Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball

Strat-O-Matic is to other baseball simulations what calculus is to flash cards. Based on a popular board game, this computer game has little pretension of wowing you with arcade-like sound or graphics. Players don't dance across the screen, and the only noise comes from a home run siren, which you can mercifully shut off.

This game's fortes are its statistical accuracy, a long menu of options, stunning realism and, if you wish, lightning speed of play.

Want to know how the 1991 California Angels would have fared against the 1986 division-winning squad? How a lineup made up entirely of Ted Williamses would hit against Sandy Koufax? Or how you, with your softball league batting average, would perform sandwiched between Maris and Mantle on the '61 Yanks?

You can do everything with Strat-O-Matic except prevent Darrel Strawberry from lunging for the low curve. Using teams from today's major league rosters or from as far back as the days of Cobb and Ruth, you can go head-to-head with a friend, challenge the computer, play solitaire or program the computer to simulate a game or an entire season.

A game in which you make managerial moves takes about half an hour to play. If you let the computer do all of work, a single game lasts seconds, an entire season a couple of hours. And the computer calculates everything — standings, leader boards, box scores and an exhaustive array of statistics for each player.

Strat-O-Matic factors in nuances like pitcher fatigue, rainouts and ballpark dimensions. Players are not only individually programmed with remarkable accuracy for how they hit and pitch, but for how well they run the bases, how many errors they make and how prone they are to injury.

The game requires an IBM computer or compatible and 640k of memory. The current Version 3 costs $35 and season disks (you need at least one) are $20 each. Version 4, boasting yet more features, is due out in January. The company says Version 4 will be priced at about $40, with a discount for