Apex Legends: Resurrection is another fresh start for EA’s battle royale



More than four years after its explosive launch shook up the battle royale market, *Apex Legends* is looking for yet another fresh start (no, that fresh start doesn’t include any updates about cross-progression or 120fps on consoles) when its new season, *Resurrection*, launches on August 8th at 1PM ET.

In the new season, the *Apex* developers are undertaking a campaign to rework and revisit existing elements, starting with one of the game’s older characters, Revenant.

Season 17 added a well-received new character in Ballistic and brought some needed changes to maps like World’s Edge, plus a new firing range area to train in. Unfortunately, it also added enough scoring changes to the ranked system that an unprecedented number of players were able to achieve high ranks by “ratting,” or avoiding fights until late game, that it affected the game’s balance.

In response, there's a new ranked gameplay system, too, giving the game's most dedicated players better matches (hopefully) with scoring based on the hidden "MMR" score that tracks how good you actually are. It will make climbing to a higher masters rank slower, according to the developers, but it should make finding games faster and more rewarding.

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As a battle royale shooter, *Apex Legends* corrals surviving players together throughout the round with a closing ring that deals damage to anyone caught in it, and the ranked mode will add new tweaks to the damage and timing of its closing to discourage players from trying to outheal its damage and avoid encountering other players to place higher.

With an increasingly crowded market including other shooters like *Overwatch 2* and the *Call of Duty* juggernaut, season 17 was enough of a disappointment financially that it earned a mention in EA's quarterly earnings slide:

> *Accelerating EA Sports FIFA franchise growth and release of Star Wars Jedi: Survivor, partially offset by lower-than-expected performance of Apex Season 17*

Still, according to executives on the earnings call (PDF), while season 17's performance "didn't meet our expectations," the game still has 18 million active monthly players and a retention rate of over 70 percent.

Said EA Entertainment president Laura Miele:

> *On Apex, the way to think about it is when you – when we have these live services, and I laid out the areas of expansion of new addressable audiences and players, geographic expansion, and then monetization conversion mechanics that will evolve*

> *over time, we think about and look at the Apex development cycle and candidly, most live services cycles as short, mid and long-term. So you will see some – we will see some adjustments and changes in Season 18. And we expect to see even bigger, more impactful changes in 19 and 20 and into the future for the following year. So again, there's a lot the team can do and what they have levers on. And then there are some things, such as modes or changes in mechanics, that just take a longer runway to develop.*

The game-as-a-service model means walking a careful tightrope of evolving in real time along with players' changing expectations, growing the game's audience with new players who don't have years of experience and money invested, and also somehow not changing things too much.

Revenant's updated abilities (along with his look) allow him to always see any nearby low-health enemies as a passive ability to go with his existing faster crouch walk and improved wall climb. In addition, a new tactical ability, "Shadow Pounce," lets him close gaps in a blink. And to replace his old ultimate, which gave players temporary shadow clones to attack with, the "Forged Shadows" ultimate now gives a shield that blocks damage and can regenerate, with refreshed shadows and tactical ability each time you knock down another player while using it.

This season, Respawn is also making Revenant available for free so players who haven't unlocked him can try out his abilities, and if they complete a set of challenges, they will unlock him for free permanently.

Also launching on August 8th are:

> ***Mixtape on Broken Moon***
>
> *Mixtape crashes into Broken Moon, bringing fan-favorite Mixtape modes to new locations this season. Jump into Gun Run*

and Team Deathmatch in The Core or play Control in the Production Yard. Legends can show their skill as the darkness closes in.

Death Dynasty Collection Event

Embody the essence of death with the Death Dynasty Collection Event. During the event, players earn double XP in Battle Royale from August 8-15 and in Mixtape from August 15-22. Legends that unlock all 24 cosmetics will automatically be rewarded with Revenant's new "Death Grip" heirloom.

Charge Rifle Update

The Charge Rifle has been re-designed for immediate use in the Apex Games. No longer does the infamous weapon fire a sustained beam. Newly fitted with an Extended Sniper Mag attachment slot and boasting a number of changes to its firing mechanisms, Legends familiar with the anti-Titan model available during the Frontier Wars should feel right at home.

Finally, the lead-up to this season brought along a very *Titanfall 2*-ish story mission, Kill Code, that I didn't enjoy based on its jumping puzzle structure but presented an interesting teaser to players who've been craving for something more single-player-flavored, especially in light of a reportedly canceled single-player spinoff and no sign of a new *Titanfall* game waiting in the wings. (Although Miele did name-drop it on the earnings call, saying, "Remember, *Apex* is set in the *Titanfall* world. There's a lot of demand and interest in this universe.") The mission and storyline also added elements to the main game that dropped higher-tier items for assisting the characters in their mission by visiting particular spots on the map. Ideally, if Respawn adds more integrations, they'll be more like this, as it added to gameplay without sending teams and teammates on a longer wild goose chase like some previous in-game activations.

On the earnings call this week, executives from EA said the game would “introduce new modes of play across various markets,” and hopefully, that means more than just bringing out a new mobile title to replace the one that was unceremoniously canceled or adding more items and characters to increase appeal internationally.

The lore of *Apex Legends* has always been a bit of a sleeping giant, and leaning into that with experiences that are playable could help it continue to stick out from the crowd.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/8/3/23817252/apex-legends-resurrection-s18-update-revenant-ranked-rework