

EA SPORTS - NHL 25

# Hockey Ultimate Team: Wildcard Quest

# Disclaimer:

**JULY 2024**

I LEFT THE COMPANY BEFORE THE LAUNCH OF THE GAME WHICH WAS OCTOBER 4, 2024 AND THERE MAY BE DIFFERENCES IN WHAT I PRESENT TODAY AND WHAT IS OFFICIALLY IN THE GAME

**MY ROLE**

UX Strategist  
UX Designer  
UXR Support

**DURATION**

Six Months  
Nov 2023 — May 2024

**TYPE**

Game UX  
NHL 25

**TEAM**

Brandon Wu  
Edwin Tang  
Murphy Miu

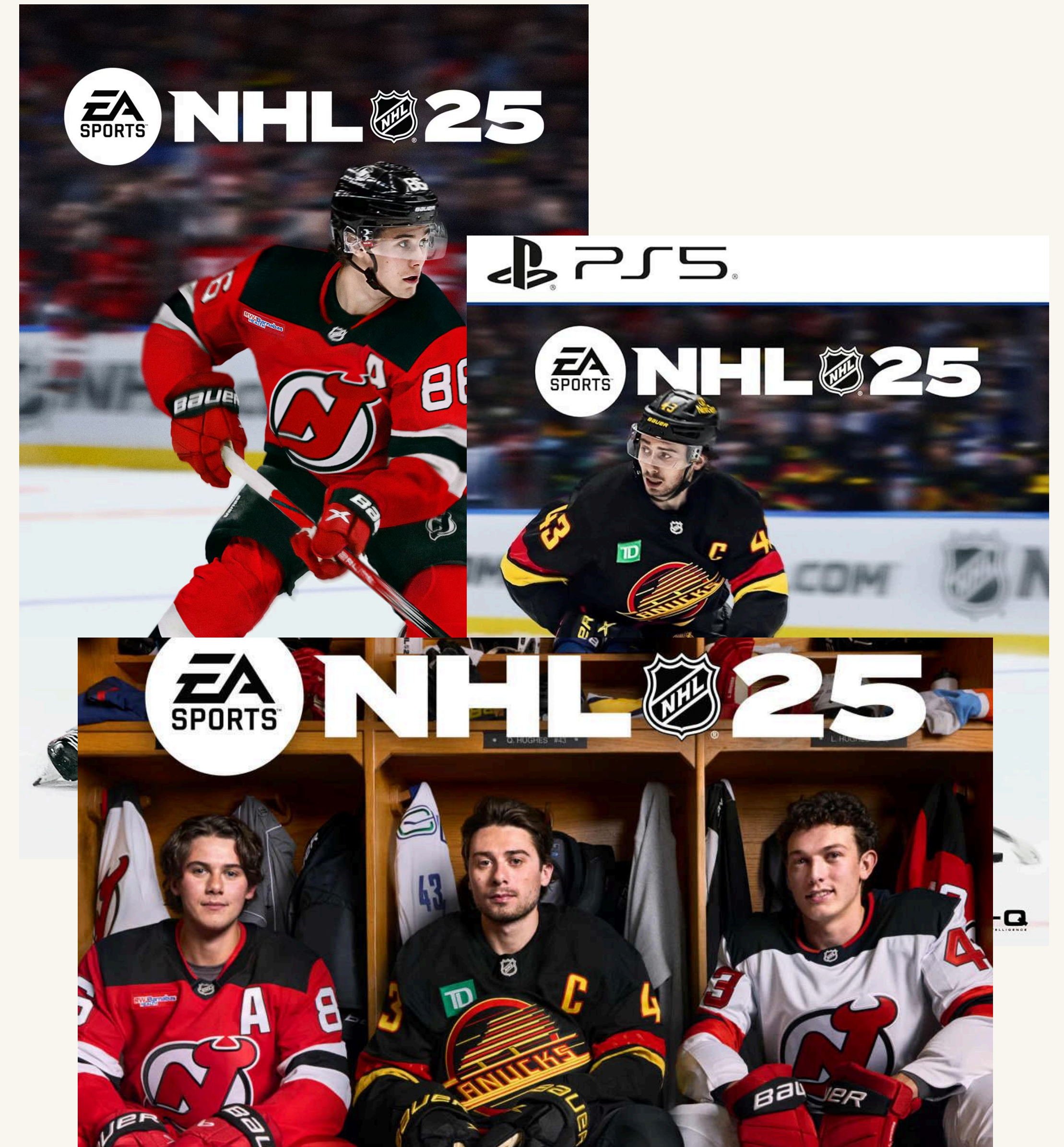


THE CLIENT

# EA SPORTS NHL

EA SPORTS is a business unit within Electronic Arts (EA) that allows for dedicated players to live their hockey fantasies with four main game modes: Hockey Ultimate Team (HUT), Franchise Mode, World of Chel (WOC), and Be a Pro.

Specifically for HUT, the mode promotes itself to be the greatest hockey team-building experience with no limitations.





## BACKGROUND

# Struggles of Keeping Up

Over the years, players have noted during UXR sessions, it was extremely difficult to pick up HUT because of the necessary “grind” that players had to go through in order to keep up. Players who entered the mode mid-season noted that it was near impossible to catch up if they didn’t start from the beginning of the season.

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“There's some challenges you can go through, and you can earn your own things. It’s just super tedious time consuming things that just to me are not fun at all ... and you just have to go through them all and for a little reward.”

EA SPORTS NHL PLAYER  
2024



BACKGROUND

# Lack of Authenticity

It was also noted during past User Interviews with players when asked the reason why they were not adopting HUT despite being avid EA SPORTS NHL players, players said that the Team-building approach in HUT felt inauthentic because of the nature of “pay-to-win” model where players spending more had stronger players in comparison to others who chose not to.

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Players expressed wanting more a more authentic and realistic team building experience.

**5 EA SPORTS NHL PLAYERS**  
USER INTERVIEWS

## BACKGROUND

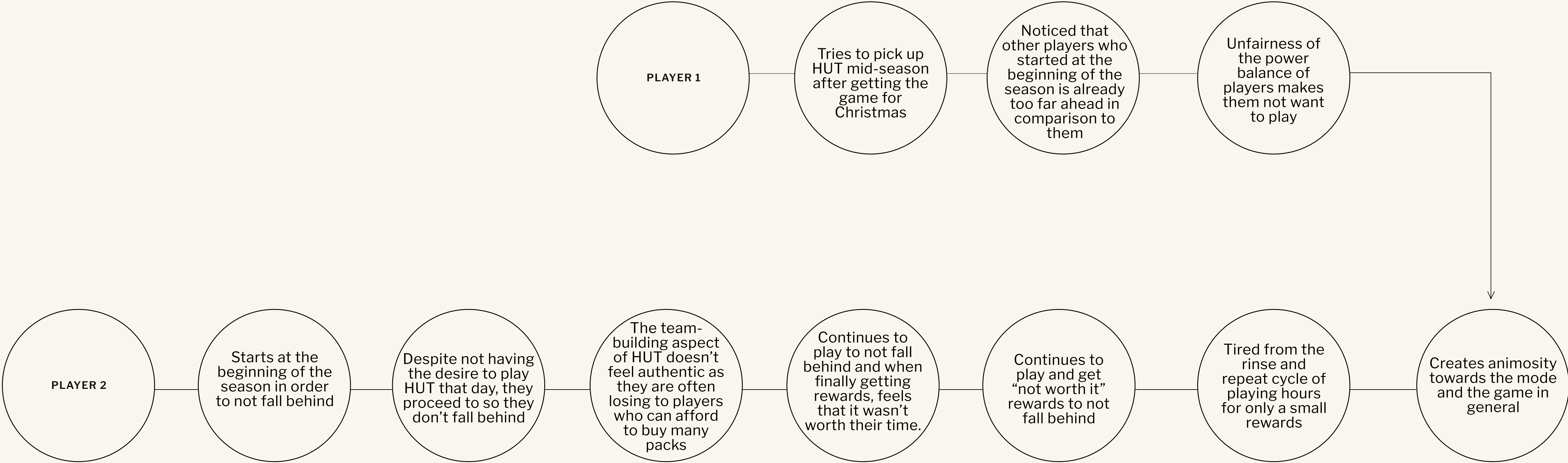
# Wanting Something New

The NHL franchise following a yearly release cycle, the player base is always craving for something new. Scouring through online forums, the repetitive releases with nothing new to show was a shared negative sentiment across the community.



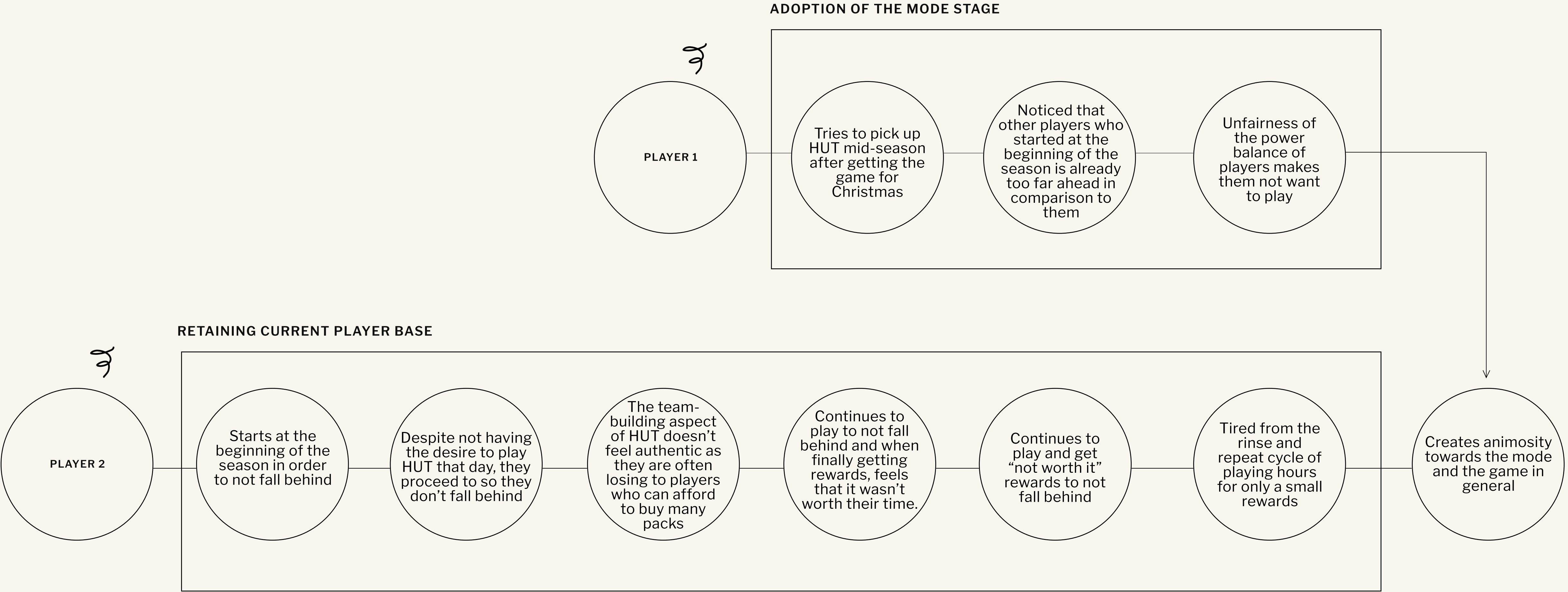
JOURNEY MAP

# What HUT Players are Experiencing



JOURNEY MAP

# What HUT Players are Experiencing





JOURNEY MAP

# What HUT Players are Experiencing



## PROPOSAL

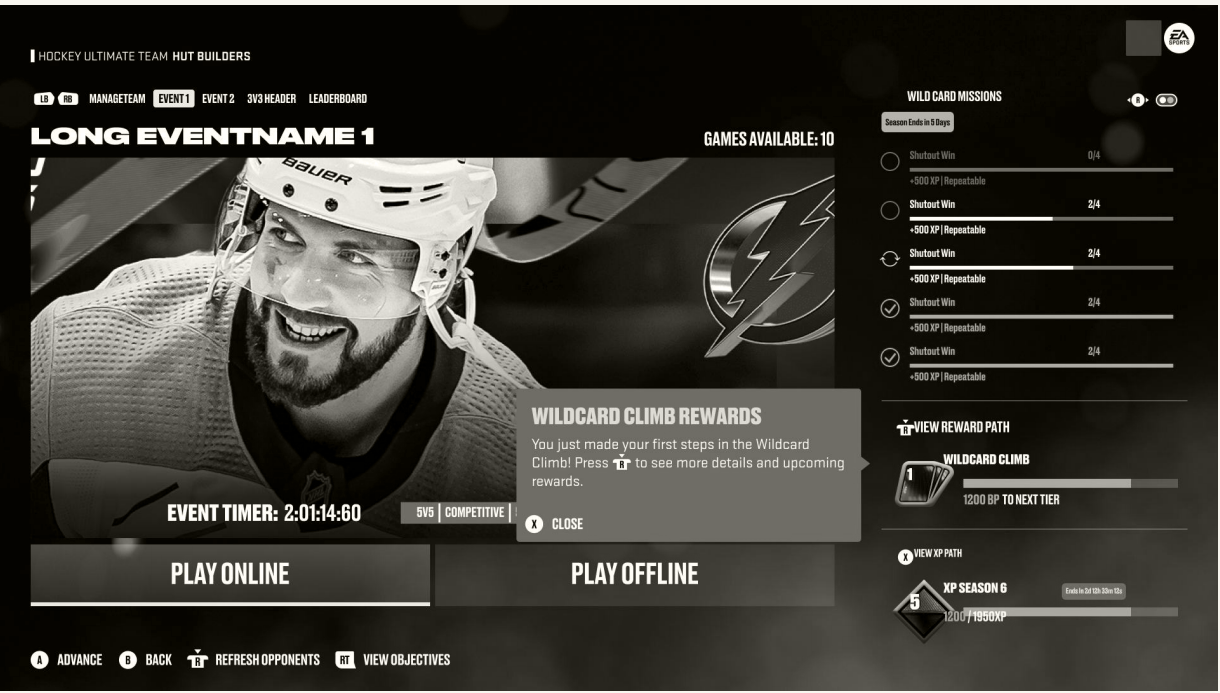
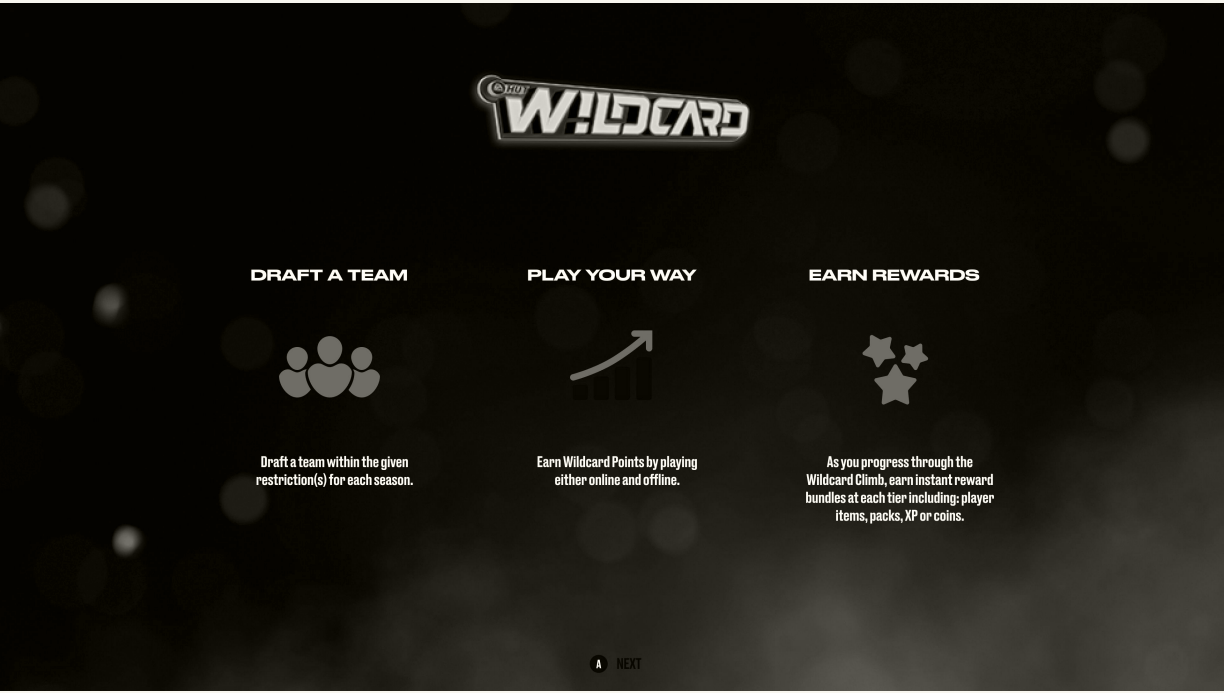
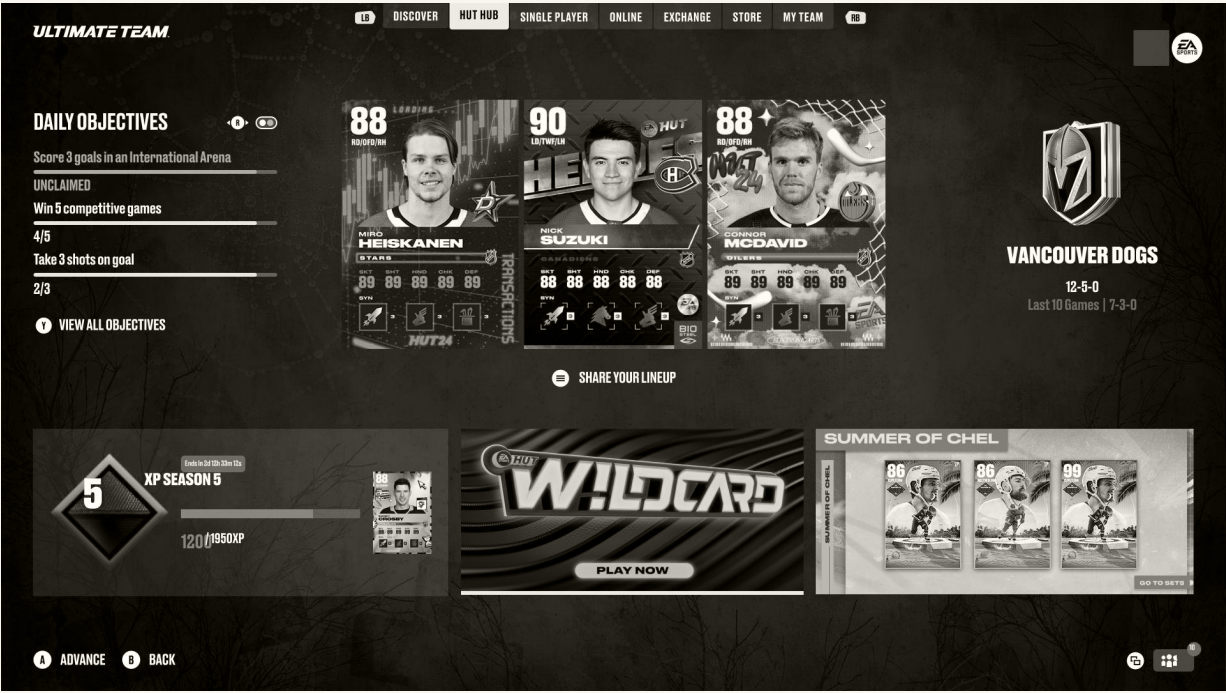
Wildcard Quest provides players with a strategic deck building experience, which is intended to provide a simple and easy to jump in experience for both core veterans and new players.



Wildcard Demo Video :)

FLOW

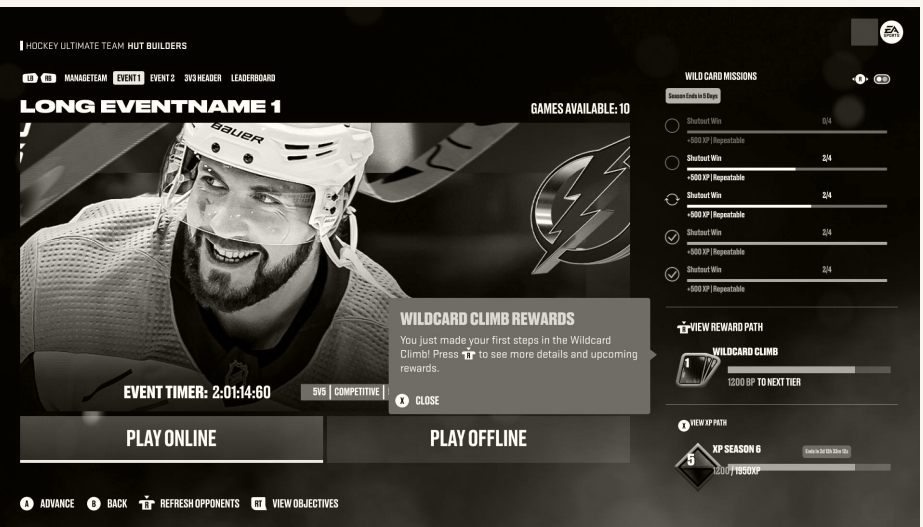
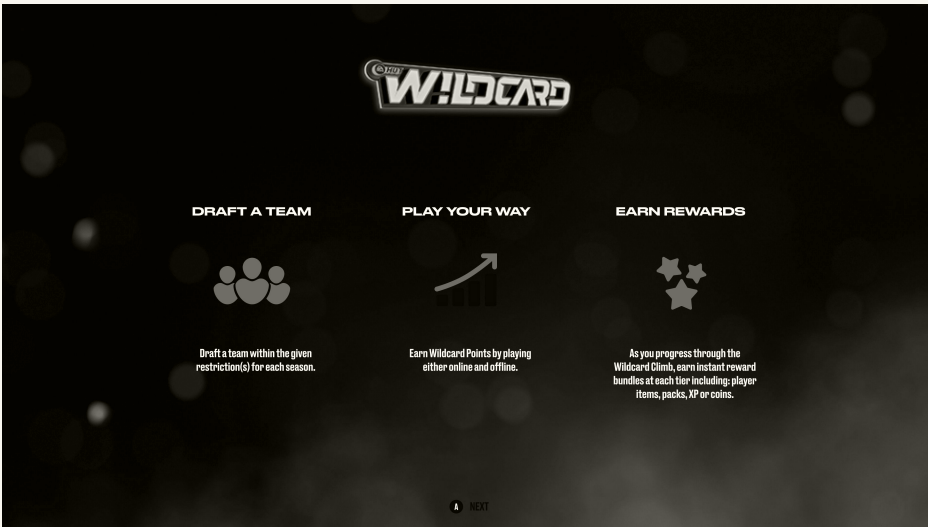
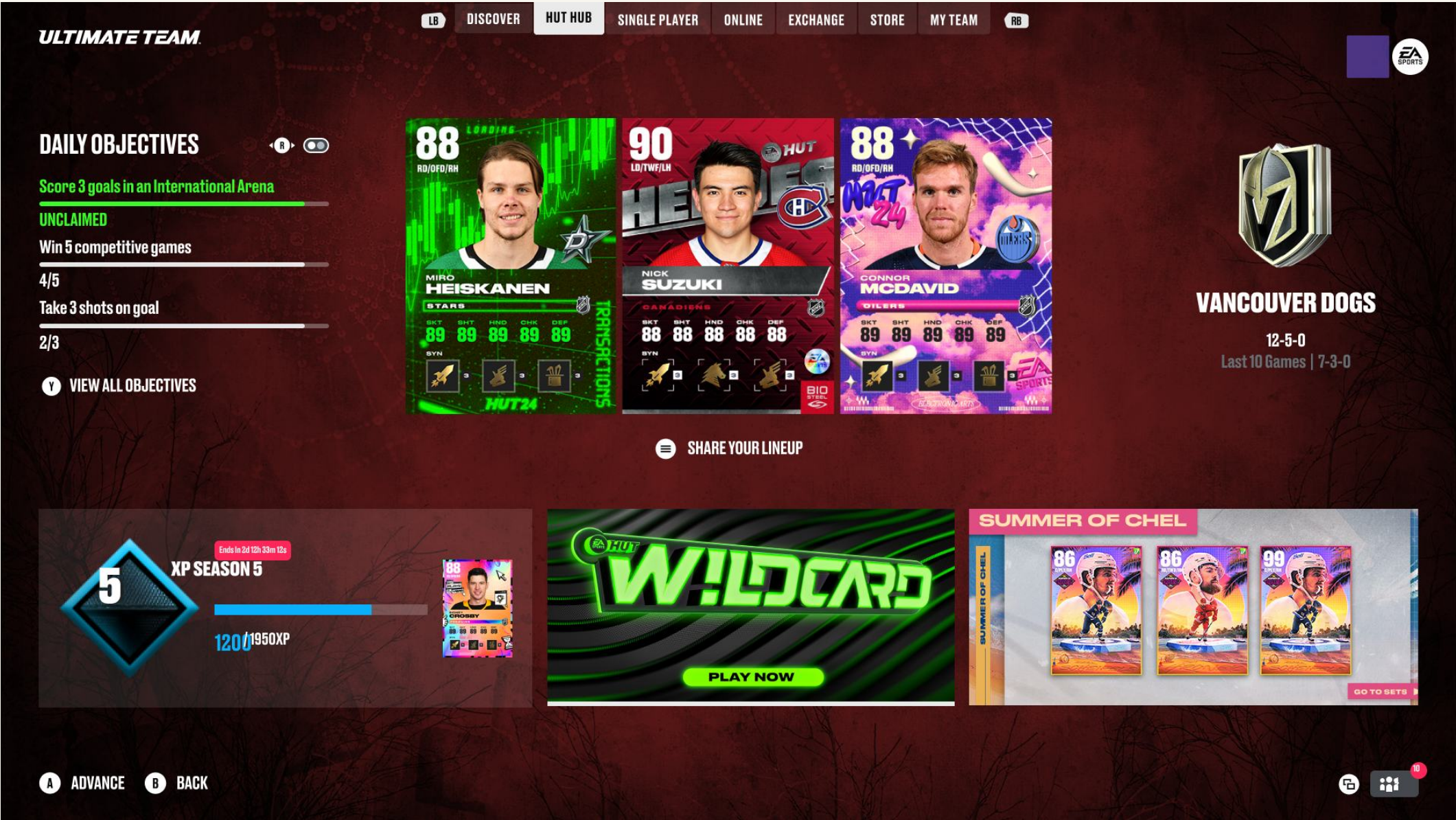
# Jumping into the Mode





FLOW

# Jumping into the Mode

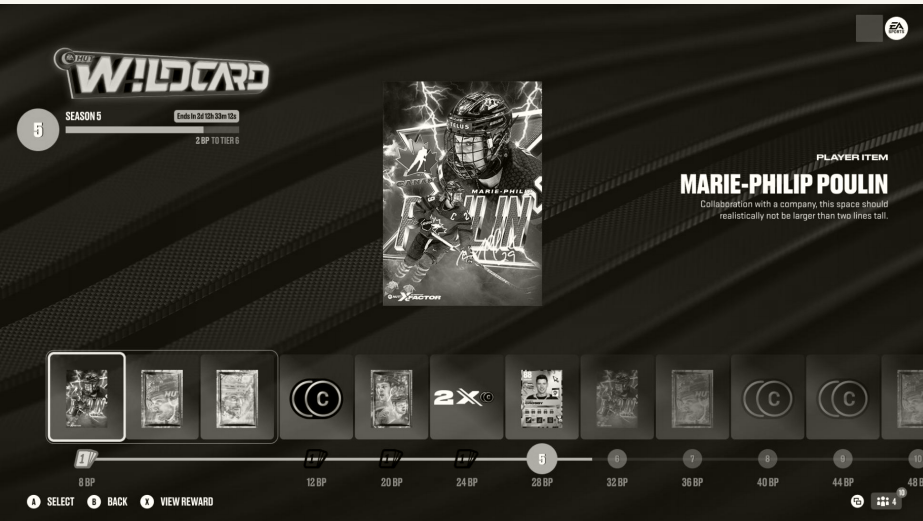
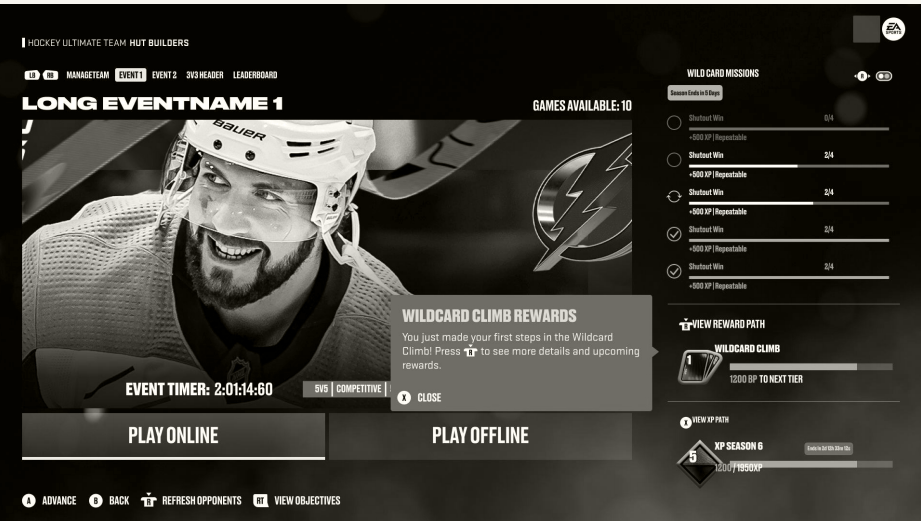
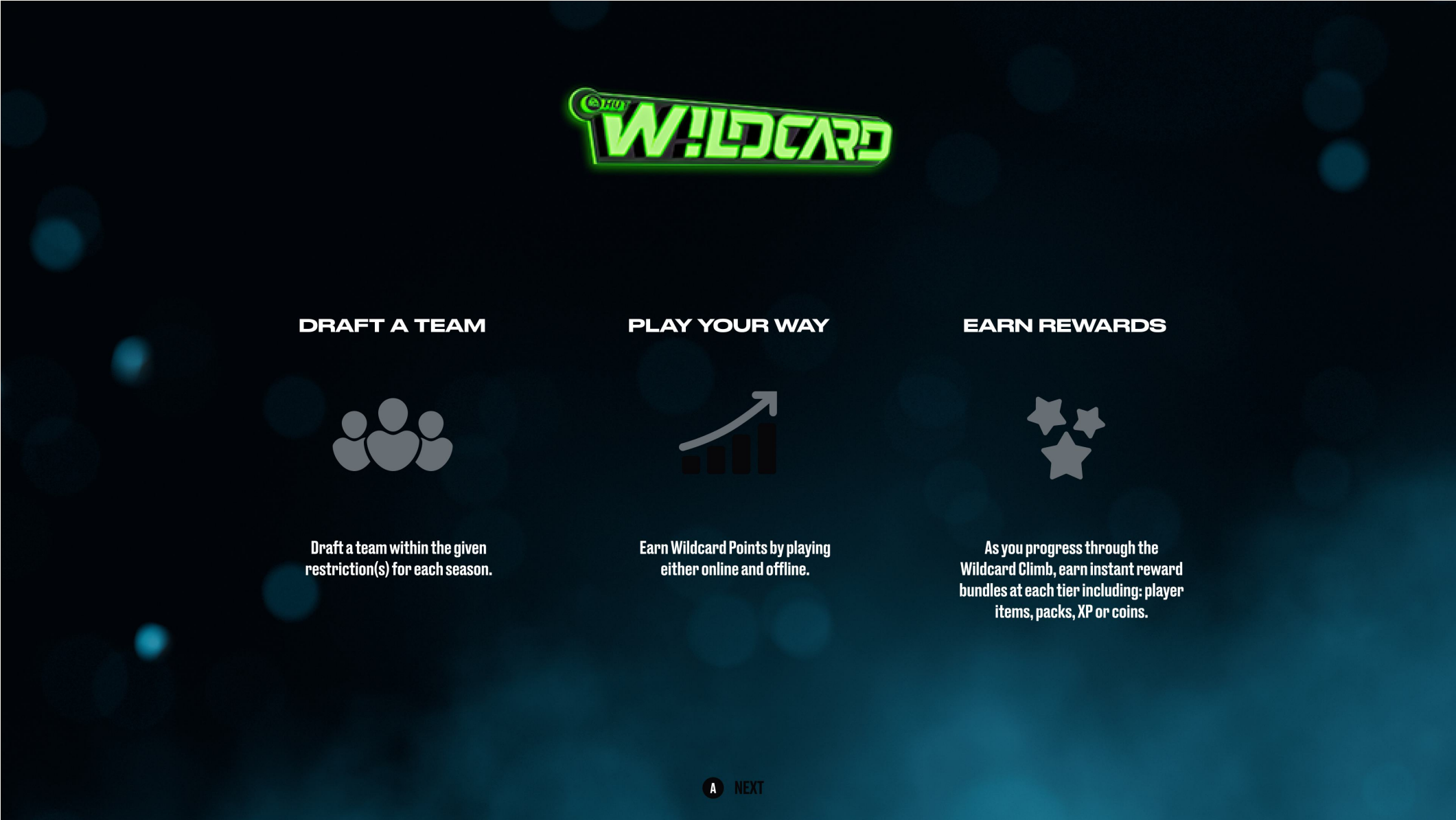
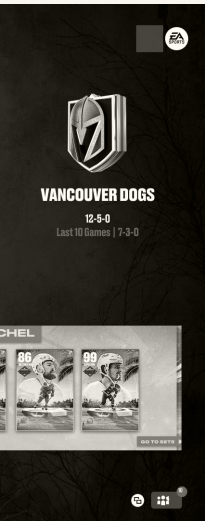


Newly designed Hockey Ultimate Team HUB where Wildcard Mode can be entered in the landing screen



FLOW

# Jumping into the Mode

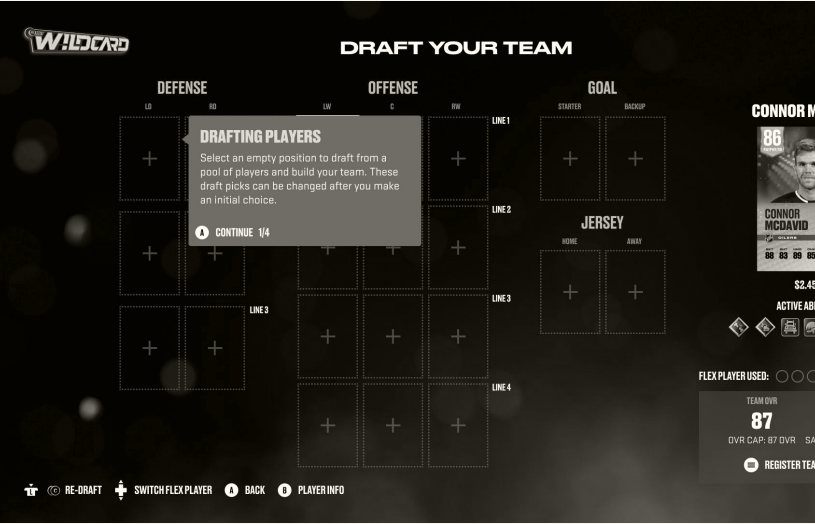
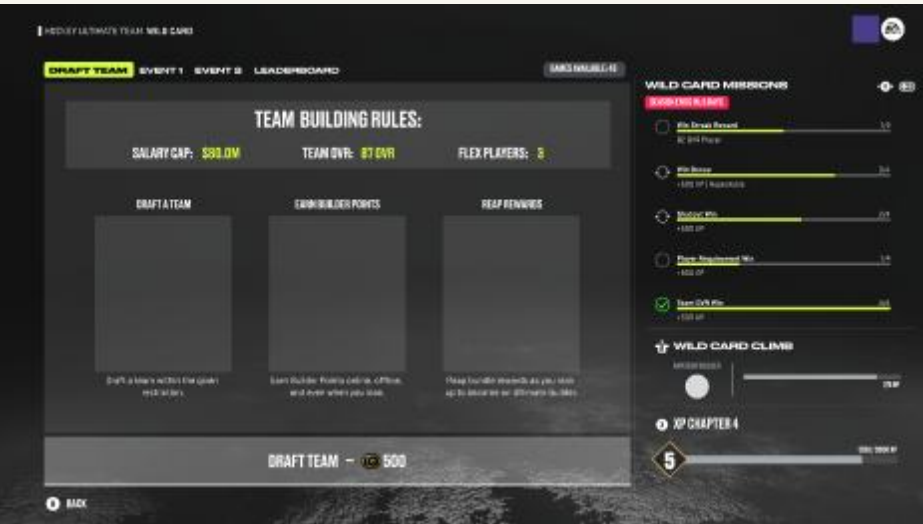
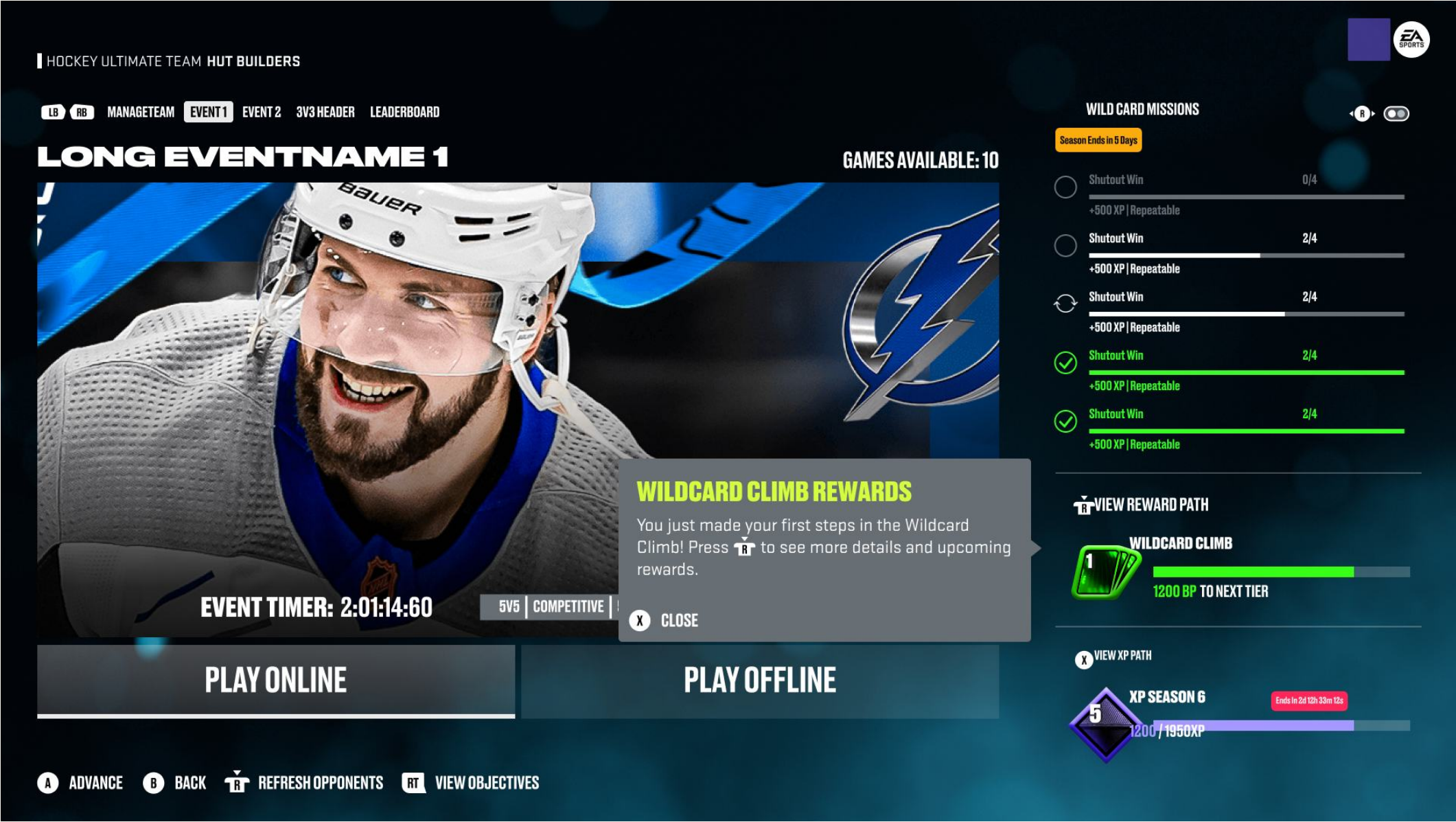


Brief introduction to the new mode and an overview of what the players are able to expect



FLOW

# Jumping into the Mode

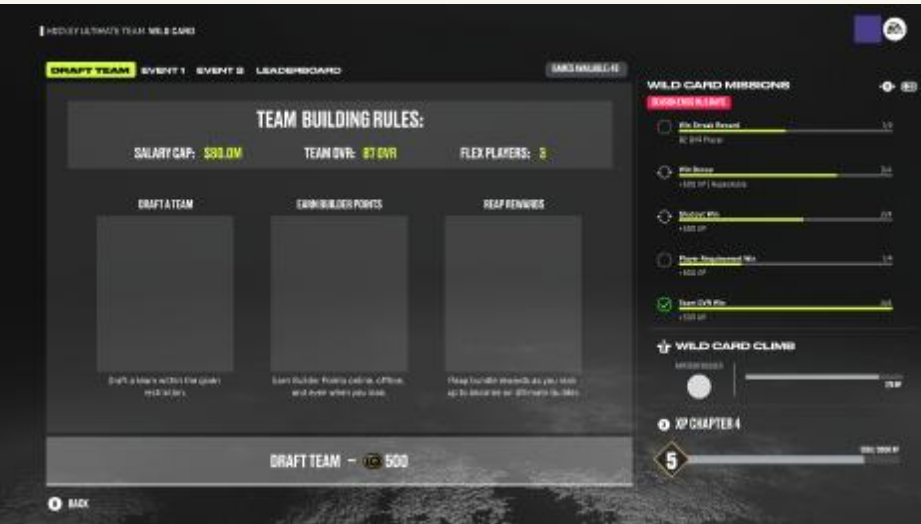
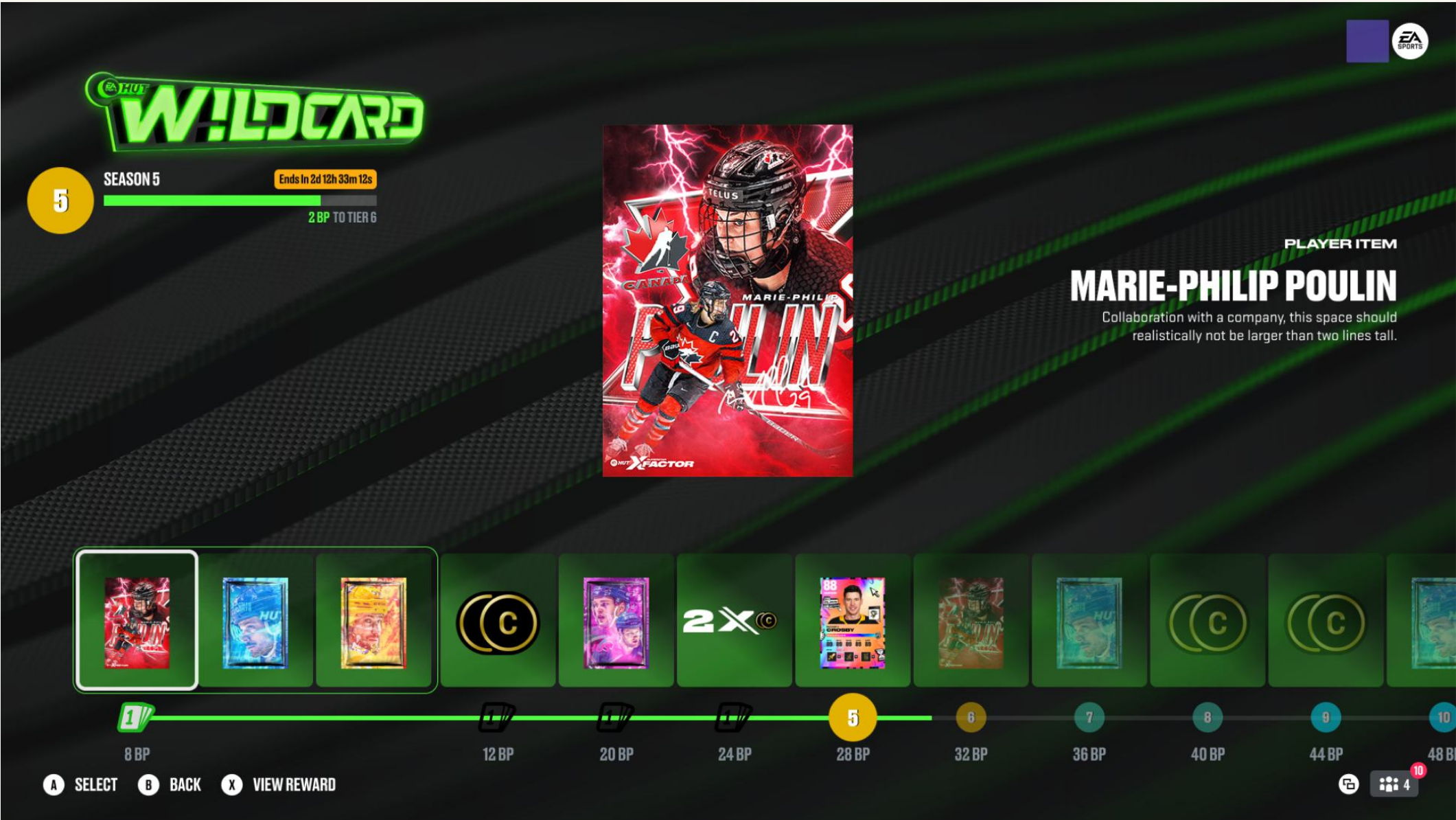


Entering the Wildcard specific HUT as a FTUE, the player is met with tooltips to introduce a new rewards path: Wildcard Climb.



FLOW

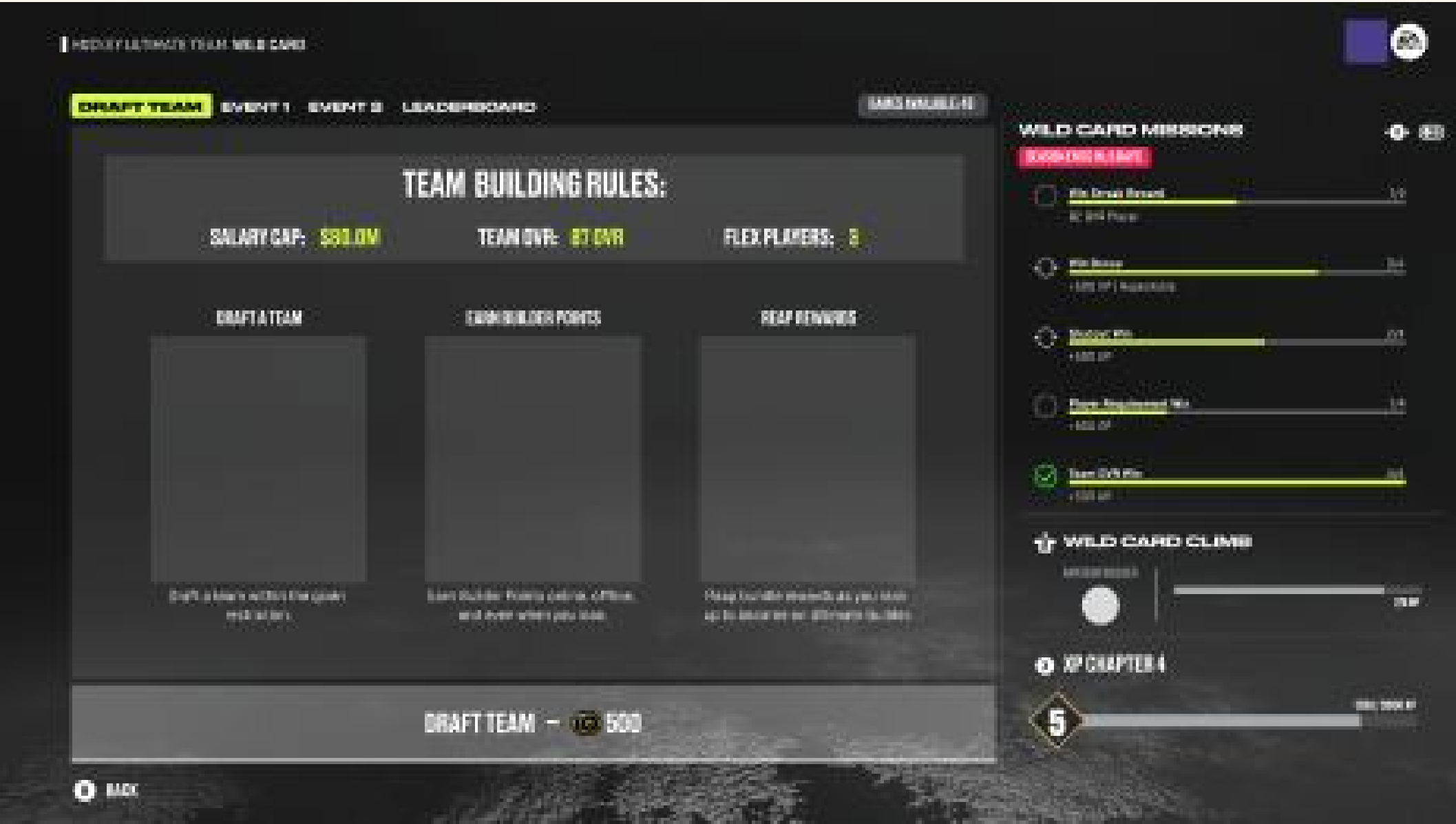
# Jumping into the Mode



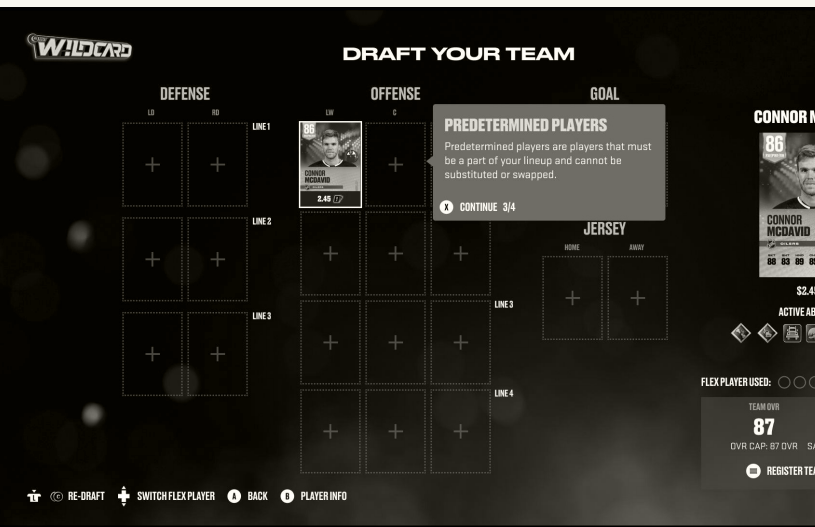
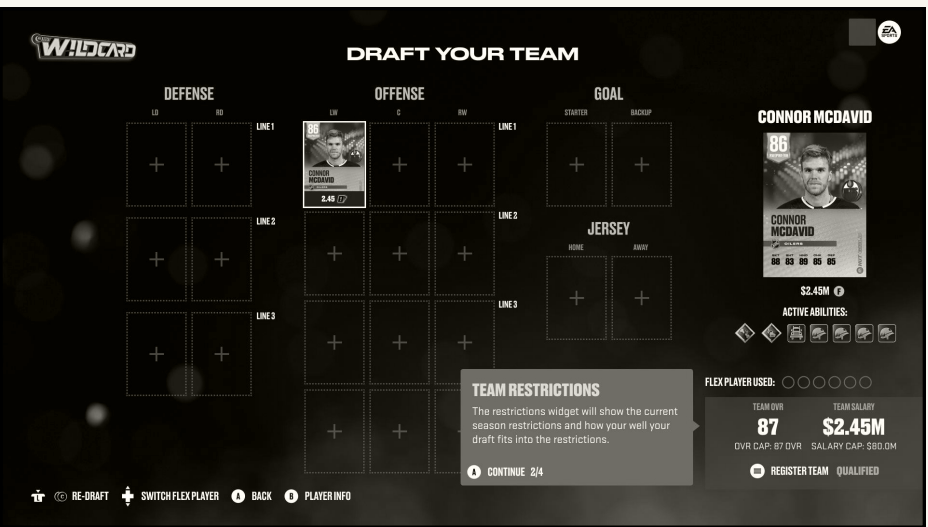
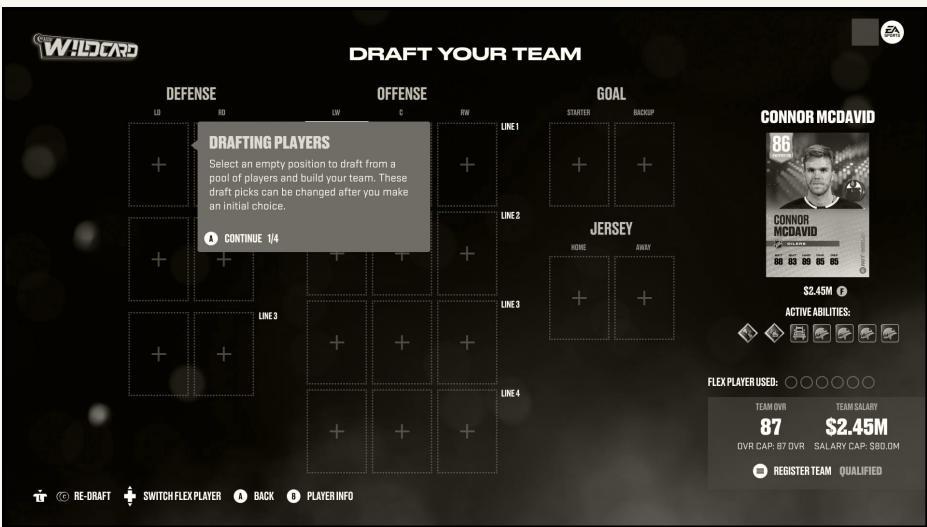
The Wildcard Climb is a new reward path for Wildcard Quest. This reward path still contributes to the main HUT reward path which is located right underneath

FLOW

# Drafting the Team



FTUE tooltips!



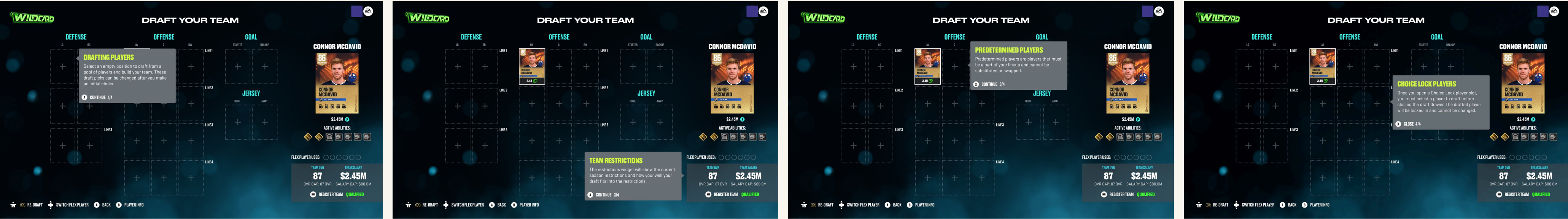
The Draft Team tab will remind players of the team building rules that the players need to comply by in order to register a team to participate in events



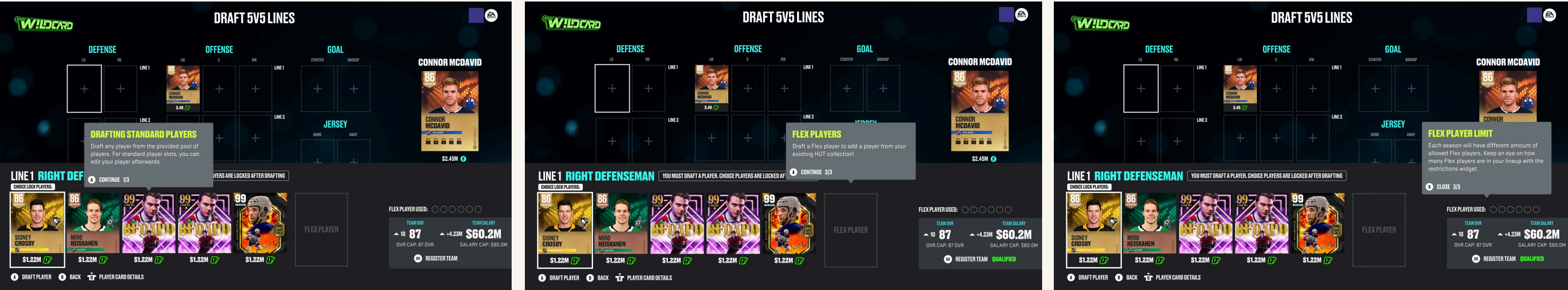
FLOW

First Time User Experience - Tooltips

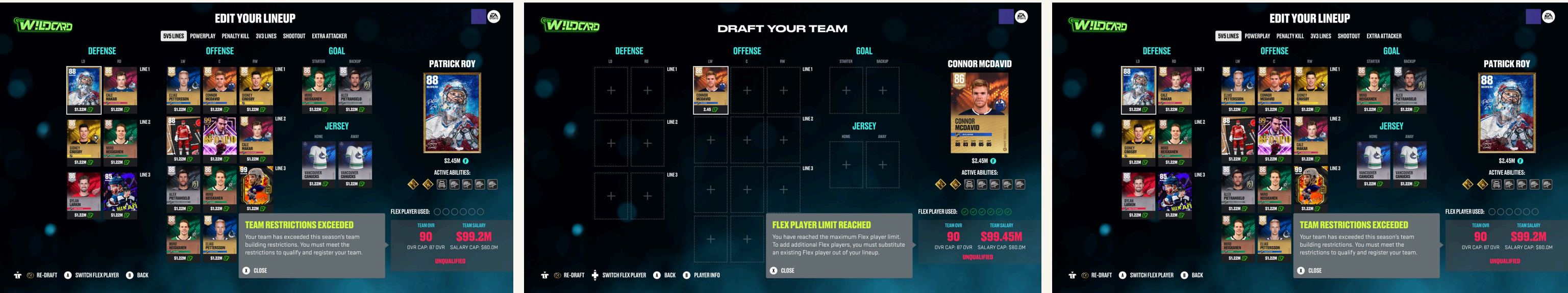
Introduction of Player Slot Types



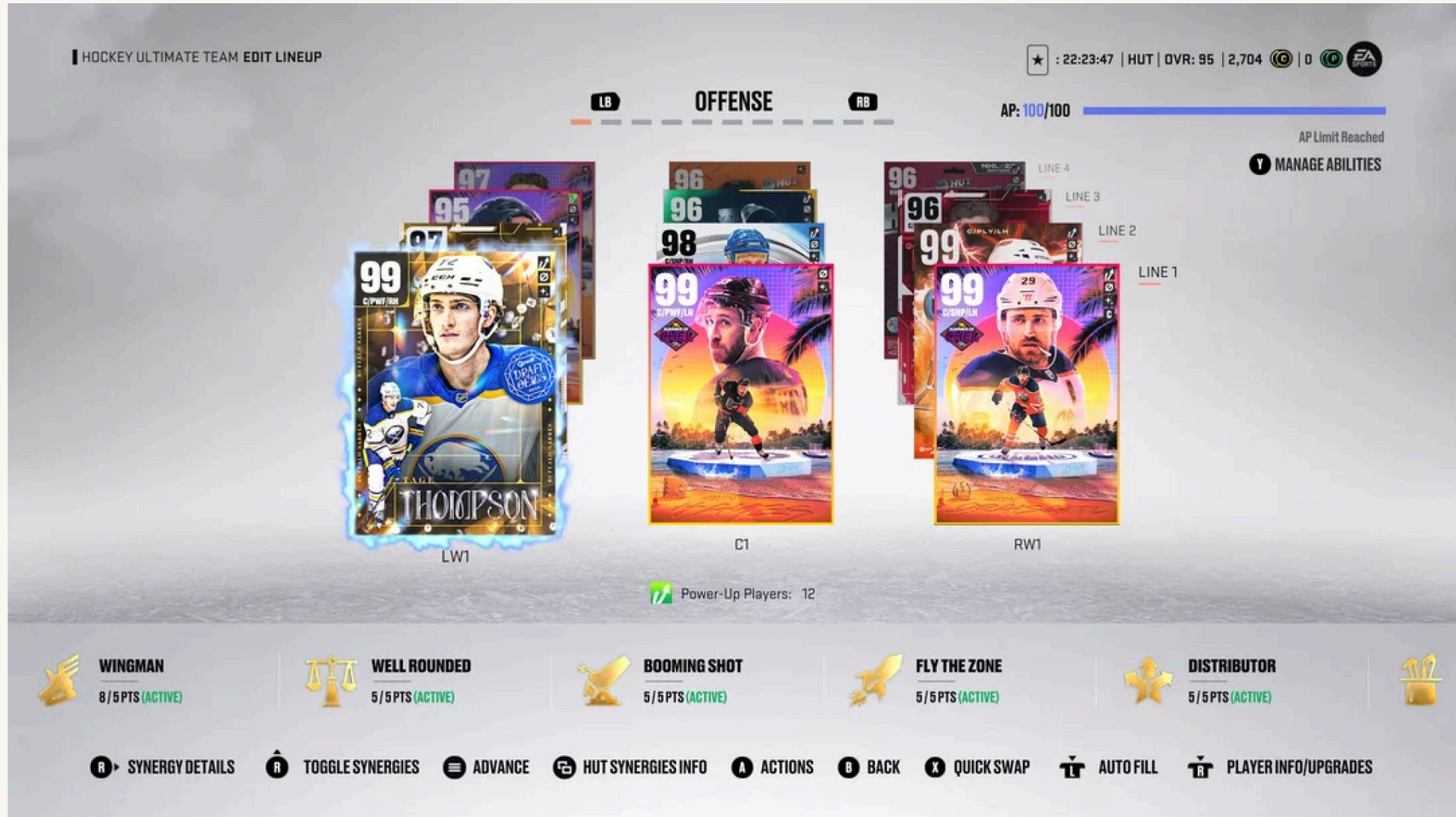
Drafting Player Rules



Restrictions





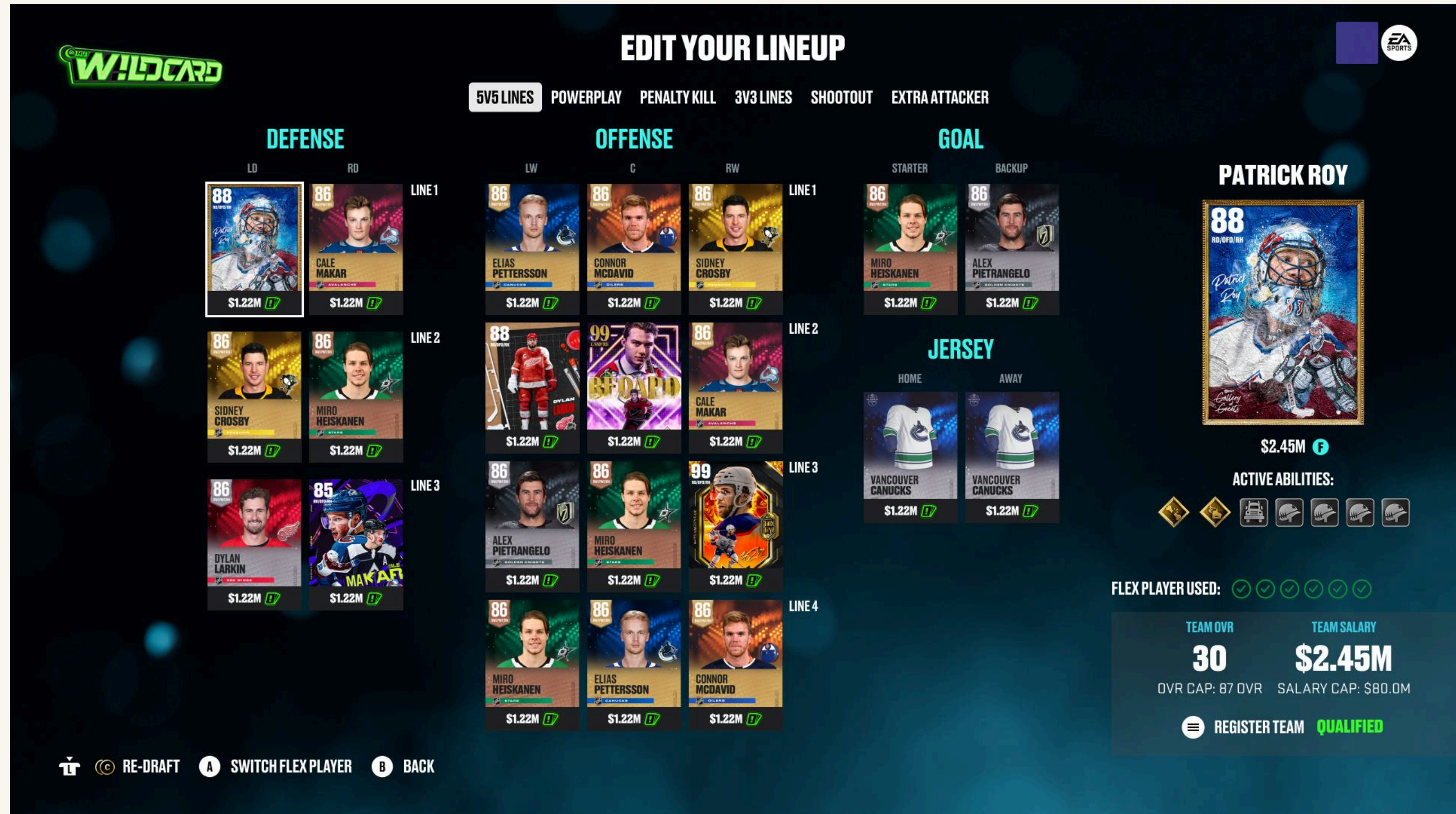


Existing HUT Edit Line Screen

## KEY FEATURES

# At a Glance Drafting View

With the mode’s focus being to draft a team that is both balanced and meets drafting restrictions, it was vital to display the lineup in a way that the player was able to view the whole picture. The new design of the drafting screen allows for players to easily view their entire lineup.



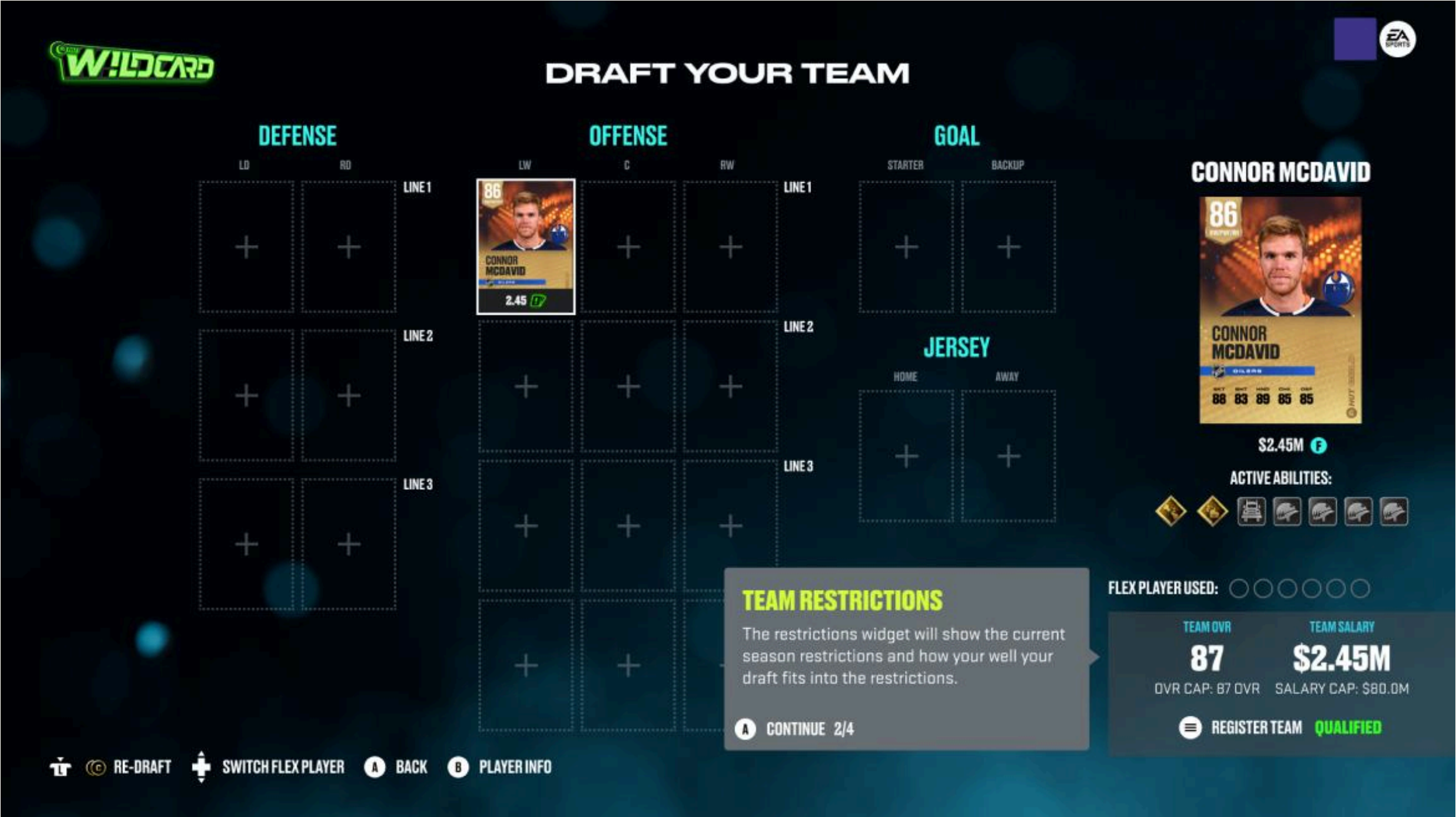
Wildcard Quest Draft Screen Redesign



KEY FEATURES

# Drafting Restrictions

For each event in Wild Card Quest, there will be team restrictions- encouraging players to be creative with their drafting choices. This prevents players to stack their teams with only 99 OVRs and encourage a more even playing field, which is especially vital if the player is starting mid season.



“I like the idea of building rosters ... but [in HUT] everyone’s looking for 99 overalls. Hockey is not about 99 overall players all across the board. I don’t want to play with freaking ... my team is 99 all across the board and so was yours. That’s not competitive hockey to me. That’s just 2 titans going at each other trying to get the most goals. ”

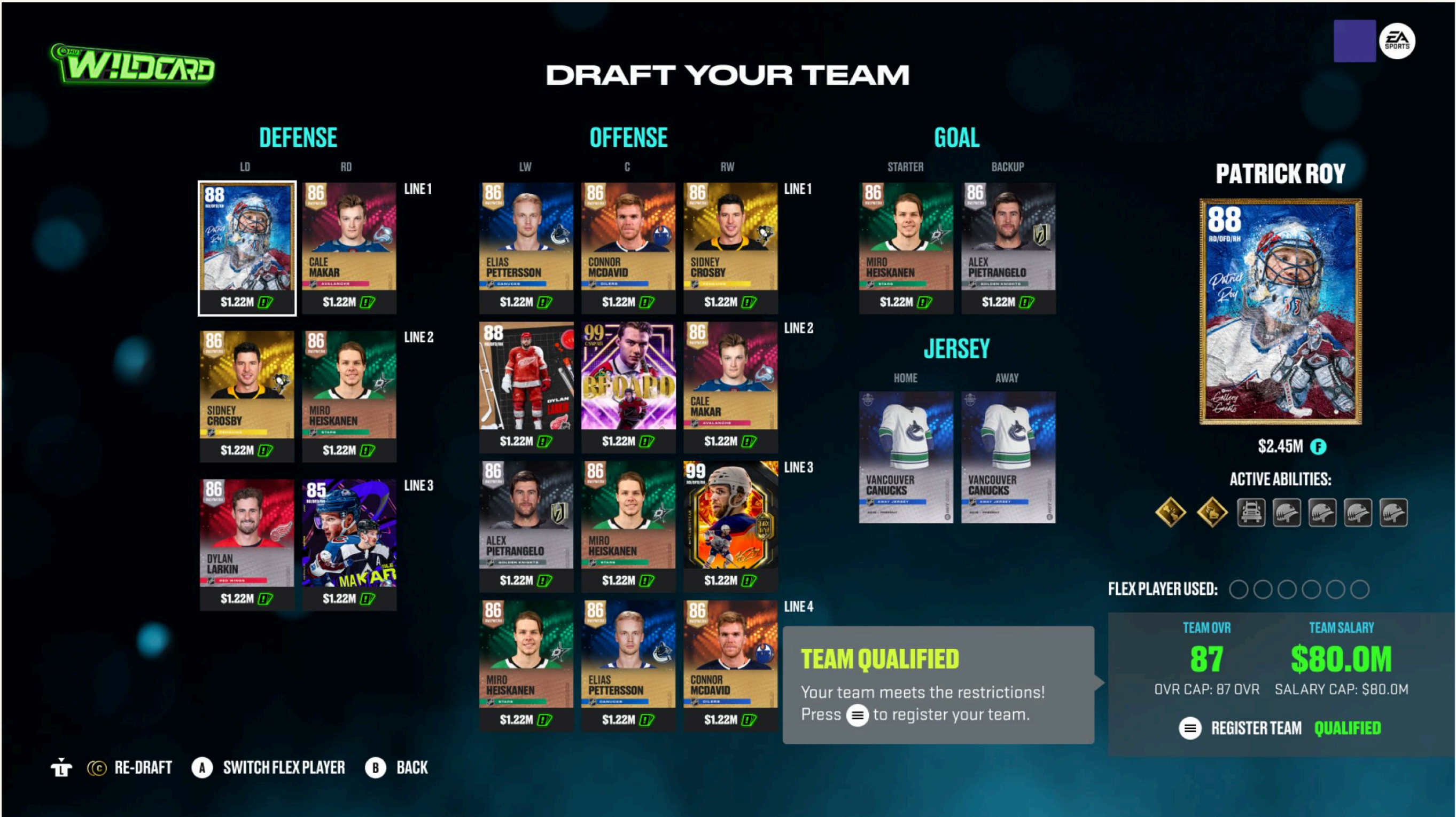
NON HUT, NHL PLAYER  
USER INTERVIEWS 2024



KEY FEATURES

# Data that Matters

Wild Card Quest introduces a right panel widget that houses important information that players have noted as being crucial. As the new layout minimizes card art, the right panel shows a zoomed in mode to showcase card art that NHL HUT is known for. The right panel also shows active abilities to empower players to make more strategic drafting decisions.

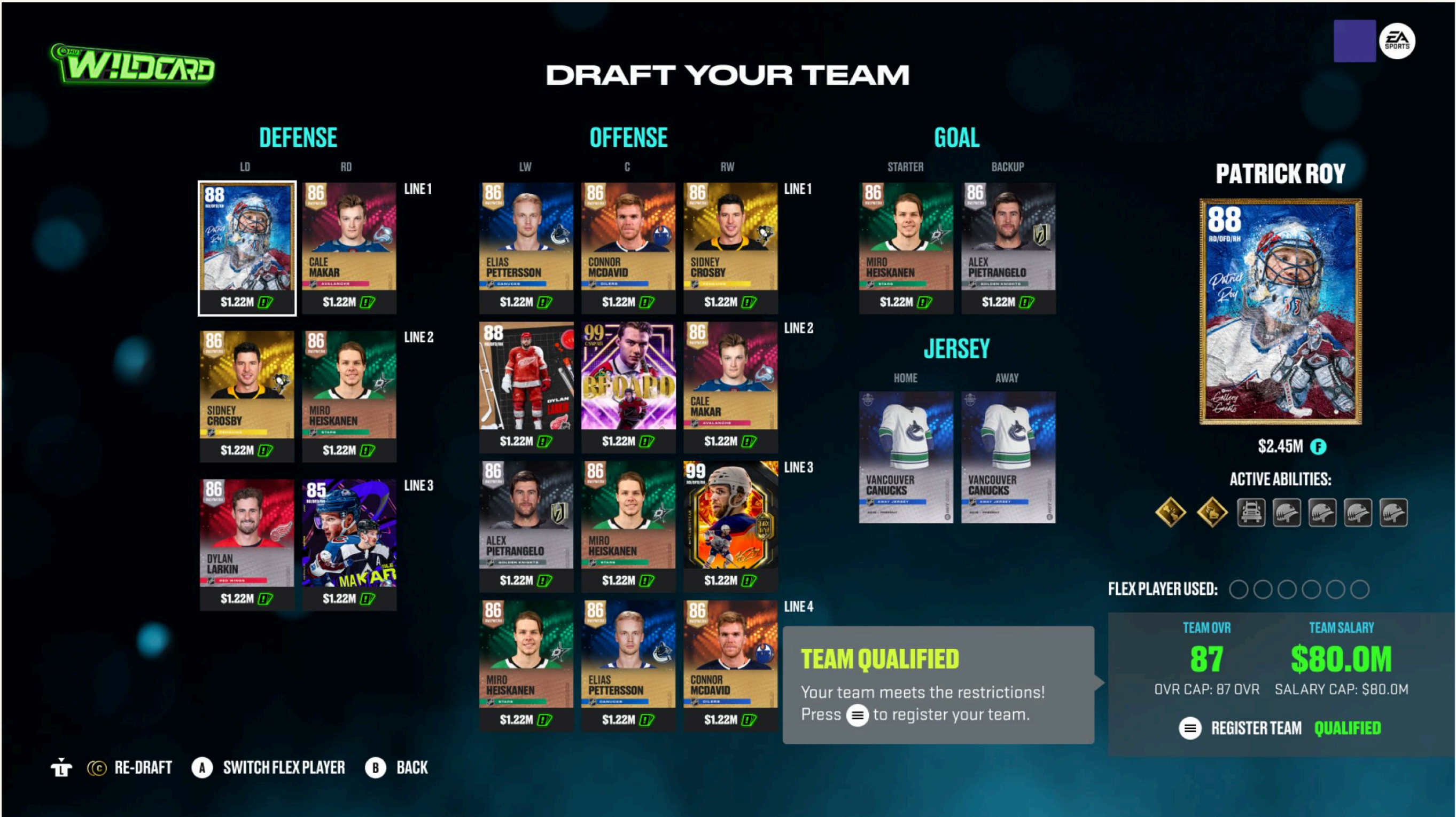




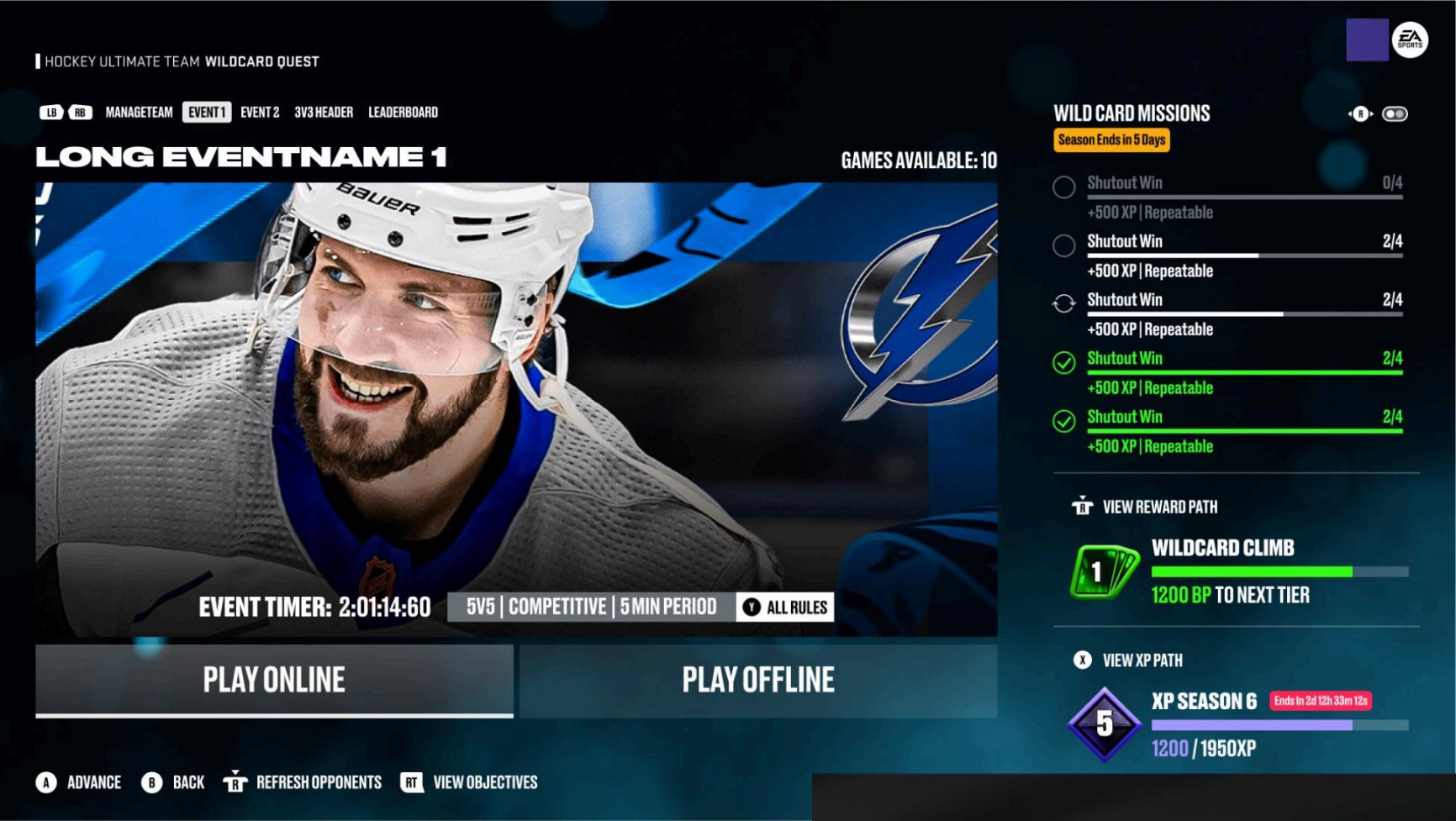
# SURVEY INSIGHT

50% of survey respondents strongly agreed that card art is vital to the experience of HUT

12 out of 14 survey respondents indicated that they look at abilities when looking at the player info screen for specific players



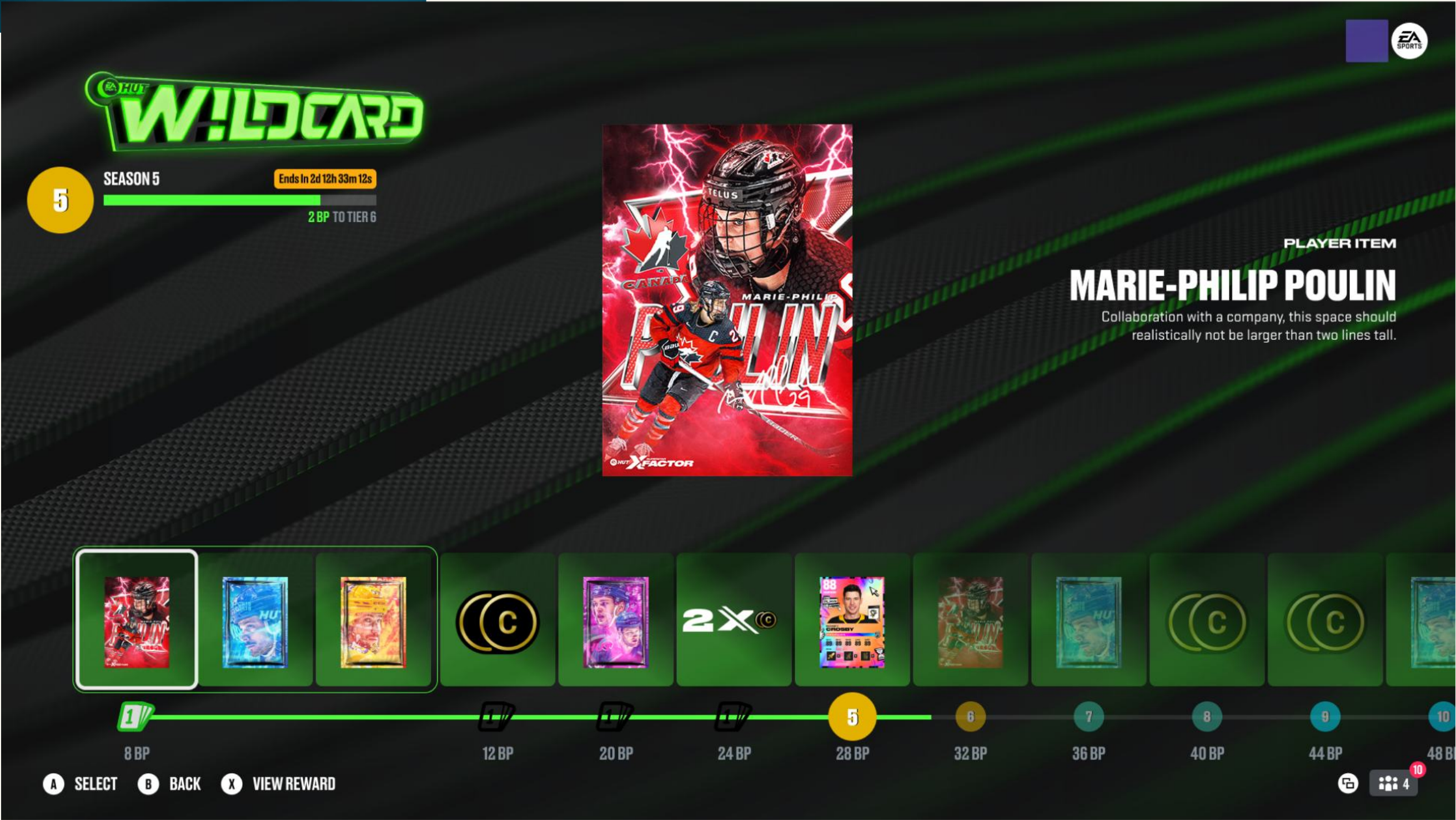




## KEY FEATURES

# Unified Rewards Path

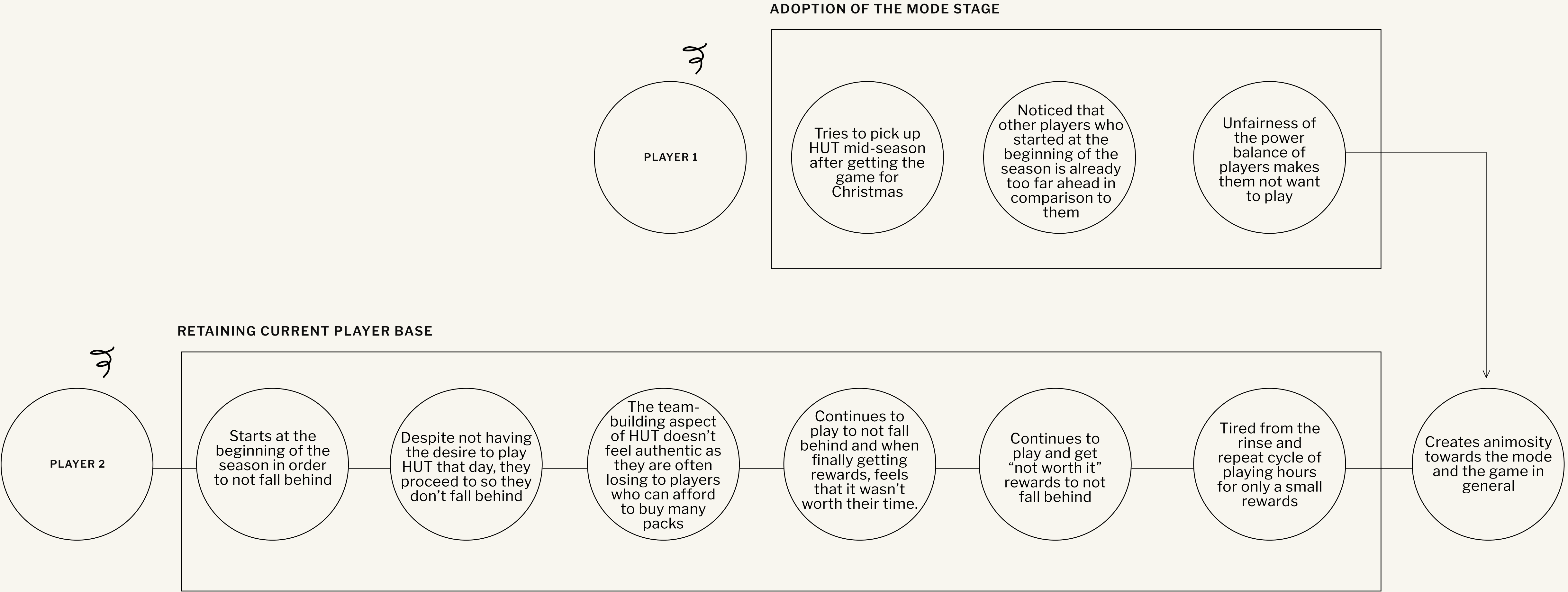
To allow for mid-season start players to catch up to players who started in the beginning of the season, Wildcard introduces a new reward path: the Wildcard Climb. Wildcard Climb will allow players to earn XP that will directly contribute to the single unified HUT reward path that is introduced in NHL 25.





JOURNEY MAP

# What HUT Players are Experiencing



JOURNEY MAP

# What HUT Players are Experiencing



THE VALUE

# Intervention Outcomes

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## FOR PLAYER

1. Catch up to beginning of season players
2. New game mode so they're able to "experience something new"
3. A more authentic team building experience

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## FOR EA

1. Ability to deliver "something new" by switching up the restriction rules, rather than building something ground up
2. Retention of seasoned HUT players and adoption of new HUT players

THE VALUE

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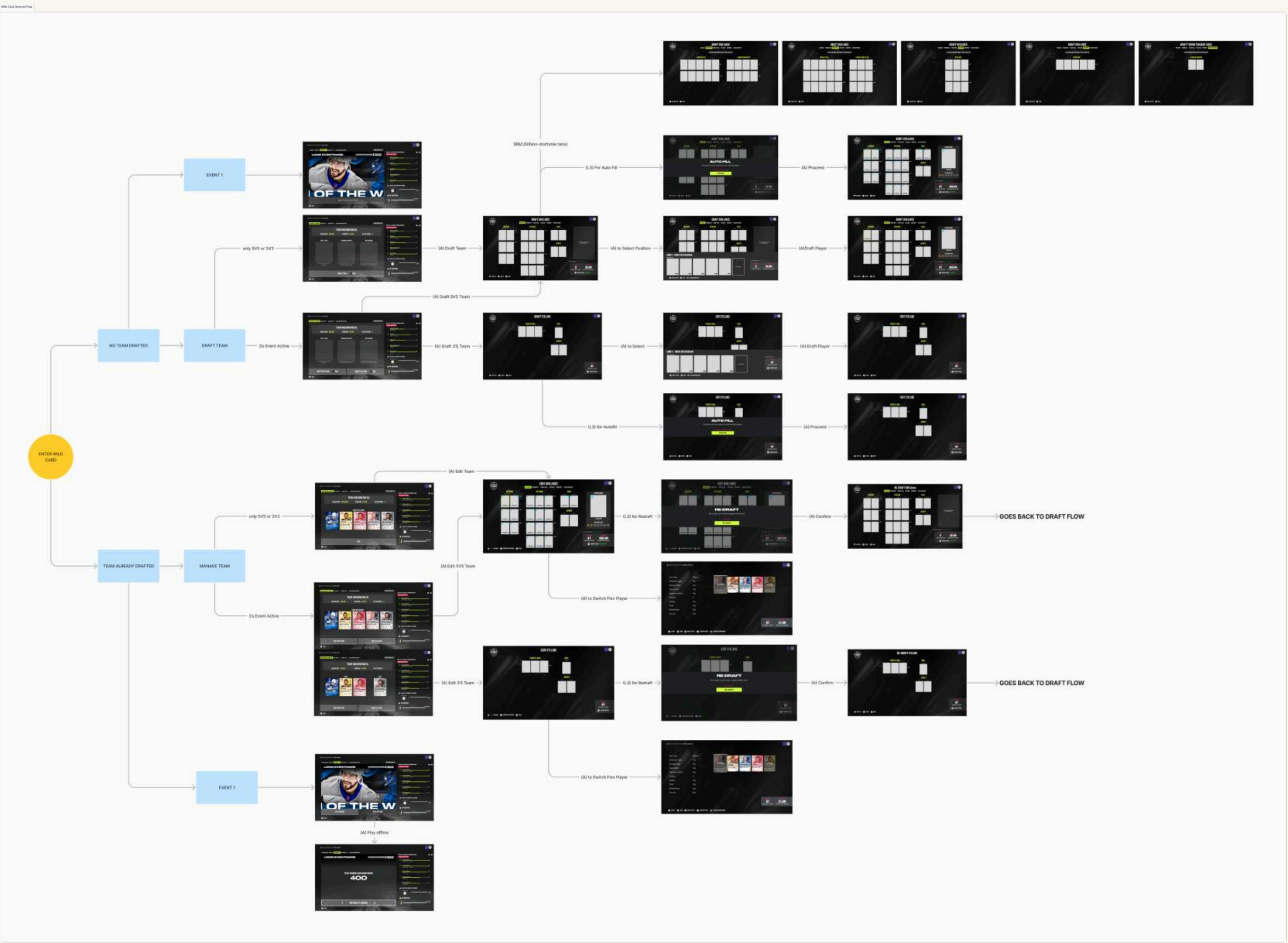
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PROCESS

# Handing off to Development



**Thank You!**

