

CRAWLERS

The 8 players Snake game for MSX



Pixel Phenix © 2023

MSX RAM 16KB **ROM** 48KB  x2

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GAME

It is well known that crawlers are braggarts. In the garden, they are always competing to see **who is the best!**

In the game Crawlers, you play as one of these **creepy crawlies** in search of glory. Through **5 game modes** you will be able to show the others (players or AI) who is the boss of the garden!

This game claims to be the **first MSX game** to allow **8 players** to compete at the same time on the **same machine!**

 *Disclaimer: No crawlers have been hurt during the game development. Do not try to reproduce these battles at home.*


Ninja Tap

Crawlers is compatible with a special device called **Ninja Tap**, which allows to overcome the 2 joysticks per MSX limit. The device connects to a MSX's joystick port (a.k.a. General Purpose port) and allows **connecting 4 joysticks** on it.

Thus, the maximum number of human players depends on how many Ninja Tap you own:

	MSX alone	MSX + 1 Ninja Tap	MSX + 2 Ninja Tap
Joysticks	2  	5     	8        
Keyboard	2  	2  	2  
Maximum	4 players	7 players	8 players

The Ninja Tap device is emulated by openMSX.

 *Did you know it?: The Ninja Tap is a device originally released by Japanese group PCCM. Nowadays, you can find them second-hand or get a new one from user Bastion Rebel at MSX.org or MSXVillage.fr.*

GAME MODES

Battle modes feature up to 8 crawlers competing under different rules, while single-player mode is a succession of levels, each with its own challenge.

BATTLE MODE - GREEDIEST

Each time you eat a bonus, you earn a point. The first to reach the chosen number of points (COUNT) wins the battle.

BATTLE MODE - DEATHMATCH

Each time you eliminate an opponent (i.e., they crash into you), you earn a point. Each time you crash into an obstacle (walls), you lose a point. The first to reach the chosen number of points (COUNT) wins the battle.

BATTLE MODE - SIZE MATTERS

Each time you grow by eating a bonus, if your length is greater than your score, it becomes your new score. When others eat a bonus, you lose a point. At the end of the chosen number of minutes (COUNT), the player with the most points wins the battle.

BATTLE MODE - BATTLE ROYAL

The last survivor of a round wins 1 point. After one minute, if the round is not over, the field begins to collapse. The first to reach the chosen number of points (COUNT) wins the battle.





TRAINING MODE

In this mode, you have to succeed in increasingly difficult challenges. The principle is always the same: you must collect all the hearts in the level as quickly as possible. Points are determined by the number of moves you made from the starting point to the last heart you got.

MENU


The main menu lets you configure the game or launch a game in one of the game modes.

Menu controls using keyboard:

-  : Move cursor.
-  : Switch values.
- **SPACE**: Select option.

The menu can also be controlled by any connected joystick. In this case, the joystick directions replace the arrow keys and the trigger button replaces the space bar.



 *Disclaimer: Don't start fighting over who controls the menus. Instead, settle your differences in a battle!*

BATTLE MODE

This is the mode that allows up to 8 players to compete against each other according to a variety of challenging rules.

BATTLE CONFIGURATION

In this menu, you can choose between the 4 battle mode rules, configure their duration and the number of obstacles.

Options:

- **START**: Go to the character selection menu to start a new battle!
- **MODE**: Select the battle rules.
- **COUNT**: Select the battle duration (depends on chosen mode).
- **WALLS**: Select the number of obstacles in the arena (from 0 to 100).



BATTLE SELECTION

This is where you can choose how many characters take part in the battle and who controls them (players with joysticks or keyboards, or stronger or weaker AIs).

Options:

- **START**: Start a new battle!
- **EXIT**: Return to menu.

When editing a character:

- **◀▶**: Change character controller.
- **▲▼**: Change turn mode (ABSOLUTE or RELATIVE). Only available when the Turn option in the Control menu is set to CUSTOM.




Several shortcuts let you change character selection more quickly.

On selected item:

- **F1 ~ F3**: Select AI level 1 to 3.
- **F4 ~ F5**: Select player with keyboard configuration 1 or 2.
- **1 ~ 8**: Select player with the given joystick number.
- **DEL**: Remove.

Global:

- **Ctrl + F1 ~ F3**: Set all AIs to level 1 to 3.
- **Ctrl + DEL**: Remove all.
- **RET**: Start the battle!
- **ESC**: Return to previous menu.

 *Hint: You can use the Test screen in Control option to easily figure out what player is connected to what device (joystick or keyboard).*

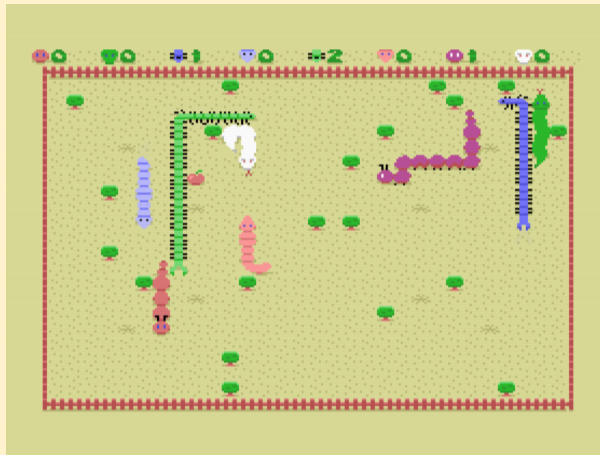
BATTLE GAMEPLAY

During a battle, the rules of the game depend on your choice, but the controls remain the same.

As in the Snake games, your character moves forward on his own, and you have to steer him by changing his direction to avoid obstacles and grab bonuses.

Keyboard shortcuts:

- **ESC**: Return to selection menu.
- **P**: Pause / unpause the game.



TRAINING MODE

In this mode, you have to succeed in increasingly difficult challenges. The principle is always the same: you must collect all the hearts in the level as quickly as possible.

TRAINING CONFIGURATION

In this menu, you can create a game or continue one from any level you have already unlocked.

Options:

- **NEW GAME:** Start a new game from the beginning.
- **CONTINUE:** Continue an existing game from the above mentioned level.
- **LEVEL:** The level from which to continue your game.
- **SPEED:** Speed of your character.

When finishing a level, your score is determined by the number of moves you made from the starting point to the last heart you got. Bonuses are added according to the chosen movement speed.

Speed	Description	Score bonus
SNAIL	Half the NORMAL speed	+0 point
CHILL	2/3 slower than NORMAL	+100 points
NORMAL	Default speed	+300 points
TURBO	Double NORMAL speed	+350 points



TRAINING SELECTION

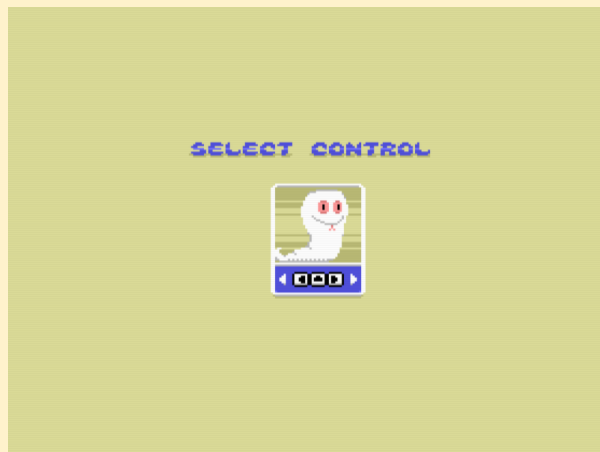
This is where you choose which crawlers you'd like to play in Training mode. This choice has no impact other than having a lot of swag.

You then choose which control device you want to use.

You can change controllers by quitting your current game and selecting CONTINUE option in the Training mode configuration menu.

Menu controls using keyboard:

- **◀ ▶**: Select a character or a controller.
- **SPACE**: Validate your choice.



TRAINING GAMEPLAY

Your mission is simple: collect all the hearts in the shortest possible time!


When you finish a level, you're awarded a certain number of points which depend solely on the speed level you've chosen in the configuration menu and the number of moves you've made between the starting point and the last heart you caught.

You've got 40 levels to show off your gameplay skills, but also your self-control, as the levels get progressively more difficult.

Keyboard shortcuts:

- **SPACE**: Activate the Turbo mode to accelerate (this doesn't give you more points at the end of the level).
- **ESC**: Return to selection menu.
- **P**: Pause / unpause the game.
- **R**: Only on the Score screen. Restarts the last level played.



 *Hint: Don't be ashamed to slow down if a level becomes too difficult for you. What do you risk but a few mocking laughs from crawlers?*

OPTIONS

The options menu allows you to modify various configurations and obtain information about the system.

GRAPHICS OPTIONS

This menu is for configuring the graphics settings and getting some information about the system.

Options:

- **SYSTEM:** Information about your MSX generation (from BIOS).
- **VIDEO:** Information about your (detected) video processor.
- **FREQ:** Gameplay frequency. Should be the same as your video processor. If not, you can adjust the game speed here.
- **PALETTE:** Only for MSX2 or above. You can change the game color palette.
- **BONUS:** Battle mode only. Select the visual of the bonus. Choose RANDOM change the visual of the bonus each time it spawns.
- **WALL:** Battle mode only. Select the visual of the obstacles. Choose RANDOM select randomly each obstacle visual in the arena.



CONTROL OPTIONS

This menu is for configuring the control settings and getting some information about connected devices.

Options:

- **PORT1**: Information about the detected device in port 1.
- **PORT2**: Information about the detected device in port 2.
- **MAX JOY**: Information about the maximum number of pluggable joysticks (depends on the number of Ninja Tap connected to the system).
- **MAX PLY**: Information about the maximum of human players (including joysticks and keyboard).
- **TEST**: Move to the controllers test screen.
- **TURN**: Turn control mode. Can be:
 - **RELATIVE**: Use ◀▶ to turn according to current head direction.
 - **ABSOLUTE**: Use ◀▶▶▶ to chose the next direction. You can only make 90° rotation.
 - **CUSTOM**: For Battle mode only. Allow each player to chose its own turn control.



AUDIO OPTIONS

This menu is for configuring the audio settings.

Options:

- **MUSIC:** Activate / deactivate music playback.
- **TEST:** Play any of the game music.
- **SFX:** Activate / deactivate sound effects playback.



CREDITS



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CODE

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Arkos Tracker II replayer by Julien Névo

THANKS

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