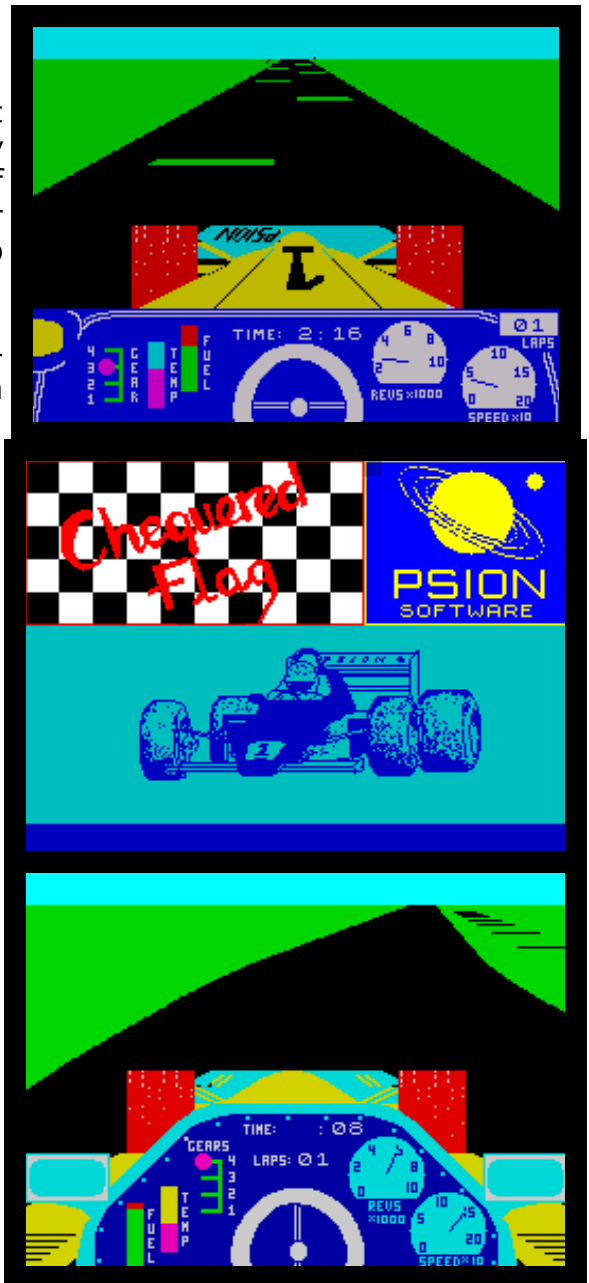


At the very end of 1983 the frustrating absence of decent racers came to an almighty halt and from a company very close to Sinclair— Psion. Following a rather weak set of games, they released Chequered Flag. With the earlier racing games as a comparison, it was clear this was a step up.

The official Sinclair catalogue from January 1984 advertised this along with other Psion games and it read “it’s an outstanding new program that puts you in the drivers seat with stunning realism”. We know advertising blurb is to be largely ignored but here you were in safe hands. Released to reasonable critical acclaim, this game sold well and impressed Speccy owners so much it stayed in a magazine ‘readers top 20’ for about 15 months, along with other favourites Jet Pac, Manic Minor and Attic Attac.

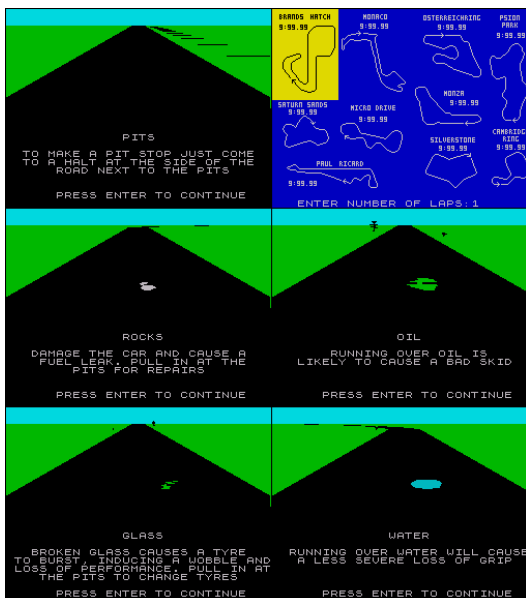
Chequered Flag was very much a simulation. Just look at the pictures, it was a first person cock-pit view. It included either auto gears, or a faster four gear formula one car on ten mostly known tracks. The game required you to time trial (no opponent cars). Steering was best done with keys where you had a fast turn or slower turn. That’s eight keys required for optimum play. Only the best would master this game. Perhaps that’s why it was so loved; it presented a great challenge. Since the feeling of racing was so good, including a brilliant feeling of skidding when cornering too fast, you never felt cheated by poor draw distances or poor collision detection.

Various other quality factors helped liven up the hot-lapping, including debris in the road (rocks and glass) causing damage to your tyres, over-revving or overheating causing damage to your engine and an ever-depleting fuel supply. Any of these could force you to pull into the pit lane for repairs.



Sure, it doesn't look much. But it certainly felt right

Don't confuse this with Atari's top-down arcade game of the same name (or it's sequel on the 3DO).



WHAT THE MANUAL SAID

Chequered flag is a fast moving motor racing simulation in which you have to negotiate some of the worlds famous racing circuits. From behind the wheel of your thoroughbred formula 1 racing car, you have a dynamic view of the outside world flashing past and of continuously changing instruments on your dashboard display. Watch the various landmarks appear over the horizon and snake towards you - trees, milestones, rocks and warning arrows, a lake etc.. There are even hills to climb and descend. Keep an eye on your instruments to achieve maximum performance and avoid skidding or overheating.

Your car has been carefully programmed to model accurately the dynamics of a real racing car and you even have a choice of cars. Peak power will be delivered at the appropriate revs, and drag and road traction are all evaluated. In order to achieve maximum performance you will need to change up and down the gears to keep the revs at the optimum level, and if you take the corners too fast you will start to slip sideways. But don't worry, to make things easier you can opt for a car with an automatic gearbox - at the cost of a little power of course.

Your dashboard display features full analogue speedometer, rev counter, fuel and temperature gauges along with a gear selection indicator - plus lap timer and lap counter. The steering wheel is also visible and turns in response to your commands.

Driving a racing car is a very skilled business, and apart from keeping on the road and trying to establish new lap or race records, you will have to avoid various hazards and look after your car.