

The wrecking game

Team X objectives	Team Y objectives		
	Win none	Win part	Win all
Win none	0	0	0
Win part	5	0	X
Win all	10	X	X

Scoring

The numbers in the boxes are the payoffs to **Team X**, using the following scheme:

- (1) The most preferred objective of both teams is to win all (of whatever is being fought over). Score 10 to the winner, 0 to the loser.
- (2) The next preferred objective of both teams is to be seen to win more than the other team (rivalry). Score 5 to the winner, 0 to the loser.
- (3) The least preferred objective is to win the same as the other team. This is so unpalatable that neither team cares what they win, just as long as the other team is no better off. Score 0 to both.
- (4) It is clearly impossible for one team to win all and the other team to win all or part. These banned combinations are marked with an 'X'.

Analysis

The tabulated payoffs are for **Team X**, so we take its perspective. We see that the only non-zero payoffs for **Team X** are in the first column, where **Team Y** wins nothing at all. Therefore the only 'rational' strategy for **Team X** – maximising its chance of getting a payoff – is to ensure that **Team Y** wins nothing at all. Essentially this is a wholly negative 'wrecking' strategy. The same argument applies if the payoffs are tabulated for **Team Y**.

Conclusion

Assuming the objectives of both teams are as (1) – (4) above, the outcome will be that each team will do its utmost to ensure that the other team wins nothing at all.

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