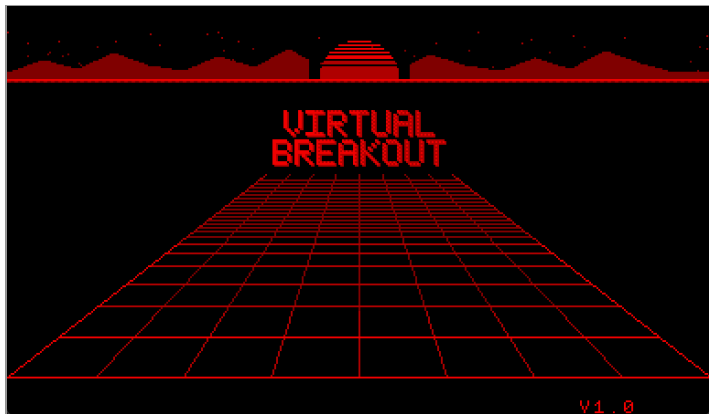


VIRTUAL BREAKOUT

Player's manual

A stereoscopic brick-breaker for the Nintendo Virtual Boy.



The title screen

This is the screen that greets you: the sun on the horizon, the grid racing away into the distance, and the title suspended between them. The whole game is already there -- a world with depth, and you in front of it.

1. The world

Something has woken up inside the network.

It does not destroy: it **absorbs**. Every sector it reaches stops answering, then stops existing. What it leaves behind is not a ruin -- it is silence.

You fly the last ship able to enter those sectors and come back out. Your weapon is not a cannon. It is a **breaker sphere**: thrown against the structures of the network, it takes them apart one at a time.

Four guardians are waiting, one per sector. None of them is a creature. They are **functions** -- things the network built to defend itself, which ended up having a character.

"ITS COLOSSUS HOLDS THE GATE."

2. Controls

WHAT YOU DO

CONTROLLER

Move the ship

Left D-pad, left and right

Launch the sphere

A

Fire (when armed)

A

Change depth plane

L and **R** (the shoulder triggers)

Pause

START

Technical diagnostics

SELECT

The triggers are the most important control in the game.

Everything else is a brick-breaker; they are what the Virtual Boy can do and no other console of its time could.

3. The two planes

The screen is not a surface. It is a **volume**, and it has two levels of depth.

	HOW TO RECOGNISE IT	WHERE IT IS
FAR plane	higher on screen, structures look smaller	at the back
NEAR plane	lower on screen, structures look wider , with a bright highlight	in front

You move between them with **L** and **R**. **The sphere takes your plane every time it touches you** -- returning it is how you decide where it will strike.

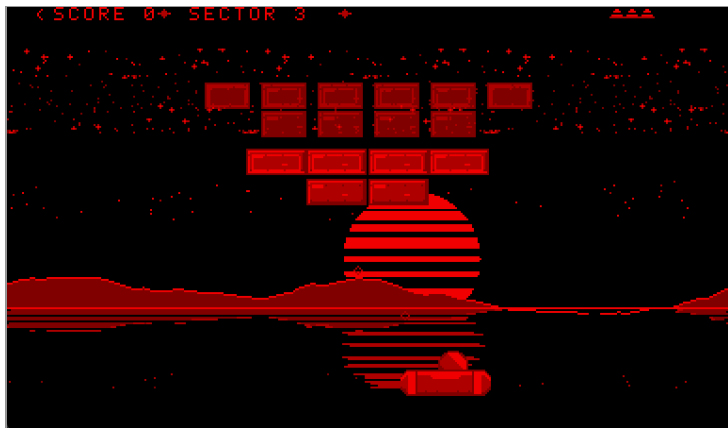
Two consequences, and they are the whole game:

1. **A brick on the far plane can only be broken by a sphere on the far plane.** Aiming,

here, is not only aiming left or right.

1. **Every guardian has a guard, and every guard is undone by the opposite plane.** A

player who never switches planes will lose, however good their hands are.



The two planes in play: the upper group is far, the lower one is near

One reading rule that will serve you everywhere: what is **small and high** is far, what is **wide and low** is near. The game never lies to you about this.

At the bottom of the screen, the game tells you where you are. SHIP announces your ship's plane, BALL the sphere's, and BOSS the guardian's when there is one. When the first two disagree, the next

return will **move the sphere to the other plane**: you see the consequence before you live it.

4. The structures

The network builds with four materials. You will recognise them by their face, never by a label -- the plates below are magnified, because a brick is thirty-two pixels wide.

The plain structure



Plain structure

One impact and it gives. This is the brick the first sectors are made of, and the one you will meet most often.

The double hull -- *it shows you its wound*



Double hull, intact



Double hull, cracked

Two impacts, **and it changes face between them**: intact, then cracked. You never have to count your hits -- the structure tells you itself what it has left.

It is the only piece in the game that narrates its own state. Look at it before you aim somewhere else.

The unbreakable block



Unbreakable block

It **never** gives. Its solid face and hard frame say so at a glance: there is no point insisting, you have to play around it. A sector carrying these is not longer, it is **narrower**.

The explosive charge

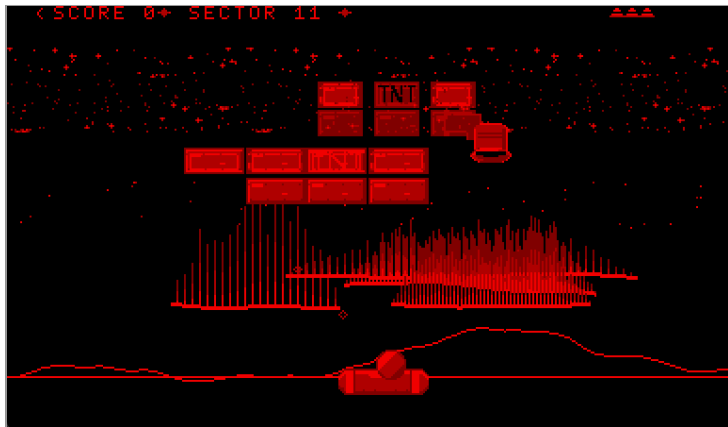


Explosive charge

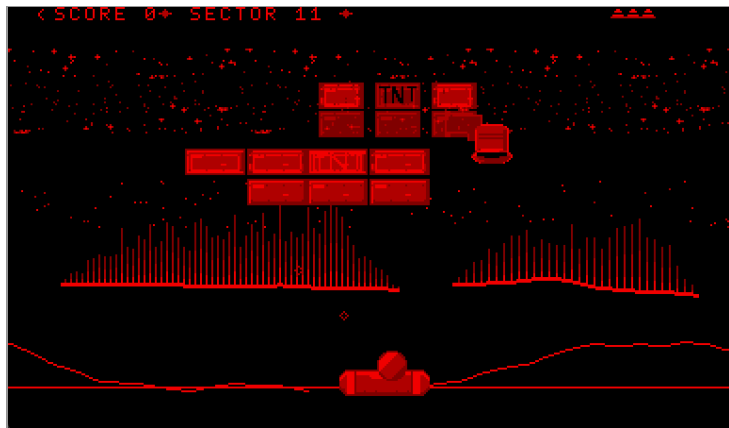
Hit it and **it takes its neighbours with it**. A sector that lines several of them up comes apart in a cascade -- it is the only place in the game where one well-placed shot is worth six.

4b. Every run draws its own sky

The backdrop of each world is not fixed: on every new run the game **draws a sky** from sixteen variants of that world's theme -- the sun for ALPHA, the ridges for BETA, the lake for GAMMA, **the aurora for OMEGA**. No two runs ever look quite the same, and that is deliberate.



The same sector 11, two runs, two auroras



The next draw

5. ALPHA SECTOR -- sectors 1 to 3

The network does not know you yet.

Three sectors to learn what the game asks of you: that the sphere changes planes, and that you decide which one. Nothing here is trying to trap you -- structures give in one impact, charges are visible, and the guardian at the end only strikes where you were.

If you remember one thing from this world: the triggers are not there to dodge, they are there to aim.

Sector 1 -- FIRST CONTACT

Twelve structures, one impact each.

Six structures in front, six at the back. Nothing else: no explosive, no block, no double hull. The sector that teaches you the screen has two planes.



Sector 1, FIRST CONTACT

Sector 2 -- THE BRIDGE

Six structures in front, five at the back -- and the floor opens for the first time.

Here is the well, one on each side. A sphere that enters it comes out on the other plane, without passing through you. It is the only new word in this sector, and it is not trying to punish you: the deck is deliberately sparse so that you can watch the switch happen.

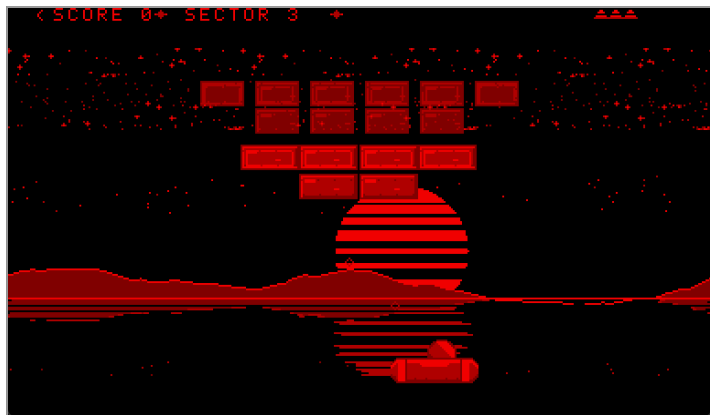


Sector 2, THE BRIDGE

Sector 3 -- SENTINEL

Two unbreakable blocks frame the deck.

At both ends of the far plane, two blocks that never give. After "some resist", here is "some refuse" -- and they do not count: the sector ends without them. At the end of the corridor, something is waiting for you.



Sector 3, SENTINEL

THE HUNTER -- at the end of sector 3

What it is: a hunter. A single eye in a pierced helmet. It does not charge, it does not rage -- it watches. It is the only guardian that makes you feel **observed**.



THE HUNTER

Its only animation: the pupil. It follows you, and nothing else on it moves.

What it does: it fires where you **will be**. Its projectile leaves toward your position at the moment of the flash.

How to undo it: *it aims at the plane you are on*. Its shot is born on one plane and stays there. **Switch planes after the flash and it passes in front of you, or behind.**

■ *"It had me in its sights. I stepped behind."*

6. BETA SECTOR -- sectors 4 to 6

It has understood that it is under attack, and it closes.

The first unbreakable blocks appear. They never break -- and that is exactly what makes them useful: a wall that does not give is a wall you can bounce off.

This world teaches you that **trajectory beats force**, and its guardian holds a gate rather than chasing you.

Sector 4 -- IRON WALL

One charge, in the middle of its targets.

Your first charge, set at the centre of a full deck. Hit it and you will see five neighbours go at once. Nothing forces you to start with it: this sector shows, it does not punish.



Sector 4, IRON WALL

Sector 5 -- CROSSROADS

Nine per plane: six soft, two double hulls, one charge.

The first **symmetrical** sector: each plane carries the same arsenal -- six soft, two double hulls, one charge. Two twin fields, two gestures: in front you **wear down**, at the back you **detonate**.



Sector 5, CROSSROADS

Sector 6 -- WARDEN

6 in front including 1 charge, 12 at the back including 1 charge -- 2 blocks on each plane.

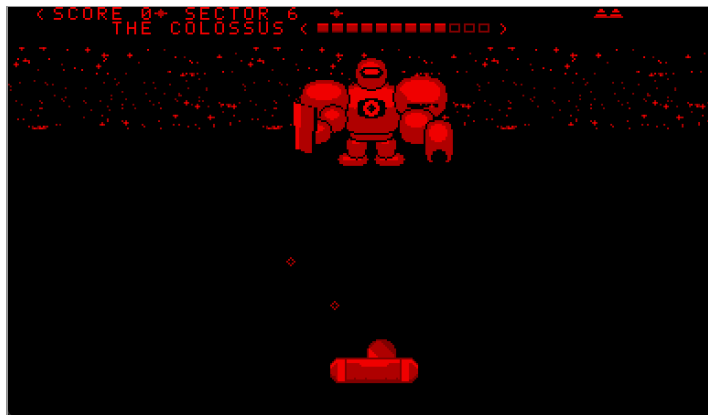
Two unbreakable blocks **on each plane** frame the path, and a charge waits on either side. The gate is guarded, literally -- and the guardian of world 2 is waiting behind it.



Sector 6, WARDEN

THE COLOSSUS -- at the end of sector 6

What it is: a gatekeeper. A planted mass with a shield on its arm. It does not chase you: it **holds the passage**. It is the largest silhouette in the game.



THE COLOSSUS

Its only animation: the shield, at three heights. Low, mid, high. It has nothing else, and that is deliberate: everything it does is readable in

that single gesture.

What it does: shield high, your sphere **bounces off without wounding it**. And its claw sweeps a vertical column.

How to undo it: *its shield only covers one plane at a time*. Striking it while it guards is not forbidden -- it is forbidden **head-on**. Move to the other plane and you hit it despite its guard. **But beware:** sheltering from the guard means stepping into the line of its beam.

"While it raises the shield, I go behind."

7. GAMMA SECTOR -- sectors 7 to 9

Here, nothing is open by default any more.

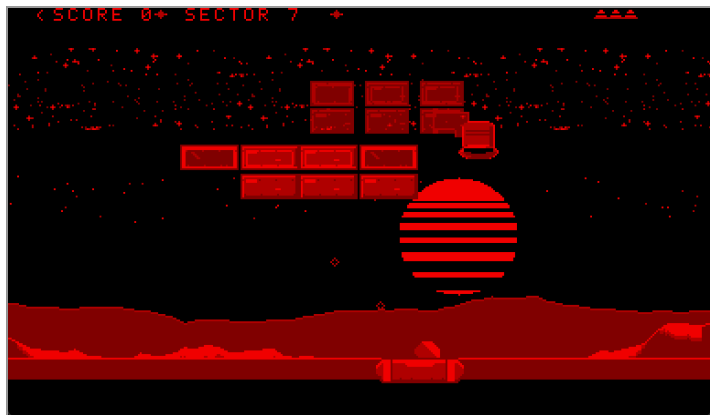
The corridors close. Where BETA laid down obstacles, this world composes shapes: a chest that has to be opened by the one available angle, a maze whose exits can be counted.

The rhythm changes: you stop returning fast and start placing. And at the end, a mother who is not trying to kill you -- only to overwhelm you.

Sector 7 -- LABYRINTH

Eleven structures, three blocks, two wells.

Blocks close the passages and leave one corridor: here depth stops being a setting and becomes an itinerary. One well per plane, each facing an open cell -- the sphere tips through and comes out where the wall would not let it in.



Sector 7, LABYRINTH

Sector 8 -- FORTRESS

A fort: eight double hulls, two blocks, two wells.

The only sector built like a stronghold. The two central columns are double hulls -- two impacts each -- and an unbreakable block holds each upper corner. The well is your service entrance: it drops you on the other plane, where the wall protects nothing any more.



Sector 8, FORTRESS

Sector 9 -- SYSTEM CORE

Two hulls in front, one charge walled in behind two blocks.

The charge at the back is guarded: two unbreakable blocks flank it, and it has to be reached at an angle rather than head-on. In front, two double hulls keep you busy while you look for the line. Something is waiting at the end of this sector.



Sector 9, SYSTEM CORE

THE QUEEN -- at the end of sector 9

What it is: a mother. An arched shell, closed, with no limbs. It is the only guardian that is not trying to kill you -- it is trying to **overwhelm** you, which is worse.



THE QUEEN

Its only animation: the shell opening. Open, it gives birth. Closed, it waits. Nothing else moves.

What it does: it lays **in pairs**, at a regular beat. Its children come down more slowly than a shot.

How to undo it: *its children come down on the plane where they were born.* Switch planes and they pass without harming you. **But here is the trap:** it can only be struck on the plane where it has just laid. **The safe plane is not the scoring plane.**

"To touch her, you had to walk in among her young."

8. OMEGA SECTOR -- sectors 10 to 12

The last world, and the shortest to cross.

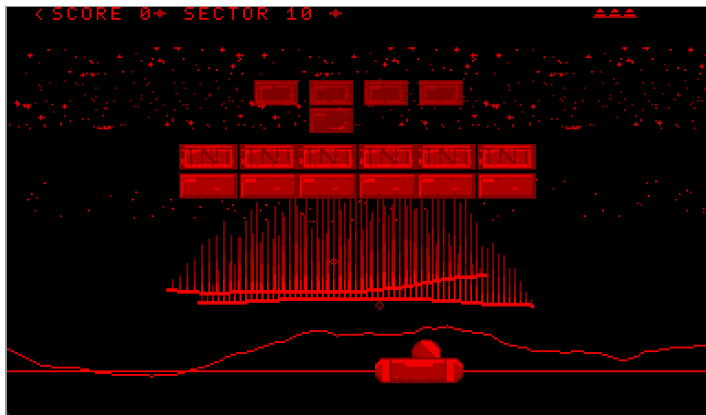
Charges become the structure. A whole sector can fall on a single well-placed contact -- or cost you time on a charge that carries nothing away.

Everything you have learned is used here at once: aiming a plane, going around a block, choosing between two explosives. The Core, at the end, asks nothing new: it asks you to hold a tempo.

Sector 10 -- THE FUSE

12 in front including 6 charges, 5 at the back including 4 double hulls.

The fuse is in front of you: twelve structures on the near plane, **six of them charges** -- half the deck can go up in a cascade. The far plane, almost all double hulls, is earned by attrition.



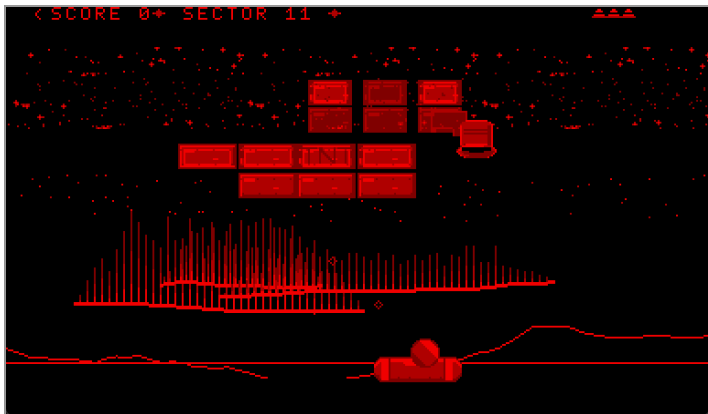
Sector 10, THE FUSE

Sector 11 -- TWIN CHARGES

One charge per plane, one well per plane.

The sector finally earns its name: two charges, one on each plane, each in the middle of its neighbours. Hit one and you will see five structures go at once -- then the other is still there, on the opposite plane.

The well is your shortcut: it drops you on the other plane without waiting for a return, and it is the only sector where the two cascades chain together.



Sector 11, TWIN CHARGES

Sector 12 -- OMEGA CORE

6 and 6, two charges on each side.

Two charges on each plane, nothing more. **Bare and fast:** everything left to learn has been learned. All that remains is to use it.



Sector 12, OMEGA CORE

THE CORE -- at the end of sector 12

What it is: not a creature -- an **organ**. The core of the network. The other three were envoys; this is the thing that sent them. No eye, no arm, no shell: it has only a **rhythm**.



THE CORE

Its only animation: the beat. Two pulses, one silence. Always.

What it does: during the pulses its rings deploy and it strikes. During the silence they fade. **The same signal carries both:** the silence **is** the window.

How to undo it: *it changes plane on the beat, and it only strikes during its pulses.* The silence between two beats is the window; the plane it has just left is the refuge. The other three guardians let you react -- this one moves **every four seconds**, whether you have read it or not. You have to anticipate.

"You had to dance with it."

And after

There is an ending. It resembles none of the other three victories, and that is all you will be told about it here.

9. The capsules

Some structures release a **capsule** when they break. It falls slowly, swaying. **Catch it with your ship** -- it passes through everything else without doing anything.



A capsule

The capsule always keeps the **same silhouette**. Only its face changes, and that face is what tells you what you are about to receive: you learn one shape, not five.

LASER -- the ship fires



The LASER capsule

Your cannons arm. **A** fires, and your shots break structures the way the sphere does -- without risking losing it.

The laser does not last: a counter appears in the HUD and runs down. As it nears zero, it pulses. **You always know how much you have left** -- which is what lets you save a shot for the right moment instead of wasting it.

WIDE HULL -- the hull widens



The WIDE capsule

Your ship lengthens. Catching becomes easier, and above all **aiming becomes more precise**: a wide ship offers more return angles, not just more surface.

Like the laser, it carries its countdown in the HUD.

The rule that holds for all of them

A capsule of another type replaces the active one. The counter restarts from zero with the new power; the old one stops dead. Catching the same one twice, on the other hand, **extends** its duration.

A power therefore never stacks with another -- but it does extend. That is what makes the choice interesting: refusing a capsule is sometimes the right move.

10. The Scavenger

When only **three structures** remain, something arrives.

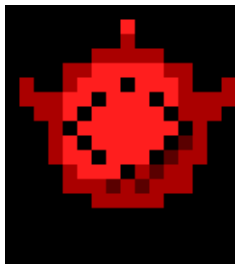
It crosses the screen **between the two planes**, at an intermediate depth -- neither quite in front nor quite behind. It is the only object in the game you can reach **from both planes**: you do not have to pick a plane to aim at it.

It is not there to kill you. It is there to unblock you. Three structures left is the moment a run bogs down: the sphere circles, the last targets slip away, and nothing advances. Shoot it down and **it drops a capsule** -- enough to reopen the situation.

Letting it pass costs nothing. Bringing it down earns points **and** a power.

It wears three faces, one per world -- the game sends you the one belonging to the sector you are in, and its silhouette tells you at once where you are.

ALPHA AND
OMEGA



the drone -- round, the
beating eye, it floats

BETA



the crawler -- low and
wide, a real walk cycle

GAMMA



the dart -- pointed, the
double thruster flame

11. The menu

Before each run, the menu lets you choose how you go in. **Up** and **down** move through the list, **A** confirms.

ENTRY	WHAT IT DOES
CAMPAIGN	the twelve sectors, first to last
BOSS RUSH	the four guardians back to back -- <i>left/right picks which</i>
SECTOR SELECT	start at the sector of your choice
CREDITS	who made this game
DECOR GALLERY	the skies of the game, and the jukebox of its nine tracks



The menu: five entries, and the alien announcing BOSS RUSH

In the frame below the list, **left** and **right** set the **speed** -- STANDARD, FAST, TURBO, EXTREME. It is not a menu line because it is not an action: the four entries above *launch* something, the speed only says at what pace. The setting returns to STANDARD every time the console is switched on.

You will find neither LASER nor a wide hull there: they are no longer chosen, they are **earned**, by catching the capsules that fall (*The capsules*). A bonus you can tick before starting is no longer a reward.

SECTOR SELECT opens a second screen, where **left** and **right** choose the starting sector. The name of the world is displayed while you look.



SECTOR SELECT: left and right move through the sectors



The chosen sector, just before setting off

Nothing is hidden here. A brick-breaker does not need secret codes: it needs you to be able to replay the passage you just missed, right away.

12. What the game teaches you, and in what order

Virtual Breakout does not show you everything on the first board. **Each world teaches you one word, and only one** -- then gives you three sectors to use it in.

WORLD	THE WORD	WHAT YOU DISCOVER
1 -- sectors 1 to 3	resistance	not every brick gives on the first hit, and some never give
2 -- sectors 4 to 6	the chain	one charge carries others; its position decides what it is worth
3 -- sectors 7 to 9	the well, everywhere	shown as early as sector 2, here it structures every board
4 -- sectors 10 to 12	the combination	nothing new -- all of it at once

The rhythm is the same in every world: the first sector **shows** the word without ever punishing you for ignoring it, the second makes it **pay**, the third **combines** it with the word of the previous world, and the guardian waits behind.

The well

The floor opens for the first time **as early as sector 2** -- THE BRIDGE shows it to you without punishing you. From world 3 on, there is no board without it.



The well, in sector 7: its chevrons state the direction

The well moves the ball from one plane to the other, where it stands, without passing through you. It only runs one way -- its

chevrons tell you so -- and that is what makes it a path rather than a switch: you leave by the well, you come back by the ship. You are no longer toggling between two planes, you are going around a loop.

Some pockets are walled in. In sector 11, an L-shaped wall runs along the right-hand pocket and passes underneath it: on its own plane, no trajectory reaches it any more. The well that serves it is just below, on the other plane.

That is the whole idea of the well, and it fits in one sentence: **a wall stops a movement, it does not stop a depth.** You do not come in from the side, you come in from underneath.

Virtual Breakout -- developed for the Nintendo Virtual Boy.

Generated from MANUAL.en.md -- screenshots captured in emulator using the Virtual Boy red profile. This page is generated; it is never edited by hand.