In It To Limit
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In It To Limit is a 3D third-person platformer where two players race each other through abstract buildings, while acquiring powerups that apply a limitation to the other player in some way. In It To Limit won first place at the WolverineSoft Game Jam.

Before the Game Jam's theme was announced, we wanted to make a 2D cooperative puzzle-platformer. However, the theme was announced to be "Limits", and we thought it would be very interesting to instead implement a competitive game in which players apply limits to each other. We settled on a racing platformer with strong negative power-ups, neither of which are mechanics we'd ever heard of. We also wanted to make our game based vaguely off of real terrain, which we felt would be hard to do in a 2D platformer, so we planned to build a 2.5D platformer instead. The camera would observe the player from a 45-degree isometric perspective. We thought this game was practical to complete in a game jam, and would create an awesome competitive experience.

As we developed, our camera system changed considerably. Initially it was going to simply be observing always from the same direction, and pan to follow the player. We discovered, however, that it was nearly impossible to build compelling puzzles with the camera like this – the player couldn't see what they were doing, even with a fancy ghosting shader we added to allow the player to see themselves through walls. Because of this, we added a mechanic where players could rotate the camera in 45 degree increments by using the controller triggers. This was extremely clunky, however, partly because playtesters had a very difficult time knowing what direction on the keyboard/controller corresponded to what direction in the game. We finally replaced it with a free-rotating camera using the right analog stick. However, unlike other games this camera did not turn when the player-character turned, which was important for our limit system.

The map is filled with limits, which when picked up by a player, put some limitation on the other player. Our first set of four limits were simply directional limits – players would not be able to move in a given direction, relative to their camera (not their player). This meant that they could still make progress no matter what, but they might have to turn the camera to do so, which takes time. These limits worked but turned out to be somewhat frustrating to playtesters, so we added diversity with more creative limits, some of which seem like benefits at first. One limit provides rocket boots, which means the player cannot stop jumping. Another provides antigravity, which means that the player jumps twice as high but cannot change direction while in the air. These limits ended up being much more compelling, so we added them along with the directional limits.

As far as we know, no game has had mechanics like this. We've never seen a competitive platformer before, and never direct, long-lasting limitations on other players like this. WolverineSoft's themes seem to be very good at providing inspiration.