

## Video Game Review: ‘MLB 2K10’ Improves Franchise But Team Still Needs Work

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 2, 2010 - 4:55pm

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CHICAGO – Last year’s baseball game courtesy of 2K Sports, “MLB 2K9,” was so glitch-heavy and poorly constructed that I assumed all of the wrinkles would be ironed out in the newest edition, “MLB 2K10”. To the credit of 2K Games and Visual Concepts, a lot of the problems have been streamlined but the game is still unacceptably glitch-heavy, resulting in an experience that is only intermittently rewarding. It’s kind of like being a Cubs fan.



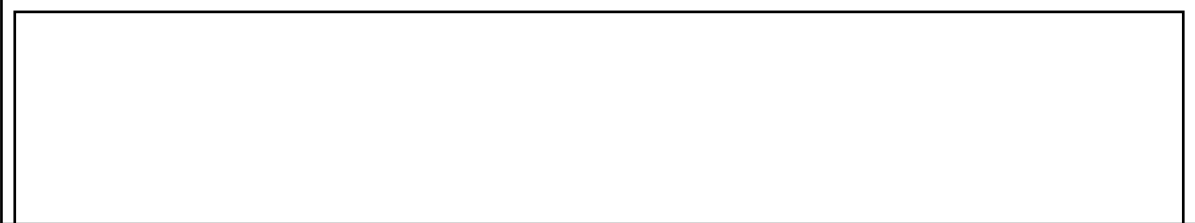
Like all good Cubs fans, let’s start with the positives. The new pitching and batting mechanics are much improved. They both rely on the control sticks and the precision of both is easily the strongest element of the new title. The pitching mechanics allow for an experience that doesn’t feel automated as you place a fastball in just the right corner or expertly time a knuckleball. The batting mechanics are a bit less perfectly refined, but there is a fluid motion to contact and power hitting that is an improvement over last year.



MLB 2K10

Photo credit: 2K Sports

Fielding is accomplished using a classic face button system where the four buttons represent each base (although it is frustratingly reversed in the “My Player” section of the game which puts you in the infield or outfield (unless you’re a catcher, I suppose) and reverses everything). Running is simple enough but stealing seems nearly broken and difficult to time.





MLB 2K10

*Photo credit: 2K Sports*

Gary Thorne, Steve Phillips, and John Kruk provide the commentary, one that's pretty average in that it repeats more often than you'd like and sometimes even misses the action on the field. I can't tell you how many times Krukkie has told me about the rough end of 2009 that befell the Detroit Tigers (my chosen team in "My Franchise") or how often Phillips has shouted about a play at the plate that was never going to happen as my runner stayed on third.

As for graphics, it seems like a step down from "2K9". The facial models for the players are remarkable but the crowd and stadium designs feel like a step back. What separates one sports title from another are the little things and the lack of detail in the crowds or the fact that they're all wearing T-shirts in Detroit in April can amplify the feeling that a game is a bit underdeveloped.

Of course, if that underdeveloped sensation came purely from the stands, no one would really notice but it's prevalent throughout the game. Once again, 2K Sports has released a title that's unacceptably glitchy. There are constant little problems that can impact an entire game. In just one, Ryan Raburn rounded first and then decided to go back when the right fielder got to the ball more quickly than first expected. He was caught standing right next to the bag long after the play should have been over. Glitch.



MLB 2K10

*Photo credit: 2K Sports*

Even worse, the poor Mr. Raburn popped a bloop single in a crucial moment of the game and the AI must have thought he hit it to the corner because he headed for second with NO prompting from this player and was tagged out. These kind of gameplay glitches are unacceptable in 2010, especially when they're in a franchise that has struggled as #2 to "MLB The Show" for awhile now.

Last year's title was so heavy on errors (I remember the Tigers committing six in one game) but the developers have gone too far in the other



direction. My season is in mid-May and not one Detroit player has even bobbled a ball. Also, none have been injured or had to be pulled from the game. The little things add up to create a lack of realism that makes “MLB 2K10” a fun arcade game instead of the complete experience it could have and should have been.

Having played the game for days before it’s release, I was excited for my first online match today but it will probably be my last, at least for awhile. The lag time on pushing the control stick forward and your player actually swinging is wildly unacceptable. Even with several days of experience, I was shut-out, no-hit in my first online game. To be fair, my pitcher, the great Justin Verlander 1-hit my opponent with a 21-strikeout performance. Clearly, the online experience is deeply broken at least on day one.

As for modes, “MLB 2K10” imports the fantastic “MLB Today” mode which allows the player to play a game that happens to be going down in the real world that same day. With the “Living Rosters” now wonderfully commonplace, you’ll be able to play a match-up with the exact same players and conditions as the real world. It’s a fantastic level of realism previously impossible in titles that never updated their rosters.



MLB 2K10

Photo credit: 2K Sports

The new addition is something called “My Player,” in which you can take a wannabe star from the minors to the majors, developing skills through different in-game goals. It’s okay but far from spectacular as baseball will always be a team sport and just playing your at-bats and fielding moments in a minor league game leaves something to be desired. Only diehards will get a player they create all the way to the Hall of Fame.

As with most sports games, players can start franchises, play postseason brackets, go through practice drills, and even attend the Home Run Derby.

I may just be a sucker for my favorite sport or perhaps the life of living in-denial of failure as a Tigers and Cubs fan has made it harder for me to give up on a team, but I still get enough enjoyment from “MLB 2K10” to barely recommend it. It looks good, the analog stick gameplay is fun, and the level of detail in elements like “MLB Today” will make this baseball fan come back for more. Having said that, this franchise still needs more time in the minors before it can really compete for the baseball video game World Series.

*‘Major League Baseball 2K9’ was released by 2K sports and developed by Visual Concepts. It is rated E (Everyone). The version reviewed was on the PS3, but the title is also available on the XBox 360, PS2, PSP, Wii and the PC. It was released on March 2nd, 2010.*



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