= Alleyway =

Alleyway (??????) is a video game developed by Nintendo and Intelligent Systems and published by Nintendo as a global launch title for the Game Boy . It is a Breakout clone and one of the first four games developed and released for the system . The game was released first in Japan in 1989 , in North America later that year , and in Europe in 1990 . It was later re @-@ released via online distribution for the Nintendo 3DS Virtual Console on June 6 , 2011 .

The name Alleyway references the in @-@ game gateway that the player 's spaceship (represented as a paddle) must pass through . While Alleyway is a portable clone of Breakout , it adds several new features , including alternating stages , bonus rounds , and hazards for the player at later levels . While the game 's original box art featured an unidentifiable protagonist , later international releases of the game replaced the character with Mario . Alleyway was released with limited advertising , receiving moderate to low scores from reviewers who compared it to games like Arkanoid .

= = Gameplay = =

The player 's objective in Alleyway is to clear all bricks in each stage using a ball and paddle while keeping the ball from falling into the pit below , similar to that of Breakout . The paddle 's speed can be adjusted by holding either the B or A button on the controller while moving the paddle , which can move only horizontally at a fixed height . At the start of each life , the player can reposition the paddle before releasing the ball and commencing gameplay . When released , the ball will always begin at a 45 ° angle above the paddle aimed toward its center . The player starts the game with five paddles ; each time the ball falls into the pit below the paddle , a paddle is removed and the ball is reset .

The game ends when all the player 's paddles are depleted . An additional paddle is granted for each 1000 points scored , until the player has over 10 @,@ 000 points . The player may have up to nine paddles at once . The game lacks a continue feature , though the high score will be retained until the game is reset or turned off . As there is no battery @-@ backed SaveRAM or password feature , Alleyway can only be completed in one sitting on the Game Boy . This was later changed with the re @-@ release of the game for the Nintendo 3DS 's Virtual Console system , which allowed for in @-@ game progress to be recorded to a single save state accessible at any time while playing the game .

= = = Ball behavior = = =

The ball will only travel at 15 ° , 30 ° , or 45 ° angles . If the ball hits a brick , the brick disappears and the ball ricochets in a different direction at the same angle . The ball 's speed depends on the type of brick that it hits : gray and black bricks increase its speed , while white and square , indestructible bricks have no effect . A sound effect is also played when the ball collides with an object or wall , with walls producing the lowest pitch and black bricks the highest .

The ball 's direction and speed can be controlled by the paddle 's velocity and point of contact . Changing direction the moment the ball comes into contact with the paddle , called a snap technique , will bounce the ball upward with increased speed . Moving the paddle quickly in the opposite direction than the ball is headed will result in the ball bouncing in the same horizontal direction as the paddle at a 15 ° angle . If the player contacts the ball with the body of the paddle before it falls into the pit below , it will bounce back into the playing field . However , if instead either corner of the paddle collides with the ball at that moment , it will be knocked directly into the pit .

Alleyway 's ball cannot be locked in an infinite loop of ricochets . Whenever the ball starts to loop between objects such as the ceiling , indestructible blocks and / or the paddle itself , its velocity will change at a random point after the second cycle on its next collision . As a result , the ball will travel at a slightly raised or lowered angle depending on its current trajectory , and will break out of the loop .

= = = Levels = = =

The game features 24 levels , based on eight block patterns in groups of three . After every three regular stages , the player proceeds to a bonus stage , giving the game a total of 32 levels . Most levels follow a generic design , though one group is modeled after Mario 's head as it appears next to the remaining paddles icon . The player progresses to the next level once all bricks are destroyed , where the same pattern of bricks appears but behaves differently . Every second stage is a Scrolling Block Screen , featuring bricks that move from left to right ; every third is an Advancing Block Screen , where the bricks move downward the height of one regular brick in short bursts , increasing in speed as the ball bounces off the paddle . Any part of a brick below a height of ten bricks above the paddle is automatically removed ; thus they cannot impede the player 's movement but cannot contribute towards the player 's score either .

As the player progresses through patterns , new elements are added to the gameplay . After the fourth stage , if the ball comes into contact with the top of the area , the paddle 's size is halved until the stage is cleared or a life is lost . From this point on , the third stage variant features hidden bricks above the ceiling that descend progressively , using a similar ? or same ? layout that must also be cleared , meaning the pattern must be cleared twice . In later levels , bricks in the second stage variant may not move at the same speed or in the same direction . After the twelfth stage , indestructible bricks are incorporated into the brick patterns .

Bonus stages feature patterns based on various Nintendo Entertainment System Super Mario Bros. sprites , such as a Piranha Plant , Goomba or Bowser . Unlike regular levels , the ball will destroy blocks in these stages without ricocheting off them , and contact with the ceiling will not affect the paddle size . These stages are the only ones to feature background music during play , and cannot be paused . A timer is present for each bonus stage ; it starts at 95 for the first and is reduced by five for each subsequent bonus stage completed beforehand . If the timer ends , the ball falls into the pit (no life is lost in this case) , or all bricks are destroyed , the bonus stage ends . Destroying all bricks before the timer expires yields additional bonus points , which vary depending on the level . Once cleared , the brick pattern changes and gameplay reverts to the normal cycle . After finishing the final bonus round , the player is given a congratulations screen using the Mario graphic from the original Mario Bros. game . The game then loops back to the first stage , allowing for infinite play .

= = = Scoring = = =

Points are awarded for destroying bricks based on their shade , with one point awarded for the lightest and three for the darkest . The player may earn additional points for completing the bonus stages , with the bonus starting at 500 for the first and reaching 1500 for the last five . The player 's highest obtained score is recorded until the game is turned off .

The game only displays four digits of the player 's score , yet it has a maximum value of 65 @,@ 535 . Scores of 10 @,@ 000 and above are displayed as a combination of icons and the numerical display . For every 10 @,@ 000 points , a sprite from the NES Super Mario Bros. game is shown below the numerical score . A fire flower is shown for 10 @,@ 000 points , a mushroom for 20 @,@ 000 , and a starman for 30 @,@ 000 points and above . The game stops changing the sprite after awarding the starman icon . As a result , the highest score that can be displayed is 39 @,@ 999 ; however , the maximum score of 65 @,@ 535 is shown as 35 @,@ 535 . Once the maximum score has been reached , the score will roll over only if the player completes a bonus stage . A roll over does not affect the recorded high score .

= = Development = =

Based on classic ball @-@ and @-@ paddle arcade games such as Breakout and Arkanoid , Alleyway was a launch title for the Game Boy in 1989 for Japan and North America , alongside Super Mario Land , Baseball , and Tetris , though only with the first two in Japan . The game 's

release predates Tetris ' by two months , due to legal battles between Nintendo and Tengen over the Tetris property . On June 6 , 2011 , the game was re @-@ released as a launch title for the Nintendo 3DS Virtual Console system via online distribution . It was first released in Japan , and then North America a year later .

Alleyway marks one of the first appearances of Mario on the Game Boy system alongside Super Mario Land , although its original box and cartridge art showed an unidentified character in a spacesuit piloting the paddle . The artwork was changed to show Mario at the controls on the game 's international release , but neither the manual nor the back of the box refer to the Nintendo mascot 's presence in the game . Nintendo Power 's preview made no mention of Mario in the title other than note of the pattern of bricks in Mario 's shape for the first bonus level . Official confirmation of the pilot being Mario only came about in 1990 with Club Nintendo 's preview of the game 's European release .

The game was one of the first titles made by the Nintendo R & D1 development team , alongside Tetris and Radar Mission . Years later , the game 's designer Gunpei Yokoi would reuse much of Alleyway 's source code (such as paddle behavior and adapted physics engine) for the Game Boy game Kirby 's Block Ball while working with Shigeru Miyamoto 's team . Alleyway was re @-@ released for download onto the Nintendo Power cartridge , occupying one memory block on the device .

Promotion of the title in Nintendo published material consisted of a segment taking up a third of the page the articles were on . Advertisements for Alleyway were grouped with those for the Game Boy itself and other titles for the system . Years after its initial release , a two @-@ page section in the Super Game Boy Nintendo Strategy Guide bundled with the Super Game Boy accessory appeared , which gave advice and color codes for the game .

= = Reception = =

Although Alleyway sold well enough during its production run , it has not been re @-@ released as a Nintendo Player 's Choice title , and reviews of the game have been mostly mixed to negative . Mean Machines gave the game a score of 33 % , criticizing its repetitiveness and stating " this variant doesn 't have much more to offer than the original [Breakout] " . The magazine 's staff added " once you 've finished a couple of screens , you 'll be bored stiff " and compared the game to its predecessor , Arkanoid , regarding the lack of power @-@ ups in Alleyway . Electronic Gaming Monthly staff also reviewed the game , with four separate reviews giving the game scores of 6 / 10 , 6 / 10 , 5 / 10 , and 3 / 10 . All four reviewers compared it to Arkanoid , complaining about the lack of enhancement over the Breakout format . GamesRadar shared the sentiment in their review of the 3DS re @-@ release , with reviewer Nathan Meunier giving it a score of 5 / 10 and stating " Alleyway wasn 't so hot when it first came out , and it still pales when put it side @-@ by @-@ side to other similarly priced offerings " . He further added at times the game appeared to " hate " the player with its difficulty , though acknowledged that the addition of save states " takes some of the sting out of losing " . Retro Gamer 's Darran Jones called it " pretty piss @-@ poor all the way back in 1989 " , noting the bland levels and lack of power @-@ ups found in Arkanoid , and that many similar clones had outperformed it .

Not all comments about the game have been negative . The two Electronic Gaming Monthly reviewers that gave the highest scores did state they felt the design was perfect for the Game Boy , one adding " It 's also a very good game that combines some new features ... with the original Break @-@ Out theme " and concluding " Alleyway is good ? but a bit long " . German magazine Power Play gave the game a rating of 48 % , but also praised the game 's level variety . The book Rules of Play discusses the game as an example of improved design over a base core mechanic , citing the inclusion of distinct sound effects for ball collision as a means to praise the player for destroying bricks , and the varied level designs as " well done " and giving the player " an element of discovery to the overall experience . " Allgame noted that despite the simplicity and variety , " Alleyway is fun to play " , further adding that games of its kind " always play well on the Game Boy " .