

# Playtesting report

We approached the playtesting of our game in an informal way. We took advantage of any free time that we had friends around and asked them to give our game a try and let us know what they thought. Around 10 people playtested the game, half of which were ETH students, but not in the GameLab, and the other half were friends that were not necessarily technically inclined.

We spent that past weeks taking into account the feedback we got and we concentrated on polishing the playability of the game.

Some of the basic questions we asked were:

- How is the speed of the game (too fast or too slow)
- What annoys you the most about the game
- What do like most about the game
- What would you add to make the game more fun
- Do you think anything is missing?



What we learned from playtesting is that even though the general controls are quite simple, it took some of the people some time to get used to them. Furthermore, it was somewhat challenging for them to understand the seasonal magic concept until they played a couple of

rounds to see the different effects in action. From this observation we concluded that we needed to add a tutorial to our game which allowed people to understand the game without our help.

When playing the game for the first time, a lot of people were a bit overwhelmed by the speed of the game. In order to mitigate this, we decided that we allow the player to set the starting speed and then increase the speed over time.

When we tested this changes we realized that most people only prefer the slow speed for the first couple of rounds, and after that almost no one wanted to play with the slow speed, and they were disappointed if the boat speed was slower when they restarted the game. Because of that we decided to simplify and only have two speed settings that are constant over time. This way people are able to play it in slow mode to get used to the game, and afterwards they are able to play it with the faster and more fun speed.

A common complaint that was made when playtesting was that it was hard to tell the boats apart. To solve this we determined that each player has a different colored boat, which contrasts well against each other. Another issue was that many people would not realize when they were getting hit. To make this event more clear we added a few things to notify the player. First, the player can hear his castle being hit because a specific sound is played, also, he can feel it, because the tablet vibrates and lastly the castle visually shakes and blinks red.

We also received many different suggestions and great ideas for the game. Unfortunately, we do not have time to implement all of them but we did have time for a few. The castles now have a forcefield which blocks enemy fireballs, this is a nice feature which allows players to bounce off their fireballs and it also helps the games story, explaining that the sorcerers are unable to use magic directly against each others castle, and that's why they must invade with ships. Also, now our game has an overall win counter for players that want to play multiple round and it also includes statistics about how they played. What's more, some people suggested that they would like to have bigger effects when using the seasonal magic. We liked this idea as well and included a three level magic system: Players can now collect more than one magic power token (up to three) and also use them separately or together which leads to bigger effects of the seasonal magic. This modification gives more fun and chaos to the game.

Lastly, the things people most enjoyed about the game at first glance was its appearance. They really enjoyed how the game looked and how the background moved over time. After, when they had a chance to play it, they also enjoyed the water simulation very much and agreed that it was fun to interact with and allowed different playing strategies.

Overall, we believed that the playtesting stage was greatly beneficial for our game. We had an opportunity to put or game out there and see what people thought about it. Which gave us many suggestions and critiques. We did our best to filter which ones were possible to do in our time frame that gave the best results. Ultimately, we were very pleased to see that many people actually enjoyed playing the game and wanted to play several rounds.