

GAME REVIEW

Back in Black

SHAHRUHK IKHTEAR

Three games in one is how I'll describe *Black Ops 3*. The disparity between the game's 3 modes is both a boon and a curse. The game offers a gargantuan amount of value for your money in the form of sheer content, however, the 3 modes are not equally good at piquing your interest.

The campaign offers an immense amount of adrenaline in the form of manic set pieces and intense level design – the staple of any *Call of Duty* game. This year, Treyarch has introduced several "cybercore" abilities which will allow your character to perform feats like hacking into enemy drones and controlling them, becoming invisible, and even hacking into other soldiers to overload their neural interfaces. This makes the campaign feel a lot like *Bioshock-meets-Crysis* but these abilities feel rather bland after repetitive usage. The game puts you in the role of an unnamed soldier

who is part of the Black Ops team of the future. The story and premise of advanced technology being fused with human soldiers and how it changes war holds up well at first. It is until the final third when the game loses track of the story and struggles to tie up loose ends.

All in all the campaign leaves a bitter taste and is the weakest part of the whole game.

Multiplayer has been refined in the sense that it prefers a slower approach compared to last year's *Advanced Warfare*. Gone are the days of extremely fast-paced boost jumps and slams onto the ground. *Black Ops 3* prefers a less abrupt method of mobility by introducing wall running and a smoother boost jump which propels your character in an arc at a slower speed. While they might seem like gimmicks at first, these new methods of traversal allow players to flank their opponents using ways around the map that are not easily noticeable. It is always satisfying to wall run around

the side of a map and get the jump on unsuspecting foes.

Before a match begins you have to select from one of the nine specialists to play as. These specialists all have unique abilities and weapons albeit you can only choose one of the two. The weapons offer unique ways of decimating your foes like Ruin's Gravity Spikes with which your character slams the ground creating a radial shockwave that insta-kills anyone around him. While all of the specialist weapons are overpowered, they do require good timing as you are vulnerable while your weapons are priming and you can be killed before they are activated. The abilities are a more defensive option as they involve your character escaping, rewinding time or even cheating death.

The specialists add a much needed dose of flavour and variety to the tried and tested formula of *Call of Duty* multiplayer which is, arguably, the best mode in the

entire package.

Alas, no *Black Ops* game is complete without a trademark Zombies mode and this year is no different. *Black Ops III* dishes out the toughest, most fun zombies experience till date. It is an absolute blast to play with friends with silly power-ups and level designs which show that the Zombies mode doesn't take itself too seriously.

Call of Duty showed signs of letting up in its previous instalments. However, *Black Ops III* does just enough to keep long-time fans of the series coming back for more. There isn't much here for sceptics to be impressed by but when all is said and done, this is one of the better *Call of Duty* games in recent memory.

Shahrukh Ikhtear is a gamer who doesn't rage. A writer who doesn't read. A musician without a teacher. Full time procrastinator. You can reach him on Twitter @sr_ikhtear and email: shahrukh.ikhtear@yahoo.com



Check out the exclusive review of *Fallout 4* on Shout's website:
www.thedailystar.net/shout

