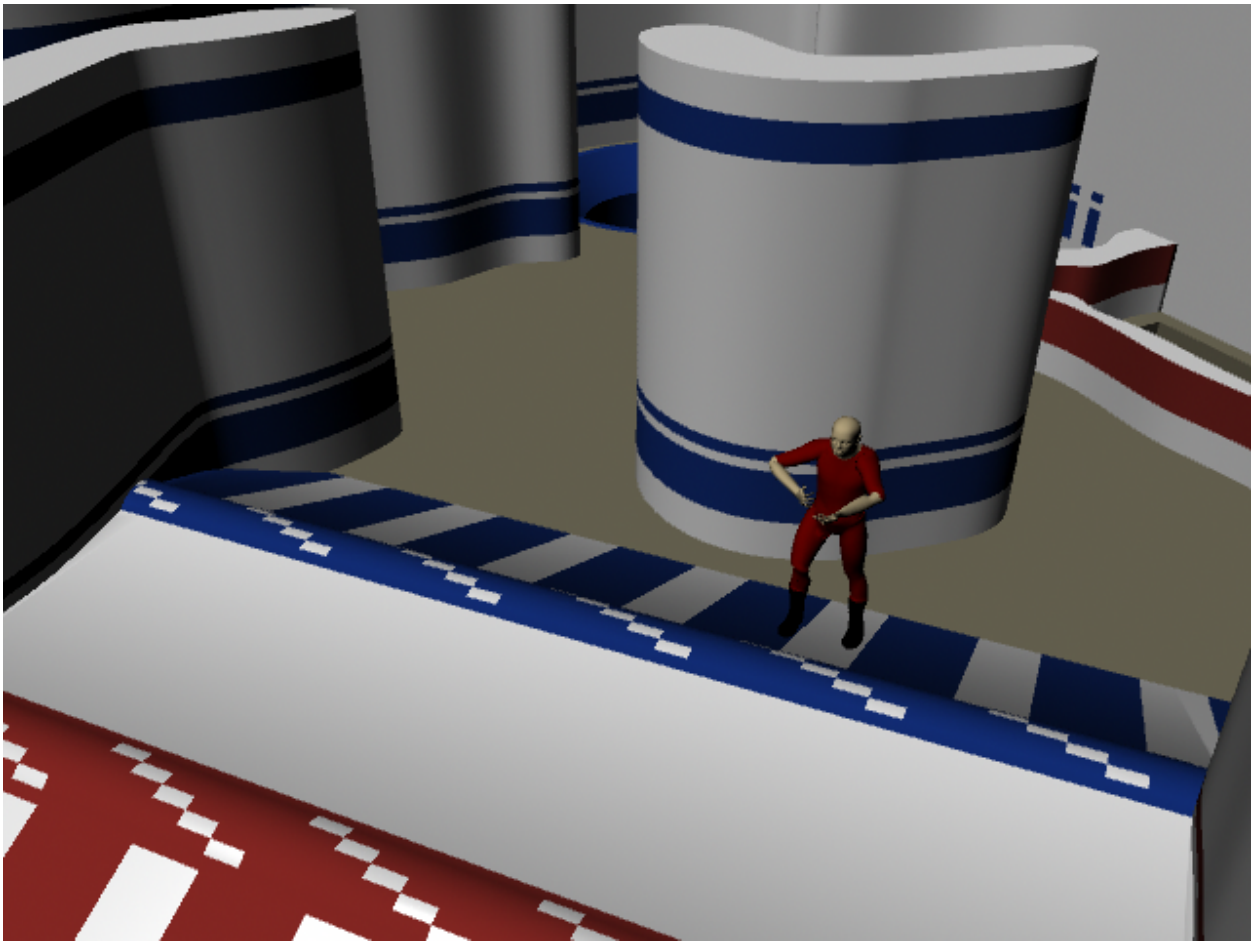
eXtreme Team Laser Ball



I. Artist Statement

Our goal is to create a non-violent videogame which makes use of the First Person Shooter (FPS) interface. Through the use of this interface, we hope to make non-violent play attractive to players of a largely violent gaming genre. We also hope to attract users in the sports genre through the use of base game being similar to soccer. Furthermore, by replacing physical harm with a mechanic of team-based competition we hope to create a game just as engaging as the typical FPS which rewards communication more than virtual marksmanship.

II. Influences [Predecessor or previous games/ distinctive factors in this genre]

Our game has been influenced by outdoor team sports such as soccer, indoor games such as pinball, and video games of the FPS genre.

The distinctive elements that we borrow from soccer are team play, competition, and goal orientation. Just as in soccer, points are scored by moving a ball into a goal and are awarded to teams rather than individuals. Moreover, each player in our game must choose a job which is derived from the player positions in soccer (forward, mid-fielder, defense, and goalie). We chose to take influence from soccer because it provides intense non-violent gameplay.

The most distinctive element that we borrow from pinball is the inclusion of environmental hazards in our maps. By including these hazards in a first person team-play environment we hope to create the necessity for the use of strategy during game play. Less importantly, we chose to make the ball in our game the size of the player; this was done to give the player the impression that they are playing a life-size game of pinball.

The distinctive elements that we borrow from FPS games are the first person viewpoint, the use of 'shooting' as your primary game interaction, and our methods of character class balancing. By using the first person viewpoint we hope to create immersive game play and by including shooting we hope to attract our target audience, present FPS players. Similar to other FPS games, like Team Fortress Classic, we modify the health, speed, and "weaponry" of players to create different player classes.

Our game includes agon and mimicry to a high degree. The game isn't about the other team, it's about your team traversing the map to get the ball to your goal end. This game utilizes mimicry in the sense that it is taking some basic gameplay ideas from things such as soccer, pinball, and FPS games.

III. Target Audience

Pre-existing FPS players, generally males between the ages of 15 and 25, are the target audience of our game due to hopeful similarity in their already gaming style. Targeting this audience should increase the appeal of this game because FPS players constitute a very large install base in US gaming. Another group of focus are sports gamers. These are very popular as well, and the teamwork, ball play, and general basis of the game would probably attract these people as well. Social gamers would also be interested because of the teamwork aspect we are incorporating.

IV. Introduction & Story

You have two teams. Both want the ball in order to score points. Make it through the various check points in order to get to the ultimate goal: the final destination.

V. Immediate and long term projected socio/cultural project impact

Not created as a direct response to current games or gaming trends, we do not expect this game to create much of a social or cultural impact. Simply put, this game was created to introduce fans of violent games to non-violent and highly social game play. Any impact this game has is completely success-based; if successful, this game could prove to players and developers that violence is not necessary element in first person video games or video games in general.

VI. Delivery System & Requirements

This is a PC game, running off of the Unreal 2k4 engine. The controls are all keyboard and mouse based.

VII. Interface

The Unreal 2k4 engine and interface.

VIII. User Interaction

Users are interacting through their player characters. Each have their own abilities/ classes so they must work together in order to reach their end goal. Teams can only push others back, not kill. The real goal is the ball, not the other team. Teams must work together to move the ball and obtain the ball during specific points of the game. You must work together to release the ball after it is hit in the goal in the first level.

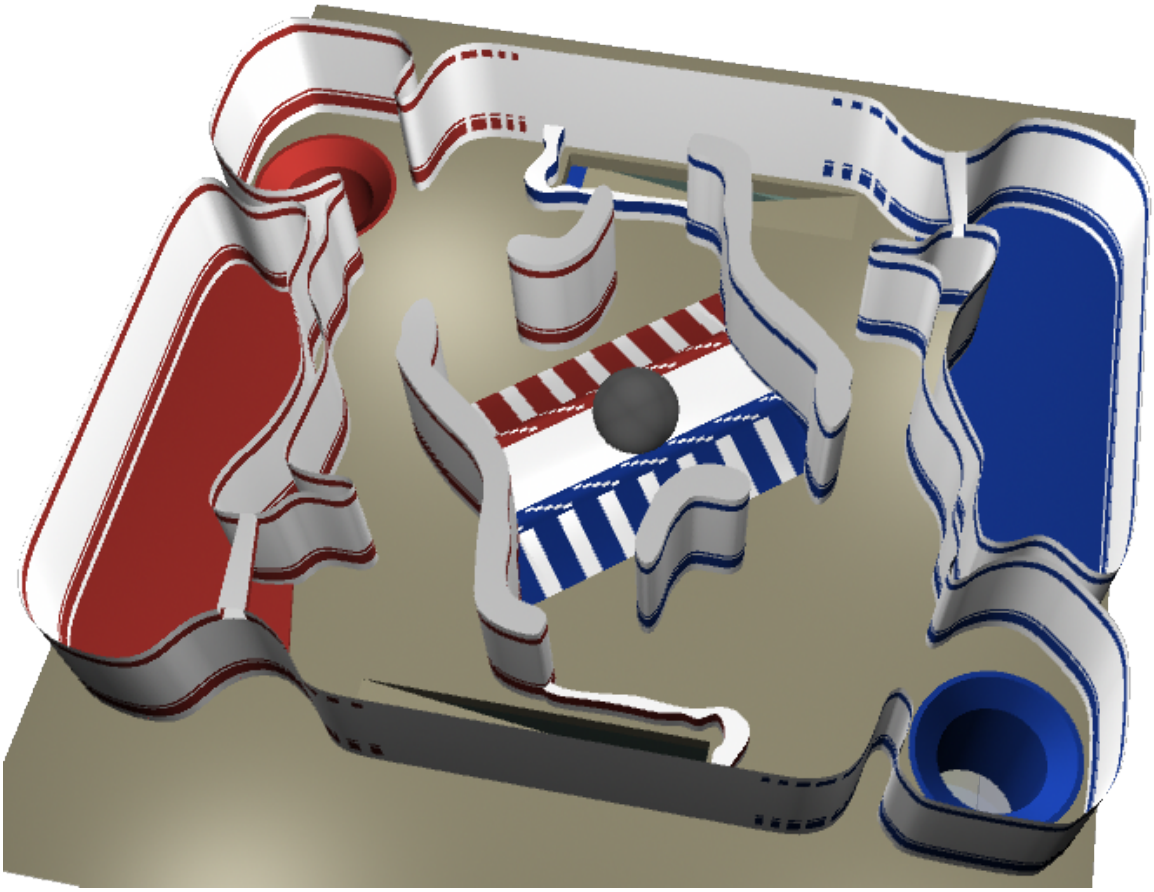
IX. The World Layout

Both teams begin the round on the top floor of the world. There are four floors that make up the entire game space, and each has a different structural and spacial layout. The fourth floor is small, and has the shortest route required for the ball to move to the drop point. The third floor is the largest, featuring multiple levels and multiple objectives. Navigating the space, opening gates for both themselves and the ball to pass, and finally navigating the ball itself into the next drop point are all involved here. The second floor is technically the final floor; where the main goals are located. Navigating the ball here is difficult, and in some spots, drop points will allow the ball to fall the the first floor. The first floor has no objective other than to get the ball back up to the second floor and into the goal. Each of these floors has a unique visual and physical layout that distinguishes them from each other.

X. Level Design

The levels are generally minimalistic in design and coloring. Transition between floors is done via shallow ramps, and passages are generally tall and wide. Movement on each floor is also aimed at being somewhat open-ended, in that teams can enter a level from any of the access points, and exit using any of the buttons and exit points. The entire map is vertically aligned; levels stacked one above another, to bring out the feeling of gravity moving the ball through the space. Dynamic elements are kept to a minimum; either moveable doors that block either the path of the players or the ball, or buttons that open these doors. Challenge is created by forcing players to navigate the ball around solid objects, such as walls, thin pillars, hills and depressions, allowing for a simple environment to become challenging, especially when different teams are trying to move the ball toward different goals, all while trying to avoid these obstacles.

Below: a render of the top floor of the level, showing the ball's start point, as well as each team's start points (the two regions with colored floors), and the ramps leading to the lower floor.



XI. Visualization- characters, flow charts,

Classes

Each class has 2 weapons per. A weapons are energy based and are harmless to the other team.

	Offense	Defense
Ball	**Rocket**	**Wall**
	HP: 70	**HP: 100**
	Rockets (3)	**Repulsor turret (1 @ time) (target enemies but are weak)**
	Magnum (6)	**Repulsor cannon (100)**

Energy	Shooting	Tank
	HP: 100	HP: 150
	Assault riffle (50)	Proxmity Mines (3-5)
	Shotgun (8-10)	Submachine gun (90)

XII. Music/ Sound Design

About the Music

The music in this game inherits the spirit of the traditional first person shooter. It is meant to be ambient, providing the player with something to occupy the sound environment while there are massive amounts of bullets and projectiles flying all over the place. The music offers energy as well to the player, as the level's music will change according to the nature of each level in the world. For example, the music will speed up and gain more energy and more elements as the player progresses to the goal. The music offers a feel of the drum and bass genre, as they are the predominant features of the music the player will hear. The music also features a couple out of the ordinary electronic and "airy" elements, which will hopefully make the player know they are in a different type of FPS game. The electronic elements also serve to reflect the cartoony nature of the game, specifically by placing unexpected elements into the sound space, just like cartoons can and put juxtapositions of completely arbitrary elements together to make people laugh and enjoy them.

About the Sounds

The other portion of the sound landscape will feature a unique mix of reality with the imaginative. There will be sounds of toy guns to show the player that the experience of firing is no longer violent, as it is realized by the player that they are living out their childhood again. The ball itself will make a large thud when it is contacted by the "bullets" and the walls. These sounds will also serve to provide the necessary feedback as to what is going on in the world. These sounds will also serve to make the player laugh, or at least find more than just pleasure out of just shooting things.

Interplay of Sound into Emotional Environment

During gameplay, the soundscape should be able to affect the player to feel a variety of moods. The ambient music serves to calm the player. Though there will be tension to get the ball where it is supposed to go, the ambient music will allow the player to calm down and focus on their true objective. The slight cartoony feel of the music will also help the player to receive a calming experience from the music, while still making sure the player feels the potential energy from each to get the player back into the real mood of the game. For seasoned FPS players, the ambient music will be a staple in their environment. For people who are new to FPS games, this type of music will help to serve their needs by providing music that won't get in the way of their discovery of what is going on and how they are supposed to play the game. The music will also be an aural queue to the player as to where they are and how close they are to completing the main objective of the game. The music speeds up as the

player gets closer to their goal, but is reduced when the player reaches the punishment level. It serves as an extra punishment for players who like to listen to it, as many of the elements of the ambient music have been removed on this level. This type of FPS also uses a different type of intensification of the action in the game. Not only does the music sped up as the player gets towards the goal, but the action gets more intense as the players figure out to use guns to move a ball towards its true destination. It's quite different than shooting other human avatars to kill them.

XIII. Rules and Gameplay A. Setup, B. Gameplay, C. Scoring

Setup: Choose a character class and then once teams are formed, play until all the gameplay goals have been reached.

Gameplay: Gameplay is centered around team communication and cooperation. In game, two teams are pitted against each other for control of a larger-than-life pinball-esque ball. Once in control of the ball, players will have to work with their team-mates to move the ball to designated checkpoints or "drop zones" scattered throughout the level, while also defending their control of the ball from the opposing team. To keep gameplay from breaking down into a free-for-all, players at the start of the game choose a class, each of which acts like one of the four positions in soccer [see section XI]. For example, some players in the game can act like defenders whose main objective is to push opponents away from the ball into holes in the environment which lead to different floors. Other players act like forwards, shooting at the ball unit their clip is empty and needs to be refilled at a refill station. This type of game play was chosen to maximize the beneficial aspects of cooperative gaming while merging it with intense, yet non-violent, competitive play.

Scoring: Get the ball to the goals before the other team, and the team with the most goals, wins. The final goal is 2 points to prevent draws.

XIV. Program Structure

The Unreal Engine uses an object-oriented scripting language in order to represent gameplay, game events, and player interactions. In the mod we are using to implement this game, we are modifying the base Unreal Tournament player class to include a "deactivation" system rather than a "death" system, allowing for laser tag-like gameplay. The ball is a simple physics object, affected by weapons that have been extended to include a simple force component.

XV. Technical Specs: Physics, Rendering System, Lighting Models

Physics, rendering system and lighting models are all done through the Unreal 2k4 system.

XVI. Implementation

Programmer: Modding Unreal 2k4 for our means.
Environment artist: Level and world design.
Character artist: Design the characters for the game.
Sound: Creating appropriate background music and sound effects.
Designer: Overall gameplay and understanding the overall picture.
Manager: Documentation assistance and scheduling.

XVII. Production Timeframe

Since this game is effectively a mod of Unreal Tournament 2K4 the timeframe as well as the cost of production should be drastically lower than that of the average game. With a six person development team, it would probably only take one semester to have a playable beta available.

XVIII. Research

We went from childhood experiences to combine a game of soccer, laser tag, pinball, and FPSs. We also shot a mini soccer ball with nerf guns to test whether our initial concept was fun.

XIX. References

Zimmerman, Eric. "Play as Design". MIT Press, 2003
http://www.soccerhelp.com/Soccer_Formation_Basics.shtml