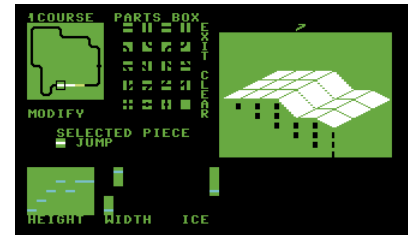
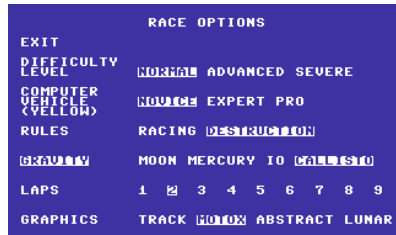
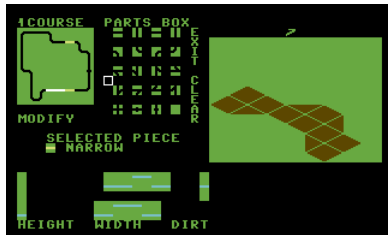


RDS FUN

The most fun in RDS came from out-smarting your opponents choices: if the gravity is set low, do you go for a fast light vehicle or a slower, heavier one that survives jumps better. Acceleration or top speed? Weapons or lighter vehicle? It all went together brilliantly. And there's more! The computer AI went from sublime to ridiculous....it would not be uncommon for the computer to leave oil at a T-junction leaving you flying down the long route! Car damage also caused you problems. Damage in 1985? Oh yes sir it did. Jumping too high, hitting opponents or spinning on oil into barriers all led to crashing and crashing slows your vehicle down. It's not funny watching your opponent in his jeep pass you on your street bike. It's even less funny watching your car skid on ice helplessly into a cleverly laid mine...one hit on a mine and (subject to gravity setting) you're going skywards, tumbling about on fire. When you stop rolling, it's game over. Whilst rocking your car back and forth within an icy dip, you could tell when your opponent was about to make good their escape and a cleverly timed crash puts an end to that. A gentlemen's agreement was required to get the race started again!

DIY

Clearly the most outstanding feature of the game is the ability to create your own tracks (everything from surface type, gravity, style of graphics, height and width of the components could be your own). This was a truly well designed front end too. A track can be created quite literally within five minutes or you could labour over a truly cunning track for hours before saving to tape and praying it saves okay. Being beaten at your own track was a frightening prospect. Thankfully the game was very quick to restart with a tap on F3. Failing that, you could always settle your score on that years other big hit: Way of the exploding fist.



PROGRAMMERS

RDS was programmed by Rick Koenig with Connie Goldman crafting the graphics and music / audio from Dave Warhol. The game was sold to Electronics Arts but they weren't the leading publisher they are today and for UK publishing, they went to Ariolasoft.

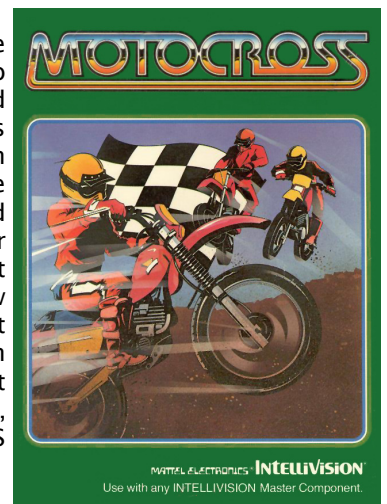
Rick went on to use the same algorithms in two later games, the 1989 Intellivision **Stadium Mud Buggies** and the 1991 NES game **Monster Truck Rally**. Without a construction set and without the variables though, they never reached the same levels of popularity.



1983 MOTOCROSS

Rick Koenig who programmed RDS was no amateur. He'd made a few earlier games and that included **Motocross** in 1983.

Motocross was a cartridge game for the Mattel Intellivision console. The game was designed initially by Rick Levine (of Truckin' fame) but as Koenig tried to take over the programming, he had to seek permission to scrap the code and start from scratch. It was made throughout 1982 but released early 1983. It's not dissimilar to RDS but instead of the RDS slot car racing, it's a crosser bike in a go-anywhere, colourful playfield. You could even go backwards around the track if you wanted to. Stray too far off course though and the computer would drag you back onto the track. There was no split screen racing—if a player lagged behind, the screen would pause, level you up and start again. Without any doubt, it's the first isometric racing game and the first popular game to allow you to create your own tracks. It was even simpler than RDS to create a track. It needed the construction feature too, since the game only came with 3 tracks on the cartridge. Of course once you turned off the power your track was gone. But it didn't matter. Creating your own track in 1983 must have seemed incredible, especially on a machine which sits somewhere between the power of a 1977 VCS and a 1982 C64.



Rick re-used the algorithms he created in Motocross for implementing weight/gravity in RDS and later games.

In England we never bought into the Intellivision. Few wanted to progress from their VCS and those who did wanted a keyboard to program educational stuff (honest). We never saw Motocross in the UK. Shame on Mattel for hiding this from us. You could play this on a cheap 'tv game' controller in 2003, but it was a cheap port onto what is 'NES' hardware. The game was single player, didn't have a shadow and played slow compared to the original and used an awful handset. So not worth it at all.

