

How the levels in ALLY
allow for fast paced strategic gameplay

In this document I will be going over my work process for creating the fast paced action packed levels that can be found in ALLY. I will touch upon how each level came to be and how I managed to make it a game about strategy despite how fast and chaotic it is.

Each level was centered around an interaction with a level event (examples of these can be seen in the pictures provided on my portfolio) such as the hammer. It was important for me to first decide what sort of hazard I would like to have in the level, if I had centered the levels around the platforms instead of the hazard the level would lose its edge. This would limit the type of events I could use and could destroy the chaotic gameplay I was striving for. With the Hammer in mind I set out to create a level around this knowing that we wanted most maps to be fairly small I then decided where the hammer should go. Considering that the level was small and the sort of gameplay that would be happening I deemed it best to use only one hammer and that it would be best placed in the center of the map. This would now divide the stage into two, With the dangers of the hammer constantly present players now had to be careful as to not get crushed by this giant device. Now I needed to create the platforms, Four were placed in the middle, two either side of the Interaction. This meant that the hammer itself could be used as a platform and would join both sides of the room allowing decent level flow. The only thing left on the agenda was to add in platforms in the bottom corners, without these two players would not be able to use any of the other platforms and the level could only be played on the ground floor.

For the type of game ALLY is, allowing opportunities for players to use strategy is a must. When designing ALLY I wanted to make it a game were players can always utilize comeback mechanics to achieve the upper hand on their opponent. Who wins would come down to who could think clearly in a frantic situation and then make the most of the environment around them. Taking another look at the hammer level, the hammer moves in increments, once it reaches the top it waits for three seconds and then plummets back down to the bottom of the stage. Players who take note of this can now use it to their advantage, they could try and trick other players into walking under it or use it to block enemy projectiles at the last second. How players moved around this interaction was the key to who was most likely to win.

Another level to look at is the crumbling blocks, these blocks disappear when hit but will reappear after so much time has elapsed. Players could drop in from more or less anywhere and take an enemy by surprise. On the other hand, if a player is dropping in from above, others could use this opportunity to escape or turn around and take advantage of the split second of vulnerability the falling player would be subjected to. In the end it all comes down to how the player can deal with these chaotic situations.

The majority of the levels that can be found within ALLY required players to take in to account the time of the interactions, the layout of the platforms and routes, their enemies locations and their own characters abilities. With all the elements combined this made ALLY a game were those who could keep a level head and strategize had the greatest chance of coming out on top. The level of skill to master ALLY was high but the level of skill required to play was low, this was a pick up and play game for anyone who wanted to join in. Although those that could adapt and could use what was given to them effectively, would hold the highest chance of success.