

BYTE'S ARCADE

Olympic Decathlon

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Okay, you armchair athletes, Microsoft has a program for you. Slide your easy chair over to the computer and prepare to compete in an Olympic Decathlon—10 events requiring speed, timing, and agility.

Game of the Year

When I first heard of this program, it sounded fairly bland. With its dull name, I just knew it couldn't compare to "Super-Intergalactic-Cosmos-Blasters."

Luckily, I happened to witness the presentation of the Creative Computing Game of the Year award at the West Coast Computer Faire. Guess which program took the honors for 1980? That's right: Olympic Decathlon, by Tim Smith. At the presentation Tim gave us a firsthand demonstration of his ingenious creation. When the presentation ended, I bought a copy and raced home to try it on my computer. I wasn't disappointed; the program exceeds its promise.

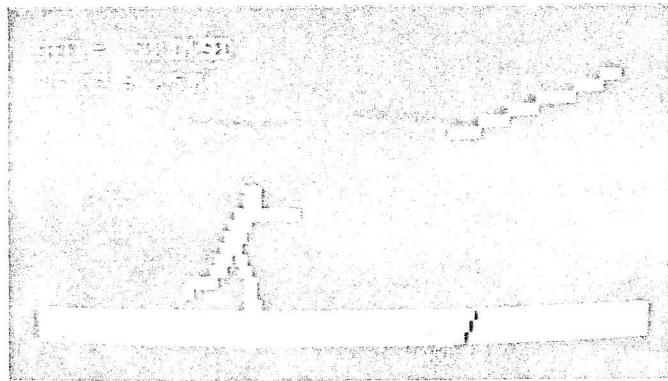


Photo 1: The javelin throw (TRS-80 Model I version).

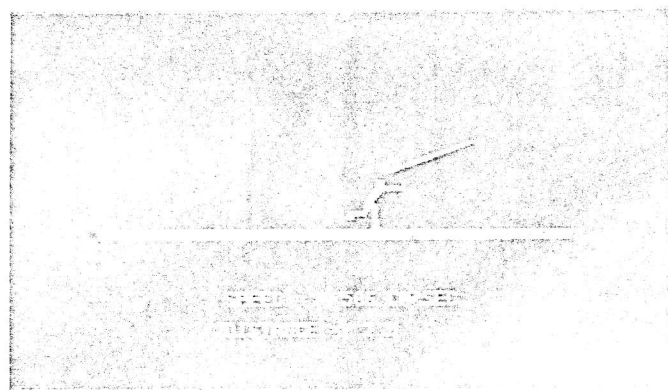


Photo 2: The javelin throw (Apple II version).

Olympic Decathlon is a remarkable simulation of the two-day event at the Olympic Games. It includes the 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, and 400-meter dash on the first day. The second day features the 110-meter hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw, and 1500-meter run. The winner of this combined event is considered the world's best athlete. After you participate in the computer version of the decathlon, you'll understand why.

Each event is displayed in superb animated graphics that you control via the keyboard. The appropriate keys necessary for each event are displayed on the screen

before each trial. These instructions are sufficient to explore each event, but you may wish to consult the manual for ways to approach some of the more difficult ones.

At a Glance

Name
Olympic Decathlon

Type
Game/simulation

Manufacturer
Microsoft Consumer Products
400 108th Ave NE, Suite 200
Bellevue WA 98004
(206) 454-1315

Price
\$24.95

Author
Timothy W Smith

Format
5 1/4-inch floppy disk or cassette (TRS-80 only)

Language
Z80 machine code (TRS-80);
6502 machine code (Apple)

Computer needed
16 K TRS-80 Model I, Level I or II—tape version; 32 K TRS-80 Model I, one disk drive (two needed to do backup); 48 K Apple II or Apple II Plus, one disk drive (two needed to do backup), and two game controller paddles

Documentation
48 pages for TRS-80;
39 pages for Apple

Audience
Amchair athletes of all nations

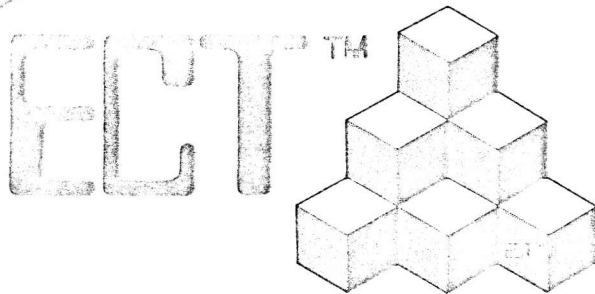
The events require fast reflexes, good coordination, timing, and lots of practice. There is a practice mode for each event so that you can polish your technique before the start.

Competition

Olympic Decathlon may be played alone or with others. When you are ready to begin, the computer asks for the number of competitors. Up to eight athletes may compete in the TRS-80 version; as many as six in the Apple version. Playing alone, you will strive to better your previous performances. When several people participate, the game develops an entirely different character. Scores take on new meaning as the competitors jockey for position in the standings. Head-to-head confrontations in the running events add to the drama.

The Simulation

Smith has captured the flavor of the Olympic Games on magnetic media. With a bit of imagination, you may relive those days on your hometown track, where you



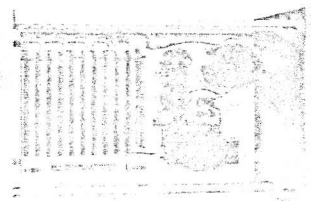
Building Blocks for Microcomputer Systems, Dedicated Controllers and Test Equipment.

R²I/O
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ECT's R²I/O is an S-100 Bus I/O Board with 3 Serial I/O Ports (UART's), 1 Parallel I/O Port, 4 Status Ports, 2K of ROM with the 8050 Apple Monitor Program and 2K of Static RAM.

\$295.00



RM-10
S-100
RACK MOUNT
CARD CAGE

ECT's RM-10 is a rack mount 10 slot Card Cage with Power Supply, consisting of an ECT-100 rack mount Card Cage (19"W x 12.25"H x 8"D), the MB-10 Mother Board (with ground plane and termination) all 10 connectors and guides and the PS-15A Power Supply (15A @ 8V, 1.5A @ = 16V).

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ECT ELECTRONIC CONTROL TECHNOLOGY (201) 686-8080
483 PAINES AVE. BRISTOL, NJ 07025

can still hear the crowd buzzing about the last race. Now it's your turn. Suddenly you are aware only of the starter's voice as you toe the starting line.

**ON YOUR MARK
 SET
 GO!**

As you frantically tap the keyboard, your animated counterpart streaks across the screen. As you near the finish line, your fingers scream for relief, but you can't give up now; your brother-in-law is gaining. With a final burst of energy, you cross the finish line and collapse into your chair, savoring a narrow victory.

The simulation of the actual events is uncanny. Each is unique and requires its own combination of timing, technique, endurance, coordination, and speed. For example, the pole vault demands a healthy dose of all these qualities. You begin with a running approach. As the graphic figure nears the pit, the pole must be planted in

the vaulting box. Miss the box, and the vault is aborted.

If the pole plant is successful, and your flying fingers have generated enough momentum, the figure will ride the pole toward the crossbar—where he must pull up into a handstand, just before hitting the bar. Finally, the pole must be released before it follows through the crossbar. Proper timing is rewarded with **SUCCESSFUL VAULT!**

Authenticity

The rules in Olympic Decathlon are virtually identical to the real event. For example, in the vaulting events you may "pass" on the lower heights and save your energy for the tougher ones. If you miss on three consecutive attempts, you are eliminated from that event.

The rules are enforced by an eagle-eye official. If he determines that you "purposely" knocked down the hurdles, you will be disqualified. He also keeps a watchful eye on the fault line in the javelin throw and long jump. And, of course, jumping the gun in a race is forbidden.

YEAR ROUND SAVINGS plus a Christmas Bonus!!

Energy Savings All Year Round!!

SciTronics Remote Controllers and Real Time Clocks are saving users money all year round.

Energy bills are being cut by controlling heating, air conditioning, lighting, and security systems in homes, offices, stores, and factories.

You too can save money by simply using your existing computer and a SciTronics Remote Controller/Real Time Clock combination as an inexpensive energy management system (EMS). Now you have the choice of controlling either the light duty BSR X-10 switches sold by Sears and others, or the great variety of heavy duty industrial grade switches recently introduced by Leviton. With your own EMS you too can be saving up to 30% on energy bills.

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Contact your local computer dealer for details and a demonstration or call SciTronics directly about other energy saving products.



How Does it Work?

Your S-100, Apple II or TRS-80-II computer prompts the controller to transmit coded control signals across existing AC power lines. The signals are received by dual phase remote switches, which replace existing outlets or wall switches. The switches in turn control the light or appliance plugged into them. No hard wiring is necessary and up to 256 locations may be operated, in either manual or prescheduled real time access modes, by a single controller.

SciTronics, Inc; 523 So. Clewett St.; P.O. Box 5344; Bethlehem, PA 18015; (215) 868-7220

Program Reliability

The program has exceptionally good error handling. User response is strictly controlled to eliminate the acceptance of unreasonable input. The TRS-80 version appears to be crash-proof. Try as I might, I couldn't cause the program to crash or even become flustered. Apple II users can avoid missing any turns by disabling the RESET key.

I found one minor logic error in the TRS-80 version. When several pairs of people are competing serially, the "false starts" are charged by lane rather than by individual. By the time this review is published, Microsoft will have corrected this problem. Otherwise, the program appears flawless.

Documentation

The program is accompanied by an instruction booklet containing background information about the program, the author, and Microsoft. The instructions cover running the program, cassette-loading problems, hacking up the disk (you are allowed one backup), and tape or disk replacement. Each event is discussed in detail, and hints on technique and strategy are included.

Hardware Requirements

Olympic Decathlon is available for the TRS-80 Model I and Apple II computers. Each version took about 10 months to complete.

The TRS-80 version is available on either cassette or disk. The disk version requires 32 K bytes and one disk

drive. This version is an impressive example of the creative animation attainable with low-resolution graphics (see photo 1).

The Apple version is available on disk only. It requires 48 K bytes, one disk drive, and game paddles. The high-resolution color graphics are quite impressive (see photo 2). The Apple version also plays the Olympic Anthem during the opening and awards ceremonies.

Software Support

Microsoft is not playing games when it comes to support after the sale. Tapes and disks are guaranteed to work. If the program fails to load properly, return it to the dealer or to Microsoft for a free replacement. If it becomes damaged during normal use, Microsoft will replace it for \$7.50. The disk version allows a single backup (requires two drives) to facilitate play while you await your replacement disk.

Conclusions

Olympic Decathlon is a superior graphics game. A well-written simulation that captures much of the flavor of the Olympic Games, it is challenging and entertaining.

While many game programs quickly find their way to the "All Played Out" file, the interactive graphics, multi-player capability, and unique features of Olympic Decathlon will keep it in your active program library for a long time. ■

Missile Defense vs ABM

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 Canoga Park CA 91304

All is quiet—perhaps too quiet. Then, without warning, comes the attack! At first, a single incoming missile streaks across the sky. Another follows. Then dozens upon dozens, in a crazy-quilt pattern of bomb trajectories and defensive streaks, darting and exploding in rapid fire. Killer warheads of every description veer relentlessly for your cities: ordinary bombs, MIRVs that retarget themselves and multiply without warning, and even "smart" bombs that can dodge your most accurate firing. With increasing speed, they rain down in waves, until your defenses are taxed to the limit—or more likely overtaxed—and your brain circuits sizzle like the cities just fried by nuclear fireballs.

But wait. Nobody is dead. This is fiction. The scenario takes place thousands of times every day, at arcades across the country and now in thousands of homes equipped with Apple computers and color TVs. At the arcade, it is Atari's Missile Command—one of the most popular games around. At home, you can have two versions of the game: Missile Defense (by On-Line Systems) and ABM (by Muse Software). All three play a tough, fast game with plenty of thrills, sound effects, and graphics. This review hopes to differentiate the subtleties, the slight distinctions, and the all-important "feel" that make for a really rousing atomic war!

Two notes on these reviews: First, I relied on a panel of