The Homogenisation of offensive threats and death of bulky threats

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1 Introduction

Greetings everyone. In this post I would like to talk about the current metagame of BH and how I feel regarding it. This will be slightly more serious post compared to other posts because it is a topic that holds importance to me. I would like to preface this by saying that everything in this post is subjective. I have my idealised version of the BH meta, just as you and everyone else have. What I like to play in BH may not be the same as yours. What you think is broken may be fine for me. Believe it or not, that's okay. I am glad there are others who enjoy the meta. You should not let others affect your enjoyment of anything.

With that out of the way, I will now discuss my source of dissatisfaction: the homogenisation of offensive threats and the death of bulky threats.

2 The homogenisation of offensive threats

In my opinion, the current roster of good offensive mons consists of those which can severely dent Imposters immediately, with no setup. This usually requires the mon to be a fast Dragon or a Ghost type because they hit themselves super-effectively, meaning that they can threaten Imposters simply by clicking their main stabs. For examples of such mons, just think of Garchomp, Flutter Mane, Necrozma, Eternatus, Miraidon, Koraidon and so on. However, there are also non-Ghost/Dragons which can accomplish this goal. The most common method is to use a mon with low bulk and such high offensive stats so that even neutral moves hit extremely hard. E.g. Greninja, Deo-N, Alakazam, Beedrill, Diancie (now banned). There are also mons such as Lucario which hits itself super-effectively despite not being a Ghost/Dragon.

Just to be clear, there is no problem with offensive mons that threaten Imposters. Offensive mons which threaten imposters have historically been good because it limits your opponent's hard switch to just their dedicated Fur/Scales/Regen rather than allowing an Imposter to come in. I will also mention that just because the aforementioned mons *do* threaten Imposter, it does not mean that Imposters *can't* switch in. Thanks to Eviolite and Chansey's base hp, Imposters are still able to come in on a coverage move. So, what exactly is my problem here?

3 The death of bulky setup

My personal dissatisfaction of the meta stems from the fact that the the aforementioned "archetype" of offensive mons are the *only* available option of offensive threats. Let me state this once again: this post is subjective. If you enjoy the range of offensive threats available currently, then I am happy for you. Nevertheless, let's stop and consider what we have lost, and what is **not** viable: bulky setup sweepers.

Setup as a whole is still alive in BH, despite the numerous bans to generational setup-staples such as Quiver Dance, Substitute and Quiver Dance. A lot of Dragon types such as Koraidon and Garchomp can readily run Tidy Up, while most special mons have access to the new Torch Song which doubles as coverage and setup, not to mention the brand-new Take Heart. Simple No Retreat is another viable setup option, albeit usually limited to Arceus-Ghost and Lunala. We also have some variant of setup Arceus in almost every team. However, let me raise an argument: apart from Arceus and Lunala, all of these mons do not require setup to function. They run setup because they **can**, and not because they *must* in order to be threatening.

Sure it's nice that your Garchomp can sweep with Tidy Up, but it's not necessary to kill walls when you already have Life Orb Adaptability. It's nice that your Eternatus can use Torch Song to boost, but you don't need it to 2HKO non-scales/vest mons with Dragon Energy. Yes, your Adapt Lucario can run Tidy Up, but most of the time you're going to click your Sunsteel Strike, Gigaton Hammer or Close Combat because they don't need a boost to deal a hefty chunk of damage. You'll have to switch out when your opponent slow pivots into their Imposter anyways. In fact, basically every good setup mon right now

are just the offensive mons from the section above, but with a setup move.

Let's stop and think for a moment: has this always been the case? Has setup mons always just been offensive mons that decide to run a setup move? The answer is no. The current state of setup has been a product of the Substitute and Poison Heal ban. Prior to the these ban, setup mons which do not immediately threaten Imposters are viable. For example, this list has historically included mons such as Tyranitar, Kyogre, Xerneas, Zac-C, Slaking/Regigigas, Yveltal and much more. Instead of using their Dragon or Ghost type to scare Imposters, these bulky mons are able to leverage their bulk alongside Sub or PH to beat Imposters. Even without PH, Sub allowed you to run self-proof bulky setup such as WBB Zac-C, GaG Zama-C, Levitate Pdon etc.

There are more reasons why bulky setup is completely dead outside of Imposters, and it all stems from the PH and Sub ban. Despite the lack of Core Enforcer and Spectral Thief to punish bulky setup mons, this gen has introduced some extremely crippling moves for bulky setup sweepers: Mortal Spin and Salt Cure. The pressure from Mortal Spin is somewhat alleviated since the introduction of Take Heart, but the presence of Salt Cure means that if you don't have Magic Guard, all Water and Steel setup mons are basically unplayable. Moreover, even if you do run Take Heart or Magic Guard, suddenly it becomes very difficult for your set to deal with Imposter. On the other spectrum, the popularity of Strength Sap means that bulky physical setup sweepers will never sweep unless you have GaG or Sap Sipper (Bounce is vulnerable to Parting Shot). There is absolutely nothing your setup mon can do in the face of Strength Sap spam without those abilities. Once again, even if you run those abilities, you will probably lose to Imposter without Sub. I will now challenge you to come up with a single setup mon that requires setup to pose a threat while at the same time able to overcome the challenges I have listed above.

If your answer is Arceus, then congratulations, you have chosen the only correct answer. In fact, I'd bet that you have not seen a setup mon not named Arceus which utilises Take Heart or Victory Dance effectively within the last six months. Arceus and its variants are the *only* last survivor from the expansive "bulky setup" archetype that used to exist in BH. Arceus is also widely considered to be the best and most splashable mon in the meta thanks to it's fantastic bulk and unremovable Plate-Judgment mechanic. If you need proof, let me ask you how many Arceus you would run if species clause was deleted. It should be a testament to the unplayability of bulky setup mons when the only viable user is literally the best mon in the game with a unique gimmick.

At this point you might be wondering: so what? What's wrong with bulky setup being complete trash outside of Arceus? Doesn't the omnipresence of setup Arceus prove that "bulky setup" is not dead? If you think so, believe it or not, you're right. There is nothing inherently wrong with the meta favouring only one type of offensive mons. There is nothing inherently wrong with an entire archetype of mons is now represeneted by Arceus. You are not obligated to care about the viability of the bulky setup archetype in BH. However, it matters to me. I want to run slow setup sweepers other than Arceus. I want to be able to utilise mons such as Tyranitar, Caly-I, Kyogre and Groudon. I want BH to be a sandbox where multiple kinds of offensive mons are viable. It saddens me to try come up with new ideas when in the end, my offensive mons will likely be some SF LO Dragon or CB SOR/CS BOR nuke. It saddens me that the only setup mon outside of Arceus are just glorified nukes with setup tacked on as a 4th move. It saddens me that so many cool offensive mons that I used to run is reduced to such an unplayable state.

4 Conclusion

At the end of the day, is there actually a problem in the BH meta which needs to be addressed? It depends on who you ask. There are a lot of people who enjoy the current meta. From a balance perspective, there's nothing too strong like Kartana or MMX. A lot of offensive mons has become viable since the Diancie ban. However, from my perspective, the loss of a whole archetype of offensive mons have severely limited the possibilities in teambuiding which BH used to offer to its playerbase. Outside of Arceus, I can never run a bulky setup mon win condition. For me, this is extremely disappointing.

So am I advocating for a Sub and PH unban after all? No, I am not. There is a saying that goes: "If something is important to you, you'll make time for it. If it is not, you'll make an excuse not to do it". Before we even begin to argue about a Sub and PH unban, I would like you to look inside yourselves and think about these questions: is it alright for only one kind of offensive mon to be viable in the metagame? Do you care that an entire population of viable mons became unplayable since the Sub and PH ban? Has the core principle of BH; offering a sandbox metagame to its playerbase, been compromised by the erasure of bulky setup mons? These are the questions which I cannot answer for you. If the viability of bulky setup sweepers matter to you, you will find excuses to keep it. If it is not, you will find excuses to ban it.