BATTLESHIPS: ALL HANDS ON DECK

Game Treatment

Grupo 1

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Executive Summary

All Hands on Deck is an expansion for the *Battleships* guessing game that adds a card mechanic and allows players to be more strategic during gameplay, with this game being suited for casual players who are competitive and like strategy games.

The card mechanic balances the luck factor of the game by having players who miss shots draw a card with a positive effect while players who hit shots draw cards with negative effects. Cards that temporarily affect both players were also added to give the playthrough a sequence of events resembling a story.

The ships were given different shot types and charging times in an effort to give it a deeper strategy-oriented gameplay. The main gameplay loop consists of taking a shot, playing a card, drawing a card, and charging the ships.

For the artistic design, we chose naval-themed realistic images for the cards as much as possible and kept the design simple, with each card having an image and text. Players are given a set of two grids, five ships and three card slots to use in their personal window. Each player plays as the CEO of a soda company (Red Soda and Blue Soda), calling the shots on their war for market control and soda supply to the world.

Game Overview

In the far future, the world is run by companies. The two eternal rivals **Blue Soda** and **Red Soda** have once again fallen into the tides of war, battling for the control of the last soda-free land in the world. Both companies have resorted to naval warfare, building their fleets for the final showdown. **May the best CEO rise above the waves!**

Inspiration

- The game's story is inspired by the Cola Wars, as well as the not so well known fact that Pepsi Co once held the sixth largest navy force in the world

Genre, Theme & Competiton

- Guessing strategy game, with a naval battle theme.
- Games like Captain Sonar and other guessing games 1vs1 like Decrypto are the main competitors.

Design Goals

1. A deeper strategy thinking game.
2. A more immersive twist to the base game, with the implementation of a storyline.

Platform & Artstyle

- The game will be developed using Vassal and is to be played on PC using realistic visuals, while still maintaining the funny undertone of the story scenario.

Features and Unique Selling Points

1v1 board guessing strategy game with the addition of cards to the base "Battleships" game. The cards **balance the luck element of the game** by awarding bonuses to player who have missed a shot and penalizing those who hit.

Each player starts with a set of pieces (ships) that they position in their respective grids (Fig. 2), unknown to the other player. They then take turns guessing where the opponent's pieces are by taking shots at a tile.

Each ship has **different fire styles** (Fig. 3) **and charging times**. The player must say which ship is shooting before choosing the tile where it is aiming.

If the shot misses a ship then the player draws a good card. Otherwise, the player draws a bad card.

A player can save up to 3 cards in their hand to use later in the game. If the player does not want to (or can't) save it for later then they must resolve it.

Each time a ship is sunk, a plot event card is drawn that moves the narrative of the story along, forcing the players to adjust their strategies. Only one plot event is active at a time**, temporarily affecting both players** (Fig. 4). These cards have a textual description of an event that symbolizes a chapter in the story and, because they are drawn at random, the probability of two stories or games playing out the same way is very low.

The cards are randomized and may have positive or negative effects, providing players with more strategic options, a more fun experience and eliminating some of the luck factor necessary to win the game.

There are three decks: the good consequences deck, the **bad consequeces deck**, and the **plot events deck**. As previously mentioned, the good consequences deck (Green Deck) awards positive effects while the bad consequences deck (Brown Deck) has negative effects on the player. This is designed to mitigate the amount of luck needed to win the game and to give players a wider range of strategies. The plot events deck (Black Deck) moves the story along and affects both players.

The Player

Target

- This game targets players who want a deep strategy thinking 1v1 competition game.
- Casual players who want to be the last one standing, to be able to beat the other players, engage in direct competition, devise strategies, or want an experience that is enjoyable and takes them away from their daily life are likely to enjoy this game.

Motivation

- The players will compete with one another to destroy the opponent's fleet. As such, they have to devise strategies to find and eliminate the ships while accounting for the cards.
- The plot events push the players into a more competitive and strategic mindset.
- The game also encourages players to interact with one another by interfering with each other's startegies with the use of cards.
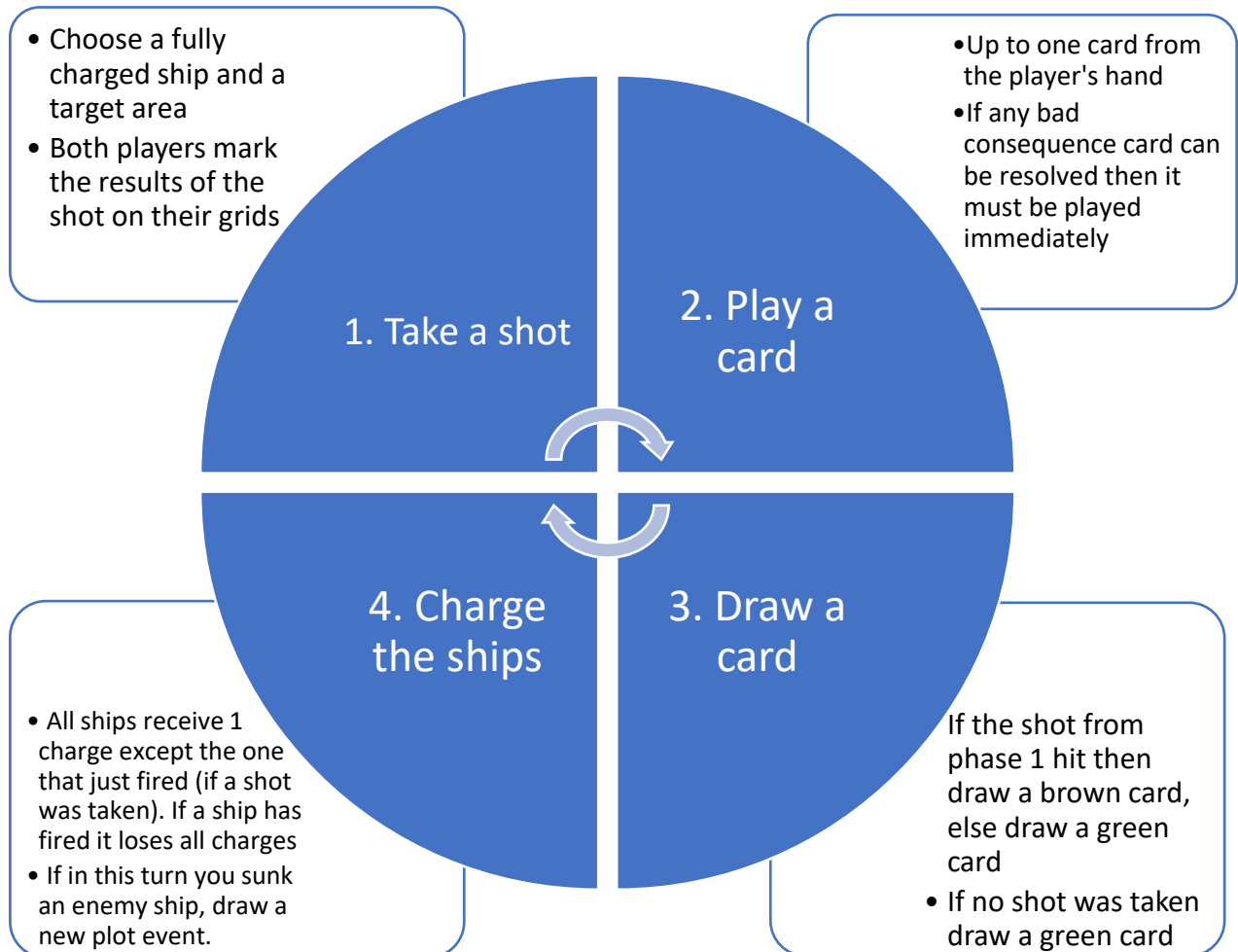
Experience and Progression

- The gameplay starts off with the familiar mechanic of the original Battleships game, easy to follow along.
- The card mechanic adds a twist to the events and allows players to have a greater variety of playing options in their turns. The story driven elements place the player in the shoes of a powerful commander, in this case the CEO, that is affected by strikes, stock market crashes and employees while still managing the war.

Control, Interaction Metaphor and Interface

- The player's personal window is composed of a set of two grids, 5 ships, and 3 card slots in their hands.
- The game also features a main board with the charging station for the ships and slots to hold the decks, as well as a turn counter for the plot events.
- Each player interacts by calling shots from their fleets, as if they were the commanders, calling strategical shots and updating their "maps" (grids) with new information.

Core Gameplay Loop

The main gameplay loop is composed of the player's turn. Both players take turns executing the following sequence of steps until one of them has sunk the adversary's entire fleet.

- Choose a fully charged ship and a target area
- Both players mark the results of the shot on their grids

1. Take a shot

- Up to one card from the player's hand
- If any bad consequence card can be resolved then it must be played immediately

2. Play a card

4. Charge the ships

- All ships receive 1 charge except the one that just fired (if a shot was taken). If a ship has fired it loses all charges
- If in this turn you sunk an enemy ship, draw a new plot event.

3. Draw a card

- If the shot from phase 1 hit then draw a brown card, else draw a green card
- If no shot was taken draw a green card

This sequence was designed so that if a player is unable to take a shot and play a card from their hand they can still draw a green card and use it immediately. The rules for each of these steps are thoroughly explained in the Game Manual, and we have included that information in Annex A.

Although our design mitigates the luck factor of the game, players can still play the odds with the cards they are dealt and devise strategies based on the information they get from taking shots and the cards at their disposal.

Art Direction and Creative Decisions

In this section we include prototypes and in-game images of the art style and game components.

Starting with the main board, initially we had a separate window for the ship charging station and it proved tiresome during playtests to constantly hide/show the window each turn. Taking that feedback, we added the charging station to the main board, that already had the decks and card slots. Taking player feedback, we moved the player's hands to their private windows. We also added a turn counter for the temporary plots events, that were also added thanks to playtesting feedback.

The game pieces consist of red, white, and yellow circles and a red cross. We decided not to add pieces for the satellite/sonar cards since they didn't reveal complete information and the evasion card doesn't prevent the player from moving a ship to a previously scanned area.
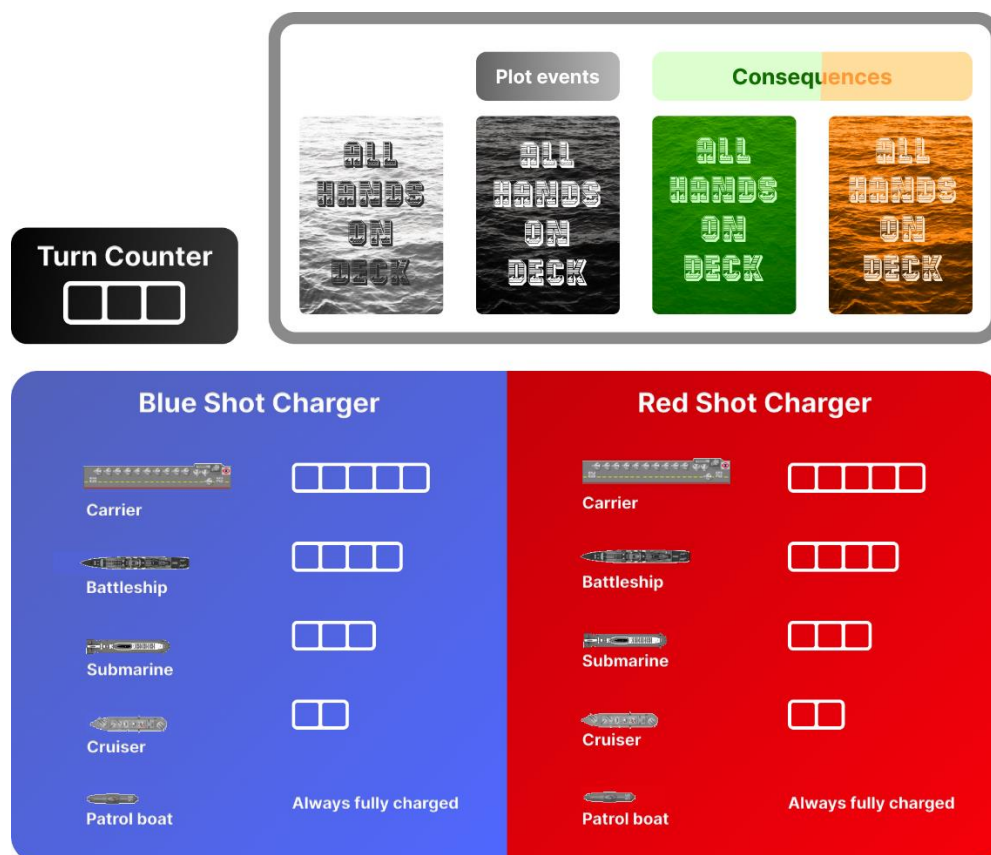

Figure 1. Main board design

For the player's private window, we created two grids with a realistic ocean background and three slots to store cards. The windows also features 5 different ships that can be placed on top of the grids.
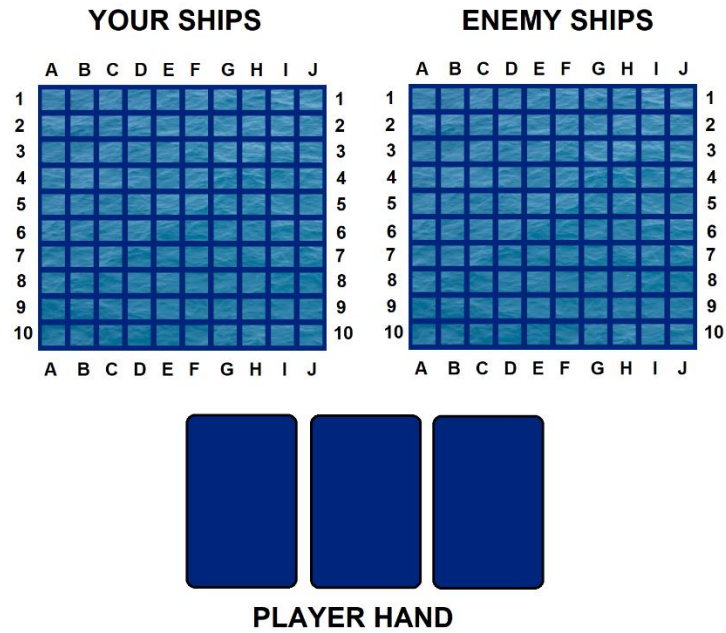
YOUR SHIPS **ENEMY SHIPS**

Figure 2. Blue Player's grids and hand

We wanted to keep the ships realistic but it proved difficult with the top view we were seeking. We settled for a mixture of the base VASSAL mod[1] pieces (carrier, cruiser, and patrol boat) and added two more.

Carrier — Shoots a 4-square line horizontally or vertically.

Battleship — Shoots 3 squares in an L-shaped area.

Cruiser — Shoots a 2-square line horizontally or vertically.

Submarine — Shoots a 4-square line horizontally or vertically but only the first hit is disclosed.

Patrol Boat — Shoots one square.

Figure 3. Shot type for each ship and ship design

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[1] https://vassalengine.org/wiki/Module:Battleship_/_Salvo

For the cards there are 3 decks: the Green Deck, the Brown Deck, and the Black Deck. The Green Deck contains 10 unique cards, for a total of 20 cards in the deck, the Brown Deck contains 10 unique cards, for a total of 19 cards in the deck, and the Black Deck contains 14 unique cards.

The decision was made to not have the bad consequences deck (Brown Deck) have the color red since it was the color of one of the players. The Black Deck is the only deck not to have an image associated with each card, instead sporting a textual description of an event in the place where the image would be placed. We used an ocean themed letter font for the game name on the backside of the cards and tried to keep the images of each card as realistic as possible.
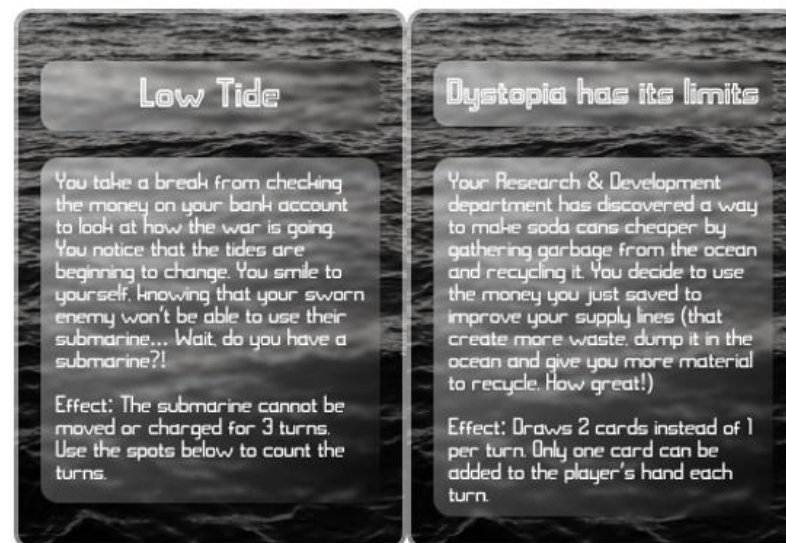

Figure 4. Examples of plot event that lasts for three turns (left) and that lasts until the next ship is sunk
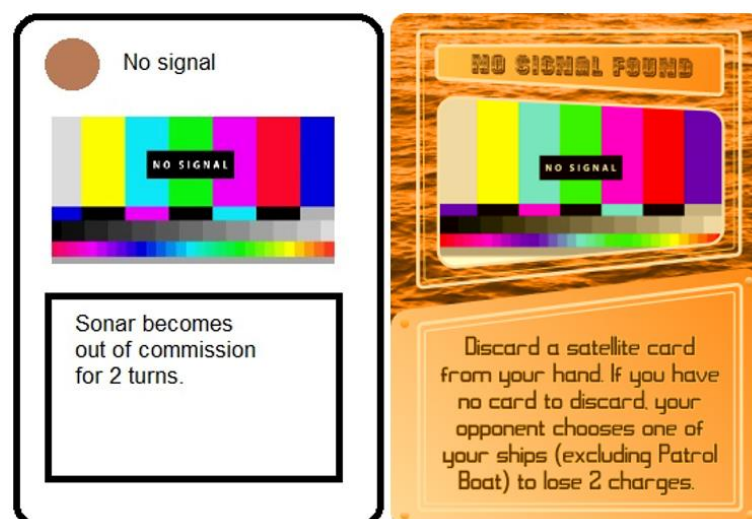

Figure 5. Evolution of the cards' design

ANNEX A

A turn is composed of 4 phases:

1. **Take a shot**
   a. Choose a ship that is fully loaded (i.e., its charging slots are all marked) and tell your opponent you are using it
   b. Choose the target area and ask your opponent if any shots hit
   c. The other player discloses the location of all hits (except for submarine)
   d. Use the white piece to mark the spot of a miss and the red piece to mark a hit in the spare grid of your private window. You can use the grid you have your ships on to mark your opponent's shots.

2. **Play a card**
   a. If you have cards stored in your hand you can choose to play a card. Let your opponent know which card you're playing and return it to the deck upon resolving it.
   b. If the card you play forces you to resolve another card it still counts as just playing the original first card.
   c. If you have any brown cards in your hand that can be resolved, play them immediately. You can still play another card.

3. **Draw a card**
   a. If you were unable to resolve any of the previous phases draw a green card (regardless of what the active plot event might indicate).
   b. If you took a shot and it hit an enemy ship in any spot of the targeted area you draw a brown card. If all shots missed draw a green card.
   c. Not taking any shot is treated as a miss (draw green card).
   d. If you draw a brown card, resolve it immediately. If you draw a green card, you can choose to play it immediately or save it for later.
   e. You can only have a maximum of 3 cards in your hand at all times.

4. **Charge your ships**
   a. If you fired a shot from any of the ships then that ship loses all charges and does not charge for the turn.
   b. All other ships receive 1 charge unless affected by a card or if they have been destroyed previously. You can use the X piece to mark the ships that have been sunk in the charging board.
   c. If in this turn you sunk an enemy ship, draw a black card from the plot events. If any previous plot event was triggered, its effects are over and now only the new black card is active. Delete the old plot event's card and place the new on the grey card slot of the main board.

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Party Disclosing Information: Group 1 ("Disclosing Party").

Party Receiving Information: Game Design teachers ("Receiving Party").

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DISCLOSING PARTY Signature:

_____Group 1_____ Date: 07/11/2022

RECEIVING PARTY Signature:

_____Game Design teachers_____ Date: 07/11/2022