

Take Me Out to the Virtual Ballgame!

Dynasty League Baseball



Images courtesy Design Depot

Design Depot

- Minimum Requirements:
(*Requires 1.3 floppy disk*)
- Windows 3.1
 - 486 processor
 - 10 MB free HD space
 - 8 MB RAM
 - VGA monitor

Realism: what does that word mean? While many games sport realism in their ads, many end up being all style and no substance. While sparkling graphics and sound may be nice to look at, what really matters is *the game*.

The folks at Design Depot know what "the game" is all about. While they don't sport eye-popping graphics, they bring another sort of realism to the game -- an accurate portrayal of the way the game is played.

Dynasty League Baseball was designed with this in mind. Graphics take a back seat to an almost entirely text-driven game. While that may turn some people off, die-hard fans will love the stats-heavy realism of Dynasty's play.

Remember the old Strat-o-matic board game? Remember how much fun it was?

Well, Dynasty League Baseball's creator, Michael Cieslinski, took that to the next level with his Persue the Pennant table top game. From that grew the original Dynasty League Baseball board game that defined a new level of realism, taking into account almost every possible situation that could occur on the field.

The next step was obvious: port the table top version to the computer for a more user-friendly flow. Dice are replaced with computer number generators and the player cards (with their immense amount of stats) are simply loaded into files.



Of course, half the fun of the table top version was realizing *why* things occurred and not just what happened. Cieslinski and company wanted to make sure that aspect remained, and it works quite well. The system's transparent play results show how the game situations are calculated and resolved, allowing the player to see the underlying logic behind the scenes.

Everything is taken into account, from the batters' power, to the wind and weather conditions, to the umpires sight lines ... it's hard to imagine that they left anything out. They even put in bizarre plays such as the infamous "Jose" play, where it bounces off the outfielder's head and over the wall.

Simply put, this game is what baseball is about.

Now that I've sung Dynasty League Baseball's praises, let me step back a bit and look at what could be done better.

First, we have the interface. While it is fairly easy to use, some of the charts are jumbled and appear cluttered. Also, if you use a monitor with set at a high resolution (mine's at 1024 x 768), you may have charts and info boxes popping up all over the place, without a good way to get rid of them. The standard 640 x 480 works fine, however.

Secondly, the process isn't as intuitive as it first appears. I had a hard time setting rosters initially. It is an easy process, but it is also easy to get a little confused if you don't look very carefully. And finally, there is the matter of limited season disk sets. The game only includes the 1969 Cubs and Mets teams. It's quite limited in what you can do. With my copy, I also received the 1982 Division Winners Set. While it was fun to watch old friends like Murphy, Homer, and Poceroba on the field again, I would've liked to have played other teams than just the Cards, Brewers, Angels, Orioles and Braves.

I can certainly understand the limited rosters, though. There is so much detail for each player, that if they mass produced the players, there wouldn't be an accurate representation. Also, I understand they do have a complete set of the 1996 season, though it is an extra \$39.95.

These flaws are more minor than anything, however. Dynasty League Baseball still remains a great simulation of the game. In my first attempt at a Dynasty League Game, Phil Niekro pitched a no-hitter through 7 1/3 until Lonnie Smith broke it up. It was great to see Knucksie at his best once more.

And I think that is why Dynasty League Baseball does such a good job. It relives the excitement of the game over and over again.



Overall rating: A solid triple.

Ratings:



Home Run - the best of the best



Triple - very good



Double - above average



Single - tolerable



Strike Out - worse than pitching at Coors Field

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