

Video Game Review: ‘Major League Baseball 2K11’ Commits Too Many Errors to Compete

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 21, 2011 - 9:59am

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CHICAGO – I have defended the 2K Sports baseball games in the past, even personally preferring the “Major League Baseball 2K10” edition for gameplay during last year’s baseball season over Sony’s “MLB 10 The Show,” but this year my denial defenses have fallen to an incredibly faulty release, one full of glitches and generally annoying design decisions. The “MLB 2K” games have long been the close runner-up to Sony’s series but this year they get swept. Let’s hope they figure out their problems in the off-season.



Video Game Rating: **2.5/5.0**

It may be unfair to compare so directly, but the fact is that Sony and 2K Sports have released their baseball games on the same day of the year and buyers are only likely to pick up one, making the comparison not only fair but one that most fans are going to do when they get to the store. The race has been tight some years but not this one. “MLB 11 The Show” literally looks like a game for a console a generation above “Major League Baseball 2K11,” like comparing PS2 and PS3 games. It’s particularly disappointing after 2K Sports released one of the best sports games of all time last year in “NBA 2K11.”



MLB 2K11

Photo credit: 2K Sports

Baseball fans, especially those in the Midwest who are loyal to the Cubs or Tigers, often focus on the positives, so let’s start there. “MLB 2K11” is certainly easier than “The Show.” The batting mechanics are nowhere near as complex as Sony’s game and rely almost solely on a timing that you’ll get down after probably just a game. To that extent, “MLB 2K11” can be less frustrating than “The Show.” It’s an easier

game to pick up and play and that could make it a better choice for either younger players or those with less patience.



MLB 2K11

Photo credit: 2K Sports

The pitching mechanics can also be rewarding in that they combine timing and precise movement to really place the ball in the right place. As the pitcher gets more exhausted or rattled by the situation, pitching becomes more difficult. Landing just the right pitch at the right time to strike out an all-star with the bases loaded is the most enjoyable element of the title.

Less enjoyable? An unacceptable number of glitches, including players who slide in and out of position without moving their legs or baserunners who take off for second on a clear single without prompting from the controller. The glitches are occasional, not constant, so one can get over them, but they add to the sense that the game just isn't as refined as it needed to be to compete. The graphics, especially when compared to "MLB 11 The Show," are sub-par at best. Players often don't look like their real-life counterparts and the stadiums feel incomplete. It may be a minor thing to some potential buyers, but a game like "MLB 2K11" needs to look right. When Manny Ramirez comes to the plate, you want to feel like you're controlling an approximation of the real player both in terms of his skills and his appearance. Neither feels adequately translated to this game.

The audio seems similarly unrefined with commentators repeating themselves or even getting the situation wrong on the field — twice I was told about the first two batters getting on base even though the first had actually been an out, which was then followed by two hits. This may seem like a minor complaint but it's a cumulative effect when a commentator gets something wrong, a catcher slides like he's on a foosball table, and a pitcher doesn't look like the real player. These elements add up and make a sports game less enjoyable. Last year, there were minor annoying details (like people wearing T-shirts every game in Detroit in April) but they're amplified this year and not just because "MLB 11 The Show" is the best-looking sports game to date.



MLB 2K10

Photo credit: 2K Sports

As for modes, "MLB 2K11" 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 and 2K deserves credit for leading the way in updated rosters, a wonderful addition to the sports gaming world. Players can, of course, start franchises, play just a postseason bracket, go through practice drills, or play in a Home Run Derby. The game has the depth that most players will expect.

Looking at last year's review of "MLB 2K10," I see many of the same complaints — glitches, graphics, awkward AI. Perhaps "MLB 2K11" is content coming in second place to "MLB 11 The Show," but one wonders how long that can be the case. How long can a team be #2? Perhaps the smart thing to do would be to embrace what works about this title. Play up the arcade aspect — the ease of play — and come closer to something like "The Bigs," a title that doesn't go for realism, just pure fun. I'll admit to having a good time during some games of "MLB

2K11" and forgiving fans who don't have a PS3 will enjoy parts of it. But they deserve better.

Baseball fans are loyal. They are the kind of people who turn out every year for each lackluster Cubs team and many of them will probably forgive the flaws of "MLB 2K11." Perhaps that's why they continue to dog this franchise. Just as people often complain that the Cubs organization has no real need to put money into the team as long as they keep selling out even for the losing ones, perhaps the only way to improve the "2K" franchise is if we stop going to the game.

'Major League Baseball 2K11' 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 8th, 2011.



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