

Analysis of Mechanics

Karel Koch (xkochk01)

Title: Art of Rally

Released: 2020

Author: Funselektor Labs Inc.

Primary Genre: Racing

Secondary Genre: Simulation, Open-World

Style: Stylized cartoon

Analysis

Art of Rally is a racing game developed by Funselektor Labs Inc. and was released for PC, PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Switch.

As the name suggests, Art of Rally is a racing game focusing on the motorsport discipline of rallying. Players can drive cars inspired by real cars from the "Golden Era" of rallying. The game contains 7 different locations, which are also inspired by real rally locations like Finland, Germany, Kenya and others.

The game's main game mode - Career - tasks the player with competing against AI opponents across 30 seasons, 5 for each major car class in the game. Seasons can vary in length anywhere between 1 rally with 2 stages to 4 rallies with 5 stages each. The goal is to complete each stage as fast as possible, finish as high in the rally as possible to score points in that season's championship and have the most points at the end of the season. The game also includes a time attack mode, where players compete on an online leaderboard to set the fastest time around certain stages and in certain groups of cars.

The last major game mode is called Free Roam. This allows players to explore an open area with their car of choice. Collectible items, like cassettes that unlock extra music tracks, are hidden throughout the area. This game mode is more casual than the others, and gives the players an opportunity to enjoy the game's great artstyle. This game mode is unfortunately very bare-bones and most players will either be done with it very quickly, or ignore it completely.

Despite the rather cartoon-y looking artstyle, which can offer up some incredible looking scenes, the game manages to reach a good level of immersion. The sound design especially does a lot of heavy lifting here. It also manages to evoke some iconic scenes, like spectators standing very close to the cars and jumping out of the way at the last possible second, that a lot of people associate with this era of rally. The soundtrack is also very good and fitting with the game's entire aesthetic.

However, despite the artstyle's visual appeal, it can give the wrong impression about the game, and especially its handling. Many people would at first glance guess that the handling is very arcade-y, and far removed from real life. And while it's by no means realistic, that doesn't mean it's completely off the mark either. The cars are initially very hard to drive, and new players will find themselves struggling for control, and very often crashing into one of the many hazards that line the stages. However once you get used to it, it is very natural and rewarding.

Another aspect of the game's style that can be quite problematic is its camera. The game is viewed from 3rd person, with the camera placed very high and far away from the player's car. This allows the player to see a large portion of the stage, even many corners ahead. However, the camera perspective suffers from frequent obstruction by tall objects like trees and mountains, making it very difficult to see in some cases. It also doesn't do a good job of following the player when turning, sometimes lagging very far behind and making it impossible to see where the stage is going. Elevation changes are very difficult for player's to judge and, combined with the game's harsh handling model, will very often result in unpredictable handling.