Final Results:
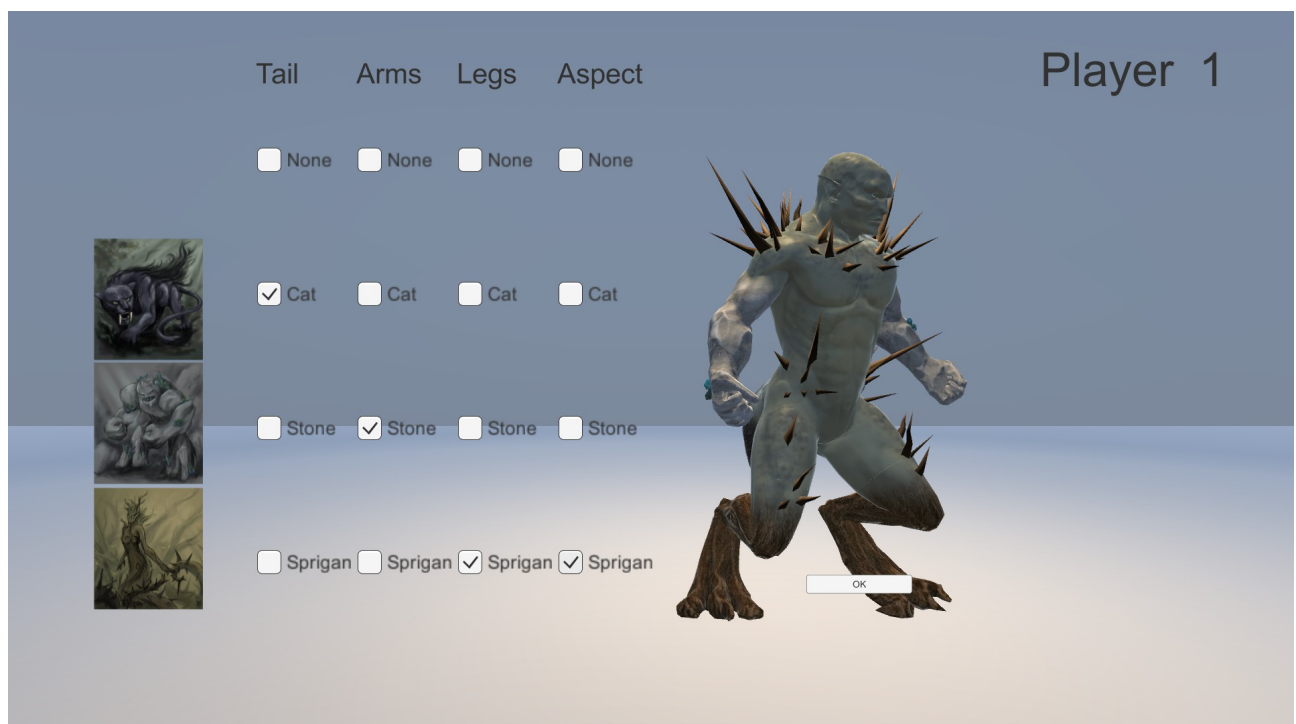
We will first show some Sceenshots to show the final feel of the game. It has changed quite a lot during our priject!

Our Title Screen is looking now more like a Card game and more "finished" overall. We first had the concepts art in here, but some people thought this was just placeholder art...

Our Evolution phase is now properly working and you can change your appearance and it also shows the attacks you get depending on your choice!

Our UI made a lot of improvements. We could replace all placeholders and used better working art. We also now showing the controller settings rather than the keyboard settings.

Also in the card playing mode we made further improvements for easier play. We show the cooldowns of all our attacks and indicate when they can go back to your hand!
Also we made some better indications to help seeing, whats happening during the game!

Experiences about the class structure:

The project structure did overall help, but it could have been more dense in the beginning, such that all the deadlines would have come in 1 weak earlier. This would have give us more time in the end. Also about the finding ideas phase some more guidance like "everyone should thing about the idea itself and write 1 page about an idea and submit this" on the beginning would have maybe helped to speed the initial process up a little bit.
And everyone would than have done brainstorming with some base of thoughts.
This are just some ideas to give more time in the end. It is clear that finding ideas etc. is also important, but there was less active work and more letting it flow than later, so it could have been more dense!
Then also it should have been clear from the beginning, when the Jury version should been submitted. Most teams were really surprised by this. And knowing this beforehand could have helped us, submitting a better version to the jury!
Also this year somehow the working together feeling in the overall class (not just the team) was somehow not that strong. Hard to say what the problem was, but from what I have heared form other years it was a bit a shame.
It would have been cool if we would have had some time, where all the teams would have worked in the same room on their game. Such that one could help actively each another and see their games test them etc.
In the end we did not really play the other games, which is a shame.
Nevertheless, the harsh structure and the theme given (which was still quite broad so you could do a lot), helped a lot to plan things out!
Also the assistants were helpful!

Experiences on working on our game.

What went bad:

Communication:

We could just not really communicate well with one another.
This is partially due to the fact, that we did not see us irregularly (we had team meetings but this isn't really enough).

But even without this restrictions, the different communication channels, (Mail, google docs, git, Skype, sms, etc.) used just made the whole thing kind of more of a mess.
Some examples on what happened because of our bad communication:

- "Oh you have already done that? I did not knew, that I could start working on my part."
- Two people standing in front of a closed door waiting.
- Us leaving the GREAT excursion early since we had to meet, since the meeting the last day did not work out :-(
- "Oh I did not know, what I could do."
- Not seeing "files added" since they are not in unity but in Google drive.
- …etc..

Planning

It was really hard for us to make a plan on what work to do when. Since we just had not much experience. Also since we did not knew ourselves exactly we could not really say what each person was capable off. Also it was hard to thing ahead of time, what problems could happen etc.

I think it would maybe work a little bit better out if we would do it now, but overall this is just quite hard!

And our biggest problem was, that we overall wanted to make to much!
We planned a really ambitious project, and this was actually too much to handle.

This may also be due to bad communication, but we thought everyone feels good about the project and is ready to invest a lot of time and ambition in it, but this was just not the case in the end.

We planned our project for 3.5-4 people, if we knew that we had at most 2.5 people we would have just planned another project with a smaller scale.

We knew beforehand, that one of our team would start working at some point, but I overestimated the stress this would give to that person and in the end he could provide less work then we hoped for.
On the other hand (again due to lacking communication) one of our team members seamed to not like our general idea. This together with other factors lead to less motivation than we anticipated.

Technical Issues

We expected some, I mean this is to be expected during such a project. But we underestimated the possibilities for technical issues.
We had almost everything possible including:
  – Computers Crashing
  – Git having problems with some changes in unity,
  – unity crashing AND corrupting,
  – Webcams being broken,
  – libraries not working on certain unity versions (or on certain devices (like PC...))
  – SMS arriving to late
  – Different drivers leading to different controller behavior

Most of it could be fixed in some time, but all together it just used more time, then we would have liked!

Also we should have made better plans for what we do, when something happens (last minute) in advance!

Wanting to much! (in not enough time)

Our versions not working on last minute due to technical issues, was bad, but it was also our fault, since we wanted to add things too late.
In the last week of the project a lot of art got finished. And we just wanted to include this art! (And than we wanted also to adapt the things not being nice to the nice art creating more art^^).

We just wanted to show the best possible we could, but we should have been ok with showing maybe less and taking less risks.

Also we got the feedback from Gobo maybe too early, since we "had time" to change some of the things they criticized.

What was especially bad was the fact that we only had one artist. And a lot of work had to go through her. So the workload forced on her was way too much.

Also we should have used WAY more time testing/finding for buggs.

Since our artist and one programmer used their last week mainly on improving stuff, no one was left to actually test the game.

(There was actually one external person trying to find some buggs, but its not enough!)

What went good

We do not want to leave the expression, that everything was bad, its not the case.
It just are a lot of points where we learned, what we should and could make better.

Art

We have great Art. As simple as that. We were quite lucky to have someone so dedicated and also talented doing our artwork.
We as a team would not have expected to have artwork as that in the end.
Also some stuff like changing the bodyparts worked easier and better than expected!

Its not much to say about that.

Programming with C#/Unity overall

Even though we had some problems with unity and git, but a lot of things were easy to do in unity or better in C#. You could do a lot of things in easy ways. Not everything worked as we planned, but even though our main programmer had not much practical experience in programming (Theory of computing), he could work quite good with unity.

The whole drag and drop part was strange at the beginning, but at least it is easy to place and copy elements and create new levels, exchange controllers etc.

Paperprototype

We had overall way better feedback on our paper prototype than anticipated. Also we had more fun playing it ourselves than expected.
We had some bad feedback from some people, but there it was also due to not explaining the rules good enough. (When the person explaining the rules has not really understood them enough, this was to be expected.)
Not only did someone express his interest during our playtest meetings in the mensa, but also after the presentation two guys told us, that we should make our card game a real game.
(One of them working on a Kickstarter project for a boardgame).

Presentation

The presentation itself was good, we had interesting things to tell, we had nice art to show and the people were not remarking, that we had so much technical difficulties and that some of us were totally stressed out.

We could not show the fight as we wanted to, but even this the worst part was at least ok.

What did we achieve?

During the course, we where ALWAYS WAY BEHIND our milestones. We could hand in our reports and presentations on time but we just had a barely working version. At some point we had than finally barely the minim target in the game.

In the last two weeks we finished our desired target, put half of our high target in the game and even had some extras in the game.

We did not plan for a tutorial in the beginning and the card recognition mode (which is not perfectly working, we are aware of that, but with some testing (on different machines) was also added as target during the course.

We had a lot of successes overall. When I, after some tweaking, could scan on my old laptop (in unity) all the cards in bad lightning I was really happy.

When the bodyparts switching worked and we could show off all the nice art we had, it was really a pleasure!

When I heard two brothers screaming at each other while playing the tutorial of the game and having fun, this was also satisfying.

What would we do different?

A lot of things in the want went wrong section, do already cover this, but there are still some things left to say:

Focus more on the coregame!

We have a cardgame. And even though we have awesome fighting animations, we should have treated the game and present it more like a card game.

That would make it easier for the people to understand it!

Work more directly together with everyone! Its easier to motivate (some people) this way and it has overall better communication.

(It might be not possible in this constellation but maybe finding a constellation where this works would help!!)

Spend more time making a tutorial, trying to find out, what people read, what not, what they do need to see etc.

Even if it looks worse make more indications on whats happening.

Try to motivate each other more! When some people are not motivated you should try to motivate them and not become a little bit unmotivated yourself.

Personal Statement

Working together with a school for arts (ZHdK) seams like a good idea,
HOWEVER it is important, that this lecture means the same for them, than to the ETH students!

I have heard different things about how much this course is counted for them, but from what I have seen, this course is way more important for the ETH (And the UZH) student, than it is for the ZHdK people!

The people from the ETH know, this course is a lot of work, AND this is one big special project for them, where they can show, what they can from a different perspective. (And it gives 10 credits (but people know they have to work more than that!))

From my perspective this was NOT the case for most people from the ZHdK. And this is just a shame.

The sole ETH student from the Life of Blob group seamed to do (almost) all the work, while the two from ZhdK did have an easy time.

The people from the Elements Racing seamed just totally unmotivated in all. (In the presentations and also when you look about when they handed in the "required" documents.)

Only the two girls (from which at least one has artistic talent) seamed to be really motivated and working!

And a little bit more about our group:

Marko was excluded from the course, which is understandable and its also fine for him. He could not show up to the class.

You asked us even about what he did with the project and yeah we had to answer it is not that much to be more precise it was:

- Working together with me (pair programming) 3 of the 4 days it took to do the first prototype with the simple gamelogic.
- Implemented the card scanning (an interface where you could easily take the cardname of the scanned card and could adjust the settings (which is necessarily for adjusting to the lightning and camera used)).

Working with him was certainly not optimal, since he had not too much time. That is true, but it was still less frustrating, than working with our ZHdK Student!

Yes he was in the lecture most of the times (but always behind a computer seemingly totally not interested in what happened in the front).

Yes he was in most meetings, but except from talking (big) not much came from him.

He did not read our propositions. He still seams to not understand our card game. (He explained something wrong in our trailer).

Creating a background for him meant just to download the first free asset in the unity store . (Even if it has holes in it and you see the pure white background).

"We need some soundeffects" was also not really solved by just adding some files (from the internet) to googledrive.

The trailer he made was fine, but still this has nothing to do with working on the game...

Having the work uneven distributed is always happening, but when someone shows no interest, and tells you the game is bad, it is even worse!

During posting the playtesting results, it was clear from the two lines he wrote, that he did not understood our card game...

Setting the life (from 20 or 12 (depending on the version)) down to 5, when the basic combo deals 6 damage, makes no sense!

Bringing the criticisms that our card game is just rock paper scissors and that having smaller numbers being slower during our playtest result report and not beforehand was also not how you should do things!

(We have our paper prototype since a long time!!)

This making our game bad during the presentation was also something another team noticed and told me!

Also after he had "done" our GUI our artist was quite frustrated the delay bar she draw was distorted, the player 1 life and player 2 life was switched (they where even made to match into the corner) and both players could get delays. (Again not understanding the prototype).

This whole kind of behavior was not only minimalism, but direct disinterest at the whole project, and THATS what is really frustrating.

(Btw. I have now mentioned all the work he did, except adding some files from the artist from our google drive to unity).

I mention this not only because I was frustrated, (or because our Artist was frustrated (actually I feel really bad, that we could not make more out of her art...)), but because this things leave a bad expression for this course, but especially for ZHdK.

Most ETH students in this course seamed to had (when I talked to them in the open) similar kind of impressions from the ZHdK students.

And I am sure we all them our friends and families about this impressions, because the Gamelab is important for us.

I think this is not something ZHdK or ETH wants, to ruin the reputation of the ZHdK (since there are some talented people there! (Evolution party shows this)).

As another example about how this can harm the ZHdKs reputation, a discussion I had 6 times with 6 different friends:

"We have one student from the Zürich High School of Arts in our Group" - Me

"Nice, than he can do the arts!" - Friend

"Well actually he cant do arts." - Me

"What?! What is he good for then?!" - Friend

"I don't know." - Me

And I still don't know.....