

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 531: We Were Having a Nice Talk—Why Are You Cursing Me?

Hearing this, Pei Qian became even more interested.

"Teacher He, tell me more about that. I really want to hear it!"

He An looked a little surprised.

"What? Is President Ma a veteran RTS fan?"

Pei Qian thought for a moment.

"Uh... more or less."

If he started liking them from now on, that should still count as being a veteran, right?

Why do I like RTS games? Maybe because they can help me lose money.

He An considered it for a moment.

"That's fine. RTS games aren't really off-topic from today's lesson, so I'll give you a brief overview."

"Real-Time Strategy games, or RTS games, were once incredibly popular. For a long time, they were one of the pillars of the esports industry. And whenever RTS games are mentioned, it's impossible to avoid talking about Fantasy Wars and Starcraft II."

"Last year, Starcraft II was released and became a tremendous success."

"But that didn't change the industry's pessimistic view of the RTS genre. Most people saw it as a final flash of brilliance before the decline. The success of a single game wasn't enough to reverse the downward trend of the entire genre."

"And that has indeed proven to be the case. Today, aside from a few long-established major studios with famous IPs, almost nobody is willing to touch RTS games anymore."

"And even those big companies don't seem interested in investing much more money or effort into the genre."

"The decline of RTS games is directly tied to the rise of newer game genres."

"RTS games demand an extremely high level of mechanical skill from players. Most players simply can't reach the minimum skill threshold, so they never get to experience the fun."

"At the same time, since most RTS games are one-on-one, there's no teammate to blame when you lose. Defeat feels much harsher."

"That makes RTS an excellent high-level esports with great spectator appeal, but it also makes it difficult for the genre to survive as a mainstream game. The entry barrier is simply too high."

"In the future, the mainstream market will belong to games like GOG. Its cross-platform compatibility between PC and mobile gives it a particularly unique advantage."

Pei Qian twitched at the corner of his mouth.

Why are we talking about GOG again?

He hurriedly changed the subject.

"So basically, at this point in time, any developer without an established IP is doomed if they try to make an RTS game?"

He An nodded slightly.

"Yes. You can put it that way."

Pei Qian couldn't help feeling overjoyed.

That's exactly what I think too!

Finally, Teacher He and I are on the same wavelength for once.

Pei Qian had actually considered making an RTS game before.

The reason he hadn't done it was because the genre hadn't completely died yet.

Although it had declined, there were still plenty of loyal veteran players, and they generally had tremendous purchasing power. If those players happened to latch onto his game, the consequences would be unimaginable.

But after more than a year, things had changed.

Last year's release of Starcraft II had essentially been the genre's last burst of life, pulling in almost all of the remaining RTS player base.

Meanwhile, GOG and IOI were locked in a fierce battle, to the point that even Divine Revelation was trembling in fear.

So what chance would a brand-new RTS game have?

Perfect.

This has to be it.

It feels absolutely foolproof.

Unfortunately, it was already too late for this settlement cycle.

He would have to wait until the next cycle to consider it.

He An sighed.

"Actually, part of the reason I've decided to retire is because I feel my understanding of where games are headed has fallen behind the times."

"I used to think games like Divine Revelation would always remain a niche genre, and that mobile games could never seriously challenge PC games."

"But now it seems those ideas have become outdated."

"So, President Ma, that's exactly why I chose to put this lesson second."

"I hope you'll always keep a long-term perspective, identify where the industry is heading, and make every game at exactly the right time—catch every trend and win effortlessly."

Pei Qian: "..."

Teacher He... we were having such a nice lecture. Why are you cursing me?

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10:00 p.m.

DGE Esports Club

It was lights-out.

All of the players' phones had already been collected to ensure they got enough sleep.

Mingyun Villa was located far away from the city, so there was very little light pollution. Even without drawing the curtains, only faint moonlight and starlight filtered into the room.

This was one of the players' dorm rooms, shared by two people.

In the darkness, a figure lying spread-eagle on the bed spoke.

"Hey, Old Zhou, could you do me a favor and hand me my water bottle? I'm thirsty."

Old Zhou, lying on the other bed, was obviously still awake.

"Damn it. What were you doing before getting into bed? Besides, why don't you get it yourself?"

The figure sprawled across the bed replied weakly, "I can't move."

Old Zhou snorted.

"Huang Wang, you say that like I can."

Huang Wang said, "Come on, Old Zhou. Stop pretending—you can definitely move. Please! If I die of thirst before tomorrow, we'll forfeit the scrim, and then we'll have extra training tonight!"

Old Zhou grinned.

"Call me Dad."

"Dad!"

"...Damn it. You really have no dignity as a team captain. I give up."

With no other choice, Old Zhou rolled out of bed, awkwardly shuffled over to the table, picked up Huang Wang's water bottle, and brought it to his bedside.

Huang Wang opened his mouth.

"Ah..."

Old Zhou's face darkened.

"What, are you trying to die? Drink it yourself. If you don't, I'm pouring it on the floor."

Huang Wang quickly struggled into a sitting position.

"I'll drink it! I'll drink it! Give it here."

Old Zhou climbed back into bed, grumbling.

After taking a couple of sips, Huang Wang smacked his lips.

"Old Zhou, we can't keep going like this. We have to come up with something. That guy Jiang on the other team is definitely a crafty old fox!"

"We've had extra practice for an entire week already. If we keep losing like this, we're going to be completely worn out!"

Old Zhou rolled his eyes.

"Isn't that because your shot-calling as captain sucks? Jiang Huan comes up with some ridiculous new strategy every single game and stomps us. Compared to them, our team is nothing but a disorganized mess! Especially you. You're playing mid lane, yet your roams are always slower than everyone else's. What's the point of playing mid like that?"

Huang Wang refused to accept the criticism.

"Bullshit! That's only because their jungler and mid are basically joined at the hip! This is all about strategy. We need some new tricks too. Otherwise every lost scrim means extra training. Who the hell can survive that?"

"If we keep this up, we might as well switch careers and become fitness coaches!"

Old Zhou chuckled.

"That's okay. Before becoming fitness coaches, we can settle things with the other team in a real fistfight. I can already tell my muscles have gotten bigger."

Huang Wang nodded.

"Alright. Tomorrow we'll work out a few new strategies too. If they're going to ignore conventional play, then we'll have to fight dirty ourselves. I've figured it out—this game is all about cheesy tactics—"

Suddenly, the hallway light outside came on.

Light streamed through the crack beneath the door, and both men instantly fell silent.

Zhang Yuan stood outside the door for two minutes before finally turning around and leaving.

. . .

During this period, daily training at DGE Esports Club had been... difficult to describe.

After President Pei laid out the training schedule, Zhang Yuan had been somewhat worried, but he still followed it to the letter.

Sure enough, those gaming addicts were completely wiped out on the very first day.

The morning session was supposed to be an easy jog.

Before long, the jog became a brisk walk.

Then the brisk walk became a slow walk.

Eventually, the slow walk turned into standing in place while desperately gasping for air.

That evening they had strength training.

Immediately afterward they didn't think much of it, aside from feeling as though every ounce of energy had been drained from their bodies.

But after sleeping for one night, many of them could barely get out of bed the next morning.

Fortunately, Coach Yaling was a professional.

Throughout every workout she closely monitored each player's condition, and everything—from nutrition, to warm-ups before training, to stretching afterward—was handled professionally.

As a result, nobody suffered any serious problems.

Even so, they were still utterly exhausted.

During the first week of fitness training, both their solo queue performance and scrim quality plummeted.

All ten players dropped roughly one full rank in high-level ranked matches.

By the second week, however, subtle changes began to appear.

Players who had once been as skinny as bamboo poles were visibly putting on muscle.

Those who had been skinny-fat were noticeably slimming down.

As everyone gradually adapted to the workouts, their in-game performance slowly recovered as well.

Then one of the teams had a breakthrough.

Jiang Huan's squad started pulling out all kinds of bizarre, unconventional strategies during scrims.

They immediately went on a seven-game winning streak and completely crushed Huang Wang's team.

As for why they were trying so hard...

The reason was simple.

The losing team had to do extra training.

If they lost by only a little, then only the captain and the team's designated scapegoat had to stay for extra workouts.

If they lost badly, then the entire team had to do extra training together.

After several days of additional workouts, Captain Huang Wang was so exhausted that he barely had the strength to get out of bed and pick up a cup of water.

This was because, as everyone's fitness improved and they adapted to the routine, Coach Yaling naturally increased the training intensity.

At first, Zhang Yuan had felt sorry for the players.

But after observing them for a while, he realized that this approach actually seemed to be working.

He had previously heard that some esports clubs had their first and second teams scrim against each other.

At first, there were no penalties for losing, so everyone experimented with weird strategies and didn't really care about the outcome.

Later, the team manager introduced a punishment: every player on the losing team had to pay 100 yuan to buy cigarettes and snacks for the winners.

Immediately, both teams started taking scrims seriously.

The extra-training penalty seemed even more effective than that.

Both teams racked their brains developing new strategies and innovative tactics, taking every scrim increasingly seriously.

Any new strategy discovered in ranked games during the day could be tested in scrims that very same day.

In addition, the custom practice sessions scheduled after the morning run were beginning to pay off as well.

At first, the players were completely baffled.

What's the point of practicing alone in a custom game? There's no one to fight against.

But there wasn't anything else they could do during that time.

So they spent hours in custom games endlessly repeating the fundamentals of various champions, practicing mechanics, and studying how each champion worked.

Once they had pushed their proficiency with their familiar champions to the limit, they naturally moved on to mastering the ones they weren't comfortable with.

After that, they began studying deeper game mechanics—minion wave management, jungle camps, and countless other details.

As they spent more time researching these systems, many of the game's numbers and timings naturally became second nature.

After all, spending two full hours doing nothing but drilling muscle memory would have been unbearably monotonous.

Whether they wanted to or not, they inevitably started thinking more deeply about the game's mechanics.

It was obvious that Huang Wang's team had also been improving steadily in scrims lately.

They were desperately researching new strategies as well, and it looked like it wouldn't be long before they finally earned a victory and restored their pride.

Then, once Jiang Huan's team had to do extra training, they'd come up with even newer strategies.

The two teams would keep pushing each other, creating a self-sustaining cycle of improvement.

After all, GOG was still a relatively new game.

The people with the deepest understanding of it were these high-ranked players themselves.

Having them develop strategies might not be any worse than relying on coaches who had transferred over from other esports titles.

Zhang Yuan couldn't help but sigh.

Could it be that President Pei really had thought this entire training program through from the very beginning?

After trying it out for a while, the results were actually pretty impressive.