

## Video Game Review: Improved 'Pro Evolution Soccer 2012' a Solid Kick

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 3, 2011 - 9:52am

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CHICAGO – When talking about sports stateside, it is pretty common to discuss the major four: football, baseball, basketball, and hockey. Even golf and tennis come up frequently. One sport that really hasn't taken off is soccer. Maybe you have to call it football to be obsessed with the sport, but soccer tends to be pretty low on the average American sportswatcher's list of favorites. However, as international sales are just as important to developers, there is still a major market for the soccer video game. In fact, it is the top-selling sports genre in games.



Video Game Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The king of soccer games has been EA's "FIFA" franchise for quite some time now, but Konami Computer Entertainment has brought a respectable alternative to the soccer fan for years called "Pro Evolution Soccer." The latest installment, "Pro Evolution Soccer 2012" has been made available in 19 different languages and can be played on almost every gaming console.

From the onset of the game, you make an avatar that will represent you in online play, as well as several of the offline career modes. The customizations are tremendously vast. You could literally make a character that looks almost exactly like yourself with the number of adjustments that can be made, and the game encourages you to go through each customization to create a look completely your own.



Pro Evolution Soccer 2012

*Photo credit: Konami*

After you have completed your avatar creation, the game encourages you to go through the training program. Of course, if you have played a previous PES game, the controls will be almost exactly the same, so training may not be necessary. However, new players should definitely give the training a shot, as controls for the game are more complex than pressing the shoot button to try and score. The kicking mechanics allow for aim, power, height, and spin all in just a few seconds of striking the ball.





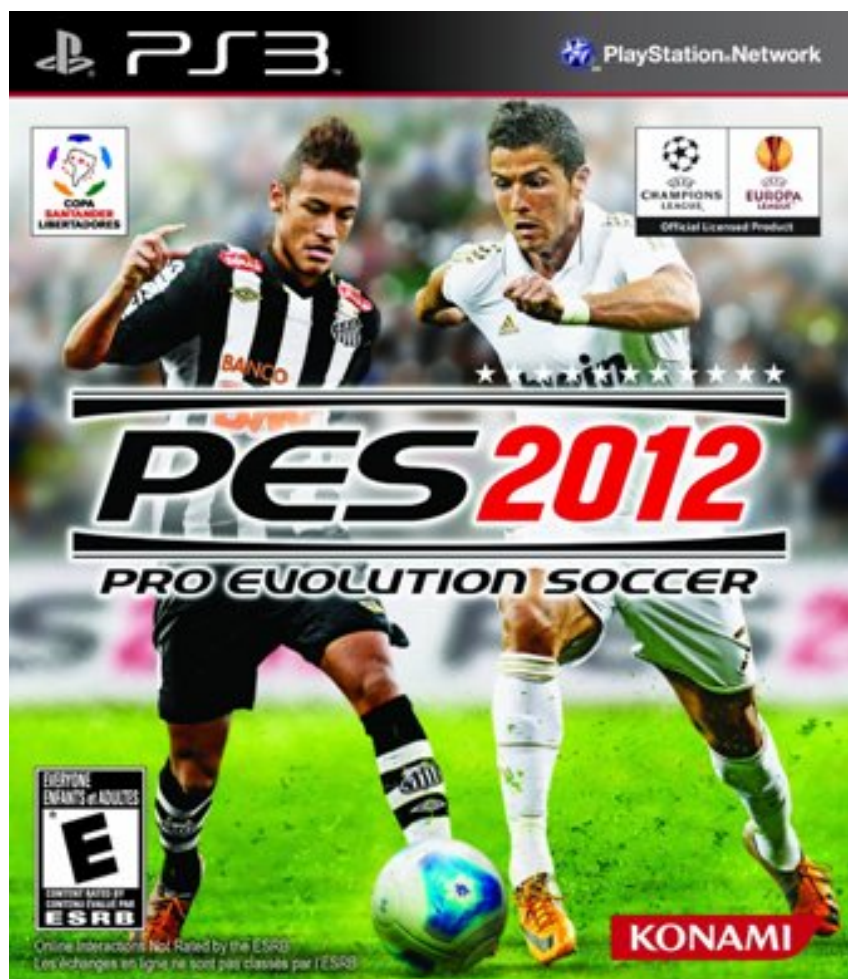
Pro Evolution Soccer 2012

*Photo credit: Konami*

After training, the game presents the standard modes seen in sports games: exhibition, tournament (UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, UEFA Super Cup, and Copa Santander Libertadores), league, and career modes. Exhibition, tournament, and league modes offer the standard game play with minor variations on stadiums, atmosphere, and animations for championship games. The career mode is the separate entity from the standard soccer play.

Career mode, titled "Football Life" on the main menu, is broken up into three different modes: 'Master Class,' 'Become a Legend,' and the brand new 'Club Boss' mode. These three modes act as alternatives to the constant standard soccer play that could be found in exhibitions or tournaments. The modes involve strategy, a detail for the game, and playing matches from a different viewpoint.

In 'Master Class,' you play as the manager of your selected team, proposing players you think would help the club, deciding training/game strategies, and working through concerns from players and coaches. You have to decide which players to start, which players to release, and what needs to be improved on your team (speed, technique, strength, etc.). You also play the games that are listed on the schedule in the standard play method that is found in exhibition and tournament modes. The mode can be difficult or easy depending on your actual skill playing soccer in the game, as winning obviously gives you more job security and losing puts you on the hot seat. There are also incentives given to you from the club chairman such as "don't get into a fight" or "get the club into the premier league" that can help your standing with the team. This game mode does start a bit confusing, as the season begins with a set currency amount your team is given, but does not display the amount of salary already on the books with the players currently on the team. If you go out and sign new players, you may end up over budget when you have to pay team salaries. The game could use a better financial page that lists what each player's salary is, so decisions on players to cut, trade, and sign become easier.



Pro Evolution Soccer 2012

*Photo credit: Konami*

In 'Become a Legend' mode, you play as your own created player. You decide on which position to play, the attributes of your player, and even what name the announcers will call for your player on the field (a very nice customization touch). In this mode, you don't have front office privileges, but you can request trades or movement from team to team. The major difference in this mode is game play is shifted 90 degrees

and you only play as your character. Instead of the long, east-west camera view used in every other game mode, the camera runs north-south and you only control the character that you are trying to make a legend. This is a nice alternative to the usual style of play, but it can become rather frustrating as well. Playing one position only allows you to touch the ball so often in a game, and there is a great possibility that you will be benched and only see so much play time when your player starts off. While benched, you must watch every game from the standard east-west view that only allows a fast forward speed of times two. The ‘Become a Legend’ mode is a nice variation in what is otherwise redundant soccer game play, but it can be a bit boring until you break through as a star player that sees action every game.

The final mode in “Football Life” is the all-new ‘Club Boss’ mode. This mode is completely gameplay absent. You work as the chairman of any particular soccer club and deal on the actual negotiations, trades, and signings with the players and coaches. You don’t have any say for what happens on the field, other than the players you put in your team uniform and the coaches to train the players to victory. This mode can be complicated to get into, but it is a nice add-on for the soccer fan that enjoys creating a team all by themselves and working everything that the front office has to offer.

The animation and dialogue scenes in the “Football Life” modes, as well as the rest of the game, are rather stiff and laughable, and the overall graphics for both the animated scenes as well as gameplay is nothing to write home about. They aren’t terrible, but they are in no way pushing the graphic capabilities in gaming.



Pro Evolution Soccer 2012

*Photo credit: Konami*

The display of PES 2012 is pretty standard for a soccer video game with long shots for the majority of the game and close up views for penalty kicks, goal kicks, and corner kicks. The learning curve for the controls is rather low and can be mastered easily after a few short matches. The major improvement in the PES series is the ability to call out another player to make a run during the game. Instead of relying on your AI teammates to move to where you want on the field, you can call for a teammate to start running up field while you dribble the ball with another player. This allows the gamer to predict the optimal time to make a pass into the open field and ups the chance of you putting the ball in the back of the net.

The game has an inordinate amount of replays during a match, seemingly every time a shot is taken or there is a stoppage in play. There are several intricate replays given when a goal is scored, including an automatic replay mode where you can move the camera around to your preferred replay angle. The replays on goals are nice to have, as there are usually only two or three a game, but the other replays become a bit much. While they are much more detailed than standard game play, showing fluid character models and distinguishable features, the replays after every shot and whistle become obnoxious and you find yourself clicking the start button past the replay screen before it even appears.

While “Pro Evolution Soccer 2012” can become tiresome in some of the gameplay styles and career mode formats, the game is entertaining for fans of soccer. The biggest improvement in the gameplay is the ability to control decisions for several players at once, a feature that will help you become a master of the soccer league. Graphics, replays, and gameplay can become repetitive after a short while, but “Pro Evolution Soccer” is still a solid sports game, an entertaining play, and a viable alternative to the dominant “FIFA” franchise.

*“Pro Evolution Soccer 2012” was developed by Konami Computer Entertainment and released on September 27, 2011. The version reviewed was for the PS3 but it is also available for the PS2, PSP, iPhone OS, Xbox 360, Wii, Nintendo 3DS, and Microsoft Windows.*



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