

LASTChancePUBLICATIONS

白 武 装 者 知 じ ぬ こと

written

by

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episode 13

In Episode 12...

"What a polite meeting you're all having, may I interrupt?..."

Silver adds his weight to Chance's stand against JBC's famous attacking duo

"You destroyed my Raptor, now you've gone and pissed me off boys" Silver said looking at the Rangers. He stood just by the wreckage with his grenade launcher in hand.

"Ha" laughed Boockerr "A Gunner in midfield, you don't see that much these days"

"No, not since Rangers started carrying these" Delacruz said as he slowly began to swap his Shock Lance for his Sniper rifle. It was well known that Rangers were the bane of Gunners on open terrain such as this. They could out maneuver the slower Gunner and their sniper rifles allowed them to engage at longer ranges whilst ignoring the Gunner's heavy shields. It was a very rare thing indeed to see a Gunner voluntarily perform midfield duties.

"Lads" said Chance "I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. Silver here, well midfield belongs to him, and you are about to see why."

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As both Rangers brought up their rifles, the ground in front of them exploded in a flash of blinding white light.

"Concussion grenade! Taisan!" Delacruz shouted and both he and Boockerr boost dodged in opposite directions to avoid any incoming fire that they could neither hear nor see.

Silver had already begun firing a rocket and it met Boockerr as he landed his dodge, the blast knocking him backwards but not killing him. Boockerr's vision began returning and he saw another rocket just in time to dodge away, far enough to remove himself from combat for a second while he recovered completely.

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Chance had averted his eyes from the concussion blast and he now saw the blue Tech drop down from the cliff onto the red Deploy-point and begin hacking it. Realizing the importance of stopping him, Chance dodge boosted between the two blinded Rangers and engaged the Tech with his shotgun.

His opponent saw him come in and quickly disengaged his hack to defend himself, he produced his shotgun and a hectic, close range duel began. But as Chance began to get the better of his opponent a sniper shot hit him in the back of the head and he dropped immediately. Delacruz had recovered his sight enough to intervene.

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"I'm down!" cried Chance

"Affirmative, re-spawn" Silver replied, knowing he would not be able to get to his partner. Chance disengaged and began to dematerialise.

Now Silver engaged both the JBC Rangers

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Whilst waiting in the re-spawn queue Chance, Cage and Dio could choose which Deploy-point to view the battle from. All three were watching Silver against the Rangers, they still had twenty seconds before the Deploy-point could re-deploy them.

"Those two Rangers were so fast and accurate, Silver being a Gunner wont last two seconds. We've lost this Deploy" Cage said to Chance

"Silver is the last remaining midfield Gunner in employment" Chance began "For a good reason. As you are aware there are six recognized forms of combat that can be trained in and employed in battle. Well Silver has invented a seventh form, Yakushin"

"A seventh form?" Cage said surprised

"Yes and it is this form that has allowed him remain a midfield Gunner. Yakushin specifically counters the Gunner's inherent weaknesses and plays to their strengths. The slow movement and dodging of the Gunner being his main limitation, especially against Rangers. Essentially there is no defence or at least very little, constant attacks on the enemy prevent them from aiming effectively and thus missing, this reduces the need for dodging. Dodging is included but the speed and distance is limited to increase the aim of the practitioner and most dodging is done in an offensive way, to close the distance between the attacker and his opponent."

"Such a form would require incredible accuracy to keep the enemy always dodging, a slight miss and they would have time to snipe." Cage said.

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As Silver's teammates talked they watched him guide the two Rangers with excellent rocket shots, forcing them to dodge towards each other.

"Gotta keep 'em close together" Silver thought to himself *"can't allow them to get round to my sides"*

Boockerr switched to team Comms "His accuracy is flawless" he said.

"I.....agree" said Dela as he narrowly dodged another rocket, again taking some small damage from the blast. "I don't have time to aim before another rocket comes at me."

Silver was doing an excellent job of keeping both Rangers on the defensive and together; with every dodge he took he closed the distance, reducing the time they had before a rocket came at them. As yet the Ranger's sniper shots had not even been close.

"We have to split up, we cannot keep..." Boockerr began, then dodged to his left to narrowly avoid another rocket "we can't keep taking this blast damage"

Silver pressed his attack towards the Rangers, placing a rocket everywhere they were dodging too.

"Their dodging skills are excellent; I expected this to be over by now" Silver thought to himself "Have to finish this fast before I run out of rockets. Better take at least one down right now"

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The re-spawn countdown read twelve seconds as Chance and the two red Techs continued to wait and watch.

"A Gunner should never last this long against Rangers, his form is very strong." Cage remarked

"What form do these Rangers use?" asked Dio

"Boockerr and Delacruz practice Shomeisho, the fifth form of combat" Chance began "It is a powerful style developed from form three. It uses the basic principle of Kaijiki, defence over attack, but attempts to create an opening for an attack at every opportunity. Basically it is a counterattacking style. The Rangers will do their best to defend until a slight opportunity presents itself, allowing them to turn defence into attack. Then they will execute that opening with deadly efficiency."

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Silver had four rockets left, quickly he fired one off at the Ranger to his right, Boockerr, then his last three he fired in rapid succession at the Ranger to his left.

Delacruz, dodged the first one, threw himself out of the way of the second and just managed to leap clear of the third's blast. An amazing feat of dodging and agility, but his suit showed the damage clearly, he had survived total shutdown but the blast damage had reduced his suit to minimal health.

"He survived, damn it!" said Silver, and he swiftly began exchanging his used rocket cartridge for another.

This was just the opportunity that the two Rangers had needed.

"Now Boockerr!" shouted Dela as he immediately set off into a boost dodge directly for Silver, swapping his sniper rifle for his pistol.

Silver rushed to replace his empty cartridge but it was clear that he wasn't going to manage it in time as pistol shots began to fly towards him.

"Change to your flamethrower Silver!" Cage shouted over the Comms "If you don't your dead"

Delacruz rushed towards Silver firing off pistol shots at a frantic rate. Silver dodged away from his incoming opponent but continued to reload his rocket launcher. Then as the distance closed between them Silver changed direction and dodged hard and fast towards Dealcruz, his left shoulder raised as an attack.

The Ranger could do nothing to avoid the impact and his jaw connected with shoulder charge sending him flying backwards. He fired his pistol one last time and the shots connected with Silver's suit, doing minor damage. Then Dela landed on the floor and his suit deactivated, having reached its damage threshold through the impact with Silver.

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"One down!" Cage shouted "Not exactly masters of form five are they" he said mockingly to Chance

"No" replied Chance "They are not masters of Shomeisho. But if you recall I said when we met them that their real strength was their teamwork"

Cage looked back out to the battlefield "Silver! Behind you" he shouted

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While Silver had been engaged by Delacruz, Boockerr had launched into a boost jump high above and behind the Gunner. Now he was gently dropping to the ground, next to the burning Raptor, whilst training his rifle on Silver.

"Thank you Dela, for distracting him and causing just enough damage to allow me to finish him with this shot." Boockerr called over open Comms, so that even his opponent could hear "A shoulder charge, very original" he finished

Just then Chance spoke over Comms to Silver.

"Silver, the Tech has begun hacking our Deploy" he said.

"Roger" Silver turned round to face Boockerr "What can I say, I'm full of surprises" he said, subtly clicking his full rocket cartridge into place.

"Silver, the Tech is hacking!" Cage called over the Comms.

"Affirmative!" Silver replied "*Just a second longer*" he thought as he watched Boockerr dropping towards the Raptor, hoping that his opponent would relish in his impending victory for just a fraction more.

"Well it is time to say goodbye, Silver" Boockerr said and he squeezed the trigger on his rifle.

Silver sprang into a dodge, putting all of his strength behind it. At the same time he fired a rocket under Boockerr. The rifle shot just missed Silver and he hit the ground on his side.

"Ha, we both missed" Boockerr said "but I won't miss a second time"

Silver smiled "I didn't miss the first time" he said

Boockerr's expression became one of confusion, then disbelief as the rocket Silver had fired past under the burning Raptor and impacted with a land mine. The explosion throwing the Ranger into the air and causing more than enough damage to deactivate him immediately.

"So that's why you took so long to emerge from behind the Raptor Silver, placing land mines" said Chance over the Comms. "Now stop that damn hack!"

As soon as Silver saw the Ranger fall he got up and turned towards the Deploy, from his position rocks obscured it and he wasn't able to use his rockets. Quickly he changed to his Grenade Launcher, firing off an incendiary grenade towards the Deploy-point as he boost jumped towards it.

The Tech was engulfed in flames but he did not disengage his hack and it reached one hundred percent less than a second before the flames killed him. The Deploy-point turned blue.

"Damn it!" said Chance

"I'm on it" Silver replied as he landed his jump on the Deploy and began to hack it back.

"We'll spawn at the base and get over to you as soon as we can" Chance said

"Roger" said Silver, a little unhappy with himself for not being able to stop the hack sooner. His hack was now at six percent and increasing very slowly. This was one disadvantage of the Gunner suit, due to its massive energy requirements simply to support its operation and maintain its high shield level, the suit was considerably slower than the others at hacking anything. In Silver's case especially so because he had used over half his energy reserve in his effort to reach the Deploy-point swiftly, this now meant that his suit had run out of reserves during the hack and was transferring energy only at the rate that it could recharge itself. Silver did not expect to finish this hack before the enemy could deploy from it.

The readout on Silver's HUD read sixty four percent complete when the Deploy-point began to engage its spin and four figures began to materialise.

"I'll take as many of you with me as I can" he said to himself as he disengaged his hack and produced his Flamethrower. The Deploy whirled into a crescendo and two Techs and two Rangers finished materialising around Silver. He covered them and the Deploy with flaming napalm.

"Come on then!" He shouted

A sniper shot hit his head and he took the full force of a shotgun blast at close range through the flames. He was hit with two more sniper shots before he hit the ground. As the flames cleared one Tech and one Ranger lay out of action.

Delacruz walked over to the downed Silver, who had not yet disengaged, with his pistol in his hand.

"A commendable effort" he said, standing over him, then he fired his pistol into Silver's head.

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Kaio and Headwire had been under pressure to defend both the forward deploy point and the left side Generator from enemy attacks. They had received very little support from Dante and Knight who were under strict orders to avoid outfield combat and proceed into the enemy base as quick as possible. Unfortunately the Blue base, like the Red one had strong and well organised defences set up inside by its Gunner and Tech defence team and as yet neither team had come close to removing an Artifact.

"They are hacking the Deploy again" called Headwire over the comms as he blew up another auto turret outside the blue base with his shock lance and dodged a Tech's incoming shotgun blast.

"Roger that, I'm not gonna to make it" replied Kaio, finishing off a Tech by the Generator and breaking into a sprint back over the hill to the deploy point. The Tech had already completed his hack and set up two defensive turrets by the time Kaio arrived. Even healing himself with Medi-packs as he headed up the hill had left Kaio with only half health and Headwire, despite battling with everything he had was in an even worse condition. Without hesitation Kaio engaged the Tech and his defences.

The voice of Chance came over the comms "Lads, they have taken our nearside Deploy. We are gonna be under extreme pressure to get out of our base. You must not let them get that Deploy off you; it's our only other option up front."

"Right, well your not gonna like this news then, they just got it" replied Headwire.

"I see" said Chance and after a brief pause he replied "Your new orders, from Command, are to withdraw to defend our nearside left Gen and help in our attempt to recover the nearside spawn."

"Affirmative" replied Kaio

"What!" exclaimed Headwire "You want us to give up over half the battlefield to these guys?"

"Headwire.." Kaio began but was interrupted by his young second.

"Chance you know that we should be trying to regain this deploy so that we can continue attacking"

"And *you* know Headwire that we are soldiers and these are our orders. Orders that must be obeyed"

"Obeyed at the cost of the battle?" Headwire replied sharply as he finished off the Tech he was fighting. "Once we give up this Deploy our attackers won't be able to get past the enemy into the base, our attacks will cease. We should be concentrating our efforts on this spawn and swarming their base while they are busy elsewhere"

"Busy attacking our base" Silver put in.

"Headwire you do not make decisions you follow orders, now fall into line and get back here! Over and out!" Chance finished and disconnected from their channel.

"Headwire, we need to heal up if we are to remain outfield and not get trapped in the base after a re-spawn. Rendezvous behind those rocks." Kaio suggested as he dodged away from the Techs defence of the Deploy and disengaged from the fight.

"Affirmative" said a disgruntled Headwire.

The two Rangers landed behind the rocks and began using their healing packs on each other.

"This withdrawal is bullshit Kaio" Headwire said

"It's our orders"

"We need to attack not defend". The Headwire's eyes lit up, "*this is my opportunity*" he thought. Then he looked at his partner "*We* could attack, Kaio"

"That's a negative Head; our orders are to defend the midfield"

"You know we won't be this close to the enemy base again this battle. They will commit everyone to attack leaving their defences low"

"The base is heavily defended inside Head, Dante and Knight have not made it in much further then the Teleports"

"Yea, but they failed an attack just now, they would have cleared some of the defences in that and the defenders wont have had time to replace them all yet. The two of us could grab each Artifact and cap 'em to win the battle. I know I could get one out."

"Your dreaming Kid, you've never attacked in a real battle before"

The two of them had almost recovered full health by now.

"I'm going in" said Headwire

"Head, you are returning to defensive duties with me."

Headwire looked up at Kaio

"Negative Kaio.....I'm on Offence!"

And with that he boost jumped backwards high and away from Kaio and the rocks, towards the enemy base.

"Damn it" Kaio said. He swiftly changed channels to Chance's private Comms channel.

"Chance, the kids gone off to attack the base"

"What!" replied a shocked Chance

"He thinks he can get an Arti out while they are busy attacking"

"Shit, he's gonna get taken out as soon as he enters the base. That's gonna leave us short in mid, he'll be stuck re-spawning in the base with the rest of us. Kaio forget him, get back here and cover our flank."

"Roger that" said Kaio and he disconnected from the Channel. He looked over at the enemy base to see Headwire running along the top support and towards the teleport Dante had last gone through.

"Good luck Kid" he thought.

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"Disobeying orders, Chance? That's gonna cost us the battle" Chance heard the menacing voice of Cage come over his private channel.

"What are you talking about?"

"The kid's gone rogue and you're allowing it. Get him back here to defend!" Cage replied. Chance realised he must have been monitoring the private conversation he had with Kaio.

"Monitoring private Comms is an offence Cage"

"So is disobeying direct orders, I wonder which the General will consider more of serious....."

In episode 14 of
8 WAYS TO LOSE...

Head swapped his rifle for his shock lance; his heart was beating so hard in his chest he thought it might explode out.

"This is it Head...When you go there's no stopping....."

Headwire launches his apparently suicidal lone attack on the enemy Node, but is there more to the young Ranger than even he knew?.....

Just then something came over Headwire, the hairs on the back of his neck stood up and the air around him seemed to grow with static energy.