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The Ins and Outs of Fitness in WII Sports

November 11th, 2006 was not just another day, in fact, it was the day that Nintendo released their new WII, partially in hopes of rivaling the newly released PlayStation 3. Part of their plan was to incorporate a free copy of WII Sports with the console and, according to Game On! it went on to sell a record-breaking 82.69 million copies. (Hansen, Dustin) This new technology allowed developers and players alike to experience these newly harnessed game mechanics.

Before going any further, the parameters of what game mechanics are must first be addressed. In this sense, it refers to Robert Zubek’s definition of “Game pieces, rules, characters, and various other elements with which the player will interact.” (Zubek, 41) The mechanics of WII Sports vary depending on which of the five different sports you can play.

There are, however, several overarching mechanics that they all share.

Albeit an obvious one, participation is an essential aspect of this game. This aspect also lends itself to Zubek’s mention of progression to entice players which manifest in WII Sports through the ability to go professional. (Zubek, 54) Players upon reaching a certain skill level in-game will be rewarded with a stylish object based on the sport, for example in Boxing the player gains boxing gloves. Without participation players would be unable to achieve their professional status, thus there would not be a multiplayer aspect nor any competition.

Multiplayer mechanics are not limited to player versus other players, with WII Sports this is no different. However, WII Sports does allow players to play with and against players controlled by bots as they are known. These computer-controlled players become harder based on the player’s skill level which levels the playing field between newer players and those who are already adept at the game. Another aspect of the multiplayer component is the ability to play against players of similar skill ranges in solo sports. Speaking of players, the WII would not be the same without the customization of a MII.

Yet another innovative change from standard consoles that WII took was giving players a more hands-on approach to their control mechanics. From the controller to your own fully customizable avatar, Nintendo went through great lengths to give players a stake in games they designed like that of WII Sports. According to Zubek “The player’s avatar is; what it can do in the game world.” (Zubek, 55) There is not a greater example of this than when a player can directly control their avatar, both in terms of movement as well as sculpting your very own character known as the MII.

WII Sports was revolutionary for the gaming scene, it introduced new mechanics and incorporated universal ones such as player participation, multiplayer mechanics via player progression, and of course control mechanics in terms of an avatar, and directly controlling your characters movements in unprecedented ways, which leaves little doubt for why it was the most sold game of its time.

Works Cited

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