

To anyone curious about this game and how it came to be,

Pokemon Tourmaline is the culmination of a long-held dream of creating my own Pokemon game. Ever since I was a little kid, I've been interested in video game design and what goes into making them. Back then, I was more of an "ideas guy"; I could never get into things like binary hacking. Nonetheless, I enjoyed speculating on the possibility that I could make my own game someday. I have fond memories of playing the handheld Pokemon games as a kid, and I liked to imagine what it would be like to combine all my favorite things about them into one game.

Over the years, I kept outlines of ideas for fakemon, moves, abilities, and anything else I'd add to a hypothetical game. Eventually, these became rough drafts for multiple games with varying degrees of completion. As it turned out, none of these games ever left the concept stage. I became less interested in Pokemon and fangaming over time, and my elaborate collection of notes ended up collecting dust on a USB drive. But the end result was that I had a huge backlog of ideas from which to draw should I ever revisit the possibility of making a game in the future.

As fate would have it, I first learned about the gen 3 decomp and their expansions during the COVID lockdowns. By that point, I had enough programming experience that I could read and understand them. That's when I realized that my old dream of bringing my own game to life was now possible. After mulling over the specifics, I decided to commit to one such project, and the first real work on Pokemon Tourmaline began. Oddly enough, I had originally planned to make this game in Essentials. I worked for about a year on-and-off in Essentials before deciding to switch over to pokeemerald. This unfinished proto-game had my first draft of the Issho region, but the story and characters were still mostly generic and unspecified. I've always felt that Pokemon games work best with minimal storytelling, so I chose to focus on the design of the Issho region and filling it with fun maps to explore. I left enough space in the right locations that I could fill in the story details once I knew what they were going to be.

The story ultimately came to me about two years ago when I first came up with the concept of Team Genesis, an organization of power-hungry thugs who use cloning science to create and weaponize their own "perfect" Pokemon. I've always been a fan of Mewtwo and the lore surrounding it, so I wanted to do a dark scifi story in the same vein. Team Genesis was partly inspired by the scientists who created Mewtwo. But unlike the case with Mewtwo, Team Genesis actually understand things like IVs/EVs/Natures on a fundamental level. Their control over these things is so advanced and refined that they can create a Pokemon with any combination of these things as easily as you can with a cheating device. Let's face it, hacking Pokemon into the game is something we've all done before. It saves time for competitive players, of course, but even casual players enjoy playing god in a video game from time to time. I wanted to imagine what would happen if that power existed in-universe. If science in the Pokemon world became so advanced that their understanding of Pokemon was the same as ours. If scientists could create a copy of you that's quantitatively better in every way. What would be the fate of "imperfect" Pokemon and their trainers in this world?

To be perfectly honest, this game is only half the game that I originally wanted to make. In the postgame, the player would travel to the Hoenn region to fight the Hoenn gym leaders, follow up on the Team Genesis storyline, and complete the National Dex. But this ended up being too grand in scope for me, so I settled on finishing up the main game with only a glimpse of the planned postgame. This means that the main story unfortunately ends on a bit of a cliffhanger. I'd like to say that I'll finish the postgame someday, but I'm honestly pretty burnt out on it at the time of writing this. I don't see myself doing any serious game devving again for a long time.

That said, I hope you enjoy playing through Pokemon Tourmaline in its current form. This took a

long time to make, but it was a labor of love, channeling all my fond memories of the games I grew up with. Thanks to those of you who've been with me since the beginning. Reading/ watching your experiences with the game kept me motivated to see it through to completion. Thanks to those of you who volunteered to help with the game in some capacity, no matter how small the contribution, it all adds up in a massive undertaking like this! And finally, thanks to all the pret people without whose diligent work this game would have never been possible.

--Tdilos