Trireme Post-Mortem Report

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**Game Summary**

Trireme is a two player naval combat game. The game experiments with game piece orientation as its core combat mechanic. Trireme attempts to simulate ancient naval combat in a way that is simple to learn and play but difficult to master. The game was inspired by the historical open field games Go, *Chess*, and Hnefatafl. Trireme is an attempt to understand and emulate these games while providing players a unique experience.

**Playtesting Results**

Playtesters responded favorably to the game. Several players commented that the game was mechanically simple but strategically complex. The most common issue that arose during testing was confusion caused by poor rule organization. Both ramming and boarding played an important role in the outcome of each play session. Boarding, however, was used more frequently by players who were losing. While boarding help close the gap between players of different skill levels, a game was never won by boarding alone. I also feel that I should mention Tyler Harp, who gave me the most insightful feedback I have received all semester.

**Further Modifications**

Most of the modifications made to the game prototype were rule clarifications. Playtesters proposed some very interesting special cases. While none of these special cases were game breaking; the rules, as they stood at the time, were ambiguous on how to resolve such cases. I address these special cases to the best of my abilities. I feel these modifications added much needed clarity to the rules.

**What Went Right**

I was able to playtest this game more than any other game I have made in this class. This additional playtesting greatly improved the overall quality of the final product. I also used diagrams extensively throughout the rules. Playtesters responded well to these diagrams and referenced them frequently while learning to play the game. The diagrams were very effective teaching aids.

**What Went Wrong**

To some degree the diagrams were a double edged sword. When first starting to play, many players would rely solely on the diagrams when moving their ships. This caused them to miss important restrictions outlined in the movement rules. This behavior was reoccurring and seemed to be the result of how information was sequenced as well as the prominence of the diagrams. It seems that many people will ignore text if they feel they can get the same information from visuals.

**What I Learned**

Keep play testing until you find something wrong. There is always something wrong and it is just a matter of finding it. The first few playtests consisted entirely of positive feedback. Whenever anything goes off without a hitch I get worried. It was only through persistent playtesting that I began to find potential landmines. I learned that it pays off to actively search for problems rather than passively waiting for them to arise.