

MARIO KART: SUPER CIRCUIT

GENRE(S): Racing

AVAILABLE ON: GBA

DEVELOPED BY: Intelligent Systems

PUBLISHED BY: Nintendo

RELEASED: July 21, 2001

You wouldn't believe the amount of *Mario Kart* purists out there in the world. The third game in the series was announced at the same time as the Game Boy Advance, and came out just a few months into the handheld's launch. Originally titled *Mario Kart Advance*, the game was specifically designed to please the fans of the original, while incorporating some improved mechanics from *Mario Kart 64*, while not really bringing up any innovations of its own. *Mario Kart: Super Circuit* gives and takes.

The basics of *Mario Kart* have never really changed. When you have a good concept, why change it? You just improve it. The concept is something you can't do better, you just pay attention to the details. It's kind of useless to start comparing *Super Circuit* to *Mario Kart 64* in looks, until you realize that it looks better. Then you realize that this isn't meant to be an adaptation of *Mario Kart 64*, this is much, much closer to the original *Super Mario Kart*. Only better, with more substance. To the point you realize it's a handheld game.

As soon as you get used to the limited controls of the Advance, you'll love 'em. The controls are the most fluid they had been in the series at this point, and the selection of racers is the exact same as in *Mario Kart 64*. Those of you who have read the earlier *Mario Kart* reviews know exactly who my choice of racer is, and it kinda kills my buzz when they put the Dark Lord down as the slowest and weakest of all of them. Ah, who cares? I know who I'm rolling with.

The GP's are the same as in the original *Super Mario Kart*, and the game throws in a platformer-style

bonus. Whenever you win gold in a certain GP, *and* collect 100 coins along the way throughout the whole cup, you will unlock the original GP from the original *Super Mario Kart*, which is extremely cool. The total adds up to a whopping 40 different tracks, and you'll definitely have fun with the game as long as you're a *Mario Kart* enthusiast...

...However, the multiplayer modes are a disgrace. Those who have followed me a long time, know that I'm not much of a racing fan, and not a multiplayer enthusiast in general. *Mario Kart* is an exception to both rules, I like the game and I love the multiplayer modes. All of the classic multiplayer modes are here, but the Game Boy Advance's hardware itself brings in unwanted limitations. The new mode called "Link It Up!" allows four players to connect their Game Boy Advances together using a link cable. This allows GP Mode to be played on four different tracks with each player using Yoshi. The classic modes – VS and Battle Mode – just don't feel the same. Everyone's staring at their own screen, sitting ass-to-ass to each other... it just doesn't work. You need space for swearing, swinging your fists, playing mind games, and finally whipping out a powerdrill to use on any subject you wish, whether it's the controller or your opponent. That's what Battle Mode's about. In most games of this type.

Even while the multiplayer modes, an enormous part of my personal *Mario Kart* experience, fail to impress me, *Mario Kart: Super Circuit* is a damn good game, equipped with surprisingly good A.I., good controls and an entertaining single-player trek.

8.5