For its entry into the 16-bit market, Commodore swiped Atari's development team and enjoyed its final major home computer success. Especially in Europe the Amiga dominated the gaming landscape of the late 1980s.

Commodore Amiga

USA, 1985

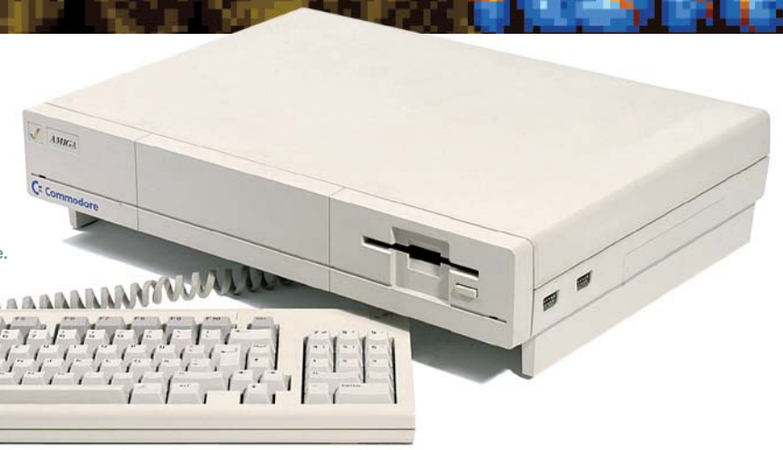
As the C64's successor, the Commodore Amiga was the most popular gaming micro of the late 1980s and at the same time, the last internationally successful home computer. When the A1200 marked the final episode in the Amiga story in 1992, Atari, Sinclair and others had long been vanquished and gamers had moved on to play with Microsoft and Intel technology.

Before the 'Wintel' victory, Motorola's 68000 processor was seen as the best consumer CPU around. A stripped-down variant could be found inside the Sinclair QL in 1984, while the full-blown 16-bit version formed the heart of the Apple Macintosh. Competitors rushed to not miss the shift to the 16-bit generation. Atari held back their 8-bit development, followed by Commodore. Both companies chose the new Motorola chip as CPU and both had in mind a multimedia machine with a graphical user interface (GUI), primarily designed for creative users and gamers. Atari turned to its ex-employee Jay Miner, whose new company Amiga was busy developing a 68000-based games computer. Atari supported Amiga financially and sought to receive the 16-bit technology in return. However, during negotiations, Atari put the Amiga team under pressure, which played into

The bestselling A500 was an all-in-one unit with a disk drive at its side.

Units sold:	5 Million
Number of games:	1,500
Game storage:	Disk, CD
Games developed until:	1996

★★★★½

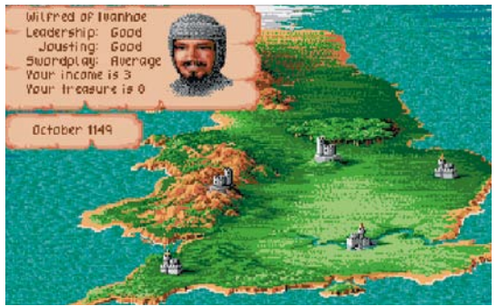


The first and prettiest Amiga had a keyboard that slid underneath the main case.

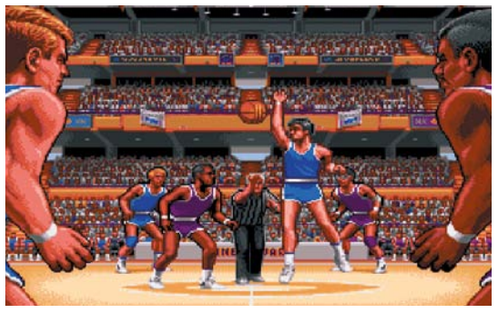
Commodore's hands. On August 13th 1984, Atari filed a lawsuit against the technology's supplier, and two days later Commodore announced its takeover of Amiga. So by a close call, the Amiga hardware nearly landed not with Commodore, but with its archrival. In the end, Atari had to ship its 520 ST without the sophisticated video chips it had been hoping for. Commodore unveiled its 'Amiga 1000' in July 1985. Thanks to Jay Miner's team, the new computer was a graphics and sound marvel.

Based on his previous design experience with the Atari 800, Miner invented two custom chips named Agnus and Denise in order to support the main processor. The Amiga had no dedicated text display mode, but featured an impressive 4,096 colors and a number of different graphic modes, up to a resolution of 640x512 pixels. In addition to LoRes (64 colors), it supported a 'Hold and Modify' mode (HAM) which displayed digital pictures in near photo-realistic quality. The graphics chips produced either standard TV interlace pictures or could bring a double-interlace resolution to the screen (albeit with considerable flickering).

After 1990, many of the best games hailed from Europe: Lotus II (below) had long-distance view and link-mode.



The early Amiga games by Cinemaware dazzled with their graphics and stereo sound (Defender of the Crown, 1986).



Cinemaware's TV Sports series scored with stylish presentation and and easy controls (TV Sports Basketball, 1989).