

Ancient Campaigns

Based on our experience we have found three games can be easily completed in an evening using the latest DBA 3.0. To add an extra variety to our games we began to experimenting with a quick play campaign system by taking features from a previous campaign rule set we devised for the conquest of Hispania 2nd century BC. With the changes made and tested we did not experience an appreciable increase in time needed to handle both the campaign and the battles. In actuality, time was saved as the following information became known; the attacker/defender role for the next battle was immediately defined, the strength of both armies was set as was the terrain type over which the next battle was to be fought.

Constructing a simple map and counters, players made preparations for the coming campaign by acquiring "activity points", these would be used to move troops, recruit allies, and replace losses. The acquisition of points continued each month until the end of the game. A player lacking sufficient activity points to carry out their campaign encountered obstacles like an actual commander with limited resources and history has shown the victor was better prepared and able to sustain a campaign forcing the enemy to seek peace.

Tools required.

Items needed to play the campaign are a deck of standard playing cards, an A4 size sheet of paper for a map, and counters to represent military commands and activity points and a copy of DBA 3.0 to resolve battles.

The Campaign Map

There are campaign maps posted to the blog "Storm Within the Empire" blog and these examples can be found through the Index link and scrolling to **Quick Play Campaign**. Bordering the map on either side are six boxes on the left labeled January to June to continue on the right side of the map with July to December. Drawing your map should reflect historical boundaries and include significant geographical features such as mountain ranges, rivers, and other significant features such as cities are placed as reference only. Three boxes placed on your map will represent the three battlefields which may take on the name of a nearby city; however the terrain type should follow closely DBA's terrain description of arable, forest, steppe, hilly or littoral. While researching your historical campaign you may produce a map reflecting other terrain types than that which is listed as "home" terrain for either army. This should not pose a problem as it will increase your game experience fighting over different terrain.

Playing the Campaign

There are a number of historical scenarios which set the placement of armies, establish a time frame and victory conditions and these are available at the Fanaticus Forum or my blog "Storm Within the Empire". Players wishing research their own campaign might do well to focus not only on a particular battle, but on the events leading to that engagement. Such an example could have Hannibal confronting the Gauls before crossing the Alps, later moving toward the first clash with Rome and ending with the Battle of Trebbia. Each battle in this example would have different terrain; the Gauls defending hilly terrain, the second and third battles would be fought over arable terrain but Trebbia should have a river feature. Whichever series of engagements you select place these on your map with terrain description.

The campaign year should begin in January giving both sides an opportunity to acquire "activity points" before setting off to force battle with your opponent. The activity points will be used to offset the cost of supply, allow movement to the next battlefield and acquire new troops or source allies.

An example of play

The invading player places his army counter at the first battlefield on your map and expends one point to do this. The defending player must respond and places his army counter accepting battle and expends one point to do so. Battles are resolved following the DBA 3.0 rules with the loser retreating to the next box (battlefield) and the victor pursuing his opponent places his counter outside the box now occupied by his opponent. The counter labeled "Month" is advanced to the next month and each player on their turn gathers points, replace losses or recruit allies (see point expenditure). Winter ceases the campaign season or if one side has lost three battles or a player can no longer sustain the campaign due to insufficient points.

Game Sequence

The invader starts first and follows the sequence listed below.

1. Acquire points using the card system.
2. Move an army counter to frontier or next enemy held box.
3. Replace army losses from battle, acquire allies or make other expenditures.
4. Resolve battle on the game board.
5. Record losses incurred through battle.
6. Loser retreats to next unoccupied box to his rear.

The defender moves through the same steps to complete the turn. The campaign moves to the next month.

The card system

To build their war chest, both players are dealt four cards from a standard 52 card set. The invader selects a suite with a high score total and makes a bid, the defender must counter with cards of the same suite. Scoring twice as many will give the winner a "point". All cards are then discarded and the process is repeated for the defender on his turn. It may be possible that during a month both players successfully win one or one player may win twice or neither player wins a point in that particular month. A player's score during a bid is the accumulated value of number cards (2 to 10 points), face cards (each are 10 points) and an ace (11 points).

Point expenditure

By expending on "point" for each case a player can do the following.

- Move an army to engage an enemy.
- Replace losses by three elements (must be taken from those lost in previous battle).
- Recruit allied contingent (as per rules).

Players will experience periods when movement is not possible as they lack the points to do so; this can mean needed reinforcements do not arrive or the lack of supplies keeps the army inert. As both sides begin their campaign at full strength (12 elements) a subsequent battle most likely will be fought with less troops and this can reflect a pursuit outdistancing support units or reluctance of reinforcements to march. Players may find it prudent to suspend battle and build their "point" strength. This worked well in a test campaign for Eutropius when he engaged the Huns in a final battle at 2:1 odds.

Determining the campaign victor

Whether basing your campaign on historical events or a hypothetical conflict you will have objectives set prior to starting; the campaign season reaches winter, three battles are won, or can no longer continue a campaign due to a lack of points.