

Playtest #1

March 31st, evening
Stephen and me

What went right:

- The idea I had in my head translates surprisingly well.
- Bending and stretching rubber bands on a geoboard is a workable game mechanic!
- The game feels as though it possesses a solid backbone structure that can support freedom and strategy.

What went wrong:

- The game's "solid backbone structure" only exists as a vague feeling and a set of rules in my head—with nothing fixed in writing yet, navigating game play feels a little slippery.
- My initial method of scoring (winner = best out of 2 rounds) results in a lot of ties, which is frustrating.

What I decided to change:

- I put my rules into writing.
- I changed scoring so that games still consist of two rounds, but instead of tracking only who won or lost each round, the specific number of pegs scored by each player in each round are added to determine the total overall score and winner.

Playtest #2

April 1st, in class
Lauren and me

What went right:

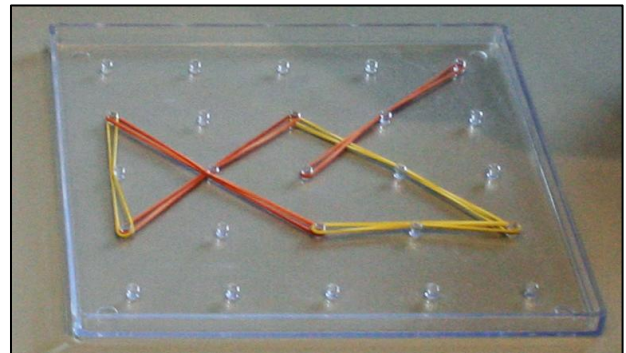
- The new scoring system is much more satisfying.

What went wrong:

- Our gameplay consisted almost entirely of placing rubber bands, with very little bending or stretching. This made the game seem much less rich and created a monotonous rhythm.
- Purposefully trying to incorporate more bending and stretching seemed to be a weak strategy that made a player easy to beat. Looking back, this is probably due to the fact that Lauren had just been introduced to the game and was still experimenting and learning rather than playing strategically.

What I decided to change:

- I significantly altered the rhythm and pace of the game. Instead of having the choice of either placing or moving a rubber band each turn, I decided to change it so that players can both place *and* move a rubber band every turn.



Playtest #3

April 1st, in class
Lauren and me

What went right:

- The new pace works great and makes for more exciting and varied play.

What went wrong:

- Questions came up during play about whether or not various moves were legal... although I have a sense of what seems right and what doesn't, the rules need to be made more comprehensive in order to cover these cases.

What I decided to change:

- Nothing yet—I want to test the pace further and jot notes on all the movement questions I need to address in a future version of the rules.

Playtest #4

April 1st, in class
Lauren and Kelsey

What went right:

- Watching the game as an observer, the new pace still seems like an improvement to me.

What went wrong:

- Kelsey doesn't like the two-part, place-and/or-move turn structure and suggests that a turn could perhaps be either/or instead.

What I decided to change:

- Having tried out both a single-action, place-or-move and two-part, place-and/or-move turn structure versions of the game, I'm opting to stick with the newer and more varied two-part turn structure.

Playtest #5

April 3rd, evening
Stephen and me

What went right:

- Stephen enjoys slow-paced, strategic games and was skeptical about the new two-part turn structure, but when he tried it he liked it okay.

What went wrong:

- Stephen made a move that seemed iffy to me—stretching and bending one of his rubber bands by more than 90°.

What I decided to change:

- I decided to change the rules so that rubber bands can never be bent by more than 90°.

Playtest #6

April 3rd, evening
Stephen and me

What went right:

- Again, the two-part turn structure is working well.

What went wrong:

- I changed my mind again and decided that rubber bands should be able to be bent more than 90°.

What I decided to change:

- I changed the rubber band bending rules back so that a rubber band can be bent to any adjacent peg rather than being restricted by angle.

Playtest #7

April 4th, evening
Daren and me

What went right:

- Daren really likes the game and says it could be addictive.

What went wrong:

- There were a couple of rules I forgot to mention at the beginning of the game and had to bring up during play.

What I decided to change:

- I'm realizing that I need to write down my new and improved rules in their entirety as soon as possible—ideally with enough time to see if a pair of new players could navigate the game on their own based on the written rules.
- I found an image of an octopus and a squid swordfighting and have decided to name my game "Octopus versus Squid." Theming will ensue.

Playtest #8

April 9th, afternoon
Sean and Oscar

What went right:

- Neither Sean nor Oscar played my game before and they managed to learn it based on my written rules, although I did also answer



a few clarifying questions for them at the beginning.

What went wrong:

- The overlap rule is a little ambiguous.
- The rule about how both players passing their turn ends the game can be misinterpreted—explicitly mentioning that it is legal for a player to pass his or her turn would help with this.
- The rules governing whether a section of rubber band is trapped or not need to be illustrated more clearly.
- Watching people new to the game play for the first time was kind of bizarre for me because I've been thinking about this game so much. A lot of the early moves seemed inexplicable to me, but they were just part of people's early exploration as they began on the game's learning curve. I'm wondering whether I should add a section on strategy to the game instructions. On the one hand it could give some direction to people who are just starting out, but on the other hand it could deprive them of the joy of figuring it out for themselves.

What I decided to change:

- I made a lot of changes and clarifications to my written rules and added another image illustrating rubber band trapping.
- I added a small "Notes on Strategy" section to the rules in an attempt to give players a little extra information without spelling too much out for them.

Playtest #9

April 9th, evening

Stephen and me

1 game:

round 1 = 4.5 minutes

round 2 = 6.5 minutes

What went right:

- I timed our game and got a fairly representative duration of how long gameplay lasts for two players who are both familiar with the rules.

What went wrong:

- Nothing!

What I decided to change:

- Everything seems to be in good working order... all I need to do is get some extra rubber bands to turn in with my game just in case any of the current set pop.