



**COMMERCIAL RELEASE!**

# Game Review

**Game:** Protovision 4 Player Compilation  
**Publisher:** Protovision  
**Release Date:** 2011  
**Available:** [Protovision](#) (disk, digital download)  
**Score:** 9/10



The limited boxed edition of the 4 Player Games Compilation. There's only a handful left for sale, so be quick!

*"And the games? The vehicles of war? It was a perfect chance to try Protovision's 4 Player Games Compilation and the four player adaptor."*

There's nothing better or more satisfying than blasting a cocky human opponent to hell, whether it be during retro or modern gaming. Four mortal enemies were given this chance at a recent Amiga User Group (#CommodoreClub) meeting in Melbourne. Competition was fierce, some might say ruthless, and there could be only one winner.. Who was it? Read on!

Well, maybe they weren't mortal enemies, and only one of them was cocky. The prize may not have been a large sum of money or the fabled Reset Golden Joystick, which was the original enticement to get these four warriors out of their respective dungeons into the light of day. It was actually something much more valuable - bragging rights. Yes, the right to boast and relentlessly heckle. There's no room for good winners in C64 gaming!

First, the combatants.

◆ **Anthony 'Top Cat' Stiller**  
 Reset reviewer, artist and the only gentlemen amongst the challengers. A fine, occasionally dapper fellow who can sometimes be seen in a top hat, just to make himself look a little bit taller.

◆ **Alex 'He-Man' Boz**  
 Reset contributor and owner of the Ausretrogamer website. Lover of all things retro and expert joystick waggler (years of practise, apparently). He also loves Atari, but we won't hold that against him, unless of course he wins.

◆ **Robert 'Smiley' Caporetto**  
 Seasoned C64 veteran gamer who is known for regularly posting his C64 game review videos on his own [YouTube channel](#). Comes across all nice and friendly, but inside lies the heart of a tiger with his eyes firmly on the prize!

◆ **Kevin 'Poker Face' Tilley**  
 Reset editor and competition organiser. Talked down his playing skills before the competition started. Everybody thought he was putting on his poker face, trying to psyche out his opponents. He was actually being truthful!

Four men, certainly not in their primes. Well seasoned (low skilled) C64 gamers with a thirst for winning (and Coke Zero) and a hunger for, well, pizza actually. All opponents swore that they had not played any of the four games before, and judging by their relatively pathetic skill levels, none were lying!

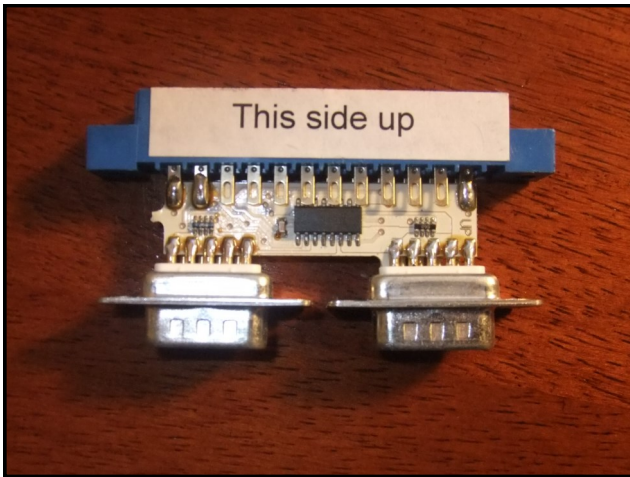
And the games? The vehicles of war? It was a perfect chance to try Protovision's 4 Player Games Compilation and the four player interface - a two



Unkle K's very own C64 setup was used for the competition. You'd think this would be to his advantage, but it wasn't. Loser!

joystick expansion module that plugs straight into the user port, allowing up to four players at once on any game able to make use of the hardware.

Let the games begin...



**Protovision's very own four player interface. A must if you want to make the most of compatible multiplayer games, and when you actually have two or more friends to play against!**

[http://www.protovision-online.com/hardw/4\\_player.php?language=en](http://www.protovision-online.com/hardw/4_player.php?language=en)



#### Game 1 - Bomb Mania

The oldest game in the compilation, Bomb Mania is a Bomberman clone that was first released way back in 1997 by Protovision's predecessor, Classical Games. Designed primarily for death matches, there is no single player campaign available. Containing charming music, colourful graphics and sprites, an assortment of different hazards and power ups, varied level layouts (8 different levels in total) and a good, fast pace, Bomb Mania

couldn't have been a better game to start with and is certainly a highly polished effort.

Playing Bomb Mania in four player mode is an absolute hoot. Simple to set up, the game throws you straight into the arena with absolutely no learning curve. The most common cause of death within the group was blowing ones self up, rather than each other as intended. The winner was often the player who best avoided their own bombs!

It was clear from the very beginning that it wasn't going to be a highly skilled affair, although strategy did creep in as the players got to grips with the various power ups and level mechanics. Alex and Ant were both particularly sneaky, often trapping opponents with a quick and well placed bomb placement - they were like ninjas, creeping up on their opponents and striking before anybody even knew they'd hit. Kevin was shithouse (as all terrible gamers do, he blamed his joypad), with Rob quite frankly only being marginally better. Of the twenty rounds played, Ant won eight, Alex six, Rob four and Kevin somehow survived two. It's fair to say that the noise level was high, with plenty of laughs heard and lots of fun had during the game.

#### **OVERALL:**

Bomberman has always been one of the ultimate multiplayer games, and Bomb Mania does the concept justice. It is clearly the best of the compilation and is arguably better than the recent (and completely awesome) Bomberland when played in multiplayer mode. An absolute ripper of a game!

#### **Player ranking and comments:**

1. Anthony (4 points) - "I may have practised beforehand."
2. Alex (3 points) - "Cruel, cruel."
3. Robert (2 points) - "Always been terrible, always going to be terrible!"
4. Kevin (1 point) - "Stupid joypad!"



### Game 2 - Team Patrol

Team Patrol is a multiplayer split screen racer bearing a passing resemblance to Moon Patrol, but really that is where the similarities end. Featuring eight graphically different courses, the premise is simple enough - race to the finish line and avoid the course hazards. Oh, but only if it were that easy! As expected, the graphics, presentation and music are top notch. The overall quality of this production is outstanding, but the question remains - how does the actual gameplay stack up?

With none of the challengers being in any way inclined to read instructions (well, except for Ant, who has previously claimed to actually enjoy reading instructions. But peer pressure caused him to let go of this impulse, and man up in front of his 'friends'). Kevin raced through the menu and options, without giving any thought to whether this would actually impact on the game, and the players got straight into it. Within seconds, the race was on. Confusion automatically set in. The players looked at the screen with confused expressions. Alex was waggling furiously, Ant was frantically pressing his fire button and Kevin and Rob pushed their controllers in an assortment of directions. With nothing happening, and the clock still ticking, Ant dived into the instruction booklet. "Oh, Team Patrol. I get it, we're in teams!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

It turned out that Kevin and Alex were racing Rob and Ant, and that the game was in fact a waggler after all. Abandoning his SNES joypad, Kevin grabbed one of Rob's spare Atari joysticks and the race

was restarted. Frantic waggling, slow waggling, careful and loving waggling - the game had it all. But who would come first? Kevin and Alex did, eventually reaching the finish line in a completely unremarkable time, but only winning because Rob and Ant's buggy landed in a ditch and they couldn't finish the race, despite a far superior start.

Game two started and ended in a similar fashion, so the gamers cut their losses and agreed to move on.

### **OVERALL:**

There is certainly fun to be had here and once again, the groans and sighs were an indication that the players were enjoying themselves, but they all felt a sense of relief when it was finally over. Let's face it, joystick waggling is an outdated and archaic gameplay mechanic these days, especially now that Commodore joysticks no longer grow on trees.

### **Player ranking and comments:**

1. Kevin (4 points) - "Hand cramps have never been so worthwhile."
2. Alex (4 points) - "Arm pump galore!"
3. Robert (2 points) - "Cassette 50 anyone?"
4. Anthony (1 point) - "Worst. Game. Ever."



Team Patrol is a nice little filler for this compilation, but probably wouldn't be worth buying as a stand alone release.



### Game 3 - Hockey Mania

Hockey Mania is a multi-player Hockey game (playable with either two or four players), bearing similarities to the old Capcom classic Hat Trick. The game is played on a single screen, with three players per team, including the goalie. Things are made a little bit more interesting with the inclusion of upgrades, which are earned by collecting stars during the game. There are three selectable upgrades, which are:

- ◆ faster turns
- ◆ More speed
- ◆ Better grip on the ice

What makes this game a little more difficult, and ultimately a lot more challenging and fun are the player physics, with the player slipping all over the place and initially having the turning circle of a [Mack Truck](#) (until you manage to upgrade that is).

The group decided that they would play two games each, the first being a knockout round, and the second to determine the final standings. Ant was to take on Kevin, with Alex Vs. Rob after that. It was fair to say, judging from previous form, that both Anthony and Alex were quite confident going into the first round. Well, this certainly wasn't justified because Kevin and Rob smashed their respective opponents. In the battle of the losers, Ant ended up defeating Alex 4 goals to 2. However, the battle for first was much closer! Kevin got off to an early lead with two fairly quick goals in the first half, to Rob's single score in the

final seconds. Kevin also had the distinct advantage of picking up many more stars and thus starting the second half as pumped up as Lance Armstrong after one of his 'special vitamin' injections. With a smirk on his face, Kevin quickly scored the next goal, making the scores 3 to 1 his way. Not one to lie down and die, Rob lifted his game and despite the obvious disadvantage of much less manoeuvrability, proceeded to score the next two goals, with the match ending in a 3 all draw. Kevin put on the face of a good sport, but was ultimately shattered with the result and spent the next minute staring blankly into the computer screen. Rob did his happy dance, which was quite entertaining.

### **OVERALL:**

Hockey Mania is a simple yet perfectly implemented multi-player sports game. Simple rules, controls and gameplay mechanics make it instantly playable and thoroughly enjoyable. The fact that it also looks and sounds fantastic helps as well.

### **Player ranking and comments:**

1. Kevin (4 points) - "Need some Red Bull."
2. Robert (4 points) - "Surprisingly good fun!"
3. Anthony (2 points) - "Good game, dammit."
4. Alex (1 point) - "Skate or Die!"

### Game 4 - Tanks 3000

The most recent of the games in the compilation, Tanks 3000 was originally released by Protovision in 2006. Two to four players need to battle it out on up to four single screen landscapes, controlling their tanks (each starting from one corner) and destroying their opponents with guided missiles. It's as simple as that. There are many of these 'dogfight/tank' games on the C64, but this one is a bit different because the guided missiles add another element to the gameplay and that is definitely a very

good thing! Interestingly, the missile guidance can be switched off in the games option menu as well as being able to tweak the rocket manoeuvrability. There are also other extras, such as shields, masks (to camouflage your tank), remote fire, enemy slowdown, enemy unarmed, and enemy chaos (makes one of your opponents unable to move normally).

By now, the four players were mentally and physically exhausted. The intensity of the competition had clearly taken its toll, with the four men unable to concentrate on the job at hand, and none of them had yet made the realisation that they could actually control their missiles, except for Ant that is.

"I've got you now, you bastard" he muttered under his breath as he shot Alex's tank to hell from around a corner.

"How'd you do that?" enquired the other three, but Ant wasn't going to give away the secret. He took care of everyone else while they were trying to figure out what was going on.

Everyone did figure out how to control the missiles, given that it wasn't actually difficult to do, and resulted in some fairly intense matches. In the end, ten games were played, with Robert coming out on top with four wins. Ant was close behind with three, Kevin two and Alex one.

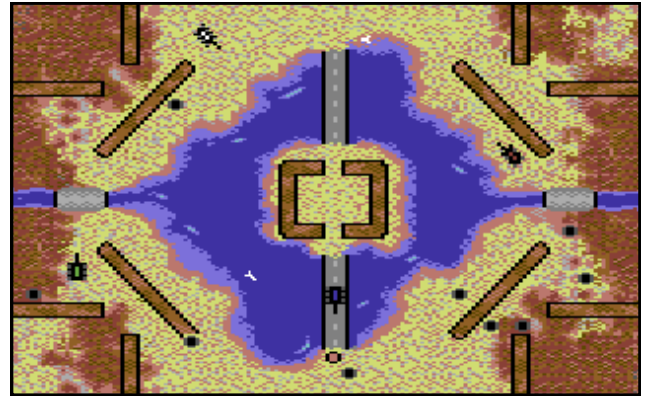
#### OVERALL

Tanks 3000 vastly improves upon a classic concept. The presentation is up to the usual high Protovision standards with a lovely animated introduction and plenty of options to play around with. The graphics and sound are both of a very high standard, and most importantly the gameplay is lots of fun and also provides a nice learning curve. Tanks 3000 is definitely a game of skill, but a little bit of luck certainly helps as well if you are to survive against your opponents.

#### Player ranking and comments:

1. Robert (4 points) - "Less combat, more mobile artillery."

2. Anthony (3 points) - "Victory was snatched from my grip"
3. Kevin (2 points) - "Great fun!"
4. Alex (1 point) - "Tanks a lot, Tanks 3000!"



#### FINAL STANDINGS

Rob was the clear winner on 12 points. Ant and Kevin tied on 11, and Alex bombed out on 9. No victory speeches, just handshakes and regretful thoughts from the three non successful challengers about what could have been. Rob just wryly smiled.

Overall, the Protovision 4 Player Games Compilation is a must have for people with friends, with two great games (Bomb Mania and Tanks 3000), one very good game (Hockey Mania) and one just okay (Team Patrol). Obviously, the four player adaptor is essential to get the most fun from the games, and don't bother if you can only go solo, but otherwise it's a blast! Highly recommended.



Left to Right - Rob, Kevin, Alex, Ant.