



BY	ACCLAIM
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	SPORTS SIMULATION
RELEASE	MARCH 1996

If you were asked to predict what games were **most likely to settle comfortably on the Saturn**, an American football game is bound to be in there somewhere. **Acclaim's NFL '96** is the first to make the adjustments and lounge back lesuierely into the 32-bit sofa. **Is it feeling comfortable?**

One typical American characteristic is the extent to which they take their sport seriously. In fact, if anyone remembers the infamous CNN coverage of the first days of the Gulf War, they'll remember the American reporters commentating on the action as if it were the Superbowl, throwing myriad sporting analogies in there to really push home the importance of the events taking place. But that's not to say that for the American citizen, sport is on a par with war. No, it's far more important than that.



Despite the decline in popularity of American Football in this country, the game spinoffs have continued to do well. Few could say they've never played John Madden's in at least one of its annual guises. Or if not John Madden's then NFL Quarterback Club which, as it happens, has made it on to the Saturn, and is the first American football game to go for 32-bit glory.

NFL '96 is a football game of the old school. Not in the sense that it's proper football involving a spherical object that you kick with your feet, but in the sense that it maintains the tradition of using windows to choose your play. Play options are chosen via a

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '96

process of selection and elimination i.e. pro set — short — halfback toss. There are loads of plays to become familiar with, and if you haven't ever been especially confident with your American football tactics this is going to take you a while to get to grips with. Likewise, familiarising yourself with all of the different offensive and defensive positions involves some extensive experimentation with your full-backs, half-back and receivers, as well as the highly esteemed quarterback. Rest assured though that after this period of initiation your awareness of American football is greatly enhanced making the real thing look like a bit more than a fight between a marauding band of motorcycle messengers.

The sub-title 'Quarterback Club' denotes the

extent to which the game revolves around the legend and mystique of this most important of play makers. Quarterbacks are chosen separately from teams meaning even if your team are the whipping boys of the NFL, you can still get the hottest quarterback on your team. However, the fact the the receivers will drop every pass tends to negate the expertise that such a footballing star has to offer.

And on the subject of expertise, where does the 32-bit capability make its presence felt eh? Primarily it's in the graphics, the game utilising a host of camera angles from which to view the game, including plenty of frilly stuff to do with those inevitable stats that appear in hordes. Apart from this though, there's little to let you know that this is 32-bit American football. The game logic is fine generally speaking, but one-player mode does involve a few eyebrow raising moments when the computer miraculously manages to read your play perfectly or execute pin-point accurate throws. But it's in multi-player mode that you can squeeze the most fun out of NFL '96, challenging all-comers to a bit of the rough stuff and engaging in the usual banter and abuse.

As yet this is the only American football game available for the Saturn, although the John Madden series is also destined to appear in the near future. The cautious among you may want to wait, but should you decide to rush out and get NFL '96, rest assured that while it sticks trenchantly to the familiar 16-bit formula, it is nevertheless an expansive and entertaining game.



The Dolphins are caught on the defence, desperately scrambling to prevent what looks like an inevitable touchdown. I suggest a blitz of some kind to try and sack the Quarterback.

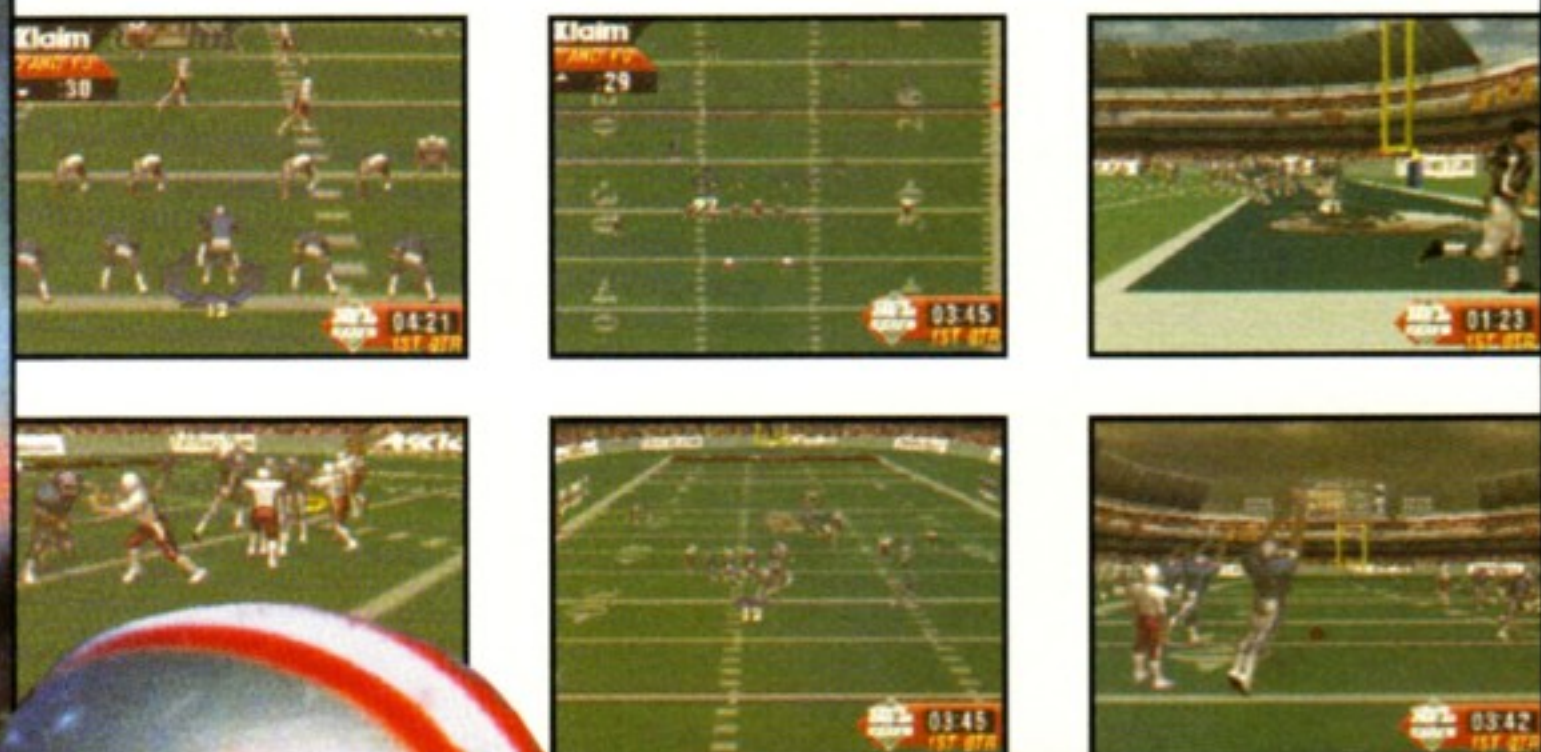


The ball is up, but who's going to get their hands on it. When using your Quarterback, it's important for throws to make sure the receiver has managed to find space before the throw.

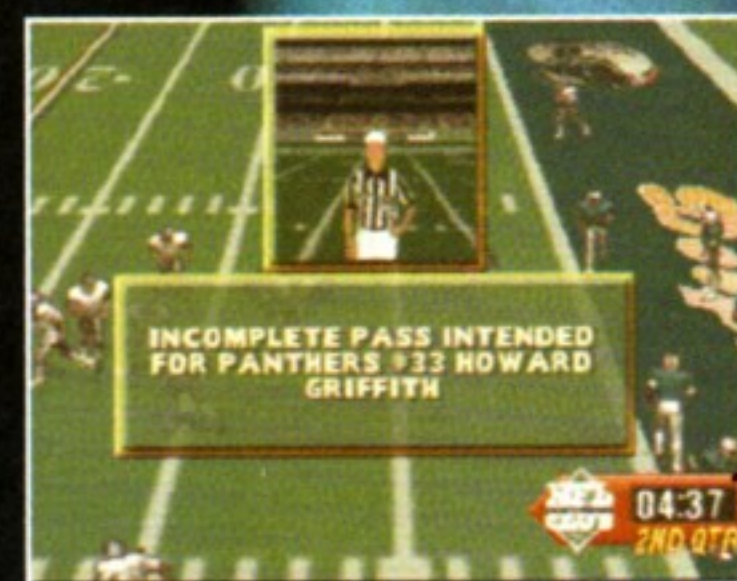


CAMERA ANGLES

It's the thing with sports sims these days isn't it? More camera angles than you'd ever have thought possible. NFL '96 is no different, and comes complete with a vast range of its own from the shoulder cam which puts you right in the heart of the action to a blimp cam which sees you observing events from way up in the clouds. Some are more practical than others. While the coach cam might be useful for seeing how your linebackers are shaping up, it makes playing difficult because your quarterback is obscured from view. The best angle to use is either the action cam or super cam.



These guys are so tough that they'll even play in snow! So long as they have some nice woolly gloves that is.



NFL comes with as many specific stats as a statistician could dream of, from the teams to each and every player.



OVERALL		
By Select State, CUSTOM-Def		
===== SCORE SUMMARY =====		
0	Quarter 1	0
0	Quarter 2	0
0	Quarter 3	0
0	Quarter 4	0
0	Overtime	0
0	Total	0
===== SAFETIES =====		
0	Against	0
40	For	0



Here's those crazy window options that we all know and love.



Select your Quarterback! Cunningham is probably the best of them.



The historic simulation lets you play out great matches from the past.

Obviously American football isn't everyone's cup of tea, but if it is your cup of tea then NFL '96 is a refreshing Earl Grey!

graphics 83

sound 85

playability 84

lastability 85

overall

84%