

# Review - PGA Tour 486

## (DOS, 1994)

You know . . . if all entertainment software companies shoved as much detail into their games as Electronic Arts has shoved into PGA Tour Golf 486, we wouldn't have nearly as much fun here at IE. Why? Because we wouldn't have as many lousy games to ruthlessly trash. I happened to love PGA 486, but even if I didn't, I'd have a hard time trashing it because I'm a sucker for realism and detail. This game drips detail. There's so much of it that it's almost obscene. I hope I'm not being too subtle here.

We all know that Access Software's LINKS 386 PRO is still the standard by which all other golf games are measured. Measured against that game, PGA 486 stands up pretty darn well. Published exclusively on CD, PGA features dazzling graphics and some very impressive courses that should lure away a lot of LINKS players. EA's PGA license allowed them to bring nine famous PGA Tour pros onto the development team. These players helped design the courses that come with the game, and appear during gameplay. A "handy" PGA Tour guide comes packaged with the game and gives one-page bios for every registered PGA Tour player. I'm sure you'll find that remarkably important, but I think I'd better get to the game now.

The main menu is as straightforward as it gets . . . choose to either practice a hole, play a round, or compete in a tournament. For the latter two options, you must register as a player. Registering as yourself lets you keep season and round stats, but registering as one of the greats can be pretty fun because your golfer will actually look like the player you choose (Fuzzy Zoeller is a must-see).

After a short eternity and so much hard drive activity that I thought a virus had invaded my system, I was plopped onto the first hole of some famous golf course. I can't convey to you how impressed I was with the graphics I saw. Hey, LINKS looks great, but this looks just as good and has Fuzzy Zoeller to boot! PGA Tour plays as well as any other golf game . . . I mean, you click a mouse a couple times to control your swing. There's nothing extra special to mention in that area except that EA spent a couple extra bytes of programming code to make the swing bar three-dimensional. Wowie. It's the nice, smooth animation and realistic ball physics AFTER the swing that are more worthy of praise. Timing a swing is difficult, and throwing wind into the mix makes it a true challenge. Golf games really are rare in the way that they dish out a lot of fun but barely require any effort to play. Software companies, take heed of that.

EA supplies three courses with PGA 486, all of which are exceptionally recreated. Accompanying the ever-popular Sawgrass course are two new ones . . . Summerlin and River Highlands. Summerlin, in Las Vegas, was created with the help of . . . you guessed it . . . Fuzzy Zoeller! (I'm seriously considering telling EA to just call the game "Fuzzy Zoeller" and watch the money roll in.) Anyway, there are a couple things which keep PGA 486 from being the best golf game ever made.

There's no course creator or editor, which I'm assuming is the case because normal human beings with busy lives couldn't possibly create a course as detailed or as realistic as the ones that make PGA 486 what it is. Still, for all those people out there with Silicon Graphics workstations, it's a major omission. Secondly, you can't customize your golfer's colors or even play a female golfer. Unlike course creation, this is definitely an easy process and a few other golf games on the market already allow it. Otherwise, PGA 486 represents the pinnacle of . . . uh . . . golf simulation technology. It's a great game made greater by the fact that it's very easy to play but tough to win. I know you've heard that before, so if you need further motivation to buy this game, I have two words for you . . . nah, I won't say it again.

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