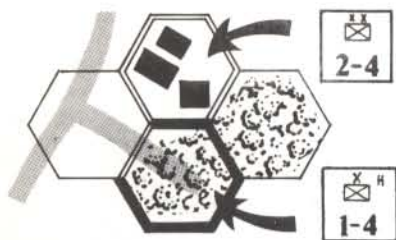


Napoleon at Waterloo

M. BOOTH

I was particularly interested in Rob Gibson's article on improving the basic 'Napoleon at Waterloo'. After playing this game over the last four years, at least once a week, I still find it gives an enjoyable, simple game suitable for fighting solo. While I agree with Mr Gibson's comments concerning Hougomont and La Haye Sainte, I am afraid I do not understand the reasoning behind his treatment of the La Haye Sainte position. In the basic rules, the 3-3 artillery unit is doubled to a defence value of 6. The most the French player can attack with (without accepting poor odds further along the line) is 12 (5-3 gd. art., 3-3 11 corps. art., 4-4 5th Division). This gives odds of 2:1. The French player therefore has four chances in six of taking the position (an *exchange* result would enable the British player to move another unit in during his movement). Mr Gibson's suggestion of putting the 1-4 unit in La Haye Sainte and tripling its value gives the French player odds of 4:1, 2 chances of destroying the unit, 2 of pushing it out and 2 of exchange. I would suggest leaving the 3-3 unit in place but still tripling it in defensive value. This only gives the French player a 50:50 chance of taking the position.

As for the Hougomont position, I give below my own ideas on the subject:



Intrinsic strength:

woods — unit defence value x 3

Hougomont — unit defence value x 3.

Units in Hougomont affected by "defender eliminated" result only. "Exchange" result — attacker loses **at least** printed value of defending unit, which is unaffected.

Zones of control: (See diagram)



Zones of control effect movement as normal *but* combat is voluntary.



Zones of control completely non-effective, combat not possible.

The above measures strengthen, I think, the Hougomont position. In particular, the actual buildings of Hougomont become



a potential 'trap' for the French player (representing Jerome's obsession with its capture and Reille's apparent inability to override him), as he must ensure he commits enough forces to obtain a DE result. If he does not do this, then valuable units are tied down, as actually happened. (It might possibly be an idea to say that 1 is added to French demoralisation for every move that Hougomont remains in British hands).

I would like to suggest a few ideas for Mr Gibson's consideration.

- (1) Grouchy's interception of some/all of the Prussian force, under a chance rule.
- (2) What about Grouchy marching to the sound of guns? As I favour completely the French in this period I wouldn't mind seeing a few French units appearing out of the East as well as/instead of the Prussian rabble!
- (3) In the actual Battle, the first Prussians on the field struck at Placenoit. The Prussians' ability to appear anywhere on the Eastern edge of the game map smacks rather of telepathy between Wellington and Blucher! To my mind, at least, the Prussian forces should move independent of the wishes of the Allied player for the first move or so of their involvement in the game.

I hope that my ideas have proved constructive to those who read them. Obviously, 'Napoleon at Waterloo' could be "tarted up" no end by adding complication upon complication. This, I think, would detract greatly from its attraction as a good, simple game. And, anyway, with "Wellington's Victory", why bother?

BETTER BATTLES IN KINGMAKER

BY Dr. P.H.S. HATTON

I think Kingmaker (see Phoenix 5 for strategic article on) is a wonderful game of diplomacy but not at all interesting as a wargame. So I was intrigued to notice that the sizes of retinues existing in the game are catered for in Ed Smith's miniature rules "Wars of the Roses" (Skytrex) — p.3 especially. Forces are divided up into Men-at-Arms (dismountable), Longbowmen and Billmen; also some household knights and cannon if one wants them, as well as the mercenaries. I am certainly not advocating miniatures but with these statistics and rules, a Kingmaker battle could be fought out on (say) the "Yeoman" map board with whatever counters are to hand.

One objection strongly urged is that the time taken over such a 'battle' would be intolerable to the non-combatant players. In practise, however, I suspect that the presence of royal pieces on the battlefield or elsewhere thinly guarded would generate frantic activity by all players while battle raged. I would suggest that forces like '200 troops within 2 squares of London' be composed half of feudal levies and half of regular troops in due proportion. If garrisons stay put as in the regular game, their composition is immaterial. However, more tentatively, I favour some more innovations: that half a garrison can accompany the town's owner; that bishops travel with a train of 30 and archbishops with a train of 50 drawn from the town of their diocese. that royal pieces have a bodyguard, say 50 for the senior surviving of a house, 30 for a cadet. If one does any of these things, one needs to know the composition of a garrison — my suggestion would be that a third be feudal levies (immovable), two-thirds regulars. Obviously, plague does not affect garrisons in the original game, I suggest it removes half of those present. How much of a problem their replacement is depends on how long the game lasts (how many contingency cards are played).

To get really radical, I favour simultaneous movement, one card per turn (not one per player), that their instructions be not magic carpet movement but rather a binding commitment to move in that direction until instruction fulfilled. Lastly, I can't get used to these nobles rising from the dead. I would prefer them to stay dead. I know the son succeeded to the title but on that logic all four younger generation royalty should be fathering away like mad. Now that is a variation I won't pursue!

I am not trying to lay down 'Alternative Scenarios for Kingmaker' rather to start discussion on how the battle element might be improved in order to make it a War of the Roses.