

Dev Diary #3 – New Gameplay Elements

Hello everyone! I'm Jun Tokuhara, the Director on the Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll game. Today, I would like to share with you new gameplay elements we have implemented in the game that we hope you will enjoy!

What's Super Monkey Ball without fun and zany mini games!? This is a great element in the game that we have a lot of fun making! Coming up with ideas for mini games that are controlled by the Wii Balance Board was pretty difficult, so we had to examine a lot of ideas and selected the ones that seem to fit well with it. In the end, we came up with around 20 of them.

We thought of some great idea variations, for example, an idea to control the game with both hands without standing on the board, or an idea where the player controls the game by laying on his/her stomach. However, we rejected those ideas because we wanted to make sure that we provide a game that every one can play comfortably.

Below are a list of our new mini games and some of the inspiration behind them:

-- Firefighter

This pump style Fireman game was created as the result of an idea to combine both the Wii Remote and Wii Balance Board to arrive at a control method which benefits from the characteristics of each controller. In the initial stages of development, the difficulty level was too high and it was very hard to put the fire out, which in many cases resulted in Jam crying! To protect your precious Jam Dojo, please do your best to put out the fire!

-- Ninja Stomp

Of course we had to include Ninjas in our game! (Laughs). Yet, we quickly realised it would be too hard to reflect the quick and precise movement of Ninjas with the Wii Balance Board so we featured a secret and ancient Ninja art form called "Straw Mat Lifting" and created new rules around that! For the Western audience, this may be the first time you have heard of this art form but please be sure to practice this secret technique to master this mini game! (Laughs).

-- Skydiving

We were trying to come up with a game which gives an exhilarating feeling and did not require the player's full attention. We had swimming and flying ideas to examine, but we decided to go with "flying" due to its accessibility for the control. However in the beginning, we were too focused on achieving a neat formation, so as a result, the game turned out to be rather hard and stressful during that period. It took us quite some time to not only improve its appearance, but also make it smooth enough to live up to the player's expectation. The more you play this game, the more skilled you become so you can then challenge yourself by trying to successfully complete new formations one after another.

-- Sumo Smash

I got the inspiration for this game when I was getting up to throw away my trash and as I was going back and forth from my desk to the waste basket, I was thinking of a game that gives a certain amount of exercise for the player with both simple controls and rules. However, if you only featured the exercise part, it would most likely appear too dull, therefore we tried to be more creative with the movement and rendering. You should definitely try your best to bump your opponent as far away into the sky as you can!

Below are descriptions of the new modes in the game that offer an exciting yet challenging layer to the game:

-- Co-op mode

In previous versions, in order to play with multiple players, match play was the only option for both the Mini game and Main game sections. However, we are introducing a completely new "co-op" play mode in the latest version along with other modes to be played with family and friends. Whenever I played a match game against my wife, she often got upset and complained to me, saying "of course a game creator would be able to play better than me!" So I tried to come up with another game style that we could still play together.

...And I think that this game could be the one that makes this possible. I can picture children controlling the monkeys while their parents are removing all of the obstacles for them. I

envision kids playing with their parents saying “Mum! Hurry up! You need to clear the way for me! I can’t get through!” and their parents saying, “Hold on a minute...!” I am sure those will be common phrases heard in many families!

-- Marathon mode

It was one of my plans to create an exercise game which is relevant and yet effective when looking at the rising health awareness and jogging fad. If you play a number of stages one after another on the Wii Balance Board, you will feel good amount of burn from the energy from exercising; you can even enjoy this exercise in your own home. We prepared this mode initially so that it could be played seamlessly. In the beginning, we were planning on making a non-stop marathon game to advance through all of the stages, but it was a lot harder than we expected! So we prepared Half Marathon and Full Marathon to differentiate the course length, just like in an actual marathon. The player can select the one which suites their physical strength and ability more. This mode is also playable with the Wii Remote, so give both a go and try to find out how fit you are!

-- Mirror Image Mode

When the Wii Balance Board is used, not everyone is able to keep equal balance between left and right; people tend to lean to either the left or the right. Taking this into account, we created this new mode by reversing the left and right side of the original courses to make it easier for people to clear the stage (on their favourite side), and to lessen the physical burden (posture-wise). Even if you are familiar with all of the stages, once they are reversed, they look and feel completely different, so please try out this mirror mode in all of the various stages. Just to note also that the HUD will not be reversed, so no worries about that! (laugh)

Hopefully, everyone has learned a lot more about Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll and I cannot wait to hear your feedback on the game after you have had a chance to play it! Thank you!