

Targets:

A brief description of each target follows, clockwise from bottom left.

Left inner inlane (red dot):

Can be hit by letting the Magnet time out. Lights the relight Kickback target (over the right outlane) for a few seconds. Also lights Quick-Dock at the Explosion hole for a few seconds (if hit within this time, Magnet will activate and you can dock one ball.)

Left outer inlane (yellow dot):

Easily hit by shooting the left ramp or left sinkhole. Lights right spinner for Power Level advance, and also lights relight Kickback for a few seconds. Hitting the Explosion hole and not flipping with the upper flipper also usually sends the ball here. Mission Start and the Dock ramp sometimes send the ball here.

Left outlane and kickback:

If you need to aim for this (and you will occasionally), aim at the top bank of drop targets.. the ball will often carom off the top of the Dock ramp into the kickback. The left outlane can be lit for Extra Ball. Using the kickback while the ballsaver is lit won't use it up (it'll stay lit.)

Left sinkhole:

Easily hit from the tip of the right flipper. Starts Video Mode if lit, locks a ball when lit, and starts Fast Frenzy if the locked ball was the last one needed for that Frenzy.

Magnet:

An under-playfield magnet in front of the upper flipper, activated by shooting the Explosion hole when Light Magnet is lit. Holds the ball in place for a free shot at the right ramp. If you don't want to hit the right ramp (which you won't if you have Super Ball Rescue lit and Dock is lit), flip before the ball lands on the magnet, aiming at the drop targets or Loop, or let it time out. Light Magnet cannot be lit during any multiball

except Space Station, but if Light Magnet is lit at the beginning of a multiball, Magnet may be lit and used during that multiball.

Left spinner:

Reasonably easy to hit from the middle of the right flipper. Scores 100K * power level for each spin. A completed Orbit will light the left spinner for Power Level for a few seconds. Shooting this Orbit often results in loss of control of the ball, so watch out.

Left ramp:

Easy to hit with a ball caught on the right flipper, but more difficult to hit with a moving ball. If possible, catch the ball before aiming.. this makes hitting it much easier. Reasonably possible to backhand from the left flipper. The left ramp lights Lock every five hits, and Extra Ball at 20 and every multiple of 50 hits.

Left ramp targets:

The cute little red targets to either side of the left ramp. Difficult to specifically aim for, though a backhand off the lower left flipper sometimes works. If the upper flipper is held up, a ball coming down the left side of the Orbit will hit the left red target. When either is hit, it flashes for about 10 seconds.. hitting the left ramp while one is active awards two ramp hits; if both are active, four ramp hits are awarded. Hitting the left sinkhole when it isn't lit for anything else will spot one of these targets permanently until collected by shooting the left ramp.

Bumpers and Bonus Rollovers:

Difficult to aim for. The mini-lane to the right of the left ramp is narrow, and a successful shot will often merely hit one bumper and bounce out. Shooting the Orbit or Loop will sometimes result in a weak shot that dribbles into the bumpers. Or, if the kickback is lit, one can aim for the left outlane by aiming at the upper bank of targets and hoping for a bounce off the top of the Dock ramp into the kickback. If the ball hits the kickback reasonably hard, it'll often enter the Loop and drop into the bumpers.

The best way to aim for them seems to be shooting the Loop repeatedly, and trying to hit the ball as close as possible to the base of the upper flipper. Because the base doesn't move as fast as the tip of the flipper, the ball will have less velocity and a greater chance of dropping into the bumpers. I've had significant success this way.

The bumpers score 1M for each activation of Super Jets, and increase the Jackpot value by about 7K. Hitting all three bonus rollovers increases your bonus multiplier (1x-2x-4x-6x-8x-10x).. if Bonus 10x has already been reached, Bonus Maxed is awarded instead.. this starts at 10M and increases by 5M each time apparently without limit. The bumpers may be shut off by holding both flippers up.

Bumper Mini-Lane:

Difficult to hit from the lower right flipper, nearly impossible any other way. Shooting the mini-lane lights the mini-lane for about 15 seconds.. hitting it again while lit awards a Super Jets activation, to a maximum of three. The mini-lane cannot be lit during a multiball, but if it is lit when a multiball is started, hitting the mini-lane again will award the activation. It seems that this is a case of "software masquerading as hardware" ala the Stroke of Luck front/back detection on the Attack from Mars real pinball: there is no actual sensor in the mini-lane, and the game awards a mini-lane shot if a bumper is hit without a rollover or left spinner being hit immediately previously.

Mystery:

The yellow target just to the left of the center hole. Easily hit from a ball trapped on the right flipper, slightly more difficult with a moving ball on the right flipper, and possible to hit with the base of the left flipper (aim the ball straight up) or a backhand.

Does various things during various modes, usually helping complete the current mission.

A rightwards nudge just as the ball hits Mystery (think of pushing the target into the ball) seems to prevent many SDTM drains, usually sending the ball to the right flipper or to the drop target area.

Center Hole (aka Jackpot, Mode Start, Mission Start, etc):

Easily hit from a trapped ball on the right flipper, slightly more difficult from a moving ball on the right flipper, easily hit by a trapped ball on the left flipper (aim nearly straight up), very difficult to hit with a moving ball on the left flipper.

Starts Ultimate Showdown, Super Launcher, Combo Mania, Quick Shot, or a Mission when lit, in that priority order, except that none of those may be started if any mission, mode, or multiball is currently running. Scores Jackpots during Space Station and Fast Frenzy. Awards Extra Ball if lit.

Balls that land here go to a diverter that normally alternates feeding to the left and right sides, but during some modes will always feed to the same flipper.

Drop Targets and Reactor Hole:

Easily hit with a trapped or moving ball on the left flipper; possible but difficult to hit with a backhand from the right; difficult to hit from the upper flipper with a moving ball, easy to hit from the upper flipper with a slow ball (from the Explosion hole.)

The Reactor hole spots one target except for the Reactor Critical mission; getting all six targets lights Dock. These targets also sometimes light Light Magnet, which is the red arrow in front of the Reactor hole. If anyone knows exactly when this happens, let me know.

Loop:

Relatively easy to hit from the upper flipper.. to improve your chances of this, hold the flipper button throughout the stroke (don't release it too soon.) Very difficult to hit from a lower flipper; if you need to do this, shoot the right orbit or Explosion hole to bring the ball to the upper flipper. Can also be shot via the kickback.

Shooting three consecutive Loops awards Bonus Held; a fourth awards Super Jets Held. A varying number of Loops lights Extra Ball at the center hole; more on this later.

** Bonus Held holds the bonus multiplier from ball to ball.. the bonus value is cumulative throughout the game regardless of Bonus Held.

Dock Ramp:

Easily hit from the tip of the upper flipper, very difficult to hit any other way. If unlit, advances Space Station Jackpot by 1M. Docks balls when Dock is lit. Three docks start Space Station Frenzy.

Shots here feed to a diverter that works like the diverter for the center shot, normally alternating right and left except during certain modes.

Explosion Hole:

Easily hit by a ball caught on the left flipper, surprisingly difficult to hit with a moving ball on the left flipper. Occasionally hittable via a backhand from the right flipper or a very low shot from the upper flipper (don't aim for that because a miss will send you screaming into the right outlane.)

Awards a random award when lit for Explosion, and activates Magnet when

lit.

Right spinner:

Same as the Left spinner, except that shooting the Orbit doesn't lose control of the ball. Easily hit from the left flipper, and possible to backhand (useful for last-ditch attempts at Bike Race or Super Launcher.)

Relight Kickback target:

Above the right outlane, easily hittable from the tip of the lower left flipper.

Right outlane:

Hard to hit intentionally, actually. Can be lit for Extra Ball.

Right inlane:

Hittable via the Reactor Hole. Lights the left Spinner for Power Level for a few seconds.

Slingshots:

Perfectly normal. Actually difficult to hit intentionally, but there are no modes in which you need to hit them.

Drain:

I'm not quite sure exactly how this is laid out (there's no viewing angle to show it), but it seems to drain any ball that gets below a certain Y-coordinate, instead of actually simulating the trough lane found on real pinballs. This affects performing death saves (see below.)

Maneuvers:

There are a few maneuvers that must be learned to truly master the game.

QuickPower:

This will get you potentially unlimited Power Levels quickly with very little risk of draining. Catch the ball on the lower left flipper and shoot the right orbit, which lights Power Level on the right spinner for a few seconds (the light stays on about three seconds, but there's a two-second grace period.) When the ball passes the upper flipper, DO NOT FLIP. Immediately AFTER the ball passes the upper flipper, hold up the left flipper. The ball will land on the lower left flipper and

roll up to about one flipper-length up the left inlane.. when it rolls back down onto the flipper, shoot the right orbit again where Power Level will still be lit. Repeat until you have all the Power Levels you want. If the ball rolls more than about four simulated inches up the left inlane, the right orbit will be difficult to hit when the ball rolls back down.. if this happens, catch the ball, letting the Power Level time out, and once the ball is under control shoot the right orbit again.

Conceivably, this could score quite a few billion in and of itself.. reaching a power level is worth $1M * \text{level}$, and each spin scores $100K * \text{level}$; a completed orbit will usually give about 40 spins for a total of $5M * \text{power level}$. At Power Level 50 (which I've reached using this method), thats 250M PER SHOT. Also, don't forget that Power Level 8 awards a Showdown Sphere, and 5 and 7 give chances at Spheres (through Video Mode and Super Launcher), and 6 lights Super Ball Rescue (aka Super Kickback).

This can also be done immediately after a ball is launched (such as if the right ramp is ready to start Space Station Frenzy, and you want to start one more mission before beginning that frenzy) or after shooting the Loop (very helpful in getting the hurry-up extra ball, or just a generic way to get the ball from the upper to lower flippers with no risk.)

I'd say this is the most critical strategy in the game.. the first game I played after figuring this out was the 1057B game that was the world buyin highscore a while back. It gets LOTS of Spheres, and keeps Super Kickback lit as much as possible.

QuickFlip:

During either Fast Frenzy or Space Station Frenzy (or Showdown if you really want to), catch two balls on the right flipper. Make sure that the higher-up ball is on the left (if the right one is higher up, tap the table gently till they settle the other way. The excellent and detailed physics are very noticeable here - for physics students, the coefficient of static friction is greater than the coefficient of kinetic friction, and this is simulated.) Release and flip again VERY quickly, and one ball will go into Explosion while the other remains on the right flipper. From there, you can shoot at the Reactor hole to spot a drop target (which will return the ball to the

right flipper and you can just keep using the same strategy) or the right ramp for Super or Ultra jackpot.

This is by far the easiest way to get Ultra Jackpot.. keep cycling one ball from the right flipper to Explosion to the upper flipper to Reactor to spot one target.. when "You're close!" do the same quickflip, but aim for the ramp instead of Reactor. This can also be done during Fast Frenzy to collect the Sphere.

QuickFlipping with the left flipper is unreliable - it will sometimes send one into the left ramp, sometimes off the left slingshot into Explosion, and sometimes somewhere else.

Saves:

Pro Pinball departs significantly from real machines in this area.

If the ball is going fast when it drains down the right outlane, hold both flippers up while hitting the table left and upwards.. this will often send the ball over to the kickback to save it.

If the kickback is unlit or the ball doesn't make it over, keep bumping the ball over the drain using only upward nudges (if you're quick, this will NOT trigger a tilt warning) until it comes almost to rest between directly under base of either flipper and one flipper-length up that outlane. At this point, nudge HARD upward and towards the center.. this will likely trigger a tilt warning (though I've done it without), but bounce the ball onto a flipper.

Slap saves are also pretty easy.. as the ball heads for the center drain, pick a flipper and nudge that flipper towards the center a split second before flipping. For this nudge, you're moving the table, not the ball.

** It is possible for the ball to move at an angle and position so that neither flipper can reach it. If this happens, just grin and bear it, and enjoy your bonus.

Flipper switching:

Going right to left is easy.. merely shoot Mode Start (if it diverts to the right, shoot it again), the left ramp, or left sinkhole.

Left to right is harder.. if the ball is coming down the left inlane, a moderately hard rightwards nudge just before the ball hits the held-up

left flipper will usually permit a hold pass. You can shoot the Reactor hole to switch, but this risks losing control if you miss. The best method, I think, is to shoot the Explosion hole and then either the Reactor hole, or (if Magnet is lit and Dock isn't) the right ramp (if it diverts to the left, do a hold pass.)

MultiLoop:

At the beginning of any four or greater multiball including Ultimate Showdown but not a Space Station in which you need Ultra Jackpot, aim for nothing but loops till the ballsaver expires. Drained balls will be relaunched and you can keep shooting loops. Do NOT flip the right flipper at all, and ignore the lower left flipper. This can lead to surprising numbers of Loops (my record is 22, and I've hit 17 five times) as well as hurry-up Extra Balls, which are pretty easy to collect with four balls on the table.

Also, if you collect a hurry-up Extra Ball while the loop count is still building up, the next loop will light another hurry-up extra ball, which you can collect again, likely using the same ball that collected the first one and got recycled to a lower flipper. My record for hurry-up Extra Balls in this manner is four, during the six-ball Fast Frenzy immediately after my first Showdown (collected EBs for 5, 6, 7, and 8 loops.)

A neat side effect of this is that balls wind up in the bumpers.. most helpful during a Showdown where all switches score X million. This also helps get Bonus Maxed if you need it.

A variation on this is to go for a four-ball Fast Frenzy as your first event of the game when the loop counts are still low.. this can give three or four free extra balls right at the beginning.

The Rebound Maneuver:

If a ball goes partially up the right ramp but stops behind the sign, it will roll back down the ramp and often hit the top of the left slingshot, bouncing up in front of the upper flipper for an extra shot. This maneuver isn't too important, but you should be aware that it exists (I've used it for Ultra Jackpot a few times, and many times during Super Launcher.)

Strategies:

The five white lights in the center of the playfield represent the five components of Ultimate Showdown. Clockwise from the top, they're Missions, Power Levels, Ultra Jackpot, Bonus Maxed, and Combo Mania.

Missions:

The six green Mission lights represent the seven Missions. Again, I'll deal with them clockwise from the top.

Both Lock and Dock can be lit during missions, and balls can be locked and docked during all missions. Starting either type of Frenzy aborts the current mission.

Reactor Critical:

Each drop target awards 10% towards completing the mission to a maximum of 99%, at which point shooting the Reactor hole completes the mission. Prior to this, though, the Reactor hole penalizes you 20%, unless Mystery has been hit.

This mission isn't worth completing, I think.. its too easy to lose control of the ball and lose it SDTM or off the top side of the dock ramp into the left outlane. When I start this mission, I either go for Power Levels via QuickPower (see above) if I need them, left ramps or left holes if I'm trying for a Fast Frenzy, combos if I need Combo Mania, or just catch and hold the ball till the mission expires.

The center hole always feeds to the left during this mission. Reactor Critical resets the drop targets, so any progress you've made towards lighting Dock is lost, and Dock cannot be lit during this mission (these can be helpful.)

Hunt Down:

Five lit sinkholes must be hit... one at a time will be lit unless Mystery is hit, which will light them all until one is hit.

A relatively easy mission, and one I usually go for. Important note: if the fifth shot is on the left sinkhole, and said sinkhole is lit for Fast Frenzy, the Frenzy hit will register BEFORE the mission hit.. ie, you

won't get the Sphere. If you find yourself in such a situation, hit Mystery and then use another sinkhole to complete the mission.

** The above paragraph is incorrect... I'm not sure why I thought that. If you complete the mission, you get the Sphere.

The mission is easy because of the long timer - it isn't much different from others like Shuttle and Bike Race, but the timer is 60 seconds instead of 40 or 45.

Ammo Dump:

25 bumper hits needed, with Mystery making each subsequent hit worth double. Difficult to go for. I usually hit Mystery first, then just aim for combos or power levels or something, and if the ball dribbles into the bumpers it'll usually get the 13 hits needed for the mission. If its your last ball or the last mission you need for Showdown, don't risk going for it; just catch and wait it out.

The center hole always feeds to the right during this mission. There is a *long* grace period at the end of this one - I've hit my first bumper after the clock hit zero and still completed the mission.

Skyscraper Raid:

THE most important mission, because of the Extra Ball available. Use QuickPower to reach Floor 5, but delay an extra couple seconds between shots to let the spinners relight. An ideal pattern to get into is collecting the Power Level at the entrance spinner and the Floor at the exit (takes some practice to get this timing down.)

After Floor 5, if Dock isn't lit, shoot the right ramp and hold pass it to the right flipper if it goes to the left. If Dock is lit, shoot the Loop and let the ball fall to the lower left flipper.. shooting the Loop takes some speed off the ball so it'll bounce far enough up the left inlane to hold pass to the right.

Don't aim for Mystery from the lower left flipper - a miss is too likely to hit the center hole and end the mission.

Shoot Mystery. This relights the spinners for Floor 6. Shoot a spinner any way you can, then hit the center for Extra Ball! and a Sphere.

The center always feeds to the left at the start of this mission; hitting it after that ends the mission.

I like to turn off the CD music during this mission, to minimize distraction and to not make me feel rushed (the music sounds like its halfway over after only about 24 seconds, and the music ends with about four seconds left including the grace period. Four seconds is a long time.)

Stop the Shuttle:

A variable number of ramps/Mysteries needed.. the longer you delay before shooting the ramp, the more it'll be worth. Shooting a ramp lights Mystery, which awards 25% when hit.

** The base ramp value starts at 14% and increases by 3% for every switch hit, with a max of 37%. Hitting a ramp resets this value to 15%, which again increases by 3% per hit to a max of 38%.. when this is collected, it resets to 14%. Hitting Mystery doesn't affect this progression. Spinners count as one switch when hit no matter how many times it spins.

Easiest way to complete this is to have Dock lit. Shoot the left ramp off the initial right-flipper feed, then hit Mystery.. if you then hit the Dock ramp, you can use the relaunched balls to complete the mission.

Biker Challenge (aka Bike Race):

Four ramp/loop/orbit hits needed, with the lit shot moving from left ramp to right ramp to right orbit to left orbit every few seconds. Loop is also lit; shooting Loop unlights it and hitting any other lit shot relights Loop.

Also reasonably easy. A key strategy is to catch the ball and wait for the lit shot to move to a shot hittable with that flipper. It's pretty easy to pick up combos during this mission if you need some. The ideal way to start is hit the left ramp off the initial right flipper feed, shooting the right orbit after that, then the Loop, then the right ramp (which will still be lit because the Loop hit delays the move from right ramp to right orbit.) This gives you 75% almost right away, and if the ramp feeds to the left, you can shoot the right orbit to complete the mission.

Mystery freezes the current lit shot wherever it is until a lit shot is hit.

Note that this can make the mission unfinishable if the Loop is unlit, the

lit shot is on the right ramp, Dock is lit, and you've already docked two balls.

Seventh Mission:

The six green mission lights cycle when this mission is lit. Awards an immediate Showdown Sphere, 250M * number of mission cycles completed, and lights the Mission lamp for Showdown. This mission must be lit and started just like the other six.

Note that when this mission is hit, the cycling light stops where it was when you hit the center hole, so theoretically its possible to "aim" for a specific next mission. I haven't tried doing this, though.

Don't forget that after you complete a mission cycle, you can do some missions for the next one if you haven't completed everything else for Showdown. Do NOT, though, complete a second mission cycle before Showdown - it won't stack and you'll have to go through the cycle an extra time.

If you need only Power Levels for your next Showdown (will often happen after a Showdown - the current ball can relight everything else but cannot re-reach Power Level 8), stop after five missions, and go for Fast Frenzies (preferred because of the available Sphere), Combo/Secret Manias, and possibly Space Stations instead of missions until that ball drains.. then on the next ball, QuickPower to 8 and collect the Showdown.

Power Levels:

Use QuickPower to get them, and remember that Space Station Frenzy deactivates Super Kickback, so get Space Station before level 6 if possible. Power Levels cannot be gotten during Quick Shot or any multiball with one exception (see Glitches, Bugs, and Rollovers below.)

Power Level 1: Small Points

Nothing special here. Scores 5M.

Power Level 2: Explosion

Lights the Explosion hole for Explosion. When hit, Explosion awards a random award, usually Power Level, a bonus multiplier, Magnet Lit, or the like. Occasionally, it'll award Outlanes Lit.. this lights the outlanes for Extra Ball until the current ball drains (ie, if you center drain or tilt, you forfeit that extra ball.) I've seen it award an outright

"Extra Ball Lit" once.

Explosion cannot be collected during any mission, mode, or multiball.

Power Level 3: Super Jets

Awards an activation for Super Jets. Bumpers are worth 1M * number of Super Jets activations you have (up to three.. the number of flashing bumpers shows how many activations you have. If Super Jets is held, the bumpers will be solidly on instead of flashing.) The number of activations reset at the beginning of each ball unless you got Super Jets Held on the previous ball; the Super Jets Total resets at the end of every ball.

Unconfirmed reports claim that getting a Super Jets activation when you already have three awards the current Super Jets total instead.. can someone confirm this? ** That does not seem to be the case - as far as I can tell, Super Jets Total is just a total.

The mini-lane (see above) and random Explosion awards can also award Super Jets.

Power Level 4: Quick Shot

Lights Quick Shot at the center hole. Simple rules for Quick Shot: go for it on the right orbit; catch, hold, and wait if its on the left.

** Scoring Power Level 4 adds 25M to the starting value for the next quickshot (so it's actually 0 at game start) and completing a Quick Shot also adds 25M to the starting value for the next shot.

Power Level 5: Video

** Lights Video mode. Video Mode has a unchanging pattern. There are six "waves" of things. The first five waves have exactly 11 items (either mines or 5M spheres) and then an atom, which you must not shoot. The sixth wave has *12* items, just to confuse you, and then an atom, then four more items to close out the mode. Video Mode will sometimes offer an Extra Ball; if it does, it will always be the fourth item of the sixth wave.

What you want to do is: shoot eleven things and collect. Repeat that five times. Shoot three more things. If the next thing is an EB, grab it! Shoot eight more things, collect the last atom, shoot the remaining four things, and collect your Showdown Sphere.

I know I told you to shoot all the 5M spheres, but this is acceptable..

there's rarely more than 20 spheres (for 100M total).. thats not a lot compared to the billions you can get from the sphere for winning the mode. Contrary to some reports, the spheres are *always* worth 5M, not 5M per video mode.

A perfect video mode is worth 250M * the number of perfect video modes you've played.

Video Mode cannot be played during any mission, mode, or multiball.

Power Level 6: Rescue

Lights Super Ball Rescue, of which enough has been said.

Power Level 7: Super Launcher

Lights Super Launcher. This mode gives you a 15-second timer to hit the right ramp (it verbally counts 10, but there's 3 seconds before "10", 2 seconds between "1" and "0", and one second after "0" where you can still hit it.) If successful, the timer resets. Five hits awards a Showdown Sphere.

This is a good time to pick up combos.. the right ramp always feeds to the left, so right orbit -> (loop) -> right ramp combos are easy.

Magnet is constantly lit during this mode, so use it.

Balls cannot be locked or docked during this, although you can light Lock and Dock.

Power Level 8: Sphere

Awards a Sphere and lights the Power light for Showdown.

Ultra Jackpot:

Gotten during Space Station Frenzy. Shoot the center three times for Jackpot, Double Jackpot and Triple Jackpot, then the right ramp for Super Jackpot. Hit/spot the six drop targets for "You're close!" and then hit the Explosion hole and right ramp for Ultra Jackpot. Hitting the Reactor hole while Explosion or the right ramp is lit for Ultra cancels the drops and Ultra ("Oh no..."); you must relight the drops.

Magnet is available for Super Jackpot shots, but is disabled when aiming for Ultra Jackpot.

Strategies: Don't use the upper flipper till you've gotten Triple Jackpot. After that, let balls drain if the ball saver is still lit; they'll get cycled around to the upper flipper for a shot at Super Jackpot. Start collecting balls on the right flipper for QuickFlip immediately after that (or possibly even before Super Jackpot.)

Bonus Maxed:

Very easy to get. Only once has this ever been the last thing I needed for Showdown (out of ** 200+ total Showdowns.) If you find yourself needing it, go for any multiball and use MultiLoop.. that'll put enough balls in the bumpers to get Bonus Maxed. Usually, after a Showdown, the bonus Fast Frenzy will relight this for you.

Combo Mania:

Also easy to get, if you're going for combos. Right Orbit -> (Loop) -> right ramp seems to be the easiest way to get combos.

Note to this section - "Double" refers to the announcement "Double Combo" which is a single shot, and Double without the quotes refers to the entire sequence of three shots. Same rules for Triple and other combos.

15 combos are needed to start this round, with each combo increasing cumulatively, so "Double Combos" are worth 2, "Triple Combos" 3, and each shot beyond that one more than the previous. A Triple Combo awards a total of $1+2+3=6$ combos. A five-way combo (six shots) awards $1+2+3+4+5=15$ combos, lighting the round. (Hmm, 5-way combo.. where have we seen this before? =))

Legal combos are:

Left orbit->left ramp

Left ramp->right orbit

Loop->right ramp (Loops after the first reset the right ramp combo timer)

Right ramp feeding to left->right orbit

Right ramp feeding to right->left orbit

Right ramp feeding to right->left ramp

Right orbit->Loop

Right orbit->right ramp

Note that shooting either Orbit twice in succession does not award a combo.

Also, shooting the unlit Explosion hole from the upper flipper and then the

right ramp immediately after shooting the right orbit will often be in time to award a combo.

If you're not specifically aiming for combos, this mode is difficult to start, especially if you're using QuickPower instead of shooting combos off the right orbit. Super Launcher and Biker Challenge are good times to pick up combos.

Skill Shot and Super Skill Shot neither award nor initialize combo sequences (so shooting Skill Shot and then the left ramp does not award a combo, and Super Skill Shot is a combo but does not award one.)

The base value starts at 25M, and increases by 5M for each Combo Mania after the first. Each combo shot in succession adds the base value to the shot, to a max of 5x the base value (so, for the second Combo Mania, a six-way combo would score a total of $30+60+90+120+150+150=600M$.) Lock and Dock can be lit during this round, and balls may be locked but not docked. Power Levels may be collected during Combo Mania.

A successful shot starts a short (~3 seconds) timer for the next shot in the combo, during which only the "expected" next shot counts for a combo (example, after shooting the right orbit, Loop and the right ramp will be lit to continue the combo, and hitting the right orbit or left ramp during those three seconds won't count.) This combo timer also happens when not in Combo Mania - ie, if you shoot the left orbit, then backhand the right orbit, then hit the right ramp, a combo won't be awarded... because, after the left orbit shot, the left ramp is lit for a combo, and if the right orbit is hit while the left ramp is lit for a combo, it won't initialize the right ramp for a combo.

It's possible to start a combo sequence during Combo Mania and continue it after the round ends - I once (I think) shot my sixth shot just as Combo Mania ended and then made two more shots, so those two shots for 7 and 8 combos relit Combo Mania.

Each combo shot adds one to the Combos listed at Fun With Bonus, regardless of its number ("Combo", "Double", "Triple", and "Super" award one each.) Shots made during Combo Mania only add to this number if they're actual combos (so "Double" and greater during Combo Mania each award one.)

This mode is also the entrance to Secret Mania.. the way to activate that is simply to start Fast Frenzy during Combo Mania. More on this later.

Showdown Spheres:

A list of every known way to get a Sphere:

Complete Reactor Critical.

Complete Hunt Down.

Complete Ammo Dump.

Complete Skyscraper Raid (five floors is enough for the Sphere.)

Complete Stop the Shuttle.

Complete Biker Challenge.

Start the seventh mission (complete the mission cycle.)

Score a Fast Frenzy jackpot after hitting/spotting all six drops.

Score five hits on Super Launcher.

Make it through Video Mode.

Reach Power Level 8.

Of these, Fast Frenzy spheres are the only ones not dependent on power levels (and therefore only once per ball) or the mission cycle (and therefore only once per Showdown and therefore only once per ball in the long run unless you complete a second mission cycle before starting Showdown). These are also the only way to get a sphere during any multiball. Moral of the story: go for these! And, only go for a two or three ball mode to increase the chances of starting it before draining. Fast Frenzy also increases its own jackpots each time it starts, whichs make it even more worth going for.

Extra Balls:

These are how to extend your games. Obviously, if every ball gets one extra ball, the game simply won't end. Ways to get extra balls:

Bonus 10x (once per game.) Little excitement here, though its a good idea to postpone it until after collecting three or four Loop extra balls.

Video Mode (randomly, always in the same spot in Video Mode.) Grab it when

it comes. Don't rely on it, but it's helpful, and another reason to use QuickPower (try to collect Video Mode on every ball.) Some reports have said that this only happens once per game.. I've collected it four times in a game, two of those consecutively.

Outlanes lit (via random Explosion award.) If you don't feel confident, light the kickback and aim for it by aiming at the drop targets to drop the ball into the left outlane to collect the EB. If you're close to a multiball, just ignore the outlanes.. the multi will collect it for you.

Loops (starts at 2 loops, increases by one for each extra ball you get by any method. Hurry-up Extra Ball, with the timer shortening as the loop count goes up, to a minimum of 6 seconds.) These can really help at the beginning of the game by building up three or four extra balls on your first ball. As previously mentioned, multiballs make these VERY easy to get for loop counts below about seven or eight. Remember that other extra balls such as 20 left ramps and Bonus 10x still increase the loop count, so postpone these others until the loop count is at 7 or 8 if possible. From J. Weaver Jr: If Dock isn't lit, shooting the right ramp after lighting the hurry-up extra ball will always feed to the right, in time for a shot up the middle (you have a full 6 seconds after "Hurry!", even though the lamp turns off after 4 seconds. Hitting it during those last 2 seconds will add the "Yes!" quote before "Extra Ball!".) Hitting the Loop again during the 6-second timer will reset the timer, so if the shot that actually lit the EB was a weak one, keep shooting the Loop until you get a strong shot and either hit the right ramp or let it fall to the lower left flipper, then hit the center.

Left Ramps (EB lit at 20 and each multiple of 50 ramps.) These and the next method are the key to extending your game indefinitely. The 20 is basically a gimme for any reasonably long game, but after that, you won't get more than one or two unless you specifically aim for the left ramp. Anytime both red targets are flashing, make this ramp your highest priority. Also, during Space Station once you've collected Ultra, or Fast Frenzy once you've collected the Sphere, just start plugging the ramp. Remember that its much easier to hit from a captive ball than a moving one.

Skyscraper Raid (Reach Floor 6, then complete mission) Described above in detail.

If you can complete a mission cycle and hit the left ramp 50 times every two balls (the 50 ramps aren't difficult if you get a Showdown, which the mission cycle will lead to), the game won't end.

If the center hole is lit for both EB and Fast Frenzy jackpot, the FF jackpot won't be awarded until the EB animation and quote finish, which gives you an extra couple seconds to hit drop targets. I've collected the FF sphere a few times this way (using those two seconds to finish the drops).. once intentionally, to confirm it could be done. This also happens during Space Station, so if you hit the hole a second time while the EB animation is going on, the jackpot for the second ball won't be awarded. Strangely, though, the delay doesn't happen for "Finish Her!" at the end of Showdown.

Only one extra ball can be collected per center hole hit, except that a Skyscraper EB can be collected on the same shot as another EB.

The display won't go beyond 9 stacked extra balls, but it keeps track of additional EBs to at least ** 22 and probably beyond. (Guess how I figured that out =))

Ultimate Showdown:

Okay. You completed all seven missions. You used QuickPower to level 8. You used QuickFlip to get the Ultra Jackpot. You managed to perform the Herculean task of getting Bonus Maxed. You hit the 5-way comb... er, started Combo Mania. You've got eight Showdown Spheres, and all switches are scoring 8,000,000.

You've got six balls flying all over the place. What do you do now?

First, use MultiLoop. Showdown's ball saver is about 30 seconds, so KEEP using MultiLoop. This also parks balls in the bumpers, very helpful when each bumper is scoring 8,000,000.

You'll eventually hear "Shoot the Spinners!" IGNORE IT. Use MultiLoop till the ballsaver speeds up its flashing, which means its about to expire. ** Your goal now is to make the Showdown last as long as possible, while making sure you can still complete it.

Keep ignoring Shoot the Spinners. Instead, shoot the left ramp. With that many balls bouncing around, the red targets will be hit (and therefore lit) almost constantly, so under 20 hits will likely be needed for the extra ball. If you collect an extra ball this way, DON'T STOP. Its easy to feel that the job's completed once you get an EB... it isn't. Keep shooting the left ramp.

Eventually, a ball will drain. IGNORE IT. Keep shooting the left ramp.

Eventually, another ball will drain. Now, you may want to make sure you keep Showdown going.. hitting Mystery will relaunch another ball and change the lit spinner (which you should still be ignoring.)

Keep this up as long as possible. Aim for Mystery when you get down to three balls with Super Kickback or four if you don't have it lit.

If you've followed directions thus far, your Reserve Balls will eventually reach two or less. NOW, stop ignoring Shoot the Spinners.

You'll probably have collected a couple Spinner hits from the action (they're accompanied by "C'mon men!", "Stop!", "NO!", and "Finish her!") Shoot the lit spinners until "Finish her!"

Then, IGNORE "Finish Her." Keep shooting the left ramp until you're down to either three balls left in play and no reserve, or two in play and less than five reserve. If one of those two is on the right flipper, however, aim for Mystery and keep it going.

NOW, finish her and collect your celebration, "ONE BILLION!", and free Fast Frenzy. Remember to use MultiLoop and the left ramp during this Frenzy. My left ramp record for the Showdown plus the Frenzy is 84.

Following these strategies will guaranteedly produce more points than simply finishing her as soon as possible. The mode is NOT timed, so keep it going as long as possible, collecting 8 million per target and a couple extra balls. Also, even a 5-minute showdown that you fail will be worth more than a successful 45-second showdown, and will likely produce an extra ball.

The best way to avoid shooting the spinners seems to be aiming at the center

hole anytime the left spinner is lit, and at the left ramp when the right spinner is lit. Once Finish Her is lit, THEN aim for the spinners to avoid ending the round yet. Holding up the left flipper will also block any shots to the left orbit.

** Brian McLean claims he has had astoundingly long (15-20 minute) Showdowns by holding the left flipper constantly during the mode, thus blocking all shots to the left orbit and collecting balls on the lower left flipper to ensure the multiball doesn't end. You need upwards of 50 reserve balls to pull this off successfully, but it can result in incredible scores.

Scoring for Ultimate Showdown:

The score is not displayed during Showdown, but winning a replay will tell you your score, and the DMD will occasionally flash your score after a Bonus Maxed animation before resuming the Showdown graphics.

** ** All switches are worth 1 million per Sphere, in addition to all standard scoring. Other scoring is not disabled, as I reported previously.

The spinners definitely seem to work like they do during Stop the Shuttle - a spinner hit counts as one switch regardless of the number of spins.

The displayed score for a failed Showdown is about half that of a successful one, but this is *incorrect* - see Glitches and Bugs below.

** ** *

A failed Showdown also deactivates Super Ball Rescue if lit.

Miscellany:

Skill Shot:

Its usually worth going for, unless you're right before Showdown (either its lit or you need the seventh mission).. in that case, let the ball fall to the lower left flipper and QuickPower yourself to eight before taking the Showdown (to get the extra sphere from 8, a possible one from Video Mode, and activate Super Kickback.)

Some say its better to stop at power level 6 for Super Kickback before taking Showdown, so that Power Level 8 can be lit on the same ball after Showdown

is finished so that two Showdowns can happen on that ball. I prefer to take Power Level 8 and the extra sphere ASAP.

Super Skill Shot:

Shooting the Loop before the right ramp will award Super Skill Shot for double the current Skill Shot value. Its possible to shoot the loop *twice* and then the ramp and still get Super Skill Shot. I try to do this on the very first ball of the game (the two loops light Extra Ball, remember.)

Pity:

** If you begin ball 3 with a score of less than 100M, a 3-ball Fast Frenzy will be lit for you on the left sinkhole.

Also, twice I've seen Explosion award Outlanes Lit on ball 3 with <400M score.. I don't know if this is random or whether it was a pity EB.

"?" choice in Fast Frenzy:

Probably the most frequently asked question about the game. The first time you choose it, it locks a ball for Space Station so that your next Space Station becomes 4 balls. If the Space Station ball is already locked, it behaves as though you chose "5".. ie, lock four more balls for a 5-ball Fast Frenzy or Secret Mania.

Note that any timers currently running keep running during the "Take your Pick" screen.

Fast Frenzy:

The formula for jackpots is:

D=number of drops down (or 10 if all six drops)

S=number of balls at start of Frenzy

B=number of balls on the table (B=S during ballsaver, B<=S after)

T=total Fast Frenzies and Secret Manias thus far

Jackpot = $1M * D * S * (B + T)$

Note that B and T are unrelated, so draining one ball of a Fast Frenzy always reduces the jackpot value by S per drop target. The minimum possible Fast Frenzy jackpot is 6M, and the maximum is unlimited (somewhere over ** 4B is my record.)

Also, any drops down at the end of this mode count towards lighting Dock, and any drops down prior to starting Fast Frenzy no longer count towards Dock.

Lock cannot be relit during this mode (if you hit enough left ramps, it resets light Lock to the next higher number.) Starting a Fast Frenzy while some balls are locked but that lock isn't completed (either a random 3-ball frenzy from Explosion or the post-Showdown 6-ball frenzy) cancels that lock.

Secret Mania:

The most ego-boosting mode in the game. =) All Spider shots are lit for big points (its related to the Fast Frenzy jackpots, see below) and every Spider shot earns a congratulatory quote. Later on, this mode can be worth half as much as a Showdown. (my record is a 5-ball Secret Mania for all spider shots worth ** 720M.) The score is based on the number of drop targets hit, so hit as many as you can as soon as you can (hitting them all before ballsaver expires is par for the course.)

Don't go for this mode early on, though, because the Sphere that can be earned from Fast Frenzy is worth much more than the then-small awards from this mode.

Whatever drop targets are down at the end of this mode will remain down and count towards lighting Dock (unless, I think, you tilt), which will usually be all of them, so Secret Mania usually lights Dock. Keep this in mind if you don't want Dock (if you have Super Kickback and already have Ultra Jackpot.) Lock can be relit during this mode, but balls cannot be locked or docked.

The formula for Secret Mania scores is:

D=number of drops down (or 10 if all six drops)

S=number of balls at start of Frenzy

B=number of balls on the table (B=S during ballsaver, B<=S after)

T=total Fast Frenzies and Secret Manias before the current Secret Mania

Jackpot = $200K * D * S * (B + T)$

If D is zero, you get a default award of $1M * S$ instead of using the formula.

In effect, the awards are 1/5 of the Fast Frenzy jackpot value, except that Secret Mania doesn't increment "T" until after the round ends, so T can be zero if you start Secret Mania before any Fast Frenzies.

Space Station Frenzy:

Lock can be lit during this mode but balls cannot be locked, and this mode will not affect balls that have already been locked. All six drops reset,

unlit, when Space Station ends.

Cow Jackpot:

During Space Station, the first Jackpot after a Super Jackpot lights Cow Jackpot at the left sinkhole until a Double Jackpot is scored (or, of course, Space Station ends.) The lamp only flashes very briefly, but there seems to be no time limit on the award. Ultra Jackpot has no effect on Cow Jackpot, which is worth as much as Triple Jackpot.

Make sure you watch the animation when you get this =)

Stacking:

Doesn't seem to occur with anything in the game except Extra Balls. So if Explosion is lit, grab it before getting Power Level 2. If Video is lit, get it before Power Level 5, and so on. If Quick Shot is lit, you may want to get level 4 before collecting the Quick Shot, though, to intentionally get the round only once instead of twice.

If a hurry-up EB is stacked on a normal (permanently lit) EB, the hurry-up is awarded.

Ultimate Showdown:

The first phase (before "Shoot the Spinners") isn't linked to the ballsaver; if you watch the display, you'll see a wall which the Dark Queen is behind, and every now and then something that looks like a Showdown Sphere will blast a hole in the wall, and after four holes, you move on to "Shoot the Spinners". These four shots aren't linked to a timer or the ballsaver; they're activated by something done by the player (if you catch all the balls, no holes will be blasted.) Anyone know exactly what triggers this? Also, once I lit "Finish Her" before the ballsaver expired (unintentionally).

Glitches, Bugs, and Rollovers:

The game rolls over at 1 trillion (1,000,000,000,000) onscreen, but keeps the extra digit internally. Strangely, though, after scoring 1T, the hundred-billions digit does not get displayed.. this is normal for scores of 1,0XX,XXX,XXX,XXX (above 1T / 1000B but under 1.1T / 1100B), but for scores above 1100B, it'll only display the last eleven digits. It will, though, display the eleventh digit (ten-billions) even if its zero.. so at one point, I had a displayed score of 03,7XX,XXX,XX0. (with numbers

where the X's are)

** What happens is that the game keeps track of everything in the hundred-billions and beyond as one digit. If your score is 1.5 trillion, the game will have a "15" in the hundred-billions digit. Beginning at 1.7T, The Web will start displaying letters in the hundred-billions place: "A" means 1700B, "B" means 1800B, and so on.. "D" means 2 trillion, "N" 3 trillion and "X" 4 trillion. This makes sense for the Ascii values - "A" is Ascii character 65, which is 8 greater than Ascii 57 which is "9"; onscreen, "A" is 8 hundred billion greater than the "9". After "Z" at 4.2 trillion, the hundred-billions digit goes blank for a while, then somewhere in the 5T range, it will start displaying pieces of the large font used to display "THE WEB" during attract mode. The digit just goes completely bonkers after 6.5T or so.

** Running the utility Webscore will read from your high score file and show you the Ascii character for the first digit. Subtracting 48 from that Ascii value will give you the hundred-billions digit for your score.

Also, during Video Mode, if your score is between 1000B and 1100B, a colon will be displayed in the hundred-billions place (":03,740,650,000"), which makes sense because the colon is the next Ascii digit after "9". Apparently, the game has the colon defined in the smaller font used in Video Mode, but not in the larger standard game font.

Showdown awards increase by 1B per successful showdown, but the quote is always "ONE BILLION!" Also, because a larger typesize is used for that, only ten digits fit... so, for the tenth successful Showdown (which requires an eleven-digit display of 10,000,000,000), it announces "ONE BILLION!", awards 10B, and displays "00" (!). Side effect of that is the eleventh showdown awards 11B, which is displayed as "1,000,000,000" which matches the quote =)

Super Launcher, Jackpot, Quick Shot, perfect Video Mode, and other awards also use that larger typeface - displayed Ultra Jackpot values roll over at 10B, but the full value seems to still be awarded.

Displayed values for completing Skyscraper roll over too.. after nineteen Showdowns (19 mission cycles), the displayed value became "1, 00,000,000" with a space after the first comma.

The Showdown Sphere total rolls over at 100 onscreen but not internally. The score announcement at the beginning of Showdown doesn't roll over, though, so I got ** "43 Showdown Spheres All Switches Score 243,000,000".

Fun With Bonus also rolls over for the display at 100 of each type of shot, but not in the scoring. It rolls over at a total score of 10B both in the display and in the actual award.

** ** The game announces an incorrect total for a successful Showdown. During Showdown, it awards points as they're collected, and keeps a running total. When you complete a Showdown, though, the announced total is the completion bonus plus *twice* that running total. That displayed total also rolls over somewhere, probably at 100B. At any rate, just ignore the displayed total; you'll get the real total awarded fine.

If a non-Super kickback is used, and relit before the grace period expires, the lamp is unlit until what would have been the grace period expires. It still functions, but uses up the relit kickback if hit. The same thing happens if you light a hurry-up EB while another EB is already lit (the lamp will be off during the grace period, but will still award the hurry-up EB.)

If Super Launcher is lit (at power level 7), you drain, and then on the next ball activate that Super Launcher and get power level 7 *during* that Super Launcher, Super Launcher immediately ends (but its relit at Mode Start.) This problem doesn't exist for Quick Shot because power levels are disabled during it.

If Quick Shot is running and you get Bonus Maxed during the countdown, the displayed Bonus Maxed value will be the changing value of the Quick Shot, not the actual Bonus Maxed value. (how'd _that_ happen in the code?)

Power Level advances are supposed to be disabled during any multiball, but if Fast Frenzy or Secret Mania is started while the left spinner is lit for a power level, the launched balls can hit the spinner and award the power level. This is probably also true for the right spinner, but its difficult to hit it that quickly after starting the multiball.

Once, I had two balls left in a Fast Frenzy and Extra Ball lit.. I hit the center to collect the EB and jackpot (see above about delayed jackpots

when EB is lit), but the other ball drained before the jackpot was awarded. The game started the next mission instead of giving the jackpot, which caught me off guard because the ball was in the left inlane by the time the mission got started.

If a Skyscraper EB is collected on the same shot as another EB, the game will start the next mode if one is lit. This is probably related to the glitch in the previous paragraph.

Quote mismatches are also easy to get, sometimes funny, sometimes annoying. Every Web player has heard "Power Level Combo" at least once. My favorite is getting the "You can't win" tilt quote with an extra ball, draining the (tilted) ball quickly and skipping the bonus count, so the quote becomes "You can't Shoot Again!" =)

I also like collecting a lit extra ball right after it's lit, so the "Extra Ball is Lit" becomes "Extra Ball is Extra Ball!" Same can be done with Super Jackpot. I've also collected a "Double Triple Super Jackpot" more than once, and "Extra Super Jackpot" a couple times... sounds like the Super Duper Jackpot of the Space Jam real pinball. =)

Collecting an Extra Ball with the shot that finishes Showdown will turn the quote into "Extra No!" =)

If you drain all balls but one during a "Triple Jackpot" announcement, the "Super Jackpot is Lit" quote will sometimes proceed, even though the multiball is over and Super Jackpot isn't lit.

** According to someone (sorry, lost the email), the cryptic quote sometimes given by the Dark Queen when you tilt is "Imbecile" with a horrible French accent. Also, the quotes "Space Station Destroyed" and "And you were so close" sometimes pop up during the post-Showdown sequence, but I've never heard them during gameplay.

Tournament Mode:

There is a special tournament mode version of the .EXE with extra balls disabled, Super Ball Rescue disabled, only one tilt warning per ball, and random Explosion awards being derandomized to always award a bonus multiplier advance. Strategy for this is to make sure you get a Showdown on every ball, go for Fast Frenzies on your first ball to add up Spheres, and go for Space Stations after that (there's no Super Ball Rescue to worry about.) Instead of aiming for the left ramp during multiball modes, aim for the right ramp to

increase the Space Station jackpot. Also, go for Secret Manias both for points and to light Dock.

Loop EBs are disabled, but Super Jets Held can still be worth a few hundred million, which is a lot more in this version, so still use MultiLoop. End Skyscraper after only five floors because the EB doesn't help you. If you get Power Level 8, then drain, DO NOT reach Power Level 8 on the next ball until you get a Showdown.

Most of all, don't do ANYTHING that has even a REMOTE chance of draining the ball.. this means, don't go for Reactor Critical, don't aim for Mystery EVER except during Showdown, don't do hold passes when locking for Fast Frenzy, NEVER shoot the left orbit, and so on. Skipping (catching the ball and waiting) Super Launcher and Combo Mania may even be advisable, especially if you haven't yet gotten the Showdown for that ball. Always skip a Quick Shot on the left; on the right, you can try for it.

** My best so far in this version is 121B, with three Showdowns.

I'm not sure if this version is available from Empire or Interplay directly, but I think I'm allowed to distribute it to owners of the game (Empire never told me not to; they just said they aren't supporting it, and to make that clear to anyone I pass it along to.) I don't really have the web space to post it on my page, but email me and I'll supply it.