
From: Allison Larkin </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BA7347E50F994F9B9A6BD20103718D85-ALLISON LAR>
To: Jennifer Luke; Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM); Matt Booty
Sent: 11/5/2022 1:13:06 AM
Subject: Re: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

So much love for Matt, his answers, and the format! Usually, the comments section of YouTube is a dumpster fire. Thanks for everyone's time and patience.

Ali

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jennifer Luke <jenluke@microsoft.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 5, 2022 9:53:06 AM
To: Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM) <Emil.Rodriguez@microsoft.com>; Matt Booty <mbooty@microsoft.com>
Cc: Allison Larkin <Allison.Larkin@microsoft.com>
Subject: RE: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

Just listened to the whole thing – really well come by both of you 😊

From: Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM) <Emil.Rodriguez@microsoft.com>
Sent: Friday, November 4, 2022 9:23 AM
To: Matt Booty <mbooty@microsoft.com>; Jennifer Luke <jenluke@microsoft.com>
Cc: Allison Larkin <Allison.Larkin@microsoft.com>
Subject: RE: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

Hey Matt,

Interview here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2ikd1K8J40>

Thanks again for participating, enjoy your weekend!

From: Matt Booty <mbooty@microsoft.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 11:26 PM
To: Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM) <Emil.Rodriguez@microsoft.com>; Jennifer Luke <jenluke@microsoft.com>
Cc: Allison Larkin <Allison.Larkin@microsoft.com>
Subject: RE: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

Thanks for the heads up, and thanks for working with them.

From: Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM) <Emil.Rodriguez@microsoft.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 9:34 PM
To: Matt Booty <mbooty@microsoft.com>; Jennifer Luke <jenluke@microsoft.com>
Cc: Allison Larkin <Allison.Larkin@microsoft.com>
Subject: FW: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

Hey Matt and Jen,

Letting you know that the interview with FPS is landing tomorrow AM (they accelerated a bit from original schedule

of Saturday AM).

[REDACTED] to recut the interview with some "DVD style commentary" interspersed where they analyze some of your answers.

Overall, it ends up working pretty well from the cut that they showed us. Their commentary is largely positive on your responses, both in your transparency and in the content itself. We'll send a link around once it is live.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Best,
Emil

From: Emil Rodriguez (HE/HIM) <Emil.Rodriguez@microsoft.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 9:26 PM
To: Gaming Comms LEADS <GamingCommsLeads@microsoft.com>
Cc: Allison Larkin <Allison.Larkin@microsoft.com>
Subject: Matt Booty on Friends Per Second podcast.

Hey all,

Tomorrow morning (approx. 7am PT) Matt Booty's conversation with the Friend's Per Second podcast will be released. Matt spoke with hosts Ralph Panebianco (SkillUp), Lucy James (GameSpot), Jake Baldino (Gameranx), and Jirard Khalil (The Completionist/G4TV) in a long-form conversation that profiles his career and perspective on the industry currently.

Whilst experienced creators on their own, the team are quite new to podcasting with Friend's Per Second being at episode 6 at the time of recording. [REDACTED]

Ralph and the team recut the interview in a revised format that would allow them to add the commentary to expand on Matt's answers in a way they would have liked to originally [REDACTED]

The outcome is that they used almost the entirety of the interview but have re-ordered into distinct blocks on specific themes. The teams has outlined the key takeaways below – we've highlighted the sections that will stand out and create some potential churn or news:

Intro

They outline the format and mention in the upfront that we asked to not touch on ABK given it's an ongoing conversation with regulatory, which they understand. [REDACTED]

What was the journey to a position like yours?

- Matt started out at Midway in Chicago right out of university working with people like Ed Boon, Eugene Jarvis and more.
- Worked at a factory where everything was built (arcade machines) as well as where the games themselves were developed
- Led studios at Midway before moving to Microsoft in 2010. He jumped into the acquisition of Mojang. In 2018 Matt took on the job he has now, working with all the studios and creators across Xbox Game Studios

What does it mean to manage these studios?

- There are two aspects to his role
- Matt's ideal version of a day includes visiting studios, speaking with developers, and just playing their games. This is the fun part and a core focus of the role
- His job comes down to ensuring the studios have what they need to make great games
- It's really to make sure that when they come to work, there's as many obstacles as possible removed so they can just focus on making the game
- Matt misses being part of the process. Matt's passion is around the crafting of games, he got his start in audio, working around audio software and really enjoys coding and art. He also misses just being a part of a studio, just walking the floor and speaking to the team outside of a formal visit
- Matt wishes he could spend more time working on games and talking to the teams about it.

Do the studios work with each other in cool ways and are there any examples?

- There's a lot of that that happens naturally on a horizontal level, as well of instances where it's more coordinated
- The Coalition lead our work on Unreal Engine, so that includes team work on titles like Sea of Thieves, State of Decay, Perfect Dark, etc.
- Matt spoke have summits that are led by discipline experts. Includes things like UI summits, a narrative summit, and more. They're attended by around 3-4 people per studio, and we aim to run about 18-20 per year. They last a few days and are centred around getting together and sharing technology, ideas and so on
 - Matt spoke around one difficulty that these can cause, in that often times, where at these summits people learn about what others have done and at that point it can make it hard to implement into a game, but it can become planning for future efforts on a title. They're working on ways to proactively get that information out there, but they have a lot of horizontal connection with technology sharing and more.
- One example Matt shared is around Undead Labs, who are a relatively modest studio in terms of size. The team there are really focused on animation technology, as well as interactivity with the environment. Some of these things are involved with The Coalition's next project, so they've been coordinating around this
 - **NOTE:** Matt mentioned that *"we don't have 300 people working on State of Decay 3"* when he was speaking to the size of the studio
- Grounded is another example, where it's a very small team of about 20 people where they've seen such strong success. They've used the tools that the entire Obsidian Studio has got. It's a great example of a game that really innovates but it didn't require a lot of heavy lifting in terms of technology thanks to great tools that the team have implemented over the years.
- **Commentary:** They flag that the 13 million figure for Grounded was unannounced and what an achievement that is for Obsidian, they also mention that it's the ideal game for them to play as a team. They also said they were 'blown away' by 'The Coalition' being utilized across studio for titles such as State of Decay 3 and that this is the first they've heard on that specific title for a while. They then give some of their opinions on the franchise and Zombie games overall.

Pentiment is a unique title and one that we've never seen before. What was the pitch like? Was it an instant yes or did you need some convincing?

- One aspect of this is that Game Pass creates an opportunity for Xbox to lean on a game like Pentiment because we know when it goes into Game Pass it has a large potential audience
- Matt believes that when people are making games that they're really passionate about, they make the best games, so Xbox don't follow a 'portfolio bingo' approach where they try to fill certain genres. It's more about what people are excited to build, and Pentiment is a game that Josh Sawyer has wanted to make for such a long time
- I like to think about game development as a bit of it as a greenhouse, where we have these big franchises coming up like Age of Empires, and Halo. For newer titles/IP we think about "how do we make this title stand up to that?" Essentially, Matt treats it as a sort of greenhouse where they give them the tools to help them grow before 'turning them loose.' That doesn't mean we necessarily give the greenlight from the get-go, but we want to give them time to nurture it and show us where the game can go
- It became clear quite quickly that Pentiment had a cool hook that they could build on and it furthered the great RPG lineage that Obsidian is known for

What might you say to the possible criticisms of Game Pass?

- We don't see Game Pass as the end all. We're still going to sell games and we understand that people still prefer to do that

- We have a responsibility to keep up with how the industry adapt to the changing business models that we have in a game. The business model of a game is so tied to the design of the game itself; you can't take a game that was built for one thing and then retrofit it for something else
- Matt thinks we are always going to follow and pursue what players want, and do it in an additive way.
- **Commentary:** The FPS team then talk to Matt's POV that Game Pass is less about subscribers and more about customer accessibility through affordability. They point out the revenue it would still generate for Xbox and speculate on the overall impact of streaming on entertainment and whether it allows for more creativity and that some titles might either be forgotten or discovered by the service.
 - **NOTE:** they do reheat the \$2.9B and the 10-15% numbers that had come up in subsequent news beats between the original recording and air date.

Halo Infinite has struggled since its launch. What does Microsoft put that down to in terms of getting Halo Infinite back on track?

- Halo Infinite saw over 20M players in December last year and the team shipped this game during challenging times, being in the midst of a pandemic and figuring out how to adapt to working as a result
- Shipping a game like Halo is just the beginning, there needs to be a plan for regular and continuing engagement with players and unfortunately we feel short on that. The team have retrenched on that, there have been changes in how the team is set up and across leadership and they have to get re-focused around that sustained content plan and ensure we have a stream of regular content for the players.
- There are great things coming and we thank and appreciate the players sticking with us. Right now, the focus of us is the quality of life of the game and sticking to that regular stream of content.
- **Commentary:** The FPS team mentioned they really appreciated Matt's transparency in his responses on Halo and were encouraged by his comments on focusing on the live service delivery model and felt it sounded hopeful. They praised how well Matt answered their questions from a leadership POV.

Can you give us any update on Perfect Dark? There had been reports about leadership changes and Crystal Dynamics involvement

- Matt noted that it hasn't been so much around leadership changes but building a studio.
- We were very fortunate to partner with Crystal Dynamics. We have a full team between the two, so I would describe it more as co-development than outsourcing
- Matt thinks similar approaches will continue in the future, and have seen that with titles like Flight Simulator (with Asobo) and Minecraft/Minecraft Dungeons, and Age of Empires IV (with Relic GameS)

With Playground Games known for Forza Horizon, how did they wind up on Fable?

- Matt thinks that the thing that Playground does well is high craft, high quality and attention to detail
- Playground Games had a particular passion for the IP, and understood what the heart and soul of Fable was about
- There's stuff that Matt wishes he could share and show, because it's so encouraging
- Matt noted that he shared some initial scepticism with the team initially, but Playground Games quickly put that to rest. Matt is excited for fans to see it

InXile are a really underrated studio, can you detail what they might be working on?

- Matt doesn't want to steal the teams thunder in revealing too much
- In the last six months or so, going to see the latest vertical slice has been a cool moment and everyone has been blown away by their work
- It was one of those moments where they had a lot to show and it looked fantastic throughout
- They get the absolute most out of everybody and make the most use of the resources they have.
- Matt agreed they fly a little under the radar and that he is excited about what they are currently working on.

What do you think sets Starfield apart in relation to the Bethesda Game Studios model?

- The things that excite Matt include the NASA-Punk style and the things that it brings into the game, where given the genre you almost must have it. I.E Ship building, exploration etc. There's going to be some new

- stuff that the team will bring in
- Its fun watching them iterate on the title and the level of polish right now

A lot of games coming out – what title from the Xbox portfolio are you most excited about?

- Matt opted to speak about aspects of several upcoming titles that he thinks people will be excited for
- The team have put so much thought into Minecraft Legends to make it an authentic experience for Minecraft Fans
- Matt thinks everyone will be blown away by Forza Motorsport
- There are also a lot of cool things going into Xbox Game Pass, such as Scorn and A Plague Tale: Requiem
- We've got the anniversary editions of Age of Empires and Flight Simulator coming up, and of course Redfall and Starfield
- There's an awful lot of stuff coming out and I think there's things about to be excited about

Outro:

They then ask how their audience feels about this interview structure and for their feedback. They also mention they haven't been able to get the scoop on fable, but they would love it.