

COMPUTER CIRCUS MAXIMUS



microcomputer games DIVISION
The Avalon Hill Game Company

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Baltimore, Maryland • Printed in USA



Computer Circus Maximus™

The Multiplayer Chariot Race Game

Computer Circus Maximus is The Avalon Hill Game Company's
Trademark for its game of Chariot Racing

To play the IBM version, boot up the DOS disk. Insert the *Circus Maximus* disk and type **CINIT**. Press the **ENTER** key. The game will begin.

Introduction

The ancient Romans had a passionate love for horse racing and betting. Rome at its empirical height had four important circuses. The Circus Maximus was the oldest, and was already venerable when its special starting stalls were built in 329 B.C. In 221 B.C., the Circus Flaminius was built, and two more followed in the first century A.D.

Each circus (a Latin word for circle) had a long, narrow course, separated by the Spina. The Spina was decorated with statues, and obelisks and also held the lap markers. People sat along three sides of the arena, with the fourth occupied by the starting gates. These were not small buildings. Measuring 650 yards by 220 yards, the Circus Maximus held 250,000 people. The circus was the meeting place of society. It was used about 240 days of the year. Under Augustus about 12 races a day were held; under Caligula up to 34 were recorded and under the Flavians the number rose over 100.

The most famous stables or factions were the Reds, Whites, Greens, and Blues. Due to their popularity,

charioteers commanded enormous payments. One named Diocles won 3000 races for two-horse chariots and 1450 for four-horse chariots (quadrigae). He retired about 150 A.D. with a fortune of 35 million sesterces. Many less fortunate racers died at an early age.

In *Circus Maximus*, you have a chance to relive the glories of ancient chariot races without taking the risks their charioteers endured. You may play single races, or take the role of a faction chief and field teams in many races while betting on the outcomes. If your strategy is sound, your horses fit, and your drivers sober, you too may achieve fame and glory.

Single Race Instructions

There are two types of games in *Circus Maximus*: single races and a five-race campaign that allows betting. The winner at the end of the fifth race is the person with the most money, not necessarily the one who won the most races.

Single races are the best place for a novice to start. When the initial options screen appears, choose S. Most commands are given by pressing the first letter of the command you wish to use. Some orders are given by using the arrow keys, and when more than one number may be required, you will also have to press the ENTER key.

Getting Started.

You need to choose the following values to set up your game:

Number of factions (2-6): the number of players, both human and nonhuman who will run this race.

Number of human players: how many factions you and friends wish to control.

Number of chariots/team: how many chariots each faction will control in a race. The maximum number of chariots on the course is 12. Thus if there are 4 factions, each may control 3 chariots.

Difficulty: sets the difficulty factor for the computer controlled factions. One gives you the easiest time, three the hardest.

Track (1-2): chooses a racetrack. Track 2 is longer. Different strategies will be required to master each track.

Designing Teams.

The chariot design screen resembles a spreadsheet. Use the arrow keys to move the cursor from item to item. Use the INS key to add to an attribute, use the DEL key to subtract from it.

Each team that you race has 4 attributes: driver, car, team and endurance. Each attribute can have a value from 0 to 2. The total of all attributes cannot exceed 4 at any time.

Driver measures the ability of your driver, both as a racer and combatant.

Car rates your chariot: 0 is a light car, built for speed

and not very good on attack; 2 is a heavy car with scythe-blades attached to the wheels — it's primarily for attack.

Team measures the speed of your horses. 0 is a slower team, on the average; 2 a faster.

Endurance measures the ability of your horses to perform during the race. They will exert themselves when whipped and endure strains when attacked or taking fast corners. See the *Designing Teams* section, below for further details.

When you have designed the teams you wish to use, press **D** and the actual values will be calculated for driver, team and endurance. Each value is selected from a range based upon the value you've given. For example, the endurance of type 0 teams is randomly selected from the range 20-45 while the endurance for type 2 teams is in the 39-54 range.

Teams are shown as four numbers from 2 to 9, each representing the speed of one horse. Thus, 6546 would represent a team with two horses of speed 6 on the outside and a 4 and 5 inside. Horses may be injured, reducing their speed. If an outside horse is killed (goes to 0), an inside horse is moved to take its place. As for endurance, the actual values for a team are selected from ranges, based on the endurance attribute. Although in general a team of type 0 is slower than type 1, the ranges do overlap, so it's possible to get a type 0 team that's faster than a type 1 team.

Starting positions are also determined randomly. Now you're ready to start the race.

Racing.

Circus Maximus uses a simultaneous movement system. All players give orders to their chariots, which attempt to move at the same time. Thus, it's difficult to predict exactly where your chariot will be during the movement phase. For this reason, attack orders can be given for all cars. Because actual movement is determined randomly, the order in which commands are issued doesn't matter.

Each player has unlimited time to give orders to their teams. Once players are experienced, you might want to impose some external time limit to keep the game moving. The following table shows possible commands:

(INS) selects the current chariot to give movement orders. If no orders are given, the chariot will stay in the same lane. See below for more information.

(W)hip increases or decreases the chariot's speed, which is measured in the number of squares you can move during the turn. The distance to the next curve is shown.

(H)elp gives a summary of these commands.

(R)eport shows current status of all chariots. There's no way to discover the actual condition of an opponent's chariot wheels or team.

(I)dentity shows the number of each chariot on the track. A,B,C are used respectively for chariots 10,11,12.

This command is the only way you can tell chariots apart on a monochrome screen.

(A)ttack takes you to the attack attitude screen. See below for details.

(M)usic turns the music on and off.

(S)afe speeds shows the safe speeds for each lane when a chariot enters a turn.

(N)ext cycles to the next chariot of your team. You may cycle thru your chariots as often as you like.

(Q)uit ends your orders and moves to the next player. Press (ESC) twice to quit. This gives a quick exit, but won't preserve any of that race's numbers.

When you choose movement, there are additional commands you can give to show the direction you want a chariot to take. Use the arrow keys on the numeric keypad. Press **4** or **6** to shift in or out one lane. To move forward, press **8**, then press a key from **1** to **9** to show how many squares to move. Thus if you want to go ahead 5, then make an outside lane change, you would press **856**. Any combination of keys can be used. Remember that lane changes cost movement points and each chariot has a number of movement points equal to the current team speed plus driver modifications plus any bonus for whipping.

Whipping will increase or decrease speed up to 100% of your team's rating. If your driver has a whip, then you can make an attempt to whip the team. This adds from 0-6 extra movement points to this turn's speed, and reduces your horses' endurance.

The attack attitude table shows what you want a chariot to do in relation to each other chariot on the track. Four possible attacks are given. You can also choose to do nothing or to attack only if it enters the lane the other chariot occupies. Details of the attacks are in the *Attacks* section of the Designer's Notes.

All the cars try to move simultaneously. Cars are chosen randomly, so some may make short spurts. Any attacks are resolved, both those ordered by players and those which occur because of lane shifts. Corners can strain or injure teams if they're taken too fast.

Each race is three laps. The finish line is the left end of the straightaway at the top of the track.

Campaign Game

The campaign game consists of 5 races run among the same competitors with the addition of betting. The winner is the player who amasses the largest fortune during the campaign.

During the design phase, each faction designs up to five teams. Players then select from these teams for each race. Teams may change during the campaign because of injuries suffered in crashes. Drivers and horses may also improve because of race experience.

After the design phase, each player is given the chance

to bet. You must bet at least 100 sesterces on each of your teams. You may bet up to 999 on each. Then you may bet on your opponents' teams. The total bet on opponents may not exceed what you bet on your own teams. When all bets are placed, the odds for each team are shown.

At the end of each race, awards in sesterces and experience is given to the first four placers. Experience is measured in points calculated both on position and distance between the finisher and the next closest chariot. Experience automatically improves drivers and teams. If an experienced charioteer crashes, some of its experience will be lost.

At the end of the race summary, you'll also see losses incurred for crashed chariots, replacement drivers and teams. Next you'll see a matrix which shows the results of the betting. The bets are divided into pools for the first three placers on a 40-30-20 percent basis. (That is first place bettors share 40% of all sesterces bet, etc.) Bettors are paid in proportion to the amount bet on a team. Thus, if 2000 sesterces were bet on a race, the winner would provide 800 sesterces to those who bet on him; second place would pay 600 and third 400. If two players had bet 100 and 300 on the winner, then the first player would receive 200, the second 600.

As your winnings increase, so does the chance that Caesar will tax them.

Designer's Notes

Hazards.

Just getting to the finish line is an accomplishment. There are only 6 lanes to accomodate up to 12 cars, so crowding is inevitable. Each chariot starts with an amount of movement points equal to twice the sum of its team speed, driver factor and any whip bonus requested. Movement points are spent. Moving one unit on the straight-away costs 2 points. The inner two curve lanes cost 1 point, while the outer lanes cost 3 movement points. Additional movement points and endurance can be lost through taking the corners too fast. This is called straining. More points are lost if a car tries to move forward and is blocked by another car. It may try to brake, or shift to an adjacent open lane. Lane shifts cost an additional 2 points for an outside shift, 3 for an inner.

Thus, one of your strategies must be to decide when to risk taking corners faster than the safe speed. You will probably have to do so to win a race, but doing it constantly risks loss of endurance or a crash. Corners taken too fast cause some loss of endurance. There is also the chance of injury to horses, jostling of the driver (a temporary loss of driver factors) or even damage to the car wheels. Another common result is a sideslip — a sideways movement of your car into the next outside lane. Sideslips from the farthest outside lane cause automatic flips.

When a chariot flips it's out of the race. The team is

rescued by arena handlers. The driver may be injured or killed. The car remains on the track until it's hit by another chariot, which may cause damage to that car, too.

Other strategies deal with opponents. If you can block an opponent you can cost him/her valuable points in braking or trying to go around you. And you may just force them into a more dangerous corner lane.

Attacks.

In addition to involuntary attacks made when cars change lanes, you can plan attacks on specific opponents using the attack attitude table. Press the number of the attack you want to use when the cursor is on the appropriate line. You can change these as often as you like. Once an attack takes place, that order is changed to an attack on lane change.

Four types of attack are possible:

Lash Driver uses the attacker's whip against the driver of the target car. The driver may be injured or forced to swerve. (A swerve result can be particularly effective in corners, especially if the target car is already in the inside lane. Any sideslip result will cost the defender extra endurance points. If they are already next to the wall, a swerve will cause them to crash.) The target driver may grab the whip of the attacker.

Lash Horses uses the whip on the target's team. Usually this makes that team go faster. While this might help the opponent on a straightaway, it can be disastrous if the team enters a curve too fast.

Ram Horses uses the attacker's chariot against the target's team. Injury and endurance losses are typical results. This attack is best used by a heavy car to cripple lighter chariots. It's most likely in the early stages of a race, when the field is tightly bunched.

Ram Car is the most effective, yet most dangerous to the attacker, also. This attack damages the wheels of the opponent's car. Wheels start at a value of 10 each, and is shown in parentheses; example: (10/10). As each wheel takes damage points that value is reduced. When damaged, and each turn after, there is a chance that the wheel will come off and the chariot will flip. (Example: if a wheel has a value of 8, there's a 20% chance the wheel will come off.) This can be an effective way for a heavy chariot to cripple the opposition, allowing lighter chariots on its team to pull ahead. There is also the chance, though, that the attacker's car will be damaged. It is not advisable to use this attack with other than heavy chariots.

All attacks cost movement points, and this is another factor to consider: a heavy chariot which spends its first turns attacking may find itself passed by the field. This is especially costly as few heavy chariots have the speed or endurance to catch a field once they've fallen behind. If this happens, one tactic is to stay behind and let yourself get lapped by the leader. A better strategy is to try to stay in the front of a tight field, and attack only those

opponents who threaten to break away.

Also be wary of making attacks against stronger drivers. If you didn't allocate at least one point to your driver in the design phase, he shouldn't be making too many attacks.

Lastly, you'll often have to decide whether to take revenge for past attacks or try to win the race. Rarely can you do both. Attacks slow down your progress and, unless you cripple your opponent, you'll only be following him for the rest of the race. Effective attacks are possible in a team race where one chariot is used to hinder the opponents while the rest of the team is designed for speed and tries to make an early breakaway. If all teams use this strategy the outcome of the race may be decided in the first few phases when the scythe-bearing bruisers still can have an effect.

Designing Teams.

A chariot team is described by 4 attributes: *driver*, *car*, *team* and *endurance*. Each attribute can have a value from 0 to 2. The total of all attributes cannot exceed 4. Choosing appropriate values for your teams can make a big difference in your race results. Also, you should consider the effects of various combinations of different team types in multi-car races.

The *driver* attribute measures your driver's ability both as a racer and attacker. The 0-2 range is used to determine the number of hit points a driver has. A high driver rating will mean a better chance of successful attacks and a better ability to maneuver the car in tight turns. The driver attribute determines the initial driver modifier (drm). The drm, however can be affected during the game. Wounds and jostling for example may reduce the drm for several turns. This effect is temporary and will gradually be restored. Each time a driver starts a race he receives his initial rating (modified by an experience points gained.)

Car is an indicator of the attack abilities of your chariot: 0 is a light car, built for speed and not very good on the attack; 2 is a heavy car with scythe-blades attached to the wheels — it's primarily for attack. All cars have wheels which can sustain 10 hit points. On any car-to-car attack each car may be damaged. Wheel damage is cumulative. Even if a car survives one attack, its wheels may be damaged enough to cause a crash later in the race.

The *team* attribute measures the overall speed of your horses. 0 is a slower team, on the average; 2 a faster. After you assign the value, the actual speed of your horses will be calculated by the computer. A horse can have a speed from 2 to 7 (speeds up to 9 are possible with experience). The following table shows the range of possible speeds.

	horse	ratings	speed range
0	4324	5435	13-17
1	5335	6446	16-20
2	6446	7557	20-24

Endurance measures the ability of your horses to perform during the race. Endurance points are lost whenever a team strains in a corner, when whipped by the driver or attacked. If a team uses all its endurance points, it will not respond to the whip and has a much greater chance of flipping if it takes a corner too fast. Thus you should use endurance points sparingly at the start of a race so that you have enough to go full out on the final lap. Ranges for endurance are:

attribute	endurance
0	20-45
1	39-54
2	83-103

You won't have enough points to give all the attributes you want to a chariot. Thus you must make some design decisions. Decide what you want to accomplish. Do you want a fast, steady car that no one will catch? Then take points from your driver and car and set team and endurance to 2's (0022). It automatically declares your intentions and makes you an early target for attacks (or avoidance). Or do you want to play the heavy, maybe being the only chariot to finish? Then concentrate your points on the driver and car (2200). If you try this type of car, you have to make your move at the start of the race. Once the field pulls ahead of you, your slow car will never see the leaders again.

In between these two extremes are many other possibilities. You can take a heavy chariot with some additional endurance and driver factors (1210), or a fast chariot, with enough driver factors to allow for occasional attacks (1012). One to avoid is the average car (1111). It has some of everything but excels at nothing.

Levels Of Difficulty.

At Level 1, all computer opponents use 1111 cars. They rarely make aggressive attacks. In the campaign game, they bet mostly on themselves. At higher levels, more consideration is given to design. Computer players react more to aggressive attacks, and will consider the previous races in its betting.

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QUESTIONS OF PLAY

The clarity of these rules has been verified by *Software Testers of Universal Microcomputer Programmers (STUMP)* and deemed "complete" in all facets of instruction. Please re-read them in areas that seem unclear at first reading. Questions on play can be answered by the factory *only* upon receipt of a self-addressed envelope bearing first-class postage.

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2. Re-read the section in your computer's manual that tells you how to load software. Try to load software again.
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Keyboard Commands.

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