

'DDR' players find a home in the Rec Center

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TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2005

A faint beat under the booming workout music captures the attention of about 10 people in the Student Recreation Center.

Two students in socks pound their feet as arrows move upward on the big screen TV. They're playing "Dance Dance Revolution."

Every Thursday and Friday from 7 to 9 p.m., students can come in and play "DDR" in the SRC. Participation is free, and the game attracts many expert-level players as well as beginners curious about the game.

John Dunn, interim manager of the SRC, said they began offering "DDR" as another alternative to the average workout.

To play the video game, players stand on a dance pad with arrows pointing up, down, right and left, and choose the song they want to dance to. When the music starts, arrows corresponding with those under their feet start moving upward on the TV screen. As they reach the top of the screen, players have to hit the corresponding arrows on the dance pad. After the song is over, the game gives a grade of A, B, C, D or F depending on how many arrows the player hits at the correct time.

Expert-level players move their feet rapidly, hitting the arrows on the dance pad in quick succession.

"I can't even read that fast," said Derek Archer.

On expert level, the arrows are so close together they are undistinguishable as separate steps to the untrained eye.

On some songs, players even have to use their hands to hit arrows while their feet are occupied with other steps.

Others are beginners playing the game on novice or easy level. The arrows are fewer and farther between.

Beginning "DDR" players can work their way up the scale, unlocking songs and alternative dance charts.

A few of the people playing "DDR" at the SRC Sept. 30 shared their reasons for loving the game.

"These days I play about every other day," said Bryan Wilson.

"DDR" is not only an enjoyable video game but it can also be a serious work out, the players said. Most players have sweat dripping down their brow as they step off the dance pad.

"It's a good way to work out, and more importantly, to show off," Wilson said. "People love a good 'DDR' player."

Jason Fitch has been playing "DDR" for about a year. He plays in the Wallace Complex basement whenever he is not in class and has money. For Fitch, the game is really about the numbers, challenging himself to get better statistics and figures. He is an expert level "DDR" player, but he said it has been a challenge to get there.

Kit Crawford has been playing "DDR" for about three years. He said he plays more often than he says he should, and blows his paycheck on the game.

But Crawford enjoys "DDR" because it is a lot like reading music. He also enjoys the music and movement the game play offers.

Some players get into "DDR" because they enjoy playing video games. Alex Eberle started playing the game as a joke. The first day after he and his friends bought the game, they played for about eight hours.

While others may enjoy faster songs that show off their quick foot work, Eberle enjoys the slower songs that move with the beat. Figuring out the flow of step patterns is one of his favorite parts.

Lack of money for "DDR" play is a heavy topic of conversation among players. If there are any millionaires who would like to donate some money for "DDR" play, they said, they would gladly take it.