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Map Design in *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*

Call of Duty developer Infinity Ward decided “it was time for a change” for this year’s *Call of Duty* (Hodgson, 2019). *Call of Duty* maps used to be three-lane based; they would consist of two side lanes and a center lane as seen in Figure 1; the side lanes are used for flanking to catch the enemy off guard and the center lane is where the heavy gunfire takes place. *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* decided to “make the maps more believable” (Hodgson, 2019). My initial experience with this game was difficult since I had to get used to this new design. If I wanted to push a certain spot on a map, I had to be vigilant of my surroundings. In Figure 2, I’m capturing the B flag in the map “Arklov Peak”, this is a pretty big map, where I must be aware of many places I could get shot from (which are represented by the red lines) while capturing the flag. Infinity Ward introduced this new mechanic of map design that lets players have a realistic feel when playing *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* and be aware of their surroundings.

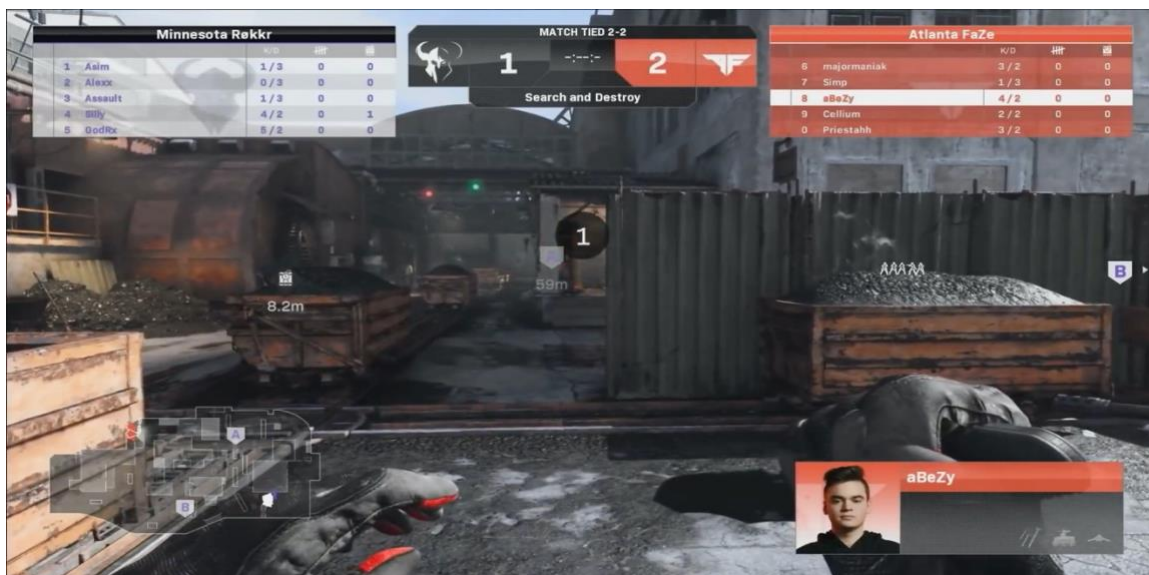


Figure 1



Figure 2

These new mechanics also affected professional players from the Call of Duty League. they took a while to get used to these new changes; Atlanta Faze, Dallas Empire, and Chicago Huntsmen which are Professional teams got used to this change quickly since they were the teams that were winning tournaments early on and ended up fighting for the championship. Pro Players like Chris “Simp” Lehr, McArthur "Cellium" Jovel, and Tyler "aBeZy" Pharris which play for Atlanta Faze adapted to this change faster than others. “Simp” and “aBeZy” where known as the “tiny terrors” from the beginning of the season. In-game modes like Search and Destroy, “aBeZy” would have the map knowledge that would allow him to flank the enemy from the start of the round meanwhile “Simp” snipes the enemies that are pushing towards the bomb sites. [Video 1](#) shows how player 8, “aBeZy” pushes to “Boiler Room” and waits for player 7, “Simp” to snipe the enemy that is “top train” which makes the enemy team rotate towards bomb site “B”, meanwhile the enemy team is rotating player 9 “Cellium” is watching the “B” bomb and “containers” this allows “aBezy” to push to “containers” from the side and get two kills and win the round.



Video 1

Aside from professional players, casual players were affected by this new addition; in order to successfully play this game, players that care about becoming better, watch playthroughs on how pro players and skilled Youtubers deal with this new mechanic. “TheXclusiveAce” which is a *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* Youtuber focuses on the mechanics and playstyles of Modern Warfare he has a series called “Modern Warfare Maps Exposed” which explains different points of interests in certain maps. From [video 2](#) he shows different ways to protect the “B” flag in the Domination game mode.



[Video 2](#)

Casual players who don't watch these kinds of videos, or just play the game for fun and their main objective is not to get better, resort to camping. In-game modes like Team Deathmatch that consists of the first team to reach to 150 kills, or a certain time limit, usually end due to the time running out and not the kill limited being reached; this is usually caused by both teams camping and not pushing out to get kills; before, this would not happen, games would

end by reaching the total kills since camping was not as big as it is in this game therefore made the games more fast paced.

Websites like Charlie Intel which focus on giving news about *Call of Duty* and are trustworthy in the *Call of Duty* community, shared their opinion on the new maps. When playing these new maps their opinion ranged from “Maps aren’t great” and “the maps are too much” (Bhat, 2019) these opinions were based around the fact that these new maps “have a lot more windows, openings, alleyways, areas to get shot from” (Bhat, 2019). Bhat went on to explain how “a lot of maps could be cut in half and have ‘choke points’ changed”. Figure 3 shows a pretty big map called “Arklov Peak” that features a lot of places where players can engage in gunfights. Since most game modes are 6vs6 it makes it difficult for players to engage in those gunfights. Teams defending the “C” flag and “B” in the Domination game mode don’t have a reason to push out toward the “A” flag; this push will most likely result in the players being killed while rotating towards the “A” flag; if a team wants to capture the “C” and “B” flag, that team only has to camp the window that has a direct view towards those flags and wait until the final score is met. This playstyle might be fun for some but further proves the point of Bhat which is that maps could be cut in half to prevent players from camping.

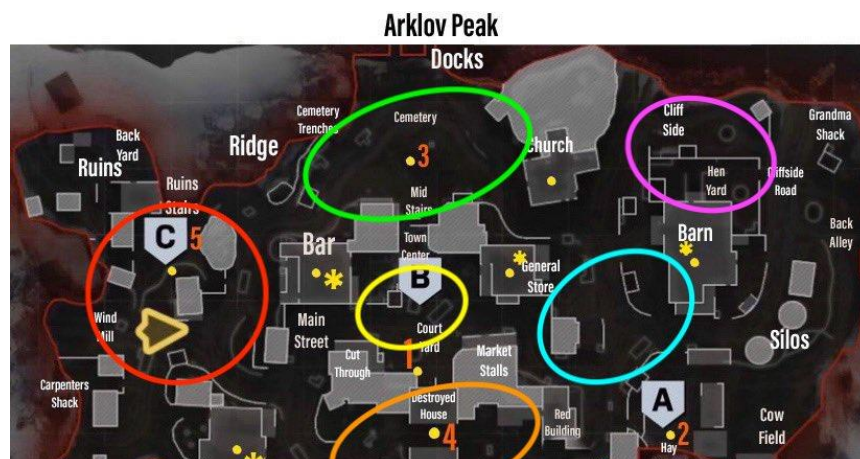


Figure 3

Modern Warfare introduced a game mode called “Shoot the Ship” which features two maps; “Shoot House” and “Shipment”. Since there is no option for players to choose what map they want to play, this game mode is very popular. These two maps are fan favorites and, in my opinion, the best maps to complete weapon challenges and get a lot of kills. “Shoot House” is the closest map *Modern Warfare* has to a three-lane map Figure 4. This map has fewer doors and windows compared to others in this game. Gunfights are mostly focused on the side lanes since the center lane is usually populated by players “mounted” in their spawn and going for longshots. This map features “straight pathways and makes the gameplay calmer” (C. Solarski, 2017, p.37).

“Shipment”, on the other hand, Figure 5 consists of close-quarters encounters; players can get a lot of kills. From Solarski’s explanation of “The Aesthetic Value of Pathway Lines”, shipment features an “angular system of roads, which is like how the roads are made in *Grand Theft Auto IV* and illustrates sharper movements” (C. Solarski, 2017, p.35). This design always makes players be alert and have a good awareness of their surroundings and represents more “aggressive” encounters (C. Solarski, 2017, p.35).

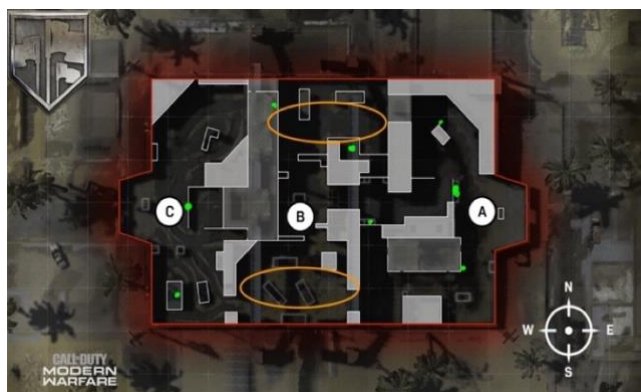


Figure 4



Figure 5

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare introduced a new map design; it made professional players and casual players adapt and create new playstyles. Windows and doors made players be aware of their surroundings and promoted team playing. I had to watch Youtubers like “TheXclusiveAce” to learn where to position myself. When the game first came out it was a lot of trial and error; I had to learn what where good pushes and where were the best places and times to flank the enemy. I learned how to use windows in my advantage to cut off enemies from flanking, and opening doors to use them as cover. Figure 6 shows a good spot which lets the player protect the “B” flag in Domination, while also being aware if people are flanking towards the “A” flag which is behind me. This new style of maps is not terrible, and it is understandable why they did it; it provides more realistic encounters and provides players with a challenge to learn how to play on these new maps. This year’s *Call of Duty* title, *Call of Duty Black Ops: Cold War*, will not be using these map designs; the maps they have shown are all three-lane based. This might be a cause of mixed reactions from *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*’s reactions or the fact that Treyarch is developing this year’s *Call of Duty*.



Figure 5

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