

STUDENT LIFE

Playstation 2 scores a birdie in golf game

Review by Jeff Smen
staff writer

Sony recently released its fourth installment of its popular golf series known as "Hot Shots Golf." But after so many sequels, is "Hot Shots Golf Fore" really worth the money?

Simply put, the answer is yes. This game has everything a realistic golf game needs and then some. Unlike like most golf games, "Hot Shots" is known for its funny animal-like characters and the fourth game in the series holds true to its predecessors. The character roster has been bumped up to 24 golfers and 10 caddies, though you only start off with 4 golfers and 3 caddies. Sony even included some of their more famous characters from various other series. Jak, from Jak and Daxter can be unlocked as well as Ratchet, from the Ratchet and Clank series. Expect Jak 3 and Ratchet and Clank: Up Your Arsenal out sometime late this fall.

There are now 12 courses in all to choose from with five courses coming directly from "Hot Shots Golf Three." A par three course is available and the return of mini golf mode made its way back to the series.

"Hot Shots" isn't terribly hard to play and most gamers will be used to the controls after playing for no more than an hour. Hot Shots uses the bar system where you have start the bar, let the bar go up in order to get some power, and stop the bar in order to hit the ball.

The graphics are about the same as they were in the last game, but you can definitely tell the water and the characters faces look more detailed this time around. The shadowing looks realistic and the option to change the seasons makes the course look more realistic with leaves

blowing, snow falling, etc.

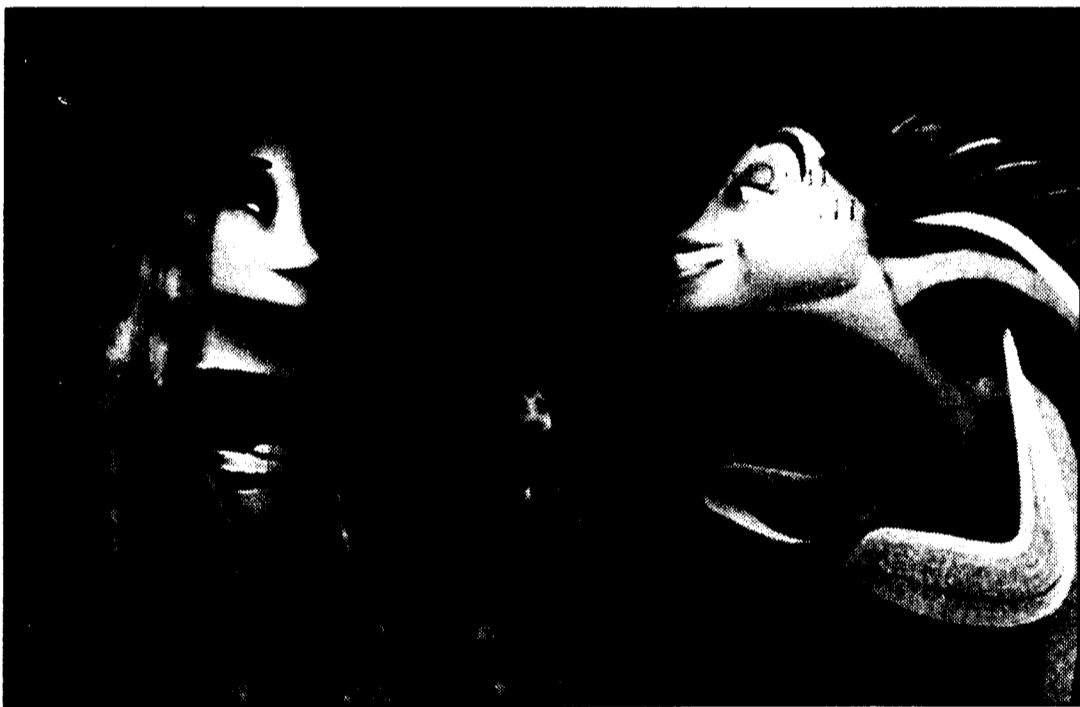
The biggest option added to the series has to be online play. Online play has two different modes, four-player mode or fifty-player mode. With four-player mode, a player can join up with three other players online. Fifty player mode consist of a player going online and playing forty-nine other player in a huge tournament, though you can't trash talk your opponents in this particular mode.

Of course if you don't have online play for the Playstation 2, it's always fun to invite some friends over and play in multi-player mode. "Hot Shots Golf" games always make great party games.

If single player is more of your style, there are four modes available to play. Tournament mode is where you play another twenty-nine people for a chance to win trophies and unlock new courses. Vs. mode has the player choose a player and compete with the computer with an character. Beat the computer and you unlock the character the computer used. The training mode is always useful if gamers are in need of some practice or they've never played "Hot Shots." Mini-game is where gamers can find an assortment of smaller games to play with friends or solo.

Hot Shots Golf Fore is definitely worth the money. With lots of extra golfers, caddies, clubs and courses to unlock, it may take the average gamer a while to beat the whole game. If forty dollars seems too much, "Fore" is at least worth a rental. If you're one of those gamers looking for a realistic golf game with realistic golfers, going with Tiger Woods might be a good idea. But if you're a gamer who wants to play a golf game with crazy characters but realistic fun courses, pick up "Hot Shots Golf Fore."

'Shark Tale' lacks bite



PIXAR FILMS

Will Smith provides the voice of Oscar in Pixar's film, "Shark Tale."

Review by Daniel J. Stasiewski
editor in chief

"Shark Tale" may very well be the first computer-animated feature that doesn't dazzle or delight. It's a whale of a disappointment that lacks the simple emotional arch to retain anyone's attention through the entire film. Unless an audience gives in to the simplicity of the humor and the placid narrative, the undersea world of "Shark Tale" doesn't have the color or class to stand alongside "Finding Nemo" or "Shrek."

Will Smith provides the voice of Oscar, a fish that dreams of making it to the top of the reef. The big time (gold chains, hot female fish, penthouse apartment, etc.) will have to wait until he's done scrubbing whale tongues for money at the Whale Wash.

Oscar's dreams, however, lead to a problem when it comes to get-rich-quick schemes, and the fast talker finds himself owing his puffer fish boss Sykes (Martin Scorsese) \$5000. That's not a problem until Sykes ticks of the underworld boss Don Lino (Robert DeNiro) and has to start paying for shark protection.

Don Lino's edginess is may be due to his pending retirement. Lino wants to leave the business to his sons Frankie and Lenny (Jack Black). But Lenny isn't shark enough to handle the job. (He's a closet vegetarian for goodness sake!) Lino puts Frankie in charge of making a shark out of Lenny.

Quick note here. Lenny's character and the parallels with a gay coming-out story are overt and unsympathetic. The writers use the idea of a vegetarian shark in sophomoric and often unfunny way to further a story that is already riddled with stereotypes. African-Americans and Italian-Americans are portrayed in ways that may have been acceptable decades ago, but not today. It's unfair to call the movie either racist or homophobic. Simple and stupid is more accurate.

Lenny and Frankie eventually stumble upon Sykes' goons taking care of Oscar for the unpaid loans. That makes Oscar easy prey for Lenny. Even tied up and

gagged, Oscar isn't an easy fish to swallow, especially for a vegetarian. When Frankie tries to show his bro how it's done, an anchor falls from the surface killing the great white.

From that day on, Oscar is mistakenly called the shark slayer and shoots to the top faster than a fart in a swimming pool. But Lenny's knowledge of the actual events puts Oscar's fame in jeopardy. With Lenny looking for a way to escape the business, Oscar and the shark devise a plan to make Oscar a real shark slay and Lenny a distant memory.

"Shark Tale" is a film that is, at its best, mindless entertainment and, at its worst, tiresome and trite. I say this only after already making note of the intellectual abandonment of the main characters. Oscar, Lenny and the rest are one-dimensional and the story is too familiar to be considered entertaining. It's a film about fish that doesn't need to be about fish at all. Worse, it's a film that knows it doesn't need fish and still embraces the ridiculous premise.

True, "The Lion King" and "Finding Nemo" have used animals with human emotions and conditions, but those characters were animals first. In "Shark Tale" the fish aren't important because our contemporary, human society influences the film so much. The timeless mythology is replaced with pop culture references for instant gratification, a sad step back for the computer-animated films.

It's no longer enough to astonish an audience with the intricate CGI designs that made even films like "Final Fantasy" worth a watch. A friend of mine said the other day this first bad movie establishes a genre of computer animation, and I couldn't agree more.

The lack of creativity and a sense of "going through the motions" do make "Shark Tale" the first real film made to sell the CGI alone. That's why the humor isn't really clever and the story is based in the action and not the characters. The days of every film turning out like a Pixar feature or "Shrek" are over. I guess it was good while it lasted.

Students follow TV to get taste of real world

By Jo Napolitano
Chicago Tribune
(KRT)

CHICAGO - With neatly pressed shirts and polished shoes, students enrolled in a rigorous Northern Illinois University marketing class modeled after Donald Trump's reality show "The Apprentice" look less like college students and more like anxious business executives.

They take their work almost as seriously as executives. One student, after being eliminated from the competition much in the way Trump's would-be apprentices are fired from his NBC program, walked out of the room in tears, shielding her face with a notebook to prevent a student film crew from chronicling her reaction.

The students are assigned a task each week, and their performance is videotaped for review. They then attend a tense boardroom meeting where two Trump stand-ins, NIU alumni who run their own companies, decide who to cast out.

For assigned tasks, students have collected \$10,905 for the USO, created an advertisement for the student insurance office and sold football tickets at prices greater than face value, raising cash for an alumni and visitors' center.

The course, the brainchild of university officials who wanted to bring "real world" experience to the classroom, has caught Trump's attention. He recently lauded the program on the radio, delighting university officials who had notified him of the class weeks ago and heard nothing in return.

"I want to hand it to Northern Illinois University's College of Business," Trump said. "They are just a little bit ahead of the pack. If I were 20 years old again, I'd be in that class."

Unlike the reality show, where contestants live in a swanky New York apartment and have a chance to land a job with "The Donald" himself, the winners each receive \$1,000 scholarships, an A in the class and bragging rights. The next best team also receives A's but with half the scholarship money. Students fired after the first competition get a C but can improve their grade by writing a paper.

Others let go along the way get a B.

The class, which started with 16 students Aug. 23, will end Monday with a winning team of five students.

Funding for the course, including the \$7,500 in scholarship money, came from companies and individuals who made contributions specifically to the "Marketing Apprentice" class.

Six students have been "fired" from class or, in most cases, handed an old cowboy boot and asked to leave the room. The much-loathed leather pink slip, which rests in the middle of the boardroom table, has become a dreaded part of each meeting. One of the two Trump stand-ins decided to use the boot to bring levity to a tense moment, fearing the words "you're fired" may be too much for the students.

But even in being booted, there can be hurt feelings.

Robert Oaf, 21, a senior let go at the end of the

second class, had a difficult time accepting his dismissal.

"I was a little angry," he said. "It was early in the game, so it was a little embarrassing."

Once they are fired, students are required to have a one-on-one meeting with a faculty adviser to make sure they are all right. The debriefing also gives them the chance to talk about their performance and learn what worked and what did not.

Oaf, who said he came to appreciate the lessons learned from the course, was still required to come to class each Monday to follow his classmates' progress. All students in the class are invited to meet with faculty and staff at a local bar after each boardroom meeting to network and unwind.

"I don't look at it as a class, but as a job," said Jonathan Van Plew, 25, who made it to the final round. "You get to find out what you're good at, but you also get to find out what you need to work on."

Although it has been difficult to acknowledge and overcome his weaknesses, Van Plew said he is more confident about heading into the real workforce.

Apprentice class can dwarf the amount of time students spend on other courses.

"It's a tremendous amount of pressure," said Dave Haas, 22, who made it to the final round. "This isn't the only thing I have going on."

Haas, a resident assistant who works part time at a restaurant and is a member of a fraternity, said he spent 20 hours on the class one week.

But the work has started to pay off, he said. A company that heard about his involvement with the class approached him about a job.

In an effort to make the class as authentic as possible, students from the school's communications department have been documenting each task in a tape that is shown to the "Trumps" so they may determine who should get the ax.

After going to the tape, one of the Trumps, Dean DeBiase, told one group it was "working way too hard and not smart enough."

"You're learning the right lessons," he told the group. "You're just forgetting some of them along the way."

After the weekly critique, the students are given the chance to make a plea for their jobs, telling judges why they shouldn't be fired.

While the TV show often leads contestants to verbally batter one another as they desperately try to stay in the game, students in the class are more discreet; they vote off team members by ballot. Their suggestions are taken into consideration, but the judges make the final calls.

Joe Cullinane, another of the Trumps, said he and DeBiase worked to challenge the students. Cullinane said the two merged the teams, split them up, changed elements of their assigned tasks and handed the group over to two new Trump stand-ins to keep it interesting.

Each twist will help prepare the students for what they will face during the course of their careers, he said, and so far, all of them have handled the changes with aplomb.

"I would hire any one of them," Cullinane said.

Campus strikes up a bowling club

By Meghan Whitesel
staff writer

If you like spares and strikes, then the bowling club is for you. Anybody can join, and there is fun lurking around every pin.

The first meeting was held on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in Reed 112. Even with the first meeting past, the club is still urging students to join. There are only about 20 members at this point, but the group hopes for a large turnout.

Who is starting the bowling club and why? Luke Pietroforte, EEBD 05, has been aspiring to the club's creation since his freshman year. Going bowling every other Friday made Pietroforte and friends appear to be an "unrecognized club."

"We would go and bowl constantly," he said. "Finally, someone suggested that we start a club."

Taking this advice, Pietroforte asked the Behrend administration for the approval of a bowling club. He applied in Fall '03, and the request was granted in Spring '04. Although the effort was approved, it fell through.

"There was a lot of misinterpretation on behalf of the parties," he said. "It was just a breakdown in communication. We were not sure if we had the approval, and when we did know, it was too late. We did not meet the budget deadline."

Because of its just recent approval, the club will have meetings for this semester; bowling will be limited and

will pick up in Spring '05. The members plan to bowl at least once a month.

"We would like to go as often as we can, but for now it is going to be difficult until the spring," Pietroforte said. "I hope people do not get upset because we have to wait until next semester."

There is no cost to join the club. However, the officers are trying to have t-shirts made for the club. Members can purchase a team shirt if they desire.

"The cost of the shirt is unknown at this point. We hope to have a price estimate when we have the meetings," he said.

Pietroforte and other members have ideas to help spark interest in the club. They plan to help with community fundraisers and hold a Bowl-a-thon. The game winners for that month will be presented with a traveling trophy that will be passed to the next month's game winners.

"We want people to have a good time, and we would like to see the club continue in the future," he said. "We would like to see more officer elections and have the interest grow."

"You do not have to be a good bowler," Pietroforte said. "We just want people to come out and have fun."

As a student working toward a degree, Pietroforte understands the value of club membership. He feels that "if one is in a club, it looks good on a resume. It shows teamwork and involvement."