Robo Rally House Rules Betsy & Chuck Like

Here are some House Rules we made up, or picked up from someone else on BGG, during the past quarter century. A couple specifically fight Leader Break-away Syndrome. Others just seem to us to make the game more fun.

(1) Walls around Flags. Put a d6 on each flag, representing a 6-layer wall. All robots collectively must shoot it a total of 6 times (reducing the pips by one each time) before anybody can claim the flag. These make grab-and-run by the Leader less likely, and often lead to excitement and commotion near the flag where lots of robots are waiting and shooting.

(2) Ordered Prizes. For each flag except the final one, create an envelope containing one random Option per player. The first robot to tag the flag earns the least-desirable Option, based on the agreement of the other players. This continues until the final robot arrives and gets the best prize. This can help Trailing players catch up.

(3) Starting Power. We like to give every robot a random option at the start of the game. This may incent them to try different strategies and add to the fun. But note that, especially if you use this and other House Rules, you may run out of option cards if you don't have more from another expansion.

(4) Helps and Hurts. After stuffing the Prize envelopes and/or taking a starting Option as in (2) and (3) above, we sort the remaining Options according to whether they help the robot that has them or hurt other robots. Then when gaining new Options (other than the Prizes) a player may draw from either stack, depending on their strategy or the playing style they enjoy.

(5) *Death* Tokens. When a robot dies, it's no fun for its owner to miss an entire round. So rather than letting each robot begin the game with three lives to lose, we begin with no life tokens. Instead, when a robot dies, instead of missing the next round, that player receives a "death token" instead of losing a life. (We can easily imagine that the cute robot heads on the life tokens are actually skulls.) After most or all robots finish the game (based on whatever end-game trigger players agree to), each skull represents that robot having finished one round later. Think of each skull as representing one round of 5 register phases. For example, a robot with two skulls that finishes on the 2nd register of the final round loses to a robot with only one skull that finished on the 4th register one round earlier.

(6) Philosophy. Most of the people we've played with try to create mayhem and comedy more than to win. We talk about this attitude while teaching the game and rejoice when something memorable happens. In fact, some of us would argue that someone trying only to win doesn't really understand the purpose of the game and should switch to a different one. A happy-go-lucky see-what-happens attitude might also reduce down-time and speed the game.

We'd appreciate your comments. Thanks!

– Betsy & Chuck Berry
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