99% COMPLETE

NINTENDO 64

SHOOT 'EM UP | BY NINTENDO | MAR 97 RELEASE | 1-4 PLAYERS

- PRICE - ¥9800
- NO OTHER VERSIONS PLANNED
- SNES PREQUEL AVAILABLE
- STORAGE - 96 MEG CART PLUS MEMORY BACK UP
- RELEASED BY - NINTENDO
- TEL: N/A

It wasn't planned for us to dedicate two solid pages of New Games to one N64 game this month. But after seeing *Star Fox 64* in action at Shoshinkai, we just had to show you the amazing progress it has made.

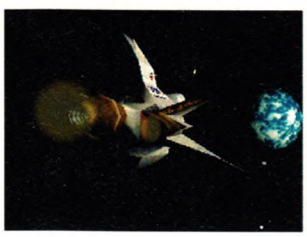
The series which launched the Super NES into an exciting new era, opens an incredible new dimension for Nintendo 64. Like the other NCL titles, *Star Fox 64* isn't just an advancement in graphic style, it pushes the new 64-bit environment as far as possible at this early stage. Also significant for its use of the new Jolt Pack accessory, *Star Fox 64* should become another essential addition to an increasingly varied collection of original 64-bit software.

STARFOX

© Nintendo 1996

A NEW TAIL

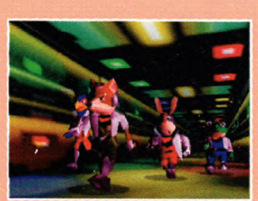
Those of you familiar with the first *Star Fox* (*Star Wing*) game may want to know how the plot has developed. Well, Fox McCloud is once again assigned by General Pepper of the Cornerian defence force to combat the evil doings of evil Emperor Andross. After being deported to the planet Lylat, Andross raised an army against the planet's native people. He must be stopped!



WING, EAR, AND BEAK MEN

Besides honouring its hero, the name Star Fox refers to the team which McCloud is a part of. It's important to know who his fellow defence force members are, as they play an integral role in the game – they're not just background fantasy. As with the first Star Fox game, Slippy Toad, Falco Lombardi, and Peppy Hare join Fox in the skies as wing men. Throughout each mission the entire team are seen handling their own situations, occasionally passing close to Fox's own ship. It's highly likely that we will see similar situations to last time, where a team mate runs into trouble and needs Fox to save them, or gets quite angry when Fox bags an enemy fighter in someone else's sights.

The addition of a radar scanner helps Fox get a handle on the situation. On here the position of his team and that of the enemy fighters is shown.



ROCKET-FUELLED SUCCESSOR

The ships flown by the Star Fox team are called ARWINGs. In the first game these were reputedly prototype models, but the design is evidently finalised now. Obvious improvements include the addition of a funnel-like sight system, similar to that used in Sega's *Panzer Dragoon*. Once again it is possible to barrel roll out of danger, and in doing so repel most enemy missiles, but this time the ARWING is seen to briefly cloak itself with a shield. How many VR modes are available isn't certain just yet, but once again it appears that only certain missions are piloted from Fox's eye-view, inside the ship.

In the original *Star Fox*, the Asteroid Belt and Armada stages were the only ones viewable from inside Fox's ARWING.

ARTRACK?

Like the ARWING this tank employed by the CDF has the ability to roll from side to side for evasive purposes. This completely new element to the Start Fox universe looks like being a lot of fun. Wonder if you can upgrade that cannon same way as the ARWING lasers?

For a tank this vehicle seems to be incredibly light, as it has great manoeuvrability.

The tank stages offer a strong contrast to the ariel exploits of the ARWING fighters.

TOUR OF DUTY

It's no surprise to find that the locations in *Star Fox 64* are invariably stunning. Here's a first look at five of these most convincing worlds that are sure to distract your incredulous mind from the real one.

FOREST

Lush. Green. Trees, and still water. As Fox flies overhead, the lakes reflect his ARWING. Low level flying is a real thrill, as you can see from the pictures. Unfortunately we don't know what the Boss looks like.

SNOWSCAPE

Mountains are everywhere shrouded in mist. Against the white background, the smoke trails of fallen enemy fighters are seen before crashing. The ARWING's lasers cause scorch marks to appear on the ground.

SEA

Water behaves as realistically as in *Wave Race 64*. This giant serpent breaks the surface, circles Fox, then tumbles back into the depths again! The ARWINGs create spray, and enemies are reflected on the waves.

SAND DUNES

Fox takes the Tank into action, being careful to avoid the mines which lay half-buried in the sand. Notice how the vehicle leaves tracks. Enemy bombers attack from overhead, and giant turtle-like mechs stalk the area.

ASTEROID BELT

Some of these rocks are HUGE, occasionally filling the entire screen as another is seen tumbling towards you! In the sequence shown here, a couple of mecha-serpents writhe into view from behind Fox's ship!

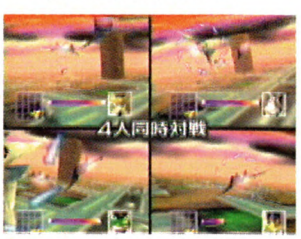
ARMADA

Squadrons of 15-20 enemy fighters attack the Star Fox team in formation. As Fox passes the hulk of a giant battleship, its gun turrets open fire. Part way through the mission a Gundam-style robot suit challenges you to a duel.

For the first time we get see the mothership, from where the Star Fox team launch into battle!

JOIN THEM IN THE SKIES

Up to four players may take to the skies at once in Star Fox 64, though only in a Battle Mode scenario. The landscape here is relatively flat, with few obstacles, as the emphasis is on hunting your opponents. Each player's ARWING fires a different coloured laser (red, green, blue or yellow) to distinguish them. Rules are kept nice and simple – last ship remaining wins – and there may even be a 'kill' count variation in the finished game. In the first instance players may join in at any time. The action is fast and fluid, with no sign of slow down. If there are only three players involved, the fourth window is employed as a third-person perspective of the action, focusing on individual ships at random.



There are no boundaries in Battle Mode. If an ARWING leaves the field from the West, they immediately reappear in the East. Handy to know, tactically speaking.

BOSS BOSSES MAN!

The Boss ships in *Star Fox 64* are as ingenious as they are gobsmacking. Check this lot out!

BOSS A headless bi-ped, which looks as though it rams into its enemy.

MINI BOSS Looks like ROB, the NES toy. Its giant fists try to smash you to pieces!

MINI BOSS Reaches out with its four skinny arms to claw at Fox's ARWING.

BOSS Similar to Blade Barrier from the original. Shoot those segments away!

MINI BOSS Huge armoured carrier, firing equally huge missiles in your direction!