



Not just another Battle Royale

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Apex Legends is a new Battle Royale (BR) game from Respawn, the developers behind the Titanfall series. The game was kept under wraps right up to its release day. So how does it stack up against other BR titles?

After the Hero Shooter trend died, every single major publisher wanted a piece of the Battle Royale pie. And why not? Fortnite amassed a staggering \$3 billion profit by simply operating on the free-to-play model with microtransactions for cosmetic items. So, it is no surprise that EA had to have a BR title of their own. What is surprising, however, is the game's release methodology. There wasn't even a shred of news regarding its development. One can infer that, due to the BR fatigue that's plaguing gamers, it would've been risky for EA to put this out to the public before they got a chance to play it, lest they be subject to public backlash which would ultimately negatively impact the game's player count. Apex Legends is set in the Titanfall universe. Before you get your hopes up, there are no titans in this game. That's

because it is based around a competition in which powerful heroes participate to attain the title of "Apex Legend". These independent combatants do not have access to the powerful weapons of the militaries that clash in the Titanfall games. For returning players, there are a lot of familiar weapons like the *Kraber sniper rifle* and the *Alternator SMG*. There are multiple Legends to choose from and each have their own abilities including one ultimate ability. I like the diversity present in these characters in terms of personality and play-styles. Mirage is a sly trickster who can send out decoys of himself to distract the enemy. Bloodhound can track enemy activities like when a loot stash has been opened or when an enemy passed by a checkpoint. The ultimate abilities aren't game-breaking either. Where a lot of developers would just go with high-damage nukes, Respawn has opted to incorporate highly utility-based *ultimates*. This keeps the game from feeling unfair and allows a lot of room for counter-play. The only mode available right now is the three-man squad mode. The game has an excellent ping system through which

you can use to ping various items for your squad to pick up, or highlight an area an enemy has been in recently, or to spot enemies in the distance. This system alleviates the problems of communication that may arise between complete strangers playing together for the first time.

The gunplay and shooting mechanics are the same as Titanfall. Recoil and weapon sway is kept to a minimum to downplay the effects of the random spray patterns so that players have to rely solely on their twitch reflexes to win firefights. When it comes to movement, there are a lot of changes. For one, you cannot double jump nor wall-run in this game like you could in Titanfall. This takes a lot away from the mobility aspect but it does allow for more grounded combat situations. Overall, the gameplay is excellent and each engagement feels rich and rewarding.

Apex Legends does one thing very different compared to other BR games. When you run out of HP, you automatically go to the downed-but-not-out state. When you get shot in that state, you die but you can still be brought back into the game. If a teammate retrieves

your card, they can put that into one of the respawn boxes scattered throughout the map to bring you back. However, you will have no weapons or armour on you.

One thing that I absolutely love about Apex Legends is how smooth it is considering it just launched. There were minimal server issues and lag didn't prove to be a deterrent to my gameplay experience. The build of the game is super stable and there were zero crashes. It is a far cry when compared to recent games which even have betas before release. Respawn are amazing developers when it comes to optimisation and the rock-solid performance of this game is testament to that fact. That being said, it is sad that we have to talk about a hygiene factor as a thing to be excited about.

Overall, Apex Legends does not do a lot of revolutionary things. It gets the basics right and incorporates small quality-of-life improvements to the Battle Royal genre to distinguish itself from the competition.

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