



APEX LEGENDS: A LEGEND IN THE MAKING?

Written by Tony Bianco

Apex Legends is the newest addition to the popular gaming genre of Battle Royale.

The Battle Royale concept is one that pits players, either solo or in groups, against one another to a “fight to the finish” where only one remains.

Fortnite and *PlayerUnknown Battlegrounds* were the first to drop on the scene along with slightly less popular *Call of Duty: Blackout*, which was mostly a flop.

However, it seems these games have softened the styles and genres of gaming to the point that *Apex Legends* has made quite a wave when it dropped onto the scene.

Electronic Arts (EA) and Respawn Entertainment made such a wave, that in the first week of release, they had 25 million downloads of the free game.

To give some perspective, *Fortnite* had 10 million in its first two weeks! It is clear players are not as hesitant to try this type of game as they once might have been in 2017 when *Fortnite* first hit consoles and computers.

WHY IS THIS GAME SO POPULAR?

Apex Legends is similar in gameplay to its competitors except they take bits and pieces from many other games such as Battle Royale.

One of the draws for *Apex*, in comparison to its competition, is that each player in the team-of-three has different abilities or specials that if coordinated can make for a well balanced team. This allows a player to focus on combat while others may focus on healing team members, tracking down enemies, or gaining greater mobility within the game.

EA & Respawn Entertainment made a conscience move to borrow the “class” system from the popular eSport game *Overwatch* so they could enter the conversations for the game to be played at the competitive level.

Another reason this game is popular is because players have the opportunity to be “revived” and brought back into the game even several minutes after digital death as long as one member of the three-person team lives through a fire-fight.

For gamers this keeps them engaged and connected longer to the game as they wait to respawn. There is a chance it doesn’t occur but the possibility keeps players watching gameplay and rooting for surviving team members.

Even if they have finished playing, they can watch someone else play the game. Doesn’t this sound a lot like Twitch or YouTube Gaming? Well, this is a smart move by *Apex*’s developers also.

Apex is now taking away screen-time from *Fortnite* and other games on these popular streaming sites. Legendary game streamers like Tyler “Ninja” Blevins have started devoting stream-time to *Apex*.

For example, Ninja and two others teamed up to win a \$200,000 Twitch Rivals *Apex Legends* tournament early in February. With this kind of support, it is no wonder that *Apex* is breaking Twitch streaming records of 8.28 million hours in a single day, previously owned by *Fortnite* which was 6.6 million hours on July 20, 2018.

Since this game is also getting the attention of “professional” game streamers, more eyes of the novice players are seeing its potential.

Apex is bringing new streamers to the eSport game as NRG (a popular eSport Team) has signed Coby “Dizzy” Meadows, an 18-year-old from Florida, who is alleged to be “the best *Apex* player in the world.” He gains viewers and makes waves of his own in the eSport community by killing 33 of his 59 opponents in one match.”

This goes to show those thousands of viewers that anyone can “make it” in professional gaming; drawing more and more interest by the next generation.

AS A PARENT – WHAT SHOULD WORRY ME?

Apex Legends is an online game only. What I mean by this is that there is no part of this game that can be played “offline” or without connecting with other people.

Just like other Battle Royale games, players partner with other players in search of being the champion so there is always a potential of interacting with other people through a microphone and headset. This presents an opportunity for inappropriate interactions between other students and/or adults.

As a parent, understand they can play the game without a microphone; therefore, unable to communicate with strangers. One option is to have the gaming console or computer in a public place where you can monitor and hear the conversation from your student and others.

Another area to consider is, just like *Fortnite*, this may be a free game but there is plenty of money involved in playing the game. It is becoming evident that these “free to play” Battle Royale games often have in-game purchasing options that unknowing parents may be surprised to see.

To make the character look distinct, say or do different things, or even have a special “load screen,” a player may pay anywhere from \$5 to \$25. There are a variety of items for purchase that are purely cosmetic. They do not give an advantage to the game itself.

Parents need to be aware accounts have a saved credit card so they may see transactions to Electronic Arts as students choose to sport the latest look or theme with their characters. This is the primary way the game makes money so talk to your student about what this may look like for them and expectations on spending.

The last thing parents should consider is the game, although rated T for Teen like *Fortnite*, is more realistic than its cartoon competitor.

Apex has realistic looking people, features, and environments and shows a bit of blood when the ammo hits an opponent.

Fortnite specifically has zero blood and when someone dies they pixelate and fade away whereas *Apex* has players who are killed and left with a crate of their “weapons and gear” inside along with the name/banner.

This doesn’t look like a casket but it certainly represents one as it falls wherever they died. The fighting and deaths play out more like a *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield* game than a cartoon shooter like *Fortnite*.

For some this is not a big deal but others may see this as too realistic and choose to keep their students away. Regardless of the direction you fall as a parent, it would be good to have a conversation about *Apex* with your student so they and you know how everyone feels about it.

WRAP IT UP

Apex Legends has emerged as a formidable competitor to other Battle Royale style games.

As a parent, be prepared on the front-end of this new trend. Just like any new piece of technology or pop culture trend, it is a good habit to have a conversation with your student.

Ask questions like:

- *Why do you want this?*
- *Why does this interest you?*
- *Who else has this?*
- *What is the purpose?*

These are great beginner questions as you navigate anything new. It shines light into their thoughts behind the decision and it is also educational for you.

This, like many other things, may also be a connection point for you and your student. If your child is actively playing the game, sit and watch with them.

Ask questions about it and learn from them. This shows you care and take interest in something they care about. I know this may sound simple but this is how relationships build, work, and flourish with pre-teens and teens. Lean in and make a new connection!

I wish I could say to you to ignore all of this because it won't last longer than a few weeks but that may not be true.

This genre of game is just scratching the surface of our culture and, if we look at others' success, we can anticipate that these types of games will be around for several years.

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