

Volume I, Number 2

Atari Games Corporation 675 Sycamore Drive P.O. Box 361110 Milpitas, CA 95035

April 1986

# JUST IN TIME FOR SUMMER 1986

Atari's Sprint 2 was one of the most popular games ever made in the 14year history of the coin-operated video game industry. The adjoining article in this issue explains how Sprint 2 came about and why it was such a successful game in its time. Back by popular demand, Atari re-created this game with new features, state-of-the-art technology, and three player positions. It's called SUPER SPRINT and it should be arriving at your favorite game locations any day now. Start looking for it soon, and to get you off with a slight edge, here's how to play:

One, two, or three players can start the game by choosing a car. A track select screen appears, allowing players to pick one of 8 unique tracks. At the starting line, the green flag signals players that the race is on. Each heat consists of four laps. Lead player is shown by a flashing score. Beat all computer-controlled cars to continue on to the next track. Players then go to the Winner's Circle where your rank, average lap time, and best lap time are given.

During each race, gold wrenches randomly appear on the track. Try to collect as many wrenches as you can by driving over them. Once you get three wrenches, you can customize your car with performance features like Turbo Acceleration, Higher Top Speed, and Super Traction. All

## **Atari Introduces** SUPER SPRINT

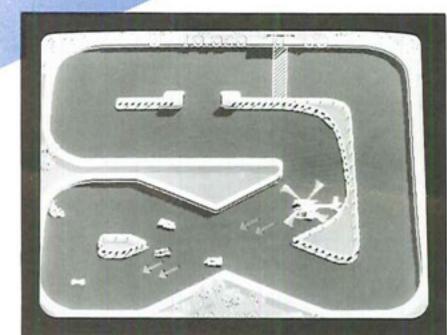
these special features make a big difference on your driving ability. If you lose a race by being beaten by one of the computer-controlled cars, you can stay in the game by adding another coin. By doing so, you will be able to keep any custom features you have acquired.

On each of the eight tracks, there are new driving challenges like jump ramps, opening and closing gates, hidden short cuts, over/under passes, and banked turns. The best way to get ahead in the game is to learn how to control your car by spinning the steering wheel to skid around corners.

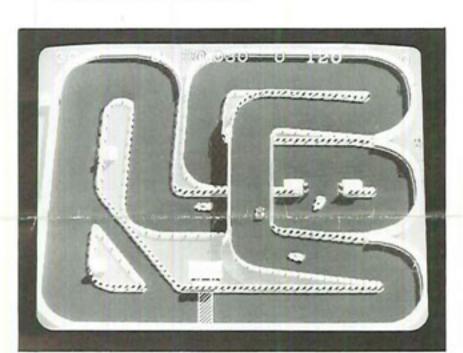
Also, anytime there is an open position in SUPER SPRINT, you can join in the game. Even playing with other players you don't know can be a strong advantage, since with more players in the game, there are fewer computer-controlled cars for everyone to beat.

If you've played one of Atari's original Sprint games, you know how the driving action was so different from any other driving game. You will be surprised to see the changes we've made in SUPER SPRINT ten years later!





Each track offers new challenges . . . shown here track #3



The ultimate challenge . . . Track #8

### **Atari Classics** Sprint 2®

Dateline: October, 1976

**Atari Racing Presents Sprint 2!** 

There are many classic driving games that can be found in game locations around the world; most of them were produced by Atari. There has been Atari Gran Trak 10® and 20®, Le Mans®, Night Driver®, Indy 4™ and 800®, Sprint One™, 2®, 4™ and 8™, Pole Position and Pole Position II among others. Sprint 2, however, is one of the games that first established Atari as the premiere designer of coin-operated video driving games.

Sprint 2 was the foundation for one very important event in the history of Atari; the opening of our manufacturing facility in Ireland. Sprint 2 was the first game to roll off the line when the factory in Tipperary opened in August of 1978. Both Kevin Hayes, currently the Vice President of Operations for Atari, and Pat McCarthy, Senior Electrical Engineer, remember the first Irish run of Sprint 2 games. In 1978 there were many Sprint 2 games that had been produced in California and exported to Europe during the previous two years, but Atari still had hundreds of outstanding orders. "Driving games have always been very popular in Europe," recalls Kevin, "but it says a lot for Sprint 2 that there was still a demand for it after two years." (A typical production run for a video game lasts for a few months, depending upon the popularity of the game.)

Why was Sprint 2 so popular with players? Sprint 2 was a very innovative game

for its time. It's hard to imagine with today's high-tech games how a game like Sprint 2 (with a black and white screen and only black, white and grey blips for cars) could be an innovation; but compared to its contemporaries, Sprint 2 was state-of-the- art in terms of both technology and game play design.

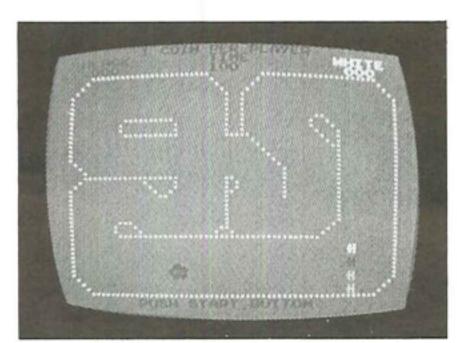
Before the dawn of microprocessor technology, the playfield and moving images on video games were created in hardware, not in software as they are today. Sprint 2 was one of the first video games to use the microprocessor-based technology which opened a whole new world in video game design. Simple things that today's players take for granted were real innovations in 1976. For example, the monitor graphics on Sprint 2 that flashed driv-



ing instructions, "game over," and "Granny," "Rookie," or "Pro" player performance ratings were innovations allowed by microprocessor technology.

When you ask Lyle Rains about the old days at Atari and the development of Sprint 2, you can tell he enjoys the reminiscing. In 1976 when Sprint 2 was introduced, Lyle was the Team Leader on the project. This 12-year veteran of Atari is currently one of the two Senior Vice Presidents of Engineering. Lyle fondly remembers designing the game play and hardware on Sprint 2 and laughs about ironing out the game play details, like the responsiveness of the steering, with the programmer on the project. According to Lyle, it was very important to give the player just the right feeling of control over the car, especially in skidding around the corners of the track.

Lyle recalls, "Sprint 2 was the first video game where you really felt you had control over your car. The realistic player interaction set it apart from other driving games. Players really liked the feel of fishtailing around the corners and still remaining in control. Sprint 2's microprocessor allowed us



to give the quick response to the controls that the player needs to give that realistic feel to the game."

Lyle holds a patent on the algorithm for the computer-controlled traffic which is used in Sprint 2. As he explains, "It was a technical innovation for the drone cars to intelligently find and follow the track. In other games, computer-controlled objects were on the screen and they followed an apparently random traffic pattern but they were not intelligent. The microprocessor technology of Sprint 2 gave us the ability to have the drone cars recognize the track they were on and move in an intelligent way, and this was very important on Sprint 2 because there were 12 different tracks that players could play."

#### How does Sprint 2 compare with today's games?

The microprocessor was the door to the future for video games, and the technological base that is still used today. Sprint 2, with its innovative microprocessor, had 4K of programmable memory that performed video game miracles in 1976. Now, 10 years later, a typical video game has hundreds of times the programmable memory of Sprint 2. For a relative comparison, Atari's new Super Sprint has 912K of programmable memory (656K is used just for graphics and 256K for the game program).

As the self-proclaimed "official Super Sprint tester," Dan Van Elderen, Senior Vice President of Engineering, was also a key member of the original Sprint 2 development team. Dan, now in his lucky 13th year with Atari, had a special role in the development of Atari's

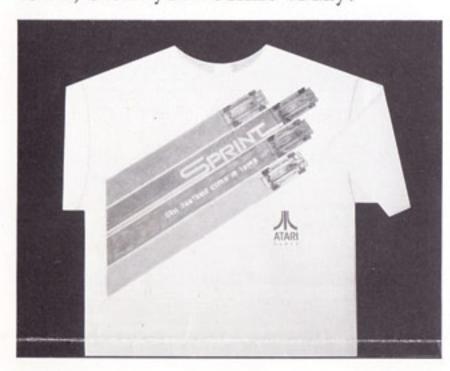
#### Atari Classics—continued

new Super Sprint. He notes that the allimportant realistic driving feel of Sprint 2 has been translated very well into Super Sprint. "We worked very hard to make sure that the cars on Super Sprint respond as they do on Sprint 2," Dan observes, then adds, "It was a tough job to play Super Sprint over and over until they got it just right, but somebody has to do the dirty work!"

Now you can judge for yourself. There are still many classic Sprint 2 games on location all over the world for you to play, and Atari's new Super Sprint is destined to be standard driving game that you will be able to find in game locations in your area. Play them both and let us know what you think; did we do a good job in re-creating the classic?

#### Get 'Em While They're Hot

Limited edition Super Sprint t-shirts are now available from Atari! You can use the enclosed order form to order yours today; just write the name "Super Sprint" on the order form, specify the quantity you would like and indicate the desired size(s), enclose \$6.50 per shirt and include tax (where applicable). Send the Collector Items Order Form and your check or money order to Atari Games Corporation, Players Club Collector Items, 737 Sycamore Drive, P.O. Box 361110, Milpitas, CA 95035. Be part of the fastest game in town; order your t-shirt today!



#### The Coin Trade Previews Super Sprint

Twice each year Atari Games attends trade shows during which we present our newest games to our customers. The American Coin Machine Exhibition (ACME) trade show is our spring show which took place in Chicago on March 7 through 9. (The other annual trade show is called the Amusement and Music Operators of America, the AMOA, and takes place in Chicago in the fall.) At ACME we introduced Super Sprint and a prototype game from our parent company, Namco, called Robo Soccer. In addition to these two new games we also displayed Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom with a new ticket dispensing feature and our most recent hit game, Gauntlet. Our products, especially the new Super Sprint, were met with a great deal of enthusiasm. Look for all of these new games to appear in your local arcades real soon!





### Gauntlet™ Maze Design Contest

As you recall, in the last Atari Games Players Club newsletter we ran a Gauntlet Maze Design Contest. Because this was our first contest of this type we were not sure how many entries we would receive. We could have obtained as few as 10 replies, or every club member could have sent in 10 entries and we would have been overwhelmed! In all we received 130 valid entries, which is just about what we

The Players Club winners listed below (in alphabetical order) will be sent

were hoping for.

the Gauntlet t-shirt of their choice:
Reynaldo P. Abutin
Steve "Blakki" Hambel
Chad Michael Harris
Timothy Huey
Bobby E. Martini
Joseph David Mikuta
Dalton Porter
Mike Joseph Szpak
Patrick Allen Tyra
Gregory Allen Turner
David Alan Young
As far as the newsletter staff is concerned, all of the entries were winners!

Thanks a lot for your participation!

#### **Atari Games Players Club Newsletter and Support Staff**

We'd like to welcome you to the Atari Games Players Club and introduce ourselves to you. We are the support staff of the Players Club. We look forward to hearing from you and answering all of the questions you have about Atari Games.

Putting together the Newsletter is a lot of fun. We have many exciting ideas for new stories, contests and promotions, but we'd like to hear from you: Are there any particular questions you have about how our games are designed and produced? Would you like to see a feature article on your all-time favorite Atari game? Do you want to see more photos in your Newsletter? Do you have a video game related cartoon that you would like us to publish? Write to us and let us know. After all, it is *your* Newsletter; we want you to look forward to hearing from us as much as we look forward to hearing from you. We'd like you to be an active member of *your* Players Club!



Here we are, your Atari Games Players Club support staff: Seated left to right: Ann Wandelt, Ann Denton, Linda Benzler, Elaine Shirley, Mary Fujihara, Jackie Sherman, and Andrea Dencker. Standing left to right: Jim Arita, Joe Hill, Marty Viljamaa, Sahara Perez, and Elena Jamero

# Players Club Quiz CLASSIC ATARI GAMES

On the left you will see a mosaic of portions of the artwork from some classic Atari games. Each of the 16 triangular game artwork photos is numbered from left to right. Figure out the names of the games by finding them in your local arcade and testing the memory of your friends. Write the name of the game next to the corresponding number on the contest

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form below and mail your guesses to: Atari Games Corporation, Players Club Quiz, Classic Atari Games, 737 Sycamore Drive, P.O. Box 361110, Milpitas, CA 95035. Winners will receive a surprise gift and have their names printed in the next issue of the Atari Games Players Club Newsletter. Good luck!

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