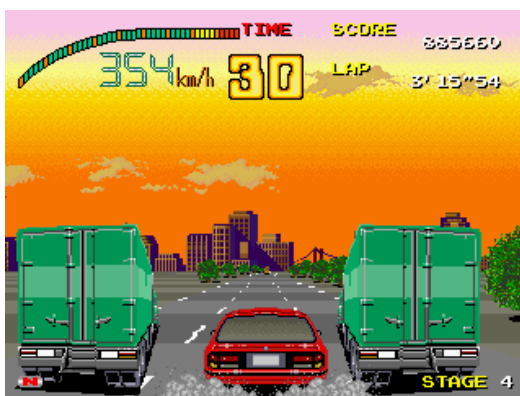




A page dedicated to Taito? Am I having a laugh? Not at all. Taito made all the great Bally Midway games until 1979 when Taito opened their own distribution offices. **Taito were directly competing with Atari since that special year, 1974.** And whilst they haven't had the enormous success of the other Japanese manufacturers, there have been some real gems to look back at. For me Taito will always hold special memories. Not like Sega, granted, but some very special ones, thanks to ChaseHQ. A game which set the UK alight when it came out, I remember friends and myself daring to compare this to OutRun and ask ourselves which is the daddy. Looking back, well we were fools. **Chase HQ** came out in 1988, two full years after OutRun. Maybe that just shows how good OutRun was, or maybe I was a fool after all. You choose. Either way, Chase HQ was great. It was a commercially successful game which means everyone knew it. The game starts with a voiceover from Nancy at headquarters telling you to go nail the bad guy. Chasing a bad guy and ramming him until his damage meter expires within the allotted time is still a commonly deployed game scenario, but ChaseHQ was first. No doubts. Sure it had a follow-up but that was much too late and didn't impress. In fact it was no better than the original. I played a good number of home conversions of this game. None could live up to playing in a dingy, noisy holiday resort arcade.



In the same year as Death Race from Exidy, 1976, Taito had their own 'take' on the game called **Crashing Race**, it appears they had their night driver clone in 1977 (**super highway**) and even had a 1980 Monaco GP clone **Super Speed Race** including the fully enclosed cabinet. In 1984, Taito hinted at originality with '**Buggy Challenge**' an off-road rally type game not to be confused with Buggy Boy.

They released a game for bike fans—**Kickstart:Wheelie King** which took the pole position view. They didn't stop there thankfully and in 1987 full throttle (their Outrun clone) was released. In the UK at least, we were too besotted with Sega's masterpiece and another Taito Gem, Operation Wolf. Oh the money spent trying to get to the end of Operation...Wolf. After they limbered up with Kickstart, Taito went on to do a great first person bike game—check out the motorbike section elsewhere

Let's not forget **Continental Circus—1988.** It used the same hardware as ChaseHQ but Taito managed to implement weather effects and some great sparks and explosions—it really looked the business. Taito even tried providing 3D goggles for this game—view the game through fixed eye pieces each turning the world into a horrible blue/green mess. It really didn't work at all for me. Saying that, it was a good game, it just couldn't match the playability of OutRun. Not at all. In 1992, Taito released **Ground Effects**, an F1 type game. It was a fine Sprite racer, but Sega had them out-done again. Taito continue to this day to provide us fine racing games such as the '**battle Gear**' series (since 1996).

