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recording if they have like a bunch of Japanese games or something like that. I'm usually I'm like, okay, they they they know things they know. Like, like, no one has copies of like, I don't know, Silent Hill or xeno gears or like weird stuff like that. Yeah, that isn't usually pretty plugged in. But yeah, this guy I was like, Oh, he's got a fair amount of like no real notable games here. Maybe he's.

Was it on Mercari?

No, it was on Facebook.

He lives down the street from me.

That's why I was like, I'll give you 60

because I could have just gone and gone down the street now. Yeah.

Like he was like, oh, he's like he's like, oh, if we decide to meet up, we could just meet up at this like Walmart.

That's like two minutes away from my house.

Yeah, I check Mercari like every morning and then probably every night just to see.

It's like a little platform.

I've enjoyed shopping on it a lot, especially considering some of the deals I've gotten, like the two Castlevania games, been like, "Oh, 20 bucks for both Lords of Shadow games? That's

not terrible." But now I get suspicious of things. Like, "Here's a \$17 copy of Simon's quest for the NES. I'm like, that doesn't seem right. Simon's Quest isn't very expensive, it's like 20 bucks. Yeah, but I feel like it should be more. I don't know. No, it's really not. I'm pretty sure that game... let me see. I've just seen... no, it's not expensive,

I checked. Here's a good looking copy of Castlevania for the NES. Simon's Quest loosed 14.99, post

charting. Yeah. So now that I have an NES in the house I'm like maybe I should get the Castlevania games. Well there's only two. Three there's three. Or three there's three. Three is the hard one. It's not really a like difficult or hard to find. No I mean like hard to find. Not online at least I've seen it a couple of times in the store it's just the more expensive one like 50 bucks. First ones like 30 ish right 30 to 40 yeah around I saw today actually for 30 bucks I was at a store today I was I went to a store to see if they could resurface my curse of darkness and he said oh because well because I just put it on and like the FMV video at the beginning was kind of skipping so I just took that as a sign of the game won't run. I didn't try the game. But he said that the disk was already resurfaced and the machine they have now probably wouldn't help. But they're getting a new one in like a month and a half. He said that that might be able to help. And obviously I'm not in a rush or anything. And who knows the game may play just fine. It's just maybe like the video file, you know, is the worst part of it because it doesn't look that scratched.

I was more interested in that he could tell it was resurfaced.

Like I want to know how he knew that.

That sounds bizarre.

Like I don't, I mean, he could have taken my money, so yeah.

Like I, it doesn't seem like a disadvantage that he would tell me, ah, that what we have, isn't going to help very much.

Yeah.

I just, it was more the, his awareness of the, like how the dislook, which I don't

I don't know.

So, but I was there and it was poking around and they had Castlevania one for 30 bucks

and I was like,

I kinda want it.

But then I go, I already own it on Switch

and it's on my Mr.

Like, I don't need it, but having it would be cool.

He did have, I don't know if he still has it,

but he has a Famicom copy of Castlevania 3 for like 90 bucks

and that's the good one 'cause that's the good music.

Oh, like the...

The Famicom.

Like, improved music?

When you...

I'm gonna recommend that when you play that game,

you choose the Japanese version.

Yeah.

'Cause the music is entirely different.

I will be playing actually an English translated ROM

of the Japanese version so I can understand it,

but also get the sick beats.

But I assume you'll just play on your...

Your copy of the collection, so play the Japanese one.

I kinda wanna still get like,

the rondo of blood vinyl. But you should. I mean, I just can't spend the money right

now. I yeah, when I saw that was all of them. Okay. Time to get the ones that the other

two that I actually cared. I mean, I would love to have all of them obviously. It's a

cool I mean, there's a I mean, there are lots of things I would like to have I would like

to have the full Shin Megami tensei vinyl lineup they just announced to that's really

cool I think. But I've never played those games and I never really listened to the soundtracks, not too much at least like here and there. Oh hey, my copy of my vinyls have shipped today. I need to, I'm getting pretty, pretty peeved at the Mondo gang. Still no reply to your email that's all. Oh! They finally reached out to me. Oh okay. Okay there we go, five days ago I just totally missed it. Oh it must have gone to another one of my inboxes. We're currently shipping all orders containing God of War Ragnarok. We're processing and shipping as quickly as we can. Thanks for your patience. Okay. Why is it taken? I mean it just it's we I guess it's just like I don't need it like ASAP but it was just a little odd that they're like May shipping and then it was like May came and went they're like they sent me an email They're like, "June shipping!"

And then now it's nearing the middle of July and I hadn't heard anything since the start of June.

And so I was kind of like, "What's going on here?"

Like, because...

Well, it's one of those things where it's like, when they charge you up front, like I get a little bit more like...

I'm not like mad or frustrated.

But yeah, it does get to a point where it's like,

"Okay, y'all charged me like five months ago for this.

Can we get it shipped out in a timely fashion like you've said you would here?"

like I know that's a little annoying I like that the Castlevania's were in stock and ready to ship that helps yeah I like that too so and it's cool because I probably ordered the one that like everyone's going yeah so like that mine is gonna take a little bit longer I bet you ordered did you just order Rondo no I got Rondo in Castlevania 3 I already had Symphony okay so I have the three games soundtracks that I really care about and the cool thing is is the Rondo one is Rondo and Dracula X so it's the Super Nintendo and the PC Engine and

then Draco's curse is both the NES and the Famicom so I get the the better one
and the you know the NES one so it's cool and the art on to them is so good
those two in particular I love the art. Well this is like the best Castlevania song
I think. Like this song rips. Oh every version of Divine Bloodlines. Yes. Oh yeah yeah yeah.
Like this song is great. And it's all because the PC Engine is the best.
Is this the... This is the first stage of Rondo. Yeah yeah but is this the song that plays when
when you take over as Alucard?

Nah.

I was thinking that song at the beginning of the castle
when you're going in and killing all the wolves
and you're like super powerful.

- It's in Smash too.

- Well of course it is.

- I wonder if there's a,

there's gotta be a Netflix version of this, right?

- Um, maybe.

I don't know if they would have tapped into it
because of--

- It's Richter.

- Yeah, that's why.

They may not have done it.

I almost preordered this one today, the physical of this.

- I'm trying to think of some upcoming,

I cannot believe you have gotten me into physical games.

What a bad time of mine.

- Well, I think you've done it to yourself.

- A little bit.

I mean, I've obviously always done,
like had some, I think it was going back
and getting my games from home,
is what kind of flipped the switch.

I was like, oh, I like this.

And then I was like, where did this game go?

don't I have this game anymore? When did I sell this game? And I started like thinking about all
these games from my childhood. I'm like, I need to get that back. I need to get this. I want this.

It's like, oh, no. What's weird, though, is like a lot of the things I have collected are things
that like, I don't know why I've collected. In some sense, like Pokemon makes sense. But

Why do I have a full Fire Emblem set for 3DS now?

Like, actually I do know I have those and that's just price.

Like those will just go up.

Fire Emblem games are going to be expensive.

Xenoblade is going to be expensive.

Yeah, I have a full Xenoblade Switch collection.

I bought two the other day for 35 bucks.

I thought you bought, you showed me a picture of all three of them.

I have Torna Golden Country.

That is a prequel to 2, but it does not have 2 itself on the card.

You didn't have the one that had both.

I thought that was the one with both in it.

I don't think it has both on it.

I'm pretty sure there's a version that's both.

I looked it up, it is a standalone...

Ooh.

- freak wolf thing. - Gotcha.

Now you just gotta go out.

I saw Xenoblade Chronicles X today.

I had a sad realization today.

I was at my favorite game store,

'cause he's like at the disc buffer.

And the other day, he posted a picture of Splinter Cell 3DS.

And I was like, "Complete in box."

I was like, "Ah, that's probably like 15 bucks."

because I think that going complete box price for that is 10 so at the store \$15 markup or a \$5 markup I was like maybe I'll snag that while I'm there I got there and it was 20 bucks I was like and I've noticed this lately at that particular store his prices that keep have kept climbing and they're just more expensive than the other stores in the area like he had Pandora Pandora Tomorrow and Double Agent on Xbox, which is what I need to complete my Splinter Cell collection. And he had both of those for I think around \$10 to \$12. And I stopped at another store on my way home because it was by the Best Buy I had a Stop At, and they had both those games in better condition for \$6 apiece. And I was like, "Yeah, my guy's just getting more too expensive," which is a bummer.

I don't understand. I've been trying to get a bead on some of my local stores and how they price things out too. But it's like the inverse at each store. Some of the stores, it is like, because I assume yours do this too, but they'll always have the price and then usually the date of when they got it in the shop and priced it as well.

Sometimes I see a price on the sticker, yes. I don't know if that means that's when they got it. I assume that's when they priced it.

A lot, yes, that's when they got it in the store and price did or whatever.

There's usually a date on most stickers at resale shops.

It's pretty common at most all of them.

But sometimes I noticed that the games that have been sitting in the store for a bit are

more expensive, but then other times they're less expensive.

Sometimes the games that have been in the shop, let's say 12 to 18 months, are cheaper at one store.

And it's like, "Okay, cool.

to find ones that have been sitting around the shop for a while that they priced back when this game wasn't as expensive. But other times I'll find games that have been sitting around forever and it's like, why is this so expensive? Like what on earth? Like, I don't know. And it's not always in relation to like newer games too. Like I showed you that Balan Wonderworld that one time that was like 60 bucks. But if you looked at the date had been in there since like 2021, it's like, okay, why does no one update the price on this?

Yeah, I caught that with a copy of Max Payne 3 that I bought for PS3 last month.

There were two copies on the shelf.

I grabbed one and it was \$15-\$17 and then the one that I bought was \$12 and just like they didn't price the other one and so I took the cheaper one obviously.

They were both the same condition, complete in box, all that jazz.

Pawn shops are weird about that though sometimes.

One time I took the two copies of Sekiro I found.

I was like, "Hey, this one's like \$10 more than this one."

I was like, "I'll buy them both, but can I get them for the same price?"

And she's like, "Oh, well, this one we got in."

Pawn shops are all about making money on what they paid for.

She's like, "Oh, well, this one we paid X amount of money for this, so we're trying to make this profit.

So we need it to be this price so we can profit this much, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

And so it all depends on what they buy it for a lot of times.

So when I go to pawn shops, I'll make them offers like, "Can you do this?"

And they'll usually check in their computer what they paid for it to get it in the shop.

And usually they're like yeah, okay, we can do that. So it's really weird, but they don't they don't that's the one thing

I do like about them

They only care about making a profit on what they paid for rather than like price charting things

Yeah, except the other day

I did go to a pawn shop

Where they didn't have prices on any of their games and I asked the guys like how much is this worth and he's like hold

On he pulled up pressure and on like on the computer there. I was like, dude, I was like, I don't

Know and I just like like I wanted to just be like, okay. I'm out. Bye like

But I just kind of I don't like making it making it clear that I'm trying to buy games to resell them sometimes even though

most people don't care

Yeah, I just because then you're going they're going straight to

The source and they're like, well, it's this much and I could probably mark it up that much

Yeah, I like to try to kind of play dumb

not too dumb, but like I

Don't know. Yeah. I also don't want to stay like well

Like like with the guy with the like with the guy with the Pokemon for instance there

I didn't say like when he's like how much would you pay for it?

I didn't say oh, I'll give you 120 bucks because that's what it says on the internet. I was like, I don't know

This much 60 bucks

Hello everybody and welcome to chapter select a seasonal podcast where we bounce back and forth a series exploring its evolution design and legacy

For this season we are covering the Pokemon franchise. My name is max Roberts, and I'm joined as always by Logan Moore. Hi Logan

- Alola, Max.

- I should have said Alola.

Aloha, Aloha.

- That's a very weird, it's a very weird element of Sun and Moon. - They're like, this is Hawaiian, but not.

- I think what throws me off with the greeting is that it's Aloha, which is fine, it's a play on Aloha, but then that's also the literal name of the region.

It'd be like if I approached you and I said, United States!

It'd be like, what?

- That sounds like something that would happen and death stranding, like United States, and you know, somewhere, and then wherever you're from on the internet.

- It's a Kojima-esque idea for sure.

- It feels like that, it feels like that sometimes.

I will say, aloha to all of our members who support us over on Super Chapter Select. For just 20 bucks a year, you can sign up, support the show directly and get access to longer episodes, exclusive episodes, and bonus content.

For a Pokemon season, we've been duking it out, embracing the rivalry in true Pokemon fashion.

And we actually, we gotta record our Ultra Sun battle this weekend, but for just 20 bucks a year, you can sign up, you can go over to listeningwithsuperpower.com.

That's the new URL I bought just for this.

I like it a lot.

- We still haven't done our battle,

which I think if I'm correct,

I think this is the first time we've not done the battle,

or we've done the battle after recording,

because we might talk about our teams a little bit

throughout this podcast, which might tip us off

to like strategies and game planning here.

- I'll make a solemn promise now.

I won't change my team.

It will, I suppose, impact the PR.

- I'm not changing my team either.

- All right, I promise.

- My six are locked in here, so.

- All right, cool.

Well, if you want to see how that battle shakes out, like we will eventually find out here,

head over to listeningwithsuperpower.com.

There you go, that's a good URL.

You didn't even tell me about that.

I did, I did.

You said you liked it.

Actually, you did tell me that.

There's been a lot of things going on in my-

It's been so long.

In both of our-

There's been a lot going on in both of our lives over the past month.

You're moving, you've got a nice little new setup now.

Yeah.

There's a toolbox behind you, which in a picture of Nathan Drake's face.

Oh, can you see?

Yeah, that's my signed Uncharted 2 poster a buddy gave me.

I got Neil Druckmann's signature on there.

- The new full president of Naughty Dog coming 2024.

- I got Bruce's signature on there.

- Chief full president.

You gotta get Evan now.

- He might be on there.

I actually haven't looked.

I'll have to check.

- Naughty Dog things aside, Max,

let's get into the typical rundown we do here

for Pokemon Sun and Moon/Pokemon Ultra Sun and Moon,

because we're going to have a guest that we're going to bring on here momentarily.

Like every other, I think like every other game in the series

we're doing this season, Pokemon Sun and Moon was developed by Game Freak.

It released on the Nintendo 3DS family of systems.

The original release date for Sun and Moon was November 18th, 2016.

The ultra versions then launched roughly one year later.

Exactly on November 17th, 2017.

The game director was Shigeru Amori.

The ultra director was Kazumasa Iwao, I think.

Iwao.

- Iwao?

- The producers, yeah.

The producers were Junichi Masuda, Shin Uai,

Takado Utsunomiya, he's got sun in his name,

I like the game you're working on.

Hitoshi Yamagami.

And then the ultra producers were once again,

Junichi Masuda, Takanori Sowa, Shigeru Amori, and Shin Uai.

And the music was done by Minako Adachi, Go Ichinose, Junichi Masuda, Tomoaki Ogo, Hitomo Sato, and Hideaki Kuroda.

And then the same composers ended up doing the Ultra games there.

I know you told me I didn't have to specify this with every single one, but I went ahead and did.

You did. Actually, the producers were all of the original producers plus the three there at the end as well.

Plus the three that I mentioned.

Oh, I think I just said Junichi Masuda.

- You did.

So it was a lot of producers on Ultra Sun and Ultra Moon.

- I mean, they probably get broad credits,

I would imagine, on the Ultra version

since they sketched out the broad structure

of what this game is, essentially.

The Metacritic averages for the original Pokemon Sun

was an 87 out of 100.

- It matches Moon and Ultra Moon as well, both versions.

So these versions came across the board.

- Okay, interesting.

I've always wondered how they differentiate this

'cause I know it's not always the same

with all of the ones that we've been doing
throughout this season.

So Sun and Moon was an 87 out of 100 on Metacritic.

Ultra Sun and Moon was an 84 out of 100 on Metacritic,
which is, I don't know if we've done enough of these
where there's like a definitive version afterwards.

We've got Platinum coming up that we're gonna talk about.

I know we've done Emerald previously,
but because we played Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire,
we didn't really dive into that too specifically.

But I do find it a little bit fascinating
the definitive kind of, it's not definitive I guess, but the expanded version we'll say
has a lower rating.

Yeah, it's interesting you say that because it makes me think, is HeartGold SoulSilver
the definitive version of GoldSilver Crystal or is Crystal the definitive version of those
games?

That's an interesting question.

That's a good question.

Well, I mean just looking at it up here as well, Pokemon Sapphire for instance has an
82 out of 101 Metacritic and Emerald has a 76 out of 100.

- Which is kind of interesting because I think--
- Everyone talks about it.
- Emerald's the one that everybody hypes up for sure.

Like the user score on Emerald on Metacritic,
just out of curiosity,
not that user score ever matters
on Metacritic of all platforms, but it's an 8.9.

So that's the one I feel like everybody

hypes up and talks up.

Curiously though, we'll be able to talk about this more

throughout the course of this episode

because our guest we have brought on for the week,

which we will introduce here,

actually played the base versions of the game whereas you and I have played the

Ultra versions instead so we'll be able to talk about this a little bit more

here throughout the course of this episode. And now we say Aloha to our

guest for this episode which is Grant Callahan. Grant, thank you for joining us

to talk about Pokemon Sun and Moon. No problem. As you all know I think Pokemon

Sun and Moon/Ultra Sun and Moon are the best Pokemon games and we'll probably

discuss that later why I'm right. I don't know about that. You were definitely the

person we had in mind when it came to tackling these games because you've sung

the praises of Sun and Moon and Ultra Sun Ultra Moon for as long as I've known

you so. Well I think when we did this season we asked Grant like we knew up

front Grant would probably do this with us and we asked him we're like what do

you want to do and we assumed he would say these two and then he of course did

say Sun and Moon so it wasn't much of a shock but Grant give us your broad I

guess history with these games and obviously you think they're the best as

you've already said but yeah what's just your own history with these games and

why do you generally like them so much oh I'm trying to think of when like they

came out like within my lifetime it was 20 2016 and 17 it was 26 also team so

very late college so because I remember you came down for x and y yeah that was I think like 2013

or it was 2013. 13 because ruby and sapphire were 14. Yes yeah so these were towards the later end

of the college and I remember reading about it every time like oh new pokemon game and I'm just

like show me what the pokemon are like because I want to pick out my team and as I was looking at

the big things that drew my attention were the Ultra Beasts. The first one was a Nalay-Hio.

It's the one I don't use, the Jellyfish Rock Poison-type. But for the longest time I was like,

"Wow, that's cool. I wonder what other ones they're going to have." And definitely the

designs on those are part of my favorite Pokémon of all time list. But the big thing with it that

I like from playing it over... I've at least played Sun and/or Moon

probably 12 times each version at least bare minimum.

Each?

Each. So at least 24 times total with just the vanilla game. I played Ultra like maybe

five times total between the two.

Do you have a complete dex?

I do not know. I've never done complete decks because I was like, "You know what?

That's too much." I've never done a complete decks in a game until

I did Violet. Yeah, I did Violet's complete decks and I did that within the first like one or two

weeks it came out. But the big thing that drew me in with this game was the ambitious

choice of not having traditional gems and having something different to work towards

And then you still have your Elite Four, which I think is a good idea to always have a big challenge at the end.

But just the idea of, "Hey, there's no gyms here. What are we going to do?"

And they give you different things.

Do I think they're all masterpieces? No.

Do I think they're really good? No.

Do I even think they're average? Half the time, no.

But just because they changed up the formula?

That's what I really appreciated about these games. I was like, "Good."

Pokemon's now going to step out and do something different compared to these other games. And

that's like the charm I fell in love with a lot of this game. And then post-game, especially in Ultra

Sun and Moon, is bonkers with some of the stuff they add. But I don't know, have you?

Yeah, we've done it.

Okay. Yeah, if you both did it, you see spoilers for everyone else. All the villains prior to Sun and moon all collide on this big post-game story arc which I thought was amazing. And my, what do I want to say, second favorite Pokemon is also in this game. Which Pokemon is that?

It's Buzzwole. Yeah. Is the the Rainbow Rocket only in Ultra? Yes. Yes it is only in Ultra.

Okay, okay. That's what I thought.

That and then the new forms and then some of the changes to like the storyline and stuff like that

or the a couple new ultra beasts like what is the like Poipole the one that you get from the yeah the three new one Poipole, Stakataka is Moon and then Sun and Ultra is Blasphemon, Blase Vyond, whatever it's called, the clown fire ghost type.

Yeah. Which is really cool.

Yeah, there's there's there's not a lot of I mean, I want to talk more about this

the later we get in the episode about the differences between

Ultra and the base games. Right.

Because Grant and I have already talked just a little bit off air about some of the differences and Max, you and I played the Ultra versions and I didn't think we I

I mean, I'll jump in here and share my broad opinion on this game.

I don't think these games are bad at all. In fact, I think these are like...

If we were to rank all 10 of the Pokemon games we will be playing this season,

so far this is in the upper half, I believe for me. I think a lot of what this game does works

quite well in ways that I didn't expect it to originally, and the longer I played it,

the more it kind of got its hooks into me, and how I started to like some of the changes and some of

of the different formulas that were implemented in this game. I think there's a lot of strong aspects to this one and it has a clearer vision than I think some of the Pokemon games afterwards

have. Grant talked about how they changed a lot of the structure of this game and then I like Sword and Shield broadly, I thought those games were pretty good, but by comparison they're very cookie cutter. Like, it is just like, let's go back and play to do a very common Pokemon game. And obviously there's a couple differences in that game, like with the wild area and stuff like that. But broadly speaking, I think this game, especially for like the 3DS and being the last, because this is the last handheld Pokemon game before they then made the jump to like larger consoles, correct?

Yeah, yeah, right because Sun and Moon and then let's go games obviously like that was all Switch and new and stuff like that

Or not Sun and Moon sorry sword and shield

Anyway, I think these games are broadly good if as far as my own history goes. I remember I got Sun at

launch I believe and I played it for about

Three to four hours and a lot of those changes that are made in this game

I didn't like and I bounced off really hard and I eventually just traded it in I think

So I never played this game in full until we've done it here for the show and I played Ultra Moon this time around and yeah generally liked it. There's a lot of positive takeaways that I had from this game overall and I'm curious kind of where you're at Max.

Is this the first, is this the only Pokemon game that you and I both have not played in this regard for this season? Sword and Shield neither of us had played. Okay you hadn't played Sword and Shield. Sword and Shield and I guess I mean very technically. Well Scarlet and Violet. Scarlet and Violet but yeah. That doesn't count in that sense. Okay. But this is a semi-older one that you hadn't touched. Yeah. I really liked this game quite a bit. Okay. There's a lot of pieces that I like a lot. But then there's some times where I don't like what they're doing. It's very, there's like this dichotomy

there. I think there's a lot of moment-to-moment and design stuff that really works well, but then they do some, I think some frankly silly things in regards to pacing, story stuff, just not a fan of some of the mid-game pacing that they go on here but as someone who really only before the season had ties to Canto and Sinnoh in regards to blue and diamond, seeing all of this Canto stuff be represented in this game made me feel good and familiar in a way. You're talking like with the different forms and stuff like that. Yeah I mean Samson Oak for I mean it's just Dan, Professor Oak.

So there's these touch points, your character even is moving from Kanto.

And so it felt good as a game to come back to.

Now we've played the five games so far, so I have more Pokemon experience.

But seeing all of the characters, the Alolan forms of Kanto Pokemon,

I was like, well at least I know the name of that one.

Like you know, that was something I could approach and feel, cause there's some games where it's just like I don't even, I still don't even know the Pokedex.

I may have some of the typing down much better but when it says, "So and so's swapping in this Pokemon," I'm like, I have no idea what this is.

I guess I'll have to guess based off the name.

It's like Latin, you're breaking it down, what type could it be?

And then you're wrong.

Anyway, so it's certainly I think the most interesting game that we've played so far and I like a lot of the pieces but there's still some downbeats that I'm excited to dig into and see how you guys feel.

I kind of want to start this off just talking about how this game is structured in this sort of island format because that is one of the things that is greatly unique about this is that it's not a single continent. It is four distinct five sort of I guess different major areas. What's the is it aether tower or something like that?

Yes. Aether, yeah. Foundation paradise whatever you call it.

So there's there four major islands and then the aether foundation area. How do you guys I think

kind of going off of what you were saying Max to me the structure of the game and the different islands I think sets it apart. It is kind of a win-loss thing.

I think it makes it very unique and it makes this game stand out that much more in the larger Pokemon series. But I did feel like the game as a whole was kind of disjointed because of that. And it was really hard for me post-game. When I say that I like this game, and Grant knows this, but I played about 50 hours of this game and I went out of my way. This is the only game we've played this season where post-game I went out of my way to get all the different totem pokemons on all the four distinct islands. I went and got all of the different ultra beasts that I could obtain within my version of the game.

So like I spent a good chunk of time after rolling the initial credits continuing to play this game and then obviously all the rainbow rocket stuff as well. And I have not done that with any of the other games I think we've played so far this season.

- You did the Delta episode in Alpha Sapphire, but--

- We did do that, but that's--

- That's not the extent that you're talking about.

- That's very short, yeah, that's very short, and yeah, there's not a lot to that.

It's pretty streamlined, and I guess the rocket stuff is to some degree, it's mainly just cleaning one hideout and doing a bunch of different battles and stuff.

But anyway, when I went back post-game though, and I was flying around to different areas,

It was really hard for me to keep track of where everything's at in this game.

Kanto is like emblazoned upon my brain.

Like I have that map in my right now.

Same with Johto.

Same with even Hoenn and things like that.

Like it's easy for me to visualize these regions when they're one giant structure.

This game was a little bit harder for me to kind of keep track of where everything was at just because it was so disjointed.

And again, I don't think that's a wholly bad thing, but kind of like I said, returning to places later on when looking at the game as a whole rather than going through it as a linear game, that made it a little bit more difficult for me to kind of go back to areas that I had been at previously.

And I didn't know, what do you guys think about the structure of the game?

I feel the same.

It's hard to re- they're all islands, right?

And so it's just like, where was this town
or where was this shop?

Oh, it's on this island.

And then you're just tapping through
looking for the name of the town or the store
or the thing that you're looking for.

I just couldn't remember.

I remember locations in my mind,
working my way up to the volcano
or that electric laboratory on top of the snowy mountain
or the graveyard kind of near the beginning of the game.

I remember these locations,
but I couldn't tell you what island it's on
or necessarily even in what order of the game
you approach them in.

I do think the game does a good job,
narratively, of just keeping you moving forward
and when you're supposed to go to the next island
they just take you there.

They offer to take you there at least.

So you never feel lost in the main game,
but going around looking for items, looking for locations,
when I would get close to picking the Pokemon
or an area where a Pokemon I wanted for my team would be,
it was like, well, I gotta wait till I get to this island
that's shaped like this and try to remember
this area and stuff.

And so, it was hard to make it stand out.

And I don't think there were necessarily distinctive zones,
like in, I don't know, I feel like at least in Sinnoh,
or even Hoenn, you know, half the map is water.
there's the water, there's a volcano,
and there's the little root in here
is where the fishing village is and stuff.

So I do think the world design kinda blends, in a sense.

But I'm really curious about a guy who's played it 24 times
who probably does know where every town
in every village is, feels about it.

- So I know Pony Island's the last one you go to,
'cause that's a big one, there's Pony Canyon
and all that stuff where all the dragon trials.

is that Akala is the second and Melemele is the first. I can never remember the third

because I always like barely acknowledge the third half the time. But I will say like each island I wish was a little bit more distinctive of what's on it because sometimes it feels like you're just going to the same island maybe one little different area. Maybe it a volcano in one small area or Pony Island has like the small dragon area but they do feel similar a lot of times until you get to like one landmark area within the island and that's... I mean it's nice that they all feel sort of the same because they're all right next to each other. I wish there was more distinction between the four. I know routes and stuff it's pretty easy to remember because it's like oh if it's between I just divide up into four groups and like oh I see route whatever 1 to 29. I'm not sure what the route numbers are in this game but I'll just divide it in four and be like oh if it's between these it's probably on this island stuff like that. So it's just like remembering like oh the shape of this island it probably has these routes on if I don't see them like let's just move on to the next one it's probably there. Besides that I think it is a little annoying just jumping between each of the islands when you're just trying to travel between them. I wish it was all just on one map then you select the island you want and then you go from there instead of just scrolling through the side yeah but I think that's the limitations of the 3ds um but besides that when it comes to islands it's cool I think on different hardware like a switch it would have been a lot better but I think it's really innovative because they're trying to do the region similar to Hawaii the state they have to do islands and that's what they're gonna do. I would love to see them approach this segmented idea in like more distinct regions they almost they kind of did it in sword and shield with the DLC. Well yes they're an island and what was the other one called the Snowy Frozen Tundra. Frozen Tundra. Different chunks of the map that were wholly unique because it is a cool idea but it's just I think you're right the 3DS just kind of cut it off at the knees to a degree.

A really good idea just execution in hardware are the big problems probably for it.

I think the thing I'll add too is like all of the different Pokemon games try to

base themselves off of like one real world area and I know like and in recent years this has

become a little bit more overt like with uh Sword and Shield it was clearly trying to be like England

or the UK. This is obviously based on Hawaii. Some of the older ones I don't think are as clear

or as obvious like the inspirations they're taking. So I like that this one was more,

you kind of knew what they were going for like from the beginning. It was very on the nose,

but I like seeing more distinctly sort of what they did with their take on a Pokemon game that

that would be in a Hawaiian type locale.

So I thought that was cool,

and I think largely it works to the game's strength,

and it really does, I think this is one of,

like I just mentioned previous regions,

like off the top of my head,

I can't tell you anything about X and Y's region.

I love black and white.

I can't really remember a whole lot

about that region specifically.

The first four games I remember a lot about

are the first four regions,

but that's mainly just 'cause I played those a lot

when I was younger. Like, the islands here stand out greatly in the scope of the larger

Pokemon series. And again, I think that's one of the big benefits of this game. Grant,

I want to go back to you because I know one of the things you really like about this game

the most is the story. This is like something you've always told me about with this one

that you like, really like, and that you think this game has a good story. What about this

story do you think like makes it so good? Because I guess just throw my own broad two cents out there,

I didn't feel like it was anything too amazing. I don't know, what is it about this one that really stuck with you narrative-wise at least? So I will say to preface this, I think all

Pokemon game stories primarily suck just like on average like this is the best of the game's stories that suck so it's not a masterpiece it's not a 10 out of 10 beautiful game when it comes to story it's just the best out of the Pokemon game but going into that you are a character that moves from Kanto um you are traveling across these islands and meet new people I think when it

gets to a good story is not within mostly the main story which is probably the main bulk.

It's sort of like the side characters and there is one side character like his story if you like poke around enough really good. Did you guys poke around too much with like characters at all and

sort of like take a little dive on each one? I did not. Not particularly. Not outside of what was kind

of put in front of me. No. What, who are you talking about though? I think Guzma has potentially

the best backstory or overall story like within a Pokemon game, a mainline Pokemon game I'll say.

I can see that. But yeah Guzma has some like it seems like a lot of dark past and like I don't know if this is going to be a trigger warning but it sounds like his parents beat him from just you find his dad in the game if you look hard enough you know talk about like how he beat his child and it's pretty dark for a pokemon game um but there's just like smaller things as you go on like oh this character is cool it's like you get a little taste of them within the story if you poke around by going around the map you'll find other characters that like hey i know this person let me tell you a little bit about them i think that's really cool and not a lot of other Pokemon games do that.

It makes so- I will say to your credit, er, to what you're saying here, like, this world feels a little bit more interconnected than a lot of the previous Pokemon games where, like, each city you would go to was kind of independent of itself. Like, I feel like a

lot of the characters you stumble across in this game are like, "Oh, you know so-and-so? I know that person too, blah blah blah." Like, a lot of the characters seem to know each other, there's like a larger history on this island, and it- you get the feeling that it's It's like a smaller tight-knit community. Because like even the people that greet you throughout the course of the game, they're like, "Oh, you're doing your island challenge? I remember when I did that when I was younger," blah blah blah blah blah. Like, there's a sort of like commonality between the characters, I feel like, and there's... it comes across more in that sense compared to a lot of the other Pokemon games for sure.

is one other thing um I will mention when it comes to story and it's maybe my biggest nitpick of all of Sun and Moon. The beginning of that game the cut scenes are very long and unbearable

at times. Do I like story and how they present it? Yes, but like half the time of 90% of those cut scenes and we're still fine. I think this game is very cut scene heavy especially early on on with a lot of these games.

- I think that's why I bounced off it early, the first time I played it, like I mentioned, because the opening hours of this game definitely do drag.

Like it takes a bit to get going, but once you get, I think once you get on the second island, it starts to kind of hit its stride and let you actually play the game a little bit more.

But yes, the opening hours are rough with the cut scenes and stuff.

- Yeah, I, the story here, you know, The big thing was they got rid of gyms, right?

And then, so you set out and you do these trials.

And ultimately you've gotta do some sort of mini game essentially and then do enough of it

and then you fight a really big totem Pokemon,
which is very difficult.

And I kinda like that, that the goal of overcoming
a natural obstacle, like a, you know, not something,
not some trainer, not some man-made thing,
but just a one with nature type of energy.

It's cool.

And then the, what's the word?

I wanna say dichotomy, but I already said that earlier,
I was trying not to use it again.

But like the, there's these wormholes,
and there's this company that has all this technology
that is so, but then you're in this natural world
of the island and being one with nature
and the energy of the sun, and I assume in Moon,
talk about the moon more than they do about the Sun but the light of the
region and it's kind of this battle between you know earth and nature versus
technology and advancement and diminishing those elements I think
that's pretty cool overall but then some of the like team skull sucks and I think
I think Team Skull really drags a lot of this conflict down,
'cause they're just swinging their arms and beatboxing
and like, "I'm gonna beat up a Pokemon."

I've like, I really struggled with anything
involving Team Skull at face value.

- Once Guzma shows up though,

I think they are improved a little bit.

- A smidge. - A smidge.

- I think he's even up front,

he's like, "I'm gonna beat you down."

And it's, which now I guess has a really crazy context.

But he, I think he gets better later

when you go to the house.

But also going to that house kinda kills the pacing.

So it's this, there's good, there's bad,

and they keep conflicting,

and it's all kinda tangled up,

and it makes me conflicted.

But Team Skull just is like not a villainous team

in the slightest.

thought what was this team in Yell? I thought team Yell was pretty bad but at

least that made sense in the world is just annoying football fans. Team Skull

is just... I don't know what punks... at the end of the game when they disband Team

Skull they their costume all that changes is the Team Skull logo goes away

and they're the hip-hop punks that are other trainers that you can battle it's

It's just, it feels, they feel very weak.

And my experience with Pokemon is there's usually

some sort of major rival group

that's actually doing something pretty bad.

And I suppose that's the Aether Foundation,

but I feel like they don't explore that necessarily

as deep as well.

That kind of comes and goes really quick.

- That's what I was, yeah.

I think it's choreographed a bit too easily in this game

that like, oh, Aether Foundation is going to end up
being bad.

Like even--

- What?

- They don't really tip their hand at it too much early on.

They really kind of present it as like,
oh, maybe you can trust these people.

These are the good guys or whatever.

But like, it's just kind of obvious

because Team Skull is so stupid

that like there's gotta be a bigger threat out there.

And they're the only ones that kind of show up

to make any sense to be that sort of,

fill that antagonist role.

And I think, yeah, them being the primary,

them being revealed as the primary bad guy

a little bit earlier in this story I think would have served a better purpose in the

long run because I think once they are sort of revealed as like the mother lady I forget

her name the mother of or lily and gladian brother and sister sister they are yes they

all have the same platinum blonde hair it was like yeah I wonder if you're related yeah

mom I forget her name the aether foundation woman I'm trying to find her it starts with

the lu louise something uh lose a mean yeah yeah like she's she's like revealed as like

I'm the bad guy and then she like hops into a portal with necrosma or whatever and then

she becomes like a sympathetic figure pretty quickly after that because they're like oh

"Oh no, she's trapped in there. We gotta save her!" It's like, what? I thought she was the bad
person.

So it like, I think antagonist-wise this game does struggle, because Team Skull is kinda goofy.

They're dumb. They're silly. Uza means kinda the bad guy, because she wants to control- Necrozma's kinda like, the bad guy? They sort of do a similar thing that they do in Sword and Shield, where the bad guy is, uh, what's the-
-Professor, or the Chairman Rose.

Well, Chairman Rose, yes, but I was thinking the big wormhole.

Oh, like a pogrom? Eternatus?

Eternatus, yeah. Like in the ending Doom of the region.

Yes, and it's sort of the same thing here with Necrozma that kind of presents like the big baddie of sorts and all the different dimension holes are opening and stuff like that.

I don't know, like it's not terrible. And I think the central element of this game that I do like story-wise is everything with different dimensions. And there's these crazy monsters from we don't

know where that we've been discovering and finding and they're showing up. Like everything involving

the Ultra Beasts and those like being one of the through-line threads of this region I think is really cool. I think outside of the Ultra Beast though, not everything else in the story works. Two other characters as well that we haven't talked about that I don't know if you guys have a ton of thoughts or feelings on, but how is your rival I think sucks. He is the most like cookie cutter like "I'm just your rival" like person possible. I think The only one who's more bland would be the rival in X and Y, I believe is like super boring as well, if I remember correctly.

Is it, I'm trying to think, because I haven't played X and Y in a while.

Is it one rival or multiple rivals?

I think, well there's like the group, isn't there?

Isn't that the one where there's like the group of different people that you kind of run around and fight?

It's that or black or white?

I don't know.

It might be black and white.

I cannot go.

I can't remember, we haven't played those yet this season.

But Hau is a really weak rival, like I just don't know, he's just happy go lucky, I want to be the best.

And it's like that's it.

Like it really, some of these games really struggle with the rival dynamic because I think what makes the first two Pokemon games in particular so good is that your rivals are like jackasses.

Like you want to beat them.

there's like actual like there is a rivalry between you and your rival and then for some reason like silver and ruby onward like they just become increasingly like like you've got may or you've got whatever the boys i always play as the boy in sapphire brandon is it brandon okay may brandon um and then you've got like even uh what's the other uh dawn and i was thinking of i

I was thinking of Wally too in the Sapphire Unity games.

Like, like there's like this string of rivals

that are just like, "Aw, shucks, I lost.

Oh, darn."

It's like, there's no, like meanwhile in like silver and gold, it's like, "I'm a criminal and I'm your rival."

And so I just wish they would get back to doing something like that rather than what they have been doing over the past two decades almost, I guess, at this point.

I feel like, yeah, rivals have been on the downswing until I believe Hop was the best nice rival you can get.

You've already played Sword and Shield, right?

- Yeah.

- So I think Hop is what Hau should have been,

where Hop is like, "I'm gonna be the best."

And then he's like, "Holy cow,

I just have main character syndrome.

I cannot be the best.

This guy's obviously the best."

And he just gets depressed.

And he's like, "I'm still gonna try to be the best."

He has a good dynamic too because he's got an older brother who's the champion and he has to grow up in that house kind of

Living in his shadow. So they do some like more interesting things with like that sort of dynamic in that game for sure

The best the best rival in recent

Recent years I think is Scarlet Violet. What's her name again Grant?

The Goku girl. Oh

Nimona. Yeah, she's awesome. She's great. She's got a good energy. She's wild.

- Yeah, she's great.

She is Goku basically.

Specifically Hau though, I thought,

I was playing this game, I was like,

man, Hau's kinda lame.

I think whenever the rival picks the weaker Pokemon

and not the counter, that's an automatic flag to me.

Like this isn't gonna be a good time.

'Cause it's just a one hit, a one hit.

But there was a moment in the story,

I think it's around the ghost,

the Ghost House trial or whatever.

When Guzma comes, they take some Pokemon away,

I think it's a little Donald Trump weasel looking thing.

And, but Hau can't stop them.

And he, or it was a little earlier maybe,

I think at the park.

Guzma's there fighting and he tells Hau like,

you know, the trials are pointless

or think about where you're at.

And it hits Hau, kinda.

and he has this realization of like,

"Well, what am I doing here?

"I just wanted to have Pokemon battles and eat my Masala,

"but what am I doing?"

And I thought at that moment,

where he and Guzman interacted in a verbal way,

not just a Pokemon battle,

I was like, "This is where he has like a heel turn,

"and Hau's gonna become a bad dude."

I thought Hau was gonna like go down the Team Skull

kind of evil path, but in a cooler way,

and actually become your rival?

And then he's like, nah, I'm just gonna be the best.

I gotta give it my all.

And I was like, no!

'Cause I really, that could've been a cool moment

for a lighthearted character to take a turn

at the behest of another bad character.

Like, for someone to have that inner struggle

and really be a counter to your character.

But I was so bummed when it didn't happen.

He was like, I just have to be the best.

Well, I think it's I think it's made even worse that like he ends up being the champion or not the champion

But the final challenger to crown the first champion is like and this is a larger discussion

We can have you one second before we do have this discussion though. I just want to say okay best rival

we were talking about best rivals in the series and

Black and white well kind of a rival, but we haven't played those yet. I'm played that I

Had no knowledge of it. He's kind of a rival. I think he fills that void in those games

I don't know what Graham would think. I think whatever you want to call the rival in

Silver, Gold, Crystal, the son of Giovanni. Yeah, that's the best rival.

Yeah, the actual the first thing you see him do is break into a PokeLab and steal a Pokemon.

Evil, evil man. He is definitely

twisted and I think one of the best.

The champion stuff we have to talk about this. So and this is another thing that I think this game does

better than most others is

You're competing in the first

Elite four ever you're being crowned the first champion ever of a Lola

It's really makes it makes the post game when you're running around and people are like, oh crap

It's the champion like they're all acknowledging you as the champion, which is kind of cool and the other games don't

Like, because that's what's kind of funny, especially looking again at a game like Sword

and Shield, where like the champion is kind of elevated on this platform with, is it Leon?

Is that a name?

Yeah, Leon is Sword and Shield.

Yeah, like Leon is like the most famous person within that region in Sword and Shield.

It's like, well yeah, he's the Poke League champion.

And so this game-

The undefeated champion too.

Like very serious.

This game does the... this game makes it feel important when you become champion because everybody acknowledges you as such in the postgame if you continue playing the postgame for quite a bit, which I know you didn't, Max, but people will acknowledge...

Well, I did the... I started the rainbow. I did the rainbow. I didn't run around Alola, though. Some people...

Yeah, but a lot of people do acknowledge you as such, which I thought was kind of a cool

Anyway, this is the part where we need to discuss like the differences between the versions.

And obviously if you're listening to this episode and you heard what I said a second ago with Hau being the champion, that is not the case in the base game.

Because the champ of the base game, as Grant informed me before we recorded this podcast a couple weeks ago, is Kakuei the professor.

Which is awesome, I think.

Which is one of the greatest things in all of Pokemon because it's always been rumored in every game before like, "Oh, there's this big professor fight."

And like back when there was no internet, when we were young kids with red and blue, it's like, "Oh, after you catch all the Pokemon and everything, you get a fight professor and he has every Pokemon.

You must kill him in a gauntlet."

And that was like the big rumor back then, but you never really had a professor fight, I believe until this game. And when it's like, "Oh yeah, we just made this league. I'm the

final trial." And I'm like, "Oh, this is good."

Well, I think that makes sense too. Because he's like one of the foremost authorities on all of the four islands. He should be the sort of final test. Instead in the Ultra Games, it's like, "Just fight your childhood friend again." It's like, "What?" I don't understand and why they made that shift in the Ultra games.

Like Max, I know we talked about this a little bit briefly off air the other day, and looped Max in on this as well.

And you kind of said like, eh, who cares?

You gotta acknowledge though that like,

it is one of those things like,

why would they change this for the Ultra versions?

I'm not really sure.

It's one of the most unique aspects about this game,

I think, that you fight the professor

to become the champion at the end.

Like none of the other games does that.

- Yeah, I don't know why they would have changed it.

- Narratively, it does make more sense

to fight the professor, I'm with you there.

That's, you know, just narratively--

- Well, they drop a lot of hints throughout the whole game.

I just, to jump in on what you're saying there,

they drop a lot of hints throughout the whole game.

He talks about when he did his own island challenge

throughout the whole game, there's the whole sequence

where the-- - He's a luchador.

- Luchador fighter, and you realize it's him,

but he's hiding his identity.

So there's a lot of hints dropped throughout the game
that like, oh yeah, I've done this too.

I'm very intimately familiar with the island challenge,
and I know how to Poke battle and blah, blah, blah, blah,
blah, but you never really see it.

So for it to be fully revealed at the end of the game
and you have to fight him,

kind of pays off all those narrative threads
that they set up early,

like in the hours earlier in the game.

So I'm not sure,
like who thought to tweak this in Ultra?

Anyway, sorry.

- No, you're fine.

I just, I don't know.

But when Hal stepped up,

I was just like, this is par for the course.

'Cause everything I've played up to this point

is essentially fighting your initial rival

or your childhood friends.

So it just was the same for me.

And I feel like, but if it was the professor,

I would've been like, okay, sure,

you're the professor of Pokemon moves.

Like, it makes sense.

So I didn't feel like I was missing out on a hype moment

or if the battle really would've been any different
as far as from a gameplay perspective,
but narratively it is different.

And it would've been better
just from a narrative perspective.

but I didn't feel like I was missing out or anything.

- I only really have two major, major complaints
about this whole champion elite four thing.

One, hey, the four people they pick for the elite four,
pretty cool except for one.

You get a random golfer air lady, she's like, "Hello,
"I have been asked to travel back and fight you."

- So I have a question about her.

I assumed that she was in the sun. Like, is she from any previous game?

Nope, she's just like "Hello, I'm now an Elite Four member!"

She just golfs! I thought it was just some deep cut,
like a character from a previous game that I just told... just a random golfer.

I mean, okay, to be fair, all of the Elite Four members in the previous games are just random
trainers, I guess, in some sense.

Well everyone you fight in this one though you had met before except yeah

yes so i guess it's weird stands out in that sense for sure yeah that should have been the four
great kahunas whatever you want to call them the four great people of each island should have
been

i believe the elite four of this game yeah i mean you're right it just kind of sets itself up really
easily that you would fight the four presiding chiefs of each of the islands. Like, yeah,
like that makes a little, instead you fight a golfer who has birds.

My other complaint, even though the professor fight is one of the coolest things in vanilla,
I wish you would have fought him when he was the luchador man and you still would have

kept up his little persona and be like, I'm not the professor, I'm the luchador man. That would have been funny but they just sort of like "hello I'm a luchador" and it's like barely visited on later on until you like pick up a mask at one point it's like hey you dropped this it's like this isn't mine and he walks off he should have been champion wrestler man but nope he was

just the professor which is still cool but I feel like they could have played off that little persona thing he has going on. I like the nacho libre-esque lifestyle he's living with the the Pokemons. I don't know, that's just one aspect of this game that I thought was very strange and I can't wrap my mind around why they did that.

I will say, one other thing about Elite Four, none of you refought the Elite Four, correct?

No, yes, mention this Grant, because Max does not know about this.

Alright, so you are the champion after you beat it the first time, correct?

Yeah.

So you beat the original four people and you sit up at the top of the throne.

From then on out after the first time, it's random people who you fight in the champion spot.

It can be different side characters, it can be Halogen, it can be random characters that make... there are two good ones.

There's one, this weird dragon tamer looking guy makes no sense why he's there.

"I'm a Dragon Tamer and I've come here to be the champion!" And then the best one...

Pokemon Trainer Joey from Route 1!

[laughter]

- No! - Can also fight you. Yes.

- Please tell me he has his Rattata.

- He has a very similar team to his first one.

- If he doesn't have an Alolan Rattata, what is even the point?

- Give me a second, I'm gonna look it up.

- Oh my gosh!

- It's from the trainer school.

It's the youngster Joey from the trainer school.

- Yes.

- This is incredible.

- But yeah, going back and fighting

is one of the funniest things ever

'cause you get random people.

So...

- That's cool world building.

- All right, so it's not Joey per se, at least.

- It's not the silver gold Joey.

- Yeah, it's trainer Tristan.

he has an Amolga, a Sharpedo, an Executor, a Lolan Form, a Magmortar, and a Tauros with a Z move.

Okay, all right. That's still cool though.

Yeah, I would just encourage you Max to go and look up the full list because I did this about a couple weeks ago. Look up the full list of everybody that can come and challenge you as the champion because it's pretty crazy. Everybody that you can actually fight through the postgame

Like, uh, the electric lab boy comes in and finally fights you.

The Aether Foundation dude with the big glasses who looks like

Elton John comes in and fights you.

Um, some of the elite four members will challenge you to be the champion as well.

They're like, I think I should be the champion.

I challenge you.

Uh, and they try to usurp you.

Um, I don't some of the other gym leaders come try to, or not the gym leaders, but

the challenge leaders come try to fight you too, or am I wrong on that?

very few it's like team skull rivals um an ultra trainer looks dope

ryuki lose a mean challenges you in ultra sun and moon

that is not in vanilla um i think professor kakui does uh gladian does

um i think guzma does as well so a lot of the main characters do for sure but

then there's like some offshoots and it's always randomized isn't it

Yep, it's always random.

That's neat. That's really cool.

That's smart stuff.

That's a fun, cool little aspect of the game for sure that like,

again, that you and I didn't see or I guess I could see it.

I mean, we're both in the postgame, but you just have to go back and do it, I guess.

I will say, though, mechanically, Elite 4, I don't

I think it's the first time and maybe the only time.

But I like that you could go in any order.

There wasn't a stacked, like, you gotta fight these trainers in this order.

I thought it was kind of cool that you could take the approach of

maybe tackling the hardest one first based off your team typing or go the easy route.

I thought that was kind of cool that you could choose the order. I thought that was pretty neat.

I don't know about you guys, but I like had some struggles with the Elite Four too,

so like I would go fight the ones that my team was best suited to

grind off of just to level up my team a little bit if so and then save the tougher ones for

Last so even if I lost against them like it was one of those things. It's like okay

Well, I defeated two or three of the easier ones just so I could level up

which I know a lot of people do in previous Pokemon games too, but it's

Sometimes the elite four because they're in a static order you would get stuck on the first or second one in some of the older

games depending on how your team matched up. Yeah, this game I think, we've talked a lot

about the champion elite 4 stuff. I want to talk about two more character things here if we can, just broadly and I think this would put to bed all the character and story stuff.

And that is just Lily and I guess Gladion, or Gladion however you say it. I don't, I feel like, I don't know how Gladion and Lily, I feel like are like three of the weaker characters in the game.

Lily, Lily in particular, I feel like they really try to focus on and have her have a character arc of some sort.

But at the end of the day, I feel like her character arc is,

"I pulled my hair back into a ponytail and now I'm not scared or something."

I don't know. It's, it's kind of...

not ambiguous, but it's just not it didn't wasn't that effective, I suppose.

So yeah, I don't know. And then Gladion is a little bit too embroiled in. I feel like he could have gotten the spotlight a bit more in this game. I think he's an interesting character. I think there's some I think they just could have done more with him than they did honestly. And

And his big reveal is just that like,

the nature of his family, I suppose.

And I feel like there was some more interesting things that they could have done with him personally that they really choose not to.

But I don't know how you guys feel about these two.

- Oh, Lily, I'll start with that.

Lily is just trying to discover what she wants out of life.

And then at the post game, she's like,

"I gotta travel and become the person I'm meant to be."

then she just disappears off into the sunset. Gladion's cool because he's like, "I gotta figure out what I'm doing and I gotta run away from my mom because my mom's mean." And then he runs away and joins Team Skull. Wow, very good life decision there. But yeah, really, Gladion's trying to

destroy his mom from the inside out until he's like, "Oh wait, Team Skull is part of my mom's group."

"Uh oh, I just found this out." And then, um, Lily is just basically like, "Yeah, I don't know who I am. I'm just traveling with you guys. Oh, I'm inspired by you guys. I'm gonna go do my own thing." Pretty, pretty meh overall with those two individuals. Yeah, I didn't care for Lily all that much. I found her pretty annoying, honestly, because she, in the front half of the game she's helpless constantly and then she has a strong disdain for Pokemon battle. She doesn't like seeing Pokemon get hurt which is part of her character, you know, helping Cosmog and all that stuff or Nebby as she calls it. So I didn't care for that. She was always incapable of something. And then there's that halfway or even kind of three quarters the way through the game, that pulled Ponytail back in the moment. And I remember this from a film class in high school. It's like when a character cuts their hair, changes their hair, it's a sign of a big person, inward change of the character. It's a new point for them. Hers is like, I'm going to come out and be stronger. This is my Alolan form or my Ultra Beast form or whatever. And I was like, oh, that's kind of interesting. Maybe she'll like become a trainer or all the stuff. Like I didn't know where she was gonna go and she does fight with you once with a Chansey out of nowhere and then she's like I'm not strong enough to do anything so I'm just gonna keep healing your Pokemon keep on going hope you hope you can do it and I just she so she didn't actually change all that much until the end when she leaves so I just I didn't care for Lily all that much and Gladiana I feel like he's in the game two three times and he's not very tough and he has this weird holds arm and it's constantly shaking like he's holding back power or something almost like a liquid ocelot kind of thing like ah so I didn't really get what was up with him or his design and is I mean I understood his motivation so I found that whole little family dynamic not as satisfying especially because of like you mentioned earlier Logan their mother kind of gets the I'm helping

a Pokemon. Haha, I'm evil. Disappears. Oh, I'm good now. So it's, it was very, the whole dynamic doesn't get fleshed out, I don't think in a great way. Well I was just gonna say like it's clear the kids have a beef with her, and then she gets sucked into a portal and it's immediately like, oh no we must save them! It's like, there's no real resolution brought to a head with like this inner turmoil that's been happening within this family for so long. It's just it just all kind of gets thrown out the window because Necrozma kind of throws a wrench in all everything. So I think it's better done in vanilla because yeah the main focus of Ultra Sun and Moon is Necrozma and mostly the Ultra Beast stuff. Sun and Moon it's basically a conflict. Both the kids run away essentially because their mom has become obsessed with beauty and perfection of like Pokemon and achieving her goals over raising her kids. So when it comes to vanilla version I think it does it better than ultra sun and moon because they're trying to emphasize on this new form new character new Pokemon and like their mechanics and trying to weave that into an already okay story that was fine to begin with. So this is where I think vanilla does it better with like the whole mother and her kids dynamic but they still have like similar outcomes besides you don't see the mother at the end of the game in the vanilla games she's just like in a room like oh you can't enter there she's sick and that's about it well you bring up something that i wanted to talk about too which was just like how the legendaries are implemented in this game obviously we've talked about in the crosma a little bit and the ultra beasts which which aren't technically legendaries, but I specifically kind of wanted to talk about Nebby and what they do with Solgaleo and Lunala in this game, which is that they have sort of like an evolved line for, I think is that the first time they've ever done it to where legendaries evolve in a distinct line like that and become like the main legendary of game. Like I can't think of any other instance where that happens in any of the games. I mean, you got Kubfu from the shield sword aisle thing or whatever. Yeah. That's the only legendary that

evolves if I'm correct. Yeah. So I mean this is, I mean on its, at face value I think that, I'll say I don't really care for either of the legendary variants in this game just in terms of of looking, like I don't know, they're fine.

They don't really stand out to me too much.

And maybe that's partially because again,

like you were kind of saying Grant,

Max and I played ultra and there's obviously

huge emphasis on Necrozma compared to the standard

legendaries in the base games.

So I imagine they get thrust into the spotlight

little bit more in the vanilla versions. But I do think the idea of this creature that's

kind of hanging around with Lily the whole game ends up being the main, legendary, most

powerful Pokémon is a neat idea. And again, it's kind of like we talked about at the top

when we started this episode. They really try to, in every sense, subvert your expectations

with this game and do something new. Like it's clear that they came into this game

and wanted to do something new with the region, wanted to do something new with the legendaries,

wanted to do something new with the storytelling. And at times they reverted back to old ways

and then in other instances I think like with Solgaleo and Lunala they do some cool things.

What did you think about how this was all done, Max?

I liked a lot that, you know, Nebby was the legendary that we were seeking the whole time.

I think that actually was pretty neat in just a small way. Not, you know, it's not some

grand revelation or anything or really, it's not like you can use Nebby or the second of

all form anyway. So you can. Well, you can. What is this a thing you get in the post game?

You can get a Nebby. Okay. You can go to an alternate. It's, it's like you go to an

alternate dimension where it's the inverse. So you know how like basically

like night is day and day is night in this other universe and there's a Nebby

or a Cosmon that exists in that world and you can capture it there and involve it and it evolves into... does it involve into the other one version that you don't have or? It will. If you're in the alternate universe, so if you're in moon and you go to alternate universe to catch a Debbie Sun you have to evolve it in that alternate universe

from its second form to final form if you want for the Sun version. If you take it back to your version you'll just get a second legendary. Because that's pretty cool, that's neat, that's something I

would have chased as a kid for sure. Yeah because there's like a specific, if you look it up up like on the Serebii or whatever like Nebby evolved or Cosmog evolves into the middle form which is Cosmoem at level 43 and then depending on which island you're on at level 53 it'll evolve into the final legendary itself.

Oh that's pretty cool.

Well I stand corrected then but you know it's cool and Nebby I guess I just kind of looked down on Nebby though because it was so attached to Lily and I wasn't caring for that character

and it seemed mostly like a narrative thing. It's not a, I don't think it's an interesting Pokemon by itself. I think the actual legendary is the one you care about.

It's moves that it knows are splash and teleport. Yeah, so it's cool conceptually but there could have been more there from an evolutionary perspective because really all of you care about in the end is the lion or the bat.

Speaking of legendaries really quick, Necrozma you don't get until you catch every Ultra Beast in the vanilla game.

So you don't even know of Necrozma until like after you get every Ultra Beast.

Ultra Sun and Moon you find out about Necrozma extremely early on.

Yeah I felt like Necrozma was being talked about pretty much most of the game.

interesting. And I think Necrozma is really cool. I'm glad that that is one of the things about Ultra that I do like because I think he's one of the cooler. Is he technically an Ultra Beast?

He is not an Ultra Beast. Your legendaries are Ultra Beasts, the Sun and Moon ones. Necrozma is

not an Ultra Beast. I do like Necrozma a lot. I think Necrozma looks really cool. I think it's got a cool design. I like him more on his own compared to when he's combined with the others.

You used up, yeah.

Yeah.

One thing that you can do with the legendaries, and I believe this is only an ultra, and this is kind of an aspect about the whole game I wanted to ask you guys about, is like you can ride on them and you can fly through all these portals and stuff like that, and I don't know if you ever did that, Max, that's how you get the Ultra Beast, you have to go to specific portals.

You have to go to specific portals and it's very RNG intensive and it drove me up a wall. the process of catching a Guzzlord kept me up all night and it was purely because of RNG basically that I was just kind of waiting to get the right one. So that was very frustrating but I wanted to segue that into a larger discussion about just the various Pokemon that you ride

in this game there's a whole Mantine Surfing bonus game, like they add little things like this here and there and then obviously there are, HMs in this game are replaced by what seven or eight different Pokemon that you can ride on and push things around with and stuff like that. How do you guys feel about this system and is this really the first game in the series that moved away from HMs fully? I can't remember if it was, if they were still implemented in any manner in X and Y. Black and white, they were X and Y, I don't remember it. That is one of those forgettable games. We don't remember anything about X and Y, so it's going to be really interesting when we play that all in Max, because I don't remember much either. I want to say yes, that there were some HMs. There are HMs in X and Y, so this is the first one. So this is the first one where they were fully moved away from HMs, which I think in the long run is a good decision, I think, that we've come to that agreement throughout the course of this season, Max.

Oh yeah.

This is, it was great to just be able to fly or ride or push anywhere without needing a Pokémon to, you know, have all the HM moves or-

A dedicated, you didn't, a dedicated Pokémon to do it, yeah.

Or waste up move slots on Pokémon you actually care about.

so I was very appreciative and it's that Charizard fly is very fast.

That is almost the definition of fast travel for sure.

It's pretty snappy.

Yeah, I think I liked, I obviously liked them moving away from HMs

because it had worn thin as the series continued onward.

I think I prefer how they handle it though in games like Sword and Shield

compared to this one where it's just like,

we're going to upgrade your bike out of nowhere and cool,

now you can cross water and now you can do this or just less. What if you just rode a

Pokemon that could fly, swim, and turn into a motorcycle? Sure, that too. Or, like, I

don't know. Some of these things in this game I think prove to me that like, like when you

get them a champ and you're like pushing boulders around, like that's never, there's never any

like actual puzzle element to that I don't feel like or ever, there was never any difficulty

to it. It was just pushing them and it was always very slow and it was like, okay, I

don't want to do this. Or when you had to get your Mudsdales and cross rocky areas or

something like that, like none of it was, I could just do it. None of it was fun switching

between them. So I was glad that it didn't take up HMs and I'm glad it didn't like, I'm

glad they moved away from that system. But I think that it's been handled better and

later entries, specifically like with Sword and Shield and Scarlet and Violet, with kind

of how they do traversal in the world in that game.

Yep, definitely first one. No HMs. The saddest moment when your HM slave could be the Donald

Trump weasel, but I mean, definitely net positive direction for Pokemon to go on in the future.

Just an HM-less game. Now when they remake all these games later on, like when you talk earlier ones if they're gonna add HMs hopefully they remove them because I do not want to catch

a little badoof later on which I don't even know. Are there HMs in Shining Pearl, Diamond, Crystal?

I think so yeah. I asked that game already. Brilliant Diamond and Shining Pearl.

Those games were bad but um definitely no HMs has been a great experience from this game forward.

Yeah, it's been really...

It was really, really nice not to have to deal with any of that.

I actually really loved it when they gave you Fly from a girl from Kanto, or Johto, one of the two.

And she was like, "This is a big deal where I'm from, but

I guess it's just a TM over here."

And then she gives it to you, and I was like,

"I don't have to use this."

Yeah, that was a good moment. I totally forgot about that, actually.

Did you spend any time mantine surfing, Max?

other than when it forced you to.

- I did it the one time it forced me to.

- You didn't pull any sick tricks off?

- I did, I guess, but then later I was reading,

I was like, how do I get, you know,

like by battle items or certain stones or certain TMs.

- It's called surfing.

- And I was like, oh yeah, surf.

And I was like, I even Googled,

how do I get battle points quickly?

(laughing)

- Without surfing.

- And it was like, you gotta do these surfing moves.

You can get like 50 in a, if you do the tricks all well,
can get 50 battle points in one trip. I was like, "Oh no."

We haven't talked whatsoever about the mechanics of battling themselves in this game and the
Pokemon. And I don't know, Max obviously you're a champion at the bit to talk about this.

What did you think about Z moves, which I feel like are the really only huge difference
in this game, unless I'm forgetting something else.

- There's one other thing, but it's not as battle prevalent
with trainers, but go on Zmoves, Max,
and we'll talk about SOS mechanics later.

- Oh yeah, SOS.

So Zmoves.

I mean, I like the idea of a,
you can only do it once per battle,
and just across your six Pokemon,
only one Pokemon could do it,
depending on who you gave the item to.
So I like the idea of a very powerful move, that's cool.

The cut scenes were a bit much.

I'm not, I think, mechanically a fan of as it is,
it does require your Pokemon to hold the item.

And so if you want it across a certain line
of moves or types, you gotta give it
to a bunch of different Pokemon.

I noticed that battle items weren't dropping very much

in this game or around the world,
and it was more collect all of these crystals.
So I'm not sure I'm a fan of that side of the mechanic,
but the moves themselves are fine,
and it seems a simpler version versus a mega evolution
or gigantamaxing.

This seems just like a very clear, simple way
to move forward, and I enjoyed them, for the most part.

- Yeah, but it also was like,
well I guess they're all just gonna hold this item.

And then later I found out that some of them
you have to actually explore the world to get them,
like the ice one and things like that.

So that was interesting as well to discover.

- I got all of them naturally, actually.

- Oh, okay.

- I just like totally, I was like,
oh I think I have all of them.

I explored the whole game apparently.

I found none of the ones out in the world.

I think there's only like two or three.

There's not a lot.

There's like, there's not that many.

You can't find any of them.

I just walked straight lines everywhere.

Kind of compared to what you're saying, I like the Z-crystals because it adds a larger
strategic element with it.

Like you and I are, like we mentioned before, we haven't done our fight yet for this game.

So in the back of my mind, I'm trying to think about which Pokemon I want to put my Z-crystals on and which ones would be best to have. Like, should I just put it on one Pokémon and really lock myself into using one specific Z-move in this battle and put better suited battle items on the other five, or should I put it on a couple in case you KO my one that has my Z-move on it? Like, there's a greater level of strategy here that I'm thinking about which involves the held items, which I think can often play a big part in, especially competitive battles like between us.

- I don't know, well, again,

you clearly explored the world more than me, but I didn't find any battle items.

So it felt like everyone just got a crystal anyway.

So I felt like there was no choice.

- Well, you definitely get a couple, I feel like.

- You definitely find some. - I have a quick claw.

- That's something.

- Sure, for one Pokemon.

Who do I want the chance of going faster?

- All right, so I know your strategy for our battle now.

You're equipping six Z-crystals on all your Pokemon.

- That's, 'cause I don't have anything else.

That's why I was searching where are these items?

And it's like, yeah, go here and buy 'em.

But you can't even buy 'em.

- But even that's not a bad strategy though, because I don't know, like in our battle,

I'll never know when you're gonna pull out your Z-move
and who you're gonna decide to use it with.

It's like, whereas if I only put one Z crystal on mine,
it's like I'm really locking myself into having to almost
set myself up for this move at some point
and using it properly.

- I suppose, I don't know.

It just seemed like a one step too restrictive
and I felt like it was taken away
from other mechanics of strategy
or at least I wasn't engaged deep enough in surfing
to find or purchase other items to up my game, so.

Grant, you mentioned the SOS stuff.

And you can talk about the Z moves as well if you want to.

I'll talk about Z moves because I think it's broken when you allow mega evolution still
in this game.

You can have both on your team.

You want to mega evolve your Alakazam and then hey my little Pikachu over here is going
to do the super thousand bolt move that like one shots anything.

Yeah, you can have both of those.

So if you didn't know Mega Evolutions were in this game, they still are.

Oh I did know they were in the game because of Team Rainbow Rocket, which I actually
thought

was a very cool reveal to me because I didn't know Mega Evolutions were in the game until
that point.

But I guess that didn't compute that you could do both, which does seem a little OP.

A little bit.

A smidge.

the assumption on teams that you didn't add any mega evolution Pokemon that can because they don't add anything new it's just from older X&Y and Omega Sapphire Ruby stuff. I yeah I didn't even try to do that I don't I well I don't even have another 3ds to trade between Sapphire and this to get the items and the Pokemon to do it so I don't think you can trade the items over the mega evolution stuff. How do you not have another 3ds I almost have like three or four of them. I only have one 3DS. Gotta start scanning the Facebook marketplaces for new 3DSs like me. Oh my gosh. This man says "oh my gosh" in a bedroom where he's surrounded and filled with video game things up to his eyeballs. This is very true. He can't just go out and buy one additional 3DS. I could trade with a game, no you can't. They don't have a trading port yet if I had dongle to trade the Game Boy Micro. But yeah, Megas and Z-Moves, too lethal of a combination I think competitively when you start looking at it at that angle. But the other battle mechanic, SLS battles, I think are very cool and some of like the only ways you can get certain Pokemon if I'm correct. So you have to... SLS battles, it's a battle. You fight one Pokemon, you get it lower health it's more likely, or you use items it's more likely to call like, "Oh no, I'm dying. Someone help me." And then a random Pokemon, usually the same species but very low chance to be another, appears around the same level. I think there's some really cool things they did with this. Like, you could catch Toxapex pre-evolution by doing SLS battles which is a very good Pokemon but that's like the best way to get it. And my personal favorite the Bagon's at the beginning you can SLS battle them and then all of a sudden like someone help me and it's like okay a Salamence appears that's like level five it may be a one percent chance but I did that and I think it's the funniest thing ever because you're just walking around is like hello this is my Rowlet and my Salamence. Fight me. I think there's some really cool things they did with that. I wish they would have done more crazy things with that.

But being able to like continuously fight the same Pokemon which gets better stats the longer you keep an SLS streak on you get higher chance for a shiny Pokemon or in the case of Salandit

hey I'm gonna fight this one Salandit that's a male I'm gonna keep fighting and get the call for people and hopefully it brings a female one at some point so I can catch and evolve that one.

I think there's some really cool things with that and just an endless gauntlet and seeing how far you can go with that is sometimes fun too. I think I've had a 78 streak before and that's because I

ran out of pp so I was like yeah I will die if I continue going on and so I ran away. You just you just gotta drink some water to stay hydrated.

- Exactly.

- I liked how the SOS stuff was implemented in the totem battle specifically.

And this is one aspect of the game when I first played, when I talked about how I bounced off, I don't think they,

it wasn't until like the third or fourth totem battle that I like lost outright.

And I was like, oh, there's a lot of like strategic depth to how this system can work because the totem Pokemon are always super charged up in some sort of manner, and they can really deal out a lot of damage.

So you're not sure if you should take down, they're lucky that they've called in to help them, or if you should try to just focus on taking down the totem Pokemon because it's the one that's hitting you the hardest.

- The answer is the totem Pokemon.

- Sometimes--

- No, I learned take out the totem is the lesson here
because it will always call back up.

See, I did not--

- No, that's the thing. - I did not care
for this SOS mechanic, 'cause it just, it's annoying.

- Like I said though, I think it made the Totem battles
actually challenging.

This is the reason, one of the big reasons I like this game
is I think that this is actually one of the
first challenging Pokemon games in quite some time.

Especially coming off of Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire
for us max, those games were a cakewalk,
like to the point where they were almost
putting me to sleep at times.

I was losing, not constantly in this game,
but like I was losing for the first time in a long time
in a Pokemon game.

- This game's hard.

- It surprised me and it caught me off guard.

And there's a layer of strategy that you have to figure out
with, again, with the SOS mechanics
and the totem battles and stuff.

That took me, took a bit of getting used to for sure.

And I don't think there's any right answer either to this.

Kind of like Max, you're sane there is.

Like, I don't know.

Like, because there was some-

- No, you have to take out the thing calling in
the endless supply of other Pokemon to hit you.

You have to.

- I agree with that.

But there was some, one of the totems in particular,
there was like a tandem that I think one of them
like buffed the other or something like that.

So it was like, I didn't want the totem Pokemon
to get any more buffs as a result of the one
that it called in via SOS.

So it's like, I need to take out the one,
this one as quickly as possible.

And that's what I'm saying.

Like there were different wrinkles
in a lot of the different fights
that I felt like you kind of had to uncover
and it kept switching things up until the end.

So even in a game without gyms,
I found that the system was pretty challenging at times.

I will say though, I did not like the challenges overall.

I found them quite boring other than the battles.

Run around the forest and find vegetables
so we can make a soup.

Oh, the soup lured in a big old Pokemon, oh my gosh.

Like some of that stuff is kind of goofy.

- Go swimming on the water and chase these fish down.

- Please go into this cave and fight a large Raticate.

I know in the base game it's Trump Weasel.

No, it's the vanilla version you have.

Oh, is it?

I fought Trump Weasel.

Yeah.

Oh, did you?

Trump Weasel's son, Moon is Raticate.

OK.

And that's it.

So there's also--

I think the dragon trial is the same in the vanilla games,

but in Ultra Sun and Moon, you either

have the dragon trial or the fairy trial.

So you fight a giant Rambo or you fight Komoloo in one of them.

So that's what I did. That was not fun.

Did you fight Rombo then Logan? I fought Kamalo.

I know with totem Pokemon you can collect it's different in the versions. I'm pretty sure the fights were different too, but if not, then I thought there was one where I fought a Rombo, but maybe I'm incorrect on that. Maybe I'm thinking of another fight at some point in the game. There is sometimes because they will call different Pokemon if you take out its side Pokemon.

Yeah, I think the craziest one has always been I'm gonna fight the dragon kamal

Surprise you think I'm gonna have like a little pre-evolution of me. No

here's a schis or and I'm like

What?

And it like screwed over my team because like well my fairy types gonna die from this schis or
But I can't kill this dragon fast enough with it

I really didn't have a fairy type I was using at the time

I just brought one because like i'll just kill it because dragons won't hit me

big mistake. But I think there's some dynamic stuff that they do are cool. I think it does
vary a little bit depending on the fight, like what comes out. But the totem stuff with SLS battles
are very good. If they countered the type matchup, they're like, "Oh, I can kill this easily." No,
you have to worry about me who will also kill you. The rock paper scissors dynamic going on.

Yeah. You know, outside of the totem Pokemon though, just the like normal gameplay, like
moment

to moment gameplay, particularly in the battles, I just have to say I'm a really big fan of the
battle menu in this game, the design of it. I, at least in the DS entries of the game,

I primarily use the touch screen to reach around and click. And I just think the design of having
fight take up the right hand side of the screen and then Pokemon and bag be on the left in
two smaller sections. I think it's very visually appealing and mechanically just sound. It's
easy to use. It's clear. It's concise. The mo- you know, this game has the feature that

I really like, which is after you fight a Pokemon, it tells you what is effective or

not effective against it. Helps my brain out a lot. You can, you know, drill in and see

what your moves do or you know the stat of the move, the specs of it so to speak. And

then also if you have that Z move then that's on the left hand side. I just think this is

a really well designed menu and I noticed that like the battles take place in the environment

that you're in instead of just in a blank white room. You know in some games where it's

like oh you've been teleported to a white room where the battle is. This actually you're

fighting in the forest or the beach or the water or what have you which I think is really

neat and cool to stay kind of immersed in this this world so it's I like that basic

stuff I do think there's a bit too much side mechanic stuff like come to our virtual Disney

world and try that out or you can do you have this Pokemon I'll trade it for you to help

my boyfriend with getting his Pokemon dreams are here, play Pokemon Snap but at two frames

a second on the 3DS with the gyroscope. So that's the worst part. Yeah, that's pretty bad. So that wasn't, the side stuff wasn't great but I think the moment to moment was actually pretty good, especially in the battles. It just felt good to battle. One thing I don't feel like we've talked about too much outside of the Ultra Beast and we mentioned that there's some like different Alolan forms of Kanto Pokemon and stuff like that. I know you talked about that Max. But one common thing I think we've been doing all throughout this season so far and all these different episodes is just broadly taking a look at the Pokedex and like what we think about it. And Grant knows this because him and I chatted about this a bit or maybe I talked to you about it too Max. It's just I don't think there is... I don't think there are good Pokédexes in a lot of these later games. There's always something missing in each of these games. Like this one for instance, why are there like no electric Pokémon in this game? Like there are a couple, like there's the Vikavolt which is the bug electric type and then there's the new sort of rat Pikachu thing that's a totem pokemon that you fight. Like there's just a couple, again, all of the different pokeydexes I feel like index too heavily into a couple types. Like too much water in this one, there's too much, I know we've played some in the past where it's like why are there so many grass types in this? Why are there so many bug types? Like I feel like there's a lot of bug types in this pokeydex for some reason. And strangely since this is one of the maybe I'm totally wrong on this you guys can tell me but considering this is the second second gen in the series to have fairy type of leave because I was introduced to an x and y there's a pretty big lack of fairy types I believe in this decks as well especially when it comes to the when I when I say all these things to I want to specify them talking about like new new Pokemon not returning Pokemon or not Pokemon from other regions or various forms or whatever ever. Like for example, when I say there's not a lot of electric types, like they make like Geodudes is an electric type in this game for some reason, which is just fine.

It's kind of cool, but there's a lot of ghost types in this decks as well. I don't know how apparent that was to some of you guys. I don't know. And then there's a huge lack of like Pokemon that I feel like evolve as well. There are just single Pokemon in this game and even when they do evolve, they don't evolve much or they evolve in certain ways. Like Grant mentioned Solanda and it evolves into Slazle, but only if it's a female Slazle and that percentage of finding a female Slazle is like 10%, 12%, something like that. There's just a lot of instances throughout this dex that I think are a little odd. And I don't think it's a horrible one, but it left a lot to be desired for me. How did you feel about this, Max? I'm curious with you specifically because I know you mentioned that you like the Alolan forms of the Kanto Pokémon in particular and stuff like that.

Yeah, I liked it because they're Pokemon I know

in a sea of

Over aren't we over a thousand now the whole decks on a whole

In the sea of a thousand Pokemon

It's nice to be able to recognize some of them and then have those be different types and visually look different

You know, you know like Sandshrew's ice now

so like that's a way to shake it up for someone like me who's kind of only really familiar with the old stuff and

but keep it fresh in a way, right?

So that's kind of cool.

But then you get to the like,

these ultra beasts just don't,

they're just a bunch of funky looking creatures and--

- The ultra beasts are cool.

I think you would like this one.

- They're cool, they're cool.

But it's, I don't know, they don't feel grounded in--

- That's why they're cool. - A normal sort of--

- That's why they're cool.

Because they all come from their own dimensions

you have to go to these different dimensions and worlds to catch them and

it's really neat. That's the point they aren't supposed to be like Pokemon at

all they're just sort of shoved in there like hello these are different dimension

things they don't make sense in our world they don't make sense in Pokemon

world but now they're Pokemon. They're basically aliens it's kind of

it's really cool actually. Well I was like I don't know about this though

'cause the one that they made tried to make me catch,

but I failed. - Oh, it's like

one of the worst ones.

- Yeah, it's like a clown with a disco ball in a tent.

- Oh, that's right. - Oh, Blaise Dion.

- I was like, I don't know about this guy.

Now, Buzzwole, yes, very good.

But the rest of these-- - Guzzlord, you go

to his world and he has destroyed the entire town

and it's just in shambles and he's eaten everything.

- It is actually one of the towns from the game,

if you look around.

So it's an alternate dimension of one of those towns.

- Or he's a- - I don't remember which one.

- He's basically like Godzilla ravaged this city

and has like eaten everybody.

And then you have to catch 'em.

So it's cool.

- Yeah.

This text just feels very,

a lot of the Pokemon look very samey

and that confuses my poor little old man brain.

And I do think there was like a lot of ground rock type

Pokemon which was frustrating 'cause there's a lot of water

on the other side of things so that's like a,

well I really don't wanna do this

'cause it's fairly counterable.

So it just, I wasn't thrilled with this Pokedex.

Wasn't thrilled with it.

Which is a bummer.

There's not a lot of--

I feel like I haven't been thrilled in a while.

There's not a lot of new water types.

I do feel like they index heavily into bug in this one.

One of the other things I wanted to mention too,

which I kind of said before,

is like how you have to evolve things in strange ways.

For those that do have evolutions,

like I think of Vikavolt,

again, it's one of the only electric types in the game,

but you can't evolve it from a charge bug

until you get to the power plant area,

and then you have to specifically evolve it

in proximity to the power plant.

And this is also true of Crabrawler,

which is like one of the Pokemon

you can get earliest in the game.

You can evolve it into the-

- Crabominable?

- Yeah, crabominable.

But you can't do that until literally like

near the very end of the game.

So it's like, why are they giving you this-

- You gotta go to a snowy place.

- Yeah, you gotta go to a snowy place

and that doesn't, you don't get that

until near the end of the game.

So it's just like, there's weird decisions like that made

kind of scattered throughout this Pokedex

that I don't understand.

And again, I don't think it's bad,

but a lot of the Pokemon here aren't too memorable.

I do have to ask you though, Ms. Max,

what starter did you choose?

- Well, I thought we might talk about our teams

after Grant shared his thoughts on the Pokedex,

but I think we all chose the same starter.

- I think we did.

- We all chose Rowlet, I believe.

- Yeah, I chose Greninja.

- Oh, and Baysun.

- Ash's Greninja.

I tried to do that and it's like,

"Oh, you have to have a son."

I was like, "This is stupid."

I played this demo for nothing."

- Yep, I got Rowlet also, but I usually get Popplio.

I'm a Popplio fan.

Rowlet I chose because I was like, "You know what?

I'll do this."

And then later on I was like, "I have a Greninja,

so I have my starter.

There's a Pokemon that I want that's also Ghost Grass,

so screw it, buy Rowlet, no more."

I hate the I hate the Popplio.

I think it has the final form is cool.

The beginning form is cool.

The middle form stinks.

How this little clown looking seal doesn't evolve into a super clown seal,

but instead some fairy mermaid beyond me.

I think it's a dumb design choice.

But when I'm like, wow, this mermaid thing, I wonder what it evolved from.

Oh, a clown? Very dumb. But the typing, very cool water fairy. I really like that. So a

lot of times I'm like, well, there's my fairy type. I'll just use this.

That that actually is probably the most interesting final typing for the starters here, I think.

Because grass ghost is another Pokemon. It's not necessarily particularly unique in the fire dark is

I like that my favorite thing about. What is it? Oh my gosh, is it Incineroar?

Incineroar?

Yeah, my favorite thing about I don't know why I can't remember his name. My favorite thing about

Incineroar is that it's a wrestling cat thing. So in your mind, you'd be like, oh, this is firefighting. And they're like, no, it's dark. It's like, no, this makes no sense to be dark because fire fighting is like the default fire evolution line and they created a fire--

Yeah, it has dark fur, so it's a dark Pokémon.

But I think there's an argument to be made that Incineroar, more than any other fire starter, should be a fighting type first and foremost, more so than anything else.

Especially giving the Smash Brothers edition, you know, a rattling--

Well, it's got like wrestling moves and stuff.

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And they're like, "No, it's dark."

It's like, okay.

I'm trying to think of all the firefighting types really quick.

Infernape, Blaziken.

Blaziken.

Inbor.

Inbor is the other one, yep.

And then after Black and White, they went to Delphox.

So yeah, they had three firefighting zeroes, skipped one, and this design-wise looks like a fire fighting but I think it's funny that it's dark and they're like yeah this pokemon is

basically a heal character from wrestling I'm like that's pretty cool. Also shout out to the long neck

executory I have to give that shout out it's always grass dragon good type also the delmize the anchor is really cool I wish I wanted I wanted to catch one honestly but it's so hard and it's hard it's a ghost type why is it a ghost oh well it's a ghost it's a gross ghost grass

It's like, what? It's Ghost Grass and then its ability makes

steel moves hit like it's a steel type. So it's almost like three types.

But then you have to catch it in water.

Yeah. Don't ask questions.

It's so it's so strange. I don't know. Yeah, the deck's terrible. But I wanted to I obviously we need to talk about music, but I know that's one of the final things we tend to do or to kind of

Well, we'll talk about music here,

and I know you wanted to talk about performance as well, Max.

What'd you guys think of the soundtrack in this one?

Because I thought it was largely

pretty darn good for the most part.

- Oh, I was so worried.

The way you were talking there,

I thought you were gonna say, "It was fine."

- No, it's really good, I think.

- No, this soundtrack, dope.

- It's very good. - This soundtrack's great.

- Definitely best ripe, or not ripe,

villain, evil teen theme of all time

when it comes to bosses.

Guzma's theme, hands down the best

out of any single evil team theme, in my opinion.

- I took notes specifically,

I could see why you like this game so much

because there was Akala, the Island Town there.

Persona trumpet vibes straight up in Akala.

I was like, this is some Persona music.

And then there's the coffee shop song

when you go to the coffee shop,

and I'm like, this is grand music.

I think the soundtrack's very diverse for a Pokemon game,
and I don't think I've heard anything quite like it
that we've played so far.

Maybe Scarlet and Violet, but that,
they just, it has strong songs, but not different.

This has different genres of music and types of music
and uses different instruments.

I noticed for me in particular the observatory
up at the top of the mountain,
that's straight Battle Network Mega Man kind of vibes.

They fit the environments really well.

Even Team Skull, as annoying as they are,
their music fits them in that way.

Dulce, the guy from the alternate dimension,
they have their own unique theme.

This game's pretty dope.

And they got this electric guitar battle theme,
Junichi Masuda coming in again.

So I really like the soundtrack.

I think it's awesome.

- I think of like my top 10 music from all of Pokemon.

My top two are from Sun and Moon,
which is Guzma theme.

Right below it, Ultra-Macrossma theme.
two masterpieces of music within a game.

- It's awesome.

I'm trying to think of the,

okay, the alternate crosswind theme is very good.

I've got it pulled up here in the background.

I think you spoke very well, Max,

to kind of my thoughts on the soundtrack as a whole.

It's very diverse.

There's a lot of different things going on.

I think all the battle themes are really good in this game.

And obviously I'm a sucker

for when you get to the Rainbow Rocket stuff in the end

they start doing the new versions of all those themes from the classic game like

the rocket hideout theme while you're in it it's really cool the whole fight

thought that the whole rainbow rocket episode thing there at the end is a

really really neat tribute to just the entire series which I really liked and I

know we haven't talked about the episode in particular too much but I think

What's really cool about that in particular is that the Pokemon series often doesn't acknowledge itself as a whole too often.

Every game sort of feels kind of siloed and like they'll make references here and there, you know, like "Oh I'm from Johto" or "I'm from Holland" or something.

Like you'll run into random characters like that.

But I feel like this game it really kind of leaned into acknowledging the larger Pokemon world more so than a lot of others.

and the rainbow rocket stuff at the end, I mean obviously does that very blatantly and

very on the nose by bringing back all the old characters and stuff like that. But I

kind of wish the series did that more often as a whole, you know, like it makes it that

much more special to people like myself. I know you've been playing forever too, Max,

but I know you took a long break, but Matt, Grant and I have largely played every single

mainline Pokemon game that's come out since the 90s. It's only because some of these later

entries here like with Sun and Moon where I didn't play them at launch. And I think it's really, yeah, like there's just a, there's almost a 30 year history of Pokemon at this point and I wish these newer games would do more to kind of acknowledge everything that's come before. So yeah, we were talking about music and I spun it off into something else, but yeah, I don't know. That's a cool aspect of this game. We should do it more in the future.

there's some more stuff you can do. So Rainbow Rocket's not the only returning characters in this game. Let me pull up a list because I can tell you Red, Blue, and Cynthia are in this game. Well they're all in like the the battle area thing that you mentioned to us, right?

Yes, you can have about any character you can think of. Hey remember, I'm pretty sure this is a Hoenn leader in here. There's just like random leaders and stuff. Where to go? Wally's in the game I know as well. From Sapphire and Ruby, red is in it, blue's in it. I mean even like you mentioned Max, like with Samson Oak, it's like that's a cool callback. Like okay cool. Or is that Oak himself? That is not Oak, that is Samson Oak. It's supposed to be

play on Alolan forms. It's Alolan form, that's the joke.

I thought it was like his brother or something like that. But even that, again, that's another reference to the larger series that's very on the nose.

Oh, very on the nose.

That I liked a lot. So yeah, more games should do this. There's a long history of characters and I feel like the only thing that transitions from game to game is just the Pokémon. And and now that even doesn't happen all the time.

- Not that much.

- Restore the national dex.

Hashtag restore the national dex.

- Yeah, this is the last Pokemon with a national dex

'cause then afterwards they're like no more.

Dex it begins.

- They're getting close with Scarlet and Violet, aren't they?

'Cause I know they're about to bring add like 200 more with the DLC, I believe.

- Who cares?

It's probably like 600, there's another 400 to add

- Until they add Ultra Beast,

which haven't been shown to be in the game,

and they add the Polywhirl line, I don't care.

- We're Ultra Beast and Sword and Shield?

- Yeah, with the Crown Tundra DLC.

- Oh, okay, okay.

That makes sense.

Max, I know you wanted to talk about performance real quick, and then I think we can probably wrap things up here.

- I just, I wanted to give credit where credit is due.

We've played Alpha Sapphire, didn't run so hot all the time, and I know X and Y doesn't run very well.

- Prepare for X and Y.

- So, you know, and then Scarlet and Violet did not,

and I don't believe has been fixed yet,

so it's, you know, that is a rough from a performance,

and even Sword and Shield had its issues,

but credit where credit's due,

this game actually ran fairly well.

I think that was Game Freak coming to terms with the 3DS

and really understanding the hardware

at the end of their run with it.

And really the only time I noticed major performance hitches was in those--

- Double battles. - Totem Pokemon battles, double battles, basically any time there was more than two Pokemon on screen, it definitely chugged, which is a bummer, since Totem Pokemon were a vital part of the narrative and pushing things forward.

But outside of that, it did run really well, which I can't say for the rest of these more modern games.

So I did wanna give credit where credit was due, because I do think it's silly that there's no 3D in the game, though, on the 3DS.

I always find it silly when 3DS games had no 3D, but if you turned 3D on, it definitely would've died, so I get it.

- Yeah, I forgot that down the line, they just started completely foregoing 3D

There's some games that even say in the front, playable in 2D only.

- I think this is one of those, yeah, for sure.

- I don't have the box near me.

- Mine's right behind me, but I don't know where.

It's in a bag of some sort.

Do you guys have any last second things you would like to say here before we wrap up?

Any last minute thoughts, any,

or actually I'll do this, Grant,

make your case on why you think this is the best of the best.

You need to do this.

- All right, best of the best,

changes formula for the better, you get in the vanilla game a challenge against the professor as the final boss. Why always change an ultra sun and moon? I don't know. I'm usually an advocate for

the vanilla games in this series. Definitely difficulty spike has jumped quite a bit. I do think it is the hardest of the Pokemon games. I don't think it gets any harder than this, especially on ultra when you fight Necrozma. That's a pretty hard fight if you aren't prepared, and you might have to do some grinding if you have a terrible team.

Removal of HMs, great decision. Last national dex, so this is the most complete Pokedex I would say out of any Pokemon game. All the ideas when it comes to Ultra Beast and involving a new

dimension I think are implemented well with the Pokemon designs. I do think they capture the Hawaii essence well within this game compared to other games it's not as done well because black and whites like New York and Kanto and Johto are like Japan.

-Poenn, I forget what it is. -Poenn is also Japan.

It is? Oh, wow.

I just know Johto and Kanto are like connected even on the map that they're inspired by.

But I think this does the best overall with theming.

The introduction of different forms like Alola forms and then later on you get Galar forms and Whatever forms are in

Scarlet and violet. I forget the name of the region already

Terrastalizing

That's bad

Being able to make some match mechanics from previous games

So Z moves and mega evolutions a very cool that they have them together because they remove

like

previous

like different

Mechanics and games come on later because you get giant ganta max and then that's removed for terracilization

Definitely callbacks to a lot of characters as we talked about

rocket teams earlier red blue fights

Cynthia stuff like that. I think some of the music is all over the place, but it's the best

Music of all because the genres they do well in each of them that they do

I

think the only big thing is

beginning truck through which I mean these games are not meant for adults half the time it's for a younger generation so

They sometimes need that tutorial to get into an RPG

Which it's not the best tutorial regardless. I feel like that's just a Nintendo thing at large as somebody not large nowadays

Yes, somebody who's playing Pikmin 4. I feel like it's a Nintendo thing at large it does except for maybe like

Zelda or something like that.

Zelda doesn't have a tutorial anymore. It's just like, here's a world, be free.

Trying to think. Compared to other things. Yeah, I think it does what it sets out to do,

which is be different. Hawaiian theme. Have this different dimension theme area of your Pokedex.

and music the best of any game. When it comes to story there's only one game that beats it,

but that's about it. So with all those across the line I think that's the best out of any Pokemon

game. If you value story this is not the game for you. There is one game that you will play later

called Black and White which will have hands down the best story, but I think everything else falls

That's not the best story. Are you kidding me? In Scarlet and Violet you feed a dog sandwiches to heal.

Oh yeah, I forgot, nevermind.

Man, I thought that person was gonna turn evil with that dog.

He's just a dog lover boy who needs to feed a subway sandwich.

It's so good, it's so so good.

Yes, everything is the best within this game from Pokedex Music, everything.

Story is a little bit behind on maybe an entry I can be confident saying it's behind Black and White in.

It could be behind others depending on person, but besides that, best in everything else it does.

I mean, just for you, Max, where would you put this one if you were to...

I mean, I think when we get to the end of this season, we'll do like a maybe proper ranking between you and me.

This is definitely one of my top games that we've played so far.

I've felt more engaged with this one, I think, over the course of it than I have with some of the more recent games that we've played.

That's good because I know we put more time into this one.

It took us a longer time, I guess, to get to where we're recording.

From start to finish, yes.

I mean, same amount of game time, roughly.

But I really did enjoy this game quite a bit.

like I said at the top, the bits and pieces I really enjoyed. I do think some of it doesn't necessarily come together on the whole, but each battle was engaging and most were difficult, especially toward the end of the game. There were real challenges where I really felt like I had to prepare and strategize, which I can't say for Pokemon on the whole. If you have the right types. It's usually fairly easy. So it was cool to be met with a challenge, especially kind of halfway through our season. And I'm excited to see where we go from here.

Looking forward to, you know, back to the other only game that I had played before the season with Diamond. I was going to say for me, there's about to be a steep drop off ahead because I do

not like Diamond and Pearl. Diamond and Pearl. Good thing I'm not on that one otherwise. I would

roast you alive for that terrible game.

- No, I'm excited.

I'm really, really excited to go back to that.

I'm not looking forward to X and Y necessarily,

but then the black and white games,

I've heard so much good things about.

- You should look forward to X and Y

just 'cause it's a new one, I feel like, personally.

Like anything new, I feel like there's gotta be some level of interest for you.

And I'll say this, I think X and Y actually has a decent Pokedex based on what I remember.

Better than this game, in terms of new Pokemon.

- We'll see, we'll see.

in terms of new Pokemon strictly, I think.

- Okay.

- But Ultra Sun, Ultra Moon, or Sun and Moon,

I'm actually, I came out more positive

and liking it more than I thought I was going to,

which I think is really good.

And--

- I think this one could have gone either way

for both you and I.

I didn't know how we were gonna feel about this one.

So I'm glad we both liked it.

- It's good stuff, it's good, good stuff.

Well, I think that does it for our discussion on Pokemon Sun, moon, ultra sun, ultra moon, depending on your preference. Thank you all so much for listening. If you like the show, you know, you can subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts, you know, rate the show and follow us at Chapter Select. If you'd like to follow Logan on Twitter,

you can do so over at more man 12 and his writing over at comicbook.com. You can follow myself on Twitter at MaxRoberts143 and my writing over at MaxFrequency.net. Grant, Grant likes

coffee a lot. Your Twitter is private so I don't think sending people there would make much sense. Is there anything you'd like the people to look at at all?

If you want to follow me, follow me on this brand new app made by Zuck himself called "Greds". It will be "Grant_Callahan" and you should be

able to find me there. That is probably where I will migrate to. But besides that, maybe Instagram, same name, even though it's private right now, I'll probably open it up in the near future soon so keep an eye out for that where I'll probably talk about coffee more than games but there will probably be a good mix. All right coffee and games persona,

Pokemon and coffee. What a combo. It's cool I mean they do come together quite well. They're

essentially the same thing. This is all the same. It's all the same. So you can go check

Grana over on threads and Instagram and then a thank you to our members who support the show

directly. You can learn more by going to listeningwisuperpower.com. So thank you to all our members and until

next time, adios! Or should I have said alola?

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