



Fourth Edition--Tech Notes

In the beginning there was Laser Tag, but it was nothing like it is today. At one time Laser Storm Pittsburgh and almost every other arena in the country operated on the version of software we refer to as "3.1". Some of the earlier arenas didn't even have computer systems. Those arenas unfortunately couldn't incorporate Base Targets, Scorecards, or any means of tracking your game statistics. At the time no one seemed to notice because Laser Storm itself was still rather new and high-tech. There was nothing better that what we had, so there were no complaints.

The 3.1 system and software, while using a computer, was able to make use of a simple scoreboard that displayed the game score, and also print scorecards after each game. In order to adjust the game time, one had to manually change the settings before every game. The rate of fire was kind of slow, permitting only 1 shot every second.

When the time was right for an upgrade, StormTrak 5.1 was released. This required a different chip inside the pack itself, and made use of a number of new features. The advanced scoreboard was installed, so you could see the game time remaining as well as the team score. Scorecards were still distributed, but the layout changed completely, and the printers were upgraded from dot matrix to ink jet. Also, rapid fire became part of the game, rather than the slow 1 shot per second.

The ability to keep track of game statistics over a long period of time became available with the addition of membership software. Smartcard reading devices were installed and memberships started to sell like crazy, because everyone wanted to get to skill level 50 first. The prize was 50 free games of Laser Storm! Now everyone could see how many shots they fired, how many hits given/taken, base hits given/taken, accuracy percentage, and how many points they need to get to the next skill level. This is all accomplished through use of the database, which gets printed weekly here at Laser Storm and posted on our member's wall and is also available on the web site.

"Programmable game scenarios" was another addition to the new software. Now you could choose from a list of pre-made laser tag scenarios that varied in length, shield level, base point value, and player hit value. For example, regular games are run on the scenario "12 min. 2sh, G=off" which means 12 minutes, 2 shields, with no guardians or sentries. Regional tournaments, however, are run with 1 shield in only 10 minutes with no guardians. This is all easily changed with a click of the mouse.

The Omni-Port also replaced our standard energizers. Instead of having to walk all the way up to the energizer, the Omni allows you to energize up to 15 feet away if done right. Omni-Ports also serve as the primary infrared emitters in the sentries and in the bases, so that you can be hit by the arena instead of just other players. Also, some new sound effects in the headsets were added to change the feel of the game a bit, and you have the Laser Storm that you know and love today. The capability of the 5.3 software will permit Laser Storm to provide the players with a high level of laser tag well into the future.

Regional Tournaments

Regional Tournaments are heating up like never before at Laser Storm! So far Pittsburgh has won 1st and 2nd in the last 3 Regional Tournaments. Just recently, during the second regional at Jester's Court in Warren, Ohio, team "Undisputed" took 1st and "Legacy" took 2nd. This is the first time Pittsburgh ever been able to win both titles in Ohio. Congratulations to those players! Way to keep the 'Burgh at #1!

Unfortunately, Pittsburgh was unable to attend the third Regional Tournament in Holland, Michigan. Due to a number of circumstances, neither "Undisputed" or "Legacy" made it out to compete in one of the largest arenas in the country. While they operate on the 3.1 system, we use the newest 5.3 version. Refer to the Tech Notes Sections for a description of the differences between 3.1 and 5.3 systems. So Michigan and the newcomers from Florida (who also have 3.1) dominated the entire tournament and took 1st & 2nd place.

The fourth Regional Tournament of the year has brought everyone back to Pittsburgh to compete in our new arena. Michigan now has a 5.3 arena to practice on, so they were a little tougher than last time. Colorado, boasting one of the greatest win/loss records and some of the greatest players in the nation, showed their face on the East coast for the first time since last year. However, they proved to be no match for any of the home teams. "Undisputed" and "Legacy" still have 1st and 2nd. In 3rd place is "Disposable Heroes" and in 4th is "Rage". In a close tie for 5th is the new Pittsburgh team "On Top", and Ohio's "Oblivion". Unexpectedly, Michigan and Colorado both went home after 2 losses. Pittsburgh players are proving themselves to be some of the best players in the nation.

The next Regional Tournament is scheduled for January 18th, and will be held at Skate Zone in Austintown, Ohio. It's been a few years since Austintown has had a tournament, so all the teams are completely unfamiliar with their arena. This should be a great tournament! With so many great teams how could it not be?

3 on 3 Tournaments

Our 3 on 3 tournaments have been the most popular out of any of the high-level competitions. The November 3 on 3 was won by team "Stacked". The name gives it all away, this was a hard team to beat! The individual competition was won, once again, by Chris "X-Caliber" Warman. He had a rough game against Matt "Red Dog" Mator, only to pull away with a victory. In the end, everyone was satisfied with another awesome tournament. The skill level cap was then lowered to 150!

The next PDS 3 on 3 Shoot-Out in December was once again, a huge success! Although there was a minor problem of rescheduling the tournament due to the arena design needing updated, we had more teams than ever. For the third time, Chris "X-Caliber" Warman has won the Top Gun. Good job Chris. Even though Justin had the lead in the beginning of the game, Justin "Phoenix" Ragghianti was unable to defeat Chris in the final 1 on 1 match. The actual tournament itself went rather well, with a few unexpected upsets, and a few surprise wins. In the final few games, the "Spoilers" beat "Captain Morgan Crew", only to lose to them again, and then win against them for the final victory! What a chain of events!

January's 3 on 3 finished up at approximately 4:30 a.m. on Sunday the 5th. This tournament was very fun and challenging, with a skill level cap of 145. Also for the first time, the 3rd place team was awarded medals as well as 2nd. Our new Top Gun champion is, for the second time, Matt "Nut" Stroud. There seems to be a repeating pattern with those who win the Top Gun. Only 4 other players have made it to the final round, not including Chris and Matt. Red Dog has been in the finals twice along with Zalgax and Cassanova once each. These guys must be doing something that the rest of you aren't!

The 3 on 3 tournament itself had 7 teams again, all with very close games against each other. The teams were all so evenly matched this could have been anyone's tournament. It was another one of those situations where the final 2 teams had to play each other 3 times to decide who wins. Both teams were undefeated until they met each other in game 9, only to rematch on different sides of the arena in game 12, where "Better of the Two" lost to "Spinach Burrito" for their first and only loss of the entire tournament. January's PDS 3 on 3 winners are the members of the team "Better of the Two", with "Spinach Burrito" in at a close 2nd and "Gratuity's Included" with 3rd place. The next 3 on 3's level cap will be 150, so start forming your teams now! The date of the tournament is set for February 1st.

TOP GUN CHAMPION



November
Chris "X-Caliber" Warman



December
Matt "Nut" Stroud

3 ON 3 SHOOT OUT CHAMPIONS



November
Chris "X-Caliber"
Nate "Sphinx"
Cha-Che "Ice"



December
Ryan "Armageddon"
Ricky "Centipede"
Cha-Che "Ice"

Summer League Season

2002

The summer league season has come to an end. All the teams who competed in this downsized version of our regular leagues were relatively even in skill. This season proceeded had 5 teams with 4 players per team. It sure was different than what we're used to. With 5 players on your team, it's easy to devise another strategy in the event one of your players is unable to make it. With only 4 however, it led to an extreme disadvantage for that team. Since day 1, everyone was absolutely certain that "I Seen That" was going to win. Although "Metal Militia" was able to beat them several times throughout the regular season, "I Seen That" achieved victory at the end of the playoffs.

Sign up NOW for next season! The faster we get names on the list, the faster the games can begin! This time we will be aiming for 5 player teams. We will also be using the Regional (National) rules.



