Turtling

Meaning

This term is mostly used in context of real time strategy games. It refers to a play style, that is characterized as very passive or defensive. For example instead of using harassment tactics the player tends to build defensive structures (sometimes referred to as walling one's self in, or bunkering). Usually this is done with the goal to lose as few as possible units and structures while fending off the opponent. The metaphor is the turtle, hiding behind its carapace.

Very often it is also marked by a strategy of slowly building up a big force or improving it by buffing it with research items or aiming for higher tiers of units. Another aspect is using weapons that are distance weapons with great offensive potential (e.g. nukes or long range artillery). Also it usually requires a lot less micro management, as automated defenses to the job mostly without any effort by the player, once they are in place. This is one of the reasons this kind of strategy is usually favored by less experiences players.

Advantages

The advantage of this strategy is, if it pays off (the opponent is annihilated time after time by the defenses without doing enough damage himself), the player can then use his eventually overwhelming force to deal the final blow.

As there is no real need for good micro management skills for this strategy, it looks appealing to novice players. It makes the game more manageable for them.

Disadvantages

On the other hand, there are some major draw backs, especially in games, where map control is important: A mobile force in conjunction with proper scouting out the opponent is far more effective, cost-wise. While a big »fence« of defensive structures will most likely cost a lot more, to be tight enough to not let anything pass, the mobile force for defending structures may be smaller cost-wise and still achieve the same level of defense (although requiring more active management in comparison with a static defense).

Also gathering resources is a key element in most RTS, which usually can only be improved upon by expanding onto the map. If one player manages to cut off the opponent from valuable resources, his stronger economy will very likely give him a decisive advantage. However, with stationary forces it is usually a lot more expensive to do that thoroughly/effectively, than with a mobile force and therefore unlikely to succeed.

Also in comparison the surplus of resources for a non-turtling player allows him for much faster expansion onto the map (increasing income or occupying strategically important spots) or reaching higher tiers, which in the long run will become a disadvantage for the turtle.

Also is it not very likely to succeed if the opponent prevents a tightly shaped defense line or when there are game mechanics, that allow for dropping units behind these lines unchallenged. If such a defense is not created thoroughly, it will eventually become useless, while having cost a substantial amount of available resources.

Simply put, it is too expensive to use this strategy against a player, that knows how to properly handle the available units to circumvent the wall-in.

Situational Dependencies

In general there are some situations, that favor turtling more than others, or limitations, that make it less feasible up to impossible to turtle. E.g. the Terran faction of Starcraft Broodwar is specifically better suited for a defensive strategy, than the Zerg faction. Especially maps with single-point access to bases make it a lot easier to defend ones base, compared to bases widely open for attacks from any direction.

Also mixtures of strategies, supplemented with turtling aspects can still be very powerful, e.g. defending very valuable resources with powerful defenses, once the economy is strong enough to support such a fortification.

[Games Database] [Game Related Terms]

From:
https://mwohlauer.d-n-s.name/wiki/ - **mwohlauer.d-n-s.name / www.mobile-infanterie.de**

Permanent link:
https://mwohlauer.d-n-s.name/wiki/doku.php?id=en:gaming_theory:turtling

Last update: **2022-04-02-21-18**