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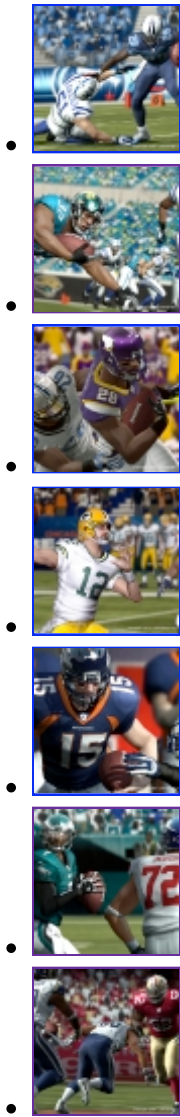
Madden NFL 12 Poised for Unprecedented Realism

By [Kyle Stack](#)  April 28, 2011 | 3:45 pm | Categories: [Gaming](#)

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NEW YORK — With more than 90 million copies sold to date, EA Sports' *Madden NFL* series has garnered a legion of loyal gamers around the world since its 1989 debut. Always looking for authentic gameplay and attention to detail, these fans will get to experience an added dose of reality when *Madden NFL 12* hits store shelves on August 30.

The latest *Madden NFL* iteration features a smorgasbord of additions that make the game truer than ever to the real thing, including [players suffering on-field concussions](#).

Helmet-to-helmet hits have been removed from [Madden NFL 12](#), but concussions are fair game. *Madden NFL* executive producer Phil Frazier told Wired.com the rate at which a virtual player sustains a concussion will mimic its likelihood in real life. To that end, EA Sports researched that each play during the 2010 NFL season contained approximately a 0.59 percent chance of a player getting

concussed.

In the game, a virtual trainer will run out to help the concussed player walk off the field. As in the real world, the player won't be permitted to return to action. A report several plays later will detail the injury, and in-game commentators Gus Johnson and Cris Collinsworth will review its impact. "We're not trying to teach about concussions and what they are and how to avoid them," Frazier said. "What we are teaching is that they're serious."

The sensitivity to concussions is joined with an all-new collision system in which player-to-player contact produces hits more reflective of the ones leveled on Sunday afternoons. It's only fitting that bruising Cleveland Browns running back Peyton Hillis (seen above at today's photo shoot) became the cover boy through [fan-voting process](#) in which Hillis soundly defeated Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Michael Vick, 66 to 34 percent, to grace the *Madden NFL 12* cover. In the game, virtual Peyton Hillis can break any of the 100 new tackle animations, including 40 types of gang tackles.

Frazier said that in past versions, he and the dev team would pick collision animations by waiting for players to get within two or three feet of each other before they made contact. They would choose an animation based on the pursuit angles, speed, weight and other factors of each player. Yet a magnetic-like effect would bring them together once they were in that two-to-three-foot zone from each other.

"It didn't look real," Frazier said.

For *Madden NFL 12*, collision animations were chosen only once the players made initial contact, for tackles, blocking and even catching. The result is more realistic collisions in which offensive players can break tackles and defenders can hold on until a teammate cleans up the hit.

In past versions, "there were times you felt the play was over," said *Madden NFL* art director Mike Young. "I've been surprised that, all of a sudden, I'm free and I bounced off a guy because we have this extended period of time where we can figure out the right thing to do."

The realism of each tackle — nearly every player movement, for that matter — will be delivered in part by EA Sports' customized camera technology called DCAM: a wireless, handheld camera system modeled after the [technology used by director James Cameron](#) in *Avatar*.

Two cinematographers from NFL Films worked on a 50-yard makeshift football field in EA's studios to capture the camera angles found in television broadcasts. New player introductions, authentic team run-outs onto the field and mascot and cheerleader celebrations were shot with a cinematographer moving around the studio field as if it were the real thing, thanks to [mo-cap sensors](#) on the cameras.

"Instead of recording a player's movement, we're recording a camera's movement," Frazier said.

The in-game cameras follow players through pre-game introductory lines, from the sideline to the huddle after a timeout or change of possession and even post-game as the coaches run toward midfield to shake hands.

DCAM has been a technological feat three years in the making, according to Young, who recalled one

scene where an NFL Films cinematographer moved on the faux field. Low-res versions of the game were being transferred onto the DCAM's monitor so that cameramen knew where to move and who to film, and this one followed a coach toward midfield before losing him in the crowd of players. So, naturally, he ran to catch up to the virtual coach to ensure he filmed his embrace with the opposing coach, just like on Sundays.

"It was those moments," Young said, "where everyone in the studio was like, 'Oh my God, that's awesome.'"

On-field authenticity, such as uniform and field degradation from weather and improved defensive AI in which defenders communicate with each other, represent the bulk of the other new features in the game.

Frazier said *Madden NFL*'s fan base expect the game to serve as a realistic complement to the actual NFL. And given the [uncertainty of the NFL's labor situation](#), gamers may actually be able to use *Madden NFL 12* as a substitute for the real thing this fall.

Images: Kyle Stack (Hillis), EA Sports

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