

= Sonic Advance 3 =

Sonic Advance 3 (?????????3 , Sonikku Adobansu Sur?) is a platform video game developed by Dimps and Sonic Team and published by Sega in Japan and THQ in North America and Europe for the Game Boy Advance . It was released worldwide in June 2004 . It is part of the Sonic the Hedgehog series ; and the chronological sequel to Sonic Battle . The game stars the characters Sonic , Tails , Amy , Knuckles , and Cream as they seek to keep Doctor Eggman and his robot assistant Gemerl from building empires on each of seven chunks Eggman has divided the Earth into .

The game is a fast @-@ paced 2D platformer that takes place across seven zones , each divided into three acts and a boss fight . It allows one or two players to control any two of the five characters ; each one has different abilities that allow players varying access to parts of levels . While the graphics are mainly 2D , the game features some 3D rotation effects . It sold quickly upon release and received positive reviews from critics , who praised its gameplay and aesthetics , though they were more divided on the team @-@ up dynamic .

= = Gameplay = =

Similarly to Sonic Advance 1 and 2 before it , Advance 3 is a fast @-@ paced 2D platformer . The player controls one of five characters simultaneously with a second one as a sidekick ; alternately , a second player joins and one controls each character . The two characters run and jump through a series of seven levels , destroying robots along the way . The player collects rings in levels and boss battles as a form of health : upon being hit by an enemy or harmful obstacle , the player 's rings will scatter and can be recollected . Being hit while carrying no rings , being crushed by an obstacle , or falling into a bottomless pit causes death ; running out of lives incurs a game over screen .

The levels contain features like vertical loops , springs , and rails that the player can grind on . Each level is divided into three acts , punctuated by a boss fight with Doctor Eggman at the end ; all three acts , the boss fight , and two minigames that grant the player extra lives are bound by a hub world . Within each act , the player collects Chao creatures ; finding 10 in all 3 acts in one zone grants the player access to a special stage , where a Chaos Emerald can be found . Collecting all seven Chaos Emeralds , which can be done after completion of the main campaign , allows the player to fight an extra final boss for the game 's true ending .

The player can select any two @-@ member permutation of its five playable characters : Sonic the Hedgehog , Tails , Amy Rose , Knuckles the Echidna , and Cream the Rabbit , provided the two desired characters have been unlocked ; only Sonic and Tails are available at the beginning , while the other three must be rescued from Eggman over the course of the game . Each character has a unique ability : Sonic can perform a spinning attack in mid @-@ air , Tails can fly using his two tails as a propeller , Amy can smash enemies with her hammer , Knuckles can glide long distances and climb walls , and Cream can fly using her ears as wings and attack enemies with her Chao friend , Cheese . The second player character can also give powers to the first by pressing the R button ; for example , pressing and holding R while Tails is the sidekick blasts both characters into the air . In addition , the second character will collect rings and destroy enemies the first has not . Outside the main game , there are two battle modes for two to four players , in which any of the characters can be selected : racing and Chao collecting .

= = Plot = =

Before the events of the game , Doctor Eggman builds a robotic assistant named Gemerl , who is based on Emerl , another robot that appeared in Sonic Battle . Eggman uses the Chaos Emeralds to perform a technique called Chaos Control and tear the Earth apart , with the intention of creating a segment of his impending empire on each chunk of the planet . This action separates Sonic and Tails from Amy , Knuckles , and Cream , all of whom Eggman finds and captures . The two friends travel through the game 's seven levels to recapture their friends and the Emeralds .

The final boss fight takes place at a temple . If the player defeats Eggman there without having all seven Emeralds , Eggman and Gemerl escape and fall off the edge of the temple . Peace is restored to the world , and Omochao snaps a picture of the five heroes . However , the game alerts the player that the Emeralds must still be collected for the true ending . If the player defeats Eggman at the temple with the Emeralds , Gemerl stops in his tracks while running away with Eggman and attacks Sonic , causing the Emeralds to scatter . Gemerl uses them to take on a giant , orb @-@ shaped form , but Sonic also uses their power to attain his Super Sonic form . With Eggman 's help , Super Sonic destroys Gemerl . Tails later finds Gemerl 's broken body on a beach and repairs it such that it is non @-@ aggressive , and the game ends with Cream playing with Gemerl at her mother Vanilla 's house .

= = Development and release = =

Sonic Advance 3 was published by Sega in Japan and by THQ in North America and Europe . Like Advance 1 and 2 , its development was shared by Dimps and Sega subsidiary Sonic Team since the latter was understaffed on employees familiar with the Game Boy Advance hardware . Yuji Naka , then President of Sonic Team , had limited involvement in the development of Sonic Advance 3 , and he conceived of the team @-@ up dynamic . While the game is fundamentally 2D , it features some Mode 7 3D rotation effects . THQ announced the game in a press release on September 11 , 2003 . The game was later exhibited at E3 2003 .

= = Reception = =

Sonic Advance 3 was reportedly " racing off store shelves " as soon as it was released . The game also received positive reviews from critics , with respective scores of 79 % and 80 % at review aggregators Metacritic and GameRankings . It later won Handheld Game of the Year at the 2004 Golden Joystick Awards and sold over 100 @, @ 000 copies in the United Kingdom alone .

Critics gave mixed opinions to the team @-@ up dynamic . Nich Maragos from 1UP.com celebrated that Sonic Team had " finally [come] up with a way of introducing teamwork and variance between characters that doesn 't overwhelm Sonic 's bread @-@ and @-@ butter gameplay . " Maragos singled this out as the main divider between Advance 3 and Sonic Heroes , a game that he found surprisingly linear in level design considering that it , unlike Advance 3 , was in 3D . Maragos , GameSpot 's Frank Provo , IGN 's Craig Harris , and Game Informer 's Lisa Mason appreciated the increase in replayability Sonic 's friends brought . However , Mason , as well as reviewer Stardingo from GamePro , thought that they played too much like Sonic and did not add much to the experience . Darryl Vassar of GameSpy took a different point of criticism : he acknowledged the presence of genuinely different character abilities , but perceived that their only purpose was to find Chao , whom he called " pointless " . Maragos noted that the " mid @-@ air trick " system from Advance 2 was optional in Advance 3 , but spoke positively about its usefulness in locating " hidden areas " . Harris argued that such varying team abilities contributed to occasional " cheapness " in the level design , because " most of the characters have absolutely no defense when hopping off items like springboards " .

However , the gameplay was mostly well @-@ received otherwise . Vassar acclaimed the level design : he both called the levels " enormous and fast " and praised the slower , smaller sections for " keeping the levels distinct and adding short interludes to the constant running and loops . " Harris also praised the " clever " level design . However , Mason found it " simplistic " , while Stardingo saw " repetition " in the typical formula . Maragos criticized the bipolar difficulty of the bosses and some minor control issues . Vassar , however , appreciated the return from Advance 2 's running @-@ based boss battles to more traditional ones . Further praise from Harris , conversely , went to the multiplayer mode and ? along with Stardingo ? to the presence of a hub world , which Harris and Stardingo thought gave the game structure .

The game 's aesthetics were also well received . Provo stated that " in terms of graphics and sound , Sonic Advance 3 is on par with the best that companies like Nintendo and Konami have had to

offer this year " . He specifically complimented the character animations , simulations of underwater waves , and in @-@ depth background effects . Vassar praised Advance 3 for continuing Advance 1 and 2 's emulation of the " colorful , angular , and stylized look " of the original Sonic the Hedgehog for the Sega Genesis , as well as its " twangy , upbeat tunes " . Starding thought similarly overall but criticized the " garish " themes of the level Toy Kingdom .