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Hello everybody and welcome to Chapter Select, a seasonal retrospective podcast where we bounce back and forth between a series exploring its evolution, design, and legacy.

For the season six finale, we are covering the Pokemon franchise for one last time.

My name is Max Roberts and I am joined as always by Logan Moore.

Hi, Logan.

Max's Tony Stark once said, "Part of the journey is the end.

" Did he say that?

I think he said it in one of the end game trailers.

Yeah.

This has been a very long season, not trailer.

This has been our longest season by far, at least on our side when it comes to production and playing and all that stuff.

I looked it up today.

I started playing Pokemon Leaf Green in April of 2022.

So it's been about 20 months of play.

I guess the only longer season would have been Paper Mario, but that's partially because we had the idea of Chapter Select.

I want to say like for good 12 to 18 months, we're like, "Yeah, we should do this and we'll start with Paper Mario.

" Then for like 12 months, neither of us played Paper Mario.

Then we're like, "Are we going to do this idea for a podcast we have?

" Yeah.

Eventually we did.

But yes, this has been the longest season by a mile, I feel like.

It has.

I beat the game the day we're recording this.

This morning I sent you that iconic image of Frodo saying, "It's done.

" Yes.

I feel like Frodo at the end of the journey.

Yeah.

This has been a lot.

I don't know.

Here's the thing, and we'll have a larger discussion once we get to the end about the Pokemon series as a whole and just all the games we've played.

But I'm glad we did this.

It has been a huge undertaking.

I think this is one of the seasons that we wanted to do the most, but we knew would be the absolute most daunting on paper just because of the sheer number.

Well, I just think the time allotment per each game combined with the number of games in this series is- It's about 200 hours of gameplay minimum.

I think it's way more than that.

I don't know.

20 to 30 hours a game.

I feel like gold and silver for us alone though was like 60 because we did- Well, that's like two games or more.

We did the true ending of that one where we're like, "We have to beat Red in order to record.

" So we both did that and it took like 60 or 70 hours for each of us.

That was a gauntlet.

So it's been a long, long season.

Definitely three or 400 hours of gameplay I would imagine.

Probably.

Yeah.

I wrote them all down.

I should just actually tally it up, but it's a lot.

My problem is I leave my DS or Game Boys or Switch running in the background sometimes.

So the hours stack up and I don't know what they actually are.

Also, this is a very small annoyance, but I've noticed if I put my DS in sleep mode, close the case and then open it back up, for some reason the time keeps running in the background on these DS games.

I don't know if it's like that on the 3DS games, but I know it is on the base DS game because I'll go to save and it'll be like, I'll have five hours more than I thought I should.

I'm like, "That doesn't seem exactly right.

" So.

Suspicious.

Very suspicious Iwata.

So it's hard to know exactly how many hours I poured in, but yes, this has been an undertaking.

But we did it.

We did do it.

Now it makes me wonder what other things we could do in the future.

Obviously, we've already talked about Metroid and Castlevania being- Well, let's see how we feel after 19 Castlevania games.

Yeah.

I'm curious to see how Castlevania is going to go with so many.

Although that's a very varied lineup of games.

Yes.

To some degree.

I mean, there's definitely an E.

G.

E.

stretch in the middle.

It's all very similar.

Three GBA games and 3DS games and Symphony of the Night, and all that stuff is going to be similar.

But anyway, Black 2 is the end.

We'll save this.

Actually, this will be my first question for you once we do the rundown.

So let's go ahead and do the rundown and then we'll talk about Black and White 2.

Sounds good.

For the final time here in season six, Pokémon Black 2 and White 2 were developed by Game Freak.

They came to the Nintendo DS.

They launched on October 7th, 2012 in North America.

This was into the lifespan of the Nintendo 3DS.

So these were some of the final base DS games ever.

Or not base, but just standard DS games that ever released.

The game director was Takao Uno.

I think that's how you spell it or say it.

The producers were Junichi Masuda, Hitoshi Yamagami, and Shusaki Agami.

The music this time was only done by Go Ichinose and Hitomi Sato.

The Metacritic score on these games was an 80 out of 100, which am I wrong, but is this a drastic drop off compared to?

Black 1 and White 1 were 87.

So it's a seven point drop.

That's what I thought.

Generally speaking, this is where I wanted to kick things off for our discussion, but I agree with that drop in the Metacritic score.

I know you and I talked before this season about how we felt like these were the only true Pokémon sequels in the larger series.

Obviously, like Gold and Silver are more sequels.

I mean, there's ties to the Kanto stuff in those games.

So those feel like direct sequels to the original games.

But these are the only numbered sequels in the whole series, and we felt like that was different than the expanded versions, like enrolled in platinum and those things.

So we want to make sure we play these.

After having done that, I don't know if we needed to in some ways.

I'm curious what your thoughts are because this is what I wanted to ask you upfront.

I don't feel like these games add a whole lot else to Unova into this black and white chronology overall.

There's some little additional wrinkles here and there, but for the most part, there's not a lot going on in this game that I feel like is super vital or all that engaging.

So it feels like a very weird sequel.

It didn't do the sequel stuff that I wanted it to do.

It mostly expands on it in a gameplay fashion.

It expands the decks right out of the gate.

No more restriction to just Unova.

They bring in from all the other four generations upfront, some gameplay changes and things like that.

But on the whole, I feel like we still shouldn't have played it because of these gameplay differences, to understand this duology of games, which is unique within the franchise.

But this is not what I was hoping for when we sat down and said, "Oh, we're going to play black one and two.

" Especially after all the hype that people talk about black and white and its sequel so fondly.

I think maybe people are lumping the two together and that's like a rising tide, lifts all ships.

I think black one being as is what it is, elevates black two a bit.

But the story and the world and stuff weren't as engaging as they were before.

It's mostly gameplay improvements and some regressions that I think make this game stand out.

>> Yeah, I think that's what's weird is I don't know.

For the most part, I feel like nowadays, like in 2023 when people look back and talk about these games, I hear more praise for the sequels than I do the original games.

Like, "Oh, I didn't like black and white, but the sequels improved on a lot of things that I didn't like in those games.

" I feel the complete opposite.

I think black and white one are both far better games, and I think they have better stories and better characters, and they're just doing more interesting things in a general sense.

There are aspects of these sequels that I do like.

I like starting off in a different area, like the first two gyms or whatever that you go to are different.

I like how they fold in characters from the previous games.

There is a time jump, so you get an idea of what everybody's doing.

I think that's mainly though an association with Sharon and, is it Bianca?

>> Yeah, Sharon and Bianca.

>> So that's fun, but that stuff starts to fade as the game goes on as well.

Then I think there was more potential with the Team Plasma arc in this game than what they do with it.

Like I really thought that there was- >> They did something with Team Plasma in this game?

>> Yeah.

>> I missed that beat.

>> Yeah.

I think there was a lot of potential with these games.

Then having played through it again, like I was just very surprised by how little they actually do.

So yeah, I'm feeling just indifferent towards these games in some ways.

I still think generally speaking, so this episode is going to be a bit different because we've already done the, we've talked about the broad beats of Unova, like the decks and the map and the gyms, things like that in our previous episodes.

So broadly speaking, I still like the decks a lot in this game.

I still like a lot of the Pokémon.

They fold in other Pokémon from other regions and things like that.

So I think it's for the better in that manner.

But yeah, for the most part, I just don't think any of the new additions here stand out all that much and I don't think they're any more engaging than what was in the previous games by any means.

>> It's difficult because I feel like Game Freak had such a good template for a sequel already in gold and silver.

I'm not saying they needed to add a whole new region and then connect it to not retrace their steps there, but the way that Johto and Kanto connected and the stories intertwined and the characters overlapped, red being this final challenge up a mountain type of thing.

They had all of this great world-building already established 15 years prior, and it just doesn't seem that present here.

It's, this does feel like that third game entry idea that crystal, that yellow emerald type expansion on the previous game, and not so much a full-blown sequel as we see here and I guess in other ideas.

It really does feel like, "Oh, we're just in the same place.

Here's some references to the previous game and have fun with the new Pokémon in just a slightly different route.

" That's what I was going to say is it felt like the Pokémon series by this point had entered the phase where they had gotten accustomed, Game Freak had gotten used to doing a third entry, crystal followed by emerald followed by platinum.

With these games, it was like, Black and White 2 feel like they're very much like, "Well, we have to do this.

This is the pattern we've outlined for ourselves here.

So we have to do something new.

" They're like, "Well, what if we just didn't do an expanded version?

What if we did sequels?

" I think that's an interesting idea, but again, this game feels very half-baked in that manner.

It doesn't feel like, I think the credits even indicate as much because the credits, we were looking at this beforehand and when you go back and look at the producer and director and composer credits for them, for Black and White, they're far more extensive compared to the sequels, which are very much slimmed down.

So it's clear that they had fewer people working on these games, and that shows with some of the story stuff, I think in particular, where the story is only really comes to a head at a couple of different parts of the game, compared to Black and White where I feel like it really over-arc'd across the whole journey and they were good about sprinkling in things here and there with every new town you would go to.

That is absolutely not the case with this game, and I feel like a lot of the story stuff is back-loaded.

Yeah, it just feels like they were committed to releasing an expanded version of the Unova games in some manner.

They decided to go down this route instead.

That was probably partially based on the thought of like, "Well, what if we did two versions rather than one?"

That'll make us even more money.

"I'm sure that was a factor to a degree.

Because a year after this game came out is when X and Y came out.

So I feel like we've got a little bit of- The core game for your team was absolutely working on X and Y by this point.

Yeah.

That's what I was going to say is, I feel like the team was working on the next big game while, I'm not saying the B team, but just a smaller team was working on Black and White too.

You imagine the game came out roughly 18 months after Black and White won.

I'm sure the development time on this was way reduced because they had the map, they had character models, they had the engine.

They really just had to do new sprites for any of the Pokemon they were bringing in.

I mean, there's a national dex in Black and White.

I was going to say, I mean, you're talking about the Pokemon being broken.

They probably didn't even have to do too much sprite work, and they just had to do the new assets, the new areas, the new characters, and new Pokemon and stuff.

I do have a video that will be in the show notes.

It's one of those Did You Know Gaming videos.

I watched it a while ago while we were prepping this season.

I haven't watched it recently, but it's titled, What Happened to Pokemon Gray and Pokemon Z, which would have been before they started just doing DLC, or I guess Ultra Sun and Ultra Moon were expanded versions as well.

So I'll put that in there, but it has some interesting stories in there that I remember hearing about.

So I think that'll be at least an insightful video of this weird, it's really a true transition for the Pokemon franchise out of not only 2D to 3D, but expanded single version of a game to multiple games and 3D remakes, and then we'll move on to DLC and big transition period for the Game Freak and the IP.

>> I think let's dig in a little bit deeper here rather than talking broadly.

I think the best way to do that probably first is just to talk about the story a bit more because I feel like that is obviously, we talked at the end of the last episode about how like, I feel like



Black and White 1 really set the stage well for these games, especially with how it ends with the end flying off on the backs of one of the legendary Pokemon.

It's like, okay, he's still out there.

He's still going to be present in the sequels and he does have a role in these games.

>> Does he?

>> I mean, he just shows up and he's like, "Oh, let me drop my legendary Pokemon here.

" Oh, no, it got absorbed by the other one.

It feels like he's only there to lead to a cool moment where the two legends fuse more than anything else.

That's pretty disappointing.

But I mentioned this before, but Team Plasma's arc in this, I think I'm very much fine with the idea of Ghetsis coming back and just being like, "I'm out for revenge.

My plan failed two years ago.

I tried to, in fact, I really like his character in this game.

Two years ago, I tried to sway the people of Unova with these fake ideals, and this plan that I had, and now I'm just going to take over Unova by force.

" I like that idea.

>> Yeah, but he only shows up at the very end.

>> That's the, yes.

>> There's no impact if you don't know from the first game.

>> Yes.

Team Plasma's entire arc in this game is very much just like, "We're still alive, but we don't really have a plan.

" They're just there for the first three-fourths of the game, and then all of a sudden they come out of nowhere and light it up with ice, and then Kyurem shows up, and then they just toss him in there out of nowhere.

I said before that the story is very back-loaded, but it is.

They freeze the town, and then you go and you fight a bunch of villains, and then Ghetsis shows up again, and you fight him, and then the legendary stuff.

Even the legendary stuff in this game is super underwhelming.

You just fight the fused Kyurem, and then it's like, "Oh, no, it ran off, but don't worry, it'll be back.

" That's about it.

>> Yeah.

>> Then there's another showdown between Ghetsis and En, but it's so anticlimactic.

There's just they had so much potential here, and I think if Ghetsis was more face-forward and was just from the start of the game like, "I'm back and I'm taking over the region by force this time.

No more trying to play nice or pretend that I'm a good guy and convince you all to release your Pokémon naturally.

I'm just going to exert my will this time around through the power of this legendary Pokémon I have.

" I think if that would have been an overarching thing that had kind of presented itself far earlier in the game, then this story would have been way more compelling.

Because then you could have introduced En and stuff like that, then had him come back and be like, "Okay, I got to stop him again.

" Like there's just a lot of, this is where it feels like they ran out of time, talking about the compressed development timeline.

It's just so apparent that they could have done more in this game, but they did not because this was such a quick turnaround on this game.

It leads to the game feeling hollow.

Yeah, I don't know.

Like I said, generally, totally fine with an evil mustache trolling villain coming back and just be like, "I'm going to light up the world with ice and all sorts.

" Like that's fine.

That's goofy.

It's Pokémon.

That's totally solid.

But it's just that it doesn't have an impact over the course of the entire game that left me feeling wanting.

Yeah.

I mean, I wrote down that there's almost zero Plasma Plot, six badges in, which that's pretty substantial.

I mean, they show up and they're around, but they're like, "Remember us from two years ago?

We're here and we have new costumes.

Let's fight.

" It's there's no, even Professor Juniper is like, "Oh, they're talking about this really cold dragon.

Come listen to this old lady tell a story.

" She's like, "Go talk to the dragon man to learn about the dragons.

" It's like, why couldn't have this been seeded earlier?

Maybe you're learning about the lore or as a new protagonist, you go back and you're learning about the things that happened two years ago.

Maybe your rival, your friend, is also like this lens to learn about the past because he's got major beef with Team Plasma that's not really revealed until midway point either, like the source of that.

But instead, your character feels pretty oblivious to everything that happened two years ago, and everyone's just like, "Remember that time two years ago?

Two years ago.

" But we're not moving forward or developing an evil plot here until the very end where it's just like, "I am here to freeze everyone.

Let me fuse Pokemon.

" I think one of the other biggest problems that I had with this game is that there's so much talk about what happened two years ago and so much.

But with those original games, your main protagonist, especially compared to this game, it has a pretty intrinsic role to the plot.

It plays a pivotal part in En's development and in the other character's development.

For all of those characters to come back, but the main protagonist that you played as from the previous game to just be completely absent feels very strange.

I know that's a hard dynamic to balance because it's like that player character is supposed to be the player themselves in this world, but they've done stuff like this in the past.

Again, with Red.

Yes.

So I feel like they needed to bring back the protagonist from the first game.

I think the protagonist should have been the champion.

That would have been a great part.

I think that's exactly what should have been there helping out along.

It's not the first time that they've just taken a character that you would name.

In reading up about this game, I learned that the rival's canonical name is Hugh, not whatever you get it.

Yeah.

So it's like they could easily have just given them the default name, that whatever the names are in black and white one.

But just to also have other- Just name him black or name him white or whatever.

It doesn't matter.

You can name him M and say it then.

But also having the friends of your protagonist from the previous game, just not really refer to it or acknowledge it in a major way.

Like Sharon being like, "Two years ago, a thing happened.

" Or Bianca just being like, "I'm going to investigate things.

" Your character from the previous games was the one who saved everyone and rescued everything and they just don't even acknowledge that there was a person that did that.

Even N doesn't acknowledge it.

N just says, "I learned a lesson two years ago about how humans and Pokemon can be together.

" Yes.

It just feels so, for a sequel, it feels so disconnected from its original game.

Like you were saying, it makes the character in this game feel like this is the most blank slate, like non- like your character in this game does not have any part that I feel like they play.

They are pure vessel.

Yes.

Especially looking back at some of the previous games.

I always think of, I feel like the game where they do this best is like with Ruby and Sapphire, where it's like, "Oh, you're the new kid in town and your dad's a gym leader," and stuff like that.

It's like your character has certain defining characteristics and relationships and things like that.

That is just totally not the case in this game whatsoever.

The only thing you're really introduced to is this character from a small town.

You have our sort of rival who keeps whining about his sister's purloin that was kidnapped, and he whines about that for quite literally the entire game.

He's the most one-note rival ever.

It's interesting to call him a rival because he doesn't even want to be the champion.

He is very focused in, "I must get revenge," which is interesting because even at Victor Road, he's like, "Let me fight you one more time," and then he encourages you to go become champion.

That's not his desire.

I think it takes too long to figure out that the Pokemon has significance beyond it's his sisters.

It was his grandfather's that he gave to his little sister.

I feel like there could have been more character development instead of him just being mad the entire time.

It felt one-note in that way.

There's no problem with a hothead rival either.

Yeah.

But he doesn't- You will feel my full rage.

He doesn't really change over the course of the game in any substantial manner.

Yeah, like you were saying.

I did like his one line though after he gets the cat back, the Leopard or something.

Yeah.

He's like, "Well, if we let Team Plasma go, no more Pokemon will be hurt.

" That actually was like, "Oh, he's struggling with this right now.

He just got the cat back, but it's been brainwashed by these ghost ninja assassins.

" He's like, "Maybe they should just do what they want so no one else gets hurt.

" I thought that was cool, but again, you have no time to actually sit in that because the next time you see him, he's like, "I'm going to battle you one more time.

" Again, very back-loaded.

Only happens at the very end of the game.

Yes.

Three-fourths of this game is so much the same.

You go to every town, and every town is basically identical in structure, except there's maybe one very tiny new thing that they throw in.

I think of the cold storage area is gone and now there's this little- Now it's the PWT.

Yeah.

Now it's this new little battle arena thing, which is cool.

I like that tournament.

I learned that if you go through that and you beat the champion of the PWT, that's the real life Pokémon World Champion at the time.

I forget the guy's name.

That's cool.

Yeah.

I watched a documentary about it.

So they put him in the game because he had won three years in a row.

He's the only three-time VGC champion.

So that's cool.

I like that inclusion.

But then I think of south of one of the towns, there's that whole little stretch where they're like, "Oh, you can bring people here.

" "They'll open shops on the streets and just talk to people around the world.

" "You can get them to come here.

" I talked to everybody in the game and never found anybody who was like, "Yeah, I'm looking to open up a shop on a random street or whatever.

" So I really don't think they flush that out.

That's what I'm saying.

Every town you go to has one very tiny difference, or they make you go out of order at certain times.

The Dragon Town is basically the same, but it gets frozen over and also it's the seventh badge instead of the eighth badge.

It's just very, very tiny, tiny things that don't matter in the grand scheme of things.

But I will say I did like that they make you get up to the top point of the western side of the map, and then you jump to the eastern side of the map.

That makes the whole map feel more you've been everywhere by the end of the game.

Because I know in the previous game you're like, "Oh, I feel like this game is going to keep going onward because I haven't gone to any of the cities on the eastern part of the map.

" I'm like, "Oh, you don't until the postgame.

That's the secret.

" So I do like that they try to make you some more of the full Unova map, even though I guess the bottom section is just completely left out because you don't go into any of those initial firsts.

Yeah, you don't go to the part where you started in the first game until the postgame.

That's the new postgame area, which is cute.

They created the whole new area in the lower left corner.

If you played the first game, and especially for us because we played these back to back, you can see the characters and the changes there and stuff.

But it's nothing too substantial.

I don't feel characters really grew or changed all that much.

I think actually Sharon, I think has a major, maybe not major, but him being the very first gym leader that you face, and it's a bunch of weak Pokémon, it almost feels like punishment for his quest to become the best and the strongest.

Yeah.

So I just don't care too much for that.

I think Bianca, I do feel satisfaction with Bianca's arc though.

She found a calling and something she wants to do and she's out there doing it, and exploring and researching.

I think that's actually pretty cool.

But even her role fades as the game goes onward.

Oh, yeah.

Not that she needs to have a major pivotal part by any means.

She doesn't really in the first game either.

But yeah, she starts to fall off the longer you play.

I want to go with the professor till halfway through.

Yeah.

That's it.

Whatever.

It's fine, I guess.

The one other person that we haven't mentioned that I wanted to go back and talk about in association with Plasma, and there's a couple other things I want to mention in association with Plasma and their arc in this game.

I feel like Team Plasma is important because there's a lot of, again, there's just a lot that they could have done with them as a group in these games to make these sequels way better and they just don't.

They introduced another antagonist with Colrus who's not even an antagonist for half the game until- He's just a science purist?

Yeah.

Then he just shows up very late in the game and he's like, "Oh, yeah.

I've partnered with Team Plasma and I'm trying to bring the strength out of Pokemon.

" Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

It's like, "Okay, sure.

" You fight him and he's like, "Oh, you beat me.

Goodbye.

" It's just there's no real- I'll disband Team Plasma now.

Yeah.

There's no real arc with him at all.

He's just this new guy with a weird haircut that keeps showing up and you're like, "Okay.

Who is this guy?

" You think he's going to have a larger part to play and he never really does.

Even then, he's still second in command to Ghetsis.

I feel like it would have been better if they would have almost made him the final boss, like have Ghetsis come in and be like, "I need revenge.



" Then, Colvus is like, "No, actually, we as Team Plasma now have new ideals and a new motive, and you're the past and I'm the future.

I'm the true villain.

" Nope.

Nothing like that ever happens.

It's just like I'm a science boy and I have a weird haircut.

I have decided to partner with Team Plasma.

Oh, darn, you beat me.

I guess I'll disband the group now.

He's a very strange character.

It's a weird one.

Yeah, it's just more botched character development and story progression.

Yes.

He's definitely one of the most recognizable people just because of that haircut.

But again, final thing I want to say regarding the Plasma 2 and just the potential and what they could have done.

I love the idea that Team Plasma has fractured because even in the first games, you saw this, some people were questioning.

You would run into random grunts throughout the game.

They're like, "I don't know if I should be with this group.

Should I leave?

This doesn't sound right.

" So the first games did a great job of setting up that not everybody in Team Plasma was on board with what the group was doing.

Obviously, by the end of that game, they disbanded and now there's a bunch of former Team Plasma people in these games.

There's neat whole sex of them.

I think the one that gives you the Zorua in north of one of the towns, I think the fifth town.

Ruud, I think.

Yeah.

So there's some of the former major Team Plasma members that are like, "Oh yeah, now we don't follow the group and we're trying to rehabilitate.

" Or, "We're trying to rectify our wrongs from the past.

" Which I think is a good idea.

I don't understand why you don't then have this anti-Team Plasma go up against the current Team Plasma or anything like that.

Again, there's just so many things they set up that would make sense for logical, big story moments and then they just never happen.

Well, they do have a fight there right before the frigate.

Yeah, a little bit.

But I almost wish they were sprinkled in more, spreading the gospel of, "We have changed and we're trying to mend what we did two years ago.

" But they only come up every now and then and I feel like it doesn't feel as widespread or immersed in the world.

I think it would have been better to see these different sex rehabilitating in each town or have people travel and they're spreading the word, kind of like Team Plasma was in the first game, but a different message this time.

But it is cool to see them and also they're trying to serve Lord N still.

There is a, I don't know if you did this, but you can link your previous save to this game.

If you interact with certain NPCs, you get these flashback sequences that show what happened in the intervening years.

Let's not do that.

So I saw a couple of those.

I didn't seek them all out, but a couple of them and they show, one was these Team Plasma members talking about, "Where is Lord N?

Why has he forsaken us?

Is what we were doing right or wrong?

Should we be for plasma or against it?

" They have this long cutscene about it and then N shows up at the end and stuff, in this flashback sequence.

It's a shame that that was locked behind syncing saves.

I get that's cool, but like a way to reward people for playing both and keeping both.

>> It definitely rewards people who played both, yes.

>> But it's just like, I don't know, that's good story stuff that's locked behind save progression essentially.

>> Yeah.

I don't know.

>> These games more than a lot of other Pokemon games that we have played over the course of this season.

I just have questions about what happened here?

Again, lots of potential, lots of good ideas at a baseline level.

Why wasn't this expanded on?

What exactly went down?

Like you can see where this game would have been fantastic, one of the best in the series, and then they just don't go far enough in certain areas, and it really ends up dragging in all that.

Again, chalk a lot of it up to probably development time, the fact that a smaller team was working on this game with a compressed development time, and that's probably the reason why it is like this, but alas, I don't know.

This is the game we were given as a result.

>> Yeah.

It feels more like a bummer than ending on the high note that I was anticipating.

Based off word of mouth.

>> Yeah.

I did want to ask you about, last story thing I think we should touch on is just the legendary.

We mentioned that there's really not a lot to say.

I will say I like that Team Plasma gains control of the legendary, and then puts it to use by trying to take over the region.

That's a new thing.

Typically, the leaders are vying for the legendary Pokemon of the region, and their plans are always thwarted right beforehand, and then the player character gets a hold of the legendary for themselves or whatever.

That's typically how it goes down.

I like that they do get a hold of Kyurem this time around, and then they again start freezing things up.

I also like the idea that it's kind of tacky.

I mean, this is my problem with Kyurem overall and how they pitch him in this game, is that in the previous games, like Zekrom and Reshiram are supposed to be like a yin and yang type thing.

They keep each other in check and in balance.

In this game, it's like, "Oh yeah, but there's also one other one that everybody forgets about.

" It's like, "Okay.

" The way I understood it was that Zekrom and Reshiram were one Pokemon, and then split with the twins, the Truth of the ideals.

This is like the husk of the one body.

So it's cool.

I think that Team Plasma was so integrated into the lore of the Unova region, to use these Pokemon and that they would exploit that lore in history to abuse and manipulate Pokemon to get to their ends and stuff.

I like the fusion thing.

I don't necessarily like how DNA splicers are just a thing suddenly.

It's like, "Ah, well, let's just steal these really quick.

" Yeah, I feel like it should have been more like a natural thing between the Pokemon, like when they clash, they mesh or something like that.

Yeah, or maybe we learn across the course of our journey about the history of Unova and these legendary dragons instead of just mentioning them, we learn about their plight.

Maybe it's like, "Ah, someone thinks they saw a black dragon over here with a green-haired boy.

" I don't know.

It's just there's so much potential to expand upon this lore, and I wish they did because there's some cool stuff.

The fusion is dope.

The fusion is really dope.

I mean, this can lead us into talking about the gameplay elements, but I feel like the reason the DNA splicers are even a thing is for a gameplay purpose rather than a story purpose.

That's because when you capture a Kyurem and then pair it with one of the others, you use the DNA splicers as a key item to either fuse them together or separate them.

Separate them?

So it's served that purpose for the player to fuse them together if you so choose once you get them.

But also, yes, it's strange at the same time.

Just like, "Here, I'm going to toss this DNA splicer into the sky.

" And, "Oh no, now they're combined.

Oh, Shum has guns.

" Kyurem's really cool.

Yeah, he is cool.

I mean, we had this jotted down, but some of the movies in this game I think are neat.

This is one of the first games where I think they really do this, is use the 3D animated cut scenes.

They only do it a couple times.

They only do it a few times.

They do it once when the town gets frozen up, and then they do it in another instance with the battle between Kyurem and the other legendary Zekrom or Reshiram.

But, oh, you're talking about other movies.

But yes, the animated cut scenes I think are cool.

They're very cool.

They're very cinematic in a way.

You can tell they're very much inspired, like even how the music is set during those sequences.

It's like major Godzilla vibes in these fights.

It is cool.

I like the concept of an ice dragon as well as the legendary.

That's one of those cool pairings that's like, "Ah, this kind of breaks the rules a little bit.

" That's neat.

And I like that you can't catch it the first time because you could just throw a master ball and finish it.

So I like that you actually had to fight it all the way.

I kind of like that, but I also kind of hate it because it's kind of easy to defeat and then it's just gone.

It goes, "Baaah!

" And then the screen goes-- And like Pokemon Sword and Shield, it was you had to beat it and then you could catch it after you beat it.

Yes.

So they at least would go on to fix that type of mistake later.

But it's cool that they make you fight Catarina or whatever it's called when it's fused.

Talk about the movies because I brought up the wrong movies and you were talking about a different type of movies.

That's okay.

Because before that bullet said "plays" like the theater.

So I just changed it to the movies.

Yes, now you can create actual Pokemon films in these games, which is dumb.

I don't know.

It's a thing.

I mean they always put little secondary things in these games and just kind of fill them out.

I mean these are games for kids.

And like I'm sure-- I'm just mad that they make you take 30 minutes to do this.

Yes, that is always the big fault.

The theater thing wasn't.

It was just like, "Oh, here's the theater.

Why don't you go on to play?

" And then you just turn around and leave.

Yes, with the movies, I mean the good thing is is that the movie studio is ran by a Mr.

Stew-Dio, which I really liked.

That's a good name.

It's a very, very good name.

And so that-- Broadly speaking, the movie part of this game, it's annoying that you have to play through it.

I think it's how it functions is-- As far as like the other secondary things that they've added in the Pokemon series over the years, I think this one is one of the better ones, I would guess.

It's not amazing, and I'm not going to spend extra time doing it outside of the tutorial section where they force you to.

I would prefer to do that sort of thing than beauty contests or something like that.

That's fair.

At least there's gameplay tied to it where you actually do a Pokemon battle, follow a script.

Yes.

It's almost like you have to fight a certain way, which is interesting.

Yes, I like that.

Forcing you to do it for half an hour is not fun.

It kills the pace.

Yes, I agree with you.

Other than that, a lot of the other gameplay things I feel like are recycled from the other games.

You've got rotation battles back, triple battles are back.

Is there anything else in these gameplay-wise that was really drastically changed or different this time around?

You actually gain experience at an acceptable rate?

Oh, yes, this is true.

Oh my gosh, it feels so much better.

I way enjoyed my time leveling up in this game.

I feel like part of it is because they put higher level Pokemon in front of you, and so you're gaining experience at a better rate because the Pokemon you are facing are actually kind of beefy throughout the game.

I felt like I was leveling at a decent rate, and I would still run into trainers, and they had Pokemon three or four levels higher than me.

I was like, oh, darn, geez.

There is an inherent challenge there, but it also ensures that the experience you're gaining constantly is of a higher rate, and you get to the end of the game.

It does feel, I will say, this is absolutely one of the better leveling grinds in the entire series.

I think.

It feels like the right level of a little grind, a little challenge, but you're never at such a deficit of, oh, I'm six levels behind, and it's just a struggle.

I gotta go into Victory Road and grind for the next 40 minutes to train my Pokemon up, and then I'll go back to the Elite Four and try to face them again.

Yeah, nothing like that ever happens, but everything still feels like there is a difficulty or a challenge to it, which is something that absolutely starts to fade in the series from here on out, really.

I feel like that's why it starts to absolutely become way too cupcake easy, and then they start to fix that a little bit more later on.

But yeah, what's funny about that is we're saying they found a perfect balance here finally and a great balance here with these games, and then they go on to totally just toss it out.

There was no extra share for everybody.

It's like, no, you did it well here.

Keep this in line for all of the future games, and then they just absolutely don't do it.

It really did feel like this perfect balance of gameplay.

Pokemon had perfected the formula right here as far as battles and gameplay go.

They still have the gimmick of a rotation battle, but there's double and triple battles, which are interesting strategically on their own.

The battles themselves are snappy, status effects, different moves.

They're animated beautifully, but they don't take too long.

The health bar moves at a good rate.

Everything feels balanced here in this game, and then it goes to not balanced from here on out, which is such a bummer.

But I am really glad, because that was my big issue with black and white.

- The grindiness of it.

- Was the leveling grind, that pacing angle of the game.

I wish we could merge the two.



Like a twin snake situation, take the story and stuff from the first game, we'll put the gameplay of the second game in it.

Honestly, maybe a fan mod out there, I don't even know, but it sounds like something the Pokemon community would do.

It was a really fun game to play this time around.

It was really great to build my team, level up.

It just felt good all around.

And I liked having Pokemon from the previous generations show up this time around, while it may not have been necessarily explained narratively, like while all of a sudden there were 300 more Pokemon.

It was cool to see them come back in a cool way without it being such a drawn out thing of, "Oh my gosh, there's a Johto Pokemon over there.

" It was just like, "Yeah, here's an electric sheep.

" - I feel like they still put the Unova region Pokemon front and center more than anything else.

Like they don't ever, I think that's always been my annoyance with some of these other games where they do expand the decks outside of, and a little bit more in the expanded versions, like Platinum Emerald and so on.

Is that some of the new Pokemon that they do introduce kind of end up taking the spotlight away from the ones that were originally there?

And I don't feel like that's the case this time around.

I feel like, if anything, they make it easier to get some of the other ones.

Like I think of whatever the first evolution of Eelektross is.

I think that's a little bit easier to catch in this game this time around.

- Yeah, I think that's a little bit easier to catch.

Like the catch rates for that in Chargestone Cave were a little bit improved this time around.

- So that's nice.

- They tweak when things show up, level up, and things like that.

It's all good and acceptable.

It's in a good spot.

- Yeah, to really not, I feel like we've been very negative in this episode on this game, but I do want to stress, like kind of like we were saying, gameplay wise, I do think these are some of the best Pokemon games in the entire series, both Black and White 2 and Black and White 1.

Like I think these are some of the best.

I love these Dexes.

I love all the Pokemon.

I love the Pokemon they add into the Dex in this game.

In time you put Growlithe and Arcanine into a Dex and allow me to catch it easily, I'm going to love that.

So I really do think like gameplay wise, these are absolutely some of the best.

We're just not talking about that a lot because I feel like we got into the intricacies of that in our first episode, and there's not a whole lot left to say this time around.

So if you want to hear us expand more on those thoughts and you haven't listened to our first episode on just Black and White, you can go back and listen to that and we'll dive into that a bit more.

The last thing on like a gameplay element that I wanted to bring up though, was something we talked about before the show.

- Okay, good.

I was going to make sure we got this up too.

- Because like Black and White 1 are so good about like, basically not making you have to use HMs at all.

In fact, I don't think you have to, period.

Even Surf, even Surf is not needed in those games.

To my knowledge, you can get from the starting town to the Elite Four without ever giving one of your Pokemon an HM, which is great.

And then that's how I think it should be.

And obviously the series later on started to move away from HMs and any sort of traversal methods you needed.

It would just give you naturally, I think of like sword and shield and stuff like that, where everything was like tied to your bike or whatever.

- Hunchkrow would come pick you up.

- Sure, things like that.

That is not the case in this game.

It's very annoying.

- So close.

- They are so close.

You get to Victory Road, you need Surf, which is I don't think a huge deal because there's one HM I don't think people have a problem with it is Surf because I feel like every team you're ever gonna- - Surf or Fly, I think.

- Yeah, Surf is the one that I think everybody always gets regardless to some degree.

So that's fine.

- It's a good move to have in general.

- Yes, the problem is you get to the Victory Road and then all of a sudden you need Strength as well.

- One time, you just need Strength once.

- Yes.

- I actually, on Victory Road, I just took two of my team out and put in two low level Pokemon.

I had Strength and Fly and Surf on them.

- There's always the classic, you go the HM slave route and you just go and get a Pokemon that can learn all sorts of HMs and you run through Victory Road with them or whatever.

I mean, I've done that plenty of times, but it is very annoying that the first games got it right.

And then in this game, for some reason, they just hard-block you at Victory Road and they're like, nope, we're gonna make you need Strength this one time to advance.

And I don't know why they do that.

- It would just be so much better if you could just delete an HM too.

- Yes, yes.

- 'Cause you still have to go to a move de-leader to make that change.

- The later games have gotten so much, got so much better with that stuff.

Like again, like Scarlet and Violet, where you can just manage your moves.

- In the menu, on the fly, anywhere in the world.

- Yes.

- It's fantastic.

- It's great.

It's awesome.

I love that about the later games.

- But yeah, it was such a bummer.

Always, I'm in the habit of what HMs do I need to get through Victory Road?

And when I read this time that I needed Strength, I was like, oh.

- I did the same thing 'cause I ran into the Boulder-- - So close.

- I ran into the Boulder at Victory Road and I was like, wait a minute, there's no way they're gonna make me have to learn Strength right now.

They've gone almost two full games without having to make me learn a specific HM other than Surf, which I'm already teaching my Pokemon.

I'm like, there's no way they're gonna make me do this.

And I look it up and alas, there it is.

You do need Strength.

It's like, oh, this sucks.

So very annoying, very frustrating.

Not a fan of that decision.

I don't know why they did that, but whatever.

- Yeah, whatever indeed.

- Music, again, a lot of commonality between the two games.

I think there are some new tracks here this time around, specifically the battle theme.

I know you noted it was a lot better this time with the rival battle theme.

- I said slightly better, slightly better.

- Yes.

- But you know what was a regression was, I think the Team Plasma battle theme.

I think that was a step back, which is a bummer.

- A lot of the themes from the first game do return though.

So again, there's not-- - Yeah.

- The wild battle and trainer battles are the same.

I did note that the Geddes theme is better this time around.

I had a big problem with that last time.

So that was a bit more fitting.

But the Champion theme was a bit lackluster this time around.

So I was like, ah, we can't all win here.

But some that I wrote down, I liked the first town, Asperda City.

I thought that was really sweet.

I liked Andelatown a lot.

And these could be the same from the first game.

I'm just noticing them more here in the second one.

But Andelatown's beachy, Animal Crossing vibe was good.

And I liked Route 13, which is right after Andelatown.

Those kind of all pair nicely.

And I really liked the cave theme.

The cave theme stood out to me.

- The cave theme is really good.

- It stood out to me this time.

- Yeah.

I mean, again, all of the music that does return to is like remixed or revamped in some sort of ways, like you mentioned the Geddes theme.

The end battle music, you can face him again.

And that's a little bit different this time around, too.

Same melodies, same broad beats, but they do some different things with the instrumentation that is being applied in those tracks.

And it makes it feel like even though a lot of the songs do return, they still feel fresh, which I appreciate, because I really feel like they could have just included all the same songs and not done a whole lot with them.

But the attention to detail that has always been made with the Pokemon series when it comes to music, I feel like is top notch.

And that really doesn't prove to be any different this time around with these games.

And I appreciate that.

We've also got jotted down here post-game.

I know both you and I didn't really do anything post-game this time around.

There is a lot to do.

I mean, we talked about the new areas to explore.

Oh, that was one thing I wanted to mention to you.

How do you feel about them putting the three legendary Pokemon from the region in front of you as you play through the game?

And they're like, you should catch these because they'll help you fight Team Plasma.

That's a much different thing than they've ever done in the games previously.

I didn't catch a single one of them.

Did you just kill them all?

Yeah, I tried to catch them, but they kept breaking out of the Pokemon.

Yeah, they have this kind of move along here.

They definitely have very high catch rates for sure.

Yeah, they're cool.

They're not my favorite designs.

It's Verizon, or Verizion, Cobarion.

Verizon.

Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T are your favorite legendary Pokemon.

And then Terrakion.

Again, I didn't catch them either for what it's worth.

But again, it's more just the idea that they put them in front of you.

And they're like, hey, you should get these.

It would be worth your time to go capture them.

I think that's a cool sort of idea.

Also, in these games, we didn't toy around with the postgame too much.

But Landorus, Thunderus, and Tornadus, don't they have their different forms in these games as well?

You know what I'm talking about?

I believe so.

That's where they introduce the different forms I think is in these games.

I want to catch them.

They are ones that I want to go ahead and get.

That's the cool threesome to have in this game.

There's two different three sets of Pokemon.

And those are definitely the coolers.

And I know Thunderus is big and competitive, not in our series for members.

It's still out here.

They're pretty powerful in the competitive scene.

At least they were.

And we haven't talked about it either.

But I think the legendaries overall in this decks are quite cool.

Yeah.

Keldeo being a water fighting type is cool.

And then we've got Meloetta, which is like a musical note sort of legendary Pokemon, which is where Genesect is really cool.

Genesect is dope.

I love how Genesect's design.

And Genesect was like a-- there was some sort of promotional thing that you got with the game when you originally got Black and White 2 for Genesect.

It was a way to get him.

So I was looking this up.

You can still get these Pokemon, these event Pokemon.

And because they're registered to an IP address or something, so you can just set up an IP.

And it will come in as legitimate because it's coming from these websites or whatever.

They're not cheating or hacking.

So I kind of want to go back and do that.

It's not a Toys R Us promotional event or whatever.

Yeah.

So you can go back and get some of these, which I think is really neat.

And I kind of want to do that to get the Genesect and Keldeo and stuff, just to have them when we do the great migration, because you and I both here at the end of the season get to finally do our big PokeBank migration into Pokemon Home.

That might be my big project over Christmas here.

I'll have to be at home with my girlfriend and my parents.

They'll be like, what are you doing?

I'll be like, I'm mass transferring Pokemon from across nine different games to the Pokemon bank.

I caught this Pokemon 15 years ago.

Well, now it's going to be safe in the cloud.

Yes.

So that'll be the fun part.

I've been very much looking forward to that here at the end of our season.

But yeah, I want to call out some of those other legendaries, because again, I know we historically haven't done a whole lot of post-game stuff throughout the course of this season.

I think the most we did was our gold, our gold, soul silver.

Gold and soul.

Yeah, our gold and soul silver.

But that was just because-- Had to be red.

We had to be red.

That's the rule with those games.

Mm-hmm.

So yeah, but there's a lot of good post-game stuff in these.

I remember from back in the day, I definitely played Black and White 1 a whole bunch.

We're going to have a two-part discussion here to wrap up this episode.



Just like these two games.

Yes, just like these two games.

The first part, I mean, what do you think, again, the legacy of Black and White 2?

What are the legacies of these games in your mind?

And I feel like this is a very obvious one in some sense.

The only direct sequels.

The only direct sequels, if we're not counting-- Gold and silver.

Gold and silver is direct sequels, which they kind of are, but aren't in name.

These are the only mainline Pokemon games that have a number in their titles.

Yeah.

So which is-- I don't think they'll ever do that again either.

They could.

I just don't think they'll do it again.

Yeah.

I mean, that is the big thing with these games.

And I'm curious to maybe broaden this discussion out a bit about what the legacy of these games is.

Obviously, we're in an era where remakes have been rife and have-- Black and white are next?

These are next on tap.

But given that there are sequels, I wonder how they would handle remakes.

Would it just be the first games?

I feel like they would just do the first games, and then they'll do Black and White 2.

Yeah, but you know that it would be a same sort of situation like with what's happening with Persona right now, with a Persona 3 remake they're doing.

Everybody's like, why aren't you remaking the Persona 3 Fes content?

Why aren't you adding the female protagonist from Persona 3 Portable?

It's like, there is extra stuff here, and I feel like no one's going to be fully happy if they don't do a comprehensive remake of everything in some sense.

And so I would wonder what Game Freak would do.

I do agree they would probably just remake the first games.

They could do what they do here at the end of this game.

After a credits roll, you unlock something called challenge mode, which is a harder difficulty mode.

Maybe once you beat base Black and White, you unlock the Black and White 2 story content, and it's a tougher challenge.

Almost new game plus in a way.

I don't know if your team would carry over with you, but-- Or whatever, but you kind of can-- You move forward, and you get to go through how the world has changed in the two years more directly instead of waiting three years for the next remake.

And it's a different art style, and they don't feel conjoined.

Because whatever art style they do for Black and White remake, which I can't imagine is going to be the same as Diamond and Pearl-- Yeah, please don't do the chibi style Diamond and Pearl stuff.

I think it fit those games, but I don't want to see it again.

Yeah.

So it's an interesting problem.

Maybe they do put them together.

Obviously, it's not a lot of narrative different content.

They would have to unify the gameplay front across both, though.

And I would hope it'd be more in line with 2 than 1.

Well, I wonder if even if they stuck to the story of the first games, I wonder if they would then, you know, well, let's add the opening area from Black and White 2, like that southwestern region where you start your journey this time around, and where the first two gyms are.

Like, maybe they could add those into the game as a post-game area of some sort that you could go to.

And there's different types of Pokemon and different legendaries.

I don't know.

Like, there's a way where I think they could kind of do everything that has been seen across both of these games.

Mm-hmm.

Tell only one of the stories.

I think the first story is the one you tell.

If you have to pick one.

Well, obviously, I mean, that's the one they're going to do.

And you really can't do this story unless there's a time gap.

So you kind of have to just do the story of the first one, I feel like, and just leave it at that.

But you can add, again, the different gameplay elements we've talked about, add some of the different locales, add that opening area from Black and White 2, the opening first set of, like, what, two or three towns before you get to the middle portion of the map or the mainland portion of Unova.

I feel like they could do that in a remake, and that would be interesting.

Yeah.

Other than that, though, I really don't feel like-- I mean, this is our most basic legacy discussion.

Like, the legacy of these games is just they were the sequels, and they're the last Nintendo DS games.

But even that doesn't really hold a ton of weight because 3DS is still DS in some sort of way, and there wasn't a monumental show for the entries.

People still bought these games and played them on their 3DS.

Yes.

Yes.

Probably how most-- maybe most-- well, the 3DS, I think, was still \$250 at the time, so maybe not.

You know, I'm looking here on the Wikipedia.

It says total sales for these games, \$7.

8 million worldwide.

Explains why they're-- Which is not a lot for Pokemon games, to be honest.

Especially if you look at Sword and Shield-- Or, I'm sorry, that was as of January 2013, so that may not be final sales.

Well, I mean, they probably didn't do-- I mean, let's say there's give or take \$10 million out there.

These are definitely, I think, the second most expensive-- I mean, well, I guess third if you throw Emerald into the mix alone.

Emerald's like, yeah, \$200.

These are like \$150 complete.

Yeah.

Obviously, the complete Game Boy games are always more expensive because no-- Yeah, I'm just talking games that sell-- --throughout the cardboard stuff.

Like, it's hard gold, soul silver at the top.

And anyway, these are some of the most expensive.

And I think maybe the most forgotten because of that sequel.

I don't remember the conversation really around in 2012 completely, but I do remember a few friends being like, they're making a sequel instead of just like gray or whatever.

Like, I remember some consternation there.

Around, oh, now they're just milking it for two versions.

So if you want everything, you have to buy two extra versions of the game instead of just the one.

I don't know how well that has been received in hindsight.

So I guess we'll see what they do when they do remake it, if they remake them together or separately.

There's the chance to do gray.

Always go back and just make up a game that never existed.

Yeah.

And so for part two of our legacy discussion here, obviously we usually end episodes talking about the legacy of a single game.

But this is our final episode of the season, at least for now.

We'll probably obviously come back and add new episodes to this season as new Pokemon games come out because obviously that will continue forever.

There's still a new Pokemon game?

I mean, really quick, maybe to kind of bridge these two, the new DLC for Scarlet and Violet just came out.

And it is in the Unova region.

It is, actually.

Yeah.

Which I really want to play it.

I really want to play.

It seems very cool.

I've purchased the DLC.

I have not played it.

I've been tabling some of the stuff, some of the newer stuff.

You know I have not played Arceus yet.

You need to.

So I'm going to play that now.

I figured that would be a nice little carrot on the end of the stick here for me once we got through all of these games to go back and play Arceus now.

I feel like that'll be fun.

And then the DLC for Scarlet and Violet.

And I feel like the DLC for Scarlet and Violet is a good time to go back to those games because that's where we're going to have our ultimate Poke battle as well.

Ultimate Poke battle, yes.

We're going to have them in the latest entries in the series, which I don't know if it's a good or a bad idea.

But so be it.

See how it goes.

But yeah, I mean, this is-- I mean, we mentioned it at the top.

This has been our largest undertaking to date.

Played through every single game in the series in some capacity now.

Obviously not some of the older games where remakes were available.

We played through those.

I mean, there's still a lot of Pokemon blind spots, I guess, in that sense that we might have here.

But we can now speak definitively to this whole series.

And I guess just broadly, Max, for you, coming into this, you had obviously not played far more games in this series than myself.

I had only not played, I think, like three of the mainline entries.

Sun and Moon, Sword and Shield.

And then obviously, Scarlet and Violet came out as we were doing this.

So I had a far more comprehensive look at the series compared to yourself.

How do you feel having now played everything?

What do you think of the series overall?

Just broadly, where are you at?

I told you earlier, I may have even said it in the show, I don't remember if it was pre or post starting, but we started playing in April or so of '22.

And at that time, I had only played two Pokemon games, really.

And I came to find out I had really played a lot of X as well.

You know, seven badges deep.

But say three games, let's be generous.

Blue, Diamond, and X.

But I couldn't tell you the type chart.

I only really knew the Kanto Pokemon.

My knowledge of Pokemon was very empty.

Total novice.

And now, I mean, I'm out here building hyper-focused teams.

I've got this type chart pretty much down.

I feel like I understand the people that say Generations are mechanics and not Dex Pokemon.

They're still wrong, but I understand their argument a bit more now.

It's cool to say that I have finally played all the mainline Pokemon games.

I can actually speak to every generation of Pokemon, which has been a franchise that is a constant in my life.

And now I have a touch point for how the series has evolved, where it's going, what I'd like to see from it.

You know, I have played Arceus and Scarlet and Violet.

And that is a direction that these mainline games need to keep going in, is open exploratory cat.

I mean, dude, when you play Arceus, it is exactly where I want Pokemon to keep going.

I would love, really, maybe they should do a Legends, you know, Genesect or something.

I don't know, just a Legends, you know, type game.

I think that would actually really dope with all of the lore here with Unova and the twins and the splitting of the dragons.

It would be really cool to see Unova come together that way.

But it is a series that is kind of, it's reaching a new form, but it also needs to tighten up its graphics on level three, so to speak.

You know, these are still the best looking Pokemon games that we've played all season, Black and White 2 specifically.

And it's a shame that these games run in such a poor state nowadays.

And I really want to see Game Freak kind of bring that up to match the gameplay promise.

Because Scarlet and Violet are still fun to play, even though they look atrocious and run like hot garbage.

So there's still room for improvement.

You know, I think the stories are getting better.

Maybe we can come back to Black and White in a more mature way going forward.

But I'm glad that we did it.

And I don't think I would have done this without the show.

I don't think I ever really would have gone back and played a game like Sun and Moon or X and Y.

You know, I probably wouldn't have played Alpha Sapphire, Omega Ruby.

I probably would have played the Game Boy version instead.

But I can speak to this whole series a lot better, I think, which I find valuable.

What about you coming back after a lifetime of Pokemon?

You know, this is the first time revisiting some of these games, I think.

Well, I mean, first off, to go off of what you said, like, yes, I imagine this is like, I knew this coming into this season that this would be cool for you to do, because this is like, we would have to double check, but I'm pretty sure Pokemon is like the largest media property on the planet.

Yeah.

Like just overall comprehensive sales for everything.

Obviously, they're not the high selling video games ever alone.

Or maybe, I don't know, they're up there.

This is like one of the biggest media properties in existence across the anime, the merch, the games, just everything.

And so, yes, it is cool that you can now speak to it all.

It's the highest grossing media franchise.

Yeah, OK.

I thought so.

Eighty eight billion dollars.

You know who's behind it?

Mickey Mouse at fifty two billion.

Like, yeah.

Yeah, Pikachu's got Mickey Mouse beat all day.

And now you can speak to all of this.

And so I figured that would be a cool thing for you.

I mean, obviously, you weren't blind to Pokemon by any means, but like, it's cool that you can now talk about the whole series and how it has evolved unintended and just grown over the years.

As for myself, the biggest takeaway I have from this season is that these games are just still like.

Like, I like I don't I don't know how you feel now at the end of this, and maybe you're just Pokemon doubt and you're wanting to take a massive break.

But like.

These are like comfort food games for me.



Like there is a there is a structure to all of them that is very similar and very, very they have not in some ways, this is still very much the same games that originally launched back in the 90s.

And I love that.

Like they have not really what they are, what the games are today with Scarlet and Violet is very much still at a baseline level what it was when they was first introduced over twenty five years ago.

And so going through all of these games and playing all of them, yes, they have different stories and different Pokemon and little different gameplay mechanics here and there.

But just the act of.

Choosing the Pokemon you want, capturing them, building them up, leveling them up with you over the course of a journey is still so fun to me, and I have loved going back to these games.

And you know, the thing I've tried to do throughout all of these games is like pick different Pokemon that I haven't picked before, but I've always wanted to build teams around.

That has been fun for me because I've played through so many of these games so many times that there's still like Pokemon that the Dex's are so comprehensive and you can only ever choose six that like if they introduce one hundred or one hundred fifty Pokemon, like you're still putting dozens and dozens of Pokemon on the shelf that you've never built a team with or played with.

And so I've really loved building teams around new Pokemon that I've never used in the past.

That's been a ton of fun for me.

Just yeah, like again, like after this season, I am still going to be playing Pokemon games.

Like I have just really fallen back in love with this series.

I've had ups and downs with the Pokemon series over the years, not in the sense that like.

Like, I know in the wake of like Diamond and Pearl and Black and White, I was like, I don't think I'll play Pokemon anymore.

That's kind of like a kid's thing.

And then I sold them for babies and then I sold them all off the game stock.

And I'm like, what the heck am I doing?

And then I jumped back in and then, you know, then I kind of got burned for a bit by like the direction that things were going with X and Y.

And that made me not want to play Sun and Moon or Sword and Shield and stuff like that.

And so, but then when I get back and I go play those games, I'm like, oh, these games are great.

Why didn't I play these before?

You know?

And so I guess broadly speaking, just like I've loved Pokemon since I've been four or five years old.

I still have Pokemon now.

I'm still going to be playing Pokemon after we're done with this season.

I'm going to fine tune some things with Black and White to set that aside.

We'll have our battle and then I'm going to start booting up Arceus or Arceus here in the coming weeks.

I'm going to play through that.

I'm going to play through the Scarlet Violet DLC.

I'm going to start trying to transfer everything over and get it all in my bank.

Like I don't see this ending anytime soon.

And I love that.

And it feels, what's great is like this feels like, and this will really come to light, I think once we start transferring everything.

But just that having everything now be at the point where it can transfer to the future games is going to be so fun.

I'm so excited and looking forward to like you'll be able to get my kid like I caught that Pokemon on this cartridge.

Hey, this is this is my this is my Houndoom that clutched out a W against Max.

I watched that video.

I keep watching it and I'm telling you, man, mistakes were made.

So like I just yeah, I love that it feels like all these journeys I've had with the different Pokemon are going to still come forward with me.

And like, yeah, who's to say I won't go back and be like, you know, I'm in the mood to replay Sapphire or Ruby now.

Like maybe I'll do that, you know, like I've got all these games.

I've purchased them over the course of our season.

I've been in the Poke Zone here.

Yeah, I don't have the GBA games in back, but everything DS and forward I've now bought physically and I have I even bought the Let's Go games.

Like I've thought about those like I never really played Let's Go Pikachu or Eevee all the way through.

Maybe I'll do that, you know, try those out, dabble with those.

And so it's just like.

Yeah, I don't know, like it's just reminded me.

That Pokemon for all ages, I I'm going to continue playing these games until I'm probably an old man.

There's a comfort to them for me and yeah, long live Pokemon.

But yes, Game Freak, please, please tighten up the graphics on level three into a little bit better.

I will keep playing Pokemon.

I definitely won't miss new games from here on out.

Like I have, you know, my whole life up to this point, but I've also really come to terms that I'm just not a portable handheld player anymore.

Oh, dude, this has opened my eyes to that.

I am like this is so I've been wanting this.

Yeah, I am totally into handhelds again, like that's the other thing that this season has done.

It's done the total opposite for me.

I really realize that I don't want to play in a little device in my hands anymore.

I want to see things on my TV and play them on the big screen and have dedicated time.

So that's been an interesting kind of lesson over the last 20 months that I've really realized.

And I do need a break for a bit.

Like we'll finish our battles up and stuff, but I I'm a little Pokemon down.

I'm a little RPG down.

Like I just need some time to refresh and play some different things.

And I think Castlevania Metroid Prime will will definitely help with that.

Cause they're just so wildly Metroidvania'd out at the end of the year.

I do fear a Castlevania out by the end of the year for sure.

Just the quantity.

But I've I need a pokey break for a bit, but I am looking forward to, you know, bringing everything up and over and not losing this pool of Pokemon that I have now and and all that stuff.

So it is going to be a lot of fun, I think, to to bring these things into the future and, you know, still have them, not lose them to a sale at GameStop anymore and things like that.

It'll be nice.

For sure.

I'm looking forward to our final battle together and I'm done ending your hopes and dreams here of truth and ideals.

So do I I don't know if you did, but I wrote down like my favorite games and in order.

Oh, did you?

I did because we played so many and I feel like Pokemon is pretty decisive in that way.

Yeah.

Go ahead and give me your order.

I can fire from the hip here and tell you what my favorites are.

Pew pew.

All right.

So number 10 should surprise no one.

X and Y.

Let's get out of here.

Let me look here.

I'll do it in order with you.

Yeah, I'd say that's probably my 10 too.

Yeah.

This one you're not going to be happy with.

Go ahead.

No, I do want to preface.

I tried to do this from a critical perspective without any nostalgia.

So basically Diamond and Pearl are where I think they should be critically not from a nostalgia.

OK, well, this is going to be like mine will be more personal.

That I guess because we're not a Sapphire and Ruby for me.

OK, I can see that based on yourself.

OK.

But then.

Oh, yeah.

Well, nine for I mean, nine for me would probably be Diamond and Pearl.

Yeah, it's interesting.

I guess it's like inverse for for both of us.

I put I put Sword and Shield at eight.

Not for lack of trying, but I just think I think I would put honestly, I think I would put Scarlet and Violet at eight.

And that doesn't mean I hate those games, but they were also broken garbage messes when I played them.

And I don't know if they've improved over the past.

They haven't.

Or since I played them.

So I just think those games have a lot of potential, but they don't capitalize upon anything unless or well, I'll say this.

Black and white two could maybe go in that slot to like interchangeable between seven and eight with those for me.

Well, seven for me is red, blue, green, like the first.

Interesting.

OK, I figured that would be a little lower on yours.

Yeah, I mean, well, again, black and white two is somewhere there between seven and eight.

Scarlet and Violet swap those two.

Yeah.

And then I have black and white two at six.

OK, six for me would likely be then.

I think.

Sun and moon.

OK, I think.

Or well, yeah, probably Sun and Moon.

I don't think those games are bad, but they're just not.

They're not upper tier for me.

No, that's well, number five for me is Diamond and Pearl.

I think they're like, I think they're the middle of the road.

They're like that nostalgic first gen, but they try a couple of new things and they really leaned into the world building.

I think they're like, this is like the standard, I think.

For me would be Sword and Shield.

I think those games are surprising how much I love them.

Like I still think they're such a snappy pair of games.

I think back to that game, like as we've done our discussion, like because those were some of the first games we played over the course of the season and as we've progressively played more games in the series, like gone back or gone forward, like I've been like, man, I wish more games kind of did what they did here in Sword and Shield, especially like from a story perspective.

I feel like those games get a lot right with like introducing the legendaries and the lore and sprinkling it in throughout the entire game rather than kind of like we talked in this episode about like backloading it.

I think that's a big problem.

It's good world design too.

It's a vertical journey.

You're going up the landmass.

It's pretty cool that way.

It's nice.

Instead of a big circle.

Number four for me is Sun and Moon.

I just really liked how different the formula was like they really tried to do something different there with the island challenges and hopping around the islands.

Now, do I remember what's on what island?

No, but I appreciated the effort and I liked I like that those two games that we played.

Four for me would probably be black and white.

Probably my favorite.

I just love the decks in those games.

Yeah, there's a lot of things.

I think the gameplay really refined itself and is far better in those games than anything else.

A lot of it comes down to the deck.

So I really have a fondness for that pokie decks and just the idea of let's do 150 completely new Pokemon.

You can't catch anything else than what is native to this region.

And they would do that more.

I wish they would do that more again rather than the variant like, well, there's a weird form Diglett in this region and it's a water type.

It's a little Donald Trump hair.

Donald Trump weasel.

Yeah.

It's funny.

Number three for me, Scarlet and Violet.

I think just the as performance wise poor those games are.

I think the gameplay loop of those games is so gripping and I think Arceus does it better, but that's not mainline or what have you.

But Scarlet and Violet.

I think the loop there is awesome and I think it's quite honestly my favorite music that we've had all season as well as Scarlet and Violet.

So I will say three is hard.

It's probably.

It's probably red, blue, yellow, fire, red, leaf, green, whatever.

Yeah, Gen one there.

I just think those games still hold up so well and I think that's still one of the best decks is and I know that's like a normie take, but like those first 150, 151 Pokemon are like iconic dude and they're so perfect and there's a fantastic balance across the whole decks of different types and things like that.

I think those games have a fantastic flow to them.

I think there's a lot of awesome world building and I always think of like the the lab you come across on.

Fire, the Fire Island, the Fire Island where it's like me destroyed it.

Yes, yes, like that stuff is so cool.

Team Rocket, Giovanni, like just all like.

Like a lot of it is nostalgic, yes, but like I really do think over the course of the whole series there is so much.

That even the modern games can look back to like what were we doing back then?

Like why were these games such a big hit?

And I think there is still elements of those games that hold up today, which is a huge achievement 'cause it was launched back in 1996, like 27 years old.

So now you gotta respect very good.

You gotta respect the origins.

You know I'm saying.

Alright, number two for me is black and white.

I just think visually this is the peak of Pokemon.

I think a lot of the gameplay is right.

It made the leveling may suck, but I think like the battles are really good here.

The decks is fun.

And they tried something mature with the story.

And it works at times it doesn't work in others, but I really think black and white two kind of like it's the best looking and almost the best playing that Pokemon's been in a traditional sense, so it brings it kind of up there for me.

Two is Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald.

I just it's I can't.



Those are the games I played the most dude.

I played those games probably.

Eight to 10 times through to completion like I wore.

I literally like war one of my Game Boy SP's.

And down and broke it eventually because I played those games so much on it.

Yeah, like my original silver Game Boy and I and I bought my Game Boy Advance SP with it and my first game was Sapphire that I bought.

With it, and so I just cannot separate that.

Nostalgia and those like I just have strong adoration for those games and they came hit it a perfect time for me for like when the original Pokemon games came out.

I was like a little like I still played them and I still got through them, but I was like almost like a little too young for it to like fully grip me.

You know, like when silver or when Sapphire and Ruby came out, I was like the perfect age where I was like really understanding games and how they worked.

Like the intricacies of them all and I was really able to sink so much time and I just feel like there's so much depth in those games too.

Like thinking about like the Reggie, the Regirock, Regice, Regiscela, I know you never caught those, but there's like the methods you have to go through to get those like the I just I love those games.

Yeah, total nostalgia, total personal bias with that and I acknowledge that they have some problems here and there, but adore those games.

I get it.

And then number one is hard gold, silver man.

It is as perfect.

The double continent, red.

Team Rocket, this 251 Pokemon decks, absolutely iconic graphically.

You know, it's some of the best.

I mean, really, it's the sprite work in black and white that elevates it, I think in my regard graphically.

But the sound to the best remakes ever silver and gold on their own are some of the best games ever.

And then SoulSilver and HeartGold are two of the best remakes I think ever.

The soundtracks are perfect.

There are flaws.

Like I remember back to our episode, like why can't I catch a hound door on native Jodo?

Why do I have to go all the way to Canto in the back?

And there's there's a fourth of the game to catch certain Pokemon and there is a grind and stuff.

Yes, it's an interesting grind system there.

But yeah, our gold, silver rains, rain supreme.

All hail again.

Put the crown on me take.

But I really just do think that I mean, it's it's hard to beat a game that has basically like a dual campaign like that packed into it.

Like there's just so much you need on the bone.

I'd argue it's still a bang for your buck today, even at the, you know, 120, 150 dollar price tag.

Yes, it is.

And shout out to Iwata for even coming up with that idea.

And shout out to Game Freak for finding a way to put all of that on a Game Boy Color Kart back in the day.

There's a lot to that game.

Yeah, it was a Game Boy Kart actually works on a Game Boy.

What's it a Game Boy?

Crystal was Game Boy Color exclusive.

That's right.

That's right.

That's right.

Black, but gold and silver Game Boy Karts.

They did have Game Boy Color enhancements, but yes, definitely just worked on a regular Game Boy had to capitalize the install base because, yeah, I know a lot of I mean, what's the story?

Iwata was telling them they had to put Canto in it.

They're like, we can't.

And he's like, no, you will.

He figured out how to do it.

I'll I'll try and find the it's an Iwata ask.

This is where that story comes from.

I'll try and find it for the show notes.

Yeah, like that's just still the best.

So the best and they still have touchstones, the originals and just yeah, everybody involved.

Fantastic, fantastic work.

Yeah, that's Pokemon.

That's Pokemon.

We'll be back with Pokemon.

What are they going to call the next ones?

Um, I mean, we're we're kind of gone back to colors.

You know, they were doing stones for a while and then letters and just colors with black and white.

Yeah, so I don't know.

Pokemon weapons, sword shield, galaxy and universe.

I don't know.

Bring it full circle.

They should go.

They should just keep doing colors.

That's the best.

I think keep doing colors.

Pokemon magenta and lavender.

Sure.

There you go.

Even though that's quite literally like scarlet and violet.

Yeah, stick with the red and purple themes here.

I guess.

But yeah, we'll we'll be back someday with Pokemon.

We'll be back and we've talked about well, I don't want to say.

But we've talked about doing an episode on Arceus if I ever play it, but yeah, that'll happen.

No promises.

We'll see.

We'll see.

But I think that'll do it for Pokemon Black and White 2 and season six of chapter select.

So thank you so much for listening and joining us along this season.

Going forward, we've got season seven and eight in the works.

That's Metroid Prime and Castlevania.

We're going to be just working on those at our pace and put them out when they're done and complete.

So look forward to that.

We've already recorded Metroid Prime, which has been fun.

So we're going to be moving into production on those seasons.

So thank you so much.

If you'd like to find our other seasons, you can just go over to chapter select dot com.

We've got everything zero through six.

You can go listen to that.

And all that good stuff.

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We've talked about doing as a member special.

We've got Resident Evil nine hopes and dreams.

We've got one on better luck tomorrow for our fast and furious season.

So all sorts of good stuff there for Pokemon.

We've done battles in every single game.

We're going to be using some fan servers here to knock out black and white, too.

And then we'll do an ultimate battle where we bring up our team forward into Scarlet and Violet.

So you could join and check all of those out as well.

It's pretty, pretty fun.

So thank you for supporting us over there.

If you'd like, you can find Logan on Twitter at more man 12 in his writing over at comic book dot com.

And if you'd like, you can find my writing over Max frequency dot net.

And until next time, till season seven.

Adios.

We'll see you on Brinstar.

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This episode was research produced and edited by me, Max Roberts.

Season six is hosted by Logan Moore and myself.

Season six is all about Pokemon.

For more on the season, go to chapter select dot com forward slash season six.

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