Spec Ops

Aaron Guhin, Chase Nguyen,
Di Xu, Marcelo Layera
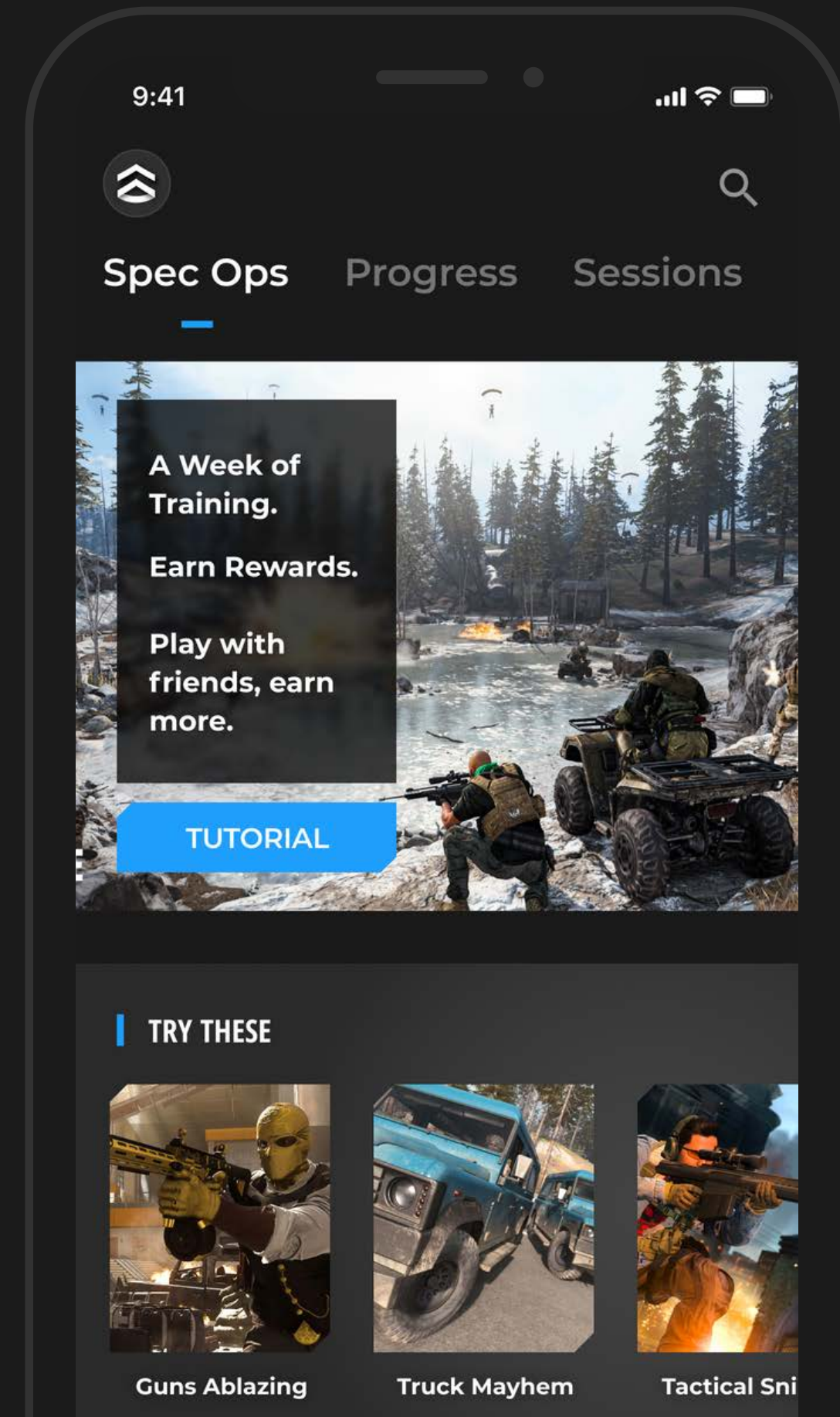
Fall
2020

Contents

Project Challenge Description

SPEC OPS: COD COMPANION APP ONBOARDING

Problem

DIFFICULTY ONBOARDING

Players, particularly new players, can have trouble navigating such a dynamic game like Call of Duty (CoD). This type of obstacle has shown to discourage players from continued gameplay and enjoyment.

So, how might we give players a welcoming experience using the companion app and help introduce them to the many different aspects of the game, all while building a community around said experience?

Insight

SOCIAL PLAY

All players we interviewed value social interactions while playing. Scheduling and communication are important but currently done in 3rd party apps.

COMMUNITY IS KEY

Women are invisible until they are in supportive communities. Once in controlled environments, players enjoy themselves more and blossom.

Solution

SPEC OPS: ONBOARDING

Spec Ops, or Special Operations, are missions, with a set of objectives, for players to complete within a week in order to get achievement badges, in-game rewards, or XP. Players can complete these by themselves, but this feature encourages them to play with others, whether to get an XP multiplier or cooperative-dependent badges.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

AARON GUHIN

USER RESEARCH
UX/UI DESIGN

CHASE NGUYEN

USER RESEARCH
UX/UI DESIGN
VISUAL DESIGN

DI XU

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
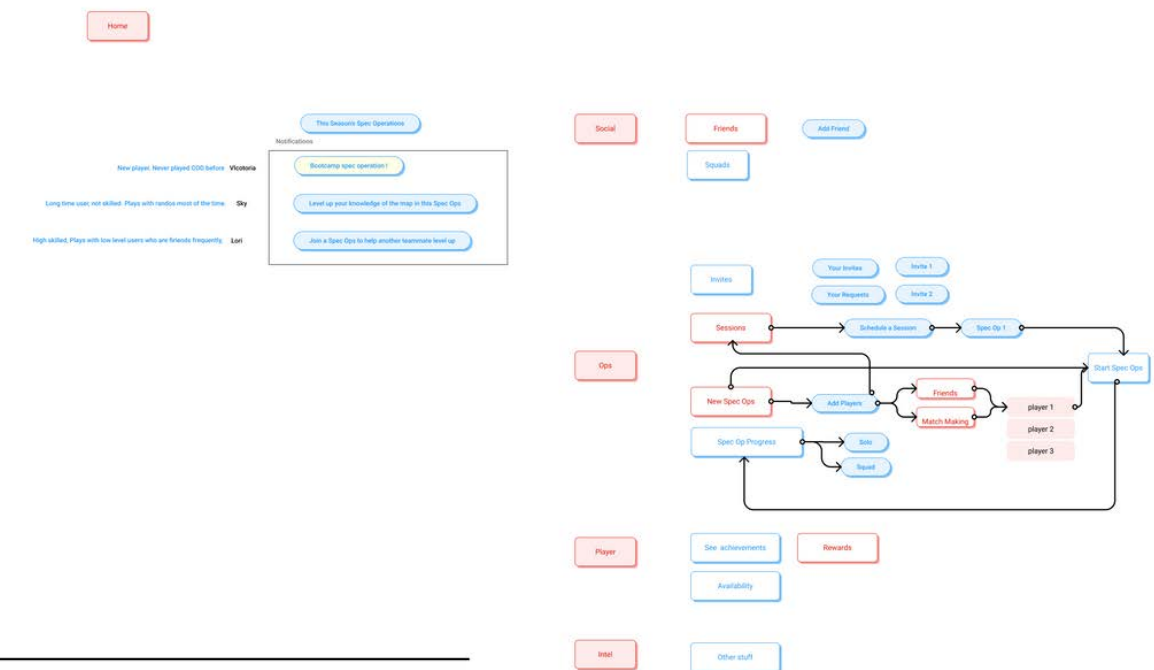USER RESEARCH

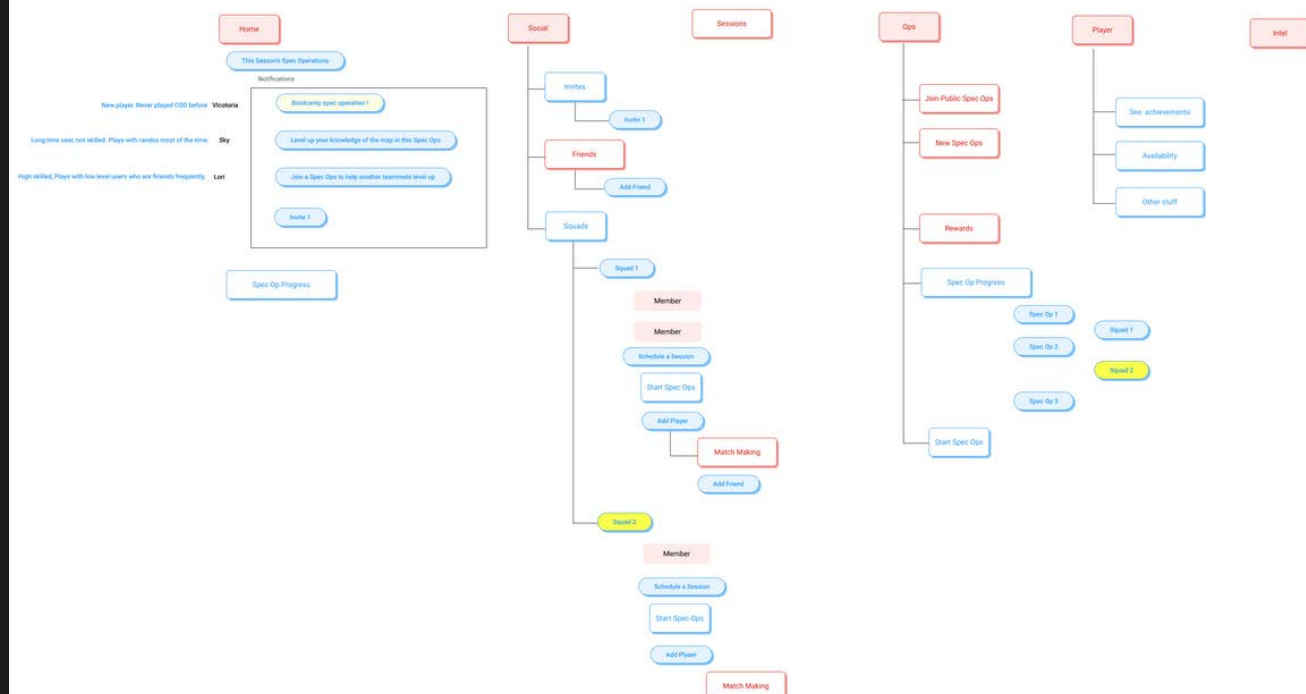**MARCELO LAYERA**

USER RESEARCH
UX/UI DESIGN

Card Sort

We conducted a card sort with the CoD app and synthesized the results. This helped us understand where Spec Ops fits within the architecture of the existing app.

Personas

Based on our interview data, we created three personas representing three distinct user groups to represent the motivations and need sets of new, experienced and casual players.

Victoria B

Position
Gym Manager

Type of Gamer
Casual

Platform
PS4, iPhone

Location
Los Angeles

Age
26

Daily	Often	Seldom
iMessage	YouTube	Facebook
Instragram	Netflix	AirBnB
TikTok	Pinterest	Houseparty
	Keynote	Fortnite
	Slack	

Lori K

Position
Product Manager

Industry
Game Industry

Education
Bachelor in Journalism

Location
North Carolina, USA

Age
26

Daily	Often	Seldom
Discord	Dead by Daylight	Among Us
Slack	Fortnite	Fall guys
Call of Duty		Mobile Games
Destiny		
Halo		

Sky B.

Position
Illustrator

Industry
Animation

Education
Bachelor in Fine Arts

Location
Seattle, WA

Age
24

Daily	Often	Seldom
Facebook	Call of Duty: Warzone	Call of Duty: Modern Warfare
Lumosity	Call of Duty: Mobile	League of Legends
Co-Star	Battlefield 2	Rocket League
Instagram	Youtube	

Primary User

We decided to focus on the experience of new players when developing Spec Ops since the potential impact of onboarding is most likely to benefit this type of user. Therefore we selected Victoria's persona to be our guide as we moved forward.

Backstory

Victoria is a LA native and a manager of an Equinox Gym. She used to play a lot of games with her younger brothers when she was growing up—mostly board games. Her parents bought a Nintendo 64 for the kids when she was in high school. She spent many weekends playing Mortal Kombat and Duke Nukem, but after graduation she moved into her own apartment and didn't have time for gaming anymore. She recently found a new roommate, Zander from work. Zander and Victoria have many common interests and he owns a Playstation 4 which he plays in their shared living room.

COD Story

Zander likes to play Call of Duty and Victoria's been watching him play. He keeps inviting her to play, but the game looks more complex than the games she used to play. The other day he texted her a link to the main COD website.

Goals

Get back into gaming.

Learn how to play COD.

Needs

Be in control.

Connect socially.

Efficient use of her time between work shifts.

Wants

To see examples of what happens in different game situations.

Foster relationship with her new roomate.

Reconnect with he brothers through gaming.

Relive childhood gaming experiences.

Fears

Freezing in place during scary and fastpaced FPS situations.

Looking like a noob.

That she won't learn very quickly.

That Zander won't want to play with her anymore if she dies too quickly.
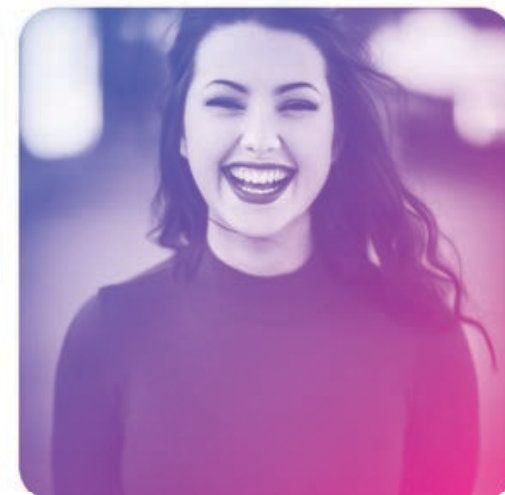
Victoria B

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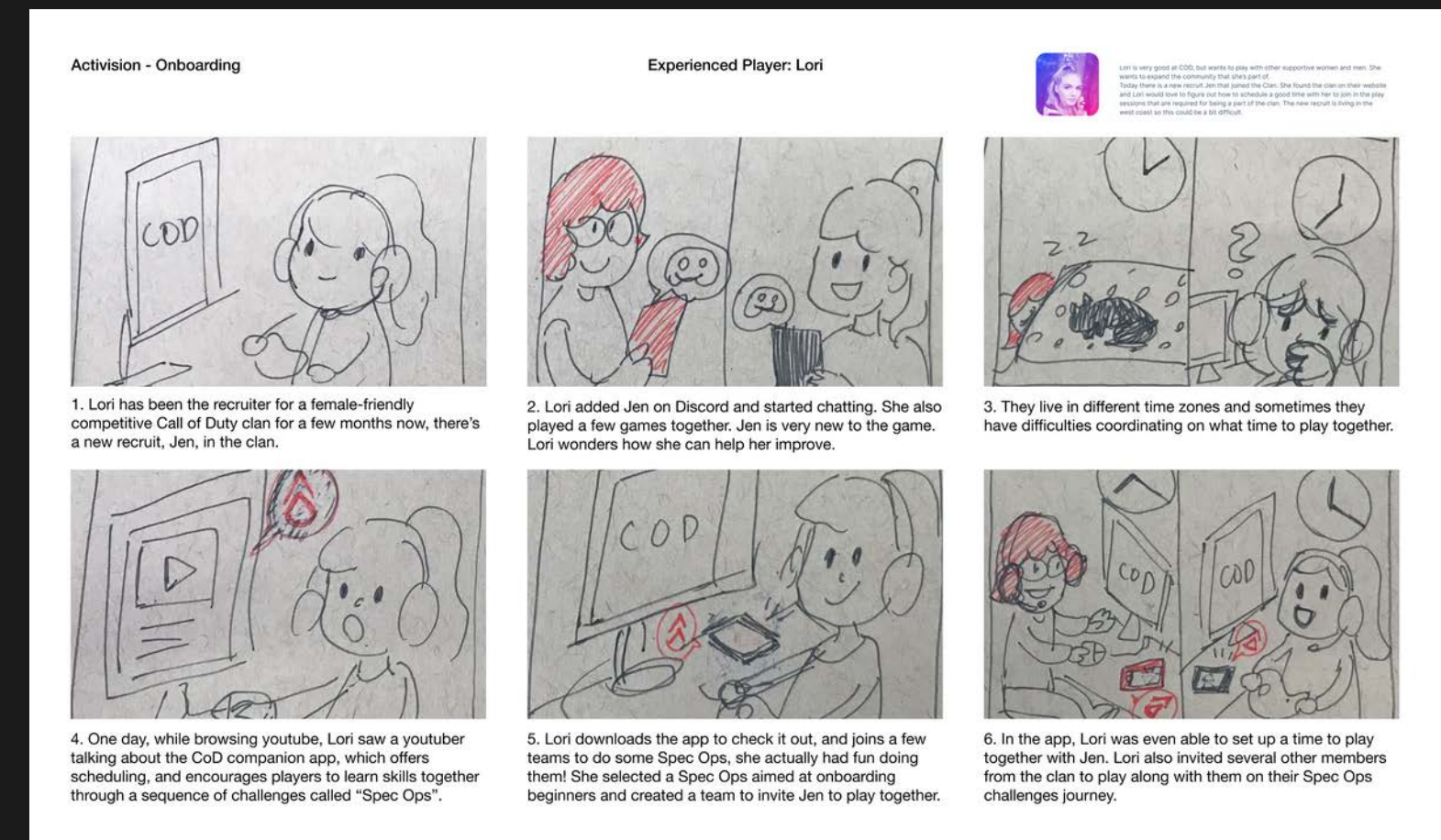| Daily	Often	Seldom
iMessage	YouTube	Facebook
Instragram	Netflix	AirBnB
TikTok	Pinterest	Houseparty
	Keynote	Fortnite
	Slack	

Storyboards

Our three persona-specific storyboards explored the circumstances of how Spec Ops changes the experience for different types of players when using the CoD app.
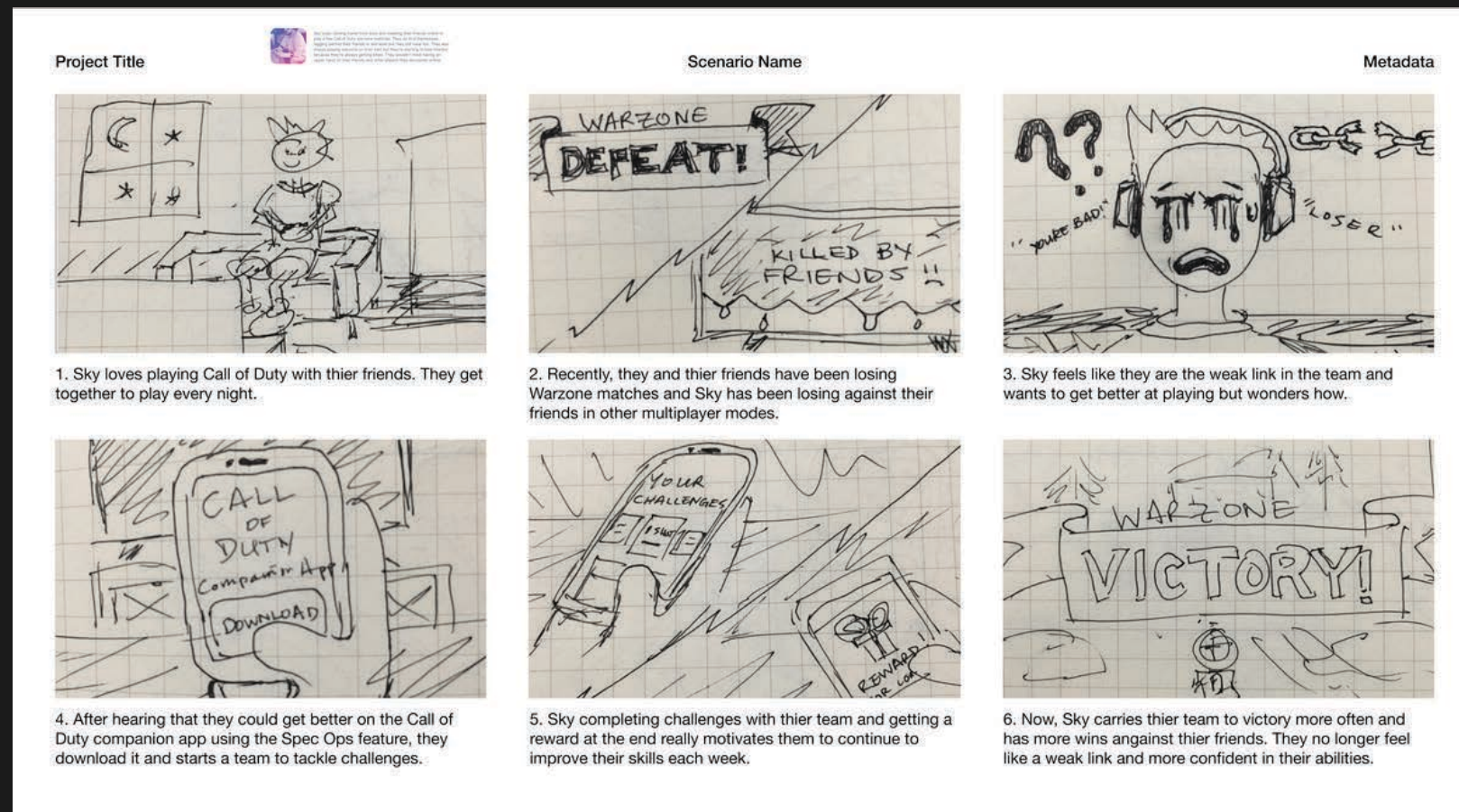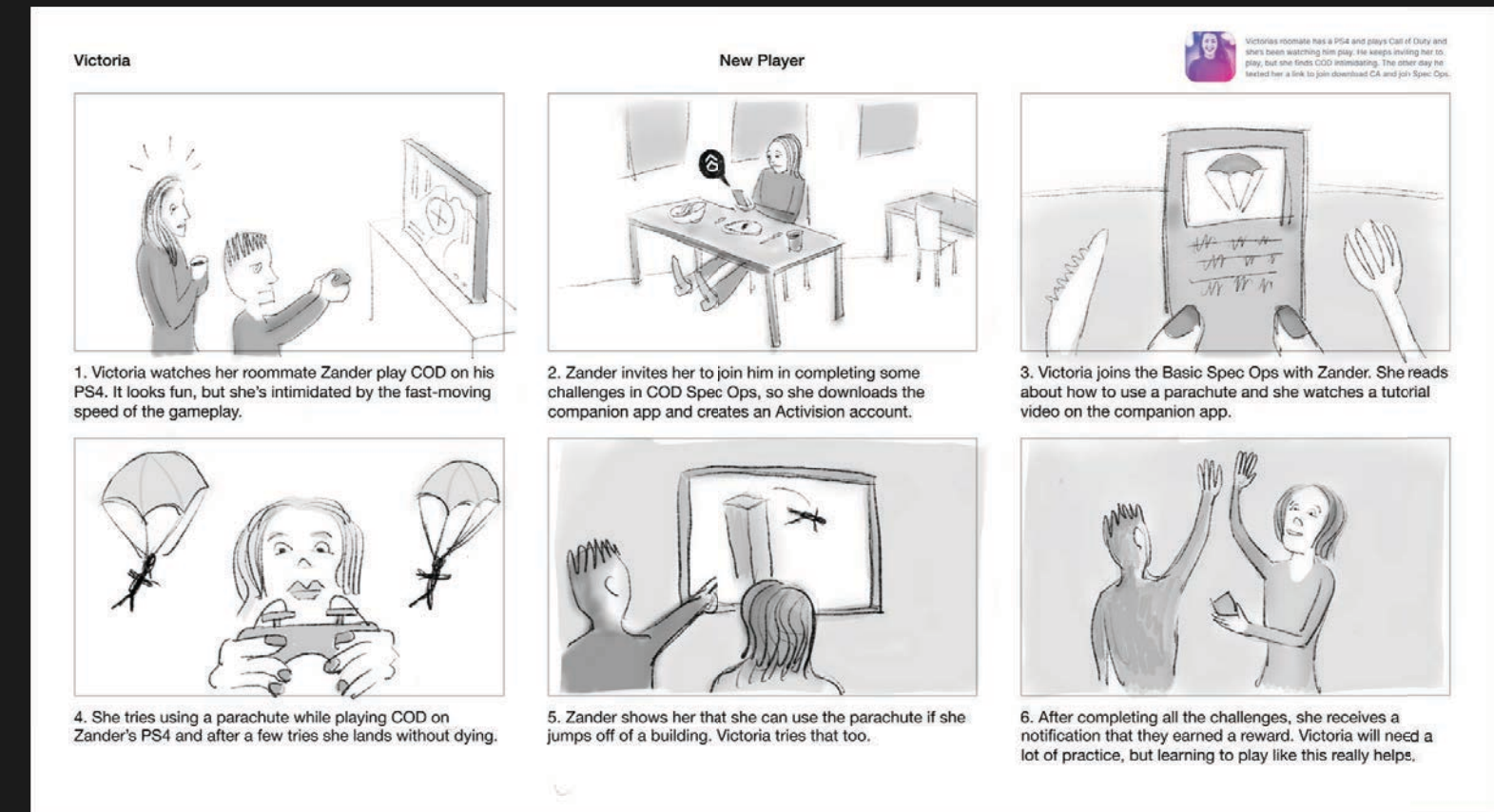
Storyboards

Primary User: Victoria

This sequence was created in order to visualize a scenario that a new user would experience when using Spec Ops, and illustrate how our concept fits into thier lives.

User Flow
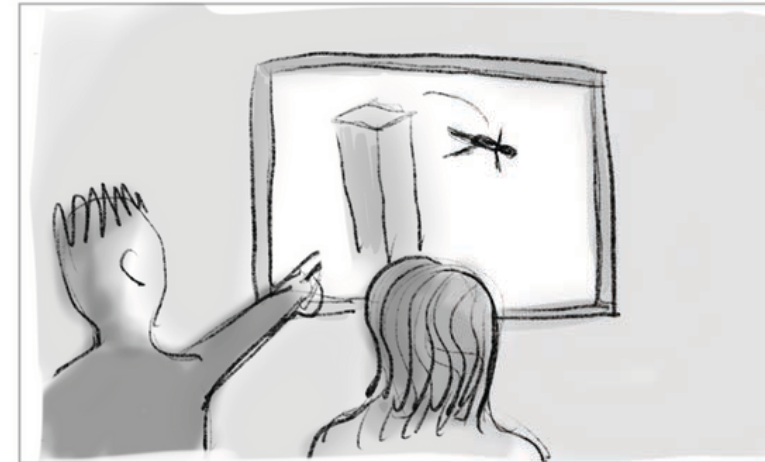
Primary User: Victoria

This user flow shows how Victoria would use the app looking at the individual screens.

Feature Prioritization

After familiarization with a lo-fi prototype, we asked interviewees to rank a list of proposed new features. The results were instrumental in shaping our thought process.

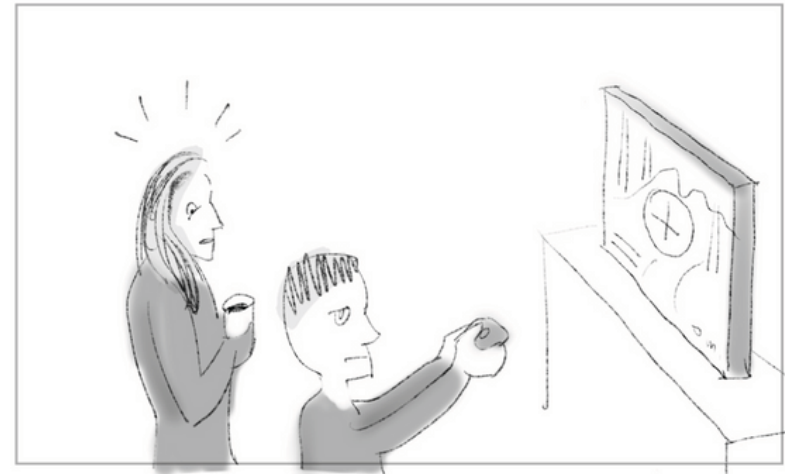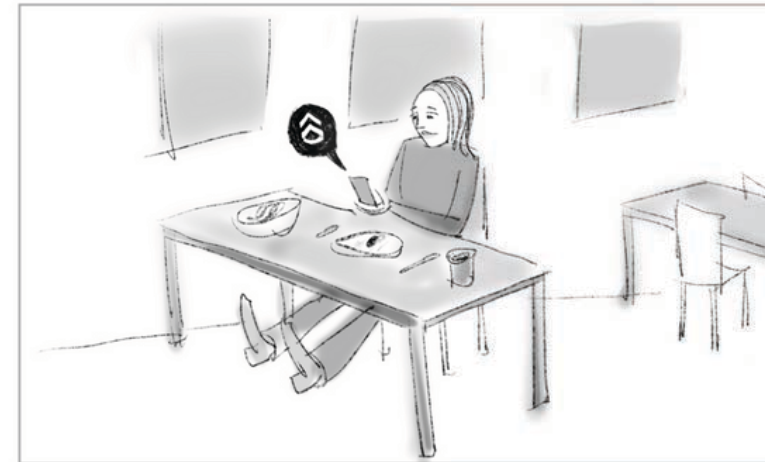The aggregate outcome of this exercise is shown here, ranked from most important to least.

	Average Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Tutorial/ Instructions on how to complete a Challenge. (
App will provide detailed descriptions of each challenge with images and videos to demonstrate how to complete them.
) — 2.9

Teams (Ability to create a team with maximum 4 members.) — 3.27

Achievements / Badges (App will reward players with badges and achievement animations that they can elect to equip on their companion app avatars to show off their accomplishments.) — 4.18

Invites friends to team (Friends are able to send invites to each other to play together for each spec op.) — 4.27

Sessions (
Ability to schedule a session in the future or a recurring session with people in your team. The companion app will send out notifications when a session is starting, or sync with your existing calendars.
) — 4.6

Internal star ratings/reviews (
The ability for players to review the spec ops to give feedback on how well designed or how useful that spec ops sequence of challenges. Feedback for Activision but not visible to players.
) — 6.67

Toggle Public / Private teams when creating teams (The option to toggle to create a public vs private team so that random players could search for your team and request to join your team.) — 6.7

Required player levels to unlock Spec Ops (
Spec Ops has a minimum player level required to start relevant challenges. Can invite lower level players to join. However lower level players can only start lower level challenges. Creating a progression of unlocking challenges by playing the CoD game.
) — 6.8

Invite a random player to team (
Ability to populate a team with random players. Ability to add random players to your team instead of just your friends.
) — 6.82

Browse public teams (A
bility to search for a random public team to join to complete Spec Ops challenges
) — 6.82

Content Strategy

TARGET AUDIENCE

NEW USERS

New users would benefit most. Experienced users can serve as a secondary group to recruit additional new users.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

USERS SHOULD THINK

"I need someone to show me how to play, to learn the game faster, and not be antagonized while doing it. I should find a team using the Companion App so I can participate in Spec Ops"
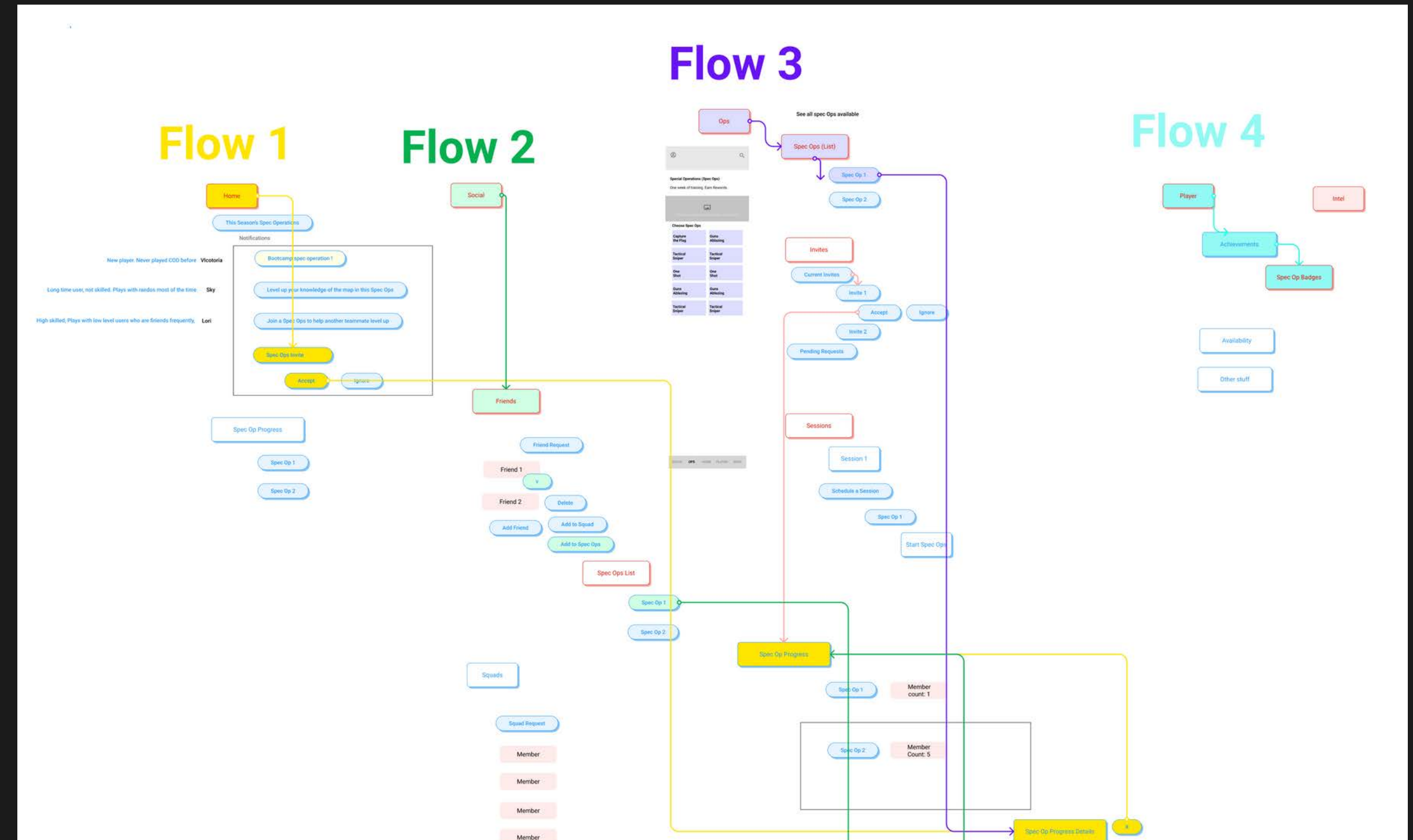
TONE & CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

COD COMPANION APP SPEC OPS TONE IS

Welcoming, Friendly, Informative, Engaging, Safe, Fun, Encouraging
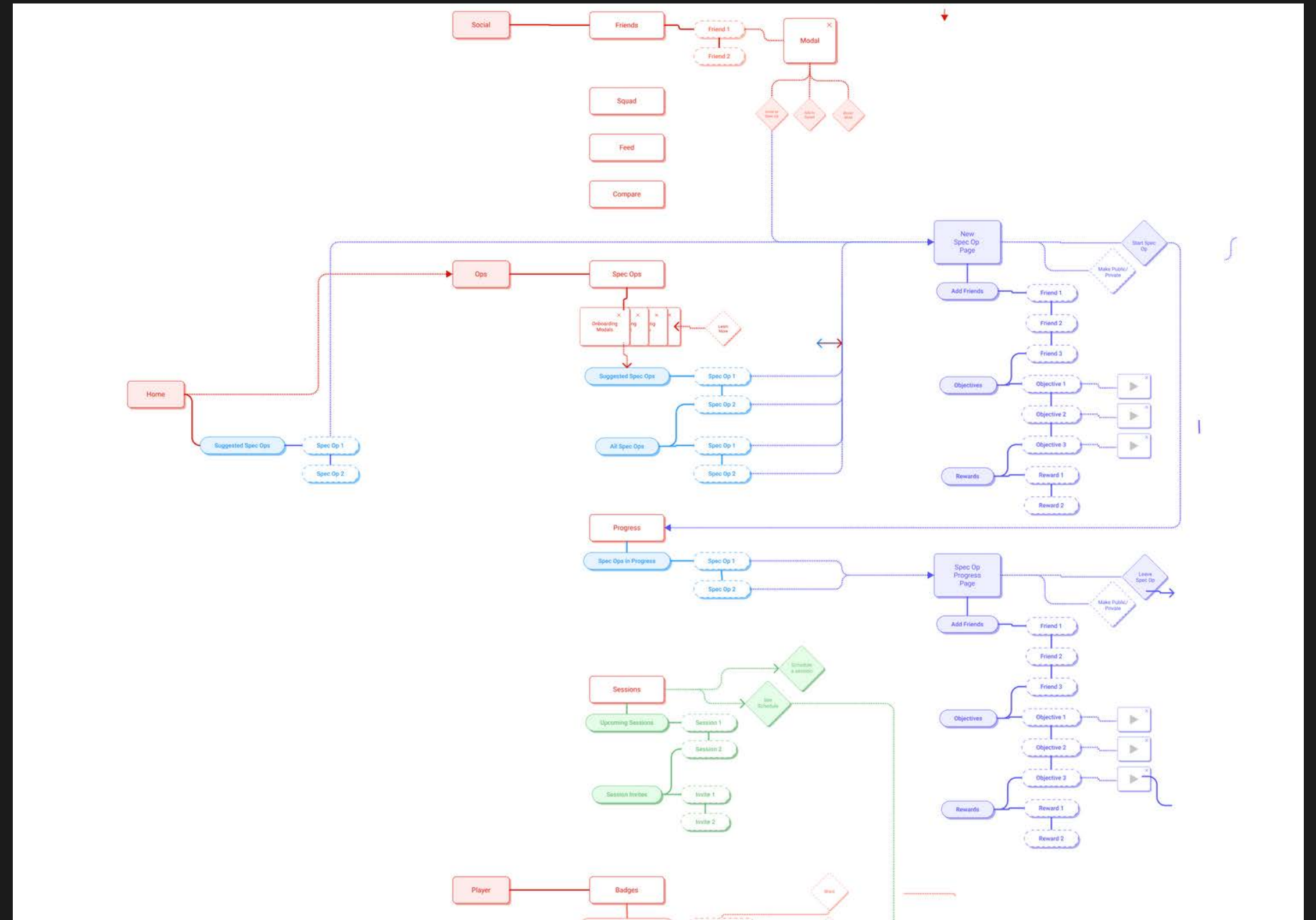
Wireflows

To get ready for user testing, we created three flows based on our new site map.

Site Map

This site map incorporates Spec Ops into
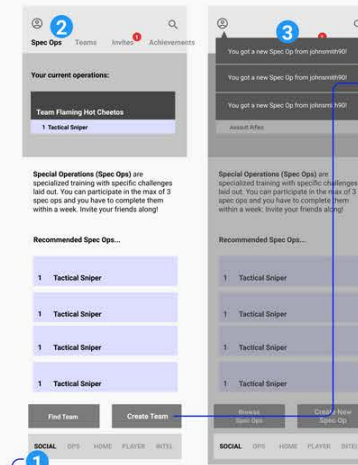the design of the CoD companion app.
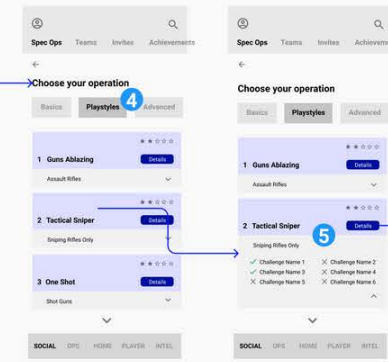
Lo-Fi Wireframes

Spec Ops and Teams

Spec Ops: The home base for our new feature. These screens allows users to view, select their missions, and invite friends to join.

Teams: This sub-tab contains the Spec Ops that the user is participating in as well as managing teams.
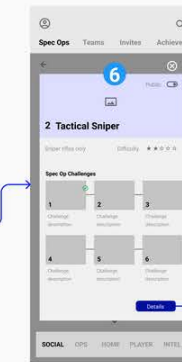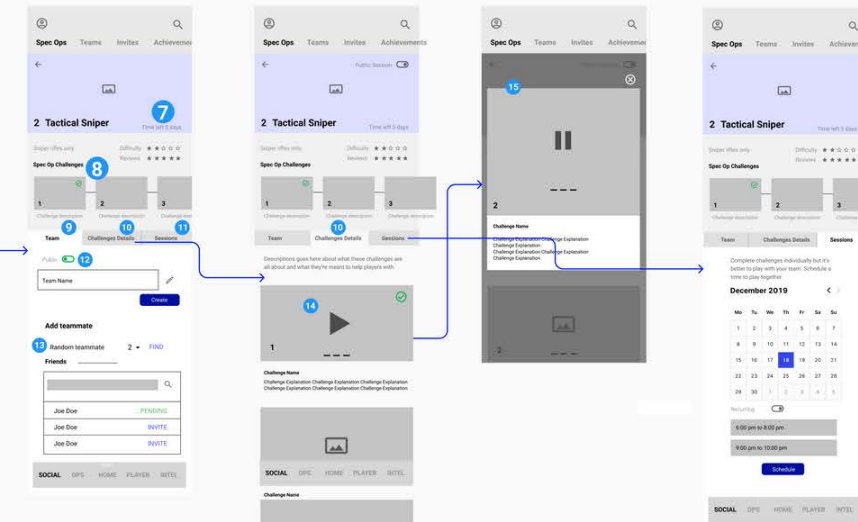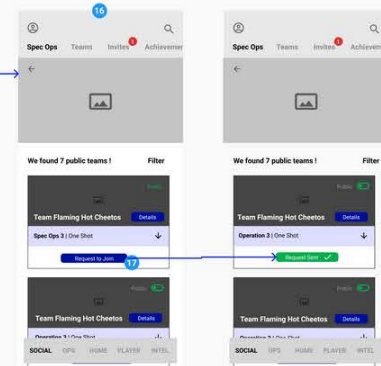

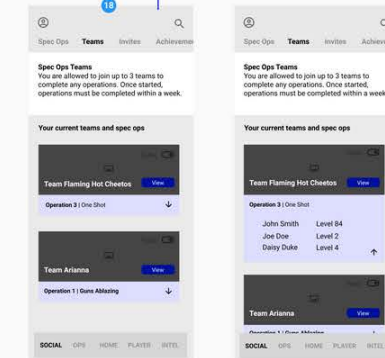**SPEC OPS**

Select a spec op to do

Spec op Quick View

Spec op management

Search/browse for other teams that are doing a public spec op

TEAMS

Annotations

1. Social tab houses the new experience we call "Spec Ops"

2. Spec ops is the "home" screen of the new experience. It shows your current operations that the player is currently apart of and have recommendations of other spec ops that they can do.

3. Notifications to let you know when someone invites another player to join their team or be notified on the status of team requests.

4. Spec Op modes are divided into tabs. These are meant to show players of all the available features of app and the game. "Basics" is additional training than what the game onboarding does. "Playstyles" are meant to show new players how to experiment with other guns and gear.

5. Expanded card of the selected Spec op. It shows a brief overview of what the challenges are.

6. Quick view modal of a specific spec op before going into the main overview screen.

7. Time remaining to complete challenge. Each team has a limit of a week to complete the challenges in order to receive that achievement.

8. Spec Op Challenges: All the requirements each player on the team must complete in order to successfully complete that spec op. These challenges are meant to expose the player to different playstyles and game mechanics.

9. "Team" is the first of the 3 tabs inside the spec op overview screen. This allows the team manager to add other friends to join this team or to search for a random team member in the server.

10. "Challenge details" is the list of challenges that each player must complete. Once the player is on this tab, they will be able to scroll through the carousel of images and videos to see how each challenge is done. When the player successfully does it from inside the game, it will be recorded in the app and marked as complete.

11. "Sessions" is a calendar scheduling tool so that random players who got paired up to play in a team can arrange a time to play that works for both players.

12. Team "public" or "private" status. Toggle controls discoverability in search and who can request to join.

13. Add "random teammate (s)". Populate team with random players.

14. Spec Ops "challenges". Overview of challenges in sequential order. View complete/incomplete challenge status. Brief description and carousel of instructional content (video/image).

15. Spec Ops detail view of individual challenge content.

16. Search for "public" Teams, challenge in progress. User can filter by challenge type, by "public" or "private" status.

17. User can send a request to join a public Team.

18. View and manage current Spec Ops Teams and challenge (User can only be on three Teams at once, Teams are max 4 / min 2 members, must be on team to perform challenge, challenge must be completed within 1 week). Expanded details include all Team member names and rank.

Lo-Fi Wireframes

Invites and Badges

Invites: Contains pending requests from other players and any requests that the player sends.

Achievements: Badges serve as rewards for completing Spec Ops.

INVITES
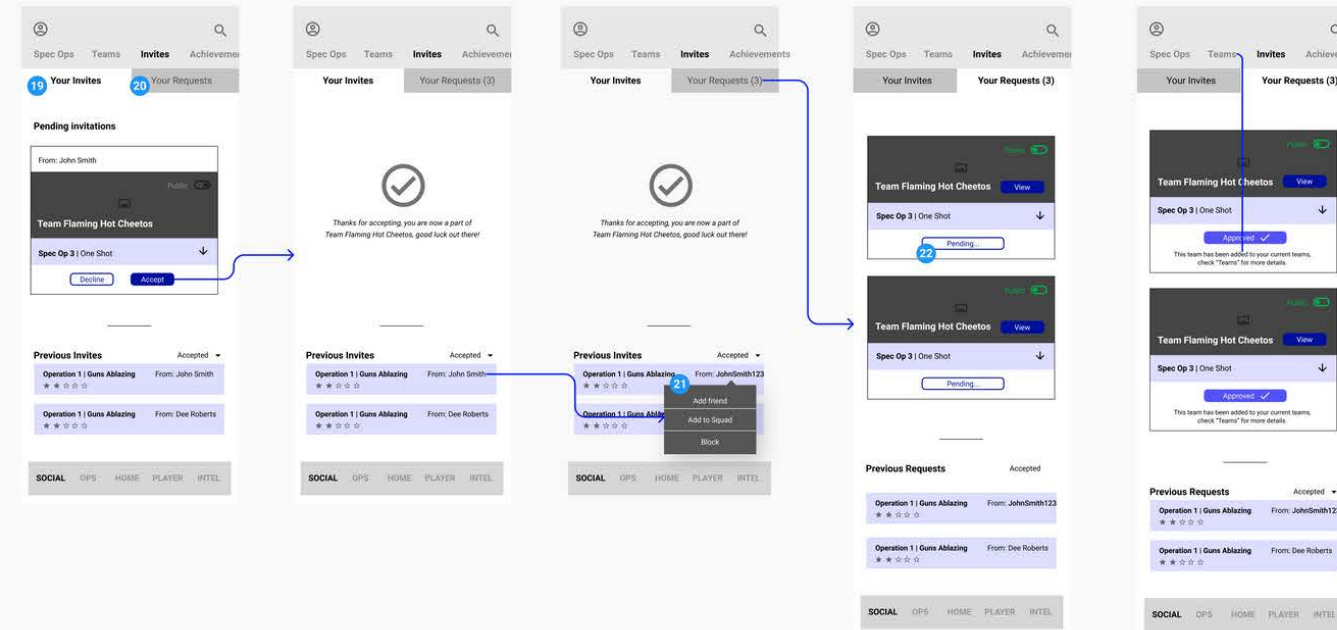
ACHIEVEMENTS
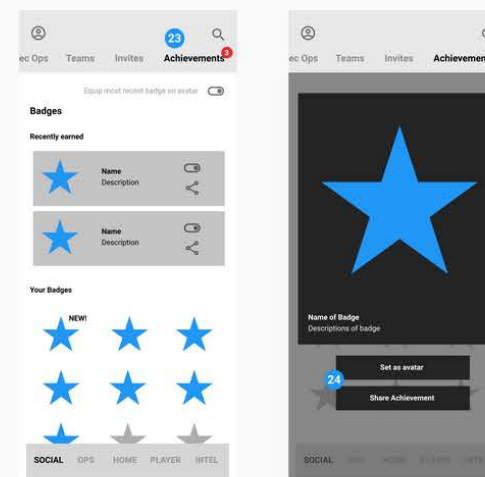
Annotations Cont.

19. Invites tab: view and manage invitations from other players. User can "accept" or "decline" pending invites. User can view previous invitations accepted/declined.

20. Requests tab, unselected

21. Add other players as friends, add player to squad or block players.

22. Request tab active. View status of requests sent to other players. Status of requests will be notified in the notifications menu

23. "Achievements". View achievement badges that were earned by completing challenges.

24. Each badge is clickable for an expanded detail view. User can "equip" to customize public avatar. Achievements shared in the app's normal feed.

Hi-Fi Wireframes

Main Screen and Tutorials

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After testing the lo-fi prototype with our participants, the first change that we needed to make was adding a series of onboarding pop-ups in order to help players understand how Spec Ops works.

MAIN SCREEN AND TUTORIAL OVERLAYS
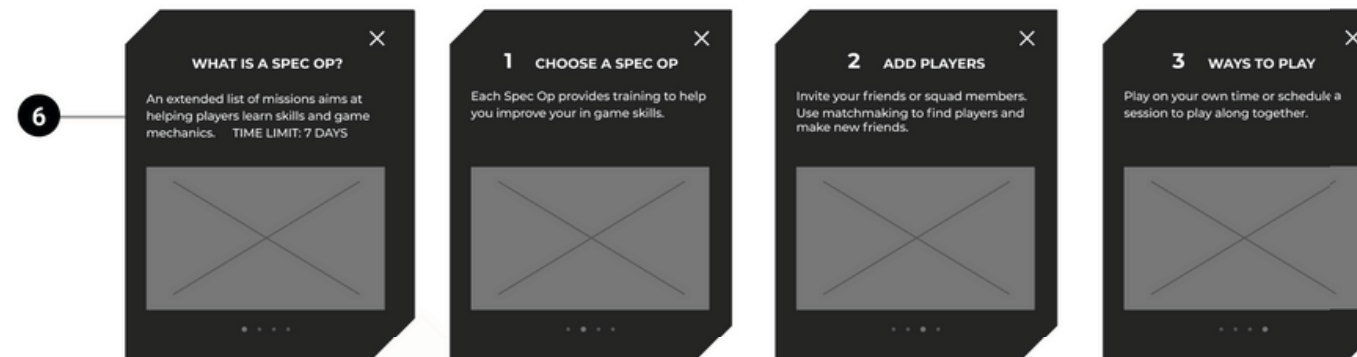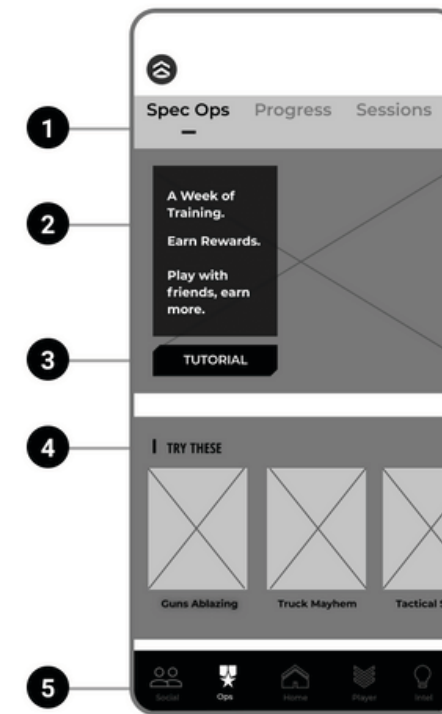
Main Screen

1 "Spec Ops" added to Ops subtab. Active tab indicator added beneath. Spec Ops "Progress" and "Sessions" tabs added to subtab.

2 Main aspects of Spec Ops explained over hero image.

3 Tutorial button triggers Spec Ops tutorial overlays.

4 Quick access to individual Spec Ops. Sidescrolling content is contextual.

5 Spec Ops is accessible from Ops in main nav.

Tutorial Overlays

6 Four swipeable modals which are paginated and can be exited by tapping the close "X".

Hi-Fi Wireframes

Spec Ops Progress Page

The Progress tab houses completion details for each Spec Op. Players can add others to join the mission, see how to complete each of the objectives, as well as what kind of rewards they will get once the Spec Op is completed.

PROGRESS

Progress

1. Spec Op player activity and content.
2. Selected Spec Op, with countdown.
3. Three sections can be expanded.
4. Button triggers countdown timer.
5. Expanded "Add Players" section.
6. Setting controls who else can see and join this Spec Op.
7. Search for other players to invite.
8. List of friends showing invite status.
9. Expanded "Objectives" section.
10. Spec Op difficulty and user ratings.
11. Objective video content.
12. Objective completion status indicator.
13. Expanded "Badges" section.
14. Earned and unearned Badges.
15. Progress tab, top level view.

Hi-Fi Wireframes

Badges Screen

We further designed the Badges screens to include how the badge was earned and with whom.

If the badge hasn't been acquired, the user can click on the button that takes them to the required Spec op.

BADGES SCREEN AND OVERLAYS
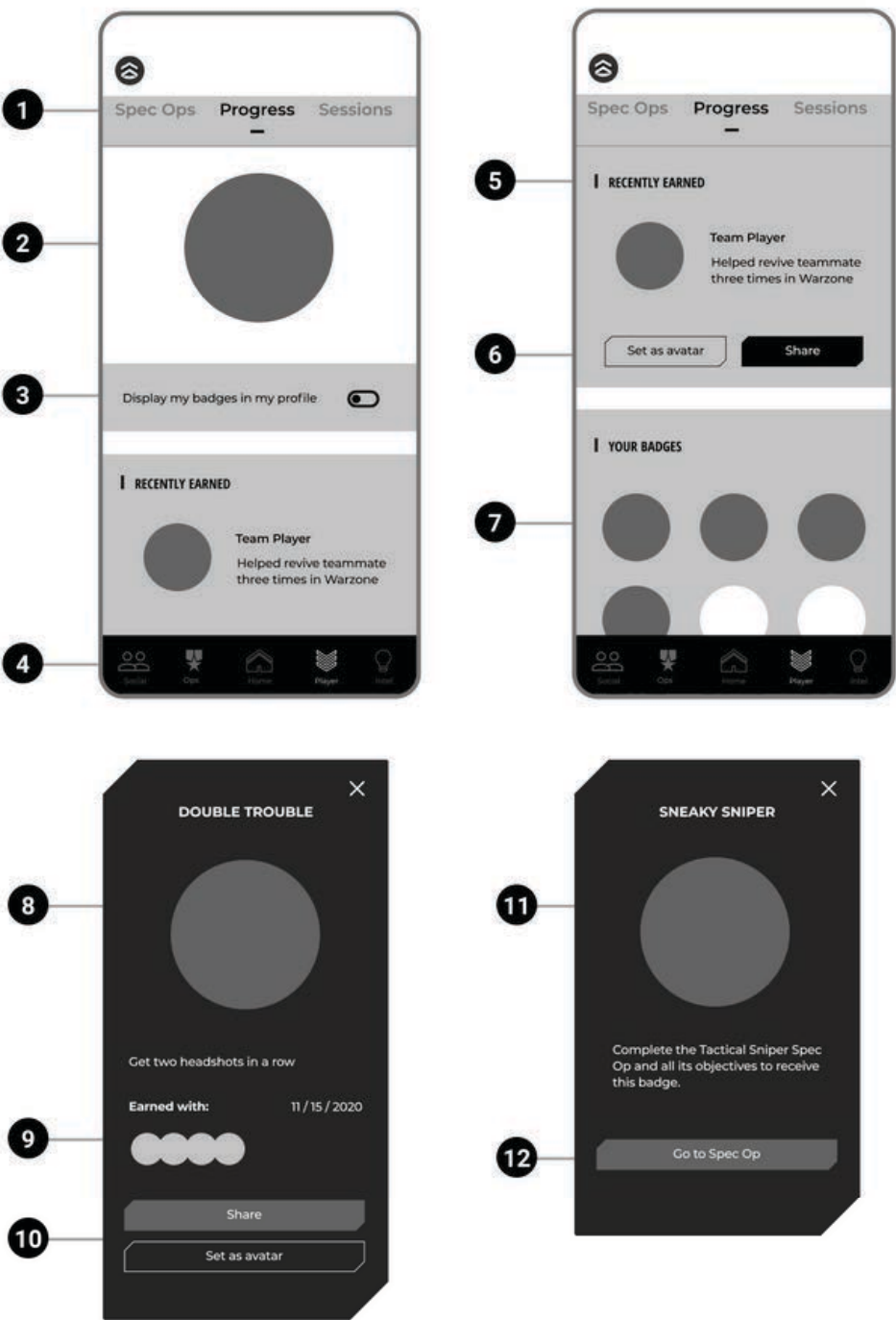
Badges

1. Spec Ops "Badges" added to Player subtab. Active tab indicator added.

2. Badge visual details.

3. Privacy toggle shows or hides public visibility of badges on profile.

4. "Badges" is accessible from main nav under Player.

5. "Recently Earned" badges section.

6. Buttons to display badge as player avatar, and social media sharing.

7. View and manage badges.

Tutorial Overlays

8. Earned badge overlay.

9. Players earned with and date earned.

10. Buttons to display badge as player avatar, and social media sharing.

11. Unearned badge overlay.

12. Button takes user to needed Spec Op.

Lo-Fi Interactive Prototype

Early rendition of the Spec Op management screen.

Hi-Fi Interactive Prototype

In the high fidelity prototype, the Tutorial button triggers a pop-up sequence showing the user how Spec Ops works.

Usability Results

Through a brainstorming exercise with sticky notes, we were able to summarize the results of the usability testing into three major insights.

Dimitri

No Onboarding, didn't understand early what it is.

Who is allowed? Can I invite someone without host

need to complete w/o host

Spec Ops ownership

Did not use Ops screen.

Spec Ops (what it is) is not seen

Critical information need to be on home page

Would use search if you can't find something. Last resort.

Spec ops on home screen needs description of one week, earn rewards.

Asynchronous nature unclear. "Play the game and complete challenges in-app for rewards.

Didn't understand sessions, thought it was a history of spec ops.

Confirmation for what happened is not clear.

See other people's platforms/ status

Who did I earn this with?

Progress check. information.

Would glance at the app to track progress.

"Slashes off challenges "

Jason

No Onboarding, didn't understand early what it is.

How am I using this while I play the game?

Unclear on asynchronous play

Am I playing the game while using the app?

Are the search global or local?

When not playing warzone and sees warzone reward. Don't understand what it is.

Was not clear that setting the badge is not changing the avatar.

What is random? random player you know or stranger?

Badges confusing, how does it work with Avatar?

Wants more info before starting

Wants to skip levels, suggested using recommended
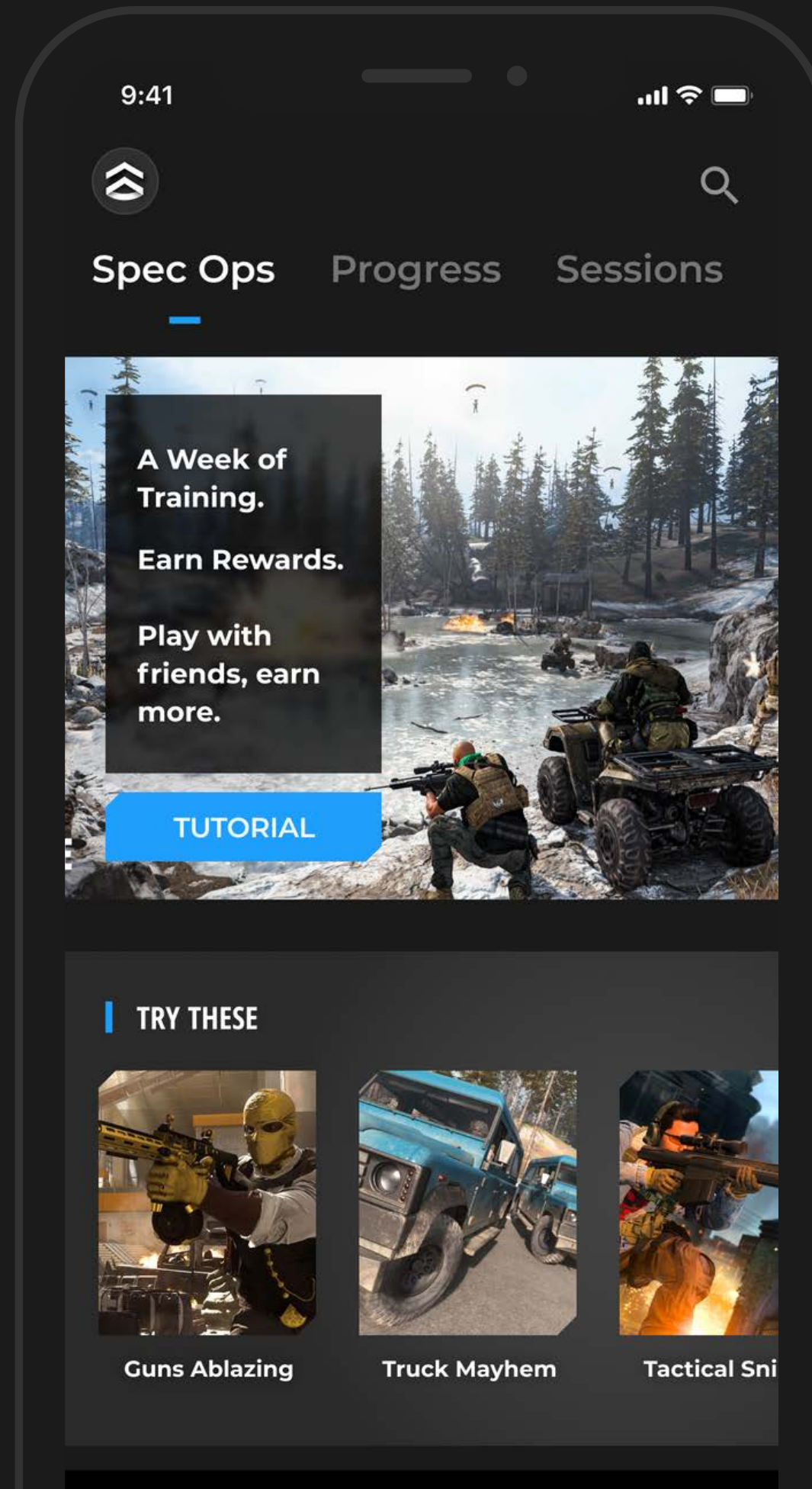
What other reasons to play Spec Ops?

Sarah

No Onboarding, didn't understand early what it is.

In general not knowing what to do

Unclear where spec ops were on the home screen

Thought speech bubble is welcome message

Confused by how to start experience (Battle Pass?)

Thought spec ops starts with battle pass

Schedule on badges was unclear to her

Like the idea of badges but would like them to be used in game too.

How would you get the badges that you don't have yet

How to earn badge information on badge page

Didn't know what schedule meant

What to do to earn badge?

(Aaron's insight) Showing which friends/teammate

Shara

Explores before tackling objectives.

Set as avatar is unclear, what happens?

Confirmation for what happened is not clear.

Too basic

Disintrested in reviews

Maybe say " joesmith and 100 other palyers completed "

Distracted by notifications

Wanted to play as teams

Bring Add friends closer to the top. Very Important to her.

Add player was too far down. Most important

//22

"Am I playing the game while I turn this on or…? So I'm not using this at the same time as playing…"

Most of our testers didn't fully grasp the Spec Ops concept early on. Even though Spec Ops is designed to help onboard people into Call of Duty, we neglected onboarding users to the app experience itself.

"It's better to play with other people. If I go into a challenge I want to make sure that option is there."

Social interaction is a shared motivator to play CoD among the participants we interviewed. Inviting friends was the most important thing they saw with an experience like this.

However, the ability to add players is hidden at the bottom of the Spec Ops page and isn't offered early enough for it to be universally comprehended by our participants.

"Is Joe Smith as good as he says he is? I wanna see how good he is, so I can then play with him"

Players sometimes use achievements for personal collection and completion purposes. Looking at other players, they're more motivated by seeing what achievements that they and others have accomplished in order to create a social connection.

ORGANIZATION

Clear organizational tactics had been deployed in order to effectively recruit participants and execute all project goals through remote collaboration.

OBJECTIVES

Our goal is to help out new players discover different game mechanics and to try out different things, while building social connections. We also considered the other ways we can display Spec Ops objectives for players to engage with rather than just providing videos.

TEAM SIZE AND OWNERSHIP

The inherent challenge of this feature is how to scale team size without making each spec op an oversized forum. One of our participants, Dimitri, asked, "What if the owner who started the spec op quits and how would that affect the rest of the team? How would the one who started the spec op transfer ownership if they decide to stop playing?"

EMPATHY

We were able to empathize with users through playing the game ourselves, as well as conducting interviews and usability testing; allowing us to understand their problems on a personal level.

SCHEDULING

Scheduling with friends was another topic that came up. This in itself is another feature we can explore and design so Call of Duty players from all over the world can coordinate, engage, and help each other out.

Reflections

01.Feature Matrix

Feature prioritization survey results PDF

02.Content Tonality Brief

Link to our full content strategy

03.Figma File

Here is the link to our Viewable Figma file.

Other Files

05. User Flow
06.Lo-Fi Wireframe PDF
07.Hi-Fi Wireframe PDF
08.Sitemap PNG
09.Usability Results PDF

10.Wireflow

04.Final Prototype

Spec Ops, or Special Operations, are missions, with a set of objectives, for players to complete within a week in order to get achievement badges, in-game rewards, or XP. Players can complete these by themselves, but this feature encourages them to play with others, whether to get an XP multiplier or cooperative-dependent badges. The main goal of Spec Ops is to help players, especially new players, become more familiar with playing Call of Duty with a unique onboarding experience while building connections with others.

Here is the link to our final prototype.

Appendix

link to the Gdrive folder containing all appendix items