


review: Tom Landry Strategy Football 1.0

Reviewed by Tuncer Deniz

Type: Football Simulation.
Publisher: Merit Software.
Mail Order: \$38
Requires: 256 colors, Hard Disk, System 7, 3.5 Meg Ram.
IMG Rating: 

Ready. In Tom Landry Strategy Football (TLSF) you play the role of head coach. Just pick your favorite team and you're ready to go. Tough coaching decisions lay ahead of you, and studying the offensive and defensive playbook is essential. Should you try a screen pass or a run up the middle? Your ability to make the right calls at the right time are at the heart of this exciting football game. On offense you decide among seven offensive formations for your pass or run pattern. You also decide when to punt, call a time-out, "milk" the clock, or send in subs. After you make your decision, hit "GO!" and watch the play unfold. On defense you decide among six defensive formations, man-to-man or zone coverage, shifts, blitzes, and which offensive players to focus on. Game play depends on a number of factors, including player strengths and weaknesses, weather conditions, team unit ratings, and coaching style. If you ever get stuck making a tough call, you can always ask the coach himself, Tom Landry, for advice. And if you're really in a jam, he'll even suggest a play.

TLSF includes a few extras to make this game high in features. A scenario editor lets you explore "what if" situations. To make game play faster you can turn off the animations. All you see is a dialog box with the results of the play. If you wish you can view the play in full animation by pressing "see." The game also includes VCR-style instant replay, in-depth game stats, and scouting information. But the gem in this game seems to be the modem play. I say "seems" because as of this writing, version 1.02A did not include this option. Merit promises an updated version with full modem play capability available after January 4, 1993. Registered owners can request a free update disk. Eventually, Mac owners can play using their modems with other Mac and DOS users of TLSF.

et. When I first tried TLSF the game would freeze on start-up. The problem was the 24-bit card I was using. Other users have also encountered this problem with their external video cards. However, the game ran without a hitch using internal video. Although the game screen looked rather small and chunky on a 13" monitor, the animation and use of 256 colors made up for this deficiency. The game's best features are good graphics, nice sounds, lots of stats, and eventually, modem play. People who love stats will love this game. After the game you can view team and individual stats and even view replays of touchdowns after the game (what a great idea).

One major drawback is the manual. It's written solely for the DOS and Amiga versions, without any mention to the Macintosh version. Merit includes a technical addendum for the Mac that gives instructions on installation, copy protection, and modem play. Speaking of which, another drawback is the copy protection. You have to enter a 3-character password from the User's Guide. And finally, the biggest omission in this game is league play. Although wins and losses and season stats are saved, there is no 16-game schedule and post season. Since the game is not licensed by the NFL, the names of players are generic and there is no way to edit the names. Such features would add significant depth to the game.

Hike. For those who enjoy game stats, good animation, and playing coach from the sidelines, this game is for you. However, like many, if you like to get into the thick of the game by controlling the player, (e.g., the quarterback), you might want to pass this one up. When I first started playing TLSF I foolishly tried to pass or run using the mouse, but I soon found out this was impossible. However, as I got into the game, I realized that Tom Landry Strategy Football is just what the name implies, a game of strategy and tactics. Hey, who ever said football wasn't a thinking man's game? :-|

Pros:

- 256 colors.
- Game stats.
- Modem play with Mac and Dos users.

Cons:

- Small screen size.

- VGA Port with low resolution graphics.
- Coach only (can't control the players).