

Video Game Reviews: 'Pro Evolution Soccer' lacks kick in new console

by *Jeb_Haught*

Game: "Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007"

Publisher: Konami

System: Microsoft Xbox 360

Cost: \$50

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 2 1/2 stars

Ask your average gamer what soccer games come to mind first, and the answer will inevitably be one of EA's "Fifa" series. However, hard-core soccer enthusiasts tend to be drawn to the realistic game play found in Konami's "Winning Eleven" series.

'WINNING ELEVEN' - Game play in the 'Winning Eleven' series -- from juking opponents to performing realistic moves -- can't be beat. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

SOCCER ACTION - In 'Winning Eleven,' everything from fake kicks to penalty shots and bicycle kicks can be performed easily. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

'GHOST RIDER' - Johnny Blaze is raising hell with his nocturnal obsession with fire in the new action

game 'Ghost Rider.' CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

HOT STUFF - In 'Ghost Rider,' most of the combat revolves around killing evil clowns and demons. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

It's just too bad that the series' debut on next-generation consoles, "Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007," lacks anything to set it apart from current-generation versions. While it may win a prize for having the longest name of any Xbox 360 game to date, it certainly doesn't impress when it comes to visuals. Sure, the realistic animations and authentic moves help the game come alive, but the unimpressive backgrounds and overall lack of detail show that minimal effort went into tailoring the game for the 360.

On top of that, the game has outdated rosters and missing teams. Add a complete lack of player customization and bare-bones online options to the mix, and you may ask: Why bother at all? Well, the answer is spot-on game play.

When it comes to juking around opponents and performing realistic moves, the "Winning Eleven" series can't be beat. Everything from fake kicks to penalty shots and bicycle kicks can be performed easily with combinations of button presses and analog stick movements. If a move doesn't exist in real life, you won't find it in this game.

Since this title looks only slightly better than its current-generation cousins and plays exactly the same, it's hard to justify spending the money. I suggest that you try it out before buying it.

Game: "Ghost Rider"

Publisher: 2K Games

System: Sony PlayStation 2

Cost: \$30

ESRB rating: T

Review rating: 1 1/2 stars

The appropriately named Johnny Blaze is back for another hair-raising tale detailing his nocturnal obsession with fire in the new action game "Ghost Rider." And now that it has been established that he's an anti-hero and not just some irritated Hells Angel, it's time to lay the smack down on a wide variety of bad guys.

While the game's story line begins after the events of the movie, characters and motorcycles from both the movie and the comic series make a welcome appearance. Unfortunately, most of the combat revolves around killing various minions such as killer clowns and demons. Yawn.

If you've ever played "Devil May Cry" or "God of War," you'll feel right at home with "Ghost Rider." Too much at home, in fact, as the flaming "hog" rider's chain attacks and attack rating system are obviously ripped straight from those titles.

Making matters worse are the lame driving missions where players must steer the hell cycle through boring levels filled with deep craters and unoriginal enemies. Hmm, in how many other games have I had to avoid obstacles while attacking mounted enemies? Fifteen minutes with this mode and you'll begin to know what it's like to be eternally damned.

"Ghost Rider" is yet another subpar, movie-based game that hopes to cash in on the familiar name more than the content.

RATING KEY

4 stars - Must have

3 stars - Pretty good

2 stars - So-so

1 star - Don't waste your time

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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