



So far, videogames have depicted Wolverine in one of two ways: a no-frills one-man fighting machine in action games, or a no-frills one-man fighting machine in fighting games—in either case, an unquestionably flat character in terms of gameplay. We all know there's more to everyone's favorite X-man than adamantium rage, however, and the depth of the character we get in *X2: Wolverine's Revenge* far exceeds that depicted in any prior game. I'd even go so far as to say that *X2* proves no other superhero is better suited to videogame stardom. It's a shame *Revenge* only presents that potential and fails to fully realize it.

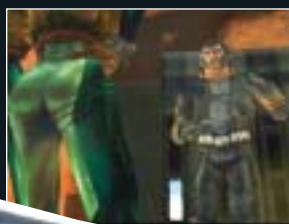
with villains like Juggernaut, Sabretooth, Magneto, and Lady Deathstrike were built on solid ideas, but almost all fell victim to my biggest gripe: poor control.

Take the Wendigo fight: Alone in an ice cave with the white behemoth, your only hope for victory is to throw it by grabbing its tail. This seemingly simple idea should be easy to pull off—but it just isn't. As in several other boss fights, you find yourself in the proper position, but you're unable to execute the blow due to horrible collision detection that causes weird clipping all over the place. Thrown controllers often follow.

The game also features bland environments that force you to

and repetitive attack animations (surprisingly brutal for a Teen rating), the Stealth mode (activated by awkwardly *holding down* L2—another control issue) presents a genuinely cool graphic effect similar to thermal vision. It requires true skill to master (though that's due partly to the shoddy control). Logan's superhuman senses can detect everything from enemy movement to the exact scope of a security camera's view, and he's voiced surprisingly well by Mark Hamill in a solid solo adventure (written by former *Wolverine* comic scribe Larry Hama) that manages to sensibly incorporate fights with the five supervillains.

After seeing his potential as a



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As a big Wolvie fan who's awaited this release for more than a year (back when *X-Men* prefaced the title instead of *X2*—which makes *perfect* sense, since the game is clearly set in the *New X-Men* comic universe), *Revenge's* 25 levels kept me happily busy for a dozen hours. It required fandom of my degree to filter out much of the onscreen crap the *gamer* in me experienced, though. Boss fights

wonder what Konami or Capcom could have done with this. There's very little interaction to be had anywhere; Wolvie can't even make a claw mark on objects he'd slice right through on a comic-book page. The effect of destroying the occasional crate or computer simply fails to impress.

But, like I said earlier, the fan in me can't help but like this game. Despite some questionable A.I.

game star, I honestly believe Wolvie could play protagonist in an adventure of *Metal Gear Solid* quality—he just needs the right developer at the helm. Had a more technically proficient team produced this game, its likely a slew of gamers beyond X-Men fans would actually give a *snikt*.

Chris Baker



X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Not “the best there is”

Publisher: Activision Developer: Gene Pool MSRP: \$49.95 ESRB: Teen