

Imitator 248

Chapter 248: First Move Wins

Li Renshu shook her head, "Not clear. The specific order in which nine-square grids open is a hidden rule. We need to observe more."

This was of course good news for Community 15, because it was their chosen 'priority development area,' so Community 15 didn't need to spend any gold coins to bid. They could directly become the '1st Developer.'

Representatives from Community 7, Jin Cheng, and Community 9, Zhang Shichao, both chose not to forfeit.

They came beside the A4 nine-square grid and each bid through the device on their wrists.

Perhaps because it was the first auction, their bids were relatively restrained.

[Community 7 bids: 5 gold coins.]

[Community 9 bids: 10 gold coins.]

[Community 7 bids: 15 gold coins.]

[Community 9 bids: 20 gold coins.]

[Community 7 bids: 30 gold coins.]

[Community 9 chooses to forfeit.]

[Community 7 obtains the '2nd Developer' status for 'A4 Nine-Square Grid.']

[Please have Community 15 and Community 7 take turns selecting plots in the 'A4 Nine-Square Grid.']

[Emphasizing again: When a certain community's three plots within the nine-square grid can connect in a straight line (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal are all acceptable), then all remaining plots within that nine-square grid belong to that community.]

Wang Weidong from Community 15 first came to the A4 plot, operated on the sign, and successfully claimed this plot.

That is, the most top-left plot of the entire nine-square grid.

Jin Cheng from Community 7, after some consideration, chose the central B5 plot.

After that, Wang Weidong selected the bottom-right corner C6 plot. Jin Cheng then selected the adjacent C5 plot.

Seeing this, Wang Weidong made a somewhat regretful "tsk" sound, because it was already determined that both sides would inevitably draw. As the first-move player, he also no longer had a way to win by connecting three plots in a straight line.

If he could win, both sides would split the plots 6:3, whereas a draw would split them 5:4.

For Wang Weidong as the first-move player, getting one less plot was still somewhat regrettable but there was no choice, because tic-tac-toe's strategy itself was too simple. As long as the second-move player didn't make mistakes in the first two steps, both sides could only draw.

Afterwards, the two respectively selected plots A5, A6, C4, B4, and B6, completing the division of the nine-square grid.

[Plot development for 'A4 Nine-Square Grid' has ended.]

[Plots obtained by Community 15 are: A4, A5, B6, C4, C6.]

[Plots obtained by Community 7 are: A6, B4, B5, C5.]

Both Jin Cheng and Wang Weidong went to check the signs on the plots.

According to game rules, each plot could build a shelter, but at this time, the 'build shelter' function was not yet open.

Players from each community gathered together again.

Zheng Jie said somewhat curiously, "Wouldn't it have been better for Wang Weidong's first move to be in the middle? I remember the middle has the highest win rate?"

Fu Chen shook his head, "No, I've looked at gameplay for various board games and small games before. Tic-tac-toe is a game where the first-move player has a very big advantage. Regardless of whether the first move is in a corner or the center, basically they won't lose.

"However, if the opponent doesn't know how to play, it's still better for the first-move player to go in a corner, because this is more deceptive. If the opponent has never encountered tic-tac-toe at all, they're more likely to fall into a trap.

"But the second-move player's response is also simple. There's a conventional formula: if the opponent goes in a corner, the second-move player must go in the center, or they'll definitely lose. The opponent will then grab the opposite corner. At this time, the second-move player can't go in a corner, or they'll still definitely lose.

"Simply put, if the first-move player goes in a corner, the second-move player's first step goes in the middle, and the second step doesn't go in a corner, then it's absolutely secure."

Clearly, the plot selection gameplay was tic-tac-toe. Its variations actually weren't many. For players who had already played or knew the tricks, it was actually a very simple strategy.

Li Renshu said thoughtfully, "Strange, this simple type of game shouldn't have much screening effect. As long as everyone knows how to play, in the end they'll definitely distribute plots 5:4.

"Then what's the point of the God's Imitator designing such a simple game segment?"

Cao Haichuan thought for a moment and said, "What this game screened out are, after all, the weakest batch of players in all communities. And the time for thinking in the first phase is very short, only 10 minutes. During that time, they still need to think about choosing the nine-square grid and other rules, exchanging gold coins, and thinking about the criminal's crimes.

"There's still the possibility of mistakes.

"Of course, I'm more inclined to believe that the God's Imitator designed this segment not wanting to use tic-tac-toe to distribute benefits between communities.

"But merely using a simple strategy to make communities that haven't played much tic-tac-toe spend some time deducing the optimal solution, occupying their thinking time."

...

Soon, the second round of the game began.

[The developable plot in this round is: D1 nine-square grid.]

[Because no community selected this nine-square grid as their 'priority development area,' both '1st Developer' and '2nd Developer' are obtained through bidding.]

[Community 7, Community 15, and Community 17 can participate in bidding.]

[Bidding starts now. Time limit: 3 minutes.]

Representatives from the three communities each came to the D1 nine-square grid.

Li Renshu and Fu Chen represented Community 17 to bid.

Community 7 and Community 15 were still represented by the previous two players, Jin Cheng and Wang Weidong.

Seeing Jin Cheng come to bid again, Wang Weidong was somewhat surprised, "Hm? Not forfeiting directly?"

Jin Cheng frowned, "What are you thinking? Of course I can't possibly forfeit."

Wang Weidong spread his hands, "Whatever, I'm just reminding you that you spent 30 gold coins in the last round of bidding, while we and Community 17 haven't spent any gold coins yet.

"You're at a disadvantage financially. Your chances of winning are slim.

"Later, the most central nine-square grid D4 might open. All communities will compete for it. Competition for this nine-square grid will inevitably be the fiercest.

"If you waste too many gold coins beforehand, what will you do then?

"Between the two, of course it should be more cost-effective to concentrate gold coins to bid on the most central area, the D4 nine-square grid."

After a moment of consideration, Jin Cheng exposed Wang Weidong's intent, "You want me to withdraw because after I withdraw, you'll no longer have competition and will inevitably become the '1st Developer' and '2nd Developer.'"

"At that time, you can completely obtain this nine-square grid at the lowest price, with almost no cost.

"If I don't withdraw, although I very likely won't win this nine-square grid, at least I can drive up the price and increase the cost for both of your communities to acquire land."

Wang Weidong said helplessly, "How could that be? Even if you withdraw, our two communities will definitely keep driving up the price in the process of competing for 1st Developer.

"If you insist on joining the excitement, withdrawing midway still requires paying a handling fee of 5 gold coins.

"If you like wasting gold coins randomly, I have no objection."

Jin Cheng no longer paid attention to Wang Weidong. Clearly, she wouldn't easily believe what Wang Weidong said.

Although Community 15 and Community 17 indeed might drive up prices to compete for 'first-move advantage,' there was also the possibility of not driving up prices.

In case Community 15 and Community 17 reached an agreement to acquire this nine-square grid at the lowest price, that would be an absolutely unacceptable situation for Community 7.