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

For this season. We are covering the Pokemon franchise. My name is Max Roberts, and I am joined as always by Logan Moore

Hi Logan, it's time to go to trumpet land

That was my trumpet

Yeah, but you didn't get to experience the real trumpets because we played the fake news remakes in this. Yeah, we did

- Yeah, the episode for us. - We were alpha and omega

over here, that's what I should've called you.

Should've introduced you as the alpha.

- Yeah, yeah, that would've been a good idea.

Alpha Logan and Omega Max.

- Even though we both played the correct version, Sapphire.

- We did, yeah.

- Ground on sucks.

- Never played a Ruby game ever.

- Keep it that way, keep it that way.

- I was just gonna chime in and say,

this is one that I've been looking forward to you playing

because obviously I think we've well documented

on this season by now that you never,

this was one of the ones you skipped,

so I was looking forward to you diving into these.

I'm looking forward to seeing what you have to say about these games as we get into this episode.

- Yeah, it's always so new and fresh, which is strange I think when you talk about Pokemon, just how big it is, someone coming in without a lot of experience with the games.

It's cool. Every time something's new.

And I'm looking forward really actually to everything else this season because Ultra Sun and Ultra Moon are very different.

- That would be a fun one for both of us 'cause we both have never played those games.

- Yeah, and then there's Black and White, Black and White 2, like a true pair of games.

That's all new to me.

So I'm excited, I'm looking forward to the rest of the season here and talking about Sapphire and Ruby.

But I did wanna say really quick that, you know, even if you did play Groudon and Ruby back in the day, you know, we'd still love you to support the show by joining Super Chapter Select, which you can do by going to super.chapterselect.com for just 20 bucks a year.

You can sign up, support the show directly, get access to longer shows, exclusive episodes,

and behind the scenes and supplementary video material.

We've got our battles going on.

Our Sapphire Ruby battle is done and recorded.

Logan, he was very upset about the last couple of battles.

And so he's, he came in this one hot, really hot.

He had a lot of pride riding on the line.

His childhood version was standing over his shoulder

saying, "You must win."

- I've accepted my place as your rival, Max.

and I'm very much leaning into this.

- We're really embracing the rivalry energy here.

So are you blue to my red?

I don't feel like I'm a very cool red.

- That's how I view it, because I'm the one who talks smack,

so I gotta be the one saying smell you later

and stuff like that.

- You should sign off those videos as smell you later.

But thank you so much to our members that we have now

and you can check out more over at super.chaptersselect.com.

- Outside of memberships,

we've also got other special things

to talk about with this episode

and that would be in the form of a guest

that will be joining us here in just a couple minutes.

Cameron Hawkins will be joining us to break down

Ruby and Sapphire, in his case, Emerald,

which is the one that he happened to play through

for our discussion.

- The only trifecta.

- This is true.

all three versions of a generation,

I think the only time this season we'll be doing that.

- Yeah, I think it's the only time where we're going back

and not 'cause otherwise we're just sticking to the remakes

if there's a remake option.

So yeah, we'll have Cam's take on how Emerald

holds up some 20 years later.

Before we do that though, let's do our typical breakdown

of everything related to Pokemon Ruby and Sapphire here.

Per usual, developed by Game Freak,

It originally released on the Game Boy Advance and later the Nintendo 3DS.

With the remakes, the original release date was March 19th, 2003, for those of us in North America for the original versions.

The remakes launched on November 21st, 2014.

The original game's director was Junichi Masuda, and the remake's director was Shigeru Amori.

The producers for the original games were Hiroyuki-Jina, Takahiro Iizushi, and Hioki

Tsuru.

The remakes producers were Masuda, Shusaki Igami, Takaru Atsunomiya, and Hitoshi Yamagami.

The music for the original game was Go!

Ichinose, Morikazu Aoki, Junichi Masuda, and on the remakes the composers were Shoto Kageyama,

Manako Adachi, Hideaki Kuroda, and Hitmoy Sato.

The Metacritic aggregate score for both the remakes and the original games was an 18.

out of 100. Just riding the same wave across time and space. Nothing, nothing

changed over the 15 year gap between the original games coming out and then the remakes coming out which is kind of interesting to me. And also I never really looked at what the... This is like kind of the gen that I never knew what the critical consensus was on it back in the day because I wasn't reading gaming magazines at the time. I knew that like the original Red and Blue and then Gold and Silver were like big deals. I mean they were worldwide smash hits and that's not to say that Pokemon wasn't... I mean it was definitely less big than I guess it was in the late 90s early 2000s by this time. But yeah I guess I never really thought about what these games were... how these games were received critically so it was kind of interesting to go back and scan through some of the original reviews there for the original games at least. I only know about 7.8 and too much water. Yeah, I mean that's that is the criticism tied to these but it's also not wrong criticism in a lot of ways and we can talk about that with uh Cam Hawkins. Cam, thanks for joining us to talk all about Sapphire and Ruby today. Uh yeah I'm glad to be here I love

I love Pokemon, so I'm always willing to chat about it.

All right, let's kick things off and we'll start with you, Cam.

Just what was your experience like returning to this game?

How do you feel about this game now?

And what's your history with this game overall?

Were you somebody who played it originally on the Game Boy Advance back in the day?

Or where's this one at in the Pokemon series for you overall?

Yeah, so I played Pokemon Ruby growing up.

I vividly remember being upset getting Ruby because Sapphire was already sold out because I believe I got it around my birthday and while Johto and Pokemon Crystal specifically is like my favorite Pokemon game I think Pokemon Ruby you know just the Hoenn games in general is the most

hours I've put into Pokemon. You and me. That was kind of like the peak of my Pokemon consumption

and I still... there are things about Hoenn that I really really really

love to this day and I played through Pokemon Emerald for the first time actually and because I was always told like oh Pokemon Emerald is basically like it's the Pokemon crystal of Hoenn and like it's notably better than Ruby and Sapphire and after playing it I don't know if I agree with that like I'm

I'm not saying that it's not a great, uh, like one of the best Pokemon entries.

Cause it is, but I think a large part of that has to do with Hoenn, um, being such an interesting region then like the additional, uh, content slash changes that they made an Emerald compared to Ruby and Sapphire.

And I will say that I have played the Hoenn remakes and I think they're bad.

I just think they're straight up bad.

I think that like, especially when you compare them to HeartGold and SoulSilver. It's been a long time since I played them because I played them relatively soon after they came out.

But, you know, one of the most disappointing games I've played in recent memory, for sure.

It just, and I don't know if it's cause, you know, the Pokemon games are in 3D now or if it was the changes that they made, but I just don't think Hoenn translated well in a 3D space because it focuses a lot on water, which I think is one of the strengths of Hoenn, but not in the artistic direction that they went with Alpha Sapphire and Omega Ruby. And when I say it's bad, I don't think it's like a bad game, but I think it's one of my least favorite Pokemon games, to be more specific.

But yeah, so that's basically my experience.

Again, like I enjoyed my time with Emerald, but I kind of expected more.

I had like higher expectations going into them.

And there have been other Pokemon games in the past
where like I heard like kind of similar praise
and I think those expectations were met,
but I don't think Emerald is one of them.
- I'm gonna jump in here before you, Max,
because if I'm right,
you've never played these games until now.
And I know I kind of have a similar story as Cam.
Yeah, like I said, this is definitely,
by far the Pokemon games I have played the most.
I've never actually played the remakes until now.
So I played Alpha Sapphire this time.
And I agree, a lot of the charm of the original games
was very much lost in this remake, especially,
and we'll talk about this more later,
but the music just did not stand up.
And I know the Ruby and Sapphire soundtracks
get a lot of like, there's a lot of memes with them
and oh, Trumpets Trumpets, and like that's
what people talk about when they talk about these games,
but I love those soundtracks.
I think those original soundtracks
are like top tier Pokemon music.
So when I got to the final battle with Steven in the remake
and there's not the Trumpets blaring like crazy
the final champion theme, I'm like, "This sucks. I don't like this at all." They replaced
so many of the horns in that final champion battle with keyboards and things like that.

I'm like, "No, this is not the same. There's not the..." I don't know. There's something about those games in that era, and I agree. Sapphire was the one I played, and I can't even tell you how many times over I played that game as a kid. Probably eight to ten I've probably put over a thousand hours or more into that game alone, let alone Emerald whenever I got that and I still never played any version of

RWBY to this day, which is kind of bizarre. But yeah, so we have similar stories in that regard and I enjoyed

the thing I'll say going back to it as

somebody who played the remake by comparison to Ucam is I did get

My nostalgia fix from this playthrough and so it's hard for me to look at these games and not still

Like them like quite a bit

Like I had a really good time playing through alpha sapphire and there are drawbacks with the remake that I do not love

And I think the original game is better

But as just a good 30 hour hit of nostalgia playing through the game once through like it did its job in that regard to me and so this was a

fun one for me to play through and revisit and was

Gave me a lot of those warm feelings I had as a kid because I should point this out too

This game is really special for me because I bought

My SP my Gameboy Advance SP in tandem with this game when my parents bought that for me for my birthday

They said what is the one game you won? It was like Pokemon Sapphire. And so that was what

Like that was my introduction to like that era because I didn't have a Gameboy Advance prior

So that was my original Gameboy Advance game and that's partially why I played it so much

so I have just general fondness for this era of Pokemon that game and I tie a lot of those feelings are tied up together with

like my first experience with the SP the backlit screen all of that stuff like oh

Yeah, so so it's like that's like one of my favorite areas of gaming ever. And so oh, yeah

There's a lot of positive feelings tied up in this case. It's hard for me to say too much bad about it

Sure, there are definitely some drawbacks that I'll get into max

Blind playthrough person. What do you think? Well, I have some history some history not necessarily playing the game

But at some point in my youth I became infatuated with mudkips

There is me

I heard you like mudkips. There's clips from the anime and stuff and that gave birth to my first email address

mudkip143@hotmail.com

You can send an email to that.

That account is defunct as all we get out.

- My original email was bulbafan1@aol.com.

- I love it.

So Pokemon email addresses come strong.

So I'm still stuck with that username in some ways.

It's still my PSN.

I know I can change it,

but the names I want aren't available,

so it's like what's the point?

So Mudkip has followed me my entire life,

or most of my gaming and adult life.

And I was always infatuated with the see-through cartridges,

but I just wasn't allowed to play Pokemon at the time.

I wouldn't actually come back to Pokemon

until the next generation on the DS

when I was about 13 years old.

So I guess that's kinda like my rough experience

in general with this generation.

Now coming into it fresh here on the 3DS,

'cause I also played Alpha Sapphire,

'cause Kyogre's just better in all ways.

I wish I played the Game Boy Advance version, mostly because of just the technical performance.

It just doesn't run well on 3DS, quite frankly.

This is the same thing with X and Y.

X and Y is the same thing.

Did you ever try to turn to 3D on?

I did.

It drops dramatically.

And so I was actually jealous of Cam because when we kind of reached out and pitched doing

this episode he asked if he could just play Emerald on, I think he played it on your pocket

or something. And as we were playing, as I was playing through this, I was like dang

I kind of wish I did that too. Because I have Sapphire in the drawer over there, I could

have done it. So as a 3D game I wasn't actually particularly fond of it and it's an interesting

generation narratively we're coming out of where we have a new team rivalry team

and like focus there there's new gyms and a narrative push it's there's like a

lot of like the world is ending kind of pressure around it which is a first for

Pokemon up to this point right this became very common and not every other

installment in the future yeah just goes from a group trying to kidnap Pokemon to

Pokemon that control space time and the earth and the sea and everything in between.

Yeah so that was an interesting juxtaposition.

Yeah and I'll say that like this is one of the key points I want to talk about that is like

probably one of the worst things about this generation is that team Magma and

Team Aqua have to be the stupidest team in all of Pokemon.

Like there's just like one team, "we want to drain the water and cover the earth with more land"

and then it's like that's stupid because everyone's gonna die. We want to expand the ocean and make

cover the land. That's stupid because people are gonna die.

I totally agree. That whole like this is our goal just never really

made sense and I don't know

what the post game is like in in Emerald or even these base GBA games

but for the remakes they made that Delta episode where there's a Deoxys shows up and you get mega Rayquaza and all that stuff and

Now just was like now an asteroids gonna crash into earth and we're all gonna die. So stop it and that just felt

almost too extreme alongside the plot of

You gotta go get all the gym batches and fill out your pokedex, but also stop evil

Can I just say one thing about the Delta episode really quick? My favorite thing is that he literally

fly into space on the back of a dragon to destroy a meteor that's hurtling towards Earth and then five minutes later

Your parents are like come on inside. Let's eat dinner and they're like, what a good young boy

I'm like, this is so what what is this dichotomy here? Like this little 12 year old kid is blown up meteors and

it's just so

It's very goofy. Yeah, the stakes are too high for

What's happening? I guess I don't know. It just doesn't take itself serious

Yeah, the stakes are silly

But like I think the actual Delta episode in itself is one of the highlights of the remakes because you know

in

The original games you had to get deoxys or Jirachi through

Events. Yep, and at that time you had to go to physical

Like Pokemon events to get the children at Toys R Us on a specific Saturday or something exactly to get these Pokemon

And then you'd like interact with like the meteors in

Moz deep I think yeah, I think you're right. It's cool like I think that it does a good job of like just introducing all that stuff and then also like ways of Which a lot of Pokemon games nowadays are like once you get to the postgame. It's just a a it's just all a legendary catchathon like you can just like almost all the legendaries are just somewhere that you can catch yes it's interesting here in the delta episode they're also not only giving you a bunch of legendaries but also a bunch of generational starters like if you go back to little root you get the toadodile or syndiquill and if do other events you'll get Gen 4 and Gen 5 starters as well and I'm sure Bulbasaur and Gen 1 is in there too.

So it was just like here's all the Pokemon you want, which is weird today with the Pokedex is being trimmed down.

This felt more, here's everything.

Yeah, they try to dump everything in your lap at a single time which is kind of nice.

I don't know, one thing I will say about the Delta episode since we're talking about it,

I don't have too much else to say about the characters that are destroyed.

I did appreciate that Rayquaza finally got fleshed out and was given some actual attention because even in the original games, except for I forget how Emerald is because it's been so long since I played it, but in the other games it's just like, "Oh, I'm going to go get a mock bike and go to the top of this tower."

And oh man, there's a dragon up here and that's about the extent of all you know about Rayquaza,

is that there's just some crazy green dragon

at the top of a tower that you biked up.

- Yeah, in Emerald, it's basically both Kyogre

and Groudon are like fighting each other in Sootopolis

and you have to go to Sky Pillar,

which you don't even get to catch him at this point.

You just have to go up there to catch,

or to just interact with Rayquaza.

And then Rayquaza basically just ascends from the heavens and is like, y'all stop fighting.

And then that's what happens.

And then after that, you go back to Sky Pillar and then you can catch him.

And you have the Master Ball,

I mean, even before the first encounter.

So it's just like, why couldn't I just caught him, catch him in the beginning and just be like, all right, Rayquaza here.

I get it 'cause like the story, you know, you could technically like kill Rayquaza and not catch him, but like, it's just one of those things like, oh, I gotta go all the way up there, and then like the puzzles to get up there, while not like strenuous, they're different and it's a little bit more difficult.

And it's just, and I'm just like, why can't I just go back up there again and just throw my master ball at you?

- Mm-hmm.

- I wanna bring it back and talk about the world a little bit more, specifically in regards to

Too Much Water, which I know is like the big meme thing with this game, but no,

This is something, I never understood why that was a thing,

because there very much is a lot of water in this game.

And this game has been designed with that in mind.

There are three HMs in this game that hinge on water.

And so it's a--

- You need them all.

- You need them all.

The Pokedex is filled with water Pokemon,

which I actually like, because in some of the later gens,

there's not enough, and I kind of hate that.

And I like that there's different types of water Pokemon

live under the sea like I think of Relicanth that you can only get if you're diving further

down and stuff like that. Like that stuff is cool to me. I think they did a good job

of fleshing out like yeah you can catch this Pokemon with a rod but you can't get this

one unless you go to the very bottom of the ocean and stuff like that. I always thought

that stuff was really cool. And even as a kid seeing all of like when I started running

around postgame and seeing all the different dive locations that are on the map like I

I'm sure this is something you didn't maybe notice, Max,

because you just did a beeline playthrough,

but there are so many dive locations on this map

that you can dive down and discover crazy things.

I didn't do it with this playthrough,

but everything with Regice, Regisiel, and Regirock

is super dope.

I used to love that stuff,

and having to interpret the braille

that they put on the walls and stuff like that.

There's like a ton of secrets packed in this game, Max,

that are really, really cool.

- Yeah.

- I kind of talked about 50 things there,
but what are your guys' thoughts
on like the general layout of the game
and how water's used and all that sort of stuff?

- What I want to say really quick is that like
the specifically Flash and Waterfall,
like HMs could like not be in this game,
at least for the original,
for the original, like there was two caves
that I needed to use Flash in.

One being Victory Road, which like, come on.

You don't need to do that.

- Yeah, that was brutal.

- And then like- - And the remix is a TM,
which is even more insane.

Is it a- - Oh, really?

- Yeah, and the remix, it is a TM that you get.

It's TM, like whatever Flash.

- And yeah, and so I had an Alakazam on my team
and I gave it a Flash, you know, in the beginning
when it was like an Abra, so I was like, okay, cool.

And then I removed it,

'cause I was just like, I don't need this anymore.

And then I get to the Victory Road, I'm like,
so now I have to pass up one of my moves

that I actually care about to give it Flash.

'Cause I already had like a Sableye to like,

Sableye is like the Bidoof of Hoenn,

'cause like it can learn Rock Smash, it could learn Cut.

I was like, okay, cool.

Like you are my HM Pokemon for this team.

And then I had like an Agron for strength.

And then I have a Walrein for surf and like dive.

And but yeah, with Waterfall,

I only needed Waterfall to get to Victory Road.

Like that is the only time I used it.

It's like, y'all could have designed it differently

so that this did not need to happen.

And so yeah, those two things like really frustrated me.

me, but the dive stuff, like I wish they, that is like the one thing I wish that

they carried over through all the Pokemon games, like diving underwater and just

explore, like exploring and like all that stuff was so cool.

Cause like the water, the water exploration in Hoenn for me is one of the

highlights, like I loved, um, exploring and like finding, cause when I was a kid

and I wasn't like as, you know, I wasn't as smart and stuff like that.

And I would just come across stuff just by surfing around.

And I got to a city. I'm like, Oh my God, I'm at a city. Like what's going on?

You know, like what's going on with this. And I was like, Oh,

this is where the next gym badges.

And like it just felt so new and different that you just don't like,

that is the only generation of Pokemon. Um, that I,

I felt that way. I felt that way.

Where it's just like just the pure exploration of coming across another, like a city like that without, you know, instead of every other game where it's just like, all right, go down the routes and then you find out like, and then you just end up going to the next town or the next city and then you do the thing. And it did have that sense of, um, uniqueness to it.

And, um, yeah, I love diving underwater.

I loved, uh, the thing I do, cause you do make a good point about like, there being a lot of water Pokemon.

they don't come up very often is the thing. Cause there is, but also like if you're surfing,

you're running into a tentacle or a tentacle you're running into a tentacle or you're running into, you know, and it's, but then like you see these trainers, they got Goldeen, Sea King, Staryu, like, um,

Wailmer, Wailord, Crawdawn, Barboach.

Yeah. Like even Wailmer, like I,

I remember running into Wailmer and like,

I didn't run to a single Wailmer during this playthrough. And it's just like,

It kind of, you know, I wish there was a little bit more variety there.

Cause you know, we've talked about like how there's so many zoo bats in caves.

Like while on the water, there's a lot of tentacles.

Let me tell you that.

Yeah.

It, I had one of those cause I needed something that knew could learn waterfall and dive.

I already had a Pelipper that had surf, but it can't learn water fuller.

Dive makes sense.

It's a bird, but so my thing was.

Now I have Pokemon taking up slots on my team,
which is taking experience from the Exp. Share,
not building up the actual team I want.

And to get up to Victory Road and through it,
you have to have that Pokemon with you.

So it's just eating up all this experience
right toward the end.

And then as soon as you get to the computer,
you get rid of it and bring in your actual team.

And it was so, it just felt frustrating.

It makes me really appreciate the games today
where I'm thinking like Legends and Scarlet and Violet,
where it's just all an ability on the overworld.

It doesn't take a move slot.

You could just go and do anything.

- This game really made me think about
what the purpose of HMs was back in the day
and trying to like, wait, why are we still doing this?

And it was really only to intentionally roadblock the player
so that they couldn't advance to a part of the game
that the developers didn't want them
to advance to ahead of time.

It was like, it's basically just purposeful roadblocks.

Like, we don't want you to go to Victory Road,
so how will we do that?

will lock Victory Road behind a waterfall.

But then you think about it,

it's like you look at previous games,

it's like, well, they could have just locked Victory Road behind badges or whatever. - A person.

- Like they do in the Indigo Plateau.

You can't enter the Victory Road until you flash all eight badges and then you go through there.

Why wouldn't they do that if they wanna keep players from going through that, to reaching those areas early?

So yeah, I don't know.

Some of the decisions in this game don't really make too much sense, but.

- Yeah, I was gonna say like this isn't, but this isn't also exclusive to Hoenn.

- Yes.

- It happens in Johto, it happens in Kanto.

It probably happens in Sinnoh too.

It's just like, I think this is where it's at its worst 'cause it requires the most amount of HMs to do that stuff, which yeah, that's very frustrating.

- Especially HMs of a single type too.

Like having three HMs dedicated only to water types pretty crazy because no one wants to put three HM like even if you are carrying a water Pokemon on your team no one wants to poke it three HMs on a single Pokemon no you are like like imagine if you start with a mudkip or something no one wants to have that be the only moves they have on their March stomp so yeah it's just not it is a kind of frustrating throughout the game as far

as the world itself, there's a lot of water. But a repel fixes the problem of running into too many things on the water and serving itself. It just takes so much, I don't know, at least in the 3DS version it's fast enough I suppose walking around. I don't know how fast the surf animation would have been, you know, how fast you feel like you're going on the Game Boy, but it didn't feel too bad. And I was beelining everything so it wasn't a lot of meandering or exploring a lot of the ocean, which I know wouldn't have been what I did as a kid if I was playing it when I had endless time and wanted to explore.

So it didn't, the too much water to me felt more like just the typing and the AHMs like we talked about, not necessarily the world.

I think it was actually cool that the world was basically split in two, where it was the eastern half is water and islands and communities there.

And then the western half is land and there's a big volcano type thing.

It's cool and it matches the legends and the Team Aqua and Magma.

Like this world fits very well into the narrative and the Pokedex.

It's all very cohesive.

And I think that's actually a really cool design.

Instead of just having, here's your spooky ghost tower in Lavender Town, here's your water gym and it's by some water.

this world feels truly designed
from the ground up altogether.

The whole, the decks, the story, the world.

- The coolest town is Pacific log
is the one that I think is like coolest.

- Really?

I think it's the four tree city.

- Four tree is very cool.

I guess I was speaking it specifically
in regard to like the water stuff,
like how they use the water within the world.

- Yeah, for sure.

- But yeah, four tree is really cool and unique too.

And is it Sudopolis, the one with the eighth gym?

- Yeah, you have to dive under it.

It's one of those things, it honestly made me,
'cause I watched the anime as a kid,
but I wasn't on top of it every week.

So I'm like, I kinda wanna go back
and see how Ash got to these towns
and what they look like,

how they were represented in the anime.

How do you get to Sudopolis?

Did he take a submarine down there?

What happened there?

What does Pacific Log Town look like in the actual anime?
because it's like on the water.

So yeah, I think that there's a lot of cool stuff there with the creativity behind the towns.

Again, like these are the things about Hoenn that I think are the kind of the most, that make it stand out from like most of the other regions for me, it's just like,

There's just things there that you can only get from Hoenn.

And I think a big part of that was just because like the team, the, you know, the team at Game Freak probably thought of like how Kanto and Johto were like, while like, those are still,

Johto's still my favorite region, you know, they wanted to do something very different and like not make you think about like,

Kanto and Johto, like this is a brand new fresh experience.

And it does feel like that, like in every way,

Like when it comes to the visuals, the gameplay, you know, introducing double battles, the, the Pokemon, right?

There's not a whole lot of Johto or Kanto or Johto Pokemon that you catch in the wild.

- Endless Tentacools.

- Yeah, Tentacool, you know, the, the, the general ones like Tentacool, Geodude, Zubat.

Like those are like the big three,

But in general, there's a lot of variety.

And I also think that it also did a good job at, um, replacing important, like locations in each town and city, uh, to make them easily remember,

remembered, like, you know, where the daycare is like, you know, where, um, the move deleter is because it's like right next to the Lily Cove. supermarket, like there's all these different things that, uh, that they. That are relevant for players that they put in, uh, spots that can be pretty easily remembered.

Um, you know, where you don't have to look at the signs in front of the houses every time.

Uh, and, uh, yeah, I just think that there is, it is one of the most varied, uh, regions, um, and it's like, it's from what I can tell, there isn't like a whole lot of, um, it's not really like based off of any sort of like, you know, country or architecture, like even Joda, like I love Joda, right.

But it's very feudal Japan inspired, um, architecture and a lot of locations.

And it's, it really does feel like it's just its own thing.

Um, and it, and it does.

And I would say that it does for like Sino and Unova too.

Um, but I just like, again, just with the variety of the land versus the water, just like that theme of Ruby and Sapphire, it does, it makes it, it makes it stand out in a way that I don't think the other two really do.

I actually, I was looking this up because I was curious if this was the first game to game freak to leave the inspiration of Japan and start designing their regions around other places around the world.

It's not, but it is based off this main island of Japan, Kusu, and I'm looking at pictures of it, and it's basically a giant volcano surrounded by water, which totally mirrors the game, right?

And so it's cool to see them tapping into a different part of Japan, because when you think of Japan,

you do think of the temples, that feudal style,

what you saw in Johto and Kanto,

And this is a different side of Japan, the fishing village angle, the volcanoes, the islands, which are huge in that region.

So it is cool to see different sides of Japan come through.

And it makes more sense actually knowing that, why they designed Ho in that way.

I wanted to ask about some of the additional stuff that gets thrown into these games.

because

Obviously, this is all present in the remakes, but they tried to throw a lot at the

Feel like Ruby and Sapphire was definitely just two installments where they wanted to hit the broad beats of what worked well in

Red and blue and gold and silver but they they tried to introduce a lot of new things in these games and see what would work

Like I like I think back to double battles. This is where double battles got introduced

I'm not sure you're aware of that max. No makes sense though

yeah this is where double battles came from I mean but then we've got stuff

like beauty contests which are just kind of like I love the beauty contest I was

gonna ask if anybody liked them because it really is just like a subset of like

you can tell they're thinking on that front was like what's another gym style

activity we can throw in yeah because people clearly love gyms so what can we

do and that was what came about I've never liked the beauty contest though I

don't really like them either I don't know if max even participated in a

single one. Not in this game. As a kid, I definitely did in Diamond and Pearl. Okay,

I was definitely into it then. But this time I was like, I don't want to. Again, I was

beelining things. So I was just like, give me three, give me three, give me three. Yeah,

I don't know some of this stuff. It's it's interesting. Like I think of the beauty contest

and they haven't gone back to that. And what's Diamond and Pearl the last time they ever

did that? Or was it in black and white as well? I don't remember. I don't think it's

been in any I don't think it's been in anything since Diamond and Pearl that I can think of but I could very much be wrong on that front yeah I don't know you can do this game is very interesting just because you can tell they're experimenting and kind of like what you were saying like Johto and Kanto are very tied to the hip both literally and those games are very much just like gold and silver are very much building off of the architecture of what was done and Red and Blue and this game is trying to be something completely new and in the process this really sets the stage for Diamond and Pearl and Black and White. It doesn't feel like they really do another total sort of shift again, at least a drastic one I feel like until X and Y where they try to turn things around a little bit again. There are like some tent pole Pokemon entries like that where they try to change the direction of the series or change what Pokemon has been up until that point.

And I really feel like a lot of the stuff that was introduced in this game was then a lot of the ideas were then expanded upon in the next two generations that we saw. So in that regard, I think this entry is that these two games are very important to the Pokemon series, and I'm not sure if they would have the long-term success otherwise. But yeah, I don't know.

What did you think, Max, about kind of what did and didn't work in this game?

one thing is, what was it you and I were talking the other day and you're like,

"This was just thrown in in the remakes, right?" And I'm like, "No, that was in the base game."

I definitely thought like the beauty contests and berries. I thought berries were...

Oh yeah, you didn't know, uh, Poke blocks were a thing.

Poke blocks, yes, for your Milotic. Yeah, so I thought that was all stuff introduced later

that then they brought into the remake to, you know, make it on parody with X and Y at the time

in future generations. So it was eye opening to have Logan say that it really was all introduced here. I think it's, this was a cut off generation, right? This was, Game Freak separated gen 1 and 2 from gen 3 here. There was no trading between 2 and 3. This was like the new start

essentially and I think that's where you see a lot of this. Where we're building the new foundation of Pokemon and we'll build off that. And quite frankly I think it's still the foundation today, maybe not so much I guess with Scarlet and Violet, maybe that and Legends being the new structure they're going to be building off of, but I haven't played Black and White and we will later this season, but I do know in Diamond and what I've played of X and Y and now this is all from that generation and even a little bit and Sword and Shield to a certain degree.

It all kind of really started here

and I think Game Freak really wanted to establish solid things to explore and expand upon.

I looked it up, Pokemon Black and White and Black and White 2, they didn't have beauty contests, they had musical, Pokemon musical.

But the idea of having your Pokemon engage in something besides battle,

And what do we see later on in Sword and Shield, camping and being able to pet and interact with your Pokemon in a 3D space.

- Cooking the food and eating it with the bad.

- The bad, the best animations.

- And Scarlet and Violet.

- Yeah, and I think it's cool that they,

we see this in Johto a little bit,

where they're in kind of horrific ways

where they're like, we're chopping off slowpoke's tails to cook them and eat them.

Or we have this Miltank farm, that's actually decent

'cause they're getting milk or whatever.

But Pokemon live in this world outside of being wild
or being in battles.

And I think these ideas, these different mechanics,
show that Pokemon do interact in the world.

And that's a theme throughout the games, right?

Pokemon and humans interacting
and living and thriving together.

Machokes, Machamps or whatever,
they're like part of the mail delivery,
package delivery service.

it's, Latias and Latios fly you around town, I guess,
it's cool to see the world be fleshed out in that way.

- I wanna go back, let's talk about,

we talked about the story a little bit before,

mainly in regards to like Team Magma and stuff like,

Team Magma and Team Aqua and some of the larger

through lines with the legendaries and stuff like that,

I feel like we touched on that stuff adequately,

but I did wanna talk about kind of your character's

like introduction to this world because they do something different which is try to make

your dad's a gym leader which is a totally different idea and concept that they've never

really played around with before which is a cool one and not only that but they introduced

the I mean Max mentioned this before we started recording but crystal was the first one where

you could choose between a male or female character but this one did the thing where

whatever character you didn't choose was then your rival by default which was kind of a

cool little wrinkle there so you could play through the games multiple times and have different

different rivals depending on whatever character you didn't select. So in that regard I guess just

what did you guys think about some of those ideas? Max I'll toss this to you first because I know you

talked about how you didn't think everything with facing Norman or your dad in the game was...

You just didn't think it was as good of a moment as it could have been, I guess?

Yeah, I think they squandered that kind of reveal or that kind of really hype battle. I think there was real potential there for it to be this, "Holy smokes, I'm fighting my dad now and there's a real

chance." He's a midway gym leader, so you kind of are getting halfway through the game instead of

him being the eighth gym leader or even maybe the champion. I think that's smart, I will say.

And where they put it in the game is like, it's before you go anywhere to the west

of the west side of the map, which I kind of like. You do a sort of loop and you come back

east side of the map. Or the east side of your gun. Yeah, before you go west is what I'm saying.

Yeah, I just... I'm sorry, east. I keep saying yes. You get fine.

It's just, I don't know, it didn't feel like it built up the right way. You like, go, you stop by

and he's like, ah, you gotta go get stronger and come back. And then my thought was that would be

the eighth, you know, that would be the end, right? Is I finally am strong enough and it's halfway

through. So that felt, it just didn't feel as exciting as it could have been. And then when you

win, he's kind of like, good job. I don't know. There just wasn't this dynamic there. And then you

go off and you're, then it's over. It never loops really back into that. Your dad is still a gym

leader to his wife Sugar Inn because they can't go see the rocket launcher or whatever. So I don't

I don't know, it just felt kind of like,

we need something different, so we'll do it like that.

It is more, you know, in Johto it's cool

where you learn that, is it Silver

is the rival in that game?

Is that what they keep? - Silver, yeah.

- Like Silver is the son of Giovanni,

like that's something you pick up on later in the game.

And so that was a cool thing to learn.

But this just felt like, eh, your dad's a gym leader,

whatever.

I think the thing in Sword and Shield,

and Logan I know that you were like,

well it's in your face the whole game,

it wasn't as great, but I think the idea of your neighbor

as the rival, his older brother,

is the undefeated champion.

And so the whole game it's like,

he's undefeated, he's really great, helps the community,

he loves battling, that's who you're gonna fight.

And I think that that pays off better

because you do get there and it's a struggle

and you have to fight all of these gym leaders again

right before him and there are cool battles in that game

and then you fight him after more final silly stuff.

And that battle was fun.

And the music really amps that up and it's a big stadium.

And so the environment in that is different,

but I just feel like this dad battle felt kind of flat

where it was just another gym leader

and it just so happened to be your dad.

- That's fair.

I mean, like for sure, like at the time,

I think that it was cool.

'Cause like not only was it your dad,

like this first game where you actually have a dad.

- They've always did the Disney thing where it's like.

but I do think that there is a...

I do think that, like, it's funny 'cause,

it's funny 'cause his name's Norman

and he's like, he is normal Pokemon.

That's also really, really funny.

- I didn't pick up on that.

- You know, people are talking about Larry, the normal guy,

but I'm just like, yo, Norman, the normal guy.

(laughs)

- And he has two slackings, like he doesn't even have three.

It's also interesting because like Norman is in the anime is May's dad.

Yes.

And like, so yeah, yeah.

And May and Max's dad.

So it's kind of weird how like they try and like implement that

into the, uh, the anime as well.

Um, but, uh, it's, uh, you know, it's cool.

Like, and it doesn't really happen again.

So it's not like, uh, they try and do it again in a way, in a way to be like,

Oh, we're trying this again, but better.

So like, it may not be great in 2023 or as effective, but at least it's something that like, they kind of like stuck their guns with and they haven't like tried to reiterate it, uh, you know, in a future region or anything like that.

I do think that, you know, what you're saying, cause you're talking about like Hoppin Leon in sword and shield.

Like that, that, that is cool.

Like I do, but I also think that there is some sort of, like, there is a level of magic to not knowing who the champion is until you get to them.

Yes.

Um, and so like, I mean, cause that's what the first game was, right?

Like the first game, you know, you find out that the champion is your rival.

Your rival just became the champion.

Now you have to take down your rival and that's like the final fight.

Right.

And, um, and I do like, and this is something, you know, Jodo, like, you know, that, I mean, you don't know that Lance is the champion, I don't think, but like, you can add two plus two together.

He's name dropped a lot, especially the later you get into the game.

Yeah.

But also like, I get that they want to try and change things up.

Like, and it's like, no, we're going to like, give you, show you who this person is and why they're significant while like with Leon in like sword and shield, people are like, Oh, he's the champion.

And then you see him and like, that's it. But like, I think in Johto, they actually like show why Lance is the champion, like without seeing him, like actually like battle or stuff like that. Like you, you feel his significance. Um, then just

like him appearing and be like, Oh, I'm the champion. And then like, that's kind of it.

Well this sets me up well, I wanted to ask you about Steven.

I wanted to lead this into us talking about Steven.

So how do you guys think Steven is handled in this game?

Because he's one of my favorite champions in the entire Pokemon series.

I think Steven's awesome.

And they don't, they're not too heavy handed with it, which is what I like.

It is very subtle that you just keep kind of running into this guy.

It's a little more heavy handed in the remakes, Max.

But in the OG games, he just, you kind of bump into him a couple times and you don't really know much about him.

And then you get to the end of the game and he's like, oh yeah, I'm the champ by the way.

So, and I think that was such a cool reveal when I, when I played those games and his team's really awesome too.

I like his team.

Yeah.

I think, yeah.

And that's one of the, uh, we'll get into that this, uh, in a sec, but like, I think that Steven is the best handled champion in the series.

Like I love Lance.

Lance is, will be my number one boy.

Uh, cause I think he's just like, for me, he's like iconic, but I think like when

it comes to the story and implementing them into the, into the narrative, I think that they, that, uh, Steve has done, uh, the best. Um, that being said, in Emerald, he is not the champion. Yes. Which is the worst part, which is, which is, which is, is a mistake. It's a mistake. It's one of the great crimes of Emerald. Did you know that before you played it cam? I, I feel like I did, but I, uh, but I, I, I kind of forgot. Like I kind of forgot until I got to that point. I was just like, Oh yeah, right. I don't think he's the champion in this game. And it's Wallace who is the eighth gym leader in the other, like in Ruby, Sapphire, Alpha Sapphire, Omega Ruby too, right? Yes. He's the champion. Um, you can still fight Steve post game in Emerald, but it's not the same. It's not, you know, it's not the same. That's surprising. And Wallace still has a full water team, right? And he still has a full water team. Yep. Yep. Um, which I mean, like, I'm not opposed to the, the, like the champion having, uh, like a same type team. So like that doesn't really bother me with Lance, especially gen two with Lance. It was a little different cause dragons were OP at the time nowadays. Not as much. So having a full dragon team back in gen two was

like, Oh my God, I'm going to get my ass handed to me. Um, but yeah, having a champion, like a full

basic type like water it's like that's a little okay like I think I can handle

this actually yeah I mean there was some variety to make it a little bit more challenging like they had like you know he's like a tenacruel so it's like water poison you know especially because me like I pay like we didn't talk about it yet we didn't talk about the starters we picked but I I had to work I picked

Torchek we're all three in the box okay okay because blaze akin in my opinion is the best final fire evolution in Pokemon.

Like of the starters.

- It's one of them.

- I like Blaziken more than Charizard, I do.

And like, you know, I love Cyndaquil.

Like I'll pick Cyndaquil over Torchic,
but I'm gonna pick Blaziken over Typhlosion.

Like that's just like the reality.

One of the things that sucks about Hoenn,
not a lot of electric types.

So that sucked.

Like a menectric and that's about it.

And in a, in a, in a magneton.

That's about it.

That's your options.

Good luck.

So yeah.

So I had, I had an Alakazam with shockwave and uh, that's it.

And I was in like, in my Rayquaza, which is level 70.

So like literally what I did was I just overpowered them with Rayquaza
because I had a Rayquaza, um, that was like a level 70 something.

But going back to Steven.

I do like how they implemented Steven.

Um, I like how, and I like how they implemented, uh, him in, um, in Emerald
as well, like he's still like relevant.

He's still prevalent in the story.

It's just like when you get towards the real, like, uh, the
Sootopolis part of the story.

It's when Wallace comes in and it's just like, what you doing?

What are you doing here?

Like, you know what I mean?

Yeah.

Um, and also what's cool about, uh, Steven, I, you might, you guys might've talked it when you did the Johto episode, but you meet Steven in the postgame of HeartGold and SoulSilver. There's somewhere where you run into him and he gives you one of the... he like makes you choose a color and it basically gives you one of the Hoenn starters. Which was really cool, you know? I forgot that that's a thing, but yes, now that you mentioned I remember doing that back in the day.

Yeah, it's just like Steven doesn't... like the thing thing that's cool about Steven is that he doesn't give the energy of a champion. He just like some, he's like kind of, he feels like a normal guy that just happens to be a champion.

Just kind of a chill dude who's like, yeah, I'm really good at trading Pokemon as well.

Yeah, exactly.

Like I like him more than like, I feel like the two champions that get pit against one another a lot in terms of like whoever the fandom is behind is Steven and Cynthia. And there's like a cult of Cynthia where everybody's like, she's the greatest trainer ever. She's so like, and I'm like, no, Stephen's just like a chill dude who's also champion. Like that's why, that's why I like him. He's just, he's just pretty relaxed.

I mean, people, people like Cynthia just cause she's notoriously the hardest champions. Like, cause she has that Garchomp that's just, you know, very powerful. Like, and you know, and it's true. Like I, I feel like Cynthia is the last champion and I haven't played Scarlet and Violet. So, you know, I might be wrong about this, but I feel like, like Cynthia is the last champion that actually like posed a real challenge when, when you, when you play, um, when you get to the champion, like, uh, I remember an X and Y like X and Y is easily the easiest Pokemon game. Like it is, it is, I know like Pokemon is meant for children. Like it's directed towards children, but like it, it was dumb how easy X and Y was. I beat the entirety of the Elite Four and Diantha with Elaporus.

That's it. I used one Pokemon.

And so like, you know.

- That's been my, that's my biggest problem,

X and Y forward is that the series gets too easy.

And I feel like with, Max, I don't know,

did this game push back against you with the remakes?

Because I feel like it was a little bit better balanced

compared to X and Y, which Cam, you're right,

are like baby level simple.

like you could just spam the same moves and you're gonna win and yeah like I

really do not care for those games because of that reason but I felt like

these games were a little bit more difficult but I still never once I never

had to grind in this game I guess I should say. The bet is fine I didn't I

didn't really feel like I had to grind or anything like that I kind of just kept

the pace up going however, however I needed to. But I gotta, I gotta, I gotta say I don't

really care for Steven. He's, I think he's too plain. He's just like, hi, I like rocks.

I'm trying to figure out what's going on in the world. And then he just shows up at the

end like, haha, I'm also the champion. But he's not really, I don't know. He just feels,

he doesn't seem like a guy who's defending this title. Like, I don't know. And then he's

just around to help and in Delta I actually really didn't like his motivations or anything.

He's kind of in a way one of the... antagonist feels too strong but he is a part of the problem

in Delta. No he's not. There's like a crazy cultist dragon woman who's like running around

stealing things like I don't... and she doesn't explain her motivation. No I think he is because

his solution is just to... I side with the crazy dragon lady I guess. He's just like

"We're gonna send it to another dimension

"and it'll be their problem."

And he doesn't-- - Well, here's the thing.

She doesn't really explain her problem

with everything until much later.

- Steven is very staunch about everything

and this is the only way to do it.

He actually feels very close-minded in the Delta episode

as opposed to a world traveler type thing.

And I know he gives, he helps give you a Latias

or Latios in the remakes, which is not in the base game.

- Well, can we just touch on that real quick?

I know this is one thing that Cam did not experience in his playthrough.

That's like one of the most jarring, stupidest things of the remakes is that they just hang you a Latios or Latias on a silver platter

and say, "Here you go! And you can mega evolve and have fun!" It's like, and you get that

four or five gems in. I think you get it right before you go to Fortree City. It like stops you right there

and you have to engage in that. And it's so...

Yeah, that's so, it's so, it's so bizarre that that is in the game.

and I don't like that and that's a whole sequence that involves Steven and yeah I don't like that.

Yeah I just didn't I just didn't really necessarily care for Steven or his motivations or really

fighting him and he wasn't all that difficult either like he seemed pretty easy what he's all

what is he's rocks in the remake than he is in the original in the original pretty brutal in

original. In the original? Specifically that crate that the cradley. F*ck that cradley.

Because it's a grass rock type so it's like it it doesn't have many weaknesses it doesn't have

many weaknesses. Well that maybe that's more a fruit of it the remakes just being aimed toward

that xy easier audience type thing but yeah I just didn't find him all that engaging when I

I ran into him or anything. So I'm very cool on Steven, but don't you worry when we play

Diamond and Pearl, your boy will be championing Cynthia for sure.

Let me ask one more character question and then we're gonna, I want to pivot to a couple

other things. And the final character I think we need to touch on to some degree is Wally.

Wally is the strangest character in this game for me.

Absolutely bizarre. Like, like it's like you're like a make a wish rivaling this kid. Like

You're not wrong!

It's so strange how it's approached like oh please be this boy's rival teach him how to catch a Pokemon and then whoop his ass repeatedly throughout the whole game.

And I don't remember it being this bizarre like it really is just like...

It really took this playthrough for it to like hit me like this is odd like...

Yeah!

He's like presented as a kid who's got like a terminal illness or something like they're like because his uncle or his family or whatever like mentions like oh he's been

sick and so he's got to come live with us or he's not well and you got oh you're

treating our boy so good it's like what is the what's the endgame with this

story arc with Wally and that's the thing there is no endgame with this

story it just kind of you beat him the final time and then he just goes away

and that's about it. Yeah and like May isn't really a rival either it's like

Like that's like one thing there's really no, like, especially like, I'm not, I don't

want to make this a Johto episode, but to this day, like I think far and away silver

is the best rival in Pokemon.

Like I don't think that there is much debate about it.

I think that silver's story arc and like how they actually implement gameplay in the storytelling with the Crobat is just like, bro, it's insane.

It's so good.

And I think I really think that blue and silver are like the only two good Pokemon rivals

in my opinion. Like I think after that, it's just like, it's just like, all right, I don't

want to spoil everything for, in fact, don't say anything about this. Yeah. Because max

does not know. And I want this to stay hidden from him. But everything with N in black and

white, I think is pretty cool too. Oh, phenomenal. No, that's pretty cool. But like, I wouldn't say he's a rival. Yeah, it's a little different.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, N is the... Okay. N is the only good part of black and white, and he is just even better in the actually phenomenal black and white 2. Again, not trying to go off a huge tangent, but black and white is terrible. If anyone thinks that game is good...

I like those games. It's been a long time since I've played them, but I did like those games a lot back in the day. I should say I like those pokey decks a lot. Like that is like one of my favorite pokey decks. So let me, yeah, let me clarify. The, like the tech, like the technical stuff of fifth gen is phenomenal. And like, even in black and white one, um, but the thing is, is like, and I, like, I respect Game Freak for doing. There was a big, uh, in case you didn't know, max, there was a big, uh, criticism ongoing throughout for like the past two generations that there wasn't enough variety in the Pokemon and the wild Pokemon you could catch.

So in black and white specifically, they decided, all right, every Pokemon in this game is going to be Unova.

It's only going to be Unova Pokemon.

But the thing is Unova has the worst Pokemon designs in the history of Pokemon.

So it's just all the--

He's aware of them. Ice cream, the gears, stuff like that.

It's just all the worst Pokemon.

Ice cream!

And then in black and white too--

Is this the Chandelier one too?

Yes.

Oh no, no, Chandelier's fourth is Sinnoh. Don't speak bad about Chandelier.

Yes, no that is Sinnoh, I'm sorry.

I was thinking of regular object-shaped Pokemon.

There are still some good ones because there are so many that there's bound to be some-- bound to be some like, and that's what I like is like the overall, there is so many new ones.

You're right.

But like legitimately, there's maybe five, you know, of a Pokemon that I like, like maybe five and it's just like, you know?

Um, and so, but then black and white too, you know, the thing that makes it so good.

Uh, is, is the story like the story is so good and black and white too.

Um, that makes it one of the best Pokemon games.

And they do fix the whole, like, it's not just, you know, the Pokemon.

It really is phenomenal.

Like if I wasn't already like doing a podcast with you all on this, that is like the game I would, I want to return to the most is black and white too.

Cause again, I didn't like the first one and my buddy who's huge in a Pokemon.

Like he's the one who like lent me his copy of Emerald to play.

He was like, He's like, I know you didn't like black and white too, but you gotta, you gotta give this a shot.

And I did.

And it is, in my opinion, arguably top three best Pokemon games.

And yeah.

We're ending this season with them and I'm really looking forward to them.

Like it's like, of the ones coming up, those are the ones I'm looking forward to going back to and revisiting.

Cause I just think there's a lot of good stuff there.

Cause I do really want to actually try and start making a living Dex.

Cause I thought about it.

It's like, it honestly wouldn't be that hard outside of like a few legendaries.

Because you know, you can get through like most Pokemon games in 20 hours if you know what you're doing.

Like it took me just under 19 hours to beat Emerald.

And like, so it wouldn't be that hard, especially in 2023.

And like, I would be very look forward to replaying through Black and White 2 specifically.

But yeah, anyway, Hoenn.

-WALL-E. -WALL-E.

- Back to Wally, I was gonna say,
chime in on Wally real quick, Max.

- Bulpapedia says, "Wally is a young sickly boy
"who lives in Petalburg City.

"Despite his illness, his dream is to train Pokemon."

Few sentences later.

- Is he actually sick?

- What is his, what is his illness?

- "His illness is never explained,
"but his symptoms appear to clear up in clean air,
"suggesting that it is either acute bronchitis or asthma."

So this is a very much like you are helping a sick kid.

- Bronchitis is temporary.

Asthma and asthma is not like a it's I mean, yeah, it's a per I have asthma. It's it's a permanent illness, but like sure

Making him sound like he's a make-a-wish kid

That is what bulb Apedia says I Wally I'm in my notes

I wrote is just a big crybaby like you just have a crybaby rival, which is kind of a downer

Cuz the rival I want to say he's a crybaby. It's just like I remember him crying

Who are you throughout this entire game?

- That's the thing, and like his introduction is bizarre

'cause doesn't your, isn't your dad the one who's like,

"Hey, I want you to meet this person,

"and this is my friend, and this is his nephew Wally,

"and will you please hang out with Wally?"

Like he really is presented in the game as like,

"Take pity on this young child, and also battle him

"and whoop his butt like multiple times throughout the game."

It's like, this is so odd.

- Yeah, I wasn't a fan of Wally,

I feel like having the rivals split this way actually kind of robbed it of that rivalry

I do think some of the sub leaders in team aqua

Were a better rivals like the one that the beefy dude and stuff like who was the team in emerald?

It's it's magma and aqua at the same time. Oh

See, that's pretty cool

Yeah

so basically in the store the story of emerald is like they each take one of the orbs and you have to go to both

locations where Groudon and Kyogre are, and then the orbs react to them and then they go to Sootopolis and then you go get

Requaza.

Got it.

Wouldn't that just create too much land and too much water at the same time which would just result in like

neutrality and then they'd be fine?

I think what happens is I think it's like raining or something like kind of like permanently

Oh, yeah, isn't it like but it's like permanently sunshiny or something like that too or something

It's yeah, it's what I and I literally played this like two days ago

like I like zoom through this game this week because I know I'm the one holding things up and like I'm pretty sure

It was raining. I feel like it was raining consistently until you

Resolve that yeah, um, so or something rather like that

Which is one of the I actually think that this is

The the generation where they introduced the weather moves, right? There's the sunny day

Yeah, cast form is in the game as to kind of get off of that

Yeah, like those were those are cool

Mechanics specifically and like

potentially like competitive that

It's cool. Like if it rains right that if you use thunder it will hit like there's without a doubt

And because it normally is like 75 70 accuracy max is learning things about Pokemon today

Yeah, and then if you have this changes strategy for the future

Yeah, and if you if it's sunny out you use sunny day, you can use solar beam immediately. You don't have to charge up

Yep, very good. So it's like those kind of effects that are really cool

Like you don't like hail is just like oh if you're if you're a non ice type you

Are dealt some damage thing same thing with sandstorm like sure if you're not a ground type you take some damage

But like those two moves specifically are were really really cool

But I'm trying to think about what else we haven't talked about that well

There's one thing I wanted to broadly mention that I feel like we haven't touched on and then

We can maybe talk a little bit more about I want to talk about music and postgame stuff

Which we've already done a little bit in regards to the remakes

one thing I just really wanted to touch on really quickly because I know we we

Speaking about it in regard to black and white made me realize we really haven't done it so far with this gen other than just

like the diversity amongst the Pokédex, but I think one of the strengths of Gen 3 here

and the Hoenn Pokémon is that there are some of the best designs of any of the Pokémon

games in this gen. Like I really like, some of my favorite Pokémon of all time are in this gen. Like I think of Salamence as one of my favorites, which I know is just like a dragon type, but like I like the three stage evolution of that and how you end up getting from Bagon. Like I even think like with Norman I think that his slight kings are... Slocking? Yeah I think those are an awesome type of Pokemon and not everything here is fantastic and some stuff is as simple as Wailord is a giant whale which is just like okay but Sharpedo I think is an awesome water type. There's a lot of like really good designs in this game that I thoroughly enjoyed and the remakes when I talk about the designs too I think about the old sprites in these games, the ones that Cam you would have definitely seen and the ones we were robbed of in the remakes because everything since Pokemon's gone 3D has been saturated and dull unfortunately. But just what were your guys' opinions on the Pokemon, at least when it comes to like look and I don't know what cool factor or whatever you want to call it, just the general designs. I mean the Pokemon designs like for me are a big part of what makes me like love a region most of the time. And again like I do think that Hoenn is like the last generation where like like moving forward I kind of like have felt... not that like every Pokemon game since then has been bad because that's just not true, but like when it comes to the region and the Pokemon designs they just have kind of gone down over over time to a certain extent. Unova I think is like still the bottom but like they're still like you know gen 6 to gen 8 like also haven't been great. And I think that like first off I think that Trico, Torczyk, and Mudkip are all great starters like they're all solid some better than others but like I don't think any of these starters are bad. I don't really like Mudkip's evolution line, but I think that just those

three as starters are really cool.

Agreed.

Yeah.

Uh, one of them, you know, we eventually, I don't know if you all have your own like top six.

Like if you were to have a Pokemon team of all the Pokemon exist, this, this will be your team, but, but, uh, Flygon is on my top six.

I love Flygon.

Flygon is so cool.

Like, uh, Flygon is like my flying Pokemon rep.

Like he'd be the Pokemon I'd be flying around whatever region on.

Like I, it's so weird.

Cause it's just such a weird evolution line.

It's like Trepinch, which is like some sand crab thing.

That's like one of my favorite things about Flygon though.

It's like that evolution line is so crazy.

Yeah.

And then Vibrava.

And then you get to fucking Flygon.

It's like, what a weird line, but like, I love, I really do love Flygon a lot.

That's like, that is like the number one for me.

like when it comes to Hoenn, I think the outside of Groudon, I like all of the designs for the legendaries. I think Groudon is definitely the weakest link there.

I really like Jirachi. I really like Deoxys.

Yeah.

I think the Regis are really cool and just how...

Oh yeah.

Yeah.

The Regis are cool, especially how they're implemented into the game.

Right.

It's kind of like, it's kind of like their version of the, uh, Hoenn's version of the unknown, right?

You're trying to like figure out the puzzles.

that combined with the legendary dogs or their version of Moltres, Zapdos, and Articuno, the legendary birds. Like they do something different with like that trifacta. Like they bring back a trifacta of Pokemon, but it's much different. And then they expand on it later with Regigigas or Regigigas, however it's pronounced. I like this deck. This is one of those ones that

like as a kid, I always saw these Pokemon, you know, just in TV and the cards and like my friends

would have them. So I definitely was aware of this gen and these designs. I did look up the

Game Boy Advance decks here on Sareby and I'm looking at these sprites and they're so beautiful.

It's, oh my gosh, 2D sprites are the best. So I do, I am kind of bummed. Again, another reason I probably maybe should have played the Game Boy Advance version. It would have looked so good

- It's good on the pocket too.

- It would be so crisp.

- It would be incredible.

- It'd be a crispy little game.

Yeah.

It is, I liked like the, I remember as a kid

seeing the, I guess the Lunatone and the Soul Rock,

thinking that was cool, just like the Sun Moon concept.

Not the games, but the Pokemon themselves.

There's Absol, I'm a big Absol fan.

So I, you know, I've seen that design here.

- The Absol's cool.

Sanguis.

- Yeah, it's cool.

And then Jirachi is one of my favorite legendaries
and I have a big, I was always thought Deoxys
and its multiple forms was pretty cool as a kid too.

So this deck's brought a lot of stuff in
that I'm fairly fond of even if I wasn't there
to play it all the time.

I will say the electric balance,
there are no electric like we talked about
and Swampert is kind of lame even though Mudkip is great.

Blaziken's a goat.

So not the animal goat, but it's a good decks.

It's a good designed decks.

Even if it's a little imbalanced,
it's not as rough as some of the stuff
we've played so far this season.

- Which is, I think part of the reason

I find gen four a letdown.

- Don't you dare be so much my sweet, sweet child.

- There are some standouts in Diamond and Pearl that I like,
but I think just comparatively,
it's like such a downgrade from Hoenn.

So no, it's, you know, it's such a fall off.

I agree.

And I think they, I, again, I like, I like black and white, but that's a whole other conversation too, I acknowledge that there are some crappy designs in that generation we've naturally touched on a lot of other things here.

Um, the big one that we need to dedicate some real time to discuss here for a moment is the music.

I, we've talked about like the meme nature of this soundtrack and how I think that his, like, if anybody is talking about Ruby or Sapphire in 2023, it is more often than not making a joke about the music and the trumpets. And heck that's even like the little call we're having in here was like a joke about, which I didn't know. I didn't know the reference to, I was just like, I don't know what this means, but okay, sure. That was, I think when I told Max about these games, I was like, Oh, Max, we're finally doing it. time for the trumpet games. And so that was his initial introduction to these games in that regard.

But the soundtracks are phenomenal. It's one of my favorite Pokemon soundtracks. Like up there with

the original Red and Blue. I don't know. Depending on the day, I really could say that this is my favorite. It just, I think a lot of the Pokémon soundtracks stand toe-to-toe with one another.

Yeah, I think, I personally like, you know, broken record, but I think Johto's soundtrack is like, not just the best Pokémon soundtrack, I think is one of the best soundtracks in video games.

And I think that, but I think that the soundtrack in Hoenn is great. Like, I think that, you know, similarly to most of my other feelings about Pokémon after Hoenn is that like, I think that it's the last memorable Pokemon soundtrack. Like I don't, I don't really think about, uh, like I could not like hum a part of a tune of any other soundtrack after Hoenn. Like it's just the, these first three generations, um, they're so like iconic, iconic with their music. I kind of like get the whole like trumpet, uh, meme about it, but like I never thought that was a bad thing. Like, I don't know, you know, and I, again, like I think that the big part of Hoenn, which makes it stand out, um, at the end of the day, and I think you could say this across like really any, uh, facet of the game is that it wanted to differentiate itself from the first two

Pokemon games. Like there, it was a new system. It was a new, you know, they, they wanted to like,

be completely new from like across the board and just like not associate itself with Kanto or Johto.

So everything that they did I think was very... they wanted to be very particular on the decisions that they made with how this game was designed from the ground up and I don't think the music...

I think the music, you know, is a part of that, and for the better.

Like, I think that's one of the... many of the reasons why I love Hoenn is because of how different it is

from Kanto and Johto. Like, I like Hoenn more than Kanto simply because, like, I get Kanto in Johto. I don't, you know, and I do think that, like, Johto, you know, after... when you play the Johto games

you know outside of like some story stuff you really don't need to play the original like Kanto games like I mean you can play like FireRed LeafGreen which are great remakes and like you could arguably play Let's Go Pikachu and Eevee if that's how you want to play those games like that generation that's available to you but I think that Hoenn like you know it has everything it did everything that it needed to do to stand out and I think succeeded and like I

I think a lot of people a little bit younger than me and Logan's and what max I don't know how old you are top my head

but like

Logan are basically the same age. Yeah. Okay like that. They're a little bit younger than us

That's like

Because like for me like a lot of people my age

Will agree that like Hoenn is like the best generation of Pokemon and you can say part of that is from us growing up with

That generation you could say part of that is nostalgia

I do not think that's the case because I think that even HeartGold SoulSilver when that re-released proved that like no Johto is just that

special and that well made

But like I do think people that are like five six years behind me in age which so like early 20s or mid 20s like thinks that Hoenn is like the peak of Pokemon and I like I

Can why disagree like I can see why like there's so much that can be presented to argue that idea

- Yeah.

- Cam, when you actually, you mentioned they were bringing it to a new system with the Game Boy Advance and it was a new generation, not to hit it on the nose too hard, but it was this new power, new technology.

They had tapped out the Game Boy and Game Boy Color and now had more power, a better sound chip.

And I actually, I was listening to some of the music

And again, I kind of really wish I played the Game Boy Advance version, 'cause it sounds so good.

- Yeah. - Yeah, you need to listen to the champion theme at the end and then compare it to the version in alpha.

It's like, dude, it's like nine day.

Like the melody is the same, but it's so different.

(chiming)

(upbeat music)

[Music]

(upbeat music)

- I think the battles, each battle has a really high energy to it and I do think part of that is the trumpets, But each battle feels exciting.

You're in there, it's a great theme.

What's the guy's name?

Junichi Masuda.

- Junichi Matsuda.

- Yes, cranking out another banger battle theme.

I wrote down, like, Wally's final battle
has some electric guitar that comes through.

I liked that, I thought that was pretty cool.

And the Elite Four theme has a really positive upbeat,
kind of like, you're doing it, you're going forward.

So it's a solid soundtrack and I'm actually,

I wanna go back and listen to the Game Boy Advance one
in more detail here, higher volume and stuff
because this is good.

These are themes that stand out.

I think I'll obviously have a huge bias
towards Kanto and Sinnoh because those were the games
that I did play as a kid and so that's just
what I grew up listening to.

But this is strong, this is solid and again,

I think probably the Game Boy Advance version
is better all around, so maybe.

- I was just gonna say it's crazy
that even with a more limited hardware,
that soundtrack is better.

Like they have more at their fingertips
with the 3DS version and they do a worse job with it.

- Yeah, I also wanna shout out like,
and I still, I feel like stronger about it again
with Jodo, but like shout out
to the surfing team in this game.

- Oh yeah. - It's so good.

It really does feel like you're just kind of exploring
the open seas in a way like, like I think that the surfing theme for me and Jodo is
more iconic, but I think that like the way that like, like when I listened to the surfing
theme in Hoenn, it makes it like sends the idea that the, you know, that, that the water
is more open and there's more open travel on the waters on the sea than like, than like
Joda, where you're just kind of like, um, surfing through smaller, uh, aspects,
portions of water. Um, I think that like the surfing theme and Hoenn like fits
the theme of what, uh, you're doing and how, and, um, very, very well.

Um, and I don't, and like the, the, the biking theme is all rights.

Um, it's not my favorite.

Yeah.

Compared to like, compared to Joda, like Jodo's biking theme, like I can, it lives
in my head, like forever for the past 20 years, it's a, it's a great soundtrack.

And I think that, uh, the battle theme is, is great.

And it's still like, I think what was again for that time, what was so good
about it is that it fit it.

It made itself different enough from like the battle themes of Canto and Jodo while
still feeling like the original Pokemon battle theme.

Yeah.

It's strong stuff.

Yeah.

Yeah, and I think that there's like really, again, just kind of can't say enough that

like this kind of era of Pokemon like we're unfortunately like never going to get it again

And like Pokemon has evolved into something more that like, I think that.

Again, this is a, this is a franchise for children.

Um, that's aimed at children.

And so they have to keep that interesting for them at the end of the day.

Um, and it's nice that we'll, we'll always have these games.

Um, and hopefully like, we'll be able to get another iteration of these, uh, of

that region, whether it be like, you know, while it's not what everyone would want, like,

whether it be like, let's go or like, like the legend series, which like, which would

be so cool. They, if they like did like something like legends, that was, you know, it wouldn't

have, it wouldn't be able to be like straight straight up Hoenn, but something in that like

vein. Oh yeah. And I think in a more water focused and focus. Yeah. Yeah. What if it

- I think it was that primordial story

like back when Kyogre and Groudon

were first battling it out and Rayquaza,

so if you could lean into that whole lore

that they were making in the Delta episode and stuff.

- Yeah, and I mean, obviously I would want something

like Jodo first, but like, 'cause you know,

I was so jealous of like people who stan Sinnoh

when Arceus was announced, but I would love to see

like a better, like, you know, a better iteration

of that because like legends was, was good.

And like, I know that it gets really interesting towards the end.

Um, but there were just like some things that just, I didn't really vibe with in

that game that, uh, could make a really cool story for, yeah, like, like you said,

like that would be a perfect example of what that stor- uh, that story could be

as like the primordial, uh, Kyogre and Groudon and like, or like in Johto, there could be like stuff with Lugia and Ho-Oh in the past or even Celebi.

We may not get a one-for-one of what we've gotten, you know, of what the Hoenn games are now, but I think we can get something similar in the future or something that is inspired by it.

I think, I mean, you're talking a lot about the

legacy of this game and stuff which is what we're naturally going to lead to

here next and kind of like going off of that like I think to me what this game's legacy is is the

evolution of the Pokemon series like you talked about Cam about how we'll never get anything like

this ever again and a lot of that is just because this was very much an experiment within the series

again they threw a lot at the wall to see what would stick and what they could carry forward

Like obviously Pokemon was successful enough at this point that they knew they had a

Multi million dollar franchise on their hands. It was not in danger of like going away overnight or anything like that

But coming off of the Gameboy Color games, it was like, okay

well

what we had where do we take it from here and there was a lot of experimentation in this game and there was a lot of

ideas of how can we design a different type of map and how can we

Introduce new gameplay elements and what do all these things look like in practice? And so a lot of this games

Legacy to me is just that experimentation and then trying to push the series into its next phase and its next chapter and

Like you were saying like we're never gonna get anything like that for us, but it's good. We still have these games

Like I feel I'm very happy that I grew up playing

This game I guess like I'm glad this game launched when I was

Nine years old eight years old. Yeah, like that's just such a sweet spot for this to come out and to really like again

I know this isn't as much your experience max

But like we said like exploring every inch of this world learning that there's three mythical

Rock steel and ice Pokemon in this game running to a grab a strategy guide while I'm at Target with my mom learning that I need

to put

Relicanth first in my party and a whale Lord last and then go interact at this wall and then it sets off this chain of

events in the game. There's just so many secrets and things tucked away in this game that were

really cool to uncover as a kid. Just everything else we talked about too, like going in different

directions with the champion and the story and how rivals work. Just a lot of things

in this game were very different than before and that's what stands out to me going back

to it all these years later.

I think as someone coming to this generation

in their late 20s, I mean I'm almost 30 for Pete's sake,

it's interesting, it feels like this was

Pokemon trying to step up in maturity and scope.

The story's a bit darker to a degree,

not a dark, dark way, but like the evil team

is trying to basically destroy the world to a degree.

And I know that actually gets worse in Diamond and Pearl

with like manipulating time and space and stuff.

So there's this like evil trend of the teams,

more than just Team Rocket doing mean things to Pokemon.

But it was Pokemon growing up,

taking advantage of new hardware at the time,

both honestly on the Game Boy Advance

and the 3DS here with the remake.

There was the Fire Red Leaf Green remake on Game Boy
and then HeartGold SoulSilver on the DS
and this was the next kind of big remake
using the power of the 3DS leaning into this 3D world.
And while I don't think that panned out necessarily
from a technical or even visual design,
it is interesting that both iterations of this generation
were tapping into new hardware
and trying to push the franchise forward in some way.
And you know, I like it.
It's a good, it's a solid generation
and you see actually a lot of the framework
that we have come to know today being fleshed out here.
And that's interesting to me because you think of Pokemon
as a big legacy thing with red and blue
and the trading card game and things
just building up from there.
But really, that was almost thrown away to a degree,
not the core mechanics,
but we are building something new here.
And I see that even if I'm only playing the remake
and not what definitely probably is the superior version
of the game, which would be the Game Boy Advance ones.
So it's cool, it's cool to see it
and finally experience this generation.
Even though I didn't, I betrayed myself
and did not choose a medkit.

- Which is, I just have to throw this out there

'cause I didn't.

That's one of the great sins I think you've made so far

in this season, which is fine,

But come on, you've been named Mudkip

on all these platforms for so long

and then you play these games finally

and you don't choose a Mudkip, like what?

Yeah, you had to see, yeah, you just had to do it.

And then your water Pokemon in the game

was a Pelipper of all things.

- I told you I wasn't happy with Pelipper.

I told you, I wasn't happy with it.

- You got a ridicule in camp.

He screwed it up.

- I had Walrion, but like-- - I needed Fly

and I needed Surf and I wanted to minimize

how much crap I had in my team.

- You had a Flygon.

You had a flag on.

That was a very late acquisition.

Very late.

Glad you got a flag on.

Do we, like we should actually talk about that.

Like what teams entered the hall of fame for us?

Like where were our full teams?

We all had Blaziken.

I had a flag on and a Pelipper as is being called out.

I also had a flag on.

What were my other ones?

I had the ice frost lass.

I had a frost lass. Yes.

I had a...

Glaidale, the psychic fairy, oh Gardevoir.

- What else did you have?

- I'm trying to think, I don't honestly remember.

- I think I passively mentioned a lot of mine
over the course of the episode.

Blaziken, Salamence, Roserade, I had a Dusknor
this time around, which was fun.

I had a Glalie, and then, did I say Roserade?

- I had a Roserade.

- You said Roserade.

Did you all keep your legendary?

- I didn't use one.

- We've been battling each other
and we haven't been using legendaries in our battles.

So that's why we weren't rolling with it.

- Yeah, we get to the end of every game
and then we duke it out.

But the rule is no legendaries in the battle.

So we tend to not train the legendaries up.

- Yeah, so no Kyogre or Rayquaza or--

- I did catch all of it.

- We caught them, yes, but we didn't use them.

- Yeah, okay.

- Yeah, so I had Blaziken, I had Flygon,

I had Alakazam, which is also one of my favorite Pokemon.

I had Aggron, I had Walrein, and then I had Rayquaza.

- Oh, my other one was Milotic that I didn't mention.

- Shriftree. - Oh, Milotic, yeah.

- Shriftree. - Shriftree, Shiftree.

- That's right.

- I had a buddy trade me one from Omega Ruby,

the CDOT.

Yeah, I had to call my buddy over because he has like a bunch of DS's and like, you

know, he's a Pokemon sicko.

And I was like, yo, I need you to come over so you can evolve my Kadabra because you had

to evolve Kadabra through trade.

So he brought like two Gameboy advances.

Like I felt like I was 10 years old again, you know.

I've had two 3DS's that I've been playing with the whole time and I'll trade my stuff

back and forth and Max like, you're cheating, Max, you're cheating.

And like, I got my dust.

- I was gonna say cheating, it's just unfair advantage.

So I tapped into that resource this time around

and started getting some--

- No, that's not cheating. - Like I got myself a

Dusknoir because I had a save file on X and Y

and I was like, do I have a dust cloth on this?

And I thumbed through my inventory and I did,

I was like, there it is, okay, I'm trading my dust cloths
over and over to trade it back real quick.

So. - Yeah.

- Crazy. - No, that's legit.

- Yeah. - As long as you play
through the games and do it yourself.

- Yeah. - Fair game.

- Sure, sure, all right.

- Well I think that does it for Pokemon Sapphire Ruby,
Alpha Sapphire, Omega Ruby.

Thank you so much for listening.

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You can find myself over at maxfrequency.net
and my other show, The Max Frequency Podcast.

Cam's been on that, episode two,
early, early guest on that show, so you can check that out.

And you can find Cam on Twitter @CamFinalMix,
and he does freelance writing all over the place.

He's been on IGN, kind of funny,

so you can check out all his work as well.

Thank you all so much for listening,

and until next time, adios.

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