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## Cool math games space is key ultimate

The Ultimate Game Machine competition started about nine years ago when Computer Gaming World began its annual rite of collecting gaming PCs and testing them. I was in on the first days and the systems back then were mostly DOS, often had SCSI drives and lightning fast 133 MHz Pentium processors. Heck, 3D graphics for gamers were in their infancy, but one thing these systems had in common with today's uber machines: They had SLI. Back then, SLI was in charge of scan line interleave, and consisted of a pair of Voodoo 2 cards. Since game systems still needed fast DOS graphics, the primary card was often a Matrox Millennium or a card based on the old Tseng ET4000. Oh, and prices peaked out at about \$3,500. Fixed until today. Computer Gaming World has evolved into Games for Windows: The Official Magazine. ExtremeTech and Games for Windows worked together to bring this roundup of high-end game systems to fruition. We have systems priced close to \$8,000 at the top end. Even the lowest cost system weighs in at over \$4,000. Of course, there have been nine years of inflation since then, so these prices aren't quite as staggering as they would have been back in 1997. This week, we're running three days of ultimate game systems. Each day will contain two system reviews and we will announce the winner on Thursday. These are all serious candidates who survived the intense round of benchmarking and stability testing. Five out of the six are overclocked, while three of them have quad-core processors. The CPU is not the only ingredient, of course. Four of the systems arrived on the scene with nvidia GeForce 8800 GTX in SLI (scalable link interface) mode. And no one has SCSI drives, although they all use RAID 0 systems, mostly to speed up reading performance. I mentioned earlier that we originally received nine systems. As Darren Gladstone from Games for Windows likes to say it, Three doesn't even leave the pits. Ultimate Game Machine shootout has always been an opportunity for PC companies to demonstrate their bleeding edge capabilities. But sometimes companies either just try a little too hard, or other problems intervene. Three of the PCs had serious stability problems. The three companies that submitted these systems all have good track records, so it's not like they were fly-by-night operations. In the end, they withdrew completely from the competition. In one case, a company tried to implement an interesting new cooler, but we suspect that the prototype they used could not withstand the hard shipping. Another company pushed their system so hard that they recommended plugging the system directly into the wall because a power strip can reduce power just enough to make the system unstable. In another case it was just a case, we think, about being a little too eager to win. In the end, they withdrew from the competition. One of the conditions for entering was that companies were required to make these ordered from their websites in November. We have to give credit to the companies that dropped out because they wanted to be sure that they could offer whatever system is submitted to their customers. So we don't name names because it's unlikely that you'll see these exact systems for sale anyway. Six PCs survived, including several that made pushing the bleeding edge pretty hard. These are the systems we want to celebrate. It's also worth discussing scoring. We have always had a 1-10 scoring system at ExtremeTech. We would like to clarify some of the scores for this roundup. On the scale is a 5/10 average. This is in contrast to the classification system in schools, where 7/10 is a C and is typically thought of as average. This gives us a little more room to play with the scale. So a 5/10 is an average, competent system that may have some problems, but none of the issues are showstoppers. Anything under 5 and the product is seriously flawed. So if you see a score of 5/10, don't think it sucks. Think instead that it is reasonably competent for what it does may have some interesting features, but compared to its peers, is unusual in most ways. For Ultimate Game Machine, the main criteria are stability, performance and gamer-oriented features. Fortunately stability was a non-issue with the survivors, so it really came down to stability, performance and gamer-oriented features. Secondary features were price, overall design appeal, and fit-and-finish. These secondary properties can make a difference between two systems that are otherwise very close. GeForce 8800 GTS Review Normally, I mention upcoming articles this week on ExtremeTech, but since the week is mostly UGM competition, I'll be sure to point out today's review of eVGA's GeForce 8800 GTS. Last week we took a look at PNY's GeForce 8800 GTX. Most of the 8800 GTX boards cost \$599 or more (many seem to be priced around \$649.) The 8800 GTS boards are supposed to be priced from \$449-\$499-still pretty pricey, but that's at least a notch down from six hundred buckazoids. We've received a lot of requests for 8800 GTS reviews, so we've got it up today for your reading pleasure. See what Jason Cross has to say about the 8800 GTX's little sister. It's also the holiday season and we're starting to run our holiday geek gift guide. And don't forget to subscribe to our weekly podcast. Get comfy and let's test your knowledge of strange castles, crazy big numbers and embargo snack foods. Board Game Rules Blog. A Short History of Mancala, May 24, 2010. (January 27, 2012) Sean. Playing Games in Class Helps Students Grasp Math, Education Digest, Vol. 74, Issue 3, page 43-46, November 2008. Gasser, Ralph. Solution Nine Men's Morris, MSRI Publications, 1996. . Faq. (27 January 2012) Blaster. Welcome to Math Blaster. 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