

## EA SPORTS PGA TOUR GOLF Featured on IGN.com



### PGA TOUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION III

Where else can you hit a 300 yard drive with a beer in-hand?

**December 20, 2004** - It's hard to walk into a pub and not see a *Golden Tee Golf* machine. The words *Golden Tee* are almost synonymous with the words "sports bar," and those machines have dominated the market for years. But there's a big boy contender whittling away at *Golden Tee's* dominance, and if you thought that machine was great, wait until you get in a few rounds of *EA Sports PGA Tour Golf: Championship Edition III* the next time you're with beer in hand.

Global VR's in its third iteration of the company's partnership with EA Sports and its *PGA Tour* franchise, and like the companies' coin-op version of *Madden NFL Football*, *PGA Tour Golf* takes the existing PC version of the series and reworks the design to make the game much more accessible to casual gamers willing to shove a pocketful of quarters into the machine in exchange for a few drives down some of the most classic fairways in the world. It's pretty clear that *PGA Tour Golf* is the direct competitor to the king of arcade links, because Global VR presents its design as simplistic and inviting as its competition. 19 different courses and more than a dozen different golfer entities are selectable right from the get-go, giving players a huge variety of options for their stack of quarters.

All that's really needed to play *PGA Tour Golf* is a quick, accurate hand on the system's trackball panel. By simply pulling back and pushing forward on the trackball, you can send the ball flying for some serious distance that would put the pros best drives to shame. But it's not just a quick wrist that's important; simply sending the ball on a straight path will never get your skills into the tournament brackets. *PGA Tour* has what's called "Shot Shaping" in its control structure, and without mastering this technique you'll never be able to break into the double digits below par.



By pulling back either towards the left or the right, you're adjusting for a slight fade or draw by shooting straight ahead. Increasing the pull back angle will exaggerate the shot's direction, and combining the pullback direction with the shot's angle will turn add even more angle to the trajectory. It's important to use the Shot Shaping if you find yourself behind a grove of trees or a huge rock formation and need to get back onto the [fairway](#)...or, better yet, to get around a dogleg and hit the green in one shot on a Par 4. Luckily the monitor's at an angle, which leaves less opportunity for hand injuries...power shots tend to cause the palm of the hand to slam into the monitor glass. Just get used to people looking in your direction everytime your fist punches the machine from a powerful trackball push.

The arcade game isn't without its quirks, though. The designers of *PGA Tour Golf Championship Edition III* kept the controls simple, too simple in fact since they put the club selection control on the trackball. Moving left or right to change clubs can actually cause the on-screen golfer to pull back for a swing, and if unchecked will cause him to take a duffed stroke. There needs to be a better failsafe for this action since it happens a *lot* on the machine we've been playing; maybe in a future iteration Global VR can add a button that needs to be held in combination with spinning the trackball to change clubs. Shifting directions is as easy as hitting two buttons for left and right, but it's too rigid and isn't as versatile as it should be; players can only turn their aim in wide increments, instead of allowing for a more analog rotation.

But even with the slight gameplay quirks, the arcade rendition of *PGA Tour Golf* is one incredibly addictive gameroom experience that fits extremely well with the barroom atmosphere. All that's needed is a single hand to play the game, leaving the other hand free to chug a beer. And because the game uses the PC version as the core design, this arcade game looks and sounds fantastic; *PGA Tour Golf* features sharp, colorful textures, an extremely smooth framerate, and a constant running commentary from the sideline announcers.



And since these machines are wired to the internet, Global VR enables handicap and tournament play for players who register an entity to the network. Players must earn a handicap by playing through all the challenges in the World Tour mode; all the player's statistics are retained and uploaded to the Global VR servers where they can check to see how they rank with the rest of the world's machines. Since Global VR's constantly updating and improving this series, here's one for the programmers. The game retains statistics per machine, but doesn't have an easy way to view these machine statistics so players can brag or compare their local standings. There's more focus on the National Tournament standings during the machine's attract mode, and while that's certainly interesting in its own right, the ability to see rankings compared to others in the same location seemed to be more important to all the people playing the machine in our break room.

I'm sure that Global VR would love to have the market shift from *Golden Tee Golf* to *PGA Tour Golf*, and if the quality of the company's game continues with future iterations we may see far more of these machines very soon. And in case you haven't seen or played the game yet, track down the closest machine at the company's website and check it out for yourself.

-- Craig Harris

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