

ROCKET LEAGUE

THE ULTIMATE SOC-CAR GAME

NONY KHONDAKER

Being the sequel to the obscure PS3-exclusive *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars*, there was not much hype surrounding the release of *Rocket League*. But within one week of its release, it got a 10/10 rating on Steam, reached 120,000+ concurrent online players and is now the latest video game to officially become an eSport. That should be enough to tell you what a great piece of work this game is.

Rocket League

Developer : *Psyonix*

Publisher : *Psyonix*

Engine : *Unreal Engine 3*

Platforms : *Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4*

Review Platform : *Microsoft Windows*

Release Date : *July 7, 2015*

The gameplay of *Rocket League* is extremely simple, but its simplicity is its beauty. *Rocket League* is about two teams (Blue and Orange) of miniature sports cars, nicknamed Rockets, trying to send a gigantic soccer ball into each other's goal post in an enclosed arena. Enclosed arena means that the play is not limited to the ground only. The rockets can use the four walls (and



sometimes the ceiling too) to their advantage. Each match is five minutes in length and the team with the higher score at the end of regulation period is the winner. If the match is tied then the play continues onto "Overtime" which is pretty similar to "Golden Goal" except that there is no time limit. The controls are pretty basic too. Besides driving them around, you can apply boost and perform acrobatics with the rockets by combining the directional input and the jump input. The game has an in-depth training mode which will help you master the game. There are ten rockets which can be unlocked through progression and their decal, paint, wheels and trail

can be customised. You can also add hats or antennas to them. These customisation items need to be unlocked through progression as well. The customisation mechanism, while not too deep, is still very enjoyable.

The game has single-player, local split-screen multiplayer and online multiplayer modes. Besides Exhibition Mode, this game also features a Season Mode. There are four types of matches in the game – Duel (1v1), Doubles (2v2), Standard (3v3) and Chaos (4v4). In Duel, the job of both attacking and defending falls upon a single player, which can be quite stressful. In Chaos, the arena becomes way too

crowded and it becomes difficult to keep track of events. That's why I personally prefer the Doubles and Standard modes. The single-player is fun at first but the gameplay might become repetitive, mainly due to the AI's tendency of scoring own goals. The frustration increases when your AI teammates score own goals and cause you to lose. The multiplayer, however, is a completely different story. The servers are always jam-packed and you will never face the lack of partners to play with. The only issue with the multiplayer is that currently there are only four servers – Europe, US-East, US-West and Oceania. There are no servers yet for Asia or the other regions so you will get ridiculously high ping and suffer from lag issues time to time. But these issues are not very frequent and they might be fixed in future updates.

To sum up, *Rocket League* is a must play if you are looking for a good time.

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Hearthstone: The Ultimate Collectible Card Game

SALMAN CHOWDHURY ABIR

Most of us know about Blizzard through their legendary World of Warcraft and StarCraft franchise, but in March 2013 at Penny Arcade Expo they announced their debut in the CCG genre with *Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft*. Initially people expected it to fail and just outright get dominated by *Magic: The Gathering*. By early May 2015, there were more than 30 million registered *Hearthstone* accounts and it became clear that Blizzard had grasped the CCG genre in a way that *Magic: The Gathering* never could. So what makes *Hearthstone* the ultimate CCG Game?

HEARTHSTONE IS BASED ON CHARACTERS AND LORE FROM WARCRAFT:

The most essential ingredient to the success of *Hearthstone* early on was the fact that it sported characters and lore from the Warcraft universe. This naturally attracted a large part of the Blizzard fanbase and gave *Hearthstone* a smoother start than most other CCG games that came before.

HEARTHSTONE IS FREE-TO-PLAY:

Many can argue that you can never get the optimal experience without spending some serious green. But when you look at the gold system, it becomes clear that while you do not get access to every card and expansion right off the bat they can be gained eventually by just getting through the daily quests.

IT'S A DIGITAL CCG:

This means that you don't need any organisers, binders or a huge collection of cards ready. Just dive right in, do the tutorial and start playing. This sets it completely apart from other CCGs.

PLAY EVERYWHERE ON

EVERYTHING:

Visually *Hearthstone* has an artistic edge that far surpasses the other CCG games, even on a low-end PC. There is even a mobile version of the game which supports both Android and iOS, meaning you can play the game anywhere you want.

A DECENT BALANCE OF SKILL AND RNG:

First up let's get one thing straight, competitive CCG games will never be like competitive FPS, RTS or MOBA's. But as a CCG game the balance between skill and

RNG is actually decent with *Hearthstone*. Unlike most CCG games *Hearthstone* always has a counter within; with the right strategy and deck you can always overcome that annoying popular deck on ladder. *cough* Face Hunter *cough*.

BEST OF ALL WORLDS:

Hearthstone has managed to produce a unique combination of the pros from other CCG games without being influenced by their negative traits. Right now it is leading the genre like no other before and there is no doubt in my mind that that all CCG games in the future will take a similar route, so if you were planning to take a crack at the CCG genre, this is the game and now is time. Overall *Hearthstone* is a real masterpiece in the world of CCG, it is a genre that is still far from reaching its full potential but thanks to Blizzard's *Hearthstone* it is heading into the right direction.

