

Oversimplified gameplay haunts 'Batman Begins'

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The recent trend of movie-based video games resumes as the Dark Knight returns to consoles everywhere in *Batman Begins*. Unfortunately, the stealth-based adventure is hampered by overly basic gameplay.

The storyline revolves around a plot by Scarecrow to poison Gotham City with a fear toxin. Glimpses of Bruce Wayne's training with Ra's Al Ghul and the League of Shadows offer some background into Batman's psychological makeup. Overall, the plot is slightly confusing with the incorporation of multiple flashbacks, but still solid.

EA Games touts 'fear is your weapon.' Instead of jumping into the fray and beating down Gotham thugs, the Caped Crusader relies on intimidation to scare opponents into submission.

While the predatory style fits Batman like a glove ? or in this case, a Batsuit ? the hand-to-hand combat is rather disappointing. Fighting is broken down too simply, as gamers end up using only two buttons for punch and kick. There are moves that also allow players to block, counter or dodge attacks, but fighting combos are very limited.

The game's simplicity extends beyond combat. The two Batmobile missions showed promise but lack punch. The courses are too easy and usually only involve you slamming into enemy vehicles, which is fun at first but can get boring after a while. Even the final showdowns with Scarecrow and Ra's Al Ghul seem as easy to complete as any other mission.

Batman Begins starts off great and offers hints of potential, but this is a game meant for fans of the Dark Knight. If you're looking for serious action, don't expect this superhero to save the day.

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