

Part III: Development

I chose to iterate on idea #1—Hot Lava Hopscotch. My intended audience is ETC students who don't mind physical activity.

Version #1

Rule set

Game materials:

- six small circular rugs
- large space or hallway
- wall

Rules:

- Single-player
- Player begins the game standing on a circular rug, thirty or more feet away from the wall, with the other five rugs on the floor within arm reach.
- Player's goal is to touch the wall.
- Player cannot touch the ground with any part of the body, but must traverse the space by placing or throwing rugs onto the ground and then walking or jumping between them
- Using both feet is allowed, and standing with one foot on one rug and the other foot on another rug is allowed. Kneeling on a rug is also allowed as long as no part of the body touches the ground.
- The player can only pick up/hold one rug at a time.
- Rugs can be picked up for repeat use.
- Order of picking up and placing rugs does not matter

Analysis

Pros

- Overall the game mechanics work, seem promising
- Simple, not a lot of complex rules
- Good exercise
- Portable, quick & easy to set up/play
- Allows for different styles of gameplay
- Funny ways to paint oneself into a corner, and ways to get back out

Cons

- Distance between starting position and wall is way too long
- Kind of grueling
- Seems like it would be better with more than one player

Version #2

Changes/improvements

- ~~Single player~~ Two players competing simultaneously to touch wall first
- Six rugs now split between two players, so each player uses three rugs
- Shortened the distance between starting position and wall

Analysis

Pros

- Multiple players definitely an improvement

Cons

- Game is much less interesting/fun when there are fewer rugs per individual player
- Players were not very aware of each other's progress because they were busy manipulating rugs on the ground

Version #3

Changes/improvements

- New game material: stopwatch
- ~~Single player~~ ~~Two players competing simultaneously to touch wall first~~ Any number of players compete against one another asynchronously by playing one at a time while timed with a stopwatch; times are compared and the one who reached the wall the fastest is the winner
- Each player gets to use all six rugs

Analysis

Pros

- Feels more competitive, players get to see each other's strategies
- Very good exercise but also fun

Cons

- Somewhat tiring
- Game is too easy if player drags rugs on the ground or skates across the floor on them, neither of which is against the rules
- Using only a couple rugs to move with and leaving the rest behind is an effective fast strategy but not much fun
- Rules need more fine-tuning so that super-effective strategies do not break the game

Version #4

Changes/improvements

- New rule: A rug cannot be moved across the floor (i.e. no dragging or skating)
- New rule: Player must stack all rugs in a pile before touching the wall

Analysis

Pros

- Fixes skating, dragging, and rug-abandoning problems
- Still allows for different strategies and styles of gameplay
- Because no rugs are left behind, game can be played in more environments

Cons

- Having to pile up all the rugs is a little awkward because you end up having to put at least one rug directly underneath your feet
- The distance between starting point and wall is still too long; players complain

Version #5

Changes/improvements

- ~~Player must stack all rugs in a pile before touching the wall~~ Player must stack all but one rug in a pile before touching the wall
- Shortened the distance between starting point and wall

Analysis

Pros

- Rug-piling less awkward now

Cons

- Still several over-effective strategies
- Wildly throwing rugs against the wall allows the player to use only a couple rugs to move fast while still being able to pile all the rugs at the end
- Moving with overlapping or very tight rug spacing is very effective and not much fun
- Distance between starting point and wall is still too long

Version #6

Changes/improvements

- New game material: object to use as goal (a chair works well)
- New rule: Five-second penalty added for each time a rug is moved such that three rugs are touching
- Shortened the distance between starting point and goal

Analysis

Pros

- Distance between starting point and goal finally seems to be right!
- Having goal object instead of wall opens up possibility of over-throwing one's target and having to bridge further to retrieve rugs
- Discouraging the player from having multiple rugs touching does seem to lessen the use of the closely-spaced-rugs strategy

Cons

- Don't like 5-second penalty, feels "off," clunky
- Penalizing player for having three rugs touching makes no sense when player has to pile all rugs together before touching goal

Version #7

Changes/improvements

- ~~Five-second penalty added for each time a rug is moved such that three rugs are touching~~ As soon as the player places three rugs such that they are touching, those rugs are considered to be the beginning of the end-of-game rug pile and cannot be moved again. The player must pile all the rugs except one into that pile before he or she can touch the end goal to stop the stopwatch.

Analysis

Pros

- Designating three rugs touching as the end-of-game pile feels much better than an arbitrary time penalty
- The new rule transforms a boringly over-effective strategy into a riskier, more-interesting one
- Even if he/she accidentally starts the end-of-game rug pile early, player can still potentially reach the end goal and stop the clock by using two rugs to get within touching distance of the end goal and then throwing one of the rugs onto the pile

Cons

- End-of-game pile rule may not create enough risk to balance super-effective strategies