



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

BREATH OF THE WILD PREVIEW

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Nintendo's new console will be out tomorrow and there's a lot of excitement surrounding its release. While a lot of the anticipation is for the console itself, there're a couple of launch titles causing a lot of buzz themselves. With ten launch titles and more games set for release after the Nintendo Switch hits store shelves, Nintendo's shaping up for a resurgence. But there is only one game that everyone's really gearing up for.

And so March 3, with the release of The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild will finally be released!

The first original 3D Zelda game in six years too. After the mess which was Skyward Sword, this feels like a breath of fresh air. The fate of an entire company rests on the shoulders of this beloved starchild. The franchise, as old as gaming itself, has stood the test of time, albeit on shaky grounds. No other launch title has ever generated this much hype. Yet ironically, Breath of the Wild has been the most lukewarm display of a Zelda game prior to their releases. So far Nintendo haven't done a lot to generate any buzz, keeping everything under wraps in terms of the story. Other than the two cinematic trailers, Nintendo haven't revealed much yet. However, journalists and YouTubers have had a chance to sit with the game and there's a lot to take away from what we've got so far.

For one, Breath of the Wild is an open world game. This is the Zelda experience we've always wanted. The game starts off in typical fashion, with Link waking up

from his slumber. After slowly making it to the top, overlooking the entirety of Great Plateau and what remains of Hyrule Kingdom, we will get a glimpse of the sheer size of the world. Nintendo has confirmed that, every one of the areas, even the seemingly unreachable ones, would all be traversable. The environments all look detailed and fleshed out and the increased resolution on the Nintendo Switch version will surely add to the stunning visuals of the game.

This is uncharted territory for Nintendo. They've never tackled a large scale 3D open world experience before but the worrying signs of it are yet to show. However, with a development cycle over 4 years, they've had a lot of time to detail every bit and piece of the map out. Add the age old Nintendo polish to the scheme of things, and we've got perhaps the best Zelda game to date.

In a recent vodcast published on Game Informer's YouTube channel, the G.I crew mentions the environ-

mental hazards that have been implemented in this game such as thunderstorms and shivering cold. This is important because we've seen changes in time and weather in other Zelda games but all of those shifts were set in predictable patterns. None of the shifts in scenery seen in prior releases drastically affected gameplay but based on what we've got, weather and the time of day adds a certain layer of realism unfound in every Zelda game before Breath of the Wild and also, in many Triple A adventure games of today. For people who grew up with the original Legend of Zelda or have played it in some point in their lives, this game is surely

the love letter they've been waiting for.

The other noticeable factor, and possibly the most important one is the RPG element added to Breath of the Wild. Link is customizable with many weapons and attires to choose from unlike the other Zelda

titles where there were only a couple of weapons and armor sets to play around with. We'll start with nothing at the start of the game but this is where the path diverges or in this case, opens into multiple facets. We can go anywhere, explore any land but we're doomed if we're not well equipped. All weapons have durability and attack power

ratings and armor pieces have defense stats like other Action Adventure RPGs would have. Due to these overhauls to the design, the combat has seen a shift in balance as well. Let's get this out of the way, this game does not look very easy. For one, gone are the Z-targeting imbalances found in previous 3D Zelda games, which became a staple ever since Ocarina of Time. In games prior to Breath of the Wild, mob mentality wasn't a piece of code written into the minds of the Bokoblins, Lizalfos and other baddies loitering around Hyrule. They were built in ways that they'd have Z-targeting priority where, even while surrounding you, they'd take their turns in fighting you. But that has been done away with this game. Combat seems more complex because of this change.

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild is shaping up for a grand release. Gorgeous and densely packed environments, breath-taking music and sound to accompany the scenery; this game is truly one to pick up if you're getting The Nintendo Switch. But if you already have a Wii U and only want to play Breath of the Wild then go for the Wii U version. Other than the slight differences in resolution with the Wii U version locked at 720p while the Switch version running at 900p, there won't be any experience changing differences between the two versions.

Asif Ayon's favorite color is a particular shade of ash but he tells everyone that his favorite color is blue. The alliteration in his name bothers him a lot too. To inquire more about what else keeps him up at night, hit him up at asifayon@live.com

