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GAT 211A—Fall 2014

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Lab Report 2

Combat Systems II

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Combat System—Drunken Boxing (version 02)

Intentions

Out of the three combat systems I had previous developed for the last lab, only "Drunken Boxing" utilized dice, making the math much more calculable than the card based combat systems did. Due to this, and the fact that "Drunken Boxing" sounds like a fun game to develop, I decided to refine my original idea by making it as simple as possible.

The idea behind drunken boxing is that each player is playing a boxing coach who must decide whether to sober up their boxer or make their boxer drink more in-between 5 rounds of boxing.

Choosing to have your boxer drink upgrades your boxer's die from its current die to a die with a higher value, for example:

d4 -> d6 -> d8 -> d10 -> d12 -> d20

Choosing to have your boxer sober up, drops your boxer's die down from its current die to a die with a lower value, for example:

d4 <- d6 <- d8 <- d10 <- d12 <- d20

Each player starts out with a d8 as their boxer and rolls these dice together during a boxing round. Each die throw is compared between boxers and the boxer with the higher dice throw wins as long as the added difference between the die roll is less than the maximum total value of the losing player's two dice. For example:

Boxer 1 has a d4 meaning that Boxer 2 can only win by a max 4

Boxer 2 has a d8 meaning that Boxer 1 can only win by a max 8

If Boxer 1 rolls a 2 then Boxer 2 can win if he rolls a 3 through 5. If Boxer 2 rolls a 6 or higher then that beats Boxer 1 over the max of 4, meaning that Boxer 1 will win. The player who scores the most damage after 5 rounds wins.

The reasoning behind the maximum limit is so that there is a reason behind choosing to go with a small die. The smaller die may not have good odds at rolling a higher number than the other die, but if the other boxer rolls too high, then the smaller die will do more damage. The game is meant to be a game of trade-offs and trying to guess what die your opponent will play.

Rules

Drunken Boxing (version 02)

Components

- o 2 pens and 2 pieces of paper to keep track of damage each round
- o 1 set of black dice
  - o 6 dice in total (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20)
- o 1 set of green dice
  - o 6 dice in total (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20)

Players

2 players

Objective

The objective of "Drunken Boxing" is to inflict the most damage to your opponent after 5 rounds of boxing.

Setup

You are the boxing coach for your star boxer. Each round you must determine whether to slip your boxer some booze or slap him to sober him up and keep him in the game. Players decide who will play as the blue and black boxer and then each take a pen and piece of paper so they can record damage done that round. Each player starts off with their color d8 as their boxer.

Rules

Before the Round

"Drunken Boxing" is played in 5 rounds. Before each round starts each player must secretly decide between "Boozing" their boxer and "Slapping" their boxer. After a decision has been made, both players roll their die at the same time, revealing their decision.

- o "Booze": You decide your boxer needs a little bit of liquid courage. Secretly swap out your current die for the next size larger die. For example:

  d4 -> d6 -> d8 -> d10 -> d12 -> d20

- o "Slap": You decide your boxer is out of control so you slap him to help sober him up. Secretly swap out your current die for the next size smaller die. For example:

  d4 <- d6 <- d8 <- d10 <- d12 <- d20

During the Round

Damage done in a round goes to the winner of the die roll, which is usually a higher die roll than your opponent. In order to deal damage your roll must be higher than your opponent's roll, but within the maximum damage limit of both dice. The maximum damage limit of is the difference between the two dice.

For example: If black has a d10 and green has a d4 then the maximum damage limit is 6. Both the d4 and the d10 can only win by beating the other player by no more than 6. If green rolls a 2 then black can only roll a 3 through 7 to win. If black rolls an 8 or higher, then the green player ducks the punch and lands damage of their own. Damage is done is equal to the difference between the two dice that round.

Victory

After 5 rounds are played both players add up their damage they have done and the player with the higher damage done wins!

Playtesters

Classmates from the GAT211 participated as first-time players for the combat system that I brought to lab.

Name:	Email:
o Jason Guelbert	j.guelbert@digipen.edu
o Berne Capone	charlesberne.capone @digipen.edu

Playtesting

While in the last lab I neglected to bring rules for my game, I made sure to bring rules for the second playtesting of "Drunken Boxing". At a page long, I figured there was enough information to convey the rules to get people started. Both Jason and Berne read the rules over in a little over a minute. They started playing, but there were a few questions that the rules didn't clarify enough for the both of them.

Initially there was some confusion about if you necessarily had to choose to "Slap" or "Booze" your boxer at all. The rules did not state that the player had to choose one or the other, which left both Jason and Berne thinking that they could opt from either at the start of a round. My intention was that you had to choose between both options every round, but I suppose without explicitly stating it in the rules I can see where both of them got the idea that they did not have to do it. I let them start the game without making them choose between them.

Jason won the first round by rolling higher than Berne. Thankfully, Berne finally decided to make a die decision and decided to pick a smaller die and Jason felt the need to go to a higher die. Unfortunately, both Jason and Berne did not make these decisions in secret from each other. Because of this, a few rounds Berne would pick a die, throw it, and then Jason would make a die choice and then throw his die. I think this may be a result of not reading the rules fully. It might also help to call attention to the fact that deciding to "Booze" or "Slap" needs to be made in secret before die throws begin.

Once different dice came into play the idea behind the maximum damage limit became an issue for both Jason and Berne. Both of them struggled to figure out who won when smaller and larger dice came into play. Jason mentioned that the complexity of the maximum damage limit might be made easier if it was not counterintuitive. He felt that the difference did not make sense. I think he's right and I'll have to rework how that part of the system works. Perhaps each die can have its own maximum damage limit be the value of the die itself. For example, you cannot beat a d4 by more than 4. It would be easier to explain this way, as well.

Overall the game lasted about 5 minutes in total, including reading the rules. There was definitely more confusion at the beginning of the game, but once the maximum damage limit was understood, the game went rather quickly. Jason was able to win by keeping a steady die, while Berne took the crazy train and experimented with the upper limits. The game shows promise, but definitely needs some revision and the rules to be better clarified.

Mechanics

"Drunken Boxing" utilizes dice, and as such has the following mechanics:

- Dice Rolling
- Bluffing (whether they choose to booze or sober)
- Dice Pool Decisions (Based on leveling up or down their die)
-

Dynamics

The dynamics in "Drunken Boxing" involve pitting two players against one another so there is definitely a strategy part of the game where players must make decisions based on what will help them best win. In order for a player to win the game, the game becomes a "what do I think my opponent will think I'll do" kind of game. This is apparent in the secrecy of dice selection before a round begins. Due to this there is a strategy dynamic created by the need to outwit your opponent. The ability to bluff and make dice pool decisions plays into the strategy dynamic of the game.

Aesthetics

The strategy dynamic helps create a challenge aesthetic for "Drunken Boxing". This is the type of experience that is often associated with competitive games and is reinforced by the dynamics and mechanics available in "Drunken Boxing". The game feels like a one on one pitted battle between two people with the breaks between rounds a way to outthink your opponent and enable yourself to win. The round starting is the actual battle,

where players test out their strategy as well as rely on the luck of the die throw to help them win the game.

Intensity Curve

The intensity curve I was hoping for when designing "Drunken Boxing" and the intensity curve that I think actually occurred during the playtest are different than I had wanted.
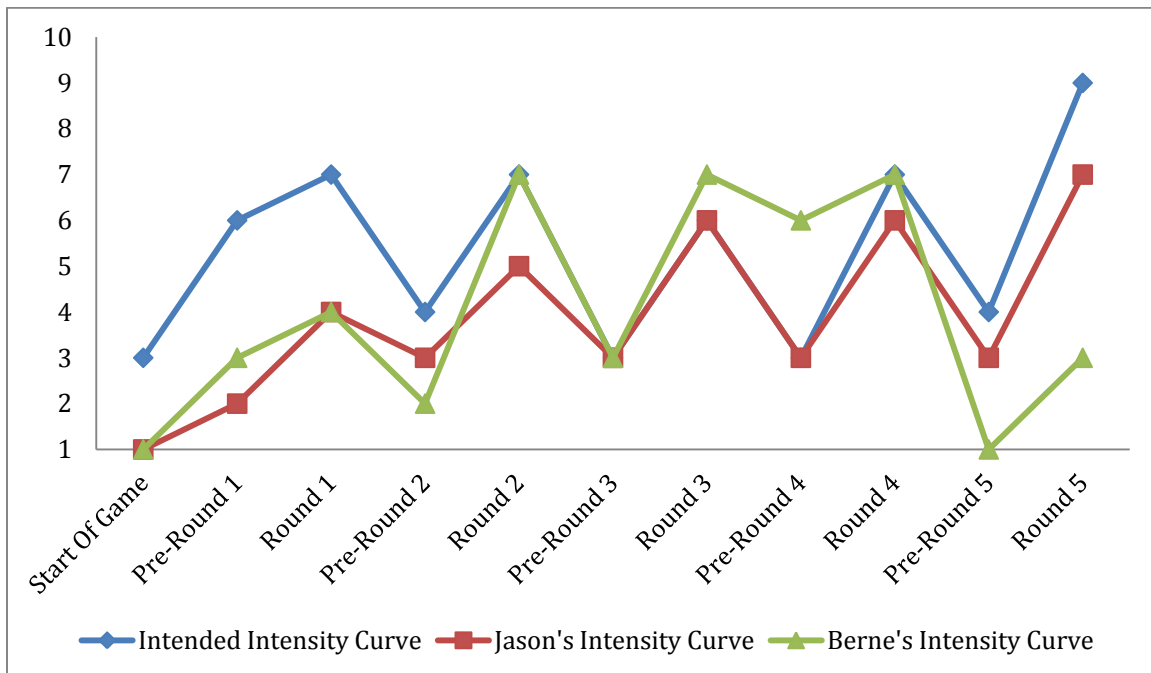
I was hoping that each round would show a spike in intensity as players eagerly awaited the die throw to see the results of their pre-round strategy. While I am glad that the intensity curves for both Jason and Berne show some indication of spiking during the rounds and dipping during the planning, the level of intensity is not quite there.

The beginning of the game saw Jason and Berne having a hard time getting into the game due to confusion about the rules and so they did not seem to be fully in that moment. Also, Berne seemed to checkout near the end, when it became increasingly clear that his crazy train strategy would not work out. Jason kept a pretty consistent intensity throughout the game as his strategy was sound and kept him increasingly in the lead.

I think the biggest problems with "Drunken Boxing", as is evident with the intensity

curve, is that the game is difficult to understand right away and does not allow a player who has gotten too far behind a way to catch up.

Combat System—Drunken Boxing

Mechanics

"Broforce" is a 2-dimensional shooter/platformer done in an 8-bit art style that features knock-off action heroes from famous movies "liberating" areas of Vietnam through superior firepower. The mechanics of Broforce are as follows:

- o Heroes with different weapons
- o Platformer mechanics (running, jumping, climbing, etc…)
- o Shooting guns
- o Using explosives
- o Lives
- o Getting from point "A" to point "B"

Dynamics

As a shooter/platformer "Broforce" creates a strategy dynamic by providing enemy AI that shoots back at you, as well as pits that need to be jumped over and other environmental hazards. The world is destructible, so there is a little bit of expression in how players would like to leave their mark on a level, but for the most part "Broforce" is all about surviving by blasting away enemies while trying to get to the level's exit.

Aesthetics

"Broforce" relies highly upon the challenge aesthetic by placing players in dangerous situations where they must blast their way through enemies and jump past hazards to get to the level exit. There is a sense of fellowship provided with co-op play, and is further enforced by an ability to save one another if someone dies during the level. Due to the destructible nature of the game, "Broforce" does have a bit of discovery in the game

as you can destroy areas of the map to discover hidden ways of getting through the level.

Intensity Curve

The intensity curve I believe "Broforce" has is as follows:
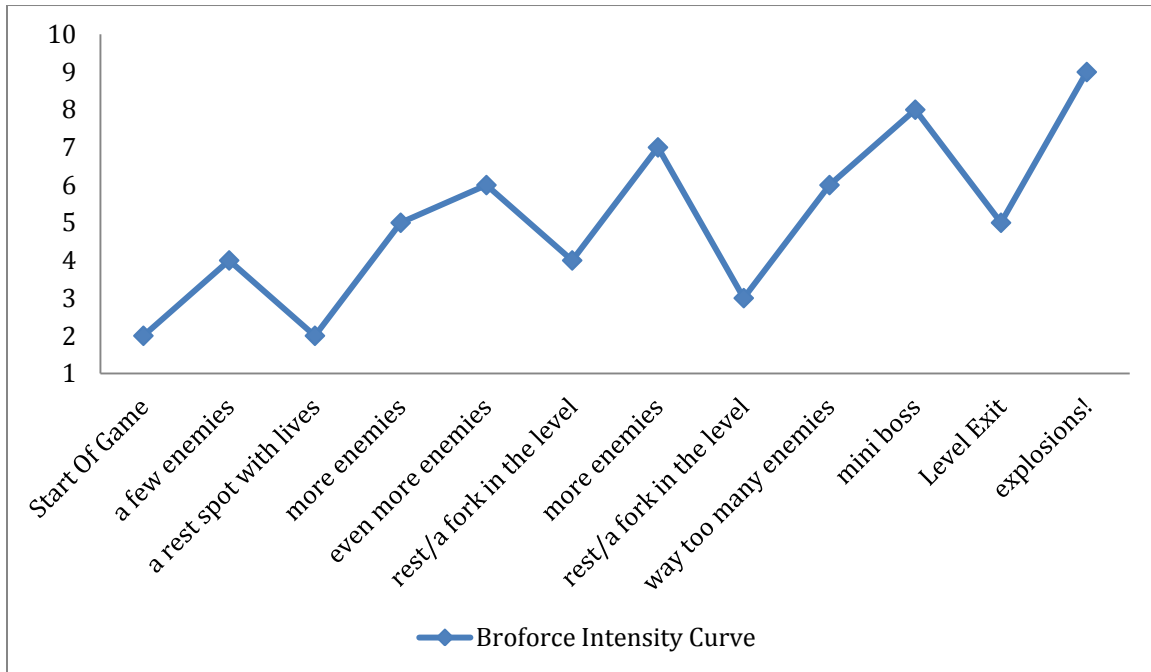
Typically a level for "Broforce" starts out with a safe area where you can see a few enemies. This initial challenge is not that hard, but it is fun because it is the start of the level. The game does a good job of giving us areas of enemies and brief rest stops to gather ourselves for the next big battle. Very quickly the game will start to ramp up the amount of enemies and space out rests even further, forcing the player to go gung-ho and destroy anything that moves. Rest areas at this point in the game also provide less dangerous paths, but ultimately lead up to more enemies. This pattern can repeat for quite a while before finally leading up to a hard fight with lots of enemies and a mini boss. This is the part of the game which truly tests the player and also makes them burn through those early lives they picked up earlier. Lastly the level exit features an enemy that must be killed, the devil, but does not fight back. It's a drop in intensity but immediately afterwards the player exits the level on a helicopter while the whole level explodes behind them. The game is very intense, but clever about its use of rest spots.