FAQ REGARDING COLORS FOR TEAM PLAY

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PURPOSE:
This FAQ is the result of over 80+ late hours, frustration, and experimentation with the .CON files and other "build" tools. The purpose behind these hours was so that my fellow officemates and I could distinguish between our inter-department teams while playing Dukematch. I am elated that we can now have team colors for Duke Nuke'm 3D (not everyone has a Pentium to play Quake! or can wait until Duke 3D team play add-on is released - hint!!). While you are free to distribute this FAQ everywhere, I would ask that you not "plagiarize" my ideal as your own.

BACKGROUND:
Although many methods have been tried to create the appearance of team play within Duke 3D, I haven't seen any that actually change the color of the teams. The following section describes the methods that I tried to force colors into our teamplay deathmatches.

Since the build engine uses the same icon for all starting players, it would not do any good to change the sprite color of the "Aplayer" icon. Although changing the color of a sector also changes the color of the player while he/she is in that sector - that too failed because it is not fun unless the various teams can interact and go hand-to-hand combat. Therefore, I moved to the .CON files.

Within the .CON files there are a number of variables drawn from the .EXE game file, .DEF files, and the .CFG file. Unfortunately the framework of the GAME.CON file is on actors taken as a whole (i.e. if I placed a command for the APLAYER actor to change to red, it would effect all players) which does not result in team identification. Therefore, a unique variable was needed to focus in and only change one team's color.

My next step was to scan the .CFG and .EXE file for variables not mentioned in the GAME.CON file. I found the variable PLAYERNAME used in both of these files. This variable is used in the game for the familiar "killed by ____" messages. Thus, I thought I could base the color to search for certain PLAYERNAME variables and assign colors based on the call signs people used. Unfortunately, intentionally or unintentionally the GAME.CON file does not recognize this variable.

For brevity sake, I will skip the rest of my failed attempts and now get to the experiment that worked. I came up with an ideal for the player to pick something up that the GAME.CON would recognize and that it would continuously scan and modify in all players at all times and that not every player possessed (I chose to use the

check_pstandard state which controls the various frames of duke depending on his actions). Obviously this means inventory items. The trouble is - what inventory items don't we use that much in dukematch and the player can't expend accidentally? Answer - access cards and boots. Since dukematch starts all players with all the access cards, boots is our answer. Therefore, my .CON file change scans the APLAYER actor and if the GET_BOOTS amount is above a certain amount, his sprite color is changed to another color. So the key is to use the hallway system (similar to Quake's difficulty hallways and Anthony Zinno's 4TEAMTEN.MAP) and have the players start in a common area, force them to get out of that common area (my favorite is laser turrets), choose a hallway, and at the end teleport to chosen spots on the actual map. This method can be superimposed onto any existing map. The added bonus is that it eliminates that annoying problem of respawing to the location nearest where you died and giving your opponent a free kill!!

MECHANICS:
1) Place the following state at the beginning of your GAME.CON file:

```
state pcolor
    ifpinventory GET_BOOTS BOOT_AMOUNT spritepal 0
    else spritepal 2
ends
```

2) Type the following line as the first line in the existing state "check_pstandard":
```
    state pcolor
```

That's it!!! Obviously you can choose the colors to suit your own needs. The above code starts all players at the default colors (0) and if the .CON file detects boots at the full amount it will switch the player to color(2). I tried to use straight blue and red, but the blue APLAYERs kept appearing 3 feet above the ground!! Hence, I decided that normal players and red team will distinguish the teams enough. Our experience in the office has been that red team stands out from far away, so make your players that deserve a handicap be on the red team. Also keep in mind when you design your teleports that you should not be able to "jump" back into the teleporter (otherwise players could change their colors in the middle of the game). See my attached map for how I solve this problem with drop-down shafts, closed entrance area, and moving walkways.

SUMMARY:
I realize this is not a permanent solution to Duke 3D team play, but it is a significant leap from "imagined teams' or trying to discern player's pants colors at 100 yards while dodging rpg missiles! If you have any comments or further enhancements PLEASE forward them to me at my E-MAIL address below:

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Happy hunting!!!