

Video Game Reviews: Console vs. PC? Fans can shoot it out here

by *Jeb_Haught*

Game: "Shadowrun"

Publisher: Microsoft

System: Microsoft Xbox 360

Cost: \$60

ESRB rating: M

Review rating: 2 1/2 stars

SHADOWRUN - In addition to firing weapons, 'Shadowrun' combatants can assign any of three sets of

special abilities that can seriously alter the course of battle. CNS Photo courtesy of Microsoft. SHOOT IT OUT - Xbox and PC gamers can stop arguing about hardware and start blasting each other in 'Shadowrun.' CNS Photo courtesy of Microsoft. DRAGON BALL Z - Combining the board-game aspect of previous DBZ games with turn-based card battles, 'Dragon Ball Z' serves up random enemy encounters as players trek across each map to fight well-known characters from the series. CNS Photo courtesy of Atari. CARD TRICK - 'Dragon Ball' features turn-based card battles. CNS Photo courtesy of Atari. With the release of "Shadowrun" on the Xbox 360 and PC, gamers from the two platforms have the ability to play an action shooter against each other. And since the debate over console versus PC would be enough to fill this whole publication, I'll focus on the game.

This version of the game is based on the popular "Shadowrun" role-playing franchise that dominated PCs years ago. Apparently, the denizens of this culture are able to fuse advanced technology and magic into combat, giving players unparalleled abilities. In addition to firing weapons, combatants can assign any of three sets of special abilities that can seriously alter the course of battle.

One of my favorites combines Glider, which lets you soar through the air; Teleport, which instantly transports you eight yards; and Gust, which knocks enemies back. When combined, I can glide toward an enemy, teleport behind him and then blast him off a ledge with a gust.

Other abilities heal the wounded, resurrect dead allies and deflect bullets. If you take out all of the cool, new abilities, the remaining combat is very outdated. Instead of being accurate by default, weapons need the Smartlink ability just to equal the precision of most modern shooters, which is lame. In addition, there's no single-player mode - just a training mode that uses "bots" to let players become familiar with the special abilities.

To top it off, there are only a handful of levels to play online. Let's hope that some new, free content will be available to download soon.

Admittedly, adding so many cool abilities makes the combat in "Shadowrun" much more interesting. It's just too bad that the actual gunplay is so mediocre.

Game: "Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu"

Publisher: Atari

System: Nintendo DS

Cost: \$30

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 2 1/2 stars

Since the "Dragon Ball Z" franchise is well-known for its surrealistic combat, I was surprised to hear that "Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu" is a role-playing card game. My guess is that the Nintendo DS hardware would struggle with a 3-D fighting game, so the developers wanted to try something new.

But why does it have to be so simplistic?

Combining the board-game aspect of previous DBZ games with turn-based card battles, "Harukanaru Densetsu" serves up random enemy encounters as players trek across each map to fight well-known characters from the series.

During these battles, players must selectively choose from their deck of randomly dealt cards. Eight types of cards are available, and they can be used to attack the enemy, increase defense, increase attack power, call for help, use items and more.

Powerful combinations can be made by using two or more cards with the same attack power, defense or action. For example, combining three cards that each sport 6 as their attack power increases the damage to 18, which is more than most enemies can handle.

On the downside, however, is the fact that every card battle is rather simplistic. Unlike other games, such as "Magic the Gathering," players will almost never encounter a move or combo that's completely unexpected or even requires a lot of thought.

Some features help to make this game more interesting, such as the ability to upgrade each character's abilities through battle experience. Another welcome addition is the local Wi-Fi multiplayer mode that requires only one copy of the game.

Young DBZ fans will really enjoy "Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu," but older gamers will find it a bit shallow.

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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
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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