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## Editorial: EA, We Have a Need for Speedy Chases

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Throughout its time, the Need for Speed series has grown to become one of the more renowned racing games in the market. However, Electronic Arts' last release, Need for Speed: Pro Street, has been getting disappointing reviews from fans of the series. In fact, many fans of the Need for Speed series admit that the past few games have been taking



the game down the wrong path.

A common and popular theme and game mechanic that the NFS series capitalized on was car chases – specifically police chases. From this idea, the Hot Pursuit editions evolved, and the games, which included police

chases, have been among the most popular NFS games. Is that what Need for Speed: Pro Street lacks?

Need for Speed: Pro Street has no police chases, no free-roaming city, no sappy, Fast and the Furious-like storyline. The story, from what I can grasp, of NFS: Pro Street is that you are Ryan Cooper, a former street racer who wants to go pro and race on legit circuits. That's it. Oh, and you want to beat the guy ranked number one. There's no substance to it. At least in Most Wanted, you had a vindictive jerk out to get you, a girl helping you out, cops to outrun, and your pimp BMW to win back. In NFS: Porsche Unleashed, you could take on the role of a Porsche test driver and complete assignments in that manner. Pro Street's story is just really vague and generic.

The game play feels almost identical to that of Forza Motorsport 2 in the sense that the game gives you racing lines to follow that let you know when to brake and accelerate through turns. The setup is also similar: you pick your car, you pick your "race day" or tournament/challenge and you hit up each track. If you are a fan of racing games, you would be more satisfied with the experience Forza Motorsport 2 gives you. Even hardcore Need for Speed fans may be tempted to let this one go and just play Forza. Why? ProStreet tries to give you a game that Forza has nearly perfected. The only difference is that ProStreet tries to do it with less finesse and a lot more "street" scene attitude, but the lack of there actually being streets, traffic, cops, and brash challengers makes that hard to pull off, and Electronic Arts have disappointed Need for Speed fans in this title.

The Need for Speed name carries more expectations than just another racing simulator, but Pro Street delivers just that. When I first started playing Pro Street, my first reaction was that I felt like I was playing Gran Turismo. They emphasize correct driving lines, braking and accelerating correctly through turns, tuning your car specifically for certain events, etc. adding to the realism of the game.

The lack of a variety may be a cause of Pro Street's shortcoming in holding onto the series' tradition, as every race day are just plain and simple time attacks, drag races (which use the same shift system we've seen before in Underground and Most Wanted), and straight up races. It lacks the challenges that one could find in roaming an open city – the speed traps in Most Wanted, Outrun races in Underground 2, and such all added to the game's fun factor. Pro Street lacks this, however, and gets repetitive as you go from race day to race day. At least in Forza Motorsport 2 you develop relationships with parts manufacturers and car dealers as your car and your driver level increases upon winning events.



When I first spun up Pro Street and began playing, I was expecting another street racing game, an open city to explore, jerk off racers who wanted to best you, and all that fun stuff that we had come to see in the series ever since NFS: Underground, but when I entered my first race day and realized all the races were legit circuit races, I had to ask: did Electronic Arts get threatened or in any other manner get in trouble for using street racing in its games, despite the public service announcements in the beginning of each game? Is there a reason why they are moving the game's environment off the streets and into legit circuits?

Bottom line is, Pro Street does not uphold the expectations that Need for Speed fans have of the series. It lacks the story, the police chases, the various game modes, and emphasizes more strict and realistic racing ability on your part, that the game has lost the classic NFS touch.

Electronic Arts ought to bring the game back on the streets and throw in some chaos: cops, or something to initiate a chase, and traffic to complicate it. Higher speeds. As Pro Street stands right now, since they have turned up the racing sim aspect of the game, there's no more throwing your car into 200 miles per hour along a highway full of cars. It's strikingly similar to playing Forza Motorsport 2, as I mentioned before, just not quite as realistic. And as weak as previous storylines have been, putting some effort into some kind of story will make the game just a little more appealing! And give us more variety in game modes, let us explore and test our abilities in our customized cars. I say to Electronic Arts, bring back the thrill!