



Honorable Intentions: Player Behavior Today at Riot Games

Dr. Kimberly Voll, @zanytomato
Senior Technical Designer, Riot Games

TI-99/4A
computer

QUIT



PHM 3112

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

SOLID STATE
PARSEC



G A M E S

— OUR MISSION —

WE ASPIRE

TO BE THE MOST

PLAYER

FOCUSED

GAME COMPANY IN THE

WORLD



Honorable Intentions:

Player Behavior Today at Riot Games

1. *We Were Here: Introduction*
2. *Case Study: Designing Honor*
3. *Design Takeaways*



We Were Here:

INTRODUCTION



Let's go back in time two years:

*“We’ve made improvements!
Things are better...”*

...right?”

- Us, basically

Except players were still telling us
something was wrong... :/

This was happening in game



Dumbass team

STFU trash

Grow a fuking brain

THANKS FOR THE DEMOTION GAME

I looked at your match history – don't f this up like you always do
at least fathers day isnt my most confusing holiday :)

Ur a backpack lmao

???

...

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING???

Blind as fuck


By ur spelling u uneducated

Why don't you learn to play before you play ranked?

How about you uninstall until you've played a 1000 more games

I think I actually hate you :(





some
considerations
before we start

geht uns alle an

The T Word

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a yellow and black striped surface, possibly a traffic cone or a safety vest. A green stripe runs diagonally across the upper right portion of the image. In the top right corner, there is a logo consisting of a yellow stylized 'A' shape above a black banner with white text, and a green banner below it.

geht uns alle an

Disruptive Behaviour



FORE!

*What players
do in a game.*

BANNED!



The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape. In the upper half, there are misty mountains under a dim, orange-hued sky. The lower half shows a dense forest of dark evergreen trees. In the foreground and midground, there are ruins of ancient stone structures, including walls and pillars, some of which are partially covered in moss or ivy. There are some glowing blue energy sources or portals scattered throughout the scene, particularly near the ruins and in the forest. The overall mood is mysterious and ancient.

What we're **not** trying to change:

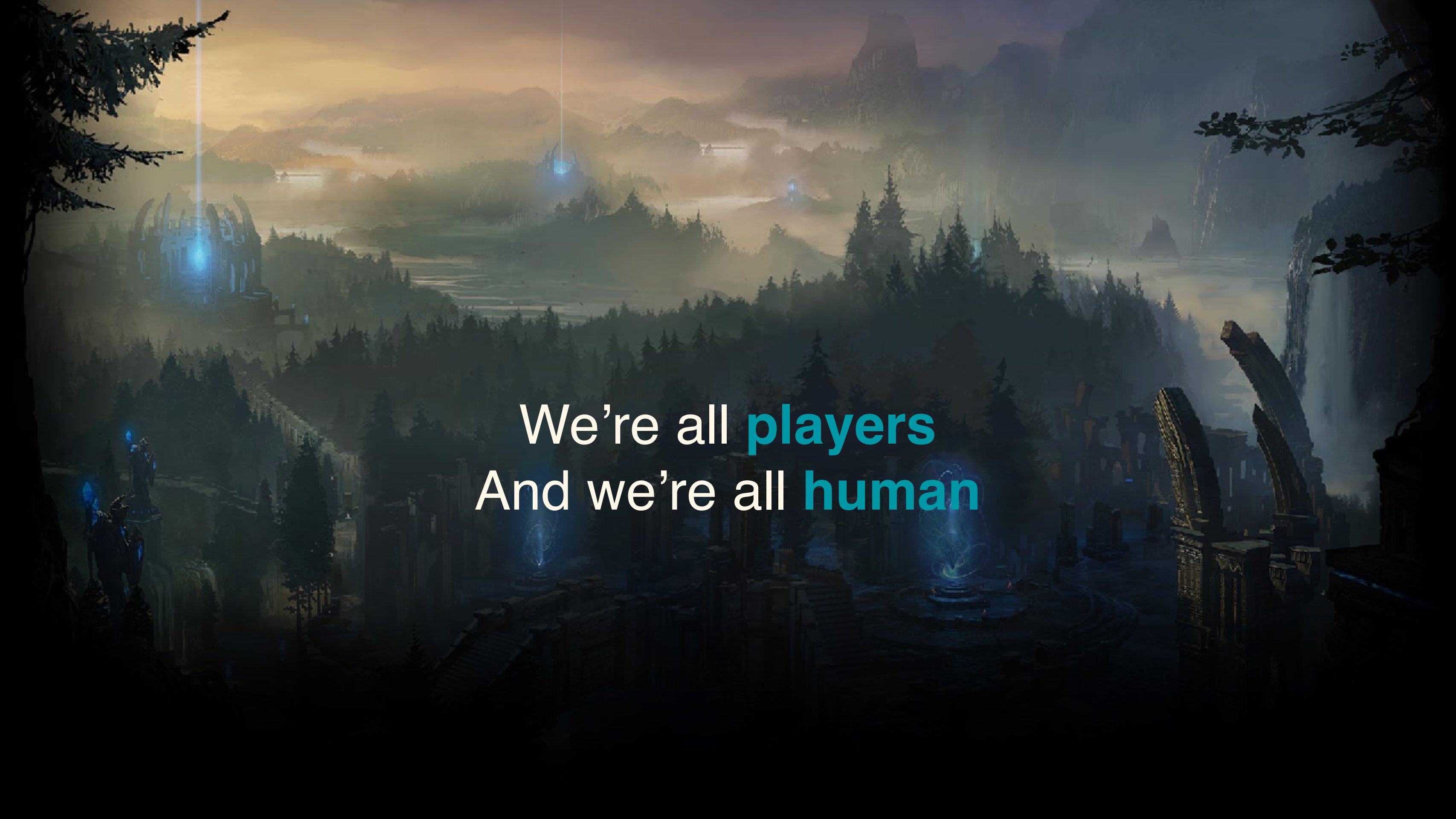
Personality
State of the world

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains, forests, and glowing blue structures. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light source in the upper left corner. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a large, dark structure with a glowing blue light. In the middle ground, there are more trees and a body of water. In the background, there are mountains and a large, glowing blue structure. The overall mood is mysterious and ethereal.


There is a lot we can do
when we empathize with why

The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features misty mountains, dense forests, and several glowing blue structures or ruins. A bright blue light source is visible on the left, casting a beam of light upwards. The overall tone is mysterious and ethereal.

Understand **how** & **why**
disruptive behaviour emerges
and **modify** or **accommodate**
through our designs

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains, forests, and glowing blue structures. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow from the sky on the left. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a path leading into the distance. In the middle ground, there are several glowing blue structures, including a large, ornate building on the left and a smaller, more modern structure in the center. The background features misty, rolling hills and a large, jagged mountain peak. The overall mood is mysterious and ethereal.

We're all **players**
And we're all **human**

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains, forests, and glowing blue structures. The scene is set at dusk or dawn, with a warm, orange glow on the horizon. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a path leading into the distance. In the middle ground, there are several glowing blue structures, including a large, ornate building on the left and smaller, more distant structures. The background features misty, rolling mountains and a body of water. The overall mood is mysterious and ethereal.

And finally...

None of this is prescriptive



DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Encouragement

Consequences

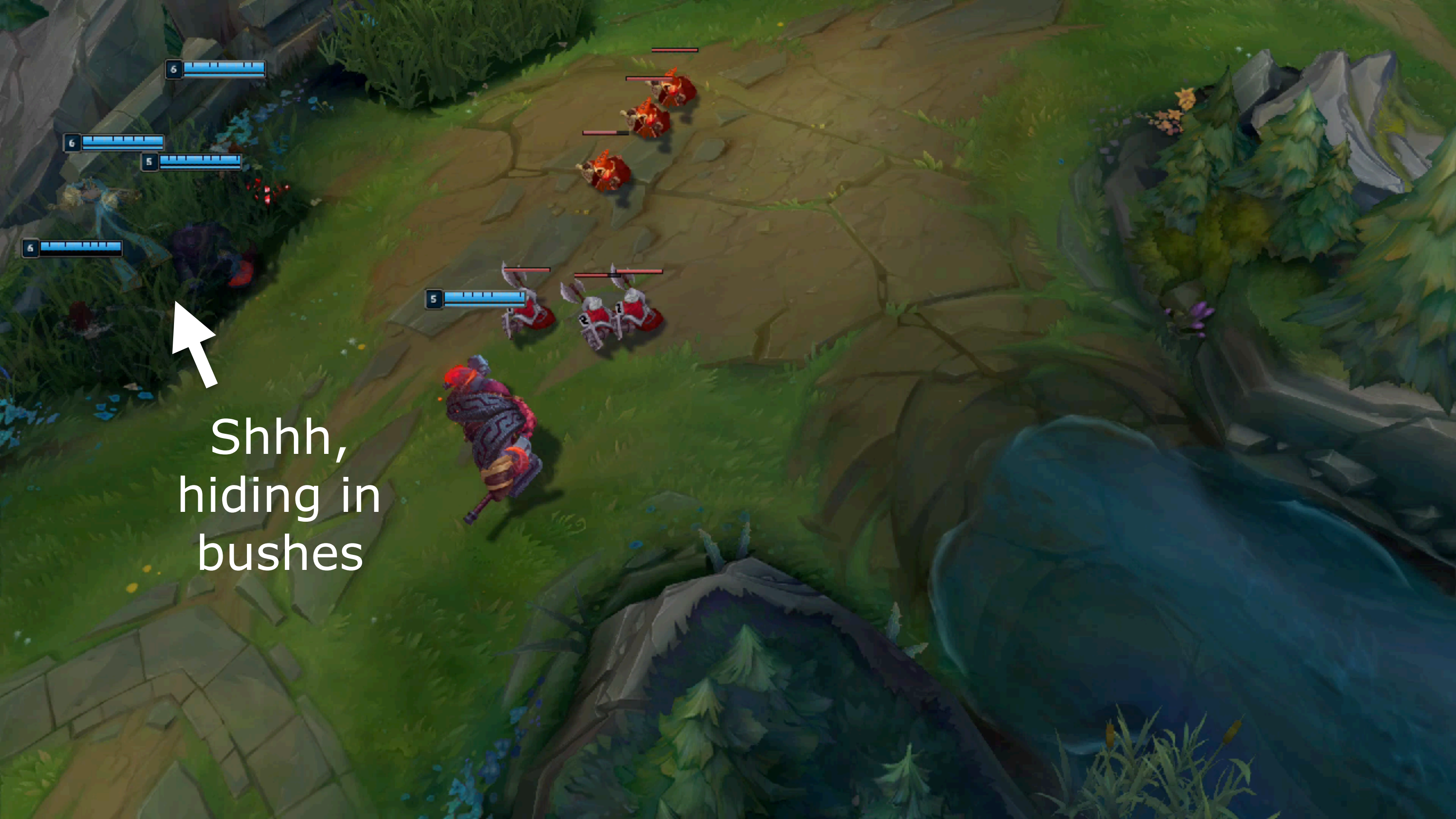
Environment



case study:
DESIGNING HONOR

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS





Shhh,
hiding in
bushes

Intense / high stakes
Difficult communication
Varied expectations
Teamwork...is hard



You vs. your team

The background of the slide is a composite of League of Legends artwork. The top half shows a misty, mountainous landscape at dawn or dusk, with a small blue glowing orb in the center. The bottom half shows a dark, forested area with ancient ruins and a blue glowing orb. The text is overlaid on a dark grey rectangular box in the center.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS: 2016

Encouragement *F*

Consequences *B-*

Environment *D*

The background of the slide is a composite of League of Legends artwork. The top half features a misty, mountainous landscape at dawn or dusk, with a small blue glowing orb in the center. The bottom half shows a dark, forested area with ancient ruins and a blue magical energy swirling in the air. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangle is centered over the image, containing the title text.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS: 2016

Encouragement

Consequences

Environment 

A photograph of two esports players from the Counter Logic Gaming team. They are wearing black jerseys with the team's logo and 'COUNTERLOGIC GAMING' text. The player in the foreground is wearing glasses and is shaking hands with fans. The player in the background is also shaking hands with fans. The setting appears to be a gaming convention or esports event, with a large 'NAG' logo visible in the background and a crowd of people in the distance.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The background image shows a dimly lit esports arena. In the foreground, a young man with glasses and a dark jersey is looking down. Behind him, another player is visible. To the right, a crowd of spectators is seen, some with their hands raised. The scene is illuminated by blue and white stage lights, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

Sportsmanship is the
spirit or **intent** of the game


It keeps us focused on the game and
competing fairly

A photograph of two male curlers from Norway, wearing red jerseys and red, white, and blue diamond-patterned pants. They are on an ice rink, sweeping the ice with brooms. A curling stone is visible on the ice between them. The image has been edited with three speech bubbles containing humorous text.

**Hurry
hard!!**

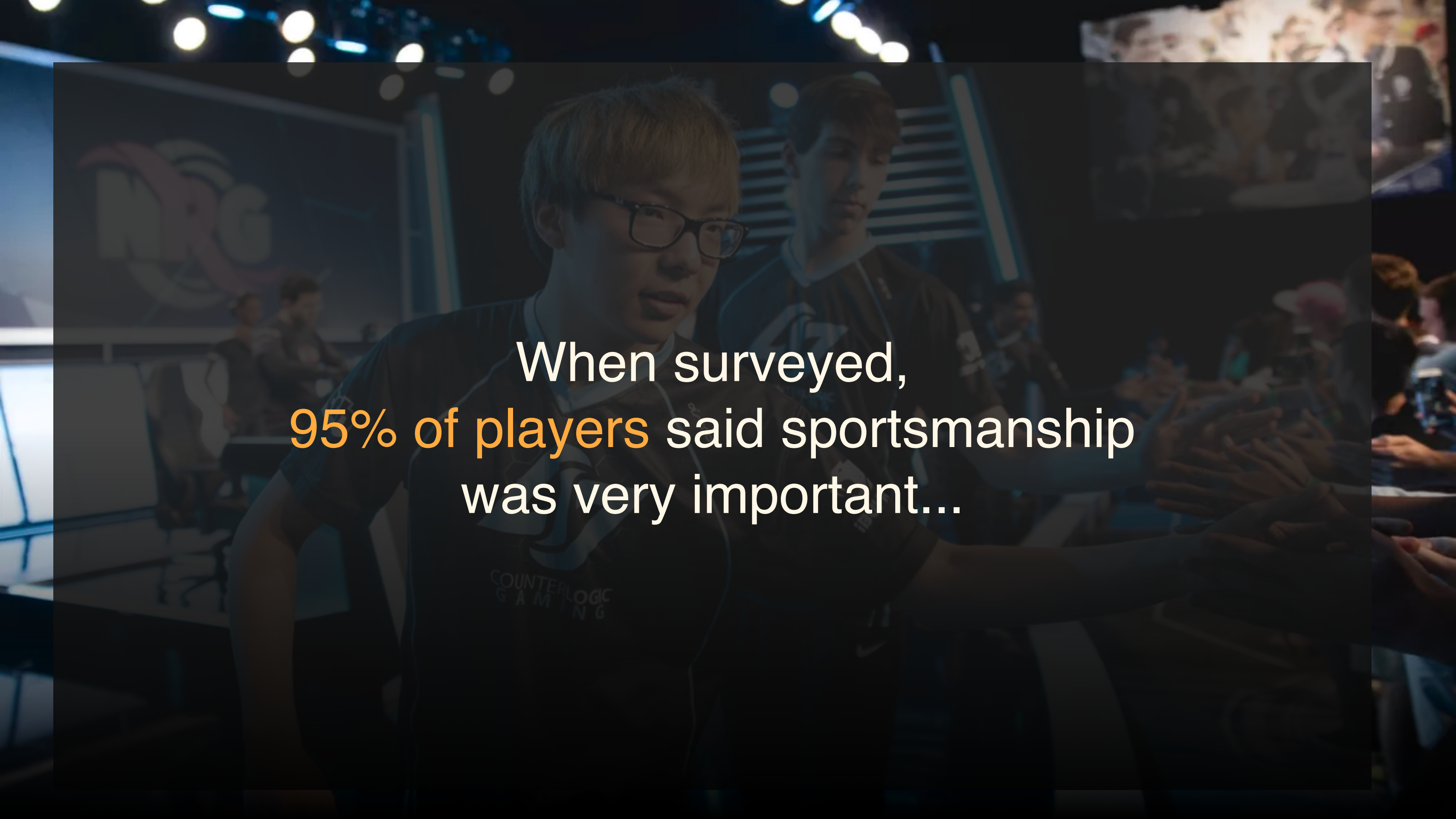
**STFU,
trash!**

**But...we're on
the same team
:_(**

A young man with glasses and a team jersey is participating in a hand-stack ceremony. He is surrounded by other team members, and their hands are being stacked on top of each other. The background is a dimly lit esports arena with blue and white lights and a large screen displaying a game.

A sportsmanlike player...

Team oriented
Resilience
Positive attitude
Respect
Responsibility

The background image shows a dimly lit esports arena. In the foreground, a young man with glasses and a dark t-shirt with 'COUNTERLOGIC GAMING' on it is looking towards the right. Behind him, another player is visible. To the right, a large group of hands is raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is filled with spectators and bright stage lights.

When surveyed,
95% of players said sportsmanship
was very important...

A young man with glasses and light brown hair is in the foreground, wearing a black Counter Logic Gaming (CLG) jersey. He is part of a group of people, likely a team, who are all reaching their hands out to form a huddle. The background is a dimly lit esports arena with blue and white lights, and other people are visible in the distance. The text "...and we weren't doing enough to promote sportsmanship" is overlaid on the image in white and orange font.

...and we weren't doing enough to
promote sportsmanship

The background of the slide is a composite of League of Legends artwork. The top half shows a misty, mountainous landscape at dawn or dusk, with a small blue glowing orb in the center. The bottom half shows a dark, forested area with ancient ruins and a blue glowing orb. The text is overlaid on a dark grey rectangular box in the upper middle.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS: 2016

Encouragement ⚡

Consequences

Environment



Honor System © 2012

Peer Recognition





Congratulations!



Your fellow Summoners have honored you for your recent exemplary behavior!

[+1] Friendly

[+4] Teamwork

[+1] Honorable Opponent

Learn more about the [Honor Initiative](#)

Category Badges

Congratulations!

You have been recognized as one of the most positive team players in League of Legends. You're a strong, cooperative player and a shining example of good sportsmanship.

[Click here for more information](#)

Close





League **without** Honor



League **without** Honor

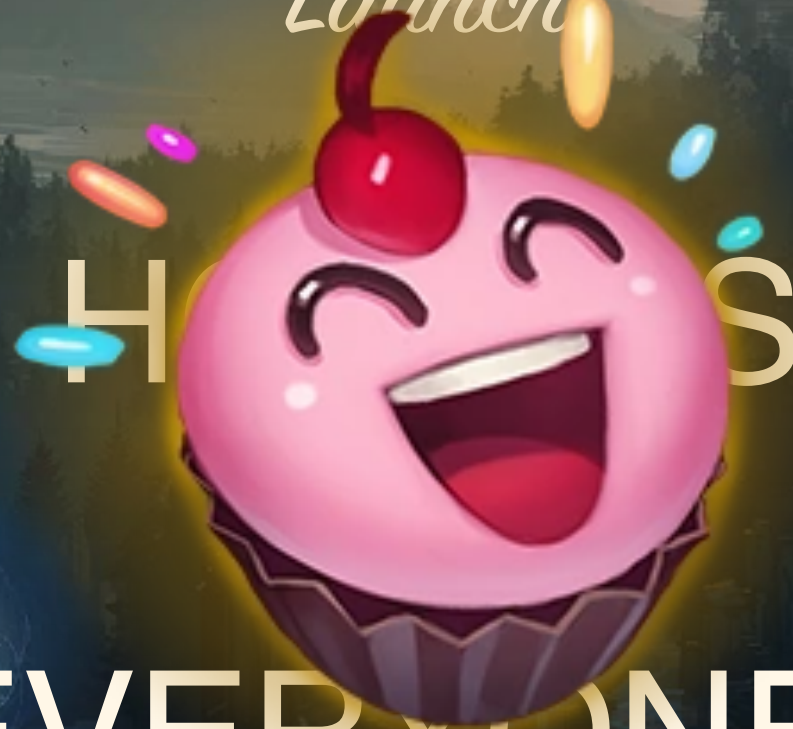


League **WITH** Honor

So what happened?

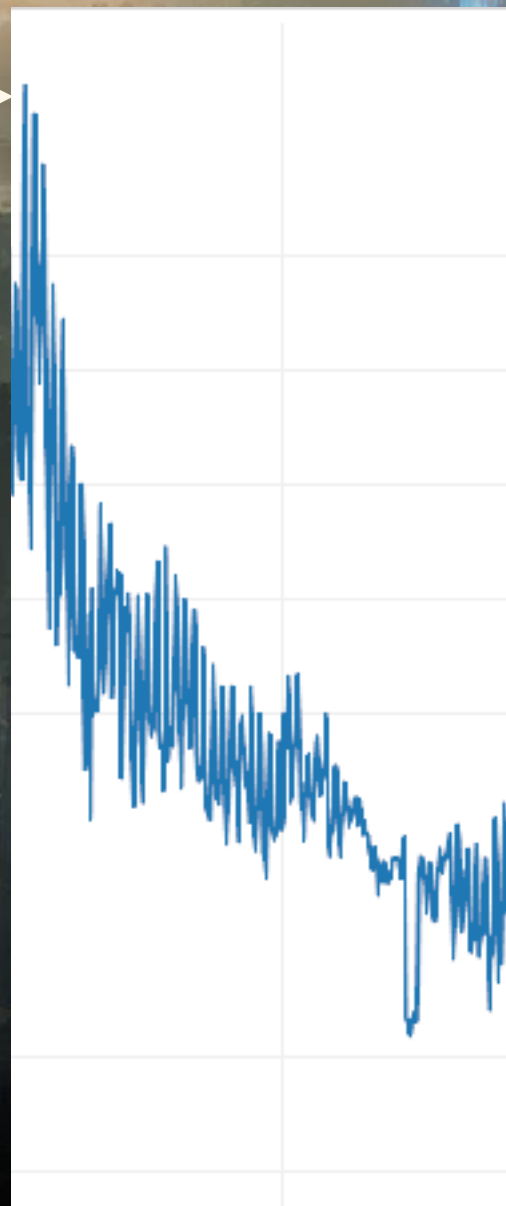
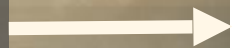


Launch



EVERYONE!!

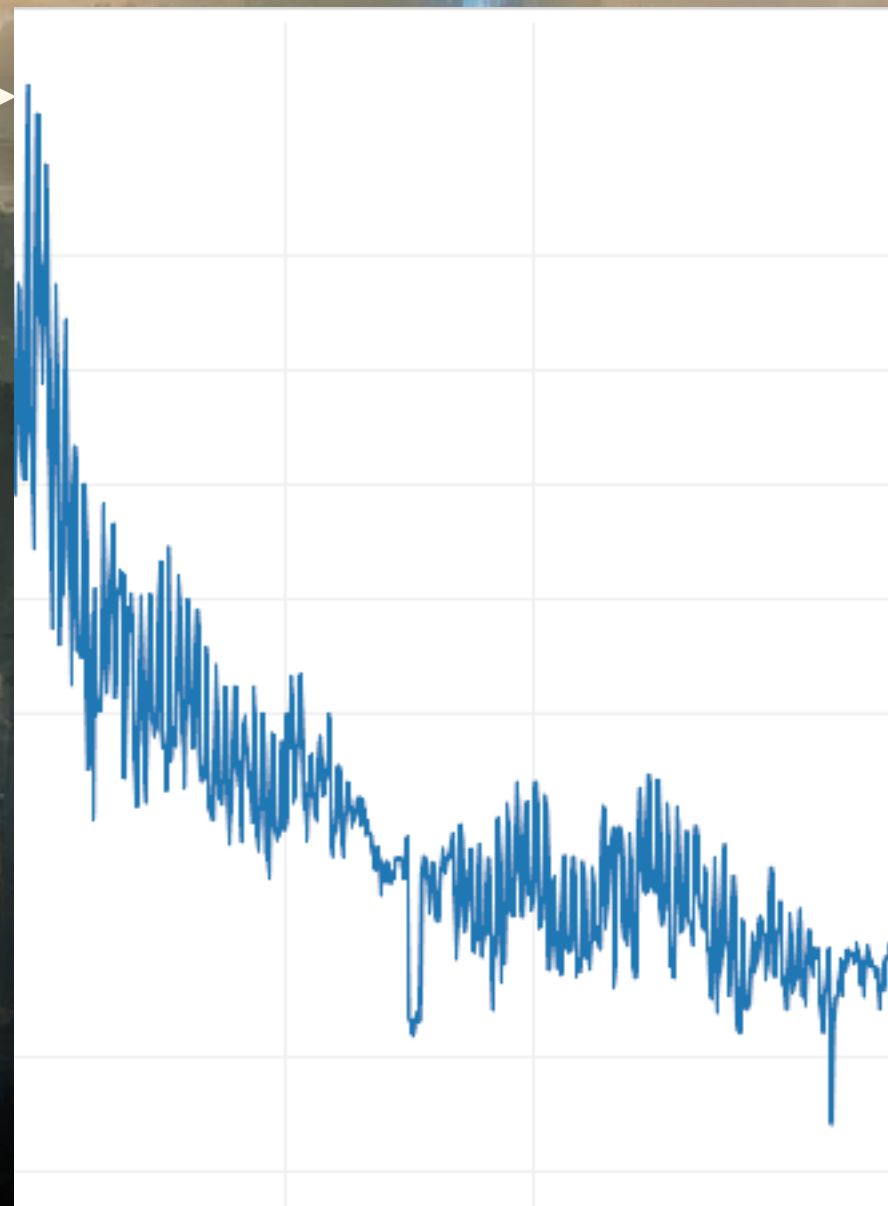
HONORS
FOR
EVERYONE!!



Year 1

Honor 1.0 Usage

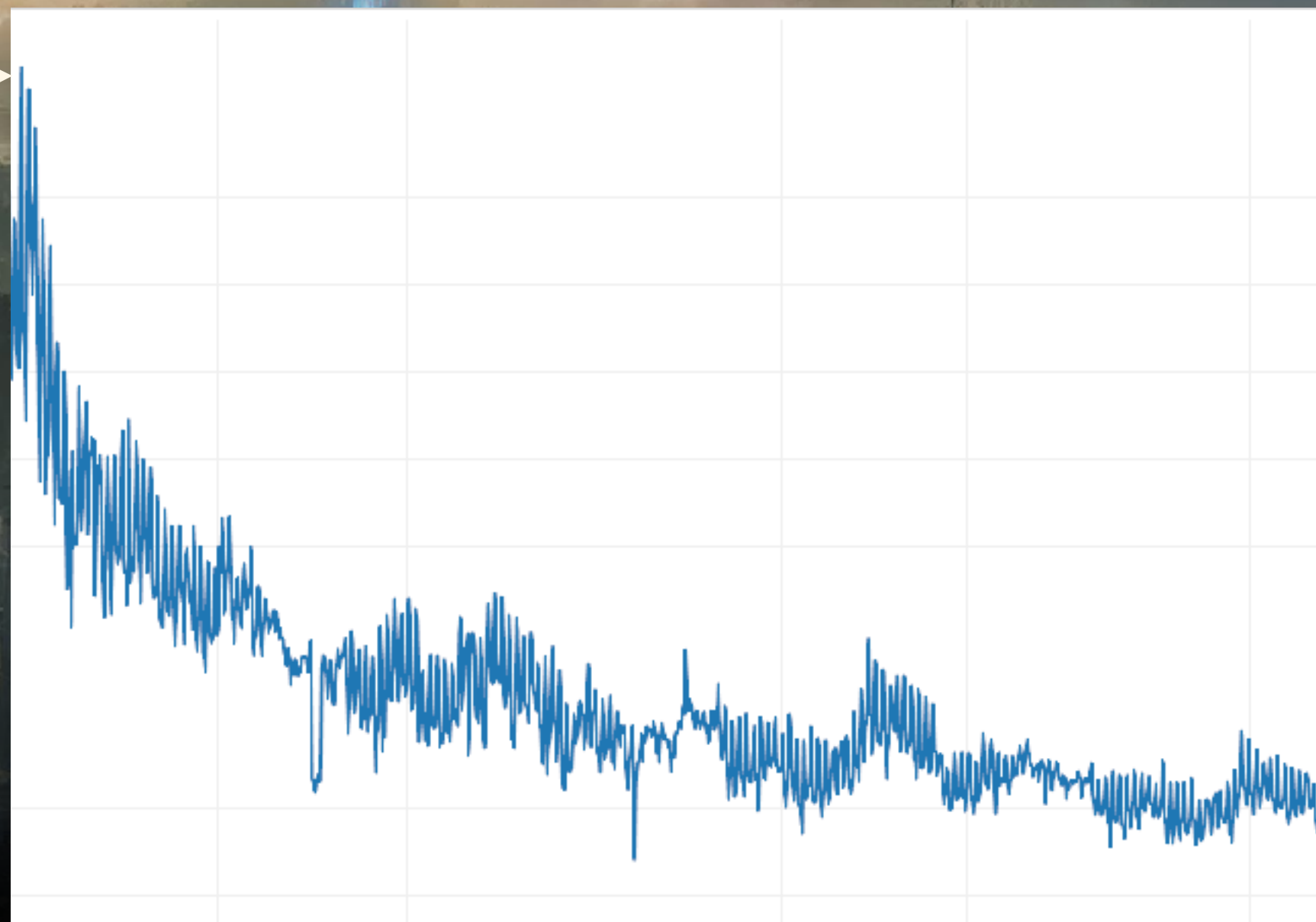
HONORS
FOR
EVERYONE!!



Honor 1.0 Usage

Year 2

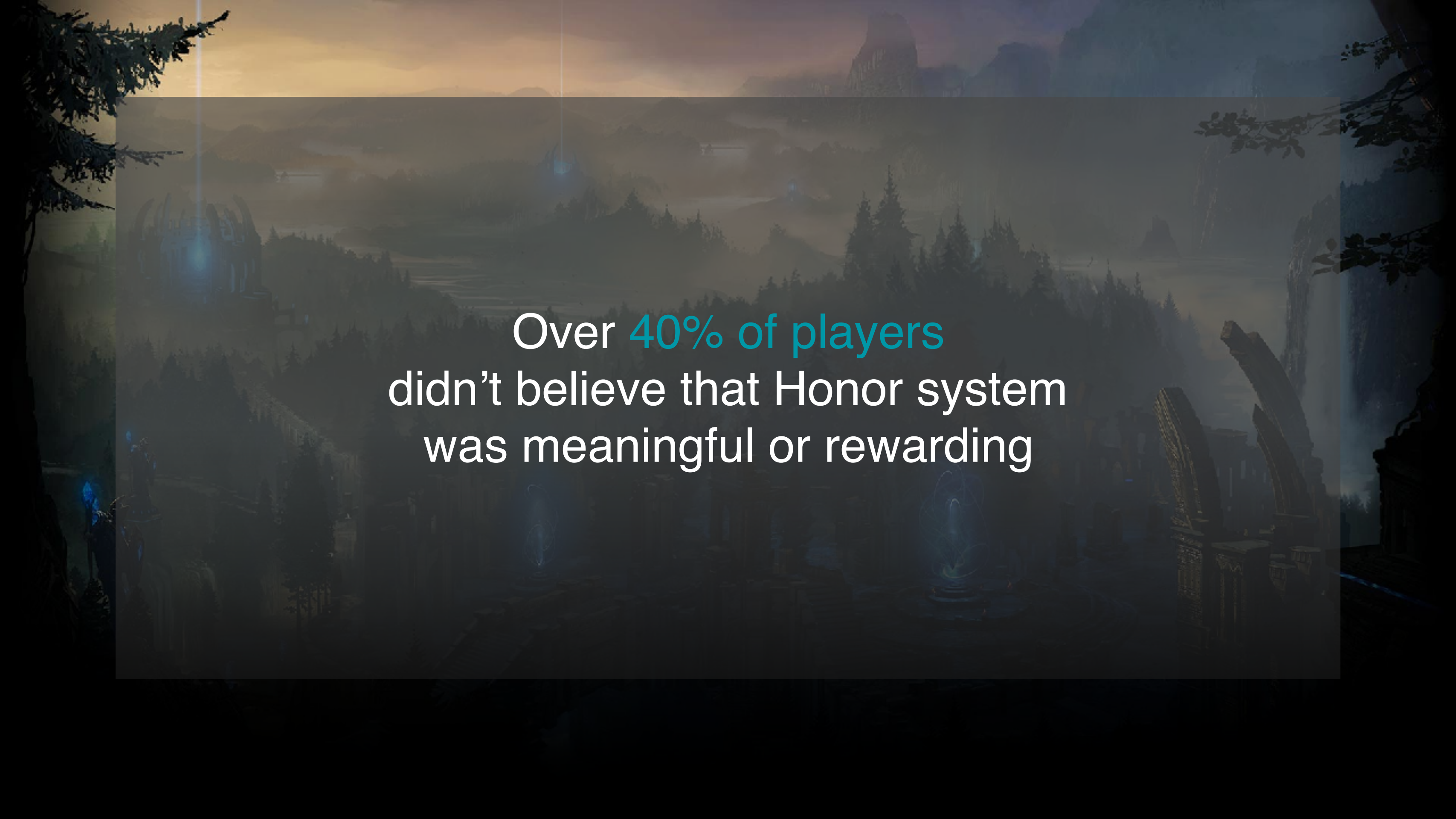
HONORS
FOR
EVERYONE!!



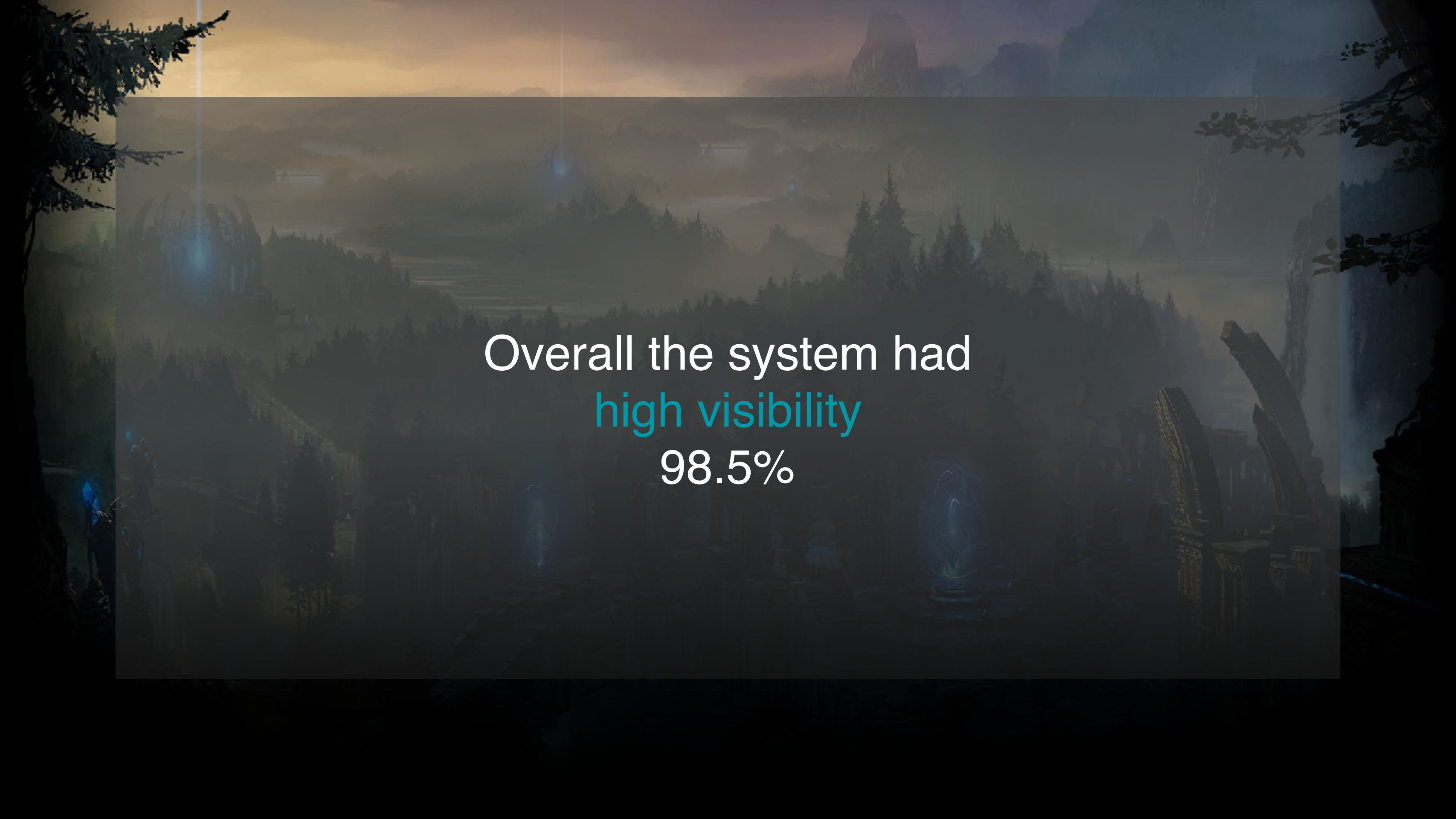
Year 4

Also,
mostly PvE

Honor 1.0 Usage (2012-2016)



Over 40% of players
didn't believe that Honor system
was meaningful or rewarding

The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features rolling hills, dense forests of evergreen trees, and distant, misty mountains. In the foreground, there are ruins of ancient stone structures, including a large, partially collapsed wall on the right. The scene is dimly lit, with a few glowing blue points of light scattered throughout, possibly representing magical energy or distant settlements. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is centered over the image, containing white and teal text.

Overall the system had
high visibility
98.5%

Oh.



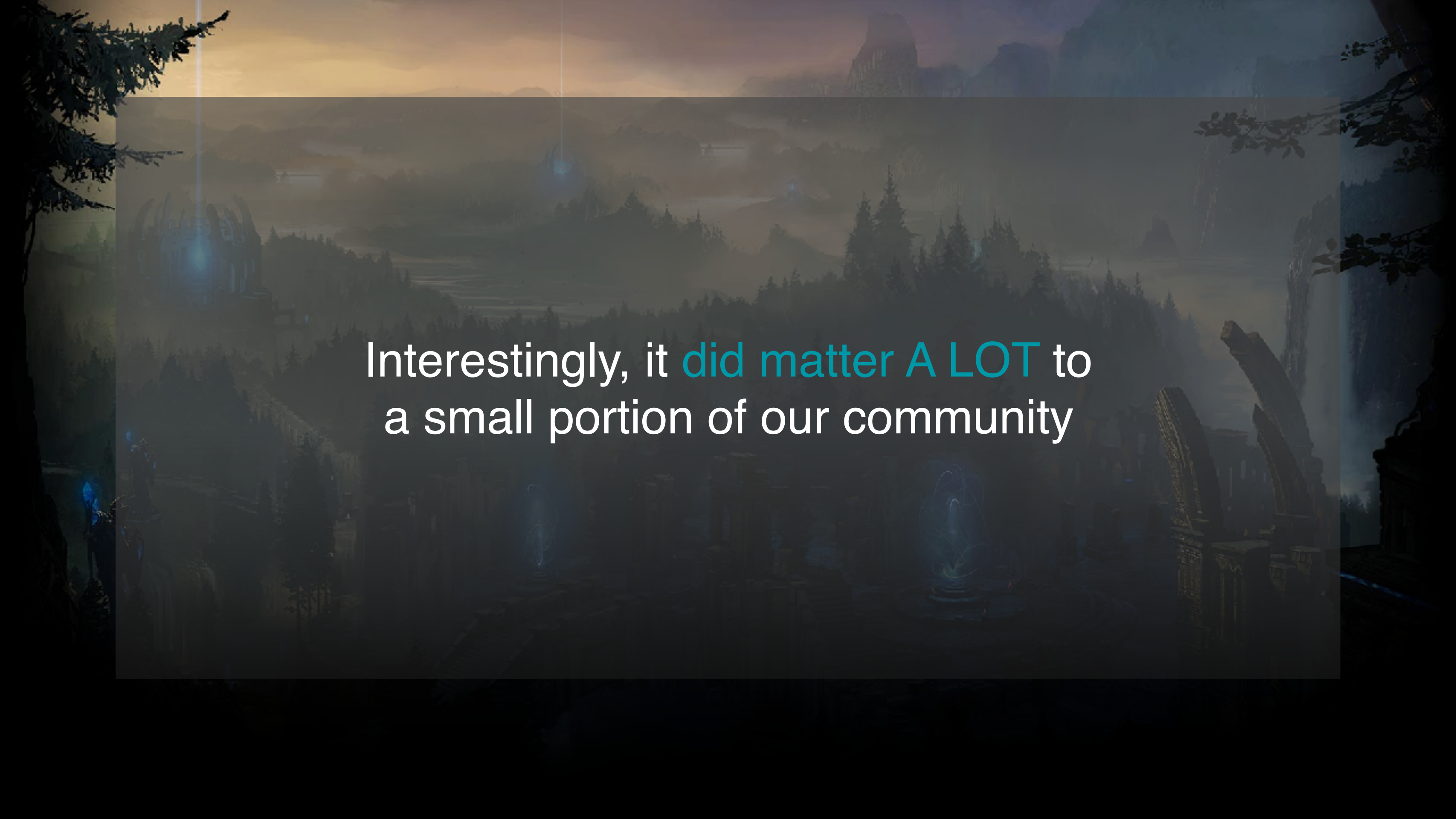
Honoring was **not a core part** of the game

Categories were **ambiguous**

Badges were **lightweight, confusing, and too rare**

Put simply, Honor didn't matter. :(



The background image is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features a range of mountains in the distance, some with snow or light-colored rock. In the foreground and middle ground, there are dense forests of evergreen trees. To the right, there are ruins of ancient stone structures, including walls and pillars. The sky is a mix of dark blue and purple, suggesting dusk or dawn. There are some glowing blue light effects scattered throughout the scene, particularly near the ruins and in the sky. A semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

Interestingly, it **did matter A LOT** to
a small portion of our community



OPPORTUNITY!

Encouragement *F*

Consequences *B-*

Environment *D*



Let's make a new Honor System!

DESIGN PILLARS

Sportsmanship as 1st-class value

Recognize passive sportsmanship

Every player can be celebrated

Values resonate with players

Meaningful, long-term change



HONOR OVERVIEW



End-of-game
Voting



Rewards &
Consequences



Progression
System



Publishing



END-OF-GAME VOTING GOALS

Create celebratory moment

Sportsmanship as first-class value

Put the focus on team

HONOR A TEAMMATE



GREAT SHOTCALLING

Leadership, strategy



The Vote

BestSorakaMidNA

NerfScuttler

xLordoftheLeashx

ImmaSoloBaron





PLAY



HOME

PROFILE

COLLECTION

COMPETITIVE



0

1290



oyang3

Online



SEASON START

OVERVIEW

► GUN GODDESS MISS FORTUNE ◀

NEXUS

PATCH NOTES

SOCIAL



▼ GENERAL (0/2)

oyang1
Offline

oyang4
Offline

► RECENTLY PLAYED

WELCOME BACK!



DISCOVER THE NEW LEAGUE



**COMPLETE MISSIONS,
EARN REWARDS**

Finish some missions, claim blue
essence, and unlock champions.

GET STARTED



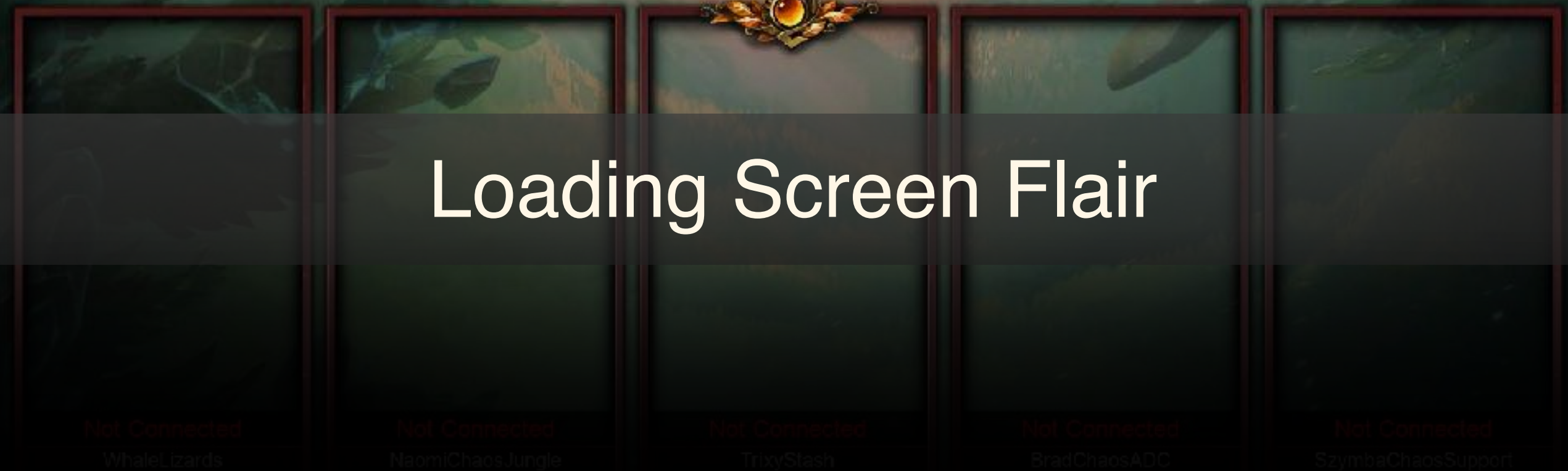
3

V8.6
Sandbox26





Loading Screen Flair



The background is a dark, moody illustration of a forest floor. It features dense foliage with various shades of green and blue, suggesting a magical or ethereal environment. A soft beam of light filters down from the top center, illuminating the scene. The overall tone is mysterious and serene.

The Categories

Stayed Cool



/stād kōol/ *Noun*

Resilient in the face of adversity.
Keeps a cool head. Tilt-proof.

Shotcaller



/SHät 'kôler/ *Noun*

Keeps the team focused. Drives
cohesion. Makes great calls.

GG <3



/jē jē härt/ ???

Made my game and my day better.
Lightweight and fun. (*Flexible*)



PROGRESSION GOALS

Provide aspirational goals

Reward long-term consistency

Social consequences

Who's more honourable???

Higher
Engager

120+ hours /
month



Lower
Engager

20+ hours /
month

~~Who's more honourable???~~

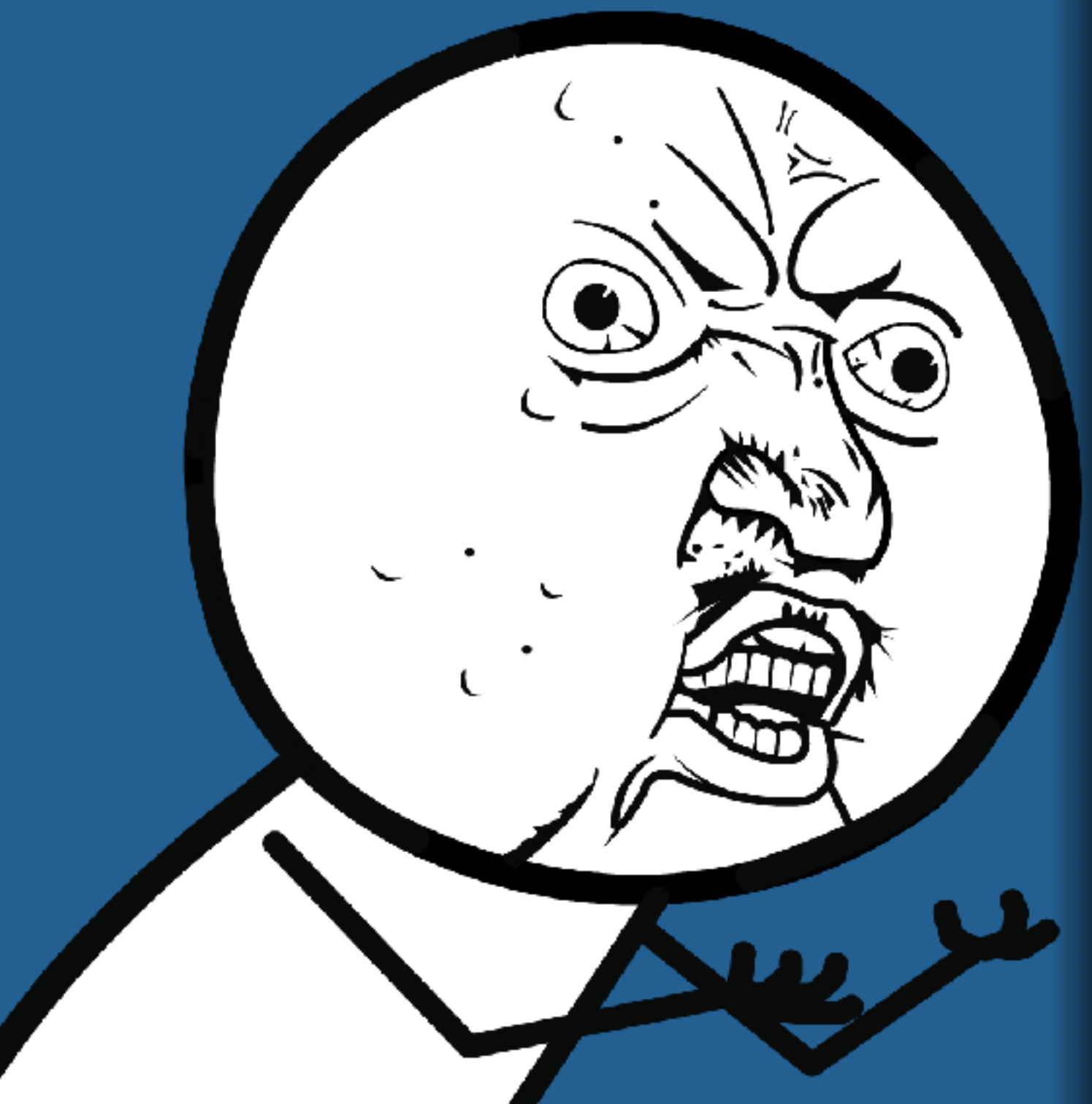
Higher
Engager

120+ hours /
month



Lower
Engager

20+ hours /
month



Rito, Y U No
Progress
Bar???



CHECKPOINTS



NEW CHECKPOINTS
BETWEEN HONOR LEVELS

HONOR LEVELS

NEW
PLAYERS



Level 0

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

Level 5





REWARDS GOALS

Provide “helping hand”

Provide context on your behaviour

Celebrate you!

Level 1



DURING SEASON

END OF
(2017) SEASON

Level 2



Level 3



Level 4



Level 5



2018??



HERE'S A KEY FRAGMENT

Your strategic style helps your team. 15 of your recent honors are for great calls.





PUBLISHING GOALS

Explain the system

Support the narrative

Have some fun





Sportsmanship as a
first-class value

A system for
encouragement that
mattered



HONOR Today



Players send Honors about 60% of the time

Usage by Category

GG <3



30%

Shotcaller



20%

Stay Cool

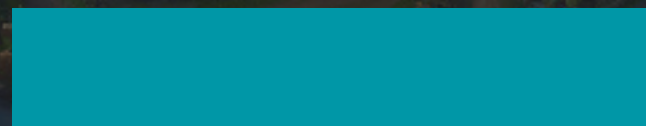


10%

The rest are time outs or opt outs.

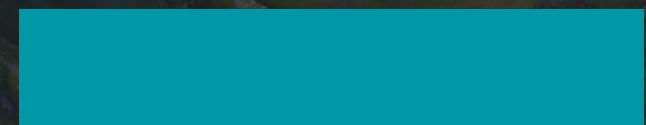
Honors by Role

ADC



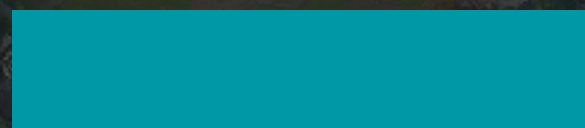
22%

Support



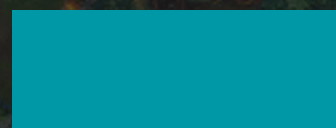
21%

Jungle



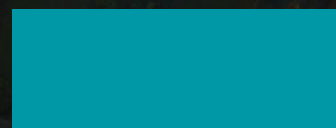
20%

Mid



16%

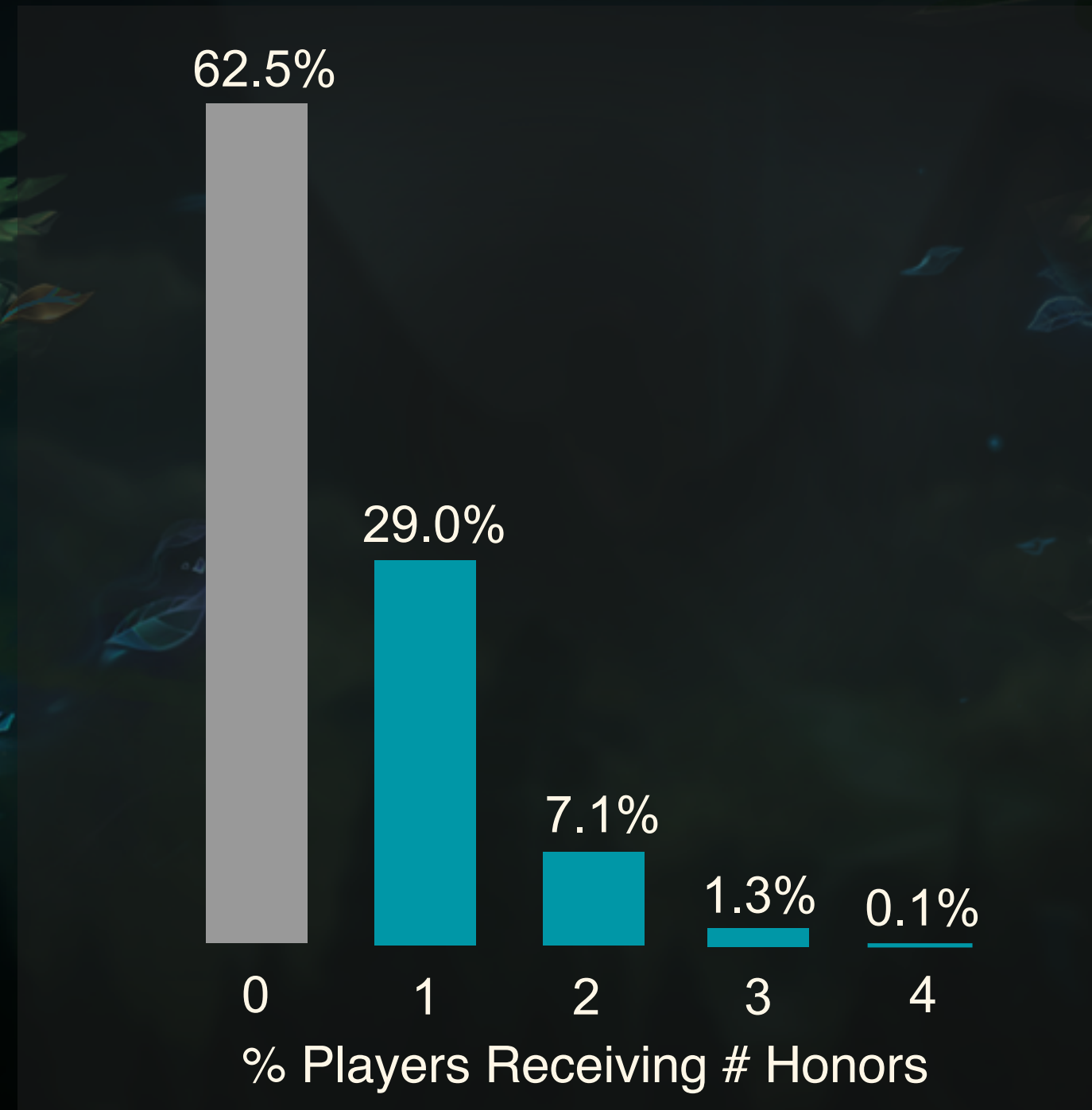
Top



16%

Rest are "non meta"

Getting Honors is worth celebrating!



A digital illustration of two League of Legends champions. Soraka, a blue-skinned celestial being with long white hair and a crescent moon on her forehead, is shown from the waist up, holding a large, ornate golden scythe. She is looking towards the viewer with a serene expression. Kalista, a blue-skinned warrior with long white hair and a crescent moon on her forehead, is shown from the waist up, holding a long, slender sword. She is looking towards the viewer with a determined expression. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a warm, orange and yellow glow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is highly detailed and artistic.

Soraka is most honored overall
as well as stayed cool and GG<3

Kalista is number one shotcaller

(No, Teemo is not least honored)



Skill is a poor predictor
of Honors



Today, **player sentiment is much higher** toward
our efforts to promote sportsmanship

Disruptive behaviour has
measurably dropped

(Still lots more to do)



We were here...

Encouragement *F*

Consequences *B-*

Environment *D*



League Today??

Encouragement *B??*

Consequences *B??*

Environment *B??*



Design
TAKEAWAYS

The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features misty mountains, dense forests, and several glowing blue structures or ruins. A bright blue light source is visible on the left, casting a beam of light upwards. The overall tone is mysterious and ethereal.

Understand **how** & **why**
disruptive behaviour emerges
for your game
and **modify** or **accommodate**
through our designs

Invest in teamwork

Don't assume it happens naturally.

Help players celebrate each other

Be aware of teamwork underminers

Focus on the positive; obscure the negative

Manage Expectations

You probably won't get it right the first time (or second)

Understand player values by getting to know each sub-community

Don't overstate things as “solutions”

Iterate, try things, show you care —
action more than words

Empathize & Understand

We're all human...

Take time to understand the why behind disruptive behaviour

Understand what you can and cannot change and work with it

Remember the design framework:
Encouragement, Consequences, Environment

First-Class Features

Give behaviour features prominence & context

If it's truly an important value, have the game and metagame support it

Where you put things speaks to their importance/relevance

Provide framing to players

Have Patience

Shifting norms can take years

We're changing the conversation slowly,
but it *is* changing

Invest in the journey
We're all still figuring things out

Factor in these principles early

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains, forests, and glowing blue structures. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow from the sky on the left. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a path. In the middle ground, there are several glowing blue structures, including a large, ornate building on the left and smaller, more distant structures. The background features misty, rolling mountains and a body of water. The overall mood is mysterious and ethereal.

And remember...

None of this is prescriptive



THANK YOU!



Dr. Kimberly Voll
Riot Games

kvoll@riotgames.com