

This is the sequel to *Warfare for Beginners*, a short EN Publishing supplement for the *PATHFINDER RPG* by Russell Morrissey. Here, we will expand the options available in *Warfare for Beginners* to enable for a little more proactivity on the part of the PCs.

In the original article, the PCs were primarily responsive. Available missions were generated randomly each day, and the PCs engaged with the enemy in commando-style encounters. In this article, the PCs will direct the war effort more directly. This article assumes that the PCs are in a position of command and can make major strategic decisions.

This expansion should be used in conjunction with the previous article; we won't be covering the basics of Victory Points again here.

Choosing Tactics

At the most basic level, each day, both sides choose one tactic from the tactics list. Each tactic has its strengths and weaknesses. Once both sides (the PCs and the DM) have chosen their tactic, both are revealed and the result determined on the Tactics Matrix at the bottom of the page, and the PCs either gain or lose Victory Points.

Simple, right?

Each tactic is strong versus some tactics and weak versus others. For example, a Charge is very weak against an Ambush, but very strong against Artillery.

Tactics are arranged in three basic groups. These groups will matter in later chapters of *Warfare for Beginners*, but aren't important right now.

Regular includes Attack and Dig In.

Reckless includes Charge and Ambush. These tactics have potential for great damage, but run the risk of great disaster.

Specialist includes Artillery and Skirmish.

Maneuver includes Flank and Withdraw.

Each of those groups includes an offensive and defensive option.

Changing the Odds

Of course, at the basic level the course of combat is a very random affair. The PCs may attempt to use Sense Motive to determine what the enemy is going to do, so that they may choose their own tactic accordingly. This Sense Motive check is opposed by the enemy's Bluff check. If they succeed, they can choose a tactic and ask the DM whether the enemy is going to use that tactic; the DM will answer "yes" or "no". For every full five points by which they beat the enemy's check, they can ask about one additional tactic.

For example, if the PCs beat the enemy skill check by 11 points, they can ask about 3 tactics (one for beating it, and one for each full five points beyond that). They may get lucky and hit a "yes", in which case their choice of tactic will surely be optimal; or they may simply narrow down the field, increasing their odds.

Other Skills

Sense Motive, as explained above, is the primary skill for interpreting enemy movements and predicting their tactics. However, other skills are also useful in the sphere of battlefield command. They can be used to increase the Victory Points gained with certain tactics.

Diplomacy – a rousing speech to the troops can improve the Charge and Attack tactics.

Intimidate – there's nothing like a ferocious charge! This skill can improve the Charge tactic.

TACTICS

Attack [regular offense]

A standard, by-the-book frontal assault.

Dig In [regular defense]

Hunkering down or forming strong defensive lines. The by-the-book defence against a regular attack.

Artillery [specialist offense]

War machines, archery, spells. This tactic also includes aerial cavalry bombardments.

Flank [maneuver defense]

Using mobility to attack the enemy from an unexpected angle. This tactic encompasses any offensive maneuver.

Ambush [reckless defense]

Lure the enemy into a trap. This could be a pincer movement, a hidden line of spears against a charge, or any other surprising tactic.

Charge [reckless offense]

A strong, reckless attack; potential for great damage, but also for great disaster.

Skirmish [specialist defense]

Harass the enemy while avoiding direct engagement.

Withdraw [maneuver defense]

A fighting withdrawal, pulling back to regroup or redeploy; this tactic covers any defensive maneuver.

Knowledge (arcana) – directing your battlemages' spells can improve the Artillery tactic.

Knowledge (geography) – knowing the local layout can improve the Flank tactic and the Ambush tactic.

Knowledge (nature) – using the land, you can improve the effectiveness of the Dig In tactic, and also the Ambush tactic.

Knowledge (history) – knowing the

ENEMY TACTIC									
TACTICS MATRIX		REGULAR		RECKLESS		SPECIALIST		MANEUVER	
		ATTACK	DIG IN	CHARGE	AMBUSH	ARTILLERY	SKIRMISH	FLANK	WITHDRAW
PC TACTIC	REGULAR	ATTACK	-2		-1	+1	+1		-1
	DIG IN	+2		+1		-2	-1		
RECKLESS	CHARGE		-1		-3	+3	+2		
	AMBUSH	+1		+3				-3	-1
SPECIALIST	ARTILLERY	-1	+2	-3					+1
	SKIRMISH	-1	+1	-2				-1	+2
MANEUVER	FLANK				+3		+1		-2
	WITHDRAW	+1			+1	-1	-2	+2	



details of past battles can improve any tactic.

Stealth – knowing how to hide makes your Ambush tactic much better. Obviously, you can only improve one tactic at any given time (the one you've chosen to use). You may also only use one skill to augment that tactic at any given time. Anyone in your party can provide the skill, but each can only use any given skill once during the battle. Once you've used your trick, the enemy knows about it.

An improved tactic increases the Victory Points gained by 1; a failed skill check reduces them by 1. This includes negative amounts, so an improved tactic can improve a -1 to a 0, and vice versa.

The skill check is an opposed check. The enemy makes the same check to see if he negates your advantage with his own tactics.

Enemies & Skills

You may be wondering at this point where the enemy general is going to get all those skills to counteract the PCs' skill checks. After all, your Big Bad Evil Guy probably wasn't optimized with these skills in mind. That's OK; you have a couple of options.

First, you can start designing your BBEG with battlefield generalship in mind. Second, you can give him advisers – he may have generals below him who provide the necessary skills. Finally, you may be perfectly happy with the PCs having an advantage with respect to skills.

We suggest the second approach. These advisers and generals not only

add to the detail of the battlefield (“Man, I *hate* that General Ixnious on the left flank! He keeps spotting my ambushes!”), but also provide the PCs with targets for the abduction and assassination missions described in the first *Warfare for Beginners* article. That way, your PCs will be selectively choosing their targets based on who is countering their own strengths.

If you don't have the time or inclination to create these NPCs, in a pinch you can arbitrarily set an enemy general's skill at the PCs' APL (average party level) plus 10.

Putting All This Into Practice

As we mentioned in the previous article, it's not enough to simply present options and make skill checks. You need to translate it all into a narrative that makes sense in the context of your battle. Each tactic should be described in terms relevant to the forces and the situation at hand; and each skill check should be illustrated with appropriate actions.

The players should select their tactic and then describe it in narrative terms, along with the skill check (if any) that they wish to make. The DM should then narrate the results after consulting the Tactics Matrix. For example:

Sense Motive check: the players beat the enemy by 7 points, giving them two questions. They ask about the Artillery and Dig In tactics.

DM: “The enemy's artillery pieces are not correctly positioned for an effective assault; it seems unlikely that he plans to use them today. His formations are loose, and his spearmen are further back

than you would expect if he were planning to form a strong defensive line.”

Players: “We're going to hold off on the direct assault for now; we would have charged had he been setting up artillery. Instead, we'll use our own catapults and the warmages from Seaquen to soften up the enemy from a distance. Grusalock is directing the mages' actions and instructing them where to target their magic.” [Artillery tactic, bolstered by a successful Knowledge (arcana) check].

DM [the enemy has selected the Charge tactic]: “As you pull your troops back, your artillery begins to bombard the enemy. At first there is confusion, but the front ranks of the enemy suddenly part to reveal a mass of horse charging straight towards you! They rip into your artillery units, slaying with abandon. However, your expert deployment of your warmages allows them to fall back to safety, mitigating the damage a little. Lucky you studied *Offensive Formations For Magic Using Battle Troops And Their Effective Withdrawal* during your wizard apprenticeship!”

A Note on Victory Points

Because these new options provide more ways to gain and lose VPs you'll need to adjust the starting and victory conditions. Instead of a 20-point scale with the PCs starting at 10 (as is the default in the previous article) you should use a **30-point scale** with the PCs starting at 15.

This will be a recurring theme throughout these articles – as more options are presented and ways to alter Victory Points become available, the scale will become larger with each subsequent article. That way you have the correct scale available for whichever level of complexity you choose to adopt.

Coming Next

The third instalment of *Warfare for Beginners* will deal with army traits, and the benefits and disadvantages of different types of armies. Choose from 18 traits, including Cavalry, Undead, Horde, Goblinoid, Dwarven, and more!

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