

High Score Leaderboards

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Project overview



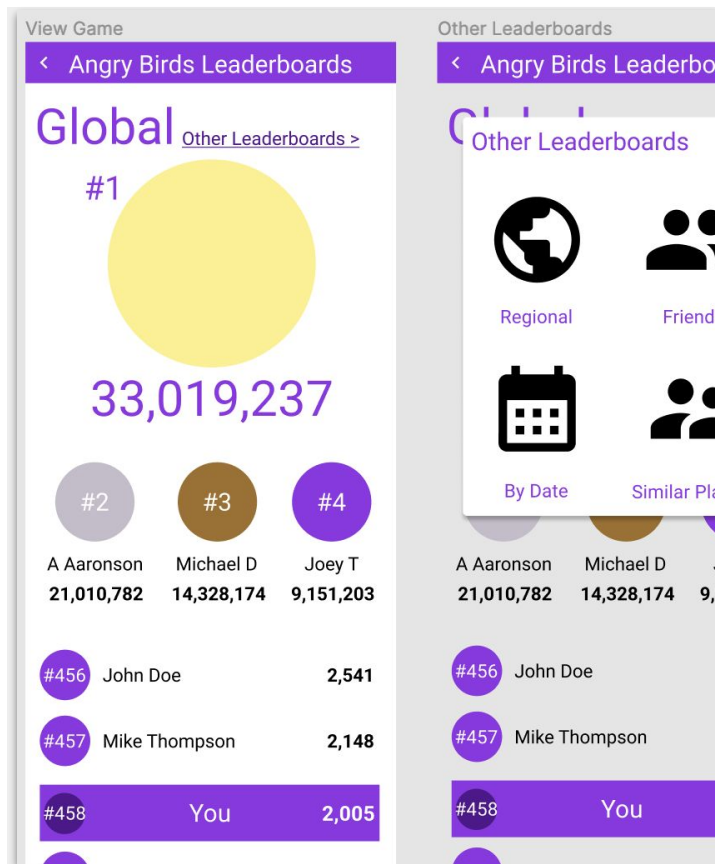
The product:

An online leaderboard app where users can submit their own high scores for various games they've played, and view high scores from similar players.



Project duration:

October, 2021 to April, 2022



Project overview



The problem:

Do players care about whom they are competing with? Do players want to focus on competing with similar players based on their gaming histories?



The goal:

Create a basic prototype app that allows users to filter other players that have similar gaming histories.

Project overview



My role:

I am the lead designer and the lead usability researcher.



Responsibilities:

- Design
- Prototype
- Study
- Refine
- Etc.

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary



After creating a high fidelity prototype, I created a list of tasks and interview questions for participants to complete. As this is for a course, I limited myself to including family and friends in the usability study. The Figma prototype was shared, along with the list of questions. Afterwards, the feedback was collected, grouped, and analyzed for themes.

User research: pain points

1

Casual Gamer Stigma

Casual players are usually placed lower on leaderboards than professional players.

2

Compete with Friends

Players might prefer to compete with people they know rather than strangers on the internet

3

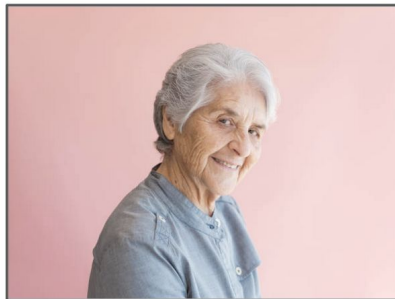
Progress is lost with new games

Users who frequently play new games lose connection to their previous successes

Persona: Julie

Problem statement:

Julie is a retiree who wants to track her progress along with her friends in a game they all play.



Julie

Age: 72
Education: Some University
Hometown: Jacksonville, FL
Family: Lives with husband
Occupation: Retiree, Volunteer

"I never used to play video games, but they're surprisingly engaging (and addictive)!"

Goals

- Stay connected with family and friends
- Stay engaged and mentally active while at home
- Recapture excitement of youth

Frustrations

- Casual gamers dismissed as not-gamers
- Nowhere to brag about her progress

As a retiree with a tablet, Julie has discovered casual gaming and is climbing the ladder in local groups for her particular match-3 and word seek games. She's been playing the same game for over a year. Her teammates share similar lives and situations and she feels competitive and challenged again.

User journey map

While the main research focus was on whether users would prefer localized groups and leaderboards, some thought was given to recording and sharing high scores.

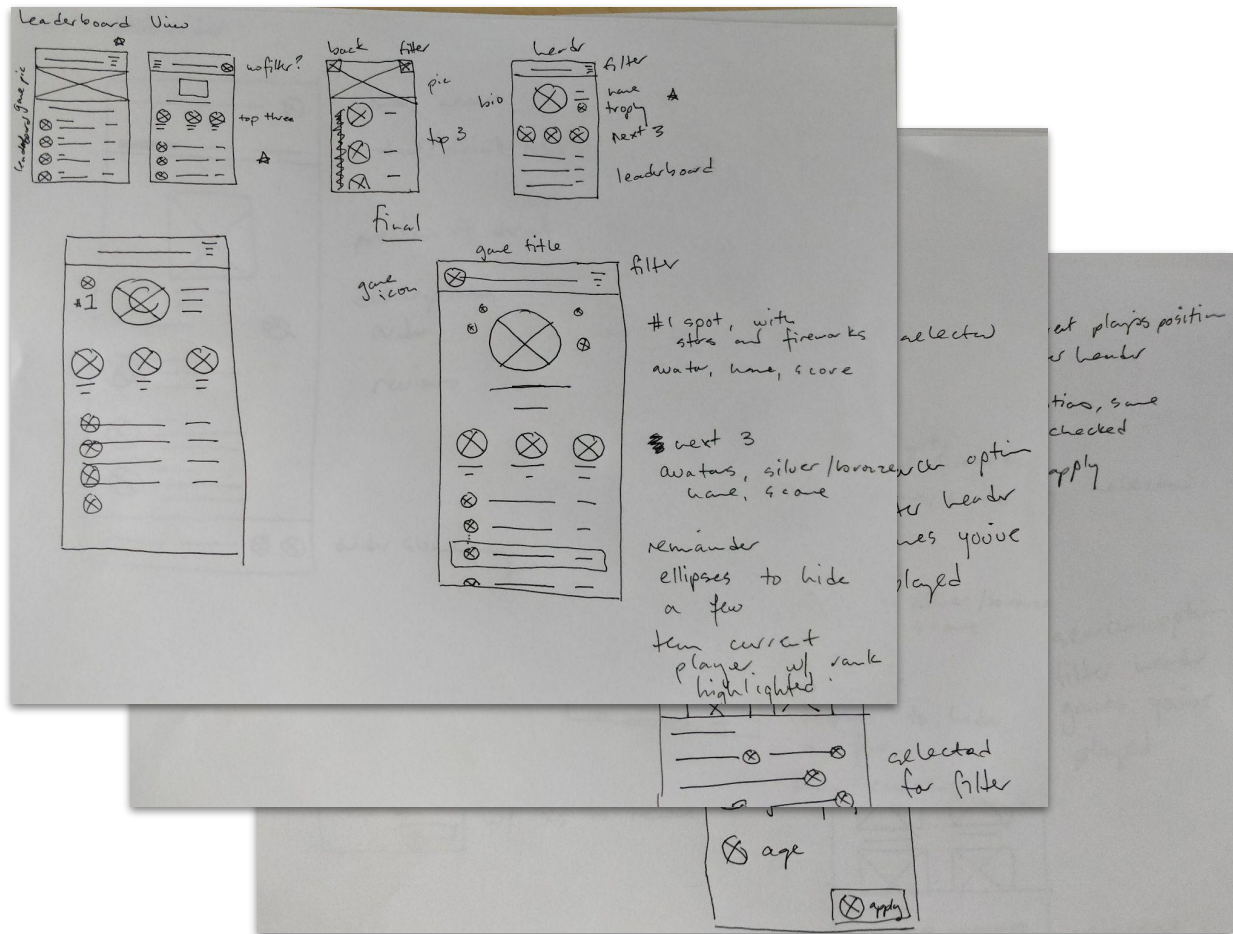
Persona: Julie

Goal: Share High Score in “match-3” game with friends on forum

ACTION	Take Photo or Record Video	View Game Forum	Add Highscore	Add Evidence	Share High Score with Friends
TASK LIST	Tasks A. Use Tablet to create screen capture of game with visible score	Tasks A. Open Leaderboard app B. Find game from “Recent Games” C. Tap Match-3	Tasks A. Tap Leaderboard B. Tap “Add High Score”	Tasks A. Pick photo from gallery B. App fills in date/time and detects score/numbers/text in screenshot so typing is easier C. Confirm or update details	Tasks A. Tap Share B. “Match-3 forum” is already chosen as destination C. Tap “Share High Score”
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Pride Success Accomplishment	Familiarity Frustration at tablet battery life	Confusion	Frustration having to correct the auto-detected score	Success
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Software for non-tablet screen capturing	Shortcut to add high score	Show recent high scores from other forum posts	Better score recognition Support for video recordings	Add custom message Real time notifications of replies or likes

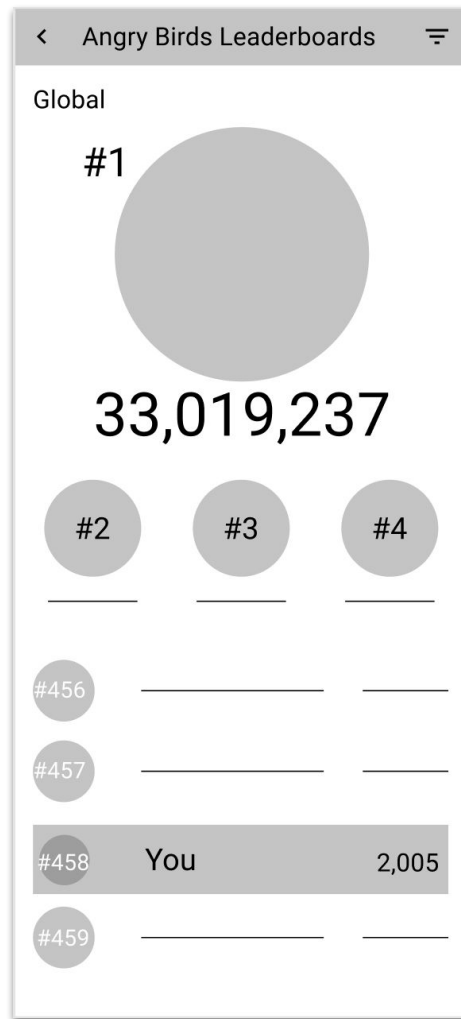
Paper wireframes

Working on paper wireframes was a great exercise in drawing, after spending so much of my career in front of a PC.



Digital wireframes

My original plan was for users to “filter” their competition, by region, timeframe, or games played.

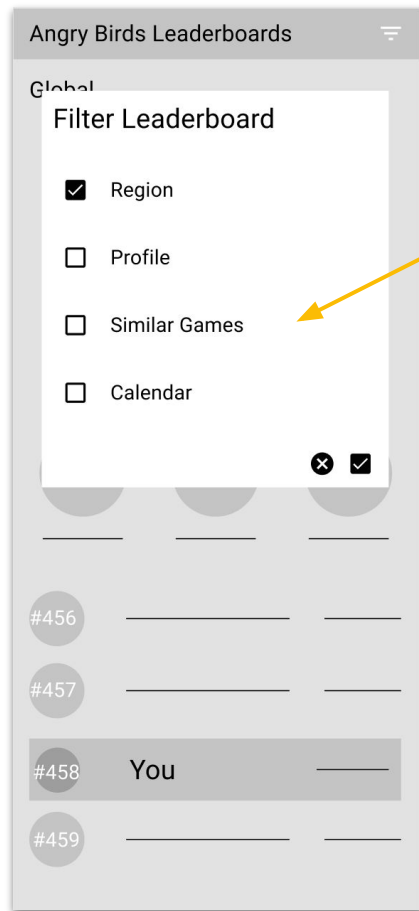


Filter option to choose a player's competition

The user's score and rank among other players

Digital wireframes

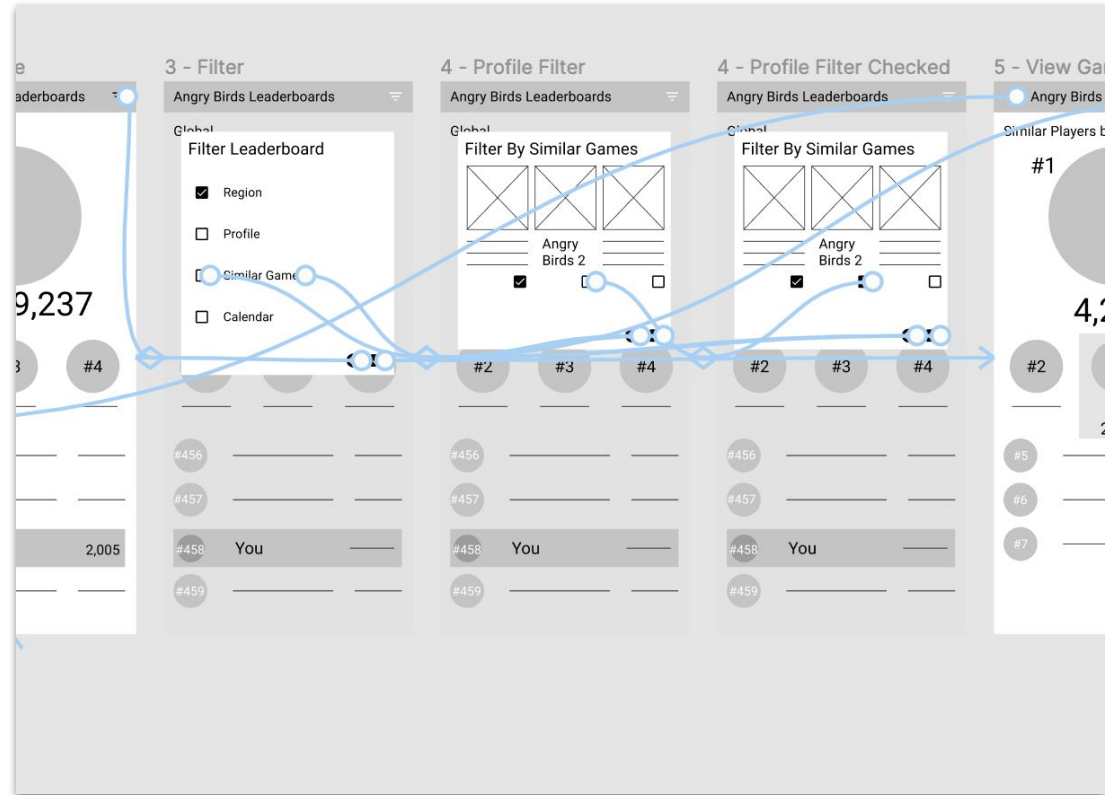
In the end, testers didn't understand how or why they would filter the players on a leaderboard.



Players can compete with others who've played similar games

Low-fidelity prototype

[Link to Figma Prototype](#)



Usability study: findings

I sent users a figma prototype link and a list of tasks to complete using the prototype. Users were given a short survey to complete afterwards

Usability Findings

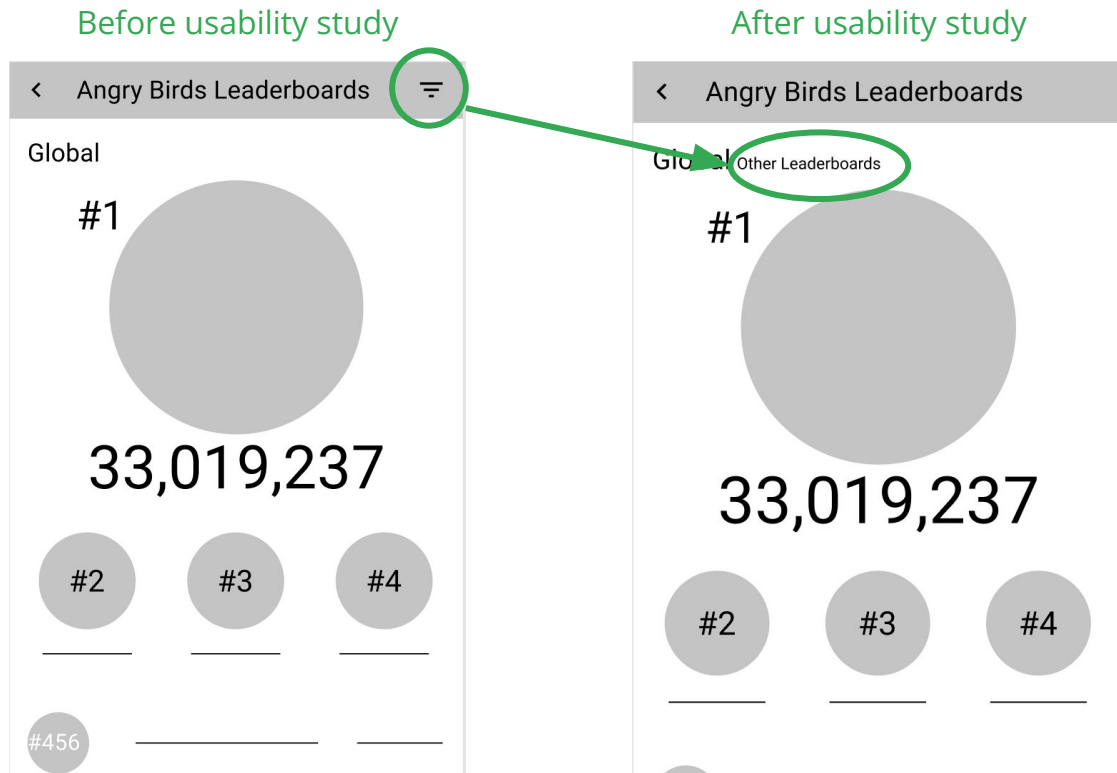
- 1 Users wanted to see logical groups to define their leaderboards, like friends, teammates, etc.
- 2 Users were confused about the filter icon, and didn't understand why they would arbitrarily edit a leaderboard.
- 3 Users found that the prototype needed actual numbers and names, not just mockup lines.

Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups

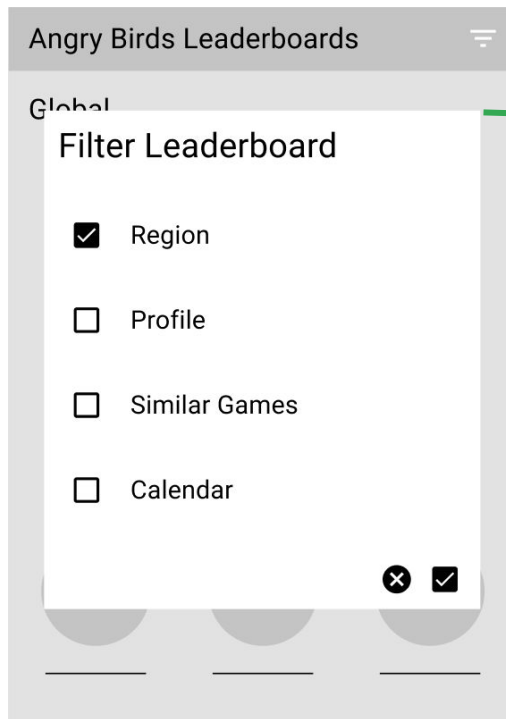
Instead of filtering their competition, users could instead view “other” leaderboards. The end result was the same, but automatic, official leaderboards felt more authentic and useful.



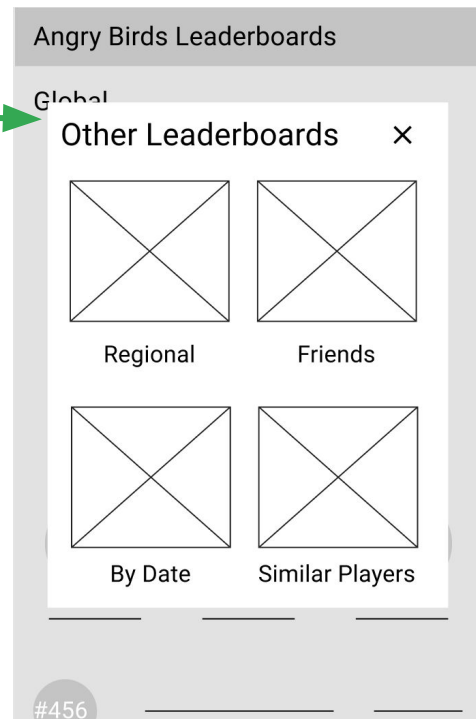
Mockups

Choosing another leaderboard means users would not combine filters either, so it changed from a mathematical operation to a simple selection.

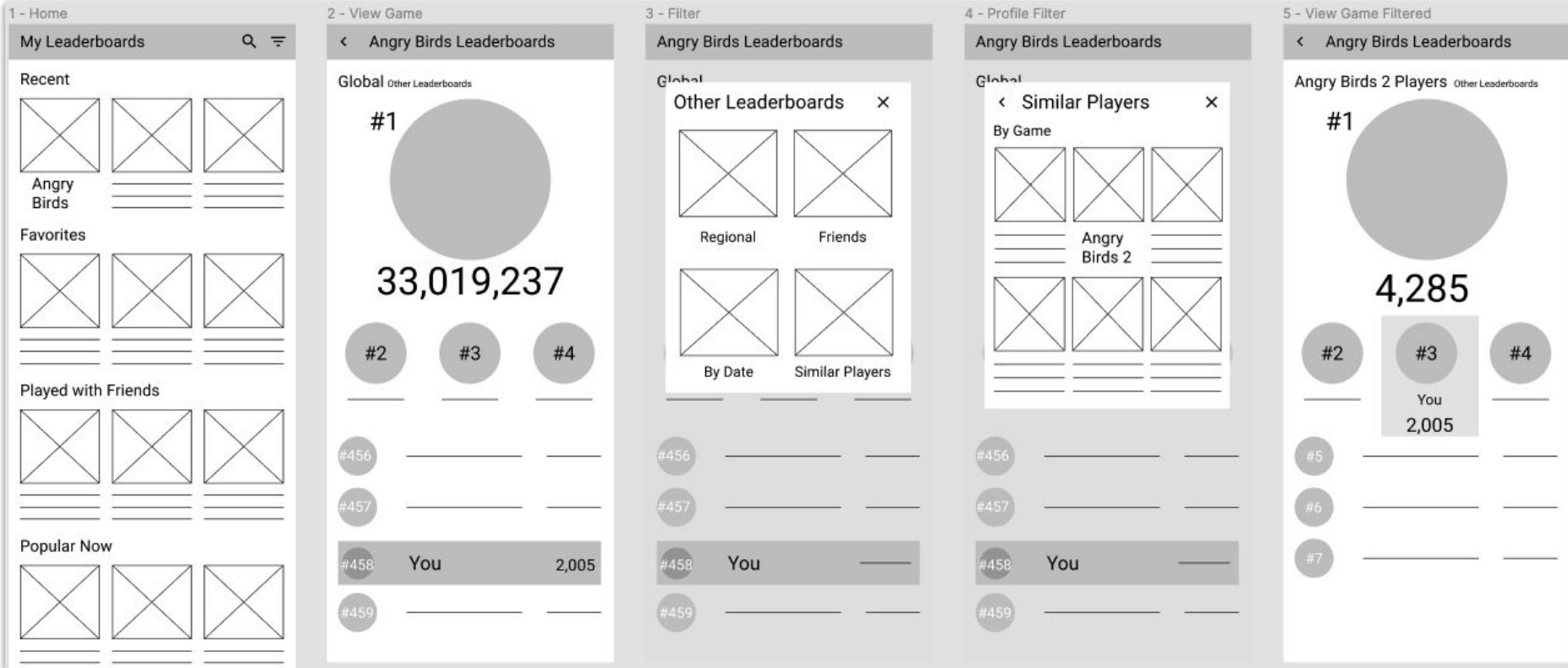
Before usability study



After usability study

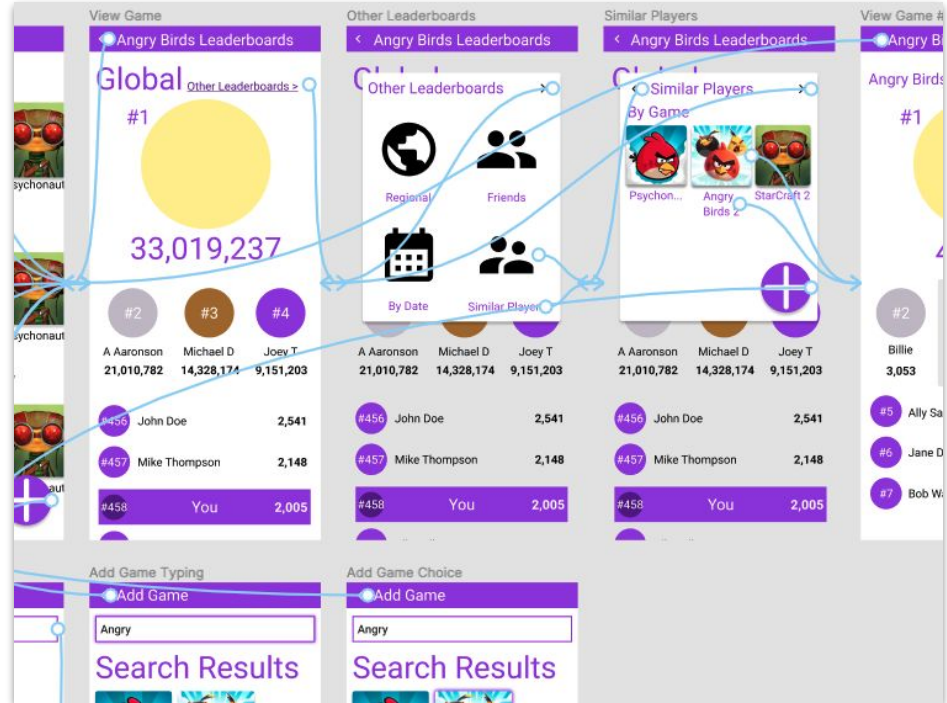


Updated Mockups



High-fidelity prototype

[Link to Figma High-fidelity prototype](#)



Accessibility considerations

1

High Contrast Colors

2

Minimal motion and animation, to balance aesthetics with accessibility concerns

3

Simple controls

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

Testers found the updated designs to be far more useful: “I like the color scheme and the ability to quickly add my own scores.”



What I learned:

I learned that design tools like figma only let you make apps that look all every other app: boxes, slide transitions between screens, and static content.

Next steps

1

There are more workflows
to mock and implement

2

The prototype could be
handed to a development
team

3

More elements could be
added to a design system
to be reused in other
apps