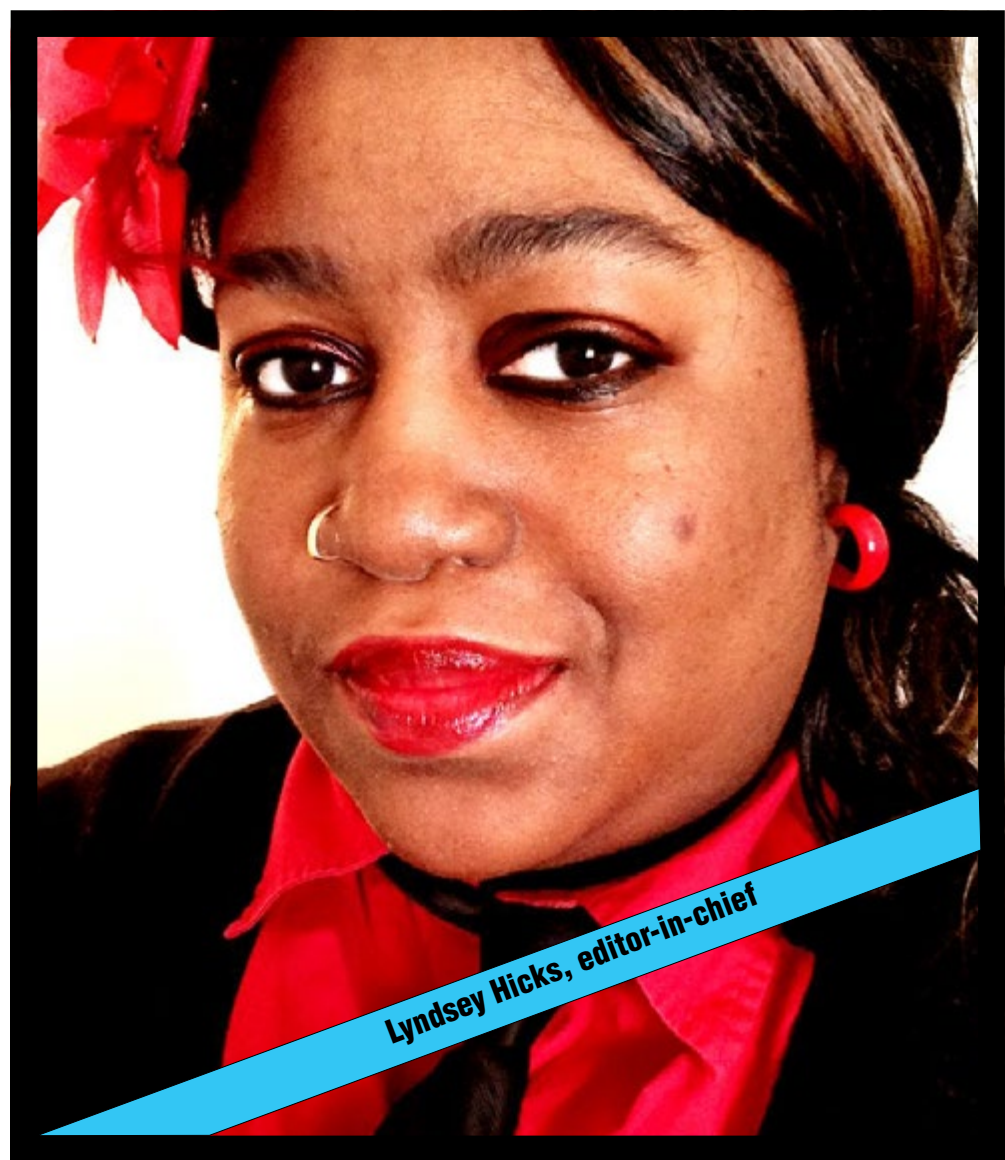


MARIOKART CLASSIC FOCUS

GI explores
the greatest
go-kart series
of all time



GAMING INSURRECTION SPECIAL SECTION



Lindsey Hicks, editor-in-chief

In 1992, Mario was on top of his game. Wildly successful in conquering his 16-bit foe Bowser in one of the greatest platformers ever created, the plumber from Brooklyn was looking for a career change. Enter his apparent obsession with go-karts.

Mario's newest fascination led to what is considered one the best spinoff franchises in history: Super Mario Kart. With seven games released and at least 12 million games sold in North America, according to Nintendo of America, Mario Kart has reached a pinnacle of success only dreamed about by its numerous competitors. And it all started with a simple racing game featuring Mario, Luigi, their friends and their rivals taking a driving tour of the Mushroom Kingdom and Dinosaur Land.

Gaming Insurrection's second Classic Focus installment seeks to examine the elder statesman of go-kart racing, a game that remains fresh after 19 years and routinely has yearly sequels for each new Nintendo console released. We're choosing our weight class and picking our best course as we look at the excellent and classic Super Mario Kart.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Choose your driver.....	3
Know your weapons.....	4-5
Our favorite tracks.....	6-7
Battle mode tracks.....	8-9
Soundtrack selections, editor's take	10
Game modifiers, secrets.....	11
Mario Kart game timeline.....	11



CLASSIC FOCUS: MARIO KART

The Mario Kart content appeared in the 2Q2012 issue of Gaming Insurrection. Download the issue or visit our archives at www.gaminginsurrection.com/giarchives

Choose your driver ...



Peach/Yoshi

Overall stats
Acceleration: Best
Top speed: Average



Mario/Luigi

Overall stats
Acceleration: Average
Top speed: Very good



Toad/K. Troopa

Overall stats
Acceleration: Very good
Top speed: Poor



DK Jr./Bowser

Overall stats
Acceleration: Poor
Top speed: Best



WHAT THIS ALL MEANS

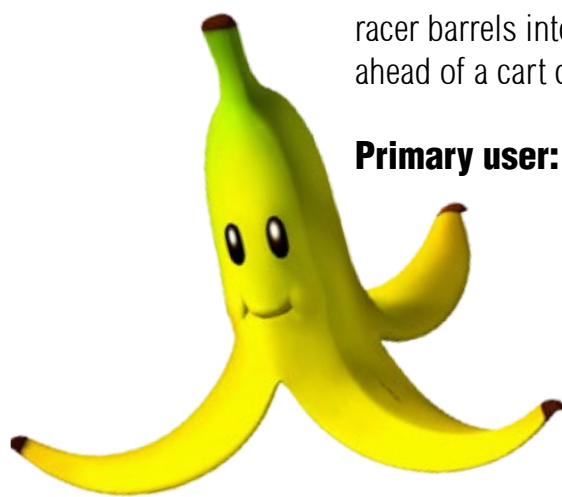
If you want characters that drive fast and have above average weight, pick Peach and Yoshi. They won't spin as easily against the heavyweights. If you want easy beginners who are lightweight with good control and fast acceleration, pick Toad or Koopa Troopa. Beware that they will easily spinout against heavyweights and even middleweights. If you want average across the board for acceleration and top speed, choose Mario or Luigi. Both characters are middleweights and won't lose as much traction in a battle against heavyweights. Finally, if you're looking for a bruiser with high top speed that can hold their own in any collision, pick Bowser or Donkey Kong Jr.

Know your weapons

ITEMS THAT ALL PLAYERS CAN USE

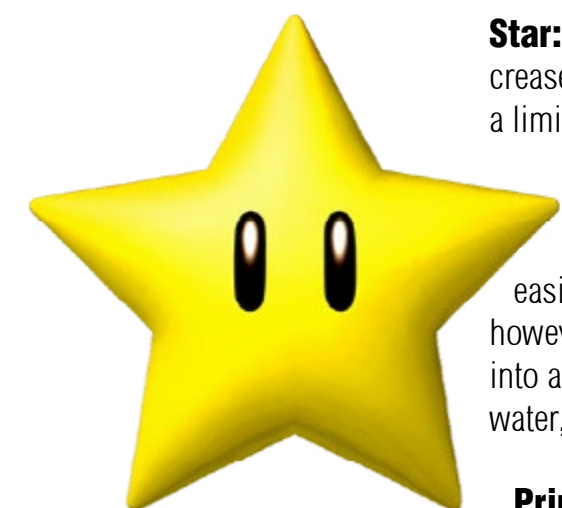
Banana Peel: This stationary item will block the roadway until a hapless racer barrels into it. It can be thrown ahead of a kart or dropped behind.

Primary user: Donkey Kong Jr.



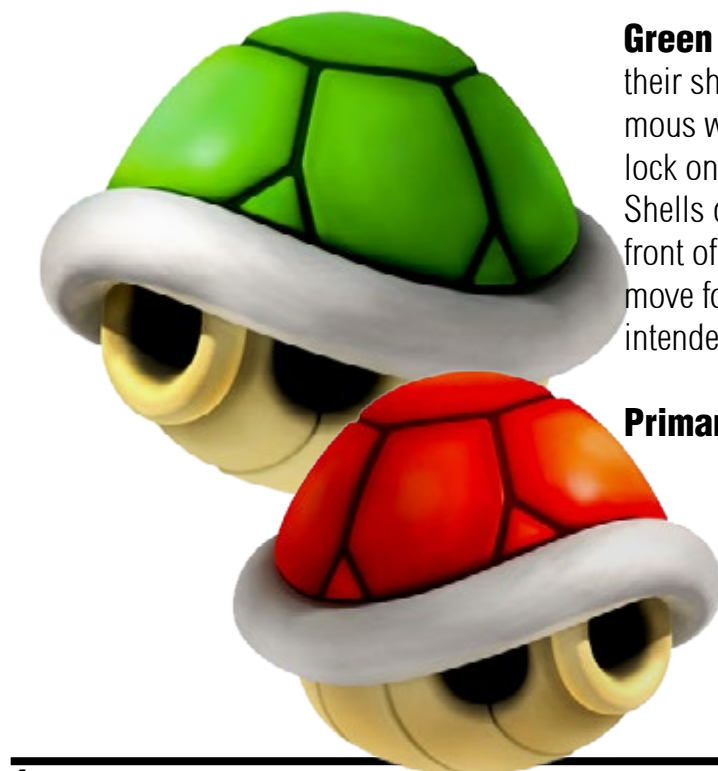
Star: Granting its user invincibility, increased speed and brute attack power for a limited amount of time, a Star is a rare item within Super Mario Kart. Stars usually come to those in fifth place or below, and in Battle Mode more easily. Stars come with conditions, however: If you drive off an edge or fall into a track hazard such as lava or deep water, you will lose it.

Primary users: Mario and Luigi



Green and Red Shell: Koopa Troopas use their shell coverings as some of the most famous weapons throughout the series. Red Shells lock on and track a specific target, while Green Shells do not. Green Shells can be shot in the front of a kart and behind, but Red Shells only move forward. If you are too far away from your intended target, a Red Shell can miss.

Primary user: Koopa Troopa



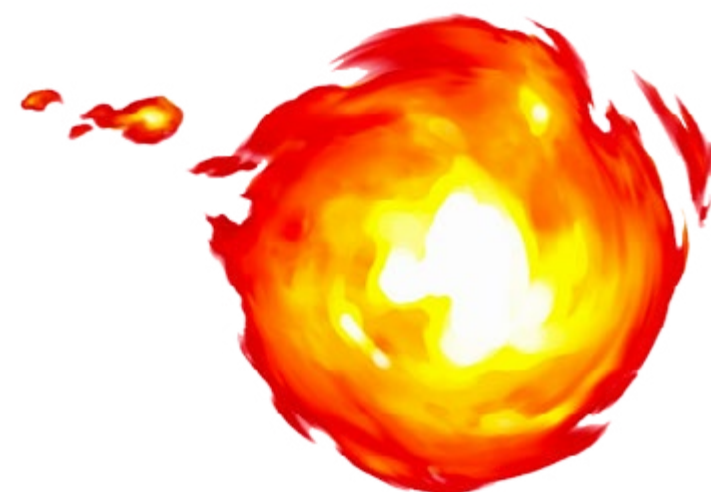
The items in the course of play fall into four categories: Those that all players (human and CPU) can use, CPU-only, human only or Battle/2UP mode only. All weapon attacks will cost four coins when they successfully connect.

CPU ONLY

Yoshi Egg: Yoshi can drop or throw this stationary projectile.



Fireball: Bowser will either throw or drop these to spin out opponents. They are not stationary, and will move around on the track.



Poison Mushroom: Peach and Toad throw or drop these shrinking projectiles. After hitting one and shrinking, try hitting a second one to return to normal size.



HUMAN ONLY

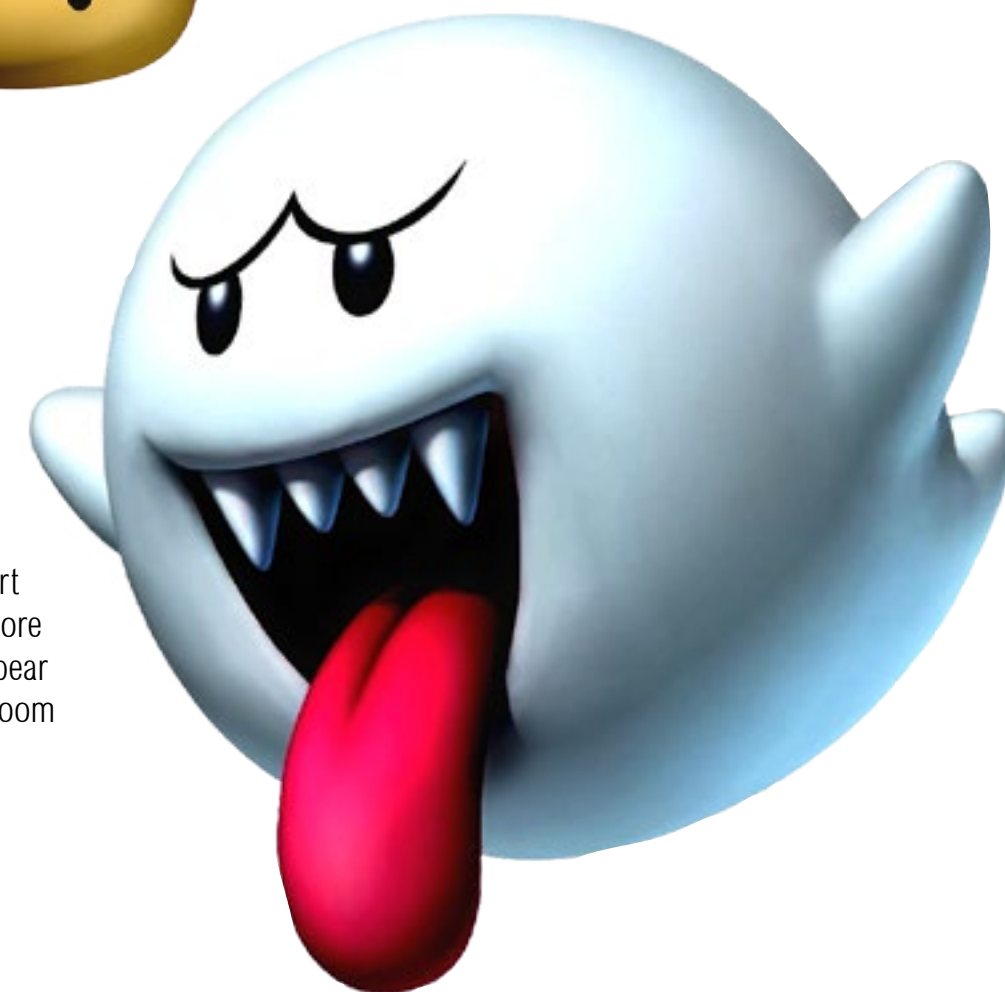
Feather: Making its only appearance in the original game, the Feather is useful in two big instances: Dodging projectiles and finding and using shortcuts. It's a rare item so use it accordingly.



Coins: Only human players can pick these up laying around the track or in item squares. They add two to your current total. They come in handy if you're losing coins in collisions or having to pay Lakitu for towing fees. They also boost your acceleration up to 10 coins.



Mushroom (speed boost): These grant a burst of speed. Use them to boost past the competition or get big air when hitting a jump.

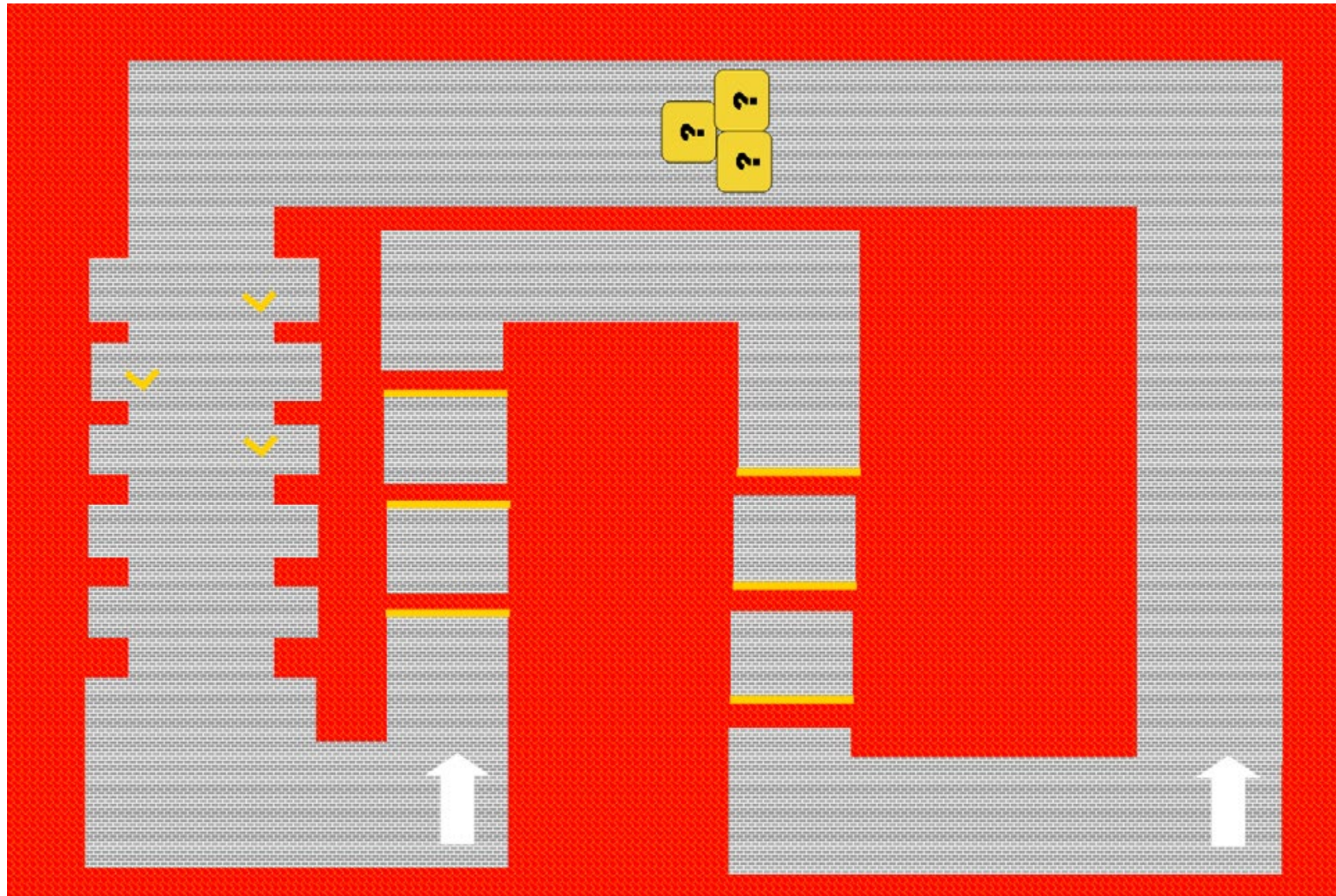


BATTLE MODE/2UP MODE ONLY

Ghost: The Boos help steal other players' items and grants the user invincibility and invisibility for a short period of time. These are infinitely more useful in Battle where you can disappear from sight and buy some breathing room from an impending shell attack.



Lightning Bolt: This later-notorious item is helpful immediately: It shrinks all other opponents on the track. If you can receive a Lightning Bolt — like the Star, only if you're in the dregs of the race order — use it. It's one of the rarest items in the game (only appearing in the Grand Prix or 2UP match races).



BOWSER'S CASTLE 1

Cup: Mushroom

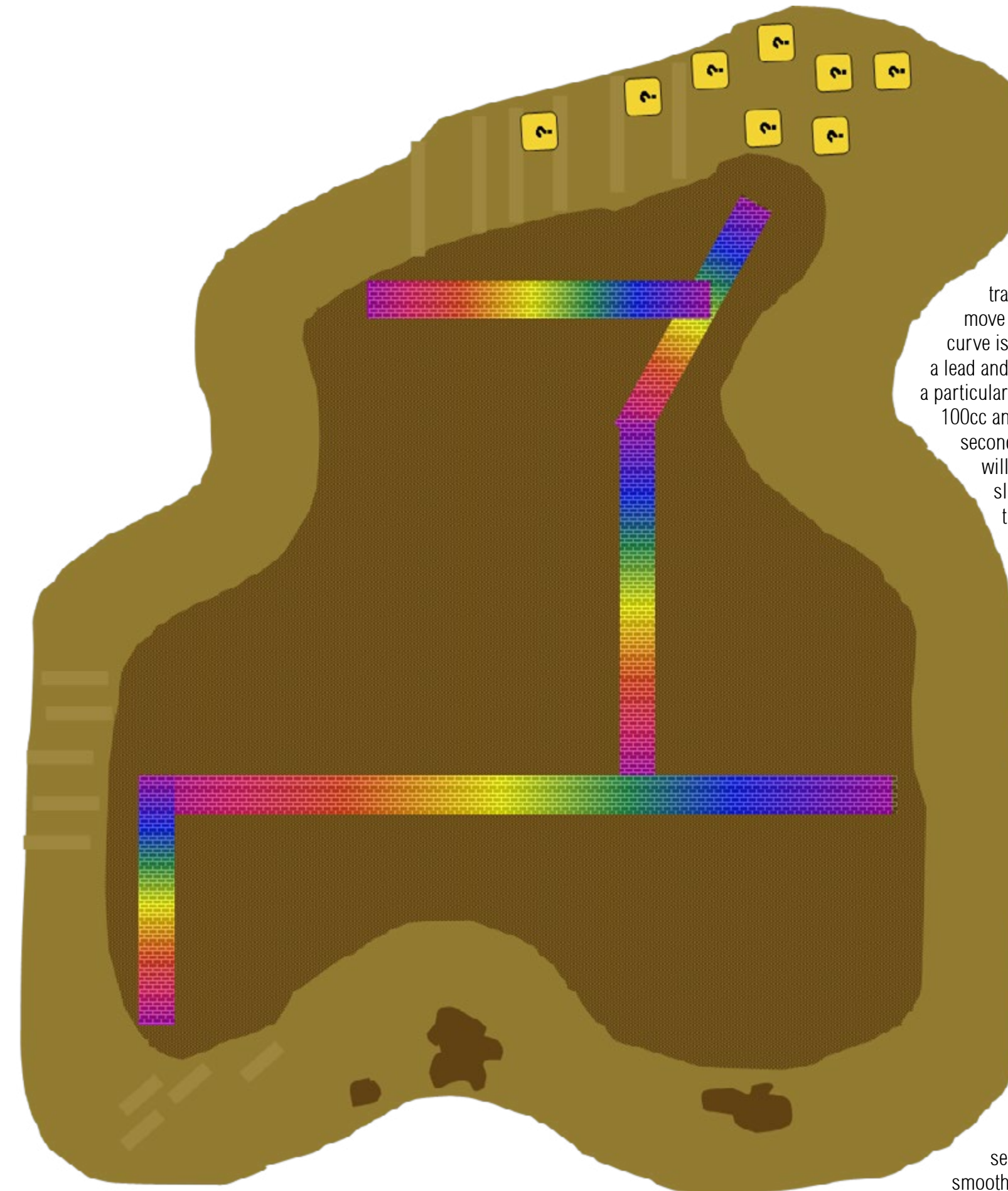
Starting out innocently enough, Bowser's Castle's most basic level becomes a fun jaunt through the hallowed halls of the King of the Koopas. The first section is a straightaway that's designed to build up your speed, allow

you to jockey for position and establish some type of order. Rounding the first curve takes you into the item box area and your first encounter with Thwomps.

Mostly nuisances that block your path at inopportune times, Thwomps aren't necessarily a threat if you either A) drive under them as they're rising; or B) squeeze through between them. A nimble racer should be able to get through the gap with no problems.

After getting by the Thwomps and rounding

another curve, an interesting straightaway appears. Here is where you need to put the pedal to the metal and take advantage of the zippers that zig zag through the area. Boost through with the two on the left to gain a tactical advantage. In the next track section, you will run head on into jumps. Here, they aren't such a problem as they're designed to bump you to the next part of the track. There are two sets and it's easy to just bop through them and make it to the home stretch.

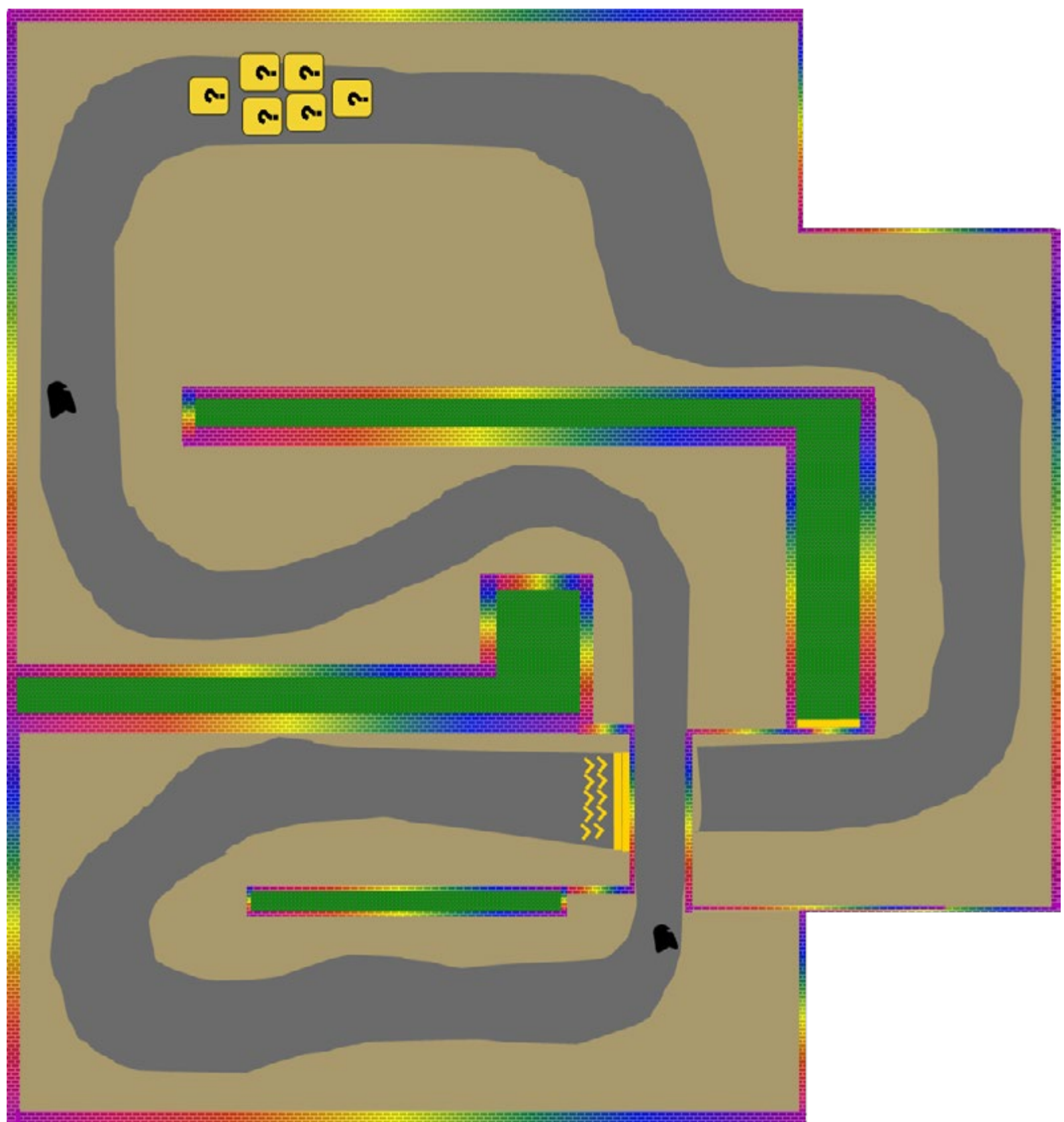


Cup: Star

The desert paradise that is Chocolate Island is filled with mud, sand and bumps in the road. The second of these tracks takes the concept and runs with it.

The winding nature of the track starts things off as you move toward item boxes. This first curve is always a fight to establish a lead and makes holding onto coins a particularly hostile endeavor on the 100cc and 150cc levels. Taking the second curve introduces bumps that will make your character bounce over them slightly. It's best to drive around them as they only really serve to slow you down. You could, in theory and practice, use the L and R buttons to manually bounce over them but sometimes it's just easier to avoid them. After that potentially dangerous slowdown comes another track hazard intended to make you lose precious time: Mud. No particular characters are rated as the best here, based on handling, but keep in mind that the Bros. plumber Mario and Luigi are rated by the game as terrible on this track. They just can't handle the traction here well at all. Those who have a good chance to succeed? Koopa Troopa and Toad.

Once you get through the muddy and bogged down section of real estate, it's nearly smooth sailing except for the reappearance of bumps. This is a particularly long section of bumps, and there's no real clear path to get around them unless you want to be in the dirt, which is a bad idea. Take the lumps and make it to the final bend.



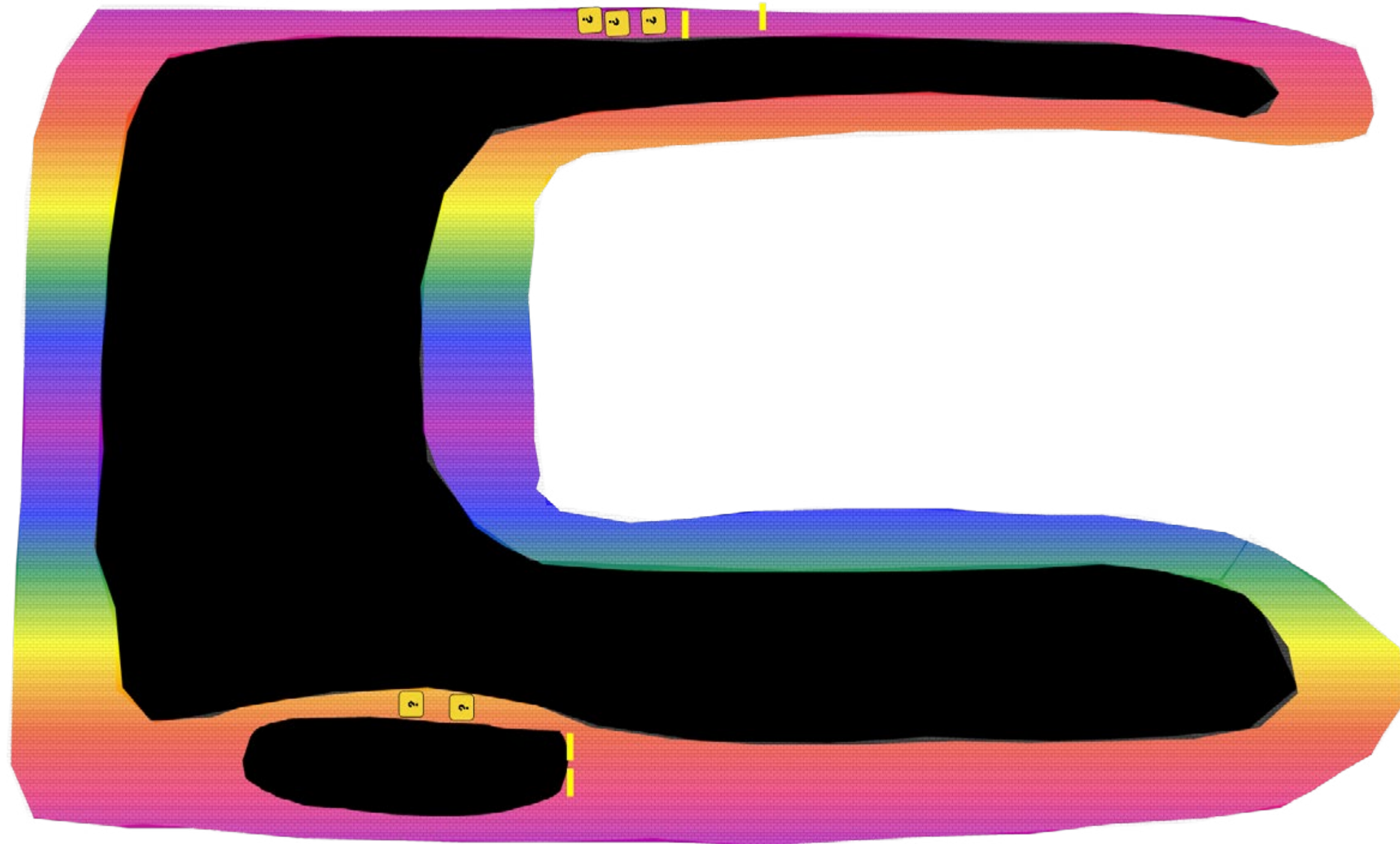
MARIO CIRCUIT 2

Cup: Mushroom

One of our favorite courses, Mario Circuit 2 is the finale of the Mushroom Cup and makes a fun trip through winding asphalt and a speedy jump near the end to round out a great start to the first cup. The item boxes are after the first two curves, which aren't all that spectacular. However, the thing to note is the fact that there is only one chance for an item and it's here. The key strategy to this track and its lack of items is to wait until there's an opportune open shot at the

end. Also, shortly after the item boxes is an oil puddle. It's easy to see and avoid unless you're specifically going for the coins just beyond it. There's only three and they may be tempting, but sometimes they're just best left alone, especially if you're still jockeying for the lead at this point.

After making your way around two more curves and another oil spill, the big jump lies ahead. Here's where the item strategy comes into play: If you're still bothered by a rival that just won't hang back, hold a Red Shell if you can pull one from the item roulette. Wait until the rival karter is just at the zippers and let loose with the shell. It's almost guaranteed to push them over the jumps and back into the preceding section of track. Having to repeat this nearly 15 seconds of track time is a surefire way to guarantee a rival knocked out of contention in the middle of the race and a fourth-place finish for them if on the last lap.



RAINBOW ROAD

Cup: Special

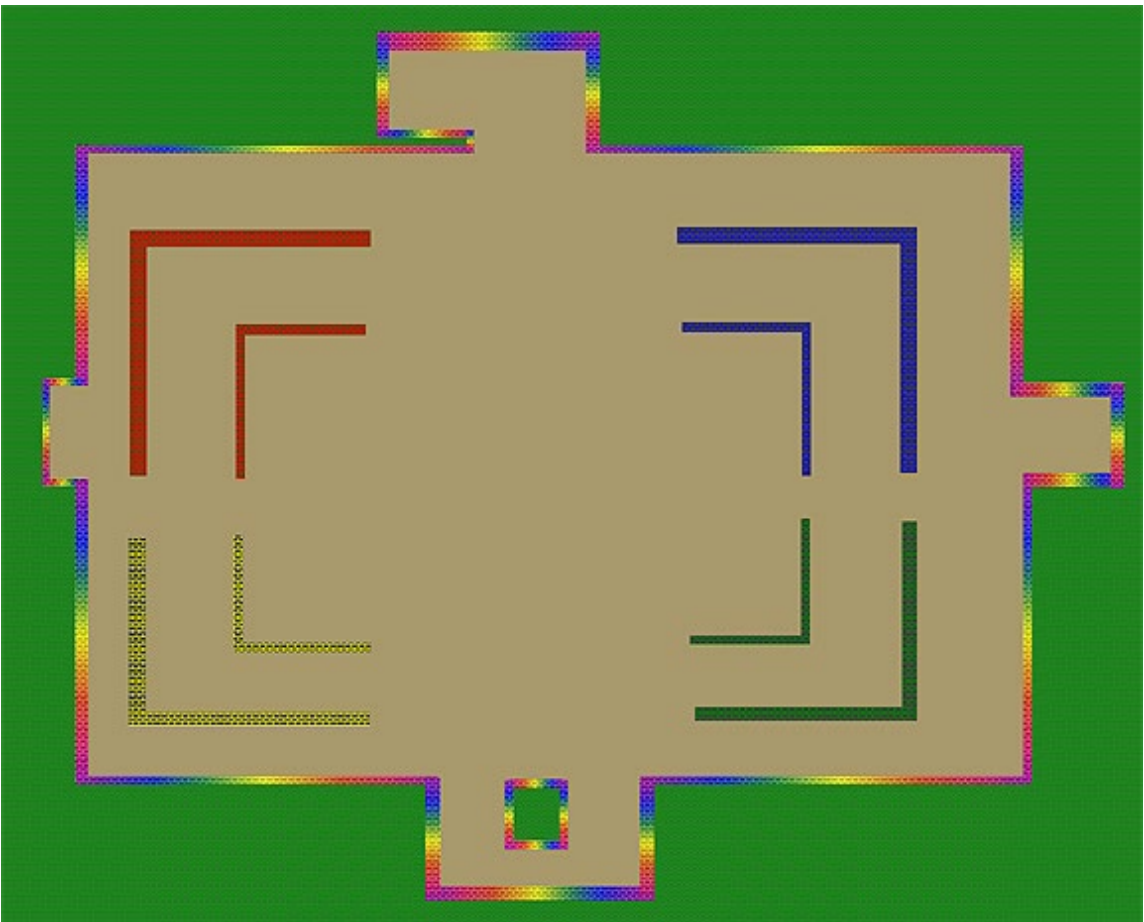
Rainbow Road is considered the hardest track in the entire game for a reason: There are no barriers and there are a lot of curves that can send you plummeting to your doom and out of contention for a first-place finish. Take heed for carefully but quickly making your way around the track because this is the trickiest of them all.

In the first stretch there are Thwomps blocking about 3/4ths of the road. Remember how Thwomps weren't that much of a problem in Bowser's Castle 1? Well, they're a huge problem here. They can easily flatten you and cause a spinout if you don't have coins. And driving between them is easier said than done. Find a way around them quickly and keep in mind that you will see them again later in the track.

There are one set of item boxes on the track, though the color of the track may make it hard to see them. Grab a hopefully useful item, dodge more Thwomps and speed through the track. Also, keep in mind that there are jumps placed throughout these first few curves. They will make you bounce off the track, so exercise tight control and

hope that no character manages to push you off. The final tricky section to the track involves a split in the road. Here, Thwomps block both sides, the left not having items and the right, which contains a few item squares. In the middle of the split is a jump that, if done correctly with a Super Mushroom, can provide a super jump that will put you on the other side of the track near the finish line. Generally, we tend to choose the right side, pay little attention to the left and definitely ignore the center altogether. Attempting to take the center and land correctly is almost like suicide so it's best left to the experts. Coming around the final curve, there are a final set of Thwomps and the last straightaway. Do your best to avoid them and speed to the end.

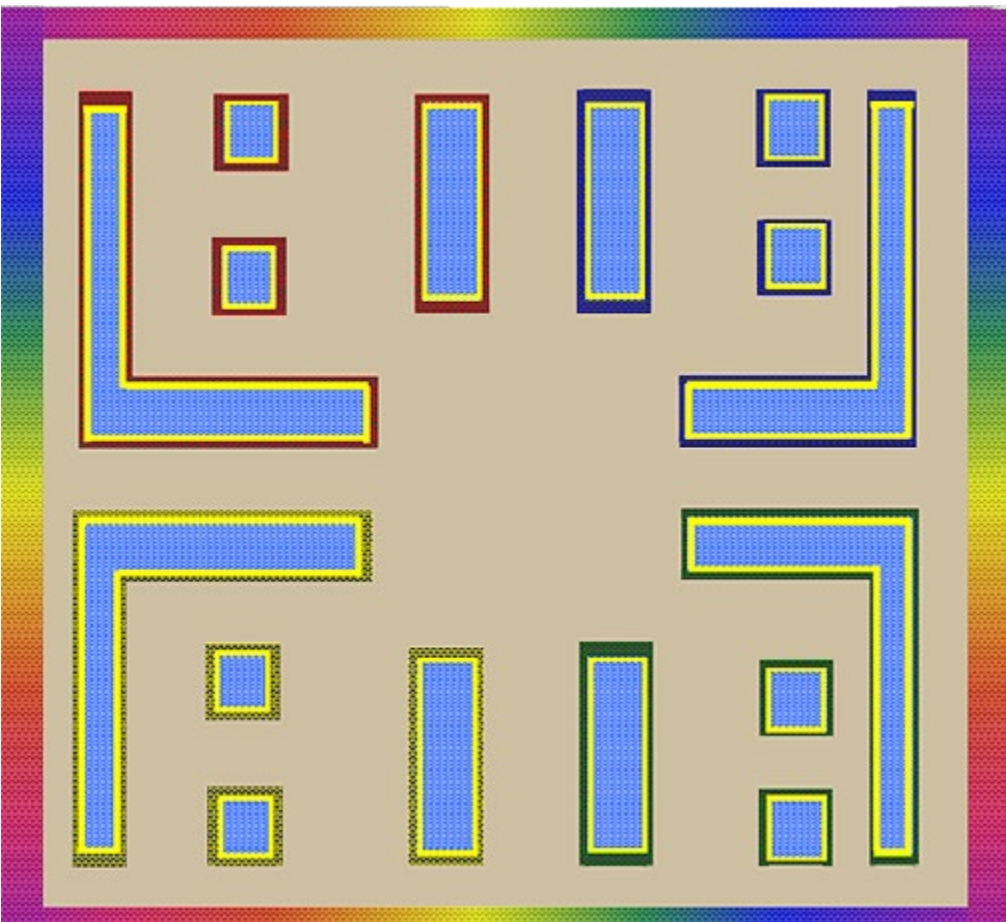
Go head-to-head in Battle Mode



BATTLE COURSE 1

Surface: Dirt
Best choice: Koopa Troopa/Toad

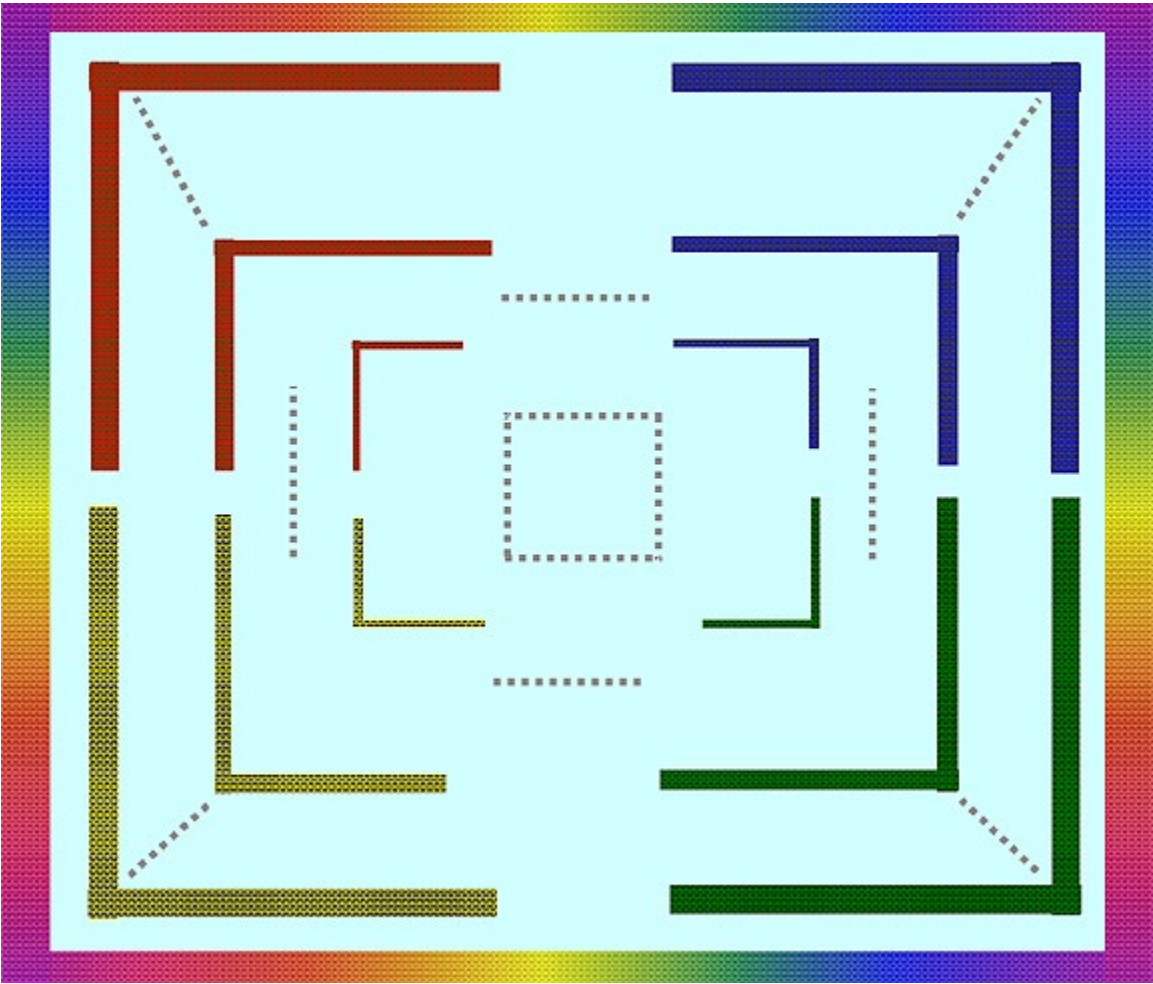
The surface of the track determines who's going to have a decent time fighting it out. With dirt coming into play here, stay away from Mario and Luigi. Much like their problems with Chocolate Island, they don't have good handling on dirt surfaces. There isn't much of a strategy for the stage other than to take note of the three squared-off sections that contain an item square. If you need a good place to take a breather, consider the top section.



BATTLE COURSE 2

Surface: Dirt/Water
Best choice: Koopa Troopa/Toad

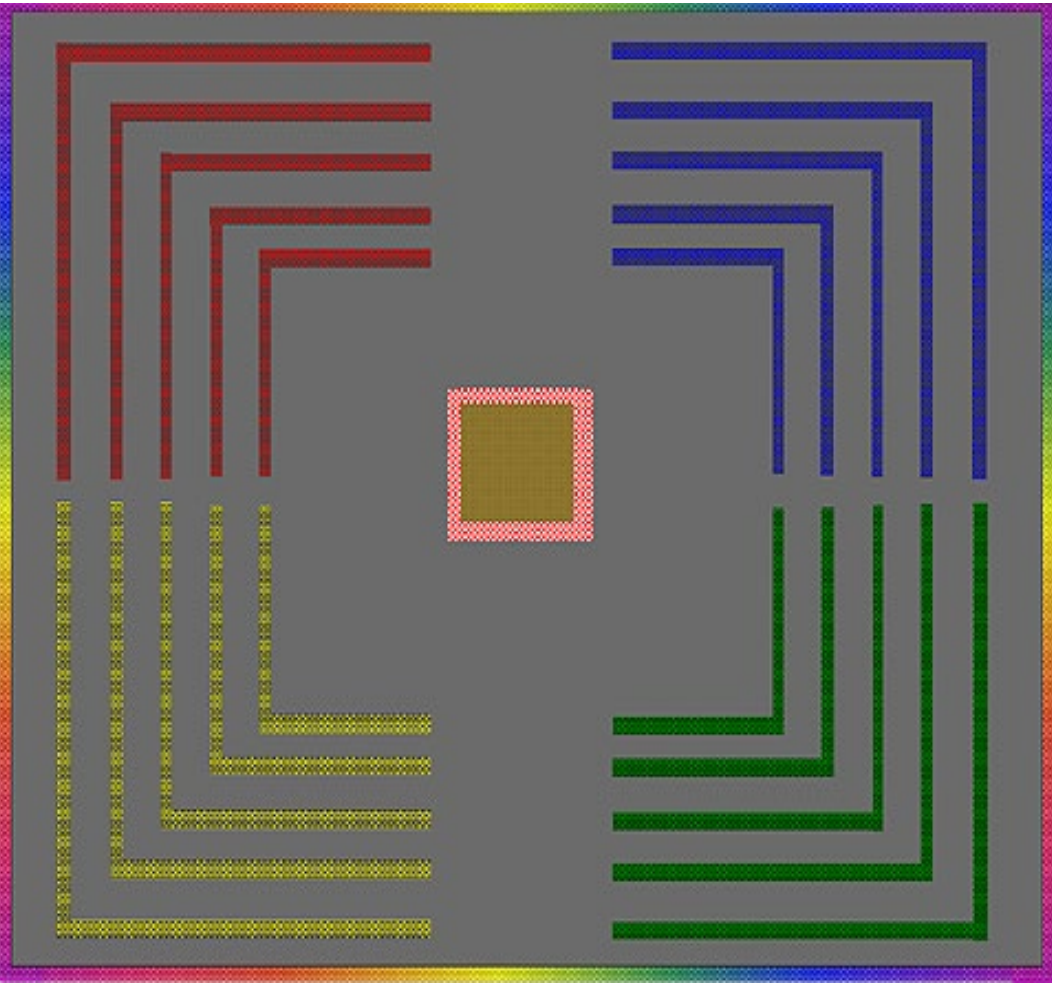
Another course basically featuring dirt as the ground type, Battle Course 2 has an interesting layout and neat features. If you, by chance, get a Feather in an item roulette box, consider using it to jump into the walled-off water sections. In at least two, you can find another item box and it buys time to protect you from shell attacks. As long as you're inside the blocked section, you won't get hit by an item that's shot at you unless it's an aimed Banana Peel.



BATTLE COURSE 3

Surface: Ice
Best choice: Mario/Luigi

When it comes to the slipperiness of the Mushroom Kingdom tracks, Mario and Luigi have the market cornered. They are exceptionally rated as being the best on icy tracks and this one is no different. Take care that most of the track is slightly blocked off by ice blocks that you have to hit multiple times to destroy. When you're being chased, keep in mind the time it takes to get around them. Also, if you're shooting items around, such as shells, beware the ricochet. The shell can and will bounce back and may hit you. Skidding is a problem on the track, but using the Mario Bros. should eliminate that problem.



BATTLE COURSE 4

Surface: Asphalt
Best choice: Princess/Yoshi

Because the surface plays a big part in choosing the correct character in Battle Mode, it's a surprise then that the final track isn't determined by surface. The track is an asphalt track, which nearly everyone in the game can drive on safely. Here, it comes down to the actual Battle rating, and the best choice to use is either Princess or Yoshi. They are rated extremely high overall for Battle Mode by Nintendo's calculations, so it's a safe bet to stick with one of the speedsters to come out on top here. The track, though, is nothing special. It has a square layout, which means a lot of straightaways and 90 degree turns. Other than that, it's not really a problem to navigate though there aren't that many places to hide.

Mario Kart soundtrack puts emphasis on fun, joy of go-karting



The immediate thing that can be said about the soundtrack for the original Mario Kart is that it's amusingly appropriate. Every song produced for the game sounds like something that should be in a mainstream Mario game. But I'll go you even one better: It's so well-produced that it sounds better than any of the Mario games that came before.

By far, this is my favorite racing soundtrack, and it's in the upper echelon of my favorite Mario soundtracks as well. When I want to go to the original tracks of the Mushroom Kingdom, this is what I listen to:

Bowser's Castle: This is a true favorite of mine solely because I love Bowser as a character. Making it to his castle in the Super Mario World was such a feat for me, and I love the fact that tune takes me right back to the struggle that was picking a doors and saving Peach from the crazed clown copter.

Chocolate Island: This is a fun track. The drums in the background are playful and inspire fun thoughts of sliding around in pseudo-mud,

I immediately associate this track with that scene. The iced-over lake invokes a winter wonderland vibe, and makes it one of the best tracks in the game. It's a cold-but-fun feeling.

Rainbow Road: What is arguably the toughest track in the original game gets one of the most awesome themes. Rainbow Road is hard, but I love that the track is very early '90s techno and clubby. This version is also loads better than any other Mario Kart's version of the tune.

Ending: By the time I heard this track, I knew I could rightfully call myself a Mario Kart master. At least of the single-player mode, that is. It sets the tone for great ending themes in just about every Mario Kart game thereafter and is a pretty nice reward for going through the trouble of beating the Special Cup on 150cc, a feat in itself.

Lyndsey Hicks is editor-in-chief of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by email at editor@gaminginsurrection.com



CHARACTER THEMES

Each character in the game has a uniquely crafted theme that plays whenever they earn first place in a race. Here's a rundown of my favorites:

Koopa Troopa: I love this theme because it reminds me of the small turtles almost immediately. It's as if they were created with this theme in mind. They embody the laid back spirit of the tune.

Toad: If there is a favorite track in the game, there is a corresponding favorite character theme and mine is Toad's. After many years of listening to it (I play Toad mostly in battle and single player except for 150cc attempts), I've discovered the multiple melody layers in the game, and they are awesome. The song never gets old for me because of this and I can always hum each part of the melody with ease. It makes me think of a fairytale in the Mushroom Kingdom.

Peach: Another character that I usually play in later Mario Kart games, Peach does have a special place in my heart in the original game. She's the only female character to be found, and her theme is appropriately feminine and dainty. Her theme instantly makes me think of pink, fluffy and cute things.

Mario: Any theme that invokes the original Super Mario Bros. overworld theme is OK by me. It's short and simple but I immediately know that it belongs to Mario, who's not necessarily the best character in the game. His theme reflects that for me as well.

Change your game with modifiers

SECRETS

Shrink racer
At the character select screen, hold Y and then press A. This will shrink your character down, and they will be able to be run over. To unshrink, hold Y and press A again at the same screen.

Unlock Special Cup in Grand Prix
At the cup select screen, press L, R, L, R, L, L, R, R

Unlock Special Cup in Time Trials
In Time Trial mode, put the cursor on Mushroom Cup and press L,R,L,R,L,L,R,R,A

PATCH CODES

GAME GENIE CODES
4DEB-CDA4 — Drive anywhere while in the air.
4FEB-CDA4 — Drive anywhere while on the ground
1A3E-CDA4 — Invincibility
C2BC-C7A9 — Item debug options
FDBC-C4A9 — Pressing the corresponding buttons uses this item:
L - Green Shell
R - Red Shell
A - Mushroom
X - Star
Y - Feather
Select - Banana
Y + Up - Lightning
Y + Down - Ghost

PRO ACTION REPLAY CODES

Infinite coins — 7E0E0063
Infinite continues — 7E015404
Instant top speed/instant stop — 80FA93EE
Debug Modifier — 7E1F0610
It works the same as the Game Genie code, just as an Action Replay code
L - Green Shell
R - Red Shell
Y - Feather
X - Star
A - Mushroom
Select - Banana
Y + Up - Lightning
Y + Down - Ghost

Codes courtesy of GameHacking.org

Nintendo's flagship racer created genre for generation of gamers

A portrait of Lyndsey Hicks, a woman with dark hair, smiling.

Lyndsey Hicks
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My tales of kart racing began with Super Mario Kart in January 1993. I'd just received my Super Nintendo for Christmas the previous year, and I was looking for other game to supplement my Super Mario World fixation. I remember having read about the spin-off Mario game that was released and winning rave reviews, so one day, I made the trip to my local and now-defunct Pic-A-Flick and decided I'd give it a try.

It was the one of the best game tryouts I have ever made.

My love affair with the Mario Kart series has had its ups and downs. There are highs (the original, Mario Kart 64, Mario Kart DS) and there are lows (Double Dash!!,

Mario Kart Wii, and, to a certain extent, Super Circuit), but I've owned every game in the series except for the newest, Mario Kart 7. The one thing that keeps me coming back to the original game is its wonderment. For me, there's a sense of the unknown in the

first game, as if each time that I start up a game and play, I have never played it before. Every time that I play, I find something new, something different that I didn't pay attention to in the previous 19 years.

Super Mario Kart revolutionized the kart racing genre, yet didn't have much to do it with.

The graphics aren't top of the line, though they're clean and bright. The music isn't the best soundtrack ever, but it's one of my favorites.

The AI is a little obnoxious if you take into account how the challenge ramps up between the basic 50cc and intermediate 100cc levels. But, somehow, Super Mario Kart manages to make me overlook all of

<p>Super Mario Kart Release date: September 1992 System: Super Nintendo</p>	<p>Mario Kart: Super Circuit Release date: Aug. 26, 2001 System: GameBoy Advance</p>	<p>Mario Kart DS Release date: Nov. 14, 2005 System: DS</p>	<p>Mario Kart 7 Release date: Dec. 4, 2011 System: 3DS</p>
<p>Mario Kart 64 Release date: Feb. 10, 1997 System: Nintendo 64</p>	<p>Mario Kart: Double Dash!! Release date: Nov. 17, 2003 System: GameCube</p>	<p>Mario Kart Wii Release date: April 27, 2008 System: Wii</p>	