

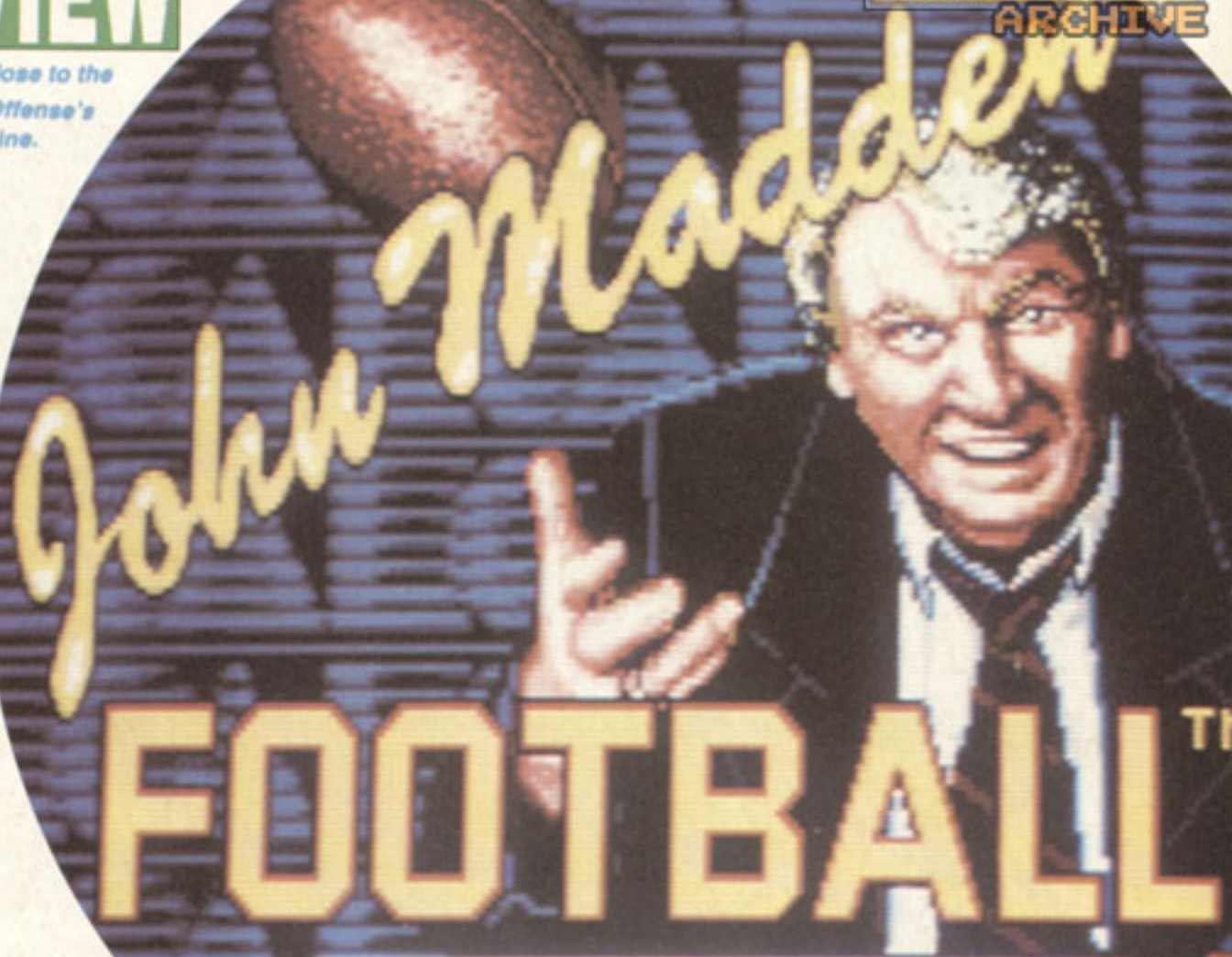
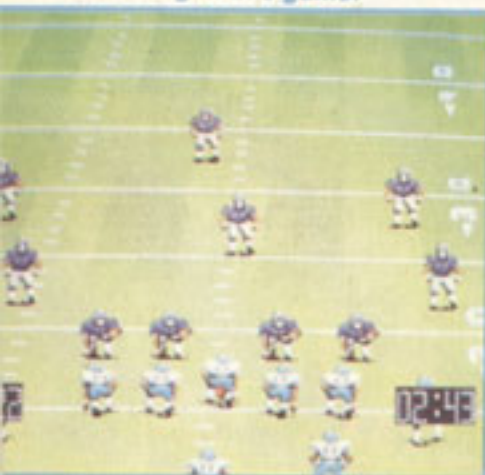


▼ A running play in progress, close to the



Offense's line.

▼ Forty two Hutt! Lots of chances for macho and nonsensical shouting in this game!



American football is a game of four quarters. It's rough, it's tough and only the fittest survive! Can you make the big time on the gridiron? John Madden's Football gives you the chance to find out.

On the title screen there are a variety of options that let you choose a side from a list of the 16 most famous NFL and AFL teams or a John Madden All-Star team, choose whether the game is sudden death, a playoff or regular season, select one or two players, and set the time per quarter.

Once those are chosen, it's onto the game proper. The action is displayed in 3D, viewed from above and behind the offensive line-up. As play happens, the screen scrolls up and down the field and also left and right in realistic multi-level parallax to follow the ball.

There are a huge range of plays available to the player, and are chosen using a series of easy-to-use menus. First of all the main team is selected (big, fast, hands and so on), which gives access to a variety of plays (shotgun, running, pro-form etc). Once a play is chosen, a further set of windows open up detailing a variety of player movements. Chose one of those and play begins.

When the ball is snapped, the player takes control of the quarterback, who either runs or passes. If the ball is passed, player control is handed over to the receiver. Offensive moves are chosen in exactly the same fashion, and during the play you can control any player you like.

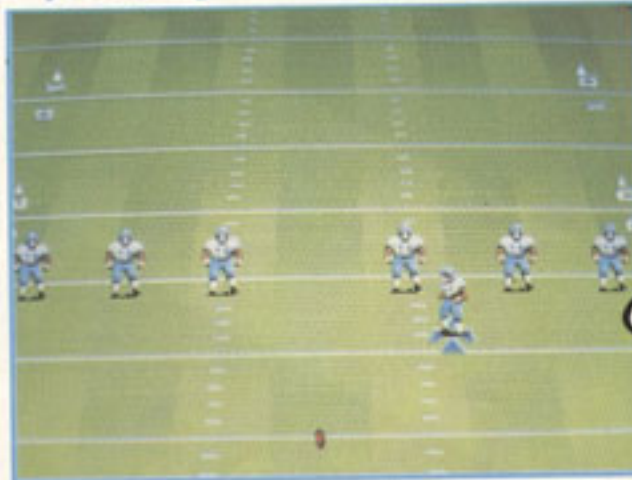
Although this seems quite complicated at first, it's surprisingly easy to get into, and the sheer wealth of plays and options made available to the player gives huge scope to develop your own playing style. And, you've certainly got to do that to get to the Superbowl, so get practicing.

...the Defense makes it...

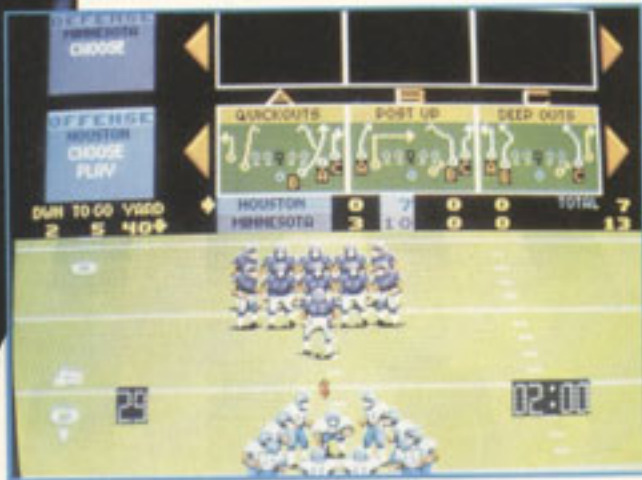




- ◀ Check out the opposition's stats before the game.
- ▼ Ready for kick off. An on-side is very dangerous, but can be worth it - specially if you're losing!



- ◀ Houston choose their Offensive play with 40 yards to touchdown.
- ▼ An attempt at a field goal, worth three points.



MEGADRIVE

REVIEW



COMMENT



MATT

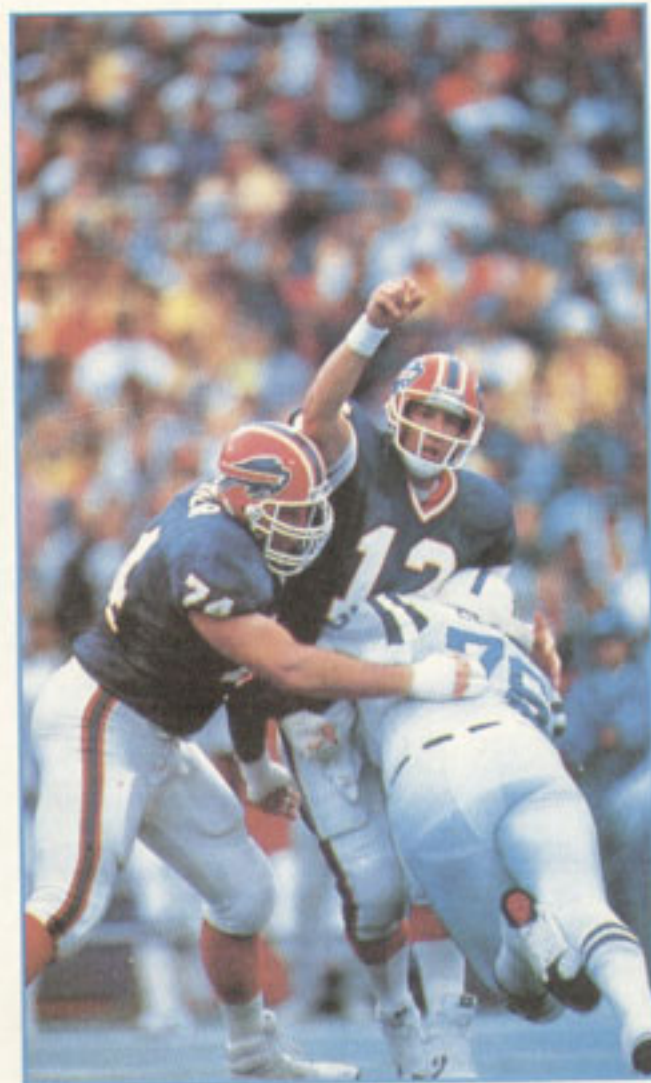
I've never been a fan of American football - after all, any game called football in which you carry the ball has got something wrong with it (unless you're Maradona, of course). But this game stunned all of us at MEAN MACHINES as soon as we saw it. The sprites are brilliant - all the moves are there, and the players jump, fumble and dive, just like the real thing. The sound is amazing as well. Wait 'till you hear the yell of "It's good!!" when you make the extra point, and the thuds and groans of the Defense as they hurl themselves at the running back. Despite all these features, it's the playability that puts this game in the stratosphere. Don't expect to master it quickly, but do expect to have a great time trying! John Madden's Football is easily the most popular game we've ever had in the office, and deservedly so.

MUSIC, MAESTRO

John Madden's Football features some amazing music and sampled sound effects. Who's responsible for this aural feast? None other than Rob Hubbard, a British computer musician who made a b-i-g name for himself in the mid 80's composing a vast array of incredible soundtracks for C64 games. He disappeared a few years ago to work for Electronic Arts in the states, and kept a low profile. But now he's back on the scene with a vengeance - let's hope EA let him loose on more of their Megadrive games!

THE JOHN MADDEN ALL-STARS

As well as featuring 16 different AFL and NFL teams to choose from, there's also the John Madden All-Stars, a team of true superstars who can run, pass and catch better than any other team. Choose it when you're playing two-player and you'll have the advantage, unless the other player chooses the same team...





▲ It's cold and snowy, and the offense decide to punt.



▲ It's the kick off!



▲ Blues catch the ball.

PASS, RUN OR WHAT?

When you take control of the quarterback, pressing C brings up three mini windows showing where the receivers are. Pressing either A, B or C passes the ball to the player in the respective window. However, if you decide to run, you're able to spin to shake off tackles, dip your head to crunch into and knock over players who try to tackle you, or take a dive to hurl yourself into the endzone or across the ten-yard marker!

▼ The teams huddle and decide the next play.



The playoff option is a long-term campaign where you try to get your team to the Superbowl. Sixteen teams line up at the start, and it's a simple game of elimination - win and you go through, lose and you're out. Since getting to the Superbowl is difficult in one sitting (requiring a full hour and a half's play on minimum time limit if you made it to the final), there's a password system that lets you carry on from where you left off.



▲ The teams are ready to play.



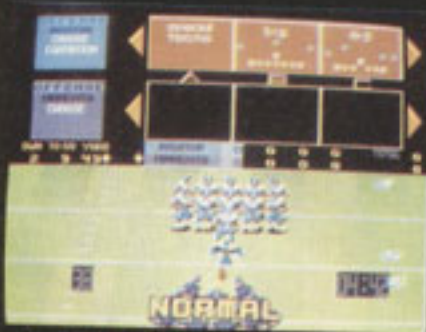
▲ 24! 38! Hut!



▲ The quarterback dives for the endzone...



▲ ...and makes it! Touchdown!!



▲ After kick off, the teams huddle again.



▲ The blues line up for a passing play!



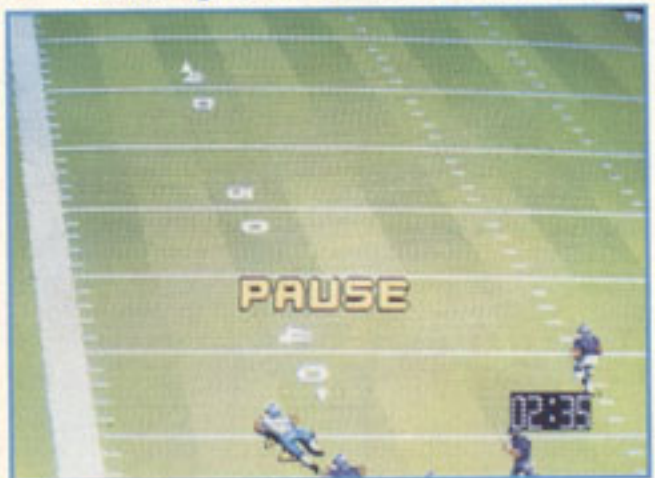
▲ After the snap, the receivers are waiting for delivery.



▲ Disaster! A sack well behind the offensive line.



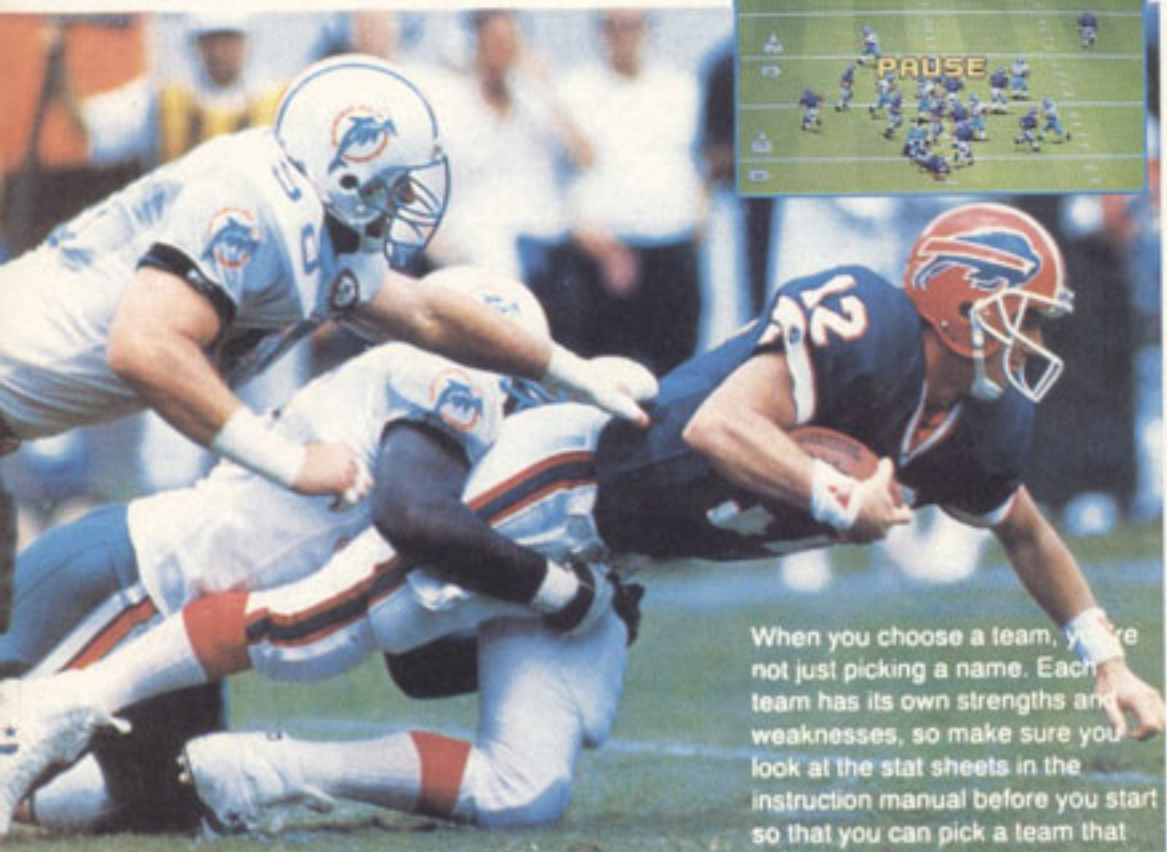
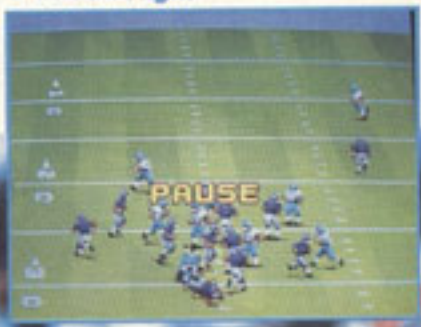
▼ The running back dives to make the first down.



▼ Other results are displayed...



▼ It's a sack as the defence crash through.



When you choose a team, you're not just picking a name. Each team has its own strengths and weaknesses, so make sure you look at the stat sheets in the instruction manual before you start so that you can pick a team that suits your playing style. Otherwise you'll be at a big disadvantage!



▲ The stats are displayed: Pittsburgh were outstanding!



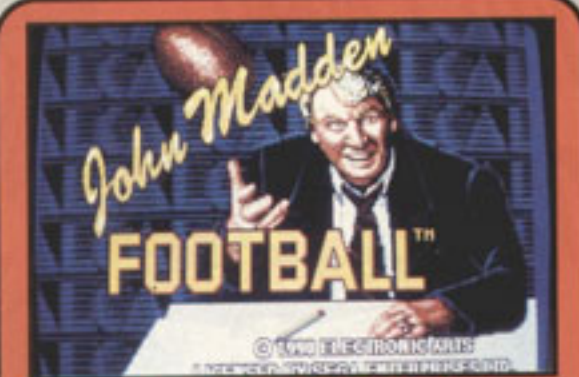
▲ The quarterback is running, and the receivers are wide open.

COMMENT



JULIAN

This is the most stunning sports simulation I've ever seen! It perfectly recreates all the thrills and spills of American football. There are so many amazing touches, I just don't know where to start: the absolutely gob-smacking 3D graphics which have to be seen to be believed, the superlative music and sound effects, the incredible amount of play options, the way the players celebrate a touchdown, the completely brilliant two-player option, the way the players all gather round before a play, the highlights from other games that are played after a match... I could go on, but I'm sure you've got the message. John Madden's Football is the best Megadrive game yet - if you're a sports fan it's an essential addition to your cartridge library.



BY: 'TRONIC ARTS

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: DEC
 GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
 LIVES: N/A
 CONTINUES: N/A
 SKILL LEVELS: 1
 RESPONSIVENESS: FAST



PRESENTATION 96%

Superbly presented throughout, with easy-to-use menus, a one or two-player game and loads of options.

GRAPHICS 94%

Incredible multi-level parallax-scrolling 3D graphics and superbly detailed and animated sprites.

SOUND 95%

An array of excellent soundtracks, and utterly brilliant sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 96%

The controls take a bit of getting used to, but once you've read the well-written manual, you'll be completely hooked.

LASTABILITY 92%

With its playoff and two-player options, this is a game that you'll be playing for months and months.

OVERALL 95%

A truly superlative sports simulation that's both highly addictive and technically stunning. An absolute must for sports fans.