

GAME REVIEW

A few steps forward, a hundred backward



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Ashes Cricket

Developer: Big Ant Studios

Publisher: Big Ant Studios

Platforms: PC, PS4, XB1

Release Date: November 16, 2017

Even though Don Bradman Cricket 17 was a major disappointment, I was willing to give Big Ant cricket games another chance when Ashes Cricket was announced with fully licensed Australia and England teams.

My experience with the game started out very nicely. The menus and HUD have all been re-done and they look incredible. Gamers now can choose between two control schemes – “Standard” which feels a lot like the controls in Brian Lara Cricket games and “Classic” which is essentially the same controls as Don Bradman Cricket 17. I decided to play a five-over match between the two licensed teams in the MCG. When the match loaded, I was amazed by how good everything looked starting from the players to the stadium and the crowd in the stands. I was welcomed by the voice of Michael Slater, a seasoned cricket commentator. The welcome was not as warm as I’d hoped because it was at that point the game started falling apart.

There were very few lines of commentary and they were so monotonous that I eventually decided to completely turn it off. Even though the players look great and the animations on their bodies are excellent, there are no animations or expressions on their faces. The camera angles are awkward and the screen twitches while transitioning from one shot to another.

Things started going even further downhill when I tried to play with the unlicensed teams. Ashes Cricket has a “Cricket

Academy” just like the previous Big Ant games where one can download community-created teams, players, stadia and more. While the Academy was a smooth experience in both the previous titles, I found the one in Ashes Cricket to be quite troublesome. I managed to access the community after trying six times. I was shocked to see that the unlicensed players are all using the character models and animations from Don Bradman Cricket 17. The low-resolution texture bug from that game also carries over to this one. Consequently, when you play with one licensed and one unlicensed team, it feels like two different games merged together.

Surprisingly, Ashes Cricket contains even more bugs and glitches than DBC17. Quite often, dismissals do not take any effect. Sometimes, the fielding team appeals for review even though the umpire has already given out. The batsmen run very slowly and often end up running in the same direction.

The batting team shows no aggressive intent regardless of the format of match or the required run rate. The fielders move at a fixed pace that does not vary according to the pace of the ball. They do not stop running even when the ball has gone past the boundary. It’s an absolute shame that a cricket game in 2017 fails to measure up to the Brian Lara Cricket titles from the late 90s in terms of the AI.

Overall, Ashes Cricket is a broken, unfinished game and I feel it’s almost criminal for the developers to charge \$50 for a game that is so devoid of quality.

Nony Khondaker is an introvert who complements his non-existent social life with video games, Netflix and a whole lot of ice-cream. Send him memes and cat videos to cheer him up at fb.com/NonyKhondaker

Stages of being addicted to a mobile game

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You’re bored, browsing the app store on your new fancy phone, desperately looking for something to kill the time. Snapchat’s great, but when your crush opens your bland “strk” snap without even replying, you realise the only apps you need are mobile games. But were you ready to be so sucked in you can’t get out?

Denial: The first step in your road of long suffering began when you found that little cute/cool icon on the top games list. You read the description and you see it’s free, but then the fineprint says “free to play, however microtransactions exist”. You brush it off thinking, “Pssh, who pays to play a mobile game?” It’s free, you’ll just play to kill time. *You won’t be one of those types.*

Anger: PvP really sucks when you’re a noob with the default character and items facing off against some veteran who’s probably invested several months and some goat sacrifices into this. Maybe you just wanted that cute skin for your character, it couldn’t hurt to spend some money on it right? Or that unit who’s hard to unlock without some \$peeding up? But you have self control, all till the frustration kicks in. “*THAT’S IT, I’M GETTING ME WALLET!*” you say.

Bargaining: It’s been a few days/weeks now. You’re making good progress; you’re happy. But you want more out of the game. xx_XXSLayR569’s on your friendlist and he’s better than you in two days without using microtransactions. You start to question why your units aren’t good enough despite being the ultra rare limited event bonus purchase. Or why you’re missing every cat type despite having paid for them once, but hey, wait *new skin just released, but it’s premium!* Time to break out the wallet!

You *need* to pay more and pray more to RNGesus.

If your friends had to call an intervention on you for being wallet happy for your in-game waifu, but not treating them, you have a problem. “*DON’T TAKE AWAY MY ALLOWANCE PLEASE*” you beg your mom after your friends tell her you’re in too deep.

Depression: It’s over. You’ve spent so much there’s a burning hole in your wallet, and a bigger hole in your heart. But you’re still not good enough, or you just haven’t collected enough. You know playing the game makes you sadder, but you’re more depressed not playing it. The withdrawal from not playing is real, but you’re not an addict you still protest.

Now you just have to figure out whether the tissues will be used to wipe the tears from your eyes or your phone screen, so you can see better.

Acceptance: At this point in time, you’ve finally come to recognise you are an addict. Free-2-play became Pay-2-play, and while you’re disgusted at becoming the same kind of people you said you wouldn’t be, you’ve come to accept it. I mean, look at your No. 1 status among your friend list in the game, everyone wants a piece of your rare goodies because they’re scrubs who can’t pay to win. Hope you’re happy with yourself and your premium paid-for pixels.

Nuhan B. Abid is someone who actually thinks puns and sarcasm are top class forms of humour. Tell him that “sar-chasm” is TOTALLY the best thing ever at nuhanbabid@hotmail.com

