

Pre-Production Planning Document (PODCAST)

GENERAL INFO

1. **Your Name:** _Nick Pagonis
2. **PROJECT:** More Than a Game: The Pursuit of Greatness in Super Smash Bros. Melee

CREATIVE BRIEF

1. What must it be (i.e. format, like audio-only podcast, video, etc.)

An original, audio only, narrated human interest documentary with voice, music, ambient sound and sound effects.

2. Who is it for?

Primarily teens and adults interested in competitive games, esports, gaming culture, or personal improvement, accessible to listeners who have never played Melee. Online audience, no specific location or education requirement.

3. How long must it be?

5–6 minutes.

4. What is your objective with the piece?

Help listeners understand why the competitive Melee community has endured and how the pursuit of improvement connects players.

5. When is it due?

November 1st.

6. What is the overall idea?

Explore the technical challenge, grassroots community and ambition that keep players invested in a game released in 2001.

7. What is the storyline summary?

Open with the sound of practice, introduce Melee's competitive appeal, explain its technical depth, explore locals, tournaments and Slippi, illustrate player motivation through my goal of becoming the best, close by reflecting on what makes the pursuit meaningful.

8. Elevator pitch:

A fast paced audio documentary asking why players still chase mastery in Super Smash Bros. Melee, combining an accessible look at its competitive scene with one player's ambition to reach the top.

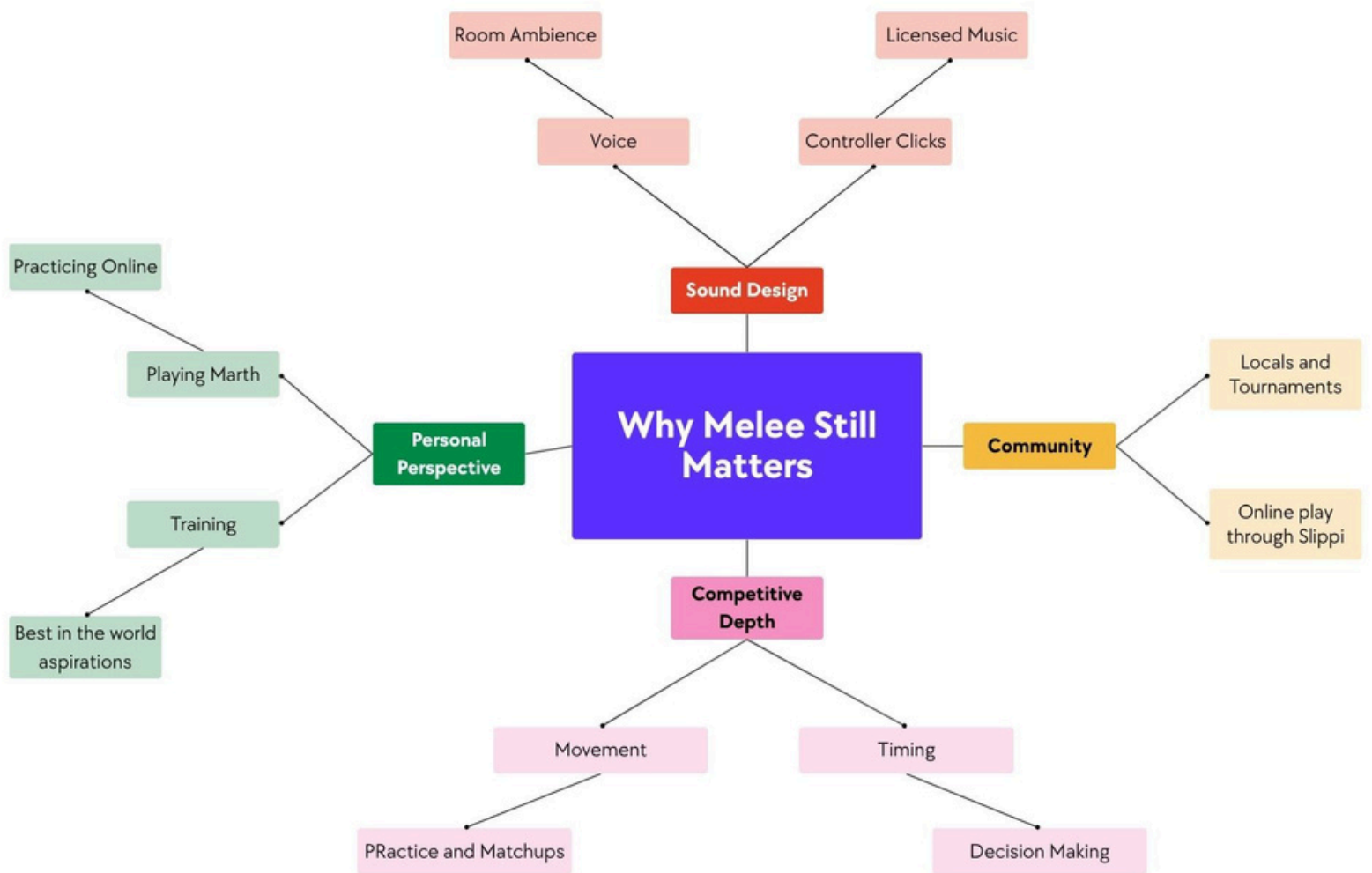
9. Tagline:

One game. Endless improvement. A community chasing greatness.

10. Look and feel description:

Energetic, focused and welcoming. Close up controller sounds open the episode, a warm, conversational narrator guides newcomers, shifts between lively practice ambience and quieter reflection keep the pace engaging.

MIND MAP



QUESTIONS / NOTES

HOOK:

1. What will grab the attention of the audience within the first few seconds?
A burst of rapid controller clicks, then a question: Why do people still compete in a game released in 2001?
2. Hook ideas: Contrast the age of Melee with the intensity of modern competitive play, use a brief pause before naming the game.

MESSAGE/STORY:

1. What message are you trying to deliver to the audience?
Long term competition can be about discipline, belonging and growth, not only victory.
 - a. **Beginning:** Introduce Melee, the question of its longevity and the experience of learning it.
 - b. **Middle:** Explain advanced play in accessible terms, show how locals, tournaments and online matches connect players, describe the appeal of incremental improvement.
 - c. **End:** Share my goal of becoming the best as one example of a broader community mindset, return to the sounds of practice.

NARRATION/HOST:

1. Who will lead us through the piece?
I will narrate in first person, balancing documentary explanation with a short personal reflection.
2. Narration ideas:
Conversational, clear, not over scripted, define terminology like wave dashing briefly, pause after the central question and conclusion.

MUSIC:

1. What is overall “mood” and “feel” of the piece? Energetic and rhythmic at the beginning, restrained and reflective near the end.
2. Music track ideas: Instrumental, royalty free or properly licensed music with no vocals, subtle pulse under explanation and a gentle rise at the ending. Verify license for public portfolio use.

AMBIENT AUDIO:

1. What is the “location” of the piece? If we close our eyes, where should we imagine that we are?
A home practice setup and the imagined atmosphere of a local competitive event.
2. Ambient audio ideas: Record room tone and the natural sound of a controller, only use event/crowd recordings with permission or suitable licensing.

SOUND EFFECTS:

1. What sound effects (SFX) would help tell this story? Why? Controller taps signal practice and make the story audible, restrained transition sounds separate sections.
2. SFX ideas: Original recordings of buttons, joystick movement and chair movement, use in game audio only after checking permissions and rights.

(OPTIONAL) INTERVIEWS:

1. Who will you interview? A fellow Melee player or local tournament participant, if available.
2. Why is this person important to the piece? A second voice would broaden the community perspective beyond my experience.
3. What questions will you ask? What keeps you playing? What improvement are you proudest of? How has the community shaped your experience?

4. What followup questions might be important?

Can you describe a specific match or setback? What made you come back?

SCRIPT

Name: Nick Pagonis

Title: More Than a Game: The Pursuit of Greatness in Super Smash Bros. Melee

VIDEO	AUDIO
(NO VISUALS FOR AUDIO PROJECT)	0:00-0:40 HOOK [SFX: Close miked GameCube controller taps, 4 seconds. Fade in soft instrumental pulse.] Why do people still spend hours practicing a video game that came out in 2001? Not just playing it casually, but studying every movement, reviewing mistakes, and entering tournaments where a single decision can change a match. That game is Super Smash Bros. Melee. And for its competitive players, it can be much more than a game. 0:40-1:35 THE GAME [MUSIC: Lower beneath narration.] Melee is a fighting game built around knocking an opponent off the stage. That sounds simple, but competitive play becomes incredibly demanding. Players learn precise movement, spacing, timing, and how to react under pressure. Techniques like wavedashing can make movement more flexible, while knowing an opponent's habits can matter as much as fast hands. Every match creates another problem to solve. For someone watching for the first time, the action can look almost impossibly fast. For the players, that speed is part of what makes improvement so satisfying. 1:35-2:35 THE COMMUNITY [AMBIENCE: Low room tone and controller inputs, transition gently.] But Melee's story is not only about mechanics. It is also about the people who keep showing up. Players meet at local tournaments, compete at larger events, trade advice, and learn from opponents. Online play through Slippi has also made it possible to find matches and practice from home. There is something special about a community where one person can be your rival in a match and the person helping you improve afterward. A difficult loss can turn into a conversation about what to try differently next time.

2:35-3:35 | THE GRIND

[SFX: A few measured controller taps, then fade.]

Improvement in Melee rarely happens all at once. You might practice a movement option again and again before it feels natural. You might lose to the same strategy several times before finally understanding the answer. Then, one day, a decision that used to require thought becomes instinct. That small breakthrough matters. Competitive players know that winning is exciting, but progress can also be measured in quieter ways: better timing, calmer decisions, and the ability to recognize a mistake before repeating it.

3:35-4:35 | PERSONAL EXAMPLE

[MUSIC: Warm, restrained instrumental bed.]

I experience that pursuit myself. I play Marth, and I practice online through Slippi. What motivates me most is the idea of working toward becoming the best Melee player in the world. I know that is an enormous ambition, and I cannot know where the journey will lead. But the goal gives purpose to practice. Every matchup I learn and every mistake I understand feels like one more step forward. My experience is only one example. Across the community, players have different goals, but many share that drive to see how far they can go.

4:35-5:30 | CONCLUSION

[AMBIENCE: Controller taps return softly. Let a brief pause land.]

That may be the real reason Melee has lasted. It offers players something that never feels completely finished: another opponent to learn from, another challenge to overcome, another level of skill to reach. Tournaments and online matches give that pursuit a community. The people around the game give it meaning. For some players, the dream is to win a local event. For others, it is to stand among the very best. Whatever the goal, the next game is another chance to improve.

[PAUSE 2 seconds.]

More than two decades later, Melee is still being played, practiced, and pushed forward – one match at a time.

[MUSIC: Rise for 5 seconds, then fade out with room tone.]