



ADV TEAMBUILDING: CONCEPTS OF OFFENSE



by vpicuno,
written for the 2021 ADV OU metagame



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DISCLAIMER

I may not be right. These are concepts gathered from my own experience of playing ADV. Even if I am right, this information is to some extent metagame dependent. This was written at the time of the 2021 metagame and may be out of date.



My Motivation

- I love strategic offense because the options for creative building and play are vastly expanded when momentum comes into the picture
- This is a sharing on general offense teambuilding based on my experiences as a ladder player who occasionally helps with tour prep



What to Expect

- Expect
 - Frameworks in which I think about team archetypes and resources, and hence the strategies I use for making offense work
 - This sharing to be focused on the concepts of strategic offense - disruption, ambiguity, momentum, divide and conquer, and overloading.
 - Examples illustrating some of these concepts, with a team featured at the back
- Do not expect
 - Rules of thumb and “piece counting”. I feel that such metrics are more useful for balanced / tactical offense teams and are utterly restrictive for strategic offensive teams
 - I won't talk much about offenses I consider more well-understood, ie. tactical styles like Spikes and drypass, and perhaps more linear strategic styles like Dugtrio offense



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MY TEAMBUILDING PHILOSOPHY

Follow at your own peril.



My Teambuilding Philosophy

- Evolution is the best teacher: **I don't learn if I don't lose.**
 - I get better when I explore “wrong” plays and team compositions. If I do lose, I learn specifically the circumstances under which the plays / teams are losing and narrow the reasons down, and **find exceptions to the rule.** If I win, I've proven an established paradigm wrong. **Losing is win-win.**
 - I question everything – notions of hax, sacrificing Pokemon on T1, all four moves, EVs, common rules of thumb, common sequences – especially in the context of the metagame.
- Exploit trends
 - The effectiveness of most sets are metagame-dependent. Very few changes are timeless improvements.
 - **Move sequences also follow trends that can be exploited.**
- Understand value in relative terms
 - I rarely find statements like “MixTar is good against TSS” helpful. Instead, I like to ask “how is MixTar **different** from UDTar?” I try to understand tradeoffs about every Pokemon, set, move, EV, move sequence choice as well as I can to make the best optimizations.



My Teambuilding Philosophy

- Do not merely follow common schools of thought; instead, turn them on their head!
 - Special spam doesn't need Mag as it has a move to hit Skarm → Use Mag to free up important moveslots
 - CBMeta is bad with Mag as the point of CBMeta is to boom Skarm → Use CBMeta to lure Skarm to stay in for reliable Mag trap
 - +I DDMence can't OHKO anything; even with Spikes it still gets walled by Gengar and SpDef Zap → Use SubSeed Celebi to chip everything, including flying mons
 - Smeargle HO has a frail defensive backbone, difficult to find an extra slot for anything funky → Win even faster by using double Spikes
 - Skarmory walls physical Leftovers Metagross → But Skarmory also can't do anything while Metagross fishes for raises/crits
- Maximizing upside is as important as minimizing downside. It is okay to lose terribly as long as I win sufficiently more than I lose.
 - Observe: Winning a bo3 tour only requires a winrate of 67%.
 - I think that if I respect my opponent's skill, using teams and making plays that give me okay-ish chances to win all matchups is possibly counterproductive.
 - Having the extra edge in multiple matchups at the expense of being severely behind in one is not just okay, it is good.
 - Being severely behind on TI is okay. It may be painful to face a bad matchup from lead, but my job is to maximize my win %, not to make the most spectacular performance.



My Teambuilding Philosophy

- I favor antifragility

- Antifragility is not merely about resilience – it is about benefitting from unexpected events / variance, which includes not just hax but also lack of information
- Fragile: Teams that have more to lose from things going wrong and heavily neutered by surprises, e.g. Forre+SuitTar balances



- Defensively, tend to have “bottlenecks” – Swampert as the only physical check, Pursuit Tar as the only Gengar answer etc. Many of them look good and “consistent” because they have answers to everything on paper, but remove any element and the team falls apart.
- Offensively, rely on a limited number of offensive resources enabled by a serial chain of events where many things can go wrong. No hard and fast rule on this one, but e.g. relying on unconvincing/scout-able lures.

- Antifragile: Teams that are not only resilient to hax or surprises but use it also as an added bonus, e.g. spamming elemental moves and getting the 15% status/crit chance



- Defensively, have multiple answers to threats even if each of them are individually less robust.
- Offensively, take initiative to seize hax opportunities and have multiple paths to victory.



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TOOLS OF DISRUPTION



What is Disruption?

- Disruption is preventing the opponent's team from fulfilling its gameplan
 - Some people call this “breaking the rhythm”
 - “Uncomfortable moment”
- Offense teams have the best breaking ability when they can exploit many tools of disruption while having counterplay against defensive disruption as well



What are generic gameplans?

- **Balanced gameplan**
 - Predominantly hit-and-run chip with defensive pivoting
 - Clean with sweeper
- **Offensive / Bulky Setup gameplan**
 - Wallbreak/trap, set up and sweep
 - May have both momentum and pivot-based elements
- **Defensive gameplan**
 - Impenetrable wall



Disruption - Terminology

- I am going to call an “offensive disruptor” something that disrupts a defensive strategy, regardless of whether that action appears offensive or defensive
 - Example: In some cases, Rapid Spin is an offensive disruptor because it impedes the defensive team’s strategy of waiting it out with Spikes
- Likewise, a “defensive disruptor” disrupts an offensive strategy, regardless of whether the move appears offensive or defensive
 - Example: Switching Aerodactyl in on CM Celebi is defensive disruption because it prevents CM Celebi from furthering its offense



What is Disruption to Balanced Teams?

- Balanced teams are the most common team style in ADV – they usually use one role per Pokemon.
 - Example: Spikes balance usually looks like this –
Tyranitar, Spiker, phys. wall, spec. wall, spikes support/bulky offense, cleaner
- Balanced teams are very difficult to beat if all Pokemon are fully functional, because they have answers to every threat while making concrete progress with chip damage e.g. Spikes.
- However, unlike select offensive or defensive teams, balanced teams can be exploited because of their lack of role redundancy.
 - Examples:
If Swampert is slept/KOed in a TSS, DD Tar potentially sweeps the entire team.
vs. if DDGyara is slept/KOed in a physical offense, there's still DDMence to sweep.
- **Disruption is preventing a Pokemon from fulfilling its role.**
- Since cleaners are usually well-preserved, disrupting balanced teams is rather similar to disrupting defensive teams.



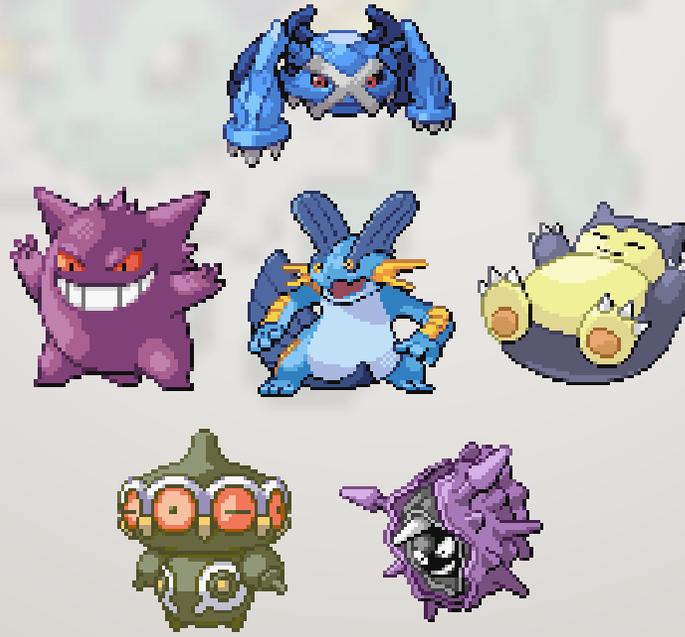
Offensive Disruptors

- Trappers
 - Most straightforward disruptor by eliminating a specific target
 - Most effective when the opponent can be lured into the trap via BP or role redundancy (explained later in lures)
 - Not the focus of this sharing as trappers are generally well-understood



Offensive Disruptors

- Explosion / Self-Destruct (/Endeavor)
 - Either eliminates an important role or forces chip on Rock/Steel
 - Enables all sorts of setup sweepers and Aerodactyl
 - Ends turns to prevent recovery/setup/force switch for momentum/Spikes damage
 - Endeavor is similar to booms by forcing a trade



Offensive Disruptors

- Sleep



- Temporarily disables the role that the slept Pokémon plays
- Two ways to use sleep: Early game and late game, with different goals
- Early game sleep: Highly beneficial to pivot-style (non-trapper/boom) mixed offense as they tend to have resources to break through whichever role has been disabled
- Late game sleep: Highly beneficial to trade-style offense, where trading down to a 3v3 makes Sleep very difficult to deal with when every Pokémon alive becomes more significant
- Sleep turns, given their short-lasting nature, should be optimally exploited with high paced moves.
 - Example: Don't Leech Seed with Venusaur early game after Sleep!
 - Conversely, many times it is better not to switch to sleep sac but stay in if the sleeping Pokémon can't exactly hurt you (e.g. Hypno Gar vs Metagross). There is a 50% chance of wake after 2 sleep turns (1st burnt on the Sleep turn by being slower)



Less obvious Offensive Disruptors

- Deception and Ambiguity (next 2nd slide)



- Taunt
 - Prevents phazing, recovery, status, and Spikes



- Toxic
 - Disrupts checks when unexpected
 - Example: Metagross' Toxic on non-Refresh Swampert or Zapdos
 - Disrupts Natural Cure mons by forcing a switch
 - Simple Example: ProTox Skarm forces out Starmie
 - Less obvious Example: Toxic Mag forces out status-less Blissey to land Toxic or Thunderbolt on something else
 - Complex Example: Toxic Zap forces out Blissey so that SubCM Jirachi can get an extra turn to set up



Less obvious Offensive Disruptors

- Rapid Spin



- Nullifies role of the Spiker especially after being taken out
- Can be thought of as a matchup division tool: use to support bulky offense against stall, else use the spinner offensively otherwise.

- Speed Pass



- Disrupts revenge kills
- Helps CMers bypass Dugtrio

- Paralysis



- In long-drawn games, full paralysis helps to break through Recover/Protect users
- In offense games, Forced/Lured Paralysis via TWave Gyarados or Stun Spore Breloom disables revenge killers

- Knock Off



- More of a stall/balanced tool that still fits the definition of a disruptor



Deception and Ambiguity

- Unexpected moves



- Example: feigning different Tyranitar sets with Lum Ice/Grass/EQ/FP Tyranitar in my Agility Pass Zapdos team

- Forced scouting – wear down your opponent scouting a move that you don't have



- Example: Set-unrevealed HP Rock Gyarados can use Earthquake to catch Tyranitar even if the opponent has Celebi

- Exploiting your opponent's respect for the ambiguity of your sets



- Example: Liechi/Salac DD Tar because everyone expects Lum Berry
- Example: Dugtrio avoids coming in on full HP DD Tar for fear that it is bulky, even though your set is Jolly.



Deception and Ambiguity

- Role redundancy to hide Pokemon / sets



- Example: Using CB Meta + Magneton to encourage Skarmory to stay in thinking no Mag behind



- Example: Using Forretress + Claydol to encourage opponent to sac the Spiker when Forre is removed only to reveal Claydol behind later

- Wrong footing your opponent



- Example: Set-unrevealed Aerodactyl/Zapdos/Flygon can Substitute on a predicted sacrifice

- Encouraging wrong sacrifices given unrevealed teammates



- Example: Sleep sac-ing Pursuit Tyranitar in the presence of unrevealed Gengar



Good Conditions for Deception and Ambiguity

- Deception is better under the following conditions

- High pressure – discourages scouting

- Example: DD Grass Tyranitar

- Example: Sleep destabilizes defensive backbones and discourages scouting

- Unrevealed Pokemon

- Example: Would you have expected DDMence last instead of EndPert on CBMeta/Mag/Cel/Gyara/Tar? If you didn't keep your Celebi instead of Swampert, you lose.

- Versatile Pokemon

- Example: Jirachi is very versatile. If unrevealed Jirachi set only has Thunderbolt + HP Grass, the opponent is still almost certain to go to the safe check i.e. Tyranitar, instead of Salamence for fear of Ice Punch.

- Generally more effective on offensive than balanced teams because continuous pressure discourages easy scouting and mons are revealed sequentially



What is Disruption to Offensive Teams?

- Offensive teams usually choose their targets for wallbreaking and assume that with enough chip, they can win from behind, even at the expense of being behind in numbers
- Offensive teams are difficult to stop if walls are chipped/eliminated and sweepers set up
- Above notably applies to spikeless (physical, special, and mixed) offense, but is a rather general principle
- **Disruption is nullifying an offense team's wallbreaking or sweeping attempts**



Defensive (sometimes offensive) Disruptors

- Wish



- Revives a Pokemon that has a good matchup to fend off wallbreaking
- Potent anti-offense tool
- Also an offensive disruptor to heal back an offensive threat that has a good matchup

- Phazing



- Prevents setup most notably of Dragon Dance and Calm Mind
- Need to consider what to do in last-mon scenario
- Also an offensive disruptor to maintain momentum and rack up Spikes damage to place walls two steps behind crucial turn

- Status



- Toxic/paralysis limit setup opportunities



Defensive Disruptors

- Intimidate

- Nullifies Dragon Dance and forces mind games



- Fast physical offense

- CB Aerodactyl/Salamence/Flygon are Celebi-pass chain cutters and anti-SuperRachi/SuperCel

- Priority, i.e. Breloom's Mach Punch stops DDTar

- Differ from usual bulky checks in the sense that they do not even allow a trade, losing significant momentum

- Offensive sequence disruptors

- Flygon is unaffected by physical wallbreaking via Spikes or HP Grass

- Moltres shields physical walls from Metagross and Blissey from Gengar's WoW

- Zapdos and Jolteon are special walls that lure in other special walls, instead of luring in physically powerful breakers



Takeaway

- Offense teams have the best breaking ability when they can exploit many tools of disruption while having counterplay against defensive disruption as well



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFENSE



Tactical vs. Strategic Offensive Styles

- Tactical styles focus on the turn-by-turn and are more intent on producing loops that slowly dismantle the opponent's defensive backbone
 - Examples: Spikes balance, Drypass / Wishpass to Fighters / CBers
 - Pivot-based; Hit and Run; require a decent backbone
 - Complementary defensive type synergy important to be effective
 - Sequences end in loops
 - Generally favored to win with more Pokemon left
 - Win by making more good reads than opponent
- Strategic styles are more focused on choosing and sticking to a gameplan to disrupt opponent's defensive backbone
 - Examples: ZapDug special offense, DD spam offense, Smeargle offense
 - Trapper-, trade- or momentum-based; may be able to get away with a weaker backbone
 - Employ disruption and ambiguity to be effective
 - Sequences end in trades
 - Generally favored to win with the correct Pokemon left
 - Win by successful disruption and making good assumptions about team composition



Pros and Cons of Tactical and Strategic Styles

- Tactical styles
 - Easier to build and reuse
 - But tend to have a smaller information advantage, i.e. easier for opponent to scout and outpredict due to cyclical nature of the battle.
 - Gains/Losses are incremental, i.e. dependent on outcome of loop interaction
- Strategic styles
 - Harder to build and prone to failing if the opponent knows the team and plan
 - But less prediction reliant because the advantage can be gained from ambiguity
 - Gains/Losses are larger, i.e. dependent on success of trapping, luring, trading etc.
- Understanding if your team is more strategic or tactical will help you figure out sets as well as the balance of offense vs defense



Offensive Tactics (not focus of this sharing)

- Hit-and-run Spikes
 - Using Spikes so that even resisted attacks sting
 - All purpose tactical game-plan of placing checks into range of KO.
 - Relatively well understood by many, will not be the focus of this sharing
- Hit-and-run (Dry Pass)
 - Using Zapdos/Celebi/Vaporeon/Jolteon to provide repeated entry opportunities for physical punishers ie. Fighters, Tyranitar, Metagross, Snorlax



Offensive Strategies: Divide and Conquer

- Divide and Conquer
 - Dominant tool of (but not restricted to) mixed offense
 - Some Pokemon are almost never used together because they serve similar functions. Divide your team into threats that tackle each of these matchups separately.
 - Example: Weezing mixed offense uses Weezing to lure Milotic while Fire/Grass coverage tackles Swampert.
- **Divide and Conquer splits resources hitting on two fronts, so disruption is paramount!**



Offensive Strategies: Overloading

- Overloading
 - Piling up with enough pressure on either the physical side, special side, or particular checks until they crack
 - Example: Physical offense, Mageton offense, special offense
 - Spikes HO can be considered more of a strategy than a tactic because the broader picture is to put the right amount of chip onto checks for a OHKO



Making Progress: Physical/Special Differences

- Fundamental differences exist between physical and special interactions in ADV
- In terms of walling ability
 - Physical walls do not actively heal / are bad at walling or healing 
 - Special walls actively heal and defend well 
- In terms of offense
 - Physical offense is usually slower / fast ones are Choice-locked. 
 - Special offense (apart from CMers) is faster 
- Consequently, most breaking is done on the physical side, or by using trappers, or Spikes, or forcing out special walls.



DIVIDE AND CONQUER



Divide and Conquer

- Divide and conquer is less straightforward to conceptualize than overloading because it is inadequate to divide and conquer on a single pair of Pokemon but the cores that come with it
 - Can't always just slap on Jirachi and consider the Milotic problem solved because it also comes with Dugtrio and Claydol
- **To help dismantle cores, need to use disruption!**
 - Example: Sleep allows you to dismantle cores with fewer resources (disabling Claydol above to help Jirachi, for example)
- Divide and conquer can also be performed on sets
 - Example: Aero/TauntRockGyara divides Drill Peck Skarm and Toxic Skarm, assuming a meta where only one of DP/Toxic is used
 - Example: Offensive Rest Suicune divides offensive and defensive matchups (see Speed Pass video)
- Some divisions can be metagame-dependent
- The following slides show some basic frameworks for divide and conquer of common backbones



Triangle of Physical (Water) Backbones

Revenge



- Don't overemphasize wallbreaking with bulky offense that you just lose to sweepers / revenge killers
- Dugtrio is more likely to trap physicals should they be used more as pivots than momentum-maintaining pieces

Divide and Conquer



- Refresh pert belongs here esp. if used with dug

SkarmPert (TSS)

MiloDugDol

- Weak to Fire/Grass
- Weak to Toxic
- Weak to Offensive Waters

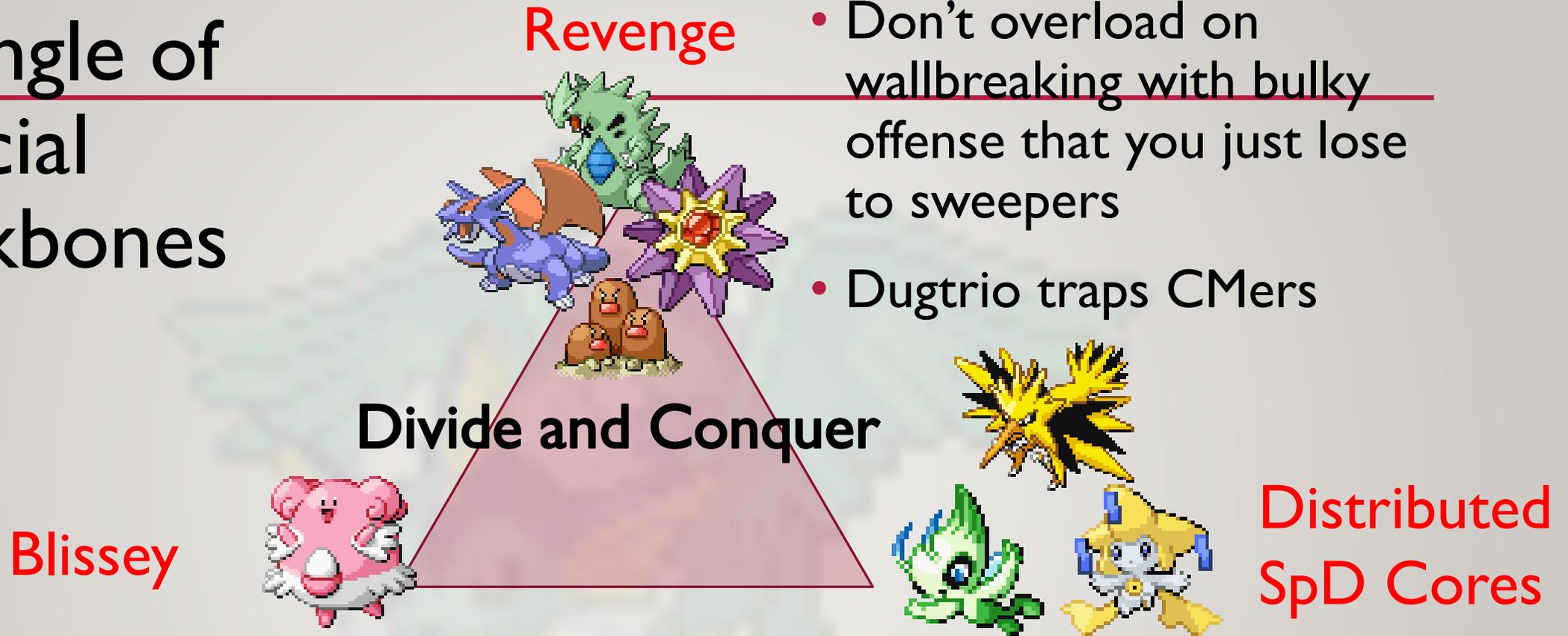
- Weak to hard hitting STAB
- Weak to Ice/Electric
- Weak to Calm Mind
- Weak to Snorlax
- Easier Metagross boom/mash raise targets
- Lack of Ice Beam can be exploited

Others to Note:

- Fighters/Flygon as Rock resist
- Mence+Meta cores usually taken care of well in this framework, but requires prediction
- Zap/Molt as Metagross checks



Triangle of Special Backbones



- Don't overload on wallbreaking with bulky offense that you just lose to sweepers
- Dugtrio traps CMers

- Weak to Fighting/Bulky Physicals (especially with BP)
- Weak to RestTalk Suicune
- Weak to SpD Dug

- Weak to Fire/Ice
- Weak to Offensive CM
- Weak to Offensive Starmie/Suicune
- Weak to DDMence
- Despite Dug weak, usually comes with Dug counterplay

Others to Note:

- Tyranitar as Electric and CM check
- Snorlax without sand
- Skarmory as CM check
- Heracross/Jolteon/Flygon all threaten specials in some way



Quiz Time: Identify elements of D&C

- Q: How does this team of mine (2019) employ divide and conquer?
<https://pokepast.es/8acaea68f5542963>

[gen3ou] final/**SubSalacVap GrassLoom BoltBeamSubRachi**



- A: Consider the division of bulky waters
 - All-matchup disruption: Sleep from Breloom
 - Swampert teams: Offensive Vaporeon, Grass Breloom and Charizard have a good matchup against TSS. If Tyranitar can be Dug'd and Swampert weakened, Jirachi can sweep.
 - Milotic teams: Breloom lures opposing Dugtrio, which gets counter-trapped by my own Dugtrio, and SubRachi beats Milotic. Claydol likely to be sleep sac'd.
 - Offensive threats: Salac Vaporeon reverses momentum on Zap, Snorlax can boom in a pinch vs DDMence and Jirachi can withstand Starmie. Admittedly a bit weak to Aerodactyl, but EQ/Rock resists are present and CB lock prevents run-away sweep



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Quiz Time: Identify elements of D&C

- Q: How does this team of Altina's (2021) employ divide and conquer?
<https://replay.pokemonshowdown.com/smogtours-gen3ou-574537>

[gen3ou] CBMeta SuperBi CroCune MixTar Dol DDMence



- A: Consider the division of special backbones
 - All-matchup disruption: CB Meta/Claydol double boom lures Zapdos for Suicune, Waters for DDMence, Steels for SuperBi
 - Blissey/Jirachi teams: RestTalk Suicune sweeps, SuperBi baits boom
 - Defensive Celebi teams: SuperBi + DDMence threatens
 - Offensive threats: DDMence sweeps
- Consider the division of physical backbones
 - Swampert: MixTar pressures
 - Defensive Suicune: DDMence pressures
 - Milotic + Dugtrio: RestTalk Suicune pressures



OVERLOADING



The Goldilocks Theorem (Important!)

- A lure has to be not too weak, not too strong, but just right against the Pokemon that it is trying to lure
 - Reason: Need to convince your opponent that the lure target is the best choice for receiving damage
 - Too strong: Target ends up pivoting out
 - Too weak: Not breaking



The Goldilocks Theorem (Important!)

- **Counterintuitive conclusions!**
 - If your team is weak to Skarmory, slapping on **Zapdos** does not necessarily help, because it **does not even get the chance to hit Skarmory!** You might be better off giving the physical attackers / special walls more punch against Skarmory (e.g. Leech Seed + HP Fire Celebi).
 - HP Grass Metagross appears to lure Swampert, but after Protect reveals HP Grass, Skarmory comes back in. **HP Grass Metagross's true target is Skarmory, not Swampert!**
 - Tyranitar might end up consistently **breaking better vs Skarmory** teams by using **Focus Punch instead of Fire Blast** because it is harder to pivot around!



Overloading Skarmory

- Skarmory chippers should ideally
 - Hit it moderately hard with **no easy pivot** out of Skarmory
 - Be unaffected by Toxic
 - Resist Drill Peck
 - Switch in well under Spikes
- All sets below make it difficult for Skarmory's teammates to pivot in comfortably
- Ideally, should also prevent free Wish turns



+ Teammates

Focus Punch
Knock Off
Spore



Overload



Focus Punch
Lum Berry



HP Grass
Leftovers
Choice Band



Mixed

TBolt/Flame
Toxic



Offensive
Offensive SubPass



Leech Seed
HP Fire



Overloading Physicals with Setup Sweepers

- While Dragon Dancers and Calm Minders appear to be on completely opposite sides of the physical/special, speed/bulk split, they are actually very similar in checks.
 - Physical Tyranitar, Metagross, Snorlax, and surprisingly, Blissey
- DDers and CMers (amongst others) break this physical scarymon trio for each other



Endeavor 

Offensive (CurseBoom) 

Mixed 

(Sub)Seed 

Mixed 

Spikes Boom 

Overloading Hoverers (excluding Skarmory)

- Loosely speaking, hovering Pokemon have some common properties that can be exploited; generally speaking,
 - Pursuit-able
 - Chipped by Fighters, Celebi, MixMence/Charizard, and Metagross
 - Fast and offensive but frail (outspeeding naturally/via boosting wins)
 - Damage sticks (no sand immunity or CB)
 - Tend to invite booms from mons strong vs groundeds: Dol, Cloy, MixMeta
 - Easy to chip, difficult to eliminate
 - Weak to Starmie (more a divide-and-conquer than overloading thing)
- The following groups of hoverers have similar defensive roles



Quiz Time: Identify elements of overloading

- Q: What are the elements of overloading in Hclat's team (SPL 2021)?

Replay: <https://replay.pokemonshowdown.com/smogtours-gen3ou-537302>

Team: <https://pokepast.es/212afd9c22137d6f>



- A: The team overloads hoverers for Reversal Scizor and Starmie to clean
 - Breloom chips Flying-types with Focus Punch
 - Metagross chips/removes Zapdos with Meteor Mash + Rock Slide
 - Salamence chips Zapdos and Gengar, and being defensively invested also lures and encourages opposing Salamence to trade
 - Salamence lures and removes Aerodactyl with Hydro Pump
 - Pursuit Tyranitar chips Gengar, Moltres, and CBMence



Quiz Time: Gameplan of this team?

- Q: What is the gameplan of Ojama's team (2019) in this replay? What are the disruptors, and what exploits this disruption?

<https://replay.pokemonshowdown.com/smogtours-gen3ou-448398>

[gen3ou] Ojama BPZap CBGon DDBugTar CloyMagDol



- A: Consider the mentioned framework
 - Disruptors are Mag (trapper) and CloyDol (two booms)
 - Divide and conquer grounded/hovering via Flygon + DD Tar
 - Once Skarm is removed by Mag, the team has two boomers that have a tendency to attract (overload) hoverers but doesn't require them to be necessarily removed. Should hoverers get removed though, CB Gon shreds. Should grounded resists get chipped by boom, DD Tar sweeps.



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MOMENTUM



Momentum

- Momentum is generally about keeping up the pressure and taking time away from your opponent, even if occasionally it requires a sacrifice.
- Many teams, especially offensive ones, require a keen sense of when it is the right time to use momentum instead of pivoting around. It is definitely not restricted to the late game.
- **How does this idea affect builds and plays?**

3:15 PM dice i think that offense is one of those things that is rly hard to grip for players because

dice it is where u have to build with intentional redundancy

dice and standard teambuilding guides & practices steer u away from redundancy

Momentum as “switch advantage”

dice so comparing offense to defensive matchups and play is so very difficult because there it is practically apples and oranges. when ur discussing defensive teams, it's much easier to pinpoint and be like 'u are weak to ddtar' and it is more legitimate because it is not about accruing momentum, wearing down shared checks

dice offense is about crafting a team that can maintain a set pace with dudes hellbent on weakening the opposing select threats just enough so one of them can scrape thru. holes are acceptable because, in most situations, ur threats are able to pose enough threat that you do damage -> weaken -> get switch advantage (edited)

i.e. momentum

dice switch advantage is very very important

i.e. overloading

dice offense is all about redundancy. defense cannot afford redundancy because its trying to cover enough so that it can wear u down and win with its own more select gameplan

dice and the gameplan is typically reliant on elements like spikes and sand

The Irony about Momentum

vapicuno I would go as far as to say that if an offense looks like its too defensively sound, its probably not a good offense

vapicuno 🤔

vapicuno Building a good offense to me is frequently about finding the defensive holes u can cheat on a bit to gain a huge upside in offensive potential

vapicuno And that means using every resource at hand, little things like using mag to cover meta, zap, aero

- Utilizing momentum efficiently means gaining more offensive power and transferring some defensive roles into counter-offensive roles, which might not be obvious at first glance
 - This can be done for all threats, including Starmie, DDMence, and SubAero, but the answer is not straightforward for these. Need to think about the chronology of the game to deal with these.
- As such, **better offenses ironically, on plain sight, appear less “consistent” and have “defensive holes”**



Momentum: Implications on Builds and Plays

- Coupled with **ambiguity and deception**, momentum takes time away from opponent to scout.
- In terms of teambuilding, having a good understanding of momentum also helps one to **minimize defensive backbone in lieu of stronger offense while still having counterplays against threats.**
- **Momentum places luck in your favor** – attacking instead of pivoting means you are providing crits and status instead of getting crit and status'ed.
 - The effect can be surprisingly big., e.g. in a Zapdos mirror, if you are faster and losing the next hit, clicking Thunderbolt lands you 15% chance of crit/para, whereas pivoting to say Tyranitar means your opponent gets that 15% advantage. The differential is about 30% or 1/3, not small!
- **Ambiguity, deception, and luck, backed by momentum, helps teams win against shaky matchups**



Specific uses of Momentum

- “Control the tempo”: Get into better positions by transforming a high-risk, high-return situation into a low-risk, definite return situation
 - Example: early game pivot of Zapdos vs Salamence into Metagross vs Special Wall
- To flip situations around by neutralizing/reversing damage
 - Example: booms, Salac Berry
- To force sequences that result in a favorable trade / winning endgame, even if the opponent has a Pokemon that can potentially sweep
 - Example: DD Mence + DD DE Gyara vs chipped Zap, Hera, TTar. DD Gyara is in on Hera, DDs and forces a trade with TTar; DD Mence follows up, DDs on Intimidated RS and sweeps. Zap has no opportunity to sweep.
- To defend against setup sweepers
 - Example: Fighting coverage prevents DD Tar from getting to +2 despite having to sacrifice



Three Core Concepts of Momentum

- Reversal – Feeding off damage to turn situations around
 - Torrent/Blaze, Endeavor
 - Salac Berry (+Endure) – commonly overlooked e.g.: activating EndPert’s Salac via Spikes
 - Dragon Dance while tanking a hit
- Neutralization – “Get out of jail” card in case you get outplayed
 - Explosion/Self-Destruct/Destiny Bond to remove an offensive threat
 - Revenge killing – esp. Dug as a foolproof revenge killer; Moltres shreds offense but vice versa
 - Sleep – e.g., getting Breloom into Skarmory
 - Intimidate Sac in the face of Dragon Dancers
 - Spikes Sac – takes one turn away from a mid-speed/set up threat
- Maintenance – Always being one turn ahead
 - Dragon Dance and Calm Mind – boost to keep fast/weak offenses at bay
 - Baton Pass – keep your boosts/subs regardless of the opponent’s options
 - Sub+Seed – prevents threats from forcing switches, or even if they do, prevent them from predicting as they are forced to click the move that breaks Sub
 - Setup prevention moves – e.g. Fighting coverage for DDTar, Roar-till-sac



Quiz Time: How is momentum used here?

- Q: How do I avoid losing to Starmie when my whole team is weak to it? Can you identify the elements of momentum and the ambiguity that supports it?

<https://pokepast.es/ea74262205422c17>



- A: Regarding Ambiguity supporting momentum,
 - Main entry point is Celebi, but opponent needs to scout Celebi's set as it is versatile
 - Opponent does not know Magnetron has EndSalac – reliably forces Starmie out
 - At this point of writing, HP Ghost Gyarados is still a new idea and lures Starmie into attempting to check it
 - To help with the lure, Gyarados' possibility of having Taunt dissuades Blissey from entry
 - Opponent does not know that Tyranitar does not have HP Bug, and fears RS flinch anyway, so will preferentially not check Tyranitar with Starmie
 - If mons are revealed in order of Meta/Mag/Cel to Ttar/Mence/Gyara, opponent does not know that I can ride the momentum off triple DD, and will tend to bring Starmie in safely instead of using it as a check



Quiz Time: How is momentum used here?

- Q: How do I avoid losing to Starmie when my whole team is weak to it? Can you identify the elements of momentum and the ambiguity that supports it?

<https://pokepast.es/ea74262205422c17>



- A: Regarding Momentum,
 - Ambiguity allows the team to chip the opponent's team before Starmie is revealed
 - Main entry point early-game is Celebi, even if Celebi's moves have been scouted, Celebi can still Slow-SubPass to Metagross. Sub helps Celebi avoid losing momentum when its checks come in
 - Once we get to endgame, there is one opportunity to win without giving Starmie a chance to reverse-sweep
 - Force Starmie out with EndSalac Magneon
 - Get DDTar in, lock the opponent into the bulky water
 - Get DDGyara in and sweep
 - How am I confident that Gyarados' coverage is sufficient for this one opportunity?
 - Starmie rarely comes with Aerodactyl, and the team is designed to chip all the other checks earlier.



Quiz Time: How is momentum used here?

- Q: This team has two Rock resists without leftovers. How does it withstand the onslaught of and beat Aerodactyl?

<https://pokepast.es/ea74262205422c17>



- A: Use momentum loss from CB lock to set up DDMence
 - Early game, only safe entry for Aerodactyl is Celebi, which has Sub to scout Aerodactyl's moves
 - Break the opponent's defenses before Aerodactyl comes out, so that DDMence can sweep
 - Example: POWC 2021 - Astamatitos using my team to beat CyberOdin's Aero
 - <https://replay.pokemonshowdown.com/gen3ou-1319647516>
 - By T15, the team is primed for DDMence sweep: Swampert has been eliminated and Tyranitar chipped
 - T17 onward, Astamatitos is just waiting for an EQ lock from Aerodactyl or Dugtrio to set up DDMence, which CyberOdin tries to avoid but sacs everything else to do so.



Closing thoughts before illustrations

- Strategic offense is admittedly hard to build and reuse, but opens up many possibilities for exploration
- What it lacks in consistency and repeated usage, it makes up for with the benefit of ambiguity and huge upside
- PS: Strategic offense is fun!



ILLUSTRATION OF CONCEPTS



Team Sharing

- Here I will share an attempt to integrate as many ideas of disruption, deception, divide and conquer, overloading, and momentum as I can into one team.
- How would you set this team? How do you think I did it?

Hint is in the name



[gen3ou] final/**I don't respect skarm**



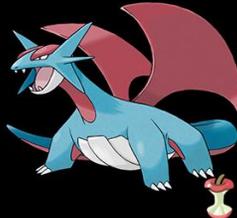
- I topped ladder with it starting from <1500 elo. Not saying that this is a consistent team; I'll give it about 7/10 for a mixed offense. All divide-and-conquer based teams will necessarily have blind spots, but also have good upsides. Good enough for a bo3!

[Gen 3] OU Top 500

	Name	Elo	GXE	Glicko-1
1	33o未必古诺o33	1659	87.4%	1868 ± 49



Notice some peculiarities...

 <p>Florizarre (Venusaur) @ Leftovers Ability: Overgrow EVs: 8 HP / 192 SpA / 56 SpD / 252 Spe Timid Nature IVs: 2 Atk / 30 Def - Sleep Powder - Leech Seed - Hidden Power [Ice] - Giga Drain</p>	<p>Double Ice</p> <p>Strange Zard Set</p> <p>Weird Bulky DD Mence</p> <p>4 Pokemon that don't seem to touch Skarmory</p>	 <p>Dracaufeu (Charizard) @ Leftovers Ability: Blaze EVs: 4 Atk / 252 SpA / 252 Spe Hasty Nature - Fire Blast - Brick Break - Beat Up - Hidden Power [Ice]</p>
 <p>Léviator (Gyarados) @ Leftovers Ability: Intimidate EVs: 24 HP / 252 Atk / 232 Spe Jolly Nature - Dragon Dance - Taunt - Earthquake - Hidden Power [Rock]</p>		 <p>Drattak (Salamence) @ Leftovers Ability: Intimidate EVs: 252 HP / 88 Atk / 44 Def / 56 SpD / 68 Spe Adamant Nature IVs: 30 SpA / 30 SpD / 30 Spe - Hidden Power [Flying] - Earthquake - Rock Slide - Dragon Dance</p>
 <p>Métalosse (Metagross) @ Leftovers Ability: Clear Body EVs: 248 HP / 140 Atk / 60 SpA / 60 Spe Naughty Nature - Explosion - Hidden Power [Grass] - Meteor Mash - Earthquake</p>		 <p>Jirachi @ Leftovers Ability: Serene Grace EVs: 252 HP / 80 SpA / 176 Spe Modest Nature IVs: 2 Atk / 30 SpA - Substitute - Calm Mind - Thunderbolt - Hidden Power [Grass]</p>



How could this team possibly work?

- Admittedly, weird to use a bunch of physical Pokemon without Magnetron, CB Metagross, or Spikes
- But I want to demonstrate **how to think out of the box by employing every resource**
- Using disruption, deception, and divide and conquer, I don't specifically target Skarmory, but make it uncomfortable for the balanced/defensive teams it is built around.
- Using overloading afforded by disruption, I target Skarmory with the Steel-types
- To make up for the tenuous defensive backbone, the offense is momentum-supported



Disruption leads to successful Deception

- Lead Venusaur immediately destabilizes opposing balance teams with Sleep Powder.
 - Slept Tyranitar/Skarmory paves the way for DD Mence, DD Gyara and CM Rachi
- Charizard is a prime candidate for deception – **high pressure, versatile**
 - Standard Charizard sets use HP Grass and Substitute, discouraging Swampert switch-ins and scouting attempts
 - Salamence and Flygon are comparatively safe switch-ins
- Because **Sleep has already destabilized the opponent, scouting opportunities are limited**, e.g. switching back to Tyranitar on potentially SubPunch Zard is disastrous
- Thus, it encourages the opponent to assume that if they see HP Ice on one of Venu/Zard, the other probably doesn't have it



Florizarre (Venusaur) @ Leftovers

Ability: Overgrow

EVs: 8 HP / 192 SpA / 56 SpD / 252 Spe

Timid Nature

IVs: 2 Atk / 30 Def

- Sleep Powder

- Leech Seed

- Hidden Power [Ice]

- Giga Drain



Dracaufeu (Charizard) @ Leftovers

Ability: Blaze

EVs: 4 Atk / 252 SpA / 252 Spe

Hasty Nature

- Fire Blast

- Brick Break

- Beat Up

- Hidden Power [Ice]

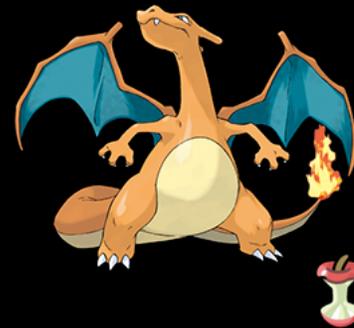
Why HP Ice? Mitigating Defensive Disruption

- Salamence's Intimidate is detrimental for the team's Dragon Dance sweepers
- Preventing Wish
 - Charizard's **Fire Blast + Beat Up + HP Ice** also cover the three main Wishers – Jirachi, Blissey, and Salamence



Florizarre (Venusaur) @ Leftovers
Ability: Overgrow
EVs: 8 HP / 192 SpA / 56 SpD / 252 Spe
Timid Nature
IVs: 2 Atk / 30 Def

- Sleep Powder
- Leech Seed
- Hidden Power [Ice]
- Giga Drain



Dracaufeu (Charizard) @ Leftovers
Ability: Blaze
EVs: 4 Atk / 252 SpA / 252 Spe
Hasty Nature

- Fire Blast
- Brick Break
- Beat Up
- Hidden Power [Ice]

Divide and Conquer: Venusaur and Charizard

- On the special side, Charizard has the three main special walls covered – Blissey with **Beat Up**, Jirachi and Celebi with **Fire Blast**
- Good chance to KO Blissey with Beat Up given the difficulty of scouting
- On the physical (bulky water) side, the defensive Water-types (Milotic, Suicune, Starmie) that dare to pivot in usually lack Ice Beam, so all of them are stonewalled by Venusaur.



Florizarre (Venusaur) @ Leftovers
Ability: Overgrow
EVs: 8 HP / 192 SpA / 56 SpD / 252 Spe
Timid Nature
IVs: 2 Atk / 30 Def
- Sleep Powder
- Leech Seed
- Hidden Power [Ice]
- Giga Drain



Dracaufeu (Charizard) @ Leftovers
Ability: Blaze
EVs: 4 Atk / 252 SpA / 252 Spe
Hasty Nature
- **Fire Blast**
- Brick Break
- **Beat Up**
- Hidden Power [Ice]

Divide and Conquer: General Plan

- **Skarm + Pert teams** are broken by Charizard, HP Grass Metagross, and HP Grass Jirachi
- **Mono-Water (Milotic/Suicune/Starmie) teams** are pivoted by Venusaur, broken with Metagross' Explosion, and swept with Jirachi or Taunt Gyarados.
 - Explosion, Sleep, and Taunt are disruptive tools used to break the otherwise endless recovery cycle of mono-water teams
- All Pokemon, especially DD Salamence participate in taking on offense



Skarmory: From Disruption to Overloading

- If a Pokemon has already been slept (e.g. Tyranitar or Claydol), chances are that it is difficult for any teammate to come in on one or both of HP Grass Jirachi and HP Grass Metagross. This **disruption** forces Skarmory to be **overloaded**.
- While Skarmory appears to wall Metagross, it cannot do anything to it except phaze, which Metagross can recover off Spikes damage with Leftovers and continue mashing.
- Exploding on Skarmory is possible but not necessary, and sometimes even detrimental because e.g. Aerodactyl KOing Metagross provides the setup turn for a DD Salamence or Gyarados sweep
- Even the physical attackers can do some divide and conquer
 - ✓ Toxic ✗ Drill Peck – Taunt Gyarados can potentially sweep
 - ✗ Toxic ✓ Drill Peck – Salamence can potentially sweep
 - ✓ Toxic ✓ Drill Peck ✗ Roar – Metagross cannot be phased
 - ✓ Toxic ✓ Drill Peck ✓ Roar ✗ Protect – Weak
- Admittedly, SkarmDug is hard, but Gyarados + Salamence can get past Suicune

[gen3ou] final/I don't respect skarm



Overloading: General Plan

- Recall that **Dragon Dancers and Calm Minders break bulky physicals for each other**
- Metagross is the **universal bulky Water wallbreaker**
- Venusaur's Leech Seed provides the tiny amount of **chip on Gengar** to put it into +1 Salamence OHKO and +1 CM Rachi 2HKO range
- HP Ice on Venusaur and Charizard **remove opposing Salamence**



Momentum as Defense and Offense

- Pivoting ability against offensive threats is low on this team
 - Physically, uses Intimidate with offensive Steels
 - Specially, only has Venusaur as Zapdos check, Charizard as a one-time Gengar pivot, and only three Pokemon are qualified to take on Starmie
- How can we use momentum both as a defensive tool and to provide offensive opportunities?

[gen3ou] final/**I don't respect skarm**



Momentum as Physical Defense

- Recall **momentum reversal**, **neutralization**, and **maintenance**
- Physical momentum compensations
 - Don't wait to pivot around Tyranitar – its main entry points are Charizard and Jirachi.
 - **Brick Break with Charizard even if it means sacrificing** (and sometimes you get away with it if Tyranitar doesn't RS). This importantly **chips Tyranitar for the setup sweepers**.
 - **Jirachi Calm Minds before Tyranitar comes in to prevent it from getting to +2**
 - Two options for **Intimidate pivoting if really necessary**
 - **HP bulk DD Mence is EV'ed to survive Rock Slide most of the time. More than just neutralizing Tyranitar's DD, it can even set up on Tyranitar**
 - **Overgrow on Venusaur allows it to win the 1v1 vs DD Tar**
 - Metagross is highly pressured to Explode on Charizard because of the **threat of Blaze**. This helps the setup sweepers once again.



Momentum as Special Defense

- Recall **momentum reversal**, **neutralization**, and **maintenance**
- Special momentum compensations
 - Don't wait to attack Zapdos and Gengar
 - **Don't Sleep lead Zapdos with Venusaur. HP Ice immediately.** Falling behind if Sleep Powder misses or Zapdos Subs, lands a Thunder Wave and BPs out keeps it more threatening late-game. HP Ice also importantly **chips Zapdos for the setup sweepers.**
 - **Charizard outspeeds or at least ties a good proportion of Zapdos, letting it deal severe damage even if it needs to be sacrificed**
 - **If Charizard is down, attack Gengar even at the expense of getting burnt.** Gengar's defensive utility is highly dependent on it being at full HP. Burnt Metagross can still force Gengar out
 - **DD Mence is EV'ed to survive Ice Punch most of the time, and get to +2**
 - Offensive Starmie is admittedly difficult as with most mixed offense, but
 - **Overgrow on Venusaur allows it to pivot into Hydro Pump and OHKO back after Ice Beam**
 - **Metagross can Explode if really necessary**



Momentum as Offense

- Recall **momentum reversal**, **neutralization**, and **maintenance**
- In using momentum as defense via chip damage, it is already used as offense
- But the team still needs to seize the opportunity before getting swept
- Steels + Dragon Dancers provide these opportunities via a **forcing/luring sequence**
 - Steels generally force in bulky Pokemon or pivot in on CB EQ which DDerers can set up on
 - CM Jirachi forces in Tyranitar, sacrifices itself and lets in a DDer safely
 - Likewise, a DDer can set up the other DDer
 - Metagross can pivot into late-game Aerodactyl knowing that if it is locked into EQ, DDerers can sweep



Quiz Time: MixMence > DD Mence?

- Q: MixMence is frequently seen as the “better” Salamence, with higher immediate damage output and wider coverage. Moreover, with the lack of Skarmory coverage on this team, would it not be the better Salamence?
- A: It’s about momentum. Some considerations:
 - It’s not just what Salamence can do to what’s in front of it, but also what comes after. MixMence may be able to KO Tyranitar without losing HP, but if it freely lets in Zapdos or Gengar right after, other mons get KOed instead. The backbone of this team is not sturdy enough to pivot defensively for MixMence to shine.
 - Related to above: MixMence’s wide coverage is actually a double-edged sword without speed. It does not force in particular targets, but chips whatever results from the opponent’s pivot sequence to get around your coverage. Forcing sequences are better for setting up DD Gyarados
 - Avoid underestimating the momentum reversing abilities of defensive EVs on DD Mence. The difference between having those EVs and not is a Salamence at +2 and a KOed Salamence, which can be a very big difference.



Other team specifics

- Venusaur

- IMO, Venusaur should take a risk-averse approach to Sleep and avoid situations where Venusaur might be KOed without any progress unless necessary.
- Venusaur should avoid Leech Seed on T2, because every Sleep turn should be optimized for maximum damage.
- My lead sequences
 - Tyranitar – Sleep. If hit, Giga Drain (prevent burning sleep from expected Leech). If miss, Giga Drain anyway to induce chip for sweepers.
 - Skarmory – Sleep until it hits. Then go to Charizard.
 - Zapdos – HP Ice until Zapdos switches, to induce chip for sweepers and avoid getting Subbed on.
 - Metagross – Switch to Charizard and Fire Blast. The T2 double back to Venusaur / other Charizard reads are too obvious and some teams have a bad enough Charizard matchup to risk staying in.
 - Salamence – HP Ice T1. CBMence isn't meta anyway, and there are no good midgrounds.
- Even if Venusaur had HP Fire, it doesn't ever want to click it, because the more highly pressurizing option is to go to Charizard

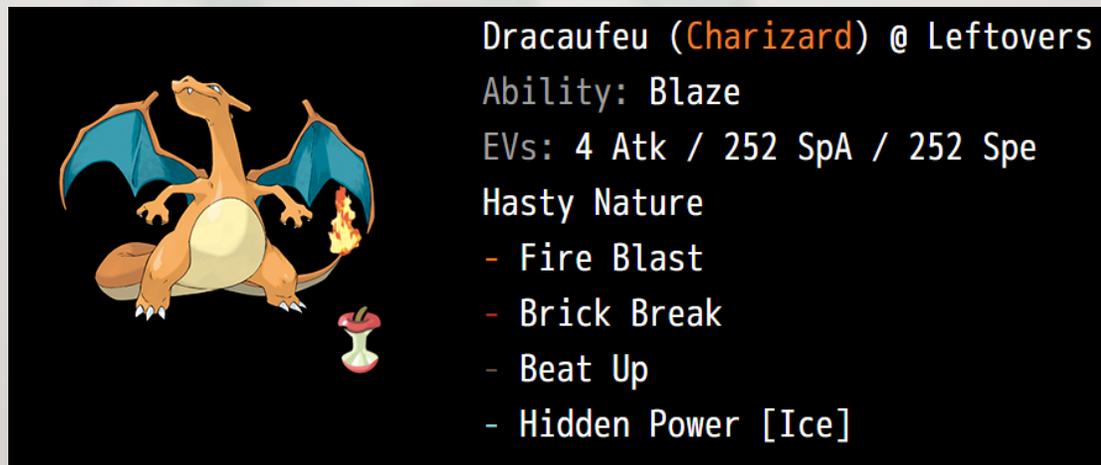


Florizarre (Venusaur) @ Leftovers
Ability: Overgrow
EVs: 8 HP / 192 SpA / 56 SpD / 252 Spe
Timid Nature
IVs: 2 Atk / 30 Def
- Sleep Powder
- Leech Seed
- Hidden Power [Ice]
- Giga Drain



Other team specifics

- Charizard
 - Fire Blast is a very good midground move. Unlike Zapdos' Thunderbolt, even resists take a lot of damage. Even if Swampert switches in, every Fire Blast it takes is subject to a 15% chance of crit or burn, so clicking the obvious move still has very high upside.
 - Charizard can be sac'd with momentum, especially if it has taken out Salamence or the special walls.
 - High chance to KO Blissey with Beat Up after Fire Blast



Other team specifics

- Gyarados
 - Preferred sweeper against Aerodactyl since it outspeeds at +1
 - Secondary Water check
- Salamence

Drattak ([Salamence](#)) @ Leftovers

Ability: Intimidate

EVs: 252 HP / 88 Atk / 44 Def / 56 SpD / 68 Spe

Adamant Nature

- Hidden Power [Flying]
- Earthquake
- Rock Slide
- Dragon Dance

- Preferred sweeper against Gengar and Tyranitar since it is Eved to live both Ice Punch and Rock Slide (93%)
- Also Eved to OHKO max HP Tyranitar at +2
- Can still sweep against Aerodactyl due to set ambiguity – after coming in on CB locked EQ, can use the bulk to DD twice
- Rock Slide gives an out vs Milotic and Starmie



Léviator ([Gyarados](#)) @ Leftovers

Ability: Intimidate

EVs: 24 HP / 252 Atk / 232 Spe

Jolly Nature

- Dragon Dance
- Taunt
- Earthquake
- Hidden Power [Rock]



Other team specifics

- Metagross

- Key Skarmory switch-in – Swampert teams frequently have no defenses against HP Grass + Meteor Mash and Mono-Water teams are susceptible to Explosion

- Jirachi

- Thunderbolt alleviates Moltres weak and hits Skarmory harder than any other move
- Substitute is as much a midground and status protection move as it is for sweeping Blissey
- HP Grass's target for breaking is Tyranitar and target for cleaning is Swampert



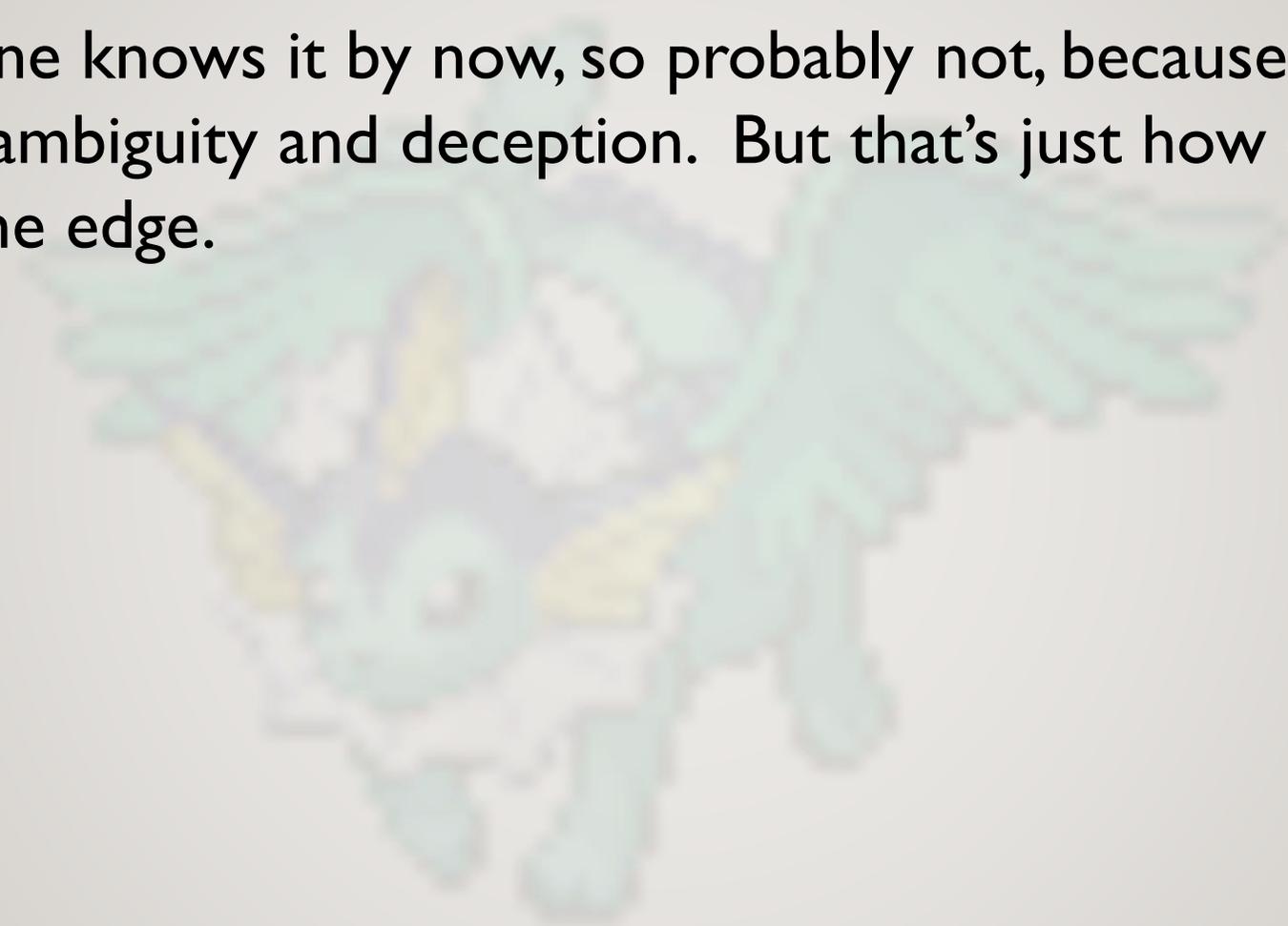
Métalosse (Metagross) @ Leftovers
Ability: Clear Body
EVs: 248 HP / 140 Atk / 60 SpA / 60 Spe
Naughty Nature
- Explosion
- Hidden Power [Grass]
- Meteor Mash
- Earthquake



Jirachi @ Leftovers
Ability: Serene Grace
EVs: 252 HP / 80 SpA / 176 Spe
Modest Nature
IVs: 2 Atk / 30 SpA
- Substitute
- Calm Mind
- Thunderbolt
- Hidden Power [Grass]

Will this team work now?

- Everyone knows it by now, so probably not, because it relies a lot on ambiguity and deception. But that's just how offense gains the edge.



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END

SORRY THAT I DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO UPDATE THIS FOR THE 2022 METAGAME
OR GO FURTHER IN DEPTH...



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