

PlayStation™

FORMULA ONE 2000 - Q&A

Interview with:

Darrell Gallagher (Project leader/Lead Artist) and Phil Hillard (Project leader/Lead Programmer) from Studio 33

The “Formula One” franchise from SCEE is the most successful Formula One games franchise in the PlayStation market, with over 4.5 million units sold worldwide. Having just completed work on the highly-anticipated “Destruction Derby Raw” (out now!), Studio 33 is gearing up to release what they consider to be the definitive Formula One game on PS One. With the “PREVIEW” version of the game ready to be delivered into the hands of eager journalists around the globe, we caught up with Darrell and Phil from Studio 33 to get some inside information on the project, and to find out what features will be implemented between the “PREVIEW” and “REVIEW” versions.

Q. “Formula One 99” has been a great success for both Studio 33 and the franchise as a whole, selling over a million units since it’s release. When did you start work on “Formula One 2000” and what areas did you want to improve upon?

A. We started work on Formula One 2000 in November last year, not before having a well earned break after Formula One 99. We got together and identified areas that we weren’t entirely happy with in the previous version, such as the sound, commentary, multiplayer mode, crashes and the ‘pick up and play’ aspect of the game.

Q. Is the same team that was working on “Formula One 99” also working on “Formula One 2000” and how many are there?

A. The team working on Formula One 2000 is essentially the backbone of the Formula One 99 team, they include 6 artists and 7 programmers.

Q. For a long time, the Formula One series was the only officially licensed Formula One game available on PlayStation, but since then several other companies have entered the market. As they are all based on the same non-exclusive license (same 17 tracks, same 22 drivers, same 11 teams, same rules, etc), how do you go about making your game different to all the others out there?

A. We have been working hard to recreate the atmosphere of each GP weekend. We now have flags waving in the crowd, camera flashes, a far more realistic cockpit view and much improved atmospheric sound effects. The detail on the tracks is far greater than ever before - there now are skid marks on the track surface, interchangeable weather conditions, and trackside models have been reworked to a greater accuracy. To enhance the ‘pick up and play’ aspect of the game, we now have a specially designed Arcade mode that offers a fresh alternative to the Championship mode.

Q. Is the “Arcade” mode the same as the “Championship” mode, with different handling or have you made other changes as well?

A. We like to think of the Arcade mode as almost a game in itself, it will feature different handling, progressive unlocking of grouped tracks and teams, and a points scoring within a time attack format. As you can see from the screenshots visually the tracks will look radically different, there will be a wider variety of race conditions and lighting effects, various stages will include sunset and early morning stages, as well as stormy and night conditions.

Q. Are there any special rewards that the player will receive for playing in "Arcade" mode?

A. As the player progresses through the Arcade mode they will unlock various bonuses. There will be the ability to build up a collection of official photographs for a gallery, additional Vehicles and a mirrored track mode will be unlocked.

Q. Another innovation we spotted were the trivia questions that are displayed during loading. Can you tell us how many there are and what areas they cover?

A. There's over 200 different trivia questions and they're covering everything from the 60's to modern-day Formula One. We were looking for a way to even further shorten the loading times for players and the trivia questions are a nice way to do this. Each question is multiple choice and you have to answer by pressing one of the four buttons on the controller - it's good fun. See how much you know!

Q. What about the multiplayer? "Formula One 99" didn't quite deliver in that department - you mentioned that was on your list of improvements that you wanted to tackle.

A. With Formula One 99 we felt that unless we were able to achieve a full grid in two player then we would only feature head to head racing. The programmers have since been working on the multiplayer mode, and we now have a 2-player Championship, with a full grid in place. So in essence, you can participate with your friend as your team-mate through the entire 2000 season - with the ability to save your progress along the way. So - who do you want to be: Schumacher and Barrichello, Hakkinen and Coulthard, Frentzen and Trulli, Button and Schumacher - it's up to you.