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HALO 5 GUARDIANS

In broad terms, there's two ways of reviewing any multiplayer experience. The first is that you can talk about the mechanical nature of that experience. You can explain weapon reload timings, the downtime between ability uses, the variety and structure of arenas, the best engagement tactics for given conditions, and anything else that boils down to explaining how each piece moves in the game of chess. The second is that you can talk about the emotional nature of that experience. How do these elements make you feel, and more importantly, when other people access these elements at the same time, how do your combined actions make you feel?

I'm increasingly interested in this second mode of evaluation. The emotions that a multiplayer game facilitates within a group of people through its design makes or breaks my desire to play a game, full stop. When Heroes of the Storm creates a readout where every player can evaluate the individual contributions of each of their team members during the match, it creates a system where a short-term downswing in performance can become a site for bullying. When Destiny's loot system creates objective optimal loadout choices where a player can be rejected out of hand for not having made those choice, it does the same.

I honestly believe that evaluating Halo 5: Guardians' multiplayer mechanics and afforded emotions alongside one another is the only thing that's left, as this review will demonstrate, because the only thing left to say about the Guardians multiplayer is that it is a Halo multiplayer experience.

If you've played a Halo game's multiplayer mode, you've played every Halo multiplayer mode to some degree. While there are an extreme number of small changes, the broad strokes are so broad as to constitute a genre all of their own. You control a space marine who has an overshield with quite a bit of health that can be taken down via damage from enemy weapons. That overshield regenerates after a short time of inaction, and if you're shot while it is down you will more than likely die. Some weapons destroy that shield

quickly, like grenades, but every weapon is going to eat through the shield really fast if you're being shot in the head.

Arena

In team-based Arena playlists, it makes for decent play. Your team ends up having specialists (someone will have the shotgun; another will camp the sniper rifle spawn). Each person, without external communication, can generally figure out what other people are doing and respond in a helpful (or blockading) way. On a mechanical level, the game feels balanced around these team deathmatch, point capture and capture the flag modes. The power level of weapons never gets out of hand, and with there being such a hard focus on a "goal," there's very little room for people to break off into shards.



Grunt Goblin:
The new fire-fight boss from latest DLC..

Infection: The new look for zombie spartans.

Ground Pound: New spartan apial smash ability.

Tundra Mantis: Now our favorite vehicles are getting customized.

Spartan: New bad ass Helioskrill armor and Into The Fire stance.

Warzone: Slayer, Objective, and Firefight all in one!



Warzone

The Warzone mode is this game's attempt at invigorating the format. It is a giant battleground where two large teams compete to control points and kill certain boss enemies while not losing those points that they're trying to control. It's Battlefield-esque, and it creates really interesting 10 or 15 person fights that stretch into cramped rooms, garages and large outdoor arenas. Contrary to literally everything I wrote above, this game mode leans heavily into changing what each player is able to bring into the game when they respawn from death, and this is accomplished through the Requisition system.

Requisitions operate in two parts: their use in Warzone and their use in the larger experience of the Halo 5 multiplayer in general. The former is fairly simple. You collect Requisitions (I'll explain how in a moment), and when you respawn in Warzone you are able to equip yourself with better-than-Assault Rifle weapons. Depending on which Requisitions you have, you can get any weapon in the game as far as I can tell.

Beyond that, you can also summon every vehicle in the game for maximal "here comes the cavalry" experiences.

You get Requisitions in packs, and you can get those in two ways. You can get them when you level up in the appropriately-grindy Multiplayer Leveling System that measures both generic gained experience and specific commendation accomplishments like "Killed 100 Spartans." The other way you can get those packs is by buying them either with in-game currency or with cold,

hard cash. Opening the packs gives you an assortment of common, uncommon and rare Requisitions alongside things like weapon skins, armors, character stances and other cosmetic items. You can "sell" these things back to the game for currency or hang onto them for use in Warzone mode.



Breakout: The new 4v4 one life faceoff game type.

Right Page: The Masterchief himself.



"here comes the cavalry"