

Applying the *Pronoun Meta Review* to a Nottingham GNK

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Abstract

The seminal work of l0velace [6] analyses the winrates of players at a large UK tournament based on their pronouns. We apply these rates to a separate tournament, in an attempt to validate whether they apply to other tournaments in the same meta. We use the pronoun matchup data collected by l0velace to predict the results of this separate tournament, and compare to the actual results. We assume a round robin tournament in our calculations, but we briefly verify that the tournament should produce results close to a round robin tournament. We find that the correlation between expected placement and actual placement according to our work is -0.754 , implying that further work is desperately needed.

1 Introduction

Netrunner is a two-player card game set in a dystopian cyberpunk future [4]. Being an asymmetric card game with a focus on deckbuilding as a means of player expression, a fluid and varied meta surrounds the game, with different decks selected by players for different tournaments. There is much research into and discussion about this meta from a deck selection perspective [3, 2]. Players' engagement with tournaments, which is the main avenue for exploring Netrunner, can involve heavy consideration of this meta.

A player's performance in a given tournament is based on more than purely their deck choices, however, and yet there has not been much exploration of factors outside of that. The only examples we had until recently are play guides, with *spike biased* [1] being one notable and well-regarded success but guides on the *Stimhack*¹ blog also oft-cited.

This can all be seen as mostly focusing on the *cyber* of cyberpunk however – thinking about technical choices made during deck construction and the game itself.

Recently, we saw some exploration of the *punk* side of Netrunner, in particular its queer representation throughout the game and its player base. l0velace's seminal work [6] introduced players to the strategic possibilities of pronoun selection at tournaments.

Rather than focusing on the pronouns of the identities being played [8], or of the characters in the deck as a whole [5], it focused on the selection of player pronouns. The author found the particular success of non-binary pronouns such as *it* and *any* during the *UK Nationals 2025* event, but also identified the winrates for a given pronoun set when fighting others'.

In this work, we consider whether this data can be applied to other tournaments and used to predict their results. We achieve this as follows. We first consider the results of the Nottingham GNK run soon after UK Nationals 2025, discussed in Section 2, in which we know of players using new pronouns. We then find the expected winrate of players in Section 3. We then compare this expected winrate and actual winrate in Section 4.

2 The Nottingham GNK

The tournament we consider is a small Game Night Kit (GNK) run in Nottingham, UK. The event was run on the Cobra tournament platform, with the results available on there². Six players attended, using a variety of pronouns: two instances of she/her, two instances of he/they, one instance of he/him and one instance of they/it.

Four rounds of Single-Sided Swiss were run to crown the runner. Swiss-style tournaments are generally considered the best method for finding a player ranking outside of round robin tournaments [9]. The key is that if sufficient rounds of Swiss are played, the result tends towards the ranking given by a round robin tournament.

The definition of *sufficient* depends on a variety of factors however, such as tournament size. The Null Signal Organised Play Policies [7] do not clearly detail the number of rounds needed for a tournament with only six participants, handwaving the number of rounds as 5-6 for all tournaments with sixteen or fewer players. We note however that four rounds is extremely close to a round robin tournament when there are six players – we only need one more round for all players to have theoretically played against each other. Thus we deem this tournament to have a sufficient number of rounds.

¹<https://stimhack.com/>

²<https://tournaments.nullsignal.games/tournaments/4070>

We note that this does not take the asymmetry of the game into account. Since players can either play Corp or Runner in a given game, it is possible for players to be paired up with the same opponent again to play the opposite side of the previous game. This phenomenon occurred in the tournament, with Lap playing against Rhea twice, but otherwise did not materialise. Thus, we believe that the tournament is close enough to a round robin for it to be representative of the expected results of a round robin tournament.

3 Finding The Expected Winrate of Players

We now look at predicting the expected winrate of players and thus how well they would do in a round robin tournament. We look at the winrate of each pair of players, purely looking at their pronouns. These winrates are taken from l0velace's work, with the notable exception that we use the they/any rates for the they/it player at this tournament due to there being no they/it data. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 1.

With this, we find the average winrate of each player to determine how well they are likely to do into this meta. This is the only factor we consider. Thus, we are ignoring things like deck choice and general player skill, but we are effectively doing vibe statistics and thus it's okay. These average winrates along with the expected ranking are displayed in Table 2.

Note that here we are claiming that winrate and position are directly correlated: this is a simplification that we use to discretise the winrates, and let's not kid ourselves only about three people will read this paragraph. We discuss how this comparison is more reasonable than we might expect in the next section.

4 Analysis

With this calculated, we now look at how our theoretical ranking and how it correlates to the actual ranking. In this tournament, the two he/they (henceforth shortened to *hey*) players were expected to have a strong set of matches into the pronoun meta present at this event, so had the highest winrates and thus highest expected ranking.

However, we found the actual ranking to be nearly the reverse of the expected ranking. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient (PCC) [10] of the data, which determines how correlated the rankings are, produced a value of -0.754 . This implies a negative correlation: not only were the rankings wrong, but they were so wrong that actively choosing the opposite rankings would have got us close to the true rankings.

There are a few potential reasons for this failing. First, it could be that either this tournament or UK Nats 2025 were unrepresentative. Given the number of caveats with this tournament: the low player count,

the potentially low number of rounds and the substitution of pronoun data due to there not being any data for they/it, we could believe that this tournament is not entirely representative. We would have perhaps expected no correlation in this case however, rather than an actively negative correlation.

Another potential reason for these results is that the method may have been flawed. We remind readers that the author has a PhD³.

We expect however that we simply need more data. A larger tournament using a set of pronouns present in l0velace's original work, particularly those pronouns with enough pilots in the original dataset (c.f. more than one), would likely lead to better results.

Finally, we recall that we have looked at winrates and thus looked at the expectation of players doing well, rather than guaranteed results. A player with a high winrate does not necessarily mean that they will win every game they play; factors other than player skill have an effect on results⁴. We would need to run multiple tournaments with similar pronoun sets to be more confident in our results.

5 Conclusions

In this work, we attempted to use the winrates derived in l0velace's work to predict the results of another tournament. We presented a simple process where we looked at the average winrate of a player across the field of pronouns at the given tournament, and used those average winrates to rank players. We found in this case that this method was insufficient, however, leading to a ranking close to the opposite ranking seen at the actual tournament.

We expect that this method is a useful one when applied to larger tournaments with fewer caveats, and in future would like to see this work applied to much larger tournaments with a variety of pronouns.

kthanksbye

6 Future Work

The work relies on a statistical simplification, where we consider winrates against the field even though a player may only fight part of the field. In this particular case, this simplification is very close as nearly every pairing happened. But in larger tournaments a probabilistic simulation may be more effective and stick closer to the pairing algorithm than just using an average.

We also had to improvise some pronoun data due to the lack of results for they/it pronouns. It may be worth identifying if pronoun data from singular pronouns can be combined into joint ones: for example, combining the data for they/them and it/its into

³This PhD may not have been in statistics, but let a girl dream okay?

⁴AceEmpress suggested the phrase "confounding variables", which sounds like nerd shit.

	Rhea (she/her)	Lap (they/it)	MattOhNo (he/they)	Jade (she/her)	Chonk (he/him)	Simon (he/they)
Rhea (she/her)	x	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.458	0.5
Lap (they/it)	0.5	x	0	0.5	0.533	0
MattOhNo (he/they)	0.5	1	x	0.5	0.486	0.5
Jade (she/her)	0.5	0.5	0.5	x	0.458	0.5
Chonk (he/him)	0.542	0.467	0.514	0.542	x	0.514
Simon (he/they)	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.486	x

Table 1: The probabilities of the player on the row winning against the player in the column. The pronouns are listed for easy reference to l0velace’s work.

	Average winrate	Theoretical ranking	Actual ranking
Rhea (she/her)	0.492	4	3
Lap (they/it)	0.258	6	1
MattOhNo (he/they)	0.622	1.5	5
Jade (she/her)	0.490	3	2
Chonk (he/him)	0.509	5	4
Simon (he/they)	0.622	1.5	6

Table 2: The average probability of a player winning a given match, and the rankings that translates to. Note that the two players with ranking 1.5 were equally likely to win.

they/it. This is a significant future research direction: we need to identify how the data combines and then combine it appropriately.

Finally, we need to find more tournaments to apply these methods to. There are a lot, it just requires work from a researcher who isn’t just writing a scientific paper in an afternoon as a bit.

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