

\*Sentences in () don't need to be voiced\*

## **INTRO**

Marvel Rivals is a game where you react.

Paladins is a game where you decide.

The difference in these design philosophies completely changes how much control you actually have over a match.

Seeing as these games are both hero shooters, I think it's fair that we can compare them; and to be completely honest, I've enjoyed playing Paladins more than Marvel Rivals; that's not to say that I don't enjoy Marvel Rivals, but the purpose of this video is to highlight what Rivals can pick up from Paladins that made that game a unique, fun, (and less frustrating) experience.

Please keep in mind that this video was formed from my personal opinion, so any defence, additions or corrections you may have to add to the points I bring up are welcome.

If you're watching this video, I will assume that you already play Marvel Rivals; however, if you've previously played Paladins (or still play) I'm sure you've felt the difference in the way both games handle their team fights. Paladins may have stopped receiving support, but the servers are still up if you want to give it a try.

Rivals is built to be more accessible and fast paced, having less systems and rules in a match, but this makes them feel more chaotic. Team fights can sometimes feel like they just don't end, and in many cases, are messy from start to finish.

Paladins feels more structured. The fights feel coordinated and much more reliant on teamwork than Rivals does, at least from my experience.

This leads to a very important question:

What happens when a game removes complexity in order to make things faster and easier to play?

This isn't a "Paladins is better" video, and it's not a rant about Marvel Rivals. Because Rivals does a lot of things right. The purpose of this video is to highlight the key differences between these shooters in hopes that the game that isn't dead can improve. Which brings me to my first point:

### **Cauterize**

So, let's start with the titular Cauterize system. This used to be an item in the games "Item shop" (which we will talk about later) but was so important for the pace of every match that it was always bought at the start of every game. This left players with 3 other item slots instead of the intended 4.

Because of this, cauterize was removed from the item shop and implemented into the system itself.

To explain what cauterize is exactly, it reduces the amount of healing you receive after taking damage. This triggers after you've taken damage from any character's basic attack and lasts for 1 second. Everytime you take damage from a basic attack, the duration resets. At the start of each match, cauterize would be active at 25% and gradually increase as the match goes on, stopping at a maximum of 90%.

This would mean you are constantly being pressured and prevents any character from effectively being immortal through sustained healing, preventing situations like the one you're currently watching:

[Insert that one video of a tank idling while all damage gets outhealed]

I believe cauterize is important to incentivising teamwork and peeling for supports. Taking cover for at least one second would cleanse players off cauterize and allow supports to fully heal players.

This would also incentivise supports to do more than becoming healbots, since they couldn't possibly keep teammates alive through cauterize; and hopefully encourage teammates to finally take cover regularly instead of eating all that damage and blaming supports for not healing them.

Cauterize is also cause for team fights being much shorter, more decisive, and much more structured. (this would also prevent lord farming, you frauds have to earn those titles instead of farming for it) Keeping the pace only as short as necessary.

This would force players to be more strategic and creative with their approaches to engaging in fights; instead of teammates running into a 1v6 head empty, no support, no tank, just pure main character syndrome.

Understandably, this would bring about big changes in the meta, like a spike in importance for characters who can shield, which would block damage and allow for teammates to cleanse cauterize without having to take cover.

This is what gives Paladins its structure. Fights aren't just about who has more healing or more damage, They're about timing that pressure correctly. If your team is consistently dealing damage, you're not just lowering health bars— you're actively shutting down healing.

Every fight has a natural flow: You engage, apply pressure, force someone low, and eventually they'll have to back off because, contrary to popular belief, they aren't able to survive through constant damage.

There's a clear moment where one team wins the fight, and the other team has to reset. It makes fights a lot less chaotic.

Cauterize rewards teamwork in a very direct way. One person applying pressure isn't always enough, unlike when your whole team is coordinating damage. That's when healing finally fails, targets become killable and supports can no longer scissor to survive.

At this point, it no longer becomes "Every man for himself". your team is contributing to a shared win condition.

This is what made being a support so fun in Paladins; your job isn't just to heal through everything. You can't. The system doesn't allow it. Instead, you have to think about timing. You have to recognise when your team is under pressure and when they're actually safe to heal.

You're watching for moments where Cauterize isn't active. Moments Where your healing will actually matter. And until you have that moment, you can use your abilities to bully your enemies all the way back to spawn.

Supports do a lot more than just heal, they Reposition, control space, and enable engages. They make decisions about when to commit resources and when to hold them. You're allowed to ACTUALLY play the game!!!

Now compare that to Marvel Rivals - Healing is much more consistent, spammy if you will. Because of that, supports often default into just... healbotting. I know invis and dagger mains can do a lot more, but are you allowed to? NO stay back and heal healer!

You end up in these situations where both teams are just powering through damage, you either make it or you blame the supports from the spawn room. The fight only ever ends when something extreme happens, most often than not it's an ultimate. And let's be real, it's either Sue's ult or Cloak and daggers ult.

This is where that difference in design philosophy really shows. Paladins creates limits, and those limits force players to work together, time their actions, and make decisions. Whether they like it or not.

Marvel Rivals does not have these limits to make the game more accessible to play, but also makes fights feel less controlled. Players may still blame their supports for not healing them even with cauterize but at least cauterize makes players consider that they COULDN'T be healed – or at least one can hope.

Although, a system like cauterize would effectively make the anti-healing status effect useless. (applied by hero abilities like Blades dash with his sword, Gambits spade card, and Venoms Ultimate [just display their icons])

This can be easily rectified by replacing them with a debuff already found in the game: Vulnerability. This simply makes enemies take increased damage, and are already used by heroes like The Thing, Cloak and Dagger and Black Widows Ultimate.

## Customization

Cauterize isn't the only system that makes Paladins unique. The biggest difference between these two games comes from how they handle customisation.

In Paladins, you don't simply just... pick a character... heh... you can BUILD your playstyle using talents and loadouts~ Marvel Rivals does not have either of these but could definitely execute them better than paladins did. Because here you're able to swap to different characters.

In Paladins, players don't have the option to adapt mid game by swapping characters, instead they have to use the item shop to do so (again, this will come up later), and they have to finish the game with exactly the same character, talent and loadout they've picked at the start of the match.

In Marvel Rivals, adaptation comes from switching heroes. If you're feeding, you swap. If you're watching this, I hope you swap. If you don't, feel free to drop your username in the comments so I can find and block you.

In Paladins you have talents that can completely change a character's base kit, and you have loadouts that modify abilities, cooldowns, and general stats.

The same support can be built for healing, or damage, or utility, sometimes even a hybrid of all three. So instead of a character being locked into one role, you define that role yourself. It's not just "who are you playing?", it's "how are you playing them?", and you better have the right answer.

This is where skill expression really starts to open up. Success in Paladins isn't just about mechanics; it's about decision-making before the fight even begins.

You're choosing the right talent, loadout, and items according to what your team needs and what the enemy team is trying to do. You're constantly making decisions that shape the outcome of the match.

From here on out, I will use my main from Paladins and Marvel rivals as an example to the things I will discuss: Mal'damba and Adam Warlock respectively

Now, I want to be honest, this is the part where I talk about Mal'damba's talents; but the characters kits in Marvel Rivals are already complex enough. So, I honestly think talents aren't necessary when talking about stuff Rivals could pick up from Paladins, but they are still valid and could still work. So, where's the harm in discussing it anyway, we're allowed to have fun speculation sessions. If you aren't interested in hearing about talents in Rivals, you can skip to this point in the video [insert timestamp of when I'm done discussing talents].

Every character starts with 1 talent and unlocks 2 more as they level that character. Mal'damba's abilities and talents are the following:

[insert visuals showing the abilities and talents briefly]

Talents allows players to choose different ways to play a character before a match. In Marvel Rivals, should talents be implemented into the game, the ability to swap to a different character should also allow players to swap to a different talent.

This would allow players to adapt as the game goes on, and in a way, execute this system in a more forgiving way than Paladins did.

Now is the time where I have some fun coming up with talent ideas for Adam Warlock. You chose to watch this section; you will stay to listen to this.

His kit is pretty simple and does not really need much explanation.

[ability montage]

Now that we ALL know what Adam does, and we ALL promise to play along with his abilities from now on, let's make him some talents.

(no need to voice these I'll just show them)

---

Talent 1: Cosmic Rebirth – Adam warlocks' ultimate ability can now revive Allies more than once in its duration.

Talent 2: Lasting life stream – Avatar life stream now heals for a small amount for 3 seconds after the initial burst stream but no longer bounces between allies.

Talent 3: Adam Warlock now only has 1 use of his life stream instead of 2, however its healing amount is increased to a maximum amount depending on how much damage he does before using it.

---

These would allow Players to play Adam Warlock much differently each time depending on which talent they choose for him, obviously. Of course, these are only talents I've thought up on the spot for this section and may not exactly be good in an actual match, so be nice about them.

His first talent could encourage players to be more passive in a game, staying back and contributing to heals and small amounts of damage as a way to continuously farm ult charge.

His second talent would allow him to play better as a pocket support, enabling and sustaining dive characters, or tanks holding the front line.

And his last talent would incentivise him to play much more aggressively, allowing him to easily sustain himself or his team by continuously pumping damage into his enemies.

[ end of the talents section]

### **Loadouts**

Loadouts were the second half of the customization, and the part that I think would be most relevant to Marvel Rivals

So, what exactly is this system? Simply put, you have 4 cards for each ability that your character has, and you can put a total of 5 cards into your loadout. You have a total of 15 points to use to strengthen all of your cards, so naturally some cards will be stronger than another. For the purpose of this video, I will use 2 loadouts that I've built for Mal'damba: My support loadout, and my DPS loadout.

This is the build I use mainly for healing and utility:

[show build, explain what it does]

However, if I ever felt like I would rather be shutting enemies down with my ssssstun ssssssnake, I would choose this DPS build before the match would start, and leaving the healing up to the others:

[show DPS build and explain what it does]

Unfortunately, once I've picked a loadout before the match starts, I will NOT be able to change this for the duration of the match. This is something I think Marvel Rivals would execute better.

Since the game already lets you swap characters to adapt in the middle of the match, why not also let players swap loadouts to change the way you play your initial pick as well.

This would allow for more unique and creative ways for people to play the game, allow for higher skill expression and allow players to create builds to better handle specific situations. And if you're not creative, nor can you handle builds, you can of course copy others.

I won't make an entire card system for Adam Warlock here, and please do not make me, but some examples of cards that could be of use to him would be: A card that would increase the healing of Soul Bond by 5%, and with each point assigned to this card, an extra 5% would be added to the damage reduction amount for a maximum of 25%

Or perhaps, a card that would increase his ultimate charge by 0.2% per hit with his charged shot.

Again, these might be broken when actually put into use, but these are also cards that I just came up with off the top of my head. And if you have a problem with them, I'd like to see you come up with something better.

In Marvel Rivals, skill expression is really just your aim, your positioning, and your ability usage. And while that's still skill, it's a narrower form of it.

Paladins creates far more variety in how matches play out. You're not just seeing the same characters doing the same things every game. You're seeing different builds, different approaches, and different solutions to the same problems.

Whereas in Rivals, once you understand what a hero does, that's it. And if your pick not working for the match, you swap or feed.

Of course, there can be different ways to play a character from their base kit, like a shotgun only punisher style, or a dive Peni Parker, having a loadout would allow these characters to have builds specialized for this type of playstyle.

And once again, this ties back to player agency. Paladins gives you tools to adapt within your character. Marvel Rivals pushes you to adapt by abandoning your morals, giving up the mask, cucking your first pick. One gives you control over how you play, the other makes you leave for milk.

And while that makes Rivals easier to pick up, it also removes a layer of depth that makes games like Paladins feel so rewarding over time.

## Item Shop

The loadout system gives players control over how play their character, but once the game begins, those decisions are locked in. You can't change your talent, you can't change your build, and you can't swap characters. So, if something isn't working, you would need another way to adapt.

And that's where the item shop that I've previously mentioned so many times comes in.

In Paladins, as the game goes on, players earn credits that can be used to purchase items. These credits would be earned via kills and healing. But most importantly they were also earned by staying on the objective.

More often than not, you will find players pushing forward to chase kills and completely ignore the objective which is the only way to win the damn match. This would either prolong the match or allow for it to be stolen back, forcing the attackers to lose.

In Paladins, you are rewarded 1 credit per second spent on the point, this would incentivise the team to, as crazy as it sounds, stay on the objective!!!

Although of course this would bring about the infamous "Payload princess/Point Bitch" archetype again; but I would argue that this would be better than the objective moving at a snail's pace unprotected.

Fun unknown fact: The objective moves faster with the more people on it, which also makes you win faster!

The items you buy with credits give you different advantages depending on the situation. You might buy items to increase movement speed, counter shields, or reduce crowd control. The important part is that you are constantly making decisions about what your team needs in that specific match.

Just as an idea of what the items in the game would offer you: [Show the item list and briefly explain what each one does]

Unfortunately, you're limited in what you can buy. You can only hold four items at a time, which means you can't counter everything. You have to choose.

Do you want survivability?

Do you want more damage?

Do you want to more utility or to counter crowd control?

Tough shit you have to pick the 4 that matters most. That decision directly impacts how the rest of the match plays out.

This is what gives the item shop so much depth. It's not just about buying upgrades; it's about making trade-offs. You're constantly evaluating the enemy team, identifying the biggest threat, and deciding how to respond to it. And it's very rare to have a match that lasts long enough for you to max out all 4 items.

In Marvel Rivals, that type of decision-making doesn't really exist. Instead of adapting through systems, players adapt by swapping characters. And while swapping does solve the problem, it also replaces the need to think and be creative.

The game gives you an answer, instead of asking you to find one. Take for example, the newly added Tenacity system. Trigger conditions and the tenacity scaling are laid out in patch notes, but I'll explain it here as well: If you get with 5.5s of CC duration or 6 effects in 7s; it purges CC and grants you 30% tenacity which can scale to full CC immunity.

It may not trigger very often, but regardless of frequency, that doesn't change what it does: It gives players a get out of jail free card.

Once this is triggered, it heavily impacts characters that rely on crowd control as part of their kit, like Rogue and Hulk in his ultimate form. More often than not, they will trigger tenacity simply from using their abilities or attacking, and players will get free cc immunity, completely mitigating the entire point of their abilities.

In Paladins, you don't get that kind of safety net. If something is causing problems, you open the damn item store and max out resilience.

What is resilience? This item at the max level, reduces the effects of cc by 75%. It doesn't make characters immune to crowd control, but it significantly reduces the effect of it.

This would allow characters with cc built into their kits to still achieve the purpose of stopping momentum. The victims of crowd control are still affected by it but are no longer crippled or granted immunity to it.

Resilience simply makes it easier to deal with, and the game doesn't automatically protect you or solve problems for you. It gives you options, but it's up to you to use them correctly.

In theory, swapping characters in Rivals already solves this. If your current pick can't handle the situation, you just switch to one that can. But there's a middle ground here.

Instead of relying entirely on swapping, a system like the item shop could exist alongside it, especially if players were allowed to respec their items during a match.

This would let players adapt without completely abandoning their character, giving them more control over how they respond to different situations, and less people to blame.

Of course, combining loadouts and an item shop would make the game more complex. It would add more systems for players to learn, which could make the game less accessible, especially for new players.

But that doesn't mean it shouldn't exist. A solution to this could be to separate these experiences. Keep the current version of Marvel Rivals as a more accessible "classic" mode, where players can jump in and play without needing to think about builds or items.

And then introduce a separate mode where systems like loadouts and an item shop are enabled. This would allow players who want more depth and control to engage with those systems, without forcing that complexity onto everyone else.

However, I firmly believe that should this be added to the game, it should be a compulsory system in ranked.

At the end of the day, systems like loadouts and the item shop aren't just about adding complexity, they're about giving players more control.

They allow for meaningful decisions, adaptation, and reward players for their creativity and understanding the game at a deeper level.

And that's something Marvel Rivals could benefit from without losing what makes it accessible in the first place.

## Drafts and Bans

I don't have a transition into this section. In ranked Paladins, matches don't just start by throwing players into a hero select screen. There is a structured pick and ban phase, where both teams take turns banning and selecting characters before the match begins.

Bans are done in stages, and each decision matters. One team bans, then the other responds, and these decisions can influence what gets picked later on.

This is what gives the system structure. There's a level of planning and strategy before the match even starts, and each of the highest-ranking players on each team are allowed to ban up to 4 characters of their choice (this amount is from the diamond + rank lobbies), for a combined total of 8 bans.

This is not to say that the lowest rank players in the lobbies should not get a chance to ban; it's to introduce the idea of giving each player a chance to ban a character instead of leaving it up to a vote.

Now compare that to Marvel Rivals.

Instead of a structured system, Rivals uses a voting system where every player selects a hero they want to ban at the same time. The game then uses a probability system to determine which heroes are actually banned.

This creates a few major problems. First, bans aren't guaranteed, even if most of your team wants a specific hero banned, there's still a chance it doesn't happen. The system introduces randomness into what should be a strategic decision.

Second, duplicate bans exist. If both teams vote to ban the same character, that counts as two bans used on one hero. This means fewer total characters are removed from the match. In some cases, you might end up with fewer bans than intended, simply because both teams picked the same target.

And third, everything happens at once. There's no back-and-forth. No adjustments. No reacting to what the other team is doing, no thought, no bitches and no victories. Everyone votes at the same time, the system decides the result, and that's it.

A system where players take turns banning would allow for more intentional decisions across the team. It would also allow for coordinated strategies, such as banning counters, protecting key picks, or forcing the enemy team into uncomfortable compositions.

In its current state, Marvel Rivals' ban system feels more like a suggestion than a decision.

In Paladins, it's the foundation of the match. Paladins gives players control over what the match looks like before it even starts.

Marvel Rivals reduces that control by introducing randomness and removing structure.

One system rewards planning. The other prioritises speed and simplicity.

## **Conclusion**

And that's really what this whole discussion comes down to. This isn't about saying Paladins is the better game. Because it's not that simple.

Marvel Rivals does a lot of things really well. It's faster, more accessible, and much easier to jump into. You don't need to learn multiple systems just to start having fun, and not to mention it has a ton of very recognizable and loved heroes with more to come, and that's a big part of why it works.

But in simplifying those systems, it also removes something important - Player agency.

In Paladins, you are constantly making decisions, you decide how your character plays before the match even starts, you decide how to adapt as the game unfolds, you decide how to respond to the enemy team, and even before the match begins, you help shape what that match is going to look like.

In Marvel Rivals, a lot of those decisions are handled by the game itself. You adapt by swapping, you survive through built-in systems, you rely less on decision-making, and more on reacting in the moment.

And while that makes the game easier to pick up - it also makes it feel less controlled over time. That's why this isn't about making Marvel Rivals more complicated for the sake of it.

It's about giving players more ways to interact with the game. Systems like light itemisation, structured ban phases, or optional build paths through something like loadouts don't have to replace what Rivals already does well when they can exist alongside it.

You can keep the game accessible, while still giving players who want more depth the tools to explore it even if it through a separate quickplay mode.

Because the goal isn't to turn Marvel Rivals into Paladins and it's not to overload players with systems, it's to give players more control.