NiGHTS into Dreams Gameplay System FAQ

by SamIAm   Updated to v0.5 on Jul 6, 2016

```
--------------------------------------------------------------------------
NiGHTS into Dreams...
In-Depth Gameplay System FAQ
Version 1.0

NiGHTS, NiGHTS into Dreams... and all affiliated characters mentioned within
this FAQ are copyright 1996 Sonic Team and Sega Enterprises LTD.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------

Format Test: if the next line wraps, this FAQ may display incorrectly
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890

Table of Contents
----------------------

xx.   Introduction
I.      Beginning The Stage and Child Form
II.     NiGHTS control
III.    Blue Chips and Ideya Captures
IV.     Items, Links and Scoring
V.      Other Major Sources of Points
VI.     Enemies
VII.    Special Items
VIII.   Nightopians
IX.     Bosses
X.      Putting It All Together
XI.     Miscellaneous Tips and Tricks


--------------------------------------------------------------------------


--------------------
xx. Introduction
--------------------


There are a lot of people like myself who think that Sonic Team's NiGHTS into
Dreams... isn't just one of the most creative and wonderful games to come out
of Sega, but that it ranks among the best action video games of all time. With
a fun pretext, dazzling graphics, and fast, tactical gameplay that works with
anyone's tempo, it's really got something for everyone.  Unfortunately, its
uniqueness makes it a hard game to learn, and even the most intuitive gamer
has to spend his first few tries failing in order to figure out how NiGHTS
works. This alone might turn some people off to it, but for the rest of you
who want to learn and don't find enough information in the game's instruction
manual, I would like to help by making this guide to complement it. Here
you'll find no stage-by-stage strategies for the game, but rather an in-depth
explanation of basic gameplay mechanics. Lucky for you, NiGHTS is ultimately a
simple game, so this won't take long.

However, anyone who does not own NiGHTS and is looking for a basic description
of how the game works will probably just be confused by everything below. It's
almost impossible to describe NiGHTS in a way that gives someone who has never
seen it any idea how it really is. The best I can do is this: NiGHTS is akin
```

to a racing game with four inter-locking tracks in each single level. You must
fulfill certain requirements on each track to advance to the next one until
all 4 tracks are completed to beat the level, all the while racking up as many
points as possible via obstacles on the course. Except you're not driving a
car on a road; in NiGHTS, you are flying through a dream.

You all know how to put a game in your Saturn and start it. In the case of
NiGHTS, getting as far as the level select screen and choosing a stage isn't
much more difficult, either, so I won't cover it. But once the loading
sequence for the stage you chose is over, it's time to start the real game.

I.   Beginning The Stage and Child Form

You will drop into the stage as one of two children, Eliott or Claris. Within
about one second, a scene will start in which monsters fly up, knock you over
and steal several orbs from you, and you will not be able to move. This will
happen without fail at the beginning of every stage and is mostly irrelevant
to how you play, so don't try to do anything about it. However, take note that
you can move during the second before the monsters hit you. After the camera
breaks away to show a monster hiding one of the orbs, it will return to the
child and you are back in control.

When playing as one of the two children, you will find the control to be
basically the same as most 3D platformers. In technical terms, this means
that the 4 basic directions on the control pad (hopefully you are using the
analog controller) correspond roughly with the "4 compass directions" of
NiGHTS's 3D world. This should be easy and intuitive.

You can jump with the A, B, or C buttons. Pressing jump again at the same
moment that the child lands allows you to do a super-jump. Press the R and L
shoulder buttons to rotate the camera. Basic items, like stars and blue chips,
will attract to you automatically when you get close to them.

No matter which stage you chose, you will see the same basic thing when you
enter it. In addition to the scene where the orbs are stolen from you, you
will see a blue gazebo directly in front of you, inside of which is a dancing
purple Harlequin – NiGHTS. When you walk into the palace, the child will
essentially turn into NiGHTS, whom you will then assume control of.

You are free to wander around and even attempt to beat the stage in the form
of the child, but playing the game properly means playing as NiGHTS. Advanced
tricks aside, you will want to get to the Ideya palace and start playing as
NiGHTS as fast as possible. As you will understand later, you will potentially
lose points by wasting time in the form of one of the children.

After 20 seconds of playing as the child in the beginning of the stage, a
floating alarm clock will appear near wherever you are standing. It will
remain stationary for a few moments, but then it will begin slowly homing in
on you. You can out-run it at first, but it slowly increases its speed until
it's virtually impossible to avoid. Once its light touches you, the child you
are controlling will "wake up" and your game will be over. You can, however,
knock it over and stall it by jumping at it.

Fulfilling the requirements to complete a level with one of the children
involves the same basic premise as doing so with NiGHTS, so I won't cover that

here. However, the kids cannot do everything and go everywhere that NiGHTS can, so this can be difficult, especially as far as getting points is concerend.

II. NiGHTS Control

The instant you turn into NiGHTS, the control scheme of the game changes drastically. You are now locked on to a so-called rail, a predetermined path that eliminates one physical dimension from your control. In exchange for this, you are given complete freedom of movement (flight) within that path and the remaining 2 dimensions. For a better understanding of what is going on, press the X button while on the level select screen to see a 3D map of any stage. You should notice a flickering line which forms a loop and intersects the Ideya Palace. This is the rail forming the first "course" of the stage, which they call a "mare". Every stage has 4 courses which are played in sequence. Press right or left on the control pad to see the other courses rails while on the map screen.

The best way to deal with the rail and the new control scheme is to start thinking of the game as a 2D sidescroller that takes place in a 3D world. Pressing a direction on the control pad will move NiGHTS in that direction relative to the TV screen, not necessarily the terrain. The important thing is, as is the case with most side-scrollers, you generally make progress by moving to the right. In NiGHTS, just like in any other fundamentally 2D game, this literally means pressing right on the controller. Don't try to move "into" the screen or you probably won't go anywhere. Just move to the right and let the game scroll. As you see on the map, the courses all form loops. This means that by continuing to the right, you will eventually arrive back at the Ideya Palace and start the same course/path again (which is what you want). Sometimes the perspective will become strange and it will seem counter-intuitive to press right, but just have faith in the rail to guide you. It's always there, it always loops, and for the most part, every course is designed to be played by progressing to the right.

As NiGHTS, you can fly in any direction within the 2D rail using the direction pad. NiGHTS moves with equal ease in all directions. You will come to know how gravity is barely relevant in this game.

Pressing the A, B or C button will let you dash, however you cannot turn as sharply while you do this. Also, the amount you can dash is limited. You will notice a green bar in the lower left of the screen that slowly depletes as you dash, and when it is empty, you can't do it anymore. The meter can be replenished by flying through orange or yellow rings.

You will see a trail of pixie-dust left behind NiGHTS as you fly. If you fly in a circle and make a ring of this dust, you will see a sort of whirlwind form inside the circle,. This is called a making a paraloop. Items inside a paraloop will be collected automatically, and enemies caught inside a paraloop will perish.

In addition to using a paraloop, all items in the game can be collected simply by flying into them.

Finally, you can perform acrobatic stunts by pressing combinations of the L and R shoulder buttons with directional movements, but doing so is useless during most of the game. Pressing L and R at the same time works as a break, but this is even less necessary than stunts.

You are limited at all times by a ground and a ceiling. A little tip: most
beginners gravitate toward these boundaries because seeing terrain up closes
gives them a sense of direction. In NiGHTS, the rail gives you all the
direction you need. Most of the action is happening between the floor and the
ceiling, so don't miss out on it. Again, just have faith in the rail.

III. Blue Chips and Ideya Captures

In a sense, this is the most fundamental part of playing NiGHTS.

When you become NiGHTS and start flying through a course, you will see all
sorts of things: orange and yellow rings, gold stars, enemies, cone-headed
Nightopians, and most importantly, blue spheres and 1 big Ideya capture.

Think back to the loading sequence, Remember all those colorful orbs that
started floating around you as the stage loaded and began? There were 5 of
them, and they are called Ideyas. Monsters, called Nightmaren, flew up and
stole 4 of them when the level began. They hid one in each of the stage's 4
courses, locking them inside so-called Ideya captures. In that sequence, you
saw one such orb being locked away in a capture somewhere in the first course.
Your job is to get them all back.

With one orb remaining, you enter the Ideya Palace as one of the kids, deposit
the orb, and turn into NiGHTS. From that moment, a timer starts counting down
from 120 seconds, and before it hits zero, you need to retrieve another Ideya
orb from the first course and return it to the Ideya palace. Upon depositing
another Ideya orb, you will finish the first course and start on the next one.
Think of it like exchanging an Ideya for 120 seconds worth of controlling
NiGHTS.

Every course has one Ideya orb along its path, and it is locked inside an
Ideya capture. In order to "blow" the capture, you must collect 20 of the
round "blue chips" from throughout the course and fly into the capture to
deposit them. If you fly into a capture with less than 20 chips, don't worry,
they will count toward the total.. As all other items do, the blue chips will
regenerate in places where you collected them once you complete a full lap of
any course, the checkpoint being the Ideya palace. In many courses, there are
not enough blue chips available in a single lap to blow the capture.

Upon blowing the capture, several things will happen. First, you will receive
an Ideya orb, which will float around you for the rest of the course. Second,
you will receive a bonus according to this equation: (120 - number of seconds
it took to blow the capture) x 100. Finally, you will then enter bonus time,
which means that for the rest of the time you spend in the course, all the
points you acquire will be multiplied by 2.

Note that the timer for the bonus you get when you blow capture in the first
course begins counting down when you take control of the child, not when you
take control of NiGHTS. This is why it is generally important to enter the
Ideya palace as quickly as possible in the beginning of the stage.

If you fail to bring an Ideya back to the Ideya palace as NiGHTS before the
yellow timer at the top of the screen hits zero, you will turn back into the
kid you started as. You'll fall back to the ground, your score for the course
will be reset, and all the blue chips you had in stock will scatter around
you. When this happens, you must simply continue the course as the kid or

succumb to the alarm clock, which instantly appears nearby. You can walk freely all over the stage now, but you must still retrieve the same Ideya orb that you were going after as NiGHTS. If you already had the Ideya orb when you turned back into the kid, then all you have to do is make it back to the Ideya palace.

Assuming you do make it back to the palace with an Ideya orb, you will receive a bonus of 50 points for every blue chip you have in stock, your score will be recorded and reset, and you will move on to the next course. Regardless of whether or not you finished the course as NiGHTS, you will begin the next course as NiGHTS again.

After depositing the 5th Ideya orb and completing the 4th course, you will move onto a boss. See the boss section for more info.

IV. Items, Links and Scoring

It is perhaps a bit late in the guide to say this, but here it is: The real point of NiGHTS is not to just make it through the levels, but to get as high a score as possible. In spite of all the fuss about Ideyas and captures, this is where the challenge - and the fun - of the gameplay in NiGHTS is made.

Set all that stuff about Ideyas aside and look at what is on each course. Among other things like enemies, there are blue chips, gold stars, and orange and yellow rings. These are the essentials of the scoring system in NiGHTS. There is only one thing to do with them, and that's to collect them. The blue chips and the stars are collected by flying into them or paralooping them, and the rings are collected in a sense just by flying through them, after which they will terminate. Think of all 3 of these things as being "items".

Items collected alone are worth only 10 points. However, items collected in a time-sensitive succession (ie within roughly 1 second) of one another will become part of a link, which allows the items' value to grow. For example, if there is a line of four stars, and you pick up all of them each within one second of the previous, you will receive 10 points for the first star, 20 for the second, 30 for the third, and 40 for the fourth. This rate of climbing continues steadily until it hits a ceiling at the 10th item. Therefore, after the 9th item in the link, all items linked continuously are worth 100 points. However, as soon as you fail to collect another item within 1 second of the last one, your link will break, and the next item you get will be worth only 10 points again no matter how high your link was.

The bright side is, it's not as complicated as it sounds, and better yet, that's really about all there is to it. There are other sources of points besides linking these 3 items, but they are only secondary to this main system.

Let me take a moment to impress upon you what kind of potential proper linking has. If you collect 30 items without linking any of them together, you will get 300 points. If you get those same items in three links of 10, you will get 1650 points. If you get all 30 items in one long link, you will get 2550 points. This is why learning how to exploit links can make your scores explode.

V. Other Major Sources of Points

There are other things you can do to earn significant points other than
linking. Note those that were already listed in the Blue Chips and Ideya
Captures section.

A: Bonus balls
    These are very common. In all sort of places, you will notice these funny
little orange and yellow striped beach-ball objects situated among the main
items. There will always be a number by these bonus balls, and in order to get
the points they contain, you must collect the ball, then make an item link of
the same quantity as this number. You will get 1300 points for pulling this
off.

B. Stunt loops
    Nearly every stage has one of these somewhere in one of the courses.
Unlike the normal rings that work as items, these blue and yellow mixed rings
will activate a 10 second bonus chance when you fly through them. When this
happens, you will see a yellow tape in your trail instead of the normal pixie
dust, and special music will start. Your task is to simply do as many stunts
as you can with the L and R buttons in coordination with the D-pad. The first
trick you do earns you 100 points, and the value approximately doubles with
every trick afterwards. You can do a maximum of 11 tricks, which will award
you 15,000 points in total.

C. Nightopian Star bonus.
    Those stars are good for something special after all. Assuming you don't
kill any of the little cone-headed Nightopians (done via paralooping them),
you will see a special Nightopian holding a sign over the Ideya palace during
the 3rd and 4th courses. The sign tells you the number of stars you have
collected, and anytime during the 4th course, you may fly into the Nightopian
to collect a one-time star bonus of 10 multiplied by the number on the sign.

VI. Enemies

    There are a lot of enemies in NiGHTS, and they all do their own special
little thing. I'm not going to list them one by one, but since they all
fulfill practically the same role, I can sum them up quickly and easily.

     In general, enemies are there to slow you down. Some enemies are little
more than speed-bumps, but many have attack patterns. Being struck by most
attacks automatically causes a 5 second deduction from the course timer, and
it also causes NiGHTS to halt and spin out uncontrollably for a moment. Simply
touching some enemies can cause this to happen. There are some special attacks
that can do things like shrink NiGHTS or drain your dash meter, so watch out!
It's up to you to familiarize yourself with all the different enemies, but
they are all very simple in their behavior patterns.

You can kill enemies in a few ways. First, when you fly into one when it is
not on the offense, you will grab in and start pivoting around it as though it
were swinging you around. When you press the dash button in this state, you
will knock out the enemy and burst forward in whichever direction NiGHTS is
facing. Second, you can hit the enemy while dashing, and if it isn't ready for
you, it will rocket off and bounce all over the place, thereafter neutralized.
Finally, you can simply paraloop the little bugger into oblivion, which is
safe no matter what it is doing. No matter what your method, you will receive
200 points for enemy destruction.

```
----------------------
VII. Special Items
----------------------


     Paralooping certain areas, most commonly those where there are groups of
regular items, will reveal one of two special items. There is a special chime
that plays when this happens. These items are collectible only 1 time per play
of a stage, although there can be more than one of each of them in different
locations within each stage.

Sonic Item
    This item is rimmed with green and has a purple silhouette of Sonic the
Hedgehog in the middle of it. Collecting it will refill your dash meter
completely. This can be extremely useful.

Nightopian Item
     This one is rimmed with pink and has a picture of a Nightopian in the
middle of it. A moment after you collect it, a happy looking Nightopian will
fly to your side and hover around you for about 15 seconds. During this time,
all stars and blue chips you fly near will automatically gravitate toward you.
This can be nice for beginners, but since it may delay the time it takes to
collect an item and therefore break your chain, the Nightopian item is
actually something most players avoid.

Blue Chip Cages:
    As the name suggests, this is actually a giant cage filled with about a
half-dozen blue chips. All you have to do is fly into or dash through the cage
like it was an enemy, and when the cage breaks and the chips are released,
they will automatically gravitate toward you.



----------------------
VIII. Nightopians
----------------------


     There are a few different kinds of Nightopians, but they all have the
same appearance -  purplish blue clothes, fairy wings, cone-shaped heads and
halos. Many people think these guys are enemies at first, but they're actually
harmless. Nightopians live in every stage, and they are responsible for
singing the background music. Depending on their mood, the music will changes.
There are 4 different moods, but they change with only 1 variable – the degree
of the Nightopians' happiness, Since different Nightopians sing different
parts of the music, there are many permutations possible for each basic
background theme. You won't hear any changes in the music, however, until you
finish a stage and start it again.

     You generally effect the Nightopians' moods with one of two actions. By
killing them, effecting their mood negatively, or by hatching their eggs and
creating new ones, effecting their mood positively. It also seems that you can
effect their mood simply by how you move around them, but it is difficult to
pinpoint any specific factors in this. However, this mood does not technically
have any effect on anything important in the game itself, so you don't have to
worry about it much. The one exception to this is that if you kill a
Nightopian, you will not be able to receive the Nightopian star bonus in the
fourth course (unless you kill the Nightopian after you collect the bonus, you
sneaky devil).

     With the Christmas NiGHTS demo disk, you can actually find out the mood
```

of every Nightopian in every stage of the original game. If you don't have
this disk, you can sometimes still tell the mood of a group of Nightopians if
there is a special singing one among them. If he sounds like s chirping bird,
he is angry, and if he plays three harmonic notes, he is happy.

IX. Bosses

     Once you complete the fourth course of a stage and deposit the fifth
Ideya orb, you will see NiGHTS be teleported out of the Ideya palace and into
blackness. You will get a quick summary of your performance and current total
score for all 4 courses, and then the boss will start.

     Every stage has a different boss, and I won"t go through how to beat
each one of them. Just like the normal enemies in the stage, though, they all
work with the same system, and that is what you should learn here.

     Once the boss stage starts, a timer will begin counting down from 120
seconds. Before it is up, you must defeat the boss or lose the entire stage,
and your score with it. Based on how quickly you defeat the boss, you will
receive a multiplier for your total score. The lowest multiplier is 1.0,
obviously not having any effect, but from there it goes up to 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
etc. up to 2.0, potentially doubling your score for the entire stage.

X. Putting It All Together

     So you know how to blow the Ideya Captures in all the courses and not get
nailed by the alarm clock, you see how the link system works, and you can at
least kill the bosses before the timer runs out. You'll be surprised to know
that with this level of skill, you will be able to beat the game and see all 3
endings. If you've had enough NiGHTS already, well, thanks for playing. But if
you want more, you have only to look at the levels again and ask youself if
you could do it better. It's a question many of us have been asking ourselves
for years, actually. NiGHTS is all about chasing that high score, and it's
time to add together all the different factors in the game to see how to do it
as best as you can. Here is how you should base your thinking:

     Go into the gazebo palace and turn into NiGHTS as quickly as possible to
get a good Ideya recovery bonus when you blow the capture in the first course.

     Blowing the capture puts you into bonus time, which doubles the amount
of points you get for ANY bonus. This is why you need to put a high priority
on blowing the capture as quickly as possible. Very few things are worth
sacrificing potential seconds of bonus time.

     You are NOT trying to complete the courses as fast as possible. You are
trying to get as many points as possible. Ideally, you shouldn't wind up back
at the Ideya palace with the orb until you are moments away from running out
of time on a course.

     You want to spend as much time as possible getting points, and since
everything but enemies and the Ideya capture regenerates on the course with
every lap, the amount of points you get is limited only by your speed. Just
remember, nearly every course in the game can be lapped more than once.

Don't think of the bosses as giving you up to two times your original
score; think of them as possibly cutting your score down to as little as one
half of what it was. In other words, anything other than a 2.0 multiplier is a
 loss. But then, if you are a beginner, don't stress about it too much yet.

XI. Miscellaneous Tips And Tricks
----

^NiGHTS requires a high degree of familiarity with the layout of the courses
in order to play even moderately well. You will make better progress overall
if you aim to learn the courses early on.

^A good tip for beginners who just want to get through the level: don't pick
up every little thing you see, or you will most likely run out of time, turn
back into the kid, and then probably wind up losing to the alarm clock. Just
get what you think you need to progress, and keep moving to the right.

^Dashing is good. When people go for really high scores, they dash through
most parts of the courses. Once you feel confident about the layout of the
stages, go for it. This is where you realize how fast NiGHTS really is.

^It is possible to keep a continuous link going in the first course of every
stage, carrying over links between laps and running up a total link count well
into the hundreds. This includes Spring Valley, but with a twist - on that
one, you have to go backwards to make the link connect. Very tough!

^It is only possible to get a 2.0 multiplier on the boss Gilwing by
paralooping the end of his tail. There are a few ways to do this. The one that
works for me is to basically start following him at the beginning of the
fight, come up under him, then turn down and back to paraloop his tail. You
must be quick, of course.

^For advanced players only: It can actually be to your score's advantage to
wander around as the kid in the beginning of the stage and pick up enough blue
chips so that NiGHTS can blow the Ideya capture in the first lap of the first
course. The extra bonus time you get for doing this can make up for the loss
of Ideya-recovery bonus points.

^Super Jumping is the fastest way to traverse long distances as a child,
especially when there are hills involved.

^If you plan on playing for really high scores, you should consider going
through all the levels once specifically to kill as many Nightopians as you
can. This is so that you won't have any to kill by accident in your runs,
which will ensure the star bonus at the end of the 4th course.