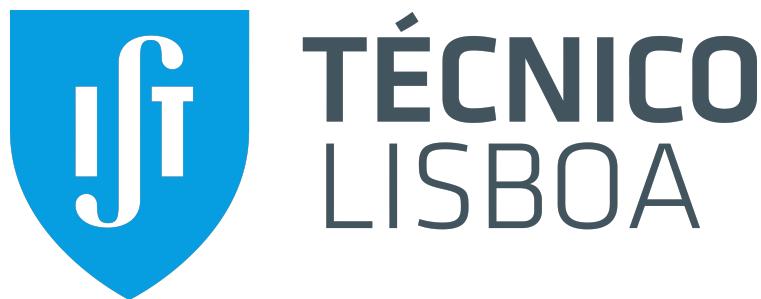


Master in Computer Science and Engineering

1st Semester - 1st Period - 2023/2024

Game Design

Report 3



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1 Decide

1.1 Creation of heat map and discussion about the sketches

After visually viewing all the storyboards on the table, we proceeded to the next step: creating a heat map. In this process, each team member is given three dots for every storyboard, this means that every member can use up to three dots to mark what they consider to be good ideas on each storyboard, with no obligation to use all three dots. We could also use post-it notes to share questions or concerns on each storyboard, although none were raised in this case.

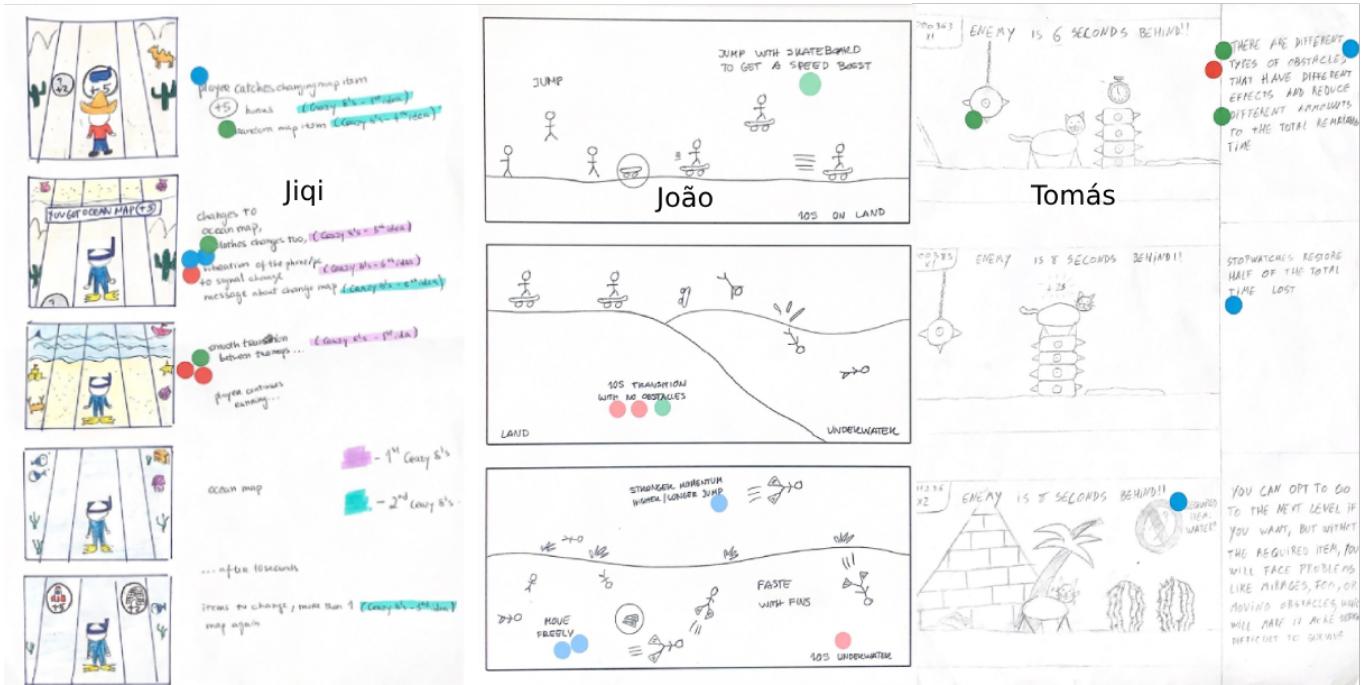


Figure 1: Heat Map (green dots from Jiqi, blue dots from Tomás and red dots from João)

Once the heat map is done, we used "speed critique" to discuss the sketches and add notes. During this process, Jiqi, the facilitator, identified dot clusters, João, the scribe, recorded standout ideas, and Tomás was responsible for highlighting these standout ideas.

- Jiqi's storyboard

Beginning with Jiqi's storyboard, the facilitator noted a clear clustering of dots in the first three "frames" of the storyboard. In the first frame, the team embraced the notion of employing an item as a means to initiate map/environmental changes, which became the primary standout idea

- Catching an item as the trigger for map/environment changes.

For the second and third frames, the members voted on concepts like clothes changing, PC/phone vibrations, and seamless transitions. These concepts all contributed to enhancing game immersion during map changes. As a result, the second standout idea for this storyboard was

- Immersive cues that signify map changes while ensuring smooth transitions.

- João's storyboard

Moving on to João's storyboard, a cluster of dots appeared in the second frame, emphasizing the idea of "10 seconds with no obstacles". This resulted in the standout idea:

- Transitions without obstacles, allowing players time to adapt.

In the third frame of this storyboard, the team also favored the idea of distinct mechanics in different environments, leading to another standout concept

- Varied mechanics/movements across different maps.

- Tomás's storyboard

Finally, at Tomás's storyboard, everyone agreed on the concept of having various obstacles with distinct player penalties. This led to the standout concept:

- Diverse obstacle types with distinct punishments.

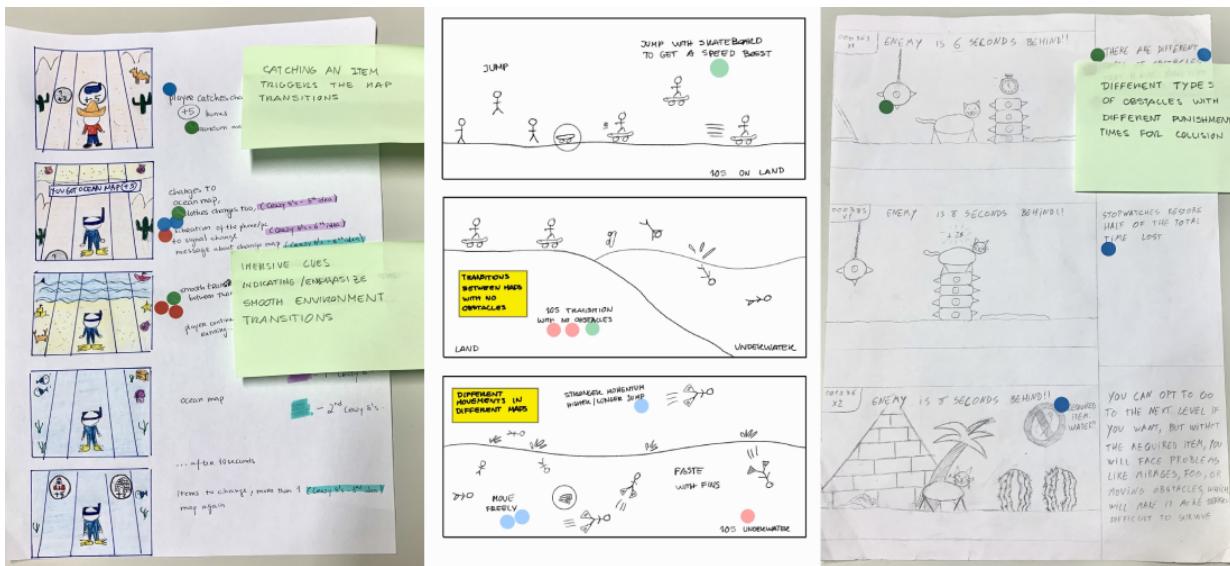


Figure 2: Storyboards after speed critique

1.2 "Straw poll" decide and explanation of the choice

In this part, each team member is given one vote to decide our sprint focus for implementation and this could be a complete sketch or even just a single concept within a sketch. The process starts with each of us privately writing down our choices, then once everyone has made their decisions, we collectively placed our votes on the sketches and discussed the reasoning behind our choices.

João used his straw poll vote on the idea of "smooth transitions" because he found that in this game, it's necessary to reconcile the constant transitions between different gameplay and environments, in order to make the game more interesting while ensuring the game maintains the flow at a pace where the player can adapt and improve.

Coincidentally, Jiqi also voted for the 'smooth transitions' idea, aligning with João's choice. She explained that, given our theme of '10 seconds of space,' the concept of allowing the player to change the map every 10 seconds could become exhausting if the transitions between maps were too abrupt.

She emphasized that this could negatively impact the player's overall experience and flow, sharing a similar reasoning as João.

Tomás, on the other hand, voted for the "catching an item to trigger map changing" idea, explaining that he thinks that giving players the freedom to choose if they want to change maps after 10 seconds, or if they want to stay in the same map, would reduce the exhaustion of constant environment changes, while allowing the players to have some control over the gameplay experience.

In the end, all three group members agreed that abruptly changing maps every 10 seconds would seriously disrupt the flow of the game and give the players an unpleasant experience.



Figure 3: Storyboard after voting



Figure 4: Storyboard after supervote

2 Storyboard

2.1 Defining player flow

In this phase, we aimed to establish the player flow. The process commences with each team member individually sketching six action steps, as shown below. Following this, team members take turns presenting their steps while reading them aloud, with the decider being the last to present. Subsequently, each member casts a single vote for their preferred frame in each six action steps, with the decider also having a "super vote".

1.3 Final decision

For the final decision, João, the decider, chose to pursue the "smooth transitions" idea, not only because it had the most votes, but because it was an idea that the whole team thought to be crucial for a good game experience. And so, this became our ultimate decision,

2.1.1 Six actions of each member

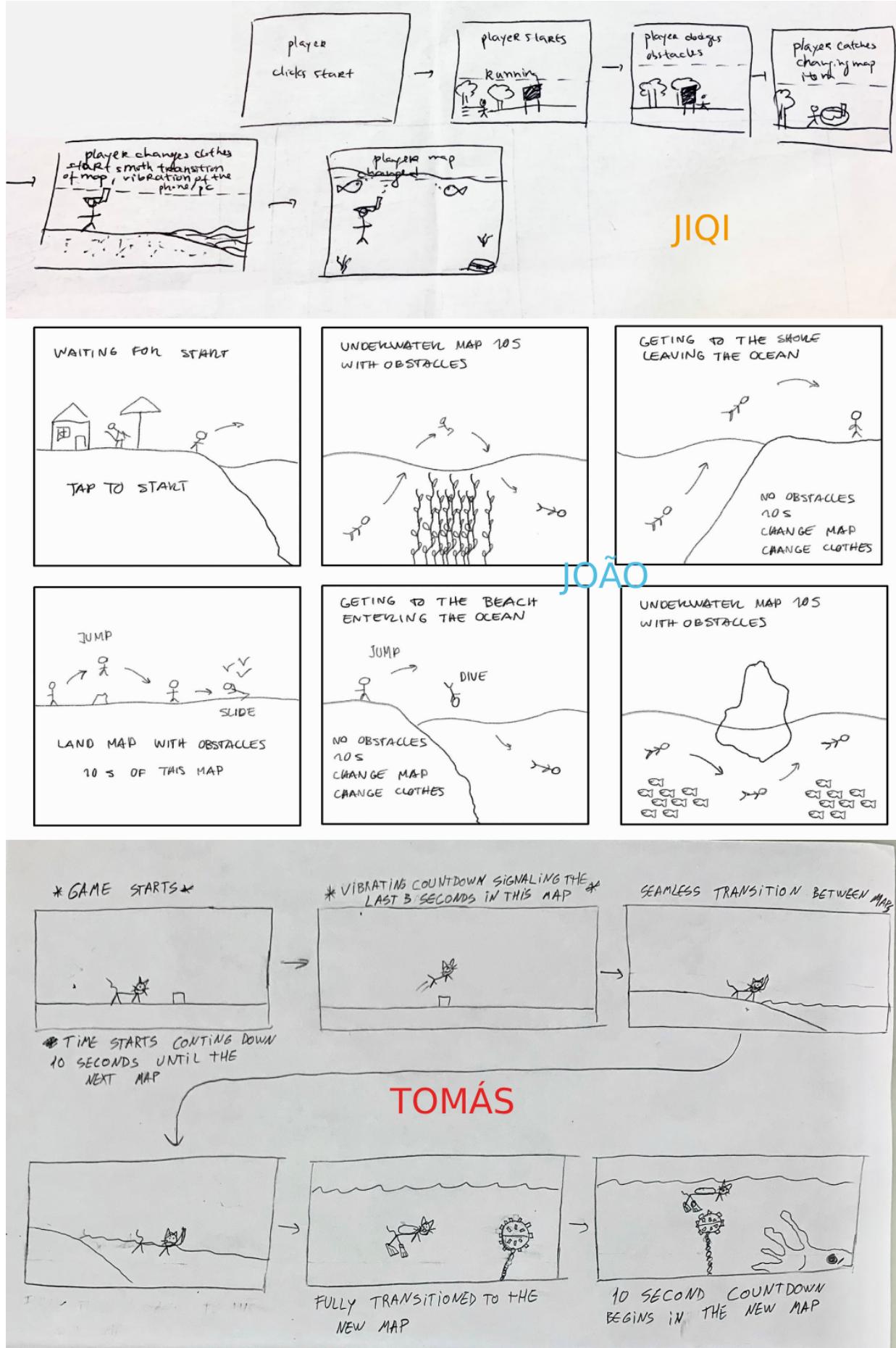


Figure 5: Six action steps of each member

2.1.2 Deciding "frames" each member liked the most

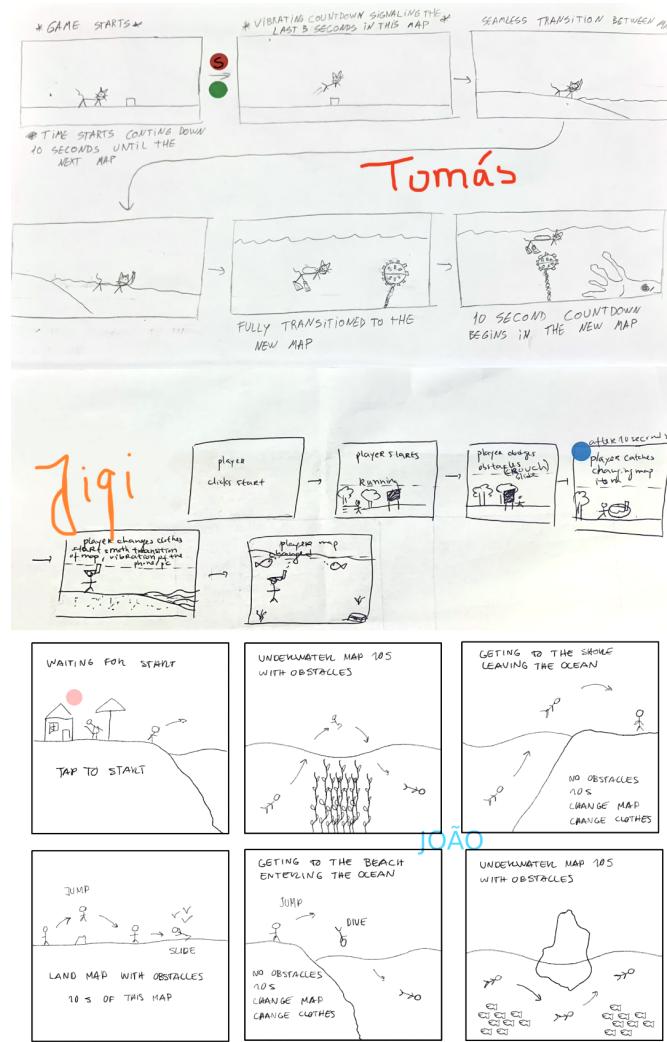


Figure 6: Six actions after voting (green dots from Jiqi, blue dots from Tomás and red dots from João)

In the voting process, Jiqi cast her vote to the transition from the first frame to the second frame in Tomás' storyboard. She appreciated the concept presented between these frames: a countdown for the map change. When the countdown reached its final seconds, the PC/phone would vibrate, signaling the impending map change to the player.

Tomás placed his vote on the third panel from Jiqi's storyboard. He enjoyed Jiqi's initiative to add the item to change maps in her storyboard (even though it was discarded in the previous straw poll), due to the improvement he believes this might add to the gameplay experience, allowing the players to choose if they want to change maps or not, thus not overwhelming the player with constant map changes.

João placed his vote in the first frame from João's storyboard since he thought it was an interesting approach for the start screen to be a resting place matching the current environment, from where the character would start running.

Finally, João used his supervote on the second frame from Tomás' storyboard because he wanted to, once again, highlight the idea, continued in the third frame, of smooth and seamless transitions made aware to the player in a non-disruptive way.

2.2 15-panel storyboard

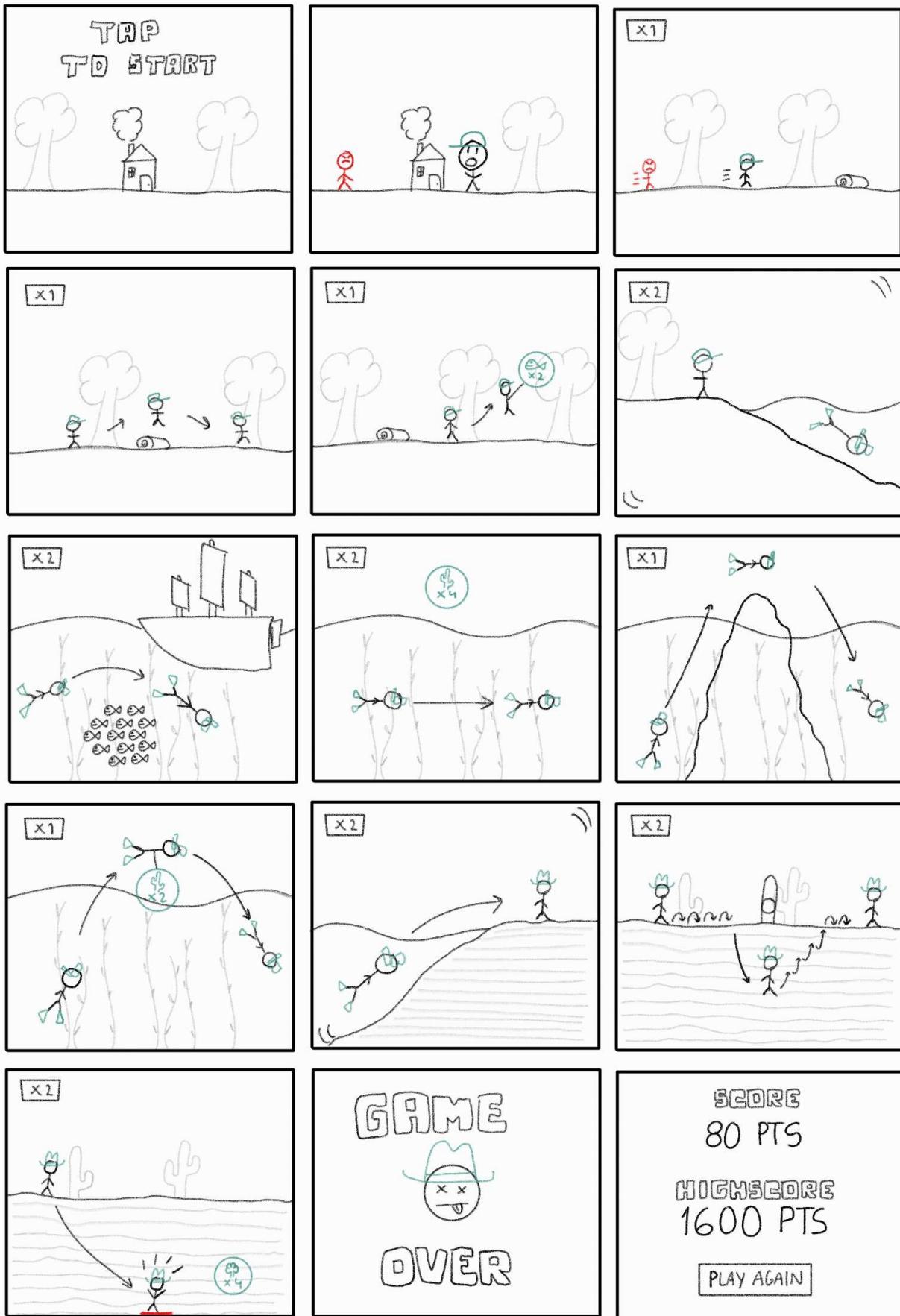


Figure 7: 15-panel storyboard by group 3

2.2.1 The process of creating the 15-panel storyboard

After considering the votes from the previous 6 action steps, in the process of creating the 15-panel storyboard, it was collectively decided that certain ideas would undeniably find their place in our final concept. Specifically, the concepts of the player needing to tap the screen to initiate the game, incorporating vibrations during the last seconds of the countdown to signify a map change, and introducing an item to trigger the map change were deemed essential components of our 15-panel storyboard.

We decided to include at least two environments in our prototype so we could showcase the transitions. But then, after a moment of consideration, we thought it would be best to include a third to make the gameplay of the prototype more diverse if we have the time and ability to add a third environment. To achieve that, we went back to the discarded ideas from João's crazy 8's and included them in the final storyboard.

Additionally, we incorporated ideas that didn't receive explicit votes but were closely linked to existing concepts. The obstacles being environment-specific and the enemy chasing the player are some examples.

Furthermore, we didn't simply discard ideas, instead, we refined and specialized them. The initial, vague idea of promoting environment changes was translated into a stacking point multiplier, that is lost when skipping a map change, allowing the player to have a relaxed run in a constant and familiar environment, or a hardcore player to get the greatest amount of points in the fastest way possible.

We also made the decision to incorporate a scenario where the player faces defeat, resulting in a "game over" screen. This addition serves to underscore the primary objective of the game, which is to get the highest score possible. It also highlights the achievement of a high score for the player to strive for.

Taking into account all the factors mentioned above, we have successfully crafted our 15-panel storyboard, designed to be read line by line, top to bottom.