

# Sword, Shield and Controversy

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After E3 there was a list for the most controversial reveals based on the reactions of each YouTube video. Surprisingly on top of the list was *Pokémon Sword and Shield*. The tremendous amount of interest and hype that surrounds the release of a mainline Pokémon game has been a constant ever since the original *Pokémon Red/Blue/Green* was released. For a title in this beloved franchise to garner this much controversy speaks volumes.

But what could go so very wrong? No matter what gripe one can have over an aspect of the series, the love the

The argument that *Pokémon* as a series hasn't evolved over the years has been made before. However, that never boiled down into a serious criticism of the series because, in spite of it all, the series never failed to make a world that was not loveable. It was always easy to invest hundreds of hours in each entry collecting these wonderful virtual beings that were as real as it gets to the fans. As the total number of Pokémon continue to edge closer to the 1000 mark and as the game introduces its

characteristics of the game. This response has triggered another wave of criticism. Pokémon as a handheld series has always been limited by hardware limitations. But *Pokémon Sword and Shield* was the first entry to the mainline consoles. And under that consideration, the visual aspect and the animations have been underwhelming as well. The details and the graphical fidelity of the game is not on par with other games of this generation. Graphics have never been a priority in terms of this franchise since its appeal was based on other things. But since Game Freak boldly proclaimed that they abandoned the National Pokédex for the sake of this very thing, the shortcoming in this field becomes all the more apparent. The game truly lacked an overall polish based on its gameplay reveal. Something that could not be overlooked anymore considering the National Pokédex was sacrificed for this.

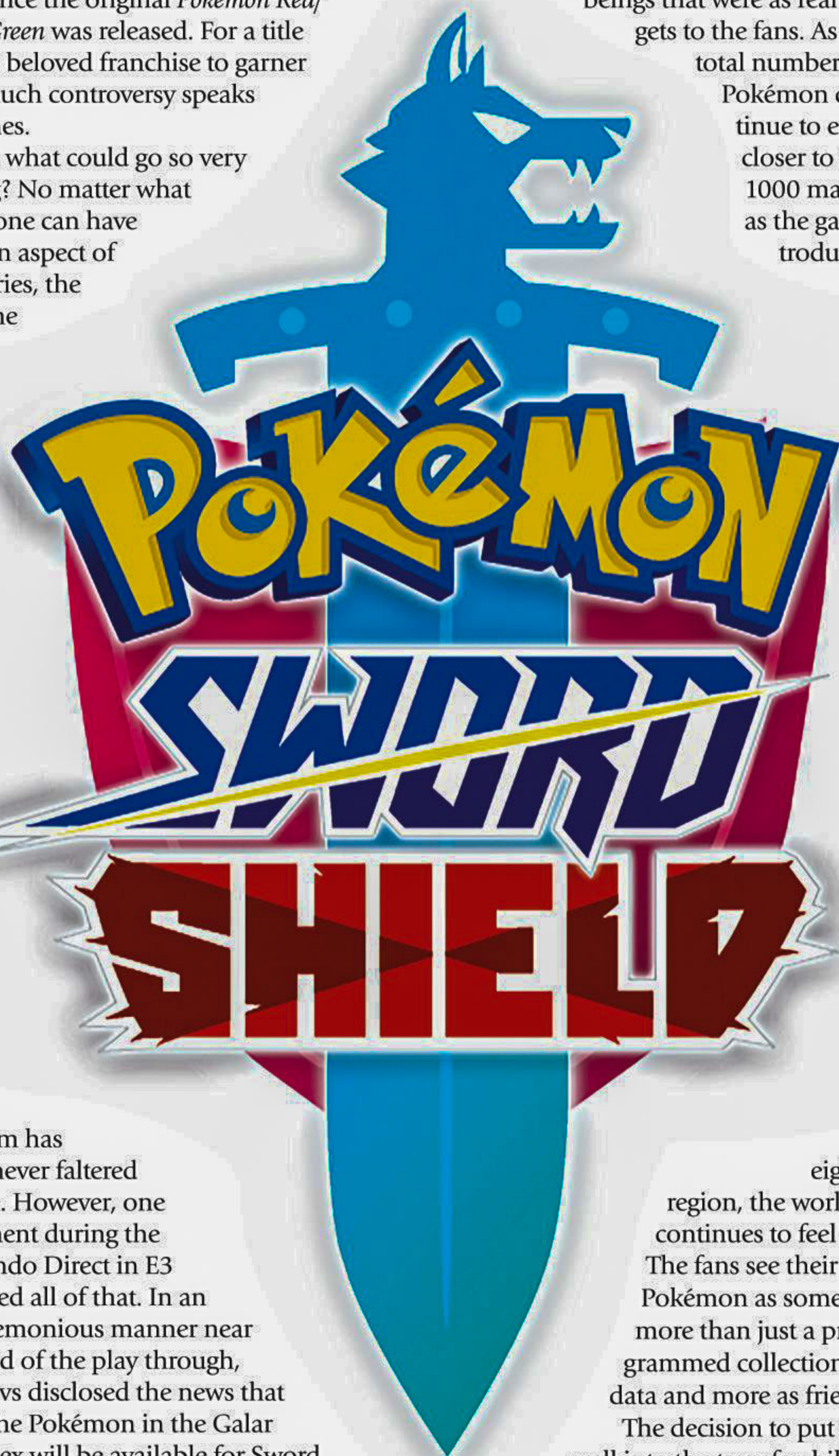
*Pokémon* has been a beloved franchise not just for the fans but also for the developers. The late, great Satoru Iwata's compression system for *Pokémon Gold and Silver* allowed the entire Kanto region to be playable along with Johto. The developers always went an extra mile to add as much detail as possible to bring more life to the world. Now, the series is

ready for a home console. The arbitrary limitations are far less constricting. For the developers to not properly utilize this opportunity and compromise on quality is almost insulting for the history of the franchise.

It might be considered that with the total number of Pokémon constantly on the rise, it becomes a harder task with each generation to balance and maintain them in a game. However, even that argument is flawed since the move from 2D to 3D enabled the developers to maintain a constant 3D model instead of having to create a different 2D sprite with each generation. With a large portion of the animations and character models being re-used from *Pokémon Sun and Moon*, there is no excuse to hide behind.

The outrage surrounding *Pokémon Sword and Shield* is not the fans being entitled but more about the developers deviating from the core values of their beloved franchise. It's not unfair to want your favorite Pokémon to be included in a mainline entry *Pokémon* game. Only time will tell if Game Freak listens to the pleas.

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fandom has for it never faltered before. However, one statement during the Nintendo Direct in E3 changed all of that. In an unceremonious manner near the end of the play through, the devs disclosed the news that only the Pokémon in the Galar Pokédex will be available for *Sword and Shield*. This means is not every Pokémon that featured in previous titles will be transferrable to the new game. This is a first for a main game in the *Pokémon* franchise. In each of the previous generations, you were allowed to transfer any pokémon that you had caught earlier. It might not be possible to catch in-game but it would be possible to have it nevertheless. But *Sword and Shield* will not even let you transfer a Pokémon that is not available in the Galar Pokédex.

In a franchise where the tagline has been "Gotta Catch 'Em All" since its inception, Nintendo told the fans that they wouldn't be doing that at all.

region, the world continues to feel alive. The fans see their Pokémon as something more than just a programmed collection of data and more as friends. The decision to put a wall into the transferability of these Pokémon breaks this illusion. To make things perfectly clear, what Game Freak's decision implies is that Pokémon other than the ones in the Galar Pokédex simply won't be coded in the game at all. That means the ones that are not in the Pokédex will never be accessible on *Sword and Shield* unless there's a massive update of course. So for the region of Galar, it's almost like those Pokémon do not exist in the first place.

Game Freak's response to the outcry has failed to appease the fans. Their response was that this compromise has been made in order to refine the other



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