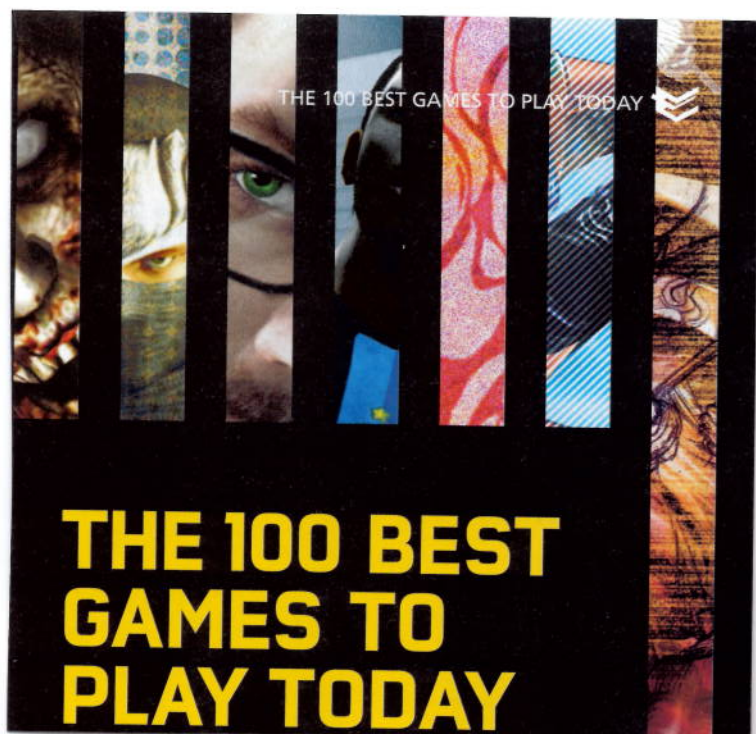


EDGE 200



83: PEGGLE

POPCAP: PC

Detractors who say it's just random miss the point. You'd think the Ode To Joy might give them a hint as where to find it. Always rewarding you, always cheering you on, *Peggle* may just sway favour by charm alone – but beneath the purposeful goofiness of unicorns and rainbows lies an undeniable compulsion. Yes, chance plays a large part, but it is precisely the struggle to impose your will over the random that forms its deadly addiction. It plays to the gambler in us, and be it by luck or judgement, triumph rarely feels as good.

INDUSTRY PICK SUKHBIR SIDHU

STUDIO DIRECTOR, POPCAP
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

EA: PS2, Xbox

You may be surprised to hear that the major influences for PopCap's *Peggle* were pachinko, pinball, and *Burnout 3: Takedown*. The first two aren't too surprising, but I'll have to explain the third.

I've never been a fan of racing games, but *Burnout 3* is just pure arcade racing magic. Unlike many racing sims, it's extremely easy to control – and driving 200mph and smashing other cars is just so ridiculously fun. Maybe one of the reasons *Burnout 3* is so satisfying and addictive to play is because it constantly rewards you for almost everything you do – steer your rival into an oncoming motor home, get a 'HomeWrecker' bonus; knock a car into the lake, get a 'Gone Fishin' bonus. The game also recognises and acknowledges the little victories you achieve as you smash your way around the track – if you barely miss crashing into oncoming traffic by a few milliseconds, you've got an 'Extreme Escape'. Knock out five cars in a row, that's a 'Takedown Rampage'. Even after you crash, you can still steer your smashed-up car into a rival to score an 'Aftertouch Takedown.' While the amazing feeling of speed and exhilaration is astounding, the drama of the takedowns is staggeringly epic. When you take down another car, the frenzied action suddenly slams into slow-motion for just a second or two, while the camera follows the hulk of your rival's car as it flies through the air, then the game quickly shifts back into top speed. It's enough to give you whiplash!

During the very early design stage on *Peggle*, we were so completely hooked on *Burnout 3* that we logged over 500 hours of play time, so it's not a surprise that some of the concepts trickled into the game we were making. In *Peggle*, your goal is to clear the 25 orange pegs from a pachinko-style board using ten balls – you aim, shoot the ball, and then watch as it bounces down through blue and orange pegs. With a very simple play mechanic and little user interaction, we wanted as much excitement and drama as we could.

The constant stream of positive feedback in *Burnout 3* inspired the numerous 'Style Shots' you can score in *Peggle*. For example, sliding the ball across a line of brick pegs earns you an 'Extreme Slide'; hitting both Spooky Ball powerups in one shot awards you a 'Spooktacular' bonus; if the ball makes multiple bounces around the free ball bucket before eventually falling in, that's a 'Lucky Bounce'. Even the jaw-dropping slow-motion crashes in *Burnout 3* influenced some of our thinking – when your ball is only pixels away from hitting the last orange peg, the action switches into slo-mo briefly to accentuate the drama.