Blaseball season is over for good



Born during covid, *Blaseball* was a bizarre text-only fantasy baseball simulator that imagined, essentially, baseball as played in a world of otherworldly horrors.

I regret that I never got to play *Blaseball*, and now it looks like I won't get to because developer The Game Band is shutting it down. The company is laying off its *Blaseball* development team and will provide them with severance pay, healthcare extensions, and a dedicated staff member for job search help.

It was a remarkable example of procedural storytelling. *Blaseball* players could bet on the games to win points throughout a given week, where chance encounters, *Dungeons & Dragons*-style could rend games, and reality itself, asunder. At the end of the week, *Blaseball*'s community could spend their points to vote on new rules for the game, and in true D&D fashion, anything could happen. Or at least that's what I gather from this delightful recap of what became known as The Discipline Era:

As a quick summary of some of the highlights, The Discipline Era saw a hellmouth open that devoured the Moab desert, three eldritch gods in the form of a giant peanut, a huge floating microphone that may have been a player's ghost or something, and, naturally, a massive squid that seemed to mostly hang out, but once tried to eat someone. A powerful grand slam blasted the spacetime continuum apart, splitting Los Angeles into infinite parallel versions of itself, prompting its name to be changed from The Los Angeles Tacos to The Infinite Tacos.

After pissing off The Great Shelled One by not respecting its idols, it entombed the three most idolized players in giant peanut shells. The community somehow resurrected them, and there was some sort of supernatural financial kerfuffle?

Also, there was crow weather.

Samuel Fung created a wonderful write-up for *The Verge* that covers the season from a player's perspective, and it's well worth a read.

Anyway, of its discontinuation, *Blaseball*'s developers said this:

> *The short of it is that Blaseball isn't sustainable to run. Since Blaseball's inception, we've been fighting against the amount of work it takes to keep Blaseball true to itself while financially supporting the team and keeping our staff healthy. We've tried countless solutions to make it work, and we've come to the conclusion that this fight isn't one we can win in the long run. The cost, literally and metaphorically, is too high.*

Blaseball developed an incredibly devoted online fandom, one that even established a merch store full of fan-created apparel, *Blaseball* cards (ahem… TLOPPS cards), mugs, and more, where all profits were given to charity. The store will

continue to operate until June 30, 2023, and will then be shut down as well.

It sounds like it was a beautiful three-ish year run, and I’m sad I kept forgetting to be a part of it.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/6/3/23744507/blaseball-shutdown-fantasy-baseball-horror-simulation