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Game Design 101

Pratt / Jones-Brewster

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<u>A Learning Curve, A Pattern, A Strategy</u>

I never considered how today's sports follow so many of the same principles of game design. When brought up in lecture, it really made me think not only about how sports themselves have mechanics/objectives. I began to give a lot of thought into how much influence games have had and what makes them so easy to play in virtually any environment. Bringing those ideas from lecture to recitation I was able to apply them to sports overall, as well as to our mini soccer games that we played during the afternoon.

In terms of game design, one of the terms we talked about was *elegance*, and soccer displays this idea perfectly. At its core, the game is incredibly simple. With your team, kick a ball to the opposite end of the field and attempt to get it in the opposing team's goal. The idea is so straightforward you can explain it just a sentence, all you need is a ball and at least two people; the game can be broken down into just kicking back and forth. The field itself has specifics for official games, yet you can play it in a public park with some orange cones to outline where the boundaries are. Now, following the implied simplicity in *elegance*, the game can be a lot more complex and a variety of strategies can be used. You could just focus on working with your team to kick the ball to the other side of the field, or you could declare specific members of your team special positions. Instead of just passing it down the line, a team can discuss an optimal strategy for their offensive players to get the ball past the opposing team's defensive players. While we played haphazardly, such as just throwing the ball in when it went out, there are various rules in the game of soccer that account for whether a ball should be thrown in, brought in by a corner kick, etc.

Our small game of soccer during recitation last Friday was a bit of an experience. It was interesting to play with people of varying skill levels, yet more specifically different interest levels. Having played soccer in middle school and over the summers, everyone had a mutual interest to be there for the game. During our recitation, soccer was brand new to some people and it went well. There was some confusion about the rules and what one should do if something happens, such as when to start if the ball goes out. However, everyone was able to pick up the general idea of how the game worked, and especially the concept of teamwork. There were some that went harder than others, but everyone had a good sense of teamwork about them and worked with each other. There was also some strategy devised during the game, such as passing to someone versus scoring a goal.

For playing sports in a game design class, it really gives a new perspective on sports, although I probably won't become a die-hard sports fan any time soon…