

Video Game Reviews: New 'CoD' lets up to 24 battle the enemy online

by Jeb Haught

Game: "Call of Duty 3"

Publisher: Activision

System: Microsoft Xbox 360

Cost: \$59.99

ESRB Rating: T

Review rating: 3 1/2 stars

â€œCALL OF DUTY 3â€™™ - â€œCall of Duty 3â€™• looks better than ever and retains the feel of authentic World War II combat. CNS Photo courtesy of ActivisionWhen "Call of Duty 2" stormed the Xbox 360 last year, it quickly became one of the new system's best sellers despite shortcomings such as static environments and an extremely limited online multiplayer mode.

The game's popularity was attributed to the highly polished single-player campaign, which offered an incredibly intense battlefield experience. Unfortunately, the latest installment, "Call of Duty 3," provides a vastly improved online multiplayer game play at the expense of its single-player adventure.

I'm not saying the single-player campaign is poor, but it jumps back and forth among three allied soldiers rather than following each through his individual mission tree. In addition, enemy soldiers seem to be as mindless and predictable as Paris Hilton on a shopping spree.

Fortunately, "CoD 3" looks better than ever and retains the feel of authentic World War II weapons that the series is known for.

As for the online multiplayer experience, get ready to be completely blown away. Up to 24 players can enlist

online and blast the enemy in a wide variety of gaming modes. My favorite has to be War, which is similar to the "Battlefield" series Conquest mode, except flags have to be captured in sequential order. This creates realistic, large-scale battles as players fight over individual flags instead of going "lone wolf."

Online mode also lets players jump into jeeps and tanks to help push through the enemy's lines. On top of that, players choose from a variety of soldier classes that sport distinct advantages, such as the medic, who can heal fellow soldiers.

Action fans should rent "CoD 3" for its single-player campaign, or buy it for the unparalleled online multiplayer experience.

Game: "Happy Feet"

Publisher: Midway

System: Nintendo Wii

Cost: \$49.99

ESRB Rating: E

Review rating: 1 1/2 stars

â€ˆHAPPY FEETâ€™™ - â€œHappy Feetâ€• brings the lovable Hollywood penguins to the Nintendo Wii. CNS Photo courtesy of Midway."Happy Feet" comes the video game adaptation of the same name. This title follows the movie's story line and features the emperor penguin Mumble as he tries to compensate for his dreadful singing voice with exceptional tap dancing (it's better not to ask why).

Regrettably, the game offers three extremely limited modes that can best be described as mini-games. First we have the dancing mode, which is almost exactly like "Dance Dance Revolution," but with only a few songs and no dance-pad peripheral.

Instead of actually dancing, the player simply moves the Wiimote left, right, up and down according to the arrows that stream up the screen. Though using the Wiimote is much better than pushing the analog stick on a traditional controller, this mode still gets old very fast.

The other two modes feature nearly identical game play, but one displays Mumble sliding down icy mountains and the other shows him swimming underwater. Other than the visuals, the only real difference is that the player can pull off basic midair tricks in downhill races and has to escape deadly underwater creatures while swimming. Both modes use the Wiimote, held sideways and tilted in the appropriate direction to steer Mumble, but the game play lacks any real depth.

"Happy Feet" is more like a small collection of cute mini-games than a true adventure. Only very young fans of the movie will want to play this game more than once.

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RATING KEY

4 stars - Must have

3 stars - Pretty good

2 stars - So-so

1 star - Don't waste your time

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Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

E: Everyone

T: Teen (13 and older)

E10-plus: (Everyone 10 and older)

M: Mature (17 and older)

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