

TWILIGHT IMPERIUM™

THIRD EDITION

GAME OPTIONS AND VARIANTS

Version 1.1

Imperial Musings

In late January 2005, despite many theories disputing its actual existence, TI3 finally made its way across the world to the shelves of hobby games retailers and the tables of gamers everywhere.

The response to TI3 has been overwhelmingly positive and very gratifying for everyone at FFG. Not only is it a pleasure to have new people experiencing the TI universe once again, but the dramatic overhaul that was implemented in the game has been very favorably reviewed.

As galactic conflict and interstellar diplomacy has erupted on thousands of tabletops, many varying strategies as well as individual opinions on many different areas of the game have arisen. As the intended “metagame” of TI evolves in the near future, many of these questions will be answered as the nuances of checks and balances in the system are discovered.

Nevertheless, many players have commented on the powerful “Imperial Strategy Card” also called the “ISC.” For this particular area of the game, a brief background may be helpful.

Perhaps one of the reasons that TI evokes strong feelings from its players is its open nature. In open systems such as this, the players must drive the game forward by their playstyles, choices, and tastes (as opposed to games that drive the players). This makes for many different play experiences among different groups.

In the first versions of TI, the very nature of the game could cause very long playtimes, as players would “turtle,” haggle, posture, within the tools provided. It was therefore intended that TI3 eliminate some of the motivations for negative play while still keeping as much of the open format as possible. The Fleet Supply limit, Objectives (public and secret), are areas that work towards more dynamic game-play, and so is the ISC.

There is a notion, perhaps due to other games that have used the same role-selection system, that all the Strategy Counters should

be “created equal.” Yet this is not intended with the TI3 Strategy System. The strengths of various Strategy Counters work into a larger “meta plan” of the game, creating underlying political strife, forethought, and planning. Many Strategy Counters have varying situational, positional, and time-related utility. The Xxcha, for example, would rather not pick the Diplomacy Strategy themselves, but desire it to be picked. Similarly with the Jol-Nar and the Technology Strategy. Warfare is very strong early in the game, less strong later, etc.

The ISC is a structural piece, whose tremendous power (it should be picked in 95% of all circumstances) serves multiple purposes. It enables the slow revelation of public objectives, it will, with the Initiative Strategy Card, drive a more predictable “cycle” that becomes part of the metagame, and allows players to respond to their position within that cycle. As the game draw closer to its conclusion, the ISC pick becomes riskier, its utility not as foregone a choice as earlier in the game. Importantly, the ISC drives the game forward to its conclusion, driving down the game time, and keeps the energy-level of the game up.

Now, due to the open nature of TI, and the many play-styles of its players, some may prefer a different dynamic than the one provided by the current ISC. In hindsight, given the controversy of playstyles relating to the ISC, we should have included some of our tested variants (relating to victory points) in the rules. Yet, the already heavy volume of the rules-booklet kept us from including them. To rectify this, using the wonders of the internet, we are here able to provide those additional variants for your TI game experience. All of the variants in this section relates to the victory conditions of the game, and thus (either directly or indirectly) relates to the utility of the ISC.

Any player can with confidence include some of the options below to create a custom TI3 experience that may fit his sentiments and his group’s playstyle.

GAME OPTION: HOMEWORLDS

As the game moves forward, and as the endgame begins, some groups (the more aggressive groups in particular) may want to include this variant, which allows military intervention to stop a powerful claim for the imperial throne.

Control of your Hometown

In order to acquire **any** victory points, regardless of the source, a player must be in control of every planet in his Home System. Thus, even if a player would be able to gather enough victory points to win the game, such will not be possible unless he controls all the planets in his Home System.

Such lost points are **not** accumulated (or left in escrow) and granted to the player should he reclaim control of his Home System. Once the player regains control of his planets, he must once more re-acquire the position (such as holding the ISC) that would give him victory points.

GAME OPTION: THE STAR IN THE CROWN

This option specifically relates to groups who may feel that the ISC is a little too dominant a meta-mechanic for their playgroup. This option still drives the game forward, but changes the dynamic of the selection process slightly.

When playing this variant, players should also play with the AGE OF EMPIRE variant found in the TI3 rules set.

Less points for executing the ISC

When executing the primary ability of the ISC, the active player receives 1 victory point (instead of 2).

(1.1) GAME OPTION: THE ANCIENT THRONE

Do not play this option with the “Star in the Crown” variant.

The Ancient Throne variant is for groups whose style does not appreciate the instant granting of victory points as currently provided by the ISC, and that may wish for a more objective-based approach.

When playing this variant, players should also play with the AGE OF EMPIRE variant found in the TI3 rules set.

New ISC ability

Instead of its original text, now play the ISC as follows:

Primary Ability: Imperial Claim

Choose either a) or b).

a) If you control Mecatol Rex, immediately gain 1 victory point. Also, regardless of your control of Mecatol Rex, during the upcoming Status Phase, you may qualify for any number of Public Objective Cards (but must still meet the individually stated requirements of each card).

b) You may choose to execute the secondary ability of the Imperial Strategy Card (at no cost). No other player may execute this secondary ability this game round.

(Secondary Ability remains unchanged).