Game Design Document



# Title Page

## Game Name

Flash team Fighting

(very much a working title)

## Tag line

Breakneck card action!

(or smt idk, having a tagline does fit the game but I’m not sure yet what to pick)

## Elevator Pitch

Opt. A: If you’ve ever wanted to blast a stomp-rock or EDM song while dealing some action movie carnage, this is the closest you can get in board game form.

Opt. B: Flash team Fighting has all the interesting card play of typical deck builders and trading card games, but makes true on its promise of emulating action-movie fights by playing at a breakneck pace.

## Date of last update

13/12/2022

# Game Overview

## Game Concept

Flash team Fighting (FtF) is a physical real-time card game for two players. In the game, you play out an action-movie style fight scene as one of many teams, each of which has it’s own unique deck and play style. You will scramble to put together a devastating combo from cards in your hand as quickly as possible, making sure each card played flows smoothly into the next. You then both resolve the effects of your combo, dealing damage to each other’s characters. First to lose all their characters loses the game.

Flash team Fighting falls with the relatively uncommon genre of real-time card games. Games in the genre have to keep their mechanics extremely simple so they can be processed in real time, in my opinion often moving into uninteresting territory. These games are only kept fun by the having to react quickly and play fast.

FtF will lean slightly further into the interesting play and mechanics typical of many designer card games. A point of reference would be Star Realms for its relative simplicity yet interesting gameplay. FtF will also use these more complex card designs to lean into its theme much more than existing real-time card games like brawl or the traditional playing card game Spit / Slam / Speed (nl.: zenuwen).

To compensate for this complexity, the game consists of alternating real-time phases involving most of the gameplay, followed by a brief non-time-sensitive phase in which complex effects can be resolved. This effectively makes FtF a programming game, albeit of a very different type than Robo Rally for example.

## Target Audience

FtF, being played mostly in real-time, is relatively unusual for a board-or card game. This means it can target two main audiences: those who are into the board gaming hobby and always looking for something they haven’t seen before (which is fairly common for board game players), and those who don’t typically like slower, more think-y games – especially if their friends *are* into the hobby, this game offers a way for them to still play together.

## Genre(s)

Flash team Fighting is a 1V1, real-time card game. More specifically, the real-time systems alternate with a non-timed phase as in a programming game (as defined for board games, “programming game” has a somewhat different meaning in video games).

For its theme and aesthetic the game borrows from sci-fi action, a major inspiration being the various Ghost in the Shell anime (Stand Alone Complex in particular).

## Game Flow Summary – How does the player move through the game? Include both the interface and the game itself.

Before the start of the game, both players pick from a number of pre-set teams. Each team has it’s own deck, containing cards from the different characters in that team, as well as some refence material to track character health and special abilities.

Once both players have set up their team, the game is played out in “combos” (read: rounds). Each combo is first built in real-time, then resolved when both players have finished building it.

During combo building, you play cards from your hand into a face-up row in for each player, from left to right. Players must make sure these cards flow into each other and accomplish maximum effect, but can’t stop to think for too long as rewards are given to the fastest combo builder. Once a player finishes their combo, their opponent only has limited time left to finish theirs.

After this follows a quick combo resolution phase, resolving both player’s combos from left to right without time constraints. The primary thing to check is which characters take damage and how much.

If a character’s health hits zero, that character dies. If a player has no more living characters, that player loses.

## Look and Feel – What is the basic look and feel of the game? What is the visual style?

This game has a cyberpunk or near-future, sci-fi aesthetic. It skews toward science-fantasy rather than hard sci-fi. Being an intense action game it borrows more from the flashy action movie side of things than it does from the moodier entries in the genre. FtF specifically seeks to reproduce the feel of an acrobatic choreographed action scenes rather than an entire movie.

One essential element of the visual style is that it must be immediately readable to enable the fast-paced play the game is built for. This means most key information will be represented with bright colour coding or clear iconography.

Non-functional illustrations such as card art may have to be simplified to match this aesthetic. They cannot be outright scrapped though, since card art, card names etc are what sell the action-scene fantasy of the game.

# Gameplay

## Objectives – What are the objectives of the game?

## Game Progression

## Play Flow – How does the game flow for the game player

## Mission / Challenge Structure / Puzzle Structure

# Mechanics

## Rules – What are the rules to the game, both implicit and explicit.

## Model of the game universe. Think of it as a simulation of a world, how do all the pieces interact?

## Physics – How does the physical universe work?

## Economy – What is the economy of the game? How does it work?

## Character / Game Piece movement in the game

## Actions, including whatever switches and buttons are used, interacting with objects, and what means of communication are used

## Conflict: if present, how is this modeled?

## Screen Flow -- How each screen is related to every other and a description of the purpose of each screen

## Game Options - What are the options and how do they affect game play?

## Replaying and saving

## Cheats and Easter Eggs

# Story and Narrative

## Back story

*In the near future, most of humanity has adjusted to living in enormous metropoles concentrating nearly all economic and political power. The streets of are rife with violence as various factions fight for control in these megacities – whether that’s powerful corporations, shady underworld organisations, lone mercenaries looking out only for themselves, or police forces violently keeping everyone in check.*

A note on this lore: it is very functional, but nothing here makes for a particularly unique setting. If this needs to be a strong IP, it will need more of an identity. However, the current backstory does everything necessary to support the gameplay and the core fantasy without getting in the way. Plus, keeping things this vague keeps a lot of possibilities open to design uniquely themed faction teams.

## Plot elements

*Life for normal civilians is tough in this sci-fi metropole, but you are not ordinary – you belong to one of the thrashing factions fighting over the city, and to you, doing their dirty work is one hell of a thrill.*

*Lead your team of mercenaries, thugs, half-assed heroes into battle and prove just how much of a well-oiled machine of destruction your squad really is!*

Each team in the game belongs to a faction. In the story, these factions are often much larger than just that team. Each faction has its own motivations in the backstory. The factions identity should be reflected in the team’s playstyle and aesthetic as much as possible. Each team of course consists of multiple characters, which can further specialise their playstyle and story identity.

## Story progression

There is not much of a plot playing out throughout the game since it is just a physical card game about fighting. However, it is a major design goal to actually evoke imagery of an action movie fight scene unfolding as you are playing the game. FtF may not have a plot, but it does have a much smaller scale story of how the fight plays out and even a bit of an arc as characters fall, gradually weakening both teams.

## Cut scenes -- descriptions include the actors, the setting, and the storyboard or script.

## Accompanying game pieces – story booklets, art work

The backstory of the game as a whole is expressed explicitly in the core rule book. Each individual team can then expand on this, coming with some info about the team members and the faction they are a part of. In this way, the unique teams get to steal the show both in gameplay and in the story.

Throughout the game, the theme is communicated in the form of illustrative art on the cards, player boards etc as well as naming conventions, all supported by some thematically evocative mechanics.

Effectively every game piece is a small part of the “story”, so playing the game strongly evokes playing out an action scene in this world.

# Game World

## General look and feel of world

See back story: the world is a near(ish)-future cyberpunk world. It is dystopian and violent as a world to live in, but the perfect scenery for a good action scene.

It is neon, full of crashing windows and acrobatic action moves, shady back alleys and massive high rises, and greatly stylised. Realism and subtlety are lowest priority, exciting and unique factions and action are paramount.

All this colourful yet grimy, stylised, intense action is rendered in hand-drawn anime-inspired illustrations – notably these almost always have to coexist with gameplay elements, which should visually get priority to enable fast-paced play.

# Areas

## General description and physical characteristics

Functionally the entire world is constrained to a single megacity, the world outside is usually irrelevant.

Within the megacity there are of course different districts, neighbourhoods and landmarks, but the gameplay is agnostic to them. Furthermore, the actual setting of the world as a whole is not the focus of this game.

The closest analogy to “areas” in the world that actually matter would be the factions: they are a story part of the world that you don’t directly control (teams are only a small part of a larger faction), each with their own identity. For a more detailed, in-progress list of factions, see my notes.

## How to relate to the rest of the world

Each faction relates to the world as a whole in what part of it they control, what role they fill in the world and what they are fighting for. Private military working for a major corporation relates to the world very differently then a crime syndicate or a government funded special operations team. This information will be provided on the story primer that comes with each team. Once again, factions are still being worked out and currently only exist partially in my notes, and partially in my mind.

Factions may also physically control some areas of the world – it would be fun to place them on a fictional map of the city, to make them all feel like a part of a single, consistent world.

As mentioned, the larger world outside those factions is not very relevant to the play nor the appeal of this game. While there could be districts defined, each with their own function to the city, and even extra locations outside the main city could be established, it does not seem necessary at the moment.

## What levels use it

The only things that are relevant are your team and your opponent’s, and the fight playing out between the two of you. Environment is simply occasionally implied by the cards – a sniper taking a shot from a rooftop, a SWAT team member breaking in through a window etc.

Like before, the factions you both decide to play are what really matters. Every time you play the game, both players will pick a team and each team has it’s own identity in the story and in playstyle, so using the analogy of factions as areas, players get to choose which area to play in each game.

A fun future expansion might be to include environment into the fights more explicitly. At the start of the game, both players would agree on an area to play in on top of picking their team. Areas then add some unique rules, cards or objectives as a twist on gameplay. This system would add more novelty and could evoke certain kinds of action scenes that cleverly use the environment to create a more unique choreography. However, to reiterate, this mechanic is not currently planned to be implemented.

## Connections to other areas

# Characters.

## For each character

## Back story

## Personality

## Appearance

## Abilities

## Relevance to the story

## Relationship to other characters

## Artificial Intelligence Use in Opponent and Enemy

## Non-combat and Friendly Characters

# Levels

## Training Level

## For each level

## Synopsis

## Required introductory material and how it is provided

## Objectives

## Details of what happens in the level

### Map

### Critical path that the player needs to take

### Important and incidental encounters

# Interface

## Visual System

## HUD

## Menus

## Camera model

## Control System – How does the game player control the game? What are the specific commands?

## Audio, music, sound effects

## Game Art – intended style

## Help System / Manual

A clear manual will be provided that is as concise as possible without sacrificing this clarity.

It will be added as a separate document as soon as the exact rules start to settle into their definitive form. For now some of my notes are provided instead, which by no means are meant as a resource to learn the game from.

# 10. Design guidelines