

DAGC Reconsidered

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On May 24, 1944, General Busch, commander of Army Group Center, called his army commanders together and told them that he agreed completely with Hitler's idea of the rigid defense. Not one centimeter of ground was to be surrendered to the enemy that summer, all units were to hold fast. The immediate reaction of the army commanders appears not to have been recorded, but it must have been something close to the German equivalent of "Far out!"

Indeed, when playing DAGe's full-historic scenario (15.1) it seems that the German position is entirely hopeless. Not only is that player committed to defending a front of completely impractical length, but on the first turn the major portion of his army is rendered immobile. The German is in a very, very bad spot, but not so bad as to make the scenario not worth playing. Consider the following proposed German set up which we feel lends at least some chance of success to that player: (*Italic hex numbers indicate that unit is a part of the initial mobile reserve.*)

2-5's: 1833, 1831, 2030, 2229, 2529, 2729, 2929, 3129, 3329, 3629, 3828, 3927, 4025, 4224, 4423(2), 4421(2), 4420(2), 4519, 3316, 4810(2), 4709(2), 4606, 4506(2), 4307, 4205(2), 4104(2), 4001(2)

1-5's: 2527, 4517, 4409, 3803

1-4's: 1616, 4121, 2310, 2901, 4615, 4611, 4606(2), 4717, 4915, 4912.

4-9's: 3521, 4613, 4005.

5-8's: 4519, 4319, 4108.

The above set up is designed to meet major Soviet thrusts coming somewhere between the Bobruisk area and the north edge of the map. It probably is not wise for the Soviet player to attack through the Pripet Marshes; he doesn't get points for taking ground, just killing German units, and he doesn't have enough mechanized stuff to pull off anything grandiose like a Pinsk to Polotsk pincer. The only pockets he's interested in forming are *relatively* small ones which he can immediately destroy.

The German defense strategy the set up envisages is composed of three phases. The first phase consists of only turn one. Then the German has to maneuver his mobile reserve so as to prevent further rapid expansion of Soviet breakthroughs before the rest of the Army Group is free to move. Don't try any sort of counter-attacking, no matter how tempting some situation may look; if you do, on turn two you may find your attacking units in turn being surrounded and destroyed. The German simply does not have the muscle to react violently on turn one.

The second phase of the defense will come between turns two and four inclusive. The German object here is to get his freed forces west of the Berizina River intact. A lot will depend on the turn one success (or lack of it) of your reserves blocking action, but there is one rule to be followed no matter what: *If it can move west, move it west.*

Phase three will, if the German has been fairly successful thus far, probably seem like an anticlimax to the players. It consists mainly of a continued German

withdrawal west from the Berezina. At this point you will no doubt already know who has "won" the game.

A word on counterattacks: At times situations might arise where some Soviet unit will have been carelessly left out on a limb. It may look like an easy kill, but be extremely careful. If you use infantry in the attack it has to stay out there, and probably get pounced on next Soviet turn. On the other hand, if you make an armored assault, you can use the second Movement Phase to run away again, but with the odds chart being what it is, you take a terrible chance of an exchange.

Here is a suggested victory condition we feel should be added to the game (all scenarios):

"At the end of Game-Turn ten, if the Soviet Player has managed to establish an unbroken line of hexes stretching from the east edge of the map to the Baltic Sea (the body of water between Memel and Konigsberg) which is covered with his units or their zones of control, he wins a decisive victory." [He just isolated Army Group North.]

-- Tyrone Bomba