of a relief considering the shambles the side has been in over the past couple of years. Playing at Wembley, England are in a qualifying group with Holland, Scotland and Switzerland. The other three groups are headed by Denmark the cup holders, those super-efficient stalwarts the Germans, and the flamboyant, if temperamental, Spanish. The top two teams from each qualifying group go on to the quarter finals where it becomes a knockout competition.

With the revelations of ole' Tel's resignation from his position as England coach immediately following the European Cup, should we see this as his managerial swan song? Or is it an attempt to absolve himself of the blame for a team of dead ducks? Only those magic 90 minutes have the answer. In the meantime, here's a list of the league groups and the dates and venues of each and every match.



MARK 'IM UP!

When one of your players comes into possession of the ball a triangle beneath his feet marks him out and points out the direction he will strike the ball. Nothing particularly unusual about that admittedly. But in Euro '96, you'll want to keep an eye on that marker for other reasons. When the triangle starts to flash it means you're in shooting range. But the marker also changes shape, and each shape denotes an opportunity. Players with a circle beneath them mean they are ready to accept a pass. If it changes to a square, this means that players are in position for you to cross the ball into the box. If all goes well a player might try a volley from the cross. If the shape changes to a star you have to act fast because it means a chance at a special move has arisen. This might be something flash like a back heel or shimmy, or even an arrogant strike for goal.



While the animation is already looking amazing, Sega are still working on making it look smoother and cleaner.



FIXTURES/GROUPS

| GROUP A | W | D | L | PTS |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|-----|
| ENGLAND | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SWITZERLAND | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HOLLAND | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ENGLAND | V | SWITZERLAND | | |
| HOLLAND | V | SCOTLAND | | |

| GROUP B | W | D | L | PTS |
|----------|---|----------|---|-----|
| SPAIN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BULGARIA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ROMANIA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SPAIN | V | BULGARIA | | |
| ROMANIA | V | FRANCE | | |

| GROUP C | W | D | L | PTS |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|-----|
| GERMANY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CZECH. REP. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RUSSIA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GERMANY | V | CZECH. REP. | | |
| ITALY | V | RUSSIA | | |

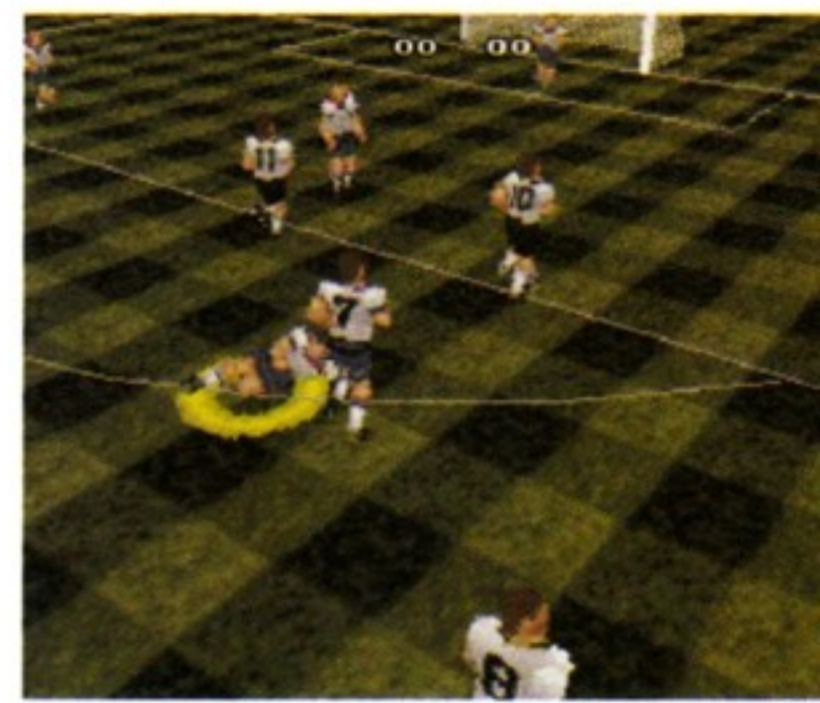
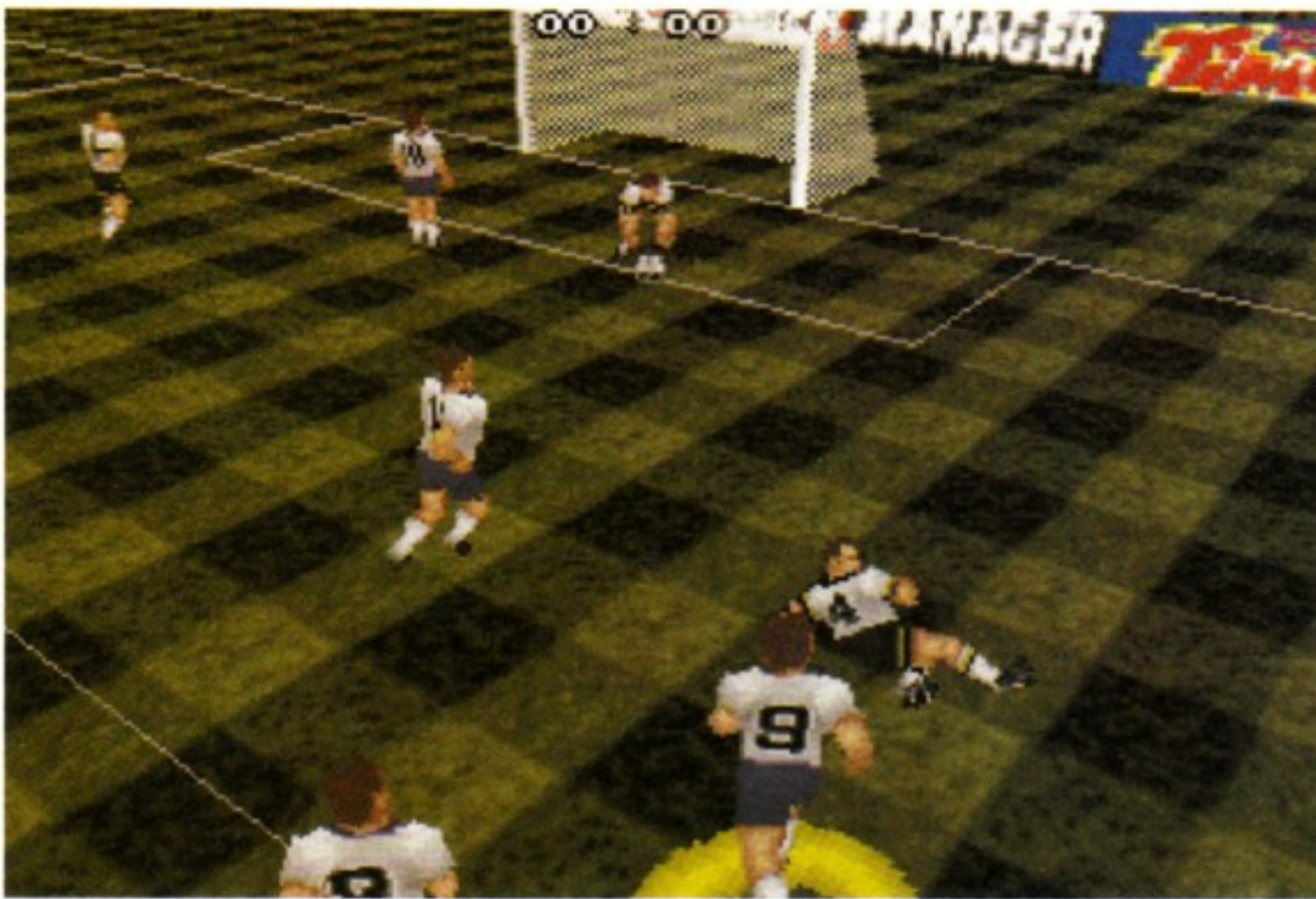
| GROUP D | W | D | L | PTS |
|----------|---|----------|---|-----|
| DENMARK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PORTUGAL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TURKEY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CROATIA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DENMARK | V | PORTUGAL | | |
| TURKEY | V | CROATIA | | |

DATES:

JUNE

- SAT 8TH:** ENGLAND - SWITZERLAND (WEMBLEY)
- SUN 9TH:** SPAIN - BULGARIA (ELLAND ROAD)
GERMANY - CZECH REPUBLIC (OLD TRAFFORD)
DENMARK - PORTUGAL (HILLSBOROUGH)
- MON 10TH:** HOLLAND - SCOTLAND (VILLA PARK)
ROMANIA - FRANCE (ST JAMES' PARK)
- TUE 11TH:** ITALY - RUSSIA (ANFIELD)
TURKEY - CROATIA (CITY GROUND)
- THUR 13TH:** SWITZERLAND - HOLLAND (VILLA PARK)
BULGARIA - ROMANIA (ST JAMES' PARK)
- FRI 14TH:** CZECH REPUBLIC - ITALY (ANFIELD)
PORTUGAL - TURKEY (CITY GROUND)
- SAT 15TH:** SCOTLAND - ENGLAND (WEMBLEY)
FRANCE - SPAIN (ELLAND ROAD)
- SUN 16TH:** RUSSIA - GERMANY (OLD TRAFFORD)
CROATIA - DENMARK (HILLSBOROUGH)
- TUE 18TH:** SCOTLAND - SWITZERLAND (VILLA PARK)
FRANCE - BULGARIA (ST JAMES' PARK)
HOLLAND - ENGLAND (WEMBLEY)
- WED 19TH:** RUSSIA - CZECH REPUBLIC (ANFIELD)
CROATIA - PORTUGAL (CITY GROUND)
ITALY - GERMANY (OLD TRAFFORD)
TURKEY - DENMARK (HILLSBOROUGH)





THE TRANSFER LIST

You're looking at the screen shots and you're thinking 'what's so different about this then? It looks just like the same old Actua Soccer.' Well, to begin with, these are screen shots from a version of the game that's about three-quarters complete, the remaining quarter left to do being mainly the cosmetics of the game. At present only 32 colours are being used and this will change to a huge 256! The whole look of the game will go through an overhaul to get all of those Euro logo's in there and of course Goaliath, the lion mascot. Likewise, the animation is still being touched up to supersede what has been seen on PC and PlayStation already. There are now more goal celebrations (12 in all) to take in all of the European eccentricities displayed during a moment of footballing ecstasy. The seven venues for the competition have all been painstakingly copied into the game, and even the crowd chants have gone through an overhaul to make them relevant to the teams playing. It's Sega's ambition that such attention to detail will succeed in conveying the real atmosphere of the competition. One thing though, does this mean that all the stadiums will suddenly grow empty if England get knocked out?



The squads in Euro '96 will be as close to the expected line up as possible. Does that include Le Tissier? Who knows!



GAME DRAW

| | |
|--|--|
| London Birmingham ENGLAND BULGARIA PORTUGAL HOLLAND | Sheffield Nottingham DENMARK ROMANIA RUSSIA SWITZERLAND |
| Manchester Liverpool SPAIN | Leeds Newcastle GERMANY |
| TURKEY | CZECH. REP. CROATIA |

TEAM SET-UP

HOLLAND

5-2-3

- 1. Van Der Sar
- 2. M. Petersen
- 3. J. Nansen
- 4. D. Smaal
- 5. J. De Groot
- 6. J. Frimpong
- 7. C. Simmer
- 8. M. Overmars
- 9. D. Bergkamp
- 10. B. De Boer
- 11. C. Wiltor
- 12. L. Van der Meer
- 13. E. De Jong
- 14. B. Rij
- 15. P. Kluwert
- 16. L. Van der Meer
- 17. J. Van der Meer
- 18. G. Verbeek
- 19. W. Baggelaar
- 20. T. Koolen

Euro '96 will look entirely different from the usual Actua stat screens.



The Saturn version of Actua Soccer will feature more set moves to use in those situations around the box.



J'ADORE LE FOOTBALL!

Is football an art form? Well, no, not really. It's a sport. But it does have its poetic moments and Euro '96 ensures they're in there octet, sextet and couplet. Because of the excellent motion capture techniques that have been used to reproduce a players movements authentically, you can see those volleys, diving headers and bicycle kicks in all their awe inspiring glory. Chris Woods and Andy Sinton were used to create the realistic animation and just how effective this has been is seen in even the tiniest details like the swivel in a players arms and legs when he shoots with the outside of the foot, or how he digs his toes in for a chip. It's just a shame they didn't get Ian Wright in there to motion capture some ecstatic celebrations!



PLAYER STATS

7 Ilian KIRIAKOV
 AGE: 29
 CLUB: Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp)
 INTERNATIONAL CAPS: 42
 INTERNATIONAL GOALS: 0
 POSITION: DEFENDER

| | |
|----------|----|
| SPEED | 55 |
| TACKLING | 55 |
| PASSING | 76 |
| SHOOTING | 75 |
| SKILL | 79 |

FITNESS 40

1 R. Mikhaliev
 2 I. Kiriakov
 3 I. Ivanov
 4 T. Isvrlenov
 5 E. Kremeniev
 6 K. Balakov
 7 D. Borimirov
 8 Y. Iechkov
 9 C. Stoichkov
 10 E. Kostadinov
 11 N. Sirokov
 12 A. Ananiev
 13 I. Penov
 14 Z. Yankov
 15 N. Biev
 16 B. Gvontchev
 17 P. Khabchev
 18 Z. Rakov
 19 P. Alexandrov
 20 D. Borimirov

Those volatile Spanish take on the cup holders Denmark. Expect fouls and moaning a-plenty!



Each player naturally comes with an individual profile showing their best and worst abilities on the pitch.

