

How to Beat EK in 200 Pages or Less

Aubs

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Chapter -1: A Warning for the Uninitiated

Emerald Kaizo is one of the best games I've ever played. It is an accidental masterpiece, difficult and well-balanced, with hidden depths in both mechanics and strategy, that has accelerated the growth of the nuzlocking community and its skill level.

It is also thoroughly beaten in every way that matters. EK is a game so deeply studied, so relentlessly mined, that there is almost nothing as-yet unknown about the behavior of its AI, about the strategies one might employ in the pursuit of victory. This document is, accordingly, a modest chronicling of the knowledge we as a community have gathered. It will contain information about encounter routing, AI behavior, common strategies, and other important knowledge that a new player might find useful to know in exploring this game for the first time.

However, there is a word of caution to present here. There are many clever and inventive strategies that have been discovered in the nearly two years since people started nuzlocking this game in earnest, and reading this document may rob you of the opportunity to discover them for yourself. There is a joy in such discoveries that I know well, and would not wish to keep from new players, as it is half of what I find fun about nuzlocking. You, too, deserve to experience it.

I say this not with the intent to dissuade new players from reading my document, as it was written with them in mind. Nor do I wish to diminish the accomplishments of those who use it. To scale a mountain is an achievement in itself, no matter who made your tools. But I say it to caution you, that if you are looking to learn how to innovate, you would be best served not by reading this document, but by picking up the game and playing it. See

what works and what doesn't, take notes, and each run do something a little different. And remember that Emerald Kaizo, for all that it holds a special place in the community's heart, is not the be-all and end-all of nuzlocking challenges. It has pushed not only our collective skill level but also the quality of romhacks made in its wake, and there is now a diverse variety of challenges to test yourself on. Many of these are newer, more unexplored, still ripe for the pickings of the next Gian, the next Dekzeh, the next Runan. The nature of innovation in nuzlocking is that you make the game easier for everyone who comes after you - if you are successful enough, you will eventually kill the game that you love. Most of the strats in this document are not originally mine; nevertheless, this is my attempt to kill Emerald Kaizo.

Chapter 0: Some General Principles

One might ask: what is the goal of a nuzlocke? Merely to beat the game at any cost? To minimize the number of attempts? To do something, anything, that nobody has done before?

In some sense, all of these. In another, none of them. While these are all considerations on some level, there is a reason we don't sit around for hundreds of days waiting for Mirage Island to appear and trivialize the Elite Four. The truth is, the thing we are actually seeking to optimize in a nuzlocke is time: namely, we are seeking to beat the game in as little time as possible from the start of our very first attempt.

It is this principle that informs everything in this guide, from encounter routing to fight planning. Why is it that I only recommend pre-sleep for specific fights, when it's technically optimal on most fights? Why is it reasonable to reset for Sunflora, but not Tailow? The answer is simple: it is just not worth your time.

It also informs another general principle which is implicit in most people's play, but is nevertheless worth stating explicitly. Namely, there is often a tradeoff between risk and reward. One might be able to risk an extra crit on a fight to save a Pokemon, at the expense of wiping if they do get crit, for instance. Or perhaps a certain route has two sources of encounters, one of which has both high- and low-value encounters, the other of which has only medium-value encounters; which is better to take? There is no hard and fast rule for this, but a general principle is that you should play high risk high reward early on, but play things safer the deeper into the game you go. The reason for this is simple: a wipe in the first gym means little, because it takes perhaps an hour to make it back there, less if you are experienced. And saving a death early on might keep the run from snowballing later. But if you wipe to Winona because you ran Blizzard Walrein (not naming names), it may well take days or weeks to return to the same point. Sacrificing your Pokemon to guarantee a win therefore becomes increasingly worthwhile.

In general, of course, do not take unnecessary risks. One of the worst tendencies of new runners I have noticed is to favor the familiar over the unfamiliar, at the expense of their run's safety. For instance, pre-damaging their starter to take advantage of Blaze or Overgrow is key strategy on multiple fights, but some would rather risk a crit than engage with a technique they haven't used before. Resist this urge; it will only stifle your growth.

In similar vein, worth noting is the matter of prior knowledge. A certain

knowledge base is expected for readers of this document, not because it is the knowledge base I truly expect you to have, but because it is the knowledge base I expect you to be capable of learning on your own. Included are facets of AI knowledge - what does it mean for the highest damage move to be +0, for instance? - as well as item locations, enemy teams, and the like. I also will not cover how to beat sufficiently trivial enemy teams, for similar reasons. The documents that explain most of this maybe found pinned in the EK channel of PChal's discord, which also is a helpful place to ask any questions you might have.

Chapter 1: A Prelude to Violence

1.0 On Decisions

Emerald Kaizo - nuzlocking in general, really - is all about decisions. Many of these come in fights: do I stay in and risk a crit, or give up tempo by switching to another Pokemon? Should I bring a mediocre Pokemon that I am intending to sacrifice, or risk a higher-quality Pokemon that has a good chance to live? These are all meaningful decisions that we will discuss in depth throughout this guide. But the game does not start with these, and yet the decisions you find yourself making at the beginning of the game have enormous and far-reaching consequences that will define the shape of your run. What starter do you pick? Where do you fish, and where do you take the grass? Which routes should you delay until a later split? Which Pokemon should you evolve, and when? What levels should you aim for throughout the split?

Emerald Kaizo has been so thoroughly dissected and explored that every possible combination of answers to these questions has been tried, tested, and measured. You will spend about thirty minutes to an hour answering them yourself, without a fight harder than Red 1 to interrupt you. As you do so, keep in mind the recommendations below, compiled from a mixture of community experience, theorycrafting, and simple common sense.

1.1 Starter selection.

I will assume here that you are not manipulating your starter's IVs, simply because you do not need to. Rather, I will discuss the merits of each starter, the fights they are good for, and the IV requirements necessary to achieve each thing they can do.

- Blaziken: Blaziken is, in short, a powerhouse. With a +spe nature and badge boost, it can outspeed base 100 speed mons of the same level, and it hits like a truck with Superpower and Overheat, both of which are 120 base power, 100 accuracy, 1/3 recoil moves in EK. This makes it useful throughout the entirety of the game, but particularly so in arguably the hardest splits: Flannery's gym, Magma Hideout, and the Elite Four. Blaziken is so good for the E4 that it is hard to think of Blaziken E4s that have lost. I think Runan lost one, as did Jakky. I

have difficulty thinking of others, though of course there are definitely more that are not coming to mind.

With no IV requirements whatsoever, Combusken can defeat both Nosepass and Lileep on Roxanne. On Brawly, it is sturdy and hard-hitting enough to solo nearly any one of his mons (perhaps after an intimidate or two). With 29ivs and +spe, Blaziken can outspeed Flannery mons, allowing it to serve as a counter to Charizard, and to revenge kill nearly anything on her team with a hard-hitting Rock Slide. Even without this admittedly insane benchmark, Blaziken remains a fantastic Pokemon for the fight, having perfect typing and a good learnset for it. It is as predictably incredible for Norman as you would expect of a Fighting type, and though useless on Winona, destroys Magma Hideout (arguably the hardest section of the game) where the permanent sun turns Blaziken into a monster. Blaziken can even lead on Maxie 2, ohkoing Tyranitar with Superpower (or sometimes even Sky Uppercut) through intimidate and baiting Exeggutor Psychic, while also being great backup for the Arcanine and Entei in the back. From Blaze, with again 29iv +spe, Blaziken outspeeds and ohkos Jirachi, the most dangerous member of Tate and Liza's team. With sufficiently high attack, it also every Lapras in the game with Superpower, including Juan's if you Fake Out the Kingdra slot. It continues to do this all the way until the E4, where it can ohko Glacia's Regice and Lapras with Superpower so long as it has a fairly modest 4ivs in atk. Also in the E4, it defeats Houndoom (potentially risking a crit to do so), and indeed it is an acceptable last-resort bring for Houndooms throughout the game, resisting both of its STABs as well as Solar Beam, which Fire types in the sun often have. Lastly, with 29iv neutral speed, Blaziken outspeeds ohkos Metagross into Jirachi on Steven's team, with Jirachi being one of his hardest Pokemon to counter.

However, as can maybe be gleaned from this passage, some of the most important things Blaziken does require the most insane IV requirements, especially in speed. Vanishingly few Blazikens will hit all these requirements, and so you may find yourself resetting for a long time indeed to find one that meets your needs. I would argue that it is the best starter by a decent margin if you do, but again - time is what we are optimizing here, and it may not be worth your time to try.

If you decide to run Blaziken, the most important stats are (in rough or-

der) speed, spatk and attack, and special defense. Hasty is accordingly the best nature, though some prefer Mild or Gentle.

- Sceptile: Sceptile has one niche, but it performs it well. It is a blindingly fast Grass type with a hard-hitting Leaf Blade, in a game where Swift Swim Pokemon are abundant. From Overgrow, with enough speed, you can outspeed and ohko most such Pokemon, trivializing rain splits. Further, because the AI sends in weaker defensive typings before stronger ones, Sceptile often can chain three or four kills before needing to switch out. It is also quite useful on the Elite Four, filling a similar role to Ludicolo, but trading Glacia utility for value on Drake and Steven, where it outshines Ludicolo.

With a mere 7 IVs in spatk, Grovyle can 2hko Lunatone on Roxanne, and easily ohkos Relicanth. On Brawly, it can counter Poliwrath, and on Wattson it beats Jolteon with predamaged Endeavor into Quick Attack. On Flannery it can revenge kill many Pokemon with Rock Slide, and can switch into Earthquake or Solar Beam to ohko Charizard so long as it has at least 26 IVs in atk, making it similar in value to Blaziken for the fight. Endeavor also gives Sceptile a niche on Norman, and its typing makes it a good pivot on Winona. In the Magma and Aqua Hideouts, the abundance of Brightpowder Pokemon makes a proper Magical Leaf user invaluable. Sceptile can also lead against Tyranitar on Maxie 2, ohkoing it with Leaf Blade from Overgrow, and then baiting Flygon Heat Wave or Draco Meteor for Tentacruel to switch into. Though mostly useless on Tate and Liza, Sceptile really shines in the rain split, where it destroys fight after fight with fast Overgrow Leaf Blade and Magical Leaf. For the Elite Four, with 14iv +spe and 20iv spatk, Sceptile can switch into random move against Swampert and outspeed ohko it with Magical Leaf, ignoring potential Muddy Water accuracy drop. It also can revenge kill Latios with X-Scissors into Tyranitar, into Kingdra if you are willing to sacrifice Sceptile by using Frenzy Plant. If you have insane spdef, you can even raw defeat Latios, before doing the same things to Tyranitar and Kingdra. On Steven, Sceptile is good against Starmie and can sacrifice itself chipping Aerodactyl or Mewtwo.

The biggest criticism of Sceptile is that its largest value comes in splits that are already quite easy, such as the rain split, where other starters

had no difficulties to begin with. On harder sections, such as the E4 or Magma Hideout, Blaziken has a definite edge. It is for this reason, despite its myriad uses, that Sceptile is in my opinion worse than Blaziken, if both are assumed to have the perfect IVs and Natures. However, if one takes suboptimal IVs, then Sceptile is probably the better of the two, and is accordingly the starter I tentatively recommend for your runs - though I have absolutely no objections to you running either one, and will write the guide with both in mind.

If you decide to run Sceptile, its most important stats are, in order, speed, special attack, and attack. Its best natures are Hasty and Naive, in that order. Timid is also very runnable, but you will need to find another answer to Charizard. The “magic IVs” that let a Sceptile do everything it needs to do are 26 in atk, 20 in spatk, and 14 in speed, with either Hasty or Naive. You probably won’t ever get them without a lot of resetting (the odds are less than 1 in 300) but I list them so that you know what to look for.

- Swampert: I’m not going to bother explaining this. Perhaps a future edition will do so in greater depth. Suffice to say that Swampert is runnable (indeed, the first ever EK win was with Swampert as the starter), but objectively worse than the other two starters in nearly every way.

1.2 Encounter routing

All the trainers before Roxanne’s gym are trivial with some modest experience, so I will not cover them in any depth. Rather, I will focus on how to gather the correct encounters for the rest of the game.

Before Roxanne, you can receive up to 11 encounters, not including your starter. Because of the importance to the start of your run, and the lack of other meaningful decisions in this split, we will discuss these encounters in excruciating detail that we will not apply to (most) other sections of the game.

- Littleroot Town: Fish now, or delay for a better rod? Delaying gives higher-quality encounters, trading Luvdisc for Crawdaunt or Poliwrath. However, one may need Luvdisc for Roxanne. A tentative rule of thumb would be to not delay if you are taking Petalburg grass, or if you are

running Torchic. This is because you want at least one Charmer for Brawly, meaning you want Luvdisc if you don't get Azumarill, and because on a Torchic run you need a Lunatone answer - Luvdisc Charm into Carvanha works rather nicely.

- Route 102: Fish, or grass? It used to be a meme to fish here. Now, it is standard. Not only are Carvanha and Barboach fantastic dupes for later, but both of them are simply better than every single encounter in the grass other than Ralts, which is a 4%. Carvanha is especially useful if you are running Torchic, as it will likely be your answer to Lunatone, once it has been Charmed down enough for Rock Slide to not hurt you too badly. And even if not running Torchic, Carvanha can still lead on Roxanne, even chaining Nosepass into Anorith if you have good enough spatk, and it can stop Rollouts from Shuckle early with Bounce. Barboach is even better overall, just worse for the early game - you'll find that Whiscash is the best possible answer to just about every Aggron you face in the game, as well as half the electric types, if you aren't running Swampert anyway.
- Route 103: Fish, or grass? Here, the answer is slightly less clear, but likely it is optimal to take the grass. Though Tentacruel is an incredible encounter, it is also quite guaranteed without taking 103, and the more likely option - Remoraid - is simply worse than almost everything on this route in the grass. The two standouts here are Sunflora and Taillow, both of which will get you through the early game quite easily by virtue of sweeping key boss fights. Other decent Pokemon are Ledyba, Spearow, Spink, Poliwag, and Mareep.
- Oldale Town: Of these first three routes, the only one you should be resetting on, if at all, is route 103, for Sunflora. I see people often reset on a "shitty" Oldale Town encounter; don't bother. The encounters here range from high C tier (Magby) to low A tier (Slugma and Numel). Compare to, for instance, route 103, where the encounters range from D tier (Hoppip) to S tier (Taillow). You don't need to reset for either route, but if you choose to anyway, why would you ever reset on the low-variance route and not the high-variance route?
- Petalburg Town: Fish, or grass? Grass is the "high roll" play, where fishing is the safe play. I generally prefer fishing personally, as I like

having Azumarill for the Brawly split, but it's a matter of personal preference. Just make sure that you fish on at least one of Petalburg Town or Littleroot.

- Route 104: Fish. Don't even consider grass. You need a Gyarados. Fish.
- Petalburg Woods: Nothing to say here. Get your grass encounter. There's no repel manips or anything else to consider.
- Rustboro Town: Take the encounter now, or delay for Armaldo? Armaldo is an insane Pokemon. It's got battle armor, fantastic typing, and great stats. It's amazing for both Winona and hideout, which you get it just in time for, so many runners - including myself - choose to delay this encounter until after the fourth split(!) to get this Pokemon. For reference, only perhaps a fifth of all runs make it past the fourth split. However, to do so, you have to give up a guaranteed high-quality Grass Pokemon, which might be just the answer you need to Lileep, Lunatone, Poliwrath, or Jolteon. Notice, though, that most of these Pokemon are already defeated by Grovyle; as such, this delay is much more common among Treecko runners. Torchic runners can still do the delay, but you need to get lucky with either a woods Oddish/Bellsprout or a 103 Sunkern. And in general, I don't recommend delaying this encounter until you've proven to yourself that you can make it to Flannery - there's no point delaying an encounter until a split you aren't even sure you can reach.
- Route 115: Take the encounter. Kabuto/Omanyte is a guaranteed answer to Anorith. Delaying this encounter gives you a small chance at a few good Pokemon, most of which aren't any better than a proper BA fossil. Metagross in particular is perhaps a B-tier Pokemon, despite its fantastic stats and typing, just because of its poor Speed tier and the abundance of coverage moves in EK. Put simply: it always seems to be risking crit. Contrastingly, a good BA Kabutops is easily a solid A-tier Pokemon, one which is actively used on many fights to reduce the number of crits you can even take.
- Route 116: Save your Great Ball for this route, in case you run into Ralts or Grimer. Other than that, nothing to note.

- Rusturf Tunnel: Remember what I said about optimizing for time, rather than winrate? Even if you could do all the trainers on route 116 riskless, which often isn't the case, I would still recommend against this in most cases. The short of it is that you should get this encounter only if you need it for Roxanne - and I do mean *need*. You have to fight a lot of trainers to get this, and on most runs it improves your deathless winrate against Roxanne maybe by 5-10% on average. As such, it's just not worth it from a time perspective unless it makes the difference between a likely wipe and a likely win.

As a sidenote, you can delay some of these encounters - notably 104, Petalburg Woods, and later Dewford Town - until you have obtained your 116 or even Granite Cave encounters, in case you run into a Pokemon with Synchronize (i.e. Ralts, Abra, Natu). Since leading such a Pokemon gives a 50% chance to overwrite the wild Pokemon's Nature with the Synch mon's, this can improve the quality of your Gyarados or Mankey, to name a couple examples. That being said, doing this strat amounts to a very small average improvement in box quality, and may accordingly be more trouble than it's worth; I don't do it, but I recognize it is theoretically suboptimal play from me that I don't.

1.3 Exp Management

The rule of thumb in Emerald Kaizo is to level up as far as you need to make the fight safe, even if that feels higher than is reasonable. Or, as I've heard it put before: "Go as high as you think you can. Then, go two more levels." The truth is that experience management is often more forgiving than it appears - it is just that the consequences of failing can be dire, if the mon that overlevels is sufficiently important. I will do my best to lay out levels you can go to for each split which are safe, both from the perspective of the fights you will have to complete, as well as from the perspective of avoiding overleveling.

In this split, I recommend starting out at level 10-12 on most Pokemon. By the time you face the forest Grunt, everything should be level 12-13. Facing Red 1, everything should be 13-14, even 15 if you need it. Treecko should lag behind the curve, being at most level 13 by the time you face Red. Torchic should race ahead, being level 15 for the fight.

1.4 Roxanne Gym

Once you have your encounters, it's time to face the gym. I'll split each fight here into the Gecko section and the Chicken section, depending on which starter you chose.

- Pregaming.
 - Gecko: Enter the gym with Treecko at lvl 13 and change, certainly no higher than lvl 14. Everything else can be lvl 15, even lvl 16 if necessary.
 - Chicken: You want Combusken already evolved, so level 16 exactly and not an xp point more. Everything else can be lvl 15, perhaps 14 or lower on Pokemon with poor xp curves, such as Luvdisc or Nuzleaf.
- School Kid Josh.
 - Gecko: Lead Treecko and click Bullet Seed twice, killing Geodude and Omanyte. Sudowoodo will come out, likely going for Rock Tomb, but occasionally Calm Mind. You can risk a couple crits to try to take it down with Treecko, if you have no other answer, but Sunflora, Phanpy, and Numel are all common counters. Oddish or Bellsprout can Toxic it, and then pivot with your fossil until it dies. your fossil can spam Mud Shot, forcing it to keep Rock Tombing you, until it's dead to Water Pulse, and then finish it off, though this requires it to not click Calm Mind too many times. Zubat loses to any number of things, and so again is not worth discussing.
 - Chicken: Lead your Luvdisc (or some similar Water type) killing Geodude and baiting Sudowoodo. Go hard Combuken, and kill it with Seismic Toss into Double Kick; this will bring out Omanyte. You can beat this either with your own fossil, or else with a Grass type, bringing out Zubat, which any number of Pokemon defeat.
- School Kid Tammy.
 - Gecko: Treecko can be brought to exactly level 15. Lead a Water type to beat Aron and bring out Yanma, and then defeat Yanma

with your Oldale encounter, likely dodging a crit in the process. If your Oldale encounter doesn't win for whatever reason, some Poison or Flying types can beat it as well. After this, assuming you don't lose to an unlucky crit, either Corsola or Rhyhorn will emerge, depending on what you used. If it's Rhyhorn, in lieu of a proper understanding of the AI just treat its move choice as fully random. As such, rather than trying to pivot into Treecko, instead dodge another crit sending in a pure Water type (one which ideally outspeeds after Rock Tomb, such as Luvdisc) and ohko with Water Pulse to bring out Corsola. Once Corsola is out, you now can pivot Treecko in on Water Pulse, and Bullet Seed sweep the rest of the fight. Ever if Corsola is out first, and Treecko chains it into Rhyhorn and Larvitar, you should arrive just shy of level 16, perfect for the next fight.

If you're having difficulty with the Yanma and Rhyhorn, note that a fast enough Carvanha can take care of both, and even a slow Carvanha can beat the Rhyhorn. The way this works is that you chip Aron with some other Pokemon, pivot into Carvanha on Aerial Ace (make sure to pivot through a slow mon to avoid Rock Tomb), and then Water Pulse chain Aron into Rhyhorn, bringing out Yanma. A fast enough shark will outspeed Yanma the first turn, so you Bounce, dodging the Giga Drain, and then Speed Boost makes it outspeed you the second turn, so it attacks before you come down and misses you again, letting you get off an 85% chance to ohko with no risk. If you miss the Bounce, you can easily just fall back on the Oldale idea. Of course, if you do this, and you need to use Carvanha on Roxanne, take care not to overlevel; you can use the Exp values in the docs to plan this out.

- Chicken: Tammy proceeds almost identically with Combusken, with the caveat that you don't have a Treecko. Thankfully, your Rustboro Grass type should still outspeed everything but at worst Larvitar, which typically comes out last and has more reasonable AI. As such, you can do more or less the same strat as above, and just pivot into a Water type on Rock Slide once the Larvitar comes out to outspeed and ohko it. Take also more care here with Exp management, as most Grass types in Rustboro level up much faster than Treecko.

- Hiker Marc:
 - Gecko: Get your Grovyle to exactly level 16 for this fight. Click Bullet Seed three times, killing Onix, Kabuto, and Baltoy, and bringing out Cacnea. It will look like you're about to overlevel, but you won't. Switch to your Fire type, holding a Cheri Berry, and oneshot the Cacnea. This has the lovely side-effect of bringing your Grovyle just a few xp shy of level 17, edging it nicely for the Roxanne fight.
 - Chicken: Luvdisc is a good lead here as well, killing Onix and bringing out Kabuto. Grass types are rarely faster than Kabuto, making it rather tricky. However, Kabuto is extremely likely to Mud Shot or Rock Tomb, so you can stay out a turn to Water Pulse, only losing to Giga Drain crit. Then, once you're slower than it, you can go into Combusken on Giga Drain to Double Kick and finish it off. This will bring out Baltoy, which your fossil should easily wall and defeat, even if it does click Self-Destruct. Lastly, Cacnea is beaten by your Oldale encounter, if Combusken is close to overleveling.

1.5 Roxanne

First hard fight of the game, are you ready?

Roxanne ends about one in every three runs that make it to her, making her the biggest wipe point of the game outside the E4. But this is more due to the tools you have being lacking, rather than the fight itself being hard to figure out. As such, these strats are actually quite simple - they're just also fairly risky.

- Gecko: If you're running lizard, a good lead is to chip Nosepass by about 16-18 HP - just enough to avoid proccing Sitrus - which you can do using some Water types, some Grass types, and anything with Seismic Toss or Psywave. You should NOT do this with Grovyle, as the Pokemon that does it needs to run Cheri Berry to soak Nosepass's Thunder Wave (which is roughly 95% likely to happen), and Grovyle needs Chesto for Lunatone. Then, once Nosepass has been chipped, you hard switch to your fossil (also holding Cheri) on the second Thunder Wave to finish it off with a Water move, bringing out Anorith. Note

that a fast enough Omanyte can be both the chipper and the finisher, by doing Mud Shot into Bubble Beam. Note also that a slow Omanyte might have difficulty finishing Nosepass, which may necessitate a less standard lead. But in any case, this puts you in the position of having a full hp lvl 17 fossil out against the Anorith, which you then proceed to defeat, possibly needing to dodge a crit to do so. Kabuto does this by clicking Rock Tomb twice. Omanyte does it by clicking Bubble Beam once. This brings out Lileep, going for Giga Drain; here is where you need to have a good answer for Lileep.

The best Lileep answer is Illumise. Not only does Illumise lead against Nosepass with Seismic Toss, but doing so gives it the level-up to 17, so that it learns Encore. Then, with Encore, Moonlight, and Seismic Toss, you can switch into the Giga Drain, Encore it, and then outheal it while Seismic Tossing Lileep close to death, renewing Encore as necessary. You can then finish off Lileep with Grovyle or something similar, so that you don't bring out Lunatone too early.

If you don't have Illumise, Magcargo is also fantastic. The idea is to Will-O-Wisp Lileep to halve its attack, making it so it doesn't click Ancientpower against you, but goes for Giga Drain instead. This way, you only risk AP boost on the first turn you're out. After that, you outheal and outdamage it and can leisurely whittle it to death. Note that this is somewhat IV-dependent, as some Magcargos continue to bait AP even after Burn, and that AP boost is a likely wipe scenario. Further, if Magcargo is slower than Lileep (less than 9iv neutral or 3iv +spe), you should run Rock Tomb over Rock Slide, to allow you to slow Lileep down and outspeed it. Overall, the winrate of this strategy is about 90%.

Another high-quality answer is Gloom or Bellsprout, both obtainable in Petalburg woods. These both learn toxic, and so you can get them in on Giga Drain, toxic Lileep, and then stall it out by switching between them and a Rock resist, often obtainable in the tunnel. Since Gloom/Bellsprout bait Ancientpower, your pivot will likely bait Giga Drain, this allows you to endure AP boosts and still stall this out, even finishing it off with Grovyle to again avoid bringing Lunatone out. The winrate of this strategy is probably about 95%, at the cost of needing two slots to accomplish it.

From here, answers get more desperate. Grimer can disable Ancient-power and spam Sludge Bomb against Lileep, but risks a mid-turn switch to Lunatone if you are slower. Gulpin does the same, but worse, using Yawn over Disable, and both bait Lunatone early (very undesirable) if you don't switch out to finish off Lileep with something else. Some Pokemon with Swarm can switch into Giga Drain pre-damaged to Swarm and outspeed ohko with a good Bug move. Makuhita and Mankey sometimes are able to overpower Lileep, and Sunflora might be able to set up against the Nosepass in order to beat Lileep when it comes out. Shroomish can stall it to death by Mud Slapping to lower its accuracy and outhealing Sludge Bomb with Synthesis, with Refresh in case you get Poisoned, and Poison Powder to get damage over time on Lileep. Chimecho can do similar. Roselia does similar, but worse, and may need a Charm or two to properly win the stall war against the Lileep. Perhaps the worst Lileep answer worth listing is Nuzleaf, which can - after you Charm Lileep once or twice with Marill or Luvdisc - come out and click Bide, dodging a few crits to ohko it.

In any case, the goal here is to kill Lileep in such a way that you bring out Shuckle. If Lunatone comes out early, things get extremely steery, but if you can get Shuckle out early, the plan is very standard: send out your Charmer to Charm, Confuse, and Paralyze Shuckle, rendering it useless while you whittle its HP down. If you used Magcargo for Lileep, that also brings out Shuckle, so you can Burn it instead, halving its attack and getting damage over time while you Charm it down. Eventually, the goal is to bring out Grovyle as it is close to death and Bullet Seed to finish it off. From here, Grovyle ohkos Relicanth (you can absorb it if you need the extra hp, though you won't ohko) and then 2hkos Lunatone, possibly requiring that you dodge a 1/32 Rock Slide crit. Your Chesto Berry keeps you from wiping to Hypnosis hit.

Overall, your team consists of a Nosepass lead, your fossil, a Lileep answer (potentially taking up two slots), your Charmer (also potentially your Nosepass lead), and Grovyle. If you have extra slots you can bring a sand attacker for Shuckle, or backup for Lileep/Lunatone.

- Chicken: If you're running Chicken, the plan is simpler, and vastly less encounter-dependent, but accordingly much riskier. Your team is Combusken, your fossil, Luvdisc, Carvanha, your Grass type, and

whatever best fits in the last slot.

Against Nosepass, you Seismic Toss holding a Cheri Berry, then Double Kick, bringing out Anorith. Because you resist X-Scissors, high crit AI doesn't happen, so you're baiting Aerial Ace (or very rarely Rock Slide) - a perfect switch for your fossil which beats Anorith risking at most a crit. Now Lileep comes out, and you can go back to Combusken on Giga Drain to Seismic Toss into Double Kick, killing Lileep easily. Now out comes Relicanth. This is usually beaten by your Grass type, or occasionally by your Kabuto due to Mega Drain. Either way, you want to kill this in such a way that Shuckle comes out, and not Lunatone. Charm Shuckle down, chip it to the red, paralyze or confuse or whatever you need to do to render it impotent, and then get Luvdisc in and finish it off on as close to full HP as possible. Make sure Luvdisc has at least two Charm pp left for the next bit, because now out comes Lunatone, the last living mon on Roxanne's team and the most dangerous. You should outspeed it, so Charm as many times as you can, and then go to Carvanha on Confusion to fight it. Due to Charms, and its only attacking move being Rock Slide, you should win this if you dodge crits and enough Rock Slide flinches. Other Pokemon can do this better, too, including Nuzleaf and Sunflora - Sunflora, even, can set up against the Shuckle to ohko the Lunatone when it comes out. It's tricky, and you will need to dodge crits/flinches, but you should come out okay most of the time

Hopefully you made it through with no deaths. I recommend resetting if you have any deaths more impactful than Luvdisc at this point, unless you have truly insane encounters (i.e. Taillow, Illumise, etc) or this is your PB. Never reset on a PB, of course - even if the run is doomed, the experience you gain on it is more valuable than the time spent playing it out.

Chapter 2: Weathering the Storm

2.0 On Risks

You've had a taste of it against Roxanne, so you should know by now that sometimes the best your box has to offer isn't good enough. Sometimes, if you pool all your resources, pull out all the stops, pre-Sleep every last pokemon, the very best you can manage is a 70% winrate. The game starts and ends with such fights, but no split epitomizes this more than Brawly.

Some Pokemon do render the split trivial. Illumise, Tailow, and Chimecho are the big three. Sunflora and Fearow are also quite good. But failing one of those, you will face the harsh reality that your best may not be good enough. Brawly, in my experience, rarely wipes you, so long as you play optimally. But there is so much potential to claim lives from your team. In this split, you will risk dozens of crits, flinches, and paralysis procs, always steering just shy of disaster, and at the end of it you may find yourself with multiple meaningful deaths, necessitating a reset.

It takes a certain measure of skill to avoid risk, while also not fearing it. This is a strange concept on the surface, but it's important to comprehend. I've heard fellow nuzlockers talk about the phenomenon of "comfort" intimidates, where a new runner realizes they're about to risk a crit, so they get an Intimidate in to lower the enemy Pokemon's attack. This, of course, accomplishes nothing, as critical hits ignore attack drops - it merely turns one crit risk into two, or even three. This is what I mean. If I have one piece of advice to keep in mind for this split, it is this balance: avoid crits, but don't let the fear of them drive you to misplays. Keep in mind always that sometimes your best choice is to risk.

2.1 Encounter Routing

The route 116 trainers, especially with the level advantage from beating Roxanne, are not worth documenting. If you are doing them before Roxanne, watch out for Youngster Joey and his choice band Slakoth, as well as the Bug Maniac at the end of the route. Get your Rusturf encounter (exceedingly likely to be a ground type), and then it's fairly easy to steamroller the next fight, against the Aqua Grunt. As long as you have a Ground type for the Voltorb, and you don't get triple Focus Banded by the Barboach, you should have no difficulties whatsoever. Level-wise, aim to hit lvl 18 right before the

Grunt; this should give you no difficulties with exp management.

From here, head on down to Dewford. There's four more encounters you can gather now: 106, 107, Dewford Town, and Granite Cave. I advocate delaying Granite Cave unless you absolutely need it for Brawly, as you generally get the highest value from Steven's Room, which is only accessible after the gym. My good friend JakkyShane started the meme that Ice Room 2 of Granite Cave is somehow optimal for odds at Jynx and Glalie; if you see people saying this, ignore it. It's decidedly suboptimal for nearly every box at this point. The primary exceptions to Steven's room are if you already have the high-value encounters there (in which case 1F or B2F make more sense), or else if you have a Nosepass dupe from Rustboro cave. In this latter scenario, you have the opportunity to Rock Smash for Geodude in Granite Cave, which likely affords you the opportunity to take a 111 desert encounter, which is typically 80% to be Flygon or Dugtrio, both of which are very valuable for the hardest fight in the game.

For Dewford Town, you have the option to repel manip at level 16, to keep away Tyrogues; don't bother. The Hitmons are actually all quite valuable encounters, regardless of which one you get. You also have the option to delay the encounter for odds at early Slowbro later; this, too, is a trap, and not worth doing, except in very specific circumstances on Chicken runs. For everyone, but especially the target audience of the guide, I recommend just taking the guaranteed Fighting type in the grass.

Similarly, for Route 106, there's a handful of options regarding what rod to use and such - anybody who tells you to do anything but Old Rod is either lying to you, or to themselves. Dewgong is a solid encounter made more important by the fact that it is guaranteed, and it is in fact the only guaranteed answer to a number of tricky enemy mons. This guide will assume you take it.

Route 107 is about the only route with a question mark attached. You have the option between taking Clamperl, or delaying for high odds at Shellder. Clamperl, owing to its Shell Armor before it evolves, gives the higher value for Brawly, and even after it becomes Huntail it remains viable as a yolo mon for later fights, where you'd rather not risk crits on your other Water types. Shellder, on the other hand, is one of the best encounters in the game, and is significantly harder to catch later on, as it will be able to explode on you by the time you make it to the fishing sim. With guaranteed Shell Armor and a sky-high 180 base defense, as well as highly useful STABs, Cloyster comes to many of the hardest fights in the hardest sections of the

game. Suffice to say, if you CAN skip Clamperl without taking an extra death, it is always worthwhile to do so. I am an enormous fan of delaying for Cloyster - Cloygod, as it's affectionately called in the community. It's particularly worth it if you already have good Shell Armor pokemon, such as a good Krabby or Corphish from the Petalburg grass, or even a decent enough Omastar. But I don't recommend doing so until you've faced Brawly a few times, and taken his measure. Once you are familiar with the fight, you can decide for yourself if it's worth it to attempt the delay.

2.2 Brawly's Gym

It was discovered that most Gyarados can sweep the last fight of the gym with flail from 1 hp without overleveling, so long as you don't put even a single point of experience on it above level 20. With this in mind, I will explain how to do every single fight assuming you are NOT using Gyarados, including the last one. This way, if you can manage to avoid using it for the first five fights, the sixth will be free; however, if your best option is to use Gyarados for any of the first five, you will still have options on the last.

- Battle Girl Laura.
 - Makuhita: Because of the way AI works, if you lead something faster than Makuhita, it can chose either Fake Out or Rock Tomb, with Fake Out being more likely. Keep this in mind when deciding how to play out the first turn; it's not, for instance, a good idea to try to lead Illumise to encore Fake Out, as you are rather likely to eat a Rock Tomb instead. But thankfully, this Pokemon is quite easy to defeat; your starter for instance should easily handle it, as should any number of other pokemon in your box.
 - Machop: A spooky pokemon, to be sure, owing to the danger of Revenge crits. Further, because of the way AI works, there is no way to predict whether or not it will go for Revenge; it is for all intents and purposes random. What I recommend here is to go to Azumarill or Luvdisc and spam Charm, since Revenge won't get the attack boost if you're clicking a status move. From there, you can go to a Battle Armor mon, which you should hopefully have by now, and even if it's weak to fighting it should tank -6 Revenge to win this 1v1.

- Meditite: Another pokemon where Charm into BA comes in handy. Thanks to Pure Power, this thing hits rather hard, and all its moves have secondary effects. If your box doesn't have good answers, you might have to risk a crit against this one. Don't hesitate to bring both a counter and a backup for this.
- Black Belt Takao.
 - Tyrogue: Literally anything beats this. Pick the least important Pokemon not weak to Fighting and send it in. Seel, for instance.
 - Mankey: It has Bulk Up, so naturally the play is to charm it down faster than it can Bulk Up, then kill it with special moves.
 - Vigoroth: Another easy one. Any reasonably bulky special attacker will destroy it. Just don't hit it with a physical move you aren't sure will kill it, and you'll be fine.
- Battle Girl Lilith
 - Wynaut: Poison, Toxic, or Burn. Dark types with special moves, Ghost types with physical moves - though the only one of these you'll regularly get is Carvanha. Lowering Accuracy, Sleep, and Confusion can sort of work if you're desperate. If you have none of those for some reason, you can pre-Sleep something that 2hkos it. Because of how AI works, it will never click Mirror Coat or Counter if you are asleep, so you get one free attack, and then the second attack kills. Note that this strategy only works here because the Wynaut doesn't have Destiny Bond.
 - Shroomish: Fire types, grass types, etc. If you want to deny it healing, you can trick it into going for Facade over Giga Drain by pre-Paralyzing your own mon, since due to a bug the AI prioritizes clicking Facade if you are statused. This will also keep it from putting you to Sleep, of course.
 - Combusken: Azumarill, or any bulky Water type, easily beats this. If you bait it before Shroomish, note that hitting it with a Water move from a Water pokemon will bait a mid-turn switch to Shroomish, potentially removing whatever boost it might have gotten from the Starf Berry. Generally this is not a threat; if you

want to play it super safe you can Charm into BA it though, since you aren't doing that for either of the other Pokemon.

- Black Belt Christian

- Magby: Surprisingly tricky to beat without risking a crit. Some Water types can do it, especially Clamperl, or occasionally even Seel if you have a good one - don't hesitate to go to level 20. A good Chicken will just outspeed ohko it, as will Carvanha. Magcargo and Numel are fantastic, as are most pure Ground types. Your fossil wins if it's BA.
- Makuhita: Charm strats should be familiar by now, you use them on every single Bulk Up mon.
- Elekid: Similar to Magby, the coverage and speed make it threatening. Magcargo and Numel once again shine here, as do some of your bulkier Grass types, such as Sunflora. Your Dewford fighting type likely has good odds here. Just about every Ground type gets outsped and loses to Ice Punch freeze or crit, so those are out, but you should still have options. In the very worst case scenario, your starter should beat this thing - either by tanking crit and Double Kick ohkoing in the case of Chicken, or else switching into Thunder Punch pre-Slept holding a Miracle Seed, getting knocked into Overgrow, and outspeed ohkoing with Bullet Seed in the case of Gecko. But you'd probably prefer to save your starter for Mankey.
- Mankey: The real demon of this fight, if you let this thing get set up it will sweep you. This is why I advise not taking damage on your starter until now if at all possible, ideally you want to pivot through a slower mon (to discourage Rock Tomb) into your starter, and then you will outspeed Mankey. Grovyle will have Bullet Seed, and Combusken will have Double Kick, clicking either move twice will kill Mankey regardless of whether or not it clicks Substitute - albeit you obviously want a +spe Combusken to pull this off. Be careful, of course, of procing the Liechi Berry, as this will put you in a very awkward spot if Rock Tomb slows you down enough that the Mankey outspeeds you. You may want to instead chip the Mankey with whatever is already out when

it comes out (often Clamperl, for instance, which is quite safe) and then going to your starter to finish it off. Mud Shot Ground types can do well by taking advantage of speed control AI, Poison types can win just by resisting Reversal, and Gyarados is fairly decent backup as well, since Mankey will only click Rock Tomb until you underspeed it. I also encourage you to read up on the AI mechanics for Reversal, Substitute, and Rock Tomb, none of which behave quite how you'd expect.

- Sailor Brendan

- Breloom: Fire types, Poison types, Flying types all generally beat this without much trouble. You are at least guaranteed a Fire type - recall that if you are slower than the AI, and Rock Tomb doesn't ohko, it won't click it, which makes a lot of the matchups safer than they appear. In general, Breloom's plethora of readily-available weaknesses make it easy pickings for most early game boxes.
- Poliwhirl: Use your Grass type with a Chesto Berry.
- Machoke: Charm go brr.

- Battle Girl Jocelyn

- Heracross: As indicated before, all but the slowest Gyaradoses will fully sweep this fight with Flail. In the event you can't manage this, however, the fight is still not particularly difficult. Gyarados should still have enough exp left that you can Intim pivot Heracross by pivoting between Gyarados and a Rock resist. From there, chip Heracross with a BA mon (assuming you have one). If your fossil is the BA mon you're using, beware of trying to Rock Tomb it to slow it down, as this can bait a mid-turn switch to Meditite; Mud Shot is okay though. From here, it shouldn't be too hard to kill this with a Wobbuffet counter that brings out Wobbuffet, including any Grass/Poison type, Magcargo, or Carvanha - though the latter will risk crit on switch-in, of course. If you're feeling VERY spicy, Carvanha can even Bounce ohko the Heracross, then bait and kill Wobbuffet, though obviously I advise against this except as meme potential.

- Wobbuffet: See above. You can't do the pre-Sleep trick here, obviously.
- Meditite: Hopefully this is either coming out last, or getting murdered by Gyarados. If the former, you can easily Charm it into irrelevance, as its base 40 spatk is very much something to sneeze at.

2.3 Brawly

Welcome to the RNG fiesta. Thankfully, despite how risky this fight often is, it's also extremely formulaic, which makes it quite easy to explain. The basic Brawly team consists of Gyarados, a dedicated pivot (ideally a Rock/Ground type, but occasionally just a Ground, Rock, or Fighting type), a charmer (Azumarill/Luvdisc), a dedicated Poliwrath answer (some Grass types, especially Grovyle and Sunflora; Noctowl, especially if Insomnia; Chimecho and other specially bulky Psychic types; if fully necessary Gyarados), and two general-purpose "good mons" (Combusken, Magcargo, Weepinbell, Gloom, Roselia, Sunflora, Shroomish, any Poison types, most Flying types, Seaking, Clamperl, Krabby, Corphish, Ponyta, etc), hopefully one of which is BA.

Of course, this is not the team comp that you *have* to use, simply one that I tend to use and which works well. Some Pokemon allow you to merge slots; for instance, Chimecho is both a "good mon" and a Poliwrath answer. If you run Mudkip, then that's another example - Marshtomp is an Intim pivot that also can 1v1 a member of Brawly's team. The overall important thing is to have all the ingredients: you want Pokemon that are capable of lowering Brawly's mons' attack stats, to make it possible for your other Pokemon to face them. You need to have enough Pokemon capable of facing them, and facing enough of them (the rule of thumb is two of his team members to each "good mon"), that you don't run out of steam halfway through the fight. And since this strategy doesn't work on Poliwrath, you need something that beats that as well.

To illustrate how the fight tends to go, let's break it down piece by piece with the framework above in mind. This isn't how every Brawly fight goes, not by a long shot, but hopefully it's close enough that you can figure out how to improvise your own fights from there.

- Hitmontop: Lead a pokemon that you want to get the level-up on, then go Gyarados on Fake Out to get your Intimidate off. The reason

I recommend against leading Gyarados is that the additional damage taken from not leading it is minimal, and the benefits of getting an extra level for free can be potentially quite large. Pivot between Gyarados and your dedicated pivot, which should hopefully bait Mach Punch; both of these should hold Oran Berries. Do this until Hitmontop has sufficiently low Atk; this doesn't need to be -6, and in fact I advise doing less to preserve HP on your pivots. From here, go to your one of your "good mons" to chip Hitmontop. These are mons that can reasonably take one crit, if not two, and which do enough damage to defeat two of Brawly's mons once they've been charmed down - assuming you don't get haxed, anyway. Some of the best of these are Chimecho (Recover lets it finish 1v1s on full HP, it has fantastic bulk/typing for the fight, hits like a truck for this part of the game), Magcargo (can Burn and Recover to win any 1v1 on full hp if you dodge a crit or two), Shroomish (similar, but with Mud Slap instead of Burn), and Corphish (which has BA and aerial ace), but most things will do. If you're low on "good mons" for whatever reason, you can bring two Charmers instead; otherwise, only one is needed.

In any case, once you have Hitmontop Charmed and Chipped, and maybe even slowed down, go to your Poliwrath answer - most of these will bait it, by virtue of it having Ice Punch - and finish off Hitmontop to bait it.

- Poliwrath: This should be coming out on a Pokemon that either beats it or deals significant damage to it, that is close to full HP. Grovyle, for instance, can 2hko with Bullet Seed, baits Brick Break over Ice Punch, and in fact only baits Brick Break half the time due to Hypnosis - meaning that if you give it Chesto, Grovyle only loses to a 1/32 Brick Break crit. Few counters are as good or better, but the idea is the same more or less every time; Hit Poliwrath as hard as you can until it either dies, or you need to switch out to something else to finish it off. Since you're guaranteed a Grass type, as long as you didn't get Jumpluff you shouldn't have too much trouble here, albeit you might get crit or need to switch out.
- Hitmonlee: Generally this is what comes out after Poliwrath, sometimes going for random move, which can be very spooky. Find a way to get to your Charmer or your Intim pivots to lower its attack, then

finish it off with a “good mon.” The shape of this fight should be starting to become clear - this is more or less how you defeat every single member of Brawly’s team other than Poliwrath, which is the reason we bring a dedicated Poliwrath answer most of the time.

- Hitmonchan: Again, Charm or Intim then throw a “good mon” at it. Do *not* status it, as it has Guts - if you’re using Magcargo, for instance, use it for Hitmontop and Hitmonlee, but not for Hitmonchan. When you kill this, due to identical coverage but differing party order, you will nearly always bait Meditite next.
- Meditite: Here, your supply of “good mons” will be wearing thin. The average one will take two members of Brawly’s team, and even with a dedicated Poliwrath answer, that still leaves five Pokemon they need to beat - you’re going to be wearing thin at this point. A common strat here is to get Gyarados in on a move that knocks it into a low enough HP that you can Flail ohko Meditite, to preserve HP on other mons. Obviously, this will be risking crit, but it’s Brawly and you often don’t have any other choice. I personally like to preserve HP on Azumarill and kill this with that. A Huge Power Azu will often straight-out ohko the Meditite, and if you aren’t Huge Power you can still get a 2hko with Waterfall (here is where leading Azu to hit 21 early might pay off). In general, Meditite is frail enough and hits hard enough that I recommend killing it outright if possible and not bothering with Charms or Intims unless you cannot; a good number of Pokemon do this.
- Hariyama: At all stages above, you need to be keeping HP high enough on your party members to be able to counter this, the scariest of Brawly’s team. If you brought Clamperl, save it for this moment. Since this is often going Fake Out turn 1, you’re often best served by hard switching to Gyarados here to get off an Intimidate. Pivot as much as you can, then go to your Charmer and lower its attack as much as you can. Then go to your BA mon, if you have one, and deal as much damage as possible. If you don’t have a BA mon, or if it is already on low HP, risk crits with your least valuable Pokemon first, in particular your Charmers, which aren’t missed past this point. Try throughout the fight to not let Gyarados get Paralyzed (if necessary you might pre-Sleep it, for instance), so that you always have an out if things go wrong - if, for instance, you get crit trying to take out the Hari, so long

as you've done enough chip you can get a low HP Gyarados in to slam it with Flail and finish it off.

Overall, Brawly is a fight of calculated but unavoidable risk. The majority of comps can't avoid this. If you dodge crits and flinches on the most important turns (do try your best to risk as few flinches as possible), even mediocre boxes will come out with no deaths. But it is hardly unusual or a sign of bad play to lose a Pokemon here. This is the other reason why I recommend bringing a Charmer to the fight - if you have to sacrifice something, let it be the Pokemon whose value most dramatically declines after this split.

It is worth noting, however, that there are a handful of Pokemon that trivialize Brawly; I will list them and their respective strategies in some loose detail here.

- Taillow: This is the first gym fight that Taillow absolutely destroys. The benchmarks are 5ivs -atk, and 0ivs spe, incredibly lenient. The plan is simple: first, chip Hitmontop if necessary. If not necessary, you can lead Gyara and hard switch in on Fake Out. If necessary, you either lower its atk to -6 and pivot in on Mach Punch, or else pivot in on a Ghost move if you happen to have a Psychic pokemon to bait it. Then, Taillow kills Hitmontop, levels up, gets Facade, and chains Hitmonlee → Hitmonchan → Meditite. The idea with Meditite is that if AI doesn't see a kill with Fake Out it won't go for it, and in this case it doesn't unless Taillow got crit by Mach Punch (in which case you'll have to stop the sweep early anyway, or you may even die outright). From there, you have about five slots on high HP to handle Poliwrath and Hariyama, so it's free from there.
- Fearow: Discount Taillow. Charm down Hitmontop. Send in Fearow, and dodge not one but four to six crits setting up Rages. Then, sweep the fight with Secret Power (we use this over Peck because you can get Silk Scarf). I've never pulled this off; it only provides a small probabilistic advantage over your average Brawly fight. In my opinion, the real advantage is one of time, as the simplicity makes planning way easier. It also can make up for a box that is otherwise bad for Brawly, i.e. one with few "good mons" available, as you won't need to touch them if all goes to plan.
- Sunflora: Two possibilities. First is to Charm Hitmontop (and lower its Accuracy if possible), then set up Growths and go on a tear. If you

do this, the big points of failure are Hitmonlee flinches/crits and Hitmontop Secret Power Paralysis. With respect to the latter, it's advised to calculate the damage of Hitmontop's moves at different Intimidate numbers, to see when you minimize the likelihood that it clicks this move on you, and thereby minimize this likelihood. Sand Attack and other accuracy-lowering moves also mitigate that loss as well. If all goes well, setting up on Hitmontop will enable you to sweep the first four members of Brawly's team. You may even kill all 6 if you dodge crits against Meditite and Hari, but if you start the sweep on Hitmontop it's advised to switch out for the last two Pokemon and let your other five team members handle them, so as to not risk unnecessary crits on a valuable Wattson encounter. The other option is to defeat Hitmontop and Hitmonlee normally, set up Sunflora on Hitmonchan, and then kill the back four, dodging two crits on Meditite and Hariyama. This has the added advantage of not risking Secret Power paralysis or flinches, since Sunflora generally opts to run Chesto Berry to beat the Poliwrath. (If your team is especially good, you can even just get these middle two kills and call it a day.) Because the first plan risks both flinches, crits, and Paralysis on Sunflora, and the second risks only crits, I used to strongly advocate for the second option. However, of course something still does have to beat the Hitmonlee, and many common answers still risk flinches, so an argument can be (and has been) made that it is simpler and better to lead Sunflora if a good Hitmonlee answer is lacking; I will cautiously agree with this. Moreover, and more importantly, without good Defense Flora might not heal enough from killing Meditite to beat Hariyama after, and may risk as many as four crits to beat both of them. Do the math, figure out which is the safer routing based on your Sunflora's IVs and the rest of your box, and go with that.

- Illumise: Easily the mon that dunks on Brawly the hardest. The plan is as follows: bait Fighting move or Fake Out. Switch into Illumise. Encore. Outheal with Moonlight (if you're taking damage at all), and Seismic Toss it to death, renewing Encore as necessary. Run Leppa Berry so you don't run out of PP too fast. With this basic strategy, Illumise can easily take out the majority of Brawly's team by itself, and hopefully your other five Pokemon can handle whichever one or two remain.

- Chimecho: By virtue of being moderately fast, having 2hkos or ohkos on every member of his team, learning Recover, and having good typing for the coverage of Brawly's pokemon, Chimecho is easily the best "good mon" you can get. It 1v1s every member of his team but Meditite and Hariyama, with perhaps minor atk lowering support.

There are other, more niche strats (Aipom/Delcatty + a Psychic type going for Fake Out pivots against mons with Ghost coverage comes to mind), but these are the ones you will see in over 95% of Brawly fights. Expect to have 0-2 low-value deaths around this part of the game if you are playing well; you hardly need to reset if you have more, but I personally like to, to ensure a smoother late game.

The End of a Tunnel

3.0 On Skill Checks

The early game dies twice in Emerald Kaizo: once at the end of this split, and then again at the end of the next one. These are the two main gatekeeps between most runs and the midgame. In the early days of EK especially, it wasn't uncommon to spend months in the first three splits, only to beat the game on your first run past Flannery. For instance, I got to the E4 on my first run past Flannery, though it did take me a few more runs past her after that to actually win.

Looking back, this split isn't actually that hard in truth. The plays aren't terribly complicated, the winrates for decent teams are extremely high, and VA luck aside there isn't a lot of RNG that can screw you over the way there is in the Brawly split. So why do so many runs die here?

One factor is that you have to have your game knowledge together to beat this split. Roxanne and Brawly you can sort of fumble your way through, losing a few Pokemon but mostly coming out okay. Wattson is deep enough into the game that attempts that make it to him will come rarely at first, and there is far more that you need to know to beat him. Not only do you need to know how to do the fight itself, but you have to learn key AI information including Thunder Wave AI, Volt Absorb AI, Intimidate AI, and more. You also have to learn how to route your encounters, and crucially how to keep them alive until you reach him.

A much-talked about phenomenon in Nuzlockes is that of the snowball, where a death early on creates a knock-on effect that leads to a wipe later. Poor boxes engender worse ones by virtue of having few answers to difficult fights, and that can easily be seen in this split. Your Wattson team is near-guaranteed, including your Lanturn (which you get 2/3 of the time, unless you're Prouty), but the flipside of this is that there are precious few Pokemon that even can be brought to that fight - losing even one of them can easily snowball into a wipe here as a result. So the last and final factor that keeps makes this split such a gatekeep for new players is a simple one: you can't really throw in this split, the way that you can in Roxanne and Brawly. Not only are there more opportunities, due to a larger number of trickier fights, but the consequences are more disastrous for doing so.

I say all this so that you keep something important in mind. Namely, it is somewhat true that the early game of EK is more difficult than the

late game, but the stats of where runs tend to wipe paint a false story. In reality, it is as much a matter of difficulty as it is of skill: there is simply a requisite minimum level of skill necessary to get from the early game to the midgame, and runners who have that skill are less likely to wipe. This is why I advocate against strats like resetting for Taillow or Sunflora, both of which greatly simplify the early splits. It's not like there aren't sections of the game you'll run into later which aren't as hard or harder than this one - look at Magma Hideout or the Elite Four, for instance. And in those sections, you won't be carried as hard by encounter luck. Every wipe is an opportunity to learn a lesson, to ask "why did I lose there?" and change your play accordingly. It is far better to do this early on, as opposed to halfway through the game.

3.1 Encounter Routing

As hinted above, now we need to start assembling your Wattson team. This typically consists of a Jolteon answer, a Lanturn answer, an Ampharos answer, and then Lanturn and two pivots for the Raichu, Electabuzz, and Manectric. There's some flexibility for the pivots, but generally they need good special defense, but also need to bait Electric moves - the standard brings here are Dewgong and Gyarados, which fit the bill nicely and are guaranteed. Also possible are Mantine, Azumarill, and even some strange ones like Thick Fat Hariyama or Grumpig.

Naturally, the lynchpin here is your Volt Absorb Lanturn, so we'll want to optimize odds of that. Tentacruel is also vitally important for the next split, so we'll want to optimize that as a secondary concern. You should already have a Jolteon answer in your Grass type, whether that's Grovyle or your Rustboro encounter - few things are riskless against Jolteon, but nearly every box gets something. That just leaves Lanturn and Ampharos, which nothing is guaranteed to beat, but for which there are enough answers that most boxes have something. I'll go more in-depth when we reach the section about the fight itself.

With all this in mind, let's turn now to the nitty gritty of the encounter routing. I will list the routes in the approximate (and often specific) order you should get them, with some modest explanation of why they are taken in the order they are. This is probably the last time I'll go into such depth on encounter routing in this guide.

- Route 109: You can either use the Old Rod or the Good Rod here. There are strong arguments for each. The Old Rod gives a guaranteed Squirtle, which turns into Blastoise by the Flannery split. Blastoise is mediocre stat-wise, but has a truly impressive movepool which makes it worth considering, including Fake Out, Water Spout, and Mirror Coat. Unfortunately, all these are locked behind the Move Tutor, meaning you'll need to burn a Heart Scale for each one - somewhat less than optimal. Nevertheless, Fake Out makes it a good bring for many of the double battles that populate the EK lategame, and Mirror Coat makes it a crit-risking bring for Flannery. On the other hand, the Good Rod gives access to Kingler, Seaking, or Tentacruel. This is the option that I tentatively favor. Kingler is about similar in value to Blastoise, being a potential Battle Armor mon with sky-high Attack and decent Speed. It comes to fewer boss fights, but eats fewer scales to be a viable bring, since its most important moves are in its level-up learnset. Seaking is worse than Blastoise, but has the advantage of being a viable bring to Wattson, giving it at least short-term value, and Tentacruel is significantly better, while also improving the odds of getting Lanturn. It is the chance to acquire Tentacruel that sways my opinion here - the main argument worth considering for Blastoise, in my opinion, is its potential value as a bring to Flannery, which often does come down to a box check.
- Mauville City: Before you can start VA fishing, you need a way to detect VA. Hence, you need a pokemon with an electric move, or else a Trace Porygon. You can catch one here.
- Route 110: Good Rod if you don't yet have Lanturn. Old Rod if you do. I generally advocate getting this route first, because you want to optimize your odds at getting Tentacruel, and if you fail to get Lanturn here there's a good chance you'll pick up Tenta by accident. If you already have Tentacruel, get this route last instead to optimize odds at Qwilfish.
- Slateport City: Old rod if you don't yet have Lanturn. Good rod otherwise. Get this encounter before 118 if you don't have both Tentacruel and Carvanha, and after if you do. Don't get it first because you really want to avoid Corsola, which is simply not a good encounter. However,

not much else on this route is of significant value, so there isn't really too much reason to save it for last either.

- Route 118: Good Rod if you don't yet have Lanturn. Old rod otherwise. Get this one last if you don't have Tentacruel, because if you get Lanturn on one of the other two routes, you can Old Rod here for a 70% Tenta that becomes guaranteed if you got Carvanha on Route 102. On the other hand, if you already have Tentacruel and Carvanha, of course get this encounter first.
- Littleroot Town: If you delayed this encounter, now is the time to get it. All three possible encounters are varying levels of good - Seaking is usable for this split, Crawdaunt is good for the next one, and Poliwrath is decent in general.
- Route 117: Good Rod if you don't have a Barboach yet. If you took Petalburg Marill, failing Barboach here gives a guaranteed Barboach on 111, just because of how the dupes work out. Barboach is vitally important for later splits, so you definitely want to get one - this guide WILL assume that you have one. On the other hand, if you already have Barboach, you can either Old Rod to get a Corphish/Krabby (improving your odds at Tentacruel on 109, if you haven't taken it yet), or else take the grass if you desperately need more Wattson value.
- Verdanturf Town: Nothing much to say here. You want this encounter for Wattson and there's no point in delaying, no decisions to be made.
- Route 107: If you delayed this encounter, get it now. 75% Cloyster is quite good.
- Granite Cave: Why did we delay this for so long? Two main reasons. One, you can get some dupes for here in Mauville City, which either allows you to Static pull for a chance at Magnet Pull Magnemite, or else just improves your odds at Gardevoir. Two, if you do run into Gardevoir, you want Nest Balls, which are obtainable in Verdanturf. In any case, you probably want Steven's Room, unless you already have everything good from it, in which case you probably already took the first room.

Another option is to take this encounter once you get Great Balls at Mauville City, since Ralts gives Synchronize options for valuable encounters such as Lanturn and Tentacruel. I'll leave it up to you which is more important, I've done both and haven't noticed a significant difference in encounter quality.

3.2 Overworld Trainers

Most overworld fights are trivial. I will cover only three (technically, four) in any level of depth, and leave you to work out the remainder.

- **Slateport Grunts:** This fight is a back-to-back, typically abbreviated b2b, which means you have to fight both grunts one after another without being able to change your party or heal. This sounds difficult, but you have a massive level advantage - your whole party should be at least level 25 - and there's an easy strat to cheese the fight. Flail Gyarados once again rears its delightful head; you can run 1 HP Gyarados holding a Leppa Berry, and as long as you have at least 48 Speed, you can decimate both fights. On the first fight, you kill Shellder → Staryu → Croconaw, and then bait Grimer. Grimer has Shadow Sneak, so switch out to anything that beats it (most Ground types will do) and kill it. Be cautious of using Dig against it, as it can Explode. Normally, of course, this is fine, but I once watched Beno's Onix dig, dodge Explosion, and then when Vigoroth came out Onix popped back up and took a Surf to the face with no opportunity to switch out. But anyway, simply due to level advantage you should have no shortage of answers for Lombre and Vigoroth. For the second fight, Gyarados sweeps the entire team except Wailmer, which we don't want to attack because it's holding a Lax Incense. Thankfully, because it comes out last, it can't explode, so just go to your Grass type and win.
- **Rival 2:** This is the bulk of this section. You will perhaps want to learn how Switch AI works for this fight, because unless you're running male PC and Treecko, you're not going to be able to use the Switch Calc. That being said, Switch AI matters somewhat less for this fight than you'd expect, as you more or less just need to bring an answer to each of their Pokemon, and pivots can be worked out on the fly. The commonality between all the fights is strong, too, with each team having a

Plusle/Minun lead, a Pidgeotto, and a Nidorino/Nidorina. You should by now have a Ground type with which to defeat the Plusle/Minun and your fossil easily defeats Pidgeotto. The Nido will be the trickiest one of the three, as it has coverage consisting of some subset of Sludge Bomb, Drill Run, Shadow Ball, and Water Pulse. Dewgong and Gyarados can both defeat it, but you will likely want to use them on other members of May's team.

If you're running Treecko, the remaining three members will be Bayleef, Wartortle, and Combusken. Bayleef loses to most Fire or Poison types, shockingly enough. Wartortle has Fake Out regardless of player gender, which means you can always get Grovyle in on that, get knocked into Overgrow, and then ohko with either Bullet Seed or - if necessary - Magical Leaf. Combusken loses to your Charmer, if you still have it, or Dewgong often does well if you don't. Any Water type, really, will typically have a decent matchup, at worst losing to Brick Break crit (which is unlikely to happen, since the Combusken has Bulk Up, and is likely to click that instead).

If you're running Torchic, the remaining three members are Quilava, Ivysaur, and Marshtomp. Marshtomp will obviously lose to any Grass type, because of its anemic coverage, as will Quilava to any Water type; since you are guaranteed at least one of each I won't bother elaborating further. The Ivysaur is by far the most dangerous member of these three, but once again you can use predamage strats: if you pivot Combusken in on Giga Drain to get knocked into Blaze, you easily ohko with Flame Wheel. Dewgong can also perform quite well with Aurora beam, if you can't manage that.

A special, and rather amusing, edge case comes when you are a male PC running Torchic. In this case, a sufficiently fast Gyarados (roughly 13 IVs in speed if neutral nature, so quite lenient) can pull off a 2-man May, as was discovered by Mannat. This is due to the strange lack of priority moves on this iteration of May's team. The way it works is that Gyarados outspeeds and ohkos Minun and brings out Pidgeotto, then you kill Pidgeotto with your fossil (be careful around using Rock moves, which can bait mid-turn switch to Marshtomp if you don't kill) to bring out Nidorina. Nidorina is going for Drill Run, so go to Gyarados and Flail sweep the rest of the fight. You run Pecha Berry to play around Poison Point. Just make sure you don't level up mid-fight (you should

have more than enough slots to xp dump using your EXP Share) as this will increase your HP and might mess up the sweep. Additionally, not every Gyarados ohkos Marstomp, so if necessary you might want to switch out on her last Pokemon - note that the first Marstomp in the calc has 12 IVs across the board, so be aware of that when calcing. If you don't throw, this is about as simple as a rival fight gets.

- Pkmn Breeder Lydia: I've watched a lot of players get stuck on this fight, worried about the possibility of Belly Drum Azumarill sweeping them. As such, I'll just let you know that every single Gyarados can Flail sweep the whole fight with absolutely no difficulty.

3.3 Wattson Gym Trainers

- Lady Vivian: Put Cheri Berries on just about all your Pokemon for this fight. This is the easiest fight of the gym.
 - Wigglytuff: Use your Fighting type.
 - Pikachu: Lanturn/Gyara if you have it. Any Grass type if you don't.
 - Shuppet: Most anything that outspeeds this can beat it, since it'll waste a turn clicking Thunder Wave.
 - Toggetic: Your fossil beats it.
 - Flaaffy: Lanturn/Gyara, or any Ground type, including Barboach.
- Guitarist Kirk: The hardest fight of the gym.
 - Voltorb: Most Ground types are okay against this. Just be VERY careful of clicking Dig, as you will probably bait a mid-turn switch to Golbat or Ludicolo - this isn't the worst thing in itself, but you should be aware of it.
 - Loudred: Hyper Voice off this thing hits incredibly hard, and will kill most of your box on a crit. If you have a sufficiently fast and strong Fighting type (Combusken, for instance, with perhaps some minimal chip), you can pivot in on something else and ohko this. Otherwise, you can intim pivot with Gyarados and a

Rock type until it's willing to click special moves over Hyper Voice against your actual answer. A very good Gyarados will 2hko with Rock Smash and not die to Hyper Voice crit after coming in on Flamethrower (which we prefer to Water Pulse because you can pre-Sleep to avoid Burn, but you cannot avoid Confusion). If you have no other options, any number of Pokemon will defeat this by risking a crit, so try to find the one you will miss the least and bring some backup.

- Elekid: Lanturn, if you have it. Barboach, if you don't. Note that this is *guaranteed* to click Seismic Toss against Lanturn, if it has confirmed VA and doesn't see Fire or Ice Punch killing, so you won't risk Freeze or Burn on anything, but you'll also take a lot of damage on pivots.
- Golbat: The real demon of the fight. Only a small handful of pokemon defeat this risklessly. Some Pokemon can outspeed it and get off hits, then pivot out once they get Confused and come back in on low-damage moves - perhaps most notable on this list is Primeape. A good Pikachu will just straight-up outspeed and ohko this with Thunderbolt. Magcargo is about as close to riskless as a slower answer gets, and even it will lose to sufficiently bad Confusion luck. Dewgong is probably the best answer that every box gets - it can win with Icy Wind into Aurora Beam, so long as it gets even a single hit through Confusion. Why SHF decided to give a Pokemon this fast Confuse Ray before you get Persim Berries is beyond me, but do your best and don't be shocked if you get haxed to death, most boxes will risk the equivalent of a crit against the Golbat. Above all else, don't try to Fake Out pivot this Pokemon. You wouldn't be the first nor the last to realize mid-fight that it has Inner Focus.
- Ludicolo: Any Grass type walls this. Confusion isn't a huge risk because it's so slow that you're quite likely to outspeed it.

Overall, a reasonable team for this fight of only guarantees might be a Ground type, Lanturn, Gyarados, your fossil, Dewgong, and a Grass type. You'll beat Voltorb with your Ground type, which will bring in Elekid, and then Lanturn will handle that easily, bringing out Golbat. Pivot through your fossil if possible (on Sludge Bomb, if you bait it)

to Dewgong and try to Icy Wind into Aurora Beam. Ludicolo comes out, and you 1v1 it with your Grass type, and then Loudred comes out. Pivot Gyara/fossil until Loudred has low enough atk that it starts clicking special moves against Gyarados, then Rock Smash it to death. If you get frozen, you should have a handful of backup options that win now that it's been Intimidated. Obviously, this is IV dependent, and so won't work for every box; adapt as necessary.

- Fisherman Ben: Overgrow Grovyle destroys this fight with Magical Leaf. We'll assume you don't have it, but it's worth noting of course.
 - Saryu: Lanturn, if you have it. If not, and if you don't have any other good answers, most any box can have Dewgong Icy Wind holding Cheri Berry. This will all but guarantee the Saryu clicks Thunder Wave turn 2, allowing you to go into Gyarados with a Cheri Berry and start Flailing. Note that there is a small chance of Saryu mid-turn switching to Chinchou, but it's rather low because Saryu has Thunderbolt, and doesn't mess up the plan much if it does happen.
 - Chinchou: Lanturn, if you have it. If not, this is a casualty of the Gyarados Flail sweep.
 - Dragonair: Lanturn or Dewgong. But Gyarados also gets this one with Flail.
 - Qwilfish: Lanturn is good for it, but can't heal off it. Dewgong and Gyarados are also quite good, as are a couple of the Electric types, which can outspeed and kill after some chip. Probably the hardest mon of the fight to beat for most boxes, but you should be able to toss two or three Pokemon at it, thanks to how easy the rest of the fight typically is.
 - Octillery: Gyarados should always win. If you did the Flail sweep, you can probably even pivot back in on Mud Shot to kill this. Failing that, most bulky Water types do quite well; this thing is hampered a decent amount by its propensity to use suboptimal speed control moves.
- Bug Maniac Angelo: This fight is thought of as harder than it is, simply because it's a double battle. Treat this as practice for the last four gym battles.

Of course, it doesn't really make sense to format the plan Pokemon-by-Pokemon the way I did above for a double battle, but the gist of it is the same most every time. Turn 1, you can get a free move off by having leading Gyarados and a Pokemon you'd like to click a move with. Gyarados draws the fire of the leads into a Ground type you switch in (or to Lanturn) while your slot clicks a move. If you can kill Plusle before it sets up rain or Reflect, that's ideal; otherwise just take what you can get. The poor coverage of Plusle/Minun makes them heavily exploitable, and once you kill them you can do similar with the Volbeat/Illumise, because Gyarados will almost guaranteed draw Thunder Wave from them. Hence you essentially pivot Gyarados and a Ground type on one slot, and click moves with a Pokemon not dead to any of Angelo's moves in the other slot. Note that Plusle and Minun have their namesake abilities and calc assuming them, meaning that you need to assume they have +1 spatk when making sure they don't kill the non-Gyarados slot.

In terms of backup, Fighting pokemon are fantastic for this fight, as many of them get Rock Slide for the bugs, and Fighting moves for the Dunsparce. Combusken makes a reasonable bring for the same reason (only with Flame Wheel instead of Rock Slide), and Grass/Poison pokemon also wall the bugs fairly well.

- Collector Shawn. A middle ground in terms of difficulty for this Gym. Doable, but tricky.
 - Koffing: Check your box to see if anything ohkos or walls. Magcargo works well, as do many Psychic types. If nothing does, just use Gyarados Flail.
 - Porygon: Lanturn, if you didn't do Gyarados Flail on the lead. Gyarados Flail if you did. If you have -atk Gyarados and don't kill, you can always use a Fighting type or something similar to beat this. Thunder Wave AI plays in your favor here, though be aware that Gyarados can bait Thunder Wave over a kill due to the way that speed control and doubly super effective AI interact.
 - Kadabra: Lanturn works here, with Carvanha as your pivot. If you don't have Lanturn, this becomes very tricky to beat. A disgustingly fast Grovyle can outspeed and ohko with X-Scissors,

and there's a few Pokemon that can win here by Fake Out pivoting it, including Hariyama. Donphan does okay, being the only Battle Armor Pokemon that doesn't get ohko'd by Kadabra. If you don't have anything else, you might just have to dodge crit on something bad, with backup in case you do get crit.

- Electrode: Try to bait it last if at all possible, in which case Lanturn or any Ground type will beat it. If you can't, which is likely, then you can still beat it with a Ground/Rock type fairly risklessly. Pure Ground types can also often win if they dodge boom crit.
- Magnetron: Lanturn if you have it, Barboach if not. Really, any pure Ground type will beat this.

3.4 Wattson

A simple fight when you get down to it, but a difficult one all the same. Aside from your answers to Lanturn and Ampharos, most Wattson teams look exactly the same, a feature of the best Pokemon for Wattson being ones that most runs will have.

One thing to note is that often a Pokemon will need an extra level to safely accomplish what it needs to, or to outspeed something, and you can usually get it by leading that Pokemon, and then pivoting safely into your actual Jolteon counter. For instance, if you need an extra level on Barboach, you can lead Gyarados, then switch to Barboach on Thunderbolt, then go to your Jolteon counter on HP Grass, getting two additional levelups you wouldn't otherwise.

- Jolteon: Any Grass type has at least a decent shot at beating this. For Grovyle runners, you have the option of leading it pre-Slept at min roll Thunderbolt + min roll Quick Attack (from your Treecko) HP. Then, holding a Cheri Berry, you tank Thunderbolt, wake up to Endeavor, and then Quick Attack the next turn, with the Cheri Berry protecting you from Static. Numel is a noteworthy non-Grass type that does okay here, as are Donphan and Marowak, though you'd probably prefer to save the latter two for later in the fight.
- Lanturn: This almost always comes out second, since you nearly always lead a Grass or Ground type. A wide variety of options exist here,

none of them guaranteed. Illumise can come in on Thunder Wave pre-Burned, encore it, and then farm it down. Note that since Thunderbolt is the highest damage move on your Lanturn (if you have one), you can come in on Thunderbolt and then Wattson's Lanturn will see all its attacking moves at -1 or below. This means that Thunder Wave, which ought to be at +0, becomes guaranteed; this is a useful positioning tactic in general for this Pokemon.

Dustox, Gloom, Weepinbell, and a handful of other Pokemon can Toxic Lanturn, and it's relatively easy to stall it from there. If you have a hard-hitting Ground type i.e. Marowak, it probably doesn't outspeed, but you can get Dewgong in on an Ice Beam or Thunder Wave (holding Cheri), click Icy Wind while the Lanturn Thunder Waves you (assuming you outspeed), and then go to the Ground type, which now outspeeds and hits it hard, potentially killing. Kirlia can do similar, thanks to Synchronize, if you pivot in on a Thunder Wave.

Seaking can hurt it with Drill Run, at the downside of needing to dodge a crit Thunderbolt, but it's fine to sacrifice it here to get chip on Lanturn for something else to kill, such as Grovyle if you used it for Jolteon. If you want to maximize the chance of Seaking living, you can come in on Thunder Wave pre-Slept, then wake up and Drill Run twice.

Hariyama and Machoke also do quite well, albeit Machoke will need to dodge a crit, and may need to be pre-burned for Revenge to do enough damage. Grumpig is a decent-ish answer, since it can Magic Coat to Paralyze it, and then farm it down.

As a very edge case strat, you can PP stall Lanturn out of Thunderbolts by bringing an extra pivot, pre-Sleeping it, and then pivoting between it and your Lanturn. Since your Lanturn will always bait Thunder Wave (see above), and your pivot will bait Thunderbolt, you can do this 16 times before it runs out of Thunder Waves, at which point you only have to pivot 8 more times to get rid of its Thunderbolts. From there, any Water type handles it, potentially including your pre-Slept pivot.

- Ampharos: Illumise, Dustox, Gloom, Weepinbell, Marowak, Donphan, Seaking, Grumpig, Hariyama, and Machoke all do the exact same things here as they do against Lanturn, though most will not do both

at the same time without significant support. Dewgong and Kirlia can both be used to slow down Ampharos in the exact same way if necessary. More Ground types are viable against Ampharos, due to HP Grass being weaker than Surf, and due to Ampharos being slower; notable among these are Nidoking and Numel, though the latter is considerably worse than the former. Don't be afraid on either Pokemon to sacrifice some trash chipping it so that another Pokemon can revenge, lots of random Pokemon can be thrown away here for this purpose.

- Raichu: If you have Lanturn, use that. Otherwise, a decent Barboach wins with double Mud Shot. If you have neither, a reasonably good Grass type does well. An extremely fast Flail Gyarados also kills this.
- Electabuzz: Lanturn, Barboach, and max Speed Gyarados beat this as well, though of course Barboach won't take both Raichu and Electabuzz. Risking crit on a Ground type will work as well, and there are a handful of Pokemon that can chip this into something else finishing it off, including your own Electric type.
- Manectric: Lanturn or a Ground type both do well against this. Barboach can slow it down or very rarely even kill it if you didn't use it on an earlier Pokemon. Nidoking and Numel do okay here as well. Despite being the ace, this is actually one of the easier Pokemon to find an answer to, due to its poor coverage.

Overall, your team composition probably consists of a Jolteon answer, a Lanturn answer, an Ampharos answer, Lanturn, Dewgong, and Gyarados. However, as with Brawly, there are couple Pokemon that do trivialize this fight as well. Indeed, they are familiar names, with familiar strats.

- Sunflora: Lead pre-Slept Sunflora. Wake up and giga drain to chip the Jolteon below 70%, to discourage it from clicking Thunder Wave. Set up to +5 spatk, and hold a Cheri Berry in case it randomly Thunder Waves or gets a Thunderbolt Paralysis. Then, sweep as far as you can, and don't worry overmuch about risking crits - Sunflora is fairly niche past this point. At the minimum, you should kill Jolteon and Lanturn, but you have a decent chance of taking the entire fight. This is one of the easiest ways to win a no-Lanturn Wattson.

- Swellow: Kill the Jolteon and Lanturn with other encounters, and then chip the Ampharos. Then, pivot to Swellow on Thunder Wave, and sweep the rest of the fight. Beware of Manectric Intimidate - there is a chance you won't ohko with Facade due to that, but if so you can just go to usual Manectric answers. Note that Swellow handles largely the same Pokemon that Lanturn does, making it somewhat superfluous if you do get a Lanturn, except for how it saves slots by virtue of not needing VA pivots.

It is very common to sacrifice up to two Pokemon to beat Wattson, or at least risk losing two. Expect this number to be higher if you don't have Lanturn. Try to limit this to your least valuable Pokemon, of course, but don't reset unless you lose something of similar value to your Starter, and not even then on a PB.

You should have 0-4 deaths at this point.

Chapter 4: Trial by Fire

4.0 On Endurance

Emerald Kaizo is a long game. There are over four hundred mandatory fights that you have to plan throughout the course of a run. Let's say half of these are trivial. That still leaves two hundred trainers that can take a crucial Pokemon, or even wipe you. Most fights in EK are not difficult by themselves, the difficulty is that small mistakes add up over the course of that many fights. Thus, the tolerance for error in each fight is actually extremely low relative to other games - sometimes, a mistake can wipe you immediately, and other times it can snowball into a wipe by the phenomenon described previously.

Nowhere is this more apparent than the Flannery Split. There are four reasonably difficult fights that can wipe an unprepared runner: Tabitha, Maxie, Keegan, and Flannery. And even aside from those, there are roughly 20 non-trivial fights of varying difficulty. It is no surprise, then, that the average box will lose 3 to 6 Pokemon during this split. It is exceedingly rare to lose nothing at all.

Chances are that you will not play perfectly across all of these fights, especially not on your first run this deep. You might even wipe a couple times before you make it to Flannery herself. Despite this, try to minimize your deaths and risks as much as possible. Emerald Kaizo is a marathon, not a sprint. Maybe a fourth of all runs by decent players get this far, and if you can get past this split, you'll truly be out of the early game.

Make it count.

4.1 Encounter Routing

There isn't as much to note here, simply because there are very few real decisions to make while encounter routing. Aside from the order in which you take your encounters (which I won't bother with, considering it only leads to small optimizations), the only three routes worth noting are Fallarbor, Route 111, and Route 114 - and Fallarbor is only worth noting because you want to Magnet Pull for a chance at Aron there if you have a Magnet Pull Magnemite.

The thing about the previous split is that although you have something of a small fishing sim, the encounters you obtain from it are quite variable.

This is due both to the different encounters possible on each route, as well as the possibility of getting *no* encounter if you get a non-VA Lanturn. Routes 111 and 114 each have three possible encounter sources: you can Rock Smash for a Geodude on both, you can fish for some of the fishing sim encounters you missed, and you can take desert on 111 or grass on 114. Note that the desert is not available until next split.

So what should you do? It's difficult to explain concisely, but perhaps an approximation may be given in terms of priorities. The encounters you want from these routes are Tentacruel, Geodude, Whiscash, Qwilfish, Flygon/Dugtrio (111 desert), Sharpedo, Poliwrath, 114 grass. That's also roughly the order of how important these encounters are to get; go for mons earlier on the list before ones later on it. You should always be able to get a Geodude, given that you get two encounters, and exceedingly rare is the box that doesn't get both Tentacruel and Whiscash by Route 114 as a result. This guide will generally assume you have all three, though substitutions will be listed where one is recommended for a boss fight.

As a small addendum to round this section out, I will point out that if you are going for the 111 desert encounter, you will want to repel manip at level 40 for Flygon/Dugtrio/Arbok. Flygon and Dugtrio are similar in utility, with Flygon obviously being better but both serving the otherwise unique niche of being a fast and powerful Ground type. The issue, of course, is that both Trapinch and Diglett can have Arena Trap, so you'll want to lead either a Flying type (which you probably can't afford to leave at level 40) or a trash Pokemon that you don't mind losing. You also may want to delay until after the Norman split for higher level advantage (or even the Winona split) on the rest of your party, as you aren't likely to need Flygon or Dugtrio until Magma Hideout.

4.2 Pre-Magma Gauntlet

Before route 114, there are precious few fights worth noting. You can go to level 37 at least on all your Pokemon with no issues whatsoever, which means that you steamroller a lot of fights simply owing to your level advantage. The remaining fights that are non-trivial, then, are as follows:

- Black Belt Daisuke and Cooltrainer Brooke: tricky for some newer players just because it's a double battle. However, you have a very significant level advantage, which does make things much easier. What

I recommend is to focus down one slot, then turn the fight into a 2v1. Flying or Psychic types will clean Daisuke easily, and if you run Blaziken you should have no trouble with Brooke. Try also to read up on Fake Out AI, priority move AI, and general doubles AI. This is a good fight on which to practice basic techniques like baiting kills to force move choices by the AI, so that on later doubles you know what you're doing.

- Twins Tori and Tia: The Extremspeed Smeargle is on the right. The Aeroblast Smeargle is on the left.
- Pkmm Trainer Red 2: Easy enough, but can definitely wipe an unprepared or inexperienced runner.
 - Pikachu: The gold standard lead here is Whiscash, since it should ohko and bring out Venusaur going for Giga Drain. Failing that, Lanturn obviously works quite well, though be careful to click Aurora Beam instead of Bubble Beam, as Bubble Beam can cause a mid-turn switch to Venusaur.
 - Espeon: The very standard play here is to pivot between Gyarados and a Dark type (most boxes should have a Sharpedo, Crawdaunt, or Absol by now) until Espeon has been Intimidated into going for Bite over Signal Beam. At that point, you can simply click moves with your Dark type without worrying about losing to Signal Beam crit or Confusion. If you don't have a good Dark type, check your box to see if you can tutor something X-Scissors to out-speed and ohko - more Pokemon learn X-Scissors than you think, including Blaziken. And one play that I rather enjoy is that you can always try to bring out Snorlax before Espeon while Blastoise is already dead. Then, a 1 HP Gyarados can line up a double kill by PP stalling Snorlax, farming it down, and then flailing to ohko the Espeon that comes out.
 - Snorlax: As alluded to above, bring Gyarados, and pivot between Gyarados and literally anything else until you see Snorlax clicking Snore. Note that Snorlax will click Snore instead of Rest if it sees a kill with it, so if you have something predamaged to 1 HP, make sure that Snorlax is truly out of Rests first. Once PP stalled,

Snorlax is a favorite target to set up on, whether by use of Rage, omniboost moves, or Growth.

- Blastoise: Tentacruel or Qwilfish is perfect here. So is your own Blastoise, with Body Slam. Water types with physical moves in general should win.
- Venusaur: Can be weirdly difficult to beat. If you lead Whiscash, this is coming out second and always going for Giga Drain, which gives you an easy switch to pre-damaged Blaziken to get knocked into Blaze and ohko. If you don't have Blaziken, you can still do decently well with most fully evolved Fire types. Tentacruel also does well, especially if it has Liquid Ooze. Most Psychic types will not ohko, but can still kill with relatively minor chip. Most boxes have something in my experience, but you might need to dig a bit for it.
- Charizard: Most Water types do fantastically here. Gyarados, for instance, often has little else to do on this fight, and works great for this. So does Whiscash.

4.3 Magma Gauntlet

And here comes your first true brush with the evil teams of this game. Magma Gauntlet is the perfect example of your endurance being tested. Very few of the fights are individually difficult, but all of them are non-trivial, and there are lots of opportunities to make small mistakes and lose a Pokemon. Pay special attention to Grunts 4, 5, and 9. Level-wise, you want everything to be level 38 at the minimum by now, with some mons on 39 to 41 as necessary. Graveler can be 41, since you'll be evolving it soon.

- Grunt 1: Your fossil will beat Weezing and bait Rapidash Drill run. Pivot through Gyarados to Whiscash and ohko it, bringing out Bellossom, going for Giga Drain. A Fire or Poison type should beat Bellossom, bringing out Magnetron last for Whiscash, Lanturn, or your already-in Fire type to beat easily. If you can't bring out Magnetron last for whatever reason, Graveler should beat it - though of course, make sure to delay Geodude for Earthquake before evolving it.
- Grunt 2: Your Fighting type should beat Exploud. If it doesn't, most Battle Armor mons will. If you don't have any, you can pivot between

Gyarados and a Rock type until Exploud goes for its special moves against whatever you want to kill it with. Marowak loses to most Water or Grass types, and can be easily Intim pivoted into irrelevance - AP boosts don't matter if you're already at -6. Altaria loses to Dewgong, and whatever you used to beat Venusaur in the Red 2 fight should also beat Vileplume here.

- Grunt 3: Tentacruel beats Wobbuffet and baits Camerupt. It has a Quick Claw, so pivot through Gyarados into Whiscash (or even just kill it with Gyarados). Venusaur can be tricky, but you can pivot Gyarados and a Fire type until it goes for Giga Drain against Tentacruel, which you're already bringing anyway. You can also just have Gyarados chip it, then switch to a fast Fire type to finish it off. Dodrio loses to your fossil.
- Grunt 4: Two Quick Claw mons and two Explosion mons makes this tricky. On a macro level, you want to bring out the Golem last, and try to get Metang out on a Fire type or Ground type that ohkos it (or baiting a kill from it into such). This is made even more complicated by the presence of the Ninjask, which outspeeds your whole team and has Substitute, making it very difficult to kill without proccing a mid-turn switch. If you don't know what mid-turn switches are, now is a good time to read up on them. Suffice to say, with most Pokemon if you use a move against Ninjask that is resisted by one of Golem or Metang, you're likely to get mid-turn switched on. This basically limits you to Water, Ghost, and Dark moves, since you aren't clicking Fighting, Bug, or Ground moves against Ninjask.

However, counterplay does exist:

- Vibrava: Don't use Dewgong here, as it will bring in Golem, which can Quick Claw Explosion. Figure out your routing ahead of time. I advise to either use a pure Water type with an Ice move, which will bring in Torkoal, and then Ninjask, or else your Dewford Fighting type (potentially chipping the Vibrava before pivoting in on Rock Slide) to bring out Ninjask.
- Torkoal: You can't intimidate this because it's White Smoke, so don't bother. Just go to a pure Water type (if you don't already have one in) and kill it. If Ninjask isn't dead, this will bring out

Ninjask. Otherwise, it'll bring out Metang. Perfect baiting either way.

Since it should be clicking Earthquake against you, Quick Claw doesn't matter too much, though you should probably use a less-valuable Water type with Whiscash as backup in case you get very unlucky.

- Ninjask: Here's the tricky bit. Magcargo is amazing here, because you bait Steel Wing, which is a contact move, so you can just spam Recover until it Burns itself against you - this will happen regardless of whether Substitute is up or not. Then, when it's just about to die to Burn, you can go to Whiscash or a fast Fire type on Steel Wing, and that'll bait out Metang for you to outspeed and ohko. Failing that, you may already have a sackable Water type out; if you aren't dead to crit, just spam Water moves, aiming either to kill or lower its health enough that it won't Substitute. Another good bring, as was pointed out to me by Beno, is Donphan, which can play around the mid-turn switch AI by clicking Ice Shard.

If his Torkoal is still alive, perhaps the best option is actually to kill this with a Persim Berry fossil clicking primarily Water moves to avoid mid-turn switches (alternately, you could alternate between Rock and Water moves to try and bait and snipe a mid-turn switch to Golem). The advantage of this strategy is that, aside from your fossil being one of the safer answers to this, you will bring out Torkoal if it is still alive, and then killing that with your Whiscash will bring out Metang to outspeed ohko.

One last thing to note: you won't be able to Intimidate this once it has its Substitute up, so you may want to hard switch into Gyarados the first turn it's out before going to your answer, to allow a greater tolerance for Flinches, Confusion, etc.

- Metang: Hopefully you already have a Metang counter out when this comes out. Otherwise, things can get tricky. One strategy I've used before is to bring a pre-damaged BA fossil. You switch into random move Earthquake/Explosion, and if Earthquake you are dead to another Earthquake the next turn (guaranteeing a safe switch), whereas if Explosion you live and win regardless. Common answers, when guaranteed a safe switch, are Whiscash

and most Fire types. If you're willing to take the extra Exp, you can even use pre-Slept Golem to switch in, tank Ice Punch crit, and ohko with EQ.

- Golem: Since this is coming out last, you should be clear to one-shot this with one of the many Water types you brought. On the other hand, if this did not come out last, it's not a bad idea in general to just toss a sackable Water type at it and pray. The worst case scenario isn't a wipe, after all; at worst a Quick Claw Explosion takes out your bad Water type (though of course we'd prefer to avoid even that if possible).

So overall a reasonable team might be a Dewford Fighting type, your fossil, a sackable Water type, Whiscash, Gyarados, and Graveler (for Intim pivoting).

- Grunt 5: If you run Blaziken, then Blaziken sweeps the fight from Blaze, ohkoing Sandslash → Breloom → Zangoose without being dead to Breloom Mach Punch. From there, just about anything beats Shelgon. If you run Gecko, this is a bit harder, but still very doable. Regardless of whether or not you are delaying for Leaf Blade, Gecko should outspeed ohko Sandslash from Overgrow and bait Breloom Mach Punch (you can predamage to 1 HP). From there, you can use Tentacruel or Qwilfish to beat Breloom and bait Zangoose. You can work out the details yourself, but it should be possible to predamage whichever one you use to be dead to Crush Claw after taking Mach Punch (and potentially also Brick Break, if Tentacruel doesn't ohko Breloom). That gives you a free switch into a Rock type, either with the intent to bait a Brick Break kill into something that 1v1s (i.e. Gyarados, a good Fighting type, etc), or else to just straight up 1v1 (if you have a BA fossil, for instance). It's difficult here to put an exact plan, but something along those lines should work for most boxes, and if you get creative you should be able to come up with other ideas as well; the core idea is just that you want the Zangoose to see a kill when it comes out to dissuade it from setting up. Shelgon loses to Intim pivoting, but Zangoose doesn't, because it outpaces your Intimidates with Swords Dance.
- Grunt 6: Lead pre-Burned (or pre-Slept if you want to put in the effort) Tentacruel and Toxic. Then pivot around to stall out the Jumpluff

without worrying about Focus Band, sending out something to bait Xatu as Jumpluff dies (i.e. your fossil). Pivot through something to bait a Psychic kill into your Sharpedo, which with Blackglasses should just about always outspeed ohko Xatu at no higher than level 40. SA Crawdaunt also works, as does any other Dark type. But the idea here is just to kill Xatu in such a manner that Chansey comes out instead of Sudowoodo. Tenta can come back out to Toxic Chansey, then stall that to death, and then Sudo can be Intim pivoted since it comes out last and hence won't boom.

- Grunt 7: Just about anything that outspeeds and 2hkos will beat Smeargle. Gyarados, for instance, basically always works, and baits Manectric. Lanturn or Whiscash beats Manectric easily. Arcanine loses to most Water types, especially your fossils. Granbull gets Intim pivoted, and you're likely bringing Gyarados and a Rock type anyway.
- Grunt 8: Lead Gyarados holding Pecha. Waterfall twice to kill Steelix and bring out Misdreavus. Lanturn works well against it, and you're baiting Thunderbolt for a perfect switch anyway. Whiscash also does well. With Intimidate, any Ground type should bait Psychic, which allows you to chip Misdreavus, then pivot into a decent Sharpedo and outspeed to finish it off. It can be tricky, but don't hesitate to use 2 or 3 mons to beat it. After that, Fearow loses to Intim pivoting or even just a good enough Rock type, and Chimecho loses to any pre-Paralyzed Pokemon.
- Grunt 9: The trickiest part of Route 114, in my opinion. A really good Whiscash can make this fight much easier, by outspeeding and ohkoing the Nidoking on 1 HP to bring out Smeargle going for Extremespeed, allowing you to head into something faster than it to chip it so it can't Belly Drum. Similarly, a very good Blastoise can Water Spout from Torrent (the calc is bugged when it comes to Water Spout, try using Water type Double-Edge at 150 bp) to ohko, get knocked to 1 HP, and bring in Extremespeed Smeargle. But most boxes don't have these, of course, or else don't have appropriate Pokemon to capitalize on an Extremespeed switch.
 - Nidoking: A lot of things beat this, it's just a matter of baiting. Dewgong and Gyara both win and bring out Scizor; between the

two I'd definitely rather use Dewgong, to save Gyara for Scizor. You can also use Whiscash, as noted above, but if you do this and you don't predamage you'll bring out Smeargle going for fully random move, which is extraordinarily difficult to play around. Sceptile shines in this fight, too - you can predamage it to Overgrow plus Drill Run HP, chip Nidoking with something else, then pivot into Drill Run on Sceptile and Magical Leaf to finish off Nidoking. This brings out Lunatone, which you also outspeed and ohko to bring out Scizor, forcing the Smeargle to come out last.

Scizor: A very standard play here is to Intim pivot and sit on it with a BA Pokemon. Most BA Pokemon, however, will bring out Smeargle. This might be advantageous if you're using Kabutops, which often then outspeeds and Rock Slides Smeargle so it can't Belly Drum. On the other hand, if you're using, say, Crawdaunt, you're very much dead to Explosion from the Smeargle that's coming out - assuming Lunatone is still alive, anyway. If you want to bring out Lunatone instead of Smeargle, two possible Pokemon are Tentacruel and Gyarados, though positioning can be very tricky afterwards to handle Lunatone as well. Failing all other options, a sackable Fire type can be risked here with little guilt, as you only lose to a 1/80 Quick Claw crit.

Lunatone: If you bring this out last, Sharpedo or Crawdaunt easily win here, as do most reasonably bulky Water types. Otherwise, SA Crawdaunt still wins in the above scenario: since Lunatone is going for either Psychic or Explosion (or Hypnosis), you can hard switch into your pre-Slept Crawdaunt, which typically lives Explosion from full at a high enough level (don't hesitate to go to 42 if necessary here). That way either it booms, in which case you win with Crabhammer, or else it doesn't boom, in which case you take no damage. From there, if Lunatone didn't boom, Crawdaunt can wake up and Crabhammer, living both Ice Beam and Explosion. Muddy Water Tentacruel is another option, as you can bring it out on Tenta and then immediately ohko it with sufficiently high spatk; some slower Tentacruels need Muddy Water for Maxie 1 anyway, so you can check ahead to determine this.

Smeargle: Golem usually works against this, being one of the few

pokemon that can tank a +6 crit Extremespeed. BA Kabutops is also fantastic, as it not only lives +6 Extremespeed, but also outspeeds Explosion, giving you odds at both Rock Slide kill, or else Rock Slide flinch if it gets the 1/10 Focus Band proc. You may consider bringing this out early if you can do so on a sufficiently good Pokemon, or else in such a manner that you guarantee Extremespeed into a good Pokemon. Pokemon that can bring it out early and then outspeed ohko it include, among others, Kabutops and Kingler. Note that if you attempt this, there is a 1/200 chance that the Smeargle lives on 1 HP with Focus Band and then Explodes. Failing all of these, you can try to bring this out late, and try to do so in such a manner that you are either baiting Extremespeed, or else can stay in and do over half damage to Smeargle before it has a chance to Belly Drum.

- Mt Chimney Grunt 1: Kabutops, Omastar, and Cloyster all typically do quite well against the Banette, especially if BA, and will all bring out Magmar. Magmar then loses to Whiscash (also Sharpedo, also Rapidash, etc, just be careful with high crit AI), which chains a kill into Golem. Ampharos loses to Whiscash, Lanturn, or Golem. Kangaskhan loses to Intim pivoting.
- Mt Chimney Grunt 2: This one is rather tricky, similar in difficulty to Grunt 9. The difficulty is twofold, stemming both from the number of hax items and how hard it can be to bait Pokemon in the right order such that either Shiftry or Gengar - depending on your preference - comes out last.
 1. Camerupt: A rather fun lead here is Seaking, which chains Camerupt into Shiftry with Waterfall and Megahorn. Not only does this remove the two hardest members of this team to beat, but it does so only risking one of the worst encounters in your box. For similar reason, Luvdisc is a popular lead here. Another common lead is Gyarados, which seems risky at first, until you realize that with fairly minimal IV requirements, Camerupt needs to Quick Claw Explosion crit in order to win here, which is 1/800 to happen. Failing all of these, you should have a good backlog of saccable Water types by this point; use them.

2. Shiftry: Very tricky. The combination of Focus Band and Explosion makes this almost impossible to deal with risklessly. Worse, most Battle Armor pokemon available at this point are Water or Ground types, meaning that Intimidate into BA isn't a viable option. The exceptions, Forretress and Torkoal, are both fantastic here, though Torkoal will definitely need that Intimidate to win. This is also a good place to throw your shitty Bug types at the wall, for instance, i.e. Beautifly, Beedrill, and Butterfree all should win if the Shiftry doesn't explode (in which case you basically win anyway). Note that Illumise, Volbeat, Yanma, and Parasect are not shitty; I don't want to see anybody saying my guide suggested they throw away a free Winona here.

If you don't have something nice to field against this, I heavily advocate trying to bait it out last. Note that this is one of the problems with tossing a Water type at Torkoal - most Water types bring out Shiftry. The main exception is Gyarados, which is a big consideration in selecting your lead.

3. Granbull: This loses to Intimidate pivoting. Better yet, if you run Gyarados, note that Gyarados baits Thunder Wave from this just about always, due to a combination of being faster and being 4x weak to Electric moves (which, for some reason, makes the AI prefer not only Electric damaging moves, but also Electric status moves as well). Hence you can easily pivot between Gyarados and Golem to get this to -6, or even stall it out of both Earthquake and Thunder Wave if you like. From there, you should have a wide variety of options to beat this.

Of course, if you have a Rock Head Golem with very minimal benchmarks, you can also just Head Smash this.

4. Gengar: I generally recommend trying to bait Shiftry out last instead of this, because you have a *much* wider variety of options to handle this. Chief among them are your fossils and Golem, which are guaranteed, and with proper positioning can win with minimal IV requirements (albeit you may want the better nature to make the matchup as safe as possible.)
5. Octillery: Lanturn is the gold standard here. Water types in general are good, if you don't have it for whatever reason. Just

make sure you equip a Cheri Berry, to play around Body Slam paralysis.

An example comp with primarily guarantees would be something like Gyarados, Golem, a BA mon, two bulky Water types, and a Fire type. You could lead Gyarados or a BA fossil to ohko and bring out Granbull, then pivot between Golem and Gyarados to intim pivot to -6. Then, go to your BA mon and chip it, slowing it down if your Golem is too slow to outspeed it, and then pivot back in through Gyarados to finish it off. (Of course, if you're Rock Head, you can just kill it immediately.) Golem at this point should be on full HP, hence it should live both Brick Break crit into Head Smash recoil and also Explosion crit. This brings out Octillery, nicely enough, so use however many Water types you need to beat it, with Lanturn being best. Note that Lanturn can potentially bait mid-turn switch to Shiftry if Octillery gets a Quick Claw proc on the same turn as you click an Electric move, so be careful here. But hopefully Shiftry should be out last, unable to explode, and you should easily handle it with your Fire type.

4.4 Tabitha and Maxie

Having made your way through the Gauntlet, with hopefully no more than a death or two, you should now be ready to face Maxie and Tabitha. Tabitha is, in my opinion, the harder fight to prepare for, but you should treat neither one lightly. We're at the stage of the game where you shouldn't be risking more than a crit on most boss fights, but it's likely these both will force you to risk one each. Don't hesitate to burn a scale or two, or to go to level 42 on anything where it might give you an edge.

Magma Admin Tabitha: The Dodrio and Manectric are both easy. Everything else can be extremely difficult to handle safely, even with a good box. Note that unless you have a Psychic type that can switch safely into Giga drain and ohko Weezing, you really want it coming out last, which heavily constrains what you can use as a counter to each Pokemon.

- Dodrio: Loses to most Rock and Electric types, despite having HP Ground for coverage.

- Manetric: Loses to Lanturn and Whiscash. You're probably using Whiscash for Aggron, though, so hopefully you have both. If not, there are backup answer for Aggron, or if you really need the slots you can have Whiscash double up and hope you don't get too unlucky.
- Weezing: Try to bait this last. If you don't, I think only some Psychic types, Magcargo, Illumise, and Ledian have decent matchups against it, with Magcargo trying to burn it before it can click Explosion so that you tank a crit, and the Bugs trying to Encore HP Grass. If you do bait it last, a lot of things can handle it, including Tentacruel and Camerupt, both of which are already coming to the fight anyway for other reasons.
- Aggron: Whiscash pops off here, being a near-guaranteed answer to this. Poliwrath is similarly good, and Breloom isn't bad either. But you'll have a hard time finding anything else with close to that level of efficacy.
- Flygon: Very tricky. Cloyster is very, very good here; this is one of the fights where it shines over Dewgong. This is because Dewgong baits Flygon to use Rock Slide, where Cloyster baits it to use Giga Drain; hence Dewgong typically risks Rock Slide flinch while Cloyster can slide in on an Earthquake, tank a Giga Drain, and ohko with Aurora Beam. If you want to use Dewgong, I recommend finding a way to Intimidate this first, so that it goes for Giga Drain against Dewgong and you only need to dodge high roll crit tier bad luck. There are relatively few answers besides these; the main ones that come to mind are Swellow, Forretress, Breloom (beware of mid-turn switch), Gardevoir (if you scale Ice Punch, with Trace even allowing you to slide in on Earthquake), Illumise, and Ledian. An extremely good Liquid Ooze Tentacruel can come in on Giga Drain to chip Flygon and then get the Aurora Beam ohko. I loathe to mention this, but both Jynx and Glalie are good answers to this, if you for whatever reason took the Ice Room in Granite Cave. And, of course, it is always worth it to look at your box to see if any notable Pokemon have HP Ice.
- Arcanine: Another tricky Pokemon. Lanturn is the most guaranteed "answer" to it, thanks to the ability to restore its HP by pivoting with Gyarados or Mantine, although it takes enough damage from HP Grass

(and HP Grass is insufficient enough as a move to pivot on) that I hesitate to call it a counter. More accurate is to say that it can chip Arcanine into something else finishing it off. Camerupt is probably the best answer in general, and Magcargo also does exceedingly well. Kabutops can finish this off with some very minimal chip, which can even be obtained by pivoting into Overheat. After an Intimidate to dissuade this from using Extremespeed, Tentacruel can perform decently well - if the IVs are there, you can even come in on Wild Charge and, after Wild Charge Recoil, finish it off with Muddy Water. Illumise and Ledian can, of course, encore HP Grass, as long as you take care not to fall into Extremespeed range. The last Pokemon I'll mention here is Blastoise, which can come in on a fair number of moves and outspeed ohko with Water Spout, at the cost of a scale. Overall, this is usually easier for most boxes to handle than the Flygon, but still can be very difficult indeed.

An example comp might consist of a pure Electric type, Whiscash, Gyarados, Lanturn, Tentacruel, and Dewgong. The Slateport Electric would kill Dodrio and bring out Aggron, which you then go hard Whiscash on (don't try to pivot through Gyarados unless you want to eat a Head Smash to the face). Whiscash dodges QC crit and beats Aggron, bring out Arcanine going for HP Grass. Pivot through Gyarados to Lanturn, then Bubble Beam to chip, then go directly to Tentacruel on HP Grass to outspeed and finish it off with another Bubble Beam. Manectric will come out looking to Thunderbolt, so go back to Lanturn - incidentally healing it - and have Lanturn whittle it down WITHOUT killing it. Then, go to Tentacruel (or your Electric type, if Tentacruel is too slow) to finish it off and bring out Flygon instead of Weezing. Flygon should be going for Earthquake, so go to Gyarados on that, then Whiscash on Rock Slide, then Dewgong on Giga Drain, and then Dewgong should bait Giga Drain, live most Giga Drain crit rolls, and ohko with Aurora Beam (or, if you needed to go to lvl 42, Ice Beam). Then Weezing will come out last, unable to Explode, so play things by ear; Tentacruel and Gyarados are both good for it if they're on high enough HP.

Note that much of this is IV dependent, despite most of the encounters appearing in most boxes. Moreover, a good number of boxes can field better teams than this. Obviously calc the fight for yourself and find a plan that works for you.

Magma Leader Maxie: Think of this fight less as a puzzle and more as a chump check. You get most of the tools to beat this fight on every single run, assuming you've used the routing I recommend, so it's literally just a matter of not throwing any of them away until now. Of course, IV requirements can throw the plan out of whack, which is why I'll list multiple alternate answers, but the majority of my teams have all been roughly the same for this fight.

Sidenote: I absolutely adore the music for this fight, and I wrote this entry listening to it. Probably my favorite Pokemon track of all time.

- Registeel: Golem is the very, very standard lead here. Maybe 90% of all Maxies open with Golem. The reason is twofold: not only does Golem win regardless of what Registeel does, but it brings out Houndoom (one of the harder-to-beat members of Maxie's team) immediately, going for its weakest move. This is why you delay Geodude for Earthquake, for this fight right here. If, however, your Golem is too slow, or you forgot to delay for Earthquake, or it died, there are alternatives - it's slightly riskier, but Registeel having Thunder Wave is fantastic for us here, because we can basically field any non-Ground type that outspeeds and 2hkos Registeel without being raw dead to either of its moves. Notable here is Blaziken, which can kill with Blaze Kick into Superpower, and indeed many Fighting types can fill this role nicely.
- Houndoom: Of course, this just had to get Modest nature. The very standard answer to this is Tentacruel, which usually outspeeds and 2hkos, while eating HP Grass into Crunch crit. This means that Tentacruel only loses to double crit tier bad luck. If your Tentacruel is too slow, or if it died, or whatever, other common answers are Blaziken, Thick Fat Hariyama, Poliwrath, and Primeape. There are also edge case answers, such as Swellow and sufficiently fast Ledian/Illumise.
- Claydol: Ideally, this is coming out after Houndoom on your Tentacruel, going for Earthquake. This makes Gyarados a perfect switch-in. Once again, you'll need to dodge Explosion crit. If you can Waterfall into Double-Edge, that also adds Flinch chance; if not, you'll be risking the 1/160. Other noteworthy answers include Dewgong (which can Icy Wind into Ice Beam), Forretress, Seaking (and most other sackable Water types), some Megahorn users, some Swarm users, Illumise and Ledian (Encoring Earthquake), Swellow, and Blastoise (which can often outspeed ohko with Water Spout).

- Alakazam: If the Gyarados play worked out, this should be coming in against your Gyarados and hopefully going for Thunder Punch, one of the better moves to switch in on. Persian, of all Pokemon, shines here, being able to come in on Thunder Punch (and not get Paralyzed thanks to Limber) and then outspeed and kill with Fake Out into Double-Edge. Sceptile can sometimes outspeed and ohko with X-Scissors. Shell Armor Crawdaunt can sometimes come in on Psychic, tank Thunder Punch from full, and then ohko with X-Scissors. Shiftry can Fake Out pivot with something that baits Psychic and tanks Fire/Ice Punch, such as Hariyama or a bog standard Fire type. A handful of Pokemon can win if they dodge crit, including Camerupt, Golem, Whiscash, and Absol, by coming in on an immunity. This is also one of the few fights where Swampert shines, being able to come in on Thunder Punch, tank Psychic crit, and ohko with Mirror Coat. But probably the most common answer is to use one of Sharpedo or Crawdaunt, along with one of Lanturn, Whiscash, or Camerupt, both pre-slept. The first Pokemon is immune to Psychic and baits Thunder Punch, the other is immune to Thunder Punch and baits Psychic. The end result is that you can switch between them until Alakazam runs out of pp on Psychic, and then you're no longer risking crit with the pokemon that was baiting Psychic, which can just easily 1v1 the Alakazam. The pre-Sleep is to play around Ice Punch freeze, which I've seen wipe people before. The reason you fight Alakazam with your Lanturn/Whiscash/Camerupt instead of your Sharpedo/Crawdaunt is because you'll want to save your Dark type for the Dusclops.
- Crobat: This is the only member of Maxie's team that you aren't guaranteed a decent answer to, though most boxes can muster something. Magcargo works best, being able to stall Crobat out and even farm it for AP boosts, before bringing out Dusclops and burning it. (Note: Don't click AP if the Claydol is still alive, of course.) Ampharos, if it comes in on the right move, can tank crit and ohko with Thunderbolt. Electrode, on the other hand, just about never ohkos, but outspeeds, allowing it to win if it dodges crit, or chip for something else to finish it off if it gets crit. The best guaranteed answer is Dewgong, which typically either wins outright, or else can slow Crobat enough with an Icy Wind for something else to handle it. If you use Gyarados to Intimidate so that Crobat goes for Giga Drain against Dewgong, you can

make this safer.

- Dusclops: The Dark/Water you brought for Alakazam doubles as an answer to this. I won't go too in-depth here, because this is really more a matter of positioning and AI knowledge than it is about specific counters. Note that you don't need to kill this outright, you just need to force it to rest, and then any number of your other pokemon that ohko this can handle things from there.

Overall, a fairly standard team of (near) guarantees for this might be Golem, Tentacruel, Gyarados, Whiscash, Sharpedo/Crawdaunt, and Dewgong. Golem beats Registeel and brings in Houndoom going for HP Grass. Tentacruel comes in on HP Grass and beats Houndoom to bring in Claydol going for Earthquake. Gyarados comes in on Earthquake and beats Claydol to bring in Alakazam going for Thunder Punch. Pivot between Whiscash and your Water/Dark until Alakazam is out of Thunder Punches; on this turn, go to Tentacruel (if possible) on Fire or Ice punch. Since Thunder Punch has 1 fewer PP than Psychic, and the first move it used was Thunder Punch, it still has one more Psychic PP, so go back to the Water/Dark one last time, and then go to Whiscash. If you can, ohko with Earthquake; if not, Muddy Water into Earthquake. Note that you shouldn't click Mud Shot into Earthquake, even if you do outspeed it at -1, just because you don't want to cause a mid-turn switch to Crobat. Crobat will come out next, though, so go to Gyarados on Giga Drain, then Golem on Poison Fang, then Dewgong on Giga Drain. You should live another Giga Drain crit, so take the turn to Icy Wind and slow down Crobat. Then, on the next Giga Drain, go to Gyarados (or, if possible, pivot through your Liquid Ooze Tentacruel so it doesn't get to heal) to finish it off. Dusclops comes out, and you can more or less go directly to your Dark type to farm it down.

As always, do your own calcs. Your box probably has something better than this if you've been routing correctly and you haven't lost too many Pokemon.

4.5 Pre-Flannery

At this point, a lot of your mons will be pushing up against the level cap. A few of them will even be lvl 42. That's fine. There's only 9 non-trivial fights left, which if you Exp dump and plan appropriately shouldn't overlevel

more than one or two of your mons, and certainly shouldn't overlevel your Flannery team.

Just about everything in your box should be level 40-41 by this point, even 42 on Pokemon that have seen heavy use like Tentacruel, Dewgong, Gyarados, Whiscash, and your fossil. Obviously Golem will be level 42, simply because you can't evolve to it any earlier. On these and similar Pokemon, the ones which are likely to be 42, while I will still point out their usefulness on certain fights, I will not expect you to have their usage, and will have a broader focus on other options. Anything below level 42 should have few to no difficulties with overleveling.

Note that, if Exp is particularly tight, it may prove helpful to plan in reverse on these fights, starting with Flannery and working your way back to Kindler Jeff. In areas like Victory Road, this is done so that you know which Pokemon you can sacrifice in each fight; in this case, we do it so that you know how much Exp each Pokemon has left before the cap.

Some quick reminders before you go forward. Don't forget to get the Return TM, and to get the Acro bike so you don't get stuck on the Jagged Pass. **MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND IN DEPTH HOW Solar Beam AI WORKS!** Suffice to say, it's not how you'd expect. Don't forget to turn on the Sun for your calcs in Flannery's gym. Grab the Charcoal in her town, as I always see new runners miss this. Also get the Dig TM, which is in the same location as in base Emerald and often gets used on a Fire type for this gym. And, most importantly of all - don't wipe. If you get past here, there's decent odds you get to the Elite Four.

- Magma Grunt Double: There's a lot of simple strats here, most of which revolve around leading one Rock type and either Gyarados or something predamaged to bait a move from Gengar, and then switching into another Rock type while you soak the boom and the first Rock type clicks a move. For instance, you could lead Golem and something predamaged to bait Sludge Bomb from the Gengar. Then, hard switch to your fossil on Sludge Bomb and Explosion, and click Head Smash with Golem into the Electrode slot. Solrock will come out and immediately die to Head Smash, and your Golem, even if Sturdy, should never die to boom crit into recoil. Alternately, you could lead your fossil and Gyarados, then switch Gyarados for Golem while the fossil clicks Rock Tomb on the incoming Solrock. Then, the fossil proceeds to outspeed and finish off Solrock the next turn (either with X-Scissors if Kabutops

or Bubble Beam if Omanyte) while you switch an appropriate Pokemon into the Golem slot to outspeed and help kill the Donphan when it comes out. And then it's fairly easy to handle the Gengar slot from there as long as you plan correctly. As long as you do a little planning, you shouldn't lose anything here.

- Kindler Jeff: Magmar loses to Sharpedo, Whiscash, Kabutops, Lanturn, Blaziken, and Camerupt, among many other pokemon. Kabutops also typically beats the Ninetales, as long as it outspeeds. Failing that, Ninetales can sometimes be a little tricky, but your own Fire types do well against it, as does Gyarados. Jeff's Camerupt can either be baited last, or else brought out on an appropriate Water or Ground type that ohkos it before it gets a chance to move. The Torkoal gets handled by most Fire types, as well as by Golem if you have no other options. Flail Gyarados, if you can spare the xp, will easily handle the Magmar and Camerupt at least, leaving five slots for the rest. Overall, these mons can be individually threatening, but with a numbers advantage you shouldn't have too much difficulty.
- Ruin Maniac Eli
 - Exploud: Blaziken is predictably amazing here, as are a couple of the Dewford Fighting types. Breloom also stands out. That being said, its +def Nature definitely hampers the ability of most Fighting types to ohko. Battle Armor mons typically do well here as well, especially Kabutops. A good Gyarados can sometimes win, and even bad Gyaradoses can be used to Intimidate Exploud into picking its weaker Special moves. Fire types with Blaze, or with sky-high spatk, can sometimes just ohko it due to the Sun boost and its -spdef Nature. Overall, this might require two slots to beat, but you should definitely have something that beats it, even if it's just Gyarados Intim pivoting with your fossil three times and then farming it down.
 - Solrock: Obviously the threat here is AP Boost. If you run Sceptile (assuming you aren't Leaf Blade delaying, which I generally advocate against anyway), you can pivot in on Earthquake or Solar Beam, get knocked into Overgrow, and ohko with Magical Leaf. Indeed, many Chlorophyll Grass types easily win here if you

can get in on the right move. Also viable is Sharpedo (and Crawdaunt) with Blackglasses, though you may need to get some chip by pivoting in on Overheat. You should usually have the ability to counter this with at worst two slots, since it has next to no Special Attack.

- Weezing: Loses to Whiscash and Golem outright. Loses to Lanturn if you Intim to convince it to click Flamethrower; this strategy works for a host of other Pokemon. You don't really need to ohko this; enough Pokemon wall it that you shouldn't have too many problems.
- Camerupt: This has neither Explosion nor Quick Claw, so despite the higher level and better nature it's still pretty easy to play around. In particular, this can often be beaten by Gyarados, Golem, and Whiscash, with Gyarados either Flailing it or else living Rock Slide crit and 2hkoing, and Golem and Whiscash outspeeding and ohkoing. Of course, these may not be viable for Exp or IV reasons, so some other common answers are Crawdaunt, Camerupt, Water Spout Blastoise, a good Muddy Water Tentacruel, Marowak, and Illumise/Ledian. Absent all of these, you can at worst yolo a bad Water type at this, since you're typically only 1/32 to lose to Solar Beam crit.
- Aroma Lady Colette: Her and Geraldine must be fought back-to-back, though you can reorder your team and heal between them. Thankfully, Fire types feature prominently on the teams for each, so you should have no difficulty compressing slots for them.
 - Bellossom: This loses to every single Fire type, as well as Tentacruel, Victreebel, and a fast enough Weather Ball Vileplume. Better yet, on most of these you don't need to worry about mid-turn switch to anything, even if you underspeed and it clicks Substitute.
 - Blissey: Less a matter of what beats it, and more a matter of what beats it while also beating something else on these teams. Fire types, for instance, are often good for this, so long as they have physical moves to click.

- Vileplume: Similar to Bellossom, except that the Sludge Bomb does pose a threat to more Pokemon. With a fast enough Fire type, you can chain them, one into the other. Otherwise, many Fire types still often win by living Giga Drain into Sludge Bomb crit, pre-Slept if necessary. In particular, Magcargo and Camerupt both do predictably well here, as does Tentacruel. If none of those work for some reason, Weather Ball Chlorophyll mons are an option, and Gyarados can Intimidate it into not clicking Sludge Bomb, which allows a greater variety of Pokemon to counter it.
- Rapidash: Once again, pretty much all Fire types and Tentacruel all do reasonably well here. Not too much else works, though.

Triathlete Geraldine: The other, harder half of the b2b.

- Tangela: You never outspeed this, and AP boost is a bitch to deal with. That being said, absent a Victreebel, and taking slot limitations into consideration, a Fire type is still often your best lead here. Just try to use a physically bulky Fire type that can take AP boost into AP, so that you risk only 1/300 tier bad luck.
- Altaria: Dewgong. Cloyster. Gyarados. Most Water types that learn Ice Beam. There are many Pokemon that beat this, so you shouldn't have too much difficulty.
- Nidoqueen: Typically coming out against your Fire type lead and going for Earthquake. Pivoting through Gyarados to Pecha Whiscash and clicking Mud Shot, then Earthquake typically works. Sometimes, Gyarados even just wins by itself. Intimidate pivoting into a BA Water type works, and sometimes you can even drop the Intimidate pivoting. Kingler, in particular, can win with two Mud Shots without baiting a mid-turn switch. Psychic types often do well. You can sometimes Rock Tomb or Mud Shot this with a BA Pokemon so that a slower Ground type (such as Golem or Marowak) can outspeed and ohko from there. Blaziken kills with Blaze Kick from Blaze, and pivots in on Flamethrower. Lots of answers, you should definitely have at least one in your box if you look enough.
- Magmar: Fire types are reasonable, especially Camerupt (which can come in on Thunder Punch and then ohko), but far fewer beat this than the previous Magmar, or even the Rapidash on the

previous fight. Tentacruel often wins by coming in on the appropriate move (some Fire Types will bait Cross Chop, for instance) pre-slept, and then clicking Mirror Coat into Muddy Water or Sludge Bomb. A fast Kabutops will outspeed and ohko. With a speedy Gyarados, you can chip the above Nidoqueen, pivot 1 HP Gyarados in on Drill Run, and then (holding Pecha Berry for Poison Point) Flail chain Nidoqueen into this Magmar.

- Triathlete Jace

- Dugtrio: Sceptile or any Chlorophyll Grass mon will ohko this. So will fast enough Fire types. You can lead Gyarados, since Arena Trap doesn't affect it, and then go into a Battle Armor mon on Rock Slide. There's a lot of options for this, since you get to lead against it, just be mindful of the Arena Trap.
- Seviper: Most fast Fire types actually just ohko this. Whiscash also sometimes outspeeds and ohkos, as do a few other Ground types. Gyarados can come in on EQ and Flail it. Its coverage is a bit demonic, but its lack of speed or bulk makes it relatively easy to find something that comes in on an appropriate move and ohkos it.
- Dodrio: Your fossil beats this. So do most Battle Armor Pokemon. So does Golem. So do most Electric types. The list goes on; you shouldn't struggle finding an answer to this.
- Rapidash: This is the Pokemon that everyone remembers Triathlete Jace for. Good speed paired with good coverage makes this very hard to find something to beat it with. Salamence would of course win easily, but you hardly have one right now. Sometimes you might have something that wins on its own, like Thick Fat Hariyama or Shell Armor Torkoal. Camerupt often wins, if Gyarados pivots with it to entice Rapidash not to click Drill Run against it (though high crit AI can still mess things up). Illumise or Ledian can encore Solar Beam or Drill Run, if they're particularly fast, and Plusle/Minun can encore Wild Charge. Most times, though, you should be prepared to use as many as three slots against this, by either chipping it into range of something else killing, slowing it down so that a slow but strong mon can now

outspeed ohko, Intimidating it into not using Drill Run against a Dig-using Fire type, or some other similar strategy. For example, you might pivot between Gyarados and a Grass type. to get off two Intimidates, then go to Tentacruel on Overheat, and due to both Intimidate preventing Drill Run and the chip damage from recoil on all the pivots you can then 1v1. Or perhaps you might Fake Out pivot switching between Sceptile and Blastoise (or a Thick Fat Dewgong), until something else (Sceptile, Sharpedo, your own Rapidash, etc) outspeeds and kills. It's very difficult to easily list common answers to this, but most boxes can cobble together something with 2-3 Pokemon that beats it, and you should easily have three slots to handle it. Just get creative, and let me know if you find anything you think other people should know about - I might add it to the guide.

- Beauty Danielle:

- Slowbro: A good Crawdaunt or Sharpedo just beats this by tanking crit and 2hkoing. A 17iv +spa Sceptile will ohko from Overgrow. Some strong Vileplumes, Victreebels, and Sunfloras will also ohko. A strong Ampharos or Magneton can sometimes ohko this as well. You also can chip it with something that lives crits from all moves and then pivot into a version of the above with worse IVs to finish it off. Blastoise can use Mirror Coat strats, and some Battle Armor Pokemon (such as 16iv +atk Kabutops, or a 10iv atk Kingler) can 2hko without getting oneshot themselves. Ledian and Illumise beat this, as they do nearly any slow Pokemon with Earthquake. Though this can be surprisingly difficult to find an answer to, you have a variety of tools and a numbers advantage; double team this if you have to.
- Clefable: Fire or Fighting types both do near-universally well here. If by some horrible chance you lost all such Pokemon - well, first of all, you'll probably wipe to Flannery, but until then, you can always try to use Gyarados or Tentacruel.
- Manectric: Lanturn, Whiscash, Camerupt, or any Rock/Ground type beats this.
- Flareon: Kabutops or Whiscash can pivot in on Heat Wave and ohko. Magcargo walls it, as does SA Torkoal. Illumise/Ledian

can easily encore Solar Beam and win. Other than those, few common encounters come to mind that easily beat this. However, assuming two slots for Slowbro, and one for each of Clefable and Manectric, you should have two slots for this. That's more than enough to pull off creative strategies similar to the ones listed for Jace's Rapidash. And, just as for that Pokemon, if you have any strategies not listed here, of course let me know.

- Pokemaniac Axle:

- Torkoal: If your Golem hasn't overleveled yet, you can use it to kill this. If it overlevels here, it's not that big a deal; there's only one or two more Pokemon after this you might want to use it for. If your Golem doesn't work for whatever reason, another common encounter that beats this is Blastoise, with Torrent Water Spout. If you have neither of these for whatever reason, you can always have two Pokemon tag-team this, such as by having Gyarados chip it, and then pivoting thought something that doesn't bait Solar Beam into Whiscash to finish it off.
- Tropius: It's Brave, so it'll typically underspeed your fast Fire types. Even slower Fire types, such as Torkoal, may win if they are bulky enough. If you don't have any of those, you can also use a Victreebel or Weather Ball Vileplume to beat this. A fast Qwilfish wins as well. Gardevoir can ohko with Ice Punch, if you taught it for Tabitha, and Trace (if you have it) allows even slow Gardevoirs to outspeed. Gyarados can chip into a variety of other Pokemon finishing, as long as you don't get screwed by Air Slash flinches. Overall, most boxes don't have too much trouble here, though those that do may be left scratching their heads for a few minutes.
- Slowking: If you aren't using it for Nidoking, Gyarados often 1v1s this after it comes in on Earthquake. Failing that, look to the prior suggestions for Slowbro and take ideas from there; Slowking swaps its physical and special bulk, so most likely Electric, Grass, and Dark types will be less useful, but Battle Armor mons and other physical answers more so. Encore is equally good against both. If you didn't overlevel your Golem, with minimal chip it

should finish this off with Head Smash. Generally, this Pokemon will require two slots to beat, but you should have the tools for it.

- Nidoking: Gyarados or Mantine is perfect for this. If you can't use yours for fear of overleveling, or if they are dead, most Battle Armor mons do fairly well. Gardevoir tends to kill this easily. It hardly bears repeating, but of course Illumise and Ledian will do fantastically here. If you lack all of these, you retain slot advantage - find a way to double team it.
- Expert Keegan: Often considered to be harder than Flannery herself. Though I heavily disagree with this sentiment, his reputation as a hard mini-boss of the gym is hardly undeserved. Where prior enemies had difficult Pokemon to beat, but you could get by due to slot advantage allowing you to double-team them, Keegan has multiple pokemon that are deserving of a double-team on a five Pokemon team. You will find yourself working to compress slots as much as possible to fit all your answers into a 6-mon team, and will likely wind up risking one or two of your brings to a crit - though, and this is the reason Flannery is harder, you should never wipe here.
 - Electabuzz: One of the Pokemon that can be safely handled by itself. Whiscash and Lanturn are the very common brings against this, though most boxes should have some sort of an answer to it. Victreebel often ohkos with Gunk Shot, and then chains the Octillery immediately afterwards, while remaining backup (or a straight-up answer if you scaled Weather Ball) for Keegan's Victreebel later.
 - Octillery: No Quick Claw, so it's very manageable. Lanturn often wins, as does Golem with Head Smash. Sceptile, if you can properly bait an Octazooka, can ohko from Overgrow - note that Magical Leaf means you don't care about Accuracy drops. Other Grass and Electric types also often simply ohko this.
 - Hariyama: Now, things start getting tricky. This is a natural target for Intimidate pivoting, and can be used to position carefully by chipping with a BA mon and then setting up a kill with something else, to have it already in when Victreebel or Houndoom comes out. However, this is the sort of answer that necessitates

multiple slots, which is precisely the problem of this fight. In lieu of the above, Ground types typically do fantastic here, including Whiscash but also Donphan, Marowak, etc.

- Victreebel: Unless you're lucky enough to have a Trace Gardevoir, a SA Torkoal, or a Weather Ball Victreebel, you're not single-slotting this. The very common play here is to bring two Fire types, and have one come in on Solar Beam to risk crit against it. Then, if it dies, the other one (typically the better one, or else a bulkier one which can live some Gunk Shot crit rolls from full) comes in fresh and does its best. Sometimes, Tentacruel can chip this into something else finishing it off. Or perhaps you can Intimidate between Gyarados and a Poison type, until it clicks Weather Ball on a bulky Fire type. Muk is also a fantastic bring, since it has massive special bulk, resists both stabs, and does huge numbers with Gunk Shot. Explosion Electrode has been suggested before, as it can come in on the right move and outspeed ohko, though it feels incredibly bad to just straight up sacrifice a mon to this. Overall, just do your best, and be prepared to lose something to this.
- Houndoom: This one sometimes gets single-slotted, but it's hard. The main candidates are Tentacruel if the IVs are there and your fossil if it's Battle Armor. Battle Armor Water types are good to check for this in general. Beyond these, most answers will risk crit, including Blaziken, and there aren't very many ways to mitigate it. Similar to Victreebel, you may want to risk crit on this with something you don't mind losing, and default to, say, the Whiscash you brought for the Electabuzz if you get crit. Note also here that you need to be careful around the Pursuit on this, especially if you're using Garde for Victreebel. The short of it is that Pursuit is treated as a regular move, unless you are a Ghost or Psychic type, in which case there is roughly a 25% chance the AI clicks it the first turn it's out (excepting special circumstances, such as seeing a kill against you). Hence, unless you're dead to Pursuit, or Gardevoir is *not* dead to Crunch, you should be fine.

4.6 Flannery

Flannery is most likely the hardest fight you've done so far, no question about it. I've seen many runs wipe here, and helped many more players who were stuck here. I've heard it described as a box check, and that's accurate. Every member of her team is demonic, and counters to them are few and far between. On some level, that's what it comes down to: finding an answer to each of the Pokemon. The difficulty is that her Pokemon are similar enough in terms of stats, typing, and coverage, that a counter to one of them often works for two or three others, making it occasionally difficult to figure out what ought to be used for what. Moreover, it effectively means you need to furnish six counters to roughly the same Pokemon from your box, which many boxes are incapable of doing; as such, you often wind up risking a crit or two on this fight, and sacrificing at least two Pokemon.

As a side note, this will change the way I present this fight; rather than focusing on counters to her Pokemon, which are all just slight variations on the same archetype, I will instead focus on listing the Pokemon that *you* can bring and what they do, in a rough descending order of how commonly I see them on peoples' teams. That is to say, a Pokemon is higher on the list the better it is for the fight and the more common an encounter it is. Particularly valuable mons - ones which are basically auto-brings - will be bolded.

Now, all this being said, the good news is that Flannery is about the last fight that could possibly be considered the early game. If the early game is characterized by volatility, by wipes from unavoidable random chance and singular misplays, the late game is characterized by stability, where you're more likely to wipe from slow bleeding necessitating increasingly risky plays. So good luck - if you get through this fight, things will even out from here.

- Tentacruel: Likely the best of the guaranteed encounters, IV manipulation aside. Tentacruel beats Ninetales, Castform, Arcanine, and Blaziken, albeit not all at once. For Ninetales, my personal favorite use of Tentacruel, the idea is to lead it pre-slept and Mirror Coat into either Sludge Bomb or Muddy Water. This should, with ordinary IV amounts, kill Ninetales and bring out Charizard, which will go for Earthquake even if you got crit; typically this is the nicest move we can offer to switch into, especially for Sceptile runners. For Castform and Arcanine, the idea is similarly to Mirror Coat into a kill, but you may wind up needing to dodge crit, since you have to not only tank a hit but also switch into one, and this may stretch your HP thin if you don't sac in. Lastly, Tentacruel has the advantage of taking next

to nothing from Blaziken and doing reasonable damage to it, while always outspeeding thanks to its poor speed, making it a fairly ordinary Blaziken answer if you don't happen to have a Gardevoir, Ninetales, Grumpig, etc.

- **Gyarados:** The other very good guaranteed encounter. Gyarados doesn't really solo any of Flannery's Pokemon other than Charizard, which is unique in lacking an Electric type move amongst her team, and there are typically much better answers for it. However, the fact that most of her team has Electric moves is actually why Gyarados is so incredibly good. With its absurd special bulk, Gyarados, can eat up Fire moves and then bait Electric moves for other Pokemon - ones which may not want to take a sun-boosted Heat Wave - to switch into. Even better, in doing so it can use Intimidate to dissuade Pokemon like Arcanine or Typhlosion from clicking their often inconvenient physical moves. All this makes it the premier pivot of the fight, and one which I've increasingly appreciated the more I've done the fight. Just don't forget to pre-Sleep or pre-Paralyze it if you're planning to switch into Heat Waves.
- **Blaziken:** Guaranteed. Perfect typing for the fight, as much of her team needs to use not very effective Fire moves against it. Great learnset, with Superpower and Rock Slide doing some pretty large numbers. Rock Tomb allows it to overcome its otherwise lacklustre speed, if necessary. Alternately, if you reset/manip for one, a 29iv +spe Blaziken simply outspeeds her team at Level 43. Overall, depending on IVs, Blaziken ranges from simply a very good bring to one of the best in the game on this fight, typically taking some subset of Ninetales, Castform, Arcanine, and even Charizard if it's fast enough.
- **Sceptile:** Guaranteed. Useful and unique typing for the fight, allowing it to serve as a pivot to bait Fire moves, if necessary. Can outspeed ohko Charizard with Rock Slide at Level 43 if it has 26 IVs in atk. Can generally outspeed her whole team and finish off chipped party members with Rock Slide, making it a useful revenge killer. Overall, this will at most solo one member of her team, but it still often comes just for that reason and as backup for the other members. Ranges from not a good bring (if low atk) to a great bring (if ohkos Charizard)

- **Camerupt:** Gets free switches off Gyarados baiting Electric moves thanks to its Ground typing. Its Fire typing lets it take Solarbeam crits. Earthquake will ohko most of Flannery's team. Camerupt is a fantastic bring to this fight, and a reasonably common encounter in general. The most common Pokemon this is used to beat are Typhlosion and Arcanine, often both in the same fight. Arcanine typically dies to a single Soft Sand Earthquake without killing on a crit. Typhlosion, on the other hand, will kill with a crit Earthquake, but you can pivot between Gyarados and Camerupt (on Earthquake/Solarbeam and Wild Charge, respectively) to lower Typhlosion's attack until it no longer goes for Earthquake, at which point your Camerupt will live crit and kill. If you use Camerupt for more than one Pokemon, though, it'll risk crit on at least one of them; you may find this worth it if you don't have many other options.
- **Sharpedo:** If you're not manipulating your Blaziken, or if your Sceptile doesn't have good atk, you'll need another Charizard answer. A reasonably fast Sharpedo (same speed requirement as Primeape, actually, at 17 IVs) will thankfully outspeed and ohko Charizard with Ancient-power. The issue is that there's no way to switch in without risking a crit, since Sharpedo is so paper-thin; however, you can often sacrifice some trash such as Luvdisc or Persian to the Ninetales so that Sharpedo can revenge kill and chain Charizard. If you're feeling saucy, or get an omniboost, you can even chip the Arcanine that comes out afterwards, to make one of her hardest mons easier to beat. Of course, this typically results in your Sharpedo dying, so if you want to save it for Maxie 2 or Tate and Liza you should probably be careful with this. Alternately, you can predamage your Sharpedo to be dead to Extreme-speed, if for whatever reason that's a safer move to switch into for your party.
- **Rapidash:** Drill Run, blinding speed, great typing for the fight, this thing will 1v1 most members of Flannery's team by at worst dodging a crit. It can then either sac to chip the next one, or else switch out to stay as a revenge killer for later members of her team. Because of how abundant fast Fire types are, it's typically not important enough that you desperately want to keep it alive, either, meaning that it's okay (if not ideal) to sacrifice it in a pinch. Most boxes that get a Rapidash

bring it to Flannery, and it's fairly common to acquire in general.

- **Arcanine:** Like Rapidash, but with a better ability, Extremespeed, and better bulk; but also worse speed, more value for the rest of the game (hence less ability to sac), and a weaker move in Dig that you also need to burn a TM for. I generally advocate delaying this for Morning Sun when you can, simply for E4 utility (and because you can typically afford the extra scale for Extremespeed), but it's a good enough bring for the fight that you often evolve it just for Flannery.
- **Hariyama:** Fake Out lets you get chip for other mons to put in some work. Rock Tomb can slow things down, and if it makes them slower than Hariyama then Hariyama effectively ohkos them. Using the TM here also enables Hariyama to serve as a Charizard answer. With Thick Fat, you tank a good amount of hits from their strongest moves, and don't take super effective damage from anything. It's not amazing, but it's definitely a good bring, and one that I've brought even when not Thick Fat. Bumped a bit on the list because it's fairly common.
- **Primeape:** With the equivalent of 16 IVs in atk and 17 in speed, Primeape will outspeed ohko everything but Arcanine with either Reversal or Rock Slide. This means that you can sweep until Arcanine comes out, switch into other encounters to kill it, and then sac to get Primeape back in to finish the sweep; even with Ninetales's pressure, Primeape still has just enough PP on Reversal to kill everything. You may want to put an Exp Share on another party member, by the way, so that Primeape doesn't overlevel to 44 and heal out of maximum Reversal damage.

Note that the requirements for this are fairly difficult to meet. Without going in depth, the odds are just over 1/5 to obtain a Primeape that meets them if you aren't using Synchronize. Hence, assuming that the odds of obtaining a Primeape on any given run are approximately 40%, you're a little under 1/10 to get a pog ape on any given run.

- **Grumpig:** With Thick Fat, this has a decent amount of utility in general, just because it has such insane spdef that it stands up to Fire moves with relative ease. Even without, this makes for a very solid Blaziken answer, either dodging crit and outspeeding to 2hko or else chipping for any other party member to revenge kill.

- Ninetales: Mostly used as a Blaziken answer, since it gets Extrasensory, but sometimes it leads to chip her Ninetales before switching out. As a fast Fire type, it's good in general, just thanks to its typing and speed, similar to Rapidash and Arcanine above; mostly it is held back by its moveset being poor against every member of Flannery's team other than Blaziken.
- Magcargo: Can beat Arcanine by overhealing its damage if it has good bulk and dodges crits. Typically, you go for the 1v1 and get some guaranteed damage on the board, so that if you do get crit to death you can revenge kill with something else. Kind of a mid bring, but has the advantage
- Blastoise: This has heavily fallen out of favor over the history of the game, but I still see it often enough that it's worth putting relatively high. Blastoise is simply mediocre for the fight; it will take one mon if it dodges crit, and if it gets crit then it won't accomplish anything. The idea is that you pivot in on a Fire move while still living Solarbeam non-crit, and then you can Mirror Coat to do a lot of damage, often even killing. But for burning a scale and risking a really bad crit, Blastoise generally doesn't come unless the box is desperate.
- Torkoal: With Shell Armor, this can often just 1v1 a member of her team. Nothing too interesting beyond that. I've seen it recommended as a lead on the fight, with the idea that you Earth Power into Rock Slide to bait and punish a mid-turn switch to Charizard, but in general I find this idea far too risky to recommend. I'd rather suggest you just focus on using this as a Charizard answer, or an Arcanine answer, etc.
- **Swellow**: With the equivalent of 28 IVs in atk, you ohko Ninetales, Charizard, and Blaziken, and then bait Arcanine, which you can't kill due to Intimidate. If you have less, you probably kill everything but Blaziken, so you'll want to either use something else against it or else chip sac against it to make Facade not a range. Crucially, and I cannot emphasize this enough, do not take the range against Blaziken. I know PC did it. It was a throw when he did it, it will be a throw when you do it, and if you get punished you will lose the most unique facet of your run.

Now, once you've brought out Arcanine, Swellow can't kill it because it'll be Intimidated. Even without Intimidate, Arcanine simply has the most natural bulk of her team, and isn't going to be ohkoed by a Swellow that isn't +atk. As such, players will typically proceed to beat Arcanine with more standard Pokemon, then sac to get Swellow back in and resume the sweep, which wins you the fight from there. Note that if you kill Arcanine with a Fire type, you can bait Typhlosion EQ and just switch back in for a deathless Flannery. You can also Intimidate Arcanine (to take Swellow out of Extremspeed range), then chip sac it with something unimportant to bring Swellow back in with a kill. Overall, even if yours is weak and can't kill the Blaziken, Swellow is an insane bring to this fight, and often just utterly destroys it. The only reason it's this low on the list is how rare it is as an encounter.

- Magmar: Probably the worst fast Fire type to bring. Shit bulk, below average speed for its archetype, and a lacking moveset for the fight. It feels kind of bad to waste your Dig TM on this, but that's probably the main way that it becomes useful; with it, it can probably take one member of Flannery's team. All that being said, Fire types are just good for this fight in general, if for no other reason than their typing. Every single one is usable, and Magmar is no exception.
- Electrode: Chip Charizard with something, i.e. Gyarados. Pivot into Electrode on Solarbeam, assuming it doesn't kill you on a crit. Finish it off with Thunderbolt, baiting Typhlosion. Explode on Typhlosion. Flannery is a fight which usually sees two deaths anyway, so to take out two of the harder members of her team by sacrificing a somewhat mediocre mon isn't actually that bad.
- Illumise/Ledian: Somehow, I've only seen these brought to this fight a couple times, despite how good they are. The idea is that Solarbeam is omnipresent in this fight, and both Pokemon can sit on it indefinitely (or at least until they run out of PP). As such, as long as they outspeed, they can just Encore and win. Ledian also can punish the Earthquakes on the sets of Typhlosion and Charizard, whereas Illumise is able to heal mid-fight to prolong its Encoring. However, the IV requirements here are rather stringent, as they both need 19iv +spe to outspeed at level 43.

- Plusle/Minun: Same as above, but for Electric moves, and with a lower IV requirement: 17iv neutral spe at level 43, same as Sharpedo. They also often don't do the killing themselves, simply owing to their frailty but instead will hard swap out for a Ground type that can get the kill for them.
- Donphan: If Battle Armor with great spdef, you can come in on an Electric move, tank a hit, and do something like double Mud Shot (with fantastic speed) or Endeavor for chip. If you do this, you'll most likely see the most success against Arcanine, which is one of the hardest for most Pokemon to beat, but one of the easiest for Donphan, on account of it having the lowest spatk of Flannery's team, and the second lowest speed.
- Mantine: Like Gyarados with more bulk and no Intimidate. Beware that if the Electric moves you're trying to bait don't kill, the AI can go for Solarbeam instead, which means you might need to predamage.
- Chlorophyll Mons: Some Chlorophyll mons can do a good job at just outspeeding and revenging, if you're lacking in high speed mons. In particular, you should be aware of Victreebel and Shiftry. Shiftry is a mediocre Charizard answer that can sometimes kill with Fake Out into Rock Tomb, and can in general Fake Out pivot by coming in on Solarbeam and then baiting Fire moves for other Pokemon (i.e. Tentacruel) to switch into. Victreebel just hits like a truck with Gunk Shot and switches into Solar Beams easily, allowing it to kill with modest chip. Neither one is amazing, because neither one can take a single hit from any of Flannery's mons, but they do enough to have a niche.
- Nidoking: With the same stat requirement as Ledian and Illumise (that is to say, 19iv +spe), Nidoking can outspeed Flannery mons and do a lot of damage with Drill Run and Head Smash. Head Smash requires delaying it as a Nidoran until level 38, but pays dividends in this fight, as a good Nidoking (17iv atk and 19iv +spe) can chain Ninetales → Typhlosion → Castform right off the bat without being dead to recoil, greatly simplifying the fight for the rest of your party.
- Base 80 Speed Pokemon: Note that the 29iv +spe requirement is not unique to Blaziken; any Pokemon with 80 base speed can come to the

fight if it has the moves and the IVs for it. A very notable example is Kabutops, which can absolutely stomp Flannery if it's fast enough, by outspeeding with STAB Rock Slides that do around 80% damage to most of her party, enabling you to kill with minimal chip. You can obtain this chip, for instance, by pivoting into recoil moves, using Fake Out, etc. Arbok is another example, as it has both Earthquake and Rock Slide when delayed. That's why I include this section on the list: there are some Pokemon which are not typically brings, but which become fantastic brings if they pass a certain IV threshold. I'd advise you to at least make a cursory glance at the IVs on such Pokemon.

- HP Rock Pokemon: Very, very rarely, you might have an HP Rock Pokemon that actually ohkos Charizard, in which case it might come to the fight just for that alone. I mention it mostly for completeness; I think out of all the Flanneries I've planned or seen I've only witnessed this once.

This list is not yet exhaustive. I will be adding Pokemon to it as I think of them, and I encourage you to DM or ping me (Alpacantrip5553) if you see any noteworthy ones that are missing.

Additionally, it's worth discussing for a moment the importance of sacking on this fight. I lost four mons to Flannery and considered it a reasonable outcome. That's on the higher end, but you should be prepared to lose two Pokemon on this fight. This is just the nature of Flannery; her Pokemon are all so aggressive and so powerful that you do not have the time to switch unless you have fantastic pivots - which, if you try to bring too many, will limit your team slots too heavily, which is why you typically only bring at most Gyarados. A good rule of thumb, then, is to figure out your answers to each of her Pokemon, and then pick the two least valuable team members to die. Then, figure out how to use their deaths to give you safer switches and chip damage, to maintain tempo throughout the fight and keep you from needing to switch into unsafe moves or risk unnecessary crits. Like the Uncertainty Principle, unless you have Swellow you can either have the fight be riskless or deathless, but not both. Most often, you get neither. If you have to choose, err on the side of risklessness; you're deep enough into the game that you ought to be playing mcuh safer.

And with that, we're finally, truly done with the early game. At this point, I would say you should have between 4 and 10 deaths. If you have

fewer than four, you likely played too risky, or you got insane encounters. If you have more than 10, you probably didn't plan enough, and will likely need to tighten your gameplay to avoid bleeding into a wipe.

Chapter 5: The Eye of the Storm

5.0: On Double Battles

As we move into the midgame, things calm down a bit. You'll find that fights become less risky, deaths less immediately impactful, and so on. The Norman split, in particular, is excruciatingly fast and easy, since you have a large level advantage for much of it, and then Norman himself can be cheesed in a variety of ways.

However, one thing worth noting is that we're shifting into the territory of double battles, which are much harder to explain and to plan for than single battles. Single battles can often be reduced to what counters what, with the positioning left implied for the reader to work out. Double battles, on the other hand, are not so simple - Swellow, for instance, beats many members of the boss doubles one-on-one, but in the absence of another Swellow you're liable to get killed by the slot that Swellow didn't beat. As such, there will be a shift in the way that we talk about the fights for double battles, away from a counter-based mindset and into a positioning-based mindset, where the emphasis is less on the individual Pokemon you bring and more the overarching goals they're trying to accomplish. Strategy instead of tactics, you could maybe say.

I often see people complain about double battles for this reason, and claim that they are unsuited for them. I advise you to avoid this mindset: you aren't bad, you just haven't learned yet. The same skills that are important for double battles will improve your ability to plan out single battles as well. Positioning, baiting, AI knowledge, and an understanding of how to route a fight are all subtler skills, but still vastly important ones if you want to beat this game, or indeed any game. Make an effort to learn them.

5.1 Encounter Routing

There's three main sources of encounters this split.

First, you get Bagon this split. Every run gets this, and it's one of the most important encounters of the game. In terms of catching it, you're going to want to bring a lot of Nest Balls, a lot of Timer Balls, a Pokemon to Paralyze this, and a Pokemon that can chip it safely. I've seen people have Bagon struggle to death on them, but never if they did all the above. Common ways to chip Bagon are to use a Sonicboom mon, a False Swipe

mon, an Endeavor mon, a Super Fang mon, or a Rough Skin mon; every box should have at least one of those. Just plan carefully and you'll be fine.

Some runs also get the 111 Desert encounter, if you delayed it until now. For this, you'll want to lead a level 40 mon to repel manip for the highest odds at Diglett and Trapinch. Since these have Arena Trap half the time, you want this Pokemon to either be a Flying type, or else be a Pokemon you don't mind losing. These are extremely difficult to catch, especially if Arena Trap, and I've basically never caught one without losing a Pokemon to them. Since you don't need them this split, it may even be worth delaying until the next split for extra level advantage on the rest of your team, giving them higher odds of living.

Lastly, if you delayed Rustboro, you'll be getting an Anorith now. Why not Cradily? Well, although Cradily is a good Pokemon, Armaldo has generally been found to be vastly superior on the next three splits. It's a Norman mon, it clowns on Winona, and it's extremely good for both Hideouts due to being a Battle Armor Normal resist. After Aqua Hideout, you'll get whichever fossil you didn't pick, making splits after that point not a consideration.

5.2 Norman Gym

The order of rooms that you are heavily recommended to take is Crit, Stall, Sleep. You can go level 47 on everything without risking overleveling, so these fights should be a breeze. For the Crit room, just make sure you understand how high crit AI works, as that's the only way you might lose a mon. For the Stall room, keep in mind that you can often pre-Para to play around status moves, increasing the variety and quantity of answers to those pokemon. Similarly, keep pre-Sleep in mind for the Sleep room, which I'd argue is the hardest of the three. However, you are better served in the Sleep room than the Strength room, as Cooltrainer Jody has unique AI compared to most other trainers in the game, making her behave differently than expected. For instance, Drxx once tried to fight her over Berke, and was shocked when the Medicham clicked Rock Slide over Fake Out and crit killed his Illumise.

That's about as much depth as these fights deserve. I have confidence that you can figure them out from there, if you've gotten this far.

5.3 On Phase 2 Baiting

For most AI knowledge, I direct you to external resources that already explain it sufficiently well. However, I had to have this explained to me by Toxic, so it would be hypocritical of me to expect others to be able to learn it from the existing documentation. I still encourage you to attempt it, but if it proves too difficult, I have included a simplified explanation here as well.

To understand phase 2 baiting, and indeed AI baiting in general it helps immensely to first understand what the intended AI behavior was, and then to dissect where it went wrong. Imagine, if you will, that you were trying to choose what Pokemon to send out after your current one has been beaten. Of course, as many of us do, your first instinct might be to look through your party for Pokemon that super-effect the enemy Pokemon, and then select from among those the one that best resists its STABs. This is in effect phase 1, except for that the AI messes up and inverts how it rates type matchups, sending out the Pokemon that is *weakest* to your STABs.

But alright, suppose you have nothing that super effects your opponent. In this case, you might instead just look for what can hit it the hardest. You might imagine calcing the damage on each move of each remaining Pokemon, taking note of which one does the most, and sending out the Pokemon with that move. Simple and clean, right?

Well, the issue is that the programmers made a few crucial mistakes when programming this logic. First, they forgot to change what Pokemon was using the move, so instead of calcing Poison Tail from the Nidoking that they're considering sending out, they instead calc it as though their dead Gyarados is using it. Because they do this for every single move, that means that the stats of their alive Pokemon do not factor into the AI's decision in any way. Second, they forgot to change all the properties of the move being calced to the one being considered: they change the typing to match it, but they don't change the damage or physical/special property from the most recently used move. That is to say, if the most recently used move was Thunderbolt, to kill the now-dead Gyarados, when it checks Nidoking's Poison Tail, it'll correctly change the move to be Poison Type, but it'll still see it as being 95 bp and special. Moreover, if the Nidoking has Rest, that *also* gets treated as being a 95 bp special move, just as a Psychic type move instead.

Now, that's the guts of it, but what does this mean practically? Well, in short, since the stats of the alive Pokemon aren't considered, and the base power or physical/special property of their moves aren't considered, the only thing that ultimately winds up being relevant is the typing of their

moves. Recall that the damage calculation for the move is done assuming the recently-killed Pokemon is using it; this means that, for instance, Poison Tail is not seen as having STAB, but Water Pulse is, since it's being calced for the dead Gyarados. And since move base power is ignored, Water Pulse, though objectively the weaker move, gets treated as the stronger one, and the Pokemon with it is favored by the AI. This also means that moves that are not damaging moves, but whose typing is super effective, get prioritized: Spore against a Whiscash, for instance, will be sent out before STAB Water Pulse, because Spore has a 4x multiplier, and Water Pulse is only 1.5x.

That's all that is necessary to explain right now. Hopefully you find this explanation salient and digestible; if not, let me know how I can improve it. We'll see in a moment how it affects the next fight.

5.4 Norman

Norman is by far the easiest gym leader in the game, in large part thanks to his Snorlax. It is, in a word, useless: it cannot attack you if it cannot go to Sleep. It cannot go to Sleep without using Rest. It cannot use Rest if you don't damage it. Therefore, if you ignore it, it can't hurt you, and the fight becomes a 2v1.

The question then becomes, how do you bring out the Snorlax as early as possible, to turn the fight into a sweep? The answer is fairly simple: phase 2 baiting. Snorlax's moves are all either Normal or Psychic type. Since the rest of Norman's team also has Normal moves, these are useless to us with respect to baiting, and we focus instead on Rest. Here, observe that Norman has precisely one Psychic type Pokemon: his Espeon. Since killing Espeon makes the AI see Rest as having STAB, as long as we do so with Pokemon that his team doesn't super-effect, we will bring in Snorlax early. This, it turns out, forms the crux of about 90% of Norman strategies. (The remaining 10% comes from the observation that only Swellow has the ability to super-effect Fighting types, hence if you lead 2 Fighting types and chain Slaking into Swellow, Snorlax is forced out by phase 2 baiting, since Rest "super-effects" Fighting types.)

Here is an example strategy, one which the majority of Norman comps use: lead Gyarados and a Water, Ground, or Dragon type, with the latter being predamaged to be dead to exactly Hyper Beam after intimidate. The Espeon will always Skill Swap Slaking turn 1, regardless of whether it sees a kill or not, so you can slap it with Strength or Secret Power or whatever

Gyarados can use to chip it into Double Edge kill range without risking killing it on a crit. In the meantime, Slaking is firing a Hyper Beam into the other slot to chase the kill it sees, so you switch in a Shell Armor mon that tanks it, or else just a bulky Rock type like Golem. Then, both of Norman's Pokemon are out of commission the following turn, with Espeon loafing due its new Truant ability and Slaking recharging from Hyper Beam. Use this turn to switch back in your Water, Ground, or Dragon type on the second slot while Gyarados finishes off the Espeon with Double Edge. Because neither Water, Ground, nor Dragon are super-effected by any of Norman's Pokemon, this will bring out the Snorlax. Now, Slaking is going for another Hyper Beam, so you can switch in another Normal resist on that slot, while you switch out Gyarados for a "sweeper". The goal here is to set up a chain of kills with both slots, which is often quite easy to do. So, for instance, if you brought in Kabutops and Blaziken, you could have Blaziken kill things while Kabutops Rock Tombs the incoming Pokemon to slow them down, to allow Blaziken to outspeed on the following turn. Primeape is another fantastic sweeper, as are certain special attackers, which don't have to worry about being Intimidated by Tauros. Another easy thing to do is to pair an Endeavor user with a Quick Attack user, so that you have one Endeavor the incoming pokemon while the other Quick Attacks them to death - just make sure your Quick Attacker outspeeds both Tauros and Kangaskhan, or else you might lose your Endeavor user to a faster Quick Attack or Fake Out (recall that Fake Out is +1 in gen 3). Sceptile is good in both roles, since it should outspeed everything Norman has. There's a lot of leeway here in how you plan things out, but every box I've seen has been able to win from the position of a 2v1, so I have confidence you will too.

Once you're down to just Snorlax left, the goal is not to let it fall asleep. You can either do this by hitting it hard enough and fast enough that it doesn't get the chance, or else by PP stalling it out of Rests (make sure it isn't seeing Snore kills, as it will go for that over Rest if so) before you fire into it. Endeavor is also helpful here.

Now, what if you don't have the ability to pull this off? If, for instance, you are lacking in Water and Ground types at this point, if your Gyarados has already died, etc? Well, there are a few alternate strategies worth discussing. For instance, Primeape Reversal can often outspeed ohko the Slaking, and if you don't outspeed then Endure plus speed control or Fake Out can give you the time to do it. Here's an example: you could lead pre-Burned Armaldo and Primeape. Endure while Armaldo Rock Tombs Slaking, then Reversal

kill Slaking and Rock Tomb the incoming Swellow to slow it down. Note here that pre-Burn keeps Armaldo from killing on a crit. Espeon will be looking to offload Truant onto Armaldo, because it wants BA (it will do this over the kill it sees on Primeape), so take this turn to switch in another Fighting type on that slot while Primeape outspeeds and ohkos Swellow, bringing out Snorlax.

Or, suppose you baited a Hyper Beam kill in one slot, then sent in your Normal resist to soak Hyper Beam alongside a 1 HP Sceptile. Then, on turn 2 while both Slaking and Espeon are out of service, Sceptile Endeavors Slaking while you send in an appropriate Pokemon with a priority move, for instance Donphan with Ice Shard, or Blastoise with Fake Out. Then, Sceptile Endeavors the Espeon while the priority mon finishes off Slaking. Note here that Skill Swap AI is flawed, in that it does not actually see Slaking as having Synchronize after it has been Swapped, but still thinks it has Truant; hence Espeon will continue to Skill Swap with Slaking for as long as it is on the field. This means that Espeon will go for Skill Swap turn 3, but Skill Swap Truant onto the incoming mon instead, rendering it incapable of acting the next turn. On turn 4, you have the priority mon finish off Espeon while switching in a Water type or something that baits Snorlax, and the fight is free from there.

There are so, so many strategies for this fight, it is impossible to list them all. There is a well-known video of RedBlueCandy beating the fight using a single Primeape and nothing else (<https://youtu.be/pvEG7RX0fOs>), though I believe the original strategy is attributed to somebody else. Play around, get creative, *learn the AI*, and treat this fight as practice for the more difficult double battles to come.