

Feb. 26, 2004

[flash]

Takin' It to
the 'Street'

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Gridiron action prevails in 'NFL Street'

By Chase Block

Some videogames get cubbyholed because not everyone has a tolerance for niche games. Sports games often fall into this category.

Believe me, I generally don't play sports games. But I am absolutely in love with Electronic Arts' *NFL Street*.

Street could easily be compared to Midway's classic *NFL Blitz* series, in that it offers fast-paced arcade football action.

But where the predominant difference lies is indicative in the title. This game takes the proverbial smash mouth football to places you've always wanted it to go.

Yes, *Street* is a football videogame. However, this is not a Madden-esque simulation.

This is the football you'd play if your buddies had a spontaneous pick-up game in an abandoned ware-

'NFL Street'

Electronic Arts



(out of four stars)

Gamecube, XBox,
Playstation 2

house, and you were all athletic supermen who felt no pain.

The setup is seven on seven. You can choose from a plethora of real NFL all-stars to form your own team, or you can choose players from exclusive team rosters.

You can also assign any player to any position, regardless of what they play in the real NFL, although players have various qualities that might make them more adept in certain roles.

Winning teams are decided by reaching a chosen set number of points. The points are scored by tradi-



Electronic Arts' latest release, *NFL Street*, puts a new spin on the gaming world's tired sports genre.

tional touchdown plays.

There are no idiot kickers here.

So while controlling your players, you can perform various style moves by pressing certain buttons.

Street has all sorts of taunts and tricks that would normally get a player fined in the NFL. But here, they rack up style points.

If you're 50 yards from pay dirt with a wide-open field, you can juggle the ball, high step and somer-

sault into the end zone in order to achieve spectacular results on the scoreboard.

All the while, you can hear the opposing team and your human opponent cursing at you.

Be careful though, trying to look cool could cause you to cough up the ball.

As for the playbooks, they aren't extensive at all.

You have four categories to choose from, including offense and defense.

They're all fairly basic with the exception of trick plays. These plays are here when you need to pull a rabbit out of your hat.

The game is beautiful as well.

The player motion is real, the environments are lush and the player models are, well, "street."

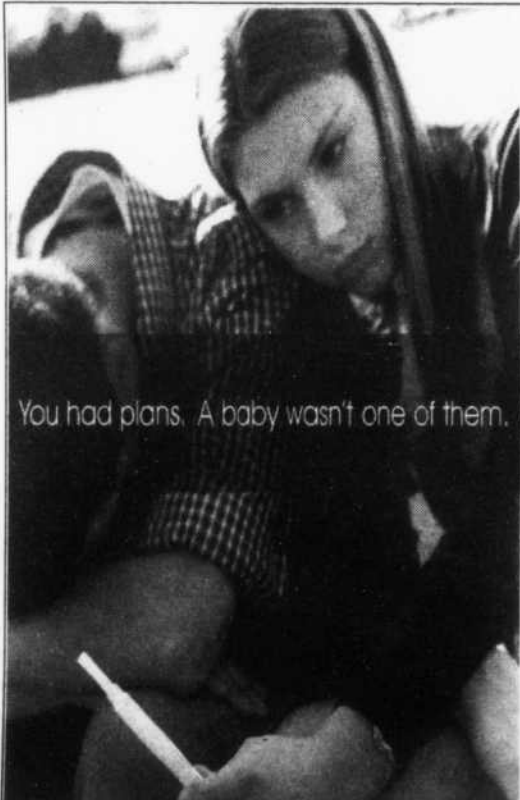
The models are all faithfully exaggerated.

For example, we all know that Warren Sapp is a big man, but here he looks like Fat Albert's California Raisin cousin.

His stepbrother Brian Urlacher looks like a meth-smoking redneck.

Meanwhile, the game flows perfectly. So unless you're on the receiving end of a beatdown, you don't want it to stop.

If you've read this far, you've either got lots of time between classes or you've already decided that you want to play *NFL Street*. Go buy it. It's worth every penny. ★



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[flash] is the weekly entertainment tabloid produced by Sidelines, MTSU's editorially independent student newspaper. [flash] is published each Thursday and seeks to highlight local arts and entertainment. For information regarding [flash], call 615-898-2917 or e-mail sflash@mtsu.edu. For advertising information call 615-898-2533.

WMTS Playlist

- 1 **Denali** *The Instinct*
- 2 **Bens** *The Bens EP*
- 3 **Aireline** *Winter Song EP*
- 4 **Apollo Up** *Light The End And Burn It Through*
- 5 **Phantom Planet** *Phantom Planet*
- 6 **Statistics** *Leave Your Name*
- 7 **Jason Collett** *Motor Motel Love Songs*
- 8 **Ima Robot** *Alive EP*
- 9 **Light Wires** *The Light Wires*
- 10 **Pale** *Gravity Gets Things Done*

Compiled by Jozeph Ash, WMTS 88.3 music director. WMTS is MTSU's student run radio station.

Grimey's Top Sellers

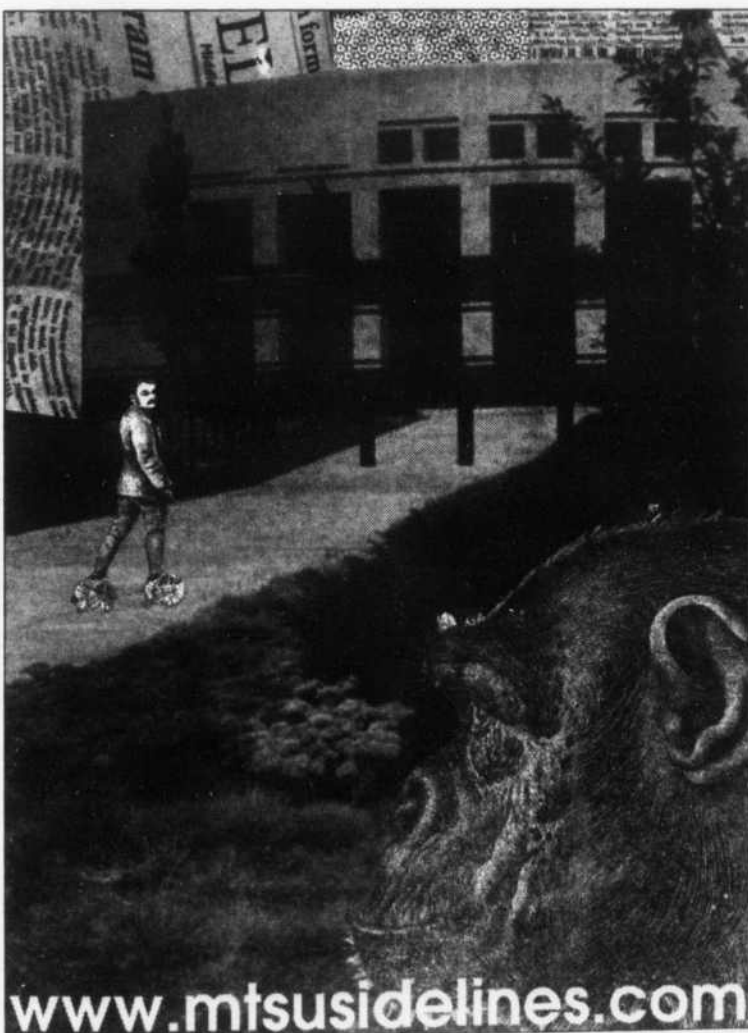
- 1 **Old Crow Medicine** *Old Crow Medicine Show*
- 2 **The Bens** *The Bens EP*
- 3 **Norah Jones** *Feels Like Home*
- 4 **The Walkmen** *Bows & Arrows*
- 5 **Probot** *Probot*
- 6 **Stereolab** *Margarine Eclipse*
- 7 **Death Cab For Cutie** *Transatlanticism*
- 8 **Various Artists** *Lost in Translation*
- 9 **OutKast** *Speakerboxxx / The Love Below*
- 10 **Air** *Talkie Walkie*

Compiled by Grimey's Record Shop owner, Doyle Davis. Grimey's is located at 2825 Bransford Avenue in Nashville.

WRLT Playlist

- 1 **Counting Crows** "She Don't Want Nobody Near"
- 2 **John Eddie** "If You're Here When I Get Back"
- 3 **Melissa Etheridge** "Bridge"
- 4 **Joe Firstman** "Breaking All the Ground"
- 5 **Five for Fighting** "100 Years"
- 6 **Guster** "Careful"
- 7 **Inidigo Girls** "Perfect World"
- 8 **Jet** "Are You Gonna Be My Girl?"
- 9 **Jack Johnson** "Taylor"
- 10 **Norah Jones** "Sunrise"

Compiled by Keith Coes, WRLT 100.1 music director. WRLT Lightning 100 is Nashville's progressive radio station.



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Deconstructing OSCAR

This year's Academy Award nominees reflect the artier independents' growing presence. Look no further than Keisha Castle-Hughes' leftist nod for her work in *Whale Rider* or the inclusion of foreign film, *City of God* in the writing category. On the other hand, blockbuster studio epics like Miramax's *Cold Mountain* were shut out of the Best Picture category. Poor Harvey Weinstein.

In celebration of this supposed indie renaissance, [flash] film reviewers Sarah Crotzer and Forrest Sanders offer their Oscar picks in a truly historic year for cinematic achievement.

[flash] staff writers divulge their Oscar night predictions

ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE

Johnny Depp *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*

Ben Kingsley *House of Sand and Fog*

Jude Law *Cold Mountain*

Bill Murray *Lost in Translation*

Sean Penn *Mystic River*

Sarah's Pick: Ben Kingsley took over *House of Sand and Fog*, but this category is going to come down to two people, Bill Murray and Sean Penn. I think it's going to be a really tight match, because they were both incredible, but I anticipate and will root for a Bill Murray win.

Forrest's Pick: Could the fact that Bill Murray showed up to collect his Golden Globe award and Sean Penn didn't have any sway on how the Academy leans in this category? I hope so. Murray's performance in *Lost in Translation* was a true career redefining moment for the former ghostbuster.

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE

Keisha Castle-Hughes *Whale Rider*

Diane Keaton *Something's Gotta Give*

Samantha Morton *In America*

Charlize Theron *Monster*

Naomi Watts *21 Grams*

Sarah's Pick: I would absolutely love it if Keisha Castle-Hughes, the little girl who carried *Whale Rider*, walked away with this award. Her performance was incredibly moving. She wasn't even relegated to the supporting category like most child actors. The Academy, though, is more likely to go for Charlize Theron because they love the implicit ironies of a beautiful starlet transforming into a crazy lesbian.

Forrest's Pick: Charlize Theron meets the leading actress criteria.

She wallows in a role that is a massive change of pace and obscures her beauty in the process. In addition, she proves she can out-ugly past leading actress winners like *Boys Don't Cry's* Hillary Swank, *Monster Ball's* Halle Berry and *The Hours's* Nicole Kidman.

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Alec Baldwin *The Cooler*

Benicio Del Toro *21 Grams*

Djimon Hounsou *In America*

Tim Robbins *Mystic River*

Ken Watanabe *The Last Samurai*

Sarah's Pick: This award should go to Ken Watanabe who ran the gamut from stately to heartwrenching in *The Last Samurai*. His magnificent performance reminded me of the late Toshiro Mifune, one of the favored leads for Akira Kurosawa. The Academy, though, adores people who attempt mentally disabled or anguished characters, so the award will go to Tim Robbins who actually did a pretty good job.

Forrest's Pick: Benicio Del Toro has received this honor before for his work in *Traffic*, and his performance in the haunting *21 Grams* is even better. However, I agree that Tim Robbins leads the pack for his magnificently understated performance in *Mystic River*.

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Shohreh Aghdashloo *House of Sand and Fog*

Patricia Clarkson *Pieces of April*

Marcia Gay Harden *Mystic River*

Holly Hunter *Thirteen*

Renée Zellweger *Cold Mountain*

Sarah's Pick: I'll start with a frank admission. I haven't seen three of the five performances list-



Photo provided by 20th Century Fox

Peter Weir's swashbuckling epic, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, failed to earn Russell Crowe his perennial nomination.

ed here. However, while these performances were certainly good, neither Shohreh Aghdashloo nor Marcia Gay Harden turned in particularly noteworthy performances. I'm going to go against the grain and pick Holly Hunter, if only because Renée Zellweger's cornpone "The men make the weather" speech in the *Cold Mountain* trailer made me want to pierce my own eardrums every time I heard it.

Forrest's Pick: Sure, she had to deliver some corny dialogue, but Renée Zellweger's spunky, Granny Clampett-esque performance was a breath of fresh air. Her flamboyant free spirit easily stole the film, and after two years of nearly winning an Oscar, I think Zellweger is due for glory.

BEST PICTURE

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

Lost in Translation

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World

Mystic River

Seabiscuit

Sarah's Pick: Surely everyone recognizes that *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* was the best film of the year. However, the Academy doesn't tend to like fantasy or action films, and the first *LOTR* was, in my opinion a more

solid piece of work. Did the first film win?

Of course not. I think the only way *Return* will win is if the Academy admits that they made a huge mistake in 2001.

Otherwise, and this is the result I actually expect, the nearly-as-excellent *Mystic River* will take home the little statuette. Either way, it won't be one of those years where I turn off my TV in an angry huff.

Forrest's Pick: Though 2001's *Fellowship of the Ring* and 2002's *The Two Towers* failed to take home this coveted prize, I think the third time may be a charm for *Return of the King*. The only film I find with a chance at dethroning *King* is \$4 million budgeted critical darling, *Lost in Translation*. However, if only to keep *LOTR's* legion of die-hard fans from rioting the next morning, let's just hope that this final chapter in Peter Jackson's groundbreaking trilogy takes home the night's biggest honor.

The 76th Annual Academy Awards air this Sunday at 7 p.m. on WKRN Channel 2 News. Be sure to check out Sarah Crotzer's Oscar themed DVD reviews at www.mtsusidelines.com ★

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[Club Listings]

Thursday, February 26

Boro Bar & Grill: Intrinsic, 9:30 p.m., \$5-7.

Bluesboro: Under Shade, Lower Level, 10 p.m., \$5

Campus Pub: An Unzipped Fly, 10 p.m.

The End: Airline, Death Cometo Matteson, 1984, 9 p.m., \$5.

Exit/In: Moonshine Still, Family Groove Company, 9 p.m., \$8.

The Five Spot: Bliss, Johnny Microwave, 9 p.m.

The Muse: Culture, Five Foot Annie, Chester Bloom, Key to the Downfall, 7 p.m., \$5.

Springwater: Moonlight Towers, Sybiris, The Falling, 10 p.m., \$5.

★The Sutler: Big Fella and Te'Arthur, 9 p.m., \$5.

Wall Street: Michael Acree's Shut Up and Listen Volume Two, 9 p.m.

Windows on the Cumberland: Transcendental Crayon Ensemble, 9 p.m.

Friday, February 27

All American Sports Grill: Shane & the Moneymakers, 10 p.m., \$3.

Blue Sky Court: Jetpack, Popular Genius, Waterproof Blond, Spiral, 9 p.m., \$5.

Bluesboro: WRLT Lightning 100 Presents Delicious Blues Stew, Sweet Papa Dave, The Blue Cats, 6:30 p.m., \$5.

★Boro Bar & Grill: Not Before Noon CD Release show with Imaginary Baseball League, Death Cometo Matteson, 9:30 p.m., \$5-7.

Exit/In: Humdrum presents Slow & Steady Winner, Septemberland, Bulb, Thornton, 9 p.m., \$5.

Guido's: Vesta Rose, Fade, 7 p.m., \$2.

The Mercy Lounge: Hayseed Dixie, Drive by Truckers, 9 p.m., \$10.

The Muse: Park, Counterfeit, 7 p.m., \$5.

Red Rose: The Velcro Stars, The Bubblegum Complex, In Passing,

Rookie of the Year, 9 p.m., \$5.

Springwater: Temple of Bon Matin, Sword Heaven, Paul Booker's Dynamite Operators, 10:30 p.m., \$5.

The Sutler: The Massacoustics, Jason Salzer, Rachel Young, 9 p.m., \$5.

Wall Street: Moonshine Still, Matt Warren, 9 p.m., \$5.

Saturday, February 28

12th & Porter: Fairfax, The Coal Men, 10 p.m.

All American Sports Grill: Don't Trust the Radio, 10 p.m., \$3.

Blue Sky Court: The Ease, Ide, Westover, 9 p.m., \$1.

Bluesboro: WRLT Lightning 100 Presents The Heaters, 10 p.m., \$6.

Boro Bar & Grill: Skullkin, 9:30 p.m., \$5-7.

The End: Fred Armisen, Jeremy, 9 p.m., \$10.

Gentleman Jim's: Strawman, 9 p.m.

The Mercy Lounge: Laws

Rushing, The Plastic Ruler, Josh Bennett, 9:30 p.m., \$7.

The Muse: Advokate, Ryonin, Human, Emits Horror, 7 p.m., \$5.

★Red Rose: Feable Weiner, 9 p.m., \$5.

Springwater: Working Stiffs Jamboree, 8 p.m.

The Sutler: Pat Buchanan, 9 p.m., \$5.

Wall Street: Grand Revue, 9 p.m., \$5.

Windows on the Cumberland: Dirt Farm, Hands Up, 10 p.m., \$4.

Sunday, February 29

★3rd & Lindsley: BR549, Porter Hall TN, 8 p.m., \$7.

12th & Porter: Love Over Gravity, Spout, 9 p.m.

The Muse: Soapbox, Blues Jam, 7 p.m.

A ★ denotes the official [flash] pick of the night.

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