

Nba superstars notes and impressions

What is it?

NBA Superstars is a 3v3 arcade basketball game. The game just launched at Dave and Busters although their record keeping website is still under construction. The game is very NBA Jam inspired but has enough differences that I wanted to write about it.

TLDR, the game is quite fun and has a different take on the Jam formula. I think there's an annoying kink or two that could make it even better though (halftime subs and pass control). And I'm pretty sure Tim Kitzrow is immortal!

Control scheme

The game has the 3 buttons we all know and love: shoot, pass, and turbo. However, the game has a very different twist on the pass button. **In 1v1 and 1vCPU games, the pass button switches the player you control on offense and defense. Steals and shoves are done by double tapping turbo, similar to throwing elbows or doing spin moves in Hangtime on offense.** I'm not sure how to control which action you get. **I am also unsure how to control who you pass to, if possible.** Going near a teammate and holding a direction did not work.

Player select

Each team has 4 players. Mostly who you'd expect, although Robinson as the Knicks' 4th was a bit of a surprise. You select the player you want to start with and the cpu selects the other 2 randomly. There are no substitutions; I selected Brunson, the cpu brought in Anonuby and Robinson, so Randle had to ride the bench all game. You also can't see the players' attributes until after you select the team (I did not take a video of the roster because of that). **Player attributes are shooting, dunking, handling, rebounding, and a seemingly all encompassing "defense" stat like the original Jam.** Does this mean players are equally fast?

Game feel

The camera angle is slightly different (angled) from NBA Jam. Players jump super high for jump shots. These 2 factors for me meant the game took some time to get used to. Dunks were difficult to block because of these angles. However, I've also noticed the time to block dunks is pretty flexible and a high defense can help a lot. Because of player control switching, I couldn't test much off ball play, but the game has alley oops that work like Hangtime and JAM OFE. Maybe even with more range. A good shooting stat gives the equivalent of modern NBA range; well beyond the arc!

Superstar mode

Instead of being on fire, if a player makes enough good plays to fill up a gauge, then receives the ball, he enters Superstar Mode (SSM). SSM increases all of a player's attributes, movement speed, and jumping ability seemingly multiplicatively as opposed to adding to them based on my observations. I didn't catalog all the ways to fill gauge, but making a dunk or 2 point shot fills it

by half. The gauge will drain over time. **While it won't have a bad shooter drain all his 3s, the speed advantage certainly makes this mode extra powerful, and you can jump what feels like halfway across the halfcourt on defense!**