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

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

Alola max. I I should have said

Alola, Aloha, Alola

That's a very weird. It's a very weird element of Sun and Moon Hawaiian, but not

I think I think what throws me off with the greeting is that it's a low law, which is fine

It's a play on Aloha, but then that's also the name literal name of the region

It'd be like if I approach you and I said United States

What sounds like something that would happen in death stranding like

Yeah, United States and you know someone and then wherever you're from on the internet the Kojima ask idea for sure

It feels like that. It feels like that sometimes I will say

Alola to all of our members who support us over on super chapter select

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Exclusive episodes and bonus content for a Pokemon season we've been duking it out embracing the rivalry in true Pokemon fashion and

We actually we got to record our ultra Sun battle this

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That's the new URL. I bought just for this. I like it a lot. I

We still we we still haven't done our battle, which I think if I'm correct

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

Or we've done the battle after recording

Because we might talk about our teams a little bit throughout this podcast, which might be a soft alike

Strategies and game planning here. I'll make a solemn promise now. I won't change

My team it will I suppose impact. Oh, I can't I'm not changing. I'm not changing my team either. Yeah, I promise

My team's my six are locked in here. All right, cool

Well, if you want to see how that battle shakes out like we will eventually find out here head over to listening with superpower calm

There you go. That's a good URL. You didn't even tell me about that. So I did I did you said you like

Actually, you did tell me that. There's been a lot of things going on in my-

It's been so long.

Both of our- There's been a lot going on in both of our lives over the past month. You're moving,

you've got a nice little new setup now.

A lot of movement. Yeah.

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

Can you see? You can. Yeah, that's my signed Untroaded 2 poster a buddy gave me.

I got Neil Druckmann's signature on there.

the new full president of Naughty Dog coming 2024. I got Bruce's signature on there.

Chief full president. You gotta get Evan now. He's a freager.

He might be on there. I actually haven't looked. I'll have to check.

Naughty Dog things aside, Max, let's get into the typical rundown we do here for Pokemon Sun and

Moon/Pokemon Ultra Sun and Moon because we're going to have a guest that we're going to bring on

here momentarily. Like every other, I think like every other game in the series we're doing this season. Pokemon Sun and Moon was developed by Game Freak. It released on the Nintendo 3DS family of systems. The original release date for Sun and Moon was November 18th 2016.

The Ultra versions then launched roughly one year later exactly on November 17th 2017.

The game director was Shigeru Amori. The Ultra director was Kazumasa Iwao. I think. Iwao.

Oh, wow. The producers Yeah, the producers were Junichi Masuda, Shin Uai, Takado Utsunomiya.

He's got sun in his name like the gaming worker. Hitoshi Yamagami. And then the ultra producers

were once again Junichi Masuda, Takanori Sowa, Shigeru Amori and Shin Uai. And the music was done by Minako Adachi, Go! Ichinose, Junichi Masuda, Tomoaki Ogo, Hitomo Sato and Hideaki

Kuroda and then the same composers ended up doing the Ultra games there. I know you told me I didn't have to specify this with every single one but I went ahead and did.

You did. Actually the producers were all of the original producers plus the three there at the end as well. Plus the three that I mentioned. Oh I think I just said Junichi Masuda.

You did. So it was a lot of producers on Ultra Sutton and Ultra Moon.

I mean they probably get broad credits I would imagine on the Ultra versions since they sketched

out the broad structure of what this game is essentially. The Metacritic averages for the original Pokemon Sun was an 87 out of 100.

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

Does it?

So these are the versions across the board.

Okay, interesting. I've always wondered how they differentiate this because I know it's not always the same with all of the ones that we've been doing throughout this season. So

Sun and Moon was an 87 out of 100 on Metacritic. Ultra Sun and Moon was an 84 out of 100 on

on Metacritic, which is,

I don't know if we've done enough of these where there's like a definitive version afterwards.

You know, we've got platinum coming up

that we're gonna talk about.

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

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

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

That's an interesting question.

- That's a good question.

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

- Weird. - Which is kind of interesting  
because I think-- - Everyone talks about it.

- Emerald's the one that everybody hypes up for sure.

Like the user score on Emerald on Metacritic,  
just out of curiosity,

not that user score ever matters  
on Metacritic of all platforms, but it's an 8.9.

So that's the one I feel like everybody  
hypes up and talks up, so.

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

throughout the course of this episode  
because our guest we have brought on for the week,  
which we will introduce here,  
has actually played the base versions of the game,  
whereas you and I have played the ultra versions instead.  
So we'll be able to talk about this a little bit more here  
throughout the course of this episode.

And now we say aloha to our guest for this episode,  
which is Grant Callahan.

Grant, thank you for joining us  
to talk about Pokemon Sun and Moon.

- No problem.

As you all know, I think Pokemon Sun and Moon  
slash Ultra Sun and Moon are the best Pokemon games,  
and we'll probably discuss that later why I'm right.

(laughing)

- I don't know about that.

- You were definitely the person we had in mind  
when it came to tackling these games,  
'cause you've sung the praises of Sun and Moon  
and Ultra Sun, Ultra Moon for as long as I've known you.

- Well, I think when we did this season,  
we asked Grant, like we knew up front,  
Grant would probably do this with us,  
and we asked him, we're like, "What do you wanna do?"  
And we assumed he would say these two,  
and then he, of course, did say Sun and Moon.

So it wasn't much of a shock,  
but Grant, give us your broad, I guess,  
history with these games,  
and obviously you think they're the best, as you've already said, but...

Yeah, what's just your own history with these games and why do you generally like them so much?

Um...

I'm trying to think of when, like, they came out, like, within my lifetime.

It was 2016 and 17. It was 2016 and 17.

So, very late college.

So, could I remember you came down for X and Y?

yeah that was i think like 2013 or it was 2013. 13 because ruby and sapphire were 14.

Yes yeah so these were towards the later end of the college and i remember reading about it every

time like oh new pokemon game and i'm just like show me what the pokemon are like because i want

to pick out my team and as i was looking at the big things that drew my attention were the ultra Beast. The first one was a Nalay-kyo. It's the one I don't use, the jellyfish rock poison type.

But for the longest time I was like, "Wow, that's cool. I wonder what other ones they're going to have." And definitely the designs on those are part of my favorite Pokemon of all time list.

But the big thing with it that I like from playing it over... I've at least played Sun and/or Moon. probably 12 times each version at least bare minimum. Each? Each. So at least 24 times total with just the vanilla game. I played ultra like maybe five times total between the two. Do you

have a complete dex? I do not, no. I've never done complete decks because I was like you know what

But that's too much. I've never done a complete decks in a game until I did Violet. Yeah,

I did Violet's complete decks and I did that within the first like one or two weeks it

came out. But the big thing that drew me in with this game was the ambitious choice of not having traditional gems and having something different to work towards. And then you still

have your like elite four which I think is a good idea to always have like a big challenge at the end. But just the idea of "hey there's no gyms here what are we going to do?" and they give you

like different things. Do I think they're all masterpieces? No. Do I think they're really good?

No. Do I even think they're average? Half the time no. But just because they changed up the formula

that's what I really appreciated about these games. I was like good. Pokemon's now going to step out and do something different compared to these other games. And that's like the charm I

fell in love with a lot of this game. And then postgame, especially in Ultra Sun and Moon, is bonkers with some of the stuff they add. But I don't know, have you?

Yeah, we've done it.

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

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

Okay, okay. That's what I thought. So yeah. That and then the new forms and then some of the changes

to like the storyline and stuff like that or the a couple new Ultra Beasts. Like what is the like Poipole? The one that you get from the... Yeah, the three new one. Poipole, Stakataka is Moon and Sun and Ultra is Blasphemon, Blasefion, whatever it's called, the clown, Fire Ghost type, which is really cool.

Yeah, there's not a lot of, I mean, I'm going to talk more about this the later we get in the episode about the differences between Ultra and the base games. Because Grant and I have already talked just a little bit off air about some of the differences and Max, and I played the Ultra versions and I didn't think we, I mean I'll jump in here and share my broad opinion on this game. I don't think these games are bad at all. In fact I think these are like, if we were to rank all 10 of the Pokemon games we've played, we will be playing this season. Like so far this is in like the upper half I believe for me. I

think a lot of what this game does works quite well in ways that I didn't expect it to originally and the longer I played it, the more it kind of got its hooks into me and how I started to like some of the changes and some of the different formulas that were implemented in this game. I think there's a lot of strong aspects to this one and it has like a clearer vision than I think some of the Pokemon games afterwards have. Grant talked about how they changed a lot of the structure of this game and then I like Sword and Shield broadly. I thought those games were pretty good, but by comparison they're very cookie cutter. It is just like, let's go back and play to do a very common Pokemon game, and obviously there's a couple differences in that game, like the wild area and stuff like that. But broadly speaking, I think this game, especially for the 3DS and being the last, because this is the last handheld Pokemon game before they then made the jump to larger consoles, correct?

Yep, that is right.

Because Sun and Moon and then Let's Go games obviously, that was all Switch and New and stuff like that.

Or not Sun and Moon, sorry, Sword and Shield.

Anyway, I think these games are broadly good.

As far as my own history goes, I remember I got Sun at launch, I believe, and I played it for about 3 to 4 hours and a lot of those changes that are made in this game I didn't like and I bounced off really hard and I eventually just traded it in I think. So I never played this game in full until we've done it here for the show and I played Ultra Moon this time around and yeah generally liked it. There's a lot of positive takeaways that I had from this game overall and I'm curious kind of where you're at Max. Is this the first, is this the only Pokemon game that you and I both have not played in this regard for this season? Sword and Shield neither of us had played. Okay you hadn't played Sword and Shield. I guess I mean very technically you'd need Scarlet and Violet but yeah. That doesn't count in that sense. Okay but this is a semi-older one that you hadn't touched.



I really liked this game quite a bit.

There's,

there's a lot of pieces that I like a lot,

but then there's some times where I don't like what they're doing.

It's very, there's like this dichotomy there.

I think there's a lot of moment to moment and design stuff that really works

well, but then they do some,

I think some frankly silly things.

In regards to pacing, story stuff,

just not a fan of some of the mid-game pacing

that they go on here.

But as someone who really only

before the season had ties to Kanto and Sinnoh

in regards to blue and diamond,

seeing all of this Kanto stuff be represented in this game

made me feel good and familiar in a way that--

- You're talking like with the different forms

and stuff like that. - Yeah, I mean,

Samson Oak for Pete's sake, I mean it's just--

- Oh yeah, yeah. - It's just Dan,

Professor Oak, so you know, there's these touch points,

your character even is moving from Kanto.

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

And now we've played the five games so far,

so I have more Pokemon experience,

but seeing all of the characters,

the Alolan forms of Kanto Pokemon,

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

Like, you know, that was something I could approach

and feel, 'cause there's some games

where it's just like, I don't even,

I still don't even know the Pokedex.

I may have some of the typing down much better,

but when it says, someone says,

swap it in this Pokemon, I'm like,

I have no idea what this is.

guess I'll have to guess based off the name. It's like Latin, you're breaking it down,

what type could it be? And then you're wrong. Anyway, so it's certainly I think the most

interesting game that we've played so far and I like a lot of the pieces but there's

still some down beats that I'm excited to dig into and see how you guys feel.

I kind of want to start this off just talking about how this game is structured in this

sort of island format because that is one of the things that is greatly unique about this is that

it's not a single continent. It is four distinct five sort of I guess different major areas.

What's the is it a third tower or something like that? Foundation or something like that.

Yeah. Yeah. So there's there four major islands and then the eighth or foundation area. How do

How do you guys, I think, kind of going off of what you were saying, Max, to me, the structure

of the game and the different islands, I think, sets it apart. It is kind of a win-loss thing.

I think it makes it very unique and it makes this game stand out that much more in the

larger Pokemon series. But I did feel like the game as a whole was like kind of disjointed

because of that. And it was really hard for me postgame. Like when I say that I like this

game and Grant knows this, but I played about 50 hours of this game and I went out of my

way. This is the only game we've played this season where post-game I went out of my way

to get all the different totem Pokemons on all the four distinct islands. I went and

got all of the different Ultra Beasts that I could obtain within my version of the game.

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

You did the Delta episode in Alpha Sapphire, but that's not the extent that you're talking about. That's very short, yeah. That's very short and yeah, there's not a lot to that. It's pretty streamlined. And I guess the Rocket stuff is to some degree it's mainly just clearing one hideout and doing a bunch of different battles and stuff.

But anyway, when I went back post-game though and I was flying around to different areas, it was really hard for me to keep track of where everything's at in this game.

Kanto is like emblazoned upon my brain.

Like I have that map in my right now, same with Johto, same with even Hoenn and things like that.

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

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

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

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

I feel the same.

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

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

Oh, it's on this island and then you're just tapping through looking for the name of the town or the store, the thing that you're looking for.

I just couldn't remember.

I remember locations in my mind, like working my way up to the volcano or that electric laboratory on top of the snowy mountain or the graveyard kind of near the beginning of the game. Like I remember these locations, but I couldn't tell you what island it's on or necessarily even in what order of the game you approach them in. I do think the game does a good job, narratively, of just keeping you moving forward and when you're supposed to go to the next island, they just take you there.

They offer to take you there at least.

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

And so it was hard to, make it stand out. And I don't think there were necessarily distinctive zones, like in, I don't know, I feel like at least in Sinnoh, or even Houghan, you know, half the map is water. There's the water, there's a volcano, and there's the little root in here, where the fishing village is and stuff. So I do think like the world design kind of blends, a sense. But I'm really curious about a guy who's played it 24 times who probably does know where every town and every village is, feels about it. So I know Pony Island's the last one you go to because that's a big one. There's Pony Canyon and all that stuff where all the dragon trials is at.

Akkala is the second and Melemele is the first. I can never remember the third because I always

like barely acknowledge the third half the time. But I will say like each island I wish was a little bit more distinctive of what's on it because sometimes it feels like you're just going to the same island maybe one little different area maybe it has a volcano in one

small area or pony island has like the small dragon area. But they do feel similar a lot of the times until you get to like one landmark area within the island and that's... I mean it's nice that they all feel sort of the same because they're all right next to each other. I wish there was more distinction between the four. I know routes and stuff it's pretty easy to remember because

it's like oh if it's between I just divide up into four groups like oh I see route whatever one to 29. I'm not sure what the route numbers are in this game but I'll just divide in four and be like, oh, if it's between these, it's probably on this island, stuff like that.

So it's just like, remembering like, oh, the shape of this island, it probably has these routes on.

If I don't see them, like, let's just move on to the next one. It's probably there. Besides that,

I think it is a little annoying just jumping between each of the islands when you're just trying to travel between them. I wish it was all just on one map, then you select the island you

want and then you go from there instead of just scrolling through the side. But I think that's

limitations of the 3DS. But besides that, when it comes to islands, it's cool. I think on different hardware, like a Switch, it would have been a lot better, but I think it's really innovative

because they're trying to do the region similar to Hawaii, the state. They have to do islands and that's what they're going to do. I would love to see them approach this segmented idea. And

like more distinct regions they almost they kind of did it in sword and shield with the dlc

well yes the iron island and what was the other one called the snow frozen tundra frozen tundra different chunks of the map that were wholly unique because it is a cool idea but it's just

i think you're right the 3ds just kind of cut it off at the knees to a degree

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

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

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

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

England or the UK. This is obviously based on Hawaii. Some of the older ones I don't

think they're as clear or as obvious like the inspirations they're taking. So I like

that this one was more, you kind of knew what they were going for like from the beginning. It was very on the nose but I like seeing more distinctly sort of what they did with their take on a Pokemon game that would be in a Hawaiian type locale. So I thought that was cool and I think largely it works to the game's strength and it really does. I think this is one of, like I just mentioned previous regions, like off the top of my head I can't tell you anything about X and Y's region. I love black and white, I can't really remember a whole lot about that region specifically. The first four games I remember a lot about or the first four regions, but that's mainly just because I played those a lot when I was younger. Like, the islands here stand out greatly in the scope of the larger Pokemon series and again, I think that's one of the big benefits of this game. Grant, I want to go back to you because I know one of the things you really like about this game the most is the story. This is like something you've always told me about with this one that you like really like and that you think this game has a good story. What about this story do you think like makes it so good? Because I guess to just throw my own broad two cents out there, I didn't feel like it was anything

too amazing? I don't know. What is it about this one that really stuck with you narrative-wise at least?

Um, so I will say

to preface this, I think all Pokemon game stories

primarily suck just like on average like this is the best of the games stories that suck

so it's not a masterpiece it's not a 10 out of 10 beautiful game when it comes to story it's just

the best out of the pokemon game but going into that you are a character that moves from kanto

you are traveling across these islands and meet new people i think when it gets to good story

is not within mostly the main story, which is probably the main bulk. It's sort of like the

side characters and there is one side character like his story if you like poke around enough,

really good. Did you guys poke around too much with like characters at all and sort of like

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

put in front of me. No. What? Who are you talking about though?

I think Guzma has potentially the best backstory or overall story like within a Pokemon game.

A mainline Pokemon game I'll say. I can see that.

But yeah Guzma has some like it seems like a lot of dark past and like I don't know if this is going to be a trigger warning but it sounds like his parents beat him from just you find his dad in the game if you look hard enough. You know, talk about like how he beat his

child and it's pretty dark for a Pokemon game. But there's just like smaller

things as you go on like, "Oh this character is cool." It's like you get a

little taste of them within the story. If you poke around by going around the map

you'll find other characters that like, "Hey I know this person. Let me tell you a

little bit about them." I think that's really cool and not a lot of other

Pokemon games do that. It makes so- I will say to your credit or to what you're

saying here, like, this world feels a little bit more interconnected than a lot of the

previous Pokemon games, where like, each city you would go to was kind of independent of

itself. Like, I feel like a lot of the characters you stumble across in this game are like,

"Oh, you know so-and-so? I know that person too, blah blah blah." Like, a lot of the characters

seem to know each other, there's like a larger history on this island, and it- you get the

feeling that it's like a smaller, tight-knit community. Because like, even the people that

greet you throughout the course of the game they're like oh you're doing your

island challenge I remember when I did that when I was younger blah blah blah

blah blah like there's a sort of like commonality between the characters I

feel like and there's it comes across more in that sense compared to a lot of

the other Pokemon games for sure. There is one other thing I will mention when

it comes to story and it's maybe my biggest nitpick of all of Sun and Moon

the beginning of that game the cutscenes are very long and unbearable at times do

I like storing how they present it yes but like a half the time of 90% those

cutscenes and we're still fine I think this game is very cutscene heavy

especially early on yes I think that's why I bounced off it early I the first

time I played it like I mentioned because the opening hours of this game definitely do drag.

Like it takes a bit to get going,

but once you get,

I think once you get on the second island,

it starts to kind of hit its stride

and let you actually play the game a little bit more,

but yes, the opening hours are rough

with the cut scenes and stuff.

- Yeah, I, the story here,

you know, the big thing was they got rid of gyms, right?

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

and ultimately you've gotta do some sort of

mini game essentially and then do enough of it

and then you fight a really big total Pokemon,

which is very difficult.

And I kinda like that, that the goal of overcoming

a natural obstacle, like a, you know, not something,

not some trainer, not some man-made thing,

but just a one with nature type of energy.

It's cool.

And then the, what's the word?

I wanna say dichotomy, but I already said that earlier,

I was trying not to use it again.

But there's these wormholes and there's this company

that has all this technology that is,

but then you're in this natural world of the island



and being one with nature and the energy of the sun  
and I assume in moon they talk about the moon  
more than they do about the sun,  
but the light of the region.

And it's kind of this battle between earth  
and nature versus technology and advancement  
and diminishing those elements.

I think that's pretty cool overall.

But then some of the, like Team Skull sucks.

And I think Team Skull really drags a lot of this conflict  
down 'cause they're just swinging their arms  
and beatboxing and like, I'ma beat up a Pokemon.

I've like, I really struggled with anything involving  
Team Skull at face value. - I will say,  
once Guzma shows up though, I think they are improved  
a little bit.

- A smidge. - A smudge.

- I think he's even up front,  
he's like, "I'm gonna beat you down."

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

But he, I think he gets better later  
when you go to the house, but also going to that house  
kinda kills the pacing.

So it's this... there's good, there's bad, and they keep conflicting, and it's all kind  
of tangled up, and it makes me conflicted.

But Team Skull just is like not a villainous team in the slightest.

I thought, what was this team in Yell?

I thought Team Yell was pretty bad.

But at least that made sense in the world as just annoying football fans.

Skull is just... I don't know what punks... At the end of the game when they disband Team Skull, their costume all that changes is the Team Skull logo goes away and they're the hip-hop punks that are other trainers that you can battle. It's just it feels... they feel very weak and my experience with Pokemon is there's usually some sort of major rival group that's actually doing something pretty bad and I suppose that's the Aether Foundation but I feel like they don't explore that necessarily as deep as well. That kind of comes and goes really quick.

- That's what I was, yeah. I think it's choreographed a bit too easily in this game that like, "Oh, Aether Foundation is going to end up being bad." Like even...

- What?

- They don't really tip their hand at it too much early on. They really kind of present it as like, "Oh, maybe you can trust these people. These are the good guys," or whatever. But like, it's just

kind of obvious because Team Skull is so stupid that like there's got to be a bigger threat out there and they're the only ones that kind of show up to make any sense to be that sort of fill that antagonist role and I think yeah them being the primary them being revealed as the primary bad guys a little bit earlier in this story I think would have served a better purpose in the long run because I think once they are sort of revealed as like the mother lady I forget her name the mother of or lily and gladian brother and sister sister they are yes I got they all have the same platinum blonde hair like yeah I wonder if you're related yeah their mom I forget her name the aether foundation woman I'm trying to find her it It starts with Elle Lu- Luise something?

Luzamine, yeah.

Luzamine, yeah.

Yeah, like she's, she's like revealed as like, "I'm the bad guy," and then she like hops into a portal with Necrozma or whatever.

"I am the only one!"

And then she becomes like a sympathetic figure pretty quickly after that because they're like, "Oh no, she's trapped in there. We gotta save her!"

It's like, "What? I thought she was the bad person."

So it like, I think antagonist-wise this game does struggle because Team Skull is kind of goofy, they're dumb, they're silly.

Uza means kind of the bad guy because she wants to control...

Necrozma is kind of like the bad guy.

They sort of do a similar thing that they do in Sword and Shield where the bad guy is...

What's the...

Or the Chairman Rose.

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

Eternatus? Eternatus, yeah. Like in the ending Doom of the region. Yes, it's sort of the same thing here with Necrozma that kind of presents the big baddie of sorts and all the different dimension holes are opening and stuff like that. I don't know, it's not terrible.

And I think the central element of this game that I do like story-wise is everything with the different dimensions and there's these crazy monsters from we don't know where that we've been discovering and finding and they're showing up. Like everything involving the Ultra Beasts and those like being one of the through line threads of this region I think is really cool. I think outside of the Ultra Beasts though not everything else in the story works. Two other characters as well that we haven't talked about that I don't know if guys have a ton of thoughts or feelings on, but how is your rival I think sucks? He is the most like cookie cutter like "I'm just your rival" like person possible. I think the only one who's more bland would be the rival in X and Y I believe is like super boring as well if I remember correctly.

Is it, I'm trying to think, because I haven't played X and Y in a while, is it one rival or multiple rivals?

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

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

It's that or black or white?

I don't know.

It might be black and white.

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

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

it's like that's it. Like I really some of these games really struggle with the rival dynamic because I think what makes the first two Pokemon games in particular so good is that your rivals are like jack like you want to beat them like there's like actual like there is a rivalry between you and your rival and then for some reason like silver and Ruby onward like they just become increasingly like like you've got may or you've got whatever the boys I always place the boy in several brandon is it brandon okay mary brandon and then you've got like even what's the other dawn I was thinking of I was thinking of Wally too and the sapphire games like like like there's like this string of rivals that are just like "aw shucks I lost oh darn" it's like there's no like meanwhile in like silver and gold it's like I'm a criminal and I'm your rival and so I just wish they would get back to doing something like that rather than what they have been doing over the past two decades almost I guess at this point. I feel like yeah rivals have been on the downswing until I believe Hop was the best nice

Rival you can get you've already played sword and shield right? Yeah, so I think hop is what how should have been

Where hop is like I'm gonna be the best and then he's like, holy cow. I just have main character syndrome

I cannot be the best. This guy's obviously the best he just gets depressed

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

He can't he has a good dynamic too because he's got an older brother who's the champion and he has to grow up in that

House kind of living in his shadow

So they do some like more interesting things with like that sort of dynamic in that game for sure the bet the best rival in

recent

Recent years I think is scarlet violet. What's her name again grant?

the Goku girl Oh

Nimona yeah, she's awesome. She's great. She's got a girl

Yeah, she's great. She is Goku basically

specifically how though I

I thought, I was playing this game,

I was like, man, how's kinda lame?

I think whenever the rival picks the weaker Pokemon

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

Like, this isn't gonna be a good time.

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

But there was a moment in the story,

I think it's around the ghost house trial or whatever,

when Guzma comes, they take some Pokemon away,

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

But, how can't stop them?

Or it was a little earlier maybe, I think at the park.

Guzma's there fighting and he tells how

the trials are pointless or think about where you're at.

And it hits how, kinda.

And he has this realization of like,

what am I doing here?

I just wanted to have Pokemon battles and eat my masala.

but what am I doing?

And I thought at that moment,

where he and Guzman interacted in a verbal way,

not just a Pokemon battle,

I was like, this is where he has a heal turn,

and Hau's gonna become a bad dude.

I thought Hau was gonna go down the Team Skull

kind of evil path, but in a cooler way,

and actually become your rival,

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

I gotta give it my all.

And I was like, no!

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

for a lighthearted character to take a turn

at the behest of another bad character,

like for someone to have that inner struggle

and really be a counter to your character.

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

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

- Well, I think it's made even worse

that he ends up being the champion,

or not the champion, but the final challenger

to crown the first champion.

is like, and this is a larger discussion we can have here, one second before we do have

this discussion though, I just want to say, best rival, we were talking about best rivals

in the series, and black and white, kind of a rival, but we haven't played those yet.

We haven't played that yet, I haven't, I have no knowledge of it.

He's kind of a rival, I think he fills that void in those games, I don't know what Graham would think. I think whatever you want to call the rival in silver gold crystal the son of Giovanni yeah that's the best rival. Yeah the actual the first thing you see him do is break into a poké lab and steal a pokémon. Evil evil man. He is definitely twisted and I think one of the best. The champion stuff we have to talk about this. So, and this is another thing that I think this game does better than most others, is you're competing in the first Elite Four ever. You're being crowned the first champion ever of Alola. It's really cool. It makes the post-game, when you're running around and people are like, "Oh crap, it's the champion." Like, they're all acknowledging you as the champion, which is kind of cool. And the other games don't like because that's what's kind of funny, especially looking again at a game like Sword and Shield, where like the champion is kind of elevated on this platform with is it Leon? Is that his name?

Yeah, Leon is Sword and Shield.

Yeah, like Leon is like the most famous person within that region in Sword and Shield. It's like, well, yeah, he's the Pokey League champion.

And so this game-

The undefeated champion too.

Like very serious.

Yeah, this game does the- this game makes it feel important when you become champion because everybody acknowledges you as such in the postgame if you continue playing the postgame for quite a bit.

Which I know you didn't, Max, but people will acknowledge it.

Well I did the- I started the rainbow.

I did the rainbow.

I didn't run around Alola though.

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

thing.

This is the part where we need to discuss like the differences between the versions.

And obviously if you're listening to this episode and you heard what I said a second ago with Hau being the champion,

that is not the case in the base game because the champ in the base game, as Grant informed me before we recorded this podcast a couple weeks ago,

is Kakuei, the professor. Which is awesome, I think.

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

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

- I do remember that.

- And he has every Pokemon,  
you must kill him in a gauntlet.

And that was like the big rumor back then,  
but you never really had a professor fight,  
I believe until this game.

And when it's like, "Oh yeah, we just made this league.

I'm the final trial."

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

- Well, I think that makes sense too.

'Cause he's like one of the foremost authorities  
on all of the four islands.

He should be the sort of final test.

Instead in the Ultra Games,



it's like, "Just fight your childhood friend again."

It's like, "What?"

I don't understand why they made that shift  
in the Ultra Games.

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

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

You gotta acknowledge though that like,  
it is one of those things like,  
why would they change this for the ultra versions?

I'm not really sure.

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

I think that you fight the professor  
to become the champion at the end.

Like none of the other games does that.

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

Narratively, it does make more sense to fight the professor.

I'm with you there.

That's you know, just narrow they drop a lot of hints throughout the whole game

I just jump in on what you're saying there. They drop a lot of hints throughout the whole game

He talks about when he did his own island challenge that throughout the whole game

There's the whole sequence where that he's a luchador luchador fighter and you like

Realize it's him, but he's hiding his identity. So like there's a lot of hints dropped throughout the  
game that like oh, yeah

I've done this too. I'm very intimately familiar with the island challenge and I know how to poke  
battle and blah blah blah blah

but you never really see it.

So for it to be fully revealed at the end of the game  
and you have to fight him,  
kind of pays off all those narrative threads  
that they set up early,  
like in the hours earlier in the game.

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

Anyway, sorry.

- No, you're fine.

I just, I don't know.

But when Hal stepped up,  
I was just like, this is par for the course  
'cause everything I've played up to this point  
is essentially fighting your initial rival  
or your childhood friends.

And so it just was the same for me.

And I feel like, but if it was the professor, I would have been like, "Okay, sure, you're  
the professor of Pokemon moves."

Like, it makes sense.

So I didn't feel like I was missing out on a hype moment or if the battle really would  
have been any different as far as from a gameplay perspective, but narratively it is different.

And it would have been better just from a narrative perspective.

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

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

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

You get a random golfer air lady, she's like, "Hello,

"I have been asked to travel back and fight you."

- So I have a question about her.

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

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

What? She just golfs! I thought it was just some deep cut, like a character from a previous game that I just told- just a random golfer. No.

I mean, okay, to be fair, all of the Elite Four members in the previous games are just random trainers, I guess, in some sense. Well, everyone you fight in this one, though, had met before except yeah yes so i guess it's weird stands out in that sense for sure it should have been the four great kahunas whatever you want to call them the four great people of each island should have been i believe the elite four of this game yeah i mean you're right it just kind of sets itself up really easily that you would fight the four presiding presiding chiefs of each of the islands like yeah like that makes a little instead you fight a golfer who has birds my other complaint even though the professor fight is one of the coolest things in vanilla i wish you would have thought him when he was the luchador man and he still would have kept up his little persona and they're like i'm not the professor i'm the luchador man

that would have been funny but they just sort of like hello i'm a luchador and it's like barely visit on later on until you like pick up a mask. At one point it's like, "hey you dropped this." It's like, "this isn't mine." And he walks off. He should have been champion wrestler man, but nope he was just the professor. Which is still cool, but I feel like they could have played off that little persona thing he has going on. I like the nacho libre-esque lifestyle he's living with the pokemons. I don't know, that's just one aspect of this game that I thought was very strange and I can't wrap my mind around why they did that.

I will say one other thing about Elite 4 none of you refought the Elite 4 correct? No it's a yes mention this Grant because Max does not know about this. Alright so you are the champion after you beat it the first time correct? Yeah. So you beat the original four

people and you sit up at the top of the throne from then on out after the first time it's random people who you fight in the champion spot it could be different side characters can be how again it can be random characters that make there there are two good ones there's one this weird dragon tamer looking guy makes no sense why is there's like I'm a dragon tamer and I've come here to be the champion and then the best one pokemon trainer joey from route one can also fight you yes please tell me he has his ratata he has very similar team to his first one he'll have if he doesn't have if he doesn't have an alolan ratata what is even the point give me a second i'm gonna look it up but yeah it's from the it's from the trainer school it's the youngster joey from the trainer school yes this is incredible but yeah going back and fighting is one of the funniest things ever because you get random people so that's cool world building all right so it's not joey per se at least it's not the it's not the silver gold joey yeah it's trainer tristan and he has an emulga a sharpedo an executor a lolan form a magmortar and a taurus with a z move. Okay, alright. That's still cool though. Yeah, I would just encourage you Max to go and look up the full list. Because I did this about a couple weeks ago. Look up the full list of everybody that can come and challenge you as the champion because it's pretty crazy. Everybody that you can actually fight through the postgame. Like the electric lab boy comes in and finally fights you. The Aether Foundation dude with the big glasses who looks like Elton John comes in and fights you. Some of the Elite Four members will challenge you to be the champion as well. They're like, "I think I should be the champion. I challenge you." And they try to usurp you. Don't some of the other gym leaders come try to fight you? Or not the gym leaders, but the challenge leaders come try to fight you too? Or am I wrong on that? Very few. It's like team school,

rivals, an ultra sun and moon. This dragon trainer looks dope. Ryuki.

Lusamine challenges you in ultra sun and moon. That is not in vanilla.

I think Professor Kukui does, Gladian does, I think Guzma does as well. So a lot of the main characters do for sure, but then there's like some offshoots and it's always randomized, isn't it? Yep, it's always random. That's neat. That's really cool.

- That's smart stuff. - So yeah, that's a fun, cool little aspect of the game for sure that like, again, that you and I didn't see, or I guess I could see it.

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

- I will say though, mechanically, Elite Four, I don't, I think it's the first time, it may be the only time, but I like that you could go in any order.

There wasn't a stacked, like you gotta fight these trainers in this order. I thought it was kinda cool that you could take the approach of maybe tackling the hardest one first to based off your team typing or go the easy route.

I thought that was kinda cool that you could choose the order, I thought that was pretty neat.

- I don't know about you guys but I like had some struggles with the Elite Four too so like I would go fight the ones that my team was best suited to grind off of just to level up my team a little bit.

and then save the tougher ones for last so even if I lost against them like it was one of those things it's like

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

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

Sometimes the elite four because they're in a static order

You would get stuck on the first or second one and some of the older games depending on how your team matched up

Yeah, this game. I think we've talked a lot about the champion only four stuff

I want to talk about two more character things here if we can

Just broadly and I think this would put to bed all the character and story stuff

and that is just

Lily and I guess Gladion or Gladion, however you say it. I don't

I feel like I don't know how Gladion and Lily

I feel like you're like three of the weaker characters in the game Lily Lily in particular

I feel like they really try to focus on and have her have a character arc of some sort

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

I pulled my hair back into a ponytail and now I'm not scared or something. I don't know. It's kind of

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

So yeah, I don't know. And then Gladion is a little bit too embroiled in...

I feel like he could have gotten the spotlight a bit more in this game. I think he's an interesting character. I think they just could have done more with him than they did honestly. And his big reveal is just the nature of his family, I suppose. And I feel like there were some more interesting things that they could have done with him personally that they really choose not to.

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

Oh Lily, I'll start with that. Lily is just trying to discover what she wants out of life

and then at the post game she's like "I gotta travel and become the person I'm meant to be"

and then she just disappears off into the sunset.

Gladion's cool because he's like "I gotta figure out what I'm doing and I gotta run away from my

mom because my mom's mean and then he runs away and joins team school. Wow, very good life decision

there. But yeah, really, Gladion's trying to destroy his mom from the inside out until he's like, "Oh wait, team school is part of my mom's group. Uh-oh, I just found this out." And then Willy is just basically like, "Yeah, I don't know who I am. I'm just traveling with you guys. Oh, "Oh, I'm inspired by you guys. I'm gonna go do my own thing."

Pretty meh overall with those two individuals.

- Yeah, I didn't care for Lily all that much.

I found her pretty annoying, honestly, 'cause she, in the front half of the game, she's helpless constantly, and then she has a strong disdain for Pokemon battle.

She doesn't like seeing Pokemon get hurt, which is part of her character, you know, helping Cosmog and all that stuff, or Nebby, as she calls it.

So I didn't care for that.

She was always incapable of something.

And then there's that halfway or even kind of three quarters of the way through the game that pull ponytail back in the moment.

And I remember this from a film class in high school.

It's like when a character cuts their hair or changes their hair, it's a sign of a big person, inward change of the character.

And it's a new point for them.

Her's is like, "I'm gonna come out and be stronger.

"This is my Alolan form, or my Ultra Beast form,"

or whatever.

And I was like, "Oh, this is kinda interesting.

"Maybe she'll like become a trainer all the,  
"like I didn't know where she was gonna go."

And she does fight with you once,  
with a Chansey, out of nowhere.

And then she's like, "Ah, I'm not strong enough  
"to do anything, so I'm just gonna keep healing  
"your Pokemon, keep on going.

"Hope you can do it."

And I just, so she didn't actually change all that much  
until the end when she leaves.

So I just, I didn't care for Lily all that much.

And Gladion, I feel like he's in the game two, three times.

And he's not very tough.

And he has this weird, holds his arm  
and it's constantly shaking,  
like he's holding back power or something,  
almost like a liquid ocelot kind of thing.

Like, ah!

So I didn't really get what was up with him or his design.

and is, I mean, I understood his motivation.

So I found that whole little family dynamic  
not as satisfying, especially 'cause of,  
like you mentioned earlier, Logan,  
their mother kinda gets the, "I'm helping all Pokemon.

"Ha ha, I'm evil," disappears.



"Oh, I'm good now."

So it was very, the whole dynamic doesn't get fleshed out,

I don't think in a great way.

- Well, I was just gonna say,

it's clear the kids have a beef with her,

and then she gets sucked into a portal,

it's immediately like, "Oh no, we must save them!" It's like, there's no real resolution brought to

a head with this inner turmoil that's been happening within this family for so long. It just

all kind of gets thrown out the window because Necrozma kind of throws a wrench in everything.

I think it's better done in vanilla because yeah, the main focus of Ultra Sun and Moon is Necrozma

and mostly the Ultra Beast stuff.

Sun and Moon, it's basically a conflict.

Both the kids run away essentially

because their mom has become obsessed

with beauty and perfection of like Pokemon

and achieving her goals over raising her kids.

So when it comes to vanilla version,

I think it does it better than Ultra Sun and Moon

'cause they're trying to emphasize on this new form,

new character, new Pokemon and like their mechanics

trying to weave that into an already okay story that was fine to begin with. So this is where I

think Vanilla does it better with like the whole mother and her kids dynamic, but they still have

like similar outcomes besides you don't see the mother at the end of the game in the Vanilla games.

She's just like in a room like, "Oh, you can't enter there. She's sick." And that's about it.

Well you bring up something that I wanted to talk about too which was just like how the

legendaries are implemented in this game. Obviously we've talked about Necrozma a little bit and the

altar beasts which are technically legendaries but I specifically kind of wanted to talk about

Nebby and what they do with Solgaleo and Lunala in this game which is that they have sort of like

an evolved line for I think is that the first time they've ever done it to where legendaries evolve in a distinct line like that and become like the main legendary of the game. Like

I can't think of any other instance where that happens in any of the games.

I mean you got Kubthu from the shield sword aisle thing or whatever.

Yeah.

That's the only legendary that evolves if I'm correct.

Yeah, so I mean this is, I mean on its face value I think that, I'll say I don't really

care for either of the legendary variants in this game just in terms of look and like

I don't know, they're fine, they don't really stand out to me too much and maybe that's

partially because again like you were kind of saying Grant, Max and I played Ultra and

And there's obviously huge emphasis on Necrozma compared to the standard legendaries in the

base games.

So I imagine they get thrust into the spotlight a little bit more in the vanilla versions.

But I do think the idea of this creature that's kind of hanging around with Lily the whole game ends up being the main legendary most powerful Pokemon is a neat idea.

And again, it's kind of like we talked about at the top when we started this episode.

They really try to, in every sense, subvert your expectations with this game and do something new.

Like, it's clear that they came into this game and wanted to do something new with the region, wanted to do something new with the legendaries, wanted to do something new with the storytelling.

And at times they reverted back to old ways and then in other instances, I think, like with Solgaleo and Lunala, like they do some cool things. What did you think about how

this was all done, Max?

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

I think that actually was pretty neat in just a small way. Not, you know, it's not some grand revelation or anything, or really, it's not like you can use Nebby or the second of evolve form anyway, so.

- You can.

- Oh, you can.

Is this a thing you get in the post-game, you can get a Nebby?

Okay.

- You can go to an alternate,

it's like you go to an alternate dimension

where it's the inverse.

So, you know, how the,

basically like night is day

and day is night in this other universe

and there's a Nebby or a Cosmog that exists in that world

and you can capture it there and evolve it

it evolves into? Does it evolve into the other one version that you don't have or?

It will. If you're in the alternate universe, so if you're in Moon and you go to alternate universe

to catch and deebie Sun, you have to evolve it in that alternate universe from its second form to

final form if you want for the Sun version. If you take it back to your version, you'll just get a

second legendary. So that's pretty cool. That's neat. That's something I would have chased as a kid.

Because there's like a there's a specific if you look it up like on the Serebii or whatever like

Nebby evolved or Cosmog evolves into the middle form which is Cosmoem at level 43 and then

depending on which island you're on at level 53 it'll evolve into the final legendary itself.

- Oh, that's pretty cool.

- Well, I stand corrected then.

But, you know, it's cool.

And Nebby,

I guess I just kinda looked down on Nebby though

because it was so attached to Lily

and I wasn't caring for that character.

And it seemed mostly like a narrative thing.

It's not a, I don't think it's an interesting Pokemon.

It's by itself.

I think the actual legendary is the one you care about.

It's moves that it knows are splash and teleport.

- Yeah, so--

- Those are some moves.

- So it's cool conceptually,

but there could have been more there

from an evolutionary perspective,

'cause really all of you care about in the end

is the lion or the bat, so.

- Speaking of legendaries really quick,

the Krasma you don't get 'til you catch every Ultra Beast

in the vanilla game,

so you don't even know of the Krasma

until after you get every Ultra Beast.

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

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

Yep.

That's interesting.

And I think Necrozma's really cool.

I'm glad that that is one of the things about Ultra that I do like, because I think he's one of the cooler.

Is he technically an Ultra Beast?

He is not an Ultra Beast.

Your legendaries are Ultra Beasts, the Sun and Moon ones.

Necrozma is not an Ultra Beast.

I do like Necrozma a lot.

I think Necrozma looks really cool. I think it's got a cool design. I like him more on his own compared to when he's combined with the others.

One thing that you can do with the legendaries, and I believe this is only in Ultra, and this is kind of an aspect about the whole game I wanted to ask you guys about, is you can ride on them and you can fly through all these portals and stuff like that. I don't know if you ever did that max that's how you get the ultra beast you have to go to specific portals. You have to go to specific portals and it's very RNG intensive and it drove me up a wall. The process of catching a Guswool, not Guswool, a Guzzlord kept me up all night and it was purely because of RNG basically that I was just kind of waiting to get the right one. So that was very frustrating but I wanted to segue that into a larger discussion about just the various Pokemon that you ride in this game. There's a whole Mantine Surfing bonus game. Like they add little things like this here and there and then obviously there are HMs in this game are replaced by what, seven or eight different Pokemon that you can ride on and push things around with and stuff like that. How do you guys feel about this system and is this really the first game in the series that moved away from HMs fully? I can't remember if it was if they were still implemented in any manner in X and Y. Black and white they were X and Y I don't remember it that is not we don't remember anything

about X and Y so it's gonna be really interesting when we play that whole thing Max because I don't remember much either I want to say yes that there were HMs in X and Y. There So this is the first one.

- So this is the first one where they were fully moved away from HMs, which I think in the long run is a good decision.

I think that we've come to that agreement throughout the course of this season, Max.

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

- A dedicated Pokemon to do it, yeah. or waste up move slots on Pokemon you actually care about.

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

That is almost the definition of fast travel for sure.

It's pretty snappy.

- Yeah, I think I liked,

I obviously liked them moving away from HMs because it had worn thin as the series continued onward.

I think I prefer how they handle it though in games like Sword and Shield compared to this one where it's just like,

we're gonna upgrade your bike out of nowhere and cool now you can cross water and now you can do this or just less just wrote a Pokemon that could fly swim and turn into a motorcycle sure that too or like I don't know some of these things in this game I think prove to me that like like when you get them a champ and you're like pushing boulders around like that's never there's never any like actual puzzle element to that I don't feel like or

ever there was never any difficulty to it it was just pushing them and it was always very slow and

it was like okay I don't want to do this or when you had to get your mudsdale and cross rocky areas or something like that like none of it was like it just none of it was fun switching between them so I was glad that it didn't take up HMs and I'm glad it didn't like I'm glad they moved away

from that system but I think that it's been handled better in later entries specifically

like with Sword and Shield and Scarlet and Violet with kind of how they do traversal in the world in

that game. Yep definitely first one no HMs the saddest moment when your HM slave could be the

Donald Trump weasel but I mean definitely net positive direction for Pokemon to go on in the future just an HM less game now when they remake all these games later on like we talked about

earlier ones if they're gonna add HMs hopefully they remove them because I do not want to catch

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

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

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

Yeah, it's been really... it was really, really nice not to have to deal with any of that.

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

And she was like, "This is a big deal where I'm from, but I guess it's just a TM over here."

And then she gives it to you and I was like, "I don't have to use this."

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

Did you spend any time mantine surfing, Rex?

other than when it forced you to.

I did it the one time that it forced me to. You didn't pull any sick tricks off?

I did, I guess. But then later I was reading and I was like,

"How do I get, you know, like, by battle items or certain stones or certain TMs?"

And I was like, "Oh, you gotta surf." And I was like,

I even Googled, "How do I get battle points quickly?"

And it was like, "You gotta do these surfing moves. You can get like 50 in a...

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

We haven't talked whatsoever about the mechanics of battling themselves in this game,

and the Pokemon, and I don't know... Max, obviously you're championing it a bit to talk about this.

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

- There's one other thing, but it's not as battle prevalent

with trainers, but go on Zmoves, Max,

and we'll talk about SLS mechanics later.

- Oh yeah, SLS.

So Zmoves, I mean, I like the idea of a,

you can only do it once per battle,

and just across your six Pokemon,

only one Pokemon could do it,

depending on who you gave the item to.

So I like the idea of a very powerful move, that's cool.

The cut scenes were a bit much.

What I'm not, I think, mechanically a fan of is it is,

it does require your Pokemon to hold the item.

And so if you want it across a certain line

of moves or types, you gotta give it

to a bunch of different Pokemon.

So I noticed that battle items weren't dropping

very much in this game or around the world.

and it was more collect all of these crystals.



So I'm not sure I'm a fan of that side of the mechanic,  
but the moves themselves are fine  
and it seems a simpler version versus a mega evolution  
or gigantamaxing.

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

But it also was like,  
well I guess they're all just gonna hold.

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

So that was interesting as well to discover.

I got all of them naturally, actually.

Oh, okay.

I just like totally, I was like, "Oh, I think I have all of them." I explored the whole game  
apparently.

I found none of the ones out in the world.

I think there's only like two or three. There's not a lot.

There's not that many.

I didn't find any of them. I just walked straight lines everywhere. Kind of compared to what  
you're saying

I like the Z crystals because it adds a larger strategic element with it like you and I are

Like we mentioned before we haven't done our fight yet for this game. So in the back of my  
mind

I'm trying to think about which Pokemon I want to put my Z crystals on and which ones would  
be best

To have like should I just put it on one Pokemon and really lock myself into using one  
specific Z move in this battle and put bat and put

Better suited battle items on the other five or should I put it on a couple and case?

Yes, a yo my one with that has my Z move on it

Like there's a greater level of strategy here that I'm thinking about which involves the held items

which I think can often play a big part in

Especially competitive battles like between us. I don't know well again you clearly explored the world more than me

But I I didn't find any battle items, so it felt like everyone just got a crystal anyway, so

I felt like it was a good choice. I feel like you definitely find some

That's something

Sure for one Pokemon who do I want the chance of going faster?

Alright, so I know your strategy for our battle now you're equipping six Z crystals on all your Pokemon

That's because I don't I don't have anything else. I've looked at that's why I was searching where my items

There's like yeah go here and buy them

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

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

You know, it's like whereas if I only put one Z crystal on mine

It's like I'm really locking myself into having to almost set myself up for this move at some point and using it properly.

I suppose. I don't know. It just seemed like a

one step too restrictive, and I felt like it was taken away from other

mechanics of strategy or at least that I wasn't engaged deep enough in surfing to find or

purchase other items to up my game, so.

Grant, you mentioned the SOS stuff.

[Music]

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

I'll talk about Z-moves because I think it's broken when you allow

Mega Evolution still in this game. You can have both on your team.

You want to Mega Evolve your Alakazam and then hey my little Pikachu over here is going to do

the super thousand bolt move that like one shots anything. Yeah you can have both of those.  
So if

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

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

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

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

a little OP. Yeah. A smidge. I want to make the assumption on teams that you didn't add any Mega

evolution Pokemon that can, because they don't add anything new it's just from

older X&Y and Omega Sapphire Ruby stuff. I didn't even try to do that. I don't

well I don't even have another 3DS to trade between Sapphire and this to get

the items and the Pokemon to do it. I don't think you can trade the items over

the Mega Evolution Stones. How do you not have another 3DS? I almost have like three or

I only have one 3DS.

This guy starts skating in the Facebook marketplaces for new 3DSs like me.

Oh my gosh.

This man says "Oh my gosh" in a bedroom where he's surrounded and filled with video game things up to his eyeballs.

This is very true.

He can't just go out and buy the Game Boy Micro.

I have a Game Boy Micro?

Uhhhh, I could trade with the Game Boy Micro.

No you can't. They don't have a trading port yet.

I'd buy a dongle to trade the Game Boy Micro.

But um yeah Megas and Z-Moves, too lethal of a combination I think competitively when you

start looking at it at that angle. But the other battle mechanic, SOS battles, I think are very

cool and some of like the only ways you can get certain Pokemon if I'm correct. So you have to,

SLS battles it's a battle you fight one Pokemon you get it lower health it's more likely or use items it's more likely to call like oh no I'm dying someone help me and then a random Pokemon usually the same species but a very low chance to be another appears around the same level I think there's some really cool things they did with this like you could catch toxapex

pre-evolution by doing SLS battles which is a very good Pokemon but that's like the best way to get

it. And my personal favorite the Bagon's at the beginning you can SLS battle them and then all of

a sudden like someone help me and it's like okay a Salamence appears that's like level five it may

be a one percent chance but I did that and I think it's the funniest thing ever because you're just

walking around is like hello this is my Rowlet and my Salamence. Fight me. I think there's some really cool things they did with that. I wish they would have done more crazy things with that.

But being able to like continuously fight the same Pokemon which gets better stats the longer

you keep an SLS streak on you get higher chance for a shiny Pokemon or in the case of Salandit

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

an involve that one I think there's some really cool things with that and just an

endless gauntlet and seeing how far you can go with that is sometimes fun too I

think I've had a 78 streak before and that's because I ran out of PP so I was

like yeah I will die if I continue going on and so I ran away. You just gotta drink

some water and stay hydrated.

- Exactly.

- I liked how the SOS stuff was implemented

in the totem battle specifically.

And this is one aspect of the game when I first played,

and I talked about how I bounced off.

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

And I was like, oh, there's a lot of like strategic depth to how this system can work.

because the totem Pokemon are always supercharged up in some sort of manner,

and they can really deal out a lot of damage.

So you're not sure if you should take down their lackey that they've called in to help them, or if you should try to just focus

on taking down the totem Pokemon

because it's the one that's hitting you the hardest.

- The answer is the totem Pokemon.

- Sometimes--

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

See, I did not--

- That's the thing. - I did not care

for this SOS mechanic 'cause it just, it's annoying.

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

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

Especially coming off of Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire for us max, those games were a cakewalk,

like to the point where they were almost putting me to sleep at times.

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

- This game's hard.

- It surprised me and it caught me off guard.

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

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

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

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

Like, I don't know.

Like, because there was some--

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

You have to. - I agree with that.

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

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

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

And that's what I'm saying.

Like there were different wrinkles  
in a lot of the different fights  
that I felt like you kind of had to uncover  
and it kept switching things up until the end.  
So even in a game without gyms,  
I found that the system was pretty challenging at times.  
I will say though, I did not like the challenges overall.  
I found them quite boring other than the battles.  
Run around the forest and find vegetables  
so we can make a soup.  
Oh, the soup lured in a big old Pokemon, oh my gosh.  
Like some of that stuff is kinda goofy.  
- Go swimming on the water and chase these fish down.  
- Please go into this cave and fight a large Raticate.  
I know in the base game it's Trump Weasel.  
No, it's the Pennine 1 version you have.  
Oh, is it?  
I thought Trumpweasel.  
Yeah.  
Oh, did you?  
Yeah, Trumpweasel's son, Moon is Raticate.  
OK.  
And that's it.  
Ooh.  
So there's also--  
I think the dragon trial is the same in the vanilla games,  
but in Ultra Sun and Moon, you either

have the dragon trial or the fairy trial.

So you fight a giant Rambi or you fight Komolo O.

Komolo O.

so that's what i did that was not fun did you fight romby then logan i fought kamal

i know with totem pokemon you can collect it's different in the versions i'm pretty sure the

fights were different too but if not then i thought there was one where i fought a romby

but maybe i'm incorrect on that maybe i'm thinking of another fight at some point in the game

there are some times because they will call different pokemon if you take out its side

Pokemon. I think the craziest one has always been, "I'm gonna fight the dragon Komodo.

Surprise! You think I'm gonna have like a little pre-evolution of me? No. Here's a Skizor." And I'm

like, "What?!" And it like screwed over my team because like, well, my fairy type's gonna die from

this Skizor, but I can't kill this dragon fast enough with it because I really didn't have a

fairy type I was using at the time. I just brought one because like, I'll just kill it because dragons

will hit me. Big mistake. But I think there's some dynamic stuff that they do are cool.

I think it does vary a little bit depending on the fight, like what comes out. But the

totem stuff with SOS battles are very good. If they countered the tight matchup, they're

like "Oh, I can kill this easily." No, you have to worry about me who will also kill

you. The rock-paper-scissors dynamic going on.

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

gameplay, particularly in the battles, I just have to say I'm a really big fan of the battle

menu in this game, the design of it.

At least in the DS entries of the game I primarily use the touch screen to reach around and click

and I just think the design of having fight take up the right hand side of the screen

and then Pokemon and Bag be on the left in two smaller sections.

I think it's very visually appealing and mechanically just sound.

It's easy to use, it's clear, it's concise.



The mo- you know, this game has the feature that I really like, which is after you fight a Pokemon, it tells you what is effective or not effective against it.

Helps my brain out a lot.

You can, you know, drill in and see what your moves do or, you know, the stat of the move, the specs of it, so to speak.

And then also if you have that Z move, then that's on the left hand side.

I just think this is a really well designed menu.

And I noticed that the battles take place in the environment that you're in, instead of just in a blank white room, in some games where it's like, oh, you've been teleported to a white room where the battle is.

This actually, you're fighting in the forest or the beach or the water or what have you, which I think is really neat and cool to stay kind of immersed in this world.

So it's, I like that basic stuff.

I do think there's a bit too much side, mechanic-y stuff.

Like ah, come to our virtual Disney world and try that out.

Or do you have this Pokemon?

I'll trade it for you to help my boyfriend with getting his Pokemon dreams.

Or here, play Pokemon Snap but at two frames a second on the 3DS with the gyroscope.

So that's the worst part.

Yeah, that's pretty bad.

So that wasn't, the side stuff wasn't great, but I think the moment to moment was actually pretty good, especially in the battles.

It just felt good to battle.

- One thing I don't feel like we've talked about too much outside of the Ultra Beast, and we mentioned that there's some like different Alolan forms of Kanto Pokemon and stuff like that.

I know you talked about that, Max.

But one common thing I think we've been doing throughout this season so far and all these different episodes is just broadly taking a look at the Pokédex and like what we think about it. And Grant knows this because him and I chatted about this a bit or maybe I talked to you about it too, Max. It's just I don't think there is, I don't think there are good Pokédexes in a lot of these later games. There's always something missing in each of these games. Like for this one, for instance, why are there like no electric Pokemon in this game. Like, there are a couple, like there's the Vikavolt, which is the bug electric type, and then there's the new sort of rat Pikachu thing that's a totem Pokemon that you fight. Like there's just a couple. Again, all of the different Pokédexes I feel like index too heavily into a couple types. Like, too much water in this one, there's too much, I know we've played played some in the past where it's like why are there so many grass types in this? Why are there so many bug types? Like I feel like there's a lot of bug types in this in this pokey decks for some reason. And strangely, since this is one of the, maybe I'm totally wrong on this. You guys didn't tell me, but considering this is the second, second gen in the series to have fairy type, I believe, cause that was introduced in X and Y, there's

a pretty big lack of fairy types I believe in this deck as well especially when it comes to the... when I say all these things too I want to specify that I'm talking about like new new Pokemon not returning Pokemon or not Pokemon from other regions or various forms or whatever like for example like when I say there's not a lot of electric types like they make like Geodudes is an electric type in this game for some reason which is just which is fine it's kind of cool but there's a lot of ghost types in this decks as well I don't know how apparent that was to some of you guys I don't know and then there's a huge lack of like Pokemon that I feel like evolve as well there are just single Pokemon in this game and even when they do evolve they don't evolve much or they evolve in certain ways like Grant mentioned, Solanda, and it evolves into Slazle, but only if it's a female Slazle, and the percentage of finding a female Slazle is like 10%, 12%, something like that. There's just a lot of instances throughout this deck that I think are a little odd. And I don't think it's a horrible one, but it left a lot to be desired for me. How did you feel about this, Max? I'm curious with you specifically because I know you mentioned that you like the Alolan forms of the Kanto Pokemon in particular, and stuff like that.

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

In a sea of,

aren't we over a thousand now?

The whole deck's on a whole.

In the sea of a thousand Pokemon,

it's nice to be able to recognize some of them

and then have those be different types

and visually look different.

Like Sandshrew's ice now.

So that's a way to shake it up for someone like me

who's kinda only really familiar with the old stuff

but keep it fresh in a way, right?

So that's kind of cool.

But then you get to the like,

these ultra beasts just don't,

they're just a bunch of funky looking creatures.

- The ultra beasts are cool.

I think you would like this.

- They're cool. - One caught 'em.

- They're cool, but it's, I don't know,

they don't feel grounded in a normal sort of world.

- That's why they're cool.

Because they all come from their own dimensions

and you have to go to these different dimensions

and worlds to catch them.

And it's really neat.

- That's the point.

They aren't supposed to be like Pokemon at all.

They're just sort of shoved in there like,

"Hello, these are different dimension things.

They don't make sense in our world.

They don't make sense in Pokemon world,

but now they're Pokemon."

Come here, bungle. - They're basically aliens.

It's kind of, it's really cool actually.

Well, I was like, I don't know about this.

'Cause the one that they made tried to make me catch.

But I failed. - Oh, it's like

one of the worst ones.

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

- Oh, that's right. - Oh, place me on.

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

Now, Buzzwole, yes, very good.

But the rest of these, - But the rest of these,

- Guzzlord, you go to his world

and he has like destroyed the entire town

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

It is actually one of the towns from the game if you look around.

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

I don't remember which one.

He's basically like Godzilla ravaged this city and has like eaten everybody.

And then you have to catch him.

It's cool.

This text just feels very... a lot of the Pokemon

look very samey and that confuses my poor little old man brain and I do think there

was like a lot of ground rock type Pokemon which was frustrating because there's a lot

of water on the other side of things so that's like a well I really don't want to do this

because it's fairly counterable so it just it I wasn't thrilled with this Pokedex wasn't

thrilled with it, which is a bummer.

There's not a lot of haven't been thrilled in a while.

- There's not a lot of new water types.

I do feel like they index heavily into bugging this one.

One of the other things I wanted to mention too,

which I kind of said before is like how you have to evolve

things in strange ways for those that do have evolutions.

Like I think of Vicavolt, again,  
it's one of the only electric types in the game,  
but you can't evolve it from a charge bug until you get to  
the power plant area.

and then you have to specifically evolve it  
in proximity to the power plant.

And this is also true of crab brawler,  
which is like one of the Pokemon  
you can get earliest in the game.

You can evolve it into the-

- Crabominable?

- Yeah, crabominable.

But you can't do that until literally like  
near the very end of the game.

So it's like, why are they giving you the Pokemon?

- You guys go to a snowy place.

- Yeah, you gotta go to a snowy place  
and that doesn't, you don't get that  
until near the end of the game.

So it's just like, there's weird decisions  
like that made kind of scattered throughout this Pokedex  
that I don't understand.

And again, I don't think it's bad,  
but a lot of the Pokemon here aren't too memorable.

I do have to ask you though, Miss Max,  
what starter did you choose?

- Well, I thought we might talk about our teams

after Grant shared his thoughts on the Pokedex,  
but I think we all chose the same starter.

- I think we did.

- We all chose Rowlet, I believe.

- Yeah, I chose Greninja.

- Oh, and base Sun.

- Ash is Greninja.

- I tried to do that and it's like,

"Oh, you have to have Sun."

I was like, "This is stupid."

I played this demo for nothing.

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

I'm a Popplio fan.

Rowlet I chose because I was like,

"You know what, I'll do this."

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

so I have my starter.

There's a Pokemon that I want that's also ghost grass.

So screw it, buy Rowlet, no more.

- I hate the Popplio.

- I think it has, the final form is cool.

The beginning form is cool.

The middle form stinks.

How this little clown looking seal doesn't evolve

into a super clown seal,

instead some fairy mermaid beyond me. I think it's a dumb design choice, but when I'm like,

"Wow, this mermaid thing, I wonder what it evolved from. Oh, a clown? Very dumb." But the typing,

very cool water fairy, I really like that. So a lot of the times I'm like, "Well, there's my fairy type, I'll just use this." That actually is probably the most interesting final typing for the starters here, I think.

'Cause Grass Ghost is another Pokemon, it's not necessarily particularly unique, and the Fire Dark is old faithful.

- My favorite thing about, what is it?

Oh my gosh, is it Incineroar?

- Incineroar? - Incineroar?

- Yeah, my favorite thing about,

I don't know why I couldn't remember his name.

My favorite thing about Incineroar

is that it's a wrestling cat thing.

So in your mind you'd be like,

oh, this is fire fighty.

And they're like, no, it's dark.

It's like, "No, this is--" -It's a heal.

-This makes no sense to be dark,

because fire fighting is like the default fire evolution line,

and they created a-- -It has dark fur,

so it's a dark Pokémon.

-But I think there's an argument to be made that Incineroar,

more than any other fire starter,

should be a fighting type first and foremost,

more so than anything else.

-Especially giving the Smash Brothers edition,



you know, a rattling-- -Well, it's got, like,

wrestling moves and stuff. Oh yeah. And they're like no it's dark. It's like okay.

So I'm trying to think of all the firefighting types really quick. Infernape, Blaziken.

Blaziken.

Blaziken. Emboar.

Emboar is the other one, yep.

And then after Black and White they went to Delphox.

Delphox is different, yeah.

So yeah they had three fire fighting zeroes, skipped one and this design-wise looks like a fire fighting but I think it's funny that it's dark and they're like yeah this pokemon is basically a heal character from wrestling I'm like that's pretty cool. Also shout out to the long neck executory I have to give you a shout out it's always grass dragon good type also the the Delmize, the anchor is really cool. I wish I wanted to catch one, honestly, but it's so hard.

It's hard?

It's a ghost type. Why is it a ghost type?

Well, it's a ghost.

It's a ghost.

It's a gross, ghost grass. It's like, what?

It's ghost grass, and then its ability makes steel moves hit like it's a steel type. So it's almost like three types.

But then you have to catch it in water.

Yeah. I'll ask questions.

so it's so strange. I don't know. Yeah, the decks isn't terrible. I wanted to I obviously we need to talk about music, but I know that's one of the final things we tend to do or to kind of we'll talk about music here and I know you want to talk about performance as

well Max. What do you guys think of the soundtrack in this one? Because I thought it was largely

pretty darn good for the most part.

Oh, I was so worried. The way you were talking there, I thought you were gonna say, "It was fine."

No, it's really good, I think.

No, this soundtrack is dope.

It's very good.

This soundtrack is great.

Definitely best ripe, or not ripe, villain, evil teen theme of all time when it comes to bosses.

Guzma's theme, hands down the best out of any single evil teen theme, in my opinion.

I took notes specifically that I could see why you like this game so much because there was

Akala, the island town there. Persona trumpet vibes straight up in Akala. I was like, "This is some

Persona music." And then there's the coffee shop song when you go to the coffee shop and I was like,

this is grant music. I think the soundtrack is very diverse for a Pokemon game and I don't think

I've heard anything quite like it that we've played so far. Maybe Scarlet and Violet, but that

they just it has strong songs but not different. This has different genres of music and types of

music and uses different instruments. I noticed for me in particular the observatory up at the

at the top of the mountain,

that's straight Battle Network Mega Man kind of vibes.

They fit the environments really well.

Even Team Skull, as annoying as they are,

their music fits them in that way.

Dulce, the guy from the alternate dimension,

they have their own unique theme.

This game's pretty dope.

and they got this electric guitar battle theme,

Junichi Masuda coming in again.

So I really like the soundtrack.

I think it's awesome.

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

My top two are from Sun and Moon,

which is Guzma theme.

Right below it, Ultra Necrozma theme.

Two masterpieces of music within a game.

- Yeah, it's awesome.

I'm trying to think of the...

Okay, the Ultimate Crossbow theme is very good.

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

I think you spoke very well, Max,

to kind of my thoughts on the soundtrack as well.

It's very diverse.

There's a lot of different things going on.

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

And obviously, I'm a sucker

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

and they start doing the new versions of all those themes

from the classic game,

like the Rocket Hideout theme while you're in it.

It's really cool.

The whole "Rainbow Rocket" episode thing there at the end

is a really, really neat tribute to just the entire series,

which I really liked.

And I know we haven't talked about that episode

in particular too much,  
but I think what's really cool about that in particular  
is that the Pokemon series often doesn't acknowledge itself  
as a whole too often.

every game sort of feels kind of siloed  
and like they'll make references here and there,  
you know, like, oh, I'm from Jodo  
or I'm from Holland or something.

Like you'll run into random characters like that.  
But I feel like this game, it really kind of leaned  
into acknowledging the larger Pokemon world more so  
than a lot of others.

And the Rainbow Rocket stuff at the end,  
I mean, obviously does that very blatantly  
and very on the nose by bringing back all the old characters  
and stuff like that.

But I kind of wish the series did that more often  
as a whole, you know?

Like it makes it that much more special to people like myself.

I know you've been playing forever too, Max,  
but I know you took a long break,  
but Grant and I have largely played  
every single mainline Pokemon game  
that's come out since the '90s.

It's only 'cause some of these later entries here,  
like with Sun and Moon, where I didn't play them at launch.

And I think it's really, yeah, like there's just,

there's almost a 30-year history of Pokemon at this point.

And I wish these newer games would do more  
to kind of acknowledge everything that's come before.

So yeah, we were talking about music  
and I spun it off into something else,  
but yeah, I don't know.

That's a cool aspect of this game.

You should do it more in the future.

- You, there's some more stuff you can do.

So Rainbow Rock is not the only returning characters  
in this game.

Let me pull up the list 'cause I can tell you  
Red, Blue and Cynthia are in this game.

- Well, they're all in like the battle area thing  
that you mentioned to us, right?

- Yes, you can have about any character you can think of.

Hey, remember, I'm pretty sure this is a Hoenn leader  
in here, there's just like random leaders and stuff,  
where to go.

- Wally's in the game, I know as well.

From Sapphire and Ruby, red is in it, blue's in it.

I mean, even like you mentioned, Max,  
like with Samson Oak, it's like, that's a cool callback.

And like, okay, cool.

Or is that Oak himself?

- That is not Oak, that is Samson Oak.

Supposed to be a play on Alolan forms.

It's Alolan form Oak.

That's the joke.

- I thought it was like,

I thought it was like his brother or something like that.

But even that, like that's a,

again, that's another reference to the larger series

that's very on the nose.

- Oh, very on the nose.

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

- I'll have to restore the national dex.

- Hashtag restore the national dex.

- Yeah, this is the last Pokemon with a national dex, 'cause then afterwards they're like, no more, dex it begins.

- They're getting close with Scarlet and Violet, aren't they? 'Cause I know they're about to bring add like 200 more with the DLC I believe cares it's probably like 600 there's another 400 to add until they had ultra beasts which haven't been shown to be in the game and they will add the poly world line I don't care well it's a bad game. We're ultra beasts in sword and shield? Yeah with the crown tundra DLC. Okay okay that makes sense. Max I know you want to talk about performance and then I think we can probably wrap things up here.

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

We've played Alpha Sapphire,

didn't run so hot all the time,

and I know X and Y doesn't run very well.

- Prepare for X and Y.

- So, you know, and then Scarlet and Violet did not,  
and I don't believe has been fixed yet,  
so it's, you know, that is a rough from a performance,  
and even Sword and Shield had its issues,  
but credit where credit's due,  
this game actually ran fairly well.

I think that was Game Freak coming to terms with the 3DS  
and really understanding the hardware  
at the end of their run with it.

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

- Totem Pokemon battles, double battles.

Basically any time there was more than two Pokemon on screen  
definitely chugged, which is a bummer  
since totem pokemon were a vital part of the narrative  
and pushing things forward.

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

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

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

So I get it.

Yeah, I forgot that down the line they just like started like completely forgoing 3D and  
a lot of these games.

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

I think this is one of those, yeah.

For sure.

I don't have the blocks near me.

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

It's in a bag of some sort.

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

Any last-minute thoughts?

Any - actually, I'll do this.

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

need to do this.

Alright, best of the best changes formula for the better you get in the vanilla game.

A challenge against the Professor as the final boss.

Why always change in Ultra Sun and Moon?

I don't know.

I'm usually an advocate for the vanilla games in this series.

Definitely difficulty spike has jumped quite a bit.

I do think it is the hardest of the Pokemon games.

I don't think it gets any harder than this, especially on Ultra when you fight Necrozma.

That's a pretty hard fight if you aren't prepared, and you might have to do some grinding if you have a terrible team.

Removal of HM's, great decision.

Last National Dex, so this is the most complete Pokedex I would say out of any Pokemon game.

All the ideas when it comes to Ultra Beast and involving a new dimension I think are implemented well with the Pokemon designs.

I do think they captured the Hawaii essence well within this game compared to other games.

It's not as done well because black and white is like New York and Kanto and Johto are like Japan.



Poen, I forget what it is.

It's Poen is also Japan.

It is?

Oh wow.

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

But I think this does the best overall with theming.

The introduction of different forms like Alola forms and then later on you get Galar forms and whatever forms are in Scarlet and Violet, I forget the name of the region already.

Terrastilizing.

No, no, no, that's bad.

Being able to mix and match mechanics from previous games, so Z-Moves and Mega Evolutions,

Very cool that they have them together because they remove previous different mechanics and games come on later because you get Gant to Max and then that's removed for terralization.

Definitely callbacks to a lot of characters as we talked about.

Rocket teams, earlier Red, Blue fights, Cynthia, stuff like that.

I think some of the music is all over the place but it's the best music of all because the genres they do well in each of them that they do. I think the only big thing is beginning truck through which I mean these games are not meant for adults half the time it's for a younger generation so they sometimes need that tutorial to get into an RPG which it's not the best tutorial regardless. I feel like that's just a Nintendo thing at large as somebody At large nowadays, yes.

As somebody who's playing Pikmin 4, I feel like it's a Nintendo thing at large, it does.

Except for maybe like Zelda or something like that.

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

Trying to think. Compared to other things...

Yeah, I think it does what it sets out to do, which is be different.

Hawaiian theme have this different dimension theme area of your Pokedex and music the best of any game. When it comes to story there's only one game that beats it but that's about it. So with all those across the line I think that's the best out of any Pokemon game. If you value story this is not the game for you. There is one game that you will play later called Black and White Which will have hands down the best story, but I think everything else falls flat

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

It's I thought that person was good turn evil with that

He's just a dog lover boy who they go to the subway sandwiches

So good, it's so so good. But yes, everything is

The best within this game from Pokedex music everything story is a little bit behind on maybe an entry

I can be confident saying it's behind black and white in

It could be behind others depending on person

but besides that

Best in everything else it does I mean just for you max

Where do you where would you put this one if you were to I mean, I think

When we get to the end of the season, we'll do like a maybe proper ranking between you and me.

This is definitely one of my top games that we've played so far. I felt more engaged with this one, I think,

over the course of it than I have with some of the more recent games that we've played.

That's good because I know we put more time into this one. It took us a longer time, I guess, to get to where we're

From start to finish, yes. Yeah, I mean same amount of game time roughly, but I really did enjoy this game quite a bit.

it. It's like I said at the top, the bits and pieces I really enjoyed. I do think some

of it doesn't necessarily come together on the whole, but each battle was engaging

and most were difficult, especially toward the end of the game. There were real challenges

where I really felt like I had to prepare and strategize, which I can't say for Pokemon on the whole. If you have the right types, it's usually fairly easy. So it was cool to be met with a challenge, especially kind of halfway through our season. And I'm excited to see where we go from here. Looking forward to, you know, back to the other only game that I had played before the season with Diamond. I was going to say, for me, there's about to be a steep drop off ahead because I do not like Diamond and Pearl.

- Yeah, good thing I'm not on that one, otherwise I would roast you alive for that terrible game.

- No, I'm excited.

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

I'm not looking forward to X and Y necessarily, but then the black and white games, I've heard so much good things about.

- You should look forward to X and Y just 'cause it's a new one, I feel like, personally.

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

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

- Better than this game.

- In terms of C. - We'll see.

In terms of new Pokemon strictly, I think.

- Okay.

But Ultra Sun, Ultra Moon, or Sun and Moon, I'm actually, I came out more positive and liking it more than I thought I was going to, which I think is really good.

And--

- I think this one could have gone either way

for both you and I.

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

So I'm glad we both liked it.

- It's good stuff.

It's good, good stuff.

Well, I think that does it for our discussion on Pokemon Sun, Moon, Ultra Sun, Ultra Moon, depending on your preference.

Thank you all so much for listening. If you like the show, you know, you can subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts, you know, rate the show, you can follow us at ChapterSelect.

If you'd like to follow Logan on Twitter, you can do so over at mormon12 and his writing over at comicbook.com.

You can follow myself on Twitter at maxroberts143 and my writing over at maxfrequency.net.

Grant, Grant likes coffee a lot.

Your Twitter is private, so I don't think

sending people there would make much sense.

Is there anything you'd like the people to look at at all?

- If you wanna follow me, follow me on this brand new app

made by the Zuck himself called Redz.

It will be Grant double underscore Callahan,

and you should be able to find me there.

That is probably where I will migrate to.

But besides that, maybe Instagram, same name,

Even though it's private right now, I'll probably open it up in the near future soon.

So keep an eye out for that.

Where I'll probably talk about coffee more than games, but there will probably be a good mix.

Alright, coffee and games persona, Pokemon and coffee.

What a combo.

It's, it's co- I mean they do come together quite well.

They're essentially the same thing.

It's all the same.

It's all the same.

So you can go check Grana over on Threads and Instagram.

And then a thank you to our members who support the show directly.

You can learn more by going to [listeningwisuperpower.com](http://listeningwisuperpower.com).

So thank you to all our members.

And until next time, adios.

Or should I have said aloha?

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

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Season 6 is all about Pokemon.

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up and have a great day.