

- So, in the wake of Genesis 6, I found a lot of confusion among new viewers to the melee scene as to WHY hbox gets the degree of hate he does, and a lot of condescending posts from Ultimate players about how disrespectful the Melee scene is to its "best player". So, I thought I'd take this opportunity to break down, from every angle, exactly why the melee community specifically despises Hbox and then defend the right of the community to dislike him as a personality and player.

PLAYSTYLE AND CHARACTER

This is probably the easiest and most obvious element to grasp. Jigglypuff can be frustrating to watch, and frustrating to play against. She has the ability to combo every character, often leading into an instakill confirm through the absolute WEALTH of setups Melee puff has into rest. However, very few characters can effectively combo or kill her, and have to rely on repeatedly winning neutral with way less payoff and way more danger if they lose. Defensive adaptations such as SDI have turned her major balancing factor, her weight, into way less of an issue so this gives her incredible survivability provided she can avoid a character's vertical kill moves. This is easy for her to do, because her airspeed, incredible number of movement options in the air, and safe poking tools such as bair allow her to cut off those options much of the time. Her ability to camp and run away from other characters is unparalleled. Her frame one instant kill can instantly reverse leads an opponent may have and make her lead insurmountable for some characters.

Is Puff easy? Overpowered? No.

She does, however, have the ability (and oftentimes incentive) to play an incredibly obnoxious and tedious style that emphasizes nearly no risk for disproportionate reward. Hungrybox has evolved his style, specifically his punish game, since his debut on the scene. But his original playstyle that still informs his gameplan today was defensive to a point of extremity. His commitment to exploiting ledge mechanics, retreating, and camping opponents was part of what shaped the original Hbox hate and stunted him as a player, as it wasn't until the mid-2010s or so that he finally figured out that you're supposed to FIGHT in a fighting game.

Watching him play is soul sucking because Puff's natural qualities as a character make it really easy to suddenly win despite being outplayed off a stray hit or a single mistake. The fact that everyone, everywhere constantly showers Hbox in praise for being "clutch" is kind of dumb because no other character can make those sort of swings as easily besides Ice Climbers, but their natural inconsistency prevents them from always doing so. The only way to counter Puff for most characters is to actually outgame her, which only a handful of characters can do effectively, and it results in incredibly degenerate gameplay.

To relate to Sm4sh/Ult Players, think about Sm4sh Bayonetta. She had the ability to randomly kill you for pretty much no reason, nonsensical mechanics that seemed only to apply to her, and a natural inclination to play as safe as possible in the neutral because of her powerful capacity to blow people up for mistakes. The most consistent way to defeat her is patient, campy, zoning characters/playstyles.

tl;dr Puff has some really exploitable mechanics that no other character has and Hungrybox's playstyle is tedious, makes everyone else have to stoop to his level

PERSONALITY

Here's where we get a little more subjective, arguably anecdotal, but it should be said. A large part of the hate Hungrybox receives is due to his personality. A lot of the time, he can come off as affable and excitable in a way that shouldn't bother anybody.

But there's a reason he has exactly 1 friend in the community's highest level of play, and it's his coach. It's the constant, unrelenting desire for validity and attention that nobody else at that level seems to demonstrate. It's the melodramatic popoffs, the unnecessary speeches and posturing. The Melee community is based on a grassroots, basement tournament mentality of love for the game and the spirit of playing for its own sake. Newer smashers might not understand this, because the scene was already fairly developed (thanks to melee) by the time Brawl, Sm4sh, and Ultimate came out. That kind of esports-y spotlight chasing and fakeness isn't really relatable.

He obviously isn't Satan himself, he has a lot of moments that I'd even consider pretty classy, but a lot of Melee players are college kids that are kind of glad to get out of that High School mentality of popularity/relevance chasing. A prime example would be the Milo picture. Why would a self-proclaimed Bernie supporter and liberal take a cheerful selfie with a famously sketchy alt-right pundit for literally any reason other than he's famous and he wants to seem like he knows famous people? It's kinda childish.

Almost everyone in the scene who's been around long enough has a story of Hbox being awkward or obnoxious in a personal context.

tl;dr many people find that his personality comes off as fake, whiny, and melodramatic in interviews or interactions

BEHAVIOR

Uh oh. Now we get into the messy shit. Hungrybox has demonstrated a lack of competitive integrity for years. Everyone knows of his frequent refusal to play friendlies or even really play Puff against anyone at all outside of bracket which does go somewhat against the spirit of the game but doesn't really constitute a cancel. But how about the fact that he actively tried (and tries?) to get Puff players not to warm up his competitors? That just seems kind of grimy and anti-competitive.

But what about his relationship to women in the tournament scene? Everyone knows he cheated on his SO after they had moved in together with another woman in the scene, but if you look around the right places there is a great deal of evidence that he has regularly made somewhat inappropriate passes at girls at tournaments, which is not only kind of sad but also a really bad look for our top level players. It makes a subset of our community that ALREADY has

to deal with neckbeards making them feel unwelcome have to take that shit from top players, individuals in positions of influence within the scene. Whack.

tl;dr hungrybox has demonstrated unsportsmanlike conduct and treats female smashers questionably at best outside of opportunities to promote himself

FANBASE

Hungrybox's stream following and fanbase, often referred to as Hfam, has a way higher proportion of younger smashers from outside the Melee community. Not to get into the conflicts between Melee and the larger smash community, but a lot of the same people that shit talk Melee with ancient memes about Fox ruining the meta stan HGOD in chat and seem to think they derive a sort of "power" over the salty melee community by gloating about an unwanted victory.

Much like, say, Warriors or Patriots fans, many people consider Hfam obnoxious bandwagoners that wouldn't give a shit about him if he didn't win everything. In person, in every region I have ever traveled to (including and especially CFL) I have yet to see much support for his play within the community. Large numbers of Hbox's fans either reside online (spectators that don't enter tournaments) or are not Melee players. Neither understands why Puff is so obnoxious to play against.

tl;dr the people who DO like Hungrybox are generally not involved with competitive melee at the local level and lack perspective on why he is disliked because of this

EFFECT ON META

One of the most common criticisms of Melee is that it lacks variety in the matchups at top level. This has been both wildly untrue and fairly valid at different points in the history of the meta, but throughout Hbox's dominance period, there has been a massive increase in Fox/Puff sets played during Top 8 streams. Puff's suffocating nature has been driving people to play a character with actual kill confirms and combos on her, which causes tons of top players to pick up Fox. Armada, M2K, Plup, Mango, all have or continue to counterpick Fox out of sheer frustration.

Hungrybox's dominance has caused the meta to stagnate. I want you to consider the state of the Melee scene right now. If Hungrybox did not exist, there would be a solid chance that any member of the top 10 could take any major tournament. There would be a period of insanely high variance at top level play, and numerous matchups would be able to develop at the top level before our very eyes. It would be the single greatest period in the game's history (barring based 2014). But instead, we all are forced to figure out how to pop the fucking balloon. It reduces variance, kills suspense, and centralizes a 26-character game into a handful of

matchups at high level.

This has been less pronounced as of late, with other characters catching up and some of the Fox counterpickers either removed from the scene or not playing Fox against him much. But it still represented a very stagnant period in Melee that started right around Leffen's visa ban and didn't really taper off until the rise of Zain and Wizzrobe in the matchup.

tl;dr he overly centralizes the meta and reduces character variance, which effects development of other matchups at peak level negatively

EFFECT ON VIEWERSHIP

When it becomes apparent Hbox is going to win a tournament, people leave streams. His presence decreases viewership outside of specific contexts like EVO and the Genesis stream schedule. This reduces Melee's exposure and popularity, which hurts the scene greater than goons shitting on him online ever could.

COMMON DEFENSES

"Melee elitists just hate him because he wins tournaments with Jigglypuff!"

Mang0 received significantly less hate than Hbox when he played Puff and ruled the meta, despite being a shitposting braggadocious newcomer. Michael4100000000000 plays an even lamer style of Jigglypuff but is actually a pretty well-liked player comparatively.

"Mang0/Leffen is the reason everyone hates Hbox!"

Mang0 barely acknowledges him at this point, and there hasn't been any notable beef between the two in years and years and years. Leffen's commentary on Hbox is fairly limited to shit talk on twitter and he has a large portion of the community that vehemently hates him as well. His platform to "foster hbox hate" is pretty limited if you think about it.

"Everyone is just jealous HGOD HAHAHA"

fuck off

CLOSING STATEMENTS

People will never stop hating Hbox for as long as he plays Puff and wins majors. It's a fact of life. There is nothing anyone can do about it, and whining about it is ineffective. There are arguably valid reasons he is disliked in the community, and provided that the antipathy doesn't cross legal or Code of Conduct boundaries, it is within the right of the community to dislike him.

Greater scrutiny of his actions and behavior at tournaments, and his history of doing so, might be necessary.

Stay mad.