

TOP FUEL ELIMINATOR™



Player's Guide

For Commodore® 64™ and 128™
and Apple® IIe and IIc Computers

GAMESTAR★

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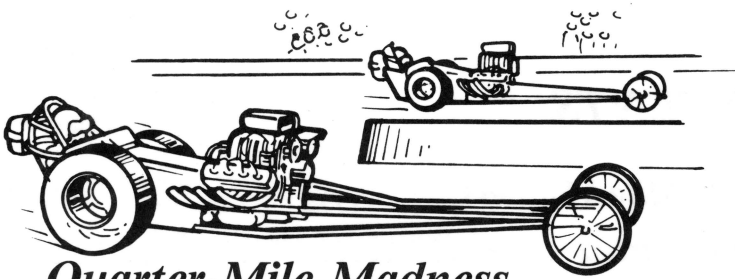
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Quarter-Mile Madness

You're at the wheel of a 2500-horsepower vehicle specially built to propel you from a dead stop down a quarter-mile track in the shortest possible time. Your reflexes have to be lightning fast because it's like trying to control a rocket skidding along the ground.

Top Fuel Eliminator is a simulation of a complete season of drag racing. The season is composed of nine events scored on a points system.

You'll be competing against eight of the world's best drivers. To win a race, or even make it down the track in one piece, you'll also have to pay close attention to track and weather conditions and adjust your dragster accordingly. *Top Fuel Eliminator* gives you lots of options that will affect your chances of winning.

Getting Started

Commodore Computers

You can play *Top Fuel Eliminator* with one joystick plugged into either or both ports on your computer.

1. With the computer and disk drive turned off, place the game disk in your disk drive, label side up.
2. Turn on the disk drive, then turn on the computer and monitor or TV.
3. If you have a Commodore 128, the game will load automatically. If you have a Commodore 64, type **LOAD** **"*"**,**8,1** and press **RETURN**.

Once the game has loaded—when the disk drive stops and the title screen appears—you can press the joystick button to skip over the musical introduction and continue. See "Time Trials" on page 3.

Time Trials (Commodore computers)

On Commodore computers you may choose either **PLAY GAME** or **TIME TRIALS**. The Time Trials give you a chance to practice on eight raceways on the Top Fuel circuit. To choose the Time Trials, highlight **TIME TRIALS** in white and press the joystick button. The Pit Area screen appears.

All your options and procedures for fine-tuning your dragster are just as described in “The Racing Season,” starting on page 5. In addition, you may also choose on which track and event you want to practice. To do so, first push your joystick left or right to highlight the question mark at the bottom right of the Pit Area screen. Press the joystick button, and track information appears for one of the raceways. Push the joystick left and right to cycle through the raceways. When the track you want to practice on is shown, press the joystick button and proceed to set up your dragster as described in the “The Pit Area,” beginning on page 6.

During each practice run, you’ll have the track to yourself, but you must still take care not to foul or crash (see “Race Rules”).

When you’ve finished with your Time Trials practice session, you must reload the game and select **PLAY GAME** to begin the racing season.

Apple II Computers

You can play *Top Fuel Eliminator* with a joystick or the keyboard—see “Joystick or Keyboard” on page 4. If you want to use a joystick, plug it into your computer.

1. Insert the game disk in your disk drive.
2. Turn on your computer and monitor.

After the program has loaded and the title screen appears, press any key to continue—see “Joystick or Keyboard”.

Joystick or Keyboard (Apple II computers)

On Apple computers, *Top Fuel Eliminator* can be played with a joystick or with your computer keyboard. A screen appears that asks you to choose one or the other. You may then use only that method of play until you reload the game. The following is a list of joystick—keyboard equivalents and their functions:

| FUNCTION | JOYSTICK | KEYBOARD |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| move left | left | J |
| move right | right | K |
| launch dragster | button | spacebar |
| shift dragster | button | spacebar |
| select option | button | spacebar |

Note: Sometimes you will also have to use the joystick button or the spacebar to go on to the next screen in the game.

Registering to Race

After you choose **PLAY GAME** on Commodore computers and after you specify whether you're playing with a joystick or the keyboard on Apple computers, you'll see the Registration screen. Here you enter your name—on Apple computers, press **Return** after doing so; on Commodore computers, enter up to eight characters, then press **Return**.

The Pit Area screen appears, and you're ready to begin the racing season.

The Racing Season

Nine events make up the racing season. They're scheduled in the following order:

1. Winter Nationals
2. North Nationals
3. Spring Nationals
4. East Nationals
5. Summer Nationals
6. South Nationals
7. Fall Nationals
8. West Nationals
9. World Event

Each event is composed of several races: a qualifying session, the first round of eliminations, the semi-final round of eliminations, and the final round elimination which determines the Top Fuel champion for that event. If you don't qualify for a race, or if you lose a race, you're eliminated from that event and *Top Fuel Eliminator* goes on to the next event.

Qualifying

You're given two attempts to qualify for an event during the qualifying session. To qualify, you need not beat your opponent, but you must not commit any fouls (see "Race Rules"), and you must beat the posted "bubble" time.

The bubble time is the maximum time allowed for the qualifying attempt and is determined by the slowest qualifying speed. There are nine drivers trying to race in each event but only eight are allowed. Therefore, the qualifying time of the eighth fastest driver will be the bubble. If you beat that time, then he is eliminated from the field.

First Round

If you qualify, you'll automatically be placed in the first round. Your opponent will be the one with the closest qualifying time to yours. If you win the race, you advance to the semi-final round. Losers will be eliminated.

Semi-Final Round

Two races involving four drivers are held in this round. The winner of each race will advance to the final round. Losers will be eliminated.

Final Round

Two drivers will race for the event title. The winner is the champion for that event. The loser is the runner-up. If you've made it this far, *Top Fuel Eliminator* will then begin the next event.

Race Rules

A vehicle may be disqualified from a race for the following reasons:

- triggering a red light by leaving the starting line too early
- experiencing engine failure
- crossing the center line
- crashing

If one car “red-lights” and the other crosses the center line, the car that red-lights will be declared the winner since center line crossing is a more serious offense. By the same reasoning, a crash is more serious than line crossing and will disqualify you first. If two cars commit the same foul, the one who gets to the finish line first wins. If both cars crash, the one that travels the greatest distance wins.

The Pit Area

Each race is preceded by the appearance of the Pit Area screen. It's here, in the pit, that you're presented with playing options for entering the race and for fine-tuning your dragster. The options are designated by icons across the bottom of the screen. Moving the joystick left or right cycles you through the icons, highlighting them as you go. When an icon is highlighted you may select it by pressing the button.

Entering the Race — The Xmas Tree Icon

This is the race icon. Selecting this option puts you at the starting line of the race, so be prepared to put the pedal to the metal before you select it. Once you're at the starting line, there's no backing out. "Xmas Tree" is drag racing parlance for a set of vertically aligned colored lights used to start the race. It appears to the left of your dragster and should be observed carefully. A tachometer appears to the right of your vehicle and should be given equal attention.

The tachometer will first show a rev to an idle of 2000 rpms as the Xmas Tree begins with a staging light. Your dragster will then rev to 5000 rpms, and the Xmas Tree will begin counting down the seconds to the race. Your response time is crucial now, so stay alert. The Xmas Tree will quickly run through a succession of yellow lights and then hit green. This is your signal to go by pressing the button. A race is often won by launching at the precise moment the green light is given. After that, you tear for the finish line with as much speed and driving skill as you can muster.

You must shift gears only once during the quarter-mile race, and you'll need real skill to pick the precise moment to do so. Shifting is accomplished by pressing the button. Your dragster's engine "red-lines" at 9500 rpms, and your engine will blow up, costing you the race, if you don't shift before the tachometer reaches this mark. However, you must also be careful not to shift too early or you'll never generate enough horsepower to win.

Steering a 2500-horsepower monster in a straight line for just a quarter of a mile is going to be more difficult than you might think. It will probably take some practice before you gain enough skill to compete against some of the better drivers in this game.

Fine-Tuning Your Dragster

You can increase your chances of winning by fine-tuning various components of your dragster. These adjustments are made by selecting other options available on the Pit Area screen. Each of these options has several settings along with a corresponding calibration. Push the joystick left and right to cycle through the available settings. Press the button to select a setting.

Question Mark Icon

This option provides you with track information that's essential in determining what adjustments to make on your vehicle. The track information is of such importance that this option is highlighted automatically whenever the Pit Area screen is accessed. The information changes continually, so it's best to check it before each race and adjust your vehicle accordingly. Logic and experience will dictate what adjustments to make in response to the information.

Clock Icon

Selecting this option allows you to adjust your ignition timing, which is a critical factor in producing horsepower. The higher the number of degrees of advance, the more horsepower will be produced. This introduces a greater possibility of engine failure, though, so set your timing cautiously.

Fuel Can Icon

Selecting this option allows you to adjust the nitro-methane mixture used for fuel in your dragster. This very explosive fuel can be made even more volatile by increasing the percentage of nitro in the mix. This will produce more power but also increase your chances of engine failure. If your racing opponent is slow, a low nitro mix may be the safer way to go.

Clutch Icon

Selecting this option allows you to adjust the clutch on your dragster. Clutch adjustment allows you to transmit engine power to the rear wheels in a manner most suitable for the track conditions. If the track conditions are good, setting the clutch for high grab will cause the car to accelerate faster. Under slippery track conditions, low grab may be preferable: power will be transmitted to the rear wheels more smoothly, decreasing your chances of spinning your wheels.

Tire Icon

Selecting this option allows you to adjust your tire pressure to suit track conditions. Under slippery conditions, a low tire pressure may provide more traction. Traction is a product of friction and resistance, however, so a low tire pressure may also slow you down a bit, especially on dry pavement. Carefully consider the track conditions before choosing your tire pressure.

Airplane (Wing) Icon

Selecting this option allows you to make a wing adjustment. The “wing” is a wing-shaped device located over the rear wheels of the vehicle. It controls the air’s angle of deflection as it passes over the rear wheels. As the angle of the wing increases, the downward force of air on the rear wheels increases, resulting in better traction. However, the amount of drag also increases, which slows the vehicle down a bit. There is no free lunch in physics. You must decide where the advantage lies, based on the conditions described in the track information. For instance, under slippery conditions, you would probably benefit from a high wing angle as it would keep the wheels from spinning excessively.

Engine Icon

This option allows you to adjust the supercharger speed. A supercharger is basically a big air pump that forces the air and fuel mixture into the engine under pressure, greatly increasing engine performance. Increasing the supercharger speed, and thus the pressure, increases the amount of horsepower the engine is capable of producing. However, there is a greater danger of engine failure when too much pressure is forced into the engine. As with the other vehicle adjustments, use this one with discretion.

The major factors for determining horsepower are fuel mixture, ignition timing, and supercharger speed. You’ll learn from experience how to deal with these variables for optimum performance. Besides losing a race, there are other indications of a badly set-up vehicle. For example, if you see smoke coming from your wheels in the overhead view of the race, you may want to set up your dragster differently to get better traction.

And the Winner Is . . .

After each *race* is completed the following information is displayed:

- A *Performance Analysis* of your driving in that race.
- A *Ladder Chart* showing the standing of each driver in the event up to that point.

After each *event* is completed the following information is also displayed:

- An *Event Points Chart* showing the points awarded to you in that event.
- An *Accumulated Points Chart* showing the points each driver has accumulated up to and including that event.

Performance Analysis

Elapsed Time — your time from starting line to finish line.

Top Speed — the speed you were traveling at the finish line.

Reaction — based on the time elapsed from the moment the Xmas Tree light turns green until you cross the starting line. If you're slow crossing the starting line, your opponent may beat you even though his Elapsed Time is greater and his Top Speed is slower. The winner is the driver who crosses the finish line first, not the driver with the fastest time or speed.

Shift — based on how well you shifted gears. Shifting gears too early does not allow the engine to develop its full potential of horsepower, which results in a slow Elapsed Time and a poor rating. Waiting too long to shift will cause the engine to over-rev and result in an engine failure. Remember, your engine "red-lines" at 9500 rpms.

Power — an indication of how well you set up your engine in the Pit Area.

Traction — an indication of how well you set up the vehicle in the Pit Area.

Engine Fail — caused by an improper pit set-up or a bad shift.

Crash — either you hit the wall or the engine exploded during a crash.

Red Light — if you leave the starting line before the light turns green, you may be disqualified from the race.

Line Cross — if you cross the center line, you may be disqualified from the race.

At the bottom of your statistics chart a message displayed indicates whether you're: Qualified, Not Qualified, Disqualified, Eliminated, or a Winner.

Ladder Chart

At the end of each race a ladder chart appears to illustrate each driver's standing in that race. If you qualified for the race, your name will first appear among the eight names listed to the left of the ladder chart that appears after the qualifying session. Pay close attention to which driver you're going to race in the first round and each subsequent round. As you'll learn through experience, some drivers are faster than others, so you'll want to set up your vehicle in the Pit Area accordingly.

If you win the subsequent elimination rounds of a race your name will advance to the right, toward the final round that determines Top Fuel honors.

Points System

Events Points Chart

After each national event is completed an events points chart is displayed. Points are awarded in four categories as follows:

Qualifying Category:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Fastest | 8 points |
| 2nd | 7 points |
| 3rd | 6 points |
| 4th | 5 points |
| 5th | 4 points |
| 6th | 3 points |
| 7th | 2 points |
| 8th | 1 points |
| Not Qualified | no points |

Contestant Category:

Each contestant gets 100 points for entering the event.

Award Category:

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Winner | — 800 points |
| Runner-Up | — 600 points |
| Semi-Finalist | — 400 points |
| First Rounder | — 200 points |
| Not In Race | — no points |

Season Points Chart

The Season Points Chart is displayed immediately after the Event Points Chart. It shows the total points each driver has accumulated up to and including that event.

The End of the Season

At the completion of the nine national events *Top Fuel Eliminator* displays your standing for the season among all nine drivers. On Commodore computers, it also saves the name and point total of the highest-scoring driver on the game disk. You may then begin a new season.

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