









COMI

TAC 5™



# ZZAP!

## Joystick Reviews

# STICK!

## THE WINTER COLLECTION

Each joystick is rated with a special marking scheme, which accurately reflects the results of a series of tests, and our opinions in general.

To present a fair standard of comparison, all the sticks are put through their paces on a rapid-fire, precision shoot 'em up, *Zynaps*; a pixel-perfect platform game, *Nebulus*; a hot-handed waggler, *Decathlon*, and an eight-directional beat 'em up, *International Karate +*. The games represent the toughest requirements a joystick should ever have to be put through, and enable a fair overall mark to be arrived at.

We also take into account the design – how comfortable is the joystick in play? It's all very well having a responsive, durable joystick, but if it's awkward to use . . .

Well, there you have it. If a joystick stands this much punishment from a ZZAP! reviewer, it's sure to serve you well.

If your faithful old joystick is past its prime, now is a good time to purchase a new one, what with all that Christmas cash just lying around in envelopes. But – which one?

### SUNCOM TAC-5

Supplier: MicroProse Ltd, 2 market Place, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 5DA. Tel (0666) 54326  
Price: £13.99

Following on from Suncom's Tac 2 and 3 joysticks is the Tac 5, the latest in the Tac-in-Audible Controller range. The light beige and grey stick features a shaft-mounted thumb button and two base buttons.

The microswitches must be the loudest ever used in a joystick (hence the name), and while this is a good indication of a clear signal, it becomes a positive nuisance in frantic play. The base buttons are in fact part of the same piece of plastic, and make contact with a small microswitch, while the top fire button is a tiny sealed switch, depressed directly.

The stick is quite responsive in use, giving good diagonals, but the travel from switch to switch reduces its precision and the main shaft also swivels slightly, making it feel very loose.

The large case is a bit bulky and lacks a means of securing to a surface. The long stick makes it 'top-heavy' in play and tends to flop from side to side unless firmly grasped – a difficult task at the best of times.

**Responsiveness: Stick 71%**

Great for finding diagonals but the stick travel is too long and lacks a decent feedback.

**Responsiveness: Button 55%**

Base buttons are quite firm and responsive, but the silent stick button is less positive.

**Ergonomics 25%**

Unstable on a surface, and uncomfortable to hold due to chunky casing.

**Durability 98%**

Brilliant – the tough case and high-quality switches should see years

of active service.

**Value For Money 60%**

A touch expensive compared to the competition.

**Overall 68%**

Firm, tactile and effective, but ultimately unimpressive.

