CREATIVE WORK SAMPLE

~Abhishek Chatterjee

About our game

A cricket strategy game where you get to play as owner, coach & captain of a cricket team in a multiplayer league. Recruit and train your team from Rookies to Superstars, and make them unbeatable with magical superpowers!

Game Link - https://hitwicket.com/

Let's get started

Working at a gaming startup like Hitwicket is itself an eventful experience, but primarily being able to dish out events for the users is remarkably fun and action-packed. Although I dipped my hands in various areas of the game, working in live-ops has been more of a challenging ride for me and helped me grow as a game designer. The entire journey of building this event couldn't have been done without the combined effort of our UI/UX designers & the tech team.

In this creative sample , I will be dissecting an impactful live-ops event that we have shipped for our users which now runs as a monthly recurring event in the game.

ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

The Alliance Championship event had to be my most memorable one. The goal for this event was to create a platform for the hyper engaged late users in our game to battle it out for ultimate glory. The added twist was we wanted to make a social event as well.

Keeping that in mind, I moved towards designing this event as an alliance event (Clubs/clans in our game).

Gameplay Recording - ***Creative Sample.MP4***

Creative Design Process

Step 1: Identifying/Selecting the most elite alliances in the game.

For this, I decided on having a championship qualifier, that all users in alliances can compete in, to get into the first ever tournament in game to determine the best alliance in the game.
For these elder users, their alliance is a sense of pride, and thus tapping into this emotional connection, the tournament gets fueled with passion and competition for these users. While the more casual users learn about these top alliances.

The qualifier format was simple. It will run for a week, and in that week, the top 60 alliances with the most PvP wins (Player vs Player) cumulatively of all members of the alliance will be selected for the alliance championship.



Now, since this should get the top most alliances, and not top users, it was essential that it had to be a group effort, and not just a few members carrying the rest of the alliance into the championship. To ensure this, a limit of 30 wins per user was added, so that now, all members would have to participate to make your alliance qualify.

Step 2: Tournament structure, fixtures & seeding

Now that the top 60 alliances are selected, the tournament structure has to be set. For this, I decided on going with a Round Robin to Knockouts Format.

There will be 5 stages in total:

Qualifiers → Group Stage → Knockouts 1 → ← Knockouts 2 → Finals



Group Stage:
For this, First we split the top 60 into sets:

- Set 1 - Rank 1-10
- Set 2 - Rank 11-20
- Set 3 - Rank 21-60.

Now, 10 groups of 6 are created.
Each group consists of 1 alliance from set 1, 1 alliance from set 2 and 4 alliances from set 3 randomly, thus forming a group of 6. This seeding is done to ensure that the strongest alliances do not face each other in the early stages of the championship.

Now, each group must go through a round robin format. (Each alliance plays against every other alliance in the group once.) Each group has a points table for this.

Now for the actual **alliance vs alliance matches.**
Each alliance consists of 30 members. Now, to make the matches as fair as possible, we apply extra segregation here. Inside every alliance of 30 members, they are split

into sets of 5 each based on their team power. Now when Alliance A plays against Alliance B, users of set 1 from alliance A will see users of set 1 from alliance B as their opponents. Now each user can play a max of 3 matches a day, thus they must strategize with the other teammates from their set to decide which opponents they should attack.



Like this, each alliance vs alliance match lasts for a day, and at the end of the day, the alliance with more wins takes the victory and the points on the points table.

For the points table, we wanted it to be more immersive than just a standard boring points table. Therefore, we went with depicting it through team buses that are racing against each other.



At the end of the group stage, the top 2 alliances from each group get to progress to the next stage, which is Knockout 1.

Knockout stages:

Taking the top 2 from each group, we are left with 20 alliances. (2 from each of the 10 groups).

Now, we stack rank them based on their overall position and points earned from rank 1 to rank 20.

Knockout 1:
Matchmaking for Knockout 1 will be as follows:
Rank 1 vs Rank 20
Rank 2 vs Rank 19
Rank 3 vs Rank 18
..... vs .....
Rank 10 vs Rank 11

These will be direct knockout matches, and the winner of each match will go forward to the next round, knockout 2.
We will again stack rank the alliances from Rank 1 to Rank 10.

Knockout 2:
Matchmaking for Knockout 2 will be as follows:

Rank 1 vs Rank 10
Rank 2 vs Rank 9
Rank 3 vs Rank 8
Rank 4 vs Rank 7
Rank 5 vs Rank 6.

Again these will be direct knockouts, thus leaving us with the top 5 alliances.
These alliances will move to the finals.

Finals:
The finals will be a round robin format again like the group stage, thus all 5 alliances will face off against the other 4 alliances.

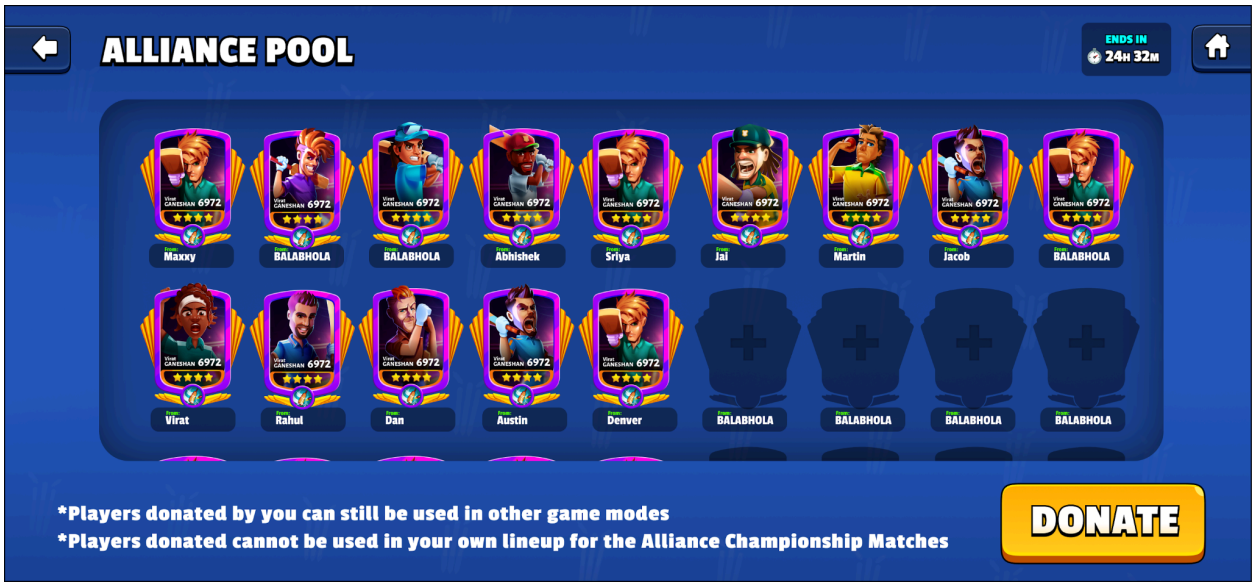
The alliance with the most wins at the end of the 5 days, will be crowned as the **Alliance Champion.**

Step 3:Harboring a need for deeper teamwork

Now that the tournament structure was set, I had to figure out a way for the alliances to have to work together to win their matches.
To achieve this, I designed a donation mechanic, where all alliance members would have to donate 2 players each to the alliance pool.

Now, when playing matches, out of the 11 player squad that everyone will use, you must use 2 players that have been donated by someone else from your alliance pool. Now, alliances can strategize to donate stronger players so that the weaker members can use them and have a better chance at winning their matches. It also allows the alliance to mix and match their squad depending on the opposition alliance of the day.





Now everyday, the users can swap their squads based on the opponent they are facing.

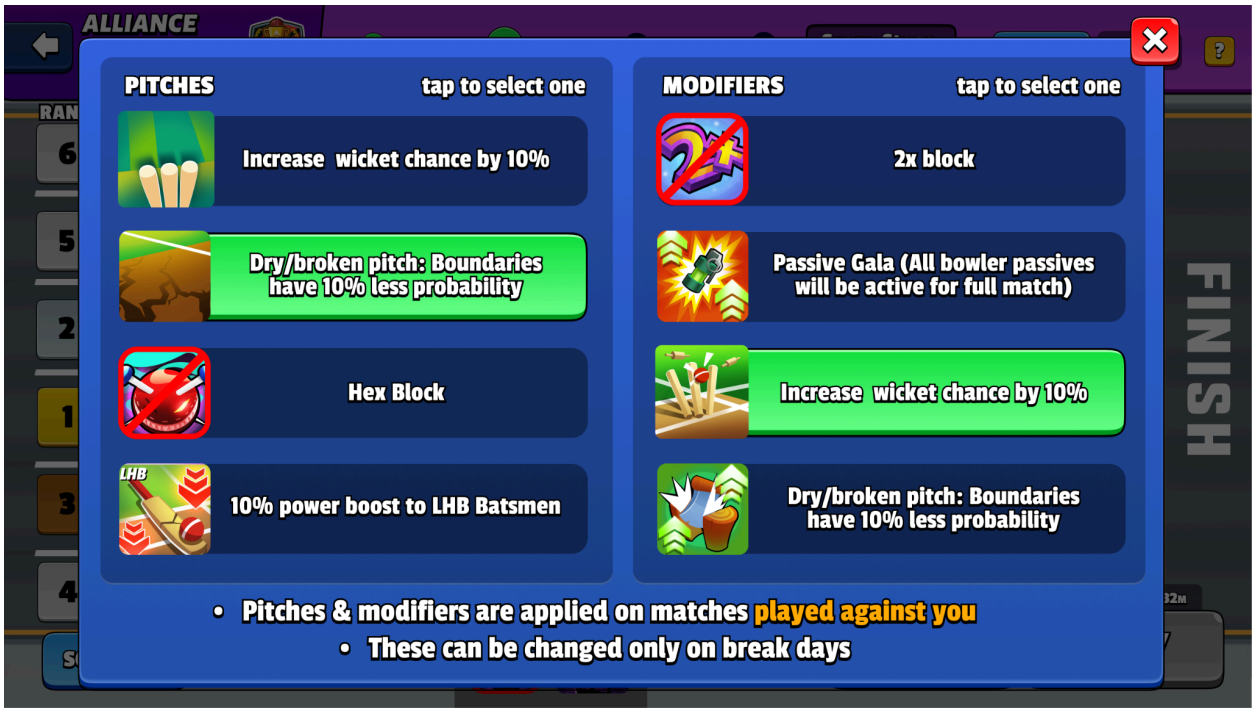
Step 4: Creating a need to strategize differently and make it harder for the top alliances

To make the matches more strategic and challenging for these users, we introduced a system of **Pitches & Modifiers.**

Pitches are game enhancers that change the pitch conditions of the match, which either allow specific bowlers to perform better or cause specific bowlers to perform badly. Thus allowing you to strategize on how you select your lineup.

Modifiers are similar, but these enhance specific player special abilities, either buffing your own batsmen or or nerfing your opponents batsmen.

So, now the user can choose 1 pitch and 1 modifier out of 4 options each. Here the entire alliance must communicate to optimize the best combination based on their squads.



Step 5: Equalization of power to make it a fair & more strategic competition

With the top 60 alliances, the goal was to create a level playing field for all 60 alliances in terms of player power, which would in turn create the need for more strategic depth and teamwork, while also keeping in competitive enough as the event progresses.

To achieve this, we implemented a power level cap based on the stage that was occurring.
Thus with each stage, the power level cap would increase, creating the need for the users to level their players up to continue progressing in the tournament.

Thus based on the stage, the Team Overall cap would increase.

Stage	Team OVR
Finals	100
Knockout 1	90
Knockout 2	95
Group Stage	60

Step 6: Monetization Strategy

From a business POV, this event was meant to drive an increase in these top users ARPPU (Average revenue per paying user).

To achieve this, I designed 2 different systems.

System 1:
Exclusive Player Scout tokens

We created an exclusive player scout, where users can spin a player gacha box to try and get the exclusive player.
Users can either sink hard currency to spin the box, or use special tickets to open the box for free.

Users would need to use either 100 tickets or 250 Hard currency.
Users can earn these tickets by winning alliance championship matches.
Users are guaranteed to get the exclusive character on 80 opens.
Users can earn up to 20 opens worth of free tickets and the remaining they would have to spend to get the character.



System 2:
War Chest & Key system

On winning alliance championship matches, users earn war chests. These war chests can only be opened if you have their keys.
Depending on your alliance's position at the end of every stage, each alliance gets a number of keys.

Now the way the calibration is done, if a user gets 5 chests, they would probably earn 3 keys. Therefore, they would need to buy the other 2 keys in order to open the war chests that they have already earned.

This creates a much stronger desire to purchase as compared to just selling things on their own.

These war chests had a guaranteed rewards counter upon opening 8 of them, thus pushing the user to open them as many times as possible.

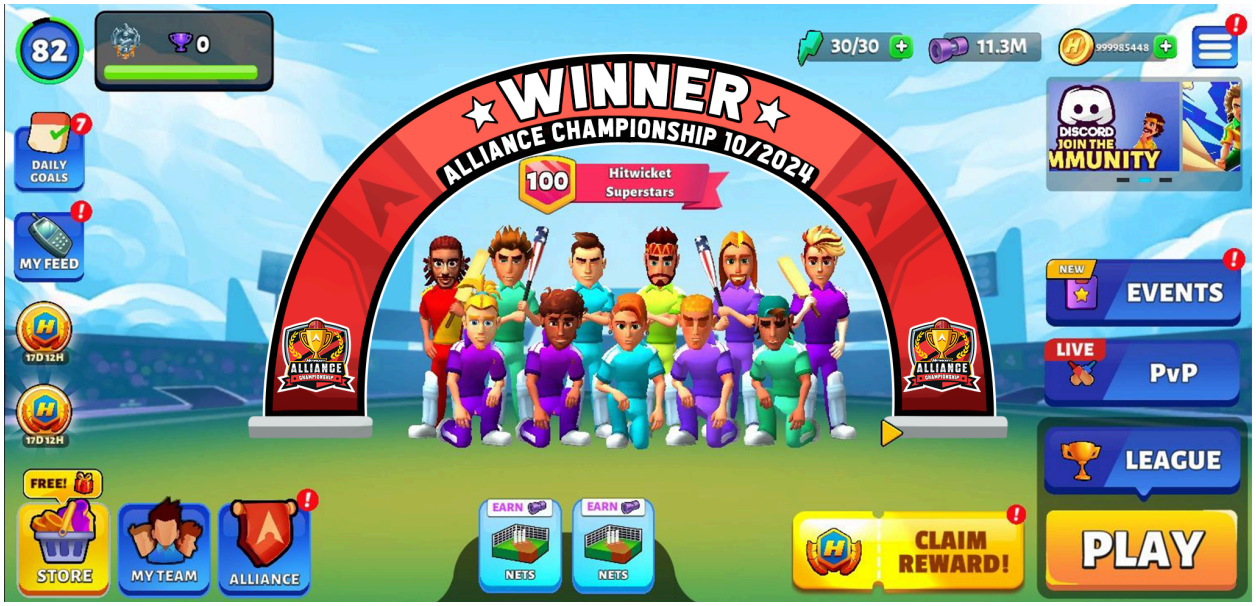


Step 7: Glorification of the winners

The last piece of the puzzle was to make this championship so grand that all alliances strive and aim to win it the next time.
In order to do this, we had to glorify the winning alliance as much as possible.

On top of doing a bunch of social media announcements, we delivered a physical trophy to the winning alliance leader.

We also gave an in-game badge to all the winning members.
And finally, for everyone in the game to see, we have a championship winner banner to the winning members on their team huddle on the dashboard.



Product Impact:

- **ARPPU** (Average revenue per paying user) went up by **8$**. during this period.
- **930** churned users returned to the game due to this event (Users who did not play the game for >= 30 days)
- DAU Return went up by **5%**
- PvP Matches went up by **15%** during the qualifiers

Timelapse of the event

In conclusion, this event has taught me to bend the design process that I tend to adopt based on the problem statement. Breaking down complex user psychology to design mechanics that impact the product as well the users in a meaningful way was a key skill I learnt.

Why I Decided to submit this creative sample -

This project is very close to my heart and I have a lot of memories connected to this. Additionally I learnt a lot while working on this project. I worked on this project as the primary game designer, along with a very experienced product manager, the UI/UX team, core tech team and artists.

This project reflects both my interests and skills. As I'm very passionate about football, as well as gaming, this event was a perfect blend of these areas, where I got to craft a tournament structure. Back in college, I had learnt tournament planning and management as well, which actually helped me design the seeding and matchmaking formulas. I also follow all the important football leagues and tournaments and this made me understand the user psychology and emotion well in terms of how they feel about their alliances and the competitive mindset.
This project not only allowed me to showcase my design skills but also my ability to capture the dynamic aspects of sports within a gaming context - something that directly resonates with my background and creative vision.

Through this project I learnt how important it is to understand how something we build affects the users. I also delved deeper into the communities and social area of mobile games, an area that I had not explored before, and I learnt how powerful social can be for a game.

Overall, I was super happy with the outcome of this project, and likewise users loved this event as well, giving me the positive reinforcement that led me to end up picking this project.