

[Open in app](#)[Sign up](#)[Sign in](#)**Medium**

Search



Write



Secret Location



DevBlog #2: Building a Warehouse



SL Staff

[Follow](#)

7 min read · Jun 3, 2022

4

1

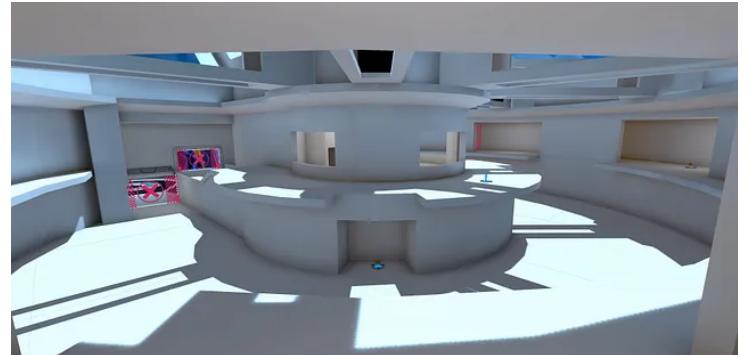
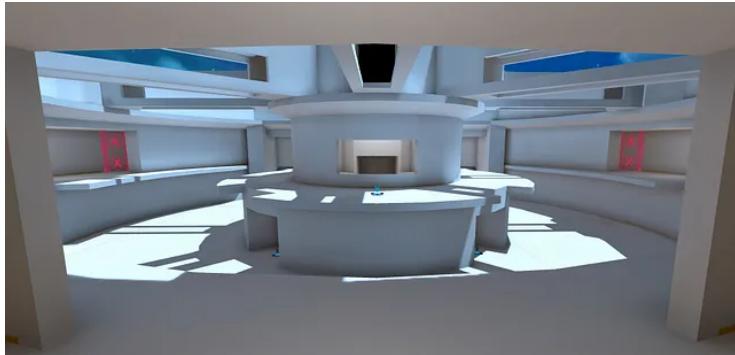


Welcome to the second addition to our *NERF Ultimate Championship* DevBlog series! We're bringing you more exclusive in-game development updates and discussions, with today's topic being one of our (as of yet) unrevealed maps,

named Warehouse! Along with this being the first time we're showing off this map, we're giving you a virtual (and written) tour of the facilities and walking you through the creative process for designing this map, from inspiration to its current state!

Joining us as our tour guide of sorts is Rich Thorogood, our 3D Generalist at Secret Location and the creative mind behind the map itself! You can find more of his work [Here](#).

The first time you're hearing about our DevBlog series? You can check out our first one [Here](#) where we break down all the blaster mechanics awaiting you in *NERF Ultimate Championship*.



Process: Inspiration

Everything has to start somewhere. For Rich, that inspiration comes from looking around at similar games for something to start a concept from. In the case of Warehouse, this came from playing games in the same genre as *NERF Ultimate Championship*. Checking out various other competitive multiplayer titles brought Rich to the idea of creating a map using circularity, really enjoying the idea of players starting on opposite ends of a circle and meeting in the middle. With that, the initial blocking out phase of map creation began!



From this initial brainstorm and focus on the circularity of the map, blocking out (placing simple white shapes to “sketch” the layout of the map) began. Matching these bubbling ideas to the core mechanics of the game was key. Wall running, fast-paced, frantic blasting action, and the flow of the competition were vital. Keeping it fresh among the other maps was important too!

“I loved the idea of each team starting at either end of a circular environment with multiple levels for interesting engagements, meeting at the center for a clash of foam and darts.”

From these ideas, Warehouse began to take shape. The two-tiered map began, introducing elements of verticality and choice, coming together in a central focus where these two paths clash and the NERF battle begins!

Populating Warehouse with assets came next. For this Rich looked through some of the pre-existing assets we had and found an underutilized one — Boxes! From this humble asset, Warehouse became more than just this

round map, starting to take shape and introduce unique opportunities for players. Carefully placing these boxes allowed players more and more choices in-game: Jump over them, move around them, or take cover behind them, all the while blasting their opponents.



Process: Playtesting

With a clear framework to work from, Warehouse began to look more like a warehouse and start the ever-important part of any production line — playtesting. Any map can be fun in theory, but the only way to find out if it's actually fun is to, well, actually play the thing!

It was during this phase that the real fine details and flow of the overall experience of the map began to materialize. The various paths players chose to take coming out of their base, seeing whether players intuitively grasp where they could wall run to or jump behind, and even things like making sure players don't get stuck on a box start to become tested.

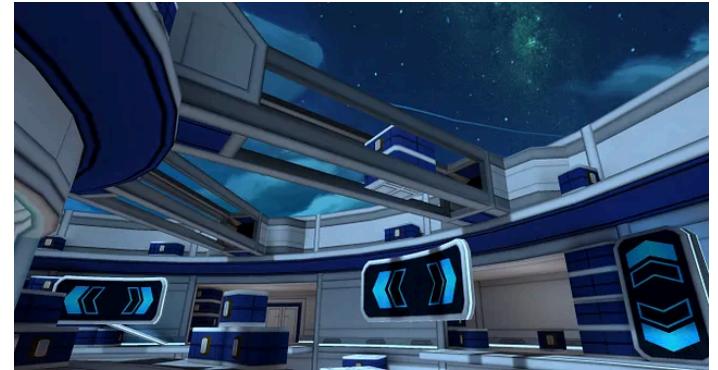
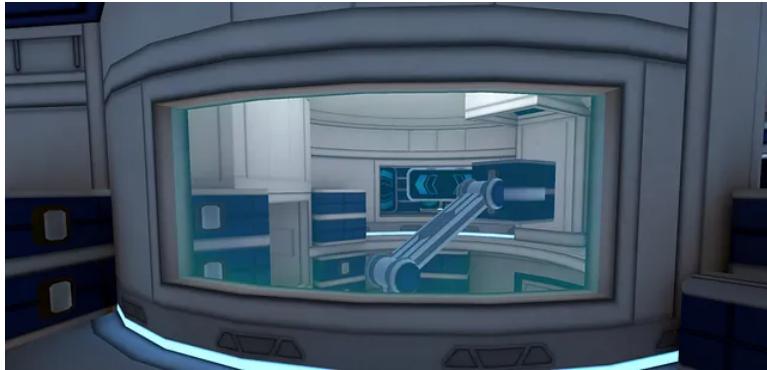


It's from this investigation of where players naturally explore and move towards a map that allowed Rich to fine-tune it. Opening up new ways to navigate the map, obstructing sightlines to increase the tension of different parts, all to ultimately craft the map into something brisk and electrifying. The close-quarters nature of the map continued to shine and Warehouse went from block-outs and boxes into a real map!



With the map's functionality coming into place, Rich began the process of fleshing out the environment and adding bits of storytelling within it, with

the concept of a storage facility or warehouse coming to mind. All the boxes and jump pads scattered around the map weren't just gameplay elements but aesthetic pieces too. The centre of the map began taking shape with a robot arm busily moving boxes around, alongside a conveyor belt high above the map with moving boxes, adding a bit of dynamism to the map.



“I really felt we needed to add more life to our scenes so I thought it would be fun to add in more animated assets that also pushed the feeling of being in a warehouse.”

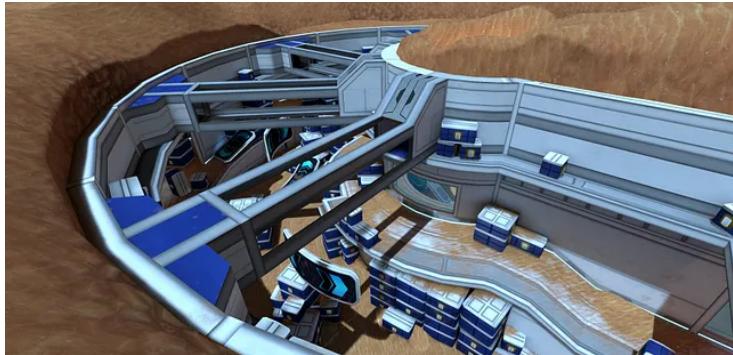
Process: Iteration

At this stage, Warehouse was more than just a couple of assets and an idea and starting to come into its own. The relatively sanitary vibes from before gave way to a warmer environment with sand and desert-like motifs.



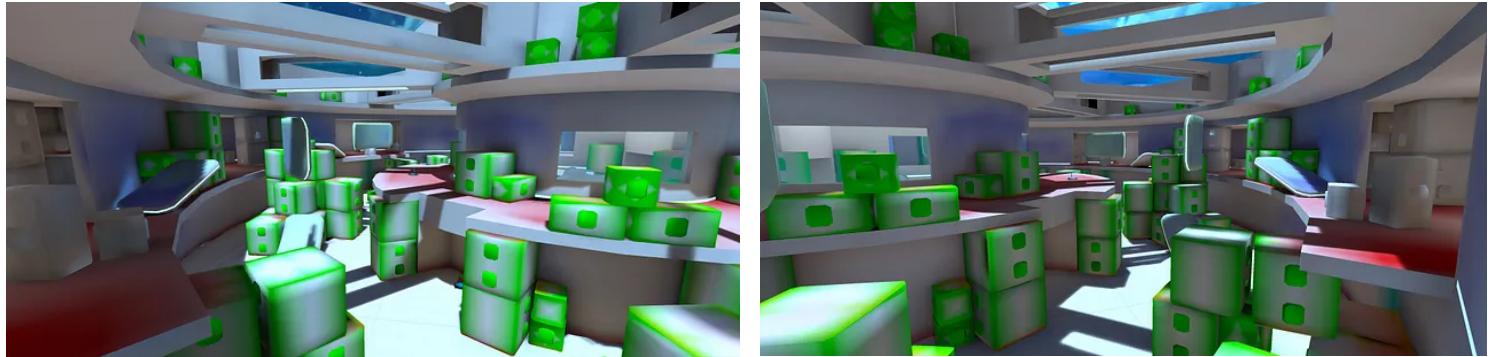
“I thought it would be interesting to fill the environment with sand. Adding in some texture broke up the scene and added contrast to the ground and walls leading to better readability of the space.”

The narrative of the area began to take shape too. A storage facility and warehouse in a desert sinkhole repurposed into a high octane NERF arena!



“To do this I created a shader that uses vertex colour channels to allow us to paint sand and footprints mapped to a second UV set on surfaces, which we ended up bringing to the other maps.”

In layman's terms, Rich used meshes, which can host colour data, to mask out details in a shader. You can see this in action below, as Rich used red, green, and blue to represent the vertices that were painted: red for the sandy bits thrown about, blue for footprints on walls and surfaces, and green to erase excess dirt to clean up bits of the map.



The newly integrated sandy elements weren't just for flair but served as a clear gameplay element as well. Sand and footprints gave a clearer picture for players of where they could go, with the footprints hinting at places they could wallrun to. This helped to increase the overall flow of gameplay and keep things moving, giving a slight guiding hand to encourage fast-paced battles and utilizing the map's unique features.

Rich next bathed the arena in a soft blue glow, giving the sense of a nighttime area which contrasted with some of the other sunnier maps on the roster. Gameplay, however, is always a consideration and readability of which teams side you were on was key. To make this work, Rich did a lighting split down the middle of the map of red and blue, helping players to distinguish which side they were on in the heat of battle.



However, Rich wasn't finished just yet with the storytelling, candidly mentioning how "I needed the feeling of a warehouse to slap me in the face!!". From there, the little bits and bobs of what one would (hopefully) find within a warehouse started to emerge. Safety and caution stripes marking the edges of platforms, signs with instructions on them, buttons that seem like they'd do something, and lights to keep the space illuminated! With these elements dotting the map, the scene finalized into a looking like a real warehouse!



The final *piece de resistance* was to bring in the arena vibe. It wouldn't be *NERF Ultimate Championship* without the exhilarating feeling of being in the

competition stadiums of the most prestigious sporting event of the future, NERF! The grandstands for diehard fans, spotlights to highlight the action, and a roaring crowd cheering you on brought the entire map together. *This is the NERF battle of the future!*



Conclusion

Thank you for coming on a tour of Warehouse with us! Hopefully, you enjoyed our walkthrough of the creative process for crafting a map in *NERF Ultimate Championship*. If you enjoyed this entry and want to keep up to date with everything *NERF Ultimate Championship*, be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#), sign up for our [Newsletter](#), and tune in on June 9th at 8am PT to find out our release date at UploadVR's Summer Showcase!

See you in the arena soon, Champions!



Published in Secret Location

[Follow](#)

54 followers · Last published Jun 3, 2022

Exploring the unknown intersections between storytelling and technology.



Written by SL Staff

[Follow](#)

15 followers · 9 following

Responses (1)



Write a response

What are your thoughts?



Stormy Does VR

Aug 26, 2022

...

the warehouse map oddly reminds me of the semi circle map from SARPBC, the predecessor of Rocket League. Except in that one there are goals at both ends, not spawns xD



[Reply](#)