

y Bill Gillette

ell, they've done it again, Casady & Greene makers of Conflict Catcher, Glider Pro and most recently Zone Warrior has come up with a Banana Split for board game aficionados.

AmoebArena is a new concept in board games that really defies description although awesome is close. Programmers Jason Regier and Mark Jordan have concocted a marvelous blend of innovation and imagination resulting in the creation of a considerable challenge. AmoebArena, much like chess, is a game that requires the utilization of strategic concepts and the ability to think ahead. The players, over and above mastering game skills, have the ability to fabricate their own playing field or scenario. This dimension insures continual interest and unlimited entertainment for those gamers who enjoy a quality mental contest. AmoebArena is not a multimedia presentation or interactive movie but rather a solid game that is fun for the beginner and challenging for the advanced.

### Interface

The setup is a squared off game board surrounded by small screens depicting the selected active players. The player fade-in to these screens is a little sluggish at times and cannot be bypassed but this is only a minor inconvenience. The menu bar is accessible to provide game mode selection, scenario editing, music and sound control levels and game save functions. Movements and placements are made with the mouse.

## Graphics

AmoebArena is pleasing to view, with everything sharp, smooth and colorful. There are some video clips relating to the players and their personalities that add a little entertainment and pizzazz.

## Help

An easy to understand manual is provided but on screen help is not available. Though once you are familiar with characteristics of the individual pieces help is not really necessary.

## ameplay

Normal Game: The game can be played with from one to four participants, you can choose from four different human players or five different computer opponents each with an individual playing style. For a normal game, after selecting your players you will encounter the game board. The board is sectioned off by a purple grid. On this grid are four distinct sections each of a different color and made up of 16 squares. These regions are the respective players initial territories. The players place their pieces; Cytozoids, Amoeboids, Mitoplasts and Blockers by clicking the mouse on the appropriate square. The computer players will automatically place their own pieces.

Play is begun by using the mouse to click on the desired square adjacent to the piece the player wishes to move. A player wins the game by clearing the board of all enemy pieces. Sound simple doesn't it? Well, trust me, it ain't.

Each piece has a different method of attack. A Cytozoid can attack an opponent in an adjacent square. An Amoeboid must move into a vacant square and attack an enemy in an adjacent square after it moves. A Mitoplast attacks by moving into an opponents' square and converting the opponent into an ally by using its genetic code. This ally is now controlled by the owner of the Mitoplast. A Blocker cannot attack but may push an opponent into an empty square or into a Pit that some boards contain. Once pushed into a Pit the piece is gone forever.

So, as you can see, the successful player must develop combined offensive and defensive strategies to combat the sometimes formidable computer (and other human) opponents. Initially you may find it a lesson in humility and frustration but eventually you can improve to the point where you are able to take on Neutron, the most difficult computer opponent. Then, the ultimate confrontation, challenging three Neutrons at the same time, GULP! Get ready 'cause you're probably going to be blown away. Sometimes your strategies have to be adjusted to fit the particular board you are playing on. One example is the game board with a spiral layout where in order to win the player must gather all of his/her cunning and skill to fend off the opponents ferocious attack.

Tournament Play: AmoebArena tournament starts with each player having three stars in their possession. The user picks the next star that will be added to the stars they possess if they win the board. You can play the tournament for a predetermined number of rounds or until somebody conquers all of the territories ( ARMAGEDDON)

Neutrons' Challenge: This is played for all of Zeta sector, with only one human player allowed to compete at one time. You start with nothing and progressively conquer one territory every game until you control the entire sector. Once all of the 10 systems are defeated you are rewarded with a spin outside the station in your pressure suit.

### Creating a Scenario

The players have the option to play scenarios of their own creation. Games may be designed for 2, 3, or 4 participants. Board configuration, number and placement of pieces is achieved by utilizing the "scenario editor." This function adds a great deal to the appeal of AmoebArena as it allows for an infinite number of different situations for the players to test and improve their skills.

### Santa Clause??

AmoebArena will bring joy to all for the holidays and it has the additional benefit of making your shopping chores a little easier. The name AmoebArena may lead one to think that it was designed for children, however, nothing could be further from the truth. AmoebArena can be played by youngsters and adults alike and for both it will be as challenging and mystifying as any game previously encountered. You can play AmoebArena by yourself, with your family, with a novice or expert. This wide range of appeal along with the vast number of scenarios that can be selected or created is what makes AmoebArena a truly great value and a wonderful game.

### Pros

- Very challenging
- A really tough time from the more advanced computer combinations but easily adjusted for beginners
- Won't get bored with it
- Anybody can play (and become addicted)
- Only requires mental agility.

### Cons

- Getting to the game board is just a little bit slow

### Publisher Info

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