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## [NBA Live 07](#)

*It's not in "The Zone!"*

We've all seen the All Star game this weekend featuring one of the weakest Eastern Conference teams ever. Of course, the Western Conference won, but NBA stars are not what they used to be. You see the Boston Celtics getting beaten by every team, the Lakers getting trashed by small teams or Toronto becoming a superb team at home. In such unpredictable times, you might reconsider watching the NBA, by replacing it with a neat gaming experience. [NBA Live 07](#) will provide you those beautiful plays you've been waiting for so long and a chance to avenge the Eastern Conference All Star team. **Concept** mentioned Boston Celtics and the L.A. Lakers above on purpose as they were the first to ever be featured in the ancestor of the NBA games. The game was called NBA Playoff and it was released in 1989, including only Lakers and Celtics. It was an MS-DOS game for the PCs, turned into a Sega Mega Drive port that gained a lot of fans. 18 years later, EA Sports delivers again another [NBA Live](#) title straight into the arms of the fans. After a cutscene that shows us beautiful moves and tricks done by computer animations of famous players we're taken directly to the main menu. It would have been nice if we were given the chance to see some true All Star players doing their jobs in the intro cutscene, as we'll be seeing animations for the rest of the game. Straight into the game you'll hear some pretty "phat" rap music in the background and in case you're wondering who the artists are, check out the EA Trax section. They're all semi-anonymous rap bands with horrible covers for their albums. When you're done with the music, you should choose the season mode from the game's main menu if you plan on playing NBA Live 07 for a long time. If you're only checking it out to see if the EA Sports title is any good, the Quick Play mode will do. Take the control of your favorite team and play a single or multiplayer match without the stress of having to choose dozens of useless options. In the latest NBA Live installment you'll also have the chance to play a cool new mode called Dynasty Mode that lets you start off with a team and go on an on winning seasons or making it to the yearly playoffs. Play up to 25 years in the Dynasty mode and keep your eye on the development of the chemistry in your team. Team chemistry is essential in Dynasty, since it's what keeps players together and raises their morale. Playing the portable version of NBA Live 07? Import all the data from your PSP, to continue the portable fun in-doors. Trades are also available in this game mode so you'd better check out the other teams' players if you want to create a defeat-proof roster. You get news and rumors that affect your team spirit and if you keep the chemistry level high, you'll notice that even the smallest team in the Conference can play like an equal with Miami Heat or the Bulls. Not patient enough to complete the Dynasty mode or a whole season? Pick the Playoff mode from the starting menu for the hottest matches of the last season. Choose the Eastern Conference or the high-scoring teams of the Western Conference and try to finish those infernal playoffs with as many home wins as you can, because playing away is pure murder in NBA Live 07. If the past weekend All Star game was not enough for your dunkin' hunger, you should try the NBA All-Star Weekend mode and maybe this time, the Eastern Conference will have a chance. All the great players are gathered in Nevada, in the glamorous city of Vegas ready for the 4 tests that they have to face: the rookie challenges for the greatest kids in the NBA, the 3 point shootout, the slam dunk contest and the All-Star game. Since I mentioned the dunkin' contest and the shootouts, you might as well try those while playing the Freestyle Challenge mode that allows you to do the tricks that Shaq uses as morning exercising. Holding a grudge against Wade or LeBron? Challenge them to a 1 on 1 competition by selecting this mode from the main menu. It may be pretty fun in the beginning, but nothing has changed from the 2000+ versions and that won't happen too

soon, as it seems. I had problems with the controls in NBA Live 07 so I had to do a bit of individual practice before starting any season mode or Dynasty challenge. You'll learn the basics of slam dunking and join the beginner alley-oop practice in an attempt to beat the ones that taught you the best tricks. No discrimination intended, but NBA is a manly sport, so doing some shopping will decrease its masculinity. However, visiting the NBA Store mode is not exactly shopping since you can unlock main menu skins, music tracks, tattoos or sports gear. EA Sports has the nasty habit of overwhelming the gamer with tons of customizable options when it comes to the roster editing or customization. When you create a player, you'll feel like playing with the LEGO pieces from your childhood. You can edit cheeks, ears, chin, jaw, eyes, mouth, neck, the player's age or the forehead style. Choose dunk packages and trade your player with another one keeping an eye on the ratings written under their pictures. **Gameplay**Well, I tried playing basketball in real life and I must say that it's a pretty difficult game that makes you sweat and swear more than football. You may miss, commit fouls or simply hold the ball too much to make things more frustrating. In NBA Live 07, the gameplay offers some pretty realistic displays of ball playing. Dribbling is done automatically, but controlling the players is a rather complicated matter as you'll probably be welcomed by pretty tight defensive systems. Considering that controls rely mostly on the analog sticks, you'll have a pretty rough time scoring. The AI seems to know the exact direction of your passes and the players of the other team will always be able to block your shots. 3-pointers will be rarely seen in the 2007 installment of EA Sports' basketball sim. The attentive gamer will be able to tell between stars like Shaw or Kobe and newbies that have feeble attempts of performing stunts. Also, you'll see that weight and height counts so you'd better focus your defense on tall, heavy men. The team's scorer must be light, tall and very powerful if you want to score many 3-pointers. It's a realistic simulator, but it seems that the AI is cheating sometimes. I felt like an idiot while trying to beat the Lakers on the easiest difficulty level. Those boys simply can't miss and the referee will give them penalties all the time. They won't miss those either...while my team makes a habit out of wasting chances. Hit the start button and analyze the options if you want to make adjustments to your team, call for a time out or activate the X-factor. For those that are not familiar to this concept, X-factor can be unlocked by keeping a player involved in the team's offensive efforts for a long time. Once it's available, this feature makes the man behave like a freestyle superstar and do those cool moves that you trigger by pressing the L1 and R3 buttons. Next to the players' pictures you'll see what kind of freestyle abilities they possess. Some have inside scorer abilities, others have greater power, some are the perfect playmakers, all in all, anyone can be transformed into a superstar if they truly get involved in the game. There are 8 skills to rotate between and you'll get used to the system once the first ability is triggered. NBA Live 07 is a very offensive-oriented game and the crowd screaming "Defense! Defense!" is only a superficial feature of the game. That's why you'll see scores going over 200 points easily with the main stars having dozens of points in the important games. Many of the fouls you'll do while playing will be sanctioned with free throws. Those are 100% percent 3-pointers, but only if the CPU is shooting. Controls are rather weird while doing the 3-point throws, as you'll have to point the right analog stick up and down in a specific amount of time. I missed a lot, I must have broken all the records regarding the most misses during an official match. The 1-on-1 challenges or dunking contests won't impress anyone who's played the previous NBA Live titles as they're the same, only with a couple of new players and some new moves. **Video**All-Star players might have big brains, but do you have to show that by making their virtual alter-egos have huge heads? It reminds me of those arcade games where a huge picture of a smiling man replaced a player's head. EA Sports can be criticized for the way the crowd looks in any of its recent games. NBA Live 07 is no exception and a huge mass of pictures will be cheering in vain, while your team gets humiliated by the AI. Players look stiff and the combos you'll do are nothing special, unless you've never played an NBA game or watched a match on telly. The action is fluid and there's no lag, although it takes time for an AI player to decide

where to pass. You have fewer camera angles than in any other EA Sports game and you'll have to chance to zoom in or out to get a better picture of the in-field action. Timeout resemble cutscenes having twice as much quality as the gameplay graphics. Like FIFA, NBA Live 07 features players that look exactly like their real counterparts, even if they under-perform at times. **Sound**The commentary is pretty fun, filled with ironic lines and information about the teams and players. Exclamations, hundreds of lines of comment will make you forget about the rap-oriented soundtrack. If you're a rap fan, you can listen to some tune thanks to the EA Trax option, but to me, those guys look like underground artists. Listen to Braza, Raptile, Bossman, Pigeon John or Tolib Kweli and maybe you'll come to appreciate their works. You'll hear a countdown when the match is a few seconds away from being finished and the commentary gets pretty intense specially if there's a draw and overtime coming. The crowd sure sounds better than it looks and they'll boo you if you pass the ball around or lose it. If you're alone on the counter attack, they might scream so loud that you'll lose the ball. One passionate crowd, I tell you! **Multiplayer**Up to 8 players can play NBA Live 07 by using a multi-tap adaptor, but things will get pretty crowded unless you have a big-screen TV and a big living-room. That's the real fun of the game as in the online mode, the play's pretty dull and there's only a 2-player mode available. You can play dunkin' contests, 1-on-1 matches and the famous 3-point shootouts. If you buy NBA Live 07 for its multiplayer features, you'd better check out the Xbox version as it runs faster and doesn't require an annoying sing-in process. **Conclusion**Many of you may think that EA Sports are finally "in the zone" with the 07 installment in the NBA Live series. Well....they're not, at least not on the Playstation 2, since the game has the same graphics as the previous 2 titles and the AI will smash you every time. There's a ton of licensed content, licensed songs, boots, sports gear and players to go around for every fan of every team in the NBA. Maybe I'm not the public section that EA Sports wants to reach, but this game is not a masterpiece, leaning more to mediocrity. I guess it has some added atmosphere value for the people that watch the NBA games daily or go to the actual games.