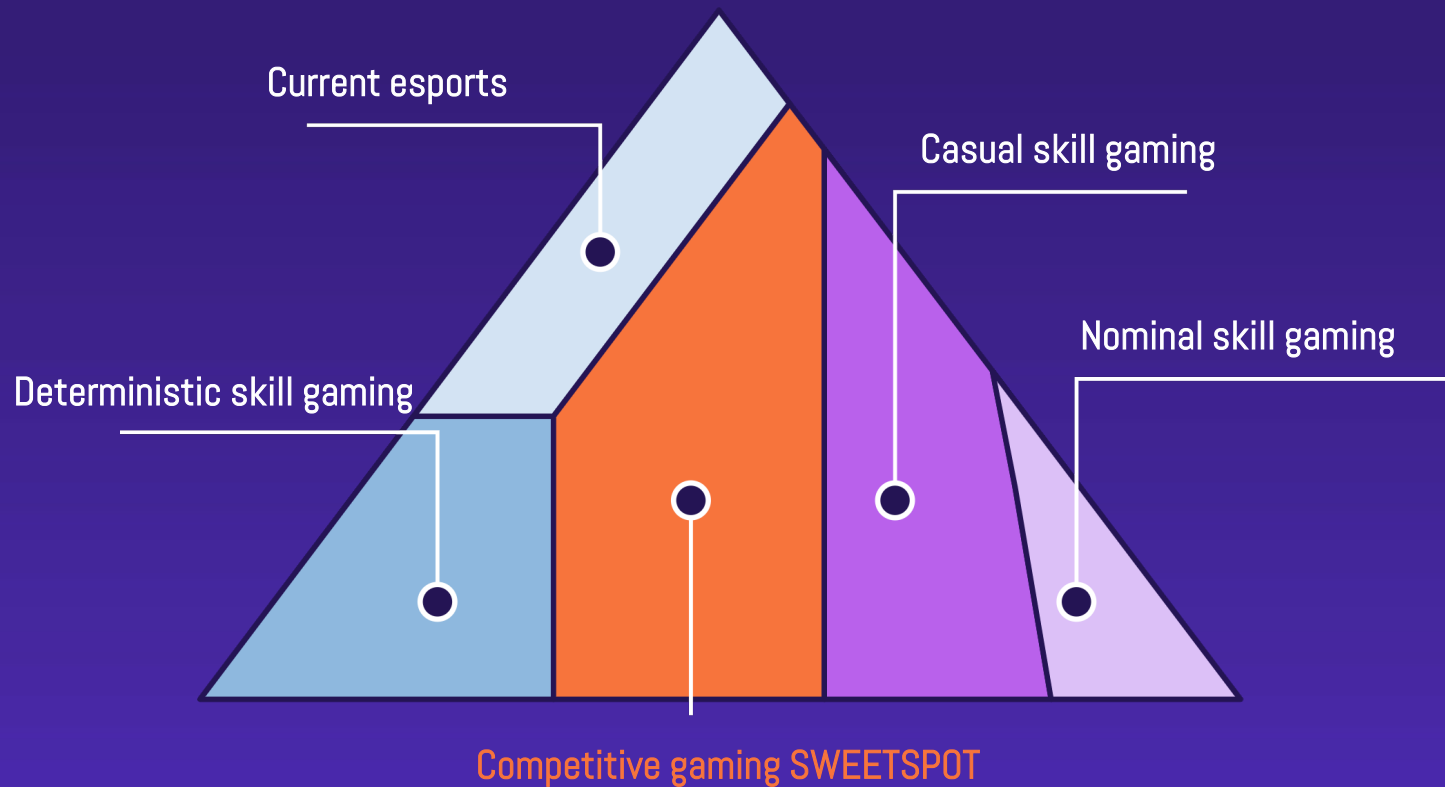


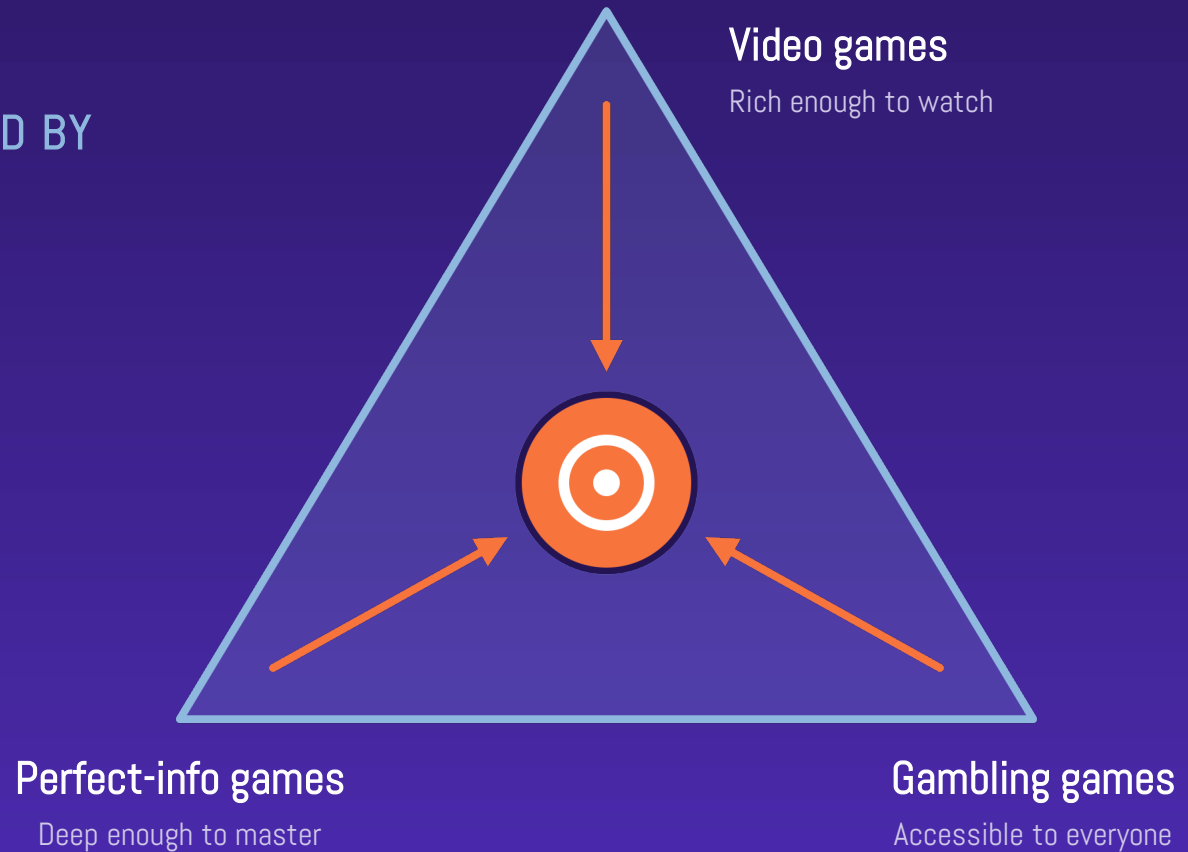
Get ready for **competitive** midcore



A competitive-first economy will emerge in the unexplored middle

THE UNEXPLORED MIDDLE WILL BE POWERED BY

Games **deep** enough to master, **rich** enough to watch and **accessible** enough to foster grassroots competitive play.



The middle borrows the strengths and avoids the weaknesses



UNLIKE ESPORTS

Competitive first, not competitive last

Games built for monetized competitive play from day one



UNLIKE PERFECT-INFO GAMES

A less defined skill gap

Anyone can win a match, while skill still wins over time.



UNLIKE SKILL GAMING

Distinct games, not generic ones

Characters, IP and depth instead of reskinned solitaire and bingo.



UNLIKE CARD BATTLERS

Not dependent on pay-to-win

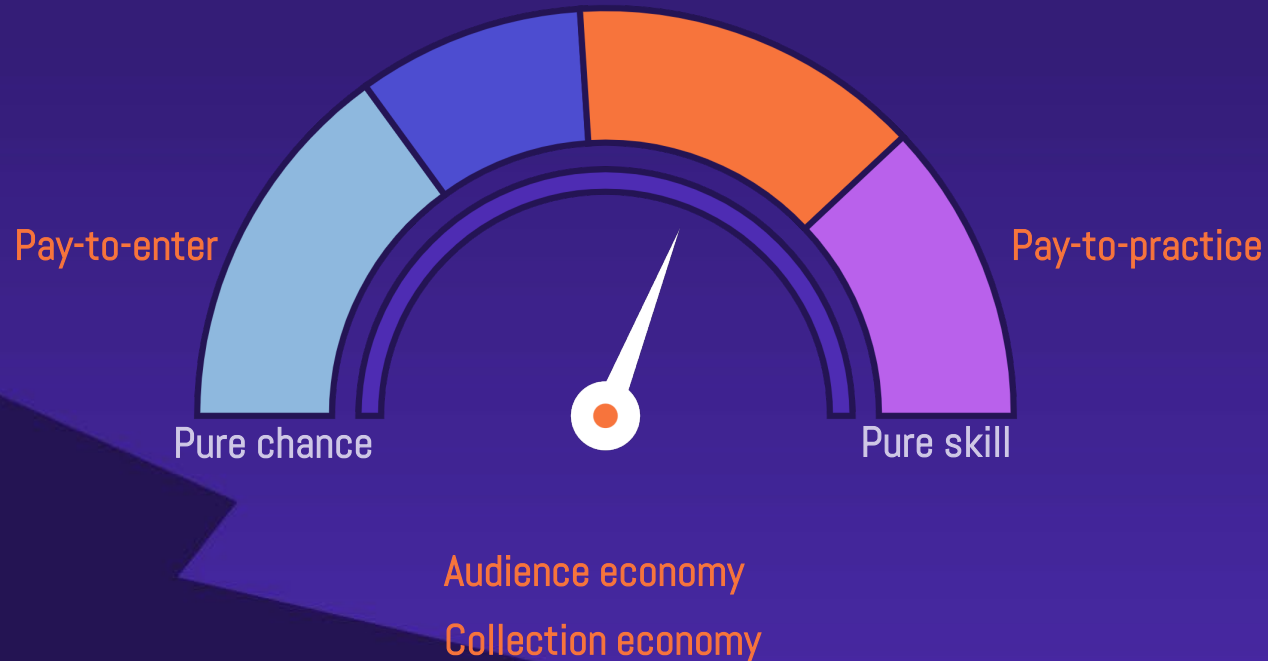
Collections add style and choice, not purchased power.

It replaces trickle-down economy with dynamic and flexible monetization

- **Pay-to-practice · perfect-info games**
Chess.com earns ~88% of its ~\$150M from Premium
- **Pay-to-enter · skill gaming and poker**
WSOP 2025: 246,960 entries, \$481.8M in prizes
- **Audience economy · esports**
75% of esports revenue: sponsors and media rights
- **Collection economy · card battlers**
Pokémon TCG Pocket: ~\$1.3B in its first year



It handles regulatory uncertainty through adaption rather than evasion



The potential to monetize either through Pay-to-enter or Pay-to-practice increases the more a game is classified as one or the other. **It's a road choice not a roadblock.**

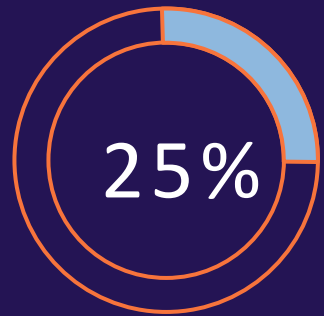
Game modes and formats can be designed to further explore the full range.

The potential to tap into the Audience and Collection economies is **determined by design** more than classification.

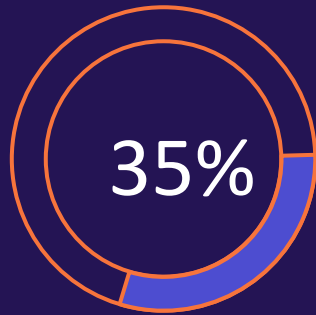
Creating vibrant competitive-first market

Ripe for exploration

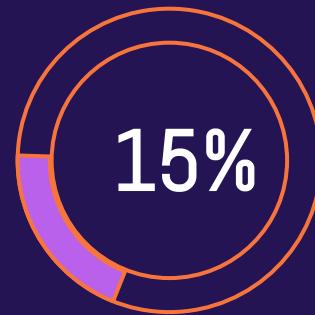
1.5 BUSD → 3 BUSD



Pay-to-practice



RMG Entry fees

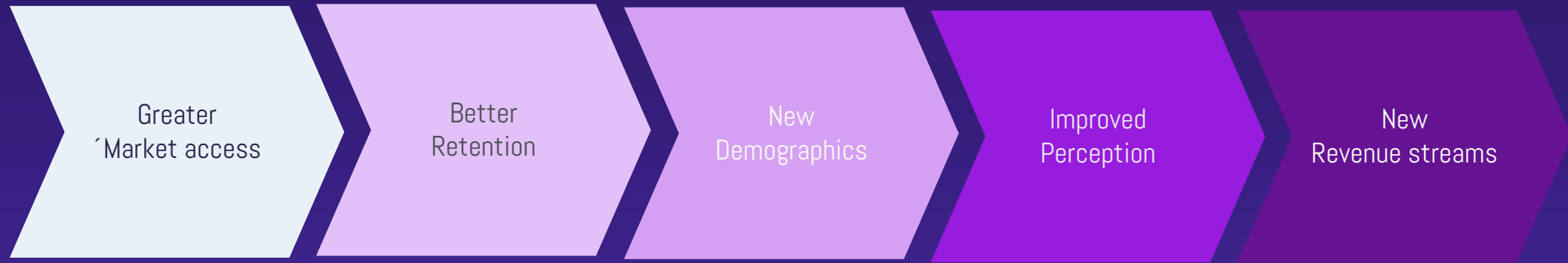


Audience economy



Collection economy

For iGaming, the case is stronger still



- Competitive play **reaches audiences** and produces content **slots can't**.
- Video gamers are **4.3 times more likely to bet** and **4.5 times more likely to gamble online**.

Every stakeholder earns from the same source

No more divided goals or mismatched infrastructure

Every step and every part of the journey from the first practice match to the final payout, is built around competitive play.

COMPETITION LAST: ESPORTS

The game earns from skins, teams from sponsors, organizers from media rights. Every link chases a different goal.



Web makes this an achievable reality

Providing financial, technical and production benefits

WEB SHOPS

74% of the top 50 mobile games now sell direct on the web, up from 12% in 2019.

RMG DISTRIBUTION

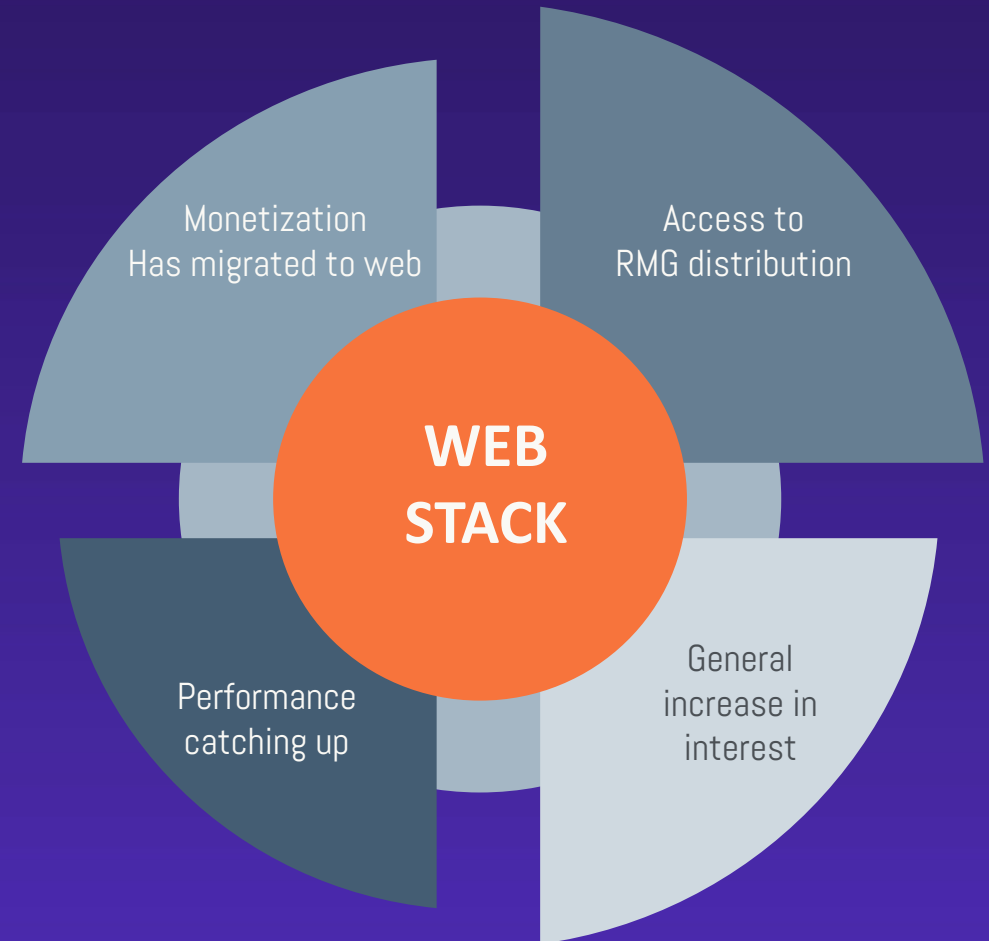
Through web, games can be supplied to hundreds of established RMG operators

WEBGPU TAKES OVER FROM WEBGL

Soon there'll be much less difference in performance between web and native / Steam games.

GROWING INTEREST IN WEB GAMES

The number of released games increased by 2.7X in 2025 to over 15 000.



Balance is the challenge

Every aspect of a game has two ways to fail

 The middle

Attention

measured in session length

Too short for richness · 1–5 min

Too long to fit a life · 3h+



Identity

measured in production cost

Cheap but generic

Expensive but unique



Accessibility

measured in skill vs luck

Luck decides · gambling law

Skill locks it · chess



Fairness

measured in what money buys

Money buys power

Money buys nothing to collect



Integrity

measured in how much a bot helps

Engines win · perfect info

Feels random · too much hidden



Liquidity

measured in players needed online

Needs a crowd online at once

Plays alone · no rivalry

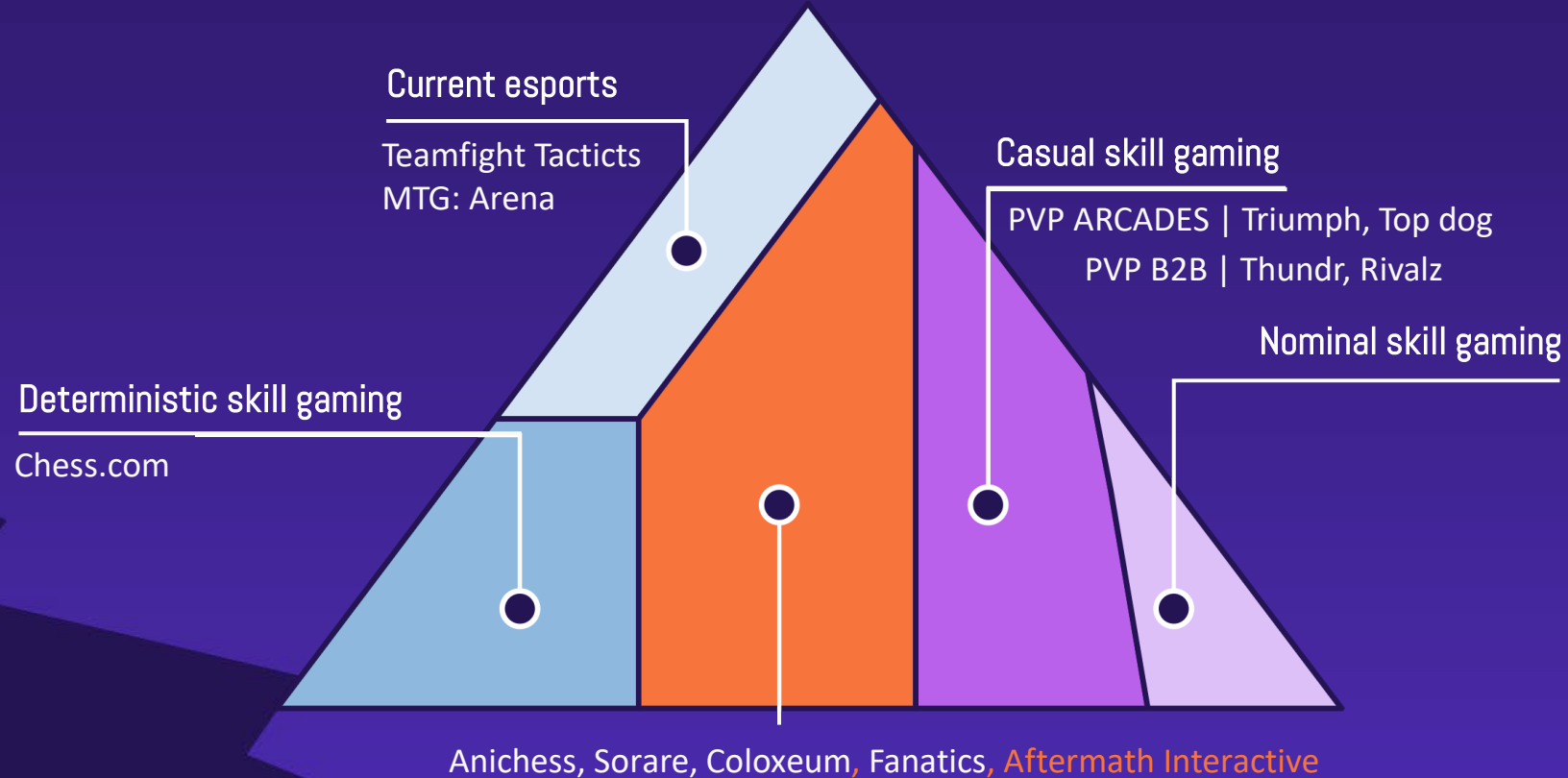


Miss one dial and the game falls back into a sector.

Hitting the middle every time takes a general-purpose recipe.

Who are in a good place to capitalize?

Activity is still mostly around the fringes



About the deck creator

I'm a gaming industry consultant and the CEO of Aftermath Interactive. We are working on a suite of competitive midcore games built on our competitive gaming platform DealR.

Contact me for consulting inquiries, partnership opportunities and to learn more.



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