

Black Ops 4 sets series back on track



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Black Ops 4 is shaping up to be one of the best entries in the *Call of Duty* series in the past six years. Already the game has been received far better than last year's *Call of Duty: WWII*.

Black Ops 4 has brought several changes to the franchise's multiplayer gameplay. The health of individual players has been increased to 150 from 100, and many of the objective game modes have seen their player count reduced from 6 to 5 players per team.

Perhaps the most drastic change from past installments of *Call of Duty* in terms of content is the omission of a Campaign. In the past, *Call of Duty* games have shipped with a story mode, called the Campaign, in which the player plays through a story shaped by the context of the game. The past installment, *Call of Duty: WWII*, featured a Campaign mode which began with the player fighting on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.

This time around, Treyarch puts more focus on the multiplayer aspect. We see their reasons for doing so, as *Call of Duty* is known more for its on-



line multiplayer rather than single-player campaign modes.

Black Ops 4's playable characters in multiplayer, called Specialists, have their own "backstories" included in the game. This is the closest thing the game has to a Campaign mode, but it still doesn't fill the void left by the absence of a Campaign, which made the franchise so memorable for its long-time fans.

The most radical gameplay change is the removal of automatic health regeneration. In past games, when the player took damage, they would have to disengage and wait until they were automatically healed over time. *Black Ops 4* is the first game in the franchise to feature manual health regeneration. All players have 150 health by default, and that health will not regenerate unless the player uses either the default healing item or an equipable item called the Stim Shot that allows for faster healing and a lower cooldown between available heals.

Zombies is a fan-favorite game mode that returns in *Black Ops 4*. We are generally pleased with this iteration of Zombies, and it generally adheres to what fans expect from the game mode.

Perhaps the most innovative new mode *Black Ops 4* brings

to the table is its battle royale mode known as Blackout. Blackout features the signature gunplay of the series, and expands upon this using the battle royale formula. The map in Blackout is the largest *Call of Duty* map ever created, and several of the locations on the map are variations of iconic maps from throughout the *Black Ops* series, the most iconic of which being the presence of "Nuketown Island."

Blackout features many elements that are a staple of other battle royale games, such as armor and looting. In comparison to other battle royale games, Blackout is probably most similar to *PlayerUnknown's: Battlegrounds* (known as PUBG), with its first person perspective and relatively realistic gunplay. Playing Blackout, however, is a much smoother experience than PUBG, and the mode has the potential to become one of the most popular battle royale games to date.

Black Ops 4 has much to offer players, and even after being out for a month there is still a lot of undiscovered content and experiences in the game. If you enjoy the style of gameplay *Call of Duty* is most loved for, then you should definitely consider trying *Black Ops 4*.