

= Super Mario Strikers =

Super Mario Strikers , known as Mario Smash Football in Europe and Australia , is a five @-@ on @-@ five football ( soccer ) game developed by Next Level Games for the GameCube . The game was released in Europe and North America in late 2005 , and in Japan and Australia in 2006 . The game 's sequel , Mario Strikers Charged , was also developed by Next Level Games and is available for the Wii . The game 's developers had worked on the NHL series before development of Strikers , which served as an influence for the fast @-@ paced and physical nature of the game .

Strikers is a sports game incorporating characters and themes from the Mario franchise . The game features the basic aspects and objectives of a football game , although no referees are present and characters can legitimately shove others out of possession of the ball . As in other games such as Mario Power Tennis , the player can use Mario @-@ themed items such as bananas and red shells to hinder the opposition and gain the advantage . Each team 's captain can use " Super Strikes " that , if timed accurately , will result in two points scored for the striker 's team . Each team comprises a goal keeper , a main Mario character ( captain ) , and three of the same secondary Mario characters known as " side kicks " .

The game received " generally favorable reviews " according to video game review aggregator Metacritic . In general , reviewers lauded Strikers ' accessibility and multiplayer gameplay , but criticised the lack of gameplay modes and single @-@ player offerings .

= = Gameplay = =

Super Mario Strikers is a five @-@ a @-@ side football console video game comprising characters and themes from the Mario series . Each team consists of a captain character from the Mario series and three secondary Mario characters known as " sidekicks " . Kritter is the goalkeeper for all sides except the " Super Team " , which consists of four captain robots and a Robo @-@ Kritter . Both sidekicks and captains have varying gameplay attributes with " balanced " and " defensive " play types available . Strikers follows the basic gameplay featured in most football video games , including the ability to dash , tackle players , and lob the ball . Despite this , characters not in possession can legitimately hit opponents with or without the ball ( " Big Hit " ) , resulting in a more arcade @-@ like style of gameplay . The game also features " Perfect " passes and shots , which trigger in sequence if both a pass and shot are applied close to the opponent 's goal . The most powerful shot possible is the " Super Strike " , which only the captain can make and will account for two points if successful . Once charged , the player must time button presses accurately on a visible gauge to trigger a successful shot at goal , resulting in a character @-@ specific animation .

As in other Mario sports titles such as Mario Power Tennis , the player can use items ? bananas , red shells , etc . ? to impede the opponent . Some " power ups " can aid the user by granting temporary imperviousness while others immobilize and hinder the opponent . The central antagonist of the Mario universe , Bowser , will also appear occasionally as a non @-@ player character to obstruct the players from each side . Strikers include six stadia , each having barriers to prevent the ball going out of play . These stadia only vary aesthetically and do not affect gameplay , featuring different surfaces such as grass and wood . The player can adjust the match settings to limit or expand the match time and select whether features such as the Super Strike will be included . As the player advances through the game , further adjustments can be made called " cheats " , that can render goalkeepers weaker and grant an infinite number of items .

Strikers includes multiple gameplay modes such as the " Grudge Match " , which is the standard single and multiplayer match mode of the game . Trainings sessions come in the form of " Strikers 101 " , where the player can practice individual aspects such as shooting and dashing . " Cup Battles " allows up to four players to compete in tournaments against artificial intelligence opponents to advance through more difficult cups for rewards , with " Super " denoting the higher @-@ ranked tournaments .

= = Development = =

Strikers was developed by Next Level Games , who revealed the game at the E3 conference of 2005 in the form of a playable demonstration . In an interview , game director Mike Inglehart and marketing director Grace Kim revealed that Strikers was originally intended to be a more realistic Mario sports game , but the development team opted for an " over @-@ the @-@ top " style after numerous consultations with Nintendo . Next Level Games cited a connection between Strikers and NHL Hitz Pro in terms of gameplay mechanics , claiming that the latter influenced the " responsive gameplay " in Strikers , as well as the use of goalkeepers and on @-@ field collisions . The developers revealed that the character system would be " balanced and fun " , although Nintendo had " the ultimate say " in regards to character design , wanting strong and aggressive styles that did not deviate from past characterisations too much . For this reason , voice recording for Strikers required more lines and sounds than in other Mario sports titles .

Assisted by producer Ken Yeeloy , Inglehart stated in an interview a willingness to link any new feature of Strikers with the sport of football . With this , they decided to accentuate " the exciting parts " of the game , with Inglehart using the electric fences in the stadia as an example in reference to the physicality of the sport . They also explained reasons for not using a penalty or card system , rating the power @-@ up system as compensation for this considering power @-@ ups are awarded to the team of a player that has been pushed or shoved .

= = Reception = =

Super Mario Strikers received generally positive reviews from critics , with reviewers lauding the game 's characterisation and visual style , being reminiscent to that of Kazuto Nakazawa . GameSpot 's Brian Ekberg praised the game 's accessibility , stating that " Strikers ' pick @-@ up @-@ and @-@ play design will have you playing like a cartoon Pele in no time " . Similarly , critics welcomed the developers ' choice to forgo traditional football rules in the favour of a more arcade @-@ like style of gameplay . Despite this , IGN complained of a " disappointingly slim " variety of modes , as well as the perceived small roster of characters and inflexibility when choosing teams . On a similar note , Eurogamer criticised the vague presentation of characters attributes , making it difficult to determine what their respective strengths and weaknesses are . Despite enjoying the variety and appearance of Striker 's stadia , GameSpot noted only cosmetic differences among them , and criticised a lack of physical features to make them more interesting .

Strikers ' multiplayer gameplay in particular was welcomed by reviewers , who praised the developers for providing aggressive and fast @-@ paced action . Conversely , the game 's single player offerings gained a less enthusiastic response , with critics noting " boring " and repetitive gameplay . GameSpot thought some features were " overpowered " in parts , including the big @-@ hit tackles and the ability to dash constantly given the absence of a stamina meter . Despite this , Eurogamer remarked that it was deeper than first anticipated , while IGN lauded the game 's " tight controls " and use of Super Strikes . The ability to push enemies into the electric barrier and the use of items was also welcomed as a means to make the game entertaining while playing defensively .

The game 's visuals received a mixed response , with critics reporting occasional problems with Striker 's framerate . While praising the character models and goal animations , GameSpot bemoaned the absence of a " Mario feel " when appraising the menu and settings . IGN noted " blurry textures , uninspired stadium designs , and almost incomprehensibly a sometimes sluggish framerate " , despite enjoying the characters art style . The audio received a mediocre response , with critics praising the use of character and audience chants while criticising a lack of variety and repetitiveness . GameSpot thought the menu music had " some nice flair to it " , despite noting sounds such as Luigi 's goal celebration that , while charming when first heard , became tedious . In Japan , Famitsu gave the game a score of three sevens and one six for a total of 27 out of 40 ; Famitsu Cube + Advance , on the other hand , gave it a score of one nine , two eights , and one seven , for a total of 32 out of 40 .

Not all non @-@ video game publications gave the same praise for the game . Common Sense Media gave it all five stars and called it " a perfect game for a bunch of teenagers to play because it

's wacky , fast @-@ paced , and just plain fun . " However , Maxim gave it a score of seven out of ten and stated that " With matches of five @-@ on @-@ five taking place on small fields with really basic controls , Strikers is classic arcade @-@ style soccer , but the game gets an extra kick from power @-@ ups , random Bowser attacks , and a Telemundo @-@ style announcer . " The Sydney Morning Herald gave it a similar score of three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five and called it " immediately likable " .

= = = Awards and sales = = =

In GameSpot 's E3 2005 coverage , this game was given the award " Best Sports Game " , and was nominated a finalist for " Best Game of Show " . It received GameSpy 's " Game of the Year 2005 " awards for " Best GameCube Sports " , " Best GameCube Multiplayer " , and was ranked second for all GameCube games in 2005 . It was a finalist for " Sports Game of the Year " by the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences for the 2006 Interactive Achievement Awards . Super Mario Strikers has sold 950 @,@ 000 in North America as of December 27 , 2007 .

= = = Top Players = = =

Since the release of the game , there have been many tournaments . Kevin " Bonj " Bongiovanni has been known to be the best player to have ever touched the game with his total earnings of \$ 300 @,@ 000 in prize money . His combo of Yoshi and Birdo can matchup to anyone . Other Honorable Mentions : Kevin " Sully " Sullivan . Keith " I Peaked " Watkins .