

ECW Hardcore Revolution – Sega Dreamcast

Developed by: Acclaim (<http://www.acclaim.com>)

Published by: Acclaim (<http://www.acclaim.com>)

Reviewed by: Tim Maxwell

Official Site: <http://www.hardcorerevolution.com>

Genre: Sports - Wrestling

Number of Players: One to four

ESRB: Mature

Overall Rating: 5

Graphics: 7/10

Sound: 5/10

Documentation: 5/10

Getting Started: 4/10

Gameplay: 5/10

Value: 5/10

The Good Press: Plenty of game modes; nice graphics; lots of different moves

The Bad Press: Atrocious collision detection; ho-hum sound; basic holds and slams are too hard to pull off

Supports: VMU, Jump Pack

Overview: A promising wrestling game doomed by poor control and a complete breakdown in intangibles.

Tips:

Soften your opponent up with a few punches or kicks before going for the grapple. If you see them staggering, they're easy targets.

Get used to side-stepping. If timed properly, your opponent is defenseless after attempting a punch or kick.

What do you get when you combine all the raunchy mayhem of standard wrestling with a bunch of unorthodox weapons, some barbed wire, and a whole bunch of tables? The newest and most violent form of the sport known as Extreme Championship Wrestling, of course. ECW is known for extending the moral boundaries of standard wrestling by incorporating the use of weapons such as chairs and ladders in the matches. This new branch of wrestling is the obvious premise for Acclaim's new brawler *ECW Hardcore Revolution*, and although there is enough carnage and bloodshed to earn its name, other redeeming qualities are few and far between.

In terms of aesthetics and gameplay, *ECW Hardcore Revolution* borrows heavily from Acclaim's own *WWF Attitude*. In fact, aside from slightly improved graphics and a peppier engine, the two games are pretty much identical. Sadly, this means that all of the same flaws that marred *Attitude* are back in *Revolution*; with some new ones tossed in for good measure. The animation and speed of the game has been improved upon and the wrestlers themselves look pretty good, but the announcer is still boring and the taunts still rank very high on the "cheese meter." That said, however, if the graphics and sound were the biggest problem with this game, it would've scored much higher.

Fans of the ECW will no doubt enjoy all the different play modes and match types in *Hardcore Revolution*. Players can try their hand in standard exhibition mode, partake in a tournament, or play out a career using a custom or existing wrestler. There are dozens of different match types to choose from, including everything from a deathmatch (where all weapons are available and there is no count out for being outside the ring) to the infamous barbed wire match (which, although highly touted, offers little variation from a standard bout). In addition, a series of "win modifiers" can be applied to each match. With these stipulations, you can elect to make it so the only way to win is to perform your character's "finisher" move, or have it so the first player to draw blood wins.

Unfortunately, all the play modes in the world can't make up for mediocre gameplay and here, things really start falling apart for *Hardcore Revolution*. Let's begin with the laughable excuse for collision detection Acclaim employs. Ordinarily, I might be able to look past a minor deficiency in this area, but for a gameplay aspect as vital as this, you'd think this glaring flaw would've been noticed in testing. Instead we're stuck with punches sailing through opponents' faces, and perfectly-timed drop kicks producing nothing more than a soar rear end for the attempter. Sadly, these things happen constantly and really make it difficult to get into the game.

As bad as the collision detection is in *Hardcore Revolution*, the control isn't much better. Each of the wrestlers have a wide range of special and finishing moves—some of which are very cool—if you could ever pull them off that is. To perform these moves, you must engage your opponent in a grapple and be the first to input a button/d-pad combination. Too bad the allotted response time is next to nil and as a result, most matches turn into mindless button mash fests. This is especially frustrating since the computer is pulling off special moves and finishers left and right while you're stuck performing the same moves repeatedly. Of course, you don't want the best moves to be simple, but a little less complication and a little more leeway would improve this aspect significantly. There is also too much emphasis placed on the kicks and punches (in the event that you could actually connect on one). During one match, I simply danced around the ring and kicked the opponent's energy bar down to near empty. This obviously isn't the most entertaining way to play, but since two or three kicks reduces the energy bar just as much as a brain buster, why put the stress on your thumbs?

Other control problems in *Hardcore Revolution* crop up as a result of the game's poor interface and manual. If you want to know how to do a special move, you have to pause the game and access your character's move list from there. Not only that, but the computer kept executing special moves without grappling first. Nowhere in the manual does it say how to do this. A couple of times I got lucky and pulled off something by accident, but it would have been nice to know how. Wait, there's more. Let's say you've knocked the bejeesus out of your opponent and you're ready to put him down for the count with a pin. Simple right? Wrong. The buttons have different functions based on where you're standing in relation to your opponent. The same button might execute a pin from one position, or an elbow drop from another. I can't recall how many times I ended up losing a match because I couldn't find the exact location onscreen to stand. Hey Acclaim, assign a button that only performs a pin for crying out loud!

When you put the whole package together, what you get is a deeply flawed wrestling game that is in desperate need of a facelift. I wish I could say that with a few minor tweaks, this game could be a good game, but there are too many oversights and major flaws for that to be true. If you're a die-hard ECW fan who must have the real wrestlers, you might enjoy *Hardcore Revolution* as a weekend rental. If, however, you're just a non-discriminate wrestling fan looking for a solid grapple fest, look elsewhere.