

Nintendo charts return of 'Zelda,' 'Star Fox' at E3 (Update)

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Actor Nicholas Bechtel, 10, plays Nintendo's Star Fox Zero video game at the E3 Electronic Entertainment Expo at Los Angeles Convention Center on Tuesday, June 16, 2015. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

Link is set to return to the Nintendo 3DS before he arrives on the Wii U.

Nintendo announced plans Tuesday during the Electronic Entertainment Expo for a multiplayer-focused installment of "The Legend of Zelda" on the Nintendo 3DS set to debut this fall. However, the Japanese gaming

giant didn't provide any more details about a previously teased open-world "Zelda" edition coming to the Wii U console next year.

"The Legend of Zelda: Tri Force Heroes" for Nintendo's handheld Nintendo 3DS system was shown off during a prerecorded video presentation Tuesday, with sword-wielding hero Link teaming up with a pair of allies. The trio could climb atop each other to take down taller enemies and reach higher locations.

"This time, I wanted players to cooperatively enjoy more serious 'Zelda' gameplay elements, like solving puzzles and going through dungeons," said "Tri Force Heroes" director Hiromasa Shikata during Nintendo's E3 presentation.

The previous "Zelda" adventure, "A Link Between Worlds," was released in 2013 for Nintendo 3DS and sold more than 2.5 million copies. While previous "Zelda" games have been released for the Wii U, Nintendo has yet to premiere an original "Zelda" entry for the console, which has lagged behind Sony's PlayStation 4 and Microsoft's Xbox One.



Attendees dance to Ubisoft's new game "Just Dance 2016" at the Nintendo display at the E3 Electronic Entertainment Expo at Los Angeles Convention Center on Tuesday, June 16, 2015. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

For the Wii U, Nintendo showcased "Super Mario Maker," which invites gamers' to create "Super Mario" levels with the Wii U GamePad, as well as "Star Fox Zero," a space combat game that utilizes the GamePad to project a view of vulpine fighter pilot Star Fox's cockpit, while more cinematic scenes are shown on TV. Both titles are set for release later this year.

"You can have that first-person and third-person view at the same time, managing those two different views as you play the game," said Nintendo executive and designer Shigeru Miyamoto during a preview event Sunday morning.

Nintendo displayed a few new figures for its "amiibo" toys-to-life franchise, including the guitar-playing canine K.K. Slider from "Animal Crossing" and a pixelated rendition of Mario that will be released in honor of the 30th anniversary of "Super Mario Bros." Nintendo also unveiled four figures—Donkey Kong, Bowser and their accompanying vehicles—that can be employed in Nintendo games and the upcoming Wii U edition of Activision's "Skylanders: SuperChargers." It marks the first collaboration between a pair of toys-game franchises.

"If you put the figure on a 'Skylanders' portal, they act as a Skylander, but you can twist the base and switch it to 'amiibo,'" said Karthik Bala, CEO of "Skylanders: SuperChargers" developer Vicarious Visions. "It can be used as an 'amiibo' in another Nintendo game."

Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime said Monday at the company's booth on the E3 show floor that the collaboration has been years in the making. He called it "very special" and wouldn't rule future mash-ups.



In this June 11, 2014 file photo, Japanese video game designer Shigeru Miyamoto introduces the Nintendo's Mario Maker during a press event at the Nintendo booth at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, in Los Angeles. After rebounding with last year's "Mario Kart 8" and "Super Smash Bros." for the beleaguered Wii U console, Nintendo returns to the 2015 Electronic Entertainment Expo with another recorded briefing instead of a live event. The expo runs June 16-18, 2015, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

"We're looking for creative collaboration opportunities," said Fils-Aime. "It's not that we're ever going to let our intellectual properties go, but what we want to do is find studios where we have a joint appreciation for how things proceed forward. Activision and Vicarious Vision really shared our vision for what these two key pieces of Nintendo IP could look like in a different environment."

Other titles previewed Tuesday included the supersized sports title "Mario Tennis: Ultra Smash," party game "Animal Crossing: amiibo

Festival" and sci-fi role-playing saga "Xenoblade Chronicles X" for the Wii U, as well as the 3D adventure "Mario & Luigi: Paper Jam," interior decorating simulator "Animal Crossing: Happy Home Designer" and intergalactic multiplayer game "Metroid Prime: Federation Force" for the Nintendo 3DS.

For the third year, Nintendo opted to unleash its E3 announcements in a streaming video presentation at E3 instead of a live briefing. However, Nintendo did host an e-sports competition Sunday at the newly christened Microsoft Theater in the LA Live entertainment shopping complex in downtown Los Angeles. John "Numbers" Goldberg of New York bested 15 competitors to win the daylong Nintendo gaming tournament.

"It was a really special moment," said Fils-Aime. "I don't know if we could ever recreate that, but certainly as we look to the future, we'd love to do this more frequently. We'll see what happens."

More information: e3.nintendo.com

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