As a current USUM Ubers and Natdex AG player (I don't know what is considered "high on the ladder", but I am at least considered decent), I wanted to point out something. Many people are well aware of the uncanny resemblance of Mega-Rayquaza and Zacian-C. So, I wanted to discuss a few things.

I also want to set something clear: This is not a document detailing why "X Pokemon is better than Y Pokemon", but rather a comparison. The other half of this document details my analysis on the Gen8 format, so if you are also interested in that, feel free to read that section.

What makes Zacian-C So Appealing in Natdex AG, Yet Not Superior or Even Equal?

As of the November 2019 usage stats (which were uploaded on December 5th), and for the first time since SM (Arceus EKiller), Mega-Rayquaza's usage is eclipsed by

another Pokemon in AG. That honor goes to Zacian-C (Zacian-Crowned). The link is
https://www.smogon.com/stats/2019-11/ . The raw and real percentages are also
surpassed significantly, but let's use the weighted percentage for our eyes' sake.

Usage Comparison by Elo Ranking				
Usage (weighted %)	No Elo Ceiling	1500	1630	1760+
Zacian-C	33.84122%	40.99633%	67.06649%	61.19190%
Mega-Rayquaza	18.36407%	22.59531%	39.79129%	40.96981%

It is especially important to note that numbers do not conclude to a Pokemon's
viability (Landorus-T was used more than Zygarde-50% in USUM OU, and look who
actually got banned in the end), but this is an interesting development. This argument of
numbers is frequently used by amateurs (like people wanting to ban Landorus-T; I also
want to say that I am not trying to minimize/discourage new Smogon players). Likewise,
this is not a new toy syndrome scenario, as multiple tier-splashing mons like
Necrozma-DM and Ultra-Necrozma did not overtake Mega-Rayquaza's usage in the
beginning or ending of the USUM AG meta. In a similar manner, Eternatus barely makes
top #15 (and practically invalidates Nagandel), and Zamazenta (both Crowned and
Hero) cries in usage and viability.

It's easy to theorymon why Zacian-C is on par with Mega-Rayquaza.

- **Better offensive and defensive STAB** (Steel/Fairy vs. Dragon/Flying, come on,
  that's not even a close contest)
- Superior ability that gives a **Jolly Zacian about the same than LIfe Orb Adamant
  Mega-Rayquaza with no drawbacks,** pushed further by an easily set Swords
  Dance.
- Toxic immunity **AND** Stealth Rock resistance. Out of the relevant Ubers, **only
  Necrozma-DM and Magearna** fits this bill.
- **Adamant Zacian speed creeps up until 130 base speed.** Mega-Gengar,
  Ultra-Necrozma, Arceus formes, Marshadow, and Darkrai are still outspeed.
- Can **better offensively check/hard check** nearly all Yveltal, Zygarde, and Xerneas
  variants, Giratina, transformed Ultra-Necrozma, Gengar, certain popular Arceus
  formes, Primal Kygore, Mega-Salamence, and Marshadow, even at **a Jolly nature.
  Mega Rayquay could not even boast such a list with an Adamant nature
  (unboosted).**

- Here are some calcs: (With Jolly Zacian; notice how the majority of these targets don't need a Swords Dance to 2HKO or hazards)
    - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 0 HP / 168 Def Xerneas: 528-624 (134.3 - 158.7%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Geomancy Xerneas can only hope to 2HKO back with inaccurate Focus Blasts)
    - **252+ SpA Xerneas Focus Blast vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Zacian-Crowned: 129-152 (39.6 - 46.7%) -- guaranteed 3HKO (Choice Scarf Xerneas)**
        - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Fairy Aura Xerneas: 373-441 (94.9 - 112.2%) -- 68.8% chance to OHKO
        - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Xerneas: 624-734 (158.7 - 186.7%) -- guaranteed OHKO
    - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 72 HP / 252 Def Yveltal: 440-522 (107 - 127%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Bulky Choice Scarf Yveltal; fails to realistically 2HKO with Foul Play even if boosted at +3)**
    - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Zygarde: 458-540 (128.2 - 151.2%) -- guaranteed OHKO (DD Adamant Variant is still outspeed by Jolly Zacian-C)**
    - +3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Zygarde: 566-668 (134.7 - 159%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Sleeptalk Zygarde)
    - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Kyogre-Primal: 294-346 (86.2 - 101.4%) -- 12.5% chance to OHKO
    - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Kyogre-Primal: 294-346 (86.2 - 101.4%) -- 87.5% chance to OHKO after Stealth Rock (Calm Mind + Water Spout)**
    - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 44 HP / 0 Def Salamence-Mega: 432-510 (126.3 - 149.1%) -- guaranteed OHKO (DD Salamence)
    - +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 248 HP / 136+ Def Salamence: 504-594 (128.2 - 151.1%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Defensive Salamence)
    - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 248 HP / 208+ Def Giratina: 356-420 (70.7 - 83.4%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Leftovers recovery**
    - **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 248 HP / 208+ Def Giratina: 590-696 (117.2 - 138.3%) -- guaranteed OHKO**

- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 252 Def Giratina-Origin: 426-504 (96.5 - 114.2%) -- 75% chance to OHKO**
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Prism Armor Necrozma-Ultra: 415-490 (123.8 - 146.2%) -- guaranteed OHKO
- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Gengar-Mega: 361-426 (138.3 - 163.2%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 64 Def Arceus-Ground: 219-258 (49.3 - 58.1%) -- 96.9% chance to 2HKO
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 64 Def Arceus-Water: 219-258 (49.3 - 58.1%) -- 96.9% chance to 2HKO
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 252 HP / 4 Def Arceus-Fairy: 510-602 (114.8 - 135.5%) -- guaranteed OHKO
- **+2 252+ Atk Arceus Extreme Speed vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Zacian-Crowned: 120-141 (36.9 - 43.3%) -- guaranteed 3HKO**
  - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 240 HP / 0 Def Arceus: 256-303 (58 - 68.7%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
- +3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 240 HP / 0 Def Arceus: 426-502 (96.5 - 113.8%) -- 81.3% chance to OHKO
- **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252 Def Arceus-Ground: 313-369 (70.4 - 83.1%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
- **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Crunch vs. 252 HP / 4 Def Prism Armor Necrozma-Dusk-Mane: 324-382 (81.4 - 95.9%) -- 12.5% chance to OHKO after Stealth Rock**
- **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Wild Charge vs. 252 HP / 160+ Def Lugia: 384-452 (92.3 - 108.6%) -- guaranteed OHKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery**
- *There is no need to calc Ultra Necrozma and Marshadow. It's obvious that Zacian-C will outspeed and OHKO any variant (except Choice Scarf and DD)*
  - Now let's compare that to a (unboosted) Adamant Life Orb Mega Rayquaza. Notice how it needs a boost to OHKO and outspeed the same targets Zacian-C can OHKO and outspeed.
    - **252+ SpA Fairy Aura Xerneas Moonblast vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Rayquaza-Mega: 458-540 (130.4 - 153.8%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Choice Scarf Xerneas)**
    - 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 0 HP / 168 Def Xerneas: 316-372 (80.4 - 94.6%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (Geomancy Xerneas)

- 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Extreme Speed vs. 0 HP / 168 Def Xerneas: 140-166 (35.6 - 42.2%) -- guaranteed 3HKO
  - **Or if Xerneas retaliates with Moonblast and doesn't set up with Geomancy: 252+ SpA Fairy Aura Xerneas Moonblast vs. -1 0 HP / 0 SpD Rayquaza-Mega: 684-806 (194.8 - 229.6%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
- **0 Atk Dark Aura Yveltal Foul Play vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Rayquaza-Mega: 288-340 (82 - 96.8%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (Bulky Choice Scarf Yveltal, outspeeds and lives Dragon Ascent)**
- **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Zygarde: 304-359 (85.1 - 100.5%) -- 6.3% chance to OHKO after Leftovers recovery (DD Adamant Zygarde; it will more likely 2HKO Zygarde)**
  - Zygarde responds with a Glare or super effective Dragon Tail.
- **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Zygarde: 226-266 (53.8 - 63.3%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Leftovers recovery (Sleeptalk Zygarde)**
  - Zygare responds with Rest, Toxic, Glare, super effective Dragon Tail or Thousand Arrows.
- 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Kyogre-Primal: 390-460 (114.3 - 134.8%) -- guaranteed OHKO
- 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 44 HP / 0 Def Salamence-Mega: 286-337 (83.6 - 98.5%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (outspeed by DD Adamant Mega Salamence)
- **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 248 HP / 208+ Def Giratina: 235-278 (46.7 - 55.2%) -- 14.8% chance to 2HKO after Leftovers recovery**
  - Giratina responds with a Will-O-Wisp, making Mega Rayquaza a sitting duck.
- **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 0 HP / 252 Def Giratina-Origin: 282-333 (63.9 - 75.5%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
  - Giratina-O responds with a Will-O-Wisp or Thunder Wave, hampering the matchup.
- **0 SpA Pixie Plate Arceus-Fairy Judgment vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Rayquaza-Mega: 302-356 (86 - 101.4%) -- guaranteed OHKO after Stealth Rock (Arceus Fairy offensively outspeeds and OHKOes, or it could respond with a Will-O-Wisp)**

- **224 SpA Necrozma-Ultra Dragon Pulse vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Rayquaza-Mega: 330-390 (94 - 111.1%) -- guaranteed OHKO after Stealth Rock (Calm Mind Necrozma-DM outspeeds after transforming)**
- **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Earthquake vs. 252 HP / 4 Def Prism Armor Necrozma-Dusk-Mane: 242-287 (60.8 - 72.1%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Stealth Rock**
  - In Trick Room: **+2 252+ Atk Necrozma-Dusk-Mane Sunsteel Strike vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Rayquaza-Mega: 411-484 (117 - 137.8%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
- And after one defensive and special defensive drop from Dragon Ascent:
  - 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 240 HP / 0 Def Arceus: 308-363 (69.8 - 82.3%) -- guaranteed 2HKO
    - **+2 252+ Atk Arceus Extreme Speed vs. -1 0 HP / 4 Def Rayquaza-Mega: 405-477 (115.3 - 135.8%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
  - **252 Atk Life Orb Technician Marshadow Shadow Sneak vs. -1 0 HP / 4 Def Rayquaza-Mega: 187-220 (53.2 - 62.6%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Stealth Rock**
  - **252 Atk Life Orb Marshadow Spectral Thief vs. -1 0 HP / 4 Def Rayquaza-Mega: 277-328 (78.9 - 93.4%) -- guaranteed OHKO after Stealth Rock (Assuming that Mega Rayquaza doesn't have a Choice Scarf)**
- Like Zacian-C, it can 2HKO most Arceus support or defensive formes without a Swords Dance or DD.
- **Is harder to OHKO** (92/115/115 vs 105/100/100) **and does not rely on a defense lowering STAB move,** making priority against it like Extreme Speed, Bullet Punch, Sucker Punch, and Shadow Sneak (Marshadow says hi) be a mediocre choice unless severely weakened.
- In a 1v1 situation, **non-Choice Scarf Mega Rayquaza** (almost never runs Focus Sash), **Zacian-C will always outspeed and beat a non-boosted Mega-Rayquaza.**
- Can switch into Dragon, Poison, and resisted + neutral hits easier than Mega-Rayquaza.

However, Mega-Rayquaza has these huge advantages:
- Clearly better coverage movepool like **V-create, Earthquake, and Extreme Speed.** It's worth noting that Zacian-C has **JUST** enough coverage to answer to its potential checks.

- After a dragon dance, **literally no one** outside of speedy choice scarf users and DD-boosted Mega Salamence outspeeds it. It **beats Zacian and everyone else** in this way.
- Can beat Ho-oh, fully defensive-Arceus Ground, Necrozma-DM, and Primal Groudon, Arceus Fire, Arceus Steel, and Lugia which a *non-+3 boosted Zacian-C* **can only 2HKO at best.**
  - **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 204+ Def Ho-Oh: 289-341 (69.4 - 81.9%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Leftovers recovery (Defensive Ho-oh)**
  - +1 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 204+ Def Ho-Oh: 433-511 (104 - 122.8%) -- guaranteed OHKO
  - **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Earthquake vs. 252 HP / 56+ Def Groudon-Primal: 234-276 (57.9 - 68.3%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
  - +1 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Earthquake vs. 252 HP / 56+ Def Groudon-Primal: 348-411 (86.1 - 101.7%) -- 12.5% chance to OHKO
  - **0 SpA Arceus-Ground Ice Beam vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Rayquaza-Mega in Strong Winds: 152-180 (43.3 - 51.2%) -- 5.9% chance to 2HKO (Support Arceus Ground)**
    - **+1 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 64 Def Arceus-Ground: 433-511 (97.5 - 115%) -- 81.3% chance to OHKO (DD Adamant Mega Rayquaza outspeeds)**
  - **252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 252 Def Arceus-Ground: 250-294 (56.3 - 66.2%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
  - **+1 252+ Atk Life Orb Rayquaza-Mega Dragon Ascent vs. 252 HP / 160+ Def Lugia: 343-406 (82.4 - 97.5%) -- guaranteed OHKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery**
- Delta Stream neutralizes weather and improves its defensive typing slightly.
- Blows up Unaware users.
- Immune to Sticky Webs and Spikes.
- **CAN HOLD ANY ITEM IT PLEASES.**
- Has **no actual counters.**
- Can switch into omnipresent Ground-type and Fire-type moves. **Zacian can not.**

After playing and experimenting in Gen8, I think I understand why the two are paired frequently on offensive cores (as a disclaimer, I am not high on the ladder at all, but at least experienced it). Both of them cover each others weaknesses extremely well, 2HKO or OHKO their respective problematic checks and counters, are extremely easy to slap onto a team, and practically invalidates non-gimmicky stall/defensive teams (Unaware users don't work, because Mega Rayquaza can 2HKO most targets, especially

after hazards). As a matter of fact, realistically Mega-Rayquaza has no counters, while Zacian-C only has a few counters in this tier.

Together, both of these Pokemon (along with Mega-Gengar) centralize the Natdex AG meta. If you were to think during teambuilding of the premier threats you must **NEVER** ignore, which Pokemon would it be (Hint: it's not Baton Bass users)? If you think about it in a certain way, two of the biggest threats in Natdex AG shapes each other. Ever since Zacian-C's release, it is mandatory to use a Choice-Scarf Mega Rayquaza (which was common in AG, but now is extremely common) or know how to play mind games and set a DD to beat Zacian-C. In turn, Zacian-C always runs Play Rough and forces out Choice Band + Scarf Locked, Life Orb, Lum Berry, and non-DD boosted Mega-Rayquaza. Mega Gengar, Zacian-C, and Mega Rayquaza practically eliminated an entire playstyle (stall). As a matter of fact, it is now common to see teams that try to use multiple Mega Rayquazas and Zacian-Cs, or pair it!

So okay, what about Gen8 Uber and AG (NOT Natdex based)?
Now that Natdex AG is out of the way, this is where the *Power Vacuum theory* comes into play. A power vacuum is a condition that exists when someone has lost control of something and no one has replaced them. In this case, a lot of viable USUM mons like the Weather Trio, the Creation Trio, literal Pokemon god, Megas, the Tower duo, and the Aura Trio are gone. So who would take their place, "authority", and power in the Gen8 Uber and AG meta? How well will these Pokemon fulfill the void and roles?

It's why the Gen8 Uber and AG games are ironically more of a sandbox realm more than Natdex AG. And despite begin relatively new, at least normally we would have veterans returning, and base it off of them. Smogon users must use and experiment new Pokemon and Pokemon that would NEVER be considered seriously viable (or at least justified). This is further exacerbated with Zacian-C's mere presence, and having only 3 legendaries available (and one of them is utter trash). Teams must have a **BARE** minimum of 3 Zacian-C "checks" (ex. Excadrill, Hippodown, Arcanine (really?!?), Galar Cursola, Ditto, Toxapex, Dugtrio) to be considered viable, and explains the rise of sand teams. Yet these "checks" only work under certain circumstances. For Exadrill, sand must be up and relies on Tyranitar (which invites Zacian-C). Sand is hard to set up and maintain in a meta where Dynamaxing moves rapidly change the weather left and right. Ditto has to copy it safely and avoid being exploited into one move (also, it copying of Zacian's boost needs to be fixed, I think?). Dugtrio is pathetically frail and can't OHKO, and the rest of these Pokemon must avoid chip damage, switching-in, and hazards, as a +3 Adamant (or Jolly) Zacian 2HKOs or OHKOs with any of its coverage.

These forced choices onto teams stales the growth of a new meta. The WHOLE current meta revolves around stopping Zacian-C. As detailed above, many of these checks stack weaknesses in teams (ex. passivity, type weakness-stacking, exploitability), which would not be normally considered acceptable in viable teambuilding. This is not like Primal-Groudon or Landorus-T. If I were to build a team right now, my team would be considered unviable if I didn't carry at least 3 Pokemon with specialized (offensive and defensive) sets and spreads to counter it. At least for Primal Groudon and Landorus-T, all you needed was a couple checks, and such checks could be flexible in their sets.

For example, you could run Calm Mind, Defensive, or Physical Swords Dance spreads of Arceus-Ground, and still check almost any variant of Primal Groudon. Same for Primal Kygore, as I could run Calm Mind + Water Spout, Defensive Sleep, or Physical Wallbreaker spreads to check Primal Groudon. Yveltal checks it with Foul Play Choice Scarfs, Stallbreaker sets, Life Orb Sets, and Charti Berry sets. You could stack Pokemon with Ground-weaknesses and be alright. Even Necrozma-DM can offensively check Primal Groudon, with a combination of Trick Room + Weakness Policy. On the other hand, checks like Arcanine must always be Impish with 252 HP / 252 Def and hold Heavy Duty Boots to avoid the 2HKO. Galar Cursola and Hippodown must also be Impish 252 HP / 252 Def with Evolite and Leftovers. The same applies for Toxapex , and yet are still 2HKO'd or OHKO'd. Keep in mind that for Mega Rayquaza, Pokemon had to do the same, except we had more Pokemon with higher Base stats.

Sand Rush Excadrill (no Life Orb or Choice Band)l must be Adamant to secure the OHKO and not force 50/50s like Jolly would (which in turn makes Excadriil even MORE reliant on sand to hit crucial speed benchmarks). With a Life Orb, it cleanly OKHOs. Eternatus is not a reliable check to Zacian-C, considering that Choice Specs are easily exploitable and usually doesn't want to run Modest (and still struggles OHKO with Flamethrower), and Speedy Defensive sets are also 2HKO'd. Dugtrio can't afford to run a bulky set (Choice Scarf Trapper), and struggles to obtain the OHKO. You could argue that Prankster users like Sabelye and Grimmsnarl can paralyze or burn it, but they are still defeated by a Play Rough, and rely on Gothitelle (which is forced to run a 252 HP Choice Scarf) to finish it.

These calcs use Jolly Zacian-C (and most of these don't require hazards):
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Wild Charge vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Toxapex: 192-228 (63.1 - 75%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Black Sludge recovery
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Eviolite Corsola-Galar: 130-154 (40.1 - 47.5%) -- guaranteed 3HKO

- - **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Eviolite Corsola-Galar: 216-255 (66.6 - 78.7%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
- +3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Wild Charge vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Toxapex: 320-378 (105.2 - 124.3%) -- guaranteed OHKO
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Eternatus: 282-333 (66.9 - 79%) -- guaranteed 2HKO
  - **252 SpA Choice Specs Eternatus Flamethrower vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Zacian-Crowned: 282-334 (86.7 - 102.7%) -- 18.8% chance to OHKO (Timid Choice Specs Eternatus)**
  - **252+ SpA Choice Specs Eternatus Flamethrower vs. 0 HP / 0 SpD Zacian-Crowned: 310-366 (95.3 - 112.6%) -- 68.8% chance to OHKO**
- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 252 HP / 0 Def Eternatus: 313-369 (64.6 - 76.2%) -- guaranteed 2HKO**
- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 252 HP / 112+ Def Hippowdon: 214-253 (50.9 - 60.2%) -- 89.1% chance to 2HKO after Leftovers recovery**
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Behemoth Blade vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Hippowdon: 193-228 (45.9 - 54.2%) -- 50.8% chance to 2HKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery
- **+3 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Hippowdon: 288-340 (68.5 - 80.9%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Leftovers recovery**
- **+2 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Close Combat vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Arcanine: 266-313 (69.2 - 81.5%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (Assuming the Intimidate drop after a Swords Dance)**
- **+2 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Sacred Sword vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Arcanine: 199-235 (51.8 - 61.1%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (Assuming the Intimidate drop after a Swords Dance)**
- 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Close Combat vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Arcanine: 133-157 (34.6 - 40.8%) -- guaranteed 3HKO (Assuming the Intimidate drop and Heavy Duty Boots)
- 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Sacred Sword vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Arcanine: 100-118 (26 - 30.7%) -- guaranteed 4HKO (Assuming the Intimidate drop and Heavy Duty Boots)
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Wild Charge vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Aegislash: 102-121 (50 - 59.3%) -- guaranteed 2HKO
- **252+ Atk Dugtrio Earthquake vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Zacian-Crowned: 266-314 (81.8 - 96.6%) -- guaranteed 2HKO (Adamant Choice Scarf Dugtrio)**

- - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 0 HP / 0 Def Dugtrio: 466-550 (220.8 - 260.6%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
- **252 Atk Excadrill Earthquake vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Zacian-Crowned: 300-354 (92.3 - 108.9%) -- 50% chance to OHKO (Jolly Sand Rush Excadrill. no LIfe Orb)**
  - **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Sacred Sword vs. 4 HP / 0 Def Excadrill: 544-640 (150.2 - 176.7%) -- guaranteed OHKO**
- **252+ Atk Excadrill Earthquake vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Zacian-Crowned: 326-386 (100.3 - 118.7%) -- guaranteed OHKO (Adamant Sand Rush Excadrill, no Life Orb)**
- **252 Atk Life Orb Excadrill Earthquake vs. 0 HP / 4 Def Zacian-Crowned: 390-460 (120 - 141.5%) -- guaranteed OHKO**

The only Pokemon capable of walling and countering Zacian-C (which we will define as avoiding the 2HKO) is Unaware Quagsire and Pyukumuku. But putting these stall and passive Pokemon on a team in a meta where such playstyle is unviable right now calls serious opportunity questions. Besides, Zacian-C puts a wrench into the matchup if it gets a critical hit:

- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Unaware Pyukumuku: 109-129 (34.7 - 41%) -- guaranteed 3HKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery
- +1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Unaware Pyukumuku on a critical hit: 163-193 (51.9 - 61.4%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery
- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Unaware Quagsire: 144-171 (36.5 - 43.4%) -- guaranteed 3HKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery**
- **+1 252 Atk Zacian-Crowned Play Rough vs. 252 HP / 252+ Def Unaware Quagsire on a critical hit: 217-256 (55 - 64.9%) -- guaranteed 2HKO after Stealth Rock and Leftovers recovery**

I wanted to mention that there is one Pokemon in Gen8 Ubers and AG that fully reap the benefits of Zacian-C. That is Bulky Choice Scarf Gothitelle. Gothitelle traps Zacian-C's defensive checks, and Zacian-C weakens Gothitelle's checks. This helps Gothitelle set up Cosmic Powers that hit like nukes against weakened Pokemon. She could even use Trick, cripple a wall, and then send in Zacian-C if needed. The core of Zacian-C + Gothitelle + Ditto is extremely centralizing, and barely needs to pick its

counters. If anything, Shadow Tag Gothitelle is just as centralizing as Zacian-C! (I might cover that another day)

So, What Can We Objectively Attempt Conclude?

Mega Rayquaza and Zacian-C have an interesting dynamic in the Natdex AG metagame. It is still early, and I wouldn't be surprised if this continues until Gamefreak creates Gen9 and introduce another gamebreaker. With Zacian-C's introduction, Mega Rayquaza receives help to cover targets that it could check it. **Technically, Zacian-C is literally the only Pokemon who actually forced Mega Rayquaza to adapt to the metagame in SOME capacity.** But is doesn't mean that is better or equal to Mega Rayquaza. As long as Mega Rayquaza and Zacian-C continue to compliment another, everyone else in Natdex AG will be influenced (the speed benchmarks definitely took a hike up this generation).

Based on all of the above, we could conclude that Zacian-C should have at least a suspect test in Gen8 Ubers. Pokemon that is not Zacian-C is forced to run specialized sets to beat it. Pokemon that would be able to check it is beaten by its sheer brute force, or is obliterated by its coverage. If you were trying to check it by scouting for its coverage, expect at least one or two members of your team to be heavily damaged or OHKO'd. According the November 2019 Usage Stats, Zacian-C is used over 90% of the time (weighted) on Gen8 Ubers teams. The fact that it draws parallels (but not superiority) with Mega Rayquaza should be taken as a red flag.

On the other hand, if a theoretical Natdex Ubers format was implemented (or if Gamefreak didn't do the dex cut and cause the worst Pokemon political crisis in the fandom), Zacian-C would not likely be banned successfully. It may get suspected, but not actually banned. While it may reach levels of centralizing like Primal Groudon's, it does have harder checks like Lugia, Ho-Oh, Primal Groudon, and Necrozma-DM (do note that all of these targets are hit super-effectively or neutrally by its coverage moves). It wouldn't surprise me though if gained future key coverage moves from tutors in the future, and knowing how Gamefreak is, it will eventually. If Zacian-C gets at least Earthquake/Drill Run and/or a Rock-type move, I would **immediately** support a ban in Natdex Ubers. Gamefreak, you really need some competitive beta testers to give you feedback for balance, and not just for Battle VGC and doubles!

Where's the Warrior Pokemon?

How do you know you're not looking at `it?

I know it's not you.
None of you are!

I heard she has a free attack boost, 170 attack, speed greater than 130 when Adamant and a bulky and more powerful Magearna

Zacian?

So that is her name.

Zacian

A worthy opponent.

Our usage, overcentralization, and battle will be legendary!