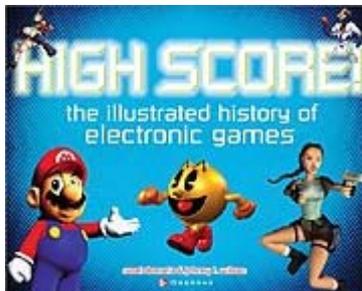


May 23, 2002

HELLO INTELLIFANS!

In this issue of our newsletter: a new book about video games, a primetime Intellivision sighting, new mugs and T-shirts, the history of sports on Intellivision, and another trivia contest!

NEW VIDEO GAME HISTORY HITS BOOK SHELVES



A new history of video and computer games is in bookstores this month. *High Score! The Illustrated History of Electronic Games* by Rusel DeMaria and Johnny L. Wilson covers everything from pre-*Pong* to the present. Most importantly, it includes a chapter on our favorite game console: **Intellivision**.

There's been a number of books published recently about the history of video games, but this is the only one whose authors contacted us to get the **Intellivision** story firsthand. We also provided them with a number of images--box art, screen shots, and photos of the **Blue Sky Rangers**--used in the chapter.

The paperback is over 300 pages with color photos throughout. The retail price is \$24.99 in the US. You should be able to find it in your local bookstore right now, or follow the link below to order it from Amazon.com for only \$17.49. Hey, that's 30% off!

[Order High Score from Amazon.com >](#)

INTELLIVISION SPOTTED IN 1978 WISCONSIN!



Intellivision on *That 70's Show*
(Artist's Conception)

A few months ago, a sharp-eyed Intellivision fan told us he spotted a display of **Intellivision II** boxes in a department store scene on TV's *That 70's Show*. We were quite excited by this news--this is the first primetime Intellivision sighting since *Auto Racing* was used as a "radar screen" on *Knight Rider*.

We called the show's production office and asked permission to post a photo from the episode on our web site and here in the Intellivision newsletter. We even promised not to point out that **Intellivision II** hit the shelves in 1982, four years after the show's 1978 Wisconsin setting.

More than a month later, we heard back from their lawyers: "No." They explained that allowing us to use a photo from the show could imply that the actors

endorse **Intellivision**.

Well, fair enough--hence our use of an artist's conception, instead. But then we got thinking. Might not the appearance of Intellivision on *That 70's Show* imply that we endorse *them*? Hey, they didn't ask *us* before using our logo.

Therefore, we offer this disclaimer: **The appearance of the Intellivision logo on *That 70's Show* in no way means that Intellivision Productions, Inc. and/or The Blue Sky Rangers endorse, enjoy, or even watch the program.** Truth be told, we're *Buffy* fans. Hey, did you catch the season finale? Man, that was cool when Giles suddenly showed up...

> [Buffy the Vampire Slayer](#) airs Tuesday nights at 8 PM, 7 central, on the UPN network.



GET MUGGED!

We have a couple new products in our **Retrotopia Videogame Store** this month. First is the **Intellivision Coffee Mug**. Finally, you can show your enthusiasm for **Intellivision** and carry your favorite beverage *at the same time!* 11 ounce mug, black, with the **Running Man** and **Intellivision** design in purple on both sides. Only \$9.95, plus shipping and handling.

The other new item is the **Intellivision Sports Tee**. This 100% heavy white cotton tee features images from the original Intellivision **Baseball**, **Basketball**, **Football**, **Soccer**, and **Hockey** game boxes (see design below). In a word, it's bitchin'. Only \$14.95, plus shipping and handling.

This is the latest in our **Collectors Series** featuring limited edition T-shirts based on Intellivision game boxes. Hurry! The previous shirts, **Astrosmash**, **B-17 Bomber**, **Sea Battle**, and **Adventure Games**, have all sold out.

We also have the return of **ColecoVision Hits**, a CD-ROM collection of thirty **ColecoVision** games that runs on your PC. We sold out at Christmas, but now we have them back in stock. Only \$29.95, plus shipping and handling.

And, of course, as always, you can get our two CD-ROM collections that let you play **Intellivision** on your PC or Mac: **Intellivision Lives!**, featuring the classic **Mattel Electronics** and **INTV Corp.** games, and **Intellivision Rocks**, featuring the Intellivision games from **Activision** and **Imagic**. Only \$29.95 each, plus shipping and handling.

[Order mugs, T-shirts, and game collections from Retrotopia.com >](#)

INTELLIVISION LORE FROM THE FILES OF THE BLUE SKY RANGERS:



INTELLIVISION SPORTS

Intellivision has been synonymous with sports since its beginning. The first Intellivision game programmed was [Baseball](#), in 1978. **David Rolfe**, who was assigned the



SPORTS

A new limited-edition T-shirt commemorates the early Intellivision sports games.

task of writing the Intellivision's operating system, realized he couldn't write an operating system without a game, and he couldn't write a game without an operating system. So he wrote both at the same time.

Although [Baseball](#) was the first game completed, neither it nor any other sports title was among the four games released in 1979, when Intellivision was test marketed in central California. Mattel was working on a licensing coup.

When Intellivision was introduced nationally in 1980, the sports games (dubbed "[The Sports Network](#)") were branded with the logos of the professional sports leagues: [Major League Baseball](#), [NBA Basketball](#), [NFL Football](#), [NASL Soccer](#), [NHL Hockey](#), [PGA Golf](#) and the amateur [U.S. Ski Team Skiing](#). Only [Auto Racing](#) and [Tennis](#) didn't feature licenses. ([Boxing](#) and [PBA Bowling](#) completed the [Sports Network](#) in 1981.) These exclusive licenses proclaimed Intellivision as *the* video game system for sports.

Mattel used the sports titles to battle the more established Atari 2600 head on. The logic was, everyone knows what a baseball diamond or basketball court should look like. In 1981, TV and print ads starring sports writer **George Plimpton** showed side-by-side comparisons of Atari's sports games with Intellivision's. The Atari games looked simplistic--even silly--next to the Intellivision versions. Mattel bragged that Intellivision was "the closest thing to the real thing."



Atari Home Run Baseball (left) vs. Intellivision Major League Baseball

The commercials worked. Surveys showed 88% of people preferred Intellivision [Baseball](#); only 2% preferred Atari's. By the end of 1981, Mattel had sold over 300,000 cartridges each of [Major League Baseball](#) and [NFL Football](#), and over 200,000 of [NBA Basketball](#). The commercials themselves became part of American culture, lampooned by cartoonists and comedians. On *Saturday Night Live*, "sportscaster" **Joe Piscopo** presented the Atari and Intellivision *Football* games side by side as the opposing teams in the 1982 Super Bowl--declaring the "Intellivision" team the clear winner.

But Atari 2600 fans had reason to thank Intellivision. The Atari sports games looked so bad in comparison that Atari went back and did improved versions under the trademark "Atari Realsports." Mattel also released improved sports titles for the Atari 2600 under the "[M Network](#)" brand.

The biggest drawback of the Intellivision sports games was that they required two players. The games each fit into 4K of ROM; there was no room to program a computer opponent. By 1982, more and more Intellivision games were being allocated 8K of ROM or more. Mattel started looking at redoing the sports games to add a one-player option.

Work was mostly finished on a one-player baseball cartridge, [All-Star Major League Baseball](#), when Mattel decided that the revised sports games should all be tailored for the new [Entertainment Computer System](#) (ECS)--an expansion module for the Intellivision. ECS versions of baseball, football, soccer, and tennis were put into development. Only the ECS baseball, [World Series Major League](#)

[Baseball](#), was released before Mattel sold the Intellivision rights in 1984.

The new owner of Intellivision, [INTV Corp.](#), recognized that sports titles had established the system. Revised, one-player versions (NOT requiring the ECS) became a priority. INTV published the unreleased [All-Star Major League Baseball](#) as [World Championship Baseball](#) in 1985. That was followed by [Super Pro Football](#) in 1986 and then the other Super Pro titles, including [Slam Dunk: Super Pro Basketball](#) and [Slap Shot: Super Pro Hockey](#), at the rate of about two per year. In most cases, a Super Pro title was built on the game code and graphics of the original two-player version, adding a computer opponent and other features.

While never matching the sales of the original Sports Network titles ([Major League Baseball](#) and [NFL Football](#) eventually sold over a million cartridges each), the Super Pro line of cartridges helped Intellivision become the only game console to survive the industry crash of 1983/1984. New Intellivision cartridges were produced through the end of the decade.

To this day, a league continues to meet regularly in the Chicago area to play [Slam Dunk: Super Pro Basketball](#).

> The new **Intellivision Sports** T-shirt, featuring box art from the original *Baseball*, *Basketball*, *Football*, *Soccer*, and *Hockey* cartridges, is now available for a limited time on the [Retrotopia web site](#).

> The original two-player sports games and the later one-player versions can be played on the **Intellivision Lives!** CD-ROM collection for PC and Mac. *World Series Major League Baseball* can be played on **Intellivision Rocks** for PC and Mac. Both collections are available on the [Retrotopia web site](#).

THE INTELLIVISION TRIVIA CONTEST!

Last month's trivia contest was apparently a real stumper: "What Intellivision cartridge includes a character named for **Star Trek** writer/producer **Joe Menosky**, and what three-letter nickname does he have in the game?" Only seven people submitted an answer, and only six got it right: "**Pug**" **Menosky** is one of the ball players in *World Series Major League Baseball*, created by **Eddie Dombrower**, Joe Menosky's buddy at Pomona College.

From the 6 correct answers, the random number generator at <http://www.random.org/> selected **Brett Gladson** of Hoquiam, Washington as the winner of an **Intellivision coffee mug**.

Congratulations, Brett! And thanks to all of you for playing!

Now try **this** question:



Plimpton and Alda.
What's the connection?

In the early 1980s, **George Plimpton** was celebrity spokesman for **Intellivision**, while M*A*S*H star **Alan Alda** was celebrity spokesman for **Atari**. Twenty years later, they both played characters on the TV show **ER**. What OTHER unique connection links George Plimpton with Alan Alda?

We'll pick a random winner from all complete, correct entries received before NOON PDT, WEDNESDAY, MAY 29. The winner will receive an official **Intellivision Coffee Mug**--just like we use here in the office for serving up steamin' hot java!

GOOD LUCK!

**THE BLUE SKY RANGERS
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