= Major League Baseball (video game) =

Major League Baseball is a sports video game released in 1988 for the Nintendo Entertainment System . It is notable for being one of the first video games licensed by Major League Baseball , although it was not endorsed by the Major League Baseball Players Association . Without the backing of the Players Association , the game could not name the actual players , although it was able to use their numbers , thus accurately portraying the contemporary teams and their rosters . In doing so , it became the first baseball game for the Nintendo Entertainment System to carry official Major League Baseball licensing and lineups .

Major League Baseball was developed by Atlus and published by LJN . It featured many facets of realistic gameplay and a focus on managerial details , which stressed the importance of choosing a well @-@ balanced team . Despite its graphical limitations , it was considered a three @-@ dimensional game at the time and was featured in the first issue of Nintendo Power as compared the system 's other baseball games of the era .

= = Development = =

Prior to 1988 there had been two games released with the official endorsement of Major League Baseball . In 1980 Mattel Electronics released Major League Baseball (also known as Super Challenge Baseball and Big League Baseball) for the Atari 2600 and the Intellivision . This version was developed by APh Technological Consulting . Four years later MicroLeague was licensed to develop and publish MicroLeague Baseball for the Amiga , Atari ST , Commodore 64 , and PC . This version contained contemporary and classic teams and players and MicroLeague released extra disks that featured additional lineups .

In 1988 Atlus signed on to develop an " official " Major League Baseball game for the Nintendo Entertainment System , which would be a first for that particular console . In 1987 Tengen had released R.B.I. Baseball for the NES , which contained a Major League Baseball Players Association license , but no endorsement from Major League Baseball itself . This meant that , while the players were named in this version , the team names and logos were absent and replaced by generic place references such as Boston or St. Louis . An earlier version for the console , entitled Baseball was released in 1985 and contained no endorsement from either organization . American company LJN agreed to be the publisher and David Rolfe was brought on board as the game 's programmer . Rolfe had previously been a publisher with Activision and had been a chief contributor to the foundations of the Intellivision .

= = Gameplay = =

Officially licensed by Major League Baseball , the game features all twenty @-@ six teams that existed in 1987 . Additionally , the lineups and the player numbers are accurate to the team rosters that year . Since the game did not have the endorsement of the Major League Baseball Players Association at the time , the team members are only listed by number , not name . In addition to their numbers the players are represented by their statistics , abilities , throwing arm , and even placement in the batting order . 1988 's Major League Baseball was therefore the first NES game to be officially endorsed by Major League Baseball and to feature accurate contemporary lineups , albeit without the actual player names attached to their numbers .

Managerial decisions are a focus and game players are allowed to select their own lineups , although the game lacks Sabermetrics statistics due to the limitations of the era . Instead , the " manager " must make their decisions based on data such as player 's average and home run totals . They also have the ability to change and decide who will be a pinch @-@ hitter and who will be a substitute pitcher . One is even allowed to pick out a designated hitter . The game prohibits one from putting out more team members in a certain part of the field than would normally be allowed , which makes deciding which player will be used where a part of the experience .

There are three modes that can be played with teams from either the American League or the

National League : regular season games , All @-@ star games or the World Series (interleague) . The World Series rounds , however , are only one match each , which is not accurate to the real World Series . Due to the licensing , the teams even appear complete in their official uniforms and colours and also have all the options that a real baseball player would have , including bunting , pitching out , base stealing and throwing errors .

Gameplay limitations

In Major League Baseball , the pitcher is unable to move around the pitcher 's mound and many are also able to perform the feat of 100 mph (160 km / h) pitches . The ball 's physics have been called into question , with the ball stopping on a dime after three or less bounces . The game 's camera system does not function properly and , when a ball is hit , the outfield camera follows the ball looking upwards , making it impossible for the game player to see where their fielders are . The ball can also be thrown and get stuck in the well between the stands and the field on an overthrow of a baseman , and cause inside the park home runs , which would not happen within a real game (in that case a ground rule double and / or error would be scored instead) . Another bug allows players to go into the stands past the wall with the ball if they enter at certain points in foul territory .
There are also gameplay issues when the player takes their turn to bat . The AI is not developed and , when the player hits a pitch , it nearly always takes the longest possible route to the ball , making runs easier to score . It also lacks the capability to throw out a runner who is returning to a base (instead of advancing) or perform a double play after catching a fly ball . Furthermore , the batter can only move vertically , not horizontally , in the batter 's box .

Technology

Graphics

The graphics themselves were considered to be three @-@ dimensional given the constraints of the technology at the time . All the players are Caucasian and each one 's batting stance is exactly the same . The game view is always top down ; when batting or pitching , it is centered above the catcher , behind the batter and with an overhead look of the pitcher . In the outfield , there is an aerial view of a portion of the field , with the team members represented by tiny sprites and an inset with red dots representing where the players are on base . Although the official colors are intact , the actual symbols on their uniforms are absent . The crowd is represented by a series of colored dots .

Music and sound effects

There are a limited number of effects and , aside from brief ballpark jingles , there is no real background music present during the game . For example , the charge fanfare is played at random points and the introductory screen begins with a different baseball tune while the player is loading up and selecting his team , along with a home run fanfare . Generic sound effects include the bat cracking upon contact with the ball , the sound of the ball flying through the air during a pitch , bouncing and throwing effects , and a stream of crowd noises .

Reception

Major League Baseball was featured in the first issue of Nintendo Power and compared to R.B.I. Baseball and Bases Loaded , although the magazine did not pass any judgment on which game was superior . Allgame 's review of Major League Baseball rated it three stars out of five , the same rating it gave to R.B.I. Baseball and half a star lower than it awarded to Bases Loaded .