

The Secrets of ColecoVision Games

ColecoVision Donkey Kong

Vital Statistics

Original Manufacturer: Nintendo

Arcade Release Date: 1981

Related Arcade Games: Donkey Kong Jr., Donkey Kong III, Mario Bros.

Manufacturer: Coleco

Game Serial Number: 2411

Home Release Date: 1982

Guide No.: 78214B (USA); 56624A (Canada)

Rarity (Based on CV FAQ): Common

Size: 16k or 24k

Packaged With The ColecoVision System

Game Background

Our hero, a carpenter (he had yet to gain the name Mario yet), tries desperately to save his love from the newly released Donkey Kong. After following the ape for several blocks, Donkey Kong climbs a building under construction. Our hero must pass three levels to save his girlfriend.

According to the ColecoVision FAQ by Joe Huber, there was a lot of competition to sign the latest arcade hit. Nintendo told a Coleco representative to either sign the contract now or risk losing it to Atari or Mattel, who were trying to get the same contract for themselves. Under pressure, he signed. Thus, most kids wanted a ColecoVision not only for its great graphics but it also had the hottest title "Donkey Kong."

Later, Universal sued Nintendo and Coleco claiming that Donkey Kong infringed upon the idea of King Kong. Although Coleco settled out of court and gave Universal a small percentage of the royalties, Nintendo fought the lawsuit and won in court. Later, Coleco used the precedent and gained back some of their lost royalties. (Information courtesy of the ColecoVision FAQ by Joe Huber)

The First Game

As Coleco's pack-in for the system, many promotional catalogs and documents had to be created and printed quickly to advertise the new system. Many "screen shots" were artists' conceptions of the coming games since many were still in the process of being created.

The promotional picture of Donkey Kong was definitely an artist's conception. Mario had overlapping printed colors, and Donkey Kong varied in color from the actual game. The girl was in red, not the purple we'd see later. The hammers are multi-colored; they ended up being a one solid color.

Some of the game features were also flawed. There were no flaming barrels on the ramp board of the final

game. Donkey Kong never beats his chest at all. The number of guys is represented with pictures under the score, not as a number on the top right part of the board.

When released, some changes were made to the game. Due to the space requirements, Coleco was only able to put in three levels of the arcade game into the home port; a later ADAM datapack release called "Super Donkey Kong" supposedly has the missing "mudpie" level. (This "mudpie" or "factory" level has been known to be dropped in other versions as well.) The springs from the "elevators" board are missing from the cart, but the "Super" datapack version supposedly adds them back in as well.

Finally, Donkey Kong is on the wrong side of the "ramps" board, the boards are out of order, and the "rivets" board has six rivets instead of the standard eight. However, the ColecoVision port still has the best sound quality overall and emulates the arcade sound very well.

Tricks, Tips, and Easter Eggs

Score double on barrel jumps. When a barrel is passing right above you at the end of a ramp, you can jump underneath it and it will register as a score. I usually jump it there, and when the barrel comes back, you can jump it for real.

I've fallen, and I'm okay! On the ramp board, Mario can fall off one ramp's edge and fall safely onto the next ledge.

Move faster up the ladders. When you begin to climb a ladder, pause. When you begin again, you will climb up the ladder faster.

Grab the hammer without worry. On the "rivets" board, the second hammer on the left side of the board could make you die in the arcade game if you misjudged your jump. Coleco did us a favor and will allow you to "bounce" off an invisible wall and grab the hammer without worry.

Lose your hammer sooner. After you have killed off a few barrels on the "ramps" board, you can lose your hammer sooner by falling off the ramp's edge and landing on the next ramp. The game will keep you from dying, and your hammer will disappear.

Watch out for the Mighty Kong. Donkey Kong cannot kill you on any board except for the "rivets" board. On the "ramps" and "elevators" boards, you will simply hit a barrier to stop yourself from touching him. On the "rivets" board, you can get near him, and he will kill you.

Drop off your barrels. Notice as you climb the ramps, the barrels you jump or avoid will drop off the gameboard when they reach the level below where you are.

Get a barrel stuck on the "ramps" board. As a corollary to the previous secret, have Mario reach the final ladder to his girlfriend. At the very edge of the top of the ladder, stop. Wait for the next barrel to pass by, and watch it fall off the top girder. When it lands most of the time, it will be on the bottom right corner of the screen "stuck".

Comon baby, light my score up. Grab the second level hammer on the "rivets" board and move near the right peg. If you are on the right spot, you can hit a fireball, and after it's created, it will come for you and be hit again. Repeat until hammer is used up.

Make Donkey Kong Blush! On the "elevators" board on the second level of difficulty, there will be two fireballs on the top girder. When you can make your way up to it, watch for one of the fireballs to guard your

girlfriend. When it's up there, jump while next to Donkey Kong. The graphics will mess up due to four objects being on the same line (Donkey Kong, girlfriend, fireball, and Mario), so Donkey Kong's face will turn different shades of brown.

ColecoVision FAQ Tricks from Joe Huber.

Move Mario up the first broken ladder then bring him back down, walk him to the left so that his back is almost touching the same broken ladder, and then move him a step or two to the right and jump. Depending on the version you have, he'll fall through the bottom and land in screen 2, or after several seconds he'll appear on top girder next to Kong. This doesn't apparently work on all versions of the cart.

In the 3rd screen, get to the top right hand part of the screen where the purse is. Below is a short ladder, get right above it and wiggle up & down, you'll fall through a metal floor.

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