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[Sonic Rivals 2](#)

The blue hedgehog returns to your favorite handheld console

The fact that most dogs have something against hedgehogs is common knowledge by now so when my quadruped best friend decided to chase one of these cute little animals while I was playing **Sonic Rivals 2**, things got ugly. Of course, the dog got spiked as a punishment for chasing the critter and this goes to show that hedgehogs are worthy opponents for most of their enemies. **Sonic**, the blue hedgehog is probably the most famous of Sega's trademark characters and he's ready to perform an "encore" returning to the PSP screen with a blast, in Sonic Rivals 2. If you've liked the fast-paced [hedgehog races](#) from the first title, you'll love the ones offered by its successor. The same gameplay gets spiced up with new attacks, new battles modes and more characters to race with. Does it **live up** to the expectations? Read on to find out!

Story Sonic Rivals 2 features a **basic storyline** delivered entirely with the aid of dialogue screens. Seems that good old Eggman is at it again, stealing all Chao-s and hiding them. Sonic and Tails are on the case and they're ready to save each Chao, as it seems that the little critters will be fed to a great beast, called Ifrit. After eating them, the creature will become invincible and he'll do what most beasts do for fun: destroy the world. That would surely ruin Sonic's day, so he sets on a quest to find the Chao-s, defeat Eggman and Ifrit and save the world. It's **not a fascinating** storyline, nor is it extremely original, but it makes enough sense to be included in the game. Concept Sega's game features enough gaming modes to keep you busy for quite a while, even if you're a casual gamer. You'll probably want to start with the **Story Mode** as it unlocks most of the areas you'll race on in all the other modes. Select a team (and a side) right from the get-go, be it Sonic and Tails, or Shadow and Metal Sonic, Silver and Espio or Knuckles and Rouge. After choosing a team, there's the option of picking a certain character from your duo and racing with him in the following missions. The Story Mode allows you to play about 6 main stages, each of them divided into 4 sections: two of them are races, one is a battle and the last one pits you against the level's boss. In case you feel that the Story Mode's too dull for you, there's always the **Single Event** to take on, so you'll probably select Sony, Silver, Shadow or any other character, choose a stage and give it a go. There are 6 areas you can roam through during the game, starting from the Blue Coast, then the Sunset Forest, Neon Palace, Frontier Canyon, Mystic Haunt and finally the Chaotic Inferno zone. Each character has a pretty cool set of outfits he/she'll wear and you'll change those as you please, before the races, but only if you've unlocked this sort of content. Most characters have a default outfit, a Race one, but there's the occasional 80's suit, mercenary costume or armor. Last, but not least, of the main game modes is the **Cup Circuit** and its name pretty much describes what the challenge involves: a series of cup events and races, unlocked by completing the story mode. There's also the possibility of practicing before racing, as you'll have a tough time progressing through the storyline if you don't know the huge tracks by heart. Free Play Mode is designed to allow you to test each stage and practice racing around, without the stress of an opponent or a time limit. Sonic Rivals 2 also has a statistics option called **Game Summary**, which shows all of your stats, including the percentage of the story you've already completed, the number of meters run or the number of boosts you're performed. Your time records will also be stored, as well as the number of rings you've collected so far. The game won't only allow you to collect various pickups during races or coins, as you'll also have to gather cards and add them to your collection. It won't be an easy task, as there's 150 of them waiting to be picked up, but some of the races will even grant you 5 at a time. Gameplay Sonic Rivals 2 plays **very much like its predecessor**, but still manages to add a nice spin to the experience, so you won't get bored and consider

this a mere cash-in attempt coming from Sega. This title took all of the good things from the first game and made them better, as levels are longer and more varied, while game modes have also changed a bit. From the fact that you can ride barrels, to Sonic's neat handgliding action, Sega's new hedgehog-based adventure delivers the content you've been waiting for: speedy races packed with taunts and tough foes. Speaking of which, I'm not going to lie to you by saying that Sonic Rivals 2 is a game that you can play while riding the bus to school, since it's not! This might be your first approach towards the title, but it won't last long. Having played the first game, I expected to finish the first two or three stages in a hurry, but I was puzzled to see that the AI managed to defeat me without overdoing it. You'll ride up, down, upside down, inside objects, hop on the back of Metal Sonic, or kick major bosses right where it hurts. Boss fights and one-on-one character battles are probably the easiest of the sub-missions you'll be doing, while the races per-se are the real **tough cookies**. The opposition is not powerful, but rather cunning, so once you get ahead, start increasing your advantage as a tiny bit of handicap is never enough for tenacious dudes like Silver, who'll get back in the race before you know it. Also, you'll probably want to pause the game and select the "Restart mission" option, because once you fall behind and lag there, you'll have no chance of completing the challenge. This doesn't apply to the AI, as your opponent can't fall in the same pit three times and then get hit by some signature move. Battles were my favorite in Sonic Rivals 2, because they allowed me to really kick a character and earn rings while performing **cool slow-mo moves**, although those were only animations. Also, the inclusion of rounds adds a certain fighting game feeling to the entire experience. Fighting Eggman's contraptions and robots is delivered in a very original manner, because you'll always have to keep your eye on the other critter that's trying to defeat your nemesis, or trying to kick your blue behind. You can make use of tons of gadgets lying around in most levels, but the action happens so fast, that you won't even see what hit you. The **environmental traps and contraptions** range from tubes to jump pads, various obstacles or areas that you have to climb, which become a real nuisance in the long run. Did I tell you that you can trigger **speed bursts**, ride rollercoasters and get shot from cannons? The controls are fairly basic, employing the use of the D pad and action buttons. You can use the power ups you find in stages by pressing the triangle button, you jump by pressing the X button and jostle your rival with the circle. Don't forget to press square for an unique signature move, depending on what character you're playing with. Now let me tell you what I don't like about Sonic Rivals 2: the constant running around is spoiled by the **frustrating times** when you get stuck in a block, near a trap, or you have to fall and repeat a nasty climb, while your opponent is way ahead. Some of the places you'll have to reach are built in such manner that you'll hit your head if you'll try to jump on them while speeding. Obviously, since speed is Sonic's main attribute, taking that away from him can only make the fans of the blue hedgehog angry, specially if they'll deal with environmental bugs and frustrating stages. VideoSonic Rivals 2 **looks exactly the same** as the original title if you ask me, or I'm just too picky... Those colored graphics will surely get you going, specially if you haven't played the original Sonic Rivals. The animations are far more varied than the above-mentioned title and each character's signature moves are a joy, both graphically and from the gameplay point of view. There are no cutscenes to comment upon and no surprisingly good environments... However, I did like the sections of stages when the camera went crazy and tried to follow Sonic, as he was spinning around in circles and riding rollercoaster thingies or speeding as explosions raged around him. Sound In the game's first level (and probably in a few other levels) you'll hear a tune that sounds pretty good. I didn't know the song, but it was very similar to the style of Coheed and Cambria, if you know the band. The soundtrack of Sonic Rivals 2 is great, fitting the speedy races you take part in, but I can't say the same thing about dialogues. Well, they're made to complement the story anyway... It just seems that the **characters are a bit faint** and that their voices don't sound as natural as they should. You'll love to hear the taunts of your fellow racing critters as you rush to the finish line, plus the other standard sounds, like the one heard

when you collect a ring plus explosions, water effects etc. Back to the song I was talking about, it seems that it's called "Race to win" and you can look it up online, if you want more details. Multiplayer If you thought that the game's single player mode was something special, wait till you get a taste out of the multiplayer mode. It features wireless play and the acclaimed **game sharing**, so there's no need for two friends to buy the same game for two PSP consoles. Battle Modes features 6 types of competition and the main racing mode, but this time you get to set the length of the battle in the selection menu. The fun doesn't end here, as there's the **Knockout Mode**, allowing you to start with 3 rings and knock them all out of your opponent in order to win. Passing to a more non-violent competition, Rings Battle offers you the chance to race against time, in an attempt to collect as many rings as you can. There's even a **Capture the Chao** mode, for the FPS aficionados, who will surely notice some similarities between this challenge and the famous Capture the flag mode. Basically, you'll have to steal Chao-s from the opponent's base and bring them to your own, but it's more difficult than it sounds. A predictable challenge is the **Laps Race**, which is exactly what the name says, a race where the first to complete the number of set laps wins. Since I've mentioned FPS titles earlier, there's another treat for you: **King of the Hill**, which features Omochoa, at the top of the level plus a light beam. You'll earn points by standing under it and the first to achieve more of them wins. Last and never least, the **Tag mode** allows you to play "tag, you're it" with a bomb, so you'll pass the dangerous item and tag another player till the time limit expires and a very unlucky player loses. If what I've described above sounded like fun, try to think about the actual game and you'll get a mere picture of the great challenges you're about to experience. Conclusion I've had enough Sonic content to last me for ten years right now, but there's a slight chance that I won't like **Sonic Rivals 3**, if it gets released for the PSP. The most important factor that decides whether the game is good or not is the hours you've spent playing the first title. If you were a fanatic, there's a slight chance that you won't dig the improvements, considering them minor tweaks to the gameplay department and the graphics, but you're not willing to pay for an "update", are you? If this is your first PSP Sonic adventure, go right ahead and play it, it will a ball, a speedball, a rocketball and a ballistic experience, featuring the blue hedgehog we've come to adore for the past 10+ years.