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**Playtest Assignment: Circle**

**Game:** Circle

**Description:**

You play as a circle in a world of edges. You have the ability to turn into either a bowling ball or a beach ball in order to affect your weight. Use your unique abilities as the sole rounded being to escape the maze of polygons!

Circle has players experience a side-scrolling platformer where they can manipulate their momentum by changing their weight. The player must use the mechanics to traverse across the map in order to reach the door to the far right. The player wins when they clear all three stages of the game, and the player loses when they touch lava.

**Goal:**

The player’s goal is to clear all the stages. Stages are cleared by reaching the goal placed at the right of the stages.

**Feel:**

I want the player to enjoy learning how to control the movement of the ball, utilizing the weight mechanics to maximize their mobility. I also want the player to feel satisfaction after figuring out and overcoming obstacles.

**Mechanics:**

-Walking: Testers seemed to lose control of the movement, going too fast, often resulting in a collision with lava. A possible improvement would be to fine tune the movement to feel intuitive; a goal if I had more time to spend on the game.

-Jumping: Works as intended; testers had no trouble with jumping.

-Beach ball: Testers seemed to be the most comfortable with using the beach ball being more used than the bowling ball. A tester even said “no point in not being the beach ball”. Possible balance to this could be putting lava in higher locations in order to punish players for jumping too high.

-Bowling ball: Although the bowling ball was meant in part to be used to control the player’s movement, it wasn’t apparent to testers, as they barely used the bowling ball without being told to do so. However, testers had fun using the bowling ball in conjunction with the trampolines.

-Lava: The purpose of the lava was to punish players for moving about too carelessly, making a player play the game slowly and carefully. Testers followed this behavior when they lost jumping into lava carelessly using the beach ball.

**Playtesters:**

-Vaibhav Sarma

-Age: 21

-Gender: Male

-Has played games such as World of WarCraft, WarCraft III, and League of Legends

-Chosen because he’s my neighbor

-Nathan Wang

-Age: 22

-Gender: Male

-Has played games such as League of Legends, Stardew Valley, and Mario Kart: Double Dash

-Chosen because he’s my neighbor

-Vi Lam

-Age: 19

-Gender: Female

-Has played games such as League of Legends

-Chosen because she’s in my class

-Kavi Mathur

-Age: 19

-Gender: Male

-Has played games such as League of Legends, Defense of the Ancients, and Super Smash Bros.

-Chosen because he’s in my class

-Doug Liu

-Age: 21

-Gender: Male

-Has played games such as League of Legends and Super Smash Bros.

-Chosen because he’s in my class

**Hypotheses:**

-Players will take time to understand controls and practice mobility before taking on the stage’s obstacles. I organized levels so that when a new mechanic is mentioned (through writing in the background) the player will have a safe environment in which they can become comfortable with the new mechanic.

-The lava will cause players to play more slowly. I realized as I made the game how useful the beach ball might be to the player, allowing them to jump around more easily. In order to prevent staying as the beach ball from being the dominant strategy, I placed triggers that will kill the player. This “lava” forces players to carefully approach the game, having them feel the excitement of platformers.

-Players will have fun interacting with the trampolines. When creating the game, I found that I had the most fun using the trampolines myself. Using the two weight mechanics in conjunction made me feel skillful, and the “feel” of the trampoline was intuitive. I hypothesize that players will feel accomplished after having figured out how to utilize trampolines.

**Observations:**

-Players often tried to rush through the level, jumping over obstacles without much thought using the beach ball. This was not how I wanted players to interact with the level. I wanted players to tackle each piece of obstacle one-by-one, giving them a sense of accomplishment after conquering it. I utilized low ceilings to limit players jumping over the level, but more could’ve been used after observing the testers.

-Players did not take much time to get understand the mechanics and went straight into the rest of the game. From observing, it seemed that if a player saw the next obstacle to overcome, they would immediately attempt to do so. In the future, keeping distractions away from the player might result in more time taken learning the mechanics.

-Players did not try using mechanics without having been introduced it first (players did not try using the bowling ball until told to do so, even though it was included in the controls menu). I believed that including every control in the start menu might encourage a player to try out immediately all their options, but the testers did not do so. This could be fixed by having all tutorial sections closely packed at the beginning of the game, or simply explaining every mechanic in the actual game at the beginning.

-Players expressed visible satisfaction when they figured out the how to use the trampolines (even stating afterwards that it was their favorite part). This is a feeling that can be built upon, if the game were to be further developed. Further implementations could include having moving trampolines or trampolines facing other directions.

-The mobility of the circle was difficult to some players, causing them to audibly curse sometimes. Sometimes they would lose control of the ball, and it would go farther than they expected.

-Players seemed to be discouraged when they died, presumably due to the loss of progress. This especially hurtful to the gameplay because the progress that they had to redo was a daunting challenge as well. This could be fixed by implementing more checkpoints.

-Some players were frustrated when they couldn’t jump over a wall. They struggled doing the same dull task over and over again, and didn’t seem to understand how to become better. In that area, the player should be given more direction towards how to win.