

# Sea Blast

Playtesting report

Urs Dönni  
Martin Seiler  
Julian Tschannen

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# 1 Playtesting session

We organised two playtesting sessions with four people each. The participants were welcomed in IFW D33 and we explained how the playtesting would work:

That they should play the game, give critiques throughout the game, ask questions even if we wouldn't answer them, tell us what they think and in the end fill out a short questionnaire.

Then they could start with the actual game. First we sent them to the controls screen where they could figure out how to move and use their weapons. After that they started the Skirmish mode and played the game.

In the first group, after about 20 minutes of play we took a break and let one person play Tournament mode, while we talked to some people about the game and let the others fill out the questionnaire.

## 2 Observations

Here are some general observations we made during playtesting:

- People were having fun playing the game. They talked to each other, laughed and had a good time.
- In the controls screen, some people had a hard time to figure out which buttons do what (even though that was described in the upper left corner). With the help of others, everybody figured out the controls eventually.
- One person was a very inexperienced player. She got frustrated pretty quickly because she always lost and then had to wait for the others to finish
- The inexperienced player then played the tournament mode and liked it better, even though it was rather difficult.

Here's a summarized list of what people said during playtesting:

- Automatic repair over time
- Difference between ground and hill not always obvious
- Different sizes of grass
- Menu unclear / Which button does what
- Sonar sound when torpedo gets closer
- 2vs2, team deathmatch or capture the flag
- Damage on collision (between ships or with ground)
- Providing help/tutorial
- Kill indication (who killed who)

- Mine too strong
- Bullet too weak
- Blue text unreadable
- Nothing to do when dead
- Handicap for novice players
- Weapon cooldown-indication is not seen
- Splash damage on explosions
- Loading screen
- Every player should confirm game start
- Which level is being played (in single player)
- Graphical indication of damage (e.g. black smoke)
- Speed loss when damaged
- Level 6 too difficult
- Interceptor stronger than hummingbird
- Ability to change boat in between levels
- Show total number of maps, e.g. Arena (3/10)
- Reload indication with controller feedback?
- Can you drive out of the screen?
- One ships seems much stronger than the other
- Ships should be faster
- "My torpedoes don't work anymore!"
- Different weapons look very different (good!)
- One needs too many hits to kill
- Tournament seems a strange name for that mode

### 3 Questionnaire

This paragraph shows the questionnaire and the summarized answers.

#### **How did the controls feel, did they make sense?**

- After a short learning time, the controls are Ok.
- The right stick (cannon) is not very accurate.

#### **Did anything feel clunky or awkward?**

- Getting used to the three different fire modes
- Swimming in the flow
- The sometimes jumpy movement of the fish

#### **First impression**

- Good/Cool/Innovative/Super game
- Bomberman under water
- Nice graphics

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

- Didn't change
- Got even better

#### **Was there anything frustrating?**

- Canon control needs practice / Accuracy of canon
- When submarine swims in between two torpedos
- Balancing of the two boats: Movement speed too slow
- Nothing to do when dead in multiplayer
- Single player challenging on medium

#### **What was missing from the game**

- Temporary boost
- Power ups for weapons / health
- Leaving the map on one end and appearing on the other

- Multiple lives per level (i.e. not dropping out when dead)
- More game modes: Deathmatch with respawn. Team mode in multiplayer.
- More ships
- More levels

**If you could just change one thing, what would it be?**

- Auto aim for canon
- Balancing of levels/ships
- Hud displays bigger
- Choose your ship, choose your weapon
- Power ups
- Boost

## 4 Play matrix

People were asked to plot the game in the following matrix (green) and say where they would like to move the game to (blue)

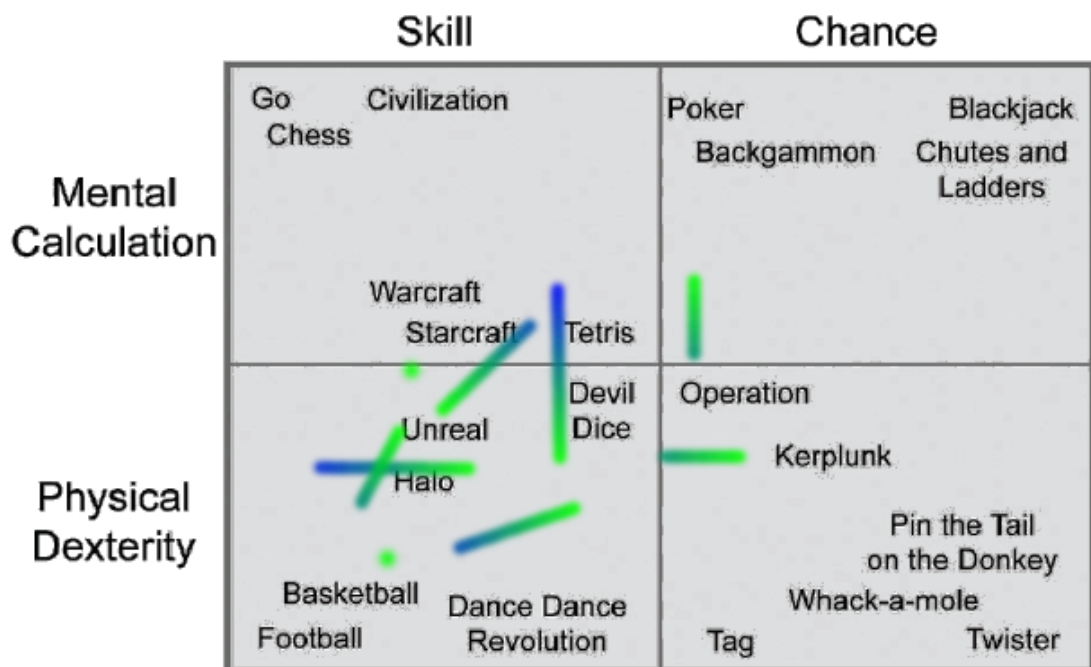


Figure 1: Results of the playtesting matrix: Where is the game (green), where should it be (blue)

## 5 Overall trends

The game was very well received. Most people liked the game a lot and thought it was fun. There were no major critiques to the actual game and gameplay, but lots of minor suggestions. Only one very inexperienced player didn't think it was fun, which came from the fact that the other players were much better.

## 6 Changes planned

There are several changes we have planned to integrate suggestions from the playtesting session into our game.

- The controls screen now first shows a big controller with easy explanations and then lets the players test the controls
- The *easy* difficulty in Tournament mode will be made a little less difficult
- The Tournament mode will be renamed to Campaign
- The clarity of the menus will be improved. More specifically, selecting ships will be improved (already implemented) and it will be clearer what each player is selecting (for example with blinking arrows indicating what can be changed)
- There will be a description of each ship type's strengths and weaknesses.