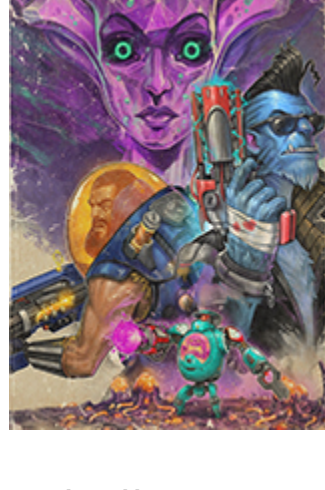


REVIEW

COMING SOON



Developed by: **Rooster Teeth Games**

Published by: **Rooster Teeth Games**

Genre(s): **FPS**

Platform: **PC**

Cost: **\$19.99**

ESRB Rating: **RATING PENDING**

Players: **2-5 Online**

Release date: **August 13, 2019**

Reviewed on: **PC**

6.8

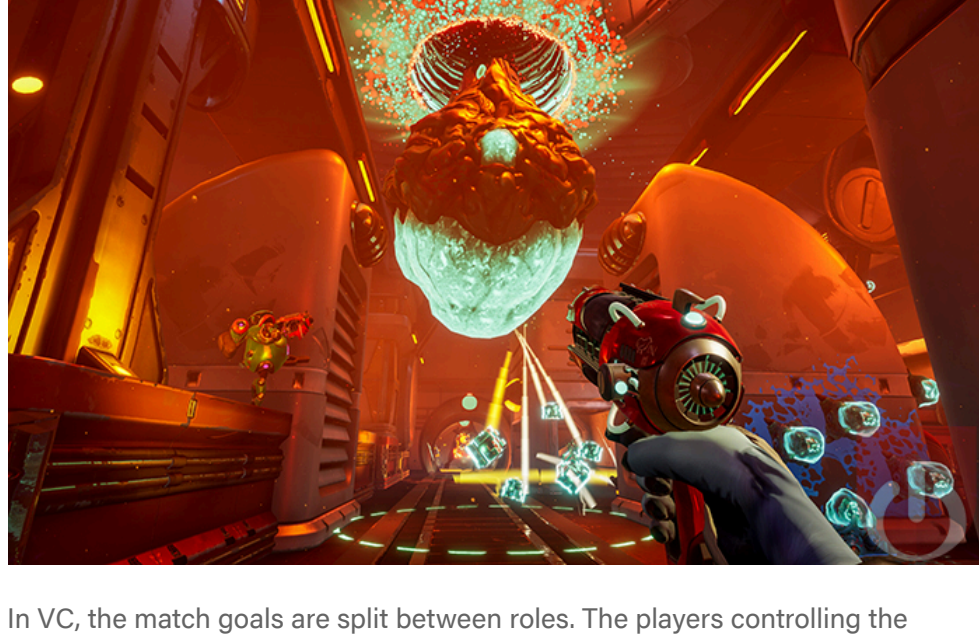
VICIOUS CIRCLE

WRITTEN BY: [KENNETH SEWARD JR.](#)

SEPTEMBER 01, 2019

We should always commend a studio for trying something new. Even if the end product isn't well received, the gaming industry is usually better off for it. That's certainly the case with Rooster Teeth's Vicious Circle.

Dubbed the "uncooperative" multiplayer shooter, Vicious Circle is a special blend of ideas. A game that merges hero shooter elements with asymmetrical mechanics; four mercenaries are tasked with completing a goal while being stalked by a giant monster. The setup is familiar. Nuance is added through competitive incentives. Though the mercs are encouraged to work together at times, there can only be one winner.



In VC, the match goals are split between roles. The players controlling the mercenaries are supposed to collect 75 nuggets (an organic/futuristic currency) in a hostile location. This is done by attacking specifically placed nodes or alien growths that randomly spawn around a map. Once a merc has collected 75 nuggets, their handler will try to beam them out. At which point, his or her peers will contest their departure.

Because the handler only has enough power to save one of them, each player will have to fight over the nuggets. That means racing to different nodes, using gadgets like ad spawning land mines and shock grenades to knock nuggets from rivals, pushing them out of the teleportation circle(s) and otherwise impede a potential winner's path to victory. The only thing they can't do is outright kill each other.

Things are bit different concerning the monster player. This giant, alien chicken's only objective is to stop the mercs. He'll rampage around the map, tossing egg bombs at players to slow them down before going in for the kill. A large health bar, powerful attacks and the ability to see mercs through walls makes him a suitable threat. He isn't invincible though. If the mercs team up, they can easily bring him down.



The last major element is the possession system. Being killed by the monster doesn't mean game over. Instead, mercs will turn into small alien creatures called Lil' Dippers. Their role is to hunt down their still living peers and attack them in hopes of possessing their body. At that point, the player who lost his body will become another Lil' Dipper as the attacker "respawns" as the possessed merc. Players with the most nuggets are the biggest targets; the person that possesses them will steal all of their collected nuggets.

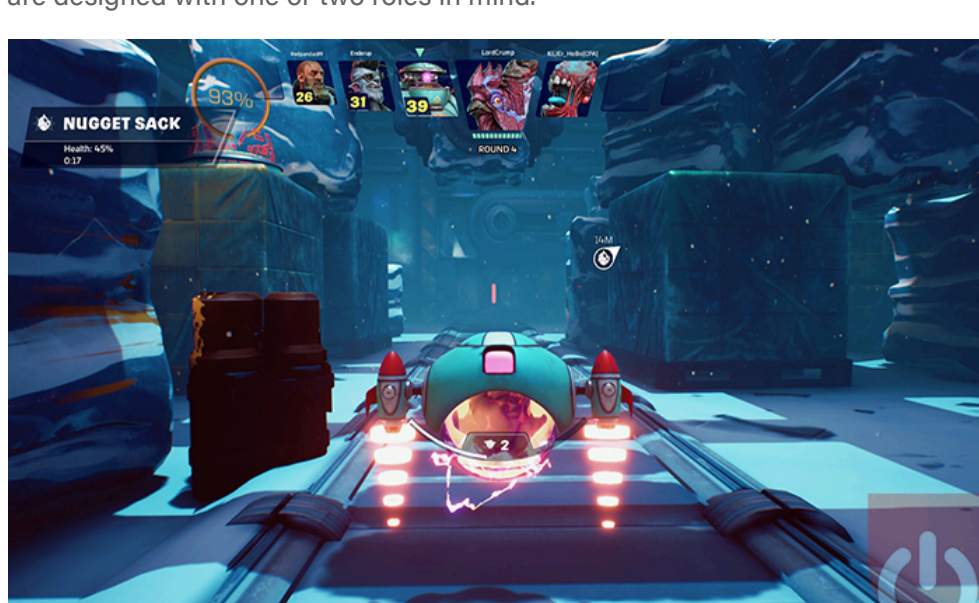
Mercs, chicken monster, dippers, the collection of nuggets - these basic elements make up most of the VC's gameplay. Four players will fight over loot, occasionally teaming up to take down the one monster player. Once the mercs start dying, the game changes. Suddenly, there are more hunters than there are mercenaries. The resulting chaos often leads to tense moments and split-second decisions; a well-timed escape or poorly timed reload could mean the difference between winning or losing a close match.

Of course, there are some advanced strategies to consider. Like how crouching can make mercs invisible to the monster's X-ray vision or certain gadgets work in conjunction with one another when playing cooperatively. There are also the maps themselves. Certain transitioning areas like an air vents are only suitable for the mercs and/or Lil's Dippers. Locked doors can give pursued players a moment of pause. If the monster's charge ability is up, they'll be able to break through them though.



For the most part, Vicious Circle is blast to play. This is especially true when you start learning some of the more advance tricks/tactics. There are also progression systems in place to help get players to return. Free battle passes help in this regard - though I'm a bit weary about the coming shop*, considering this isn't a free-to-play game. Still, what's here is pretty solid.

That's not to say that the game is perfect. There are some balancing issues that need addressing. Some are found between the playable characters. There skill sets make some way better than others. There's also the maps and how some are designed with one or two roles in mind.

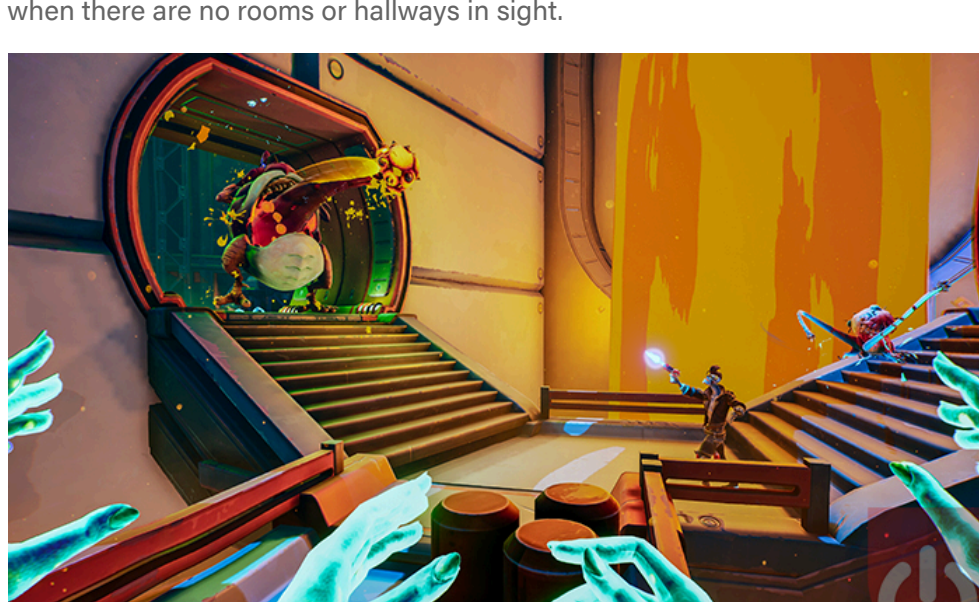


Take the mercs. Each of them has their own unique weapon, abilities, and attributes. For example, Blitz - who appears to be a mix of Arthur Fonzerelli and Zapp Brannigan - is the fastest character in the game. He isn't that strong though. While his laser pistol does decent damage, he's seemingly weaker than his peers. That said, Blitz doesn't need to be a powerhouse to win a match considering he's not out to kill rival mercs.

What makes him a good pick though is his ability to teleport short distances. It's easy to fool pursuers by "bamfing" around a corner or through a tight space, into another room. The same can be said for Zella who has to the power to become invisible. You see, most of the mercs have a movement ability to help them get out of tight spots. Others, like Captain Boom, have more defensive skills. This slight change in design allows for exploitable situations, leading to lopsided matches.

Back to Captain Boom. Instead of a movement ability, he has a shield that can absorb all damage for brief period of time. If all four players choose him, they'll become a nightmare; the monster player will have a hell of time trying to kill them when they're all together. And considering that he has the most consistent damage output among the mercs thanks to his rifle, it won't take a group of them long to kill the monster. It's basically a mercs game at that point.

The maps also play a key role in who wins or loses. Some of them are dominated by small spaces, making them more suitable for the mercs. The monster will typically have to take longer routes to get to the same places as the mercs. The opposite is true for the maps with large open areas. It can be hard for a merc to get away from the monster (even with their movement ability) when there are no rooms or hallways in sight.



Again, Vicious Circle is fun. Working together to stay alive and collect nuggets, only to backstab my peers at the last minute is just as fun as rampaging around the map as a giant chicken. There are some balancing issues when it comes to the characters and maps, but nothing that breaks the game; there still some skill/luck involved with winning. I'm sure with a few solid updates, Rooster Teeth will iron out all of the wrinkles. That is until they start adding new characters, maps, and monsters - all leading to more balance-based updates.

**Through recent updates, the coming shop message is no longer shown. This comes in line with the new battle pass changes (concerning how players unlock levels). We're aren't sure if that means Rooster Teeth has decided not to have a paid shop or if they still plan on adding it to the game.*

Gameplay: 8

Vicious Circle is an entertaining, asymmetrical shooter. It has a few balancing issues though. Most of which can be fixed with a few patches.

Graphics: 6

The characters aren't as charming as one would hope. Especially, when they're compared to the heroes/villains of games like Overwatch. The same can be said for the colorful, yet uninspired maps.

Sound: 6

The music and sound effects are ok.

Replay Value: 7

Really, this comes down to the community. As of this writing, it's easy to find a match. That might no be the case a month from now.

Final Score: 6.8

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