
Subject: Re: Opinion piece of sorts - "1v1 doesn't prove skill"

Posted by [Nukelt15](#) on Wed, 10 Oct 2007 08:07:22 GMT

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So, in a nutshell, what you are saying is that the highest and most worthy game type is a 1v1 duel- in a game which was designed from the ground up as a team-based game?

No, I do not agree. Whatever the mechanical skills a 1v1 requires, it does not test every aspect of gameplay and therefore cannot be a test of a player's skill or lack thereof at playing the actual game as designed.

Does playing a lot of 1v1's make a person better at certain aspects of Renegade which carry over into team games? Absolutely. Here's the problem-

Let's say that Joe Schmoie decides he's going to become a certifiable ReneGod. He hears on the grapevine that 1v1 is the best way to make him a skilled player in short order. Let's leave him and check back in a few months, shall we?

time passes

...so here's our boy Joe after three months of playing 1v1s. He knows exactly what characters to buy, what vehicles to drive, what buildings to attack and defend, what tactics to use... and when to do all of these things. He's become a real crack shot and can really dominate those tunnels with his pistol.

Now let's drop dear Mr. Schmoie into a full-scale game- say, 16v16. He drops in, confidence high, and prepares to kick some ass. He fails miserably. Let's take a look at why:

- Multiple threats instead of just one. Sure, there are as many people on his team as there are on the other side, but sooner or later- probably sooner, and frequently- he's going to find himself fighting more than one person at once. However good of a shot he may be by now, and however good he is at multitasking, he just can't deal with this because he's never acquired that sort of awareness. He's never been flanked before, barring some deception- but trickery doesn't shoot from two directions at once.

- Competition for team resources. Sure, Joe knows that a Med is his best shot at some points and kills at this point in the game, and- gosh darn it!- he knows just how to use that tank to the best possible effect. But he's got a problem: there aren't any vehicle slots available. Oops. Now he needs to face up to the fact that he can't be the star player all the time, and maybe take a supporting role. Which brings me to the next point...

- Ability to play supporting roles. Supporting roles don't exist in 1v1. Either you do it yourself, or it doesn't get done. You never have to just hang on and trust that someone else will do just as well. You'll never be called on to go out there and fix the hell out of a friendly tank while it moves and fights the enemy, you'll never be afforded the opportunity to pop off shots at an enemy tank while it fights your teammates, and you'll certainly never pull double-duty as taxi while you're driving an APC around. All of a sudden, Joe is expected to perform as part rather than whole, and he's never done that before.

- Ability to work in spite of a bad team. Sometimes you have to kick ass all by yourself in order to get the job done- and you'd think that this is where 1v1 skill would really come in handy. The big hitch in that assumption is that in a 1v1 you don't have any deadweight. You'll never have to worry about a bunch of fools buying Orca after Orca even though half the enemy team consists of Sakuras. You won't have to worry about who does or doesn't have your back when you go off rushing. All the accountability is on you, and you never have to shoulder anyone else's responsibility but your own. Granted, that responsibility may be an entire team's worth of duties, but you can at least rest assured that the other guy has the same set of problems- in a team game, you don't have that assurance. The enemy team may well be acting as a coordinated whole while yours is falling apart, and you need to do what you can to limit the damage while fighting the twin threats of incompetence on your side and extreme competence on the other. Teamwork in spite of a bad team is adding the weight of your experience to one or more players who frankly need all the help they can get.

The list goes on and on and on. Yes, there are plenty of people who are good at both 1v1 and teamplay; good for them. Kudos. For the rest of the world, it just looks stupid to take skill in one area and attribute it to another or to mark that other as a 'test' of skills acquired in one. It is never, ever that simple. Not in a game, and certainly not in life.

Skill is more than just an understanding of when to do what and why. It is more than the ability to point and click with great accuracy. It is more than the patience and awareness needed to deal with many players on the field instead of just two. It is all of those things combined, rolled together, and blended. 1v1 may improve on a great many skills, but it hardly makes you the master of the game- that title belongs to the person who can jump into any type of game and consistently kick ass while- in team games- being of real value to the other people on the field. Lone wolf tactics work very well when you're in a situation that calls for them, and those situations do crop up fairly often in Ren- however, the bulk of the game (and of any game designed for teamplay) is learning to coordinate with the efforts of other players, and where necessary to fill in the gaps left by the shortcomings of others. The trick is to do so even when you can't rely on others to cooperate with you.

I realize that you're setting 'skill' as something wholly different from 'teamwork,' but what you define as 'skill' is in fact many different skills which contribute to a player's overall competence and proficiency in the game. Overall skill requires teamplay just as much as any of the skills needed to win a duel- so 1v1 does not, in fact, prove skill. It proves skills, plural, but not all of them, and a player who does nothing but 1v1 will not have all of the skills needed to succeed in a larger game- just like a person who always plays team games won't have all of the skills needed in a 1v1, because they are dropped into a gameplay environment which is unfamiliar to them.

The two sets of skills are not mutually exclusive, but there are skills in either sort of game- team or duel- which do not carry over to the other and therefore cannot be tested using the other sort of game. To use an analogy, that same logic could be used to pull an airline pilot from his seat, strap him into an F-22, and tell him that if he doesn't succeed at every task laid out for him then he must be a bad pilot. Sure, they're both planes- just like 1v1 or team games are both Renegade. That doesn't make the skills required for one the same as the skills required for the other. Basic skills remain the same, true- but there's a whole mess of other stuff that just doesn't hold true for both. Would you pull an Immelman in a loaded 747? No? Well, you wouldn't lone-wolf an APC into the

enemy base with a whole team defending it, either. You can't dismiss skills covered by the heading of 'teampay' as just knowing when to rush any more than you can simplify 1v1 skills down to predicting where your enemy will be so as to capitalize on their weakness. It's much, much more complicated than that.

I play team games, and team games exclusively. You may reasonably infer that I'd be crap squared at 1v1, to exactly the same degree that our posterboy Joe Schmoe couldn't hack it as a team player. 1v1 proves only that a player is good at 1v1- nothing more, nothing less. Yes, that requires lots of skill- skill and patience- but so does learning teampay. Most folks just dismiss that because they learned the teampay skills (or failed to) when they first started playing.
