Simplification for the initial state:

this is for the competition only. HW2 still should work with any initial state.

instead of any random initial state, you can assume that the initial state will always be:

4 0 200 ****** ****** ****** ***OX** ****** ******

and O plays first.

your agent will still alternate between playing X or 0 on different games (so you will have the first move only in half of the games, the opponent will have the first move in the other half)

so, the opening move of the first player in both cases is limited to c4,d3,e6,f5. You can use this knowledge to think about opening moves.