

FANTASTIC FOOTBALL

PLAYER GUIDE

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August 11, 2021

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Introduction

After seeing news on the Internet that Sensible Soccer was ported to Amstrad CPC and being without a good idea for a game for the running MSXDev'21 competition, I started working on a proof of concept for a football game that would allow virtual pitch size and one pixel scrolling in any direction. As MSX 1 hardware is not very friendly to that, lacking any hardware acceleration, having slowest Z80 processor compared to similar machines (ZX Spectrum, Amstrad CPC), and having indirect video memory access, it was clear that the task will be challenging and will require some compromises.

MSXDev'21 rules required for games to work with 16Kb of RAM but could have any ROM size for the game content. However, I limited myself to 48Kb of ROM so that the game would still be playable from a cassette when 64Kb of RAM were available.

The combined result of limitations, available free time, MSXDev'21 deadline and my coding ability is here. Hope you will have some fun.

System Requirements

An MSX compatible system with at least 16Kb of main memory for the ROM version of the game.

For a cassette/diskette version 64Kb is required.

Optional hardware is SRAM cartridge Sony HBI-55 which will allow saving of states during World Cup.

Note that game was designed for a 50Hz/PAL machine. If using a 60Hz machine, gameplay, music, and sound effects will appear faster than normal.

Quick Instructions

The main game interface is based on menus and can be navigated by keyboard or joysticks. Use directional keys or joystick to move between menu items and values. To select a desired option use any of the possibilities defined under trigger 1 (T1), to back out or cancel use trigger 2 (T2).

T1=space, enter, Z(Y), button 1 of any joystick

T2=backspace, escape, X, button 2 of any joystick

To start a match, choose Quick game and all the appropriate values.

World Cup mode is described in its own section of this document.

Gameplay is controlled using following triggers

T1=Z(Y) or joystick 1 button 1 or joystick 2 button 1

T2=X or joystick 1 button 2 or joystick 2 button 2

Which have different use depending on situation.

When you own the ball pressing T1 will kick the ball slightly in the direction you are facing. This allows you to be faster as having the ball at your feet slows you down. If you hold T1 and release you will do a strong kick or a shot at the goal. Strong kick will send the ball in the direction you are facing far away.

If you press T2 when controlling the ball, it will be passed to the marked friendly player (but not the goalkeeper). Marked players are those blinking or, if outside of visible area, marked with a small arrow on the screen borders.

When not having ball possession, pressing T1 will cause you to take control of the player closest to the ball.

Goalkeeper is fully automated, and you can't control him, only if he needs to kick the ball after an opposing player sent it outside of the pitch behind the goal.

World Cup

World Cup mode is fashioned after FIFA rules where 32 nations take part in the competition. You can take control of 1 or up to 32 teams which allows an individual or a group of people to play together against each other and the computer. Following screenshots will explain how to set up and play in this mode.



After selecting WORLD CUP option on the main page, you may get presented with the following menu depending on the presence of the save game in the SRAM cartridge. If the cartridge is not present or there is no save game this menu will not appear, and you will go straight to World Cup set up page.



In this menu you can select 32 national teams that will compete at the World Cup. Total list contains 64 teams and was compiled based on the visitor statistics per country to the www.file-hunter.com website, thus including countries where MSX enthusiasts reside, and FIFA standings at the time of writing. You can select 0 to 32 teams. If you select less than 32 teams, rest will be chosen randomly. To exit the list, scroll all the way down or press T2.



After choosing FILL REST AND PROCEED on the previous page you are presented with a list of 32 teams that will compete and need to select at least one that the player will control. If for example 4 people meet to play the game, each one will select a national team to control. Pressing T2 or scrolling down will lead you to match length. Each game played at this World Cup will have the same duration. Choosing BEGIN WORLD CUP will enter the group phase of the competition.



We are now in the group phase of the competition where teams are spread in 8 groups: A-H with 4 teams per group. Player controlled teams are placed in groups, so they meet as late in the competition as possible. For example, with 4 players, they would be spread in groups A, C, E, G.

This screen is shown when player-controlled team needs to play a match. Current group standings are shown. One can play the match, abort the current World Cup and return to the main menu,

or save the game if SRAM cartridge is detected. When the cartridge is not detected SAVE option is not shown.



When you choose PLAY NEXT you will be presented with basic controls options and the menu will depend on, if one or two players are involved. Choose START MATCH to play it. Note that group phase matches are played at PROFESSIONAL difficulty and in later phases at CHAMPION level.

WORLD CUP GROUP PHASE

Team	GF	GA	P
ARG	1	0	3
PER	0	1	0
AUT	0	0	1
IND	0	1	0

Team	GF	GA	P
TUN	4	0	3
EGY	0	4	0
ROU	0	0	1
JOR	0	0	0

1:0 INDIA - ARGENTINA 2:1 SPAIN - GREECE 2:2 PANAMA

WORLD CUP GROUP PHASE

Team	GF	GA	P
ESP	1	0	3
BRA	0	0	1
AUT	0	0	0
PER	0	1	0

Team	GF	GA	P
TUN	0	2	0
EGY	0	2	0
ROU	0	0	1
JOR	0	0	0

IRELAND - GREECE 2:0 PANAMA - ALGERIA 3:2 SPAIN - GER



After the group phase is over an overview page is displayed, with first page showing groups A-D and second groups E-H. First two teams in a group will proceed to the next round of 16. Teams are ranked following these rules:

1. Number of points (P), where 3 are awarded for each win, 1 for a draw result and 0 for loss
2. Bigger goal difference, which is calculated by deducting total goals against (GA) from total goals for (GF)
3. Player controlled team has precedence over computer-controlled team
4. Alphabetical, based on team name

Having passed into the round of 16 phase you will see a summary screen with all the upcoming matches and teams.



When a game needs to be played by the player, next match will be highlighted by the arrow beside it.

Note that matches played after the group phase can't end in a draw result and will require you to play extended time until a winner is decided. There are no penalty shots.



Matches continue with a small difference that it is not possible to save the game at the semi-finals and finale stages.



With enough skill and determination, you will reach the finals and if you win well you will just have to find out yourself.

Gameplay

This section covers gameplay itself in details and covers QUICK GAME menu settings against the computer.



One can choose to control the game using keyboard, or joysticks.

There are 3 levels of difficulty: amateur, professional, and champion. These influence how fast computer controller footballers are.

Team colours are preset and you can choose between two sets:

- Blue vs Red
- Cyan vs Yellow

Choose the one with better visibility on your setup. Cyan vs

Yellow for example works better for MSX1 machines on composite output as it produces greater contrast. Due to a different palette of MSX2 Blue vs Red looks nicer on such machines. Note that goalkeepers have distinct colours.

Total match duration in minutes is between 6 and 30 minutes in 6-minute increments. For a 6-minute match, each half will last for 3 minutes and optional extended time for 1 minute.

CONTROLS

Gameplay is controlled using following triggers:

T1=Z(Y) or joystick 1 button 1 or joystick 2 button 1

T2=X or joystick 1 button 2 or joystick 2 button 2

Additional keys for special purposes:

(SHIFT+) A, S, D, W – camera movement

Normally the part of the pitch that you are looking at is where the ball is. Using above keys allows you to view other parts of the pitch. Without SHIFT key camera movement is fast, with SHIFT key camera moves at 1 pixel. Note that camera movement is limited when normal gameplay is active and will not allow you to stray away from the ball. To be able to view the entire pitch pause the game.

STOP – pause/unpause

This will pause the game and will show a small pause indicator. Allows camera to be moved freely.

CTRL+STOP – end the match. Pressing this will immediately cause time to run out and end the match.

SCREEN OVERVIEW



Game presents a top/down view of the pitch and footballers. There are 11 footballers on each side. Picture on the left shows starting moments from the centre where Blue team has the ball. On-screen messages are displayed:

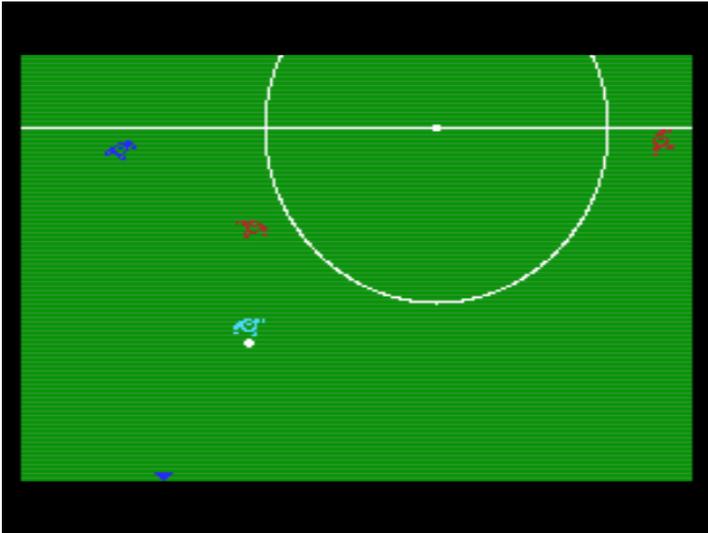
- Part of the game
- Game time
- Score

There are other messages: out, corner kick, time, explaining what has happened.

In this colour combination active/player-controlled footballer is shown in cyan. Goal keepers are also having unique colours compared to other team members. For computer-controlled footballers there is no colour distinction between the one controlling the ball and others.



Blinking footballer depicts the one that you will pass the ball to if you press T2. As you move the active footballer, there is a 90-degree angle of view. The closest friendly footballer will be selected as a target to pass the ball to if you wish.



It is possible that the pass-to footballer or the active footballer itself goes outside of the currently shown part of the pitch. That is why an arrow will appear showing roughly where the footballer is. In this example the footballer to pass the ball to is somewhere below and left of the active footballer. The arrow is coloured as a regular team member meaning that it is pointing to the pass-to target. If the arrow were to point to the active footballer, it would be cyan in this colour scheme.

HOW TO PLAY

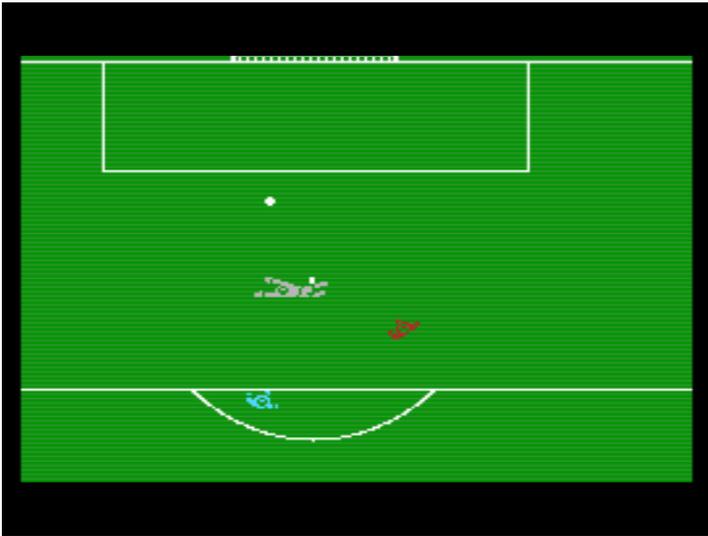
When you control the ball your movement speed is reduced compared to free running. That is why you are advised to use T1 (short click) to make a slight ball kick in the direction you are going and thus speeding yourself up. This allows outrunning those swarming opponent footballers.

Ball overtaking is based on getting close enough to the ball. This means that if you control the ball, avoid opponents getting close. When you are chasing an opponent that owns the ball get close enough and stay close until you take the ball. There is no need to press anything to have a chance to overtake the ball. Once you overtake, use the trick above with T1 to outrun your opponent.

Ball passing to another friendly footballer has been explained before. Target for passing is automatically updated as you move the active footballer.

T1 can be used in basically 3 situations:

1. Leading the ball and wanting to outrun the opponent – press and release quickly
2. Kicking the ball strongly or at the goal – press, hold, release
3. When not actively controlling the ball to switch active/controlled footballer to the closest one to the ball



Variant 2, when close enough to the goal, will shoot the ball at the goal. To be able to do that you need to be close enough to the opponent goal and have at least a part of the goal in 90-degree view angle.

When conditions required for a goal kick are not met, a strong kick in the direction the footballer is facing will be executed.



Goalkeeper is fully automated, and you do not need to do anything to defend yourself.



When executing free kicks after out situation you can use T1 or T2 to pass the ball as you see fit. The maximum speed the ball is kicked is naturally reduced during hand throw-in.

Game does not implement foul play or penalties. If a game ends in a draw and this is not allowed, like in later World Cup stages, you will play extensions until one team takes the lead.

Acknowledgments

A big thank you to Daniel for composing the music, sound effects and graphics. Added to that thank you for the valuable feedback and testing. Also thanks to MRC users that have tested the game and provided feedback:.gdx, albs_br, Tamagozawari, Aoineko, Pencioner

Following tools have been used in the creation of this game:

Arkos Tracker 2 - <https://www.julien-nevo.com/arkotracker/>

MSX Font Editor - <http://marmsx.msxall.com/projetos/mfe/index.php>

TinySprite Editor - <http://msx.jannone.org/tinysprite/tinysprite.html>

Multipaint - <http://multipaint.kameli.net/>

spriteSX devtool - <https://github.com/mvac7/spriteSXdevtool>

graphxconv - <https://github.com/ericb59/graphxconv>

Pletter - <https://github.com/nanochess/Pletter>

Z8ofloat library - <https://github.com/Zeda/z8ofloat>

rasm - <https://github.com/EdouardBERGE/rasm>

sjasmplus - <https://github.com/zoom128/sjasmplus>

Contact

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Music and sound effects author (Daniel Simon, MRC user defdanny) at defdanny@gmail.com

Download Info

Game can be freely downloaded from my GR8NET friendly server at

<http://mzorán.duckdns.org:81>

Use the following direct link to start the game using WebMSX emulator (www.webmsx.org)

https://webmsx.org/?MACHINE=MSX2E&ROM=http://mzorán.duckdns.org:81/ff.rom&FAST_BOOT=1&SPRITES_DEBUG_MODE=1&Z80_CLOCK_MODE=1.5&SCREEN_CRT_SCANLINES=2&SCREEN_FILTER_MODE=1

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