

Powderkeg Playtest-1-Fall 2019

Teacher/Photographer (plays videos & takes photos)

- Derrick

Players

- Fabian Fronz
- Lauren
- Alex

Play Assistants

- Tony

Observer Note-Takers

- Katherine Kehoe (instructions observer)(will have a booklet)(blue)
- Sarah Ling (Interpersonal communications observer)(yellow)
- Catherine Pasman (timer)(pink)

Timer

Time each operation separately

Intro Video

Photo:

Time: 5 mins (extra time cause of technical difficulties.

- Player attentiveness (such as; percent that watched all the way through?) - everyone paying attention (100%), humor of the video kept attention
- Player Enjoyment (how many were “leaning in” to the media?) -100%, humor again playing a large part of player attention

How to Play Video

Photo:

Time: 1 min

- Player attentiveness (such as; percent that watched all the way through?) - 100%
- Player Enjoyment (how many were “leaning in” to the media?). - everyone seemed more focus as they were trying to understand and follow the rules

Instruction Book

Photo:

Time:3 min

Ask for a volunteer player to be the game master. They hold and reference the instruction book as needed.

- How many volunteered? 1 person
- How was it decided who it was going to be? Whoever was best at reading.
- Did the players need to reference the book to get started, or was the video information enough? They still looked at the booklet even after watching the video.

Epic character cards are dealt

Photo:

Time: 1 min

- What percentage of the Epic Character cards were read aloud (which is called for by the instructions) None.

Powderkeg Setup (players do this)

Photo:

Time: 1 min

- Were the cards set up as shown in the instruction booklet? For the most part- The middle event cards were set up differently.
- How much help, if any, did they need? None.

Powderkeg Gameplay

Photo:

Time: 40 min

- Did the players understand how item cards are used? Explain. - Initial confusion on the point system and how the items affect the characters and their value. Understood after it was explained/ looked it up in the rulebook.
- Did the Players understand how events affected them as Epic characters? Explain. They were a bit confused about the extra bonuses of epic character cards, but with the help from Tony and on their own they figured it out.
- What percentage of Event Cards were read aloud?? All
 - At what point did they start or stop? They started from the beginning.
- Describe the card reading interpersonal interactions, for example:-
 - Embarrassed?
 - Coerced?
 - Interested?
 - Surprised by the story?
 - Dramatized?
 - Other?

-People worked together to try and understand how these cards work and the benefits that they would have for themselves/ other players. Some confusion as they tried to understand the effects, focus and interest in the readings otherwise

- Did the players understand how to do the math of adding items to Allied Character PowerPoints? Explain. Sort of- they didn't collect everything at first so they were a little confused. Didn't understand how points worked at first.
- Do the players think Phases are different than Rounds? Explain. They seemed to understand. Nothing was really said showing that they thought the phases and rounds were the same.
- Did the players understand how to take turns? Explain. Yes

- If turn-taking is different than in the instruction booklet? Explain. Only difference really was that they took both cards at the same time.

Declarations

Photo:

Time: 2 min

- Can the rule book reader see the cards in the instruction book well enough to tell what kind they are? The players said that the cards were a little small and could be bigger and more clear.
- Write down what the players are saying at this point in the game. -Discussing how the characters they picked up determined what side they chose. Also debate on that trading with “the store” (being able to go back to the market) was something they wanted to do,

Trading

Photo:

Time: 3 min

- What percentage of cards were traded? 2 Trades were made
- Were trades only between allies? - No
- Were some trades between Whigs and Tories? - Trading was done before declarations, so trading happened between everyone with no one knowing who was on which side

War

Photo:

Time: 9 min

- Did the players understand how to set up and play the cards by referencing the pictures in the instructions booklet? Are the pictures large enough to tell what they are? As stated previously, players commented saying that the pictures could be bigger and more clear. They seemed to understand how to set up
- Did any players appear to feel disappointed due to losing consistently? - No
- Explain how they expressed their disappointment and how the rest of the table addressed it. - No one appeared disappointed by any losses or wins
- Did the players understand how to tally up points? Yes, they understand tallying points.
- Explain if the players tallied up points differently than in the instruction booklet. They flipped the war card at first, but then realized they should put down their fighters first before.
- Were there enough Tiebreaker cards? Explain. Yes. There was a double tiebreaker during the 4th war card and that was the only tiebreaker that happened, so only two were needed.
- Explain how the players felt about tiebreakers? -Players understood how tiebreakers worked and followed the concept of them easily

Winning The Revolution

Photo:

Time: 2 min

- Who won? The Tories or the Whigs? Whigs.
- For those players that did not win the war: Did they still feel like they had fun? - They still had fun, even if winning would have been nice

Winning Most Decorated Epic Character

Photo:

Time: 1 min

- Who won? Fabian won Most Decorated.
- How did they feel about that? - "I really like winning" -Fabien, who won
- How did they express their winning physically? - Leaned into the game, swooped up the cards he had won, joking around with the other players

Overview

Did the new point allocation system help to even out the potential for any allied character to help win the war? Explain:

Yes and No, In accordance to a meta game perspective it functions. However, by the rules of a By-draw system chances are randomized and naturally makes getting cards that function to their assigned partners inconsistent (Which is how it should be). In short, it requires more testing and the results of said testing are influenced by a number of things such as: Character Epic Card affiliations (And their effects on the event/war cards), Who-Goes-First, Intricacies of Strategic Gameplay, Meta gaming, and player declaration affinities.

Ideas for Improvement:

My current thoughts on improving factors that are within our control:

- Continue balancing BOTH the Powderkeg events and War Cards (allows for fair and consistent effects of these events. For example, characters like Atticus who is hardly affected at all through the entirety of the game). I suggest making sure there are an equivalent number of titles (in gold) that are used and an equal number of benefits and drawbacks (such as every character loses and gains the same number of characters at different increments of the game).

What was the total time: 40 min

Swipe here and type

Ideas for shortening the time:

Swipe here and type

Where would we be a good place to stop and start the game to accommodate a 2 session gameplay

Swipe here and type

How effective was the Instruction Video

It seemed effective. They wanted the video to not be shown in separate parts. It had the basics for the players but they mentioned that it seemed like the video came off as having all the information that they needed when it in fact did not.

How effective was the Instruction Booklet

It was somewhat effective- still somewhat confusing and needs some parts rearranged and rules added. Examples include having a symbol guide for the cards to help better explain them (such as neutral), as well as moving the rule about having non-allied characters to an earlier part in the booklet so that players understand that when picking their cards.

Other observations?

Tony's overall Observations for PLAYTHROUGH 1 - Table 1

A number of things were brought up throughout the process of the first Playthrough:

- Suggested reading the booklet first before showing the video. The video made them feel like they didn't need to revisit the booklet. ALSO SUGGESTED WATCHING THE ENTIRE VIDEO FIRST, this is because questions between phases are answered in other sections of the video.
- Issues understanding some of the core rules described in the booklet (Possibly a result from the issue stated above). Also they flipped over event cards first and drew both characters and items in the same turn. HOWEVER, the game still functioned and players felt it was still mildly fun by the end of understanding the full game.
- EXPRESSED THE WANT FOR A CARD BREAKDOWN. A breakdown that covers all the graphic design of the card and their purpose. Suggest maybe doing a full page dedicated to card breakdown for clarity.
- EXPRESSED WISHING FOR AN EARLIER EXPLANATION TO PICKING SIDES. They wished that before they got to trading that point-penalties and the future need to declare a side (as Whig or Tori) was explained sooner; also explaining neutral cards (even though there is only one), possibly in the very beginning.
- POINT VALUE FOR WAR CARDS NEED TO BE STATED. Point allocation for determining winners was inconsistent AND NOT IN THE RULEBOOK. Need an entry explaining Official War Cards are more valuable than tiebreakers. Players also expressed interest in tiebreakers eventually making the equivalence of a point (i.e. 3 tiebreakers = 1 war medal)
- Players (When less than 5) expressed interest in trading with the final market as some characters and items will end up not being used in the game.
- ALSO GLASS WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE PLAYTEST!!! No characters currently use glass yet. Those two characters still need to be finished.

IMPROV PLAYTEST 2 Observations:

After the initial playtest we had enough time to start another one (although only until trading) to observe the working of two things: 1) How players with different understandings of the game interact. 2) The efficiency of play and the mannerisms of the game after understanding it more.

Players:

Hansol

Fabian

Lexi

Julia

Alex

- Setup was much faster this time around.
- Lexi's more accurate understanding of the game helped fix and answer questions Table 1 had. Also ended up adopting most of the rules from Table 2.
- Inconsistent understanding of WHEN TO RESTOCK CHARACTER CARDS AND EVENT CARDS. (Table 2 did not restock until all associated cards were gone).
- Players who played the game a second time incorporated more metagaming and strategizing (Could be a result of an older age group, but were glad that level of game depth existed)
- Lexi Lead the group this time.
- More elaborate understanding of card combinations and strategic card picking.
- CLEARLY MORE FUN AND EFFICIENT THE SECOND TIME AROUND.