

Instructions

The Age of Sail

Introduction: *The Age of Sail* depicts combat actions at sea during the extended conflict between Napoleonic France and Great Britain. The focus is on naval integration, specifically how military success at sea drove the outcome of this very long war. The scenarios capture historical combat actions that reinforce ongoing instruction in the War Studies Department, Command and Staff College, and do so by fulfilling the Commandant's guidance for wargaming with the purpose of emulating the need to practice decision-making against a thinking enemy.

A facilitator implements a very limited number of procedures for movement, combat, and time elapsed. There is no need for historical knowledge of the time period or the historical event. There is a great need for operational decision acumen as each player confronts an initial decision point with possibly several more to come thereafter.

Playing the Game: Each scenario should take some 30 minutes, depending on opening moves. Each 'move' represents an action and reaction of the opposing sides depending on 'orders' received from the players; the 'facilitator' of the game announces calendar elapsed time depending on implementation of these 'decision points.' This measure depends on the number of actions of the opposing sides, actions that will force one or both sides to resupply after too much time at sea. A scenario continues until one side achieves its victory conditions.

Turn Sequence:

Assessment
Action
Resolution

A number of moves equals calendar time elapsed, determined by the facilitator.

Movement: After a player issues orders, the facilitator repositions the playing pieces on the map conducts die rolls for unite, intercept, and evasion, and then resolves all combat. The number of moves

needed to resolve orders determines time elapsed in the game.

An "order of battle" sheet records the size of the force under each commander. Each force has a number indicating 'command span' i.e. total possible number of ships under that commander. The actual number assigned is declared in the Scenario Card and marked on the command span and adjusted after losses sustained in combat or should that commander be reinforced.

Each combatant can deploy one independent commander (Capt A). That leader can command up to 5 ships of the line and 5 frigates. An independent commander will need to complete a unite roll to rejoin another fleet.

Table Resolutions

A "table resolution" card and "reference card" lists key tales and parameters. Each are explained below.

Naval Combat Table When fleets engage in battle at sea, a "Naval Combat Table" determines the results. A die roll yields a percentage based on the size of the *attacking* fleet; that total is deducted from the opposing side. Only the survivors may counterattack. The side attacking first depends on a wind gauge result; the high roll holds the wind gauge. Both wind gauge and battle resolution are modified by +1 for British seamanship, +1 for Nelson in command, or +? for the Leadership Rating.

The battle continues until one side disengages, or is eliminated. Losses are recorded on the order of battle sheets.

Intercept To have a battle, one fleet must find another. An intercept die roll enables a fleet seeking battle to claim that battle. A die roll of 1-3 means interception. That roll is modified by -1 for Nelson, -1/+1 should a side possess more frigates than the enemy, and also for weather ('storm') and the size of the enemy fleet being pursued.

Evasion Should a player wish to avoid battle, he/she must conduct an evasion die roll. A die roll of 1-2 means evasion is successful. That roll is modified by -1 for Nelson and also for weather and the type/size of the fleet attempting evasion (a convoy incurs a +1; 5 or less man of war enjoy a -1). Should Nelson be present in the attacking force, a die roll for successful evasion must be repeated.

Should both sides succeed on their die rolls of interception and evasion, the rolls are done again until one side fails and the other succeeds.

Note! Evasion and interception (pursuit) can occur prior to battle or after any round of battle.

Unite Should a player wish to unite a divided fleet, he/she must announce that intention and roll one die. A 1-4 means success. The roll is modified by -1 for Nelson, for weather, and by a +1 if the forces seeking to unite are coalition partners (not the same nationality but allied together).

Convoy A convoy requires two successive turns to successfully “land” and occupy a target.

Should a convoy be attacked at sea, it may attempt to disengage by the player rolling a 1-2, then rolling a 1 again. That roll is modified by the size of the fleet and the weather.

ADVANCED RULES

Should a player wish to add more complexity to the game, the following procedures should be considered.

Weather: Weather conditions rest on storm or calm conditions. The facilitator checks the weather at the beginning of each turn. A ‘storm’ result makes intercept and uniting a fleet more difficult; a storm makes evasion more likely.

Diplomacy: Neutral countries can shift allegiance between Britain and France depending on battle victories. For each victory, move the marker one place in favor of the side that wins a battle.

Logistics: No fleet can remain at sea indefinitely. A “months at sea, ship forfeiture” chart reduces a fleet readiness by the number indicated after time elapsed.

A fleet can reconstitute itself by spending time in port. In Scenario 1, bases Minorca, Malta, and Crete replenish one fleet per turn. Should Naples or the Ottoman Empire be an ally, that location can replenish 2 fleets per turn. In Scenario 2, there are no logistics.

Leadership: Should a player wish to have leadership impact the game beyond Nelson, see the Leadership Rating Chart. Each naval captain possesses a leadership rating used to compare advantage or disadvantage when moving and in combat. Add the difference between the two commanders to the die roll i.e. 2 vs. 1 means the side with a 2 rating adds a plus or minus one to the die roll. Equal ratings between commanders means no impact for leadership on the die roll.