

Regatta Rush

Game Design Document

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Game Details:

- Target Platform: PC
- Target Audience: Casual gamers aged 10 - 35
- Target Rating: E for Everyone

Story and Gameplay

Story

Setting: The game unfolds in the iconic Maltese Grand Harbour, renowned for its historical significance and breathtaking beauty. The setting serves as a perfect backdrop for the thrilling rowing races that capture the essence of Malta's maritime traditions.

Characters: Players assume the role of an aspiring rower, determined to make a name in the regatta world. Their goal is to achieve the best times in a series of time trials to become the fastest and most skilled rower.

Conflict: The narrative centres around the player's personal journey from a novice to a revered rowing champion. The story highlights the player's trials and triumphs, emphasising their growth in skills and their determination to become the fastest rower.

Ending/Cliffhanger: As Regatta Rush is structured as a mini-game, the story focuses more on the progression of skills rather than a traditional narrative arc. The game culminates in the player reaching the highest level of competition, symbolising their mastery in rowing.

Gameplay

Game Flow

Start Screen:

- Players are greeted with a start screen that includes options to play and view high scores.
- There is an "Instructions" button that, when clicked, displays the game rules and controls.

Game Initialization:

- Upon selecting 'Play', players choose between "Time Trial" and "Versus Mode."
- The game then transitions to a countdown sequence ("3, 2, 1, Go!") before gameplay commences.

During the Race:

- Players control their boat using keyboard inputs, navigating through a dynamically generated course.
- The objective is to reach the finish line in the shortest time while managing the boat's stamina.

End of Race:

- Upon crossing the finish line, the game displays the race completion time.
- In Versus Mode, a screen shows which player won and the times of both players.
- Players can choose to play again, return to the main menu, or exit the game.

Game Mechanics

Boat Control:

- Players use the Left and Right Arrow keys for navigation in Time Trial mode and additional keys in Versus Mode for the second player.
- Rapid alternation between keys increases the boat's speed but also depletes stamina faster.

Stamina System:

- Each boat has a stamina metre that depletes with every movement.
- Depleted stamina results in increased resistance, slowing the boat down. Stamina regenerates automatically when no input is given, with regeneration speed inversely proportional to current speed.

Speed Caps and Acceleration:

- Boats have a maximum speed cap. Excessive acceleration without proper rhythm can lead to inefficient stamina use and slower overall speeds.

Game Modes:

- Time Trial: Solo play, aiming for the best time on the leaderboard.
- Versus Mode: Two players compete against each other on split screens with a shared course.

Character

Player's Role: In Regatta Rush, players control a novice rower who is new to the world of the Maltese Regatta. This character represents an underdog, embarking on a journey from a beginner to a celebrated rowing champion.

Backstory: The character is an enthusiastic individual drawn to the tradition and excitement of the Maltese Regatta. Inspired by tales of legendary rowers and the vibrant atmosphere of the Grand Harbour, they decide to take up the challenge and become part of this storied racing world.

Main Gameplay Concepts and Platform Specific Features

Gameplay Concepts

Primary Genre: Regatta Rush is primarily a racing game with a focus on time trials and competitive 1v1 races. The game combines elements of rhythm and skill-based mechanics, where players must manage their stamina and coordination to achieve the fastest times.

Sequence of Play:

1. **Start Screen:** Players begin at the start screen, where they can choose between different game modes such as Time Trial or Versus Mode.
2. **Tutorial (Optional):** A brief tutorial guides new players through the basic controls and mechanics.
3. **Countdown:** Each race starts with a countdown (3-2-1-Go!), after which players can begin rowing.
4. **Rowing:** Players control their boats by rapidly alternating between specific keys (e.g., Left and Right Arrow keys for Player 1, Z and C keys for Player 2 in Versus Mode) to row. They must manage their stamina bar, which depletes with each key press and refills when keys are not pressed.
5. **Finish Line:** The race ends when the player crosses the finish line. In Versus Mode, the first player to cross wins the race.
6. **Results Screen:** Players see their final time and, in Versus Mode, the winner is displayed along with their time. High scores and personal bests are also shown.
7. **Restart or Main Menu:** Players can choose to restart the race or return to the main menu to select a different mode or exit the game.

USPs:

- Rhythmic Racing Mechanics: Unique control scheme that combines rhythmic key presses with stamina management, providing a fresh take on traditional racing games.
- Versus Mode: Competitive 1v1 mode with split-screen gameplay, allowing two players to race against each other on the same device.

Platform Specific Features

Control Scheme:

- Optimised for keyboard and mouse, providing precise control for rhythm matching.

Graphics and Performance:

- Leveraging PC graphics capabilities for detailed and immersive visual experiences.
- Higher frame rates for smoother gameplay, crucial for rhythm-based mechanics.

Game World

Overview

Regatta Rush offers a straightforward and engaging game world, ideal for a mini-game format. Set in the iconic Grand Harbour of Malta, the focus is on delivering an immersive racing experience. The game emphasises competitive rowing without additional features like customization, keeping the experience streamlined and focused on skillful gameplay.

Key Environments

Starting Docks (Menu Screen)

- Description: This serves as the game's main menu. The Starting Docks are depicted with vibrant visuals, showcasing the bustling atmosphere of a Maltese harborside.
- Function: Here, players can start their game, view high scores, or exit.
- Mood: Inviting and lively, capturing the essence of a traditional Maltese festival setting.

Podium (End Screen)

- Description: At the end of each race, players are taken to the podium screen, which displays their race time, ranking, and the winner of the versus mode if applicable.
- Function: To celebrate the player's performance and encourage replay to improve ranking or time.
- Mood: Celebratory, providing a sense of accomplishment and closure after each race.

Time Trial Mode

- Description: A solo race against the clock, where players aim to achieve the best possible time on a straight course.
- Function: To hone players' skills in speed and stamina management.
- Mood: Intense and focused, with the player striving for personal bests.

Versus Mode

- Description: A competitive mode where two players race against each other on parallel courses.
- Function: To provide a multiplayer experience, adding the thrill of head-to-head competition.
- Mood: Highly competitive, with an emphasis on strategic rowing and stamina management.

Finish Line

- Description: The crucial endpoint of each race, marked by a clear finish line in the harbour.
- Function: To determine the winner and end the race. In Versus mode, the first player to cross the finish line is declared the winner.
- Mood: Climactic and rewarding, signalling the end of the race.

Interface Design

Navigating the Game Shell

The interface in Regatta Rush is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, ensuring players can easily navigate through the game's various options and features.

Main Menu (Starting Docks):

- Overview: The Main Menu serves as the game's entry point, set against a lively and vibrant backdrop of the Maltese Grand Harbour.
- Options:
 - Start Game: Initiates the game mode selection screen.
 - High Scores: Displays the leaderboard with the top times and winners.
 - Settings: Allows players to adjust audio, controls, and display options.
 - Exit: Closes the game

Game Mode Selection:

- Overview: Players can choose between different game modes.
 - Time Trial: Solo mode where players race against the clock.
 - Versus Mode: Multiplayer mode for head-to-head competition.

Gameplay Screen:

- Overview: The core screen where the racing action takes place.
 - Elements:
 - Speedometer: Shows the current speed of the boat.
 - Stamina Bar: Indicates the player's remaining stamina.
 - Timer: Displays the elapsed time since the start of the race.
 - Split Screen: In Versus Mode, the screen is split to show both players' progress.
 - Finish Line Indicator: Shows the distance remaining to the finish line.

Game Over Screen (Podium):

- Overview: Displays after the race ends, showcasing the player's performance.
- Elements:
 - Final Time: Shows the race completion time.
 - Winner Announcement: In Versus Mode, indicates which player won.
 - High Score Notification: Alerts if a new high score is achieved.
 - Options:
 - Restart: Begins a new race in the selected mode.
 - Main Menu: Returns to the Main Menu.
 - View High Scores: Directs to the leaderboard.

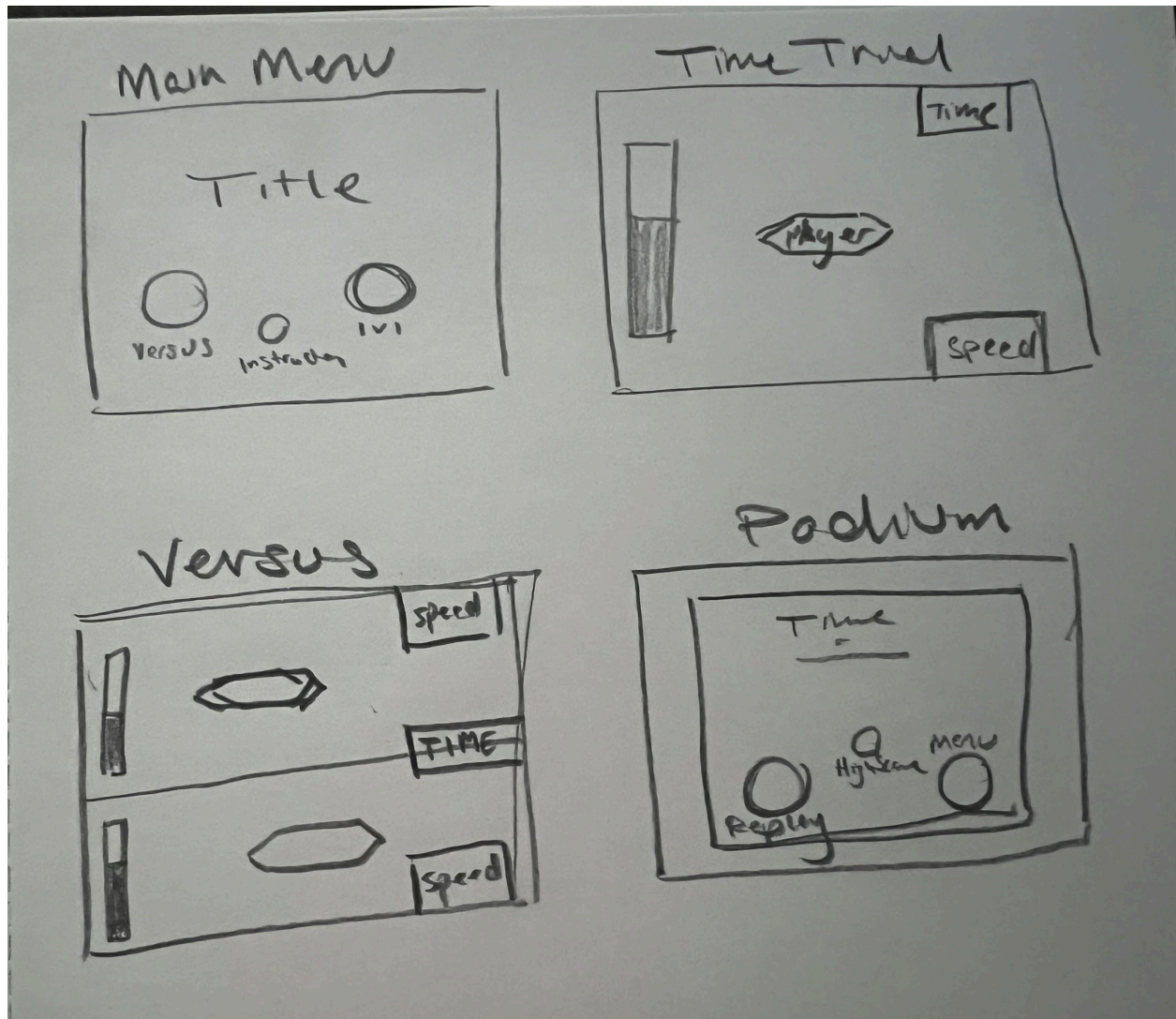
Mood and Aesthetic

- The overall mood of the interface is lively and engaging, reflecting the festive and vibrant atmosphere of a Maltese regatta.
- The colour palette includes bright blues, whites, and yellows, evoking the feel of the Mediterranean.

Music and Sound in Interface

- Main Menu: A light, upbeat traditional tune plays in the background, setting a cheerful and welcoming tone.
- Race: The music tempo slightly increases, adding a sense of anticipation and excitement.
- End Screen (Podium): A triumphant version of the theme plays, celebrating the player's achievement.

Storyboard



Game Mechanics

Unique Gameplay Mechanics

Rowing Rhythm:

- Description: Players need to press specific keys in a rhythmic manner to propel their boat forward. The rhythm and timing of key presses directly influence the boat's speed and stamina consumption.
- Keys:
 - Player 1: Uses the Left and Right Arrow keys.
 - Player 2 (Versus Mode): Uses the Z and C keys.

Stamina Management:

- Description: The boat has a stamina metre that depletes with each key press. Stamina regenerates when the player is not pressing any keys. Effective management of stamina is crucial for maintaining speed.
- Metre: A visual representation of the stamina level is displayed on the HUD.

Speed Limitation:

- Description: The boat has a maximum speed that it can achieve. Exceeding this speed without managing stamina effectively can result in reduced efficiency and slower overall times.

Asymmetric Multiplayer (Versus Mode):

- Description: In Versus Mode, two players compete head-to-head on the same screen, each with their own set of controls and HUD elements.
- Split Screen: The game screen is divided to show both players' boats, speeds, and stamina levels.

Mechanics Relation to Player Actions

Rhythmic Key Pressing:

- Action: Players press the assigned keys rhythmically to row their boat.
- Effect: The speed of the boat increases with correct timing, but poor timing can lead to quick depletion of stamina and slower speed.

Stamina Depletion and Refill:

- Action: Continuous pressing of keys depletes stamina.
- Effect: As stamina decreases, resistance increases, slowing the boat down. Players must balance rowing with pauses to refill stamina, optimising their speed and endurance.

Speed and Efficiency:

- Action: Players need to find a balance between maintaining high speed and managing stamina.
- Effect: Efficient use of stamina ensures sustained high speeds, while poor management can lead to exhaustion and slower overall performance

Use in the Environment

- The mechanics are designed to be intuitive yet challenging within the race environment. The rhythmic rowing and stamina management are constantly at play, influencing how players navigate through the courses.
- The game's environmental design complements these mechanics, creating a cohesive and immersive gameplay experience. For example, the stamina bar is responsive and easy to see.

Gameplay Flowchart

