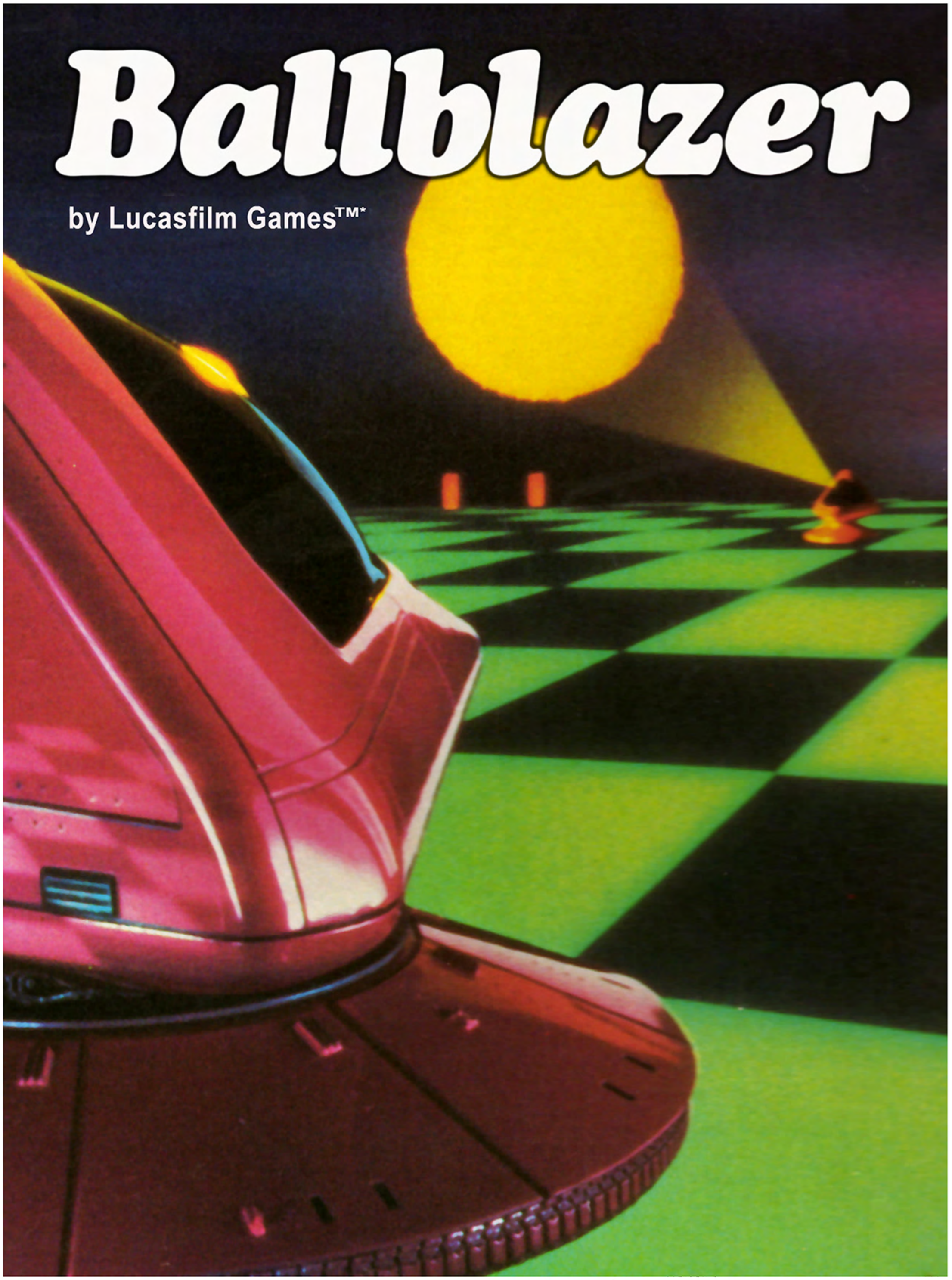
ATARI® 7800™ Game Manual

Ballblazer

by Lucasfilm Games™*



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Ballblazer: the simplest, fastest, and most competitive sport in the known universe. It grew from dark roots in ancient space wars to become king of all games among every lifeform within range of Interstellar Ethercast. In exactly three minutes, Ballblazer can make you a hero—or destroy a lifetime of dreams.

The year is 3097, and the place is a null-gravity nexus mid-space in the binary star system of Kalaxon and Kalamar. Minutes from now, on the luminous surface of an artificial asteroid, the final round of the Interstellar Ballblazer Championship—the greatest tournament of all time and space—will begin, and history will be made. For the first time a creature from the planet Earth has battled through the countless qualifying rounds and eliminations, enduring and then triumphing, across vast parsecs, to win the right to compete for Earth's honor and the ultimate title any being can possess: Masterblazer.

The final round is about to begin and the competitor from Earth is YOU.

Getting Started

As a young tyro, you were required to master the Ballblazer prep procedure before you were allowed to go into competition. You perform this procedure now, readying your equipment, setting the game length, and sizing up your opponent.

1. Connect your controls. For one player, plug a joystick into the left controller port. For two players, plug a second joystick into the right controller port. Player 1 (left joystick) plays the upper screen; player 2 (right joystick) plays the lower screen.
2. Ready the Rotofoil. Insert the Ballblazer cartridge into the cartridge slot.
3. Turn on all systems. Switch on your TV, then press the **[Power]** key to turn on the

Three Minutes, Two

console. Demonstration play automatically begins. Each player combination of humans and droids is demonstrated at random for one minute.

4. To play the regulation two-player (two-human), three-minute game, press the left joystick's fire button. To select other player and game length combinations, press **[Select]**. The designation for player 1 will flash. Move your joystick up and down to choose the HUMAN or a DROID level. Droid9 is the most skilled of the computer-controlled opponents, and Droid1 is the least skilled. Typically you would leave player 1 at HUMAN, for yourself.

   Move your joystick to the right to select game length. The numbers at the center of the band will flash. Move your joystick up and down to choose from one- to nine-minute games.

   Move your joystick to the right again to designate player 2. Your opponent will be HUMAN if you have a second player. Or move your joystick up and down to choose a DROID level.

5. Press **[Select]** again to watch random demonstrations for one minute.

6. Press the left joystick's fire button to start the game.

7. Press **[Reset]** at any time to restart the game with the same options you previously selected.

8. During play, press **[Pause]** to pause a game; press it again to resume play.

Players, One Victor!

Playing the Game

Before boarding your Rotofoil, you take a moment to look over one of the most beautiful and exciting sights in the universe: the Grid (the Ballblazer playing field). Ah, the Grid—1155 squares surrounded by an Electroboundary that keeps players and ball within bounds. Soon it'll be you out there racing after the Plasmorb, Ethercast for all the universe to see. Right now the pairs of Goalbeams at the ends of the Grid look like an easy shot, but when the game starts they begin moving at 5 meters per second and the distance between them shrinks.

You tense for action as the "Song of the Grid" plays through the headphones in your helmet. This song, created from the musical contributions of Masterblazers of old, sets the pace for the game by capturing the urgency and thrill of the action. Meditating on it sharpens your competitive edge and excites the fans to a frenzy.

As you strap yourself into your Rotofoil you recite to yourself the basic rules of the game as you learned them from the official Interstellar Ballblazer Competition Handbook:

"Each player must compete in a regulation Rotofoil. These Rotofoils, designed after cruisers used in ancient deep space dogfights, travel at speeds of up to 50 meters per second. Each Rotofoil must be outfitted with the following:

- A joystick control for navigating the Grid and blasting the Plasmorb. To navigate, the player moves the handle in the direction of intended travel. If in possession of the Plasmorb, the player presses the fire button to activate the Pushfield and launch the Plasmorb.

- A Rotosnap computer that automatically rotates (or Rotosnaps)

the Rotofoil 90 degrees to face the Plasmorb (or the Goal-beams if the player already has the Plasmorb).

- A forcefield that completely surrounds the Rotofoil. When traveling without the Plasmorb the forcefield is a Bumpfield that withstands collisions with other objects. When a player is within a few meters of the Plasmorb, the forcefield becomes a Pullfield that automatically captures the ball and centers it towards the goal. When a player in possession of the Plasmorb presses the fire button, the forcefield becomes a Push-field that launches the ball.

"The game officially begins when the timer starts. Players begin by moving downfield until they locate the Plasmorb and attempt to capture it.

"Players score points each time they blast the Plasmorb between the Goalbeams. To score maximum points, players blast the Plasmorb between Goalbeams that have disappeared over the horizon on the opposite end of the Grid. This is called an Over-the-Horizon (OTH) Shot.

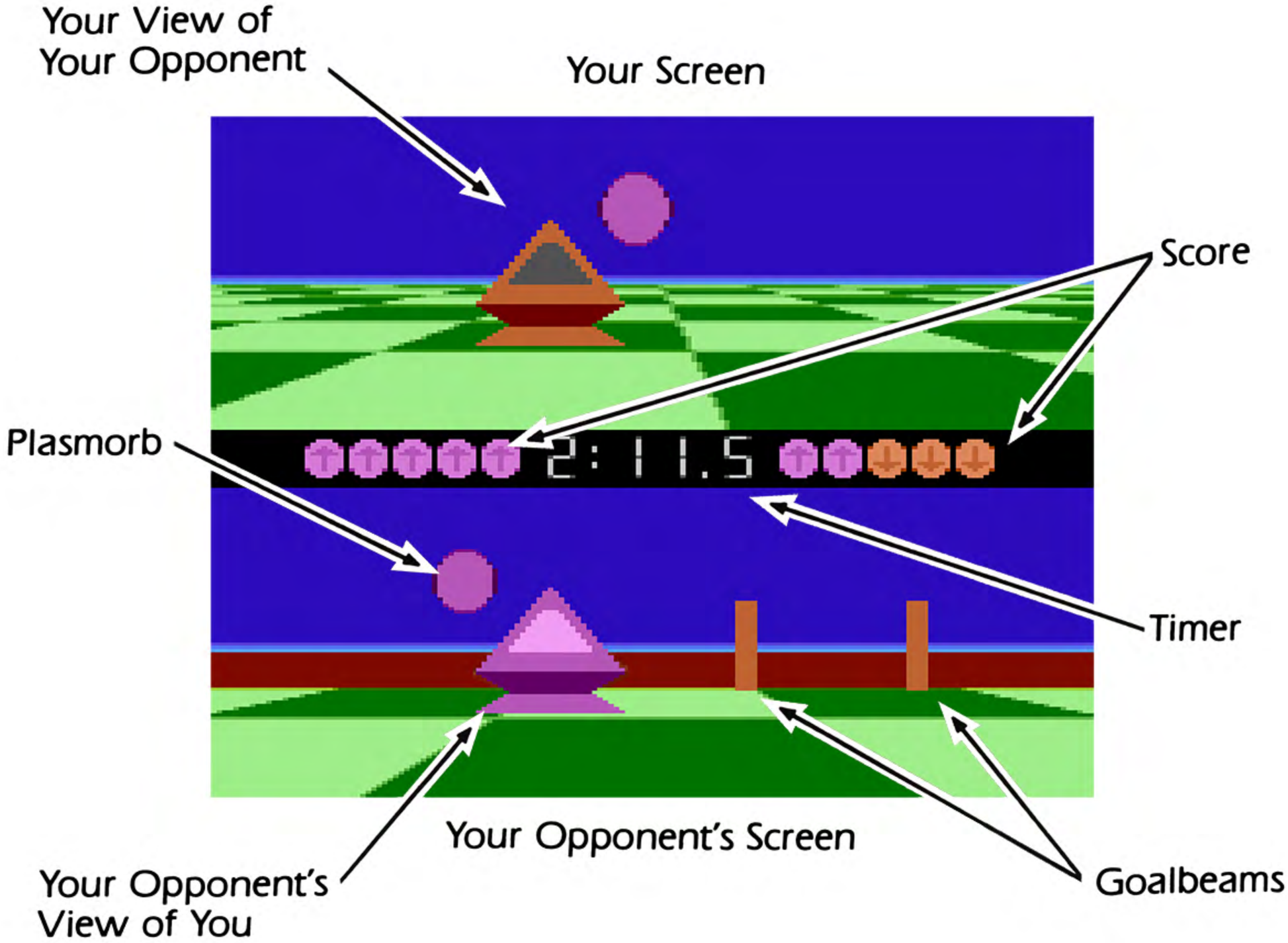
"A player may attempt to steal the Plasmorb by rushing up beside the opponent, blasting the Plas-morb away, and going after it."

Viewing Game Action

New fans sometimes ask for pointers on viewing the action. The Interstellar Ballblazer Competition Program includes the following information on viewing the game:

"In the following illustration, two players in Rotofoils are facing each other. In the top screen, you are looking out of the cockpit window at your opponent's Rotofoil and the ball.

"In the bottom screen, your opponent is looking out at your Rotofoil, the Plasmorb, and the Goalbeams. Your opponent has the ball and is heading towards the goal, but you are blocking the line of fire. Your opponent has three points, and you have seven . There are two minutes and 11.5 seconds left in the game."



Strategy

As you moved up through the elimination games you caught the attention of the famous Masterblazer Arboster Kipling. Arboster was so impressed with your steady nerves, timing, and devotion to the game he decided to personally supervise your advanced training. In the last training session before the Championship he gave you his most valuable tips:

"Listen kid, you're pretty good for a human. You've got a real shot at the title if you keep in mind a few little tricks.

"First, try to make your goals early in the game before the distance between the Goalbeams begins to shrink.

"Your OTH Shots will be more successful if you take aim and blast the ball just before the Goalbeams disappear over the horizon.

"Sometimes you might find yourself too close to the Electroboundary for a high-scoring OTH Shot. If you do, just blast yourself backwards and catch the ball on the rebound.

"To shake off an opponent who's tailing you closely for the ball, make sure the opponent's Rotofoil is directly behind you, then blast the Plasmorb. The force will send your opponent backwards and the ball ahead so you can get to it first.

"Here's a real classic—the block. Simply position yourself between the Plasmorb and the Goalbeams. This will block all but the trickiest angle shots.

"I guess you're thanking me now for all the practice I put you through. Of course, you got the most out of every practice session by shooting at the Electroboundary just outside the Goalbeams. That way you got in a lot of shots without going through the whole goal-scoring sequence.

"And all those Droid demo games I made you watch gave you a chance to study technique, especially Plasmorb stealing. You've got it down now, getting in real close until the buzz of your opponent's Rotofoil is loudest and you have the power to blast the Plasmorb as far as possible. We pros call it 'maxing the buzz.'

"Oh, and don't let the Rotosnaps disorient you. Listen for the snap when you rotate so you can keep your sense of direction.

"Let's see. Anything else? Oh yeah. Nobody ever scored any points by sitting still. Keep moving!

"Well, I guess that's it. When it's all over I hope it's the other guy's Rotofoil I see spinning out in defeat. Go get 'em, kid."

Scoring

The official Interstellar Ballblazer Competition Handbook states the following about scoring:

"A player scores by blasting the Plasmorb between the Goalbeams. Goals made when the Goalbeams have disappeared behind the horizon (OTH Shots) score 3 points. Goals made closer to the Goalbeams score 2 points. Close-in goals score 1 point.

"The total score (the combined points of both players) cannot exceed 10 points for each game.

"A player scoring 10 consecutive points wins the game in a shut-out. Otherwise, the player with the most points (score circles filled in with a player's color) at the end of the game period wins. In the event of a tie the game goes into overtime and the next player to score wins.

"When all score circles are filled, a player can steal points by scoring more goals. For example, if Droid5 scores the first 9 points and the human scores the next 6 points, the human wins 6 to 4."

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Ballblazer was created by the Lucasfilm Games Division: David Levine (Project Leader), concept, design, and programming; Peter Langston (Games Group Leader), design and programming; David Riordan and Garry Hare of Search and Design, design. Contributions and support by Charlie Kellner, Gary Winnick, and David Fox. Special thanks to George Lucas.

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