



DRIVE TO STALINGRAD, TURN LEFT

Variant Rules for the DRIVE ON STALINGRAD[®] *Game*

by Dick Rustin

With the reprinting of the SPI™ *DRIVE ON STALINGRAD™* Game by TSR, Inc., gamers have an opportunity to recreate the German summer offensive of 1942 with this 1977 SPI™ Game line classic. The game is unchanged from its initial release. This variant article offers additional rules for added simulation enjoyment and flexibility to try out alternate strategies. Any questions or conflicts between these variants and the rules are resolved by using the official game rules.

THOSE WHO'VE PLAYED THE GAME BEFORE will remember the restrictions caused by the game's faithfulness to historicity. The Axis player is channeled along his "road to ruin" (also the game's subtitle) by Section 16 of the game rules, which recreates Hitler's fixation to capture Stalingrad at the expense of everything else. Furthermore, the Soviet player is privy to all gyrations of Axis strategy and can plan accordingly. Few uncertainties and surprises of the real campaign are present.

Several operational analyses of the game have already been published; these generally focus on how the Axis player might win within the rigidity of the Hitler Directive rules of Section 16. But in the final analysis, the Axis player is constrained to repeat the strategic mistakes of the Summer of '42, winding up with either his left arm mauled as he reaches for Stalingrad or with his right hand cut off as he tries to dip into the Caucasus Mountains.

Still, the game is a truthful recreation of what happened. Gamers should play it at least once in its standard form to get the flavor of the campaign and the restrictions under which both sides had to operate. If the dichotomy between high command and field commanders is upsetting, the following variant to create a unity of purpose between the two elements is offered.

For the purposes of this article's rules variants, the following rules are not used:

[5.38] All Axis units are free to attack on game turn 1.

[15.2] **German Withdrawals:** All Axis units are available throughout the game.

[15.4] **Added Reinforcements:** Soviet reserves handled according to the **Soviet Strategy** section.

[16.0-16.6] **Hitler Directives:** The Axis player chooses his own strategy, based on the suggestions in this article.

[17.0] **Continuous Front.**

[18.2] **Soviet Retreat Restrictions:** This rule is a simulation of Soviet fears of a German threat to Moscow from the south. In this variant, the Soviet player can choose his own measures to combat that option.

[19.12-19.15] All victory points pertaining to rules not used in this variant.

Illustration by Jeff Easley

The following rules are modified for variant purposes:

[14.0] Air Units: See the **Aerial Reconnaissance** section.

[15.1] Axis Reinforcements: These appear according to the Reinforcement Track. Players should ignore reinforcements due on game turns 20 and 21, as these units have been previously withdrawn from the map.

The Axis player may speed up reinforcement arrivals, incurring a victory point penalty in the process. For each game turn that a unit enters before its regularly scheduled entry, the Axis player immediately deducts 1 point from the victory point index. **EXAMPLE:** If the entry of the 13th Panzer Division (3 points) is advanced to game turn 7 from 12, the Axis player loses 15 victory points.

[15.3] Soviet reinforcements, as in the **Soviet Strategy** section.

[16.7] German Eleventh Army units are automatically available on game turn 6. Their entry cannot be advanced.

[16.8] Additional German truck units are also available, one per even-numbered turn, beginning with game turn 6. Their entry also cannot be advanced.

[19.0] How to Win (See this section for new conditions).

German Strategic Options

AT THE GAME'S BEGINNING, THE AXIS player chooses one plan, from strategies A to D listed here. Each option has a different set of victory conditions. The Axis player secretly writes down the letter of the option he selects on a slip of paper and places it face down in view of both players. On the reverse of the slip he writes "GT1," signifying this as his original strategy.

The Axis player can change strategy at the beginning of any friendly player turn by placing another slip, with a secretly written strategy option, atop the first slip of paper. The second and subsequent slips should bear the number of the game turn of the new change on their face-up side.

To confuse his opponent, the Axis player can place dummy slips on the pile. In such cases, the previously selected strategy remains in force. The Axis player can enter any number of new strategy options or dummy slips during the game, one per turn. Each time the Axis player actually changes strategy, his level of victory (rule 19.0) is reduced by one. Thus, with one strategy option change, he would require a 4:1 victory point ratio for a decisive victory; 2:1 would represent a Soviet marginal victory. Dummy slips have no effect on victory levels.

The following are the Axis player's strategy options:



A. Destruction of Enemy Forces:

This option represents a realization that the war will last beyond 1942. Accordingly, it is necessary to inflict maximum casualties on the Red Army. No specific geographical objectives are involved, though the Axis player can try to deceive his opponent into believing that there are such objectives and maneuver him into decisive battles of annihilation. Victory points are computed thus: for cities, as per rule 19.11; for enemy units eliminated (VPs added to the Axis total); and for Axis units eliminated (VPs deducted). Truck units and on-map units with one step lost do not have any VP value.

Soviet eliminated-unit values: For each Soviet HQ, the Axis player receives VPs equal to that unit's leadership value; for each tank/mechanized corps, 3 VPs; for each Guards/NKVD division, 2 VPs; for each air unit, 2 VPs; and for each rifle/cavalry division, 1 VP.

Axis eliminated-unit values: For each German panzer or panzer grenadier regiment lost, 2 VPs; for all units of a panzer or panzer grenadier division eliminated, each regiment's VP point losses are doubled, to -4 each; for each air unit lost, -2 VPs; for each 2 steps of a German infantry or mountain division lost, -2 VPs; for each jaeger division lost, -2 VPs; for each allied Axis (Italian, Hungarian, or Rumanian) unit lost, -1 VP; and for each allied Axis HQ unit lost, -2 VPs. For the Axis player to lose VPs, both steps of the unit have to be eliminated first. Thus a 9-9 division, if totally eliminated, represents a 4-VP loss: 2 VPs are lost when the 9-9/4-9 counter is eliminated, and 2 more VPs are lost when the 2-9/1-9 counter is eliminated.

Victory points for eliminated units are tabulated at the end of each player turn. Units eliminated during a player turn should be segregated until tabulated. The net difference in points for units lost is computed and then applied to the Axis total on the VP index. Soviet markers on the index are

never adjusted when computing VPs for eliminated units. **EXAMPLE:** Soviet units worth 20 points are eliminated, while the Axis player loses 6 VPs; 14 victory points are added to the Axis total on the index.

B. Southern Hook vs. Moscow:

This is the strategic option the Soviets feared the most. The Kursk-Belgorod area is the jump-off point for the southern prong of a major offensive against the Soviet capital. The victory point computation is for all such units eliminated (as per strategy option A), and for cities (as per game rule 19.11).

The Axis player also receives victory points for Axis units exited off certain hexes of the northern map edge. **IMPORTANT:** These points are tabulated at the end of the game or at the time the Axis player reveals his strategy. He receives these points only if his current plan is strategy option B. To compute victory points under this option, a unit's value is multiplied by the value of the exit area in which the hex is located. There are 3 such areas; one with a point multiple of 2, the other two with a point multiple of 1 each.

Unit Values: One victory point is awarded for each strength step of an Axis unit exited off the map; for example, the VP value to the Axis player of a 4-9 infantry division is 3, while that of a 2-12 panzer grenadier regiment is 2.

Hex Values: Area 1, hexes 0140-0142 between the Don and Voronezh Rivers, multiply by 1; Area 2, hexes 0132-0139, between the Voronezh River and Tambov inclusive, multiply by 2; and Area 3, hexes 0127-0131, between Tambov, exclusive, and Kirsanov, inclusive, multiply by 1. **EXAMPLE:** If a German 1-12 panzer grenadier regiment exits at hex 0138, the Axis player gains 2 VPs (1*2).

Axis units exited from those hexes also reduce the amount of reserves the Soviet player may commit to the northern map (see **Soviet Strategy** section). **IMPORTANT:** This rule applies even if strategy option B is not chosen. If the Soviet player runs out of reserves, the Axis player receives double the amount of VPs for units exited after no Soviet reserves are available. The Soviet player must disclose when he has run out of northern-map reserves.

Axis units exited should be placed just above their exit hexes until VPs are tabulated. For the Axis player to obtain full victory points for units exited from a particular area, at least one hex in that area must be in supply at the time the victory points are calculated. Otherwise, VPs earned are halved, rounding down fractions. Units exited off the map cannot return.

C. Offensive Against Caucasus:

The victory point computations for this op-

tion are: for units eliminated, as per strategy option A; for cities held on the northern map; for cities held on the southern map west of the Start Line, as per rule 19.11; and for cities held on the southern map east of the Start Line, as per 19.11 during the game.

However, the latter cities held have double victory point value for the owning player at the end of the game or at the time the Axis player reveals that his strategic option was C. **EXAMPLE:** For capturing Krasnodar, the Axis player receives and the Soviet player loses 5 victory points during the game. Also, if the Soviet player retains Astrakhan throughout the game, he receives 15 more victory points.

D. Severing the Volga Lifeline:

The victory point computations for this option are: for units eliminated, as per strategic option A; for cities held, as per rule 19.11; for hexes held on the west Volga river bank; and for hexes held on the east Volga river bank.

The Axis player earns 5 victory points for each hex on the west Volga bank occupied by an Axis unit in supply (regular supply or air supply). The victory points are awarded at the end of the game or when the Axis player declares his strategy to be option D. The victory points earned in this option are in addition to any earned for capturing cities on the Volga. **EXAMPLE:** Hex 2713N (Kamyshin) is worth 10 victory points under this rule. For hexes held on the east bank of the Volga, the Axis player earns 10 victory points per hex, subject to the same conditions as the west Volga river bank hexes.

Soviet Strategy

AT THE GAME'S BEGINNING, THE SOVIET player can, within certain limits, allot reserves to the north or south map. Once allotted to a map, a Soviet reserve unit must initially be committed on that map. Before the first turn, the Soviet player sorts his reserves as per rule 15.3. He has 128 Untried rifle and 18 Untried cavalry divisions, 23 Guards/NKVD rifle and Guards cavalry divisions, and 19 mechanized and tank corps (188 ground combat units in all), plus 18 HQ and 2 air units. The air units are placed on the Reinforcement Track and appear normally on schedule.

The Soviet player then secretly divides his other forces into north- and south-map reserves, recording this on a sheet of paper. At least half the units allotted to a map must be U-8s. Neither fewer than 50 ground combat units and 5 HQs nor more than 75 ground combat units and 7 HQs can be allotted to the south map. That minimum represents units available locally; additional units represent those drawn from the stra-

tegic reserve and earmarked for the south map as reserves.

The Soviet player may commit as reinforcements one reserve army per turn without penalty. Additional reserve armies may be committed on the same turn with a victory point penalty incurred. A reserve army consists of up to 12 ground combat units, at least half of which must be U-8 rifle divisions, plus an HQ. No army can be committed without an HQ; an army is committed when it is brought onto the map normally, as per rule 15.3, or is placed in *hidden reserve*. Units in hidden reserve are not initially placed on the map; their location is noted on the Hidden Reserve Form provided with this article.

Armies are committed during the friendly initial movement phase. The Soviet player decides, at the time of commitment, what the combat unit composition of an army will be, within the limits stated above. Regardless of whether an army is committed normally or placed in hidden reserve, its combat units are not actually selected until such time as they are physically placed on the map. They are then chosen at random from the reserve pool for their respective map. The Soviet player can freely choose which HQ he will assign to an army. Once physically placed on the map, a reserve unit can operate normally and draw supply from any HQ.

Headquarters units evacuated as per rule 11.5 can also be assigned to reserve armies. Any number of armies may be committed per turn, as long as there are HQ units available. The Soviet player should plan carefully in advance how he will allocate his reserves. He must announce when more than one army is being committed per turn. Victory points are immediately deducted from the Soviet total on the index, as listed below, for each unit in the additional armies. The choice of which army is committed first is made by the Soviet player, who does not need to inform the Axis player of the composition of any hidden reserves committed at a penalty; he need only compute the penalty and the victory points. All data concerning hidden reserves are ultimately verifiable by the Axis player. Soviet victory point penalties are assessed as follows: **HQ** = -VPs equal to the unit's leadership value; **Tank/Mech Corps** = -3 VPs each; **Guards/NKVD** = -2 VPs each; and **Untried Units** = -1 VP each.

EXAMPLE: The Soviet player decides he will reinforce the north map by committing two reserve armies directly on the map. For his initial army he selects, from those units earmarked for the north map at the beginning of the game, the 56th Army HQ (leadership value 3) and 12 combat units (the maximum allowable): 6 U-8s,

3 Guards divisions, and 3 tank corps, all of which are picked randomly. For the second army selected, the Soviet player selects the 28th Army HQ (leadership value 2), 7 U-8s, and 2 Guards divisions, for a penalty of 13 VPs. Note that the Soviet player took the cheaper penalty by committing the 28th Army second; the penalty for committing the 56th Army second would have been 24 VPs. The Soviet player could not have assigned any of 28th Army's Guards units to 56th Army as at least half of the latter's units would be Untried.

Soviet north map reserves can be reduced by Axis units exited off the north map edge. These reduced reserves represent units drawn off to counter a thrust toward Moscow. North reserves are *permanently* reduced at the beginning of the Soviet player's turn immediately following the player turn of the Axis unit's exit, even if the Axis player eventually doesn't earn victory points because of supply or strategy considerations when tallying points.

Lost reserves are expressed in terms of *reserve points*. Each reserve unit has a reserve point value. The Soviet player loses reserve points at the rate of *one half* the total of *potential* Axis VPs for units exited in the Axis turn; fractions are rounded down.

Reserve Point Values: **Untried cavalry division** = 1/2 Reserve Point (RP); **untried infantry division** = 1 RP; **Guards/NKVD division** = 2 RPs; **mech/tank corps** = 3 RPs. For each 10 RPs lost cumulatively over various game turns, one HQ unit must be removed from the north-map reserves.

The Soviet player decides how he will apportion the losses. Units are removed at random from *uncommitted* or *hidden* north-map reserves and are placed just above the north-map edge. If taken from a hidden reserve army, a note must be made on the Hidden Reserve Form for that army.

EXAMPLE: During his player turn, the Axis player exits from the north map units with a potential total of 27 VPs. At the start of his turn, the Soviet player must remove units equal to 13 RPs from his north-map reserves. He chooses at random 10 U-8s, 2 U-6s, and 1 Guards rifle division, plus 1 HQ, from his uncommitted reserves. He could have taken some or all units from armies previously committed as a hidden reserve. If the Soviet player runs out of reserves to remove, the Axis player can receive a VP bonus.

Hidden Reserves

SOVIET RESERVE ARMIES CAN BE PLACED in hidden reserve when committed. Any number can be so placed during a turn. The location, composition, subsequent hidden

The southern hook against Moscow: the strategic option the Soviets feared the most. The Kursk-Belgorod area is the jump-off point.

movement, and any victory point penalties are recorded on the Hidden Reserve Form for that army.

An army is placed in hidden reserve at the beginning of a friendly initial movement phase. It must be assigned to a Soviet-controlled city hex at least 10 hexes from the nearest Allied unit. While hidden, the army's HQ is deemed to occupy the city hex and its ground combat units, the city and adjacent hexes. No hidden reserve army can ever move or be placed within five hexes of another.

A hidden reserve army cannot move in the phase in which it is committed. Except as noted below, a hidden reserve army can secretly move in any subsequent friendly phase (conceivably twice per turn). When an army changes location, all its units are deemed to move together.

An army can secretly move up to 10 hexes per friendly phase and still remain hidden, provided its new headquarters hex (where the Army HQ is located) is at least 10 hexes from an Axis unit. The new headquarters hex need not be a city hex. If for any reason an army begins a friendly movement phase less than 10 hexes from an Axis unit, it must either move or its units are physically placed on the map. An army can secretly move from one mapsheet to the other; however, hidden units moved off the playing area for any reason can never return again.

At the beginning of any friendly movement phase, the Soviet player can voluntarily place hidden units on the map. They can move and engage in combat and overrun normally. All units of a hidden reserve army must be placed on the map together. They can be placed anywhere within the communications radius (the leadership rating, per rule 11.1) of the army HQ. No unit can combine hidden and normal movement in the same phase. Once placed on the map, an army can never return to hidden status. However, mechanized units can withdraw into hidden reserve, as specified below. Switching of units among hidden reserve armies is prohibited.

If an Axis unit moves within the communication radius (the leadership rating, in hexes) of a hidden reserve army, the Soviet player must immediately announce this. He then has two options: he can place immediately all the army's units on the map, as specified above (a unit can be placed in an

enemy ZOC); or, he can secretly move the army up to 10 hexes in an easterly direction. The Soviet player can do this only once per Axis movement phase. If the same or another Axis unit moves again within the HQ's radius, the Soviet player must place the army on the map. Any army moved secretly up to 10 hexes in an easterly direction once per Axis movement phase cannot move or be placed on the map during the next friendly *initial* movement phase.

Hidden Mechanized Reserves: Under certain circumstances, either player can hide the location of mechanized units *only*, not any other units. The Axis player can do so at the start of the game. Both players can withdraw on-map units into hidden reserve during the game. A unit can be withdrawn any number of times during the game.

At the start of play, the Axis player can withhold as many mechanized units as he wishes from the map. He notes the location of each stack on a separate Hidden Reserve Form. These mechanized unit stacks must be at least 10 hexes from the nearest Soviet unit. In cases where the Start Line negates this condition, the Axis player can place the mechanized units off the western edge of the map, and these units are deemed to be situated on any rail line leading westward off the map.

Either player can withdraw any number of mechanized units into hidden reserve at the start of any friendly movement phase, provided the unit begins the phase in regular (not air) supply and is at least 5 hexes from the nearest enemy unit. Such units can secretly move in that phase up to 10 hexes in an easterly (for Soviet units) or westerly (for Axis units) direction. No unit can combine regular and secret movement during the same phase. A unit can remain hidden and continue to move secretly as long as it ends a friendly movement phase at least 10 hexes from an enemy unit. It can move once per friendly movement phase.

If an enemy unit comes within 5 hexes of a hidden mechanized reserve during an enemy movement phase, the friendly player can move the hidden unit *once* 10 hexes to the east (for Soviets) or west (for Axis). It cannot then move or be placed on the map during the ensuing friendly *initial* movement phase. If so approached twice in an enemy phase, the unit must be placed on

the map in question.

Subject to the above, hidden mechanized reserves can be placed on the map at the beginning of any friendly movement phase, and can operate normally. Axis units entering from off-map are placed on the west map edge.

Aerial Reconnaissance

EACH PLAYER RECEIVES A CERTAIN NUMBER of aerial reconnaissance (recon) points (ARP) according to the number of friendly air units on the map. Recon points are expended in efforts to detect hidden enemy reserves. They are assets *in addition* to air points received as per rule 14.0.

The Axis player receives 2 ARP per air unit (maximum 4 points); the Soviet player receives 1 per air unit (maximum 5 points). The range of an Axis aerial recon point is 40 hexes from an air unit; the Soviet range is 24 hexes.

Aerial recon points are expended by a player at the beginning of his initial movement phase, before any units have been moved. The air unit expending the point need not be in supply. Expending an ARP does not affect an air unit's ability to perform other operations later that turn; the air unit can later move or expend air points.

An aerial recon point is expended against a single hex, 1 point at a time. The same hex can be the target of more than 1 aerial recon point in the same phase, so long as the points are spent individually. The search represented by the point expenditure affects a 7-hex "rosette": the designated hex and its 6 adjacent hexes. Off-map hexes cannot be searched.

Procedure: The phasing player designates the rosette to be searched, rolls a die, applies any modifiers, and receives the result from the table below.

Die Roll: 1 - The nonphasing player discloses the precise number, type, and size of any hidden units in the rosette. SS, Guards, or NKVD designations or allied Axis nationalities need not be revealed. **EXAMPLE:** A typical disclosure might be: 1 panzer and 4 panzer grenadier regiments; 3 rifle divisions; 2 mechanized and 1 tank corps.

2 - The nonphasing player discloses only the types of any hidden units in the rosette (cavalry, mechanized, tank, and other types).

3 - The nonphasing player discloses only that there are hidden units in the rosette area.

4+ - No disclosure is made.

Modifiers: +1 to die roll from turn 20 onward, reflecting poor visibility during the winter months. There is a +2 die roll modi-

fier if the nonphasing player elects to expend an air point for combat air patrol (CAP) over the rosette. Only 1 air point can be expended at a time. The air point must be expended by a nonphasing air unit that is

within *normal* range (20 for Axis units, 12 for Soviet) of any hex in the rosette. Such modifiers are cumulative.

How to Win

WHEN THE VICTORY POINT RATIO REACHES 3:1 in the Axis player's favor, the game is halted and the Axis player's current strategy, along with any changes, is revealed. If the Axis player has not changed any strategies, the game ends. If he has, the game continues until turn 25 or until he achieves a decisive victory (4:1 if he changed strategy options once, 5:1 if twice, and so on cumulative), whichever comes first. The Axis player can continue to change strategy options, but he continues to pay the victory-level penalty.

When following strategy options B, C, or D, which call for certain victory points to be calculated on a non-running basis, the Axis player can call for the stoppage of play at any time he thinks he has achieved a decisive victory. He reveals his strategy option, along with any changes, and the appropriate VPs are added to the victory point index. If these produce a decisive Axis victory, the game ends. If not, play continues as above.

Optional Record Forms

The Hidden Reserve Form: In the upper left-hand corner of the form, enter the designation of the Soviet HQ if the form is to be used for a hidden reserve army, or for the unit(s) if used for one or several mechanized units in a stack. A blank box separated by a slash is used to record the game turn and phase/hex of initial placement and subsequent hidden movement; for example, 5I/3207N, 5M/3211N.

If the form is for a reserve army, enter its composition, by number and by type of units, at the left. Include the leadership value of the HQ. If the army is not the first to be committed that turn, enter the victory point penalties in the right-hand section, applying the multiples for each unit type in play to the proper entry.

During play, place the form face down in view of both players, in separate piles for Axis and Soviet units. On the back of each form, list the game turn on which the army or unit(s) were initially placed in hidden status. This serves as a check for any VP penalties and for verification of hidden movement, should any dispute arise.

Players can retrieve their forms to record secret movement, but then must replace them in the pile. When all units on a form are placed on the map, the form can be shown to the opposing player. A player can also prepare dummy forms to mislead his opponent.

Soviet Reserves Record: The Soviet Reserves Record is used to keep track of how many reserve units of each type the Soviet player has committed on each game map, of how many units have been lost because of Axis units exited off the northern map, and of how many reserve units the Soviet player has remaining for each map.

At the start of the game, the Soviet player records in his left-hand column the number and type of reserve units he has allotted to each map. Whenever he commits a reserve army (either directly on a map or as a hidden reserve army), or is forced to divert reserves destined for the northern map, he deducts the applicable number of units from the current total of units remaining at his disposal. He does this by entering the number of such units next to the minus (-) sign in the column under the number of the game turn on which the deduction is made. He then enters the new total under the "Left" section of the column. When he carries forward totals to another record sheet, he enters the current total in the left-hand column and continues as before.

Comments from readers on these variant rules to the DRIVE ON STALINGRAD® Game are welcomed.

HIDDEN RESERVE FORM		
Army or Unit(s)	/	/
	/	/
If Soviet Reserve Army:		
Composition	VP Penalty	
HQ	_____	x1 _____
U-8	_____	x1 _____
U-6	_____	x1 _____
Gds/NKVD	_____	x2 _____
Mech/Tank	_____	x3 _____
Total	_____	VP Lost _____
<small>(Maximum of 12)</small>		

SOVIET RESERVES RECORD								
North Map*								
At Start/ Carried Forward	GT		GT		GT		GT	
	Left							
HQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armor/Mech	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U-8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U-6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total								
South Map**								
At Start/ Carried Forward	GT		GT		GT		GT	
	Left							
HQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armor/Mech	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U-8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U-6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total								

Notes:

* At least half the reserve units allotted to each map at start must be U-8 rifle divisions. At least half of any reserve army committed must consist of U-8 units.

** Limits on units allotted to the South Map at start: between 50 and 75 ground combat units and 5 and 7 army HQs.