

## Review of recent video game release

**By Billy O'Keefe**

McClatchy-Tribune News Service  
(MCT)

"Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am"

For: PlayStation 2

From: Creat Studios/Midway

ESRB Rating: Mature (blood, language, mature humor, drug reference, cartoon violence, suggestive themes)

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The good news about "Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am" is that, at \$30, it's affordably priced by video game standards. That allows fans of the hilariously funny "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" cartoon to purchase it on impulse and play through it to see some exclusive new content, including a brand-new episode.

The attractive price also is, for many of the same reasons, bad news. What "Pro-Am" doesn't do to your wallet, it most certainly will do to your patience and will, regardless of how deep your "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" fandom goes.

For whatever reason, Creat Studios decided "Aqua Teen" fans would want a golf game, so that's primarily what "Pro-Am" is. The twist is that, between shots, you have to manually walk to wherever you hit the ball. On your way there, you'll be swarmed by enemies and must defeat them before taking your next swing. You fight as both Frylock and Shake, and can switch between characters on the fly.

The combat element helps "Pro-Am" make sense of the golf approach, but it's a black hole of fun due to a rash of technical problems straight out of the early days of 3-D. The fighting controls are super-sloppy, collision detection is terrible, the characters are slow and choppily animated, and the action ranges from shallow to cheap.

This sadly, comes on top of a golf engine that's equally inadequate. "Pro-Am" uses a traditional three-click swing system, but it's often inaccurate, to the point that even chip shots sometimes travel nowhere near where you aim them. That's assuming you can aim them anyway \_ a tricky proposition when the only means of viewing the course you're on is through a broken landing cam.

Topping off the triumvirate of botched game styles is a kart racing game using golf carts. The same problems \_ poor control, sloppy technical execution \_ apply here as well.

The only possible reason to play through "Pro-Am" is, of course, the writing. It's true to the show, and when you're not seeing red because of the sludge of frustration you must wade through to get to the cut scenes, it's pretty funny. The major characters make appearances, the show's voice and writing talent are on board, and the graphics are faithful (for better or worse) to the show's look.

If that's worth \$30 and a few hours of blood-curdling frustration, then by all means, enjoy. But you've been warned.

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(Billy O'Keefe writes video game and DVD reviews for McClatchy-Tribune News

Service.)

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