

Player 1 has 3 choices:

①

C	S
M	

Corner C

Side S

Middle M

Once Player 1 has made a choice, Player 2 makes a choice. In no case can Player 2's choice guarantee a tie - there is still a risk.

But by Player 2's 2nd choice, following Player 1's 2nd choice, a tie may be assured (if Player 2 plays well, + makes no foolish mistakes).

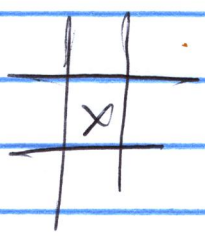
Table 1:

Player 1 choice	C	S	M	Three distinctly different possible choices
Player 2 choice	M	M	C	

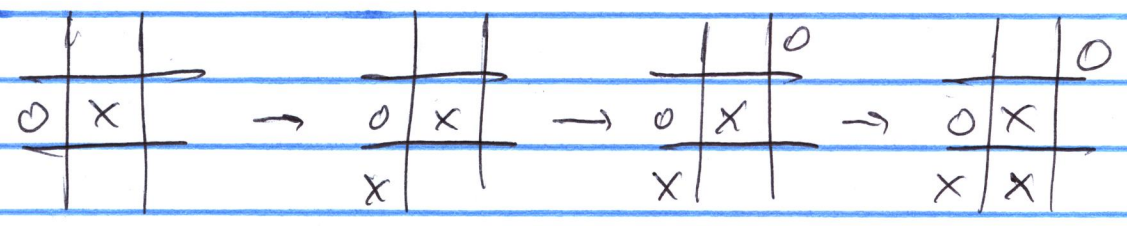
These choices for Player 2's 1st move will lead to a tie, if Player 2 continues to avoid foolish mistakes.

* Throughout the following I'll rely on symmetry to reduce the number of choices we need to consider.

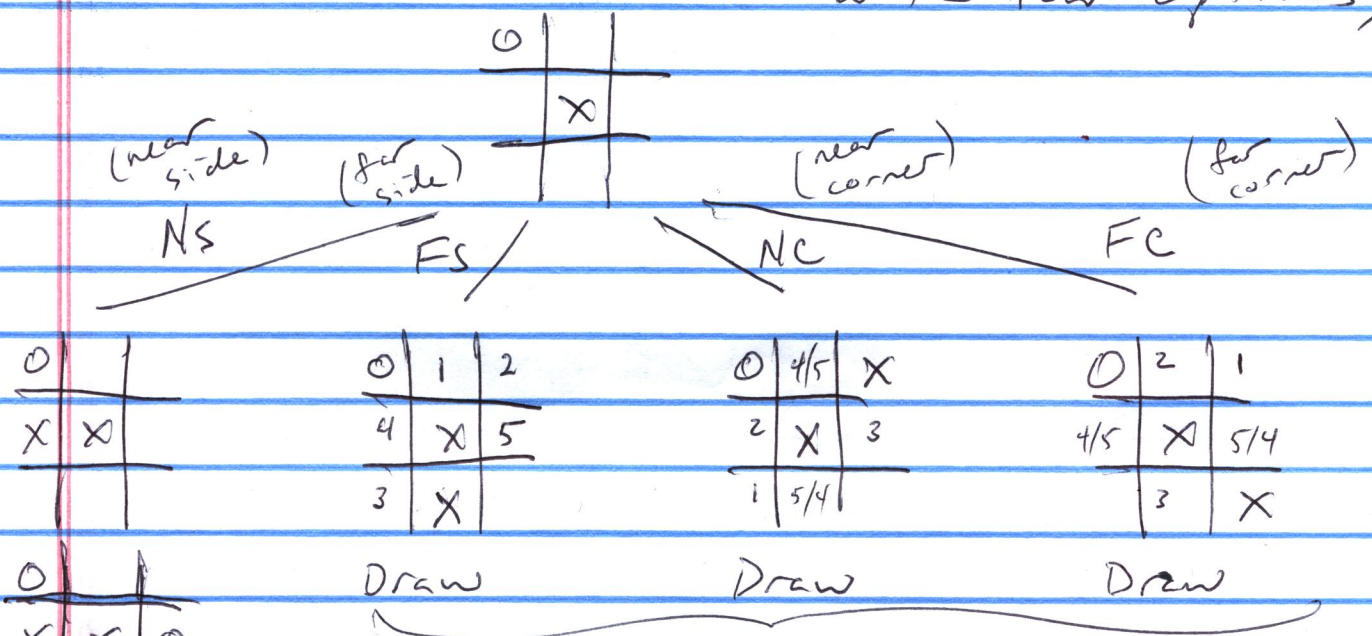
hardest!
 The ~~easiest~~ case to complete is when
 Player 1 chooses the middle M:



Player 2 has one of two choices: S or C.
 A choice of S leads to defeat:



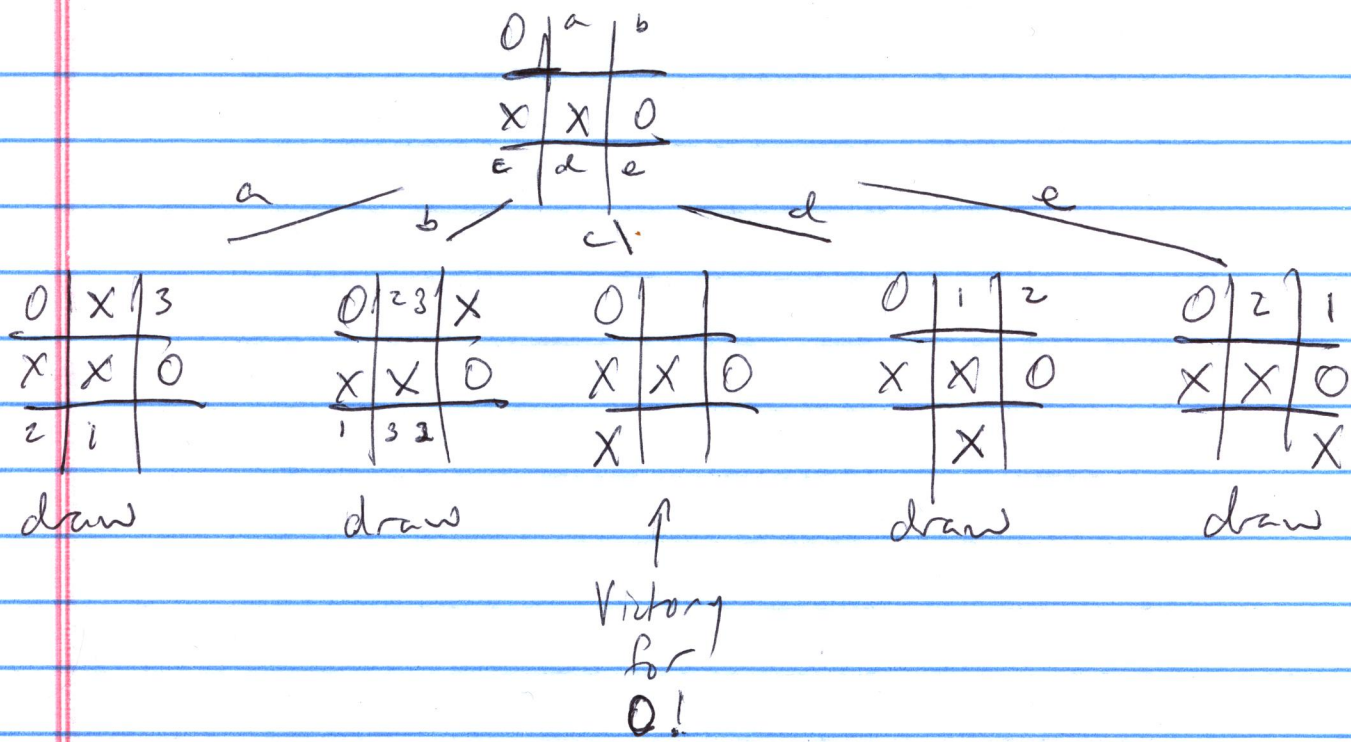
and Player 2 has lost the game. So only a
 corner offers any hope (leaving Player 1
 with four options):



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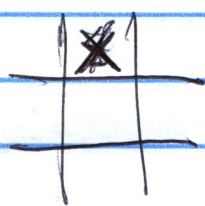
0		
X	X	0

where the numbers are the next moves until a draw is assured.

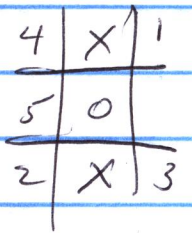
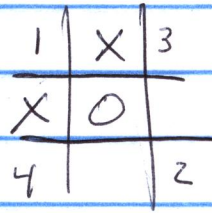
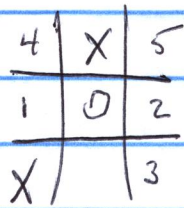
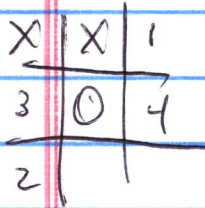
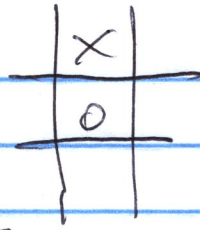


So a careful response by Player 2 can fend off any attack by Player 1, at least starting in the middle.

Let's now consider the choice of a side S by Player 1:



We claim that a middle response from Player 2 is the right move:



draw!

draw

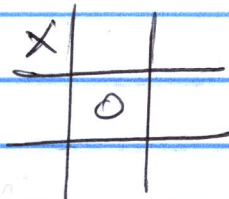
draw

draw

All roads lead to a draw for Player 2, provided the correct 2nd choice is made.

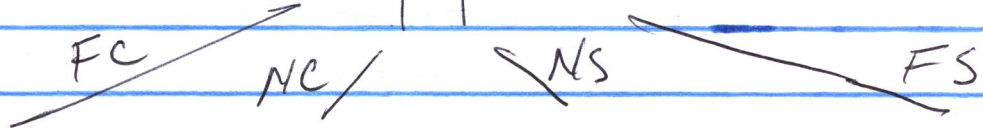
In each case above Player 2 attacks, eliciting a known response from Player 1, until the game ends in a draw.

The final case is that of a choice of a corner by Player 1, who then faces this board when Player 2 chooses the middle:



Player 1 has the usual four choices:

X	
	0



X	1	4
	0	5
3	2	X

X	3	
1	0	2
X	4	5

X	X	1
3	0	4
2		

X		3
1	0	2
4	X	5

draw

draw

draw

draw

Once again, Player 2 goes on offense in response to Player 1's move, & the game is decided in a draw.

This proves that Player 2 can force a draw no matter what Player 1 does, provided Player 2 makes the correct start (Table 1).