

# hobbies/into the 80s/hobbies/into the 80s/hobbies/into the 80s/hobbies/into the 80s Pinball game changes, but still man vs. machine

By Jim Faddis

The game is still called pinball, although much about it has changed.

Mechanical levers have been replaced by flashing lights, sound effects, electronic and computer circuitry. The machines are brighter, noisier, faster, more complex, cost more and give less for the money.

One could argue that pinball machines reflect society. But that argument can be made for anything that changes.

Pinball does seem to go through the same fads that society does. Disco- and Star Wars-type games were in, but are now out, being replaced by middle earth fantasy, Star Trek and super hero games. Captain Fantastic and Fop Forty machines are being pushed aside by Gorgar, Lost World and Superman.

But the classic confrontation that the game presents, man vs. machine, is still the lure behind the electronic digits, just as it was behind the mechanical numerals.

But that challenge is not the only reason people play pinball. The game is also relaxing, Rollie Hughes, recreation manager of the Nebraska Unions, said.

"Pinball is an entertaining way of

getting rid of frustrations," Hughes said.

He said the pinball machines in the union are used the most during finals and dead week, when students are looking for something relaxing that will take their minds off of studies.

UNL freshman Joel Warner said he plays the game to relax.

"It helps me forget about school," he said.

Sophomore Mike Crooks said he plays pinball to kill time between classes.

Sarah Root, a freshman, said she also plays pinball because it's a fun way to kill time.

Warner, Crooks and Root all said a game of pinball is too expensive, but that they still play it. One game of pinball, consisting of three balls, costs a quarter on most of the new machines. The new machines also offer a "special deal" of three games for 50 cents and five games for a Susan B. Anthony dollar.

Just a year or two ago, the machines gave two games and five balls per game for a quarter, Hughes said. He said there is a simple reason for the increased cost of pinball—greed.

"The manufacturers of the machines

saw that they could increase the cost and make their machines more attractive to vendors, and people would still play them," Hughes said.

The popularity of pinball has not decreased since the cost went up, he said.

Pinball has faced many challenges to its seat on the throne of the arcade, Hughes said, but it is still king.

"A few years ago, foosball was threatening to destroy it. But now, foosball is dying out while pinball is still going strong," he said.

The challenge now is from video

games, but Hughes said pinball will still reign.

"The game manufacturers won't let it die out," he said. "They'll keep improving the games to keep them popular."

One of the biggest innovations in recent years is the addition of sound effects, Hughes said. A Harlem Globetrotters machine plays "Sweet Georgia Brown," a Sharpshooter machines gives out cries of a man in pain, and a Stellar Wars machine has the sound of rockets firing.



Daily Nebraskan Photo

Alex Rossell and Andy Cheung try their hands on a regular pinball machine, which delivers three balls for a quarter.

## Mental advantage essential, even in physical activities

By Lori McGinnis

A mental edge on an opponent may be the difference between winning and losing a game, whether the game be football or chess, downhill skiing or crazy eights.

Psyching out an opponent can give a player a definite advantage, said Glenn Potter, assistant professor of health, physical education and recreation.

Psyching out an opponent means getting a mental edge on him, he said.

Potter said more people are realizing that the psychological aspect of sports can be as important as physical conditioning. Potter teaches psychology of sports.

Psyching out an opponent has an impact on the mind, actions, attitudes, interests, emotions and feelings, he said.

It is common in athletics, he said. There are many ways it can be done.

"A home crowd can definitely give a team a psychological advantage," Potter said. Players who are familiar with the surroundings play with more confidence, he said.

The home crowd noise can distract the opposing team, he said.

Distractions such as players talking to one another during the game can cause a loss of concentration, Potter said. Because no one can concentrate on two things at once, distractions often affect performance.

Incorrect height and weight figures in sports programs can psych out an opponent, he said. Someone expecting to play against a 6 foot 3 inch basketball player may be shocked to see the player is actually three inches taller. It's bound to affect his attitude, Potter said.

Another tactic used to psych out an

opponent is to report that a star player is injured. It will improve the opponent's attitude, he said, until the supposedly injured player comes into the game.

Time-outs during a crucial part of the game can have an impact, he said, because a time-out will build pressure and make the team think about the upcoming play, he said.

Robert Narveson, adviser of the UNL chess club, said psyching out an opponent is common in chess. There are two ways it can be done, he said.

The first way can be used if a player knows his opponent or has seen him play. By preparing for the opponent's errors, the player can take advantage of the mistakes, he said.

The second way is by watching the opponent during the game and looking for his weak points. A player then can prepare to take advantage of the opponent's mistakes, Narveson said.

By playing on his weaknesses, an opponent can be forced into an unfavorable game plan, he said.

Psyching out an opponent is ethical, he said, but it doesn't always work.

"If you can play perfect chess, you don't have to try to psych out an opponent," he said. "But nobody plays perfect chess."

Potter said players are always looking for an advantage, and a psychological edge is one such advantage. If it wasn't an advantage, Potter said, people wouldn't do it.

Muhammad Ali was good at psyching out his opponents by claiming he was the greatest, Potter said.

"He had some of his opponents psyched out before he came into the ring," he said.

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