

Solo DBA for DBA Version 3.0 (Draft 1)

Building on the work of Richard Lee, and his solo variant rules for DBA v2.2, this is an updated version for use with DBA 3.0.

1. Introduction

1.1. Description

Solo DBA provides a method of playing one side of a De Bellis Antiquitatis (DBA) game against a human opponent. The intention is that the automatic (non-human) player plays sensibly, but not too predictably. This terrain system, deployment and tactical engine were developed from "Random Terrain Placement" by John Meunier and "De Bellis Solitarius" by Chad La Mons, taken from the Fanaticus website. This version is intended for DBA version 3.0.

1.2. Terminology

- **NPG:** The Non-Player's General
- **YOU/YOUR:** Refers to you, the human player (i.e. the NPG's opponent)
- **Bad Going Elements:** Psiloi, Auxilia, Warband, Bow

2. Army Composition

Select which armies will be used by the NPG and YOU. Then:

2.1. Choose YOUR Army Options

If YOUR army has options, choose YOUR army's composition before that of the NPG, so that you do not sub-consciously take advantage of your knowledge of the NPG's army composition.

2.2. NPG Army Composition

Work through the army list looking for options, but chose the general last (see below). Wherever there is an option, chose the elements by dicing. Select the option with the highest score (dicing again if more than one option had the highest score). Ignore any result that would cause an odd number of pike to be in the army.

2.2.1. NPG General

If the NPG has options for their general's element, throw a dice for each option, apply relevant modifiers (see below), and then choose the option with the highest final score.

Modifiers

- -2 Will cause there to be an odd number of pike in the NPG army
- -2 Mounted (except elephant) general when YOU have 4 or more bows
- -2 General will be slower than any other element in the NPG's army

- -1 Psiloi general
- -1 Elephant general when YOU have a total of 4 or more psiloi, auxilia, light horse, or any artillery
- +1 Infantry general of a troop type already present in NPG army
- +2 Mounted general of a troop type already present in NPG army

2.3. Invader and Defender

Dice to determine which army is the invader, using the army aggression factors, as per the rules.

3. Terrain Placement

If YOU are the defender, then place terrain as per the normal rules. If the NPG is the defender, then YOU have the choice to **either** select and place terrain, using your discretion to create an optimal set-up for the NPG, **or** use the Optional terrain Rules (see Appendix A) to create a more randomised set-up.

4. Deployment

4.1. Base Edge Selection for NPG Invader

For a NPG invader, select the preferred edge to deploy, firstly, using normal rules as a guide (eg. if a road crosses the battlefield, once of the intersected sides must be used) and then, secondly, common sense to dictate which would be the most advantageous edge for the NPG to deploy from.

4.2. Camp Placement

The NPG camp is placed according to the following rules in descending order of preference:

- Avoid placing near a flank with a waterway, if YOU have littoral terrain
- Position camp behind bad going, if available, and the NPG has 6 or more Bad Going elements
- Position camp as close to the centre as terrain, and the other rules, permit

4.3. Camp Garrison

If the NPG has a camp, occupy it by normally via camp followers, unless you feel that there is an extraordinary reason for it to be occupied by a non-allied troop element.

4.4. Built Up Area Garrison

Armies with infantry may garrison a built up area (BUA), if it is a CITY, and must, if it is a FORT. For a city, roll a D6, apply modifiers, then consult the table:

Built-Up Area - CITY	
Die Roll	Garrison?
Up to 3	No
4 or more	Yes

Modifiers

- +2 Defender has blade
- +1 Defender has spear
- +1 Invader has spear
- +2 Invader has blade, or more than 1 pike
- -1 Invader has no infantry, except psiloi
- -2 Defender has no infantry, except for bows or psiloi
- -3 BUA in Defender's side

Use the following rules in descending order of preference to select a garrison:

1. Pick blade, if their number is not divisible by 3
2. Pick spear, if there is an odd number of spear
3. Pick blade
4. Pick spear
5. Pick pike, if there are an odd number of pike
6. Pick artillery
7. Pick horde
8. Pick auxilia
9. Pick warband

4.5. Tactical Groups

Form tactical groups of up to 4 elements each. If there is more than one mounted element, then there must be at least two tactical groups containing mounted. The tactical groups should be of the same element type, except for the following exceptions:

- Bows are interspersed with spear or blade elements if YOUR army has more than 3 mounted;
- Spears, blades or pikes may be combined within the same group. Pikes should be grouped in even numbers, if possible;
- Elephants may be grouped with up to a total of two other elements: either auxilia and/or psiloi if YOUR army has no more than 2 mounted; or auxilia and/or psiloi and/or knights if YOUR army has 3 or more mounted.
- Excluding elephants, mounted elements may be grouped with other types of mounted elements.

4.6. Littoral Landing

Armies with littoral terrain may perform a littoral landing if there is a waterway. If the NPG army has littoral terrain, throw a dice and apply the modifiers

below. If the total is 6 or more, then the NPG may reserve troops for a littoral landing.

Modifiers

- +3 NPG is invader
- +2 YOUR camp is within 6 BW from the waterway
- +1 There is bad going terrain near the centreline, near the waterway and NPG has auxilia and/or psiloi (or camels if the bad going is dunes)
- +1 YOU have 10 or more elements that move 3BW or less in good going
- +1 NPG has 8 or more elements that can move at least 3BW in good going
- +1 YOUR army does not have littoral terrain
- +1 YOUR army has stronger infantry (ie. more pike, blade and spear) than NPG
- -1 NPG has any elephants, artillery or warwagons
- -1 NPG general moves at 2BW in good going
- -2 Waterway at YOUR rear and NPG is defender
- -2 YOU as defender have deployed troops within 2BW of YOUR camp
- -2 NPG is invader and YOU have reserved 2 or more elements for a littoral landing

4.7. Deployment Position

There are 4 major positions within the deployment zone: 'Centre', is in the centre two quarters of the deployment zone, up to the furthest forward deployment position; 'Reserve', is 2BW behind the centre position; 'Right Flank', is to the right of the deployment zone, up to 6BW from the NPG baseline; 'Left Flank', is on the left of the deployment zone, up to 6BW from the NPG baseline.

Throw 2 dice and add their score, apply the modifiers then refer to the table to decide where to attempt to deploy each group:

Deployment of Groups	
Dice Score	Position
4 or less	Reserve
5-9	Centre
10	Left Flank
11	Right Flank
12 or more	Littoral Landing/Right Flank

Modifiers

- -5 Mounted General, which is the only mounted element
- -5 Infantry facing good going, when YOU have more infantry with high combat factors against infantry in good going, and NPG has more mounted
- -3 Cavalry, camelry, knights, blades or spears and YOU have reserved troops for a littoral landing
- -3 Mounted if both flanks are bad going
- +2 Psiloi or auxilia
- +3 Tactical group contains elephants or knights and is not the general who is the only mounted
- +3 Bad going troops and both flanks are bad going
- +4 Cavalry, camelry, light horse and is not the general who is the only mounted element

Flanks may be joined to the Centre, or may have a gap between them and the Centre if they need to avoid a terrain feature. The Centre should be centred in the middle of the game board unless there are major tactical reasons not to, e.g. inconvenient terrain ahead. The Reserve is placed 2BW behind the frontline.

It is possible to have the whole NPG army in one massive group in one area (e.g. Centre, Reserve, etc.). For example, the die results have three groups of Spartan spear being placed in the Centre. The Spartans are thus placed in a huge phalanx, which might be 2 ranks deep, 6 elements abreast or a line of 12 elements.

Deploy the groups following these rules:

1. Deploy pikes in 2 ranks;
2. A maximum of 3 elements may be used for a littoral landing. Throw a dice for each tactical group and select the one with the highest score to be the littoral landing group, assuming they are eligible;
3. Do not deploy psiloi facing cavalry, camelry or knight with no bad going between them;
4. Do not deploy war wagons or elephants facing within one base width of YOUR artillery;
5. Deploy troops in column if they are in, or will soon enter bad going, or to avoid deploying in bad going. Otherwise deploy in line if space permits.
6. If the NPG army has 6 or more warband elements, throw a D6; on a 1-3 deploy the elements in two ranks; otherwise deploy one warband element on each flank of the group (one rank deep) with the remaining in two ranks;
7. The fastest elements are placed on the outer extremities of a position unless that will mean mounted troops facing or being deployed in bad going. Fastest mounted have priority over slower mounted;
8. Deploy the general as close to the centre of the position as is consistent with the other rules;

9. If non-bad going troops are to be positioned on a flank in bad going, or that has bad going ahead within 6BW, then deploy them on the other flank, if that is clear of bad going;

Some placements may be impractical due to the presence of impassable terrain or terrain an element cannot enter (e.g. the die roll indicates that a group of two Ottoman bombards are to be placed on the left flank where there is a large bad going marsh). Since Artillery can't be placed off-road in bad-going, the 2 Artillery must roll for a new position.).

4.8. NPG Defender Option to Swap Elements

Try to avoid bad match-ups for the NPG and try to create bad-match ups for YOU. If necessary, roll to redeploy these elements. Examples of bad match-ups are below:

- Psiloi faced in good going with cavalry, camelry or knights
- Elephants faced by psiloi, auxilia, light horse or artillery
- Knights faced by elephants, scythed chariots, light horse or bows
- Cavalry, camelry, light horse or warband faced by scythed chariots
- Hordes faced by elephants, knights, scythed chariots or warband
- War wagons faced by elephants or artillery

5. Tactical Engine

5.1. Actions

The tactical engine guides the NPG by prioritising the actions that the NPG may make. The actions are:

- **Aggressive Attack** – Attack YOUR troops by shooting or close to combat whenever there is an equal of the NPG killing YOUR elements, compared to YOUR chance of killing NPG elements;
- **Aggressive Manoeuvre** – Move NPG troops to either threaten YOUR troops or facilitate a future attack;
- **Calculated Attack** – Attack YOUR troops by shooting or close to combat whenever there is a better chance of destroying YOUR elements than NPG elements;
- **Defensive Manoeuvre** – Move NPG troops to defend against a threat from YOUR troops, e.g. to face a flank attack or to move psiloi into bad going to protect against YOUR cavalry;
- **Form Column** – A group forms a column, usually to facilitate passing through bad going or a gap;
- **Form Line** – Columns form line;
- **Occupy Terrain** – Move bad going troops forward to occupy bad going or a hill;
- **Re-arrange Line** – Move NPG troops so that they change position within an existing group, e.g. widen a group by putting elements in rear support into the front line, putting elements from the front rank into rear support or moving rear support;

- **Reckless Attack** – Attack YOUR troops by shooting or close to combat when there is a chance of the NPG killing YOUR troops, but YOU have a higher chance of killing the NPGs;
- **Re-enforce** – Move NPG troops towards an existing group or single element as a re-enforcement;
- **Repair Line** – Move elements that have been recoiled or pushed back, or which have been brought to within one move away from their anticipated position, into position in a line;
- **Safe Attack** – Attack YOUR troops by shooting or close combat whenever there is a chance of destroying YOUR elements, but no chance of destroying NPG elements;
- **Support Attack** – Attack or shoot as part of a coordinated attack on YOUR forces, i.e. attack to make a simultaneous attack on YOUR forces more effective.

5.2. Aggression Level

The aggression level determines whether or not the NPG tends to play aggressively or defensively throughout the game. It is determined once, at the start of the first NPG bound, and affects what the NPG does in all following bounds.

Throw a dice. Apply the modifiers then refer to the table below.

Modifiers

- +2 NPG has 5 or more mounted elements
- +1 NPG has an army with eleven or more elements that move at least 300 paces in good going
- +1 NPG has 6 or more warband and YOUR army has 6 or more spear
- -1 NPG has a total of more than 4 auxilia and psiloi and YOU have a total of more than 4 cavalry, knights, blades and spear;
- -2 NPG has a total of 6 or more spear, blades and pike

Dice Plus Modifiers	Aggression Level
2 or less	Defensive
3 or 4	Neutral
5 or more	Aggressive

5.3. Each NPG Bound

At the start of each NPG bound roll 2 dice. (It is helpful to use different coloured dice.) The first die determines PIPs. The second die determines the NPG tactical stance for this bound (essentially what element(s) shall warrant priority in expending move points).

NPG Tactical Stance	
Die Roll	Battle Plan
0-2	Defensive
3-4	Cautious
5	Aggressive

Modifiers

- -1 Each element the NPG has lost
- -1 NPG has 'defensive' aggression level
- -1 NPG has 1 or 2 PIPs
- +1 Each element YOU have lost
- +1 NPG has 'aggressive' aggression level
- +1 NPG has 5 or 6 PIPs
- +4 NPG has lost 3 elements but YOU have lost 2 or less

Permitted moves for the 3 tactical stances are listed in descending order of priority. Exercise your best tactical judgment, but attempt to find useful higher priority moves for the appropriate tactical stance in preference to the lower priority moves. Consider using the 'Tactical Engine Override' (see below) if the tactical engine seems to be making a very bad choice.

Permitted Moves for the NPG Tactical Stances in Descending Order of Priority		
Aggressive	Cautious	Defensive
Safe Attack Support Attack Calculated Attack Aggressive Attack Aggressive Manoeuvre Reckless Attack Occupy Terrain Defensive Manoeuvre Re-enforce Repair Line Form Line	Defensive Manoeuvre Safe Attack Support Attack Occupy Terrain Repair Line Calculated Attack Aggressive Manoeuvre Form Line Re-enforce Form Column	Repair Line Defensive Manoeuvre Re-enforce Form Line Occupy Terrain Safe Attack Support Attack Calculated Attack Aggressive Manoeuvre

5.4. Tactical Engine Override

Sometimes the tactical engine will either miss opportunities or not allow the NPG to deal with significant risks. There are a maximum of three opportunities

per game to dice whether or not to ignore the choices that the tactical engine makes for that bound. An opportunity is used whether or not the dice allows the tactical engine to be overridden.

Throw a dice. If the score is 3 or more then ignore the tactical engine for this bound. If the score is 1 or 2 then follow the dictates of the tactical engine for this bound.

Appendix A. Optional Terrain Placement Rules

If the NPG is the defender, then select terrain from the NPG's compulsory and optional features:

3.1. Compulsory Terrain

Select one instance of the compulsory terrain feature. Arable terrain has 2 options for compulsory terrain.

3.1.1. Arable Compulsory Terrain

For 'Arable' terrain the compulsory terrain may be either a Built-Up Area (BUA) or 2 Plough. Players who want to use BUAs should throw a D6, apply the modifiers and refer to the table:

Arable Terrain Compulsory Feature	
Dice Roll	Terrain Feature
Up to 3	BUA
4 or more	2 Plough

Modifiers

- +1 Defender has 5 or more mounted elements
- +2 Defender has a total of less than 6 spear and blade
- +2 Attacker has artillery
- +3 Defender has no spear or blade but the attacker does

3.1.2. Multiple Compulsory Terrain Features

Some compulsory terrain types may have 2 pieces. For Woods, Difficult Hills, Gentle Hills, Rocky or Scrub, throw a D6. If the defender has a total of more than 6 bad-going elements, add 1 for Woods, Difficult Hills or Rocky or Scrub. If the score is 4 or more then select a second compulsory terrain feature.

3.2. Optional Terrain

3.2.1. Number of Features

Determine whether there will be 2 or 3 optional terrain features. Throw a D6, apply the modifiers and consult the table:

Number of Optional Features	
Dice Roll	Number
Up to 3	2
4 or more	3

Modifiers

- +2 Defender has more bad going elements than invader
- +1 Invader has more mounted than defender
- -1 Compulsory terrain includes 2 pieces of bad going
- -1 Defender has more mounted than invader
- -1 Invader has more bad going troops than defender

3.2.2. Littoral Options

Littoral terrain may have **either** difficult hills **or** marsh. It may have **either** woods **or** dunes. If the defending army has littoral terrain, decide whether steep hills or marsh are appropriate. If both are appropriate for the defending army, throw 2 dice, 1 for steep hills and the other for marsh. Ignore the terrain type with the lower score when dicing to select terrain. Use a similar procedure to choose between woods and dunes.

3.2.3. Optional Terrain Selection

For each optional terrain feature for the defending army, throw a D6. There must be at least one feature that is bad going, a Waterway or a River. If this has not already been chosen as compulsory terrain, then select the relevant feature with the highest score. Select the other optional terrain features from those with the highest scores. If necessary, re-roll for ties.

3.3. Terrain Placement

Place the terrain feature according to the rules, ensuring rolls of 1-4 or 5 maximise the placement of the terrain piece to be as desirable for the NPG as possible.