

SOLO AGE OF HANNIBAL

DESIGNER NOTES

This supplemental rulebook for AGE OF HANNIBAL is aimed at the dedicated “Lonely Wargamer,” inspired by the famous dictum of Donald Featherstone,* the pioneer of solo wargaming. It is meant for players who live too far away to meet for a game, have no mates (poor souls!), or simply want to win every game (but also lose every game ... so not a great deal). The rules are primarily intended for set-piece-battles.

The game phases like “Army Recruitment” and “Commander Appointment” proceed as usual, except that the player recruits both armies. The “Battlefield Creation” and the “Army Deployment”, however, deviate from the standard rules.

BATTLEFIELD SETUP

With a standard size of 6'x4', the table is divided into 24 squares as usual. A terrain card is placed face down on **each** of these squares, one by one. Decide beforehand whether the battle will be fought in dense, average, or open terrain. Depending on the terrain type, a deck of 24 cards is used, consisting of:

DENSE: 10 “Clear” terrain cards, 14 other terrain cards

AVERAGE: 14 “Clear” terrain cards, 10 other terrain cards

OPEN: 18 “Clear” terrain cards, 6 other terrain cards

The specific terrain cards can be chosen randomly or based on the topographic zone where the battle takes place (e.g., forested terrain in Gaul or Germania). The deck should be well shuffled before distribution. Stratagem cards are not used in SOLO AGE OF HANNIBAL, as it is hard to trick oneself; other random mechanisms serve this purpose!

After revealing the cards, the terrain is placed as usual. If illogical or confusing placements occur, a maximum of 4 terrain pieces in dense terrain, 3 in average terrain, and 2 in open terrain may be moved to another free square.

TACTICAL CARDS

Army deployment is not entirely free, as in the standard rules, but follows certain tactical principles. Imagine the generals of both sides planning their tactics the night before the battle, after reading the Iliad—and **every** general studies the Iliad the night before the battle, don't you?—and then instructing their commanders accordingly.

For this purpose, there are 16 tactical cards depicted on the following pages for printing or copying. These cards are shuffled and then drawn face down for each army, **not** to be revealed yet. The number of cards drawn per army depends on the deployment formation, which can be chosen according to the army sizes (but does not have to be). Instead of freely choosing the formation, the player can also roll for the formation for one or both armies if more randomness is preferred. For this purpose, the **Appendix** can be consulted, where various deployment formations are listed.

In case of free choice, here are some suggestions for the most common deployment formations:

THREE CARDS for an army with a left wing, center, and right wing.

FOUR CARDS for an army with an outer left wing, inner left wing, center, and right wing.

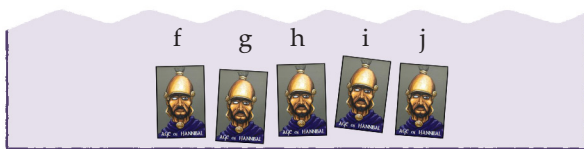
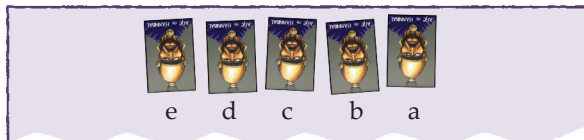
FOUR CARDS for an army with a left wing, center, inner right wing, and outer right wing.

FIVE CARDS for an army with a left wing, left center, center, right center, and right wing.

It is important that the cards for each army are placed side by side on their respective table side in the order they are drawn, and the order is not changed. Note: At this point, it is not yet determined which army will deploy on which table side; this is decided in the next step.

* Donald Featherstone, Solo-Wargaming, London, 1973.

Top Table Side—Army A



Bottom Table Side—Army B

Example: The tactical cards are drawn face down one after another for each army and placed side by side. In this case, it is 5 cards per army, because these are very large armies. First, card a was drawn for Army A, then card b, and so on until card e. Then card f was drawn for Army B, and so on until card j.

The cards represent the tactical principles “Powerful Offensive,” “Moderate Offensive,” “Flexible Defensive,” and “Stubborn Defensive,” and guide the player how the respective part of the army is to be led in battle. However, these principles are more a gaming philosophy than **strict** tactical guidelines.

The tactical principles in detail:

POWERFUL OFFENSIVE (3 cards): This tactic relies on an aggressive approach, aiming to advance at all times. Risks are consciously taken, including neglecting flank protection and losing contact with adjacent troops.

MODERATE OFFENSIVE (5 cards): Compared to the powerful offensive, this tactic is more cautious and coordinated. Advancement is done in coordination with other units to ensure a cohesive and supported approach. Flank protection is maintained if possible.

FLEXIBLE DEFENSIVE (5 cards): This tactic is defensive but allows for advancing and attacking when an opportunity arises. Risks are minimized, and the focus is on exploiting enemy mistakes. But when an attack is launched, it is powerful and determined.

STUBBORN DEFENSIVE (3 cards): This tactic emphasizes maximum immobility and steadfastness. Troops aim to hold their position as long as possible, moving only to secure better defensive positions. A compact formation is preferred, and no risks are taken.

ARMY DEPLOYMENT

After the tactical cards for both sides have been drawn and placed face down, a d8 is rolled to determine which army deploys on which table side (e.g., top table side: Army 1 with a roll of 1-4, Army 2 with a roll of 5-8).

Then a roll determines which army deploys first (as in the normal rules, the army that deploys first takes the first turn). The tactical cards for the army that deploys first are then **revealed** (but be careful to maintain the order of the cards). The player can now deploy this first army so that the deployment and unit types optimally fit the tactical principles.

As a rough rule, the center should contain as many or more bases as both wings combined. Additionally, a reserve can be placed behind the main line, not exceeding 20% of the total army (rounded down, e.g., an army with 22 bases can have a reserve of up to 4 bases). The reserve does not need to adhere to any tactical principle.

After deploying the first army, the tactical cards are placed aside, keeping their order so the tactical principles remain visible throughout the game.

The entire process is then repeated for the army that deploys second. With one exception: If the second army has a “Stubborn Defensive” card directly opposite a first army’s “Stubborn Defensive” card (e.g., center of Army 2 and center of Army 1), a new tactical card can, but does not have to, be drawn.

THE BATTLE

Once the armies face each other on the battlefield, the battle is fought according to the usual rules, with the following exceptions:

- No stratagems are used, as mentioned.
- Measuring distances **before** moving, both for “own” bases and those of the “enemy,” should be avoided to increase unpredictability.
- Troops should behave according to the tactical card principles wherever possible and plausible. But remember: These are instructions for the commanding generals, not a program for robots. The player can deviate from these tactics or even ignore them entirely if it seems reasonable and enhances the enjoyment and excitement of the game—hey, it’s a solo game, and you ultimately decide what happens on the table!

- As a recommendation: The tactical principles should be followed particularly during deployment and the approach of the armies, as well as the initial enemy contact, up to perhaps the mid-game. Later in the engagement, when the initial formations have broken up or become mixed and chaos increases, they can be disregarded more and more, and the units will act more according to the situation and operate on their own.
- Optional, but highly recommended, is the use of Chance Dice to foster surprising moments and challenge the player or provide beneficial events. At the beginning of each round, a 2d10 roll is made. The Chance Table clarifies the effect of the roll, which only applies to the army currently taking its turn.

CHANCE TABLE:

- 10% of units (rounded up) receive a DMZ marker. (Example: 10% of 14 units is rounded up to 2 units)
- 1 RF for all units of the army this round.
- No unit of the army may shoot this round.
- 1 penalty for all shooting of the army this round.
- 1 CF in melee for all units of the army this round.
- 2" movement for all mounted units of the army this round.
- 1" movement for all infantry units of the army this round.
- No effect.
- No effect.
- No effect.
- No effect.
- No effect.
- +1" movement for all infantry units of the army this round.
- +2" movement for all mounted units of the army this round.
- +1 CF in melee for all units of the army this round.
- +1 bonus for all shooting of the army this round.
- All shooting units of the army may shoot twice this round.
- +1 RF for all units of the army this round.
- Remove a DMZ marker from 10% of units (rounded up). (Example: 10% of 14 units is rounded up to 2 units)

APPENDIX

Roll a d10 for each army to determine the **deployment formation**. A tactical card is drawn for each group depicted. Of course there's nothing against inventing your own formations ...

- 1 Left wing, center, right wing.



- 2 Left wing, left center, center, right center, right wing.



- 3 Outer left wing, inner left wing, center, right wing.



- 4 Left wing, center, inner right wing, outer right wing.



- 5 Outer left wing, inner left wing, center, inner right wing, outer right wing.



- 6 Forward left wing, rear left wing, center, right wing.



- 7 Left wing, center, forward right wing, rear right wing.



- 8 Forward left wing, rear left wing, center, inner right wing, outer right wing.



- 9 Outer left wing, inner left wing, center, forward right wing, rear right wing.



- 10 Forward left wing, rear left wing, center, forward right wing, rear right wing.



Note: In formations with "forward" and "rear" positions, the cards can be swapped between these positions if it makes tactical sense (such as when a defensive card is in front of an offensive one).