Some games easily fall into monotony even though they aim at delivering an action packed experience. It also happens that the action is delivered in a way that is so complex that it can discourage players to play the said game even before having mastered it. When it comes to Loadout, those concessions do not apply; primitive brutal action is the essence of the explosion simulator that it is.

Loadout is an online competitive third person shooter that refreshes us with a touch of brutality that had been long lost in the genre. And who says competition also says progression: the game offers a simple way of upgrading and modifying your weapons so you will always strive for a particular part or upgrade. This is indeed a very satisfying system because it allows you to choose each part of your weapon to create your very own. Credits gained after each matches ensure that players gradually unlocks different upgrades.

The game being free-to-play, developers incorporated real-money currency along with the rewards gotten by players after each match. Fortunately, weapon upgrades do not necessarily mean stronger weapons. This would be a shame for such a game to sacrifice fairness and ruin the gameplay, favoring players who chose to pay for credits. In fact, the only elements that are exclusive to the real money currency are purely esthetic.

It is easy to pick up the game and enjoy it since, when you start a match, there are no fancy mechanics in the way. The most elaborate thing is the single perk that each player choose, whom behave differently one from another. However it can be a bit frustrating at first to face players who have already adapted themselves to the pace of the game. The characters move very fast and it can be a bit disorienting to try to evaluate what caused your death since; it can sometimes happen in seconds. Even though most experienced players will know it is only a rite of passage, novices might get discouraged at some points.

Nevertheless, it is clear that once the basics are grasped on, it is easy to get sucked in the frenetic action, adrenaline-rushing-matches, that the game provides. You will find yourself pressing the left mouse button so frenetically you will wonder why it does not make you spawn back faster.

The game sits on the foundation of most modern shooters, borrowing some play modes such as capture the flag and blitz (control-the-node). But there are also some new concepts that we have not seen in the latest years: Jackhammer, for example, is a capture-the-flag match where the flag is replaced by a deadly hammer. As the player rushes toward his own base with the enemy hammer, he benefits from the hammer’s power, allowing him to crush his enemies. While doing so, the hammer-carrier charges the weapon and will score more points when he come back to his base. It is in these simple modifications like that that Loadout gets its unique feel, packing the action in a way that feel stimulating and refreshing.

It would be a shame to conclude this review without highlighting the visuals that make Loadout such an enjoyable piece of work. The simple, cartoony, visuals go hand to hands with the game's goofy sense of humor and penchant for excessive violence. It is rare to see that much gore in a video-game, but the way it is presented in Loadout just fits the explosive gameplay. The only thing that is missing and that would make the presentation just perfect is a soundtrack. While the menus have rock-themed song, no music is to be heard in matches. It is easy to see how this audiovisual marriage would enhance the overall experience and take it to another level.

The game has only been out for a couple of months now and some game types maps have already been added to the initial content. In its current state, the game is definitively enjoyable and yet more is to come.

Loadout is a beautiful shooter that sends us back to an era where there was never enough blood and explosions. The third person competitive shooter brings some interesting game modes that feels refreshing and will keep the player coming back as every match feels different. While only a few maps are available, more are to come and the game’s free-to-play scheme certainly makes it a worthy contender against other games of the genre.

8/10

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