

Developer Diary #1

Hi Everyone,

I'm Toshihiro Nagoshi, creator of the Super Monkey Ball franchise and the loveable characters, AiAi, MeMe, BeBe and GonGon, that you all know so well! Today I'm going to give you some background information as you may or may not know about me, and also give you some insight into the creation of the games and my role throughout the history of this franchise!

I majored in Film Studies while I was in college and wanted to work in the film industry. At the time, it was really tough to enter that field, so I joined a games company instead. I had always wanted a career in entertainment so entering into the video games industry was the natural progression since it allowed me the chance to have a creative outlet, and of course I like playing video games, so it all worked out. This year, I am celebrating 20 amazing years with SEGA!

I enjoy creating games as well as playing games. The Mario series is my favorite of all time and I'm currently playing Dragon Quest and some PC puzzle games. I'm a hardcore gamer but also enjoy playing casual games.

During my time here at SEGA, I have been able to work on some amazing games from DAYTONA USA, SPIKEOUT, F-ZERO, YAKUZA, the Virtua series, and of course the Super Monkey Ball games. Even though, I am now supervising the overall Research & Development for Consumer Games within SEGA, I will continue to work passionately on games. I am still actively involved in the most current Monkey Ball game, Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll.

We imagined the original idea for Super Monkey Ball when we were trying to create a game that anyone could enjoy immediately after inserting a coin in an arcade machine without having to read the instructions since many of the arcade games back then were becoming overly complicated to satisfy hardcore fans. I came up with the original game concept. At first, the idea was just to use a plain ball but we faced two problems with the design; the first being that the design of the ball was too inorganic and cold and wouldn't be appealing and the other was that it was too hard to feel the sense of direction out of a plain ball.

We tried to cope with these issues by adding an illustration on the ball surface but the problems still remained. So instead, we placed a character inside the ball as a test and then discovered that this unique combination worked very well. We didn't come up with the monkey character right away but went through numerous trials and revisions before we decided on those final characters you see today. A lot of people ask me how the monkeys get into the ball, unfortunately, that's a secret! You will have to use your imagination!

Bringing the original Super Monkey Ball arcade game to the GameCube really revolutionized the way Monkey Ball could be played and elevated the game to new heights. The arcade version was well received but wasn't an instant hit but we were very confident about the game and its appeal. When the

GameCube launched, it provided us with a great opportunity to re-create this game for users at home. The rest is video game history!

We were aware that the design of the original arcade game is different from how the game is known today and have made changes to balance the gameplay aspect since the original version was ported straight from the arcade version which could be difficult for casual gamers to play. Now, we're creating Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll on the Wii, with the addition of Wii Balance Board support which offers a new layer to the gameplay element that can be easily picked up and played and fun for family and friends. We hope the fans will enjoy this new iteration of the series.