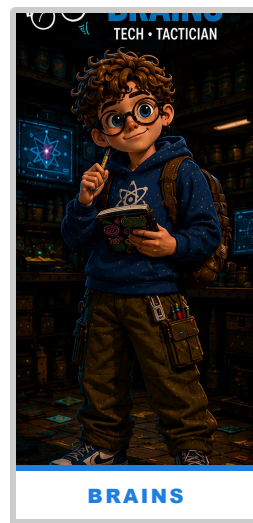
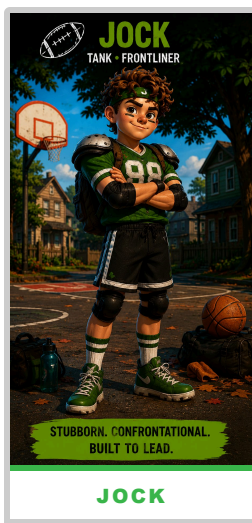




A LATE-90S SUBURBAN BATTLE ROYALE

# Cul-de-Sac Royale

*What if the last great summer of childhood was also a battle royale?*



Kids scatter into a cul-de-sac block, scavenge and craft with improvised neighborhood gear, and funnel back to where they started for a final fight under the streetlights. A class is not a loadout – it is **how a kid solves a problem**. If two classes solve a fight the same way, one of them is wrong.

Gather in the cul-de-sac

- a whistle blows, everyone scatters into the block
- scavenge & claim yard-specific gear
- the curfew boundary forces convergence
- the final fight happens back in the cul-de-sac, under the streetlights.

## THE NON-NEGOTIABLE IDENTITY

Every match starts and ends in the same physical place. This bookend is not a mode detail – it is the structural identity of the game.

### The bar it must clear

Feature-completeness is necessary, not sufficient.

**“Does this feel like neighborhood war when you were ten?”**

### Prototype scope

- Backyard Royale, solo + duo
- 16 players (bots fill)
- One block, one curfew boundary
- 5 classes – passive + active
- No progression, no ranked

## PILLAR 1

### Every kid feels authentic

A class is a whole approach to problems, not a loadout. Identity over role.

## PILLAR 4

### Competition stays lighthearted

Reads as play-fighting. No gore, humiliation, profanity, or mean-spirited punishment.

## PILLAR 2

### The neighborhood is a character

Trading on a porch, a lemonade stand, a treehouse – not sterile menu grids.

## PILLAR 5

### Discovery rewards curiosity

Shortcuts, hidden NPCs, secret hangouts. Optimization helps; curiosity matters.

## PILLAR 3

### Movement is playful before competitive

Vaulting fences, creek shortcuts, roofs and ziplines feel good with no one chasing.

#### THIS PROJECT IS

- ▶ Suburban, late-90s
- ▶ Stylized & tactile
- ▶ Socially playful
- ▶ Competitive, not cruel
- ▶ Readable at a glance

#### THIS PROJECT IS NOT

- ▶ A military shooter
- ▶ A grim survival game
- ▶ A sterile esports
- ▶ A menu-first RPG
- ▶ A pure sandbox

CLASS	EXPRESSION	ROLE LABEL
Jock	Force	Tank / Frontliner
Cheerleader	Momentum	Support / Motivator
Joker	Movement	Agile / Trickster
Brains	Preparation	Tech / Tactician
Outcast	Opportunity	Rogue / Strategist

# The Gameplay Loop

---

## MOMENT-TO-MOMENT

- ▶ **Read the yard** – loot, routes, hazards, cover, opponents. Claim, leave, hide, craft, or contest.
- ▶ **Move through the neighborhood** – sprint, climb, vault, cut through yards. Movement feels good before combat.
- ▶ **Scavenge & improvise** – craft only when it creates a meaningful choice.
- ▶ **Spend stamina deliberately** – the main combat rhythm, not just a movement meter.
- ▶ **Use class identity** – force, tempo, bait, prepare, or punish.
- ▶ **React to the curfew boundary** – bedtime pressure pushes players inward, not a lethal storm.
- ▶ **Resolve the final fight** – the streetlights are the climax beat, not a second sudden-death system.

### Early hook — 10 minutes in

Tests whether the game grabs someone fast, independent of match length.

“That felt like playing neighborhood war when I was ten.”

### End-of-match payoff

The streetlights climax should feel like the tension of the whole match paying off – confirming what the player was feeling, not cutting it short.

## SESSION LOOP — THE HUB

Arrive in the cul-de-sac hub → daily challenge from the Paperboy → queue Backyard Royale → play → return with cosmetics/currency → visit NPC vendors (Ice Cream Truck, Garage Kid, Lemonade Stand) → queue again. Progression signals **identity, not power** – cosmetics and titles only, never pay-to-win.

# JOCK

Stubborn. Confrontational. Built to lead.



*"How do I force my way through?"*

## ROLE IN BACKYARD ROYALE

The pressure class. Forces fights when others prefer delay, setup, ambush, or escape. More threatening in the final collapse as escape routes shrink.

## COUNTERPLAY

Joker baits his commitment with Fake Out. Brains makes him spend stamina first. Outcast prefers him already tired – but Tough resists exhaustion hunting.

SLOT	DESIGN
Passive	<b>Tough</b> – reduced knockback, faster stamina recovery post-exhaustion, +1 heavy item carry.
Active	<b>Shoulder Check</b> – short charge, knockback, breaks weak barricades, high stamina cost.
Start	Juice Box

<b>STAM COST</b> 35	<b>CHARGE</b> 0.6S	<b>COOLDOWN</b> 12S
----------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------

## STRENGTHS

- ▶ Direct engagement
- ▶ Stamina-trade advantage
- ▶ Breaks weak barricades
- ▶ Carries heavy items
- ▶ Protects duo teammates

## WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Predictable commitment
- ▶ High stamina costs
- ▶ Weak at deception
- ▶ Less crafting / prep
- ▶ Kited if he overcommits

## VISUAL LANGUAGE

Green theme, football silhouette, shoulder pads, athletic shoes, confident crossed-arm stance. Backyard sports gear, not military armor.

## DESIGN GUARDRAIL

Balanced, readable, distinct. Identity never overlaps another class.

# CHEERLEADER

Bright. Energetic. Everyone's hype girl.



SLOT	DESIGN
Passive	<b>Second Wind</b> – stamina regenerates sooner after actions; identical in solo and teams.
Active	<b>Pep Rally</b> – 10s faster stamina regen, reduced costs, faster interactions, reduced flinch. Self-only solo, allies too in teams.
Start	PB&J Sandwich, Walkie-Talkie

**STAM COST**  
20

**DURATION**  
10S

**COOLDOWN**  
25S

## STRENGTHS

- ▶ Stamina recovery
- ▶ Interaction speed
- ▶ Team tempo
- ▶ Revives in team modes
- ▶ Stays functional through repeated actions

## WEAKNESSES

- ▶ No direct damage bonus
- ▶ Average duelist
- ▶ Lower burst than Jock
- ▶ Less prep than Brains
- ▶ Less ambush payoff than Outcast

“How do I keep everyone performing at their best?”

## ROLE IN BACKYARD ROYALE

Survives by keeping options available – sprint, climb, heal, revive, or disengage sooner than others. In duo, stabilizes a teammate without becoming mandatory.

## COUNTERPLAY

Can out-tempo Jock but should not out-duel him. Broad-but-shallow tempo; never gets Brains' resource-generation identity.

## VISUAL LANGUAGE

Pink theme, megaphone / pom-poms, expressive pose, bright backpack. Energy without combat aggression. Support / Motivator – never Healer or Medic.

## DESIGN GUARDRAIL

Balanced, readable, distinct. Identity never overlaps another class.

# JOKER

Quick-witted. Unpredictable. Always a step ahead.



*“How do I outposition everyone?”*

## ROLE IN BACKYARD ROYALE

The active opener – creates mistakes live. Strongest when the player reads routes and enemy commitment. Speed is the output; misdirection is the identity.

## COUNTERPLAY

Pairs with Outcast: Joker manufactures the whiff, Outcast punishes the aftermath. Never just ‘the fast class’.

SLOT	DESIGN
Passive	<b>Flow</b> – continuous movement builds speed, resets on damage. Parkour momentum, not board momentum.
Active	<b>Fake Out</b> – feint / dodge-cancel; opponents who commit and miss take a stamina penalty; Joker gets a brief speed burst.
Start	Rope

<b>STAM COST</b> 15	<b>DODGE WIN</b> 0.45	<b>COOLDOWN</b> 85
----------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------

## STRENGTHS

- ▶ Route chaining
- ▶ Repositioning
- ▶ Baiting attacks
- ▶ Avoiding stamina trades
- ▶ Escaping collapse

## WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Flow resets on damage
- ▶ Lower pressure than Jock
- ▶ Less prep than Brains
- ▶ Less finish than Outcast
- ▶ Fragile if cornered

## VISUAL LANGUAGE

Yellow theme, smile iconography, cap / streetwear, movement-ready shoes, trickster body language. Playful, not rebellious. No skateboard – traversal is on foot.

## DESIGN GUARDRAIL

Balanced, readable, distinct. Identity never overlaps another class.

# BRAINS

*Inquisitive. Curious. Knowledge is power.*



SLOT	DESIGN
Passive	<b>Resourceful</b> – finds extra resources, crafts faster.
Active	<b>Quick Build</b> – instant-craft one gadget if materials are available.
Start	Flashlight, AA Battery, Tape

<b>STAM COST</b> 0	<b>BUILD</b> INSTANT	<b>COOLDOWN</b> 45S
---------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------

### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Crafting
- ▶ Resource efficiency
- ▶ Battery value
- ▶ Information control
- ▶ Trap & gadget setup

### WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Weaker when surprised
- ▶ Needs materials to shine
- ▶ Less pressure than Jock
- ▶ Less escape than Joker
- ▶ Less burst than Outcast

*“How do I create an advantage before the fight?”*

### ROLE IN BACKYARD ROYALE

Wins before the fight. Looks at a yard and sees craft options, battery value, line-of-sight control, and ways to make enemies spend stamina before combat.

CUL-DE-SAC ROYALE – DESIGN BIBLE  
**COUNTERPLAY**

Builds the plan; Outcast steals the prize. Cheerleader out-

### VISUAL LANGUAGE

Blue theme, glasses, notebook / gadget, tool pouch, garage / science-fair flavor. Called Brains, not Nerd – many flavors fit under it.

CLASSES  
**DESIGN GUARDRAIL**      PROTOTYPE V0.1 • INTERNAL

Balanced, readable, distinct. Identity never overlaps

# OUTCAST

Quiet. Independent. Doesn't obey.



*"How do I steal yours?"*

## ROLE IN BACKYARD ROYALE

Wins during the fight, not before it. Thrives when two players already fought, a target is exhausted, someone overcommits, or a route can be sabotaged.

## CUL-DE-SAC ROYALE – DESIGN BIBLE COUNTERPLAY

Waits for openings and cashes them in – the counterpart to

SLOT	DESIGN
Passive	Opportunist – faster looting, bonus damage vs. exhausted opponents, faster sabotage.
Active	Smoke Bomb – vision-blocking cloud for escape or ambush.
Start	Firecracker

**STAM  
COST**  
20

**DURATION**  
6S

**RADIUS**  
4M

## STRENGTHS

- ▶ Ambushes
- ▶ Fast looting
- ▶ Sabotage
- ▶ Third-partying fights
- ▶ Punishing exhausted players

## WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Weak vs. players who avoid exhaustion
- ▶ Needs timing
- ▶ Less pressure than Jock
- ▶ Less tempo than Cheerleader
- ▶ Less proactive setup than Brains

## VISUAL LANGUAGE

Purple theme, black hoodie, independent stance, subtle punk / goth edge, graffiti / sticker iconography. Quiet confidence, not melodrama.

## CLASSES DESIGN GUARDRAIL

Balanced, readable, distinct. Identity never overlaps

# Mode — Backyard Royale

Kids gather in the cul-de-sac, scatter across one suburban block, improvise with neighborhood gear, and get forced back home by the curfew boundary. Last kid or team standing wins under the streetlights.

SETTING	VALUE
Player count	16
Queues	Solo + Duo
Match target	30 min
Map size	One block
Classes	5 (passive + active)
AI fill	Simple bots

## PACING BASELINE

PHASE	TIME	MOOD
Gather + scatter	0:00	Full map
First shrink	9:00	Golden hour
Second shrink	18:00	Dusk, flashlights
Final shrink	24:00	Min size
Streetlights	28:30	Climax

## MATCH STRUCTURE

- ▶ **1 • The Gathering** — shared pre-match space; emotes, staging, walk-together.
- ▶ **2 • Scatter** — whistle blows; 10s grace, no damage; looting & positioning live.
- ▶ **3 • The Block** — scavenge, craft, contest yards, hide, bait, choose fights.
- ▶ **4 • Curfew Collapse** — boundary shrinks toward the cul-de-sac. Bedtime pressure, not sci-fi storm.
- ▶ **5 • Cul-de-Sac Finale** — final fight where the match began, under the streetlights.

## HOUSE IDENTITIES

HOUSE	LOOT LEAN
Sports House	Sports gear, food
Workshop House	Batteries, Tape, Metal
Family House	Food, supplies
Overgrown House	Stealth-friendly

Landmarks double as callouts: Red Swing Set, Giant Oak, Treehouse, Blue Garage, Park Gate.

# Combat & Economy

Backyard Royale runs on **Health + Stamina**. Health decides elimination; stamina decides tactical pressure – sprinting, climbing, vaulting, dodging, heavy swings, and abilities all draw from it. (Draft values, not final balance.)

## PLAYER BASELINE

VALUE	DRAFT
Max Health	100
Max Stamina	100
Stamina regen (out of combat)	8 / s
Sprint	4 / s
Climb	6 / s
Vault	10
Dodge	15
Heavy swing	12

## PROTOTYPE CRAFTING RECIPES

OUTPUT	INPUTS
Club (upgraded)	Wood x2, Tape x1
Slingshot	Wood x1, Metal x1
Firecracker	Metal x1, Tape x1
Alarm Clock	Tape x1, Metal x1
Rope → Zipline	Wood x1, Metal x1
Flashlight (repaired)	Metal x1, AA Battery x1

## WEAPON & THROWABLE DAMAGE

ITEM	DAMAGE
Club	18
Slingshot	14
Rock	12

## GROUNDING METER

Outside the curfew boundary, the meter fills over **5s**; once full it deals **5 Health/s** until the player returns or is eliminated. Diegetic VO carries the warning (“Hey!” → “Come back!” → “You’re too far!”), not on-screen text.

## LOOT SLICE & LIFETIMES

CATEGORY	V0.1
Resources	Wood, Metal
Weapons	Club, Slingshot
Throwables	Rock, Firecracker
Gadgets	RC Car, Alarm Clock
Permanent	Rope → Zipline
Consumables	Juice Box, Candy

**Permanent objects:** server-authoritative, fixed anchors only, max 3 concurrent per match. No free placement in prototype.

## LOCKED TECHNICAL STACK

DECISION	CHOICE
Engine	Unreal Engine 5.8
Ability system	GAS-lite (scoped)
Networking	Dedicated server, authoritative
Session	Epic Online Services
Rig	UE5 Mannequin / IK Rig
Shading	UE5.8 Toon Shader; Substrate fallback
Camera	3rd-person free-look cone, $\pm 70^\circ$
HUD	Minimal: Health / Stamina / Grounded

**Combat:** server-authoritative hit detection + client prediction.  
Melee = physical collision; ranged = server-validated projectile.

## SERVER OWNS (AUTHORITATIVE)

- ▶ Health, Stamina, ability validation & cooldowns
- ▶ Hit confirmation, item pickup, inventory, crafting
- ▶ Curfew boundary & Grounded Meter damage
- ▶ Permanent-object activation, bot state, victory

## BOTS — SIMPLE BEHAVIOR TREE

MoveToLoot → Engage → Flee. No crafting in v0.1.

## DATA SCHEMA & NAMING

ItemData + AbilityData DataAssets. IDs are dot-namespaced lowercase: `item.weapon.club`, `ability.joker.fakeout`.  
Blueprints: `BP_Item_Club`, `BP_Ability_Joker_FakeOut`.

### Hard guardrails — flag, don't silently decide

- ▶ Permanent world objects stay server-authoritative, fixed-anchor, hard cap of 3 concurrent.
- ▶ Item catalog scoped to the ~20-item vertical slice, not the full catalog.
- ▶ Open Questions in /docs get surfaced in chat before any default is implemented.