



OPEN BETA DISAPPOINTING

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Anticipation is what I had when I jumped into my first match. What I left with, was disappointment.

The Battlefield V Open Beta went live on September 4 for people who either had Origin Access or pre-ordered the game. For the rest of us who are more conscious about our expenditure regarding video games, it went live on September 6. The beta ended on September 11.

I had multiple extensive playing sessions before I decided to conclude that the game needs massive improvements before it can live up to the Battlefield name. Don't get me wrong, BFV is a solid game at its core. It's the elements surrounding that are the most problematic. But I'll start off with what I like about the game before getting into the parts that need work on DICE's part.

First off, the graphics — it hits you in the face as soon as you boot up your first match. This is one gorgeous-looking game and it's astounding as to how DICE improved the visual fidelity coming from Battlefield 1, which was itself a marvel from a technical standpoint. Destruction is given much more "oomph" in the large number of particles that are sprayed into the air after a V1 rocket hits a street on

Rotterdam. Keeping up with the series tradition of having gameplay implications tied in with the destructive nature of almost everything in the map, any region of the map can be nearly completely levelled with the right amount of explosives. The lighting system is crazy with global illumination and sub-surface scattering combining to make some of the most lifelike environments and characters ever seen in a video game.

Something that's very interesting about the new Frostbite engine is the simulation of snow particles. Where every game that has snow particles just slaps on a random particle box that doesn't interact with the environment, DICE has done something completely different. If you take a closer look at the snowflakes on the Narvik map, you'll see that snow particles bounce off every hard surface. Even the gun that your character is holding. Makes for a much more real simulation of harsh weather conditions.

Weapon mechanics have been overhauled from BF1. Time to kill (TTK) has been adjusted to reflect the more powerful weapons of the WW2 era and it makes for a satisfying change of pace. The movement is slower and more in line with BF4. Tactical advancements bear more fruit than brash charging in this game. Spatial awareness is much more

important but it's marred by flawed sound design (more on that later). You can now prone on your back like in Rainbow Six Siege and it honestly allows for a lot of good angles that weren't possible before.

Unfortunately, that's where the stand-out features end and the bad parts begin. Starting off with the UI of the game. It is simply horrible. DICE seriously needs to hire a new UX guy to fix the mess that is BFV's menus. The matchmaking is horrible with multiple disconnections before the game could even start to load the map. I get that it's a beta but usually, betas are MUCH more stable than this and this problem hints at wonky net code. Once you do get into a game, though, the experience is very smooth.

The map design feels very awkward with wide open spaces that literally have nothing in them. Great for those camping snipers but absolutely not fun for people who don't want to play the game with just their mouse. Vehicles have been reduced in number, which is a surprise considering Battlefield 1942 (which was also set in WW2) had way more vehicles than this game. DICE seems to favour the casual shooter crowd way more than actual Battlefield enthusiasts and that is NOT a valid strategy for this game. The casual crowd has Black Ops 4 coming out

on October. Battlefield V can never be that game for them.

Speaking of vehicles, apart from some of the tanks, everything feels abysmal. The worst offenders are the planes. They simply do not feel powerful at all in the sense that even if you use your .50 cal machine guns at point blank range, foot soldiers will merely shrug it off and keep running like nothing happened. How does that even make sense?

The progression system seems to be designed to be as frustrating as possible. Once you upgrade a weapon, you cannot revert the upgrades even though there are multiple upgrade paths that you can take. So once you decide on something, you can't change your mind. Just like those 60 dollars that you had to put in for the game. Every time you want to customise your soldier, you have to exit a match and go to the main menu to do so. Seriously, DICE, fire your UX designer.

All in all, Battlefield V needs changes and quickly. It's no surprise anymore why DICE decided to delay the game to November 20, but I really hope they get their act together.

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