

= Sonic the Hedgehog 3 =

Sonic the Hedgehog 3 (Japanese : ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ3 (???) , Hepburn : Sonikku za Hejjihoggu Sur?) is a platform video game developed by Sonic Team and published by Sega . The third main game in the Sonic the Hedgehog series , it was released for the Sega Genesis worldwide in February 1994 , and in Japan three months later . Following the events of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 , Dr. Robotnik 's spaceship , the Death Egg , crash @-@ lands on a mysterious floating island . There , Sonic and Tails must once more retrieve the Chaos Emeralds to stop Death Egg from relaunching , while making rounds with the island 's guardian , Knuckles the Echidna .

Development of Sonic 3 began shortly after the release of Sonic 2 in November 1992 . It was developed simultaneously with Sonic & Knuckles ; as the games were originally developed as a single title until time constraints and cartridge costs later forced the team to split them in two projects . The Sonic & Knuckles cartridge features " lock @-@ on " technology that allows it to be physically attached to the Sonic 3 cartridge , creating a combined game , Sonic 3 & Knuckles .

As with its two predecessors , Sonic 3 was a critical and commercial success , with critics seeing it as an improvement over previous installments . It sold 1 @. @ 02 million copies in the United States ; though this makes it one of the best @-@ selling Genesis games , its predecessors , bundled with the Genesis in some regions , had sold a combined 21 million . The game has been re @-@ released in compilations and download releases for various platforms , including Sonic Mega Collection for the GameCube and Sonic 's Ultimate Genesis Collection for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 .

= = Plot = =

After Sonic the Hedgehog and Miles " Tails " Prower defeat Dr. Robotnik at the end of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 , his space station , the Death Egg , crash @-@ lands on a mystical floating landmass called Angel Island . As Robotnik begins to repair the damaged station , he meets up with Knuckles the Echidna . Knuckles is the last surviving member of an ancient echidna civilization that once inhabited the island , as well as the guardian of the Master Emerald , which grants the island its levitation powers . Knowing Sonic and Tails will try to track him down and realizing he can use the emerald to power the ship , Robotnik dupes Knuckles into believing Sonic is trying to steal the Master Emerald .

Meanwhile , Sonic and Tails approach Angel Island in their biplane the Tornado . Sonic , possessing the emeralds from the events of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 , jumps off the plane and turns into Super Sonic , zooming towards the island . When they arrive , Knuckles ambushes Sonic from underground and knocks the Chaos Emeralds from him , returning him to normal ; he then steals the emeralds from them and disappears inland . As Sonic and Tails travel through the levels , they frequently encounter Knuckles , who hinders their progress with various traps .

At the Launch Base Zone , Sonic uses a spare Egg @-@ O @-@ Matic to travel to the Death Egg , and ends up encountering Knuckles on a girder . As usual , Knuckles tries to stop Sonic , but is defeated when the Death Egg re @-@ launches and the girder collapses , sending Knuckles plummeting into the water . Sonic continues to a deck on the Death Egg , where he fights and defeats Robotnik 's Big Arm machine . The Death Egg is damaged and falls out of orbit , after which it explodes .

= = Gameplay = =

Sonic 3 is a 2D side @-@ scrolling platformer . At the game 's start , players can choose to select Sonic , Tails , or both . In the latter choice , players control Sonic while Tails runs along beside him ; a second player can join in at any time and control Tails separately . Sonic 3 adds the ability for Tails to fly for a short time by spinning his twin tails like a propeller ; when he gets too tired , he falls . Unlike Sonic , Tails can also swim underwater .

The game takes place over six zones , each divided into two acts . Levels are populated with

Robotnik 's robots , called " badniks " ; Sonic and Tails can defeat badniks by jumping on them or using the " spin dash " attack , which also gives the character a speed boost . The levels include obstacles and other features such as vertical loops , corkscrews , breakable walls , spikes , water that the player can drown in , and bottomless pits . There is a miniboss fight with one of Robotnik 's large , powerful robots at the end of the first act of each level and a full boss fight with Robotnik at the end of the second . Reaching a new level saves the player 's game to one of six save slots , which can be loaded later .

As with previous Sonic games , Sonic 3 uses rings , scattered throughout the game 's levels , as a health system ; when the player is attacked without rings , is crushed , falls off @-@ screen , or exceeds the act 's ten @-@ minute limit , they lose a life and return to the most recently passed checkpoint . Dying with zero lives gives the player a game over . The levels also include power @-@ ups in television monitors that , when hit , grant the character an extra life , temporary invincibility to most hazards , a number of rings , a shield that allows them to breathe underwater , a shield that allows them to withstand fire from enemy projectiles , or a shield that attracts nearby rings .

The game contains two types of " special stages " . When the player collects at least 50 rings and passes a checkpoint , they can warp to the first type , which involves bouncing up a gumball machine @-@ like corridor to earn power @-@ ups by hitting a switch . Both sides of the corridor are lined with flippers , which disappear when the character bounces on them , and the switch drops when both flippers supporting it are removed . The corridor 's floor contains a bounce pad , which also disappears after one use ; falling afterwards causes the player to leave the stage with the most recent power @-@ up collected .

The second type , triggered by entering giant rings found in secret passages , involves running around a 3D map and passing through all of a number of blue spheres arranged in patterns . Passing through a blue sphere turns it red , and touching a red sphere causes the player to leave the stage , unless the player has just completed a cycle around an arrangement of blue spheres , in which case all of these spheres turn to harmless rings . Removing all of the blue spheres gives the player a Chaos Emerald ; if Sonic (not Tails) collects all seven , he can become Super Sonic at will , which makes him invincible to most obstacles .

Sonic 3 includes a competitive mode : two players , controlling Sonic , Tails , or Knuckles the Echidna (this is the only way to use Knuckles without attaching Sonic & Knuckles to the cartridge) , race through one or all of five stages that do not appear in the main game . In these same stages , a single player can compete against the clock in time attacks .

= = = Sonic 3 & Knuckles = = =

Sonic 3 and Sonic & Knuckles were intended to be a single game , but were released separately due to time and financial constraints . The Sonic & Knuckles cartridge features a " lock @-@ on " adapter that allows it to be physically attached to other Genesis cartridges . Connecting the Sonic 3 cartridge creates a combined game , Sonic 3 & Knuckles . The lock @-@ on function is available in some digital releases of the games , such as the Virtual Console service for the Wii .

Sonic 3 & Knuckles allows the player to play Sonic 3 levels as Knuckles or Sonic & Knuckles levels as Tails or both Sonic and Tails . Other new features are the ability to collect Super Emeralds , unlocking new " Hyper " forms for Sonic and Knuckles and a " Super " form for Tails , improved save options , which record the player 's lives and continues , and an additional ending that shows Sonic returning the Master Emerald to Angel Island .

= = Development = =

As with its predecessors , Sonic 3 was developed by Sonic Team and published by Sega . Yuji Naka and Hirokazu Yasuhara were the primary creators of the Sonic 3 design document and project schedule . Sonic 3 began as a top @-@ down , isometric game , similar to what would become Sonic 3D Blast (1996) , but the concept was abandoned early as the team did not want to change

the Sonic formula too radically for a sequel .

Sonic 3 and Sonic & Knuckles were originally planned as a single game . However , time was limited and the manufacturing costs of a 34 megabit cartridge with NVRAM would have been prohibitively expensive . Sonic Team split the game in half , giving the developers more time to finish the second part , and splitting the cost between two cartridges . The cartridge has a small amount of non @-@ volatile RAM built into it , which allows the player to save game progress to the game cartridge .

Sonic 3 was released on February 2 , 1994 in North America and February 24 in Europe . To help promote the game 's European release , Right Said Fred adapted the song " Wonderman " to include references to many aspects of Sonic . The song was used in the game 's advertisements and released as a single , which charted in the UK at number 55 . In the music video , Fezhead and Skull from the Sega TV advertising campaign appeared along with Sonic .

= = = Michael Jackson 's involvement = = =

In 2005 , former Sega Technical Institute director Roger Hector stated that Sega brought in Michael Jackson to compose music for Sonic 3 , but following the allegations of sexual abuse against Jackson , his involvement was terminated and the music reworked . The website of musician Cirocchio Jones , who contributed music to Sonic 3 and is credited in @-@ game as " Scirocco " , credits himself along with Jackson and Jackson 's tour keyboardist and songwriting collaborator Brad Buxer for musical cues for " levels 2 & 3 " of " Sonic the Hedgehog " . However , senior Sega staff later stated that any involvement of Jackson was arranged without their knowledge , and no contracts nor formal agreements were ever made .

In a 2009 interview with French magazine Black & White , Buxer stated that Jackson was involved with some Sonic 3 compositions , but chose to remain uncredited because he was unhappy with the sound capabilities of the Genesis . He also said that the Sonic 3 credits music later became the basis for Jackson 's 1996 single , " Stranger in Moscow " . In November 2013 , it was discovered by the community that the musical theme for " IceCap Zone " closely resembles a previously unreleased track from 1982 by The Jetzons , of which Buxer was the keyboardist and co @-@ songwriter , called " Hard Times " .

In October 2013 , GameTrailers dedicated an episode of its Pop Fiction series to examining Jackson 's involvement with the game . Roger Hector , who previously stated that Jackson 's involvement in the game was dropped due to the sexual abuse allegations , stated that any similarities to Jackson 's music in Sonic 3 was not intentional on Sega 's part . However , an anonymous source involved in the game 's development reaffirmed Buxer 's statements and said Jackson 's involvement happened before the scandals came to light in August 1993 , and that his contributions remained in the game with Jackson choosing to remain uncredited . The source specified that the Carnival Night Zone music was one of the pieces Jackson contributed to .

= = Alternate versions and ports = =

= = = Compilation releases = = =

Compilations that include the game are Sonic Jam (1997) for the Sega Saturn ; Sonic & Knuckles Collection (1997) and Sonic & Garfield Pack (1999) for the PC ; Sonic Mega Collection (2002) for the GameCube ; Sonic Mega Collection Plus (2004) for the PlayStation 2 , Xbox , and PC ; Sonic 's Ultimate Genesis Collection (2009) for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 ; and Sonic Classic Collection (2010) for the Nintendo DS . Most compilations feature the game largely unchanged . However , Sonic Jam , in addition to featuring the original release , also had a few new " remix " options . " Normal " mode altered the layout of rings and hazards , and " Easy " mode removes certain acts from the game entirely . Sonic & Knuckles Collection features a MIDI rendition of the game 's soundtrack , with certain levels featuring completely different music .

= = = Digital releases = = =

The game was released for the Wii 's Virtual Console in September 2007 and for the Xbox Live Arcade on June 10 , 2009 . The Xbox version has enhanced graphics for high definition displays as well as online leaderboards and support for multiplayer via split screen and Xbox Live . The original method of saving the game is replaced with a revamped version that allows progress to be saved anywhere during play , except after completing the game . When the PC version was released via the Steam software , the game and its successor were released together as Sonic 3 & Knuckles as originally intended , with the player (even if playing as Tails) simply continuing at the beginning of Sonic & Knuckles after finishing Sonic 3 .

= = Reception = =

The Genesis version of the game sold 1 @. @ 02 million copies in the United States . While Sonic 1 's worldwide sales have been estimated at 15 million and Sonic 2 's at 6 million , Sonic 3 , unlike these two , was not bundled with the Genesis console itself . However , Sonic 3 is still one of the best @-@ selling Genesis games of all time .

Like its predecessors , Sonic 3 received positive reviews . It holds a score of 89 % at review aggregator GameRankings based on 5 reviews . Critics generally felt Sonic 3 was the best game in the series so far . Andrew Humphreys of Hyper , who declared himself not a Sonic fan , said it was " undoubtedly " the best of the series , including the acclaimed but obscure Sonic CD , though he admitted having preferred Sonic 2 's special stages by a small margin . Sega Magazine , however , stated that Sonic 3 has better special stages and was not only superior to Sonic 2 as a whole but would be " a serious contender for the Best Platform Game Ever award " . Sega Power wrote that despite their skepticism , they found it " excellent " and easily " the most explorable and playable " in the series . Electronic Gaming Monthly also compared Sonic 3 favorably to Sonic 1 , 2 , and CD and awarded it their " Game of the Month " award . They later ranked it number 1 in The EGM Hot 50 , indicating that it received the highest average score of any game they 'd reviewed in the past year . Thomas of IGN stated that Sonic 3 " completed the trilogy as the best of them all . " Whitehead , however , considered Sonic & Knuckles superior .

Some critics felt that Sonic 3 had innovated too little from previous Sonic games . Humphreys of Hyper saw only " a few new features " while Sega Power thought it was " not all that different " and Nintendo Life writer Damien McFerran said that " there 's not a lot of new elements here to be brutally frank " . Provo stated that the game 's most significant addition was its save system . However , he and Electronic Gaming Monthly also both enjoyed the new power @-@ ups . Many aspects of the game 's level design were praised ; Electronic Gaming Monthly and Sega Power enjoyed the game 's expansive stages , secret areas , much less linear level design , and difficulty . Mean Machines agreed , describing the game as " a rollercoaster ride from start to finish " and listing Carnival Night as their favorite level , which they described as " probably the most slickly programmed portion of game in Megadrive history " . Humphreys and Mean Machines felt that the game was too short , but they and Sega Magazine felt that its two @-@ player mode and the Emerald collecting would significantly extend the title 's replay value . On the other hand , Whitehead said that the stages ' large sizes would keep players sufficiently engrossed . Sega Magazine also enjoyed having the ability to play as Knuckles in the two @-@ player mode .

The visuals were very well received . Humphreys described Sonic 3 as " one of the most beautiful games around " and full of " flashy new visual tricks " , highlighting Sonic 's ascension up pipes and spiraling pathways as particularly inventive . Sega Magazine exclaimed that its graphics were " brilliant " even for a Sonic title , while Provo praised the " elaborate " backgrounds . Mean Machines thought similarly , giving special praise to the camera 's quick scrolling , the diversity of the level themes , and the " chunkier , more detailed " overall aesthetic . Thomas and Provo especially enjoyed the use of wordless cutscenes to create a coherent story and thematically connect the zones . McFerran , however , felt that the visuals had been downgraded , particularly Sonic 's "

dumpier " sprite and " the infamous ' dotty ' textures " .

The sound effects and music were also well received , though somewhat less so than the visuals . Sega Magazine described them as " brilliant " and " far superior " to Sonic 2 's . Mean Machines stated that every level had " great tunes " and sound effects and particularly praised the game 's ending music . However , Humphreys described the sound as " Sonicky ... with the emphasis on the ' icky ' " ; he also found it strikingly similar to the first two Sonic games ' soundtracks . Thomas thought the music was " impressive " , but not quite on par with Sonic 2 's .

Reviews of later ports have been slightly less positive ; its Xbox 360 release has scores of 78 % and 79 % at GameRankings and Metacritic , respectively . Some critics , such as Adam Ghiggino of PALGN , felt the game had been insufficiently upgraded for its re @-@ releases ; Dan Whitehead of Eurogamer wished online co @-@ op had been implemented . Frank Provo of GameSpot and Lucas M. Thomas of IGN wished Sega had re @-@ released the game and its successor together as Sonic 3 & Knuckles instead .

Mega ranked it the fifth best Genesis game ever in November 1994 . In 2014 , GamesRadar ranked Sonic 3 & Knuckles as the seventh best Genesis game ; Jeremy Parish of US Gamer ranked the combined title eighth on a similar list in 2013 .

= = Legacy = =

Issues 33 and 34 of Sonic the Comic and issue 13 of the Archie Comics version of a Sonic the Hedgehog comic consisted of their own comic adaptations of the game . For Sonic 's twentieth anniversary , Sega released Sonic Generations , a game that remade aspects of various past games from the franchise . The Nintendo 3DS version of the game features a remake of the game 's final boss , " Big Arms " . Additionally , a re @-@ arranged version of the " Game Over " theme appeared in the game .