



# Competitor Assessment 2022

2022 (Q1)

## Purpose

The purpose of this research document is to measure direct competitors with an in-depth assessment through overview competitor radar chart. This research can be used as a baseline evaluation of direct industry trends and gaps in the market with notable direct competitors, along with planned estimations into how Stakester can better serve users.

## Method

- Radar charts are scored using six **core foundations** on a 1-5 metric scale. The core foundations assess in-app culture, user concurrence, overall usability, user Interface design, technical stability, and trustworthiness (based off user perception.)
- Along with the scoring of our direct competitors and indirect competitors, the Competitor Assessment will also cover Stakester's differentiators and future improvements.

Below you'll find a comprehensive guide to how these six **core foundations** are defined; these definitions are the guiding hand on how each competitor is scored within the radar chart.

### ▼ Definition of "Core Foundations"

#### ▼ Culture

This measurement is used to look at the overall pulse & values of the user demographic, within the app. This is not a measurement of user quantity, rather user quality. This is a measurement of the experience perpetuated by those engaging with the product.

- *Does this app have dishonest players or bad actors?*
- *Does this app have high levels of "sharking" or "smurfing"?*
- *Does this app have an unequal playing field that is abused by users?*
- *Does this app have a high or low value perception due to the user base the product attracts?*

#### ▼ **Concurrency**

This measurement is used to assess the overall quantity of users returning to the app to allow effective concurrency.

- *Do users struggle to find a second player within the app?*
- *Do users wait long periods before getting to enjoy the core experience?*
- *Are there only a few notable times where the app provides a usable and/or rewarding experience?*

#### ▼ **Usability**

This measurement is used to distinguish if there are major hurdles that make the experience arduous or undesirable.

- *How quickly can a user pick this app up and use it?*
- *How efficient can a user move through a task?*
- *Does the app function in the way users might expect it to?*
- *How effective is this app's approach?*
- *How much cognition do users need to apply to their overall experience on the app?*

#### ▼ **UI**

This measurement is used to assess the overall look and feel of the app.

- *How relevant or out-dated does the app look?*
- *Does the app feel like it works on the users device as a native application?*
- *How well does the app handle accessibility needs?*
- *Does the app invoke joy? Does the UI help or hinder efficiency?*

### ▼ Stability

This measurement is used to assess how stable and how reliable the technical experience is on the app.

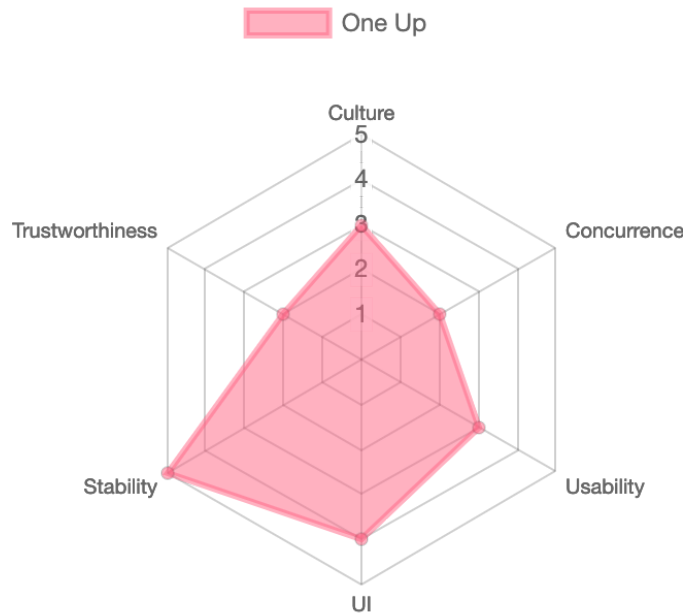
- *Does the app crash frequently?*
- *Is there historical patterns of updates?*

### ▼ Trustworthiness

This measurement is used to assess consumer perception of the app's trustworthiness.

- *Does the majority audience, outside of the app, have the perception that this experience can be trusted?*
- *Does the app ask users for personal information at unexpected or obscure times?*
- *Do users feel safe providing my personal information on this app?*
- *Does the app ask for an inordinate amount of personal information?*
- *Does the app define clear rules?*
- *Does the app provide users with the proper checks and balances so that users feel safe using the service?*
- *Does the app facilitate an environment where there's a lack of policing bad behavior?*

## Notable direct competitors



Location of services: USA (with the exception of the following states: AK, IA, LA, MI, MO, SC, TN, VT, WA).

Radar charts are based on a 5-point rating system  
**1** Worst | **2** Weak | **3** Average | **4** Better | **5** Best

## One Up

One Up is constantly adapting their product and refining their design decisions based off of user feedback. Their product changes more frequently than any other competitor on the market giving it the presumption of an innovative company. One Up made a major pivot in 2021 leaning almost entirely away from a 1v1 model and towards a on demand tournament-based service, changing their original USP and leaving their 1v1 users underserved.

**Culture (3):** With the introduction of transparent skill levels this increases the likelihood that top players will pick off lower-tiered players or the "stalemate effect" wherein users will not engage because they think the other player is better than them. Sharking and forced-disconnections have been reported via user ratings and thus One Up has a "beware" undertone towards its service, at least at the moment. One Up has done a good job finding the target audience who would use the app but seemingly **only serves**

**half of them.** Users who play Fortnite or Call of Duty would feel underserved on One Up, as there aren't any celebrity players or tournaments for their chosen game titles. This pigeonholes users into the 1v1 environment and leaves half of the app to serve no value or purpose to their experience. For this reason, it is no surprise CoD and Fortnite arenas remain empty. The culture feels diffused when considering the supported platforms and the subsequent interest in those platforms (are CoD players really interested in Madden? Are Madden players really interested in PC gaming? Are there any similarities between users of this app that could foster a loyalist culture?) Overall, the targeted demographic feels seen and served and many ratings show the experience is mostly good.

**Concurrence (2):** One Up suffers from the same problem many of these services do — low concurrent users. In their effort to solve concurrent user deficits they've employed tactics like **increasing event cadence through tournaments** and the ability to watch live streaming content. Moving from 1v1 to an on demand tournament service is a nod to increasing their event cadence but this is now notably seen in the 1v1 lobbies. Tournaments are cancelled unless enough users participate and at least half of the time the tournaments are cancelled due to low user enrollment. These bracket-styled tournaments *seem* appropriate given the game titles they support (mostly AAA major league sports games). This would be an innate experience for anyone using the app, if they're sports fans. (CoD players and Fortnite players would find little value here and this would not increase their concurrency, in fact it may decrease their return rate). It's also worth noting that the live streaming content is almost always **unpopulated** and any pre-recorded content seems aimed towards PC players (a platform that One Up barely supports and arguably a platform that One Up's core users **have no interest** in). One Up has done a decent job attracting players of Madden21 and NBA2K21 to the app; users only struggle to find other players at obscure times of the day (early weekday mornings, late weekday evenings) which means they're no where near critical mass, as of yet.

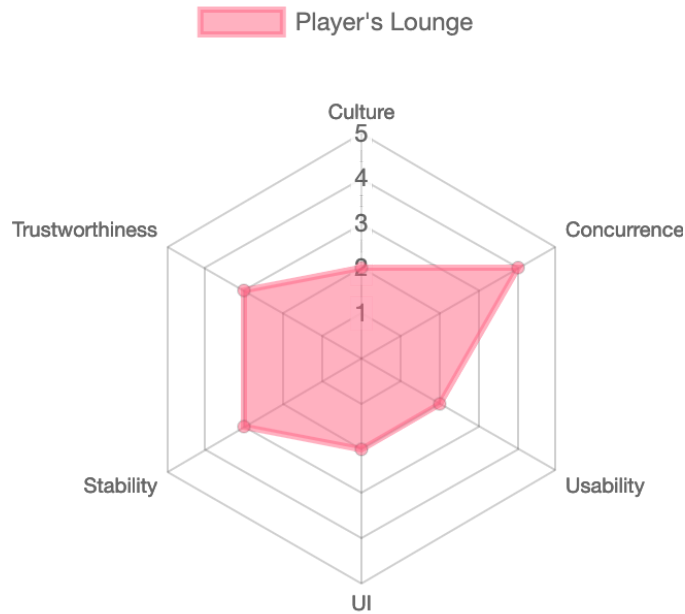
**Usability (3):** Although One Up ranks high on ease of use, learnability, and error tolerance, there are corners of efficiency and effectiveness which are open for question. One Up supports 5 different game titles but to switch between each arena is not a quick task. Users must enter the filtering system to successfully browse through competitions that are relevant to them; having such an **arduous task baked into the core experience** creates an innate hurdle for returning users. With low efficiency in its core experience there's also a questionable job of effectiveness. Half of the users within the

app won't use the Tournament page due to only a few titles being supported here, yet, all return users are pushed to the Tournament page upon arrival. This leads to users having an extra step every time they seek out the area with higher relevancy and higher use cases; the 1v1 lobby. Otherwise, the app functions as you would expect it to and many other **tasks are quick to and easy complete**. There's a **low threshold in understanding** how the app works upon install. Tasks are clear, memorable, and clean. The **lack of friction** between install and a user playing their first game is a nod to its overall usability.

**UI (4):** One Up has a very fresh and relevant look and feel. Their arena's capitalize on the trendy low-poly style artwork and each screen feels very intentional with it's design decisions. The design system feels incredible consistent which makes the over all experience feel very well branded and intentional. However, there is cutting off of certain elements on smaller screen sizes and some areas of insufficient affordance. Nevertheless, the app stands strong as one of the most **visually appealing** competitors.

**Stability (5):** One Up could be the competitor **gold standard of stability**. The app rarely crashes and has a decent support system to aid any users who run up against a rarely-seen bug. Transitions are smooth, buttons work as intended, and nothing seems blatantly broken. As with any new app there is a very small bit of clunkiness but nothing notable enough to put off users. One Up also has a great history of updating frequently and listening to user feedback.

**Trustworthiness (2):** The company is in a unique position (due to early funding from some celebrity athletes) to use professional sports logos giving it a more "official" backing and providing users a **visual element of trustworthiness**. Tournaments are hosted by these celebrity athletes giving the app an extra layer of clout — *"If these guys back this app then surely I can trust it?"* The adding and depositing flows instill some confidence that sensitive information and stored properly. However, many user reviews across the app store and on One Up's social channels might lead prospective users to turn away from the app; disgruntled users have shared their experience on **withdraw/deposits taking too long** or **feeling cheated out of money** through sharks on the app. 3 years of users feeling like they can't access their funds as damaged the app's reputation — the reviews overwhelming call the app "a scam". Valid or not, user perception is everything.



Location of services: claim is global (exceptions AZ, AK, DE, LA, MD, MN, SC, SD, TN, & Italy)

Radar charts are based on a 5-point rating system

1 Worst | 2 Weak | 3 Average | 4 Better | 5 Best

## Players' Lounge

Players' Lounge has proven longevity and great foundational user concurrency. Although their product fails to deliver a visually engaging experience, users are still drawn to the product. Players' Lounge has moved more towards a subscription style model in the last 12 months (2021-2022), but this hasn't shown a visible increase in competitions available.

**Culture (2):** Players' Lounge doesn't have a notable community, per se, it has a pulse but there is a lack of personality. Users show up to play but the genre of user feels like they come for the money and stay for the money. It's not a culture of likeminded friendship building or fine-tuning one's skill, it's a culture of mass sending invites to

competitions with the sole agenda to take the cash. Players' Lounge is known for its culture of **sharking and smurfing** (pretending you're a bad player to then swindle someone at a later date but at a higher prize point, once you've gained their trust). Sharks tend to swarm new players on the app and PL loyalists **spam any users who are online** to come play with them. However, the **loyalists** are real and do back their experience through the app store rating system and will defend the brand on various social media threads where Players' Lounge's integrity is in question.

**Concurrency (4)**: One of the most impressive feats on Player's Lounge is its user concurrency. Users don't struggle to match up with another person (with the exception of a few arenas); instant matchmaking, of the most popular titles, are **almost always occupied with users**. This isn't the case for all games; Fortnite and CoD tend to be on the lower populated metric but still have players available at just the right time of the week. Players' Lounge also employs the tactic of increasing event cadence by adding on many tournaments in popular titles and unpopular titles alike. Every arena has a **tournament going each week**, sometimes there are multiple tournaments (as many as 7 per arena). However, of all competitors (not just these listed here) Players' Lounge seemingly has the most marketing widely available and therefore users would know this long-running competitor name notably better than any similar business.

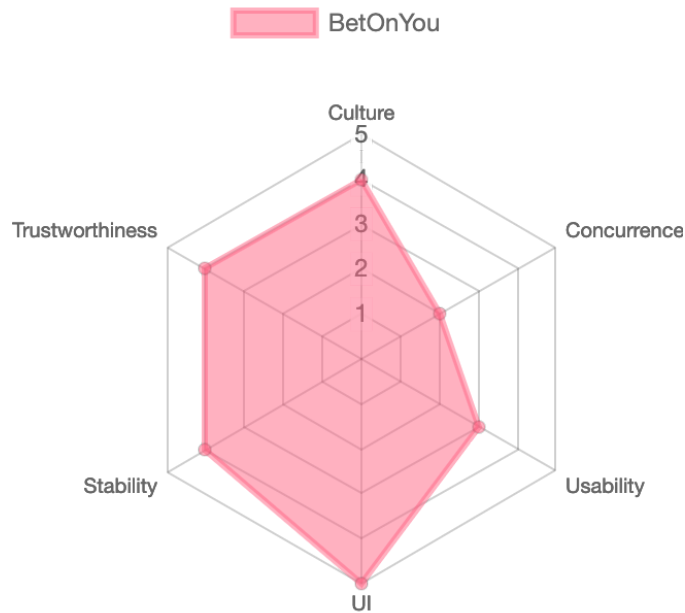
**Usability (2)**: Usability is the current downfall of the Players' Lounge's app. First time users are left in the dark as far as learnability. Without any clear indication on how the app truly functions, each button feels risky but mostly confusing. There is a constant undertone when deciding what to do next; *"will entering into something here cost me money?"* The **app feels incredibly confusing** when trying to decide what path to take. There are two different ways to enter into a match (find a match & instant match), none of which are clearly explained or differentiated, even after using them. The bottom nav feels like a catch-all for the basics but doesn't feel deliberate on it's creation. New players aren't given enough tools to understand or effectively record/document their results or the bad behaviors of others, so these new users have difficulty winning in the event of a dispute. Tasks **feel loaded, unfamiliar, and ill-defined**. After having done a competition before, you could move through the app at a quicker and somewhat less cognitively laborious speed and there have been small additions in the last 3 months to give the app a facelift, but it's a far cry from being a well thought-out experience. It couldn't be more clear that Players' Lounge created their **app as an after thought** and will continue to move users to their website for the full experience.



**UI (2):** Along with poor usability Players Lounge **lacks congruency and visual engagement**. The app feels **functional in its creation** but there's a clear lack of joy. A bit of the design sparks a small amount of anticipation but could be redesigned to better engage users. Design system feels dated and unintentional. There are affordance issues, hierarchy missteps, paired with the lack of clarity in copywriting and UX; it makes for a confusing and ugly experience for first-time users. For return users, it ticks the box of functionality so it deserves points for solving a core problem enough to have users return to the app (although, it isn't clear if the majority population of users are on the app or the website).

**Stability (3):** At times the app feels very clunky but **doesn't feel noticeably broken**. The app crashes on rare occasions but it does show signs of reoccurring bugs that haven't been ironed out in a year+. Players' Lounge was quick to roll out fixes in the event of reported issues in 2020 but this has slowed significantly. The speed in which bug have been resolved has clearly decreased as of recently. However, this doesn't majorly hinder the experience on the app. This aids to Players' Lounge's feeling of functional but ugly. It's clear that Players' Lounge largely tries to **prioritizes speed of functionality rollouts and solving critical bugs** over the speed of new and clearer product designs.

**Trustworthiness (3):** Players' Lounge has been around for enough time to gain a little **brand equity**, for this reason it has some **innate trustworthiness**. However, **cheating has been a repeatedly reported problem** and therefore conversations surrounding the fairness, policing, and disputing process has long been in question. Many users who leave negative reviews believe there is **a skewed system** in place by Players' Lounge dispute team, to side (dishonestly) with friends, affiliates, and PL loyalists who dispute matches, leaving the little guy holding the bag. Customer Service is constantly referenced as **inadequate and unfair**. This reoccurring theme might push potential users away from the app. The undertones of a shark-filled or dishonest community also imbues the feeling of an untrustworthy experience. However, many users still see the value in crossing those hurdles and bypassing those insecurities of use, or else there wouldn't be such high levels of user concurrency. These reviews and opinions echoed across public forums might lead one to believe PL has high amounts of churn.



Location of services: France, Europe, USA (exceptions: AK, AZ, CT, DE, FL, LA, MO, NE, NM, SC, SD, TN)

Radar charts are based on a 5-point rating system

1 Worst | 2 Weak | 3 Average | 4 Better | 5 Best

## BetOnYou

BetOnYou has only entered the market in early 2021 but is quickly proving its value amongst gamers who are crypto literate and are familiar with freemium styled experiences. Echoing many apps in the space, BetOnYou is plagued with concurrency issues.

**Culture (4):** In comparison to other notable competitors, BetOnYou has established a **significant Discord community** from their origins as a Discord-Only Tournament Bot. BetOnYou strives for a community culture, which is reflected in their efforts to build a strong Discord community presence for their app and NFT servers. Although their numbers are strong — boasting 80k members on their dedicated app server and 5k members on their Octos NFT server — the channels **struggle with creating organic**

**conversations between their members.** In-app, the absence of a global chat or the ability to view current other members without entering matchmaking, makes it **difficult for new users to feel the benefits of the community they have built.** Their strengths lie within creating community engagement within their Discord servers; which they achieve by hosting frequent giveaways, mobile and console tournaments and Discord games. Within the community, there are **loyalists who champion their experiences** on the app via the app store ratings and social media, as well as provide feedback and suggestions via their discord channels. The iconography of the “Octos” (Octopus Characters that represent BetOnYou’s branding) are reflected in their purchasable in-app skins, as well as their NFTs, which has fostered a **sense of identity for their community.** In-app, users are visible by their Octo skin during matchmaking and NFT holders have the ability to boast their Octo NFT as an in-app skin.

**Concurrence (2):** BetOnYou has recently reduced it’s offering of mobile and console game titles, which has artificially inflated their concurrency, with their large user base now funneling into matchmaking for just 10 titles. For the remaining titles, matchmaking for the console games in particular struggles to match you with another user within 15 minutes. For the mobile game titles, matchmaking is faster, however you expect to be **matched against the same user again and again.**

**Usability (3):** Validating phone numbers is noted as a sign up hurdle and a gripe of some users. There are a few confusing aspects of the user journey and UI Game titles have been modified to be almost unreadable (due to licensing issues), this creates slight unfamiliarity as to what game title you're selecting. Octocoins are the driving economy and **it's difficult to immediately understand the conversion rate** (dollars to Octocoins) that result in prizes. Using iconography to denote wins, losses, and draws is foreign at first glance, causing another learnability curve. Overall, **the app is bloated,** due to the pushing of freemium models, making many of the customer touch points quite a cognitive undertaking, and creating a **longer learning curve to grasp the entire concept and "rules" of the experience.** However, once users overcome these hurdles the experience becomes clear.

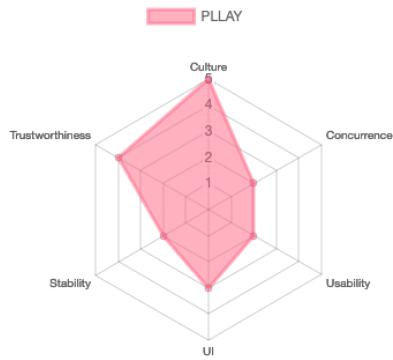
**UI (5):** One of the best designed apps on the market; BetOnYou has UI that mimics the style and tone of that consoles and PC gamers might be familiar with (some of the UI can almost be mistaken as a Steam replica or taken directly from **popular mobile game frameworks**). Designers use their Octopus mascot to populate game titles with traits that they can attribute to popular titles; the use of the Octopus mascot lends itself to keeping a **cohesive branding throughout the journey.** Designs are well thought

out although slightly dated. Some of the UI is difficult to read and interact with, with smaller screens, but no major hinderances. **Animations are used throughout** stoking joy through onboarding but also through the entire user journey, reminiscent of progression used in mobile games.

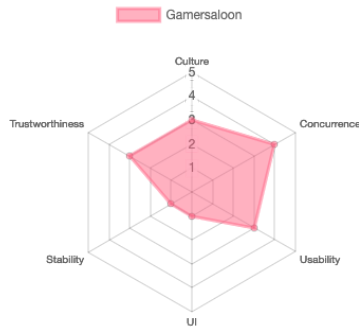
**Stability (4):** Another area where BetOnYou shines is stability. Developers are quick to fix critical bugs and rollout updated features making the **core functionality of the experience reliable**. However, there are frequently loading bugs where users lag behind load times and UI that sometimes stick on the screen long after entering into a new game. Users have little grievances with the app's stability due to the consistent **rollout of updates once a month** (sometimes 2-3 times a month).

**Trustworthiness (4):** BetOnYou has excellent TrustPilot (4.1) and App Store (4.7) ratings, with reviews mainly praising the prizes and rewards. A dedicated “share your prize” Discord channel, as well as a “winners” section of the app, allows users to share their own and view other user’s redeemed prizes, accrued from engaging in competitions within the app. This provides assurance that **user’s efforts on the app are rewarded and that prizes are attainable**. On their NFT Discord server, trustworthiness in the brand has somewhat waned since the launch of the Octo NFTs project, with users commenting on a **decline in communication between the team and the community** post-mint and a lack of progress in implementing the utility promised in their roadmap. Within the match experience, many users have commented on the high level of “cheaters”, “scammers” and/or “hackers” they come up against within the app, however **support tackles the “bad actor” issues quite quickly**. This does have a knock on effect with the culture, this is especially true with long-term community building within the app (and outside of it).

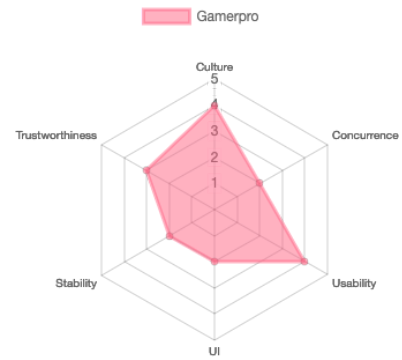
## Honorable Mentions



Locations of services: USA  
(exceptions: AK, AZ, CT, DE, FL, LA, MO, NE, NM, SC, SD, TN)



Locations of services: Global  
(exceptions: AZ) Footnote on website "*it is your sole responsibility to ensure compliance with such laws*"



Location of services: Global  
(claim of 170 countries. Exception: Italy)

# Stakester

## What we do differently

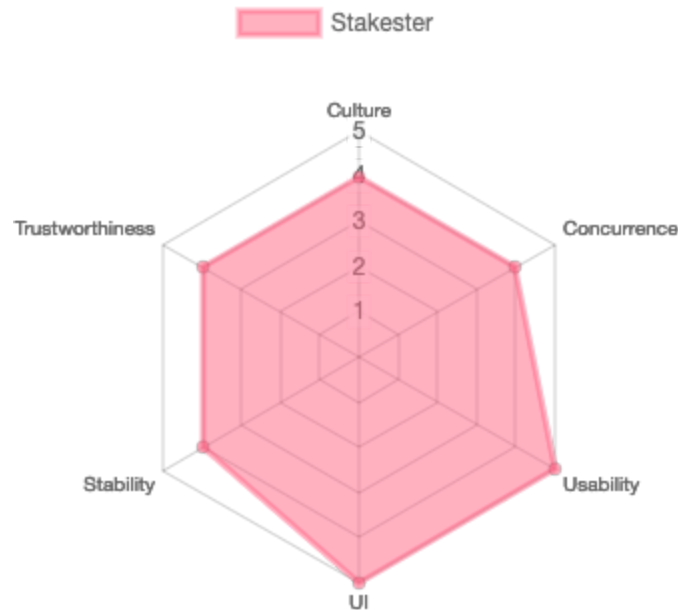
- The brand:** Stakester corners the market with tone; having a steadfast branding voice that no other competitor appropriately executes. All of the competitors have a static (almost robotic) service tone throughout the experience and their apps lack a unique culture due to the absence of a brand personality. Stakester is the only direct competitor in the market to dox the entire team and showcase actionable brand values which the team works to translate through the entire customer experience.
- Fair-play model:** Stakester employs one of the most robust vetting systems for game titles amongst direct competitors. Passed through several iterations with lawyers and gaming experts; our in-house gaming matrix assures that the skill-based competitions are played on even competitive grounds with well-tested titles. Stakester is one of few apps in the market not drowning in user reviews claiming “scam” behavior, due to its integrity team dedicated to vetting titles and moderating competitions. Competitors that rely heavily on the honor system, custom/modified

rulesets, and other variations make them susceptible to high dispute turnover and poor user experience.

- **Deliberate community building:** Many of the competitor services revolve around the money aspect instead of bolstering "the win" hook and the true journey of competition (the highs and the lows). Numerous competitors fail to capitalize on the braggadocios character trait that these services innately attract. This becomes evidenced through high churn, or worse, bad actors lurking on competitor apps. Stakester is committed to creating an experience that is just as rewarding for winners as it is for losers, fostering a community that returns for the full Stakester experience, not just cash payout.
- **Gamified economy:** The prize store and gems economy built within the Stakester app is the cornerstone of Stakester's retention and progression experience. This games economy rewards *all* Stakester users engaging in competitions and gives a secondary way to retain users that isn't immediately monetary. This leaves room for a more gamified experience for customers but also allows room for partnerships and a cheap business acquisition of prizes. Few competitors are taking advantage of the physical/digital prize market relevant to customers who engage in mobile or console games.
- **Mobile & B2B offering:** With the introduction of Arcade (launched Q4 2021) Stakester solved concurrency issues by offering a mobile high-score experience wherein appointment dynamics hold less precedence to our customers. Users can login, at anytime, and submit a score at their leisure. The B2B USP allows mobile game developers and publishers a secondary revenue stream, by monetizing their high-scores games. Working directly with Stakester's internal team; Dev houses just add a simple API to their game and can launch to their customers allowing Stakester to house the leaderboards and facilitate all payment processing. No other competitor in the industry has this level of ease-of-integration or games vetting procedure in place.
- **Positioning into Web 3:** With the exception of BetOnYou, competitors in the field are severely lacking any presence in Web 3. Stakester launched the VIP NFT in May of 2022 and are working towards adding a crypto experience within the app. The Stakester brand is maneuvering towards Web 3 entertainment and educational content across our social channels. Ultimately, Stakester is aiming to become

thought leaders and educational voices of authority for new and old NFT adopters, in monetized gaming and beyond.

## How we plan to improve



Using the six **core foundations** as a measurement, we plan to fill in the gaps existing in the industry and in our current product. As we roll out future updates our product will be invariably distinct among other competitors.

- **Culture:** We're targeting the right persona(s) and making it harder for bad actors to take advantage of the global availability of users online. We plan to build PvP relationships inside of the app to humanize the experience to foster a culture of consent and autonomy between our users and who they allow within their in-app network. With the addition of Arena 3.0 we bring Friends Lists, members clubs, title-specific leaderboards and more community driving-features.
- **Concurrency:** ARENA: Unlike many of the competitors we'll be adding in a feature that creates matchmaking as an event mechanic; instead of filtering through a lobby of matches, our algorithm will group players together and make it easy to add each

other as "friends" at the end of the match. Adding in-app chat functionality will improve concurrence through pre-planning matches between two friends. ARCADE: Signing on larger contracts with bigger mobile titles means we'll have the ability to test out new gaming schedules, fee schemes, and a larger podium allowing more room for multiple winners. These experiments will help guide the business in our downstream retention campaigns and organically increase retention as a result.

- **Usability:** Over Q1, Q2, Q3 in 2021 we've created a reusable design system for easy and effective iterating, which is backed by several months of user testing. We'll be overhauling the Arcade UX to making clear and direct pathways to get users where they want to go, bolstering the effectiveness of the app. Within Arena we'll be adding in open memberships, leaderboards, and event matchmaking which will lend itself to a smarter more intuitive experience. Quick learnability will be increased as we prioritize efficiency by tailoring the app to feel more native in its UX and UI design. Steps will feel more clear and each screen is more deliberate in its function and value to users.
- **UI:** Currently the Arena designs feel more intentional to better serve users throughout their journey from signup to finishing their first match, and sticking around for the next one. We'll be apply this to Arcade 2.0. Going forward with Arena 3.0 and Arcade 2.0 the UI will be more visually engaging and cohesive in it's branding (and area that feels fragmented between the two experiences). UI will generally decrease the user's obligatory cognitive load and increase intentional engagement.
- **Stability:** With the overhaul in UI and UX comes the overhaul of the backend/front end to increase stability. Employing more layers of testing before release dates and a better understanding of scalability and future features are being considered throughout development and release.
- **Trustworthiness:** With the right culture, ease of use, and continually building clout in Web 3; we're on track to imbed trustworthiness in the foundation of the product. With the addition of requiring proof of results (Arena), automated results verifying (Arcade), a better and more robust dispute system, and a better deposit/withdraw flow, we'll confidently push users through those less comfortable moments of entering sensitive information.



