Flaming Zebras Playtesting

**Script:**

(lead) means push the player further in that direction if their answer is already going there.

Were you able to purchase things in a reasonable time?

Were you happy with your end-game purchases? (lead)

Did you spend much time with nothing to buy/that you wanted to buy? (lead)

Did upgrades feel worth it?

Spending win points not worth it/non-issue?(lead)

Risk of holding on to the gold too high/low?(lead)

Did you feel like any information was missing?

\*Make special note if we've conveyed the information, but in a way they missed

\*Or if it wasn't obvious enough/too intrusive

Did the game drag on at all?

Everything bought that you want? (lead)

Everything looted already? (lead)

Did you have enough time to explore?

How much of an impact did you feel other players had on your gameplay experience?

They weren't ever there (lead)

They were always in my face (lead)

I could ignore them though (lead)

I couldn't do anything else when another player was in the room (lead)

How did the behavior of non-player enemies affect your gameplay?

I had to figure out what the enemies were doing all the time (lead)

I learned what an enemy did then I knew exactly what they were doing (lead)

How did traps affect your PvP experience?

They didn't/were ignorable (lead)

I had to be very careful about how other players used traps (lead)

How did traps affect your gameplay when you were not in combat?

They didn't/were ignorable (lead)

They presented a challenge in and of themselves (lead)

Did sources of damage feel worth avoiding?

Which ones did or didn't?

Why (lead)

ex. Too easy/hard to dodge

Too much/little damage

etc.

Any major issues/bugs that you noticed?

**Analysis**

One of the major problems we found in play testing was that the actual effects of buying upgrades was unclear to players. We currently only have a small UI that gives a general explanation of what each purchase does for you. Limited time in the shop does not help this, nor does the inability to experiment with weapons. These problems will all be addressed in our final product which will have a tutorial, as well as a single player practice mode. The single player practice mode lets the player run around, figure out the rooms and also experiment with upgrades.

Another issue we found was that players didn’t really utilize the traps against other players. A lot of them even didn’t realize how the traps worked, by the activation of a button. This is something that will be taught in the tutorial when we implement it later. An intermediary solution we have tried to utilize is increasing the visibility of the buttons by changing their colour to stand out more, as well as adding more distinct audio feedback to traps activating.

Another issue we ran into was in our initial room that branches off, we had doors leading to other areas that aren’t built yet since we scaled down the game for the final hand in of the class. Many players were confused by the multiple doors, and the inability to use the two doors which didn’t lead anywhere. An additional problem is the initial single-path room leading to a boulder block, discouraging several players from adventuring forth. Many players did not venture to try actually hurting the boulder and breaking it, but once they did the game seemed to open up quite a lot.

A fourth issue was spawn camping. Some players were noticeably lower skill than the others in their test group and they found after falling behind, they simply couldn’t do anything. The complaint being that the combination of being a weaker player with less upgrades meant they can’t fight other players and win, and they can’t go explore because they’ll run in to other players trying to get out. This is an issue caused by the lack of our other areas. We scaled the class-final-version of our game down to an alpha that only has one of our 3 areas. With 3 areas players will be able to choose other paths that won’t be completely guarded by others focusing on PvP. Furthermore those focusing on PvP currently will have another more viable choice in the higher reward more difficult areas.

A fifth issue was the frustration of running through rooms that have already been “cleared” by other players. Another aspect of our game that we decided to postpone till after the class is the minimap. We wish to have a minimap that will show the layout of the entire map to the players, along with an indication of which rooms have treasure in them or had treasure in them. This will be communicated by the presence or lack of a treasure chest, which if cleared will be an empty treasure chest.

A sixth issue that was gleaned from speaking with players was that traps tend to have a low effect on PvP once the incentive of a treasure chest has been removed from a room. The players simply never at any point put themselves somewhere they could have a trap triggered on them, even if no one is near the switch. This is a design issue largely. We consider it mostly acceptable for the current rooms we have, which are limited to the easy region of our game. To avoid this in the later rooms, designing them it will be important to place either respawning or constant incentives in the rooms. Another option would be placing traps such that a significant portion of the room which must be traversed to pass through the room would be within the “line of fire”.

We specifically asked questions about the numbers balance (not directly mind you) however the feedback we got for those questions wasn’t very applicable. The main reason being that none of the players were able to get enough time with the game to develop any significant opinions about numbers affecting combat dynamics or the dynamics of the economy over the course of a match. This mainly just tells us that none of the numbers we currently have are game-breaking or egregiously over/under-tuned. That’s about all we can hope for until we get to an actual beta stage, throw hooks in the game and start handing out betas.