

It has been **three and a half years**.

I am so sorry.

In case you don't know what this is, and there's a pretty decent chance you don't: this is another installment in a series of videos where I break down the boards and mini-games of each Mario Party game, in an effort to determine how well each balances luck, skill, and strategy. It's called Chance Time, I thought it would be cute to ape off of Mark Brown's Boss Keys back in... 2018?

No, wait, that can't be right... **6 years ago**? Dear god. How many games are left?

Let's not waste any time then. Mario Party 5 released in **2003**, developed by the same people who brought you all the others, a year after the last one!

You're watching Chance Time.

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### **The Mini-Games**

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Mario Party 5 has a bit of a reputation. I wouldn't be surprised if this was the game people pointed to when they wanted to claim that Mario Party is a luck-based misery simulator. Unfortunately, the bad minigames in Mario Party 5 are **memorably bad**.

Mazed and Confused is a maze game where you have to reach the center, where the maze shifts every couple of seconds... randomly. It's frustrating since you're given the **illusion** of choice, that maybe skillful play can make the difference, but really you're just at the whim of wherever the electric barriers show up next.

Mathletes is a game where you hit a dice block, and get the amount of coins equal to the sum of whatever your equation ends up being. This is technically a 1v3 mini-game, but there's no teamwork involved, since the one person hits three random dice blocks, and the other three hit only one random dice block. It's a random number generator coin mini-game. Cool.

Panic Pinball is a 2v2 game that is pinball. You can try your best to play this one skillfully, but thanks to how narrow your openings are to shoot the pinball, and the fact that you have to rely on another player, **and** the fact that whoever hits zero on the middle bowser first gets five extra pinballs... this might as well be luck-based. I almost always end up spamming my paddle.

Lucky Lineup is a battle mini-game that is **literally** a slot machine. That's it. There's nothing special here, no timing to learn. It's a slot machine. For a **battle minigame**. Not to mention, there's another one called Random Ride, where they go through all this effort of giving certain

rides higher odds of winning compared to other rides, but then one player gets to choose first, and there's no reason not to pick the best ride, so it's just luck based **again**. Except they almost try to trick you into thinking it's more than that. These feel **particularly** bad to get in this entry as coins won from battle mini-games now contribute to the mini-game star **for some reason**.

There's even Get a Rope, a duel mini-game that is entirely luck based. In Mario Party 5, you can now duel with stars as a wager, making this **oh so fun** to get. And then, of course, there is no way I could go without mentioning **Vicious Vending**, one of the most infamous mini-games in the series. You rotate a lever, get a capsule, and hope it's 20 coins and not a Thwomp.

It is **ballsy** to put at least one entirely luck-based mini-game in **every single** category. Even the **Bowser** games have one, and if you lose those, you **could** be forfeiting **all** of your coins.

No, it is not difficult for me to see why Mario Party 5 has the reputation it does, especially when many of its other mini-games are so repetitive. There are **eight** mini-games that are button mashers. There are **very slight** variations. Will Flower, Manic Mallets, Tug-O-Dorrie, and Pump n' Jump all use the A button, while Wind Wavers and Submarathon will have you alternating between the L and R buttons. You're actually supposed to switch with your partner during Submarathon, but since there's nothing stopping you except your own physical stamina, and it's **slower** to switch to your partner to take a break, the optimal strategy is to mash for so hard and so long that your heart beats out of your chest while the other player watches.

The **only** mashing game I'm willing to give a pass is, ironically, called Button Mashers. Here, you're given a stone with any of the major buttons on it. You have to mash this button, in addition to any other buttons which fall on top of it. This is a really clever spin on the traditional mashing mini-game, not simply testing mashing **speed**, but more so your dexterity and consistency. Every single time, the buttons drop in a random order, too, meaning it's a unique challenge.

The other seven, though, might as well all be the exact same. That's a pretty decent chunk of mini-games available which are underwhelming at best and can show up pretty readily during a game. Considering you get a bonus star from mini-game performance, and that winning mini-games overall is a pretty massive advantage in almost all areas, that is incredibly disappointing.

The list doesn't even end there. In typical fashion, the 1v3 mini-games are quite unbalanced. Quilt for Speed is a game where the team of three has to coordinate which direction they'll be taking their machine. Each player controls their own direction, and the order they appear in is the order they'll go off in. Meanwhile, the one player only has one roulette, theoretically meaning they would move much slower. In reality, the one player has a **massive** advantage, since they don't have to think or coordinate their moves in the same way. They might hypothetically be moving slower, but they can just pick their movements until they win. The group of three has to talk out which directions they're taking, since they move in a set order, and don't want to get their wires crossed.

Curvy Curbs is meant to be balanced by the team of three having much more room for error with three players, but are given faster speeds to compensate. Meanwhile, the one player turns slowly, but obviously has less of a window for error. Except, this one is weird too, since it's essentially smooth sailing for the one player, with the exception of one random corner in the middle which requires a nearly pixel perfect input to get right. Still, that's essentially one **guaranteed** wall hit, compared to a team of three who **all** have to be performing well to not drag the rest of the team down. In my experience, it is **extremely** unrealistic to see the team of three winning because the odds are simply stacked against them, unless you are playing with three **very** experienced players. Most of your games won't have that.

Fight Cards is rock, paper, scissors. That's it. If you or a friend are the last ones standing at the end, you can communicate with each other to press different buttons to win, but for the most part, it's just a luck-based mini-game that barely justifies itself as a 1v3 at all, a little bit like Mathletes.

Heat Stroke is a mini-game I **really want** to love. The idea of it is so cool. The three players have to survive on a series of platforms by jumping off of it as the one player hammers them away. There are a finite number of platforms and a timer, meaning there are two win states for the team of three. The one player can fake out the three, though, by pressing the b button to do a fake hammer swing. Unfortunately, I have found that the speed with which you can spam fake swings **into** a real swing is **ridiculous**. You'd expect this to be more like a bunch of mind-games, but in reality, the one player just has **so much** speed that it always leaves a bad taste in my mouth. It is **possible** to react to the hammer if you're a platforming god, but that's just a little too much pressure on one end of the balance.

Mario Mechs, similarly, is a cool idea. The one player is in a giant mech. It can strafe and do aoe attacks in addition to its lasers, while the team of three are much faster with a boost button, but only have access to their lasers, and cannot strafe. It seems pretty well balanced, until you realize the one person can charge their laser to throw out a huge projectile that **almost** instakills any of the three players, and can also fly through and hit multiple at once. It's just busted since the team of three **have** to be facing you to hit you, meaning they constantly need to put themselves in the path of a giant charge shot that can eliminate them in a few hits.

So here's the thing: that is a **lot** of frustrating mini-games. It's hard to imagine going a single board without encountering at least a few of them, and yet: the remaining mini-games spell out the vibe of Mario Party 5 better than anything else. This is a game of **extremes**.

Coney Island is a novel and cute idea where you have to sit under falling scoops of ice cream at the top of a Mario version of the Statue of Liberty, holding an ice cream cone that you battle **on**. Whoever has the highest cone at the end wins. This is one of my favorite mini-games in the entire series. It's such a simple premise, injected with a lot of charm, as well as a very clear weakness for those players who are in the lead, making their movement much slower.

Coin Cache is one of my favorite coin mini-games, where you break the brick blocks in the hopes of finding coins. Some of them have ten coins inside to hit, but there are three layers of them, meaning to get them all, you'll eventually have to make it to the top. Thing is, other players can break blocks out from under you, and as the mini-game goes on, it becomes harder and harder to hit those ten coin blocks as they shift from left to right. You continue to lose more and more sure footing, until only those truly skilled at platforming get to make out with the rest of the treasure. You can also jump on each other's heads, and any mini-game where you can fuck others over is a win in my book.

Dinger Derby is another one of my absolute favorites. It's all about your own reaction timing, as you have to remember and master four different pitch timings, sent out to players in a random order. Since everyone always gets the same pitch as another player, it is purely about who is able to react to these pitching speeds. You can also occasionally see audience members getting bonked by baseballs out of the corner of your eye, it's so cute.

That's the thing about the mini-games on offer here: not only are the good ones **good**, they're also **oozing with** charm that make them stand out.

Beam Team is set near Stonehenge, and playing off the theory that it was built by aliens, the three players have to abduct the one player. Only problem is, those three players can bonk each other, encouraging them to move carefully and precisely. It's one of the rare 1v3s where it genuinely feels like it could go either way, especially since your pick-up radius as the UFO is rather generous.

Big Top Drop is cool in that the one player has to be pretty strategic about how they drop the balls to the tightrope below. You can press the A button to drop them fast, or the B button to drop them higher and slower. Alternating between them, you have to try to catch the three off guard. However, if you mash them together, you'll start to notice that you leave massive blind spots, since you can only throw so fast. To hit players in the middle, you need to consciously stop and time your presses, hopefully leading them into a more advantageous position. The three are going to try to stay in the middle where it's safe, but since they move so slow, if you juke them correctly, you can guide them to the sides, where you naturally are able to throw more balls.

Squared Away is another fantastic 1v3 mini-game, where one player controls a small, quick cube, while the other three heavier ones need to crush the one player. The one player might move quickly, but the three take up a lot more space, and the speed the one player moves at isn't **always** an advantage. Sometimes you might rocket straight next to one of the three if you misjudge your timing. It's always nerve-wracking as the one player, since you can **feel** that your loss is always just one wrong step away. Meanwhile, the three need to work together to try to trap the one player out because of their slower speed.

I daresay that the 1v3 mini-games here that **work** are some of the most fun and inventive the series has yet seen. They feel like they're **trying** to match the perfect balance that the 2v2s strike.

Bus Buffer has you working with your teammate to clear some gunk off a bus, very similar to Eatsa Pizza. You each take a quadrant, but as you near the middle of the bus, you have to stay out of each other's way, and the unwieldy nature of your mop makes this a lot harder than you'd imagine. Turning too often will slow you down, too, encouraging efficiency and teamwork.

Clock Stoppers is much the same, where you have to move two hands of a clock to match the middle picture. You might think to designate each of the hands to a single player, but sometimes, both hands will need to pass through each other for their shortest path to victory, meaning you'll often need to coordinate who is pushing what where and have the foresight to get out of someone's way. The size of the clock hands even comes into play, since the larger hand can be pushed **through** the smaller one by moving to its edge, which leaves room for skillful maneuvering.

Defuse or Lose is another novel idea, where you need to ground pound fuses before they reach King Bob-Omb and explode. There are three fuses and only two of you. Again, you can designate a general **side** for the two of you to manage, but having three fuses to look after gets pretty chaotic. It's not uncommon to get your wires crossed here, going after something that might have once been on your side, because your partner is off dealing with another one that's **also** on their side. You can trap two of them at an intersection, but the timing makes it very difficult to keep them there. If one wire pulls ahead, one player essentially needs to babysit it, while the other player works overtime to keep two of them from catching up. It's a phenomenal 2v2, another one of my favorites.

The duel mini-games are also **really** cool this time around. You have a version of Shy Guy Says that's styled more like a western standoff, where the Shy Guy can hold up signs to fake you out, before holding up a button to press to fire your gun. If you mess up even a single time, you lose. It replicates the energy of a cowboy gunslinger standoff **perfectly**, it is one of my favorite duel mini-games because of that.

Countdown Pound is a timing-based challenge where you need to stop a timer with a ground pound before the timer passes zero. Too late and you lose, but too early and your opponent might beat you. Piece Out is a cool block matching game, where you try to fill your board with as much of the same colors as possible. You have to pull from a conveyor belt in the middle that your opponent is also picking from, meaning you can steal colors they might need. You also need to place the blocks in such a way that you don't leave annoying one block openings that are hard to fill, adding a lot of on-the-fly strategy.

Head Waiter is probably my favorite of the bunch, though, because of its mind game potential. You pass a bomb back and forth, pressing A to lower its countdown by one, or B to lower it by two. Once it reaches five, you'll see a question mark display, meaning you'll then have to guess

what the other player picked. In essence this **is** luck based, but the element of player choice makes it **so much more fun**. You can go for A presses back and forth, or just go full chaos and mash the B button. It has the same thrilling energy as something like Bowser's Big Blast by utilizing a lot of clever psychological tricks, and I think that's the best way to craft mini-games like this. It's far more interesting than pulling a rope.

I love these mini-games, and I **hate** these mini-games, more than **ever** before. Every mini-game is essentially a dice roll where half the time I end up groaning, but the other half is competitive and kinda thrilling? What helps is that even though battle mini-games swing the mini-game star in one player's favor **way** more than it probably should, everyone has to vote on a set of three, making it a little less likely that you'll be thrown through a slot machine. Since there are four players and three choices, a tie will pick the one that no one chose, leading to a lot of conflict **before the mini-game even starts** where players just sit on the screen waiting for someone else to make their move, before one of them decides to be chaotic and choose one to force a tie, making everyone upset.

It does make me wonder why a voting feature like this isn't a more prominent feature. Why they're willing to do it for battle mini-games and nothing else is a little confusing. It would probably make sense for the person being forced to wager a star in a duel to at least be able to pick their mini-game poison.

This leads to **very** unpredictable board outcomes, but as we'll come to see: Mario Party 5 is an unpredictable game, and part of me thinks that was **the point**.

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## **The Boards**

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Mario Party 5 has a unique set of boards which, at first glance, are all **really boring**. For a long time, they were all jumbled together in my brain, and I'd often mistake one for another. That's not due to any aesthetic failings a la Mario Party 4. This time, they've actually taken the Star Spirits from Paper Mario, who've lulled us all into various dreams. You get a fun set of boards with very dreamlike qualities. There's one set in the clouds, one underwater, one on a table full of sweets, and one set in outer space. Bowser gets to call his a nightmare, ruling over it as his domain, and it might be the strongest theme for a Bowser board thus far because of that.

No, the reason they all tend to blend together, is because none of them have central mechanics. They are all, more or less, a set of spaces that move around in a circle, with some junctions. Their happening spaces trigger special games or events, which give you items or coins, or maybe moves you to another part of the board. Bowser's are a little more unique, and there are smaller distinctions like how Sweet Dream uses a much less punishing version of the crumbling bridges from 4, and Rainbow Dream forces you to pay coins to move to other islands.

For the most part, though, I don't have any strong feelings towards these boards one way or the other, which might be a first for this series. The boards I tend to prefer are up in my estimations for fairly arbitrary reasons. I think Pirate Dream looks really cool. I like how much elevation there is. I suppose I'm not fond of Rainbow Dream. It feels like a worse version of Future Dream, where you have to pay a five coin tax to progress around the board in a single direction. I'm also not too fond of how you can get trapped in junctions sometimes thanks to the crumbling bridges in Sweet Dream. It leads to the board favoring players who get high dice rolls, and those are probably my least favorite boards in any Mario Party.

Bowser Nightmare is certainly the board with the most personality, and it might actually be my favorite because of that. It's a board intended to inflict as much pain and suffering as possible. Events which see Bowser slowly walking across large swathes of the board, turning dozens of spaces into reds. You'll get trapped in a ring of death pulled straight from Mario Party 2, you'll be forced to take part in an item game where a loss sends you back to start, or lose all your capsules to a Bowser Flamethrower.

Thing about these mechanics is that, as usual, they are not a dominant force on your play experience. There is no reliable way to guarantee happening spaces, making them pretty rare events all things considered. That means they're **supplements** to the main meat of your gameplay, which will revolve around your items, which may as well control this title's flow.

In this installment, there are no shops. Items have been packaged into gachapon capsules, and are given out to players **at random** when they pass over a gachapon dispenser. The **entire** game is stuffed into these capsules. It is, without a doubt, tied with Mario Party 3 in terms of how much they affect a game.

Their effects range from: steal ten coins from another player, to shuffle everyone's items around, to warping straight to the star space, to the classic star steal. The revolutionary thing about these capsules is that they **do not** supplement board events. They **replace** them.

If you're used to visiting Boo, you're out of luck because his services are not available. Chain Chomp capsules are now the **only** way to do this. Either pay the fee to open the item and use it right away, or **place it** on the board, permanently adding it as an event for the rest of the game, in the hopes that maybe you'll land on it and get a free use out of it.

This might not sound like a huge deal, but I promise you: when you play Mario Party 5, you will **feel** how much control this gives you. Almost every turn, it feels like there's something new you have to consider.

If you have a Chain Chomp capsule, and your opponent has a Lakitu capsule, you'll need to consider your next steps carefully. It takes fifteen coins to open a Chain Chomp, plus 30 coins to actually steal a star. Meanwhile, a Lakitu costs ten coins to open, but it will steal a random orb from a player of your choosing.

If they have those coins, your Chain Chomp is essentially **gone**. So far, this is very similar to interactions you'd have with plunder chests in previous games, except this time you gain that Plunder Chest at random. If you don't have the coins to use your Chain Chomp now, it is most assuredly going to be stolen... **unless** you throw it in front of you. This will put the Chain Chomp on that space **forever**, until it is overwritten by another player. You have a chance to land on it and use it for free, but so do **all three other players**.

Still, is this a better idea for you than having it stolen and used by someone **against** you? You basically have a choice to make: pay the coin cost to use the item **once**, or throw it onto the board to make it a permanent fixture of your game. This is **crazy**, for so many reasons. There are quite a lot of dispensers on these boards, along with several events that give you more capsules. If you're constantly throwing these, the board is going to fill up with an assortment of crazy events. And the further you think about the implications of this, the crazier it gets.

Chain Chomps might not register to you as particularly novel. After all, they're essentially like Boo Bells, and we already know how those work. You want to know an item that never existed before? A Chance Time capsule. Yes, that means, if you wanted, you could force a Chance Time **whenever you want**, or **place a permanent one: wherever you want**. And this ain't no **reversal of fortune bullshit**, this is **good ol' fashioned, friendship ending bullshit**.

Want more fun stuff? You can place a Koopa Bank **wherever you want**. You can place a Tweester, which switches the position of the star **wherever you want**. You can place a duel space **wherever you want**. Since this one lets you wager stars, duels are a new and legitimate path to victory for aggressive players. Or, you could hold onto them, banking your coins and lording them over everyone, until you decide "hey, lets pop a few coins to use them like normal." Of course, there are items which steal capsules from you, or shuffles them around to different players, or simply steals them from your inventory and throws them onto the board at random. A roulette decides many of these events, but it's also a roulette that you can time by stopping it when the cursor is on the player directly after the one you want. It moves fast enough that it's never a guarantee you'll hit the timing right, but the fact that it's possible makes those capsules even more terrifying when in play, and means that you can't just hoard capsules forever. You are encouraged to use them eventually.

I think my favorite part of this system is that if you throw an item onto the ground, it becomes a **neutral** space. That means, if you threw a capsule that could **harm** you, and you land on it, it will still harm you. You get zero protection from this chaos. It is next to impossible to predict how a game of Mario Party 5 will shake out.

This might be why the game has a reputation for being a luck-based nightmare. Undoubtedly, some of that reputation concerns its mini-games, but I have to imagine an entirely random item system might give people that impression as well.

Here's the thing: they're entirely right. Though there is a tier system which decides the items you'll get from the dispensers, based on placements and turn count, the capsules you get are still **virtually** random, even if you have a higher chance of getting game altering ones if you aren't doing so well. It doesn't change the fact that nobody knows what they're going to get until they get it.

It leads to this anticipation when a player reaches a dispenser. You watch the color of the capsule, trying to guess what it will ultimately be, groaning when they inevitably pick up their Chain Chomp or Lakitu or Wiggler.

Mario Party 5 is **undeniably**, up to this point, the most luck-based game in the series; yet, I think I've had fun almost every time that I've played a round. Its ups and downs tell a story that each of its players partake in, and has actually **challenged** my view that the best Mario Party experience is one that perfectly balances Luck, Skill, and Strategy.

I played a round of Undersea Dream with a few friends that I'd like to walk you through, if you don't mind, to demonstrate the power of Mario Party 5. Pyrrhickong is Boo, who runs the Designing For channel. You might be familiar with them for their Mario Party board analysis, but they also make videos on all kinds of interesting video game design. Tarvould plays Peach, who runs a video game music trivia show that I've taken part in before. Both of them are awesome, I'll link to them below.

Undersea Dream is one of the most straightforward boards you could ask for. Two sides, junctions on either side, stars can spawn equally either way. Happenings can take you from one side of the board to another, as well as give you items.

The first several turns are uneventful, as per usual on a board. Some warp pipes are obtained, as well as a cursed mushroom. Oddly, this red space gets a lot of mileage. We get two button mashing mini-games in a row, so that's pretty cool and epic. Boo gets a happening space which places him on the other side of the board, right in front of the star. I have a decision to make, then. I have a warp pipe, which will spin a roulette and swap places with another player. I am relatively confident in my ability to time this roulette, so I consider swapping with Boo. Unfortunately, using the warp pipe would cost me enough coins that I would no longer be able to afford the star, so I save the item for a potential use later. Boo would need a very high roll to reach the star, anyway.

Peach is faced with the same dilemma, but decides to chance it, swapping with Boo. They are rewarded with a hidden block which all but guarantees a star next turn. Unfortunately, the next mini-game is Quilt for Speed, controlled by Luigi, so none of us get any coins. That's annoying for me, since I really wanted to use my Warp Pipe to deny the star. Fortunately, Luigi lands on Bowser, forcing everyone to take part in the luck-based game, and the losers have to forfeit all of their coins. Peach is the only one to lose coins, meaning they'll pass the star without being able to buy it. The star is still in play.

A few more turns pass, as a numbers race ensues between Boo, Luigi, and myself. Boo gets the highest possible turnout at 36 on Mathletes, putting them far ahead of the competition for mini-game star. Luigi then snipes the star, ruining my plan to use a Warp Pipe now that I finally have the coins. Luckily, the next star space is across the board, and I land on the one Boo got earlier, netting myself a solid number of coins. Though it doesn't place me in front of the star, per say, I still have my trusty Warp Pipe that I decided to hold onto. Boo then grabs a Chain Chomp out of a capsule, inciting mass hysteria.

A new rat race ensues for the star, and I decide it's time to use my Warp Pipe to put myself just before the junction. I deliberate on this for a while, as Boo's Chain Chomp is in play, with just enough coins to steal a star. I could hold off on it and let the stealing ensue with other players, but Boo assures me they're after Luigi. Ultimately, I decide to believe them, and the warp pipe switch pays off, as I switch with Peach, roll high enough, and nab the star out from under everyone else. My decision to hold onto the pipe paid off! The next star lands in front of Peach, who mushrooms their way over. The next star lands in front of me, and everyone else by proxy. Boo then uses a Chain Chomp star steal on Luigi, true to their word.

I nab the next star, and then we participate in a mashing battle mini-game. Thankfully, unbeknownst to anyone playing, I am very good at button mashing, which nets me 49 coins that, may I remind you, go toward the mini-game star. This makes me very happy. But then, the hits keep coming, because I roll high enough for the next star, which just so happens to be on my path. Boo, amusingly, rolls just enough for Chain Chomp, having lost the coins they would have used for another star steal. We then start loading up the beginning junction with poison mushrooms and piranha plants and all other manner of deadly traps, because of how frequently players need to pass through it for stars. Also because we might like to inflict pain on each other.

Peach forgets about the Piranha Plant, seeing they've landed on a coin space, assuming that means it's a good space, then loses half of their coins. Another reason I love the capsule system so much is because of this ambiguity. Everyone needs to remember which space is what, since every capsule is grouped into a broad category. A coin space could be good or bad, you never really know unless you keep track of every space, adding to the decision making and memory management of a board. The longer this goes on, the more intense it becomes.

Boo nabs the star, and I nab the next one. Meanwhile, Peach sits at a junction right before Chain Chomp, inflicted by a poison mushroom. They're counting on the lower dice roll, though, and decide to throw a Chain Chomp they received a turn earlier ahead of them to increase their odds of landing on it. As luck would have it, they land a natural chain chomp, and steal a star from me since I'm in the lead with four. Another one of my favorite things about this item system is that, occasionally, you can make gambles like this, and it is extremely rewarding to have them pay off. Peach saved some coins with this, but if they had even more, they potentially could have pulled off two steals in one turn if they wanted to dump a few more coins and use the capsule before rolling.

Though this gamble benefitted Peach immensely, it also means there are now two Chain Chomp spaces right next to each other for any player to land on, making it a dangerously rewarding section of the board. Luigi nets himself a star, and I land on another happening, much to the annoyance of Boo who also has two. Now, our happening bonus is tied, and I most assuredly have the mini-game star. Luckily, Boo manages to land on the poison mushroom right before the two chain chomps, giving them an incredibly good chance of another star steal... **except**, it's the last five turns now, which means a last five turns event.

In Mario Party 5, there's a particularly crazy event in which Bowser will replace **every** space on the board with a random capsule, which we roll, completely destroying Boo's chances to steal another star, as those two spaces get overwritten. Amusingly, they even roll the number they needed for it, hitting a Tweester and changing the star space. Thanks to the chaos it creates, this is probably my favorite last five turns event in a Mario Party game. Not only does **every** space now have a random event, nobody knows **which** event they're landing on. As I said before, capsules are grouped into broad categories, which means every player has a lot to consider now when counting out their rolls. A coin space is, more often than not, good for the player landing on it: but it also contains a piranha plant that eats **half your coins**, so do you gamble that? This will be an important set of questions moving forward.

I land another happening space, which puts me in the lead for bonus stars, while I rocket my way up the coin standings **very** close to the coin star. My advantage has become somewhat frightening, which means there's now a target on my back. Peach lands on a random warp pipe, switching them with Boo who was in front of the star, causing **yet another** shakeup. Unfortunately for them, Luigi snipes the star, and then I win a 1v3 mini-game which finally pushes me over the edge to the highest coin record, meaning I officially have three bonus stars under my belt.

Then, something **absolutely crazy** happens. I find myself at a junction, with a choice between a movement space, and a coin space. I am not so familiar with what can be on these spaces, except that I have such a high coin total that I **do not** want to lose it to a Piranha Plant. I decide to take the movement space, thinking that I'll get a warp pipe, or moved away to another space, or even hit a podoboo that moves me ten spaces forward and steals some coins. Instead, this is when I figure out that movement spaces include **wiggler**, who warps you to the star **for free**. It costs twenty coins to use, at which point, you're warped directly to the star and obtain it for free, meaning I essentially landed on the star by taking this path. That means I have three bonus stars **and** have the physical star lead. All because I decided I did **not** want a Piranha Plant. Peach lands on a Chain Chomp to steal one of my stars, but it's already far too late. A few turns pass, we make it to the final standings, I receive my three bonus stars and sweep the board.

May I remind you, there were **no** chance times involved in this game, yet almost **every turn** something crazy happened. Shakeup after shakeup, nobody **ever** knew what was going to happen, and yet we were all making calculated, strategic decisions that very often paid off for us. It is not **inaccurate** to claim that Mario Party 5 is a luck-based nightmare, but it's a **fun**

luck-based nightmare that **understands** the appeal of Mario Party, giving players just enough to think about every turn in order to ensure that there is **never** a boring match.

While it is true that these boards lack a strong identity of their own, in this title, the **identity** of a match is primarily decided by its players. In the past, this was true to some extent. You'll have good games, bad games, boring games, and exciting games. Those experiences are likely to sway your opinion on a board or mini-game one way or the other. Are you playing against pros, or casual friends? Are you a pro? Are you out for blood, to cause chaos, or to have a laugh?

I set out with this series to find the games which facilitated matches which made you work for your victories. In doing so, I think I overlooked something crucial: that Mario Party **might not** be looking for **one** kind of experience. By my own metrics, Mario Party 5 **should be** one of the worst that I've played, but that just isn't the reality.

In terms of game rankings, I think I'd comfortably put it above Mario Party 3, top of the list for the moment. This has surprised me, and it's made me think that **luck** having more weight than the other two elements doesn't have to be a bad thing. Luck is a **spice**, used to bring out a certain kind of flavor. The amount of spice you decide to use, though, is entirely up to you. The amount of spice you **enjoy consuming** is also entirely up to you.

If you told me that Mario Party 5 was the worst one you'd ever played, that would make a lot of sense to me. The boards all blend together, you have no control over which items you'll receive, and those items have more power over a game than **ever before**. These games are what we see in them, for we are the ones who create their stories.

That will be important to keep in mind whenever the next time should come. We'll be covering Mario Party 6, my most played game in the series, and one very close to my heart. Hopefully it won't take me three years again, but hey: I'm not making any promises.

Gambling in video games is a bit of an interesting topic. In Mario Party, specifically, duels feel a lot like gambling. Though you participate in bouts of skill, you have to wager something of your own first. Winner takes all. Lately, I've been a bit curious about the ways in which video games utilize aspects of gambling in their design. I actually wrote a video about it, and you can watch it exclusively over on Nebula. It's not something that would make as much sense to put on YouTube but Nebula is the perfect place for deeper dives like that. Here's a little snippet:

You can watch this exclusively over on Nebula!

You can find many exclusive videos of mine, in fact. I have another one on my ideal version of Sonic Generations, Astro Bot's excellent callbacks to dormant IP, and a video about Hi-Fi Rush prophesying its own studio's demise. I plan to make many more.

That's because I am proud to be part of Nebula, a streaming service delivering exciting new artistic works! Other creators, like Jacob Geller, are also part of the service, creating their own

exclusive content, like a video discussing the infamy of video game Six Days in Fallujah, and whether it deserves its reputation; or another from him about how Batman: Arkham Knight still looks incredible, despite its age.

No matter where you look, Nebula has fun stuff to watch! Their Originals have started to interest me a lot. I recently got around to watching IDENTITEAZE directed by Jessie Earl of Jessie Gender, a fascinating sci-fi thriller interrogating our use of strict binaries and definitions, and how it impacts our ability to truly be one with ourselves in a corporate dystopia. I highly recommend sitting down and watching this forty minute short film, and many others: I can vouch for their quality! Nebula isn't just a place for things we can't put on YouTube, it's becoming a place for us to transcend what we could do on any other platform.

If you're looking to check out what the site has to offer, you can use my link below to check out my channel, as well as my video on how video games promote gambling. Using my link, you'll get 40% off a yearly plan, which shakes out to \$36 a year, or \$3 a month. You could also choose a monthly plan at \$6 a month, or go for a Lifetime plan for \$300. That's right, you'll get access to Nebula **for life**. All of this using my link below! New paid subscribers also receive guest passes to give out to others, so if you end up loving it, you can invite friends and family to check it out free of charge! No credit card information required. And for those of you that want to share everything Nebula has to offer with your family and friends, Nebula is now offering Annual Gift Cards. Use the link [gift.nebula.tv/kingk](https://gift.nebula.tv/kingk) to give a year of Nebula to a friend for just \$36.

I think you'll all really enjoy what Nebula has to offer, if you give it an honest chance. It's a bright beacon of creative hope in an increasingly dark and stormy independent creator landscape. So go check it out now at [nebula.tv/kingk](https://nebula.tv/kingk) and I'll see you there.