Video Game Reviews: 'Full Auto 2' for PS3 puts new twist on 'gunning it'

by Jeb Haught

Game: "Full Auto 2: Battlelines"

Publisher: Sega

System: Sony PlayStation 3

Cost: $59.99

ESRB Rating: T

Review rating: 3 1/2 stars

â€˜FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINESâ€™ - 'Full Auto 2: Battlelines' adds a demolition-derby arena mode, complete with new weapons. CNS Photo courtesy of Sega.When Sega introduced its vehicular-combat title, "Full Auto," to Xbox 360 owners this year, the game wasn't short on action, but its narrow focus on racing gave it a slight disadvantage.

This sequel, "Full Auto 2: Battlelines," adds an exciting arena combat mode that lets players experiment with a wide array of destructive weaponry. The game, which is exclusive to PlayStation 3, adds several new vehicles, levels and weapons, offering players much more customization, and devastation, than the original. In addition, players can select their own weapon combinations instead of having to choose from predetermined

weapon sets.

One of the cooler, but very challenging, features is being able to aim some weapons with the right analog stick while driving. Imagine an opponent's surprise when you drive up next to his vehicle, aim your turret sideways and unleash a point-blank shotgun blast to his chassis.

When there's nothing left to destroy offline, budding demolitions experts can take their favorite hunks of twisted metal online, where the gearheads are separated from the Sunday drivers. Both racing and arena modes are available online, along with two new modes - Base Assault, and Cat and Mouse.

Ever since the release of the "Full Auto" series, I don't mind waiting in traffic nearly as much. I can simply daydream about what that car that just cut me off would look like after I got through with it in arena mode.

Game: "Xiaolin Showdown"

Publisher: Konami

System: Nintendo DS

Cost: $29.99

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 2 1/2 stars

â€˜XIAOLIN SHOWDOWNâ€™ - Take your kung-fu skills to the Nintendo DS to battle the forces of evil in 'Xiaolin Showdown.' CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.Based on the popular animated kung fu show, Konami's knuckle-busting action game "Xiaolin Showdown" lets players take control of four characters as they attempt to defeat the insidious Jack Spicer and his robotic minions. Who knows what dangers await the brave martial-arts experts. Do you possess the inner chi to lead them to safety?

Although this title doesn't sport impressive graphics, it does provide several realistic fighting moves and animations. In addition, each character, whether Omi the monk or Kimiko the nimble fighter, has a distinctive set of combat moves. You might expect that after years of martial-arts training, characters would have more than a handful of useful maneuvers, but alas, their skills are rather limited.

With all four characters on the screen at once, the action is akin to the "Smash Brothers" series. As a result, players can take advantage of the computer-controlled assistance, but why do my artificially intelligent comrades steal my power-ups? Just when I need some help, one of my "buddies" comes in and snakes the power-up. And I thought he was on my side.

While "Xiaolin Showdown" doesn't have an online mode, up to four players can enjoy the adventure cooperatively using wireless local play. This is the game's saving grace, as the constant battle for power-ups at least makes sense. Still, fans of the series will probably be the only gamers interested in this mediocre title.

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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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