

Video Game Reviews: Not-so-fantastic 'Silver Surfer' another wipeout

by Jeb_Haught

Game: "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer"

Publisher: 2K Games

System: Sony PlayStation 3

Cost: \$60

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 1 1/2 stars

'FANTASTIC FOUR' - Superheroes can be so, well, super-draining, as 'Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer' players will discover. CNS Photo courtesy of 2K Games. HEROES - Some of the maneuvers in 'Fantastic Four' look really cool, like Sue telekinetically lifting enemies or objects in the air and tossing them around. CNS Photo courtesy of 2K Games. 'TIME ACE' - Move through the centuries and fly each era's aircraft with 'Time Ace.' CNS Photo courtesy of Konami. TIME FIGHTING - Only Dr. Clock can stop Scythe from ruling the world, so he builds another time machine and starts chasing his adversary. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami. With countless comic books, two incredibly mediocre movies and nothing but lame video games under their belts, the Fantastic Four seem anything but fantastic. So it comes as no surprise that the game "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer" is about as exciting as listening to Sue Storm and Rex Reed making wedding plans.

In the game, featuring the exact-same type of play from the previous movie-based title, the player controls one team member while the computer controls the other three. Sure, it's possible to switch between heroes at will, but every character uses the same repetitive, button-mashing combos interspersed with the occasional super-move.

Some of their maneuvers look really cool, like Sue telekinetically lifting enemies or objects in the air and tossing them around. It's just too bad that the game play quickly degrades. Activate switch to open the next door. Clear the enemies. Activate next switch. Clear more enemies ... yawn.

While I may not adore the Fantastic Four, this title had loads of potential, but it's ruined by boring game play, bad camera angles, horrible artificial intelligence and bland environments. In addition, none of the characters looks like his or her movie counterpart, and the actors didn't even do the voice-overs.

I will, however, give them credit for a video game first - and, I hope, a last. In co-op mode, both player-controlled characters went off the screen at the same time while still being attacked by off-screen enemies. My speechless friend and I looked at each other, had a good laugh and then inserted a different game.

Game: "Time Ace"

Publisher: Konami

System: Nintendo DS

Cost: \$20

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 2 1/2 stars

Fast-paced action games are few and far between on the Nintendo DS, so the idea of controlling a time-traveling pilot and planes from different eras is intriguing. That's the premise behind Konami's newest franchise, "Time Ace," and while it may be a bit simplistic, it's also quite fun.

When Dr. Hubert Clock invents a time-traveling device (oh, the irony), his demented assistant, Klaus Scythe, steals it. Intent on amassing history's most devastating weapons, Scythe begins journeying through the past and future. Only Dr. Clock can stop Scythe from ruling the world, so he builds another time machine and starts chasing his adversary.

Throughout the game, virtual pilots get to control biplanes, World War II fighters, jet fighters and the futuristic Star Glider and Space Fighter.

Players have two weapons - rockets and rapid-fire projectiles - at their disposal with each craft. Rocket power-ups increase ammunition, while various other power-ups increase the primary weapon's rate of fire or change it into a sonic cannon or laser gun.

Most of the game is played on rails, with the player controlling side-to-side as well as up-and-down movement while the computer constantly pushes the plane forward. Needless to say, fancy maneuvers such as loops and half-turns aren't possible, but there's a nice variety of enemies to shoot.

"Time Ace" is fun to play, but it's not as engaging as most other flying games due to its simplicity. However, younger gamers will appreciate the constant action and the ability to dogfight in multiplayer mode with other local players. Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

E: Everyone

T: Teen (13 and older)

E10-plus: (Everyone 10 and older)

M: Mature (17 and older)
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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