

BATTLE MASCOTS

User Experience Research Report

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=== Overview ===

Battle Mascots is a *Tabletop Simulator*-based board game centered around college football mascots duking it out to become the strongest around. User testing focused on the game's replayability, variation, and willingness of users to engage with the game mechanics. Testing was conducted with the following measures:

Task Checklist to Measure User Engagement

Task

Have all users upgraded their Leader with a Bench space at least once?

Ten-Question Pre- and Post-Game Surveys

8. I felt that there were sufficient opportunities to sow chaos and sabotage opponents.
- Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
9. How likely would you say it is that you would consider returning to this game?
- Unlikely Very Likely

Product Reaction Cards

Simplistic	Inviting	Clean
Not Valuable	Approachable	Dated
Boring	Effortless	Comprehensive
Motivating	Compelling	Overbearing
Organized	Fragile	Accessible
Fresh	Creative	Relevant

The driving question of this research was, going in:

"Do the players want to play the game again?"

If the answer is "no", then there is some failing in the game's mechanics. Additionally, if the rules are unclear, that not only could create further confusion, but reduce the user's desire to come back to the game.

=== Participants ===

This study garnered a total of six participants who played in three different games. Three of the participants played twice, while the others played only once.

% of participants that were college students was

50%

Average Age of Participants

24

Ratio of testers that were familiar with Tabletop Sim

4/6

Due to the limitations of recruitment, the sample ended up not representing the target demographic particularly well – there were no true card game novices in the sample, and the average age was higher than my target of 21. Most participants understanding card games meant they had greater insight, however.

=== Key Takeaways ===

Each of the testing sessions was observation-rich and exposed different issues for each.

"I'm not really understanding this trying to read it."

- Users found the notebook generally ineffective, and understood the game quicker when it was put into action. It's worth considering a visual guide instead of a text one.
- Gather and Battle Phase quickly proved to be unevenly balanced, necessitating some on-the-fly changes.
- Users exposed some oversights in the game design – in particular, the consequences for defeating other players were, in the current draft, rather flimsy, leaving room for some game-winning exploits that had no counterplay.
- Game length was approximately *81.33 minutes*, which is just about in the sweet spot of what I was aiming for.
- Mechanics are generally working properly. Abilities and Units had a *100%* engagement rate throughout all games as decided by the task table; Items and Traits were slightly lower, at an *88.8%* and *66.6%* engagement rate respectively.
- On a scale from 1-5, the six users across nine responses rated their likelihood to return to the game at an average of *4.5*, above my target goal of 4. Most positive feedback expressed their desire to return once rule changes were put into effect.

"I can just keep all my cards and play them all at the end."

=== Feedback & Changes ===

With the game finally put into action, many oversights were immediately discovered and changes made on the fly to patch up errors. Here are a few of the bigger changes that have been made so far:

- In the initial version of the game, only the "Trap" space automatically activated as you passed over it. More space types, such as Crowd and Sun, have been updated to have this mechanic, and the relevant spaces have a new outline to denote this. This change generally improved the balance of the game, according to the players;
"Now that we had massive amounts of units this time thanks to the Crowd Square rule change, they felt a lot more useful as it was harder to simply take down the few rare units players acquired." –[Anonymous]

Before



After



- The length of the game has also significantly changed. In the initial draft, there were 10 turns each of Gather and Battle Phase – now, most players suggested a different pace, and the game is played with 12 Gather and 4 Battle rounds, with a Battle happening after 3 of the Gather rounds.
"battles per every 3 turns with 12 moves seems to be the correct pace" –[Anonymous]

Before



After



- Future updates on the docket will be creating a visual guide to replace the Tabletop Simulator notebook, detailing the gameplay loop and space types ala an instruction manual; as well as a more concrete “darkness line” mechanic for the Sudden Death phase – as the users found especially the latter rather confusing and ill-defined.

=== Appendix ===

The Appendix for this report can be found at [this link](#). It includes the following:

- This project’s User Experience Research Plan.
- All notes taken and the task table filled out for each of the three games.
- Pre and post-test surveys and product reaction cards for all participants.
- All consent forms signed by the participants.
- A document detailing the target market and recruitment of this project.
- The form that was used to gauge testing interest.