

# **From Insight to Interface**

## **Improving Attention and Usability in Sports News Websites**

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## **1. Introduction**

Digital sports websites compete heavily for attention. Bright banners, advertisements, live updates, and breaking news all fight to be seen first. While this increases engagement, it often creates clutter and makes it difficult for users to quickly find essential information such as live scores or match schedules.

This project explores how visual hierarchy and interface structure influence user attention and accessibility in sports news platforms. Rather than starting directly with design solutions, I began by observing how users interact with existing websites and identifying where frustration occurs.

Through small-scale observational testing, eye-movement analysis, and user-centered research tools such as personas and journey mapping, I examined how digital layouts shape behavior. The goal of this project was not only to redesign a sports website, but to understand how thoughtful interface decisions can reduce cognitive overload and improve clarity.

## 2. Research & Observation

To understand the problem more deeply, I began by observing how users interact with existing sports news websites. Instead of immediately redesigning the interface, I focused on identifying behavioral patterns and moments of frustration.

I conducted small-scale observational testing in which participants were asked to complete simple tasks such as finding live football scores or locating match schedules. While observing their navigation patterns, I noticed that users rarely read content word-for-word. Instead, they scanned the page quickly, searching for keywords, numbers, or visual cues.

A consistent pattern emerged: attention was repeatedly drawn to high-contrast banners and large visual elements, even when they were not related to the user's goal. Live scores, which were often placed lower on the page, competed visually with advertisements and secondary content. This created unnecessary cognitive load and slowed down task completion.

In addition to my observations, existing eye-tracking studies confirm that users often follow an ***F-shaped*** reading pattern, focusing primarily on the top and left areas of a page. This insight helped me understand why certain navigation structures were more effective than others.

The combination of direct observation and established behavioral research allowed me to identify a clear issue: sports websites often prioritize visual stimulation over information clarity. As a result, users spend more time navigating than accessing the content they need.

### **3. Key Insights**

After analyzing observational data and user behavior patterns, several key insights emerged:

#### **1. Attention is pulled toward contrast, not relevance.**

Participants' gaze was consistently drawn to high-contrast banners and large visual elements, even when those elements were unrelated to their goal. This created distraction instead of clarity.

#### **2. Users scan for specific information, not full articles.**

When searching for match results or schedules, participants focused on numbers, keywords, and structured data. Long text blocks were mostly ignored during task-based navigation.

#### **3. Navigation complexity increases frustration.**

When menus were overloaded or placed inconsistently, users hesitated before clicking. Even small moments of confusion disrupted the flow of interaction.

#### **4. Cognitive overload reduces trust and satisfaction.**

Participants expressed frustration when they had to scroll excessively or compete visually with advertisements. The interface felt busy, which reduced perceived usability.

*These insights shaped the direction of my design decisions. Rather than adding more features, I focused on reducing visual competition and prioritizing time-sensitive content.*

## 4. User Persona

Saeed

### Bio

After working for more than 30 years, Saeed now lives a calmer life. He enjoys morning walks, reading the news, and watching football. He often talks about matches with friends and neighbors. Saeed is not very good with technology, but he uses his phone and laptop every day to check news, talk to his family on WhatsApp, and visit sports websites.

### Brief description

Married with two adult children

He is a 56 year old man

Lives in Iran

Retired government employee

### Motivations

- Wants quick, reliable updates on football matches.
- Enjoys reading analysis and commentary after big games.
- Likes to stay informed so he can talk about matches with friends.

### Frustrations

- Excessive advertisements and pop-ups
- Hidden schedules and unclear menu structures
- Overcrowded layouts
- Having to scroll multiple times to find basic information

### Needs

- Clear visual hierarchy
- Immediate access to live scores
- Simple and predictable navigation

## **Design Process: User Persona**

To make the findings more concrete, I developed a user persona named Saeed. Saeed is a 56-year-old retired government employee who lives with his family. He represents users who are comfortable with digital tools but prioritize efficiency over exploration.

Although Saeed uses his smartphone and laptop daily to read news and follow football matches, he interacts with sports websites in a task-focused way. When searching for match results, he scans pages quickly rather than reading full articles. His attention is drawn to numbers, tables, and clear headlines, while dense text blocks or competing visual elements are often ignored.

He becomes frustrated when advertisements or clutter interrupt his goal of quickly accessing scores. Predictable navigation and structured information increase confidence, while overloaded layouts create hesitation.

Saeed's behavior reflects a broader pattern observed during testing: users visit sports platforms primarily for speed and clarity, not for prolonged browsing.

## 5. Empathy Map

### Says

I just want the scores, not endless ads

Why is the schedule hidden?

### Thinks

Navigation should be simple

I wish the site worked better on my phone



### Does

Scans multiple sites to cross-check info

Avoid sites with pop-ups and clutter

### Feels

Frustrated when wasting time searching

Excited when info is quick and clear

## **Design Process: Empathy Map**

To better understand Saeed's experience, I created an empathy map that includes Says, Thinks, Feels, and Does.

This tool helped me connect emotionally with the user. For example, when Saeed quickly finds scores on a clean homepage, he feels satisfied and confident. But when he is forced to scroll past distractions, his frustration grows. Recognizing these emotions guided my design choices toward clarity and simplicity.

## 6. Journey Map

Phase of journey	Discover	Entry	Navigation	Information Access	Reflection
User Action	Searches for sports website on Google	Navigates menus to find football section	Looks for live scores and match schedules	Checks live scores	Decides whether to return
Needs and Pains	Hope this site is easy to use	Why are there so many menus?	I just wants scores quickly	Needs quick access; distracted by clutter	Needs efficiency; frustration reduces trust
Customer Feeling					

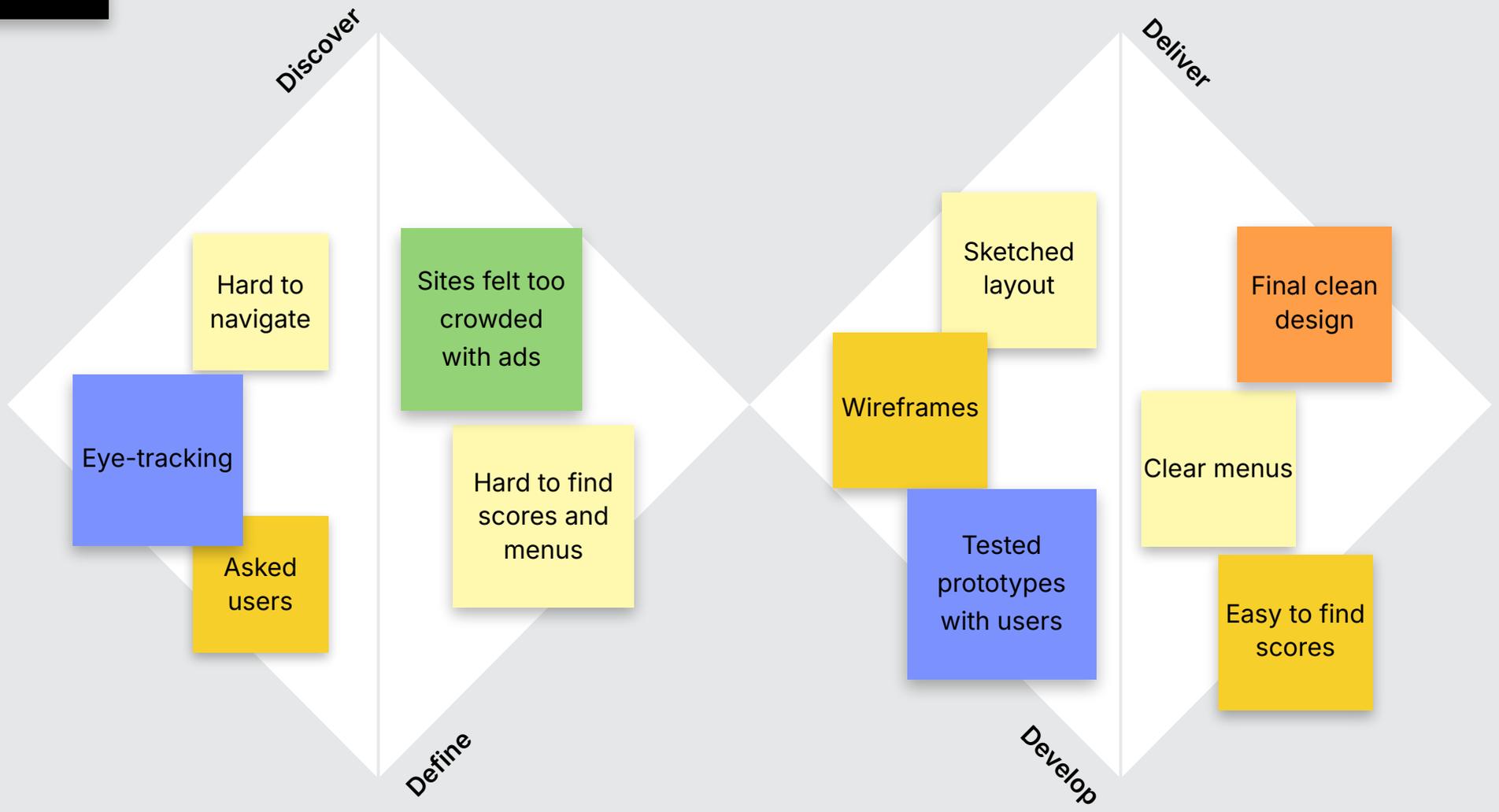
## **Design Process: Journey Map**

I then mapped Saeed's typical journey on a sports website:

- 1. Discover:** Saeed searches on Google for football results. He usually clicks on the first or most familiar link.
- 2. Entry:** He lands on a homepage filled with banners, advertisements, and multiple content blocks competing for attention.
- 3. Navigation:** He scans menus and scrolls to locate match schedules or results.
- 4. Information Access:** After scrolling and filtering distractions, he finally finds the scores.
- 5. Reflection:** He considers whether to return to the same website in the future.

This journey map revealed that primary pain point occurs at the entry stage and during the search for scores and schedules. It also emphasized the need for a homepage where live scores are immediately visible without distractions.

# 7. Double Diamond



## **Design Process: The Double Diamond**

The Double Diamond framework guided my design process through four stages.

### **Discover**

In this phase, I explored the problem space without proposing immediate solutions. I analyzed competitor sports websites, observed user interaction patterns, and identified recurring usability issues. Eye-movement behavior and task-based testing revealed that clutter and misplaced hierarchy were the primary sources of friction.

The goal of this stage was to understand why users struggled before deciding how to fix it.

### **Define**

Based on research findings, I narrowed the focus to three core problems:

1. Visual overload caused by competing elements
2. Difficulty locating time-sensitive information
3. Navigation structures that increased cognitive effort

This led to a clear design objective:

To create a sports news interface that prioritizes clarity, speed, and structured information access.

### **Develop**

During the development phase, I explored multiple layout structures through sketches and low-fidelity wireframes. I experimented with side navigation versus top navigation, varied content hierarchy, and tested placement of live score sections.

Task-based user feedback helped evaluate which structure reduced hesitation and improved scanning efficiency.

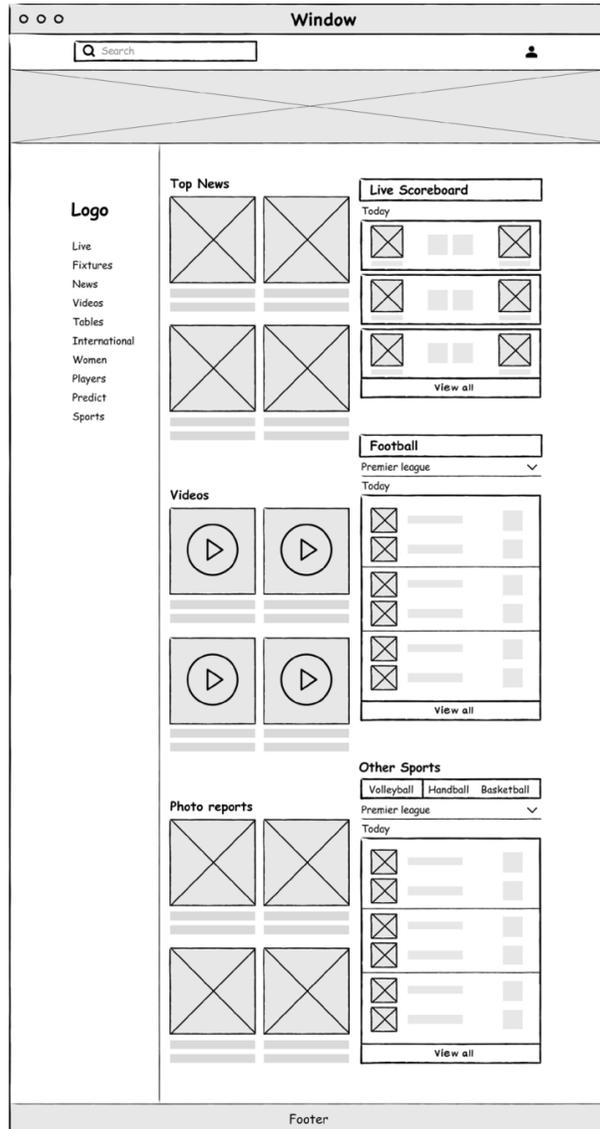
## **Deliver**

In the final stage, I refined the layout into a clean, high-contrast interface where live scores were placed prominently at the top of the page. Navigation was simplified, and unnecessary visual noise was reduced.

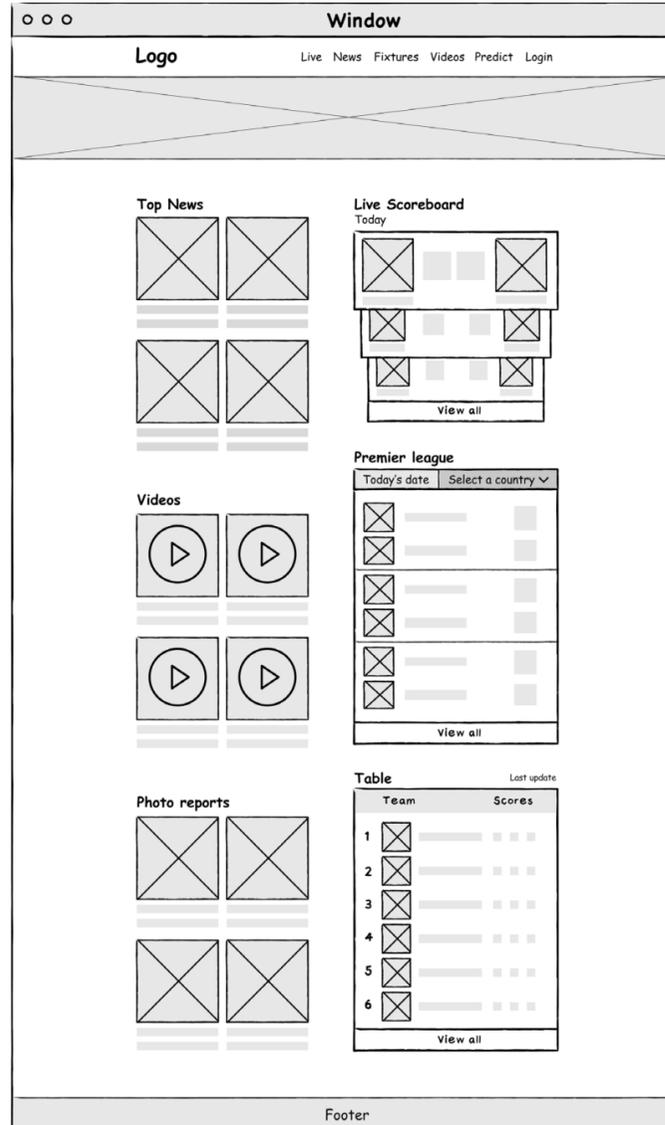
The final outcome reflects a direct translation of research insights into interface decisions, ensuring that design decisions were evidence-based rather than purely aesthetic.

# 8. Wireframing & Prototyping

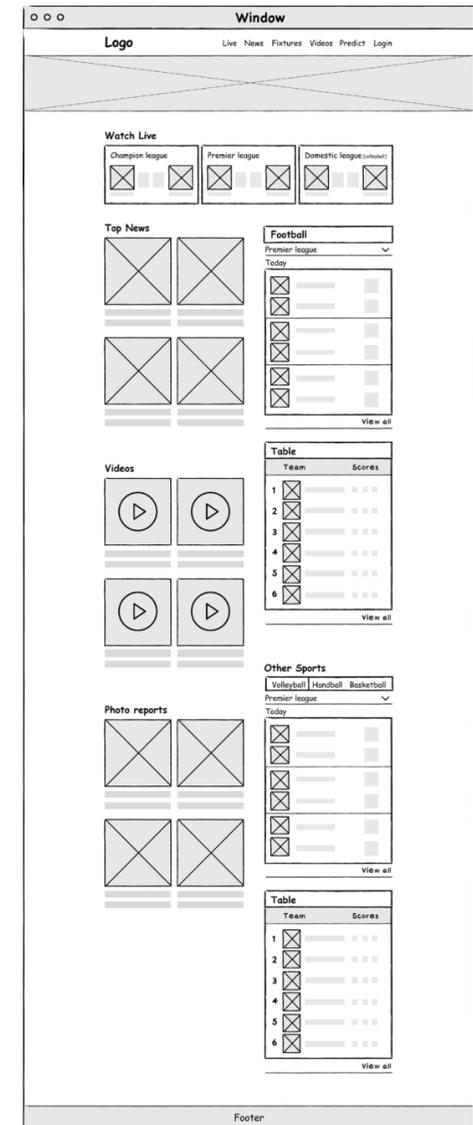
01.



02.



03.

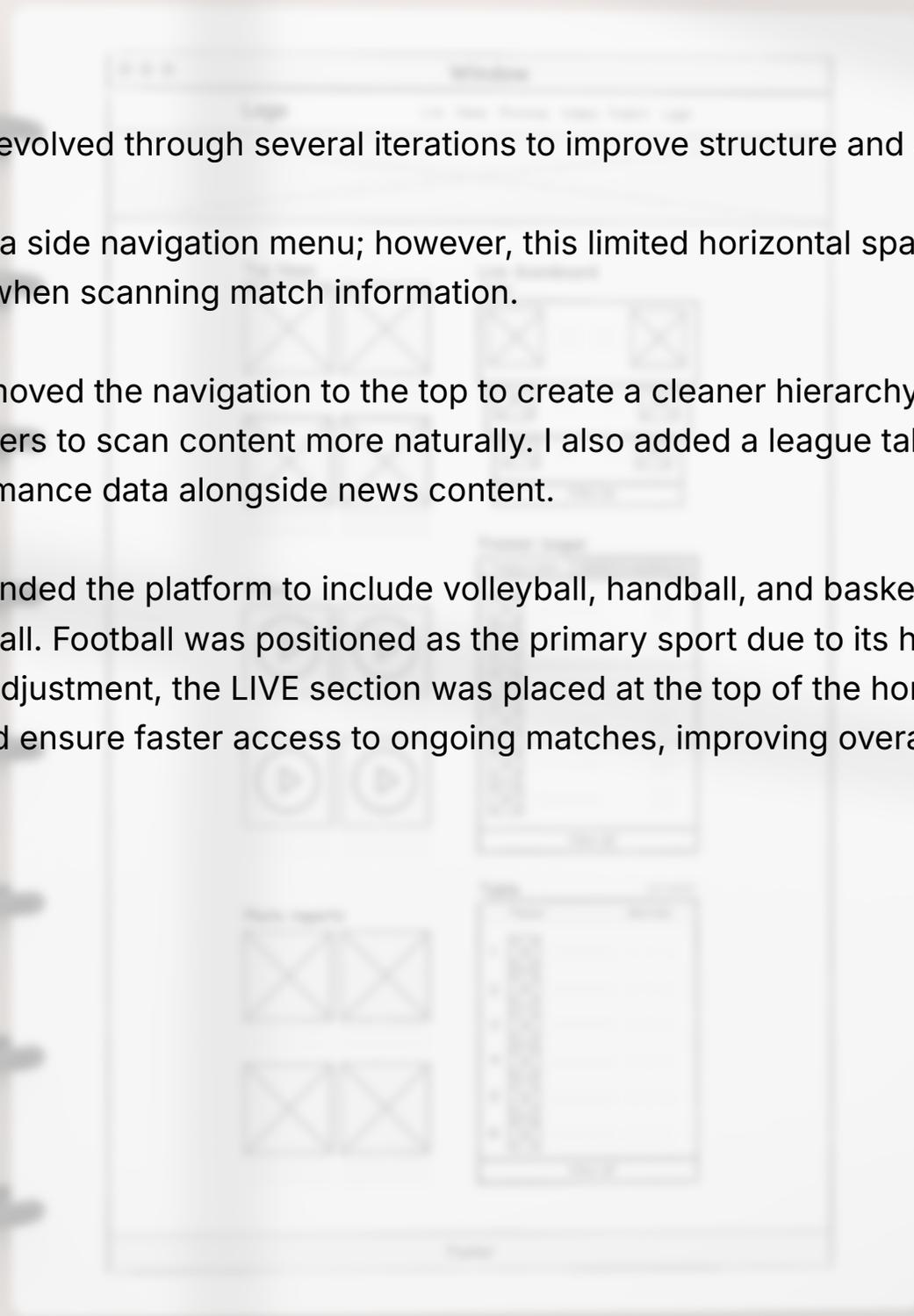


The wireframing process evolved through several iterations to improve structure and accessibility.

In the first version, I used a side navigation menu; however, this limited horizontal space and slightly increased cognitive load when scanning match information.

In the second iteration, I moved the navigation to the top to create a cleaner hierarchy, follow common web conventions, and allow users to scan content more naturally. I also added a league table (scores section) to provide structured performance data alongside news content.

In the third version, I expanded the platform to include volleyball, handball, and basketball, each with fixtures and tables similar to football. Football was positioned as the primary sport due to its higher popularity and engagement. In the final adjustment, the LIVE section was placed at the top of the homepage to prioritize time-sensitive content and ensure faster access to ongoing matches, improving overall usability and accessibility.



# 9. Final UI Design

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## Stay ahead of every match

Get live scores, breaking news, and win prizes by predicting the game.

[Join now](#)

### LIVE NOW

View all live scores >

<b>Champion league (Europe)</b>	<b>Premier league (Iran)</b>	<b>Women's domestic league</b>
Real Madrid <b>0</b> Benfica <b>0</b>	Azarshams <b>1</b> FC IRALCO <b>0</b>	Bam Khatoon <b>3</b> Malavan <b>2</b>

### Top News

- Alipour Delivers Agility, Persepolis Fall Once More!
- Why Did Persepolis Lose? A Jersey Color Alone Doesn't Define a Team
- Mehdi Tazari's 7-Point Record Against Esteghlal and Persepolis
- Title Race Between Persepolis and Gol Gohar Decided / New Standings for the Reds
- Iranian Clubs Compete for Foreign Signings with Salaries Europe Won't Offer / Contracts of Several Iranian Players Revealed

### Football

Premier league (Iran)

Today, Tue 12 Feb

Paykan	FT	0
Mes Rafsanjan	FT	2
Esteghlal Khosestan	FT	1
Fajr Sepasi	FT	0
Chadormalu	ES	0
Esteghlal	ES	0
Tractor	FT	3
Foolad	FT	1
Persepolis	FT	1
Golgozar	FT	3

View all >

### Table

(Latest update Mon 11 Feb)

#	Team	W	L	Pts
1.	Golgozar	10	5	36
2.	Tractor	9	3	35
3.	Esteghlal	9	3	35
4.	Sepahan	10	5	35
5.	Persepolis	9	5	34
6.	Chadormalu	7	5	29
7.	Malavan	7	7	28
8.	Fajr Sepasi	7	8	27

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**Abdi: We Defeated Shahrhiri Thanks to Strong AnalysisThunderous Strike**

**Al Nassr's First Goal Against Al Fateh (Ronaldo)**

**Volleyball Highlights: Foolad Sirjan 1 - 3 Mehrigan Noor**

**Bayern Munich's Third Goal Against Werder Bremen — Goretzka**

### Other Sports

Basketball | Handball

Premier league (Iran)

Today, Tue 12 Feb

Razin Polymer	32'	2
Esteghlal Gonbad		3
Pas Gorgan	FT	3
Tabiat	FT	1
Foolad Sirjan	FT	1
Mes Rafsanjan	FT	3
Paykan	FT	3
Shahdab Yazd	FT	2
Omid Sport Club	FT	1
Zob Ahan Esfahan	FT	3

View all >

### Table

(Latest update Tue 12 Feb)

#	Team	W	L	Pts
1.	Foolad Sirjan	14	2	40
2.	Shahdab Yazd	13	3	39
3.	Chadormelu	11	4	35
4.	Paykan	11	5	35
5.	Pas Gorgan	10	5	34
6.	Omid Sport Club	10	6	29
7.	Tabiat	8	7	28
8.	Mes Rafsanjan	6	10	27

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### Photo reports

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**Female Wushu Fighters Battle for the National Team Jersey**

**Intense Showdown at Azadi Swimming Complex**

**Important Win for the Blues; Esteghlal Stand Tall in Isfahan**

**A Bitter Farewell for Shiraz's Representative**

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Esteghlal | Persepolis | Tractor | Zob Ahan | Sepahan | Sanat Naft Abadan | Fajr Sepasi | Nassaji Mazandaran | Malavan

AC Milan | Inter Milan | Barcelona | Paris Saint-Germain | Chelsea | Real Madrid | Liverpool | Manchester United | Bayern Munich



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# COLORS

## **10. Reflection**

The final interface was shaped by research findings rather than visual preference.

Visual competition was reduced by limiting high-contrast elements and prioritizing LIVE scores. Structured data blocks highlight numerical information, supporting fast scanning behavior. Navigation was simplified and organized horizontally to reduce hesitation.

These decisions ensured that essential content was immediately visible, reducing cognitive load and improving efficiency.

## **11. Conclusion**

This project demonstrated how interface structure directly influences attention and usability. Through observation and iterative testing, I learned that reducing cognitive load can be more impactful than adding features.

The process strengthened my interest in research-driven design and reinforced my belief that thoughtful interface decisions should support user goals rather than compete with them.

This case study reflects my approach as a designer: research-driven, structured, and focused on creating clear and human-centered digital experiences.