

## Playtesting - Game Programming Lab 2009

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# Dirty Derby

### 1. Introduction

We were not able to get the car physics working, also the interchange of the underlying physics framework did not help a lot. The frequent crashes were gone and the car had suspension and an authentic behavior, but the steering did not work. Thus we had to go back to the latest working version, which was the one we showed at the alpha release presentation.

Because we had spend too much time to get it working, there was not much left for testing and were only able to recruit 4 people for a test session.

### 2. Play matrix

We asked the tester to mark our game in the play matrix, which is represented by the red dots. The red line points to where they actually want to move the game to.

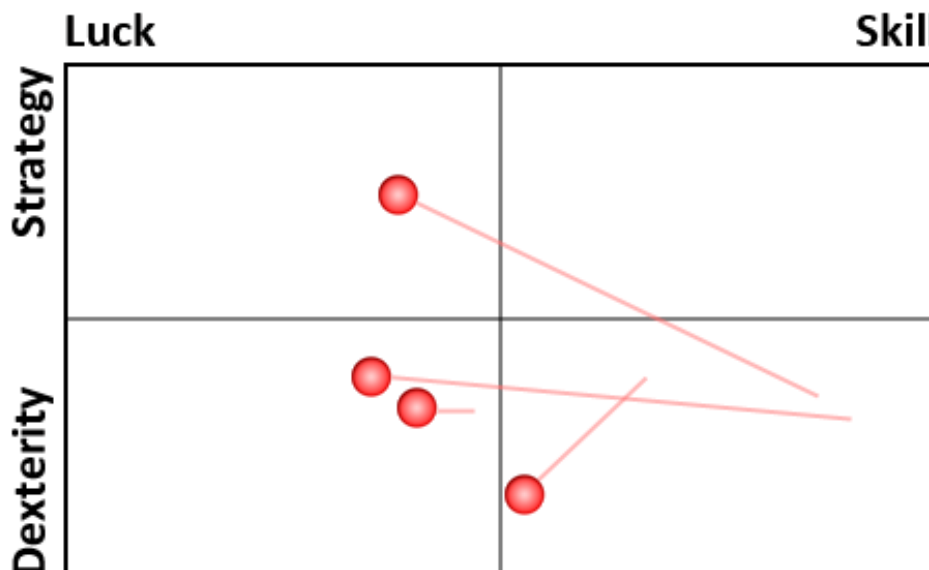


Image 1: Play matrix.

### 3. Questions & Answers

#### 3.1. In-game

**Does the navigation seem confusing?**

For all testers the navigation was clearly not confusing.

**Are there enough / too many / too few settings available to trim the game to your liking?**

Only one stated that there are too few settings available and especially the controls should be adjustable.

**Is the game balanced?**

One answered yes, the others found the missiles too strong.

**Did you feel good when you won the round?**

The one half of the tester answered yes and the other no. One stated that he unfortunately never won a round.

**Did you feel bad upon losing a round?**

No one felt bad upon losing a round, most of them answered that it was fun anyway.

**Did you keep a good overview, was the perspective and the camera movement ok?**

There all answered yes.

**Would you play this rather against more human players or against AI?**

No one answered that he would play against AI, they all rather play against humans. Most of them also stated that they want to play against more humans.

### **3.2. Post-game**

**How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?**

Most of them found the controls useful as they were. One did not like the assigned button to fire the weapons.

**Did anything feel clunky or awkward?**

This question was answered mostly with no, but one mentioned the steering.

**What was your first impression?**

The answers were quite mixed. The mentioned aspects were fun, landscape, graphics and the bugs.

**How did that impression change as you played?**

Most of them mentioned the bugs, but also that it would be fun if they were not present.

**Was there anything you found frustrating?**

Here the bug which caused the car falling through the terrain was mentioned by all testers. And also the frequent crashes they found quite frustrating.

**Did the game drag at any point?**

It was not answered by all of them. Two wrote no.

**What was missing from the game?**

There were two aspects they missed. The first one was the missing sound which had to be played at every click and second that it would be more fun to collect an arsenal of weapons, not just one. Another answered that he missed positive scores.

**What was the best feature?**

Even the driving was difficult because of the missing car physics, one mentioned it as best feature. Other best features were the bouncer, the missiles and the idea of cars with weapons.

**What was the worst feature?**

The only feature mentioned here was the sound system. They found the music boring and missed some cool sound effects.

**What's your favourite weapon?**

All weapons occurred in the answers, except for the mines.

**What's the most useless weapon?**

The only weapon that was mentioned is the bouncer.

**Should there be more or less weapons? Which weapon would you add?**

The opinions were split into two equally sized halves. Some wanted clearly more weapons, the other half found the number of weapons ok. From the ones which wanted more weapons, the machine gun was the most mentioned weapon they would include.

**Describe the objective of the game:**

The objective of the game was clear to almost all of the testers. Some of the testers thought it was a death match mode without collecting points.

**Was the objective clear at all times?**

All answers were positive, but one added that the score system was a bit confusing.

**If you could change but one aspect of the game, what would that be?**

Almost all mentioned the steering of the car, especially the car physics and some of them found the sensitivity of the steering not right. Another aspect they would change is the background music and the sound effects.

**If you could keep but one aspect of the game, what would that be?**

Some of the most mentioned aspects were the game idea, the graphics and the landscape generation.

## 4. Conclusions

### 4.1. Controls

Most of the testers found the controls useful and thus we do not have to change much. And the sensitivity of the car controls can be adjusted when the car physics completely works.

### 4.2. Navigation

Since all testers found the navigation not confusing, there is no need of a mini map or something that helps the player to navigate through the landscape. Also the camera perspective and movement was completely accepted by all testers and do not have to be changed.

### 4.3. Game mode

The objective of the game seemed to be clear to almost every tester. May be we should emphasize more that the primary objective is to collect the points and not only to shoot at the opponents. This could be achieved with a more sophisticated score system, but which should be more transparent as a tester criticized. An idea would be to explicitly give visual feedback, when a player gains or losses points.

### 4.4. Items & Weapons

The number of weapons should not be less, but also not all tester wanted more weapon in the game. If we would include an additional weapon, the testers preferred a machine gun.

It is not completely clear which weapons of the currently implemented ones the testers preferred most, because all except for the mines where mentioned as a favorite weapon, but only the bouncer as a most useless one. Thus the missiles and the sphere mines seem to be a bit more popular than the mine and the bouncer.

The weapons have clearly to be balanced. At the moment the missiles are far too strong.

### 4.5. Graphics

The overall feedback for the graphics was very positive.

### 4.6. Physics

Not surprising, this was the most criticized aspect of the game. The missing car physics made the cars difficult to control, which was quite frustrating for the test players. And also the frequently occurred crashes of the physic engine made them happy either. Nevertheless some already found it fun to drive around and shoot. And they mentioned if it would work, they would enjoy it a lot. So for the last two week our main focus has to at this aspect. Without an authentic physic engine the game clearly won't work and won't be fun.

The play matrix is also an indicator for that, because with the current car physics it is quite difficult to control the car and thus a lot of luck to successfully drive around without an accident. A good car physic engine let the player predict the movement of the car and experienced players are able to better control the car than the others, and that is exactly what the tester wanted.

### 4.7. Landscape

The feedback for the landscape was overall quite positive and we don't have to change our plans.

## 4.8. Sounds

Since we had no time to add a complete working sound engine, this aspect gained also a lot of critiques.