

STARFOX

The Space Odyssey Continues

- **Size:** 96 Megabit
- **Style:** 1-Player Space Shooter (1 to 4-Player Split-Screen Versus Mode)
- **Special Features:** Built In Memory Back-Up for Saving High Scores, Three Gameplay Paths, Split-Screen Multi-Player Versus Games, Three Different Vehicles (Arwing Assault Fighter, Landmaster Tank, and a Submarine), Two Playing Views, Rumble Pak Compatible
- **Levels:** 15
- **Created by:** Nintendo
- **Available:** June 30 for Nintendo 64

► **THE BOTTOM LINE** 9

Airborne Once Again

Star Fox 64 presents an unprecedented combination of personality and complexity in a video game. We've seen intergalactic shooters, and we've even seen novelty action games with happy-go-lucky fuzzy characters, but we've never seen these two worlds unite successfully. All the characters presented in Star Fox, like Fox McCloud and Falco Lombardi, have the appearance of a cute plush doll or an animated character, and the gameplay and presentation of visuals is comparable to the action in the Star Wars movies. Obviously, this sounds ridiculous, and just the thought of your stuffed Fozzie Bear manning the helm of an X-Wing Fighter seems a little far-fetched to us, but not to Nintendo. Somehow, Nintendo managed to fuse these two completely different worlds together to make one of the greatest space shooters of all time.

A flare of creativity is always welcome in the world of gaming, and Star Fox designer Shigeru Miyamoto, who has done all of the Mario and Zelda titles, knows how to entertain not just a specific genre with a specific title, but rather, every breed of gamer. It's uncanny how well the cute characters and intensity and difficulty of gameplay collide in Star Fox. The first release for the SNES was the first polygonal game ever released for a console, and now with the first sequel, Star Fox 64, it will be the first 64-bit space shooter available on the market as well.

Unlike Super Mario 64, Star Fox 64 will not completely blow your mind. This game is not trying to make the "fashion statement" that Mario did by introducing a whole new gaming environment to fans of the series. Star Fox 64 is here to please gamers who love the original version, and to turn the heads of those who never experienced a Star Fox adventure. The gameplay is almost identical to the original, with a few new control additions that make the game more involved. The first thing you'll notice is not every area in the game is a forward scrolling design. There are three-dimensional arenas for certain levels, mainly the gigantic boss stages. Plus, instead of having every mission be air bound, you'll now man a Landmaster Tank for ground melee and a Submarine for aquatic assaults.

Star Fox 64 is back with a vengeance and although it has been a while, we're sure the

original clan of Star Fox fans will be back to challenge the forces of evil in this souped up 64-bit version. The game comes packed with a force feedback controller peripheral, the Rumble Pak, which shakes the controller when you take a hit, run into a canyon wall, launch a bomb, or simply hit the turbo. The release of Star Fox 64 is an exciting event for the gaming nation, and we never thought it would happen after Star Fox 2 was canned for the SNES. But on June 30, the power of the cosmos returns to the N64 to challenge even the most skilled of gamers.



Fire In the Sky

The entire cast of Star Fox has returned to rid the universe of the evil Andross, the most sinister intergalactic villain around. Your three wing men: Slippy Toad, Falco Lombardi, and Peppy Hare, will travel with you (Fox "Foxy" McCloud) across the cosmos, through the stratosphere, and into the heart of evil. At times these characters will encounter an enemy bogie that they cannot shake, and it will be up to you and your skill to get them out of a bind. If you don't, there is the possibility that they will not be around to help you on the next mission.

Obviously, these characters won't help you too much, but the most surprising character in the Nintendo universe has been resurrected to help you out. R.O.B. (Robotic Operating Buddy) the Robot is an 8-bit relic, and he makes his Nintendo 64 debut as a helping hand to Fox and his squadron. Every once and a while, Rob 64 will pop up on the radio waves offering a helpful power-up to assist you in your current battle. This is a limited time event, so you'll need to keep a watchful eye on your radio view screen and the top of the screen for the okay button to tell him to drop some supplies.

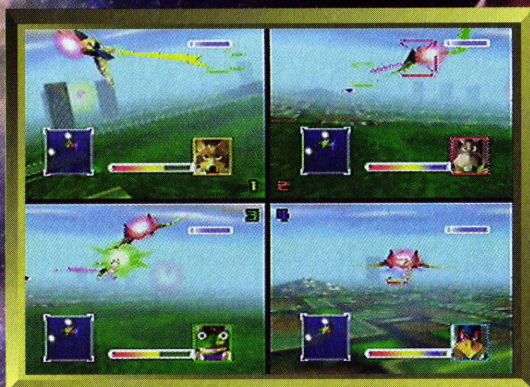
The level designs and enemy AI have always been one of the high points of Star Fox. This time around there is a bit of irony and sarcasm

presented in certain levels. One of the level bosses reveals its true form as a Borg-like cube from Star Trek, one entire stage could easily be called "The Battle on the Death Star," and there is also a large dogfight with a huge saucer preparing to fire a deadly ray on a significant landmark. Yes, the game does have some stolen ideas, and whether it is an intentional knock on these other sci-fi films is unknown, but they are funny and do have a place in the game.

Of course, a large portion of the level structures are there to be maneuvered through, or to cause chaos for you and your squadron. To do so successfully, Nintendo has kept the controls of the Arwing the same. Meaning, you can still barrel roll to the left and right, fire lasers, use a turbo, and brake. But now, two new features have been added: the flip move, which can be used to shake bogies and dodge enemy fire, and the charge laser attack, which locks on and shoots a large green laser ball. This attack is powerful, but avoiding it is fairly easy.

Another cool feature in Star Fox has always been the ability to lose a wing, which makes flying the Arwing a little chaotic. This feature is back, but it is harder to lose a wing in this version. To avoid losing any part of your vehicle, you'll have to locate key shield power-ups that bring your shield and hull damage up a few points. If you collect three of the gold shield power-up rings on a level your energy bar will increase for that stage only.

Star Fox 64 has some of the most dazzling special effects and background graphics around. The gameplay is extremely user-friendly and the missions within the game are amazing. Up to four-players can compete in a split-screen versus mode that has the option to play Deathmatch, Time Trial, or Scoring. There are two levels in which you can compete, but Nintendo has told us that there is at least another 4-player level hidden within the game, as well as a rumored expert difficulty level.



ANDY, THE GAME HOMBRE

Concept: 9 "As far as shooters are concerned, Star Fox is one of the best. While it may be a tad on the easy side, the multiple routes and numerous enemies make this game fun to play again and again. The levels are well designed and definitely put you in the middle of an immense battle. The graphics feature lots of texture maps and there are even moments when I'd swear there are at least 50 enemies on-screen. There are a ton of voice-overs in the game; unfortunately, they get really annoying. Falco never shuts up. The 4-player mode and the 360° levels are excellent additions that offer new challenges to the experienced Star Fox player. Definitely not one to miss."

Graphics: 9.5

Sound: 9

Playability: 9

Entertainment: 9

OVERALL:
9

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept: 9.25 "Don't miss your chance to earn your wings in this intergalactic odyssey of non-stop carnage and precise flying mechanics. This title shines with amazingly detailed three-dimensional backgrounds and awesome dog fighting and space combat. I have always been, and still am, a huge fan of the original, and with the arrival of this sequel for the N64, my enthusiasm for this series has only grown. Technically, I think the incorporation of the three vehicles should have been improved on, and the real-time voice-overs could have been minimized, but otherwise this title is nearly flawless. Star Fox 64 is how it should be: true to the original, equipped with multi-player modes, and packed with the most intense gameplay around."

Graphics: 9.5

Sound: 8.75

Playability: 9.75

Entertainment: 9.5

OVERALL:
9.25

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept: 9 "Anticipation couldn't have been higher for this game and I must say the wait was worth it. Star Fox 64 takes awesome shooter action and chucks it into the middle of a beautiful, 3D polygon world. Because the flying in Star Fox is so smooth, the twitch game elements are intensified. Dodge left, roll right, loop backwards, turbo into the screen, all while confronting a hailstorm of fire and collapsing structures...it's the best of Star Fox all over again. Yes, the game is short, but we're beginning to see that some of the Nintendo cartridges will be shorter games. It's not necessarily bad, because the multiple paths and medals will keep you playing, but it may start to get frustrating as CD-ROM games take on epic 2 and 3 disc lengths at a comparable price."

Graphics: 9.25

Sound: 8

Playability: 9.25

Entertainment: 8.5

OVERALL:
8.75