

Less is More: Retro Bowl Scores Big with Old-School Charm

BY OLIVER SORENSEN

One of the staples of every generation is the ways that they entertain themselves. Everyone knows of classic games like Subway Surfers and Angry Birds, but what about the new games breaking into the scene?

Retro Bowl, an 8-bit styled mobile football game has been around the scene for a couple of years now. Recently, it garnered almost 1,000,000 Apple App Store reviews and the title of #2 sports game. The game, simplistic at first, shows the depth of its features as you dive deeper into the fun. For this review I'll evaluate Retro Bowl based on 4 categories: graphics, gameplay, immersiveness, replay-ability in order to further understand why 53% of the student body plays.

While some may believe that the graphics are sub-par, I believe that they fit the game perfectly, after all the game is called 'Retro' Bowl. The graphics, which appear to be loosely based on Tecmo Bowl (NES), help hide imperfections while giving users the same great old-school vibe. As far as 8-bit graphics go, these are the best I've seen, as even with the incredibly low number of pixels, each team and player are easily distinguishable.

The graphics may look retro; however, Retro Bowl is just as fun and immersive as modern mobile games. Retro Bowl is all about offense. While some users may complain that they want to be able to control their defense, it certainly adds to the dramatic effect and can be crushing when you continuously read the word "TOUCHDOWN" as your defense fails to protect your 31-point lead. The touchscreen controls are perfect allowing for users to pass, juke, and dive to a tee. Games flow quickly, and depending on how you like to play, you can choose between 1-minute, 2-minute, and 3-minute quarters.

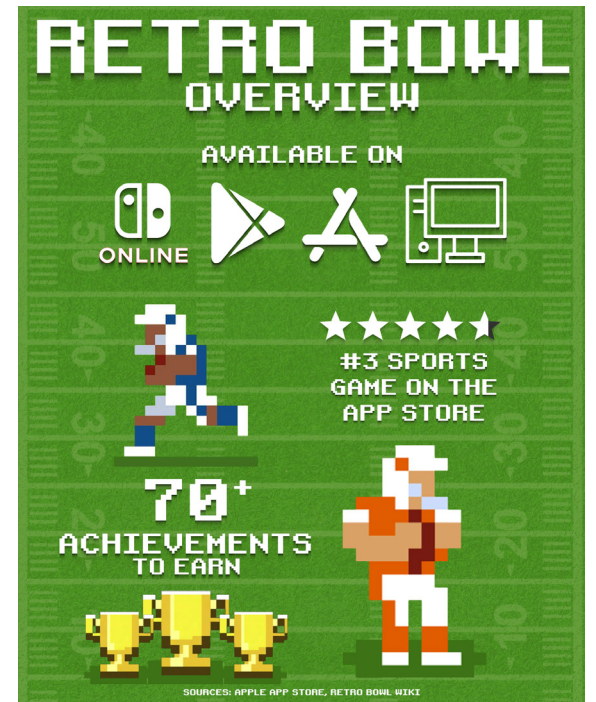
When it comes to immersiveness, this is where Retro Bowl tops other mobile games. Every

season you have the opportunity to draft new players, sign free agents, customize players, and manage upgrades to help your organization succeed. One of my favorite aspects of the game is how well it replicates the job of a football coach, as you must maintain team morale, fan happiness and player plahealth, to make sure your team is still successful. You have the opportunity to sign, cut, and draft players from different positions on both sides of the ball to best suit your needs, along with customizing your players' likeness to imitate professional players or some of your friends. With an in-app purchase of \$.99, the unlimited version of Retro Bowl is a great way to mix up some of the fun, as it gives you the opportunity to customize uniforms, weather, endzones and more.

“If you’re looking for a game that blends old-school charm with addictive, fast paced gameplay, Retro Bowl is worth your time.”

The replay-ability of Retro Bowl is unmatched. Although some may think that it is the same repetitive plays and seasons, but in reality, no two seasons are the same. Thanks to the immense detail put into the game, it is hard to replicate the same play, let alone an entire game or season. To add extra goals and motivations for players to continue to play, New Star Games, the developers of Retro Bowl, added over 70 achievements for players to continue working for even after winning the Retro Bowl. These achievements can be as easy as “Make a Pass” and as difficult as “Win 10 Retro Bowl Titles” and keep the game fresh and exciting.

If you’re looking for a game that blends old-school charm with addictive,



fast paced gameplay, Retro Bowl is worth your time. Check out Retro Bowl on the App Store, Play Store, Nintendo eShop, or on the web and see what makes it a standout among mobile games.

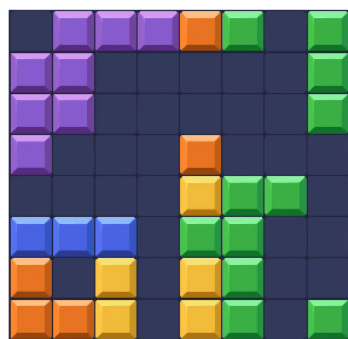


Clearing the Board: Block Blast Takes Over Mount Michael

BY J1 REPORTER RYLAN PEARSON

In previous years, the mobile game hall of fame was headlined by the infamous Brawl Stars, Subway Surfers, Flappy Bird, and countless other classics. Over the past few months, however, a new game has shown up on many students' mobile devices.

Block Blast, a popular mobile puzzle game developed by South Korea's "Hungry Studios" took the world by storm at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, acting as a lifeline during slow study halls. While some may see Block Blast as a brain-dead addiction, many view it as an escape from reality and a healthy way to deal with stress.



Cooper Weakland '26, a self-proclaimed Block Blast megafan, described Block Blast as "The feeling of gambling, but times a bajillion because you can't lose money." Weakland also said that, "playing Block Blast gives me immense joy."

Patrick Barnes, a sophomore with a Block Blast high score of 29,000, described the intense dopamine rush he feels when playing the game. Barnes plays Block Blast for upwards of an hour and a half every day, claiming the game is revolutionary.

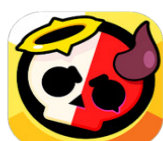
Brandon Nguyen '26 likes how the seemingly simple game "challenges my mind. It makes me feel like I am growing as a person."

When asked about the internet phenomenon of seeing Block Blast when closing one's eyes, Nguyen responded with "I don't know, because I don't like to close my eyes. If my eyes are closed, then I can't play Block Blast."

Whether you personally play Block Blast or not, it's impossible to denounce the impact the game is having not only at Mount Michael, but on the nation as a whole. In a world filled with political, social, and economic divides, Block Blast brings all people together in a way never seen before.



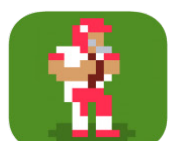
"BRAWL STARS IS MY FAVORITE GAME BECAUSE IT HAS BRIGHT COLORS AND ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY THAT CAPTIVATE ME."



"FARMING SIMULATOR IS MY FAVORITE GAME BECAUSE IT IS VERY RELAXING AND I GET TO DO WHATEVER I WANT ON MY FARM."



"RETRO BOWL IS MY FAVORITE GAME BECAUSE OF HOW MANY DIFFERENT THINGS THERE ARE TO DO AND I LOVE TO DESTROY THE BAD TEAMS."



Timur Guliev: The Mount's Gaming Guru

BY JOHN KELLY

Out of all the students that go to Mount Michael, the most qualified to join a discussion of mobile games is the junior Timur Guliev, known online as TimIsPancake.

Guliev's start as a Clash Royale player was just as sudden and shocking to him as his journey to Mount Michael, as freshmen year he was not planning to go to Mount Michael until he was dropped off the first day. By the time his boarding career started, he needed a fun but quick game to pass the freshmen phone hour every night, which quickly became Clash Royale.

Almost instantly he understood the ins and outs of the game and its complicated community, which pushed him to start streaming on occasion to show off his skills. Guliev climbed the ranks to become one of the top twenty in the United States in less than two months. He even started making some money from his success. "Yeah, sometimes I'd join a tournament, talk big game, and win the whole pot all during phone hour," he said.

Guliev was very known in the freshmen dorms to always 'Indiana-Jones' it, meaning every night he would sprint to the phone box, so he did not miss announcements, frequently saying things like, "No! I only had one game left!" and "Please Mr. Struckman just let me finish this game!" Surprisingly, his line of

reasoning never won over the dean.

Guliev's rampant success was not slowing down either, as when the summer after freshmen year hit, he "finally had time to play the game more than one hour a day, which let me obliterate the tournaments." Guliev made over five hundred dollars that summer alone. This rivals the pay of some part-time jobs, leading many to question the stigma around doing e-sports. Often he would even be played by individuals who wanted to get advice from him and to stream with him, by either paying him or just buying him in game items. "It was nice side money; it kept building up too because I'd get a sponsor that would buy me stuff in game, and when I won, they'd pay me more."

Guliev even had a short-lived e-sports experience at The Mount, playing for Mr. Dave Cormier's e-sports team. Guliev beat every team he faced and gained a reputation at Mount Michael as the "Clash Royale Guy" because by then he was among the ten best players in the nation.

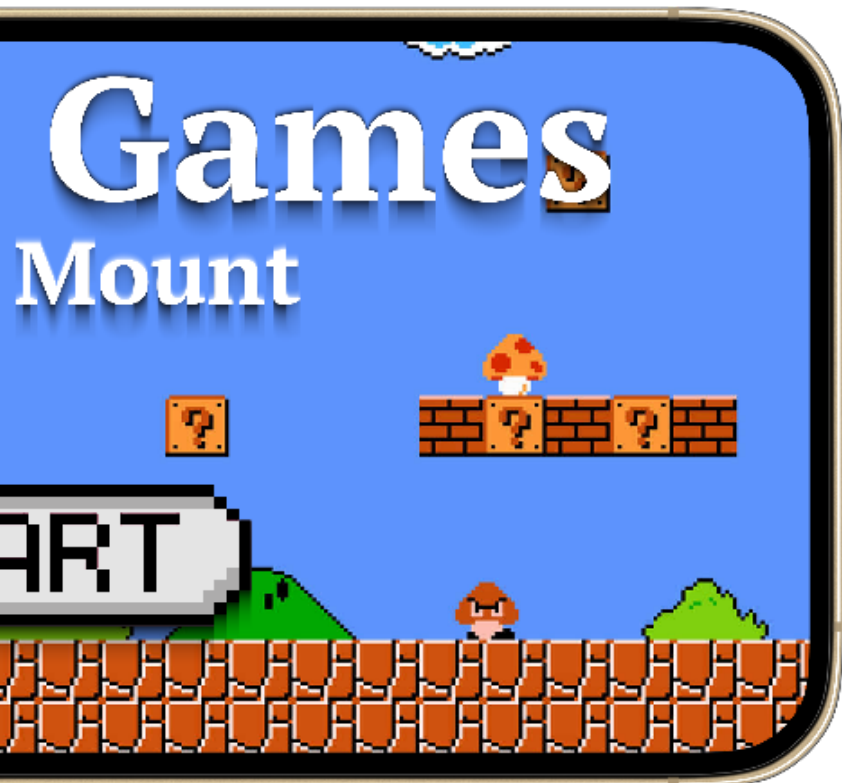
Although sometimes the staff were not fans of his apparent disinterest in school, he did not struggle to balance this impressive performance with his school life, even attending challenging courses like Academic Decathlon and earning medals at state. "It was kind of really funny, they called my name for a medal, and I had to stop playing a game of Clash. I got two golds and a silver, and I still won that game."



Guliev got into discussions online about the game where popular influencers challenged him to a game, which he rarely lost. "One time I was sitting in my dorm room and this YouTuber trash-talked me and we played against each other, and he raged out on his stream when I beat him."

But when the second semester of sophomore year came around, Guliev pivoted to Chess.com and World of Tanks where he also had staggering success, being a competitive chess player, and one of the top fifty best World of Tanks players in the world. As Timur's roommate John Chen said, "He was always playing Clash or some other game; he is so good at them." Even a year later, Guliev is still ranked as one of the best Clash Royale players in the world, one of the top chess players in the state, and a nationally ranked World of Tanks gamer.

Clash Royale, one of the most popular mobile games in the United States, is another victim of Guliev's mobile game rampage. His mastery of "terrible games" knows no bounds, and it's only a matter of time before he conquers your favorite game.



40%
of students play
Clash Royale



Mounting Up Screen Time: Gaming Hits High Scores

BY OLIVER SORENSEN

During study halls, and nearly every waking hour of the day, The Mount is gaming. In fact, if you were to tally up the total time that students play games in a week it would total over 750 hours.

Among the student body's top games are Brawl Stars, Retro Bowl, Retro Bowl College, Clash Royale and Baseball 9. Brawl Stars lead the charge with 59% of the student body reported playing, Retro Bowl with 53%, Retro Bowl College with 43%, plus Clash Royale and Baseball 9 round out the top 5 with 40% respectively.

While statista.com reports the average daily time spent by users worldwide on mobile gaming apps as 20.17 minutes per day, The Mount is far above with an average of 51.38, but it isn't without good cause. "I enjoy playing games during study halls, after lunch, and at night with my friends because the school day can be stressful, and it gives me a short break where

I socialize and have a good time with my friends," Jackson Teetor '25 said.

Mobile Gaming at The Mount isn't just about killing time; it's a way for students to hang with friends and take a break from school stress. Sure, they're gaming way more than the global average of 20 minutes a day, but as Teetor said, it's a fun way to relax

and socialize.

What sets mobile gaming at the Mount apart is the way it seamlessly integrates into daily life. Study halls are filled with quiet excitement after completing school work as students huddle over their screens, collaborating and celebrating victories.

Even after school hours, gaming spills over into residential life, with students gathering in dorms, or The Armory to play together. These moments create a unique balance between competition and camaraderie. It's not uncommon to hear bursts of laughter or spirited debates over the best tactics, turning gaming into a shared language among the student body.

Whether it's battling in Brawl Stars or kicking off in Retro Bowl, gaming has become a big part of life at The Mount, bringing students together for some collaborative fun.



"WSOP IS MY FAVORITE BECAUSE I ENJOY WORKING ON MY POKER SKILLS SO THAT WHEN I PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS I HAVE THE UPPER HAND"



"RETRO BOWL IS MY FAVORITE GAME BECAUSE IM A BIG FOOTBALL FAN AND I ENJOY WINNING RETRO BOWL CHAMPIONSHIPS."



"BRAWL STARS IS MY FAVORITE GAME BECAUSE I ENJOY THE FAST PACED GAMEPLAY AND BECAUSE IM CRAZY AT IT."



