

y Glen W. Wolf

Earlier in 1996 Papyrus and Sierra came out with IndyCar II for the Mac. Excitement was high that this hot PC title was finally coming to the Apple frontier, however, not all was happy in driving land. No available driving wheels, slow performance, and a few nasty bugs haunted IndyCar II, but despite these factors it was still respected in many circles. Now Papyrus is on the cusp of releasing NASCAR for the Mac, and from the looks of it, many of the problems that dogged IndyCar are a thing of the past.

NASCAR was founded in an allegedly smoke-filled room in Daytona Beach on December 14, 1947 as the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. From these humble beginnings began the point-based championship NASCAR competition we now know today, and will soon be able to experience first-hand on the Mac. NASCAR Racing has up-to-date statistics on all the drivers that make the sport great, and even offers some statistical advantages the PC version doesn't (see Interview with Steven Travers).

### gnition

As with IndyCar you begin the game by selecting one of 15 different tracks from around the U.S of A. However, probably the best thing you could do for yourself is check out the 'Set Controls' menu and set up your steering wheel, brake, and gear shift. This is largely a matter of preference, and although our esteemed writer Chris Breen finds a joystick infinitely preferable, I was just as agreeable to use the keyboard with the mouse as a throttle. Once you've decided which control set to use you can either jump in and go for a practice run, try to qualify, warmup, or race. For most just practicing is probably the best route in the beginning. As was mentioned in the IndyCar II review, you should be prepared to crash SEVERAL times before you get the hang of the game, and even then, passing can be tricky. Just like in real life.

### Config This!

Perhaps the most impressive feature of NASCAR lies in its configurability. Not only can you pick from 15 tracks, but you have the ability to tweak nearly every aspect of your car. You can alter your tire pressures, suspension, spoilers, gear ratios and even fuel and steering lock. Although a novice need never venture into this area, closet mechanics will revel in the ability to change the minutia of their car's structure and handling. There's even a set of prefab settings to choose from that will help you get your car adjusted for speed, stability, or just plain panache.

### Realism

Wow. Playing this game is just plain spectacular, in fact, when watching a replay of a race I had just crashed-out in, I had to do a double take to make sure I wasn't watching a movie of a NASCAR race. The reason my eyes were initially tricked is probably due to the hyper-realistic physics and camera angles employed by the replay engine. When in the replay mode you can choose from a plethora of camera angles, which actually makes for a good time watching replays. When you're behind the wheel the realism factors rears its head again, but in a good way. As you steam down the track at 170 mph you had better have complete control of the wheel or you'll be spinning out in a haze of dust and smoke before you can say Tom Cruise. I was continually impressed by the realistic feel of the game, whether I was in 'cockpit' view or in chase view the dynamics of racing were highly compelling.

The dashboard of your car contains a digital speedometer, and analog tachometer, oil pressure, oil temp, and coolant temperature. All of these are fully functional and should be kept an eye on as you lap the track. Of course, if your tires feel like they're losing a little grip you can always take a 25 second trip into the pits to get some fresh feet and a spot of gas. Overall the realism in NASCAR Racing is very impressive, and it will quickly become the premiere racing sim for the Mac.

### Speed

And now the question everyone is asking. "How fast does it run?" Well, because I was running an alpha version it really wouldn't be fair to do a detailed comparison, but suffice to say that it COOKED on my 604/132 (which is fast becoming a middle-of-the-road machine). It'll be interesting to see what Papyrus can do to ensure adequate performance on lower-end Macs, but it should be noted that the graphical detail settings can be set from everything from almost stick-figures to fully textured surroundings.

### [heels and Such](#)

Perhaps the most important thing that will happen about the same time NASCAR is released will be the release of the T2 wheel from Thrustmaster. This wheel will single-handedly make NASCAR totally kick butt, so let's hope that Thrustmaster can get it out before Xmas. NASCAR Racing will also feature a multi-player mode over network, and although I wasn't able to test this feature, the concept of racing head to head is very exciting. Let's hope Papyrus can pull it off.

### [I Can Hardly Wait](#)

Considering I was testing this game as an Alpha version, NASCAR was remarkably refined, stable, and just plain fun. It was silky smooth on my 604/132 and the intense configurability, true NASCAR statistics, and the availability of the T2 wheel will make NASCAR the premiere driving sim for the Mac well into '97.

### [Publisher Info](#)

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