

Playing the Long Game

Posted By: sirchauce

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Well I got here. I had my doubts and probably won't be here long, but being here entitles me to gab a little, and anyone who know me knows I take opportunity whenever I can. First of all I only had to win 8 consecutive pentagon games, unlike Robert, who won 12, but the new rating system helped allot. Don't worry RB, I will give you another chance to stop me before I break your record, if I get that far :) I want to focus this GOA on how a player like me can win consistently against the very top players, which I firmly believe will help not just Pentagon players, but everyone.

TOP TEN WAYS TO MAKE GOA

10. Turn the TV off.

I lost two pent games that I may have been closer by losing my concentration. My winning streak began the moment I turned the boob-tube off and I do it every time now. Plus I think I am saving at least 30-40 cents a month on my electric bill.

9. Don't Retire

The new rating system will help allot now, thanks to BannSidhe, but retirement was almost my undoing. After those two loses, I didn't think I was good enough, or even lucky enough to make a General, not too mention my rate dropped to 69. Well Tazco98, thanks to you again bud for talking me out of it. After that, I started my win streak that hasn't stopped yet. You don't give up in a game until it is over, don't do it with your rate either. I probably have the worst rate of anyone who made GOA before. What does that matter when you are number one?

8. Use all your time

Three minutes is not enough time to plan your moves, but the good thing is that both players suffer from this! This also means the more in "your routine" you get in, the better you are going to do. Players at all levels should be trying to think out at least the next two moves, sometimes more. If I see players making quick moves, I am happy. Even better is when you see someone move and take back, move, then take back again. That is all free time YOU have to be thinking about those moves in the future. Time, like units are a commodity that can be traded for position and material, don't waste it.

7. Always give good players tough choices

This is obvious, the real question is how do you do this. I wish there was an easy answer. First of all, you should know what a player is going to do, or at least have a feel for it. If you know Germany is going to plant in Eastern Europe, take Western with enough to make him reconsider; if you know UK is going to ship everything to Karelia, give him a target in Europe. Make your opponent play your game. Yes, it can be risky, but it can payout double. Moves your opponent hasn't thought of yet are the ones he will bungle. It is the most important part of advanced play. When you are bleeding another good player's time you are preventing them from thinking ahead too far and seizing the tempo.

5. Use an Odds Calc

Time and time again do I hear about how a battle went the wrong way. Time and time again, they are wrong. If you don't think this is true, go take my A&A quiz (link below). The average score was one right out of five questions and about 100 players took it. Many were in the Pentagon. If you have never used an odds calc, you can't possibly understand many of the properties of large scale battles. Simply adding up

attack/defend factors and dividing by 6 will not cut it in most battles. I use my calc usually twice on my non-combat turn and about a half dozen times during my opponents. It was no coincidence I started using it again after the first few games of my Pentagon winning streak. I will never play without it again.

4. Watch Units Counts

In long games, I like to manually keep track of IPC's and unit counts. I just draw 5 columns, one for each power, and track how many each power buys, how many everyone loses that turn, and new totals. Many times I don't distinguish between tanks and infantry. The larger the battle, the less it matters. (So for crying out loud, try not to buy tanks when there are 50 Russian infantry on the board) This gives you an outstanding picture of where you and your opponent need to be headed in the long term.

3. Don't Waste Time on the Bid

The bid means almost nothing, even next to nothing. Play your best side against tough players, try to improve against lesser players. Don't fear giving the Axis 15 if you like the Allies and don't hesitate to take 13 if you like the Axis. Look, that one unit is going to be made up at least 5 times over by playing your game. If you don't have a preference, does your opponent? You don't want to start out thinking that way, because if you do, then you are already admitting that the other guy is better. If he is, don't play him. It can be much more valuable to be unpredictable with your bid than the number you get. This throws them right away. If it is a good place and you are playing your game, you won the bid.

2. Never Give Up

You have to take chances that are proportional to your chance of winning. It is that simple. When you have a really rotten first few rounds, try to turn things around in a big battle. Personally, rolling for tech when you already lost will almost certainly seal your fate, two of the last three games I played my Axis opponent got desperate and took some rolls. Both got heavy bombers and both still lost. That doesn't mean you have too. When the chips are down your opponent is going to be conservative, take advantage of it. Make some daring moves, knowing they are going to be less likely to gamble with you and in the meantime, you can siphon off some of their advantage. Playing from behind its good points too.

1. Be as Nice as Possible

I promise you that trash talk and the "I'm the best" attitude might work in games of physical performance or speed, but rarely will they help you in a game of Axis and Allies (and to those of you who know I don't always follow this rule, I say all rules are made to be broken, and that goes for all of these). What you will likely do to a good player with trash talk is doubling their concentration. Bad idea! Be humble, polite, curse their bad dice, and pretty soon, they'll be glad you beat them. Well, OK, not exactly glad ... :)

Well there you have it folks, my top ten ways I got to the top. As far as strategies, forget them, they mean almost nothing (joke) but if you got a pencil and paper handy, you are on your way to the TOP!

sirchauce

General of the Army

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