

Golf Clash by Playdemic

A Product Teardown

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02/19/19



Agenda

Executive Summary

Gameplay Overview

Core Loop

Takeaways

Summary

Relevance

- Golf Clash leverages the proven Clash Royale F2P model and successfully adapts it to fit its own gameplay and audience. Golf Clash gives evidence to how the Clash Royale F2P model can be generalized to games of vastly different genres by understanding their core audience.

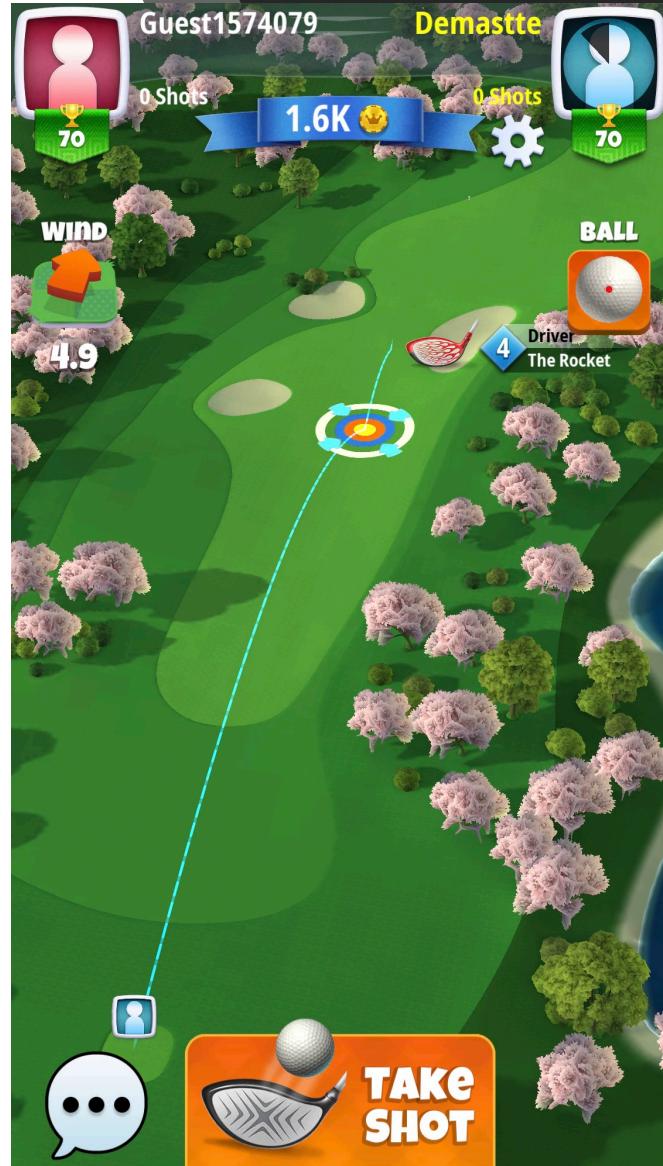
Gameplay

- Players compete in winner-take-all, real-time, PvP golf matches. With easy-to-learn but hard to master mechanics, players will upgrade their clubs, unlock tours and refine their skills to become the very best.

Basic Info

- Grossing Rank (02/19/19) **Top 4:**
 - Philippines: **4**, USA: **16**, UK: **17**, South Africa: **18**
 - Peak Grossing Rank (for respective country w/ year):
 - Philippines (2019): **4**, USA (2017): **2**, UK (2017): **2**, South Africa (2017): **4**

Executive Summary



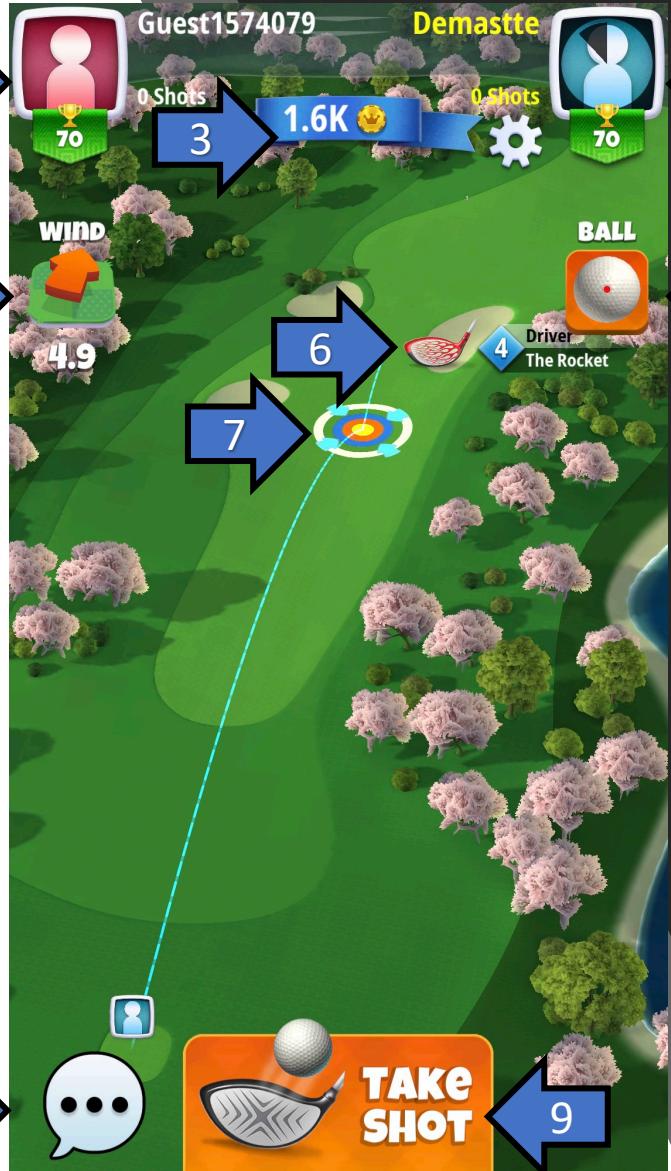
Gameplay Overview

Golf with added stakes!

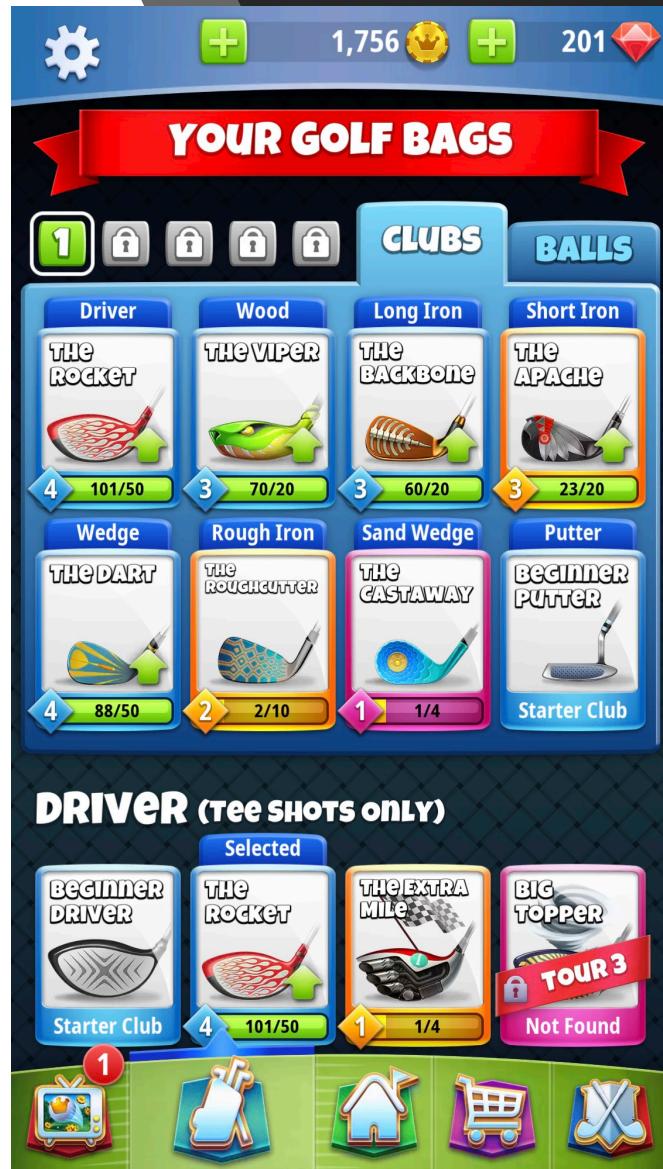
- Players wager Gold against each other in winner-take-all golf matches.
- Golf matches are played on a single Hole within a Tour, a series of different Holes.
- Players take turns using different clubs to hit their ball into the hole.
- The player to hit the ball into the hole with the least amount of strokes is the winner and claims the Prize Pot.

Gameplay Overview

In-game UI Breakdown



1. Opponent's Name, # of shots taken, # of trophies.
2. Player's Name, # of shots taken, # of trophies.
Yellow text and countdown timer shows current player's turn.
3. Prize Pot: Amount of Gold the winner receives.
4. Wind Speed: Environmental factor that affects the ball's trajectory.
5. Ball Spin: Players can add topspin, backspin and/or sidespin to their shot.
6. Club in use: Players can change clubs by changing the aimed distance of their shot.
7. Target Reticle: Indicator for where the ball will initially land.
8. Quick Chat: Premade chat lines for quick and easy communication.
9. Take Shot: Enables the drag and release shot system to hit the ball.



Gameplay Overview

Preparing for the Match!

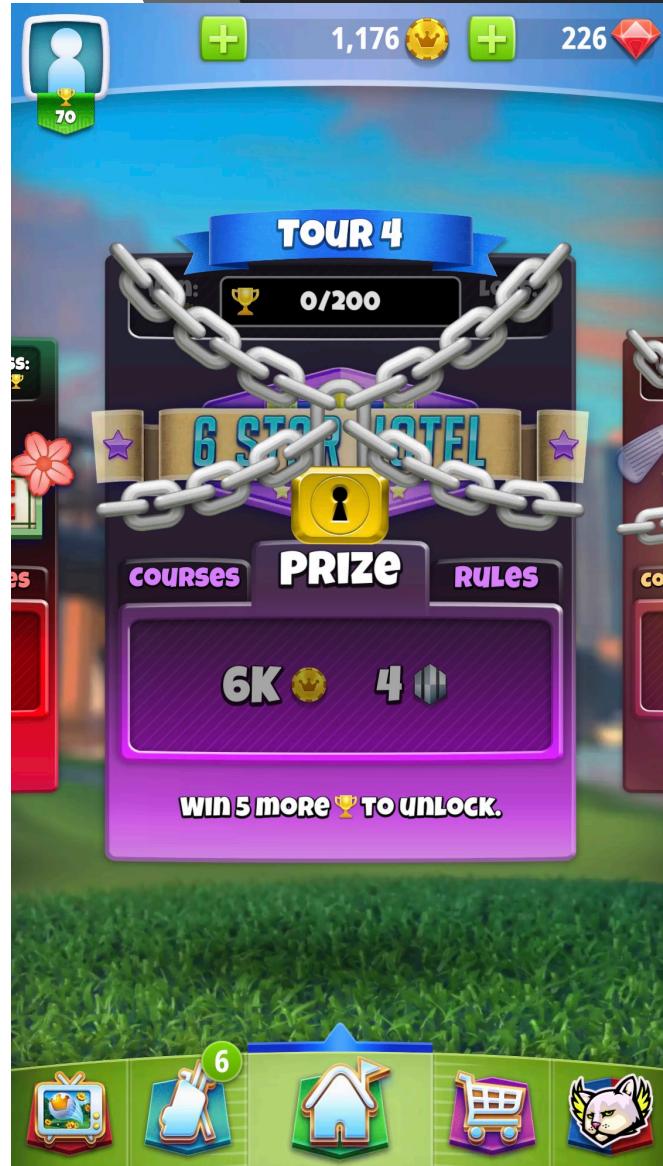
- The Golf Bag is the set of 8 clubs players choose to use in a match from their available list of golf clubs.
- Each club type has different clubs with unique stats that players collect and upgrade over time.
- Players may set up multiple Golf Bags prior to the match and determine which set of clubs to use at the beginning of a Hole.



Gameplay Overview

Rewards (Chests)

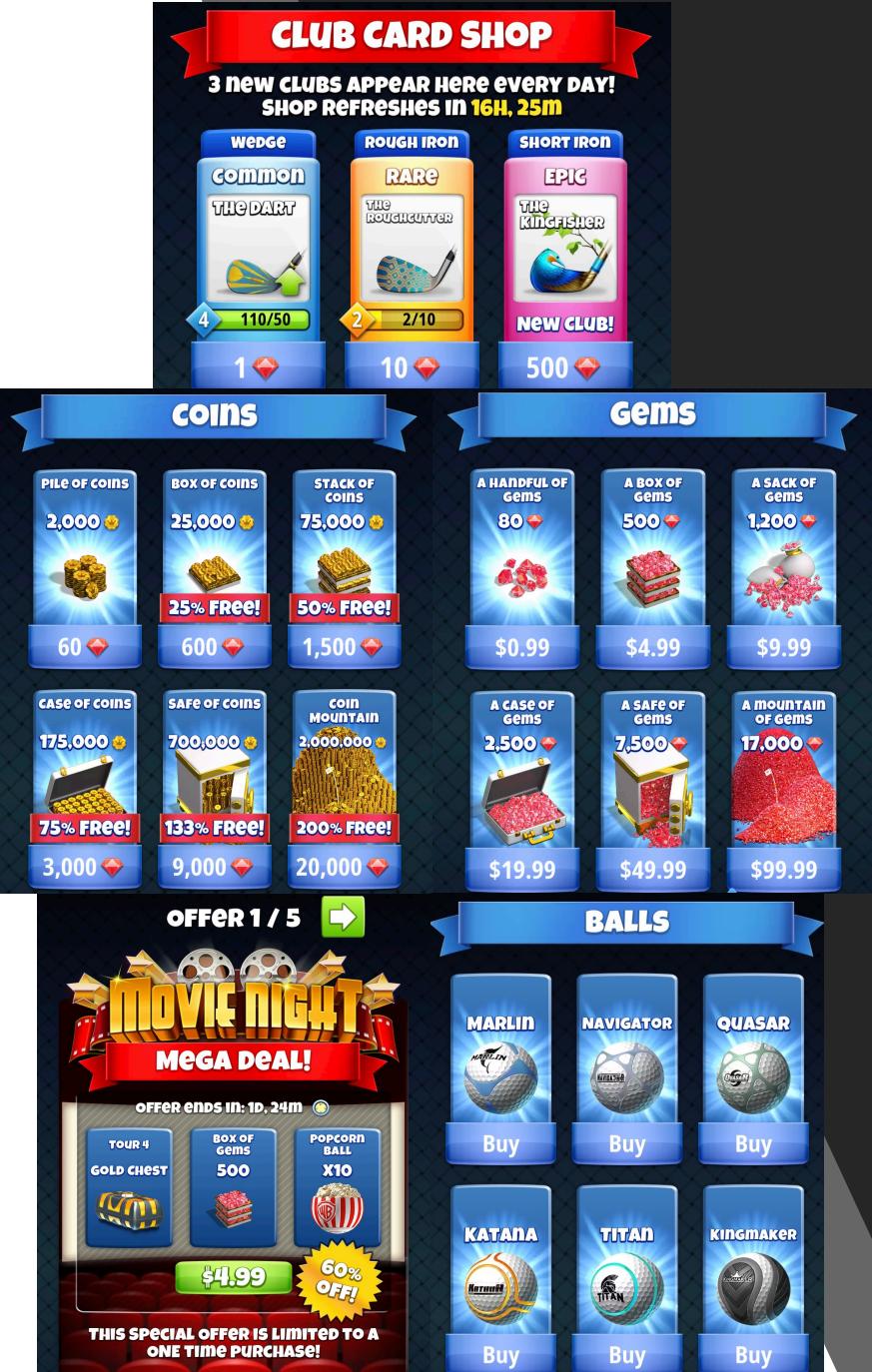
- Chests are the main method for players to upgrade their clubs.
- Players receive Chests by regularly logging into the game, playing matches, and winning matches.
- Chests will contain Golf Club Cards, Gold, and Gems.
- There are also higher-tiered Chests that contain more valuable rewards but take longer to open.



Gameplay Overview

Progression (Trophies)

- Trophies are a measure of rank in Golf Clash.
- Players collect more trophies by winning matches across different Tours.
- Trophies are a requirement for unlocking more Tours.
- Unlocking more Tours provides more Holes to play, better rewards to earn, tougher opponents to face, and higher risks to incur.
- Progression in Golf Clash promotes a “high risk, high reward” mentality that competitive players can enjoy.



Gameplay Overview

Store

- Gems are the sole hard currency in the game.
- Gems can be used to buy Clubs, Balls, Chests and Coins.
- Only Gems and Special Offers can be purchased with real money.

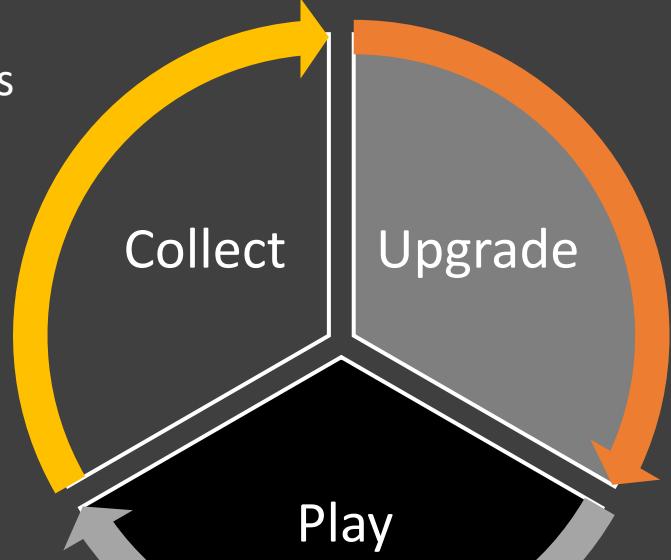
Strengths

- Rotating purchasable clubs drive players' willingness to return each day.
- Limited-time Special Offers incentivize people to spend now instead of missing out on the deal.
 - Players can easily compare the value of a deal with normal purchases since they use similar price points.
- Golf Balls are enticing consumables that can give players an edge over their opponent for a small premium currency fee.

Golf Clash Core Loop

Gain/Lose

- + Gold
- + Gems
- + Club Cards
- Time*

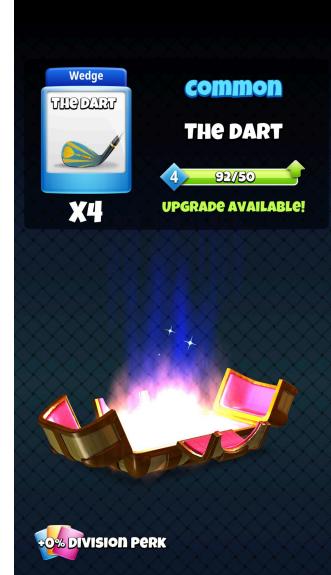


Gain/Lose

+/- Trophies
- Gold*

*Can spend Gems to buy more Gold, buy golf balls, or unlock chests faster

Collect



Upgrade



Play



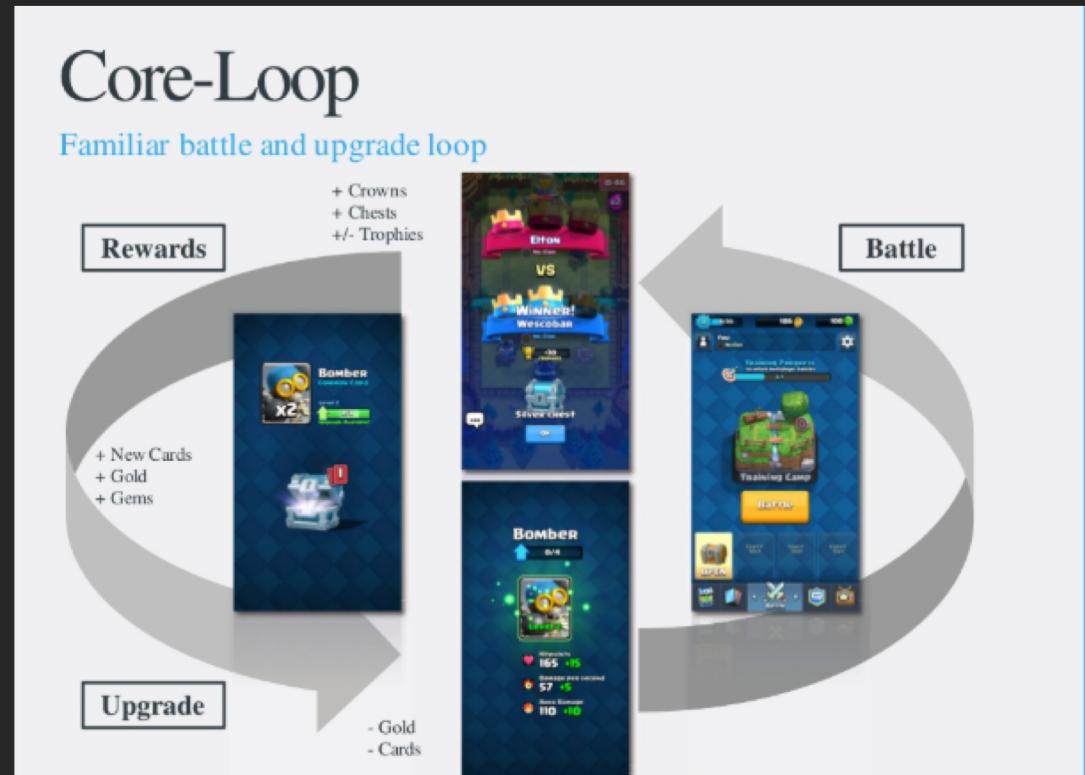
Core Loops

A Comparison

Golf Clash



Clash Royale (Reference [1](#))



*A key difference in their core loops is the need to wager to play a match in Golf Clash

Golf Clash Takeaways

Strengths

01

Wager To Play

02

Chest System

03

Modularity in Social

01 Wager to Play

Why This Choice

- Golf Clash requires players to wager gold to play unlike Clash Royale where there's no cost.
- Extending Gold's purpose of upgrading clubs and playing matches allows for finer control over content-pacing while maintaining appeal to its core audience.
- This is also partially necessary since it is difficult for Golf Clash to give each golf club strong enough utility for each club to be desirable.

Takeaways
Strengths

01 Wager to Play

Why This Works

- Audience
 - Golf Clash targets a competitive mid-core demographic with favoritism to those who like or are interested in golf.
 - Wagering in golf is a socially acceptable practice in real life, so it's a familiar concept to these players.
 - Players also have the disposable income to support this mechanic.
- On the other hand, Clash Royale could not copy this "Wager to Play" mechanic.
 - Although Clash Royale targets a similar demographic, players of strategy games are not open-minded towards "pay to play" like mechanics.
 - Clash Royale has a younger demographic compared to Golf Clash, hinting at less disposable income and more frugal gaming behaviors.
 - "Wager to Play" mechanic would conflict with the gaming culture of the Clash Royale demographic.

Takeaways
Strengths

02 Chest System

Why This Works

- A flexible solution to a blend of problems
- Some big issues for F2P mobile games:
 - **Sessioning** (Chest limit and timers curbs player incentive to play too much)
 - **Retention** (Chests give reason for players to come back)
 - **Monetization** (Both Non-paying and paying users have reason to spend: Open chests quicker or Open more chests)
 - **Progression** (Chests are the primary way to upgrade clubs and progress through the game)
- The chest system addresses each of these issues in a seamless manner.

Takeaways
Strengths

03 Modularity in Social

Why This Choice

- Before the release of Golf Clash's Clan System, the game had Leaderboards, Play vs. FB Friends, and Replays as Social Features.
 - Social Features geared toward promoting competition and flaunting skill.
 - “We had clans in our original design document,” – Paul Gouge, Playdemic CEO ([Reference 2](#))
- The original Social Features indicate a clear focus towards their desired audience: a competitive mid-core audience.
- Understanding Clans were not a necessary social feature at launch allowed Golf Clash to capture its initial target users with simplicity and optimize the Clan feature to focus on needs during later releases.

Takeaways
Strengths

03 Modularity in Social

Clan System

- Clans are teams of players that compete against others to climb up the rankings in order to earn more rewards.
- Rank is determined by the cumulative clan points players collect by winning matches.
 - Matches played on harder Tours grant more clan points.
 - At the end of a ranking period, the top ranked clans of a the division are promoted and lower ranked clans are demoted.
- This drives the game motif of higher risk, higher reward and fuels the gameplay loop effectively.

Takeaways
Strengths

Takeaways

Weaknesses

01

Overchoice with Gold

02

A Handmade-Meta

01 Overchoice with Gold

Players must use Gold to wager on a Hole AND purchase upgrades.

- If the desire to increase the casual audience grows, Overchoice becomes a growing issue.
- Overchoice potentially causes more casual-oriented players to drop the game rather than choose an option that they believe could be incorrect.
 - Players who spend on upgrades may have buyer's remorse and not want to wager more Gold to regain their losses.
 - Players who spend on playing matches may lose and not want to wager more Gold to potentially lose more.

Takeaways
Weaknesses

01 Overchoice with Gold

Make the Choice Easier

- A “prime the pump” approach towards gold may reduce apathy towards Overchoice.
- Increasing player’s gold per day through dailies could encourage players to spend and not fear losses as much.
- **Concern:** This may speed up player progression through content an undesirable amount.

Get Rid of the Choice

- Remove the Gold cost for playing a match.
 - Gold would be used just for upgrading.
 - Golf Club upgrades would still be limited through the Chest Rewards System.
 - Players would only risk trophies in matches instead of both trophies and Gold.
- **Concern:** Less risk may reduce meaningfulness of matches for competitive players, and also removes a monetization avenue for developers. Additionally, Gold winnings from matches would likely need to be adjusted.

Potential Solutions

02 A Handmade-Meta

PvP but lacks interaction between players

- Because it's golf and players can't affect the outcome of each other's actions, a Golf Bag's utility is determined by the Hole.
 - "Good" clubs depend on the level design of a Hole.
 - This may result in "stale" gameplay as a Hole has a limited number of dominant strategies, leaving few optimal Golf Bag combinations.
- This contrasts with Clash Royale where PvP interaction allows for a plethora of strategic possibilities, which keeps the game fresh.

Takeaways
Weaknesses

02 A Handmade-Meta

Keep it Fresh

- To keep gameplay fresh, Golf Clash will need to continue creating levels with new challenges.
 - Cycling out Holes within Tours will spark player re-engagement as they compete to overcome new obstacles.
 - Regular, short-term events/tournaments allow competitive players to showcase their skill and adaptability to new challenges.
 - Successful events/tournament will also need strong incentives to encourage player spending.
- **Note:** Content-pacing is important. Don't overwhelm the player base so they feel like they can't keep up and don't underwhelm them such that they become bored and leave.

**Potential
Solution**

Summary

Overall

- Golf Clash is a strong example of a mobile game that has adopted a proven monetization method and translated it to a different game genre.
- It effectively captures and solidifies its core audience before adding features of uncertain needs (Clan System)

Takeaways

- Currency Overchoice in F2P is something to be mindful of. The purpose of currencies should be minimized.
- The Clash Royale Chest System can be successful in other gamer genres when integrated correctly.

References

1. <https://www.slideshare.net/adriancrook/clash-of-clans-mobile-game-teardown-or-deconstruction-by-adrian-crook-associates-freemium-game-design-consultancy>
2. <https://www.pocketgamer.biz/interview/69574/how-golf-clash-is-getting-more-competitive/>
3. <https://www.appannie.com/apps/google-play/app/com.playdemic.golf.android/app-ranking/?type=best-grossing-ranks&date=2019-02-19>