GENERAL

GANGSTERS

Prohibition is in full swing and illegal booze flows from every speakeasy in town. Cops on the take look the other way. Violence erupts whenever rival gangs overstep their territories. This is the "Roaring Twenties". In such a world, could you put together a syndicate that will rule Chicago?

GANGSTERS is a strategy boardgame for two to five players. Rival gangs fight for control of mob activities while the police try to stem the tide of lawlessness engulfing the city. Each gang consists of three elements: Racketeers, Thugs, and Vamps. The racketeers are the "brains" of the outfit, purchasing legitimate businesses to front for their rackets while controlling the number of moves each player can make. Thugs are the "muscle" that extort funds from the populace and knock off opposing "joints". Vamps are molls that can lure opposing gangsters to switch their allegiance. Meanwhile, the public's patronage provides the illicit profits that fuel the inevitable gang wars. Players alternate two-minute moves (a stopwatch or watch with a sweep second-hand is required but not included) while vying to be the first to control the Windy City.

Although blessed with simple rules, strategy plays a major role In **GANGSTERS**. Players must decide if (and when) they should invest their loot in improved weaponry, communications and bribes - or tough it out and go for a quick win made possible with unspent profits. Timing is essential. However, for the light of heart, frivolity is not forgotten. Shootouts are brought vividly to life, as each time a player loses a gangster he gets a drenching from his real-life adversary with the "Gangster Gun" - a harmless but squeal-evoking water pistol.
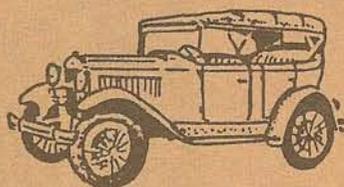
THE AVALON HILL Philosophy

Part 144
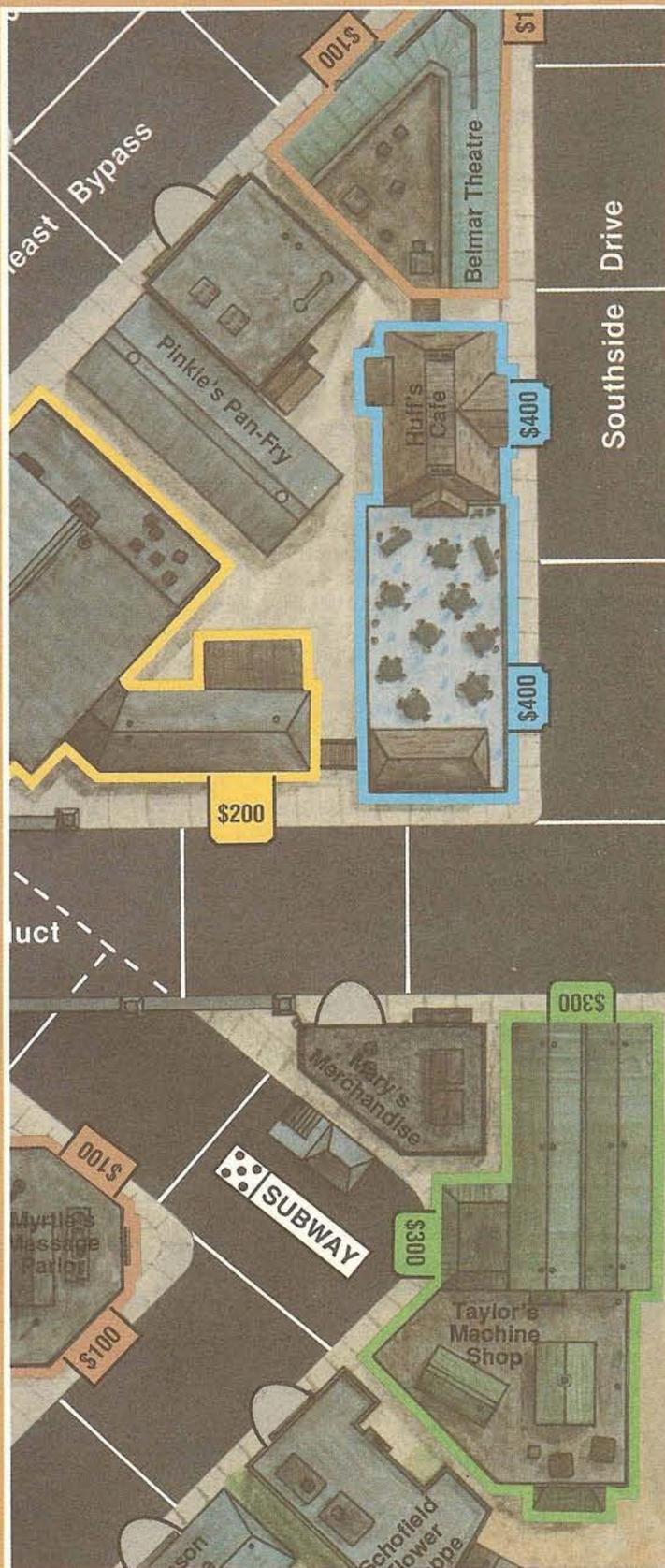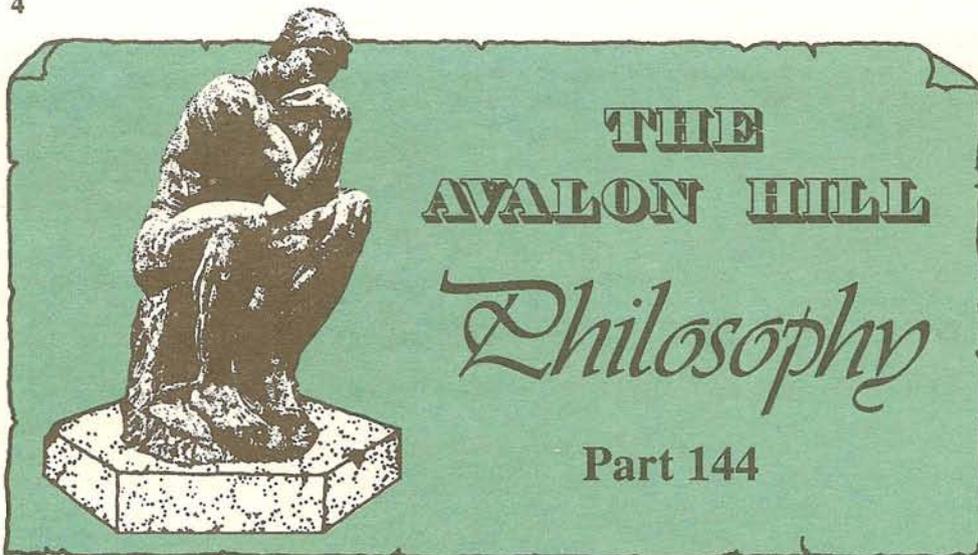
In Baltimore, in February 1930, was born one Thomas N. Shaw. Now, 62 years later comes word of his impending retirement (as of May 1992) from his position as a vice-president of The Avalon Hill Game Company. What can one say about an individual whose career has spanned the history of Avalon Hill, the world's first and largest wargame publisher?

After progressing at a steady pace through the primary and secondary school systems, Tom entered study at Western Maryland College (Westminster MD). But he found it not to his taste, and dropped out in 1950. Which meant, soon enough, that he was drafted.

From 1951-1953, he served in the US Army. Trained as a Guided Missile Technician at Redstone Arsenal (Huntsville AL), he was assigned to the Terrier Missile program at the White Sands Proving Ground. His role in that great adventure was certainly less than glamorous; Tom rode on the rear of the missile booster on its way to the launching pad, furiously waving two red "Danger" flags just in case someone should miss seeing the several-ton behemoth. Getting one of the flags caught in a cactus was termed "dereliction of duty" by his superior, and he was promptly re-assigned to police the Orderly Room (sweeping and mopping). But, he was replaced after a short stint by a more apt and efficient understudy. Re-assigned once again, Tom now found himself in the Public Information Office at White Sands. He had, it appears, found his niche at last. In short order, PFC Shaw was sports editor and staff cartoonist for the weekly camp newspaper, Wind & Sand. (However, with typical military logic, he was also given the duty of driving one of the staff cars that picked up visiting government dignitaries coming to watch missile launches.) Tom was discharged (honorably, despite appearances) at the rank of Corporal in 1953.

At loose ends but home once more, Tom used the experience gained during his past three years to land a position with VanSant-Dugdale. From 1954 through 1960, he wrote ad copy for print, radio and TV (including many of the commercials for

Jim Henson's original "Sam & Friends", the precursor of the famous Muppets). Being with an advertising agency obviously left Tom with a fair amount of spare time, for he indulged his interest in sports by designing FOOTBALL STRATEGY and BASEBALL STRATEGY. Too revolutionary in concept and design for the day, Tom nevertheless saw both published by The Strategy Game Company, a small third-party entrepreneur. Tom himself marketed the two games, which were sold in mailing tubes.

In August of 1960, Tom was "stolen" away from VanSant-Dugdale by one Charles Roberts, a long-time Baltimore acquaintance. In the small operation that was Avalon Hill, Tom served as public relations staff, game design staff, game development staff, and just about every other staff as well. His success at all were immediately apparent, for in 1961 Avalon Hill doubled the size of its line of "adult" games with seven new releases - among them, Air Empire and Verdict II, both designed by Tom. (FOOTBALL and BASEBALL STRATEGY would be brought into the line

in 1962, where they remain popular and profitable to this day.)

The period of 1963-64 was a time of transition for Avalon Hill, with Tom carried along by the tide of events. Avalon Hill was, by late-1963, unable to satisfy its various creditors. Of those, only one - Monarch Services, a local printing operation owned by Eric Dott - sought to work with Roberts to salvage this unique "toy company". Although plans had been made to file for bankruptcy on 13 December 1963, on the 29th of January a deal was struck whereby Monarch Services became the "corporate headquarters" for The Avalon Hill Game Company and waive the indebtedness. The J.E. Smith Company, which produced the mapboards and boxes, agreed to hold off its own demands for payment.

Meanwhile, Tom was dividing his time between the unemployment line and making calls on prospective employers in the advertising realm. Although Roberts, Schramm, and most others opted to turn to other pursuits, Tom Shaw agreed to remain under the new management. (The only other, Helen Michael - Roberts' sister-in-law, who headed the one-person order and shipping department.) The rest is, as they say, "history".

Tom's accomplishments in the wargaming industry, and hobby, would take more space than we have to spare. In May 1964, he launched his latest inspiration - a 12-page, professional periodical to inform and encourage the scattered and isolated fans of wargaming. Eight years later, he relinquished his editorship of The GENERAL to Don Greenwood, one of the young turks of the growing new hobby. During that same

One example of Tom Shaw's tenure as staff cartoonist while stationed at White Sands. Happily for wargaming, he found that his talents lay elsewhere.
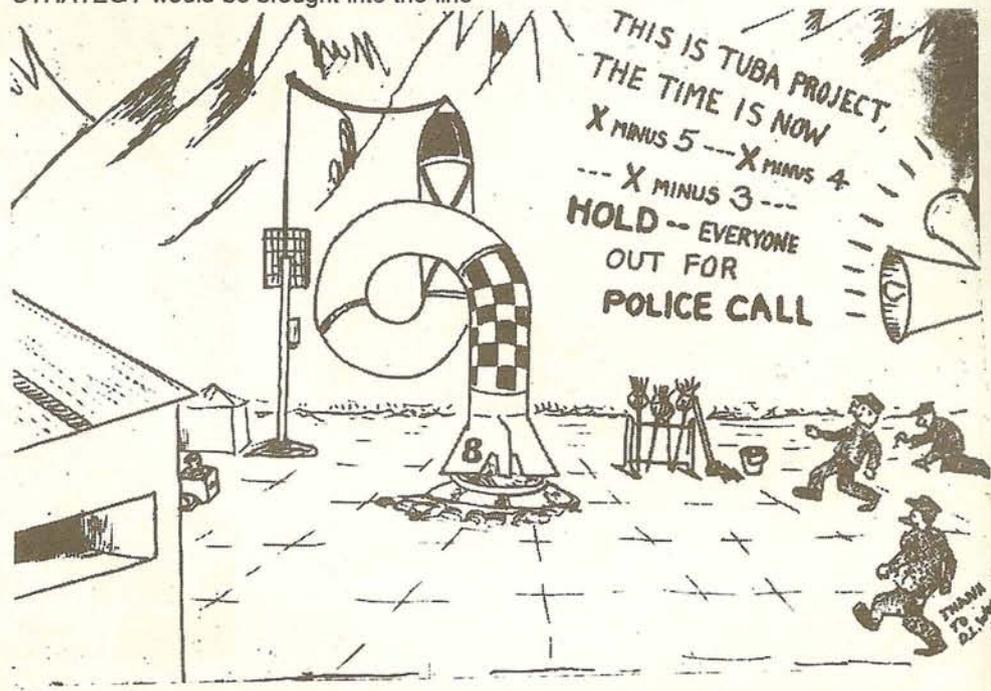
CANDIDATE

CANDIDATE is a simple game for two to six players. Each takes the role of a politician seeking their party's nomination for President. Players must manage financial and endorsement resources while touring the country to engage in state primaries. In the process, they must adroitly sidestep damaging rumors and dirty tricks. Guesswork and bluff are required to complement an overall resource allocation strategy that is constantly changing due to the fall of the cards. Players may opt to skip certain primaries so as to lay groundwork elsewhere for subsequent elections. But even the best-laid plans can be upset when "Super Tuesday" dawns unexpectedly.

Elections are resolved by playing cards on the campaign platforms of both your own and opposing candidates. Players vie to win each primary so as to establish a "bandwagon" effect that can sweep them to a majority and the party's nomination on the first ballot. However, such landslides are rare and usually the game reaches its climax at the convention, where weaker candidates are eliminated one by one and must throw their support to another contender until a victor emerges. Needless-to-say, the gloves come off when the convention is held.

Although position is rewarded, even the weakest candidate can emerge from the convention triumphant in a game packed with more surprises than Dan Quayle's resume. Strategy and luck play equal roles in the final outcome. Indeed, it has been said that this is a "true game-player's game", and fun and educational as well. For ages ten and up. Playing time is two hours - just the thing to while away the hours waiting for election-night returns.

CANDIDATE is now available for $25.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). If ordering direct, please add $4.00 to cover shipping and handling ($8.00 for Canadian orders; $12.00 for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
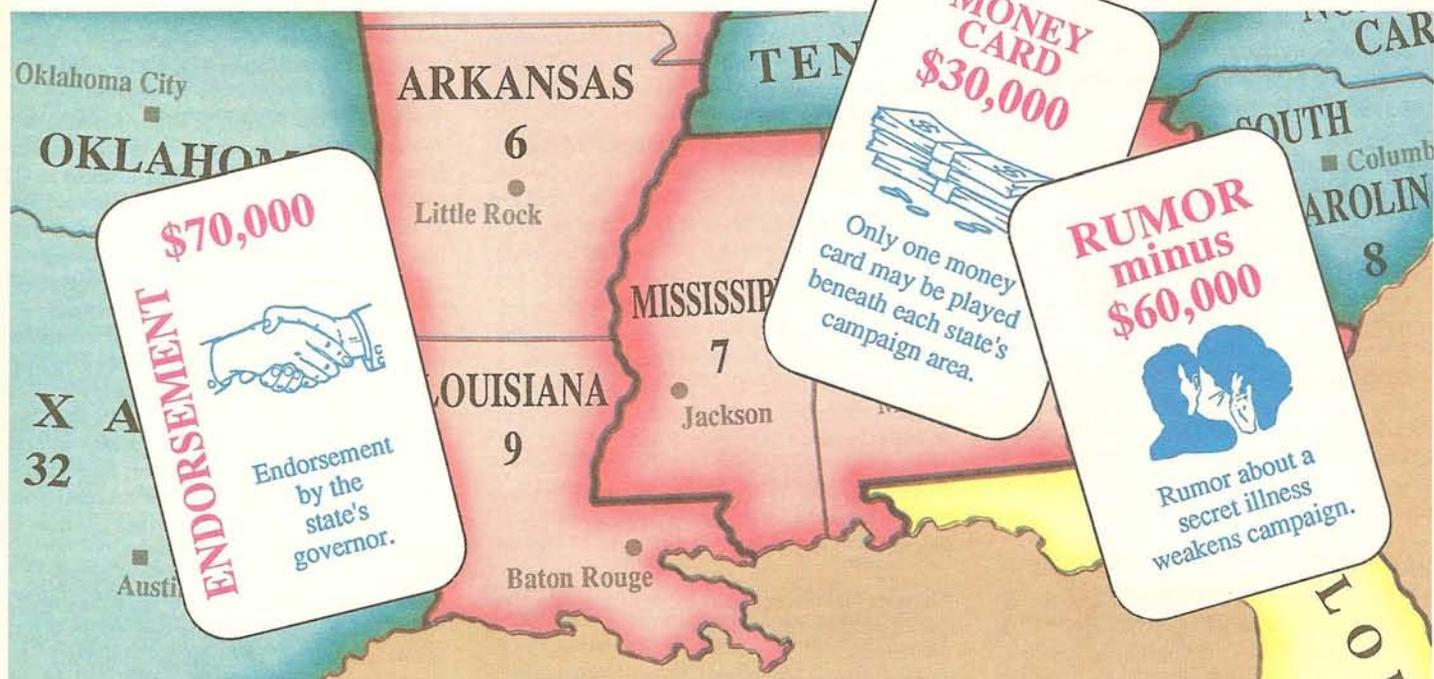
SERIES REPLAY
Solitaire BLACKBEARD
Pirate Player - Jim Anderson
Neutral Commentator - Don Greenwood

When I responded to the request for playtesters in The *GENERAL*, I had never before playtested a game and did not realize what I was getting myself into. I just looked at it as a chance to give back to a hobby that I have enjoyed for many years. The ad said that the subject matter of *Seahawks* was pirates, a topic on which I had some knowledge; so I signed up and anxiously awaited the playtest kit's arrival. I soon discovered that playtesting is not quite as glamorous as I had envisioned. It's work! Call me a masochist, but I enjoyed it nonetheless!

Well, here it is one year later and I find myself writing this article. A lot of water has passed under the hull since then. Even the game's title has changed, along with just about every rule in the playtest kit. I have played *BLACKBEARD* both in groups and solitaire, and I find it more suited to solitaire play as the action moves much quicker. The game's unique system of movement is structured to prevent a player from knowing who will get the next turn. I have played games where I had more than twice as many turns as my opponent and still lost! This proves that it's not how many turns you play, but how you play those turns. *BLACKBEARD* has become one of my favorite solitaire games. What follows is how one of those voyages played out.

Jim Anderson was more than just a playtester of BLACKBEARD - he was the best playtester. Had he been involved in the project from the beginning, I'd have been inclined to share the development credit with him - which instead went to Jim Eliason whose help proved invaluable in getting the playtest kit into playable shape before Anderson and the rest of the playtest crew ever came on board.

SETUP:

Six Governors are drawn and placed by random dice rolls in six different ports:

Governor:	Politics:	Port:
Barry	Pro-Pirate	Honduras
Collingwood	Pro-Pirate	Curacao
Sothel	Pro-Pirate	Philadelphia
Samuels	Pro-Pirate	Zanzibar
Bellomont	Anti-Pirate	Ethiopia
Richier	Pro-Pirate	Mocha

Six Merchants are drawn and placed in Shipping Lanes #11, #26, #54, #66, #21 and #35 by random card draws. The game is now ready to begin.

PLAY:

Turn 1: Blood - Activate. Blood's sloop is placed in hex A24 with a Crew Unrest of "7". I chose to start Blood in the Caribbean because its prizes are usually richer and it has several weak, but valuable, ports. I chose a sloop rather

than a schooner because I intend to raid ports and want the extra combat factor. I prefer a "Raid & Sack" strategy, as one can gain both Notoriety and Booty in a short amount of time. With this strategy, you know going into battle what the opposition's base strength will be. I selected the Spanish port of Campeche as my first target because it has the weakest Defense Rating (7) of the Ports valued at "3".

The "Raid & Sack" strategy is not an unusual tack to take - especially in the solitaire game where diplomacy plays no part and the other guys are always out to get you rather than someone else. Under those circumstances, anything that shortens the length of the game should work in the player's favor. And there is no denying that the Raid & Sack approach results in the shortest games - one way or another. However, raiding ports with a sloop and without inside information is a good way to get your neck stretched fast. Personally, I'd have started in the Indian Ocean where the prizes are fattest and been content chasing merchants until I could trade up to a bigger ship or gain useful information.

Turn 2: Blood - Drop Anchor & Raid. Ability (5) + Combat Rating (6) + die roll [hereafter "dr"] (5) = 16. Campeche Defense (7) + dice roll [hereafter "DR"] (1,3) = 11. Blood wins a bloodless battle by taking damage equal to one less than the port's lowest die (1-1 = 0). The absence of casualties will make sacking the port relatively easy. The Defense rating of "3" allows a roll of three dice to calculate Blood's take: 3+3+4 = 10 for 1000 doubloons. Blood gains seven Notoriety and an Attack History versus the Spanish.

Jim obviously believes in the old adage "a Merry life and a short one" as it applies to pirates. With average dice rolls, his raid on Campeche ends in a draw at 14:14 and he takes no damage in the process. Even if he wins the dice roll and takes losses in the raid, his chances to sack the town are much reduced. Suffice it to say that fate has been kind so far without even taking up the matter of his gaining the first two turns. One wonders how many times he has started a game thus with less pleasing results?

Turn 3: Draw Warship. A Warship is randomly drawn and placed in *Shipping Lane* (hereafter "SL") #32.

Turn 4: New Merchant. A new Merchant is drawn and placed in SL #14.

Turn 5: Blood - Sack Campeche. Ability (5) + Combat rating (6) + dr (2) = 13 against a weak-

ened defense (7 halved to 4) + DR (3,4) = 11. Blood wins and takes two points of Combat damage (lowest die 3 - 1 = 2) and moves his Combat Track to 4 and the Crew Unrest up one (+3 for sacking, -2 for damage). Crew Unrest now stands at "8". He rolls two dice to check for injuries (1,3); the "1" results in an injury, which a card draw reveals to be "Minor" - lowering all his Personal ratings by two, Combat Track to "2", Speed Track to "1", and Crew Unrest to "7". Blood gains additional Notoriety of "14" (double the Port Defense) for a new total of "21". Placement of the "Port Destroyed" marker on Campeche puts Blood out to sea.

Although our "hero" has made good his undertaking and is now already 21% of the way to winning by virtue of Notoriety, even his good fortune reveals how perilous an undertaking this business of raiding ports can be. Despite having the first three Pirate turns and winning an even exchange of dice to take Campeche without loss, he has been reduced to a combat strength of two and would be easy prey for any Warship that happened along. Any damage suffered by a Pirate is serious because it can bring instant death in an injury draw (as witnessed by this turn's flesh wound). Jim doesn't mention any consideration given to using a Cunning to reroll the Sack exchange and possibly avoid the injury; further study shows why. He won the battle without using the Cunning, and the average exchange would cause that much damage or more anyway. Far better to take his chances with the injury than give up use of the Cunning reroll option until used by another player.

Turn 6: Move Warship. Since the Warship's speed is not yet known, a dr is used to determine speed. The "4" dr sends it north to O21 away from the pro-pirate port of Curacao.

The fact that our dummy Pirates have yet to take a turn pays dividends in allowing Jim to move the warship away from Blood rather than towards him. Yet, Jim is more concerned about moving it away from Curacao than from Blood, which at this distance is probably forgivable although still unusual. Had we seen the "Warship Intercepts Most Notorious Pirate" card instead, the decision to raid a port would not look so good as Captain Blood is in a bad way. There is a 2.5% chance that each card drawn will bring that warship over the horizon, yet Blood is in no condition to resist.

Turn 7: Blood - Move to F22. A Move dr of "6" coupled with Blood's speed of "1" yields a seven-hex move. The raid has filled my holds so it is pointless to search and I am making for the closest pro-pirate port (Curacao). I have

Figure 1: The Situation on Turn 7.

enough booty to meet any bribe and the pro-pirate Governor there ensures acquiring it as a Safe Haven.

The choice of Curacao as his destination is probably the correct one due to the long-term benefits to be gained when dealing with a pro-pirate Governor. The closer British port of Port Royal or the Pirate Haven of New Providence are also possibilities (given Blood's need to refit, the latter is an especially appealing choice). However, the Safe Haven that Curacao offers is a better one and, once secured, will match the Pirate Haven's Refit capabilities without the accompanying expense. The decision is made much easier by Blood's fourth turn in a row without an appearance by either of his adversaries.

Turn 8: Dummy #3 - Activate Le Sieur Ravanau de Lusan in SL #54. My first adversary appears in a sloop atop a Merchant in the rich Indian Ocean.

Turn 9: Dummy #2 - Activate Kidd in SL #11. My other adversary appears in a sloop atop a Merchant in the North Atlantic.

Turn 10: Kidd - Attempts Capture. Kidd's Ability (3) + Combat rating (6) + Speed (+3) - French flute (2) = 10. Kidd rolls an 11. The flute avoids capture, Kidd takes a point of damage, moves his Combat Track to "6", and rolls a "1" for an injury as well. The resulting injury is superficial and merely lowers Kidd's meager abilities by one for the balance of the turn. Kidd's Crew Unrest is lowered to "6". I didn't consider the flute important enough to use half of Kidd's supply of Cunning for a reroll.

The restraint in not using Kidd's meager supply of Cunning is admirable.

Turn 11: Blood - Move to J22. A speed dr of "3" limits the sail to four hexes.

I question the wisdom both of moving onto a Shipping Lane and within reach of the Warship at O21. A more southerly course might be more prudent should a "Draw Warship" card attract one to SL #25. In fact, I'd be concerned about the proximity of that Warship at O21. Perhaps it should have been sent due east when Jim had the chance.

Turn 12: Remove Odd Merchants. Merchants on SLs #11, #21 and #35 depart. A new one is placed in SL #12. Fate has stolen Kidd's prize, but a new one is not far away in the next Shipping Lane.

Turn 13: de Lusan - Attempts Capture. Lusan's ability (4) + Combat rating (6) + Speed (3) - British schooner (4) = 9. Lusan rolls an "8" and captures her. She yields Booty of 50 plus Mandatory D&R and a hostage. Being a gentleman pirate with a cruelty factor of only "1", de Lusan's torture efforts yield no effect but nevertheless please his crew and raise his Crew Unrest to "8". His Notoriety is increased to "6" (one for cruelty and five for the hostage) and he gains an Attack History versus England. A round of *Debauchery & Revelry* (hereafter referred to as "D&R") follows and further improves his Crew Unrest standing to "9".

Turn 14: Draw Two Merchants: De Lusan is delighted to hear of the appearance of two Merchants in the next Shipping Lane (#55). Now all he has to do is sober up his drunken crew and sail over there and bag them.

Turn 15: New Merchant: The Gold Coast gets its first activity with a Merchant in SL #45.

Turn 16: Blood - Move to P23. A Speed dr of "5" allows a six-hex move towards the port of Curacao.

Jim shows no respect at all for the Warship in O21 - a scant three hexes away. A single "Move Warship" card could spell disaster. A more southerly course to Curacao would be well advised. Perhaps he is card counting and knows that the Move Warship cards are behind him, but a Random Event will bring a shuffle and a 6% chance of trouble each turn.

Turn 17: de Lusan - Petitions the Crown. De Lusan's crew has slept it off and the D&R marker is removed. Player 3's request for a *King's Commissioner* (hereafter "KC") is denied by a two-digit dice roll of "45". The player had to roll less than or equal to Blood's Notoriety (21) to receive a KC. Two-digit dice rolls are derived by rolling two dice and reading the colored die roll before the white die roll as a two-digit number - thus obtaining a range of 36 possible results.

Turn 18: New Merchant: The Warship in SL #31 gets some company. Although only three hexes away, it is of no interest to me in my present condition even without its escort.

Turn 19: Kidd - Move to SL #12. A Speed dr of "6" is five more than Kidd needs to move to the next SL containing a Merchant.

Turn 20: Blood - Anchors in Curacao. A favorable wind (dr 6) gives me just enough movement to reach port.

Favorable wind indeed. Not only has Blood received as many turns as both of his competitors combined, he completed the 24-MP journey in a mere four moves. With an average speed of 4.5, it should have taken Blood six turns to reach Curacao even by the straightest and riskiest route. Blood is living a charmed life.

Turn 21: Remove Even Merchants. SLs #12, #14, #26 and #66 are vacated. Another Merchant appears in SL #13. Kidd loses one Merchant, but sights another in the next SL. He appears to be chasing ghost ships.

Turn 22: de Lusan - Move to SL #55. De Lusan moves two hexes to the next SL, where two merchants await him.

Turn 23: New Merchant. SL #23 gains an occupant.

Turn 24: Kidd - Move to SL #13. With a speed of 3, Kidd needed only a dr of "2" or better for the five-hex voyage to the next SL where another Merchant awaits him.

Turn 25: Kidd - Petitions the Crown. Kidd's Action Line contains the notation "KC", so he must perform a KC operation. With none on board, he must petition the crown for one. However, a two-digit DR of "35" is insufficient. He needed "21" or less (a 19% chance).

Turn 26: Kidd - Attempts Capture. Ability (3) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - Spanish brigantine (5) = 6. Kidd rolls doubles "2,2" - which not only takes the prize, but also allows him to transfer his flag to the bigger ship which surrendered without a fight. Kidd gains Booty of 500, two Notoriety, and an Attack History versus Spain. Things are finally looking up for the snake-bit Kidd.

Yes, indeed. Kidd has even equalled Blood in total turns at six apiece. However, a bigger ship is not necessarily a move up in the world for a pirate who depends on speed and evasion for his survival. Yet, the dummy pirates in the solitaire game have fewer enemies, and being slower is not all that much of a handicap for them. Furthermore, by changing ships, Kidd need not worry about a refit for his earlier misguided encounter and can press enough hands into service to make good his losses and then some. All in all, the upgrade to the bigger ship is probably wise.

Turn 27: de Lusan - Attempt Capture. Ability (4) + Combat (6) + Speed (3) - Dutch threemaster (6) = 7. Lusan rolls a "3" and the Merchant heaves to following a single shot across her bow. The deck has been exhausted - one of the rare times the sequence of events has allowed a complete pass through the deck without a reshuffle. The new deck brings a Booty of 50 and Mandatory D&R. Poor de Lusan has drawn the same card both times and is once again stuck with a drunken crew. De Lusan gains one more Notoriety to reach "7" and now has an Attack History versus the Netherlands. At least his rowdy crew likes him: the D&R marker is accompanied by an increase in the Crew Unrest status to "10".

Turn 28: Draw Two Merchants. Two Merchants appear north of Guadeloupe in SL #42.

Turn 29: Kidd - Move to J12. A Move dr of "6" allows Kidd's brig (with a speed of +1) to move a full seven hexes towards the greener pastures of the Caribbean. A Search draw reveals nothing.

Turn 30: Blood - Recovery. Blood's Wound marker is removed and his personal ratings returned to normal. Consequently, his Combat Track is now returned to "4" and his Speed to "+3". With their Captain's recovery, the Crew Unrest improves one to "8".

Turn 31: Blood - Sells Booty. Sale of the loot from Campeche adds 1100 to Blood's Net Worth (due to the extra 10% for a pro-pirate port). News of the sale increases Blood's Notoriety to "32" and raises crew morale to the maximum rating of "15". A Bribe dr of "3" to Governor Collingwood reduces Blood's Net Worth to 800, but gains Curacao as a Safe Haven. Henceforth, I'll be able to refit all damage here in one turn and add 20% to all sales.

Turn 32: Blood - Refit. All damage to the ship is now repaired. Return the Combat Track to "6" for *Arabella* (see following account).

Blood's ninth turn finds him sitting pretty. His once vulnerable status is now completely

restored. Only his reputation as the most notorious pirate can lay him low now. Yet, this appears to be the very route Jim will pursue for the win.

Turn 33: Kidd - Move to H16. A Speed dr of 4 allows a five-hex move along the Florida coast and Kidd searches as he goes, but draws a storm. The resulting Storm DR of 10 sinks Kidd's ship with all hands. So much for his change of luck. Saving his Cunning rerolls did him no good at all (as Cunning cannot be used against Storms, which are a real hazard in coastal hexes). This appears to be a case of fiction imitating life. Historically, Captain William Kidd was a very over-rated pirate. He scored only one good catch amid a lot of mishaps.

Searching in coastal waters is very dangerous, but Jim can't be faulted for sending Kidd to Davey Jones' locker as the solitaire rules require him to search when able to do so (and not already in the same hex with a Merchant). Given his decision to send Kidd to the richer hunting grounds of the Caribbean and his speed dr, the coastal waters could not be avoided.

Turn 34: Random Event. The deck is shuffled and Scurvy is drawn. This is essentially a nonevent since Dummy #2 was the last player to move and has no ships in play at present.

Turn 35: Blood - Move to N25. A Speed dr of 6 gives me a nine-hex start on my voyage to Honduras - the site of my next raid.

Again he pays scant attention to that Warship in O21. A "Move Warship" draw could give him cause to regret his course. An approach from the south would be safer.

Turn 36: Blood - Move to H25. A Speed dr of "3" coupled with my speed modifier of +3 leaves me just off the harbor mouth with the town in sight. Next turn I'll anchor and Honduras will never be the same again.

Blood's luck remains exceptional. Although his move dr left him one short of a two-turn landfall in Honduras, average luck would have required four turns for the 16-MP journey he will complete in three. Moreover, he has now amassed 11 turns to the miserly five of dummy #3.

Turn 37: Rackham - Activate. John "Calico Jack" Rackham's schooner appears in SL #23 with a Merchant off the port bow. I gave him a schooner for a change of pace, and also because the Caribbean is the best place for such vessels. With so much coastal water to hide in, the Evasion possibilities compensate for the lessened combat value.

Blood's luck runs true to form. Rackham is another mediocre competitor who shouldn't be hard to best. De Lusan is tougher stuff, but he sits becalmed in the Indian Ocean with a paucity of moves. The early demise of Kidd and the appearance of his less-than-sterling replacement raises the possibility of a change in strategy. Rather than continuing to pursue his risky port-sacking strategy, Blood could sandbag it and pursue safer venues while

attempting to bring about the demise of Rackham and winning by virtue of his current monetary lead when player #2 runs out of pirates. At present, Jim cannot petition the crown for a KC because his opponents have no significant Notoriety. However, Blood could dog Rackham and challenge him to a duel at the first opportunity. Rackham is not a bad swordsman, but he is no match for Blood in a fair fight.

Turn 38: Remove Odd Merchants. The Merchants in SLs #23, #31, #45 and #55 vanish. Another appears in SL #12. Dummy #2 is not having a good day. This is the third time he has lost a Merchant in his hex.

Add de Lusan to the list of guys not having a good day. The merchant in #55 was in his hex for 16 turns without an attack being made and has now made good its escape. To make matters worse, his crew is still hung over.

Turn 39: New Merchant. A Merchant reappears with the Warship escort in SL #31.

Turn 40: Warship Intercepts Most Notorious Pirate. The Warship in SL #31 is finally withdrawn to the Draw cup and replaced by one in Blood's hex, who with "31" is easily the most notorious. The interception attempt fails when Blood rolls a dr "4" (modified to 7 by his speed). Nevertheless, the presence of the warship will mean an end to the Honduras expedition.

Average luck dictates that this result will occur once every 40 card draws, so lady luck is right on schedule in this instance. Blood can expect more such visits as long as his port raids make him the most notorious pirate, but the timing of this appearance is particularly entertaining to the townsfolk of Honduras.

Turn 41: Move Warship. Cursed luck! The Warship attempts interception again, but fails when Blood rolls a "5" speed dr, modified by his speed of three to "8".

Jim should be praising his luck instead of cursing it. A Sloop's ability to add its speed modifier to its interception dr gives it an enormous advantage when it is undamaged. Had these events transpired after his raid instead of before it, Blood may well be swinging from a yardarm had he been wounded in the raid (such as he was at Campeche). The resulting reduction in the crew's readiness and the ship's speed modifier could then prove fatal.

Turn 42: Move Warship. Who shuffled this blasted deck? This time Blood is catchable because his Speed dr is only a "3". The Warship can attack with a dr of "6", but fails to do so.

After so much good fortune, Blood has now encountered all three of the Warship cards consecutively. The odds of that are 1-in-64,000! But he has survived them all and none remain to be drawn until the deck is reshuffled. Only a "Random Event" can catch him now.

Turn 43: Random Event: Automatic Interception! What are the chances? Blood's Ability (5) + Combat (6) + DR (8) = 19. The British Warship rating of 9 + DR (10) also equals 19, so there is no damage; but because the Warship

rolled higher, the battle continues. This time Blood rolls a "9" for a total of 20 to the Warship's "4" and a total of 13. Blood wins this round, takes a point of damage, and draws away. Blood escapes injury, but his reputation is somewhat sullied among the crew as the Crew Unrest drops from level 15 (God) to 14 (demi-God).

Eight cards into a new deck, the chances were 3-in-32. It never pays to linger long around a Warship. Even so, I must give full marks to this Warship commander for his persistence. The danger is far from over. The Random Event has reshuffled the deck and Blood remains in the same hex with his persistent adversary. He now faces a 6-in-40 chance (15%) of yet another encounter with this Warship, and the odds will worsen with every passing card until he leaves the hex.

Turn 44: de Lusan - Petitions the Crown. Dummy #3's two-digit DR of "42" fails to elicit a response. Blood, at 32 Notoriety, is still only a 38% proposition to generate a KC. However, de Lusan finally sobers his crew and removes the D&R marker - but now faces an empty ocean.

Turn 45: de Lusan - Anchors in Zanzibar. A Speed dr of "3" provides more than enough MP to reach port and empty his holds. Besides, there are no sails visible on the horizon.

Turn 46: de Lusan - Sell Booty. The pro-pirate port bonus allows de Lusan to sell his loot for 110 in Net Worth. His Notoriety increases one to "8" and his Crew Unrest improves one to "11". His crew is well "lubricated", even if they aren't very wealthy.

Turn 47: New Merchant. Another sail heaves into view in SL #23. Rackham's lost prize has returned to him, if he can get a turn before it leaves again.

Turn 48: de Lusan - Ransom Hostage. A ransom dr of "5" nets 550 doubloons for the hostage and another five Notoriety to bring that total to "13". The crew is now extremely pleased and the Crew Unrest tops out at "15". A bribe dr of "3" to Governor Samuels nets Zanzibar as a Safe Haven at a cost of 300 doubloons. De Lusan's Net Worth now rests at 360.

Turn 49: Rackham - Attempt Capture. Rackham's Ability (3) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - Dutch Brig (5) = 6. Rackham's DR is "8", missing by two. This not only fails to take the merchant but also nets Rackham two points of damage. Under the circumstances, some Cunning expenditure may be warranted as the game cannot afford to lose Rackham to an injury draw. The reroll is "12". The Merchant disappears, but at least Rackham didn't take any damage. His Cunning is reduced to "1", but that's only half the bad news. Now he can't use it again until someone else does.

Turn 50: de Lusan - Move to SL #55. A Speed dr of "3" allows him to move five hexes. No Search is allowed because it cost him a movement point to up-anchor, and therefore he didn't

Figure 2: The Situation on Turn 60.

end his move six hexes from his starting position this turn.

Turn 51: Rackham - Move to SL #24. A Move dr of "1" allows only a four-hex move. The resulting Search finds nothing.

Turn 52: de Lusan - Move to SL #62. A Move dr of "5" brings him off the coast of Bombay. He already has an Attack History against both England and the Netherlands and, in this area, any unflagged Merchants found will become one of those two nationalities by default. Consequently, he won't gain any unnecessary Attack Histories. However, the resulting search uncovers only a storm. Eight boxes are lost on the Speed Track with a DR of "8". One more point and he would have been fish bait. Storms in shallow waters are killers. At least he can careen where he is. With a speed of -5 he doesn't have much choice.

Blood's chances of another encounter with that Warship are growing. The odds are now 6-in-31. If I was Jim, I'd be getting nervous.

Turn 53: New Merchant. The Gold Coast gets a visit from a Merchant in SL #52.

Turn 54: Draw Two Merchants. There is now a veritable fleet of four Merchants in SL #42.

Turn 55: Rackham - Petitions the Crown. The Action Line dictates a KC move, so Dummy #2 petitions for a KC. Again the 38% chance is failed with a two-digit DR of "45".

Turn 56: Rackham - Move to L21. A Move dr of "2" allows a five-hex advance towards the Merchant in SL #31, but the resulting search off the coast of Jamaica finds nothing.

Turn 57: Remove Even Merchants. So much for the fleet in SL #42. Those in SL #12 and #52 are also removed. A new Merchant is placed in SL #34.

Turn 58: de Lusan - Careen. The Careen marker is placed and the work progresses rapidly with a dr of "5" restoring five Speed boxes.

Turn 59: de Lusan - Careen. A dr of "5" completes the repairs. De Lusan can now re-launch as good as new.

What goes around comes around. Blood, who earlier had more moves than his combined adversaries, now has less than each of them! And all the while he is sitting in the same hex with a hostile Warship breathing down his neck, so he's anxious to move away and complete his escape. What exquisite torture! Nineteen cards have been drawn since the last shuffle, bringing the odds of another interception down to 6-in-21.

Turn 60: Blood - Move to SL #31. At last! A Move dr of "5" allows me to complete the eight-hex voyage to SL #31 and beat Rackham to the Merchant there. More importantly, it gets me out of the same hex with that accursed British Warship and completes my escape. Blood's Notoriety rises five to "37". This encounter hasn't sullied his reputation among the British.

Turn 61: Blood - Attempt Capture. Blood's Ability (5) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - Spanish Three-master (6) = 7. Blood rolls an "8", misses by one, and takes a point of damage. Blood

wasn't injured, but his Combat rating drops to 4 and the Crew Unrest to 13. I'd rather conserve my Cunning than waste it on a Merchant encounter. "Cursed Spaniard! Ye'll pay for this!"

The "8" DR would have been sufficient to bag the Spaniard had Blood not been damaged in the Warship encounter. It seldom pays to go hunting with less than a full complement. A damaged Pirate's first priority should almost always be repairs - especially in a sloop. The decision to save the Cunning is probably correct. Using it would return that option to Rackham and Blood wants Rackham out of the game.

Turn 62: de Lusan - Remove Careen.

Turn 63: Rackham - Move to SL #31. Calico Jack wants to horn in on my prize. We'll see who takes her.

Turn 64: de Lusan - Move to G17. The Indian Ocean is bereft of merchants so de Lusan has to troll for prey. I've sailed him in the general direction of his Safe Haven in case he encounters trouble. But this time the Search finds a Merchant in the Open Sea.

Turn 65: Blood - Attempt Capture. Blood's Ability (5) + Combat (4) + Speed (3) - Spanish Three-master (6) = 6. Blood rolls an "11" and the Merchant escapes. Having two points of damage is costing me. I have to repair this ship! I guess I should have expended Cunning back on Turn 61. I had a better chance at capture then, and even without a prize I might have avoided damage. I have seen games lost for lack of Cunning, so I tend to be quite frugal.

I wouldn't fault Jim for not expending the Cunning on Turn 61. On the other hand, I might take issue with attacking the merchant again with two points of damage already. He stood a 30% chance of taking even more damage with an Attack Number of only "6". Could it be that he was more interested in depriving Rackham of the prize than his own survival? Given Rackham's meager record to date, that would be poor judgement.

Turn 66: Blood - Move to S22. A Move dr of "1" allows a four-hex voyage towards my Safe Haven where repairs await, but the resulting Search finds a Storm that sends down the Merchant in SL #34. "Rig for foul weather." A Storm dr of "1" costs only one box on the Speed Track. Just a squall. Being in Open Sea makes a big difference when the weather turns.

Yes, but not that big a difference. Blood shouldn't have been searching in his present condition. He needs repairs more than prey and anything worthwhile that he might find may well be better off left for Rackham to handle. The Storm may have prevented him from making another mistake as he was doubtless trying to beat Rackham to the Merchant in SL #34. It's easy to be bold with an absence of enemies in the vicinity and a Safe Haven just over the horizon. With no KC on his trail, Blood is living in the fast lane. This game has a habit of turning on you fast however, and I've found it usually pays to be cautious.

Turn 67: Blood - Move to V23. "Sail ho!" A Move dr of "1", coupled with his reduced speed of 2, allows only a three-hex voyage - but that's enough to arrive off the coast of Curacao and the resulting search finds a Merchant right outside my lair.

Jim is definitely made of bolder stuff than I. It's true that he has little to fear from a Merchant (other than injury) with his Safe Haven in view. But man-made obstacles are not the real danger here. Another storm in these coastal waters would have a 28% chance of sinking his damaged sloop outright - Safe Haven or no. And all the Cunning in the world won't save you from a Storm.

Turn 68: Random Event. The deck is reshuffled and a Letter of Marque is drawn; French as it turns out. Anyone care to fight for the Frogs?

Turn 69: Rackham - Move to O17. Rackham tries his luck off Mayaguana, but his search finds nothing.

The game should be thankful he didn't find a storm in those coastal waters. This is rather risky patrolling. All perfectly legal, mind you, but I doubt whether Jim would be so eager to send him into coastal water searches if de Lusan was ahead in Net Worth.

Turn 70: Rackham - Move to U19. The resulting search finds a Merchant off Isla Mona.

Turn 71: de Lusan - Petitions the Crown. Blood's Notoriety of 37 now gives such a petition a 50% chance for success, but this too falls on deaf ears with a DR of "44".

Turn 72: Blood - Anchors in Curacao. I have a bad feeling about that Merchant. I am down three points in capture attempts (two Combat and one Speed). I don't know why I searched in the first place when I was headed in for a Refit. I guess I just got caught up in the hunt. This is not good play. I've seen storms blow up three times in this game already.

Ah, he comes to his senses belatedly. With luck the Merchant will still be off the coast after he refits. Attacking it now makes more sense than searching for it did last time because his Safe Haven is so nearby. Still, an injury to Blood caused by attacking with too low an Attack Number would be embarrassing.

Turn 73: Random Event. The deck is reshuffled and a Storm is drawn. The Merchant off the coast goes down with all hands. As for Blood, he rides out the storm at his anchorage. Sometimes, my instincts say do "A" instead of "B", when logic tells me that doing "B" is the correct thing to do. Logic might dictate chasing the Merchant because it could be a flute or sloop that I could easily capture. I'm glad I ignored logic this time.

Certainly a fortuitous decision, all right.

Turn 74: Blood - Refit. My Combat Track is restored to full strength.

Turn 75: New Merchant. A Merchant is placed equidistant from Rackham and Blood in SL #33.

Turn 76: de Lusan - Attempt Capture. Ability (4) + Combat (6) + Speed (3) - Dutch Threemaster (6) = 7. De Lusan rolls a DR of "4" to take her without a fight. These Dutchmen don't seem to have much stomach for a tussle. But what is this in the hold? A King's ransom! De Lusan's share will come to 2500 doubloons. He instantly takes the Net Worth lead from Blood. Only a -1 modifier for the Indian Ocean prevents a hostage situation that would have netted even more. De Lusan's Notoriety increases one to "14". But wait till he gets this haul back to port!

Turn 77: Rackham - Attempt Capture. Ability (3) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - British Three-master (7) = 4. Rackham makes a DR of 6 - the worst possible result. The Merchant not only avoids capture but delivers a broadside that puts two damage on Rackham's schooner. The three-master was too tough prey for the likes of Rackham in a schooner. He had only a 16% chance of a capture and a 25% chance of taking damage in the attempt. Rackham can't use his last Cunning point to reroll because he is already holding the "last use" marker. It could have been worse; at least he avoided injury. Although what's left of the crew isn't too pleased with him; the Crew Unrest marker is dropped to "5".

Turn 78: New Merchant. De Lusan gets more prey. A Merchant in SL #54.

Turn 79: Remove Even Merchants. Easy come, easy go. The Merchant in SL #54 is replaced with another off the Gold Coast in SL #45.

Turn 80: de Lusan - Move to C21. A move dr of "3" allows a six-hex voyage. The resulting search in coastal waters finds nothing.

I bet Jim wished he had found a Storm. Once de Lusan returns to his Safe Haven he can attempt to retire. In a multi-player game, de Lusan would be foolish to risk his lead by searching in coastal waters now, but the solitaire game allows the player to play fast and loose with the common sense of dummy pirates.

Turn 81: Rackham - Attempt Capture. Ability (3) + Combat (3) + Speed (3) - British Three-master (7) = 2. Rackham's capture attempt DR of 7 allows the Merchant to escape as expected. Few players would have even attempted it with their own Pirate, but the solitaire rules handicap the dummy Pirates considerably.

Turn 82: Rackham - Anchors in Santo Domingo. Rackham's move dr of "2" requires him to return to port to refit. Fortunately, Rackham has done so poorly that he has yet to record an Attack History against *any* nationality and can therefore enter any port without an antipirate Governor.

If Jim were playing the short version (two-Pirate limit) game, now would be a good time to sail for Santo Domingo and duel Rackham before he can get away and De Lusan can turn his booty into the Net Worth that will give him the lead.

Turn 83: Rackham - Refit. In a neutral port, Rackham can repair only one point of combat damage per turn. He is now at "4".

Turn 84: de Lusan - Petition the Crown. Incredibly, de Lusan fails yet another 50% appeal for a KC with a two-digit DR of "53".

Turn 85: Blood - Careen. The lone point of storm damage is removed.

Turn 86: Blood - Removes Careen. He still remains in port, but is no longer grounded.

Turn 87: Blood - Move to V20. A move dr of "1" allows a voyage of only three hexes after paying to weigh anchor.

Turn 88: Rackham - Refit. The last point of Combat damage is repaired.

Turn 89: Random Event. The deck is reshuffled and a Native Uprising is drawn in Zanzibar. Governor Samuels is removed - and so is de Lusan's Safe Haven.

Turn 90: Rackham - Move to SL #33. Rackham beats Blood to the nearest Merchant.

Turn 91: New Merchant. More prey for de Lusan. Merchant in SL #64.

Figure 3: The Situation on Turn 96.

Turn 92: de Lusan - Move to J16. A move dr of "5" brings him within one turn's sale of the new Merchant in SL #64. His search on the way proves fruitless.

Turn 93: de Lusan - Move to SL #64.

Turn 94: Random Event. The reshuffle yields Crew Unrest. At level 13, Blood is untouchable so Rackham must be the target. With a Crew Unrest level of 5, a mutiny can occur on a DR of "6" or more - a 73% chance. Rackham rolls a "4" and avoids walking the plank.

Turn 95: Rackham - Attempt Capture. Ability (3) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - Spanish Sloop (3) = 8. Rackham rolls a "7" and finally takes a Merchant. The Booty is a paltry 65 doubloons, but the ship yields a Hostage. A torture dr of 4 gains information useful against Havana and improves the Crew Unrest one to "6". The Notoriety for this little encounter vaults Calico Jack all the way up to "9"!

Even in victory, hapless Calico Jack gets himself into trouble. The useful information forces Rackham to raid Havana, which is a very strong port - much too strong for a schooner manned by the likes of Rackham. A live player would postpone such a raid until he captured a bigger ship, but the solitaire rules don't cut the dummies any slack.

Turn 96: Blood - Move to Q20. A move dr of "2" allows a five-hex voyage; the resulting

search off the coast of Hispaniola yields two Merchants.

What I don't understand is why Blood has suddenly lost sight of his "Raid & Sack" strategy. It is a dangerous course to pursue because it gains so much notoriety, but once you've become the most notorious pirate there is no reason to stop. Push on and try to end the game as soon as possible. The longer the game continues with that target painted on your nose, the poorer your chances. Why dither around with those Merchants now?

Turn 97: Blood - Attempt Capture. Ability (5) + Combat (6) + Speed (3) - British Threemaster (7) = 7. Blood rolls an "8". The Merchant avoids capture and Blood takes a point of damage. Blood avoids injury but Crew Unrest drops to "12".

Turn 98: Rackham - Move to O19. Look out, Havana. Here come Calico Jack with delusions of grandeur.

Turn 99: Rackham - Petitions the Crown. Finally, the Crown agrees to send a KC to hunt down the infamous Captain Blood with a two-digit DR of "22". Mungo Herdman is dispatched to Transit Box 1.

Turn 100: Blood - Attempt Capture. I let the English ship go and try my luck against the other Merchant. I really don't want an Attack History versus England anyway and wouldn't have attacked last time had it not been for the Crew Unrest penalty for failing to try. Ability (5) + Combat (5) + Speed (3) - Spanish Threemaster (6) = 7. Blood rolls a "9" and takes two additional damage points! This calls for some Cunning. I have a 58% chance of taking this big Spaniard and I want to avoid the two damage points. So drop Blood's Cunning to "5" and reroll. Huzzah! "2,2" takes the prize and Blood transfers his flag to the bigger ship to boot! The Booty draw is disappointing though; only 10 doubloons! A large, empty ship! But on the positive side, a hostage is taken. The resulting torture gains no useful information (a damn shame with this fine ship) - but the Crew Unrest returns to "13" following the fine sport offered by the hostage's entertainment. Notoriety increases by six to "43" (five for the hostage). Converts from among the Spaniards crew more than make up for earlier losses and Blood sails off with a full complement for his new vessel.

I went after the second Merchant hoping it would be weaker. Had this still been the English one, I would not have been able to transfer to it since I had taken damage from it back on Turn 97. Acquiring a Three-masted square-rigger was well worth the cunning expended. Now I can go after the big ports! Blood seems to do well against the Spaniards. All of his victories have been against them, and all of his setbacks have come, ironically, at the hands of the English.

It is hard to argue with the results obtained, but without such hindsight I'd have been tempted to refrain from using my cunning. In so doing, I'd have denied Rackham use of his last measure of the precious resource, and God knows he will need it in Havana.

Turn 101: de Lusan - Capture Attempt. Ability (4) + Combat (6) + Speed (3) - British Schooner (4) = 9. De Lusan rolls an 11 for two points of damage. Cunning is expended (now at 3) for a reroll. The new DR is a 5 and captures the vessel. The take is a disappointing 45 doubloons. Notoriety increases one to "15". Not much of a gain for an expenditure of a Cunning point.

The Cunning "last use" marker didn't stay on Blood long, did it?

Turn 102: Random Event. The reshuffled deck yields an Earthquake result that flattens Curacao. Scratch another pro-piracy port and my Safe Haven. At least I wasn't there at the time, and I had no Net Worth stashed there.

Turn 103: de Lusan - Move to C14. With his Safe Haven gone and his holds full, de Lusan must head to Mocha (the last pro-pirate Port on the Indian Ocean).

Turn 104: Warship Intercepts Most Notorious Pirate. The Warship in Honduras is returned to the Draw cup and another is placed in Q20 with Blood and the English Merchant. With a Three-masted square-rigger, Blood is much more vulnerable to interception because he has no speed modifier; but his dr of "6" still leaves the Warship behind. I'm holding a raincheck for Honduras. Maybe I should go there now and make trouble.

It took 64 turns for this card to surface again. Blood is still living a charmed life.

Turn 105: Blood - Move to Q25. Move dr is 5. Forget Honduras. I'll go after the 3-8 ports. First, I want Cartagena. I'm not going to search for Merchants along the way because a storm right now could really mess up my plans.

Equally important, he will have no room in his holds. A sacked port fills all the holds of even a Three-masted square-rigger.

Turn 106: de Lusan - Anchor in Mochha.

Turn 107: de Lusan - Sell Booty. The pro-pirate Governor of Mocha yields 2799 Net Worth to De Lusan - one lousy doubloon short of tying Blood for most notorious. A bribe of "1" buys him a new Safe Haven in Mocha, whose Governor Richier proved easily bought.

Turn 108: New Merchant. SL #44 sees some activity.

Turn 109: de Lusan - Petitions the Crown. The chance for a successful petition against Blood is now 58%, but yet another petition goes unheeded on a two-digit DR of "56".

Turn 110: Rackham - Moves KC to BB21. Herdman is on the trail; but it is very difficult for one KC to catch a pirate - especially in the solitaire game. They really need to work in pairs to catch their target in a vice.

Turn 111: Blood - Anchors & Raids Cartagena. Ability (5) + Combat (10) + dr (6) = 21. Cartagena's defense of 8 could only muster a DR of "2,6" for a total of 16. Blood takes Carta-

gena at a cost of one combat point. His Combat strength drops to 9 and his Crew Unrest to 12. The booty on a three-dice roll = 1200 doubloons. He dumps the meager take from his last conquest (see Turn 100) to make room for the treasures of Cartagena. His Notoriety increases by the Port's defense strength of eight to "51". He is now more than half-way to a hard-earned victory.

Turn 112: de Lusan - Petitions the Crown. The chance for a successful petition against Blood is now 70% and the Crown can no longer ignore the pleas. Benjamin Hornigold is randomly drawn and placed in Transit Box 1. The plot thickens as two KC are out for Blood! Literally!

Turn 113: Rackham - Move Herdman to Y22.

Turn 114: New Merchant. SL #34 draws the traffic.

Turn 115: Remove Even Merchants. SLs #34 and #44 are vacated and another Merchant is placed in SL #35.

Turn 116: Blood - Sacks Cartagena. Ability (5) + Combat (9) + dr (3) = 17 against the weakened defense of 4 plus DR "3,6" = 13. Blood wins and takes two points of damage while avoiding personal injury. Crew Unrest is adjusted upwards three to 13 for sacking the town. Combat Track is now at 7 and Notoriety at 67. The Spanish have so much more than they need. I just help myself to some of it. Time to find a new Safe Haven in which to sell off my booty and make repairs.

Turn 117: Blood - Move to Q26. A Move dr of 1 allows only a one-hex advance. The journey to Port Royal may take some time at this rate. Square-riggers are slow. In spite of all my troubles at the hands of the British, I have yet to acquire an Attack History against them so I should find what I need there if not the outright hospitality of the destroyed Curacao.

Turn 118: Blood - Move to O24. A Move dr of "3" picks up the pace a bit.

Turn 119: de Lusan - Attempt Retirement. With a Net Worth of 3010 doubloons, de Lusan has a 33% chance to successfully retire. However, his two-digit DR is "31" and his crew insists he stays on. Denied peace by the lack of 90 lousy doubloons!

Turn 120: Blood - Moves to M22. Another Move dr of "3" brings Blood within sight of Port Royal.

This time Blood will take a turn longer than the 8-MP passage would normally require for a square-rigger. But the bounty of turns and absence of nearby opposition makes the slow passage of no consequence.

Turn 121: Blood - Anchors in Port Royal.

Turn 122: Rackham - Moves Herdman to V21.

Turn 123: Rackham - Moves Herdman to S22.

Turn 124: Random Event. The deck is reshuffled and yields "Hull Damage". Herdman and Rackham both lose a Speed box to "+2" and "3" respectively.

At present, this event is of little consequence since Rackham is on his way to raid Havana and has no use for speed. Herdman's loss is not yet reflected on his total speed as the averaged yield of most KC Speed Tracks is not reduced until they've taken several such losses.

Turn 125: de Lusan - Move Hornigold to AA21.

Turn 126: Blood - Sell Booty. I'm not actually selling anything yet. I'm using this operation round to bribe the Governor. I can pay for this out of my Net Worth on board. I am waiting to convert the Booty after acquiring Safe Haven status to get the 20% bonus for selling there. Because this is a Neutral port, rather than one in which the Governor is favorably disposed to Pirates, the bribe is more of a risk and requires a random draw of a pro-pirate Governor in addition to the Net Worth expenditure. The bribe dr is a "1", which is good because it cost me only 100 Doubloons, but bad because it apparently wasn't enough. An anti-pirate Governor is drawn and returned to the cup. Request denied. I'll have to try again.

Jim's strategy is correct. Net Worth is not as important to him as Notoriety. Net Worth is only a means to an end. He seeks to win by reaching 100 Notoriety and he can gain two extra Notoriety this time, plus more later, by waiting to convert his booty at the inflated prices of a Safe Haven. With two KCs after him, he will also need a Safe Haven for quick refit if he is to continue raiding ports.

Turn 127: New Merchant. SL #44 draws another passing ship, but suddenly there is little interest in Merchants.

Turn 128: Blood - Sell Booty. The Governor is holding out for more and his price is steep: a dr "6" will cost 600 of my remaining 700 Net Worth. This had better work because I can't afford another try. The Governor Draw is pro-pirate and Governor Richardson remains on board in Port Royal, my new Safe Haven from the dangers that abound.

Turn 129: de Lusan - Move to F17. A Move dr of 5 grants eight MP for the voyage.

Turn 130: Blood - Sell Booty. Add 1440 to Net Worth for a total of 1540. Notoriety gain of 14 to "81", and Crew Unrest tops out at "15" again.

Blood is in an exceedingly fine position. All he needs is the time to refit and sack one more port and the game is his regardless of de Lusan's wealth. If those KCs or a Warship don't catch him soon, the game will be over.

Turn 131: de Lusan - Move to F22. The five-hex move ends in a fruitless search of the coastal waters off Madagascar.

Turn 132: Warship Intercepts Most Notorious Pirate. The Warship off Hispaniola is returned to the cup and a British 7-5 is drawn. Being in a British port, Blood is Ousted at a cost of one more damage point (now at "6") and a drop of one on the Crew Unrest to "14". But the real threat comes in the form of an injury to Blood ,who is among the casualties from the Ousting. To come so close just to be offed by a lucky shot . . . no fear, the injury is deemed superficial.

The British just won't leave Blood alone. The 7-5 isn't very powerful, but down four crew boxes Blood is at his most vulnerable and the square-rigger is too slow to outrun this adversary. A repeat of the earlier episode of multiple "Move Warship" draws could yet bring Blood to justice. With only three "Notorious" draws in 132 turns, Blood has been fortunate so far.

Turn 133: Random Event. What a close call! Blood is saved by a technicality from an automatic interception sure to have cost him, at the least, some more damage. The fact that the Warship is in port while Blood is at sea in the same hex means that the two are not in the same location and consequently the automatic interception does not apply. Instead, the Random Event merely announces the arrival of a new anti-pirate Governor (Tolliver) in Charleston.

Turn 134: Blood - Move to N21. A move dr of 1 emphasizes the lack of speed of the square-rigger as Blood crawls one hex away from the Warship. He remains well within its range; but even if it doesn't pursue Blood, it has effectively robbed him of his newly secured Safe

Figure 4: The Situation on Turn 154.

Haven. I'll now have to make for Tortuga to refit.

The hindsight afforded by recent events points out an error in judgement by Jim back on Turn 130 that escaped me at the time. After securing his Safe Haven, Blood's next operation should have been to refit - not to sell booty. Always think in terms of maintaining your ship in fighting trim first. The game has demonstrated how quickly disaster can strike from out of nowhere. Should the Warship pursue him, Blood will wish he had a full crew much more than that added Notoriety.

Turn 135: Remove Odd Merchants. The Merchants in SLs #35 and #45 are removed, and a new one is placed in SL #36.

Turn 136: Blood - Anchor in Tortuga. Blood's luck returns. A move dr of 5 is just enough to enable him to safely anchor in Tortuga. A quick refit and we'll be off.

Turn 137: Rackham - Move to K18.

Turn 138: Random Event - The reshuffled deck again results in "Hull Damage" for Rackham and Herdman, whose Speed Tracks are reduced to "+1" and "3" respectively. Unfortunately for me, Herdman's ship can take two points of "hull rot" before it loses any speed. But the next such event will force him to careen.

Turn 139: Rackham - Anchor in & Raid Havana. Ability (3) + Combat (5) + DR due to useful information (7) = 15 against the Havana Defense (10) + DR (1,2) = 13. Shiver me timbers! Bumbling ol' Calico Jack turned a suicide

run into the coup of the century. He takes Havana without losing a man! His share of the booty is 1900 Doubloons and his Notoriety increases by ten to 19. Blood is now the poorest Pirate on the board!

Well, that impressed the hell out of me. It just goes to show that you can never rule out the unexpected in BLACKBEARD. Rackham's exploits to the contrary, I will nonetheless change the second edition rules of the game to make such suicidal raids by dummy pirates non-mandatory in the future.

Turn 140: New Merchant. Fresh prey for de Lusan in the Indian Ocean as a Merchant appears in SL #65.

Turn 141: Rackham - Move Herdman to P20. Uh-oh! A KC has closed to within one move of Blood.

Turn 142: Blood - Refit. The Pirate Haven completes all repairs and Blood is ready to sail with a combat factor of 10 again.

Once again, Blood gets a turn just when he needs it.

Turn 143: Blood - Ransom Hostage. A Ransom dr of "5" adds 400 to my Net Worth, increases my Notoriety to 85, and maximizes Crew Unrest at 15. I'll refuse the Mandatory D&R for selling Booty in a Pirate Haven as my crew is too fond of me at "14" to cause any trouble. If I can sack Santiago before I run into a Warship or KC, the game will be over.

I wouldn't risk being blockaded in Tortuga for the sake of ransom now. The 20% reduction for sales in a Pirate Haven make the likely Notoriety to be gained a mere "2" or less - which is hardly crucial at this point. Better to be out and away from Herdman before he can cause trouble. You can always ransom the hostage later if necessary. But why Santiago? I realize it is the closest port, but it's also within one turn of the Warship in Port Royal (and Herdman as well). It would be much safer to try for San Juan or St. Augustine which also have weaker garrisons. Sacking either would still win the game and would leave potential trouble far behind.

Turn 144: Blood - Anchor & Raid Santiago. Ability (5) + Combat (10) + dr (4) = 19 versus Santiago defense (9) + DR (4,5) = 18. Blood wins the raid but takes three points of damage while avoiding personal injury. Combat strength drops to "7" and Crew Unrest to "11". The Booty is 700 Doubloons, but Notoriety increases by nine to "94". All we have to do is sack her and it's over. The odds are in my favor!

The odds are in his favor all right, even moreso than for the initial raid where the most likely outcome was 18:16. The "average" resolution of the upcoming sack attempt improves to 15:12 - and Blood still has a Cunning use in reserve. But port raids are dangerous and he could still be robbed of his victory by an injury. Posthumous Notoriety doesn't count! The nearby presence of Herdman and the British Warship still make this a perilous undertaking whose wisdom I question.

Turn 145: Rackham - Move to I18. Satisfied with the loot of Havana, Rackham heads for New Providence and a week of wine, women and song.

Turn 146: Random Event. The reshuffled deck yields another Native Uprising. And this time it is in Santiago. Groan! Blood is Ousted with the loss of another combat point and victory is snatched from his grasp. His Combat Track is reduced to "6" and Crew Unrest to "10", but he again escapes any Personal Injury.

If I didn't know better, I'd suspect this thing was scripted by a Hollywood writer rather than actually played. The "nick of time" circumstances are becoming rather too extraordinary. Now if the game can just move that Warship or Herdman onto the weakened Blood, he can truly be made to pay for his misadventure.

Turn 147: Blood - Anchor in Tortuga.

Blood continues to get the turns just when he needs them. He even completes the trip to Tortuga in one turn, when on average it should take two.

Turn 148: Blood - Sell Booty. Add 560 to Net Worth for a total of 2500. Notoriety gain of five gets him to "99" and Crew Unrest returns to maximum status. I'm so close I can taste it! Blood will once again refuse the Mandatory D&R. Crew Unrest drops to 14.

Another mistake. Refit first! You're still in danger. Close only counts in horseshoes. If you hang with 99 Notoriety you still lose.

Turn 149: Blood - Refit. Combat Track returns to 10.

Sheesh. What luck! Six of the last seven player turns have gone to Blood! He can't lose at this rate.

Turn 150: Rackham - Anchors in New Providence.

Turn 151: Move Warship. The British 7-5 in Port Royal raises anchor and moves to O19.

Turn 152: de Lusan - Hornigold to W21.

Turn 153: New Merchant. SL #25 sights another sail.

Turn 154: Rackham - Move Herdman to Tortuga. Blockaded, Blood's Crew Unrest drops to 13. The noose is getting snug! If the Warship gets another turn before Blood does, I will see my first anti-pirate campaign.

155: Blood - Moves two. Blood attempts to run the blockade. He rolls a "2" for the Interception attempt with no speed bonus to Herdman's "5" dr. The battle is joined. Blood's ability (5) + Combat (10) + DR (8) = 23. Herdman (15) rolls a "10" for 25! Now is the chance to exercise Blood's cunning. Herdman and Blood are evenly matched at full strength (with a base strength of 15 apiece). Whoever wins the first round will have the upper hand. Blood's only advantage is his Cunning, and he uses it now. Blood's reroll is a "9"; Herdman's a "5". Blood wins by four! This reduces Herdman's combat

strength to 11, but also requires four injury rolls and one results in a superficial wound for Herdman - which further reduces his Combat Track another box down to nine. He has now taken sufficient damage that each box causes a loss of two combat factors - not just one. Blood takes one point of damage, but avoids personal injury. I have him!

I won the round so I can choose to continue the battle or break it off. As soon as I leave the hex I can claim five more Notoriety for escaping battle and that will win me the game. However, I estimate that, with the remaining deck, Blood has a 70% chance of escaping before a Warship shows up in his hex. Presently he has a +5 modifier in combat with Herdman. Discounting ties, this gives him an even better chance of winning outright by sinking Herdman, so I continue the fight. In the next round, Blood's base strength of 14 and DR of "9" = 23. Herdman with a base strength of 9 and a DR of "7" can muster only 16 and he plunges to the bottom. All that remains is to survive the injury check caused by the last point of damage gained in the exchange, and Captain Blood certainly does. A gain of 15 Notoriety for sinking Herdman gives Blood 114 and the game.

What Jim didn't consider in his calculation is the possibility of injury in winning even a lop-sided battle. He needed to win the DR by two to dispatch Herdman in one round and thus expose Blood to only one more injury roll. He did just that, but I question the wisdom of trusting to such luck when another turn would have taken him out of the hex and granted him victory without combat. At this point, he had no more Cunning to use in this exchange and a bad dice roll could have been catastrophic and unalterable. Herdman needed only to win the dice roll to force at least two more rounds of battle with the accompanying risk of injury to Blood. It would have been the ultimate irony had Blood fallen this close to victory.

AFTERMATH:

As luck would have it, Captain Blood won this time. It doesn't happen all that often - especially if you play the dummy Pirates in what I call a "suicide mode". This consists of moving to keep within three hexes of Blood and dogging his every move, searching in an attempt to find a storm that would affect Blood due to his proximity, and being in position to strike any Merchant that comes along before Blood can get to it. If both dummies play this strategy and it is executed carefully, Blood will have to outlive at least three, and as many as five, other Pirates before the game is over. This strategy can be used against live players, as well. If you find your Pirate has the most Net Worth, activate another one and use him to try to pick off the Pirates of your weakest opponent. If you get control of a KC, use it. KCs aren't as fast as Pirates; but between having to refit, careen, sell booty, ransom hostages, etc. a Pirate can spend only a fraction of his turns actually moving around the board.

I have yet to find a sure-fire strategy to winning at *BLACKBEARD*. I have lost many more solitaire games than I have won. There are a number of ways to succeed in the game, and many more to die in the trying.

"Suicide mode" is not all that easy to administer in practise. First, it assumes that Pirates will start in the same general areas and move in roughly equal blocks of turns. As we've just seen, turns in BLACKBEARD rarely follow any path of even distribution. Moreover, even if Pirates did move in turn, they rarely move at the same speed and in order to search at all a Pirate must move as many hexes from his last position as he has movement points. Consequently, tagging along within three hexes of another Pirate is just not all that common an occurrence. Nevertheless, using a second "throw-away" pirate to dog the steps of a main competitor is not a bad tactic - especially if he turns out to be a good swordsman in a duel. One must be careful, however, that he won't need that "throw-away" himself should his main character come to grief. In general, I reserve such tactics for situations where I have retired a Pirate with the lead and I can end the game by eliminating the last pirate of another player. Otherwise, I find having two Pirates in play to be a detriment because you have to split your turns between them (which makes it difficult to keep out of harm's way once the KCs come calling).

The solitaire game plays quite differently from the multi-player game. The Dummy players tend to live up to their name and are obviously less flexible than a live opponent. For instance, in this replay, it is obvious that had it been a live game, once Blood had reached 80 Notoriety, the other players would have abandoned their own Pirate moves in favor of moving their KCs at every opportunity. Instead, the game allowed them to move KCs on only certain of the card draws. This is balanced (in theory) by the fact that Blood is both one of a kind and up against a solid coalition of opponents who are always after him, and not each other. In the multi-player game, players change allegiances and targets of opportunity as the situation warrants - the old "gang up against the leader" philosophy prevails. Consequently, KC activity and pirate mortality tends to be much more in evidence. I dare say that Jim would have spent a lot more of his turns obtaining and moving a KC in a multi-player game. Here, all but one of his turns graced Blood as he kept his goal of winning by Notoriety evermost in mind and left the dummy Pirates to fend for themselves.

Many times during my commentary I referred to Jim's seeming good fortune in keeping Blood out of trouble. I admit to being a hopeless devotee of analyzing the luck factor in games - being both attracted and appalled by the vagaries of fate in games. There are many ways to assess the "luck factor" in a game and when you combine both dice rolls (especially of different types, dr, DR, and the two-digit variety) and card draws you can get into some hopelessly sophisticated analysis. Whether a player rolls high or low on average means less in this game than in most, because the most desirable result is not consistently a high or low outcome. So let's restrict our "luck analysis" to an admittedly simplified look at the card draws.

A Scoundrel's Log
Helpful Suggestions for Beginners
By Cliff Odell

Have you had enough of blitzing through Russian infantry in *RUSSIAN FRONT*? Getting tired of always having to take a fortified building manned by fanatical Guards in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*? Don't care to sink the *Kaga* and *Akagi* in *FLAT TOP* again? Well, how would you like to capture merchantmen full of Aztec treasure or Eastern spices, sailing a ship manned by the most vicious outlaws in the world? All that, plus you get to spend time in the Bahamas? If this sounds like a nice change of pace from your usual weekend of wargaming, then oil your rapier and set sail for the shipping lanes. What I mean is, of course, grab a copy of Avalon Hill's newest game, *BLACKBEARD*. But, before heading out of harbor, you may wish to have some hints on play. Who knows? Maybe a tidbit of this advice will secure you the infamy of being the most notorious pirate in your neighborhood.

BLACKBEARD depicts the "golden" years of piracy and enables you to take on the role of a pirate captain. It is an excellent simulation that neatly meshes skill and luck; between eluding warships and the ever-feared King's Commissioners, while trying to amass a fortune and retire, the pirate player always has something to worry about. There is so much in this new game to think about that the novice player may be unsure of where to begin or what type of strategy to use, in addition to their normal unfamiliarity with the rules. Therefore, this article will offer some ideas and general strategy to think about before that first game actually starts, and

then give some guidelines on specifics during play.

One point to mention before forging ahead. The reader may find it bothersome that each rules section is noted as it comes up in the discussion, but this is done so that the novice can read along with the rules and note the particular cases as they are mentioned. I find that this method helps commit the rules to memory quickly. I will also highlight some of the rules that are occasionally forgotten or passed over by the beginning player.

Preparation

To start, follow the age-old advice of reading the rules through once. Get acquainted with the major concepts and basic mechanics of the system first. Then take a second reading to absorb the finer points and details. Since the rules are only thirteen pages this should not be a problem (especially for any lurking *ASL* veterans). If one does not mind marking their rulebook, use a highlighter to note important sections and rules; this speeds play when consulting the rulebook. Pay particular attention to the sections concerning the Action Line (Rule 6), Operations (7), Merchant Ships (9) and King's Commissioners (13). Those four are the major rules sections that one should know. The Action Line (6) is, perhaps, the single most important element of the design and is the heart of the system; so take some extra time to look over the cards and get a "feel" for them. While you are at it, take a look at the Pirate cards. Learn what each ability

listed on the card means, so that when you receive that first buccaneer, you will know what his strengths and weaknesses are.

Now for the mapboard. As in most wargames, the map is the stage, so break out both sections and study them. While doing so, think about the victory conditions of the game: A player's pirate must have either 100 Notoriety or the highest Net Worth at game's end to win. To achieve either of these goals, a pirate must attack merchants and raid/sack ports as his main source of both infamy and income.

Shipping Out

After you find who your pirate will be, you need to decide what type of ship to start him with. Unless you "inherit" a ship due to a mutiny or other such circumstance (Rule 12.4), the only type you may start with is a Sloop or a Schooner. The Sloop has one more Combat Point than does the Schooner, but the Schooner has a special Evasion die roll it may make when in a coastal hex. This ability often comes in handy should you run into a warship, but I still am not sure if the sacrifice in firepower is worth it. Since both ships have identical hold space and hull strength, it is up to the player's individual taste and style as to which ship to take.

And, speaking of ship types, notice Rule 9.64. It states that a pirate may take a captured merchant ship if he rolls doubles and has taken no damage during that action. If you do meet these requirements, you must decide whether to transfer your flag to the new-found ship. If the

captured ship is the same type as yours and you have sustained any Speed or Combat damage earlier in the game, why not take the undamaged "sister" ship. But when (and if) the opportunity comes, should you upgrade to a larger ship? The first few times I played, I always elected to grab the biggest ship I could, until finally I captured a Three-Masted Square Rigger. I was overjoyed with the power of a ship with a Combat strength of "10"; taking merchant ships and raiding ports never seemed easier. But then I wondered why I was attacked a lot more often, and why I couldn't outrun enemy warships and King's Commissioners. Take a look at the Three-Masted Square Rigger card. It does indeed have a good Combat strength, but it also has a "0" Speed modifier. Simply put, the more cannons you carry, the slower your ship is. It will not be able to lead King's Commissioners on wild goose chases; and if you happen to be the "Most" notorious pirate, warships will intercept you again and again (see Rule 8.51). With this in mind, the Sloop's or the Schooner's excellent speed gives them the best chance to escape a conflict; if they roll a "4" or higher (with no Speed damage) they get away automatically. A wonderful asset to have, especially when your ship has full holds and hostages. Of course, the larger vessels do have their advantages; but for the first game or so, I would recommend that you use the smaller ships. Once you get the hang of the system, you should experiment with the larger ships, for they do have some interesting potential.

Now that you have a pirate — and a ship for him to command — where to put him? The best starting place for your first pirate in the game will probably be the North Atlantic/Caribbean, as this is the largest area and the most likely to see merchants come into play via the "Action Line". The merchant ships in the Caribbean usually carry a goodly amount of booty as well, and there are many shipping lanes to choose from. Another reason to start your career in the North Atlantic/Caribbean is that it contains two of the three Pirate Havens. These are not as safe as they sound, but are handy assets nevertheless (as explained below).

If you are the last player in the game to activate a pirate, however, and the larger mapboard is already crowded with fellow heathens, then the Indian Ocean is not a bad place to start. Yes, it is smaller, but it does have a Pirate Haven, and the merchants there are often heavily laden with treasure. One positive advantage to the Indian Ocean is the relatively weak ports there, which can often be raided and sacked at slight risk (versus some of the heavily fortified North Atlantic/Caribbean ports). One major disadvantage of the Indian Ocean, and a downright deadly one for the Gold Coast area, is exemplified when the King's Commissioners enter play. These two bodies of water are small enough that, should a pirate need to escape, he will only find very temporary safety. At least on the other, larger seas you can skirt around the islands or make a dash for a board edge. The lesser seas do have a some advantages, but until you get used to the game system, try to stay to the wider areas.

Now that you have chosen your first zone of operations, exactly what hex do you place your ship on in that vast expanse of blue? Well, might as well get right into the action; place it on top of a merchant ship. I have yet to see a better way to start the game than this. And speaking of merchant ships, read Rule 9.62 carefully. It states that a pirate must *take* a merchant to receive its "Nationality Attack" flag, not just *attempt* to take it.

So, before the game actually begins, you should make some sort of decision as to who your friends and enemies will be. This means deciding at the outset which nation's merchants and ports you will (and won't) attack. Each pirate should keep at least one nation friendly if the player entertains any hope of victory. This is a vital choice, as it will determine those ports you may do business with (sell booty, repair damage) and from whom you may purchase a Safe Haven. Once you have decided who this friendly country will be, stick with it.

To properly choose whom to befriend and whom to plunder, you need to consult the map again. First take a long look at the North Atlantic/Caribbean map. There are eight British ports, ten Spanish ports, two French ports, one Dutch port and two Pirate Havens. With these numbers in mind, look at the number of merchant ships from each nation. There are seven British, six Spanish, four French, four Dutch, four Portuguese, and seven unflagged ships that have a chance of being any nation's (but will usually be British or Spanish as per Rule 9.21). It should be obvious that Britain and Spain have the largest number of ships. And remember the ports mentioned above? Britain and Spain have the most ports in the North Atlantic/Caribbean. So, for the beginner and/or conservative player, the best choice of the one country to befriend would be either Britain or Spain, for they offer the most ports that are eligible as Safe Havens. The two nations have almost equal merchant ship values, so this need not be considered as a factor.

But before randomly choosing one or the other of the "Big Two" as your "friend", consider this: As ports garner excellent booty and notoriety, the nation with the weakest ports is the easiest to attack. The British ports, with the exception of Bermuda and Port Royal, are all rather stoutly defended. The Spanish ports, on the other hand, are slightly weaker. If the pirate has information from a hostage (which allows an extra die roll in a port raid; rules 9.73 and 15.3), his chances for some quick gold are almost assured. Note especially Havana. With a strength of "10", it is a slight gamble to attack, but with its fall comes a booty of five dice rolls added and then multiplied by 100. That's anywhere from 500 to 3000 pieces of eight! A grab of booty that large makes the risk well worth it. If that hasn't convinced you, compare Havana with British ports that also have a value of "5" and notice their strengths: "12", "14", "15", "17". Only Bermuda, and maybe Port Royal, are feasible targets for a raid. That's only two ports compared with nine "easy" Spanish ones. Another good reason to befriend the British in the North Atlantic/Caribbean area is Port Royal itself. It makes an excellent Safe Haven if you're lucky enough to reach it, and improves

the chances of a win nicely. Port Royal is ringed by seven Spanish Ports and seven Shipping Lanes, all within easy reach. This makes an ideal base from which to sally out to relieve the Spanish of their wealth. There are several other benefits for staying on good terms with Britain, and I'll touch upon them shortly.

You may be wondering why I have not suggested attacking *both* the British and the Spanish and ally with France or the Netherlands. There are few reasons against this, but they're good ones. First, as noted above, France has only two ports on the Atlantic/Caribbean map, and the Netherlands only one; the two French ports are located adjacent to each other. This limits your manueverability when attempting to return quickly to a friendly port, or if you are in need of a haven. If a pirate ship is in the far north or in the Bahama Islands area, it could take three to four turns to reach those Dutch/French ports on the other side of the map. This is extremely risky if you have damage of any sort. A King's Commissioner or warship in the region has a good chance to intercept you, and since you never know whose turn is next, you could be becalmed in the middle of the sea for several turns. Only very brave or powerful pirates should elect France or the Netherlands as their "friendly" nation.

If the Atlantic Ocean/Caribbean is full of pirates and you've elected to start in the Indian Ocean, you will still need to select a nation to which to tie your fortunes. In this case I would recommend the opposite of the above, and choose either the French or Dutch as a friendly nation (preferably the Dutch since they also have a port on the Gold Coast). This comes in handy if you need to make a hasty withdrawal from the Indian Ocean. There is only one British port in the Indian Ocean, and since the British have seven merchant ships, they make too common and rich a target to pass up. Another nationality found in the Indian Ocean are the Moors. Don't even bother to trade with them unless you need to . . . and for God's sake, don't elect to stay friendly with them! They have the most Ports in the area, (three), all of them with a Garrison Rating of under "9", and make easy raid objectives. Since Spanish ships are considered unflagged in the Indian Ocean (Rule 9.21), these have a decent chance of being Moorish. The Moors don't have any ports outside the Indian Ocean, so if you need to leave the region you will not have to worry about having any ports closed to you in the other seas. Therefore, attack the Moors with abandon for they will form the core of your wealth and notoriety in the area.

The Facts of Pirate Life

When you start playing *BLACKBEARD*, you will notice that merchants come and go from the Shipping Lanes as often as they like (due to the mechanics of the Action Line). Because of this feature, the Shipping Lanes should not be used as your primary source of prey. The best way to find merchants is by Searching (Rule 9.3). After a pirate moves, he may draw a card and consult the Action Line to see if he bumps into anything. Read 9.3 carefully. It states a pirate must move his *full* Speed away from his starting position in order to Search. Sailing in

circles doesn't work one bit. Also, be aware that some cards have a Warship or a Storm on the Search Line (which can damage your ship unexpectedly).

You may also notice that sometimes you find a Merchant Ship *only* if the pirate ship is in a coastal hex. The problem with this is that there are also a number of cards that have Warships appear if you *do* search the coast. If that's not sufficiently humbling, consider that drawing a Storm card while searching in a coastal hex inflicts two die rolls of Speed damage instead of the usual one roll if at sea (9.31). So use caution when searching, and more notably while on coastal hexes. If your ship has any type of damage, take the time to consider your Searches carefully, as there is no way to be sure of what they will uncover. A good way to garner booty and notoriety is to head toward full Shipping Lanes while searching the seas along the way. This makes finding merchants a lot more likely, and disaster less so.

Once you have captured a merchant ship, it's time to party! You may, or may not, have to declare "Debauchery and Revelry" (rules 9.8 and 9.82). Unless your crew is unhappy (having, for instance, a Crew Unrest marker at "3" or less), you should not declare Debauchery and Revelry. I'd even go so far as to say a "Mutiny Check" is better (if my pirate's Leadership is above "4") than to suffer from the Debauchery and Revelry penalties. At least with a Mutiny Check, the Crew Unrest marker goes back to "6" and not just one point upward. "Debauchery and Revelry" is a deadly handicap ("-2" on Speed/Combat rolls) and it always seems that a warship pops up just when your crew is hung over. You also lose one turn with that pirate (Rule 9.8), and since player turns can be so far apart in this system, that penalty can stay on long enough for an enemy ship to appear and attack. (Just read the back of the Bartholomew Roberts card and you'll get the idea.) Rule 9.8 does state, however, that the *player* doesn't lose the turn; only the *pirate* does. If you insist on the celebration of your good fortune, this is a fine time to "Petition the Crown" (13.21) for a King's Commissioner, or to take a "free" action with one already on the board.

Hostages also find their way into your hands once in a while. When a merchant is taken, the player needs to determine whwther a hostage is on board the new prize (Rule 9.71). Don't forget to add the Ocean Modifier (depending on your ship's location). If there is no hostage, well, better luck next time. If there is one, you next need to find the hostage's Home Port by consulting the "Home Port" line on an Action Card (Rule 9.72). If there is an asterisk on the Home Port line, then the Home Port is the closest port of the merchant ship's *nationality* (not just the closest port). Now that you know the hostage's origin (or destination, if you will), you can elect to torture him for information regarding that port's defences (Rule 9.73). If you succeed in this (by rolling equal to or less than the pirate's Cruelty rating), you will be able to roll two dice (instead of one) if you raid that port. If you decide to torture the hostage, you also gain a level on the Crew Unrest Track. (I really advise against torturing the hostage if his Home Port has the same nationality as your

proposed Safe Haven. The only thing you will gain, unless you plan to turn against your ally, is a modification to the Crew Unrest Track.)

But read Rule 9.73 carefully:m A pirate must roll *exactly equal* to his Cruelty, or the hostage dies during torture; only a one-in-six chance of survival! For a lousy one-point increase in Crew Unrest, the pirate has cheated himself out of 100 to 600 pieces-of-eight in ransom. So, if you do not plan on actually attacking the hostage's Home Port, don't torture the poor soul unless crew morale is dangerously low and you're far from a friendly port. It's better to raise the Crew Unrest Marker a few points more when the ransom money is received (one level on the Crew Unrest Track for every 100 turned into Net Worth). If you do torture the hostage and get information, remember that the information only lasts for a while (Rule 9.73).

Now, a word on Pirate Havens. Don't sail into them unless you have no other choice. To begin with, they are a poor place to trade, knocking 20% off the top of any booty turned into Net Worth (the guys who run these places are the *real* pirates). Note also that Rule 10.22 tells a player that his pirate *must* declare "Debauchery and Revelry" when booty and hostages are "cashed in" at a Pirate Haven. Note also Rule 9.81, which forces the "Most Notorious" pirates into a duel whenever "Debauchery and Revelry" is performed in a Pirate Haven. There are two redeeming points to a Pirate Haven, though. One is that King's Commissioners cannot enter without a squadron of warships (Rule 14.31); the other is that it repairs all your damage in one Repair Operation. Taking these facts into consideration, the best way to use a Pirate Haven is in emergencies. If your pirate is being chased by a King's Commissioner and you have damage, duck into the haven for quick repairs and protection. Otherwise, Pirate Havens are no better then piratical tourist traps.

Finally, don't sail off to another sea unless you really need to, as it's always best to stay where your roots are. The Transit Boxes chew up a lot of movement, taking an entire Operation to enter each box (Rule 8.6). It may also seem that every time you wish to use a Transit Box, a King's Commissioner or a warship appears, and since Interception is automatic while in a Transit Box whenever a Random Event is drawn (Rule 8.52), you need to use caution. Finally, you are forced to stop at a port first before re-entering the same Transit Box. The best advice I can offer is to use the Transit Boxes sparingly.

Pitfalls of the Pirate Life

I have spent some time thus far warning about King's Commissioners. The time has come to stress their importance to players as they seek to win the game. The only way one can directly hurt another pirate in the game with their own pirate is by a Duel (19). But, duels don't occur all that often, and unless a pirate is a truly gifted swordsman he can end up dead. Each player, on the other hand, has the option to go "pirate hunting" with any King's Commissioner he happens to control. These powerful lawmen are received by either Petitioning the Crown (Rule 13.21) or by a Random Event

(17K). I personally wouldn't waste a turn petitioning the Crown, unless another player is far in the lead or if all the other players have King's Commissioners and you don't. Far better to receive one "free" by Random Event. Remember that a player may have only two King's Commissioners in play at any one time.

The KC (as they are affectionately known in our circle) is a valuable tool to discourage other players from "interfering" with one another. If a player does have a King's Commissioner and the game is somewhat even, he shouldn't use him all that often. It only attracts attention to that player (and to their pirate currently in play) as an object of frustrated revenge. Using one takes up an entire player turn as well, so your pirate will just sit on the board while you move the KC. However, if one player is definitely in the lead, or the other players are using their own KCs aggressively, send out one of your own and try to engage a pirate. This will keep them on the run and allow you to catch up to merchants with your own pirate. Once a player's pirate retires (they should be so lucky), all they can do is control King's Commissioners and warships, so use them then without caution. You will need to knock out the other players as fast as possible in order to secure victory.

Warships are painful thorns in every pirate's side. Unless you have a KC to "team up" with a warship, they are fairly weak. If you chase another pirate with one, all that can be expected is to have that same player eventually chase your pirate with a warship. This helps no one. So, before King's Commissioners become active in the game, just sail the warships into corners were they can do little damage. This may seem limp-wristed, but it clears the Shipping Lanes of unwanted men-o-war and lets everyone worry about securing those first merchants. But, once the game is well afoot and you have a KC, use them.

When combined with the King's Commissioner, warships make a deadly force and should drive most pirates out of an area. A good use for a warship (and any KC available), is to blockade or oust an opponent's pirate from his port. You may enter and oust (Rule 13.5) him only if the warship is of the same nationality as the port. Blockading (14.3) is another fine way to hinder a pirate. The blockaded pirate loses one step on the Crew Unrest Track, and will go down another for each Random Event drawn while still blockaded. A pirate can be Intercepted if leaving the blockaded port and will not be able to return to that port until he has landed at a different port first. This is a *major* drawback when the port that pirate has just escaped from is their Safe Haven. Rule 14.3 also forbids the selling of booty or hostages while blockaded. If a pirate with full holds is in his Safe Haven, and can be blockaded with a KC and/or a warship, do it! He will need to break the blockade first, and then sail to another port before being able to return to his (again) blockaded Safe Haven. If he elects to sell his booty in the new port, he might take a loss on the deal, depending on which type of port he does the trading in. And, if the pirate wishes to stash his Net Worth, he must run the blockade *again*. Truly, an unkind way to deal with that pirate's new-found wealth.

Raiding ports is the best way to quickly pick up Notoriety, Booty, and Crew Unrest points. But the forts guarding them are often very powerful, and can sink your ship in one shot. Raiding a port should not be as automatic a reflex as pouncing on merchants; it should be a planned and cautious affair. Some ports are so pathetic in defense (Ethiopia and Cormantin, for example) that this advice may sound overly cautious. But read Rule 15.3: Even if the pirate wins a raid, he still suffers damage equal to *one less than the lowest die roll that the port made.*

By way of example, a pirate with an undamaged Sloop and an Ability of "4" is attacking Ethiopia, and rolls a "12". The port also rolls a "12". The pirate has certainly "won". But, when one is subtracted from the "6" rolled to calculate the damage taken (in accordance with 15.3), he ends up suffering five points of damage. That leaves his formerly pristine Sloop with only one damage point left, and our pirate hoping he doesn't run into a storm or warship on the way home! Of course this example might be a rare occurrence indeed, but it can happen. And what if the port had been Santa Domingo instead of Ethiopia? I would hope the novice can see what even a lightly defended port can do to a ship. The most important thing to remember about raids is that the raiding force will take damage 84% of the time. With that in mind, I offer some advice.

If you have any information from a hostage on a port, use it and attack that port before the information becomes dated (9.73). This information will improve the chances of successfully raiding that port. Another point is to make sure all damage to your ship is repaired before ever sailing into those guns. If you should somehow receive damage while on the way to attack a port, turn back and get it repaired; every damage point counts.

Sacking ports is a wonderful way to gain Notoriety and make the crew happy. It is also dangerous, and I'd advise against it unless you have taken little or no damage and are able to use your Cunning rating as a backup. A nasty trick, one that's sure to win you some applause, is to sack a port where another pirate has stashed his Net Worth. According to Rule 15.5, stashed Net Worth is lost if the port is sacked! (Another good reason to stay on good terms with the British; if you have a strong port as your Safe Haven, which most of the British ports are, then it is unlikely that you will lose any hard-won wealth to another pirate.)

To sum up, attack weak ports once in a while, even if you don't have useful information from a hostage. They provide quick and valuable booty and notoriety. The Indian Ocean has the best ports for this action, as most are weak. On the other hand, if you are daring, try to take some of the Spanish ports. They are wealthy and moderately defended, but not so strong as to make them impregnable. Lastly, if you have the information (and are fool-hardy enough), go for one of the British ports on the upper East Coast of the Americas. These are very risky, but the wealth and notoriety to be gained is amazing.

Careening, Scurvy and Wounds are among the most dangerous events in the game, and can take a pirate out of the running before you can blink. There's nothing that can be done to prevent them, so when they occur, grit your teeth and hope for the best.

Let's consider "Careening". Always go to a port — a Pirate Haven or Safe Haven over another port if possible — to clean up your ship. The latter two will offer the best protection if an enemy ship sails near you. Only a Random Event can hurt a pirate while Careened in a port, but if caught on the coast, the pirate only has a 50-50 chance of survival (Rule 16.4). Careen your ship whenever it has Speed damage. Only if a King's Commissioner or warship is in the area should you elect to ignore Speed damage. Remember that you may be stuck scraping the hull for quite a while due to the Action Line, so try to sail to an isolated port, far from the law. Every point of speed counts in *BLACKBEARD*, so repair any lost speed as soon as possible.

There's not much to say on scurvy or wounds except that when a pirate has either, he should get to a port and implement a Recover Operation quickly. Both conditions gravely hinder pirates and crews, and the scurvy gets worse with time (whenever a Random Event is drawn). Remember that each time a pirate or King's Commissioner takes any combat damage, a die roll must be made to see if they are wounded (Rule 13.7). I will never forget the time I took a Spanish port while suffering only two points of damage and received two eye wounds! Damned grape shot!

Advanced Skulduggery

One of my all time favorite phrases from a wargaming article is from Marcus Watney's piece in the *Gamer's Guide to THIRD REICH*. The phrase referred to the Free Siberian Transfer, and was, simply: "Don't!" I can think of no better advice than this in discussing the use of multiple pirates in *BLACKBEARD*. Rule 6.21 allows up to two pirates from the same player to be on the board at one time, but you may still take only one action with one pirate per turn. This leaves the other pirate just milling about on his ship. This is a very dangerous predicament in this game as a King's Commissioner or warship may come along at any time. You cannot even form an "alliance" with your two pirates (20.2). There is no benefit to having two pirates play simultaneously as far as I am concerned, but perhaps there is some hidden advantage I have yet to find.

Cunning is an interesting part of *BLACKBEARD*, and one that has saved many a pirate from an early grave. Use your Cunning wisely, as it can be replenished only when "Peace is Declared" in Europe (17M), a condition that comes about solely by a rare Random Event. Expend Cunning only in the most life-threatening situation. For instance, if your ship sustains two hits from a merchant and you are far from a port, spend some Cunning and re-roll. If, however, you take only one point of damage and are in no immediate danger, don't bother wasting it. If you rolled three higher then what you needed to capture the merchant, it will escape anyway. I wouldn't waste any Cunning for a re-roll if the merchant gets away. No need to spend such valuable points on just one lost merchant. Use your Cunning during port raids and combat with KCs/warships, as even one bad roll avoided could save your pirate's life. Duels are another excellent time to make use of Cunning. In three-player or four-player games, use your Cunning from time to time. In a two-player game, however, denying the other player his ability to use Cunning (Rule 22.1) can prove decisive. (In my experience, the Cunning marker in two-player games takes on the role of the Initiative Chit in other wargames.) Simply denying its use to your opponent can seriously alter his plans, and even get his pirate killed. The same holds true at certain times in a three- or four-player game as well. If one player is in the lead in a multi-player game, you can try and deny him use of his Cunning by holding onto the marker. That would make him an easier target for the authorities to sink, and give you time to catch up.

"Letters of Marque" are valuable documents that enter play only by a Random Event (17E); but if you are able to obtain one, grab it as fast as you can. You must enter a port of the nation sponsoring the letter in order to purchase it, so if you have attacked that nation in the past you are out of luck. The Letter of Marque is used two ways. First, it automatically upgrades all ports of that nation one level. This means that all that country's ports are now open to you, and any port with a Pro-Pirate Governor is the equivalent of a Safe Haven. Very nice, indeed. The Letter of Marque also allows a pirate to "surrender" to a warship of the same country as the letter. If the letter is British, it also allows you to surrender to a KC (just one more reason why being allied with Britain is valuable). You may surrender to a King's Commissioner or a warship during a battle, and use your Letter of Marque to get out of the sticky situation (rules 13.63 and 18.2). There is some risk when using the letter, though. You may have to pay a fine and retire (or end up being hung at a crossroads). But then again, the letter could allow you to continue pirating; it all depends on the die roll. The disadvantage of a Letter of Marque is that if the "Peace Declared" Random Event is drawn, it will take all letters out of the game. They may come back into play, but you must go through the whole expense of procuring one again. Despite these problems, Letters of Marque are valuable. The letter is a form of insurance, and at the very least the ports of the nation from whom you got the letter are raised one level for you. That's reason enough to want one.

Alliances, for the most part, aren't a very efficient way of gaining an edge in either money or notoriety in *BLACKBEARD*. Just as it points out in the introduction on Alliances (20.1), they never last long and someone *always* gets cheated. I have never seen an alliance work very well for very long (usually not more then two or three actions) in this game. Most end with a duel on a captured merchant! Unless you have a good swordsman as a pirate, I wouldn't encourage an alliance. If you can trust your fellow players (ha!), alliances do make a tempting temporary venture. Remember that only the three- or four-player game allows any alliance to form. Port Attacks (20.6) are the

ODYSSEY ON THE HIGH SEAS

*Wherein The Hiftory of The Famous Game Concerning
The Adventures of BLACKBEARD, The Pirate,
and His Brethren is Revealed to The Public*

By Richard Berg

I once designed a game - the title of which presently escapes me - which went to print and hit the stands in less than four months. (Must have been a magazine game.) In any case, it certainly wasn't *BLACKBEARD*, whose gestation period was longer than that of a mastodon with a mother fixation.

Most of my game design ideas occur from a simple source: I find a neat looking map, and the rest is (at least hopefully) history. Not so *BLACKBEARD*, whose origins are almost antediluvian. An Origins convention conversation with Don Greenwood, back in the early 1980s, in which Don suggested that Avalon Hill *might* be interested in a family-oriented game on pirates provided the initial spark. Having just burdened myself with a mortgage the size of Zaire's national debt, anything that smacked of income sounded fine to me. In truth, I had always found pirates fascinating; I was a major fan of Rafael Sabatini's works (and especially one of the greatest historical novels ever written, *Captain Blood*). There was a large amount of information available, and the idea of combining a board game with role-playing - at Don's suggestion - was appealing. So we were off and rowing.

My first stroke of luck was stumbling upon a copy of the Time-Life series book, *The Pirates*, in a local library "good-riddance-to-bad-rubbish" sale. A quick reading instantly revealed we were going to have a problem. Although the idea was to do a multi-player game, 18th-century piracy was not an overly cooperative, or even interactive, venture. It was truly "every man for himself". Further research showed another looming roadblock, for both the designer and the player (and certainly for the pirates). Being a buccaneer was a very boring job, with long stretches of inactivity punctuated by quick - and deadly - bursts of action. It looked like this was a job for . . . Chrome Man!!!

The original map for "The Sea Hawks" - which was the original name chosen for the game (and by which it was known until it actually came out) - was a 17x44 inch hexagonal-field map, stretching from the New World all the way east to the coast of India. We did do a little warp-field action between Africa and South America; otherwise, we would have needed an extra map. The main feature thereon different from the present map was the presence of Shipping Lanes (more of which anon).

Many things that *BLACKBEARD* now features were in the original version: the pirates and their ratings have not changed overly much; the basic system which forces the pirates to balance "staying out of trouble" with "getting into trouble"; the use of Random Events;

the presence of King's Commissioners as a method of bringing the game to a close; and so on. What is interesting is how much of the original game is *not* around!

The first draft that Don Greenwood got to see actually caused him to move one of his eyebrows (with Don, a sign of excitement on a parallel with a major coronary). It was almost 100 pages long - or 2.5 times their present length. But my playtesters, a bunch of local high school kids (two of whom are now bankers), loved it. Then again, playtesters always love your game, especially when you're standing over their shoulders like Torquemada at a *sedar* and they expect a free copy at the end of the tunnel. However, in retrospect, these were teenagers and, to them, the idea of watching a burning ship sink into the sea, complete with its cargo of screaming slaves (see more, below), probably appealed to their rapidly growing sense of maturity.

Anyway, Greenwood tossed the manuscript into the lap of designer-extraordinaire, Joe Balkoski, who took one brief, but informed, look at the rules and told Don that anyone who published this was going to be shot by the shareholders. "Too long, too complex, too much . . . too bad."

Serendipitously, just about that time TSR had leveraged SPI into oblivion and one of SPI's expatriates, Dave Ritchie, was now handling board-game acquisitions up in Wisconsin. Dave, aware of the project, said he would take a look at it. So off it went to TSR with nary a change. After several months of playtesting, TSR was still interested, although not as much as before - and it would be some time until they could get around to it. Their testers, though, appeared to be high on it:

"... a game with very strong potential ... thorough, realistic and fun."

"...a fun game ... consistent (sic) in theme and play . The concept is good ..."

On the other hand, the same folks had this to say:

"... the organization is pretty bad throughout .... horrendous ...."

"(The) Governor's Daughter (rule) ... is unnecessary, sadistic, and vile."

"The Governor's daughter section should be drowned. It is a bit too crude; to put it mildly ... the game seems as though it would run a very long time. Is this normal for a wargame?"

(Probably D&D people; who else would think this was a "wargame?" And what exactly was there in the "Governor's Daughter Rule" that so captivated them?)

Actually, there was no Governor's Daughter Rule, per se. That bit was part of what I felt was

the "chromatic" heart of the game: the (infamous) Cruelty Tables. The historical background - and the design principle - ran this way: A pirate captaincy was, for the most part, an elected position. In fact, his share of the proceeds was usually only double that of everyone else in the crew. He retained his "office" by his accomplishments, as well as his ability to keep his crew amused. Pirate life was boring, and the men who peopled pirate crews were not an overly cultivated or civilized lot. Raised and bred in a particularly brutal and cruel "home" environment, one where hangings and public torture were an everyday part of life. Their idea of amusement stemmed from this Dickensian atmosphere. Pirate crews were made up of stupid, uneducated, greedy, craven, brutal men (with a few women thrown in for laughs) who were capable of almost incalculable acts of individual and group cruelty. To keep this crew of misanthropes happy, a pirate captain had to show a variety of levels of ingenuity. Some, like Francois L'Olonois, were to the manner born, as it were.

In the game, a pirate, having captured a merchant (a time-consuming process that included a "Shot Across the Bows" Table, amongst other arcana), would use his Cruelty Rating to decide what to do with the merchant crew. There was a different table for each possible variation of the latter, including "Crew/Resisting", "Crew/No Resistance", "Slave Cargo", "Ship's Officers", and - and this is where our fearful debutante makes her entrance - "Passengers". Depending on how many of his Cruelty Rating points he applied, and what his 11-66 die roll was, the pirate/player could attain the following array of results (some of which applied only to certain categories) and earn a given number of "Crew Control Points":

The [Original] Cruelty Results Legend Chart

Letter	Event	CCPs
A+	Released without harm and may Recruit	+0
A	Released without harm	+0
B	Released after some "mild sport"	+1
C	Released after being severely mistreated	+2
D	Released after being beaten, assaulted and totally humiliated	+4
E	Chained to ship, which is then burnt and sunk	+3
F	Tortured for information and then released	+4
G	Tortured and killed	+6
H	Held for Ransom . . . no harm (yet)	+1
I	Mistreated, but held for Ransom	+3
J*	Raped repeatedly, and then killed	+8

* = If this result is obtained for the Governor's Daughter, roll another die. If the die roll is a "1" or a "6", the GD and the Pirate fall madly in love. This situation enables the Pirate, within the next three turns, starting with the ensuing turn, to obtain a Pardon and Retire by entering Port in any port with any Governor. A die roll of "2-5" and nothing happens (at least not of a permanent nature).

Well, there it is. Initially, the objection seemed to be to having a woman raped (a reprehensible act in any age but a historical, if ugly, fact of life when presenting an accurate picture of that era). I suggested changing the rule wording to "Daughter/Son", as pirates were not particularly picky about their partners. No matter; the Philistines prevailed and out it went. The Cruelty Table did last through the game's later versions, at least until that ardent foe of the die roll and protector of "Family Morals", The Donald, started laying waste with his Occamlike razor.

Clearly, however, that was not the only problem. The game was far too long and too involved. The movement system, while "neat", was conducive to an endless evening. Pirate movement (which was simultaneous way back then) was based on ship speed plus the prevailing wind of the Ocean area the pirate was in (another long table with lots of dice rolls). This was followed by merchant movement - there were always a total of eight merchants on the map then - which was also determined by the same method, but occurred only on the Shipping Lanes. This enabled pirates to lay in wait like fat spiders, as if they had access to everyone's shipping plans. It didn't help that players also had to roll dice every time a merchant reached a "fork" in the lane. All King's Commissioner actions - including movement - were random and, yet again, controlled by dice. Actually, everything appeared to be controlled by dice, mainly because research had shown that piracy was characterized by a haphazard form of fate.

Historical pirates, although aware of the general courses sailed by merchants, could never be sure when - or even if - one would arrive. To sit out in the middle of the ocean and wait, as some occasionally did, was to invite death by storm, scurvy or mutiny (among others). To sit in coves and inlets was better, although the Royal Navy often knew they were there too. (We had done a great deal of research into ship types and capabilities, especially those favored by the pirates, and found that one of the reasons they favored the smaller, more elusive sloops and schooners was just so that they could make best use of the coves and inlets that proliferated throughout the Caribbean.) Even when they "sighted" a merchant, there was no assurance that she was carrying anything more than some minimally useful supplies. Such cargo was not something on which one could retire. The number of pirates who were actually financially "successful" is frightfully minimal; you can count them on the fingers of one, badly mangled hand. This is reflected by the difficulty in "winning" the present game.

And then, what did you do with the loot once you got it? You had to convert it to something spendable, or at least tradable. Few, of course, were the pirates who actually looked farther ahead than the next meal, which is why burying the damn stuff is probably better as story than fact. Life expectancy was just not long enough - nor their compatriots trustworthy enough - for a crew to invest in such below-ground, albeit high-yield, "bonds".

Given all of this, what we now had was a game where everyone went on their merry way,

almost oblivious of the other players. It was a multi-player game where none of the players had anything to do with the others. Historically accurate, perhaps, but destined for doom in playability terms. The game also had more tables, with more dice rolling, than a Vegas hotel. There were Ransom Tables, Interception Tables, KCs vs Pirates tables, "What's in the Ship" Cargo Tables. It got to the point where we even had to roll on a table to get to use another table.

When Mark Herman, then MC at Victory Games, took a look at "Sea Hawks", these were the two main flaws he picked out almost at once. (I showed it to Mark after Keith Poulter toyed with the idea of sticking it into his *Strategy & Tactics* magazine; this babe's been around, to be sure.) Mark came up with some solid suggestions to bring the players into the game and to vary the monotony of simply waiting for ships, two of which are still around: sacking ports and having players control the King's Commissioners.

By this time, the game had been floating around for almost half a decade. Seeing that it wasn't going to ever see the light of day in its present form, I took a deep breath and revved up the buzz saw. Regardless of what I did, though, I wanted to make sure of two things: one, as discussed above, was to retain the simulation of the pattern of pirate life; and two, to recreate for the player as well the total lack of control pirates seemingly had over their fates. The latter, I knew, would have severe repercussions with many Avalon Hill veterans, gamers for whom *absolute* control over everything on the board was a matter of "ritual-become-dogma-become-religion". The player who spent 20 minutes calculating exactly how he could get a 3-1 on an enemy unit was not going to buy random player activation, that's for sure.

After a brief flirtation with a point-to-point mapboard, I settled, for the most part, on what you see today (a *Reader's Digest* version of the original maps). The randomized system of player activation replaced the former si-move mechanics. The number of cards were lopped in half (by putting cargo info on charts, although this did add yet *another* chart). In all, the rules were totally rewritten and reduced by 50%. With this reconstruction in mind, Donald G, once again, showed a hint of interest. At long last, we were in business. Which means, of course, that I was "in business."

The crack "AH Developmental Team" actually kept a great deal of what was then in the "3rd edition" of the rules. The major (and it was major) change was to eliminate most of the dice rolling by substituting the "Action Cards" (Jim Barnes' contribution to the gaming industry through his *Statis-Pro* games). Although both cards and dice are legitimate randomizers, there is a subtle (or not so subtle) difference. Dice are open-ended randomizers; i.e., you can, theoretically, roll the same number 500 times in a row. Cards are not; unless you are willing to shuffle the deck each time you pick a card, drawing that card eliminates it from the random pool. This creates a whole different level of probabilities, and an entirely different approach to game design.

I had no objection to cards. As a matter of fact, I'm a major proponent of cards as an integral part of a game system, as I feel they add a lot to the psychological enjoyability level of the game. The major questions here, however, were: in what format, and how many? It was obvious that most of the (by-now homogenized, pasteurized and bowdlerized) game chrome and personality information could be randomized easily by cards. But would there be enough randomness to ensure that lack of knowledge quality I felt the game needed to make it work. Then again, there's always the question of cost. What we ended up with was a compromise of sorts: Don said, "This is what we've got"; and I said, "Sure, why not." My feeling is that the game plays better with double the number of Action Cards (or even triple, if you can afford it).

BLACKBEARD, as it now stands, is pretty much what I wanted to do. Even with the heavy hand of "The Tinkerer" evident in almost every rule, it is a fairly accurate portrayal of what life as a pirate was like at that time. There are lots of things I would have preferred to see left in (for one, the rather interesting "Captain Kidd" rule, in which Kidd starts the game as a King's Commissioner with a really special ship, "The Adventure Galley", only, by Random Event, to turn pirate).

As a game, *BLACKBEARD* is going to appeal to many people . . . and be detested by others. The system, and its randomized lack of control, almost ensures that. On the other hand, with Don Greenwood's help, it has turned into a marvelous solitaire game (using Captain Blood as the pirate), and for those players willing to immerse themselves in the flavor of the period it can be extremely challenging. Finally (and best), in its present version, it plays in an evening rather than, as in its original form, longer than it took to bring it into port. ☆

A ROGUE TALE
The Pirate's Life For Me!
By Jim Anderson

The turn of the Eighteenth Century marked a period in maritime history when merchants depended wholly on the sea to transport their goods. Merchant vessels by the thousands plied the waters between Europe and the rest of the world, bringing gold and silver from the Americas and silks, spices and pearls from the Orient. The seaman's life was not an easy one; uncharted reefs and violent storms claimed over a hundred ships each year, and aboard ship he had to face harsh discipline, spoiled food and scurvy. And if he managed to survive all that, he had to face an even greater menace: Pirates!

Pirates were a breed apart. They came from many different backgrounds. They were derelicts or upper-class, orphans or family men. Some pursued the lifestyle for diversion; others had it thrust upon them by circumstance. They were freebooters looking for fortune and fame: fortune to buy retirement and a life of ease; fame that made it easier to acquire their fortune. Many's the time when a pirate's notoriety alone caused a better-armed merchant to surrender without firing a shot when that cutthroat's ship came alongside flying the black flag.

This is the story of the greatest swashbuckler of all, Captain Peter Blood, as told by his navigator, Jeremy Pitt . . .

. . . Well, okay; so this is *really* the story of a Saturday afternoon as told through a solitaire game of *BLACKBEARD* (with sprinklings of Raphael Sabatini mixed in)! The story contains references to this issue's Series Replay from which this tale was taken. Richard Berg has produced *BLACKBEARD* to give you a taste of a pirate's struggle with the law, nature and even his own crew in an attempt to make his fortune - or die trying! But, back to our tale . . .

This was a time when honest men could barely make a life for themselves. Many of the politicians were corrupt, and pirates by the score prowled the seas. Some of the colonial governors even supported these rogues: Governour Isaac Richier in Mocha, Governeur Barry in Honduras, Governor Collingwood in Curacao, Governor Sothel in Philadelphia, and Governor Samuels on Zanzibar. Of course, not all of the colonial governors were dishonest - the Earl of Bellomont, then Governor of Ethiopia, had a special distaste for freebooters having been betrayed before in a privateering venture and pirates avoided his waters. They were more interested in the merchant vessels that criss-crossed the seas. Fat, treasure-laden ships sailed shipping lanes of the North Atlantic.

This corrupted political system was responsible for setting in motion the wheels of fate that would deliver a certain Peter Blood into the role of pirate. Blood was a doctor by trade. He earned his medical degree (by the age of twenty) at Trinity College, Dublin. After this, he took to the road to seek adventure. He became a soldier of fortune and fought against Spain in the Netherlands. There he learned the skills that would serve him well in later years. He was, inevitably, captured and spent two years in a Spanish prison where he experienced, first hand, the cruelty of which the Spaniards were renown. After his release, he returned to England to recover from the ordeal and resume medical practice. But during the Monmouth Rebellion, he was arrested for treating a wounded rebel leader. Although he had neither fought for nor backed the rebels, he was found guilty of treason and shipped off to the penal colony of Barbados. Some time later, Spanish pirates raided the poorly defended English settlement. Blood and a score of fellow slaves (among them, one Jeremy Pitt) slipped aboard the Spaniards' sloop, *Cinco Llagas,* seized her and sailed away.

The refugees made their way to the pirate haven of Tortuga, where they refitted the ship and took on a full crew of cutthroats who swore allegiance to Captain Blood! He renamed the ship *Arabella,* after a girl he had fancied back in Barbados. An outcast from all societies, he set sail to fulfill his destiny. *[It is here we pick up the tale, as described in the accompanying Series Replay.]*

Blood wanted to begin his new career in a bold way, by raiding a Spanish port, and so serve notice of his private war on Spain. Campeche seemed like the perfect target. With but one small fort, it was rather weakly defended for the wealth that was supposedly there *[Turn 1]*. He sailed in, under the guns of the fort, flying the flag of Spain (a trick he learned from the Spaniards who had raided Barbados). Once safely past, he lowered the Spanish colors and ran up the "skull and bones"! The fight was short and one-sided *[Turn 2]*. The pirates demanded 100000 doubloons in ransom or the town would be razed. The townsfolk offered up only a fraction of that amount, and the outraged pirates quickly sacked and then fired the settlement. During the pillaging, Blood confronted a Spanish don who then drew a pistol and shot the pirate captain. Fortunately, it was only a flesh wound *[Turn 5]*. The Spaniard himself died on the end of Blood's sword. The legend had begun. With her holds full of Spanish treasure, the *Arabella* pulled out of the smoke-filled harbor.

Blood ordered a course set for the Dutch island of Curacao, off the coast of South America *[Turn 7]*. He had heard that the governor there, Collingwood, was friendly in his dealings with pirates. After an uneventful two weeks, their destination appeared on the horizon *[Turns 11, 16 and 20]*. Blood spent his first few days ashore recovering from the wound he had received in Campeche and making arrangements for an auction to convert their booty into currency *[Turn 31]*. After the auction, Governor Collingwood invited the good captain to tea at his estate. Blood learned that the governor was a collector of swords and so made him a gift of the rapier he had taken from the governor of Campeche. It was a finely crafted blade, made by the best Toledo swordsmiths, and worth well over three hundred doubloons. Doubtless, the governor was very pleased with the gift. At least, he informed Blood that he would always be welcome in Curacao, and used his influence to aid the quick refitting of the Arabella *[Turn 32]*.

Since his raid on Campeche had gone so well, Blood decided to strike at Honduras next. This small Spanish port lay almost nine hundred miles due west. Its fort was even smaller than that of Campeche and although the town was not as rich, it was still an important link in the Spanish silver trade. After settling accounts in Curacao, Peter Blood weighed anchor and began the voyage across the Caribbean in search of plunder.

The *Arabella* made good time in the crossing to Honduras *[Turns 35-36]*. Blood and his crew spent their free moments, of which there was precious few aboard the orderly ship, carefully planning the coming attack. They had decided on the same course of action that had worked so well for them the first time. So it was that Blood raised the flag of Spain and nonchalantly headed in. But as they were tacking down the channel towards the fort, one of the crew spotted a warship on the horizon and coming fast. Blood ordered his ship about. He could not chance being caught in the harbor with a warship on one side and the fort on the other. The bewildered soldiers garrisoning the fort saw through the ruse and opened fire on the departing ship. Luckily, the shots fell short of their mark because the *Arabella* was already out of range. But the cannon fire did serve to signal the incoming warship that there was trouble afoot.

The warship altered course to intercept the pirate vessel. Blood tried to shake off his pursuer by changing course several times, but each time the warship stayed with him and slowly closed the gap *[Turns 40-42]*. Blood could only hope that the warship would not catch him before the sun went down, when he could slip away in the darkness. However, late that afternoon, the two ships came within range. The British warship, *Insufferable,* opened fire. Blood had to think - he was outgunned, and he had already seen that his opponent had more than enough sail to catch him. So, if he couldn't outfight the British, he had to take away their sails. Blood ordered his gunners to concentrate their fire on the warship's foremast and turned to engage the British. After ten minutes of fierce pounding (in which the *Arabella* lost two of her guns and six of her crew), the foremast of the *Insufferable* fell away. Blood gave the order to break off and raise every bit of canvas, leaving the British to their fate. Yet the stubborn English captain remained in pursuit and could be seen keeping pace astern for several days.

Honduras was out of the question, for now. Captain Blood needed desperately to replace the lost cannons and repair his ship before another attempt on the Spanish port could be made. So that the trip was not a total loss, he led the restless crew in search of a fat merchant ship. Headed northeast, into the shipping lanes off Jamaica *[Turn 60]*, it wasn't long before a Spanish galleon was sighted. The *Arabella* closed on its prey, ran up the black flag with the white skull and crossed-bones. The galleon promptly responded with a broadside that tore away the pirate's bowsprit and forestay. Blood cursed the Spaniard's luck. Without a forestay to support the mast, he had to reduce sail or risk losing all her rigging *[Turn 61]*. The pirates fired back with a vengeance, but the crippled sloop could not prevent the prize from escaping *[Turn 65]*.

Arabella made for Curacao with a jury-rigged bowsprit. En route, they ran into a storm that caused some more minor damage *[Turn 66]*. As they approached Curacao, with the seas building and the sky darkening due to a gale brewing to the east, a merchant ship was sighted making for port as well *[Turn 67]*. But Blood ordered his course held *[Turn 72]*. He wanted to be safe in port when this storm hit. No sooner had *Arabella's* anchor struck bottom than the heavens opened up. The gale lasted three days *[Turn 73]*. The merchant that was sighted outside the harbor never made it in. Its wreckage was found strewn along the beach when the storm let up.

This time, the pirate's stay in Curacao lasted three weeks. During them, the *Arabella* was refitted with a new bowsprit and new cannons to replace the armament lost in the skirmish with the *Insufferable [Turn 74]*. After the refit, the sloop was beached at high tide so it could be careened *[Turns 85-86]*. (Careening is a process in which the ship's hull is scraped clean of the marine growth that accumulates, quite rapidly in warm tropical waters.) The ship's seams were then caulked and the hull coated with a mixture of tar and sulphur to deter future growth. Several times during the stay, Collingwood paid visits to the ship to see how the repairs were coming.

Finally, *Arabella* was seaworthy once more. When the last of the provisions were aboard, Blood set sail *[Turn 87]*. Within the week, the pirates were trolling off the coast of Hispaniola. And it wasn't long before they spied the British merchant vessel *Cornelius*, bound for London *[Turn 96]*. Blood closed on the vessel without raising his flag. When he was within hailing distance, the merchantman ran up the Union Jack and requested Blood show his colors. In those days, it was generally accepted that any vessel refusing to show her flag to another was to be considered hostile. The other captain, suitably nervous about the intentions of the obviously well-armed sloop, emphasized his request with a shot across the bow. Before the English cannonball hit the water, the pirate gunners responded with a full broadside.

The *Cornelius* fought back with the fury of a cornered beast. Blood ordered the helm about, taking his ship away from the English trader, and called on his crew to cease fire. Despite his unfavorable past experiences with the British -

accused, jailed, banished, the battle with the *Insufferable* - he was *still* a loyal subject and would have no part in taking a British vessel. Pitt and most of the crew sided with their captain. Besides, they had need of a safe haven somewhere. Those opposed to the decision did not grumble for long. Before the fleeing *Cornelius* dropped below the horizon, another merchant was spotted - the Spanish galleon *Esposa del Pescado*.

The pirates closed with the lumbering ship and hoisted the Jolly Roger. Surprisingly, the Spaniards struck their colors and surrendered without a shot being fired *[Turn 100]*. Blood was amazed that a ship carrying twice the cannons he could muster would surrender so easily. But he found, once boarded, his prize carried only a dozen bales of cotton in her holds, hardly worth a fight. As luck would have it, however, the *Esposa's* owner, Don Dueno del Barco, was aboard. He told the pirates that, in exchange for not harming him or his crew, he would make it worth their while. Blood agreed; he also decided the *Esposa* much better suited to his needs. So he ordered everything they might need moved to the other ship. After transferring the Spanish crew to the *Arabella,* they chopped down her mast and sailed off - taking Don Dueno as hostage.

This bit of luck was to prove only a short respite from the string of misfortunes plaguing Blood and his crew. In England, news had reached the Admiralty of Captain Blood's battle with the *Insufferable*. It was one thing for a pirate to raid the port of one of England's less-than-friendly allies, but another matter indeed to have a pirate attacking one of His Majesty's warships. The fact that Blood was a runaway English prisoner made this act all the more contemptible. The King commissioned Mungo Herdman to hunt down this traitorous sea dog *[Turn 99]*. Herdman was given command of the *HMS Weymouth* . He set sail for the Caribbean within the month.

Before the political aftershocks had quieted in England, a shaker of a different sort struck the Caribbean. The port city of Curacao was destroyed in an earthquake *[Turn 102]*. Most of the town flattened and thousands of lives lost in the disaster. The town was never rebuilt. Blood had lost his safe haven!

Shortly after the capture of the *Esposa*, a warship was sighted; but it did not alter course to intercept and passed by without incidence *[Turn 104]*. The pirates now had a ship that was powerful enough to carry out large-scale raids on Spanish ports. It was time for Blood to plan his next enterprise. The abortive attempt on Honduras was discussed among the men, but Blood proposed a raid on Cartagena instead. The crew readily agreed and the new course was set *[Turn 105]*. Eight days later, the spires of Cartagena were visible on the horizon.

Cartagena was protected by a stout fort overlooking the deep harbor. Blood and half the crew went ashore just out of sight of the settlement. The remaining crew sailed boldly into the harbor and engaged the garrison. Blood, meanwhile, marched around the town and stormed the fort from the rear. The Spaniards, faced with an attack from both sides, surrendered within minutes *[Turn 111]*. The pirates proceeded to

vent all their pent-up frustrations on the helpless town. They stripped it bare of anything of value and burned it to the ground *[116]*. Blood and crew had sacked their second Spanish settlement.

When word reached Europe of the disaster, Spain vehemently petitioned England to do more to end Blood's career. The Spanish government offered 100000 doubloons for his head, and ordered their own warships to sink him on sight. The King of England moved to ease strained relations by dispatching Benjamin Hornigold, as another King's Commissioner, to the Caribbean to join the hunt *[Turn 112]*.

The pirates needed a safe port where they could sell their booty and refit the *Esposa*. Blood suggested Port Royal (as it was the closest non-Spanish town). He would get a better price for the spoils there than in either of the pirate havens, Tortuga or New Providence. The crew readily agreed and course was set *[Turns 117-121]*.

Port Royal, in Jamaica, was British territory. Since Blood was an escaped prisoner so far as the Crown was concerned, he proceeded with utmost caution. He made a rich gift to the city magistrates to show his good faith. The governor was, however, unimpressed and none too anxious to be dealing with the refugee from Barbados *[Turn 126]*. So, Blood made a generous "donation" directly to the governor. Blood had found both Governor Richardson's price and a friendly port *[Turn 128]*.

The pirates readily converted their booty into cash *[Turn 130]*. But, before they could undertake the refit of their ship or negotiate a ransom for poor Don Dueno, a British sloop was sighted. The pirates raced back to their ship and cast off. The warship, made wary by the hasty departure of the galleon, fired a warning shot across the *Esposa's* bow. The pirates, without acknowledging the shot in any way, continued out of the harbor. This so infuriated the warship's captain that he opened fire on the fleeing pirates *[Turn 132]*. Blood was himself at the wheel when a cannonball slammed into the poop deck railing. He did cut an impressive figure, manning the helm without flinching when hit by flying splinters from the shattered rail. (Blood suffered only a few scratches.) The pirates raised all sail and were out of range by the time the warship came about. After a short chase, the British thought better of the enterprise and turned back to Port Royal. Once out of sight, the pirates turned northeast and made their way to Tortuga *[Turns 134 and 136]*.

In the month that Blood and his crew spent in Tortuga, repairs were made to the *Esposa*. The ransom, promised by their Spanish hostage, took three weeks to arrive from Santiago *[Turn 142]*. While he waited, the pirate planned his next raid. It was decided that since the people of Santiago could provide such a ransom, then the buccaneers would sail over and clean out the rest of the treasury! Blood signed on additional cutthroats for the raid, doubling the size of his crew. Two of the newcomers had lived in Santiago for a number of years and knew the harbor (like the proverbial back of their hands). The plan was for them to guide the *Esposa* into the harbor at night to catch the fat, unsuspecting Spaniards asleep in their beds.

The Spanish sloop from Santiago finally arrived with the ransom and the swap for Don Dueno was negotiated. Blood ordered Jeremy Pitt to take a few men, row over to the sloop during the exchange and disable its rudder. After all, he didn't want Don Dueno warning Santiago of the coming raid. Mister Pitt was successful and after the exchange, the *Esposa* sailed o the evening tide.

The moon set shortly after midnight while Captain Blood waited offshore. With one guide in the bow and the other at the helm, the pirates cautiously entered the dark harbor. The Spanish populace didn't know what hit them, but the garrison nonetheless gave a good account of itself before the governor's order to surrender came *[Turn 144]*. The next morning the pirates began loading their booty. But that afternoon, misfortune struck in the ironic form of a native uprising *[Turn 146]*. The Indians, who had been introduced to Catholicism by Spanish missionaries, attacked when the pirates began looting the churches. Many Spaniards joined the fray. Blood reluctantly ordered a hasty departure before the guns of the fort could be manned. The *Esposa* left with her holds only half full of the wealth that Santiago had to offer and minus several hands lost in the sudden uprising.

The chastened pirates returned to Tortuga to lick their wounds *[Turn 147]*. The booty was auctioned off for a tidy sum - considering they brought back only half of what they could have *[Turn 148]*. Jeremy Pitt, Blood's navigator ever since they escaped together from Barbados, decided he had enough money to retire from piracy. Blood and he had come to be fast friends (as fast as any in their line of work). The captain wished him well as Pitt went ashore for the last time.

Repairs to the *Esposa* were completed quickly and plans were laid for the next raid on the Spanish *[Turn 149]*. However, two days before they were to set sail, a warship was sighted. It was the King's own Mungo Herdman, aboard the *HMS Weymouth*. Herdman dropped anchor outside the harbor, blockading the pirate port *[Turn 154]*. Word spread quickly for the crew to return to the *Esposa*. Blood planned to run the blockade before other warships arrived.

The *Esposa* was just clearing the harbor as Jeremy Pitt ran to the docks. There he had a perfect vantage point for watching the coming battle between the two ships. Blood had to sail right past Herdman to leave the port *[Turn 155]*. The *Weymouth* opened fire with a broadside that carried away the pirate's topsail. The *Esposa* turned and answered with her starboard cannons. The battle lasted more than three hours and the blue-grey smoke from the guns was so thick that Pitt could not tell who was gaining the advantage in the furious engagement. Finally, he spotted the black smoke that signaled a fire pouring from the *Weymouth*. Twenty minutes later, the burning British man-of-war slipped beneath the waves just outside the harbor. The *Esposa* limped away and disappeared over the horizon. The former navigator could but wonder.

Jeremy Pitt never saw his friend again. Some say that Blood died that day in the battle with Mungo Herdman. Others say he was killed in a second attempt on Santiago. I tend to believe the rumor that he saved Port Royal from an attack by the French and was given a King's Pardon by the grateful British Crown. Whatever the truth, his days under the black flag had come to an end.

There were other pirates even more fearsome, like Edward Teach (aka "Blackbeard"), but that's another story . . .

☆

Series Replay . . . Cont'd from Page 14

In a three-player (or solitaire) game, each player should get 22.5% of the turns (with the game using the remaining 32.5% for neutral occurrences such as Random Events or Merchant movement). In a 155-turn game then, Blood should have logged 34.8 turns. He, in fact, had 44 turns for 28% of the action. Kidd/Rackham had 35 and de Lusan 32. The game itself drew the largest shortfall with but 44 of its expected 51 occurrences! By all accounts, I'd have to say this qualifies Blood as lucky in the matter of the card draws.

A closer inspection, however, would suggest that this intervention of fate was even more pronounced. In a 155-turn game, Blood (who grabbed the title "most notorious" from the outset and never relinquished it) could have expected to been hit by four of those deadly "Most Notorious" cards, but in fact encountered only three. Moreover, the next most dangerous card ("Move Warship") should have been met eight times, and was dealt with on only four occasions - and one of those controlled by Blood himself. I won't even bother to count the number of petitions to the crown that fell on deaf ears which were deserving of a better fate.

In conclusion then, I'd have to say that Blood got far more than his fair share of luck. Jim played a reasonably sound game, although he made several mistakes that a less kind fate could have turned into fatal errors. Indeed, a different DR on Turn 2 could have ended the game outright 153 turns sooner.

As to the game itself, I'm still not sure exactly what constitutes a "typical" game of BLACKBEARD. I would venture a guess that it is rare to see a game of this length in which three nationalities played no role at all, and rarer still to see a Letter of Marque go unclaimed. Most games I've played have seen far more KC activity. But then, most of my experience has been of the multi-player variety, where tormenting your fellow players is considered good sport.

☆

BLACKBEARD Errata:

2.21 MAP: The white dashed line separating the North Atlantic and Caribbean should be considered to be the top of the chain of white coastal hexes extending from Florida at H15 to Martinique (BB18), Shipping Lane 41, and Barbados (DD19). It appears on the 2nd Edition map as a *black* dashed line. The "<" symbol on the first line of the Mutiny Outcome Chart should be ">".

ACTION CARDS: Those cards with Injury results of "-1 to all ratings" should read "-2 to all ratings". The word "Attack" on card 66 should read "Intercept".

Some decks were assembled incorrectly. Check to make sure that your deck has 24 different Pirate cards, 36 Action cards whose Shipping Lane icon in the upper right contains the numbers "11" through "66" with no duplicates, plus four which contain an asterisk in the Shipping Lane symbol. If your deck is incorrect, return the duplicate cards for free replacement.

SUGGESTION: The game plays much faster with a duplicate set of Action Cards to substitute pre-shuffled for the deck in use whenever a Random Event is drawn. This avoids the wait while the deck is reshuffled. Action decks can be purchased separately from TAHGC for $6.00, plus usual postage charges.

2.33 Is the KC's Display printed incorrectly with respect to the KC values?
A. No. The KC markers are placed on the Track *only* after a KC suffers some type of damage. Insert the words "when damaged" after "KC" in the sixth line.

4.2 Governors are placed white-side face-up.

8.6 Is Transit Box 1 considered part of the North Atlantic?
A. Yes. See Transit Box 2. The 2nd Edition mapboard labels each Transit Box as belonging to a particular Ocean. Boxes 2, 3 and 4 belong to the Gold Coast, and boxes 5 and 6 to the Indian Ocean.

9.21 What are the nationalities of the different Shipping Lanes? Does the determination of an unflagged warship's nationality occur based upon the ship's initial position at the start of its move or at the time it is revealed?
A. Shipping Lanes assume the nationality of the closest Port. On the 2nd Edition mapboard, the Shipping Lanes contain the flags of that nationality. An unflagged Warship's nationality is determined at the start of its turn, and can change from turn to turn.

9.72 What can a Pirate do with useful information about a Pirate Haven?
A. Nothing.

9.82 Delete: "to declare D&R after taking such a prize".; substitute: "Mandatory D&R"

10.22 Delete: "must declare"; substitute: "faces Mandatory".

15.2C Add: "or one currently under attack."

17G Safe Havens *are* lost due to Native Uprisings.

23.3 Does the player use KCs when he wants in the solitaire version, or is he forced to take a KC move when his card indicates such?
A. The game can be played either way. At first, we recommend that the player have freedom of choice over when to take a KC operation. However, once players have mastered the game, it makes a more challenging contest if the player too must obey the dictates of the cards for KC operations.

23.5 Insert after "9.3.": "A Pirate will attack a Merchant in the same hex unless his Attack Number is < 2.". Insert: "or his Attack Number" after "dr".

23.51 Delete: "the port in question . . . Sell Booty Operation." Substitute: "that port (without searching or attacking Merchants on the way) to raid it once his holds are empty if his Ability and Combat strengths at least equal the Port defense. If successful, he will sack the port only if he has at least five Combat factors remaining and the raid yields booty of less than 300 per die."

23.7 Do solitaire opponents always declare D&R after taking a prize?
A. Only if Mandatory D&R is present or Crew Unrest is under 7, unless in the same hex/Transit Box with a KC/Warship.

Letters to the Editor . . .

Dear Editor:

Regarding "Operation Crimson Sky" in The *GENERAL* (Vol. 27, No. 2), Tim Earl's plan for the destruction of the American carriers is based on the assumption that the American CAP will come out to fight even when outnumbered. They are, however, by no means obliged to do so; my copy of *6th Fleet* gives the option to attack to the CAP player. Therefore, Mr. Earl's stack of three interceptors and one attack plane would approach the task force, launch its SSMs from its one attack plane and go home unmolested, were I the American commander. Total damage to my task force would probably be limited to one destroyer or frigate. That would be the last attack he would launch on a defended target that turn since he would have used up all his fighters.

I have always felt that the rule permitting the CAP player to refuse to fight when threatened by superior numbers to be a little artificial and to strongly skew the balance of any attack in favor of the defender. It is true, however, that being under your own radar/AEW coverage gives a big edge to any fighter pilot. I suggest the following alternative rule:

During any air movement segment, if a stack of air units containing any interceptor units (or attack units acting as interceptors) enters a hex in the range of an enemy CAP marker, and the non-moving player elects not to attack the moving stack, the moving stack may itself attack the CAP marker on the Interception (not the CAP) line of the Air-to-Air Combat results table. The stack must include an AEW marker or be within four hexes of a friendly airfield or CAP or AEW marker to take advantage of this option. The defending units use their full Air-to-Air combat value. If using the rule from *7th Fleet* permitting friendly CAP to participate in Air-to-Air within its range, the combat is assumed to take place *in* the hex of the CAP marker being attacked for the purposes of determining the Air-to-Air combat value of attacking CAP aircraft.

This rule also takes into account the possibility that the area where the air-to-air combat is to take place could be under *both* sides' radar umbrella. We assume that the fight will take place in neutral territory with respect to SAMs as well, hence the requirement to use the Interception instead of the CAP line of the combat table.

In order to fully simulate the dueling AEW planes, players should create a number of counters representing landbased AEW (AWACs and IL-76s). There should be one per two friendly airbases. These counters take one hit to destroy (i.e., they don't have a damaged side, like recon planes). These counters should have immense ranges (as long as the longest-ranged recon plane in the game) and could accompany an air strike from their base if not placed on CAP. If they are not on CAP, that base would use the carrier "CAP only" method of determining its Air-to-Air combat value. If they are accompanying an air strike, that strike could take advantage of the preceding variant rule and attack enemy CAP markers on the Interception line of the combat table. As a special exception to the normal rules, in the CAP Landing Phase, they should be allowed to freely rebase to any friendly airbase; this simulates the fact that there would actually be single or pairs of AEW planes at almost all airbases, but it would require two or three at a minimum to cover a strike sufficiently to allow attacking interceptors to hunt down defenders.

I also feel that the Air-to-Air comat chart overuses the "r" result. In almost any *6th Fleet* air-to-air combat, one side or the other is going to be sent home. If the CAP player is the victim (as Mr. Earl points out in his article), succeeding waves of unescorted bombers can attack an unprotected fleet. I don't believe the loss of four to six F-14s (a

"1" result against the CVBG's CAP) would so disorganize the carrier's defenses that it wouldn't be able to get any defensive fighters into the air for eight hours.

Therefore, I think the "r" result should be optional - that is, that the player has the option of taking the losses indicated or returning to base and preserving one point of those losses. If the result was "0r" and the losing player elects to ignore the "r", roll one die. On an even number, there is no effect. On an odd number, the stack suffers one point of loss. If both players suffer "r" results, the moving player should be the first to choose if he is going to press his attack or abort.

Additionally, this would permit the Russian players to send strategic missions to zones outside their fighter range where Allied fighters might be found, accepting losses off the "bounce" table in return for some pay-off if the dice were favorable. A lot of USSR naval recon strategy in the North Atlantic *was* based on wandering Bears sneaking through American fighter patrols to pick up information permitting crushing Backfire strikes to find their targets. I believe they should be given a greater than 1-in-10 chance of success when using this strategy.

Stewart King
Conakry, Guinea

★★★★★

Dear AH,

Contest #156 was a lesson to me in physical and mental endurance, causing me to lose my 20/20 vision - not to mention several hours of leisure time. My grand strategy was based on ripping through my old wargames of yesteryear, looking for anything resembling an Avlon Hill catalogue or flyer!

Before you fellas decide to print another word-search and destroy puzzle, consider this. I could have played three solitaire games of *1914* in the time it took me to squint through your migraine maze of vegetable soup, discovering one entry, and then by God, another - leading me to push further onward into the hours of darkness.

Oh, and thanks for your "AVALON-CON" clue - big help! Now I've got one for you . . . find "Do I Let Sid Tan" and time yourselves! But, no hard feelings. Comparing these hours to my years of wargaming, many thanks for giving me a lifetime of enjoyment, time and time again.

Roland Harvay
Rochester, New York

My experiment with non-game-specific contests over the past few issues has drawn a number of such good-natured letters. And, in point of fact, the number of responses to recent contests has increased dramatically over what had been the "norm" for the past couple of years, so the readers must be enjoying them. I'd rate the experiment a small success, therefore.

This first batch of a half-dozen or so puzzles came from the fertile minds of Paul and Jason Qualtieri, a father-son team of puzzle addicts who happen to share a love of wargaming as well. However, there is no reason to limit the creative fun to them; should any reader have a puzzle, with an AH theme, I'd urge him to feel free to submit it for possible publication.

Gentlemen,

There has been a lot of discussion in your editorial and letters pages lately on the value of "introductory" wargames to the future of the hobby, especially in their role of bringing in the younger set. I wanted to take this opportunity to relate my experience with the simpler games in hopes that you will be appropriately encouraged.

Last year at this time my unit (the 54th Engineer Battalion, Combat, Mechanized) was getting on planes headed for Saudi Arabia. We had no idea how long we would be there, whether waiting for the ground war to start or on garrison duty or whatever. Therefore, I took along a few simple wargames, among them UP FRONT and ENEMY IN SIGHT. Packing space was a priority, as was set-up space. After the conclusion of the war, we took up a residence of sorts in the open desert in southern Iraq for a month or so while we did our combat engineer thing of destroying Iraqi equipment. During that time, I introduced several people to UP FRONT and soon had a devoted group of players. They progressed up the Programmed Instruction ladder very quickly (a valuable tool that). We played on MRE boxes, water cans, and the wood bench in my vehicle. We ran generators just to provide light for the game, and we cursed the wind when it blew our squads around.

After returning to Saudi Arabia, both in the desert and later while waiting in port in Dhahran, I built up a fanatic following of ENEMY IN SIGHT players. Our companies were in individual compounds from 500 to 1000 meters apart. We conversed on the radio with such coded signals as "The blockade is lifted" or, more subtlely, "I have some paperwork for you", to indicate that the time was ripe for another game. We would then walk to each others' compounds to round up the players. Once in port, we could plan the game for an evening, even stocking up non-alcoholic beer inside the air conditioner ahead of time. Right up 'til the last minute, as we waited in the terminal for our plane back to Germany, someone would yell "Let's play ships!, and the game would begin.

Those two games did a lot for us. Screaming and yelling about the infinite complexities of breaking someone's line was therapeutic. After we got back, several of those new gamers became devoted players. One or two of them may actually read this letter now that they have started to follow The *GENERAL*. Keep up those intro-ductory games, keep the "hollering" in playing wargames . . . the "easy" ones are not just for the kids.

Lt. Wayne Lee
Winchester, Virginia

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the *ASL Annual '91*. As one of the silent wargamers who don't write letters (until now) or attend conventions, I can assure you that we are out here, playing *ASL* and enjoying your continued efforts to improve and enhance the ultimate tactical wargame.

After purchasing and enjoying the '91 Annual, I now regret not buying the previous ones and have ordered all back issues. My wargaming goal for 1992 is to replay all the regular *ASL* scenarios in numerical order through *HOLLOW LEGIONS*, just to justify

buying *CODE OF BUSHIDO*. With but one busy opponent, this will take all year, but will prepare me for the Imperial Japanese Army!

My brother and I, avid *PANZERBLITZ* players at the time, were initially dismayed when we read the rules of *SL* (in that awful purple box). The abstract system seemed to lack the historical "chrome" we loved, but after playing "Guards Counterattack", we realized that this was a breakthrough in tactical gaming. I took *SL* to college and spent four years in a "golden age" of wargaming - lots of spare time and lots of opponents.

I bought *ASL* reluctantly, thinking that 80+ bucks just for rules and the Eastern Front was excessive. Despite my misgivings, I was impressed! *ASL* delivered what the original *SL* promised: accurate reproduction of WWII infantry combat, plus real rules for ATGs and AFVs. Those negative armor modifiers in *COI* (and the lack of accurate ordnance silhouettes) incensed us history buffs. But *ASL* corrected all that, and now *HASL* offers the only missing element: historical terrain.

I could drone on, but won't. In short, *ASL* and *HASL* create the game I dreamed of back in 1971. Hurry up with that French module, and keep the *ASL Annuals* coming! Good work!

Victor Lauterbach
Dayton, Ohio

Bob McNamara is already hard at work on CROIX DE GUERRE (the tentative title of the French module), which is due for release late this year. However, Mr. Lauterbach will be kept quite busy working his way through two Annuals and the two PTO modules for some time. For my part, the ASL Annual '92 is well in hand and should see print in time for AvalonCon. While focusing on the Japanese and PTO Theater, it carries the usual mix of scenarios appealing to every taste - 15 in all. And, for the old-timers, there is an extensive Commando Campaign Game for SQUAD LEADER, the first new work for that system in some years. Fine articles by the likes of Mark Nixon and Steve Swann, along with the regular features, round out the best (so I feel) ASL Annual yet. Meanwhile, Charlie Kibler continues to labor on KG PEIPER, the next HASL ("Historical ASL") module, due out in March 1993.

★★★★★

Dear Sirs:

I think the letter written to your editor printed in Vol. 27, No. 3 by a Mr. Ed Bicknell was a piece of junk mail.

Mr. Bricknell, don't throw that politically-correct sewage at the wargaming hobby. This hobby is fine the way it is, and people like you should stick to checkers or chess. You sound like a liberal Yankee screwing up everything you get your hands on, always messing up a good thing. If you don't like the way things are, jump ship!

There are already plenty of games for a beginner to start out with, and if people can't accept the challenge of an Avalon Hill type game, they should stick to *Trivial Pursuit*. But keep your hands off my hobby. Thank you Avalon Hill for providing challenging, stimulating, educational games in such wide diversity and variation that we "greybeards" (yes, I'm only 28 years old) will keep coming back for more. I'm getting back into civilian life, and I for one plan to purchase many more AH games. Keep the Grade A+ standards you've held since your inception.

Patrick Pressler
Atlanta, Georgia

Scoundrel's Log ... Cont'd from Page 18

single most valuable mission for an alliance to undertake, as the larger ports can now be raided and both ships add their Combat strength (but only the operating pirate's ability). If you do form an alliance, the best advice I can offer is, "Good luck and don't trust that other pirate!"

One last point to be mentioned for all those card-counters out there, veterans of *UP FRONT* and *ENEMY IN SIGHT*. If you think that the danger is past once all the Warships and/or Storms in the deck are drawn, then you are in for a surprise. Rule 6.31 does away with card-counting by having all cards reshuffled for every Random Event drawn. Card-counting simply will not work, so please don't rely on it or your pirate may end up as fish food.

Conclusion

I hope that these suggestions have brought about an appreciation of some of the problems and opportunities to consider when playing *BLACKBEARD*, and that any reader who has not yet tried the game will now rush out to give it a try. The best advice that I can conclude with is to say that nothing in this game is assured. Many of the things I've mentioned above may not apply all the time, and I have seen players win by discarding a lot of the things that I've said. "Murphy's Law" applies to this game more to any other I have yet played. Anything can and will go wrong, and be assured that it will seem to do so be at the worst possible moment, and usually to you. So, take all this advice with a grain of salt. Each game of *BLACKBEARD* is wonderfully different and it will take the new player time to get used to its unique systems and opportunities; be ready for anything.

So good luck; may your powder always stay dry and your sails never tatter.

☆

Sports Special

Alone in the Pits
By Brien Martin

SPEED CIRCUIT, Avalon Hill's excellent re-creation of the world of Grand Prix racing, is a wonderful way for up to six buffs to experience the thrills of speeding around the race tracks of the world - without the risks inherent in such pursuit. But what happens when you can't find even one competent (or willing) opponent with which to conduct a simple spin around the track? That was the question which our "racing association" faced 11 years ago when our members were all preparing to go separate ways in pursuit of college degrees. Although we have stayed in touch through the years, and even attempted a few PBM Games of *SPEED CIRCUIT*, we were unable to re-capture the fun and the excitement of rainy afternoons spent touring the world's most fabled tracks.

So, after much debate and discussion, we formulated a set of rules which would allow each of us to play the game in a solitaire setting, with each member responsible for the completion of two or three of the scheduled races, conducting each under the strict guidelines which we had set down. These guidelines would not only attempt to insure fairness, but would try to result in a uniform translation that no member could misunderstand. Thus armed, we playtested the variant rules over and over again, discarding the mundane and ill-advised while polishing those which kept each race as sensible and competitive as possible. In 1989 we finally arrived at the solitaire system offered here. (Since then, we have added rules for pit stops and made minor adjustments in some of the original rules.)

For purposes of this system, all *SPEED CIR-CUIT* rules are in effect, except for slip-streaming and specific exceptions to the regular rules as noted elsewhere in this article.

We begin our tour of this solitaire system by introducing a new concept to *SPEED CIRCUIT* fans: individual Driver Ratings. These ratings have an impact on all of the charts which are included as part of both the regular rules and new rules which we will introduce later. Drivers of each car are assigned ratings ranging from "-2" to "+2", with the former rating representing the world's best drivers and the +drivers being those whose licenses should be revoked. To ensure fairness in your racing association, it is recommended that for every ten rated drivers, they distributed as per the following (convertible to percentages):

Table 1: Individual Driver Distribution

Level	Rating	Number
5	-2	1
4	-1	2
3	0	4
2	+1	2
1	+2	1

These ratings will be applied as die roll modifiers to any and all charts. This means that all Chance Table rolls, Test Brakes rolls, and rolls to determine stalling or engine damage when attempting Excessive Speed options will all be affected by the Driver's Rating.

To illustrate, a Level-5 driver who must roll on the Chance Table will do so with a -2 added to his roll. In effect, no Level-5 driver will ever crash as a result of his use of the Chance Table. Is this unrealistic? Not when you look at the records of the best Grand Prix drivers of history. Rare is the occasion when these men are ever involved in an accident on the track. Therefore, their high rating is deserved and simulates the impressive driving abilities of such men.

Of course, the Driver Ratings were not just designed to affect the charts that are part of the regular rules. They were primarily designed to assist in the preparation of special charts upon which all acceleration and deceleration in solitaire play will take place. When these ratings are used in conjunction with these charts, the true skill of the driver will shine.

The first major rule change we instituted deals with "Excessive Speed Options". There are three times when a solitaire driver might purposely exceed the speed limitations placed on him by his equipment in order to pull off a major move. For these options, the solitaire player must roll on the Options Chart in Table 2 subject to the following rules:

l) any attempt at increasing starting speed may be done only as the result of a Spinout;

2) attempts to exceed maximum acceleration and/or top speed may be done only during the final three laps of the race *and* only if the driver attempting the move is *not* in the lead;

3) each Excessive Speed option may be attempted only *once* per race.

Table 2: Options Chart (Driver Rating drm)
Increase Starting Speed	dr: 1-5
Exceed Top Speed	dr: 1-2
Exceed Maximum Acceleration	dr: 1-3

Before detailing the core of the solitaire system, it is necessary to define a few "house" rules which will make application for the non-player controlled cars consistent:

1) All cars must reach top speed as soon as is possible, and must maintain that speed (if possible) at all times.

2) When any car must reduce its speed below top speed in order to satisfy the cornering rules, it must resume top speed as soon as possible thereafter.

3) When resuming the race after a Spinout (or a Pit Stop, see next issue), top speed must be reached as soon as possible thereafter.

4) All cars must attempt to gain the inside lane, unless doing so would result in collision, in which case the car must attempt to take the next closest position to the inside lane.

5) All cars move in order of *position*, not current speed. "Position" is based on distance to the finish line and position nearest the inside lane; cars on the inside lane always move before any other in the row occupied.

6) To simulate international racing rules, all cars must pass on the left when passing, unless doing so would cause a collision.

7) Non-player cars must *always* use Wear Points whenever the rules offer the driver the option, even if this would reduce Wear to zero.

As mentioned earlier, the focal point of this system is the Acceleration and Deceleration charts. These charts (presented as Tables 3 and 4) limit each driver's ability to achieve a particular speed. Even though the solitaire player is solely responsible for selecting the speed for each non-player car to travel (under the restrictions of the above rules), he cannot be certain of attaining that speed until he has rolled the die for each car, consulting the appropriate table below.

Table 3: Acceleration Chart
DR	\ Speed Attempted:							
	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180
1-7	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180
8-9	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160
10	0	20	40	60	80	100	120	140

Table 4: Deceleration Chart
DR	\ Speed Attempted:							
	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160
1-7	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160
8-9	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180
10	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	200

Players use these charts *only* when accelerating or decelerating, as appropriate. If a car's speed will remain constant throughout a turn, no roll is necessary on either chart. To use the charts above, simply choose the speed you wish to reach for that car, roll a ten-sided die, and apply the resulting roll to the column which corresponds to the speed you wish to reach. For each car rolled for on these charts, two die roll modifiers apply. First, you must apply the Driver Rating (as discussed above). And you will apply the modifier found in Table 5 which matches the change in speed you wish to make. Together, these cumulative values simulate the abilities of the machinery and advanced technologies of each car in response to the actions the skilled (or not) driver is demanding.

Table 5: Speed Change
Speed Change	Modifier
+/- 20 mph	-2
+/- 40 mph	-1
+/- 60 mph	+1
+/- 80 mph	+2

As an example, let's assume that a *SPEED CIRCUIT* car in a solitaire game is moving at 100 mph and would like to get up to 140 mph. Let's also assume that the car has a Level-2 driver. Before rolling the die, the player must calculate the cumulative DR modifiers. With a Level-2 driver, you apply a "+1" modifier, and for attempting a relatively easy speed change (+40 mph) you will apply a -1 modifier. The end result is that you will add zero (0) to the die roll. Rolling the die, assume that it comes up "7". Checking the "140" column of the Acceleration Chart, we see that on a roll of "7", the value "140" appears. This means that the car did indeed get up to the desired speed.

Now, let's slow down on the next turn. How about a decrease to 80 mph, which will require an attempt of a -60 mph speed change, which brings a "+1" modifier. Adding that to the "+1" for Driver Rating, you will add +2 to the upcoming die roll. Upon a roll of "8", the result is "10". Under the "80" column of Table 4, the value for a DR of "10" is "120". Thus, only 20 mph of speed was lost this turn, and the car is still whipping along at 120 mph. (I think it's time for me to bail out.)

Application of the usual *SPEED CIRCUIT* rules will penalize the attempt to decelerate or corner at greater than normal speeds. In other words, if the attempt to decelerate or take a corner would violate a rule and result in Wear Points, the penalty is applied even if the car did not actually reduce its speed by that amount.

Cornering requires another set of variant house-rules which govern the methods and routes taken by each car as it reaches and moves through a corner. For our purposes, we define a "corner" as beginning with the first row of spaces in which an arrow appears. The cornering house-rules are summed up:

1) No car may exceed the posted speed (including arrow bonuses) by more than 40 mph.

2) Each car must check its speed prior to entering a curve and:

2a) if the distance to the corner is less than or equal to the number of spaces which the car may travel in its next turn, the car *must* decelerate (if possible) in order to comply with the limits set in C1 above; or

2b) if the distance to the corner is greater than the number of spaces that the car may travel in its next turn, then the car may decelerate, stay at its current speed, or accelerate (if desired).

3) If more than one corner falls within range of a car's current location, use the lowest posted speed from the corners in question to determine the car's compliance with C1 above.

4) Each car must attempt to follow a cornering arrow through a corner, unless doing so would result in a collision;

4a) as a corollary, each car must stay on an arrow as long as possible before it may be forced to leave the arrow to avoid a collision.

5) If more than one arrow exists through a corner, each car will follow the arrow which will allow it to (in order of priority): a) keep its present speed; b) obtain the inside-most position on the track; and c) cause the least Wear Point usage.

6) Upon leaving the arrow, each car must attempt to move to the inside, as per the first house-rule #4 above.

A couple of simple examples serve to illustrate application of the above "cornering" rules:

If Car A is traveling at 160 mph and is seven spaces from the entrance of a corner, it *must* decelerate to at most 140 mph before entering the corner. If Car B is moving at 160 mph and is nine spaces from the entrance to that corner, the driver may speed up, stay at 160 mph, or slow down during its turn - keeping in mind that it must still meet the limits of the first rule of cornering in the turn following that.

Suppose cars A and B are both traveling at 140 mph, tied for first place, with Car A on the inside. As they approach a corner with a posted speed of 120 mph, Car A (moving first) takes the arrow (which will still allow it to move without Wear penalty) and moves directly to the inside lane. Car B will also follow the arrow, but cannot move inside because of A's presence. Applying rule 4a, B will occupy the space next to A.

Now assume that Car C was also tied with A and B for the lead, but was moving at 160 mph. Taking the arrow would cause a collision, so C must take the next shortest route through the corner which would also result in the least amount of Wear points used. In addition, Car C must finish its turn as close to the inside lane as possible, given the congestion on the track ahead.

Using the above rules, and a little common sense, it is possible for fans of this great game to enjoy the thrills and strategy of Grand Prix racing, even if alone. In the next issue, I will offer a trio of Optional Rules, for use with this solitaire system or with the regular multi-player game.

☆

MOVING UP THROUGH THE MOB
Player's Notes for GANGSTERS
By Craig Sandercock
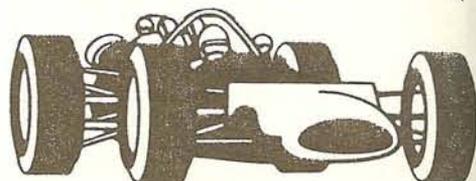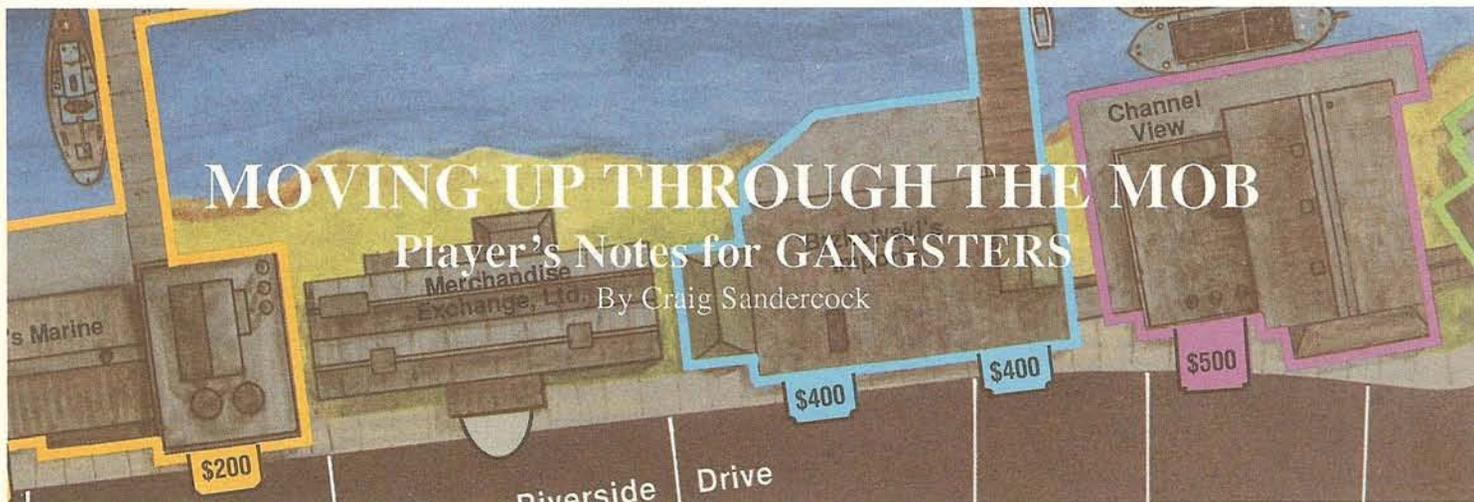
GANGSTERS is our newest multi-player family game; in fact, the ink is barely dry on it yet. Hoping to give you readers an edge over the opposition when GANGSTERS inevitably shows up at your local game club, we culled the following hints on strategy from the reports of one of the best playtesters involved in its final development.

Basic Principles

Even before the game begins, there are some decisions to be made . . . and I've some suggestions for players first entering the world of the Roaring Twenties.

Buy your first three Joints in the same neighborhood, as they will be easier to defend from the Cops and attacking Gangsters if they are close together. Buildings that are connected to each other are particularly useful as they can help your Gangsters maneuver while on their own "turf". Once the game has begun, when you have a bit of money to spare, move your Racketeer around your neighborhood buying more Joints to give yourself more opportunities for Organized Crime. Start with the cheaper properties, and accumulate some cash before moving up to the higher class of corruption. And put aside a reserve of cash (I like at least $2000) for emergency recruiting. Owning fancy gin joints will not help you much if an all-out Gang War begins.

Always start the game with at least one of each character (and preferably at least four Racketeers) so that you will have two movement options each turn. Recruiting more members is important to keep up your Gang's strength and influence, but do not pay to raise your Thug's or Racketeer's level above "6"; they are too easily reduced by Shootouts and Seduction to make that expense worthwhile. Taking a Racketeer up to a strength of "6" is very important, since you will then have that third movement option.

Once the game begins, bribe a Cop whenever you roll a "1" on the blue die; the expense is small and moving any Cop one space is rarely a matter of "life or death". When moving Cops, first look to see if you can do so to arrest an opposing Gangster (criminal-side up) or Raid an opponent's Joint (any with a Public piece inside). Many first-time players forget that Cops can use the subway and so miss such

opportunities; always study the board carefully. If there are no arrests or raids to be made, check to see if you need to move away any Cops infringing on your territory. If your neighborhood is already free of Cops, bring on a new Cop in the territory of your enemy (assuming the Crime Level is high enough).

Extortion is the easiest way to make money in *GANGSTERS*, and getting your Thug and/or Vamp into unowned buildings is your first priority. Both characters extorting every turn will bring in an average of $700, an income for which I am sure you will find a use. When extorting, you must always keep your eyes open for approaching Cops, as getting arrested can ruin your day. The gray buildings are better Extortion sites, because they have only one entrance - which makes it harder for the Cops to catch you during your nefarious activity. Never leave any Gangster white-side-up within six spaces of a Cop on patrol. Try to move them to another unowned building where no Cop can reach them in one move; but if that is not possible, then just move them anywhere and flip them back to being honest citizens.

Organized Crime can be very remunerative, but requires more care than simple Extortion. After your Thug and Vamp are in safe locations and raking in a steady income, use your remaining movement options to bring the Public into your neighborhood. Even if you cannot move a Public piece into one of your Joints immediately, having it in the neighborhood both increases the chances of enjoying some Organized Crime on your next turn and temporarily keeps the Public away from your opponents' Joints. While keeping the Cops away from your Joints is always good policy, don't become overly worried about Police Raids. Even a single payoff from Organized Crime is guaranteed to generate income at least equal to the loss you would suffer from a possible Raid there, and sometimes you will collect much more.

Avoid fights with other Gangs as much as possible. Mob Violence is always costly for both sides - not only because of the expense in replacing casualties but also because the movement options you must use in making "hits" could have been more profitably used in raking in loot. But there is no reason not to encourage other players to fight it out with each other (as long as you stay out of the battle yourself). If one player is clearly in the lead and on the fast

track to victory, the others may need to combine their efforts and attack him to catch up . . . but even then it is best to open the operation with a unified front of Cops, not Gangsters.

Vamps should always begin the game by Extorting in a safe place. Once some money has been stockpiled for emergency uses, your lady can move on to a more aggressive activity - Seduction. If your Racketeer is not yet at level "6", those of the other players should be her first targets. Vamping can lead to violent retribution; but if you are well prepared financially to replace her, the rewards are worth that risk.

As mentioned with regard to Mob Violence, the first diplomatic priority of a trailing group of players should be a general agreement to use the Cops exclusively against the leader. A further step in such an alliance would be to agree to a concerted effort to keep the Public away from the leader's Joints. While player-interaction in *GANGSTERS* is limited, as in many other multi-player games, there will be times when co-operation is the "name of the game". Stay open to all approaches.

If, however, *you* are perceived as the player in the lead, you should try to convince the others that you are not actually in the lead at all . . . or at least not significantly. Failing that, do all you can to foment disagreements among the opposing Gangs. Since all have conflicting needs for money, it should not be too hard to disrupt their alliance. Simply leaving a Public piece in place in one of their Joints during your own turn can often work wonders. If that does not work, there is always whining and groveling.

The easiest path to victory is to quietly collect $10000 cash. Always keep your cash secret (unless you want to prove that you have less money than they suspect, and even then you do not have to show them *all* of your money). Do not make the mistake of hoarding your money to the extent of neglecting your Gang, however. The good player will always have all three characters of his Gang in play, with reasonably strong Thug and Racketeer, and own several Joints. Having lots of money will not save you from severe setbacks if your Gang is not strong enough to repel a moderate attack. The best path for the beginning player is the "middle road": having neither the best Gang, nor the worst Gang, as either extreme invites attack from your rivals.

Intermediate Play

Now you have moved to the higher level of Crime and are no longer a mere "punk"; time to refine your strategy and tactics. Again, this starts before even the first piece is moved.

Buy relatively cheap properties at the beginning of the game, so that you will have money left over to spend on your Gang, which is more important than property at the outset. Buy a pair of either Protection or Rackets (or even three of a kind), and start your Racketeer in one of those Joints. In that way, you will have the opportunity to "improve" the Joint without even moving him into the "mean streets". You may even want to consider saving enough money from the initial investments to improve a Joint on your very first turn.

The advantages of an "improved" Joint are obvious: increased profits from Organized Crime; the Joint is not lost to a Police Raid; it is more costly for other Gangs to "knock over"; and it provides increased protection if your Gangsters need to hide from an opposing Gang. But remember that Joint improvements don't count towards Victory, so don't get carried away by improving everything; be selective in terms of where and when.

Once this is done, you are ready to expand your criminal empire. When considering buildings to purchase, count the spaces from the nearest subway station. Nine of the colored buildings can be reached in exactly one move from a station (e.g., both the blue and green warehouses can be reached in one move from Subway Station #4). This means that you could bring a Public piece onto the board and into these Joints in one swift move. The drawback, of course, is that other players can also start a new Cop and move it into one of these Joints for a sudden Police Raid. Even if you face the possibility of a Raid, however, it is always worth the chance to collect a payoff; there is only one-in-six odds that the next player will roll what is needed to conduct the Raid.

If you save at least $400 from your initial Joint purchases, you can afford to start the game with six Racketeers, one Thug and one Vamp. This will give you three movement options each turn, from the very beginning. Your first priority is still to get your Thug and Vamp into safe buildings for Extortion; but you can use that third option to start bringing on the Public at a time that other players may not be able to take advantage of them. As soon as you have some cash and a low black-die roll, recruit your Thug some company and make him less vulnerable.

If your Thug is eliminated, you should recruit at least one as soon as possible, regardless of the black-die roll. On a roll of "6", one Thug costs $600, which he will recover through Extortion in just a few turns. You want to build up the Thug's strength quickly, but meanwhile any further high black-die rolls will generate a goodly income while you wait for a low roll. On the other hand, if your Vamp is eliminated, you will probably have to wait for a low red-die roll of "1" or "2" (even "3", depending on how desperate or flush you are) before recruiting a new one.

When moving a Cop, keep in mind the Bribe markers you have. If you own Cop #5, for instance, moving him will guarantee that the move can not be cancelled by another player. And, conversely, if the choice comes down to Cop #5 and one in your neighborhood, it is important to remember which is more dangerous to you and move him out first.

If you should happen to draw the "Untouchable" marker, consider who is bribing the most Cops. If you invest in Bribes more often than any other player in the game, keep the marker to reduce your losses. If all seem to bribe Cops as often as you, throw it back into the cup so others can share your misfortune . . . but not immediately. Wait until another player has actually made the announcement to bribe a Cop, because it may turn out that you are the one who wants to do so and there is no need to draw the "Untouchable" again if you can avoid it.

Give some thought as to how the Crime level compares to the current number of "Cops on Patrol". In some situations, you may want to strategically alter the Crime Level by flipping your Gangsters. The advantage of doing this is that you can, in that manner, influence whether or not the next player is able to bring a new Cop into play. If you have some particularly lucrative Organized Crime in progress, you may want to lower the Crime Level enough to prevent the next player from starting a new Cop that could Raid your Joint - especially if it can be reached from a subway in one turn. If the Crime Level is low and you want the next player to be able to start a new Cop to use against a common enemy, you may wish to engage in some penny-ante crimes just to raise the Crime Level.

When possible, having your Thug and Vamp extort in the same building is often safer than splitting them up. If they are together, there is only one building from which to exclude nosey Cops instead of two, and the Thug can serve to protect your Vamp from hostile Racketeers. The danger is that if a Shootout does occur with Cop or enemy Thug, it could be doubly disastrous for your gang.

When choosing a site for your strong-arm tactics, keep in mind how safe the building is. Those with only one entrance (all gray buildings, and a few colored buildings) are the most difficult for Cops and other Gangsters to reach. Buildings close to a Subway Station are risky, as Cops can readily transfer from other parts of town and arrive right on your doorstep. The 13 buildings (nine colored and four gray) that can be reached in a single move from a Subway Station are definitely to be avoided. Buildings at intersections are also dangerous, as attackers can approach from several directions. The Safest locations are found near the edge of the board and near bridges, since movement tends to be restricted in these areas.

Since there are only four Public pieces (of varying values), it is important to keep track of which are on the board already. For example, if you notice that both the higher value Public pieces are in play, you may opt to use a movement to move one of these more lucrative prey towards your neighborhood rather than start a new lower-value Public piece.

When moving the Public, look for long stretches of road without any intersections (particularly those around bridges) that pass through your neighborhood. All you need do is point the Public in your direction on these roads and they cannot be diverted nor turned back. Even if the piece does not get as far as your Joints, it is not available to be of profit to the other Gangs.

But what of attacking the other players? At some point, you'll want to slow them down, or bring a leader back into the pack. A few tips for getting at the rival Gangs seem in order here.

The safest and most "defensive" hit is to use your Racketeer to eliminate an opposing Vamp. Vamps cannot return fire, so there is no immediate risk. And the benefits of a successful strike are several: there is less danger to all in having their strength "vamped" away; the target Gang's income is reduced (at least temporarily); and the rival Gang must spend both money and a movement option to recruit a new Vamp.

Another type of attack you may wish to consider is using your Thugs against an opposing Racketeer. If the two are of equal strength at the start of the Shootout, odds say that you should inflict twice as much damage as you suffer. The dice may, of course, dictate otherwise; but in general pitting your Thugs against opposing Racketeers will always be in your favor. Even if the Racketeer is twice as strong as your Thug, on the average you will score the same number of hits on each other . . . but the Racketeer's losses will be twice as expensive to replace.

Yet another kind of "attack" involves moving any one of your white-side-up pieces into the same space as a Public marker, so that the Public is removed at the end of your turn. Your own Gangster will be in danger of arrest, but it may be worth the risk to remove a high-value Public piece from the neighborhood controlled by a rival.

But, your Vamp remains the best "attacker" you have; Seduction is so much more subtle than a Shootout. To sneak up on an unsuspecting Thug or Racketeer, first move your Vamp close to a Subway Station. Once she is in position, try to calculate before your turn which reddie roll(s) your Vamp can use to reach an opposing Gangster. This avoids that clumsy counting of spaces which signals that your vamp is on the prowl, while saving you some precious seconds during your move.

When debating whether to vamp a Thug, check to see if that Gang's Racketeer is more than six spaces away from the Thug; if so, the Thug is a much safer target. When vamping a Racketeer, first consider how easy it might be for him to circle back to the space and fire on your Vamp. Buildings with multiple entrances, Joints connected to others owned by the same Gang, and street spaces adjacent to the enemy's Joints are particularly dangerous.

But if you wish to avoid conflict with a particular Gang, you can try to establish territorial boundaries that opposing members cross only as a declaration of open Gang Warfare. Such security is largely symbolic, however, as the subways allow for sudden movement to within your neighborhood no matter how secure.

If one player is in the lead, others will need to resort to unusual measures to redress the balance of power. Allies could agree to leave the Public in each other's Joints as a way of

increasing income that is promised to be invested to harm the leader. Allied Gangs might move their pieces into the same location for increased security. If the leading player is particularly offensive, the weaker Gangs could even pool their property or money to produce a surprise victor from within their ranks (and so end an unpleasant game, perhaps).

A more aggressive approach to winning than just accumulating money becomes a real possibility as you gain experience with *GANGSTERS* - steadily buying property from the start of the game. Start your Thug and Vamp extorting to provide a regular income and use your movement options to keep them out of trouble with the Cops. Meanwhile, move your Racketeer from one cheap building to another around the map. Try to buy a new Joint every turn. But if you cannot reach a nearby building, leave your Racketeer in place and improve it a level on the following turn. Don't bother with Organized Crime unless a particularly profitable opportunity presents itself, as the inevitable Raid will reduce your holdings.

Once you have eight or nine Joints, your opponents will be forced to continually waste their energy attacking your operation in an attempt to close them down. You can keep the pressure on by buying another every turn. If this becomes a prolonged pattern, you could even sneak into a win by quietly collecting all of one color while your opponents are concentrating on stopping you from having ten Joints. Or you might even manage to reach that elusive ten grand during all this foolishness.

Advanced Play

Equipping your Thugs with "heaters" is obviously a fine idea before launching a Gang War. When used offensively, heaters are most effective when combined with the flexible movement that "wheels" can provide to your marauding band of Thugs. But if you can afford to buy these early, they can also be a useful deterrent against any attack. Do not buy heaters when your Thug's strength is less than "4" however, as they are too easily lost. If your Thug is badly weakened in a Shootout, make recruiting or vamping more levels a priority to reduce the risk of losing the heaters. In short, adding the heaters will be seen as escalation, and certainly "heat" up the game.

"Wheels", as noted above, can be very helpful in the game. They provide even greater flexibility to all three of your mob members. Even though they are used for only one each turn, you can always use them with whichever you need most to move. On a high roll of the three dice, and making use of the wheels and the subway, a Gangster can reach anywhere in the city. Figuring the route might be a bit complicated, however, so it is important to have a clear idea of where you want to be before your timed move begins. If you are trying to move a piece into a nearby building but did not get the needed low roll, you may still be able to use your wheels to get there in a circuitous fashion. (Remember, you can cut through Joints that you own, or can transfer to the subway in order to approach the building from the opposite direction.) The wheels are very powerful when used to make a hit or seduction. Such actions will

inevitably escalate the violence, so be sure to maintain a strong Racketeer to prevent the possibility of the loss of both movement options and your wheels if he is targeted.

As with heaters, a "Siren" is most effective when combined with the powerful movement of "wheels". Unlike heaters, however, outfitting a siren has no defensive excuse at all (it may even provoke a pre-emptive strike), so you'd best buy one only if you plan to make quick use of her. Usually this means that your Vamp is in striking range of other Gangsters, and you have enough money set aside that you will not need the Vamp to extort. The best sequence is to use your Siren to vamp a Gangster in a gray building (usually a Thug busy with Extortion), so that on your next turn she can become a siren again and land on another victim (preferably in a gray building again).

Then there is the most popular marker in the game, one unique in the annals of gaming - "Donuts". The mere smell of Donuts can be used to stall a Cop that is poking around in your neighborhood; but this should only be done if your blue-die roll is insufficient to get him out of it entirely. Moving a Cop into a Donut Shop only delays the problem, and there is always the possibility that another player can turn over that Cop's bribe counter to get him moving so he can annoy you. If a rival Gang uses its Donut marker to delay a Cop, check your own bribes when you (or an allied player) have an opportunity to reach out with him and strike the offender. Parking a powerful Cop in another Gang's neighborhood is an even better use of Donuts. Once there, the Cop threatens their criminal activities, yet is safely far from your own turf.

"Random Movement Order" is perhaps the wildest of the optional rules. It demands of the players the ability to think fast, yet offers so many opportunities that it is hard to resist using it once you have mastered the game's mechanics. Whenever your marker is drawn first from the cup, consider that if it is drawn last in the next series of turns, every other player will have taken two turns in between. This means that you must be extra careful not to leave your Gangsters in vulnerable positions where they can be attacked, arrested or vamped. If your Thug, for instance, has been extorting and you roll a black-die "1", it is best to forego that measly 100 bucks and move him (so flipping him back to a law-abiding civilian).

On the other hand, if your marker is the last drawn in a turn, you should keep in mind that there is a 25% chance (in a four-player game) that you will have the next move as well. Therefore, it pays handsomely to give extra attention to moving the Public into your neighborhood. If you can get one of those patsies into one of your Joints, you might well collect two Organized Crime payoffs in a row. And the possibilities for your Vamp and Thug (especially if combined with "heaters" or "wheels") boggles the mind.

Five-Player Game

With the fifth player, who takes on the role of the police in this crime-ridden metropolis, Gangster players should generally bribe a Cop on any blue-die roll of "1" or "2", as they so

reduce the activity of the Police Commissioner. As a Gang, players should keep more money in hand in this version for the more expensive bribes. If a Cop would be able to use your blue-die roll to arrest one of your Gangsters, it is better to pay the bribe than let him move. If the draw cup is empty (because all the bribes have been bought), you can still throw one of your own back in order to buy it back again. On the other hand, on a low blue-die roll, check to see if any Cop can use that to reach a rival gang member and catch him red-handed. If so, you may wish to pass up the cheap bribe and urge the Cop player to move against the other Gang. Obviously, however, don't do this if the Police Commissioner (the Cop player) is well in the lead; you may even need to pay more expensive bribes simply to keep the Cops from making lucrative arrests of other Gangsters (as well as your own)! When the Commissioner is close to winning, all the Gang players can do is bury the hatchet and work together to reduce police activity and arrests as much as possible. (Attacking Cops is always counter-productive, as they are easily replaced and the Commissioner will profit from the Shootouts.)

For the Police Commissioner player, strategy is a bit of a mix of opportunism and skill. Make arrests whenever possible, regardless of the odds. Patrols being shot up by Gangsters does not hurt your position, as you have an endless supply of "blue boys". Try to move each Public piece on the board out of the reach of all Joints; but when this is not possible, concentrate on moving the piece away from the most valuable Joints or those owned by the most successful gang.

Do not be afraid to spend $300 or $400 for a bribe marker, as they are crucial to your success in the game. The Gangsters are not likely to give you any better deals on their turns (remember that bribes are your *only* expense). Once you own a bribe, you need never give it up - even the "Untouchable" marker should be kept. The more bribe markers you have, the less chance there is that your movements on the board will be blocked.

If there are no arrests or raids to be made, and a bribe is too expensive or not available, use your turn to bring a new Cop into play. Don't bother to just move Cops around on the map (other than to make an arrest) until you have as many on patrol as possible. The more Cops you have in play, the greater the chances of making arrests in later turns. If the Crime Level is too low to allow you to put a new Cop on the streets, move one to a Subway Station; having one ready to transfer greatly increases your striking range and worries the evil-doers.

Conclusion

GANGSTERS is a clever, and fun, game. While light-hearted, the strategy and tactics are quite deep and mastering them a real challenge. The timed-moves aspect demands the best of the players, and victory will often go to the one who can best think under pressure and not be distracted from his game plan by momentary setbacks. I hope the above suggestions may prove of worth to you when you are under the gun in *GANGSTERS*.

☆

VENUS SMUGGLER
The Black Market in MERCHANT OF VENUS
By Wesley Kawato

At first, we of the Galactic Trade Association considered the Rastur to be a mere nuisance, but not much of a menace. They often stopped our ships, demanding tolls and delaying shipments when their outrageous demands were refused. Many of our members grumbled at this, but we took no action, because most cargoes still eventually reached their destination. But then the Rastur turned rather nasty, forbidding trade upon the worlds they controlled. The response was as old as history itself - most members turned to smuggling (or even less savory pursuits). And some, unwilling to face the risks, sought to work within the "law".

SMUGGLING

In order to use the variant rules listed below, the Rastur must be in play. No goods may be sold at a ground city if a Rastur unit occupies the orbit box above, except through the use of the smuggling rules given below. For purposes of this variant, a ground city is "Rastur-controlled" if there is a Rastur unit in the orbit box above it. The principle also applies to Rastur-controlled space ports. Other than altered by the variant rules below, all standard rules of MER-CHANT OF VENUS remain in effect.

Upon landing at a ground city, or a spaceport controlled by the Rastur, the player must locate a "black-market dealer" if he intends to sell any "Goods" (note that "Equipment" may not be sold as such). To accomplish this, the player rolls a single die and one is found on a roll of "6" or more. The player gets a "+1" die roll modifier for every $10 he pays in bribes (consider the player to be paying off contacts in various starport bars). This payment is made directly to the bank. Only one attempt to find a black market dealer may be made per game turn. If the die roll fails, the player must await the next turn to try again. If the roll succeeds, the player may immediately make a roll on the Black Market table listed below, after announcing all types of Goods being sold, with the indicated results for each possible result strictly enforced:

Black Market Table
1. **Police Informer:** You're arrested and your Goods confiscated (eliminate all cargos currently onboard the player's ship). Pay a $50 fine *or* lose your next turn.
2. **Rip Off:** The dealer takes your Goods and disappears (eliminate all cargoes of the item being sold).
3. **Bad Luck:** The dealer informs you the police are everywhere. He returns your Goods unsold (no effect).
4. **Quick Sale:** The dealer sells your Goods for half the normal profit.
5. **Sale:** The dealer sells your Goods for the normal profit.
6. **Good Sale:** The dealer sells your Goods for twice the normal profits.

A black market dealer may sell any number of Goods for a player. If a player has his Goods returned to him, he must make a new die roll next turn, to find a new black market dealer. Note that, when calculating the price, all usual bonuses and penalties are applied before halving or doubling the final profit.

BLOCKADE RUNNING

Another way to thwart the Rastur is through "blockade running". Available for purchase at systems with a Metaphysical technology is the "Cloaking Device". This item costs 40 credits and takes up half-a-hull space. Only one cloaking device may also be installed on the hull. Cloaking devices, like nova balls, are a one-use item. Upon entering any box containing a Rastur counter, the player may use his cloaking device to move past the Rastur without paying a penalty. Remove the item immediately after its use.

Ships containing cloaking devices are subject to inspection at all Rastur-controlled ground cities, space cities and space ports. A single, unmodified die is rolled and on a result of "6" the player's unused cloaking device is immediately confiscated. Worse, the player must either pay a $50 fine *or* lose his next turn. (Cloaking devices are banned by the Galactic Arms Control Treaty.) As with any item of equipment, cloaking devices may be sold, or even jettisoned, if desired.

GUN RUNNING

Where there is invasion and occupation, there are always those willing to risk their lives to free themselves from alien rule. The Rastur expansion is no exception, and this kind of environment makes "gun-running", to various liberation movements, a lucrative side-line for some merchants. Through their activities, some locations may be "liberated" from the Rastur.

In order to liberate a ground city, space city or spaceport from Rastur control, a certain number of arms shipments must be sent to that location. To determine the required number of shipments, divide the strength of the occupying Rastur unit by ten. (A quick inspection of the Rastur counters reveals that it'll take between five and 25 arms shipments to liberate a location from the Rastur.)

An arms shipments consists of either one laser or two nova balls (e.g., a single nova ball equals a .5 in the tally). Players should keep a written tally for each location under Rastur control, for it makes no difference who delivers the arms shipment. Once the required number of shipments has been received, the occupying Rastur unit is immediately eliminated (going back into the Active pool).

Players receive $200 for each laser delivered and $40 for each nova ball delivered. Before receiving payment, however, a player must roll on the Gun-Running table:

Gun-Running Table
1. **Arrested:** The arms are confiscated and you must pay a 100 credit fine. If you can't pay the fine, you lose your next turn.
2. **Narrow Escape:** You are chased by a Rastur patrol and are forced to jettison the arms shipment in order to escape. Eliminate all lasers/nova balls and move one dot in any direction.
3. **Delivery Postponed:** A frantic radio message from your contact on the ground warns of a trap at the drop point. You may not deliver any arms shipments to this location this turn, but may roll again on this table on your next turn.
4-6. **Deal Completed:** You receive $200 for each laser delivered and $40 for each nova ball delivered.

RASTUR TRADE POLICY

After awhile, the Rastur realized their inability to halt the smuggling and other "illegal" activities. Two solutions were suggested to deal with this dilemma. One school of Rastur society maintained that strict enforcement of current trade restrictions would eventually lead to an end to smuggling. The other maintained that the trade restrictions were un-enforceable and should be repealed. This led to plenty of vacillation, as one can imagine, with policies changing as new factions came to power within their system.

To reflect this vacillation in trade policy, a die should be rolled each turn before the first player moves. On a roll of "1-4" there is no change in the Rastur trade policy. On a roll of "5-6", the Rastur trade policy changes.

The Rastur may engage in one of two trade policies: "Free Trade" or "Embargo". Free Trade allows Goods to be sold openly on their planets; all the usual rules are in effect, with the exception that the Rastur will not interfere with player movement or trade. An Embargo policy institutes the usual rules for the Rastur halt of trade, and allows players to engage in any/all of the variant rules presented in this article. At the start of the game, the Rastur trade policy is "Free Trade".

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Although some merchants strayed into the "gray" areas of trade, such as smuggling and gun-running, to compensate for the loss of revenue created by the Rastur invasions, others invested in advanced technology to speed up their trade runs to worlds still free from Rastur control. Recently, an engineer at Galactic Base came up with a package of innovations that makes it possible for a merchant to buy and sell goods without landing on a planet or a starport. The first part of this package is a trans-light communication device, which makes it possible

to negotiate a purchase or a sale while moving in space. The second element of the package is a "transporter", a device that allows instantaneous pick-up and delivery of goods.

In game terms, this package costs $500 and is only available at Galactic Base. The package is installed on the ship's hull and may pick up or deliver goods, weapons, drives or relics. Fares may not be picked up nor delivered using a transporter (because the device cannot guarantee the survival of a living organism). To use it, a player's ship must pass directly through (or the orbit box above if a ground city) the delivery/pick-up location. Each turn, a transporter may be used to deliver one item and pick up one item. The pick-up and delivery may occur at different systems. Spaceport and factory bonuses are still received by the owners of such installations on all transporter transactions.

If the transporter/trans-light communications package proves to be too powerful during play, there are several ways to limit its use. One way is to make the package unavailable until someone rolls a "4" while rolling for the Rastur trade policy change (indicating a hardening of Rastur policies). Another is to make the package require more space, perhaps half a cargo or even a full cargo hold.

Yet a third possibility is to make the device unreliable, making necessary an extra die roll. On a roll of "1", the device short-circuits and may not be used again until a stop is made at Galactic Base for repairs. Such repairs cost $50 credits. If the transporter short-circuits, the Goods go nowhere and are not damaged in any way. If this option is being used, a separate reliability roll must be made for each pick-up and delivery, even if both are occurring at the same location and at the same time.

The method of limiting use of the Transporter/Trans-light Comm package is left to the players of each game. Further, players are encouraged to experiment with other ways of limiting use of this powerful variant.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that institution of each element of the variant presented above changes the flavor of the complex strategy of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*. Each successive element of "Venus Smuggler" makes the Rastur less menacing, and makes the solitaire game easier to win. But, for those players of this great game who are looking for something different, my group of gaming buddies highly recommends it. It certainly offers a wide variety of situations, with an even wider range of strategies now available in response. And, the challenge is always there of beating the Rastur at their own game. ☆
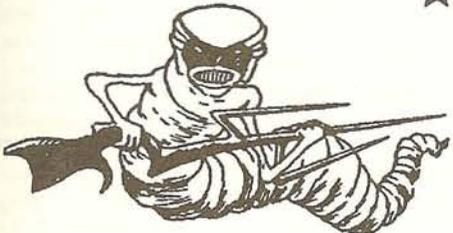
BACK ISSUES

Only the following back issues of The *GENERAL* remain in stock; price is $4.00 per issue (plus the usual shipping and handling charges). Due to the low quantities of some back issues, if ordering, please specify alternative selections. Below is a listing of each in-stock back issue by subject matter; game abbreviations are italicized and standard (a partial listing may be found on the "Opponent's Wanted" form on the insert of this issue). Type of article is indicated by the following abbreviations: A - Analytical, DN - Designer's Notes, H - Historical, Q - Questions, P - PBM (postal), S - Strategy, Sc - Scenarios, SR - Series Replay, V - Variant. The featured game for each issue is always the first one listed.
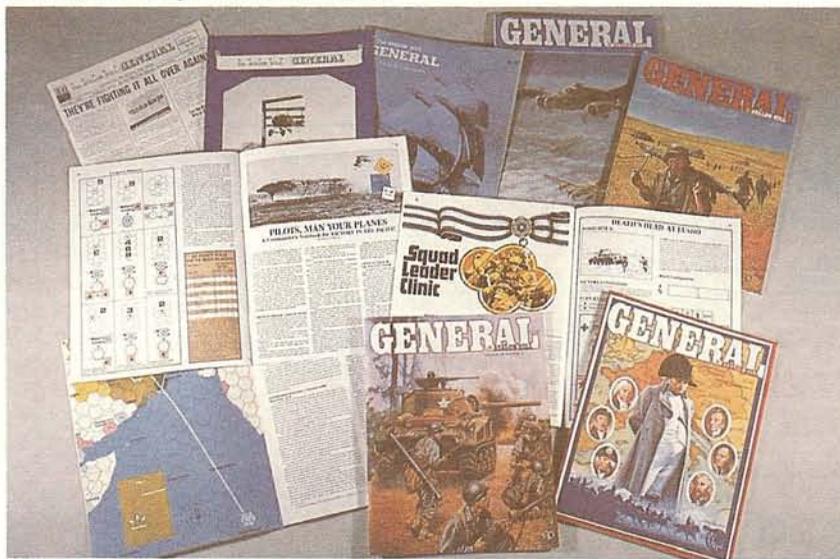
17-4: *FE* - S, P, DN, V; *MD* - V, Q; *COI* - SR; *VITP* - S; *1776* - Sc; *WQ* - A; *SST* - V; *NAP* - S
17-5: *CM* - S, V, Q; *RW* - V; *SL* - V; *STAL* - V; *PL* - S; *3R* - S, SR; *CAE* - V; *KM* - S; *MR* - S
17-6: *STAL* - S; *WS&IM* - V, Sc; *WAS* - V; *3R* - SR; *SL* - S; *CL* - S; *VITP* - S; *TRC* - S
18-1: *FITW* - A, Q; *BIS* - S; *SL* - S; *DUNE* - V; *DIP* - S; *AK* - A; *PB* - SR; *AL* - S; *W&P* - S
18-2: *AF* - A, Sc, Q; *AK* - V; *3R* - DN; *TB* - V; *SL* - S; *AIW* - V; *VITP* - S; *DIP* - S; *DD* - S
18-3: *GOA* - S, DN, V, Q; *AOC* - V, Sc; *AK* - S; *VITP* - V; *SL* - S; *WS&IM* - SR, P; *DIP* - S
18-4: *GL* - H, V, A, Q; *SL* - A; *LW* - V; *W&P* - SR; *AOC* - S, P; *FE* - V; *WAS* - S; *AK* - S
18-5: *3R* - S, A, V, DN, Q; *SL* - S, A; *TRC* - V; *TB* - V; *RW* - V; *CL* - A; *DUNE* - V
18-6: *FT* - A, Sc; V, DN; *VITP* - V, Q; *MD* - S, Q; *SOTN* - A; Q; *SUB* - Sc; *BL* - V
19-1: *SOA* - A, V, DN, SR, Q; *TLD* - A, Q; *3R* - S, Q; *DWTK* - DN; *TB* - A
19-2: *BB'81* - H, Sc, S, DN; *TLD* - A, Q; *SL* - V; *3R* - S; *SOA* - SR
19-3: *GSL* - A, Sc, V, SR, Q; *DIP* - A; *RW* - Sc; *GE* - V; *1776* - Sc; *LRT* - V, Q; *SL* - A
19-5: *SON* - A, S, H, Q; *W&P* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *WAT* - V; *WS&IM* - Sc; *SL* - A
19-6: *VITP* - P, SR; *3R* - V, Q; *DIP* - A; *FT* - V; *BIS* - V; *NAV* - A; *SL* - A, Sc; *SUB* - V, Sc
20-1: *GI* - S, A, DN, V, Q; *VITP* - SR
20-2: *TT* - A, DN, S, Q; *MR* - V; *LRH* - A; *SL* - Sc; *W&P* - V; *GOA* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *PL* - V
20-3: *FRED* - S, V, Sc, Q; *PB* - A; *1776* - Sc; *DWTK* - S, V, Q; *DIP* - A; *CONQ* - V, S
20-5: *BR* - SR, S, H, Q; *LRT* - S; *DIP* - A; *GSL* - Sc; *GE* - A; *WS&IM* - Sc
20-6: *B-17* - A, V, SR, Q; *AF* - V; *LW* - S; *DL* - S; *FE* - S; *DIP* - A; *MD* - S; *BR* - SR; *GOA* - Sc; *SL* - A; *PL* - Q
21-1: *UF* - S, A, SR, DN, Q; *SOA* - S; *GI* - H, S; *TRC* - S; *DD* - S
21-2: *NAB* - S, DN; *W&P* - S, A, Q; *NAP* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *FR* - S; *FE* - S; *3R* - S; *BFI* - S; *1776* - S; *SL* - A
21-4: *PGG* - S; SR; *PB* - A; *3R* - S; *TRC* - S, V, Q; *DIP* - A; *STAL* - V, S; *SL* - Sc
21-5: *HW* - S, V, A; *MR* - S, Q; *OR* - A; *DIP* - A; *3R* - A; *RB* - S; *CONQ* - V; *CIV* - S; *SL* - A
21-6: *FP* - II, V, SR; *AIW* - S, Sc; *BL* - V; *TAC* - V, Q; *SL* - A
22-1: *PAA* - A, S, Q; *TB* - A, V; *DWTK* - DN; *TR* - V; *GSL* - P; *DIP* - A; *AOC* - S; *WAS* - S, Q; *AK* - V; *CIV* - S; *3R* - S, Q
22-2: *BANZ* - A, SR, Q; *FT* - A, S; *SUB* - Sc; *VITP* - S, Q
22-3: *PB* - SR; *PL* - Sc, V, Q; *SOA* - S; *3R* - V; *DIP* - A; *CIV* - A; *UF* - Sc, Q; *AIW* - S; *GOA* - A, Q; *TLD* - A
22-4: *RF* - A, V, S; *TRC* - V; *PK* - S, Q; *DIP* - A; *3R* - V; *SUB* - V; *PGG* - S
22-5: *DEV* - S, A, Q; *GSL* - Sc; *BR* - S; *DIP* - P, A; *SC* - V; *FITG* - A; *ASL* - Sc, Q
23-1: *FL* - A, V; *DL* - V, *B-17* - V; *IIW* - S, Q; *VITP* - V; *3R* - S; *TT* - V; *LW* - V; *SST* - V; *RW* - V
23-2: *ASL* - A, S, Sc, Q; *BV* - SR; *UF* - S; *DIP* - A; *PL* - A
23-3: *SUB* - V, Sc; *ASL* - S; *BV* - SR; *IIW* - V; *BL* - V, Q; *BB'81* - A
23-4: *EIA* - S, DN; *W&P* - V, S; *WS&IM* - Sc; *SC* - V; *NAP* - S; *YS* - S; *3R* - S, Q
23-5: *KOTA* - DN, Sc, Q; *WAT* - V, Q; *3R* - S; *RW* - V; *ASL* - S; *VITP* - S
23-6: *1830* - DN, S, V, Q; *FP* - Sc; *RB* - S; *DEV* - P; *CIV* - S; *MR* - S
25-3: *PAT* - S, H, V, Sc; *TPS* - DN; *AK* - V; *3R* - Sc, Q; *ASL* - S; *PGG* - P; *PB* - A; *UF* - V; *SOA* - V; *PL* - S; *BB'81* - S
25-4: *EIS* - S, H, V, Sc; *WS&IM* - V, P, Sc; *EIA* - V, Q; *VITP* - S; *NB* - DN; *1776* - V
25-5: *GE'88* - SR, V, II, Q; *1776* - S; *ASL* - II; *FP* - Sc; *RB* - V; *OS* - V; *DEV* - S; *GOA* - DN, Q; *W&P* - S, Q; *BR* - DN
25-6: *ASL* - H, S, V, A, Sc, Q; *PAA* - S; *RSN* - V; *UF* - S; *FP* - Sc
26-1: *MOV* - S, DN, V, SR, Q; *DE* - V; *DUNE* - V; *DLW* - S; *KM* - S; *SC* - S; *ASL* - A, Q; *KR* - V, Q; *ROR* - DN; *CIV* - V
26-2: *TPS* - S, DN, SR, Q; *PB* - Sc; *ASL* - II, A; *3R* - S, Q; *IIW* - S, Q; *UF* - V; *RF* - S
26-3: *MBT* - II, S, SR, Q; *FL* - V, Sc; *FP* - Sc; *ACQ* - S; *TA* - S
26-4: *SOJ* - H, DN, S, Sc, Q; *KM* - V; *TT* - V; *CIV* - S; *DIP* - S; *MR* - A; *ASL* - A
26-5: *UF* - S, V, SR; *AF* - V; *FT* - Sc; *B-17* - V; *FP* - V; *ASL* - II, Q
26-6: *NB* - DN, S, H, Sc, Q; *EIA* - Sc, V; *1830* - S; *WS&IM* - Sc; *DEV* - S; *W&P* - Sc
27-1: *TRC* - S, II, V; *ASL* - II, Q; *KR* - V, Q; *RF* - S; *TPS* - S
27-2: *3F* - V, Sc, A; *6F* - S; *2F* - V; *EIA* - S, Q; *ASL* - S, D, Q; *WS&IM* - V; *FT* - V; *VITP* - S
27-3: *3R* - S, DN; *TLD* - S, V; *ASL* - S, DN, Q; *FE* - S
27-4: *ROR* - A, SR, DN, Q; *CIV* - DN; *KR* - V; *EIA* - S; *DIP* - P
27-5: *BB'91* - A, S, V; *BB'81* - DN; *ASL* - II; *DIP* - P; *TA* - A; *ROR* - SR, Q; *DD* - S

USS Los Angeles
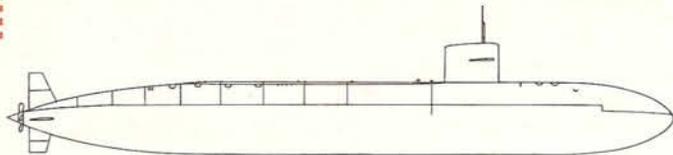
CLASS: Los Angeles
TYPE: SSN
DISPLACEMENT: 6,900 tons
SPEED: 31 knots
LENGTH: 109.7m

ARMAMENT:
4 × 533mm amidships torpedo tubes
(Tomahawk, Harpoon, Mk 48 torpedoes)

SENSOR VALUE	5	4	SUNK

ATTACK VALUE	VS. ship +3 / +3	VS. sub +2 / +2	SUNK

CONTACT LEVEL	No Contact	No Attack	1	2	3	4

SYSTEMS SHUTDOWN 5.5
Option after being hit.
Reduces Contact Level one.
RN ≥ 4 reduces Contact Level
  or resume play.
Reduces Hand Size.

Only Playable Cards:
CR Surface Noise
CR Thermal Layer
PS Passive Sonar

Current Detect Value 6

5

Defense 8

PLUNGING THE DEPTHS
The Cards of ATTACK SUB
By Jim Burnett

One of the finest *games* to join the Avalon Hill line in recent years is *ATTACK SUB*. This "simulation" of modern undersea naval combat maintains a careful balance between a game which is easy to play and one which is difficult to master. This means that while *ATTACK SUB* has been designed to appeal to the mass market, it also presents quite a challenge to the veteran gamer. Naturally, these players take their games more seriously, and thus want to have every advantage that can be obtained when they confront their opponent.

Diverging from most of Avalon Hill's other games (exceptions include *UP FRONT* and several of the sports games), the "luck factor" is controlled by cards rather than dice. This means that the blackjack player's standard tactic of counting cards can be of great value. For this counting to have any value, however, the odds must be known. Most of us now can recite by rote the odds for various types and combinations of dice rolls. This understanding is what allows one to decide whether to risk an attack, try to maneuver around the enemy for better odds, or assume a defensive posture by attempting to disengage. The *ATTACK SUB* cards should be treated the same way. Even if you don't take your game seriously enough to count the cards as they flow through the hand, you can gain valuable insights into the probabilities for occurrences of different events just by understanding the number of times each event is expected to happen during the passage of a full deck of the cards. This is even more impor-

tant in *ATTACK SUB* since the rulebook is not complex; the real challenge of the game lies in mastering the strategy and tactics of play rather than memorizing a large body of rules. To whatever depth (pun intended) you take this knowledge, your play should certainly be enhanced by being aware of what's possible at any given moment.

To begin, the deck contains 128 cards. Since this number is not a base ten for easy percentage calculations, or the familiar base six (normal cubic dice), we will translate the results given below into percentages. These percentages will be listed in the tables where they are deemed to be of value.

The first feature on each card is the "Random Number". This number is used for several important things in the game (such as Sensor Detection, Helicopter Checks and Repair). These "random" numbers range from "0" to "7", and include an "X" to give the unpopular but necessary equipment malfunctions. Table 1 lists the occurrence of each Random Number, the percentages for each, and the cumulative percentage for each number greater than a particular desired result. The cumulative number is important when you need to know the chances of drawing "greater than or equal to" a certain value. For "greater than or equal to", use the percentage listed out from the number in question. For just "greater than", use the percentage for the next highest number when making your decisions during play.

Table 1:
Random Numbers

RN	#	Total >	%	% >
X	8	128	6.25	100.0
0	16	120	12.5	92.75
1	16	104	12.5	80.25
2	16	88	12.5	67.75
3	16	72	12.5	55.25
4	16	56	12.5	42.75
5	16	40	12.5	30.25
6	16	24	12.5	18.75
7	8	8	6.25	6.25

While this is a fairly even flow of percentages, the roll off at the ends is noteworthy and especially important in the limited number of "X" cards, which bring all sorts of malfunctions to the hapless player. The breakpoint for even odds is about "3". The experienced player will note that several of the necessary draws in the play of the game are "three" or "four".

The most important item displayed on each card is the "Card Symbol" itself. These are the designators for the actions you can perform when holding a particular card. The Symbols are further broken into Black and Red colors. Per Rule 1.4, black Action Cards are to be used in your own turn and red Action Cards may only be played during your opponent's. A large number of the cards contain both colors, and thus have the flexibility of being played either offensively or defensively. A list of the cards by Actions and colors is contained in Table 2.

Table 2:
Card Symbols by Type and Color

Symbol	Name	#	%
Black Cards:		58	45.31
WL	Weapon Lockon	28	21.88
DC	Damage Control	2	1.56
AS	Active Sonar	14	10.94
HE	Helicopter	12	9.38
T	Technician	2	1.56
Red Cards:		16	12.50
EA	Evasive Action	16	12.50
Both Colors:		54	42.19
BS	Battle Stations	2	1.56
PS	Passive Sonar	14	10.94
CR	Contact Reduction	20	15.63
A/PS	Active/Passive Sonar	4	3.12
C/OR	Close/Open Range	14	10.94

As you can see, there is a fairly close balance between the use of the cards for offensive or defensive purposes - if you consider that the Technician and Damage Control cards have a "defensive" function which is used during the "offensive" phase (actually, "defensive after the fact") and that the Contact Reduction cards, while being able to be used in both situations, actually are "defensive" cards.

The Contact Reduction and Evasive Action cards have different features on different cards. In addition, some of them are gray-topped, indicating they may be played by submarines only (rules 5.4 and 7.2). These differences are listed in Table 3, along with their applicable percentages and notes.

Table 3:
Contact Reduction /Evasive Action Cards

Name	#	%	Notes
Contact Reduction:	20	15.63	
Thermal Layer (-2)	6	4.69	Sub Only
Silent Running (-1)	6	4.69	Sub Only
Surface Noise (-1)	8	6.25	
Evasive Action:	16	12.50	
Noise Maker (-1)	4	3.12	Sub Only
Decoy (-2)	4	3.12	Sub Only
High Speed Turns (-1)	8	6.25	

The exclusive designators on some of these cards give the submarine twice the ability to take an Evasive Action, and two-and-a-half times the chances of a Contact Reduction, as a surface ship. This reflects the real-life advantage due to the "hidden" nature of an underwater craft. The scenarios in the game are balanced (despite this advantage) by the numbers of surface ships and their helicopters in pursuit of a sub. We also note that the Contact Reduction cards give a choice (through the Red/Black designators) of using the negative value on the Red portion of the card during the opponent's turn to reduce the Sensor Value, or having a chance to draw another RN during one's own turn to reduce the Contact Level.

After you have achieved a "contact", your interest will turn to the employment of the Weapon Lockon cards to fire your weapons. This is a crucial consideration in *ATTACK SUB*, since all the maneuver in the world does no good if you are unable to bring weapons to bear on the enemy. A summary of fire numbers versus contact levels on the Weapon Lockon cards is given in Table 4.

Table 4:
Weapons Lockon versus Contact

Fire #	Contact Numbers				Total Cards	%
	1	2	3	4		
1	4	2			6	4.69
2	2	4	2		8	6.25
3		2	4	2	8	6.25
4			2	2	4	3.12
5				2	2	1.56
Avg	1.33	2.0	3.0	4.0		

It is helpful to view this table in both directions. The most obvious way is vertically when you are on the defensive. You know what the current contact number is, so you now wish to decide the average Fire Card you can expect to be dropped by your opponent. As you can see, the progression here is fairly linear, with the obvious spreads with more cards occurring in the "Contact 2" and "Contact 3" areas. Keeping up with the available Fire Cards by contact level can make things a bit easier on your mind if your contact is low enough that there is little or no chance of ordnance heading your way. Not as much information is apparent when reading the chart in the horizontal direction. About all you can find of interest is the number of Fire cards which are available. This is worthwhile, however, if you have been keeping a careful count of the cards and wish to estimate your chances of obtaining an appropriate Fire Card on the next draw or whether you should expend your efforts in closing the range and/or increasing the Contact Number.

The final feature on the cards (and the one of most interest after a shot has been taken) is the Hit Result. The spread of these results is presented in Table 5.

Table 5:
Hit Results

Result	Cards	%
Sunk	28	21.88
Attack	12	9.38
Attack*2	18	14.06
Sensor	12	9.38
Sensor*2	18	14.06
Attack/Sensor	12	19.38
Attack*2/Sensor	12	9.38
Attack/Sensor*2	12	9.38
Dud	4	3.12

Of particular interest on this table is the total possibilities to kill a target (or be killed). If your damage rating is three hits or better, the chance of one shot ruining your day is 21.88%. If you can only stand two hits, this possibility jumps to 45.32%. For the poor target with only one hit between itself and oblivion, the chances of being sunk by the first shot soar to 73.44%. This is only considering the losses from Attack or Sensor. If both of these ratings are one, you can only hope for the slim chance of a dud to survive. As you can see, the chances of being sunk jump from a bit over one out of five to almost-certainty, depending on your defensive capacity. Nowhere else is the power of the first strike in modern naval warfare better illustrated. Clearly, the message is to contact first, fire first, and hit first. To find the enemy is to kill the enemy; and vice-versa. All else is superfluous unless you are facing more than one

opponent (and then the opposite message concerning concealment should become very plain).

The tables above indicate that the three or more cards you are allowed to hold in your hand should give you the flexibility to act under any circumstances in which you find yourself. At the start of the game, you will wish to have the various Sonar and Range cards which allow you to search for the enemy and close or open range when necessary. Weapon and Damage Control cards are not of as much value at this time. When both sides are beginning to find out where the opposing forces are actually located, the character of your hand should change to a balance between defensive and offensive cards with at least one Weapon Lockon and one Evasive Action/Contact Reduction card present to allow you to respond to opportunities and threats. Obviously, the Red/Black cards are of value at all times and their use should be tempered by the situation. A Technician card is a valuable luxury against the possibility of malfunction for the player who may hold several cards. For those ships with low tolerance to hits, Damage Control cards should be discarded. What is the use of such a card if any hit suffices to sink you. The only exception to this is if such a card is drawn at the end of a deck and its retention would deny re-introduction to the shuffle (and thus make it unavailable to an opponent during the next deck). At all times, the wise player tries to use the cards available to the best advantage while retaining enough balance in his hand to respond to a rapidly changing battle environment.

I hope that these few tables have illustrated the detailed portions of the game to you. The Skipper's Notes and other articles on *ATTACK SUB* in The *GENERAL* will offer you the tactics you need to put the information above into practice in your own games. The numbers are there, whether you use them as an aggressive skipper and try to be the first to strike at your enemy - or whether you are the cautious type to whom concealment is all. ☆

A/PS 7 **A/PS**

SENSOR DETECTION
ACTIVE/PASSIVE

Active: own turn;
+ 1 to Sensor value.

Passive: either turn; Finds
Active & Sub fire automatically.
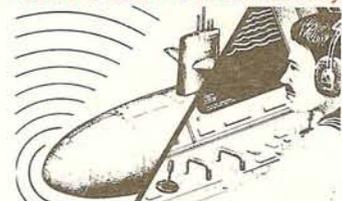
ATTACK

A/PS **A/PS**

NAPOLEON VERSUS LLOYD'S OF LONDON
A Variant for WAR & PEACE
By Glenn Rahman

In a sense, the military aspect of the Napoleonic sea wars ended with France's defeat at Trafalgar in 1805. Never again would the French admirals seriously contemplate another head-to-head naval clash with Great Britain. Nonetheless, the naval scene remained of vital interest to French strategists until the overthrow of the Empire itself in 1814.

Napoleon's post-Trafalgar strategy was essentially that of the earlier French Revolutionary governments, albeit more intense and methodical: to wage a naval war of attrition against England by destruction of its trade through means of commerce raiding, and so force it to terms. A similar strategy would be employed 100 years later and again 130 years later by the German Kriegsmarine, and ultimately it enjoyed the same lack of success.

This is not to say that the French and their allies made poor privateers, or that their efforts were lackadaisical; the British certainly took it seriously enough. The French actions at sea eventually doubled the Lloyd's of London insurance rate for British cargo, from 2.5% of the value of the voyage to 5%! Still, during the same period the French merchant marine was virtually swept from the seas with no real hope of return. Neutral shipping was so harried by the British that their own insurance rates for French-bound voyages were in the 20%-30% range. Occasionally this jumped as high as 50%, a crippling burden that discouraged trade with Napoleon's empire and reduced many continental Europeans to poverty.

The British titled their collective fiat upon neutral shipping the "Orders in Council". Their purpose was twofold: to embarrass France and Napoleon by the prohibition of direct import and export trade (which for them could only be carried on by neutrals), and at the same time to force into the Continent all the British-borne products that it could absorb. The expenses incurred by neutrally-flagged vessels forced to stop at British ports, both coming and going, as well as by British tariffs and sundry inconveniences, were passed on to the continental consumer in the form of ever higher prices.

Napoleon's response to the Orders in Council were a series of decrees, the most important being the "Berlin Decree" of 1806 and the "Milan Decree" of 1807. Collectively, they prohibited the import of all British goods into the Continent, with any violator of this form of blockade liable to seizure by French ships at sea (mainly privateers) or by Imperial port authorities. French vassal states and allies, the most important being Russia at the time, were forced (or persuaded) to go along.

But Napoleon's policy proved a poor one. It actually weakened French privateering efforts, for instead of be-deviling the enemy on distant, under-defended sea lanes, many now boarded ships near French-controlled ports, seizing the cargo and often the vessels themselves on the flimsiest pretexts that they carried British goods - even small smuggled items belonging to the common seamen being taken into account. In effect, they were pirates operating in European waters. After surviving or avoiding an outrage of this kind, neutral ship captains then faced additional danger from opportunistic port officials. Small wonder that beleaguered neutrals found British trade much safer. In large part, Napoleon's own heavy-handed commercial policies isolated his empire and hastened its decline.

All told, the anti-British trade embargo was intolerable for Continental Europe and illegal imports of British goods were epidemic. Czar Alexander gave the blockade his best effort, but he was isolated in his own court on the issue, and long resistance by his subjects eventually wore him down. In 1812, he like others (such as Napoleon's own brother Louis, king of Holland) ceased compliance, and this action precipitated Napoleon's invasion of Russia and France's own hard-fought downfall.

In the game WAR & PEACE, the French player is usually in a quandary as how best to employ his large - but not large enough - fleet. He might variously try to break out of blockade and achieve a local victory over a British naval detachment here or there, or he might keep his fleet intact as a threat in being. Nonetheless, an effective invasion of England - every would-be Napoleon's dream - is out of the question (except, perhaps, against only the youngest or most incompetent British players).

Therefore, I would like to offer this variant to frustrated French admirals. It supposes that the French privateering effort was pursued, at least as aggressively as it was historically, but that Emperor Napoleon opted for a much expanded commerce-raiding role for his own ships-of-the-line. While the French cannot hope to physically cut the maritime life-line of Britain, this policy seeks to inflict such losses upon the British merchant marine and neutrals trading with Britain as to drive the price of insurance for unfriendly shipping to unacceptably high levels. If insurance rises too high, mercantile interests have historically put extraordinary pressure upon Parliament to make the seas safe - safe for mercantile interests, that is. They would force greater efforts against enemy ports abroad, while demanding increased patrols in distant seas and perhaps institution of a convoy system. All of this is to the detriment of Britain's immediate wartime interests, which demands that it deal with France in Europe.

OFFBOARD MOVEMENT

The Off-Board Sea Movement Display (see chart on next page) provides more than a dozen sea areas where commerce raiding, sea interception, and combat may take place. Wherever sea "boxes" are connected by solid lines, a moving Naval unit may make a change of location. The movement point cost to the Naval unit is printed upon the sea box (given as the value of MP) and is paid immediately upon entry to that box. If insufficient Naval movement points remain to pay the full cost of the sea box, the box may not be entered.

The North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea "naval zones" printed upon the WAR & PEACE map are identical to the North Sea, Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean sea boxes upon the display. If a unit is in one, it may be transferred without movement point cost to the other. To enter or exit the map, the transfer must be physically made with the counters.

For example, a French Naval unit bound for North America would leave Brest and enter the Atlantic naval zone at the cost of one MP. It would then be transferred directly to the Atlantic sea box on the display, and could move to the North Atlantic box at the cost of one MP, then to the North American box at the cost of two more MPs.

A couple of the sea-box transfers are inherently hazardous for the French player. Due to the problem of getting past Gibraltar undetected, French ships crossing between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean must reenter the WAR & PEACE map if the British have a Naval unit at Gibraltar, and make the passage under the guns. Likewise for any French Naval units attempting to reach the North Sea from the Atlantic, which would mean daring the well-guarded English Channel. If French-friendly forces happen to take Gibraltar and place Naval units there the situation, vis-a-vis the British, is reversed.

COMMERCE RAIDING

A French or French-allied Fleet strength point beginning its Movement Phase in a sea box, and remaining for the entire phase within that box, may engage in "commerce raiding" instead of movement. To successfully raid a sea area, total the value of the Naval units in the sea box and add it to the sum of the roll of two dice. French Fleet SPs have a value of "1" and non-French allied Fleet SPs have a value of ".5" each.

Take the resultant total and add to it any MT (Maritime Traffic) modifiers that the appropriate sea box indicates. (For example, the MT in the North Sea is "+2", indicating a wealth of British shipping). From this combined total, now subtract the number of British Fleet SPs in the sea box, and any "AAB" modifiers which the British player has created by his "Action Against Bases" (see below), as well as the constant (and arbitrary) value of "9". The remaining positive number (if any) represents the change in the insurance rates for British shipping. Repeat this procedure for each and every sea box in which the French player has stationary friendly Naval units, totaling the change in rates. This value is the "Current Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate" (at game start, 5%).

The Americans tended to be adamant in their defense of the freedom of the seas. An undeclared war with Revolutionary France was fought between 1798 and 1800 due to the depredations of French privateers. Therefore, should French commerce raiders operate in the North American box during a given year, for any "War With America" die roll during the January of the following year, the chance of an American war with England is reduced. Should a war be indicated by a die roll of "1", roll again: an even-valued result means the war occurs as usual; odd means the Americans are too fed up with *both* combatants to declare war on the British. The British-American war roll may be made in subsequent Januaries, until the war is actually fought. Should the French end a game-year without raiding commerce in the North America box, the subsequent January war roll is conducted as per the standard rules. Should an American War be raging, the MT modifier for the North American box is reduced to "0", representing the interruption of normal British-bound trade there during wartime.

OTHER MODIFICATIONS TO THE INSURANCE RATE

A lack of French success at sea, or a paucity of effort, will encourage British underwriters to reduce their rates. To represent this fact of economic life, each turn - notwithstanding any action of the French player - three (3) is subtracted from the total achieved above, to create a new "Current Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate". The British insurance rate may not be lowered to less than 5% (representing the historic level of French privateering). Should it occur that the French player makes no commerce-raiding rolls at all in his player turn, the amount to be subtracted is doubled to six (6).

For example, the French have just begun commerce raiding with two Naval SP in the North Atlantic box. At the beginning of the units' Movement Phase, the French player rolls the dice for a total of "11". Add in the value of the commerce raiders (two) and the MT modifier of the sea box (+3), subtract the number of British Naval units (zero) and their AAB modifier (also zero), and the total of "16" is reached. Subtract nine (a constant) for a change in the Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate of "7". Add this change to the old rate (5% in this example) for a new total of 12%.

At the beginning of the British turn, this "12" will be modified by the constant -3, representing the confidence of underwriters in British counter-measures, for a final total of "9" This new rate of 9% is the Insurance Rate to be carried over to the next turn.

EFFECTS OF SKYROCKETING RATES

When the Current Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate reaches 10%, the British must send into the off-Board Sea Movement boxes a total of three Fleet SP, *or* two British land SP (with a Transport Fleet), *or* expend three production points in *each* subsequent turn. This latter represents creating new units and diverting resources to the high seas commerce war. The expended production points may be used for an

"Action Against Bases" attack in the turn that they are spent.

If the Naval units involuntarily sent from the map are destroyed in combat in the off-board display, they must be replaced during the next British Movement Phase. Neither the naval or land units may return to the *WAR & PEACE* map so long as the Current Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate remains at 10% or higher, unless first replaced by equivalent units or production spending. Land units on Transports in the sea boxes are absolved from the rule requiring that they land at the end of each turn. We assume that ports are available in the sea boxes as required by transported units.

It is possible for the British player to alternate his reaction to the high Insurance Rates. For example, he may first elect to expend three production points, but should he latter send three naval (or two land) SP to the sea boxes in a subsequent turn, he can cease expending the production points. He may also trade off Naval units for land units, and vice versa.

If the Current Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate reaches 15% (or higher), the British player may not draw more than one point each from his production centers.

If the Lloyd's of London Insurance Rate reaches 20%, the British player must expend

three production points per turn until the Insurance Rate is less than 20%; if he is *already* expending three production points per turn, he must then send three Naval SP, or two land SP (with Transport) to the sea boxes.

If the Insurance Rate should reach 30%, he must spend three production points per turn, as well as maintain in the sea boxes at least three Naval SP *and* two land SP (with Transport).

If the insurance rate reaches a catastrophic 40%, no production points may be lent to allies (in the unlikely event that the British player has any to spare), and no British land units may leave England (except to go into the sea boxes), and all British units outside England upon the *WAR & PEACE* map are forbidden to engage in attacks (they defend normally)!

INTERCEPTION & COMBAT IN SEA MOVEMENT BOXES

A fleet which begins its turn in a sea box may roll in the Movement Phase to intercept enemy naval units (including Transports) in the same sea box. For this special off-board roll, use the Pursuit Table of the Naval Results Table. Some sea boxes, in deference to the size of the area they represent, have an Interception Modifier (IM) as shown, making it harder to achieve a successful interception. This modifier is printed upon the sea box in question.

OFF-BOARD SEA-MOVEMENT DISPLAY
For "Napoleon versus Lloyd's of London"

N. America MT: +3 MP: 2	**N. Atlantic** MT: +3 MP: 1 IM: −1	**Baltic Sea** MT: +2 MP: 1
Caribbean MT: +3 MP: 1	**Atlantic** MP: 1	**Britain** / **North Sea** MT: +2 MP: 1
Spanish Main MT: +1 MP: 1	**S. Atlantic** MT: +2 MP: 2 IM: −1	**Empire** / **Mediterranean** MT: +2 MP: 1
Cape Horn MF . 2	**C. Good Hope** MT: +3 MP: 2	**Indian Ocean** MT: +2 MP: 2 IM: −1	**East Asia** MT: +3 MP: 2 IM: −1
South Pacific MP: 2 IM: −1	**East Pacific** MP: 2 IM: −1	**West Pacific** MP: 2 IM: −1

MT: Maritime Traffic
MP: Movement Points
IM: Interception Modifier

If a fleet beginning its second turn in a sea box seeks to intercept an enemy fleet which has also been present during the entire last French Movement Phase, "+1" is added to the Naval Results Table die roll for Pursuit.

Combat is resolved between enemy fleets in the normal manner. In resolving such combat, assume that a sea box has no friendly port for a losing fleet to retreat to - unless the box is the Mediterranean, the North Sea, the Atlantic or the Baltic, and such a port actually exists on your current *WAR & PEACE* map.

If a fleet wishes to leave a sea box, there is no pursuit from enemy units in the same sea box. However, if it enters a new sea box containing other enemy Naval units, those units may attempt pursuit in the moving player's own Movement Phase, taking into account the new sea box's IM.

ACTION AGAINST BASES

As Pompey proved millennia ago in his war with the Cicilian pirates, one of the best ways to eliminate sea plunderers is to destroy their bases abroad and coerce neutrals to abandon support for their actions. This can be an arduous and expensive process, but ultimately can be quite effective - and it also offers booty and new territory for the major maritime power. Historically, base-capture was the most effective means by which Britain solved its enemy privateering problem.

The British player during his Combat Phase simply indicates the sea box where he hopes to suppress enemy ports. He cannot choose the North Atlantic (because the French are assumed to be using Continental ports). Too, any favorable modifiers the British player achieves from port suppression in the North America and the Caribbean are ignored during an American war, to represent the upsurge of American privateers operating from North American bases.

Once the British player has chosen a sea box to attack for port suppression, he rolls two dice and subtracts ten (-10). To this remainder he adds the number of British Naval *units* (excluding Transports) and British land *units* in the same sea box. He also adds the number of production points spent this turn (if he is making port-suppression attacks, the expended production points may be divided between the attacks but the same production points may *not* be used in more than one attack). If the result is a positive number, the sea box acquires an "Action Against Bases" modifier of "+1". As mentioned above, this reduces the effectiveness of French commerce raiding in the affected sea box.

If he has sufficient forces (i.e., units and production points), the British player may divide such and attack the *same* sea box more than once in a turn (an area would have more than one enemy port). This allows the British player to acquire more than a single "Action Against Bases" modifier that turn for the same sea box (if successful in more than one attack). Once acquired, the modifier is cumulative and may never be reduced (the French were incapable of effective reconquest). There is no limit to the size of this cumulative modifier, but at some point a sea box becomes so unfavorable to a French commerce-raider that he will likely simply abandon it.

If the sea box under attack is the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the North Sea or the Baltic, the AAB modifiers do not come into effect unless *every* enemy port opening to those seas on the *WAR & PEACE* map is captured.

Because of the paucity of usable French bases in the Cape of Good Hope area, unless Portugal is a French conquest (and thus the French have access to African colonial bases), each successful AAB score for the Cape box wins the British player twice the usual AAB modifier (that is, "+2" instead of "+1").

OPTIONAL SECRECY

To make the commerce-raiding aspect even more realistic (and more favorable to the French player), secrecy may be maintained. In this case, a duplicate off-Board Sea Movement display is necessary to provide the British and French player each with a display. Movement between boxes is conducted in secret (insofar as it doesn't violate the rules above), and the French need announce their presence in a sea box *only* when the British player announces that he is entering, or is already within, a sea box and it happens that that sea box contains a French Naval unit (this is completely voluntary; the British player needn't announce his movement), or the French roll for commerce-raiding in a sea box. In the latter case, the French player will state something like, "I'm commerce-raiding in the North Atlantic," and then make his roll. If this option is used, I strongly suggest that the constant subtraction of "9" for commerce raiding (see above) be raised to "10", as such secrecy makes operations very hard for the British Admiralty (as witness the U-boat campaigns of later wars).

ADVICE

We (my playtesters and I) think this variant adds an intriguing new dimension to the usually drab French naval game in *WAR & PEACE*. If he chose the commerce-war option, he ought to pursue it aggressively, rebuilding lost fleets as quickly as possible and sending them out to rob and plunder again. If the British player ignores the problem for too long, his freedom of action in Europe will be seriously reduced. In the best situation (for France), Britain will become only an unconquerable cypher in this game of empires.

For the British player, we recommend he pursues a blockading effort with vigor. The French navy cannot interfere with maritime commerce if it is trapped in friendly ports - or destroyed by amphibious landings. Use Nelson to best advantage against the high-seas raiders. Occasionally that might mean sending him overseas to destroy a large nest of commerce-raiders; but be very careful when trying to chase down the enemy. The French raiders are slippery and the British player could condemn himself to fruitless pursuits through many seas (though, at least, the pursued ships cannot effectively prey upon your commerce).

If the French break out of European waters and start raising insurance rates dangerously, a large armada moving from sea zone to sea zone may rapidly establish favorable "Action Against Bases" modifiers in the most sensitive sea boxes. This may be the most economical way to deal with French depredations in the long run. If action is tardy, however, the climbing outcry from Lloyd's will force this course upon the British player anyway, perhaps at a time when he can ill-afford to be distracted from the continent. All-in-all, the strategic situation seems to slightly favor the British, as it did historically; but the French player can take heart that the worst that might come from his dashing effort is a mere return to the same status-quo that he would have suffered under had he done nothing at all. For we Francophiles, that's enough.

Prepare for action! Enemy in sight! ☆

NEW ADVENTURING
A Variant for NEW WORLD
By Jared Scarborough

Let's face it. In an age when Hollywood can successfully market films sympathetic to the Native American, many a tender soul will find *NEW WORLD* as inspiring as the Spanish Inquisition. After all, knocking off redskins and looting their cities is, for some of us, about as cheering as trench warfare. On the other hand, history is history, and the "Age of Discovery" is perhaps the most exciting of all. Only the distant possibility that our descendants might one day discover a habitable new planet can compare in scope to the discovery and colonization of the Americas.

What *NEW WORLD* lacks, then, is not the excitement and drama of history, but the romance - the "what-if" of fiction. What if trade had been as important to the Europeans as territory? What if explorers had brought a tolerance and appreciation for the non-Europeans they would encounter? What if the governments of the Old World had worked hand-in-hand with those of the New? In other words, why limit play to an exploration and amassing of terrain? How about exploring human interaction and amassing wealth instead?

I offer a *NEW WORLD* alternative. Rather than being colonial powers in conflict with the native tribes, now you take the role of adventurers living among them, trading goods from the Old World or those of the New. Eventually, given your kind nature, you can win the complete confidence of the native peoples, even to the point where they become your comrades-in-arms. Together, you can storm the centers of autocratic power (the cities) to install compassionate, egalitarian governments which will, in turn, reward you handsomely. Unless, of course, some other player beats you to this golden age. And you can expect those engaged in traditional colonial expansion to despise your humane approach.

The Variant

The game begins with each player deciding whether to send the traditional colonists or "adventurers" to the New World. All standard rules remain unchanged. However, the following rules apply to those players who elect to try an adventurous approach:

Adventurers:

Adventurers are outfitted (purchased) for $10 each. Once set ashore, they must trade with the natives in that hex until Trade Level 7 (see below) has been reached, when they are free to move to any adjoining hex. Until they trade at Trade Level 6, Adventurers may not attack the pieces of other players. Adventurers may never attack natives. They are, however, counted as soldiers when defending against any attack.

Trade:

The trade goods listed on the accompanying "Trading Table" may be purchased by adventurers in Europe for the price shown at left, and

placed on outbound ship(s) during the Planning Stage of a player's turn. Goods received in trade and their "sale" price appear at right; these may be picked up from anchorage dots prior to that player's homebound naval movement. Players may deposit, then pick up, paired trade goods during the same turn.

Trading begins with "beads" and must continue, level by level, from Level 1 through Level 8 (see below for more details on each level). At least one of each good per level per hex must be traded. In other words, a player may not trade at Level 5 until he has traded at each of levels 1-4 (including each type of good at Level 3) in the hex. Players may, however, trade at more than one level during a single turn in a single hex. For example, a player's ship may carry beads, cloth and pigs on its first journey west and trade for "friendly reception", food and corn; however, the player could not carry beads, cloth and sheep and trade for the latter. All unused trade goods must be returned to Europe on a player's homebound voyage, but may be transported outbound again without cost in a subsequent turn.

A player must have at least as many adventurers in a hex as the level at which trade takes place. Thus, when a player trades at Level 5, at least five adventurers must be present in that hex. No good may be traded more than once in a given hex, except cloth-for-food (and beads, if playing the Exploration version).

Once a player has reached Trade Level 7, trade goods may be moved by land from one hex to another. Furthermore, trade goods may be dropped off by ships at any hex experiencing a Level 7 expedition. One or more adventurers must always accompany trade goods moving overland.

Trade Level 1: Beads constitute a "peace offering" and must be given as gifts during the initial turn of arrival in a new hex, one bead "unit" per hex. Beads do not take up room on a ship, but must however be assigned to a specific ship. If beads are not available (due to ship loss, for instance) when adventurers disembark, the native Uprising Table must be consulted for that game turn for that hex. (Normally, adventurers need not consult this table.) In effect, the beads gain an adventurer-explorer a friendly reception.

When playing the Exploration variant, beads are traded for information concerning adjoining hexes - one unit of beads per adjacent hex - in addition to their use as peace offerings. In this version of the game, all players (whether adventurers or colonizers) may purchase beads for this purpose.

Trade Level 2: Cloth may be traded for one turn's worth of food supplies fed to one adventurer. As with beads, cloth does not occupy space on a ship, but must be assigned to a specific ship. All adventurers must be fed; other-

wise the player must consult the Native Uprising Table for that hex for that turn. One "food" unit per adventurer is necessary through Level 5.

Trade Level 3: New plants/animals are specimens, and therefore receive special treatment demanding considerable space onboard a ship: maximum of two units per ship. A single ship might therefore carry one adventurer and one animal, or two animals and no adventurers. Costs of animals/plants are paid/amassed only in Europe.

Trade Level 4: Tools can be traded for "herbal medicines", which in turn eliminate the need to consult the Survival Table for that particular hex. Otherwise, the Survival Table is consulted each turn normally, with adventurers affected by all losses assigned to colonists (but not those assigned soldiers). A unit of tools takes up one-quarter of a ship's space.

Trade Level 5: Weapons can be traded for "Precious Materials", one trade in each per hex. Unlike all other trade goods, precious materials may be stolen (when using the Optional rules for Piracy). All precious materials are assumed to be at anchorage dots prior to homebound naval movement. Weapon/precious materials units occupy one-quarter of a ship's space each.

Trade Level 6: Reading/Writing can be "traded" for Loyalty. Natives in a hex who have been taught to read/write will feed and defend adventurers therein. Having now reached Level 6, adventurers are capable of both defense and attack. Furthermore, adventurers no longer need be supplied with cloth to secure food in the hex. Note that for a player to maintain this level the investment of $20 must be paid each turn to maintain it.

Trade Level 7: Following a turn in which Level 6 trade occurs, natives in that hex will lead adventurers from that hex on journeys into other hexes. Such is termed a "Fountain of Youth" expedition. (Until this point, adventurers could not travel by land - although they could be transported by ship from one hex to another.) A "Native" unit is created to lead each Fountain of Youth expedition.

Once such an expedition arrives in a new hex (which must adjoin the first), the owning player may begin a trading relationship with natives in that hex, beginning with Level 5 trade goods. Level 5 goods may be brought with the expedition, or may be landed by ship separately that turn (trade goods may always be landed and moved one hex, provided they are accompanied by at least one adventurer and any new hex involved is experiencing either trade or a Fountain of Youth expedition). No cloth/food supply is necessary on a Fountain of Youth expedition, and no Survival Table consultation is required.

Trading up to Level 7 must occur in subsequent turns in the new hex for the party to proceed with its expedition into another hex. If no natives are present (as a result of Native Combat by other players), however, the expedition may still continue on during the next friendly Movement Phase. All natives save one (being taught in each hex) may accompany an expedition, and automatically swell in number by one whenever an expedition moves on to another hex.

A player may send out Fountain of Youth expeditions to more than one adjoining hex; but remember, for a Level 5 trade to occur there must be at least five adventurers present in the hex.

Trade Level 8: Once a player has engaged in one or more Fountain of Youth expeditions, and has completed Level 6 trades with natives in the new hex(es) encountered, he may (along with any natives accompanying the adventurer) move into a hex containing a native city. If adventurers and accompanying natives are greater in total number than the city's value (found below the city symbol on the mapboard) multiplied by four, the player takes the city. All natives present join the victorious party and a compassionate, egalitarian government is formed which, in turn, grants the player $100 multiplied by the city's value. And this new government will grant "Keys to the Kingdom", akin to Political Control, which will earn the affected player $50 per game turn. Natives accompanying and joining the player granted a "Keys to the Kingdom" may now travel by sea with the adventurer, as well as by land.

Naval Losses:

Adventuring fleets lose cargo - highest trade goods first - when naval losses indicate the loss of soldiers. Adventurers are considered the equivalent of colonists for the purpose of consulting the Naval Losses Table.

Native Combat:

Colonial soldiers arriving in a hex in which adventuring units are already present must fight the adventuring forces and eliminate them before engaging in Native Combat. If natives have been reduced in number in a given hex, they will not agree to any trade not offered by a

former trading partner or a Fountain of Youth expedition.

Conflict among Adventurers:

Prior to reaching Level 6 (when they become capable of offensive action as well as defensive), adventurers cannot enter a hex in which another nationality's adventurer is present.

Income:

Adventuring players receive offboard Political Control income. They do not receive any Political Control income from the New World (see "Keys to the Kingdom" above instead). Nor do they receive Resource income; trade goods will fill this role.

Loans:

At any time during the game, any player (both colonial or adventurer) may take out a loan of up to $40 (maximum). Repayment of twice the loan amount ($80 maximum) must occur within the next two turns, or the player defaults. If a player defaults, he may never take out another loan, and must immediately subtract the money owed from any future treasury balance until the full amount (double the original) is repaid. If the player successfully pays back the loan to the "bank", he is entitled to take another loan, this time for up to the amount repaid (with the amount due again double the amount borrowed). A player may never have more than one outstanding loan, but so long as all loans are repaid within the two-turn limit, he may borrow as often as desired. The Banker keeps track of all loans and their repayment.

The Russian Player:

At the end of Turn 4, any player that wishes may elect to roll for the chance to change his role to that of the Russian. High roll wins; and the new Russian player must immediately declare to be either colonizer or adventurer.

Russia begins with $160 in its treasury, but due to its geographic position may travel twice in a single turn to Hex 2A. Furthermore, Russia need only roll once for naval losses when traveling outbound to 2A, and once homebound (a total of four rolls when making two trips during a single turn. The Russian player must roll twice, however, when visiting hexes in the next sea zone to the south; thrice when visiting any

other sea zone beyond that bordering the Pacific. While the Russian player may land units on any Pacific coastal hex, he may never land on the Atlantic seaboard.

If being played as a colonial power, the Russian player receives Political Control and Resource income as would any power (but does not benefit twice from control of hex 2A despite two trips being made per turn). The Russian player does, however, have the ability to trade twice or move/ship gold during the same turn when making two trips to hex 2A.

Victory Conditions:

Adventuring players win the game when they have secured a "Keys to the Kingdom" with a single native city, even if this occurs during a turn in which a colonial power controls five areas. Should two adventuring players both claim control of one native city at the end of a turn, the game continues until one controls a second city, one loses control of the city, or both lose control and a colonial player can claim five Politically Controlled areas, or the game reaches Turn 10.

If playing the "Long Game", or if there is no winner by Turn 9, adventuring players win if they have the largest treasury at game's end.

Tokens:

Adventuring players should use their nation's Colonist tokens to represent adventurers. Like colonial players, they are limited to 24 (loyal natives accompanying Fountain of Youth expeditions will increase this number however). Gold tokens may be used for precious material markers, while all other trade goods are not represented on the mapboard. Adventuring players must keep accurate and legible records of all activity.

Finally, a word on strategy might be in order. Adventuring players will want to quickly make their way to Trade Level 7. To win by Turn 8 or 9, they will have to be on a Fountain of Youth expedition by Turn 5 or 6. Furthermore, those who elect to try this approach will soon find that paying for more than a few turns worth of cloth/food can force one to start over at a different site due to a depleted treasury (food for five adventurers at Level 5 is $50 a turn).

Positioning is also vital for a turn 8/9 win. The initial landfall should be no further than two or three hexes from a native city. Expect to be attacked by other players just before your first Fountain of Youth expedition. Once you've launched that first expedition, no one is likely to attack your original hex, what with its $20 per turn financial obligation (see Level 6).

If you find your treasury low, or if you've lost many adventurers, concentrate on multiple Fountain of Youth expeditions and forget about the Keys to the Kingdom for the time being (although you may have to keep others from taking native cities). Play a defensive game while you recover.

Finally, a word of caution - watch out for crippling naval losses in the early turns, when you are forced to depend on certain trade building blocks. You might consider investing in an extra unit of beads, for instance.

Good Adventuring! ☆

TRADING TABLE:

	Trade Good:	Cost:	Traded For:	Worth:
Level 1	Beads	$5	Friendly Reception	$0
Level 2	Cloth	$10	Food/Turn/One Adventurer	$0
Level 3	New Animals:		New Plants:	
	a) Pigs	$10	a) Corn	$40
	b) Sheep	$15	b) Tomatoes	$45
	c) Cattle	$20	c) Potatoes	$50
	d) Horses	$25	d) Tobacco	$60
Level 4	Tools	$20	Herbal Medicines	$0
Level 5	Weapons:		Precious Materials:	
	a) Knives	$15	a) Silver	$50
	b) Swords	$20	b) Furs	$60
	c) Pistols	$25	c) Gems	$70
	d) Muskets	$35	d) Gold	$90
Level 6	Reading/Writing	$20/turn	Loyalty	$0
Level 7	Fountain of Youth Expedition			
Level 8	Keys to the Kingdom			

Total Damage					
0					
1 STRENGTH 3					
2 STRENGTH 2					
3 STRENGTH 1					
4 AGILITY 3					
5 AGILITY 2					
6 AGILITY 1					
7 SKILL 2					
8 SKILL 1					
9 POWER SURGE 2	**10** POWER SURGE 1	**11** STAMINA 2	**12** STAMINA 1	**13** RECOVERY 2	**14** RECOVERY 1

IMMOBILE

SUBMIT

The Kimono Lizard

STRENGTH: 3

AGILITY: 3

SKILL: 2

POWER SURGE: 2

WEIGHT: 2

RECOVERY: 2

No Manager

May Not Use Blue Holds

SPECIALTY: Karate Chop:
(STRENGTH: 1)
DAMAGE: 2

LEARNING THE ROPES

Strategy and Tactics in WRASSLIN'

By Bruce Harper

Every game designer (and player) dreams of a simple, fast-paced game that's interesting and challenging. *WRASSLIN'* meets this standard, as I hope to show in this article. It is a card game, intended to be played at blitz speed, preferably by players in high spirits; but the social aspects of the play should not cause the true competitor to overlook the many opportunities to demonstrate his (or her) superior abilities. In *WRASSLIN'*, as in most things, winning is more fun than losing.

Overview

As an introduction, the following discussion is intended to supplement the rules which come with the game. Where appropriate, rule references have been included.

Each player controls a wrestler, who is distinguished by his Strength, Agility, Skill, Power Surge ("heart"), Weight and Recovery ("conditioning") levels. Each wrestler also has at least one specialty, may be a legal or illegal sportsman, and may or may not have a manager. All of this information is noted upon his card (see above).

A wrestler's abilities determine which holds he can inflict on his opponent, and which holds his opponent can inflict on him. A wrestler's Agility and Skill can never be increased above their initial levels, so a wrestler with no Agility will never jump off the top rope; nor can a

wrestler with "0" Skill ever use a hold requiring skill. Only a moment's reflection is necessary to see why this is so. Similarly, a wrestler's weight is fixed, and does not change during a match.

As damage is inflicted on a wrestler in the course of a match, his Strength, Agility, Skill and Power Surge levels are eliminated, in that order. Once a wrestler's Strength, Agility and Skill are gone, the wrestler is considered to be immobile, which inhibits his ability to defend himself.

A wrestler can increase his Strength for one turn by playing a "Power Surge" card. The increase corresponds to the wrestler's current Power Surge level. However, if the wrestler has sustained so much damage that his Power Surge level has been reduced or eliminated, his ability to find hidden strength is reduced or eliminated accordingly. It is important to remember that only Strength can be increased in this way - Agility and Skill can never be increased above their initial levels.

Basics

Quite understandably, the first thing any gamer new to the world of pro wrestling in *WRASSLIN'* wants to do is hit his opponent. This shows considerable insight, as victory is ultimately achieved only by inflicting holds on the opponent.

In order to place a hold on an opponent, a wrestler must have the minimum Strength, Agility and Skill printed on the hold card. In addition, some holds are illegal, and can only be used by illegal wrestlers (illegal holds are printed in blue). When a player picks up the seven cards he is dealt to begin a match, his hand will usually contain some hold cards which will never be of any use to him. These include:

1. holds which require more Agility or Skill than is possessed by his wrestler;
2. lifting holds when the opponent's weight exceeds the total of his wrestler's Strength and Power Surge level (because his wrestler can never lift more than that total); and
3. illegal holds held by a "legal" wrestler.

Because an opponent's Strength can be reduced by hitting him, strength holds (which are printed in gray) are not included in the above list. A strength hold which cannot be played immediately might become playable later in the match.

During his turn, a player may do one, and *only* one, of the following:

1. try to place a hold on his opponent; or
2. recover from holds previously inflicted; or
3. leave the ring; or
4. discard a card.

This does not mean that a wrestler is always limited to playing only one card, but only that

he can only attempt one of the above functions in a single turn.

Play

The structure of WRASSLIN' sometimes may seem chaotic, but actually the legal plays in any given situation can be specified fairly easily. Rule 5.4 sets out the basic sequence of play, into which every card fits in one way or another (if only as an exception reflecting the card's special attribute).

An example of the simplest (and most common) type of play is:

Attacker: Elbow Smash. (The defender would incur damage of one.)

The attacker also has the option of using a Power Surge to increase his strength, even if it is not strictly required:

Attacker: Elbow Smash + Power Surge. (The defender would incur damage of one.)

Before any damage is inflicted by a hold, however, the defender has a chance to react by playing a Block, Reverse, Interference/Block, Interference/Reverse or Power Surge card of his own. There are some restrictions on the play of reaction cards.

Blocks can only be played by a wrestler who is mobile (has some Strength, Agility or Skill remaining). A wrestler's Strength can be augmented by a Power Surge card. The sequence thus becomes:

Attacker: Elbow Smash + Power Surge.

Defender: Block + Power Surge. (No damage is incurred.)

The sequence is no more complex when a Reverse is played, although the result is significantly different:

Attacker: Elbow Smash + Power Surge.

Defender: Reverse + Power Surge. (The attacker incurs damage of one!)

In both cases, the sequence ends with the play of the red reaction card. The attacker may not block or reverse his own hold after it is reversed. Once you've jumped off the top rope and your opponent has lifted his knee, it's a little late to do anything about it. As can be seen, reverses are powerful cards, but are limited by the fact that they may not be used against Continuing Holds or Specialties. The most common Continuing Hold, the "Pin", thus cannot be prevented or removed by a Reverse.

Interference/Block and Interference/Reverse cards work in much the same way. Only a player with a manager can use these cards. A wrestler does not have to be mobile to benefit from his manager's assistance (quite the opposite, in fact), but an Interference card may be negated by a Referee card, unless the interfering player can himself counter that with a Distraction. The full sequence is:

Attacker: Elbow Smash + Power Surge.

Defender: Interference/Block

Attacker: Referee.

Defender: Distraction. (No damage incurred.)

or

Attacker: Elbow Smash + Power Surge.

Defender: Interference/Reverse.

Attacker: Referee.

Defender: Distraction. (Attacker incurs damage of one.)

The Power Surge card shows its versatility when used as a reaction against a strength hold. When the opponent requires superior or equal strength to inflict a hold, a Power Surge can tilt the balance:

Attacker: Test of Strength + Power Surge.

Defender: Power Surge. (No damage incurred if strengths are equal; damage of one incurred by attacker if defender's strength is greater.)

A Power Surge blocks the strength hold if it makes the defender's strength equal to the attacker's strength, and reverses the hold if it makes the defender's strength greater than the attacker's strength. In either case, play of the Power Surge ends the sequence.

Combinations

A Combination card allows the attacker to play two holds against the defender. The defender has an opportunity to react to the first hold before the second hold is played. A reversal of the first hold (or the play of a Referee card against an illegal hold) prevents the second hold from being applied. The attacker may not recover, leave the ring or discard in place of playing a second hold. A successful combination would look something like this:

Attacker: Combination; Suplex + Power Surge.

Defender: None.

Attacker: Piledriver.

Defender: None. (Defender incurs damage of five!)

A less successful combination would look like this:

Attacker: Combination; Body Slam + Power Surge.

Defender: Block + Power Surge.

Attacker: Piledriver.

Defender: Block. (No damage incurred.)

A completely failed combination would look like this:

Attacker: Combination; Suplex + Power Surge.

Defender: Reverse + Power Surge. (Attacker incurs damage of two; second hold of combination prohibited.)

Like many other cards, Combinations can be decisive when played at just the right time. But if played prematurely, they can turn out to be a complete waste of effort. Combination cards also allow Power Surges to be used effectively, because the increase in strength resulting from the Power Surge played in conjunction with the first hold continues to apply for the second.

The Referee

Even in a one-on-one match, there is another man in the ring who could have a great influence on the outcome. The referee, as any wrestling fan knows, misses a lot, but still plays a big role in determining the winner.

A Referee card only works against illegal holds. If your opponent is a legal wrestler, you will want to discard any Referee cards you hold. But against a wrestler who has abandoned fan approval in favor of short-term gains, the Referee may be your best ally. If a player attempts an illegal hold and is caught by the Referee, he loses one, two or three turns, depending upon the hold he was attempting.

Thus, a minor attempt at cheating such as a Hair Pull met by a Referee means the attacker doesn't draw a card to replenish his hand until his opponent has taken one complete turn. During that turn, the referee is admonishing the culprit, so the defender can't inflict a hold; but he can recover or discard a card to improve his hand. The attacker then draws a card to bring his hand up to seven cards, after which his opponent again plays and can attack him normally.

A wrestler may disregard a referee's warning and continue play (although the illegal hold is still prevented), but if a second Referee card is played, he is disqualified and the match ends (9.42).

A Distraction card, which can only be played by a player with a manager, negates a Referee card, which means the full sequence described above would actually be:

Attacker: Hair Pull.

Defender: Referee.

Attacker: Distraction. (Defender incurs damage of one.)

The only thing to keep in mind is that the defender must immediately elect how he wishes to respond to an attempted hold - he may either block or reverse it, or appeal to the referee - but he cannot try a second option if the first fails. Thus the above sequence ends with the play of the Distraction card. The defender may not play a Block card once he discovers the referee wasn't paying attention. This gives players ample opportunity to go wrong when responding to their opponent's holds.

Continuous Holds

A continuous hold is one which remains in place for longer than one turn. A "Pin" is one common form of continuous hold and, while it doesn't inflict any damage on the opponent, it may well end the match. A Bear-Hug and a Boston Crab, as well as several Specialty holds, inflict one damage point on the victim for each turn they are applied.

There are two aspects to continuous holds which make them dangerous for the defender. One is that they can't be reversed, so a Reverse or Interference/Reverse card has no effect on them. The other is that the victim may not recover from damage while in a continuous hold. A player may thus feel confident that he can shrug off his opponent's attacks, only to find that he is suddenly pinned and unable to use his Recovery cards.

A continuous hold may be broken by a Block or Interference/Block, or by a Power Surge which negates the strength advantage required for the continuous hold. But it is always dangerous to be in a continuous hold. After a few turns in a Bear-Hug, a Power Surge may no longer help, or the opponent may himself play a Power Surge to eliminate this defensive possibility. Or a Long/Short Count card may end the match after a count of only two on a Pin - or start the count again, depending on who plays it.

Out of the Ring

An Out-of-Ring card has two uses. It can be played against the opponent as a normal lifting hold, resulting in damage equal to the oppo-

nent's weight, or it can be played to allow a mobile wrestler to leave the ring voluntarily. In either case, one wrestler is outside the ring.

A wrestler in the ring may not apply any holds to a wrestler outside the ring (the sole exception being Manly Mike Adams, whose Specialty allows him to jump from the top rope and elbow an opponent who is out of the ring). Both wrestlers continue to recover or discard and replenish their hands, but the wrestler who is out of the ring must return to the ring (missing a turn in the process) before five turns have elapsed, or he is counted out and loses the match. A Long/Short Count card can reduce this to four turns or start the count again, depending on who plays it.

If a wrestler feels his opponent will unduly benefit from being outside the ring, he can use an Out-of-Ring card to leave the ring himself. If both wrestlers are out of the ring, they can fight, and *no* Referee cards may be played (the referee remains in the ring). This sort of mayhem can only go on for five turns, however, after which both wrestlers are counted out (11.33). Alternatively, an opponent's attempt to leave the ring may be prevented by the play of a Block (which simply negates the Out-of-Ring card) or a Reverse (which causes your own wrestler to leave the ring).

Voluntarily leaving the ring is not seen very often, but a strategic retreat at the right time can sometimes lead to a shocking comeback. A wrestler who has five or six damage points registered against him and no reaction cards nor Recovery cards should leave the ring, since continuing to battle means almost certain defeat. The drawbacks to flight are obvious - a missed turn when your wrestler re-enters and time for your opponent to recover and improve his hand as well; but with four turns to draw cards, your wrestler might recover and draw some defensive cards. A Long Count increases the chances of a revival. The winning wrestler rarely follows his opponent out of the ring, but this can certainly be effective in eliminating any chance of an upset. By delivering a few more blows against a staggering opponent, the likelihood of a count-out is increased. Bear in mind that neither wrestler can leave the ring without an Out-of-Ring card.

Specialties

As mentioned above, each wrestler has a specialty hold, peculiar only to him. The details of each specialty are printed on the various wrestler cards. Two things should be kept in mind about specialties. One is that the wrestler must still have the attributes required to use the specialty; so certain specialties, which require the ability to lift the opponent, may be of no use against a bulky adversary. The second is that specialties may not be reversed, which makes them safer than normal holds for the attacker.

Some specialties simply act as limited "wild cards", such as that of Big Daddy Warbucks (a Referee, Distraction or Long/Short Count) or Flying Phil (Reverse, Combination or Power Surge, as well as a Flying Head Scissors). Others introduce new continuous holds (Mr. Brutal's Sleeper, or Samson's Full Nelson), or the more feared "automatic win" holds, which result in immediate victory if successfully

applied (Ali "The Rabbit" Mohamed, The Block Buster, Tyler "Heartthrob" Johnson and The Serpent).

Three specialties deserve particular mention. The Grandmaster can play any illegal card as a specialty, ranging from a Foreign Object to an Interference/Reverse. This sort of versatility should not be underestimated. The Garbage Man has the noxious possibility of incapacitating his opponent with the "Green Spew", after which he can attack the defenseless victim for three successive turns. The impact of this specialty is reduced by the fact that, if countered by a Referee card which is not in turn countered by a Distraction card, its use can result in the Garbage Man's immediate disqualification. Finally, the Champ can recover from three holds with his specialty, even if in a continuous hold, making him one of the hardest opponents to beat in a fair fight.
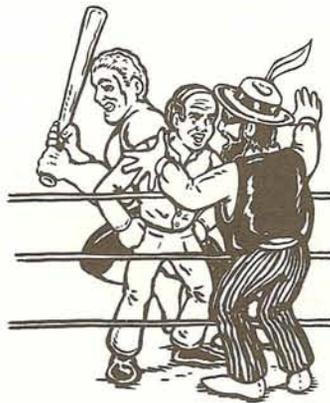
Recovery

The play of a "Recovery 1" card allows a wrestler to eliminate the damage caused by the oldest hold still affecting him. A "Recovery 2" card eliminates the oldest two holds, provided the wrestler has a current Recovery level of two (otherwise a Recovery 2 acts as a Recovery 1). If a wrestler has no Recovery level remaining, he has already been taken to the hospital. Needless-to-say, he has lost the match.

There is nothing tricky about Recovery cards, other than when to play them. As pointed out earlier, a wrestler who is pinned (or in any other continuous hold) may not play a Recovery card, so it usually doesn't pay to be coy and let the damage build up. The play of a Recovery card precludes an attack on your opponent in the same turn, so it is often better to react to an opponent's hold during his turn, then attack during your turn, than to let the hold go through and then recover from it.

Discards

The rules relating to discards are simple. A player may not "Pass" - he must discard a card if he makes no other play, and may not discard more than one card in a turn. Occasionally, you may be faced with the decision of what to keep - especially in tag-team matches. Other than that, there is little to be said about discards. Cards that are absolutely useless should always be discarded, but the crucial question is when such discards should be made. This merges into the question of when a wrestler should attack and when he should consolidate his position. More on this aspect later.

Tag-Team Matches

Almost all of the above pointers apply equally to tag-team matches (12.). A tag-team match requires three or more players, although usually there are two teams of two wrestlers each. The players sit alternately around the playing area. One wrestler from each team is the wrestler in the ring. Two types of cards are added to the deck: Tag cards and Double-Team cards, and a few basic rules work in a slightly different way.

A Tag card allows a mobile wrestler who is currently in the ring to tag his partner, who then becomes the legal wrestler in the ring. A tag may be made as a wrestler's only play, or in addition to any other play (including a discard). The play of a Tag card always ends that player's turn. It is an accepted tactic to hit the opponent, then tag-in your partner - although this is not required, and sometimes even ill-advised. A Tag card may be negated by the play of a Distraction card, which prevents the referee from seeing the tag. The wrestler who tried to tag then remains in the ring. A wrestler who is pinned or in some other continuous hold may not tag. Frustrating as it can sometimes be, a tag may only be made by the wrestler who is in the ring. His partner may not enter the ring by playing his own Tag card.

Some intervention in the action can come about through the play of a Double-Team card. The ethics of professional wrestling being what they are, even "good" wrestlers may bend the rules by double-teaming an opponent in a tag-team match (this makes them "tag-team specialists", rather than simply cheats). The double-teaming wrestler then plays a hold against the opponent's in-ring wrestler (but not a Specialty, pin or other continuous hold). A Double-Team card and its accompanying hold may be negated by the play of a Referee card, unless the Referee card is itself negated by a Distraction card. A hold applied in conjunction with a double-team may not be blocked nor reversed, although it may be countered by an Interference/Block or Interference/Reverse. If a double-teaming wrestler applies a hold to a wrestler who is in a continuous hold (including a pin), the continuous hold is immediately broken. To summarize, where "North" and "South" are partners and "East" and "West" are partners, with North and East in the ring, and South and West outside the ring, the play might be something like this:

> *South:* Double Team + Clothesline + Power Surge.
> *East or West:* Referee.
> *North or South:* Distraction.
> *East or West:* Interference/Block or Interference/Reverse. (No effect with the former, or South incurs damage of one, depending on the final play).

This example illustrates an important rule - any wrestler involved in a tag-team match may play an outside interference card. Some clarification of this rule is required. If your partner is under attack, whether from a double-team or otherwise, you may assist him with an Interference/Block or an Interference/Reverse providing you are mobile (or you or your partner has a manager). I find the statement in rule 9.1 that, "Interference requires a manager or mobile Tag

Team partner" a bit confusing - it doesn't help if the wrestler in the ring is mobile, because it is the wrestler outside the ring who is doing the interfering. Either player may play the card which triggers the interference, but the wrestler outside the ring must be capable of interfering (i.e., he must be mobile).

You don't have to go through all this in a match. It is enough to remember that either wrestler may play an (green) outside interference card - which includes Referee, Distraction and Long/Short Count cards.

The sequence of play in tag-team matches is very important. A standard round of play might go as follows:

> North: Stomach Kick.
> East: Interference/Reverse.
> South: Referee.
> West: Distraction. (Sequence ends with one point of damage on North.)

There is a tendency to forget the difference between reacting to the opponent's hold and applying your own. In singles matches this isn't all that important, except that a hand is replenished only at the end of your own turn; but in tag-team matches, it has more impact. The full description of one possible round of play, for instance, is:

> North: Clothesline + Power Surge.
> West: Block.
> North: Draw one card.
> East: Discard; draw one card.
> South: Discard; draw one card.
> West: Body Slam.
> North: Block.
> West: Draw one card.

After West blocks the hold from North, East and South take their turns. This is important, especially considering either East or South may play a Double-Team card and enter the ring. For example, if West used his last Referee card against North, a double-team by South might catch him unable to react and decide the match. If West carelessly replenished his hand before South took his turn, he might draw another Referee card. The term "careless" should actually apply to North and South, who should watch for things like this. Rule 11.5 specifies that errors in play become legal once the opposing player plays a card.

After a few tag-team matches, players of WRASSLIN' will find that the sequence of play becomes second nature.

Out of Control

One unusual, but very real, possibility arises when the referee loses control of the match and a free-for-all develops. After a player enters the ring with a Double-Team card, he may elect to *stay* in the ring so he can continue to attack the opponent (12.41). If either of the opposing wrestlers plays a Referee card, the team with the second wrestler illegally in the ring will be disqualified unless they can counter with a Distraction card. (But who does the distracting? Why, a third mobile partner or a manager - 12.41!) A count also starts against the wrestler who is illegally in the ring, but by the time five turns (or more, if a Long/Short Count card is played by the offending team, although the rules don't specify this) have elapsed, the outnumbered wrestler should be "history".

Rather than watch in frustration, the partner of the victim has the option of entering the ring himself, even without a Double-Team card, in order to save his partner (12.42). Referees and pins no longer have any bearing at all, and the match ends when all the wrestlers on one side or the other submit or are out of the ring. If a tag-team match involves more than four wrestlers, everyone can come in the ring once the rule of law breaks down.

There are several situations where a free-for-all is a distinct possibility. One arises when one side has one or more Distraction cards, and can therefore extend a double-team with impunity. Another comes about when there are no Referee cards left unplayed, so disqualification is not a possibility. Finally, if your partner is so badly off that loss is virtually certain, you have nothing to lose by risking disqualification by staying in the ring after a double-team (although in this situation the other team might not want to trigger a free-for-all).

While the rules don't make the point absolutely clear, the restrictions associated with applying holds and reacting to them in a double-team situation only apply when a Double-Team card is played. If a wrestler stays in the ring, it's simply two against one and everything is handled normally, although a referee won't count a pin when a third wrestler is in the ring.

Playing by the Rules

Since WRASSLIN' is quick in pace, it is only natural that a player will occasionally apply a hold for which his (or her) wrestler does not have the required attributes, or make some other play which is simply not allowed by the rules of the game. Rule 11.5 was meant to deal with this situation. The first sentence is worth repeating:

> **11.5 ERRORS:** Any card played illegally (usually due to insufficient ability on the part of that Wrestler) will nevertheless be considered a legal and effective play once an opposing player has subsequently played a card . . .

This seems straightforward enough; but apparently some players have taken to deliberately making illegal plays in order to get rid of otherwise useless holds. If and when they are caught, they simply discard the offending card.

(I am told that Charlie Kibler and Tara Greenwood are two of the worst offenders. Tara is so skilled at the game that she shouldn't demean herself with this degrading and *sleazy* tactic. Some say Charlie, however, should do everything he can to get an edge. I confess to having once used this very trick myself during playtesting, by illegally throwing a friend's husband out of the ring during a "Battle Royal". I excuse this on the grounds that I didn't particularly like him anyway.)

Having alerted the reader to this possibility, let us return to Rule 11.5. "Error" is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "something incorrectly done through ignorance or inadvertence; a mistake." This limits 11.5 to accidental illegal plays. If, in the excitement of play or because of inexperience or unfamiliarity with the details of a rule, a player does something he/she can't properly do, the rules do not require that the offender be penalized.

It may be that offending players are relying on a different definition of *error* (also from the Oxford Dictionary): "a departure from moral rectitude; a transgression." *[To save you the trouble of looking up "rectitude", the applicable meaning is "moral straightness or uprightness; goodness, integrity; virtue, righteousness."]* This leaves open the question of is it permissible to deliberately make an illegal play in *WRASSLIN'*?

I hesitate to punish the innocent along with the guilty. Those who are learning the game or accidently do something wrong should be treated quite differently from those who stray from the "goodness, integrity, virtue and righteousness" which characterizes both *WRASSLIN'* and the sport of professional wrestling itself. The designers do not sanction play which is not morally upright (unless all players concerned agree to play in that manner). Deliberately illegal plays should be penalized either by the offender losing his or her turn (the offending card being retained) or, more drastically, by applying the offending hold to the transgressor (a great part of the show, this often happens in pro wrestling when the referee is bigger than the wrestlers).

Timing

No one can deny that luck plays a part in *WRASSLIN'*. Without decent cards, even the best wrestler will lose. While you don't have much control over the cards you draw, you have complete control over *when* you play them - and therein lies the secret of the game.

Some matches are short and some are long. An early combination, with a Stomach Kick and a Pin for instance, can end a match after but one play. The Garbage Man can use his specialty and get caught by the referee, losing on the first turn. (Usually I last longer, though.) On the other hand, a match can go through the entire deck (or indefinitely, if Rule 5.8 is ignored). Most matches tend to end before the deck is exhausted, because the offensive cards outweigh the defensive cards. If every hold is blocked early in the match, things inevitably get more violent later.

It is trite to say that playing the right card at the right time is the essence of the game. What has to be explored is how you determine whether a certain time is the right time.

Winning?

In the real world of professional wrestling, it's usually pretty clear who's winning. In fact, it's usually pretty clear what's going to happen *weeks* before the match begins. This is not the case in *WRASSLIN'*, and even the harshest critics of the game can't say the matches are "fixed". Armed with this squeaky-clean reputation, we can continue with the analysis.

Determining who's winning a match at a particular moment is crucial in deciding how to proceed. One way is to look at the damage incurred by each wrestler, but there is more to it than this. The value of each player's "position" in the game is the combination of his wrestler's attributes, as modified by the damage he has incurred, and the cards he currently holds in his hand. Players often forget this second component, obvious as it is upon reflection.

One common situation in a match is that one wrestler is attempting to wear down the other. If four or five standard holds, each inflicting one damage point, are successfully applied to one wrestler, there is no doubt that the wearing-down process has been successful. But what if all five holds are blocked? Some players become frustrated or depressed at this apparent lack of success of their best efforts, but in fact the defender is being worn down almost as effectively as if the holds were getting through. It's possible, but very unlikely, that the defender has picked up another four or five reaction cards to replace those he played. If several of your holds are blocked, the odds are that your opponent is running out of defensive cards. You may run out of holds as well, but that's another subject.

Your opponent's hand is an integral part of the game strategy. In the situation described above, you should continue attacking, simply because your opponent is probably defenseless. A good player will sometimes let one or two small holds get through, so that the attacker thinks the time is right for a more damaging hold - which will then be reversed.

Another common situation arises when a wrestler recovers from severe damage and is finally able to attack his opponent. Frequently a player will immediately apply a hold to his opponent, only to have it reversed, after which his wrestler is in trouble again (usually fatally). This sort of counterattack is usually doomed to failure because the opponent has had ample time to accumulate defensive cards (including Reverses) while the wrestler who has just recovered is unlikely to have any recovery cards in reserve.

The Flow

It follows from all this that there is a time to attack and a time to defend. There is very little point to attacking an opponent who can easily defend himself, especially if he reverses your holds. If the opponent has a hand full of defensive cards, your best strategy is to try to increase your holding of defensive cards and prepare for a long match. On the other hand, if your opponent has a handful of hold cards, you should attack him first in order to limit his options.

There are many ways to determine the composition of your opponent's hand (other than by sneaking a peek, which is not the sort of cheating which is condoned by the rules). Counting cards as they are played is a tremendous tactic which few of us can carry out in practice. But not every card is important. There are three Reverses, two Interference/Reverses, six Referees, three Distractions, two Combinations, four Specialties and two Wild Cards. If you can keep tract of these, you're doing well. Once certain cards are gone, strategies can change; so keeping track of these cards is a worthwhile habit.

More commonly, the opponent's hand will be revealed through his play. If your opponent is beating up on you, then starts discarding, it's very likely that he has run out of holds. This means he only has either defensive or useless cards, and as the latter are discarded you can be fairly certain that his hand consists of defensive cards. After all, if he could hit you again, he would. Similarly, if you are successfully attacking your opponent and he is neither reacting nor recovering, his hand probably is primarily offensive.

Naturally no guidelines can be given for that razor's edge situation where a single card can decide a match. Intuition then must take over. But even in this sort of crisis situation, certain principles can be set out.

The Key Moment

In many matches, a decisive moment arises where the right play will win and the wrong play will lose the game. Somehow, the good player makes the right decision more often than not. Armed with a reasonable estimate of the opponent's hand, the following principles can be applied:

If you're winning, assume the worst. Don't gamble the match on the possibility that your opponent doesn't have the defensive card he needs. Wrestler's aren't paid by the hour (at least not in WRASSLIN'), so there's no hurry to win the match.

If you're losing, assume the best. If there's only one chance to win the match, take it. You may think it likely your opponent has the cards he needs to block your action, but if you can catch him off guard (and will lose anyway if you don't), you have nothing to lose by giving it your best shot.

Think mobility. Mobility is the key to blocking and reversing holds, leaving the ring and, in tag-team matches, interfering to help your partner. If a wrestler's Strength, Agility and Skill is gone, his defensive options are severely limited. If his Power Surge ability has also been eliminated, he is completely open to attack (except for the possibility of outside interference). When under attack, it is worth using your last reaction cards to keep some mobility, whereas when attacking nothing should be held back if the opponent is immobilized.

Start small. While there are exceptions, generally it is better to attack your opponent with small holds, building up to more damaging ones. This often forces the opponent to use his defensive cards, opening him to later effective attacks. Because Recovery cards remove the oldest damage first, several small holds insulate a more serious hold from the effects of a quick "Recovery 2".

Don't risk a Reverse if you can't absorb the punishment. It's going too far to say that you should never risk a reverse unless you hold a Recovery card, but there's nothing more likely to turn a match around than to unleash a two- or three-point hold, have it reversed, and be unable to then continue the attack. In some situations, the pace is so quick that the risk of a reversal has to be accepted; but too often players walk into reverses unnecessarily.

Keep your cards moving. The more cards you draw, the more chances you have of getting good cards. If you hold several Power Surge cards, it may be a good idea to use one with a Block or a standard hold just to clear out your hand. Sometimes it is worth playing a Combination just so you can get some new cards which might be more helpful to you.

Get rid of the dead wood. As mentioned earlier, it is always a good tactic to get rid of unplayable cards. If three of your cards can never be used, you are playing with a hand consisting of only four cards, which greatly reduces your chances of obtaining any good card combinations. Discarding the useless cards eases the pressure on your opponent for a turn or two, but increases the likelihood of a fortuitous combination of cards later on.

Hold onto your good cards. Novices have a disconcerting tendency to play cards as soon as they get them, rather than waiting for the best moment to attack. Thus Stomach Kicks and Elbow Smashes are reversed; and Specialties and Wild Cards are used early in a match when they are easily blocked. Such cards are "money in the bank" (especially the Wild Cards) and should be retained unless their use is likely to decide the match immediately. This principle is subject to the qualification that a player may only hold seven cards, and sometimes *every* card is worth holding onto for a better moment.

Conclusion

What makes WRASSLIN' so darn interesting is that different cards have different values, depending on the situation. Even in defense, a Block may be worth more than a Reverse, while an Interference/Block or a Recovery may be worth more than either. The skilled player becomes adept at spotting useful cards, either singly or in combination.

One effective technique is to build up your hand for a massive attack on your opponent, perhaps by using a Combination and two Specialties. In a balanced match, neither player can afford to hold a completely offensive or defensive hand, so such an attack may break through the enemy defenses. Another approach is to allow enemy holds to register, using a Recovery or two to get rid of the effects. This saves your reaction cards for your furious counterattack when you don't want to pause to recover.

In tag-team matches, the possibilities are even greater. Experienced team-mates will move wrestlers in and out of the ring seemingly at will, holding onto Tag and Double-Team cards until a sustained offensive can be mounted. It is hard to trap good players in the ring in a tag-team match, because their sense of danger tells them when it's time to bail out.

This article doesn't purport to explore all the possibilities in WRASSLIN', if only because there are too many to categorize. The most innocuous card can decide a match under the right circumstances. As you become a ring-wise veteran, you'll find that you are able to bring about these circumstances more and more often, piling up wins as you do so.

☆
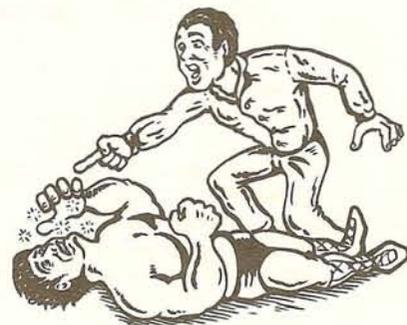
FINANCIAL STRATEGY
Player Notes for STOCKS & BONDS
By Michael L. Roos

Anyone who has played a few games of Avalon Hill's *STOCKS & BONDS* quickly notices that some of the stocks perform better than others. Stryker Drilling can be worth rags . . . or riches, just as promised in the "Securities Review". New players, aspiring to be modern-day pirates, are often attracted by the high dividends paid by Uranium Enterprises, Shady Brooks and Pioneer Mutual Fund; yet all of these stocks are poor performers in the long run. The portfolio of a consistent winner is almost invariably rich in shares of Growth Corporation, Metro Properties, Tri-City Transport and Stryker Drilling. Basic principles of financial management can show why this is true.

Since dice are used to determine price fluctuations, it is possible to predict the long-term performance of each stock. The "Appreciation Index" is defined as the average expected increase in the value of each stock. This index is calculated by multiplying the increase (or decrease) in the price of a stock by the probability of rolling each number, and then summing for all possible dice rolls. The dividend per share is then added to the average price increase. The results of this calculation are presented in Table I, which can be interpreted as the average expected gain in dollars achieved from buying $1000 worth of a stock, holding it for one turn and then selling.

Table I: Appreciation Index for Each Security

Stock	Expected gain per turn per $1000 invested
Growth Corporation	$122.90
Metro Properties	$128.20
Pioneer Mutual Fund	$106.70
Shady Brooks Development	$ 89.00
Stryker Drilling	$126.00
Tri-City Transport	$128.20
United Auto	$117.50
Uranium Enterprises	$ 93.50
Valley Power & Light	$112.10
Central City Municipal Bond	$ 50.00

An examination of the Appreciation Index shows what most good players know intuitively - that Growth, Metro, Tri-City and Stryker are winners; while Municipal Bonds, Shady Brooks, Pioneer Mutual and Uranium Enterprises are losers. United Auto and Valley Power have intermediate Appreciation Indices, and therefore have moderate value as investments.

To demonstrate the effect of the Appreciation Index, consider a pair of hypothetical games in which a player invests his initial $5000 in only one stock. Dividends are re-invested in the same stock as soon as enough money accumulates to purchase ten shares as required by the rules. Table II shows the average value of a single security portfolio after ten and after thirty turns. (The thirty-turn game is included for comparison since many fans of stock market games play for longer than the

mere ten turns specified in the rules; one million dollars is not an unreasonable goal for the winner in a game of 30-40 turns!

Table II: Value of a Single-Stock Portfolio

Stock	10 Turns	30 Turns
Growth Corporation	$15,936	$161,883
Metro Properties	$16,704	$186,446
Pioneer Mutual Fund	$13,781	$104,681
Shady Brooks	$11,729	$ 65,537
Stryker Drilling	$16,382	$175,842
Tri-City Transport	$16,704	$186,446
United Auto	$15,186	$140,086
Uranium Enterprises	$12,222	$ 73,035
Valley Power & Light	$14,483	$122,383
Central City Bonds	$ 8,144	$ 21,610

An examination of Table II shows that the advantage of owning Metro or Tri-City over Municipal Bonds is more than $8,000 in a 10-turn game and more than $160,000 in a 30-turn game. This difference is larger than the $78.20 per thousand dollars per turn shown in Table I due to the effect of compound interest.

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, the Central City Municipal Bond is by far the worst investment. All stocks outperform the Central City Municipal Bond by a substantial margin. Secondly, a player might be lucky with a poor performing stock and beat a player with a better performing stock in a 10-turn game, but is unlikely to do so in a 30-turn game. Therefore, the importance of knowing which stocks are the best investments increases with the length of the game.

With knowledge of the above tables in hand, it is possible to construct an optimized strategy for *STOCKS & BONDS*. One approach would be to purchase a portfolio consisting exclusively of Metro Properties or Tri-City Transport. Since these stocks decline in value on less than ten percent of the dice rolls, the chance of bankruptcy is almost non-existent. Experience has shown that this strategy will win a fair percentage of games only against inexperienced players.

While a portfolio consisting of Metro or Tri-City is the best single-stock strategy, it is possible to construct even better strategies with portfolios of more than one stock (diversified portfolios). An old adage about the real world stock market is "buy low, sell high." This adage also applies in the market of *STOCKS & BONDS*.

The financial concept of "return on investment" can be used to refine the Appreciation Index. An examination of the slide card that determines price changes shows that Metro Properties increases an average of $12.80 per share per turn. This expected increase is the same regardless of whether the price is $80 per share or $140 per share. On a percentage basis, however, Metro would be expected to increase 16% when the price is $80 per share, but only 9% when the price is $140 per share. A general principle of finance is that a high rate of return

is better than a low rate of return. Therefore, Metro Properties is a much better investment at $80 per share than at $140 per share

The optimum strategy for a player with a portfolio consisting of more than one stock is to sell the shares of the stock currently owned and buy shares in the stock which has the highest *expected* rate of return. The expected rate of return as a percentage can be calculated by multiplying the Appreciation Index by ten and then dividing by the price of the stock.

Note that this strategy, which is known as "arbitrage", does not generally work in the actual stock market since the actions of the market participants themselves affect the price of a stock. If the hypothetical example with Metro and Shady Brooks happened in the "real" stock market, investors would sell Metro and buy Shady Brooks. The price of Shady Brooks would rise and the price of Metro would drop until both stocks had an equal expected rate of return. The game does not take into account the actions of players in determining the price of a stock.

Two special considerations need to be made in calculating the rate of return. One is the probability of bankruptcy for stocks priced below 20 dollars per share. If Stryker Drilling is priced at $20 per share, the expected return is 12.6 dollars per share, or 63 percent. Offsetting this gain is the almost 50% chance that Stryker will go bankrupt on the next roll and take the player out of the game.

The decision to be made at this point depends on whether the player is winning or losing. A player who is far behind the leader could put most (or all) of his money in Stryker and hope for a favorable roll, since this is his best chance of catching the leader. A player who is leading, however, should put some of his money (perhaps 20%) into Stryker to prevent another player from passing him should the price double or triple on the next roll. If Stryker does go bankrupt, the player who is behind is crippled, while the leader has suffered a small setback. If the price doubles or triples, the leader may retain his lead since he has also made money on Stryker.

A second consideration is the loss of dividend for stocks priced near $50 per share. Suppose Uranium Enterprises is at $50 per share. The expected gain is $9.35 per share, or 18.7 percent. Of the $9.35 per share gain, $6.00 is dividend - which will be lost about 50% of the time. The actual expected dividend, then, is more like $3.00 per share, which reduces the expected rate of return to only 12.7 percent.

One question that should be asked is whether shares of the lower performing stocks will be purchased using this strategy. The answer is "Yes", but only for a short time. Suppose that Shady Brooks is selling for $80 per share and Metro is selling for $140 per share. The expected return on Shady Brooks is 11.1% and the expected return on Metro is 9%. My strat-

egy would be to sell Metro and buy Shady Brooks (unless another stock had an even higher expected return than Shady Brooks). On the next turn, however, Metro would be likely to split, and common sense would call for conversion of Shady Brooks shares to Metro shares. In short, the poor performing stocks are still poor performers and are seldom held in the portfolios of winning players for long.

The final consideration in determining an optimum strategy for *STOCKS & BONDS* is buying "on margin". The interest rate for margin purchases as established by the rules is 5%. Another general financial principle is that money should be borrowed when the rate of return on the investment made with borrowed money is greater than the interest rate of the loan. Examination of the "Appreciation Index" and subsequent calculation of rates of return show that expected rates of return are *always* greater than 5%. Therefore, a player should always buy on margin if the price of the stock is greater than $25 per share (below which margin purchases are not permitted).

VARIANT RULES

Players will soon grow bored with the game once an optimal strategy has been outlined. Players who have an optimum strategy outlined will usually beat players who do not, especially in the longer games. If several players know the optimum strategy, their portfolios will similar (if not identical), making for a rather mundane game. The solution to this dilemma is to modify some of the rules to offset the advantages of the optimal strategy, while at the same time bringing the poorer performing stocks into play and increasing the realism. Having extensively playtested the following options, I'd encourage experienced players to add one or more in their next session.

1. Institute a "broker's commission" on every transaction. All purchases are made at a price $1 higher than the posted price, with the extra dollar being considered the broker's commission. Similarly, all sales are made at $1 less than the posted price to account for this commission. This rule makes the arbitrage strategy somewhat obsolete, since the two commissions paid to switch from one stock to another would reduce the percentage return on investment.

2. Players must note their transactions in the player record secretly and reveal them simultaneously. This rule incorporates knowledge and anticipation of other players' strategies into the decision-making process. Make an error in judgement, and one can be left behind.

3. Market trends are now incorporated. "Bull" or "Bear" markets tend to last 3-5 years in the real world, but will be more random in *STOCKS & BONDS*. The Situation cards are separated into Bull and Bear market piles. The initial market trend is determined by rolling two dice. Any odd number on the dice roll represents a bullish market, and an even result represents a bear market. For subsequent turns, one die is rolled. If a "1-4" is rolled, the market trend (Bull or Bear) remains the same. If a "5" or "6" is rolled, the market trend switches. Changes in stock prices within a market trend are then determined by rolling two dice as

usual. The Situation card is then drawn from the pile corresponding to the market trend.

4. Increase the dividends on the poorer performing stocks as follows: United Auto $0.50 per share, Valley Power $1.00 per share, Pioneer Mutual Fund $2.00 per share, Uranium Enterprises $2.50 per share, and Shady Brooks $3.00 per share. All stocks will now be competitive at some point in the game. (The new yields on the stock certificates are summarized in Table III below.)

Table III: Variant Stock Certificate Yields

Stock	10	50	100
Growth Corp.	$10	$50	$100
Pioneer Mutual	$60	$300	$600
Shady Brooks	$100	$500	$1000
United Auto	$25	$125	$250
Uranium Ent.	$85	$425	$850
Valley Power	$40	$200	$400

5. A "variable interest" rate can be instituted. The initial interest rate is 12%. The interest rate then declines 1% for every consecutive bull market (subject to a minimum of 5%), and increases 1% for every bear market (subject to a maximum of 20%). This rate is used to calculate the interest payment for stocks purchased on margin. The purpose is, obviously, to increase the risk of buying on margin. There are now times when stocks should be purchased on margin, and times when stocks should be sold to pay a margin balance.

A further optional rule that can be used in conjunction with the variable interest rate is adding or subtracting points from the price of a stock based upon current interest rates. This rule reflects the fact that a company will make more money during good economic conditions than during a recession. This rule also makes "safe" investments (such as Tri-City) more volatile during bear markets. Table IV gives the number of dollars that are to be added or subtracted from the price change per share, as indicated by the slide.

Table IV: Interest Rate Adjustments to Stock Prices

Interest Rate	Adjustment
5% - 6%	add $3
7% - 8%	add $2
9% - 10%	add $1
11% -14%	no change
15% - 16%	subtract $1
17% - 18%	subtract $2
19% - 20%	subtract $3

6. The price of bonds often fluctuates with the market. Since the bonds in this game have no maturity date, they can be considered "perpetuities". Under this variant rule, the yield of the bond remains constant at $50.00 per $1000 face value, but the selling price changes with the interest rate. The bond price has been set such that the rate of return is 2% less than the interest rate. The risk of adverse economic conditions has also been incorporated into the dividend payout of the bond. In years with interest rates of 16%, two dice are rolled to determine whether the bond "misses" its dividend payout. Bond prices and default rolls are summarized in Table V.

Table V: Bond Prices

Interest Rate	Bond Price (per $1000)	Default DR
5%	$1667	n/a
6%	$1250	n/a
7%	$1000	n/a
8%	$ 833	n/a
9%	$ 714	n/a
10%	$ 625	n/a
11%	$ 556	n/a
12%	$ 500	n/a
13%	$ 455	n/a
14%	$ 417	n/a
15%	$ 385	n/a
16%	$ 357	2-3
17%	$ 333	2-4
18%	$ 313	2-5
19%	$ 294	2-6
20%	$ 278	2-7

Incorporation of these variant rules into *STOCKS & BONDS* gives each and every playing a unique flavor. Sometimes everyone becomes rich, while at other times one or more players go bankrupt. The variant rules, if played in toto, demand a higher skill level from the players than the original game since an optimal strategy is no-longer clear cut. Broker commissions, interest rates, market trend and even the actions of others can make a decision correct in one situation and disastrous on the next occurrence. These factors can make the game almost as exciting as the "real" stock market. ☆

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

				Rank Last Pub Time	Times On List	Freq. Ratio
Titles Listed: 133					**Total Responses: 516**	
Rank:	**Title**					
1.	Advanced SL	AH		1	32	5.3
2.	Diplomacy	AH		2	33	3.2
3.	Up Front	AH		4	19	2.7
3.	Third Reich	AH		3	12	2.4
5.	Advanced CIV	AH		--	1	2.2
6.	Republic of Rome	AH		10	6	2.0
7.	Panzerblitz	AH		19	2	1.9
8.	FlatTop	AH		7	4	1.8
9.	Squad Leader	AH		11	2	1.8
10.	Civilization	AH		6	5	1.7
11.	Empires in Arms	AH		13	2	1.6
12.	Russian Campaign	AH		8	6	1.6
13.	Patton's Best	AH		--	1	1.5
14.	Midway	AH		--	1	1.4
15.	D&D	TSR		--	1	1.3
16.	Gung Ho	AH		--	1	1.2
17.	1830	AH		--	1	1.1
18.	Russian Front	AH		12	3	1.1
19.	Afrika Korps	AH		16	3	1.0
20.	Titan	AH		15	2	1.0

The usual shuffling of titles around the cut-off mark brings some old and new designs onto the listing. Perhaps in anticipation of the completion of Craig Taylor's effort on *MIDWAY '92*, the original classic saw a resurgence of interest. The latest installment in the ASL saga makes its appearance. Both versions of *CIVILIZATION* are grabbing players' attention. Perhaps as a prelude to ORIGINS, *D&D* shows up for the first time in years. And, ironically, *BLACKBEARD* slides off our "popularity poll" just as we feature this intriguing new game.

AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	79	2583YOW	1
2.	D. Burdick	78	2356HIQ	2
3.	J. Kreuz	6	2197IGR	3
4.	B Sinigaglio	64	2189GIJ	4
5.	D. Barker	6	2119GHN	5
6.	P. Flory	55	2109EHL	6
7.	E. O'Conner	38	2081GIP	7
8.	P. Siragusa	73	2079FIL	8
9.	J. Beard	68	2058JJT	11
10.	P. Landry	53	2054IJO	9
11.	D. Mattson	21	2050MKY	10
12.	T. Deane	31	2029GBB	12
13.	N. Moran	1	2018CEH	--
14.	C. Corn	28	2017FEB	13
15.	J. Noel	32	2015EEK	15
16.	G. Fortenberry	1	2013CCB	--
17.	L. Barlow	26	2009KLV	17
18.	D. Garbutt	77	2006IIJQ	18
19.	J. Bjorum	13	2000EFK	20
20.	R. Berger	19	1996EGG	21
21.	M. Sincavage	6	1984FFK	22
22.	S. Sutton	45	1978GIIO	14
23.	J. Fuqua	3	1956CFB	24
24.	R. Shurdut	24	1954GHM	25
25.	D. Kopp	24	1952IIJP	27
26.	J. Ingersoll	6	1940CEH	26
27.	H. Newby	44	1923VKQ	28
28.	M. Mitchell	16	1915GIO	30
29.	F. Reese	59	1911JDJ	32
30.	W. King	5	1907BDG	33
31.	T. Oleson	88	1906ZZZ	34
32.	W. Scott	76	1895NLW	31
33.	D. Greenwood	14	1892IIN	29
34.	M. Crowe	7	1890CCH	37
35.	J. Eliason	27	1879GJO	38
36.	M. Frisk	33	1866DFJ	39
37.	J. Campbell	16	1856FFD	42
38.	S. Goehring	3	1851GHN	41
39.	K. McCarthy	33	1842DFJ	44
40.	B. Sutton	4	1841DFE	45
41.	R. Schilb	3	1829GJN	47
42.	K. Kinsel	12	1819IHH	48
43.	G. Smith	5	1810GHO	50
44.	G. Chaney	1	1805CFA	--
45.	P. McNevin	1	1792KKW	--
46.	T. Greene	1	1786EGL	--
47.	M. Cox	1	1784GEB	--
48.	R. Gifford	1	1784GIG	--
49.	J. Lutz	1	1781IIIQ	--
50.	R. Cox	1	1778YMN	--

UF RANKINGS

Replacing the "Meet the Fifty" section of our AREA report will be the AREA Specific listing for a select game each issue (in this instance, *UP FRONT*). Shown is the member's name, his hometown, and his Specific rating (V = verified; P = provisional). Note that this does not match the general AREA rating, for Specific AREA reflects only the results of rated play of the title indicated.

Rank	Name	Hometown	Rating
1.	J. Paull	Cary, NC	V1660
2.	P. Coveney	Redwood City, CA	V1610
3.	B. Conner	Youngstown, OH	P1500
4.	J. Finkeldey	Cincinnati, OH	P1500
5.	L. Kay	Maynard, MA	P1500
6.	P. Cook	Vallejo, CA	V1448
7.	R. Pfeifer	Baltimore, MD	V1445
8.	P. Yakey	Mode, IL	V1385

Area News

Congratulations are in order for previous "AREA News" editor Don Burdick: Don has clinched the *STALINGRAD* PBM Championship in his two-game match against hearty campaigner Dave Kopp. While each player won as the Russians, Dave has conceded defeat in the face of Don's fierce Russian counterattack, giving Don the tie-breaker and the championship. Don will have little time to rest on his laurels, though - his first title defense begins immediately! His opponent will be Greg Smith, who won against PBM veteran Kevin McCarthy, so this final match-up in the premier ladder should be spectacular!

Other news from the first-round action in the *STALINGRAD* ladder includes organizer John Grant's win over Harry Hollern on Board 3, and Joe Beard's win against Robert Weigand on Board 4. There is no word as yet on the game between Ed Menzel and Patrick McNevin on Board 5. If everyone continues into the second round, this would make the pairings as follows:

Board 1: Burdick versus Smith
Board 2: Kopp versus Grant
Board 3: McCarthy versus Beard
Board 4: Hollern versus the winner of Menzel/McNevin
Board 5: Weigand versus the loser of Menzel/McNevin

There may be some last-minute changes to this list, since players are free to "drop off" the ladder between rounds. Too, John has asked that we sound the clarion to call forth any other interested *STALINGRAD* players. Paul Selzer of Ottawa has recently joined the ladder, and there is still room for more. Players will be paired in the order their requests reach John, so if you're interested in joining the *STALINGRAD* PBM Championship Ladder, write to John Grant (at 198 Brookdale Road, Stamford, CT 06903). Ironically, as Greg and Don prepare for their title match, they are also currently dueling for another crown atop the *BULGE* PBM ladder! The two have met in the third-round action, and as both are now on the GEnie BBS they are using Email to exchange their moves. These games should move quickly in that medium, so it will be interesting to see who's holding the PBM Championship crowns when we all gather at AvalonCon this summer!

In news of other ladders, the pairings for the first *VITP* ladder competition have been completed. Thus far, they include eight players and are:

Board 1: G. Petroski vs T. Proksch
Board 2: Lance Ottman vs Mike Ussery
Board 3: K. Kinsel vs A. Applebaum
Board 4: John Sharp vs Dave Paronski

The *VITP* ladder differs in a few ways from the other PBM ladders. First, *VITP* doesn't have the years of PBM practice behind it that the other "classics" had when their ladders formed, so the pool of experienced PBM *VITP* players is smaller than that of *TRC* or *BULGE*. After discussions with tourney director Glenn Petroski, it was decided only *one* game per round would be played, rather than the two simultaneous games the other ladders use. This will make it less difficult for those new to *VITP* by mail. The second change was to initially pair the players as in a first-round Swiss system. In this instance, this means players experienced with PBM would be paired with those new to PBM. This should ease the transition for those folks who have only tried FTF but would like to try *VITP* by mail for the tourney. (Think of it as a chance to get your feet wet without putting your CVs at the bottom of the Coral Sea!) The *VITP* ladder will use James Lutz's rules from The *GENERAL* (Vol. 19-6), with only two minor changes: the placement of U-Boats and Marines. Since only one game will be played per round, sides will be chosen by POC bid. Glenn Petroski will be in charge of any rules questions, and I will take care of pairings and ladder duties. If you'd like a copy of Lutz's rules, the issue (or photocopies) is available from Avalon Hill. For copies of the ladder rules, or to join the ladder, write to me (Russ Gifford, 320 East 27th, South Sioux City, NE 68776); please enclose a legal-sized SASE.

In other ladder action: On the GEnie *ASL* PBEM Ladder, I have successfully thwarted Marc Hanna's efforts to wrest second place from me, and have proceeded to challenge Gary Fortenberry of Texas in the second-round match for the "top banana" slot. Unfortunately for me, it looks as though Fort will retain the #1 position. We're the slowpokes, though: I'd estimate at least 20 other games have been played on this 50+ member ladder. Ladder custodian Phil Pomerantz of Pennsylvania has recently changed the ladder from a pyramid to a linear format to facilitate the rapid play of games. If you're an *ASL* player and would like to join, use your computer to sign on to GEnie (see last issue) and then send Phil your name, address,

Lost in the Wilderness
By John Huff

phone number and AREA number and rating via Electronic Mail. (His Email address is P.Pomerantz1.)

On the subject of GEnie and *ASL*, the results of the 1991 GEnie *ASL* AREA Championship are in! Bob O'Connor (of New Albany, Indiana) won an all-important final CC to defeat Geoff Engelstein (of Scotch Plains, New Jersey) in this second annual event. Both of these gentlemen are long-time PBEM players (Geoff since the mid-1980s). Both are also already registered in the 1992 *ASL* PBEM tourney, too, so we'll see if they can manage a repeat performance! (Note: If their names seem familiar to you, check the recent *REPUBLIC OF ROME* replay in The *GENERAL*.) Other top names in the *ASL* arena are starting to recognize the use of AREA for tourney action. Bill Conner has mentioned some high level *ASL* AREA action is happening in the eastern portion of the country in preparation for Ray Wolozyn's annual "Winds of War" FTF tourney. Bill also has the distinction of being the *first* player to earn an AREA victory chit from Mike McGrath, winner of the first AvalonCon *ASL* tourney!

In the midwest, The *ASL* Great Plains AREA Championship has reached the finals. Three Swiss-system AREA qualifying tournaments were held in Nebraska and South Dakota and Iowa, and included players from six different states. The top two players from each tourney, and the best AREA performance by any player under 1500 have made the qualifying cut, and will play a round-robin to decide the winner of the 1992 Championship. Finalists include three South Dakotans: Bruce Rinehart, Burnie Hegdahl and Steve Swann; three Nebraskans: Mike Thompson, Rick Plankinton and myself; and one Iowan: Nathan Summerside, last year's winner. These players will now face off in a round-robin tourney which will decide the overall champion. There's plenty of inducement: he'll receive $100, plus a trophy from the tourney sponsor Patch Craft Hobby (Sioux City, Iowa).

Now, a few notes on using your AREA membership. The most asked question I get is "How do I keep track of my rating?" That's easy - just enclose an SASE when you send in your chits, and the AREA Tech will send back your current rating. But on the subject of sending in chits, remember to send your chits in within two weeks of the game! While AREA will likely honor them for a bit longer, don't be foolish; anything past a month is too long. For this system to work properly, the reports need to be timely. And, please don't call the Hill asking for you or your opponent's current rating - they can't give that out over the phone!

Remember to mark your calenders from July 30 through August 2, and we'll meet in Pennsylvania! See you at AvalonCon! ☆
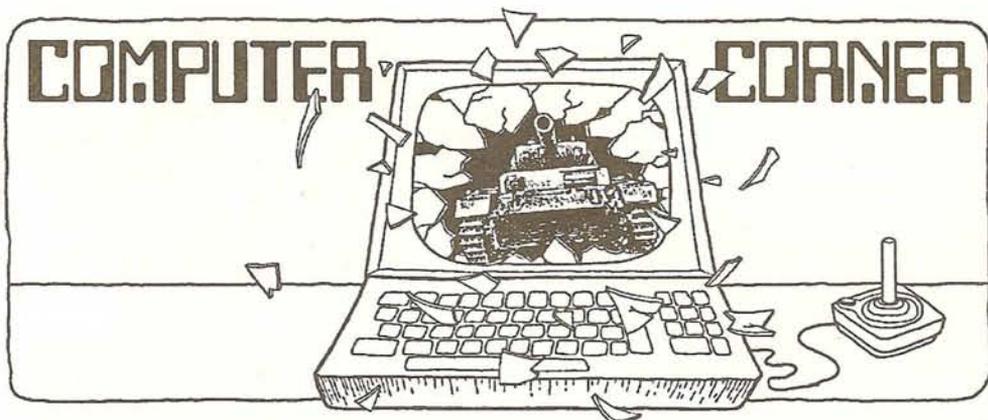
Finally, the release of *The Wilderlands* approaches. For the uninitiated, *The Wilderlands* is the first supplemental module for *LEGENDS OF THE LOST REALM*. It's pretty impressive. Oh, you've never played *LOLR*? Well . . .

LEGENDS is a fantasy adventure game for Macintosh computers. It is structured a bit different than most computer adventure games, in that the goal and the various puzzles and problems to reach it can be solved by several routes (some more direct than others). Combat is abstracted to the point that it is still fun, but sufficiently free of detail that the tedium of most computer fantasy games is avoided. I've had to play *LOLR* from "soup to nuts" several times during the course of development, and yet still enjoy subsequent replay. Try that with other computer adventure games!

The Wilderlands picks up our story in the dungeons of the castle Tara-Cirinik ("The Fortress of Cirinik"). The exit is guarded by a Mighty Warrior. Once he is defeated, you pass through a portal and are transported to the mines beneath the Great Forest. Eventually you will find a route to the surface. The mines are important later on, but for now we'll stick to a brief overview. Just try to remember where the portal is, as you may need to go back to it from time to time.

On the surface, you'll find an old cabin. This cabin takes the place of the "Barracks" used in the original scenario. Leaving the cabin, your party finds itself in the forest. The forest is displayed several levels deep, so buildings and terrain structures in the distance will be visible through the trees a few moves before you arrive. There are streams from which to refill your canteens, plants and animals to eat, and firewood. Because of the distances involved (and the relative scarcity of "homing sticks"), you will make a lot of cross-country trips a few days in length. So, like any good scout, you must be prepared. If your characters are cool or cold, you will want to acquire some warm clothes. These can bought from the "friendly trader" on the river bank. He will also buy any valuable furs you might acquire while hunting for food.

The forest trails lead to the hills in the north and west, the river to the east, or the sea to the

south. Within the forest you find many curious creatures, an ancient temple, a wizard's tower, a city of trolls (remember the trolls in the catacombs; they were weenies . . .) and a village of happy (what else?) villagers. Beneath the surface are miles of mines and tunnels. Each location has a puzzle, which must be solved to finish the module. Ideally you will have recovered the "Staff of Life" by this point. Somewhere in the wilderlands you will find two more pieces of the great staff.

There are some updated files included with the game which improve the play. Among these improvements: the magician spell-level problem has been corrected; the mapping function now stores accumulated information permanently; and there is now a SPEAK button in the combat screen. You will do a lot more talking in this scenario than in the first. So try not to *immediately* kill everything you meet; they might have something important to tell you.

Several other improvements to the game have been made as well, but they are internal to the program; while they improve the speed and performance, they are mostly transparent to the player. (You *gotta* go back to the corner towers in the Stronghold; we've added some improved graphics to the interiors and they are very snazzy.) One piece of advice, don't move about too quickly. If you miss a message, you might not notice it and cost yourself a lot of frustration.

In practical terms, an experienced *LOLR* player can look forward to weeks of new places to go and new things to do. *The Wilderlands* has a more complex set of puzzles and adventures than the original, but reaching the end is well worth the time and effort.

C3R

I have been gratified to see the response to *Computer THIRD REICH*. Most of the registration cards have been very positive, and even the few negative ones have been helpful. Development of the IBM version is in full swing and it will show many improvements over the 68000 releases. Much of this is thanks to the constructive comments from many of you readers.

We are taking full advantage of SVGA graphic modes, digitized sounds and music. Many features missing in the Amiga and ST

versions will be incorporated in the MS-DOS version, and eventually some of these will (where possible) be retro-fitted to the original platforms. This will take some time, as we are very busy correcting minor bugs and getting the IBM version up and running. However, hard-disk installable versions for the ST and Amiga are in the works. I'll keep you posted.

The computer player will be more sophisticated in the MS-DOS version and will play on several levels (from "novice" to "expert"). At higher levels, you may experience some lengthy pauses while the computer is "thinking" - but that is part of the price of a smarter opponent. Just how much of a delay, I won't know until the game nears completion.

So, keep those cards and letters coming . . . We are listening.

☆

AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 4

period, Tom continued to design and develop games for Avalon Hill, which grew to be a sound and profitable investment. By 1972, Tom - so thoroughly identified with Avalon Hill as to be indistinguishable - took over the duties of marketing, sales and general operations. The company had grown too large for these to be part-time concerns any longer. Since 1981, Tom has concentrated upon sales and marketing, serving as Vice-President of The Avalon Hill Game Company.

In the process, Tom has enjoyed (hopefully) the fruits of his labors. His wife, Christy, was head of Avalon Hill's Direct-Mail Division from 1971 through 1981. (Everyone needs a working wife, and what better situation than to have one who works for *you*.) His two children, son and daughter, grew to adulthood. Tom acquired, and renovated, a small farm north of the city. He is well-known and respected throughout the game industry. One mark of that respect would be his election to the "Wargaming Hall of Fame" at ORIGINS in 1977. Another would be his becoming the first Chairman, in 1980, of the new Adventure Game Division of the Hobby Industry of America (HIA). There were many more, too many awards and honors to list here.

But should you ask Tom himself what good things the past 31 years with Avalon Hill have brought him, he will no doubt mention only the many friends he has made (and he has a story about each) across the country and around the world.

So, what does the future hold for Mr. Shaw? If his participation in the 1991 Maryland Senior Olympics is any indication (a silver medal in the racquetball tournament), a great many good things. As we see, however, there are only two true goals left of this "godfather" of our hobby: growing the perfect tomato, and winning the SuperBowl trophy in the Avalon Hill Football Strategy League (which he founded). Best of luck, Tom!

☆

FIND THE HIDDEN STAFF AND SAVE THE KINGDOM

THE BATTLE OF RENNELL ISLAND
A New Scenario for CARRIER
By Alan R. Arvold

CARRIER is a solitaire game about, rather obviously, carrier battles (both real and hypothetical) in the Southwest Pacific during 1942 and early 1943. In the game, the player controls the elements of the U.S. fleet involved in the various actions while the elements of the Japanese fleet are run by the game system. It is a highly complex game; carrier operations are a highly complex subject. (Yet, it remains remarkably playable, a unique attribute given the current state of solitaire game design.) Because it is a complex game, a number of inconsistencies and errors have been noticed in the game; but since these have been the subject of other *CARRIER* articles in other wargaming periodicals, I shall not repeat them here. My hardy congratulations goes to Jon Southard for his successful effort.

I bought *CARRIER* when it first came out, and then took two months to learn and master the convoluted system. I most especially enjoy the historical scenarios and, in a game where the non-thinking opponent is surprisingly clever, have lost more games then I have won. I was puzzled, however, by the exclusion of the Battle of Rennell Island as a historical scenario. My initial research into the subject found the reason: the battle is either ignored or briefly mentioned in most bibliographical sources about the Guadalcanal Campaign. Few historians talk about it, and even fewer discuss it in detail. Samuel E. Morison, the author of the monumental work *History of United States Naval Operations in World War Two*, lists the Battle of Rennell Island as the last of the seven major naval battles for Guadalcanal. Yet the action consisted only of a series of airstrikes by Japanese bombers on one American task force over a period of two days near the island that gave the battle its name. (For those who may be curious about the location of Rennell Island on the game mapsheet, it is the island mass in hexes 3026 and 3027.) But then, air attacks by Japanese aircraft on American ships in the waters around Guadalcanal were a common occurrence during the campaign. So what was it about this series of air attacks that made it a major battle?

Further research showed that the carrier *USS Enterprise* was involved during the second day of the air attacks, supplying CAP over the task force. Now the question might be how this would make the air battle near Rennell Island a major action? Finally I uncovered the fact that this series of air attacks were only part of a bigger battle that did not happen. Sounds confusing, doesn't it? As it turns out, both sides had strong naval forces in the area around the Solomons poised for battle. But, other than this series of air attacks on one task force, nothing happened. How this came about, including the events leading up to the battle is the subject of the next few paragraphs, after which will follow the scenario. Hopefully, my fellow players will find it of interest.

After the battle of Tassafaronga, the American admirals changed their tactics in dealing with the Japanese in and around the waters of Guadalcanal. Instead of using heavy ships to combat the infamous "Tokyo Express", the Americans were using attritional units such as planes and PT boats to disrupt the Express. The planes were not only hitting the Japanese convoys in the Solomons, but also started striking Japanese airfields and naval bases in the middle and northern Solomons and at Rabaul. American submarines (once few in number) were more increased in the northern Solomons and the New Britain area. Instead of being on the defensive in the Guadalcanal area, reacting to enemy moves, the Americans were determined to carry the war to the Japanese. While the losses inflicted on the Japanese were not that spectacular, the amount of damage to Japanese ships and equipment was reaching a critical level by the end of December. Back in the waters around Guadalcanal, PT boat attacks on the Tokyo Express were beginning to become effective. While the actual losses inflicted on the Japanese in any one action were minimal, the attacks were causing many Express runs to turn back before they could drop off the supplies they were carrying. Of those supplies that were delivered, only about a quarter were recovered by the Japanese troops on island.

In Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo, a furious debate was going on between the Army and the Navy on the fate of the Guadalcanal campaign. The Army was insisting that the campaign continue. They had already committed 36000 troops to the island and were prepared to commit another 50000. The Navy commanders, on the other hand, wanted an end to the campaign and were ready to surrender the island to the Americans. Their reasoning was that losses in shipping made it impossible to support, or even transport, the Army's additional troops. They could not now keep the troops already on Guadalcanal adequately supplied. Eventually the Army officers gave in to the naval reasoning, and on 31 December 1942 Imperial permission was granted for the evacuation of Guadalcanal. However, it would be another month before the Navy could assemble enough ships to effect the evacuation. In the meantime, it would be forced to continue its supply runs to the island.

In January 1943 the situation in and around Guadalcanal grew worse for Japanese. The Americans now had two operational airfields on the island and were building a third. American air strength continued to increase despite their losses in the daily air battles. The Tokyo Express was making fewer runs to the island due to losses inflicted on earlier attempts. The American fleet, taking another page out of the Japanese book on naval tactics, sent cruiser/destroyer task forces to the New Georgia Islands on two occasions (were they bombarded Japanese airfields). To make matters worse for the Japanese, the Americans were monitoring the buildup of shipping at the Japanese base at Rabaul, meaning they would be well prepared to deal with any evacuation. Therefore, the Japanese had to do something to neutralize the growing American naval and air strength around Guadalcanal.

Back in the Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo, there was again a heated debate on how best to prevent American interference with the evacuation. The Army insisted that the Navy engage the American fleet and try to knock out the American airfields on Guadalcanal. They reasoned that, regardless of who won such a battle, the American fleet would retire to its secure bases at Espirtu Santo and New Caledonia to refuel, repair and replenish. They also reasoned that it would take a matter of days to repair the airfields if they were adequately bombarded. At any rate, the temporary lull in the fighting would be the time to do the evacuation. The Navy disagreed with the Army's plan for several reasons. First, the Navy commanders did not wish to engage the American fleet in a decisive engagement at that date. Second, the Navy believed that it could accomplish the same purpose as the Army's plan by merely acting as a decoy, allowing the American fleet to chase it around without becoming decisively engaged. The American fleet would still have to retire to its bases when it gave up the chase. As for the airfields on the island, the plan would call for an increased number of raids to keep the American air strength busy during the evacuation. In the end, it was the Navy's plan that was adopted.

Towards the end of January, the Combined Fleet sailed from Truk and headed towards the Solomons. On the evening of the 27th, it was spotted by American long-range reconnaissance aircraft in the area of the Ontong Java atoll (north of the Solomon Islands). The American naval forces in the area under Admiral Halsey deployed into six task forces south of Guadalcanal to await the anticipated Japanese offensive. For the next two and half days, neither fleet moved towards the other; both appeared to be waiting for the other fleet to make the first move. Meanwhile Japanese submarines located one American task force, Task Force 18, moving towards the western end of Guadalcanal. This particular naval force had the Japanese worried because it was moving into a position were it could easily intercept the evacuation runs. The Japanese were right to worry about this enemy task force (composed of six cruisers, eight destroyers and two escort carriers), as it had the mission of making a sweep up the "Slot", engaging any Japanese ships they found, and of bombarding a Japanese airfield in the New Georgia Islands. The Japanese did not want chance this force being around when the evacuation started, so they arranged a series of air attacks on it by land-based planes from Rabaul.

The first air attacks hit Task Force 18 about 1900 hours on 29 January when the group was located just north of Rennell Island. There were two separate strikes that day, which together lasted a total of 45 minutes. These attacks were composed of torpedo-carrying twin-engine bombers. Task Force 18, which had earlier detached its two escort carriers with two destroyers and sent them eastward, had no CAP (Combat Air Patrol) to protect it and so was taken by surprise. Luckily, only two torpedo hits were scored, both on the heavy cruiser *Chicago*. But this caused the task force to change course and head in an eastern direction during the night.

The next morning, American long-range reconnaissance detected the Japanese Combined Fleet retiring towards Truk. When Halsey heard this, he recalled all of his naval forces which were deployed south of Guadalcanal. However, he ordered Task Force 16 (containing the carrier *Enterprise*) and the two escort carriers from Task Force 18 to intercept the damaged cruiser, at that time being towed back towards Espirtu Santo, in order to provide CAP against any further air attacks. By late afternoon on the 30th, the carriers, which hadn't intercepted the *Chicago* yet, were close enough to provide CAP. The *Chicago* at this time was east of Rennell Island being towed by a sea tug and being escorted by the six destroyers from Task Force 18. (The other cruisers from the Task Force had earlier linked up with other naval forces being recalled.) However, Japanese aircraft had again found the crippled cruiser and a twelve-plane force again attacked her. Although the CAP and the anti-aircraft fire downed ten planes, the *Chicago* took four more torpedo hits and one of the escorting destroyers took one. The *Chicago* went down in twenty minutes, but the destroyer managed to make port. The Battle of Rennell Island was finished.

In the aftermath of the battle, the Japanese made three more Express runs down to Guadalcanal in the first week of February (the last being on the night of 8/9 February). These runs were solely for the evacuation of the remaining Japanese troops on the island. The Americans, of course, detected them and engaged them with their light forces. As there were only destroyers in these Express runs, the Americans assumed that these were supply runs and responded in the same manner they had before. The heavy ships of the American fleet were in port during this time refueling and resupplying just as the Japanese commanders had predicted. After the departure of the last Japanese destroyer from Guadalcanal on the morning of 9 February, the naval campaign was over.

As we can see, the Battle of Rennell Island was not much of a contest. Though both sides did have substantial forces available, the battle didn't develop as expected because the American deployment was too defensive and the Japanese wanted to avoid becoming decisively engaged, hence the probable reason the game designer didn't include a scenario for the Battle of Rennell Island. The following scenario explores what *might* have happened if the Americans were more aggressive and the Japanese had decided to follow the Army's plan for a decisive naval action.

31.5 Rennell Island: January 28-30 1943

Notes: *In this little-known action, the Japanese Combined Fleet was attempting to knock out Henderson Field on Guadalcanal and major American naval forces in order to prevent their interference with the upcoming evacuation of Japanese forces from the island. Japanese carrier forces were still weak, however, as the Shokaku and Zuikaku were unavailable. The Americans committed their entire fleet in the area to stop what they perceived to be another major Japanese attempt to take Guadalcanal. This was complicated by the fact that the Americans are evacuating the last elements of the 1st Marine Division from the island. The scenario opens as the American transport group at Guadalcanal is beginning to unload.*

US Deployment
Task Force 11 - CV Saratoga (with 9 F4F, 9 SBD and 4 TBF); CLAA San Juan; five DDs (Hex 3014)
Task Force 16 - CV Enterprise (with 9 F4F, 9 SBD and 4 TBF); CLAA San Diego; five DDs (Hex 3711)
Task Force 18 - CVEs Nassau, Altamaha (each with 4 F4F and 4 TBF); CAs Chicago, Louisville, Wichita; CLs Cleveland, Columbia, Montpelier; eight DDs (Hex 3517)
Task Force 64 - BBs Washington, North Carolina, Indiana; three DDs (Hex 3316)
Task Force 67 - CLs Helena, Honolulu, Nashville, St. Louis; four DDs (Hex 3016)
Cactus Striking Force - four DDs (Hex 2628)
Transport Group - APs Crescent City, McCawley, President Adams, President Jackson (Hex 2626)
Henderson Field - 10 F4F, 4 P-38, 10 SBD and 4 TBF steps, with 50 fuel points.

Japanese Forces and Objectives
The Japanese have only one objective, Guadalcanal. There are 20 combat forces in play. Since the Japanese have no transport commitment, no transport forces are in play.
Japanese Commitment and Retirement limits are 15/22/-/35.
Rabaul Air Value is 16.

Special Rules:
1. The scenario begins with the 0520 turn of January 28th.
2. At the start of the scenario, the US transports at Guadalcanal are eligible to begin unloading. When the transports finish unloading, they must begin loading using the same procedure as that of unloading. (This represents the loading of the last units of the 1st Marine Division, which is being evacuated from the island.) After the transports are reloaded, they must begin moving immediately towards the southern map edge, escorted by at least three destroyers. The US player receives two points for each re-loaded transport that is exited off the southern edge of the map sheet. The Japanese receive two points for each re-loaded transport that is sunk.
3. Contrary to the rules concerning U.S. formations (5.0), any US task forces or groups that begin a turn stacked together in any hex may

exchange ships or combine in any fashion desired. However, US carriers may not be exchanged or combined with other carriers.
4. Game Extension (24.0) and Rabaul (28.0) rules must be used.
5. Task Force 16 (*Enterprise*) begins the game at the base of Espiritu Santo and may move out on the first game turn.
6. Contrary to the rules concerning surface bombardment of airfields (30.0), Henderson Field may be bombarded during the game by the Japanese.
7. The US escort carriers (CVE) have reduced carrier operations capability. They may only launch, land, raise, and lower four steps at a time. The number of steps raised and lowered plus the number launched cannot exceed six. Planes can not land if there are more then six steps on deck. US escort carriers have an AA value of "5" and a hit capacity of "5". Like all carriers, they have no bombardment value. The damage levels on an escort carrier are "L" for one hit, "M" for two hits, "H" for three hits, "D" for four hits, and "Sunk" on the fifth hit. US escort carriers are slower then fleet carriers; during every three game turns, a task force or group containing an escort carrier may move on only two of those game turns. In this case, such a force or group would move on the first and third turns of each set of three game turns.
8. Because some of the ships listed in this scenario are not in the counter mix, the player should use the following existing ship counters as substitutions. CA Northhampton for the *Louisville*, CA Minneapolis for the *Wichita*, CL Denver for the *Montpelier*, CL Boise for the *Nashville*. For the escort carriers, the player may any of the unused carriers in the counter mix; just substitute the escort carrier values for the values printed on the counter. Because there are only three carrier displays on the map sheet, it is suggested that the player craft an extra one (or photocopy one from the mapsheet) to use for the fourth carrier. The same suggestion is offered for the "Carrier Task Force Display", as a third one will be needed.
9. The Japanese carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* are unavailable for this scenario.

Strategy:
Players will find that the Americans have a superior force to the Japanese in this scenario. In fact, they have the best chance to win in all of the historical scenarios. The American escort carriers which start the game together should, I think, remain together for the whole game. When operating together, they in effect are another fleet carrier. Together they have almost as many planes as a fleet carrier and they can service all types of naval aircraft that land on them. They are, however, slower and much easier to damage and sink. Therefore the player should use them with care.

CARRIER is a most challenging game to play well, and even more difficult to win when faced with one of the historical scenarios. The Rennell Island action not only gives the American player his best chance in any of these, but for once gives him the numerical edge. But, most of all, it provides to the dedicated player the satisfaction of a climactic battle at the end o a long and hard-fought naval campaign.

WOODEN SHIPS FOR ONE
A Solitaire System for WS&IM
By Mark Hunter

Whether it's because you don't have an opponent to play with, or simply an extreme case of introversion, we all have occasions to play our favorite wargames solitaire. The only problem is that many of these games cannot be readily played alone. That was my dilemma with *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN*. But rather than just complaining, I took matters into my own hands and developed a set of solitaire rules for this gaming classic. With these rules, *WS&IM* can now be a challenging solitaire game, making all us gamers (and especially our wives, who insist we be home) the happier.

The theory behind my design for this solitaire system stems primarily from the introduction to the "Design Your Own Scenarios" section to the 2nd edition rules: "Intermediate actions between several ships-of-the-line were very rarely fought. Yet within the game format, these actions are the most enjoyable to portray. They allow for hard-fought battles without overburdening the player's ability to handle large numbers of ships." This solitaire system was designed for just such battles, and is most effective pitting several (one to four per side) SOLs against one another. When utilizing this system for solitaire *WS&IM*, all rules pertaining to the Advanced Game remain the same except where modified in the following.

But first, some terminology. "Friendly Ship" is used to refer to any ship you control. For example, in a battle between the British and the French in which you are playing the side of the French, all French ships are "friendly ships". Obviously then, "Enemy Ship" is used to refer to any ship that the game system controls. In the above example, all British ships are "enemy ships".

The following are tables and charts added to the traditional game for solitaire play:

1. Nearest Ship Attitude Diagram
2. Enemy Ship Movement Table
3. Enemy Ammunition/Fire Table
4. Grappling Status Table

With the exception of the first (see right), these are found on the following pages. All other tables are utilized, and remain unchanged from the Advanced Game.

SOLITAIRE SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Wind Phase: Wind effects remain unchanged from the Advanced Game. Roll one die to determine Wind Direction change, and if so, how it will change. This is done every third turn. In the solitaire game, the wind velocity used is always "Normal Breeze" throughout.

Unfouling Phase: During this phase, each pair of ships which are fouled together must roll once (for the pair) on the unfouling table. Unlike the traditional game, you may not automatically choose to stay fouled by not rolling. The result of the die roll is put into effect as in the Advanced Game.

Drift Phase: All ships which are fouled, grappled together, or otherwise immobile, and are due to drift, are moved during this phase. In the solitaire game, all drifting is conducted *prior* to all other ship movement notation. Consult the ships' logs and determine any ships due to drift for any of the aforementioned reasons. Place a "D" in their move column and move the ships at this time. Any collisions which may occur as a result of drifting ships is resolved immediately as in the Advanced Game.

Movement Notation Phase: Movement is plotted on your ship log for all friendly ships, as in the traditional game system.

The plotting of enemy movement is conducted after your own is completed. After determining "Nearest Ship" and "Nearest Ship Attitude" (see below), determine enemy ship movement by consulting the Enemy Ship Movement table. Record this movement plot on the enemy ship log.

Movement Execution Phase: Each non-drifting ship, enemy and friendly, is moved *exactly* as ordered on the log. Retrace any possible collisions one hex at a time. Check for fouling.

Grappling/Ungrappling Phase: All friendly ships adjacent to enemy ships must roll once on the Grappling Status table and determine whether ships are grappled or ungrappled (see below).

Combat Phase: Resolve all fire by friendly ships, followed by the fire of all enemy ships (see below). Remember all combat is actually simultaneous, so fire effects do not take effect until all combat is complete.

Melee Phase: For all ships grappled/fouled together, melee must occur (see below). Resolve during this phase.

Load Phase: During this phase you may load all friendly ships as per the traditional rules. You may reload broadsides of all friendly ships with your choice of ammunition. Enemy ships, however, do not reload at this time; their gun loads are not revealed until an enemy ship fires.

It is crucial that players follow this Sequence of Play exactly, especially with regard to the plotting of ship movement, both friendly and enemy, to maintain the tactical challenge.

Nearest Ship Attitude Diagram

Nearest Ship Attitude Diagram
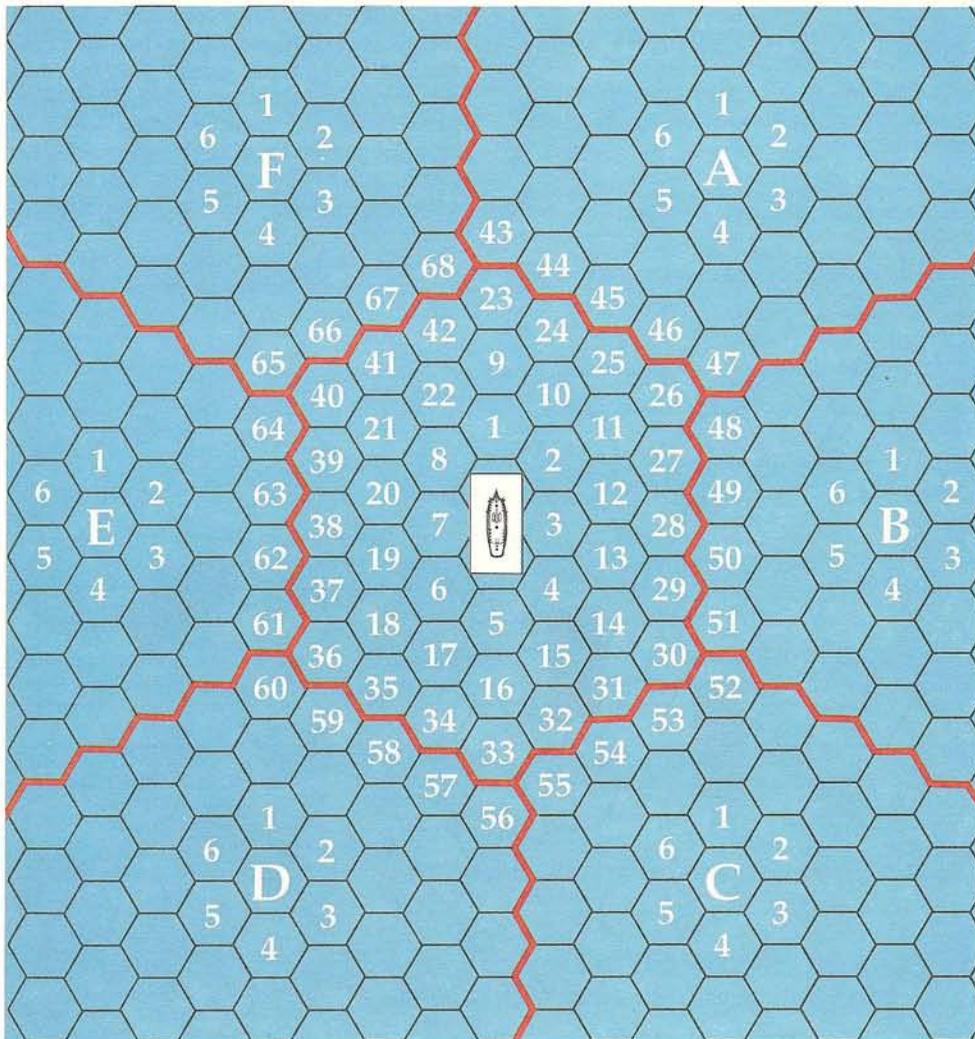
MOVEMENT NOTATION

Movement is plotted for all friendly ships on the ship's log as usual. After noting all friendly ship movement, the solitaire player must determine enemy ship movement by using the following process:

1. First, one must determine the "Nearest Ship". For each enemy ship, calculate which friendly ship is nearest to it in hexes. This is done by simply counting the number of hexes (enemy to friendly) by the shortest possible route. Count from either the bow or stern hex, whichever is closest. When determining "nearest ship", never count hexes from one enemy ship through *another* enemy ship to reach a friendly ship. When this occurs the farthest enemy ship is considered "screened" and must count hexes to another friendly ship (see Figure 1 below).

Any number of enemy ships may use the same friendly ship as the "nearest ship". In the event that two or more friendly ships are equidistant in qualifying as the nearest ship, determine which is to serve as the "nearest ship" at random. When determining "nearest ship", do not consider inactive ("struck") friendly ships in that calculation.

2. "Nearest Ship Attitude". After each enemy ship has determined its "nearest ship", consult the "Nearest Ship Attitude" diagram to determine their relationship. By visualizing the friendly ship in the middle of the chart as shown, the enemy ship's relation to it can be determined by finding its corresponding hexes. These two hex numbers are assigned to each ship - bow hex number first followed by the stern hex number. This is called the "enemy position number".

Figure 1: In this example, enemy ships are shown in red and friendly ships in blue. Enemy ship "B" is closest on the mapboard to Friendly ship "D" only three hexes away, except that "B" is screened by Enemy ship "A". Therefore, "B" must use Friendly ship "E" (four hexes away) as the "nearest ship". The nearest ship for "A" is obviously "D"; and for ship "C", Friendly ship "E".
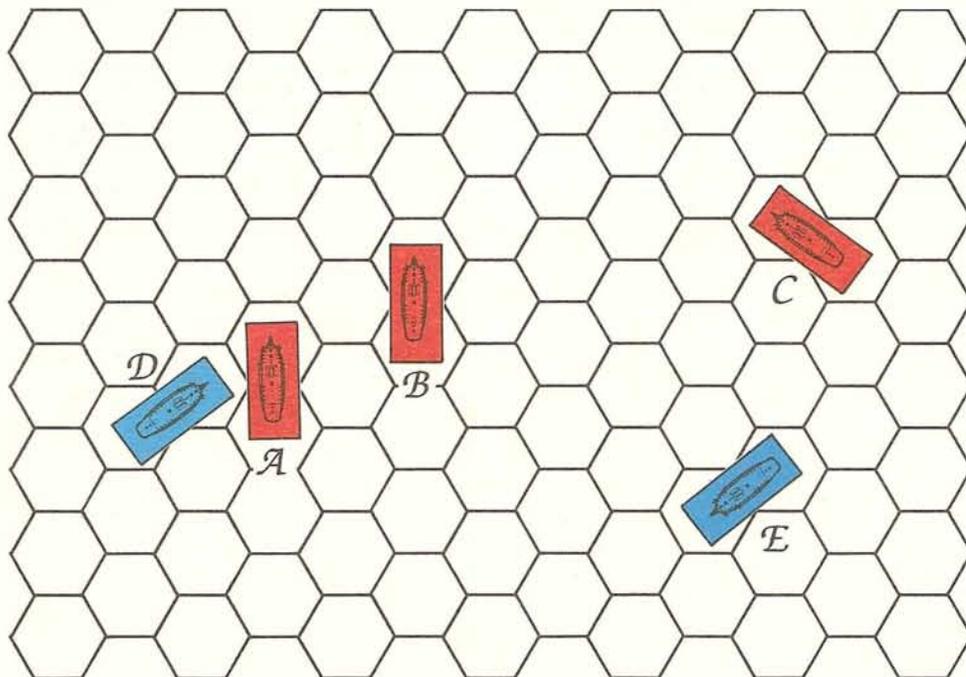
In the event the range exceeds three hexes, the bow hex will be more generally determined by a zone (A-F) followed by a stern hex (1-6), as shown on the diagram. Using Figure 1 cited before, the enemy position number for each enemy ship is as follows: Enemy Ship A: 1-2; Enemy Ship B: B-6; Enemy Ship C: 30-31.

3. It is now time for "Enemy Ship Movement Notation". Using the "Enemy Ship Movement" table, cross-reference the enemy position number with its attitude to the current wind. Shown on the chart is the movement for the ship in question. (This chart is designed primarily for Nr. 2 SOLs, although Nr. 1 SOLs may be used.) Occasionally, two possible movements are listed, the second in parentheses. When this occurs, roll one die. A roll of "1-3" indicates the first movement plot is to be used; a roll of "4-6" means the second move given in parentheses is used. After the move is determined, it is written on the ship's log.

If, due to damage, a ship's movement/turning capacity is reduced (or a Nr. 1 SOL is used), the player should chose, if two are given, whichever movement can be completed. If neither can be completed, or there is only one offered, then determine the choice at random and follow as far as damage permits. For example, a ship with a turning ability of "1" given the choice of "L1R(L2)" movement would use L2. If "L1R" was the only move listed, then its move would simply be L1.

If an enemy ship should become dismasted, its movement should be to turn its broadside to face the nearest friendly ship (limited as per rule V.5 of the basic game). Conduct this maneuver after all other ships have moved. Note that use of full sails is not allowed in the solitaire game at any time; all movement (including that of friendly ships) must be under battle sails. Conduct "drift" as per the standard rules of play.

[NOTE: It is strongly suggested that these steps (1-3) be determined for one enemy ship at a time.]

GRAPPLING STATUS

	Crew Square Comparison		
DR	3<	= +/- 2	3>
1	G	G	G
2	--	G	G
3	--	--	G
4-6	--	--	--

DRM:
-1 if either ship motionless during Movement Phase (applicable only if ships not already grappled).
-1 if player seeks grappling success.
-1 if ships already grappled.

GRAPPLING/UNGRAPPLING

Grappling/ungrappling is handled differently in the solitaire variant than in the traditional game. During this phase, any opposing ships adjacent to each other may become grappled together or, if already grappled, become ungrappled. For each friendly ship which is adjacent to an enemy ship, consult the "Grappling Status" table by cross-referencing a die roll with the appropriate column of enemy crew squares. The first column (3<) is used if the enemy ship has three or more total crew squares less than your friendly ship. Column Two (= +/- 2) is used if the enemy ship has an equal number of crew squares or no more nor less than two squares, compared to your friendly ship. The last column (3>) is used if the enemy ship has three or more crew squares than your friendly ship. (Example: If a friendly ship has 20 crew squares and an adjacent enemy ship has 17 crew squares, the first column is used.)

If, after cross-referencing the die roll with the appropriate column, a "G" appears, the ships become grappled (or remain grappled if already so); if a "-" appears the ships do not grapple (or become ungrappled if already grappled). Each die roll may be modified as shown on the bottom of the chart. If the ships are not already grappled, and either ship was motionless during the movement phase, the die roll is "-1". If you hope for grapple success, you may elect to modify the die roll by "-1". There is a "-1" die roll modifier if the ships are already grappled together. All modifiers are cumulative. Unlike the two-player game, ships cannot be grappled more than once.

Furthermore, like the Unfouling action, rolling on this table is *not* optional. For every turn an enemy ship is adjacent to a friendly ship, whether already grappled or not, their grappled status must be checked. Grappling/ungrappling between friendly ships is automatic unless the friendly ship itself is already engaged in melee with an enemy ship. In this case, the "Grappling Status" table must be consulted. As in the basic game, use the ship's log to record the ship's grappled status.

COMBAT

During the combat phase you may fire any of your friendly ships at enemy ships in the same manner as before. After you have completed your fire, use the following process to conduct enemy fire at friendly ships. (Remember, combat - and damage - is actually simultaneous.)

ENEMY SHIP MOVEMENT TABLE

Enemy Position	B	Port A	Port C	D	Stbd C	Stbd A
1-2	L1	L	L	L	L	BBB (2L)
1-8	1R	BBB (2R)	R	R	1	2L
1-9	R1 (L1)	L1	R	0	L	L1
1-10	1B	2R	1	L	L	2L
1-22	BB (2)	2R	1	0	1	2L
2-1	R1 (RB)	2R (BBB)	1	R	R (B)	1RB
2-3	BR (B1)	BBR (2L)	1	L	1	BBR (3)
2-10	1B	2R	1 (R)	0	1	1BB
2-11	LB	BBB (R1B)	L	L	L	L1B
2-12	RB	R1L	1	R	B (R)	2L (1BB)
3-2	BB (1B)	1R1 (2R)	R	0 (R)	1 (R)	2R (R1B)
3-4	1B (L1)	2L	1	R	1	BR1
3-12	B1	1R1	B (1)	0 (L)	1	L1R
3-13	R1	R1B	R	R	R	R1L
4-3	R1 (1R)	R1R	R	R	L	L1L
4-5	1B	1L1	B (1)	0 (L)	1	L1R
4-13	1B (BB)	1B1	1 (B)	0 (R)	1	BBB (1R1)
4-14	R1	3	1 (L)	L	L	LBB (B2)
4-15	L1 (R1)	L1 (R1B)	R (1)	R	1	L2 (BR1)
5-4	R1	R2	B (R)	R	B (1)	2R (R1)
5-6	L1	BBB (L1)	B	0	L (B)	1L1
5-15	1B	2R	1	0	1	B1B (2R)
5-16	L1 (R1)	1R1 (R2)	R	L (R)	L	R2 (L2)
5-17	2 (1B)	2L	1	R	1	1B1
6-5	1B	R1L	1	0	1	1R1
6-7	LB	LBB	L	R (L)	L	L1L (LBB)
6-17	R1 (LB)	2B (L1R)	1	L	1	R1 (1LB)
6-18	2	1L	R	R	R	3
6-19	BB	1BB (BBB)	1	0	1	2L (BBB)
7-6	1B (R1)	R1B (2R)	1	O	L	BBL
7-8	BB	1L1	L	L	1	2L
7-19	LB (L1)	L1R	L	L	R	BB1
7-20	B1	2L (RBB)	R (1)	L	1	2L
8-1	1B (BB)	L1L	L	L	1	2L
8-7	BB (BL)	BBL (2R)	1	0	1	2L (BBL)
8-20	L1 (LB)	L1R	1	L	1	L1R (LBB)
8-21	R1	R1B	R	R	R	R1B
8-22	1B	1L1	1 (L)	L	B	B1B (2L)
9-1	1R (1L)	3 (1R1)	R	R (L)	L	2L (R1L)
9-10	BB	1L1	R	0	L	L2 (L1B)
9-22	BB (R1)	R2	B	0 (R)	B (R)	1R
9-23	L1 (R1)	L1 (R1)	B (1)	L (R)	1	L2 (BR1)
9-24	1B	1L1 (RBB)	1	0	1	L1L (B1B)
9-42	2	1BB	1	R (0)	1	2L (R1B)
10-1	2 (1L)	RBB (R1R)	L	L	L	3 (L1L)
10-2	1L	2L	L (1)	L	L	BBR (2L)
10-9	BB	B (1)	1 (B)	R	B	3
10-11	1B	BB1	1	0	B (1)	L2 (1L1)
10-24	R1	R2 (L1R)	1	L	R (1)	2R (L1R)
10-25	2 (L1)	BB1 (L1R)	R	O (R)	1	2B (BRB)
11-2	LB	RBB (R1R)	R	L	L	LBB (2L)
11-10	BB	BBB (R2)	R	R	R (L)	L1L
11-12	1L (BB)	2L	B	L	B (L)	2L
11-25	2	1R1 (B1B)	1	0 (R)	1	1B1 (2R)
11-26	L1	1B1	L	L	L	1R1
11-27	RB (2)	R1B	R	R	R (1)	RBB
12-2	RB	BBB (R1B)	R	R	R	L1L
12-3	L1	LBB	L	L	L	L1B
12-11	1B	1R1	B	0	B	1R1
12-13	BB (1B)	L1R (R1L)	1	R	1	L2
12-27	R1	B2 (B1B)	1	L	L	R1
12-28	RB	RBB	R	R	1	RBB (1RB)
13-3	LB	RBB	L	L	L	LBB
13-4	BB	BBB	B	0	B	BBB
13-12	BB	R1B (R2)	R	R	R	R1B (1R1)
13-14	RB (1B)	RBB	R (1)	R	1	2B (RBB)
13-28	1B	1BB	1	L (0)	1	1BB (2B)
13-29	R1	L1 (R1)	R	R	L	1R1 (L1B)
14-4	LB	L1R	L	L	L	LBB (L1B)
14-13	RB	RB1 (RBB)	R	R	R	RBB (L1L)
14-15	BB	BBB	B	0	1 (B)	1L1 (L2)
14-29	BB	R1L	1	R	1	BBB (2B)
14-30	1L	R2	L	L	L	R1 (L2)
14-31	2 (1R)	1RB (L1R)	1	R	1	L1L (L1R)
15-4	L1	RBB	R	R	R	L1L
15-5	LB	L1 (R1R)	L	L	L	L1B
15-14	BB	1R1	1	0	1	1R1 (BBB)
15-16	BB (B1)	L1R	1	0	1	L1R
15-31	2	2B	L	L	L	3 (2B)
15-32	1R	L1 (1R1)	R	R	R	L2 (1R1)
16-5	RB (LB)	R1R	R	R (L)	L	L1L
16-15	BB	R2 (R1B)	B	0	B	BBB
16-17	BB	BBB	B	0	B	L2
16-32	1B	1BB (1B1)	1	0	1	2B
16-33	R1 (L1)	1L1	R	R	L	1R1
16-34	2	1BB	1	0	1	1BB
17-5	R1	R1B	R	R	R	R1
17-6	L1 (LB)	LBB	L	L	L	LBB (L1B)
17-16	1B	BBB	B	0	B	BBB
17-18	1B	BBB	B	0	1	BB1
17-34	1L	2L	L	L	L	2L
17-35	2	2B (L1L)	R	R	R	2B (L1L)
18-6	RB	R1B	R	R	R	R1B (L1L)
18-17	BB	BBB	B	0	B	BBB
18-19	BB	L1B (BBB)	L	L	L	L1B
18-35	1B	1LB (R1R)	1	L	1 (L)	1LB
18-36	1R	L2	R	R	R	1R1
18-37	BB	BBB	1	0	B	1BB
19-6	BB	R1B	B	R	B	BBB
19-7	RB	L1L	R	R	L	L1L
19-18	LB (1B)	2B (LBB)	1	L	1	LBB (2B)
19-20	BB	L1B (L2)	L	L	L	L1B (BBB)
19-37	R1	R1B (R2)	L	L	R	R1B
19-38	1B (2)	2B (1BB)	1 (B)	R	1	RBB (1BB)
20-7	RB	R1B (1R1)	R	R	L	R1R (L1L)
20-8	LB	R1R (L1L)	L	L	L	L1L (L1B)
20-19	1B	BBB (1BB)	1 (B)	0	B (1)	LBB (B1B)
20-21	1B	1L1	1 (L)	0	1	BBB (1L1)
20-38	L1	R2 (2B)	1	L	L(1)	LBB (1LB)
20-39	RB	L1 (R1B)	R	R	R	1B1 (R1L)
21-8	RB	RBB (1RB)	R	R (L)	R	L1L (RBB)
21-20	BB (1R)	2R (BBB)	B (R)	R	R	2R (BBB)
21-22	L1	L1 (R1R)	L	L	B	BBB (L2)
21-39	LB	2B	1	L	L	LBB
21-40	L1	1L1 (R2)	R	R	R	R1 (RBB)
21-41	2	1L1 (2B)	B	0	1	R1L (1BB)
22-1	2 (L1)	2R	L	L	B	R1R
22-8	1R	2R	R	R	R	2R
22-9	BB	1LB	B	0	1 (B)	1L1 (BBB)
22-21	1B	R2	B	0	B (L)	2R
22-41	LB	3	L	L	L	B2
22-42	1L	LBB	R	R	R	R1L
23-9	R1 (L1)	R1B (L1)	L	L (R)	R (L)	L1B (L2)
23-24	BB	BBB (R1R)	L (B)	L	L	L1B (L2)
23-42	BB	BBB	B	0 (R)	R	R1 (BBB)
23-43	L1 (R1)	1R1 (R2)	R	R (L)	R	1L1 (1R1)
23-44	BB (1B)	B1B	1	0	1	L1R (2B)
23-68	1B	2B (R1R)	1	L	1	3 (LBB)
24-9	1R	BBB (RBB)	R	R	R	L1L (R1)
24-10	LB	2L (R1R)	L	L	L	L1B (2L)
24-23	BB	R1R (1BB)	1 (B)	0	B	2R
24-25	1B	BBB	B	0	B	L2
24-44	1L (R1)	2B (R2)	L	L	1	1L1
24-45	2 (1L)	RBB (3)	R	R	1	2B (L1L)
25-10	RB (LB)	R1R	R	R	L	L1L
25-11	1L	2L	L	L	L	1L (2L)
25-24	BB	R2	B	R	B	1R1 (2R)
25-26	RB	BBB (2B)	R	0	B	1L1 (L2)
25-45	2	3 (R1R)	1	L	1	R1R
25-46	1R	L1	R	L (R)	R	3 (L2)
26-11	LB	R1R	R	R	L	L1L (R1R)
26-25	BB (R1)	BBB (R2)	R	R	R	L1L
26-27	BB (1B)	2L	B	L	B	BBB (2L)
26-46	2	3 (LBB)	B	0	B (1)	1B1 (R1L)
26-47	R1	L1 (1L1)	L	L	L	2R (L2)
26-48	1R	3 (L1L)	R	R	1 (B)	1BB
27-11	RB (R1)	BBB (R2)	R	R	R	L1L
27-12	LB	LBB (L1B)	R	L	L	1L1 (L1B)
27-26	2 (BB)	R2 (R1L)	B	0	B	R1L
27-28	BB (1B)	L1R (BBB)	1 (B)	0 (L)	L (B)	3 (1BB)
27-48	L1	L1 (1L1)	L	L	L	1L1 (1R1)
27-49	1R	1RB	R	R	1	1BB (L1L)

ENEMY SHIP MOVEMENT TABLE (CONT.)

Enemy Position	B	Port A	Port C	D	Stbd C	Stbd A
28-12	RB	R1B (R1R)	R	L	L	L1L (R1R)
28-13	L1	L1 (1L1)	B (L)	L	L	L1B
28-27	BB (R1)	R2	1 (B)	0 (R)	B	R1L
28-29	B1 (R)	2L (L1R)	1	0 (R)	1 (B)	BBB (3)
28-49	2	3 (2B)	L	L	L	2B (R2)
28-50	L1	2R (1RB)	R	R	R	L2 (2R)
29-13	RB	R1R	L	L	L	BLB (R1R)
29-14	BB	BBB (L1)	B	0	1	L2
29-28	BB (R1)	R1B (R2)	R	R	R	R1 (RBB)
29-30	RB (2)	3 (L1R)	1	R	1	1RB (L1L)
29-50	2 (1B)	3 (R1R)	1	L	1	1BB
29-51	1L	1R1	L	R	L	1L1 (2R)
30-14	L1	R1R	L	L	L	LBB
30-29	BB	BBB (R1B)	R	R	R	RBB (R1)
30-31	BB	L1	B	0	1 (B)	L2 (BBB)
30-51	2	2B (B1B)	1	0	B	1BB
30-52	1L	2L	L	L	L	1R1 (2L)
30-53	RB	L1R	1	R	1	L1L (3)
31-14	RB (R1)	R1B (RBB)	R	R	R	R1
31-15	L1	LBB	L	L	L	LBB
31-30	1B (2)	R1L	1	0	1	2R
31-32	BB	L1R	B (1)	0	1	1L1
31-53	R1	2B (R2)	1	L	L	R1R (3)
31-54	2	2R	R	R	R	L1L (3)
32-15	R1	L1L	R	R	L	LBB
32-16	BB	BL1	L	L	L	LBB
32-31	BB	R2	B	0 (R)	B	R1L
32-33	1B	L1R	L	0	1	BBB (L1R)
32-54	2	3 (R1R)	1	L	L (1)	2B (1LB)
32-55	L1	L2	R	R	1	1L1 (3)
33-16	LB (RB)	R1R	R	R (L)	L	L1L
33-32	R1 (BB)	R2	R	R	R	R1
33-34	BB (L1)	L1	L (1)	L	1 (L)	L2 (L1B)
33-55	2	R1L	1	0	1	R1L
33-56	1R (1L)	R1B (1L1)	R	R (L)	L	L2 (1R1)
33-57	2	L1R (3)	1	0	1	L1R
34-16	R1	R2 (R1B)	R	R	R	R1
34-17	LB	R1R (L1)	L	L	L	2L (L1L)
34-33	BB	R1L	1	0	1	BBB
34-35	BB	L1R	B (1)	0	1	L2
34-57	R1	2L (R2)	L	L	L	1L1 (R1)
34-58	2	1L1 (2B)	1	R	1	3
35-17	RB	R2 (R1B)	R	R	R	L1L (R1)
35-18	LB	L1	L	L	L	L1B
35-34	1B	R1L	1	0	B	BBB
35-36	BB	L1R	1	0	1	L1R
35-58	1L	3	L	L	L	2L
35-59	1R	L1L (2R)	R	R	1	L2 (3)
36-18	RB	R1R	R	R	L	L1L (R1)
36-35	BB	R2	B	R	B	R2
36-37	LB	L1	L	L	L	L2
36-59	2	3	1	L	1	1LB (R1R)
36-60	1R	2R	L	R	R	2R
36-61	BB	BBB	1	0	1	L1R
37-18	BB	R2	R	R	B	R2 (BBB)
37-19	LB	RBB (R1R)	R	R	L	LBB
37-36	2	R1R (R1L)	1 (L)	L	L (1)	3 (LBB)
37-38	BB (L1)	BBB (L1)	L	L	L	L2 (BBB)
37-61	R1	2L	L	L	L (R)	3
37-62	2 (1B)	L1L (L1R)	1	R	1	L1L (3)
38-19	R1	R1B	R	R	R	L1L (R1)
38-20	LB	R1R	L	L	L	L1B
38-37	BB (2)	LBB (3)	1 (B)	0 (R)	1 (B)	2B (R1L)
38-39	BB (1B)	L1R	1	0 (L)	1	L2 (BBB)
38-62	1L	R2	L	L	L (1)	2L
38-63	2	2B (L1L)	R (1)	R	R (1)	3 (L1L)
39-20	RB	R1B	R	R	R	L1L
39-21	L1	L1 (LBB)	L	L	L	L2 (LBB)
39-38	BB (R1)	R1L (2R)	B (1)	0 (R)	1 (B)	R1L (1R1)
39-40	2 (BB)	L1R	B (1)	O (R)	1	2B (1BB)
39-63	1L	R1R (3)	1	L	L	1LB
39-64	1R	1L1 (R2)	R	R	R	R1B (L1L)
40-21	RB	RBB (2R)	R	R	R	L1L
40-39	BB (R1)	R2 (R1B)	B (R)	0 (R)	1 (R)	BBB (R1L)
40-41	BB	L1	L	L	B (L)	L2 (BBB)
40-64	LB	3	B (1)	L	L	3 (LBB)

Enemy Position	B	Port A	Port C	D	Stbd C	Stbd A
40-65	1R	2R (1R1)	R	R	R	1R1
40-66	2	L1R	1	0 (R)	1	L1R (RBB)
41-21	R1	R2 (BBB)	R	R	R	RBB
41-22	RB	1R1 (RBB)	R	R	L	R1R (LBB)
41-40	2	R2	B	0	B	2B (1BB)
41-42	BB	L2	B	L	1	L2
41-66	1L	3 (R2)	L	1	R	R1
41-67	2	2B (RBB)	R	R	1	3
42-9	LB	LBB (R1R)	L	L	L	LBB
42-22	R1	R1B (2R)	R	R	L	L1L
42-23	BB	2L	B	0	B	L1R
42-41	1B	R2 (BBB)	B	0	1	1BB (R1)
42-67	2	3 (R1R)	1	L (R)	1	L1B
42-68	RB	L2	L (R)	R	R	L2 (3)
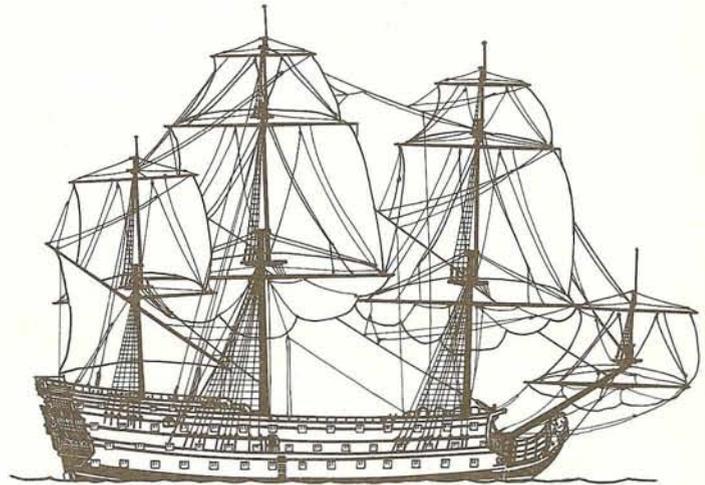
ZONES:

Enemy Position	B	Port A	Port C	D	Stbd C	Stbd A
A-1	R1	2R (1R1)	R	R (L)	L	2L
A-2	2	3 (L1R)	1	1 (L)	1	L2 (3)
A-3	L1	L1 (1L1)	B (1)	L	L (1)	L2 (L1L)
A-4	LB (L1)	L1	L	L	L	L1L
A-5	R1	R1R	R	R	L	R1 (L1L)
A-6	R1	R2 (R1R)	R	R	1 (B)	R1
B-1	R1	R2	R	R	B (1)	R1
B-2	2	3	1	L (R)	1	3 (2L)
B-3	2 (1R)	3 (2R)	1	R	1	3
B-4	L1	L1R	1 (B)	L	L (1)	L2 (2L)
B-5	L1	L1 (R1R)	L	L	L	L1L (L2)
B-6	R1	R1R (R2)	R	R	R	R1 (L1L)
C-1	R1	R2 (R1R)	R	R	L	L1L
C-2	1R (R1)	R2 (R1L)	R	R	1 (B)	R1 (1R1)
C-3	2 (1L)	3 (2-L)	1 (R)	R	1	3 (2L)
C-4	2 (1R)	3 (2R)	1	R	L	3 (L2)
C-5	L1	L1 (L1R)	1	L	L	L1R (L2)
C-6	L1	L1	L	L	L	L2 (L1L)
D-1	L1	R1R	R	R (L)	L	L1L
D-2	R1	R1R (R2)	R	R	R	R1
D-3	1B (R1)	R2	R	R	1	R2
D-4	2 (1L)	R2 (3)	1	R	1 (L)	2L (3)
D-5	2	3	1	L	1 (L)	3
D-6	L1	L1	L	L	L	L2
E-1	L1	L1R	1	0 (L)	1	L2 (2B)
E-2	L1	L1	L	L	L	L2
E-3	R1 (RB)	R1R (RBB)	R	R	R	L1L
E-4	2 (RB)	3 (R2)	1	R	1	R1L
E-5	2 (1L)	3 (2L)	1 (L)	L	1 (L)	3 (2L)
E-6	1R	2R (3)	R	R	1	3 (2R)
F-1	2	3 (2R)	1	L (R)	1 (L)	3 (L2)
F-2	BB	L1R	1	L	1 (L)	L2
F-3	L1	R1R (L1)	L	L	L	L1L (L2)
F-4	RB (R1)	R1B (1R1)	R	R	R	L1L (L2)
F-5	BB (2)	R2	1	R	1	3 (BBB)
F-6	1L	2L	R	R	1 (R)	3 (2L)

1. For each enemy ship, determine which of your friendly ships is to be the target. This is determined in the same manner as the usual game, taking into account field of fire and "closest target" (see VIII of the Basic or Advanced game rules). If more than one of your friendly ships can equally be a target of one enemy broadside, determine the final target at random.

2. Rolling on the "Ammunition/Fire" table will indicate the particulars of each shot. After a target has been determined, roll on this table to see if indeed the enemy ship fires. This table will also reveal what type of ammunition was used (R=round shot, CH=chainshot, GP=grapeshot, DS=double shot) and whether the shot was aimed at the hull or rigging (brackets around H or R). To use the table, cross-reference the range with a die roll. The modifiers listed ("+1" for EL or CR crews, "-1" for GR or PR crews, "+1" if it is a rake, and "-3" if both broadsides had fired last turn) are cumulative. If it is the enemy's initial broadside, the die roll must be ≥ the range (including dr modifiers); otherwise, no shot takes place. (Example: An EL crew firing its initial broadside at a range of five hexes would have to roll a "4" or more for the shot to take place; a GR crew must have a "6".)

3. After you have determined that a shot takes place, mark the appropriate broadside on the enemy ship as "fired" (R, CH, etc.) and conduct the shot determination against your friendly ship on the combat tables as in the traditional game, applying all appropriate modifiers. Roll on the selected Hit table using either hull or rigging column as indicated on the "Ammunition/Fire" table. Record hits against your friendly ship.

4. When recording damage on enemy ships under "Gun Hits", distribute the hits evenly between bow and stern unless the field of fire is clearly on one or the other. Given the choice, carronades should be marked out first.

The Melee Exception: Once a ship's crew (either friendly or enemy) has engaged in any phase of melee, it may not conduct fire at any ship until it has defeated the enemy in melee or become ungrappled.

ENEMY AMMO/FIRE

DR	Range			
	1	2	3	4-10
0	--	--	--	--
1	R[H]	R[H]	R[H]	R[H]
2	R[R]	R[H]	R[R]	R[R]
3	R[H]	R[R]	R[H]	R[H]
4	CH[R]	R[H]	R[R]	R[R]
5	GP[H]	CH[R]	R[H]	R[H]
6	DS[H]	R[H]	CH[R]	R[R]
7	DS[R]	CH[R]	CH[R]	R[H]

DRM:
+1 if EL or CR enemy crew.
-1 if GR or PR enemy crew.
+1 if rake.
-3 if both broadsides fired last turn.
NOTES:
If initial broadside by firing ship, the shot takes place *only* if the dr (with modifiers) is greater than or equal to the range.
If ships are grappled, *all* shots are fired at hull.
If firing ship is British, all CH results are considered "R".
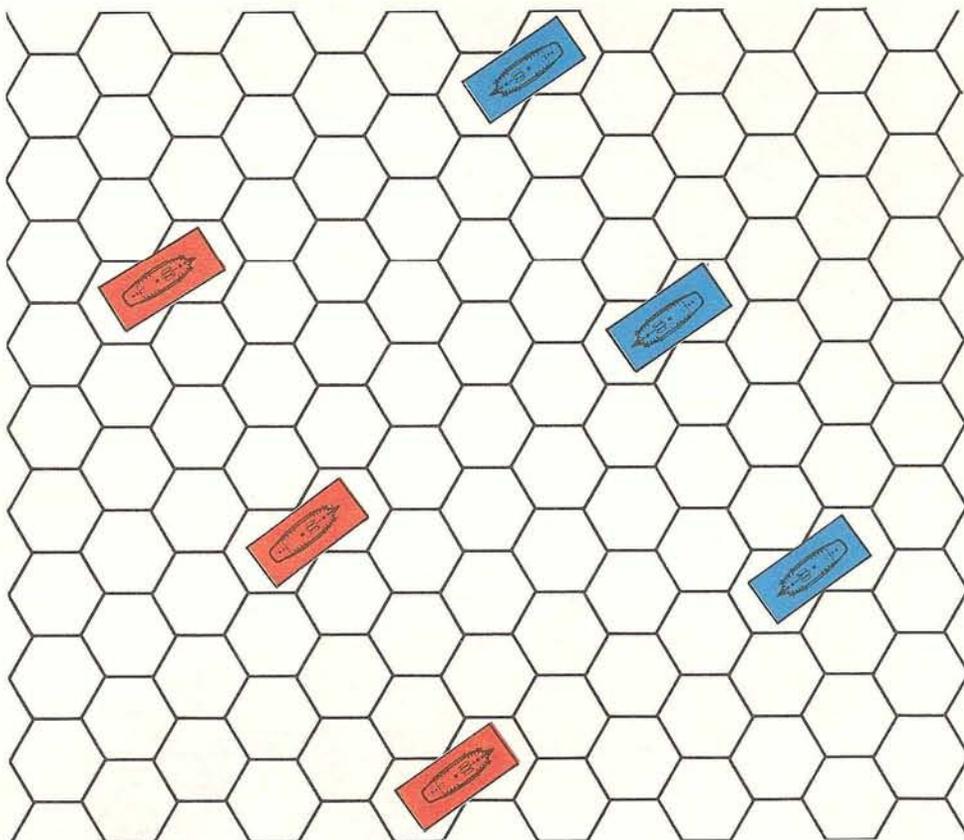
Figure 2: Initial Set-Up

MELEE

Anytime ships are grappled or fouled together, melee *must* occur. In the solitaire game, however, there is no boarding party determination involved in resolving the melee. Melee always involves all crew squares of both ships. Melee is conducted by adding up the total crew squares and multiplying them by the "crew melee strength factors", then rolling on the "Melee Resolution" table as in the published game. Both sides do this simultaneously. If, after three rounds, no conclusion is reached, melee must continue the next turn. If melee involves more than one ship on a side (such as two friendly ships grappled to one enemy ship), the melee strength points are simply added together. Remember, once melee begins, grappling to a friendly ship is not automatic. The "Grappling Status" table must be consulted.

If, during melee, one side's crew is completely eliminated, then the other side is considered to have captured the ship. If a friendly crew is victorious in melee, you may choose the number of crew squares to move onto the enemy ship to become the "prize crew". The prize crew now operates the ship under your command. If an enemy crew is victorious in melee, *half* (rounded down) of all remaining crew squares are moved onto the captured ship and becomes the prize crew. It now functions as an enemy ship.

SCENARIO SET-UP

Use the "Design Your Own Scenarios" section of the rules to create your engagements. "Buy" ships from either the Revolutionary Period or Napoleonic Period charts utilizing the point system given. If you are a veteran *WS&IM* player, you may make the battle even more challenging by allowing the enemy ship side a point value advantage in purchasing ships. Also interesting is to play the same engagement twice, changing sides.

To begin the scenario, utilize Figure 2 to set up the ships on the mapboard. This pattern can be extended or reduced depending upon the number of ships in the engagement. To determine wind direction, after set-up roll one die and place the wind direction arrow in the wind direction hex in the appropriate attitude.

[NOTE: For your initial engagement, it is suggested that you utilize one ship on a side for quick mastering of the solitaire rules.]

SOLITAIRE VARIANT

To recreate even more realistic battle conditions, you may allow the solitaire system to control *all* ships (with the lone exception of the one you command). This change has great impact by not allowing you an omnipresence in ship deployment and coordination of movement. Historically, limited communication was possible between ships at close distance; so, whenever friendly ships are within a range of six hexes (and not "screened") you may attempt to communicate with one friendly ship per turn. Communication is established by the roll of one die. If the die roll is ≥ the distance to the friendly ship, communication is established and you can control its movement for one Movement Phase. However, if the die roll is ≤ the distance to the friendly ship, its movement is still controlled by the solitaire game system and all rules above apply to it. Communication must be re-established at the beginning of each Movement Phase.

OPPONENTS WANTED

30-year old college student seeks opponents for ASL, TLD and many other AH wargames. Joe Cleere, 3600 Gault Avenue North, Fort Payne, AL 35967. (205) 845-5959.

Opponents wanted: two-player and multi-player games. Yours games or ours. Small group of college-age players. John Baker, 4675 South Harrison Road #95, Tucson, AZ 85730. (602) 290-9177.

PBM opponents for DD, FE, BB'81, TRC. Rated (1500 Prov) or unrated. Getting back into hobby after long absence. Bob Robles, 1155 Everett Count, Concord, CA 94518. (510) 827-9219.

The Marines have landed! A GUNG HO ASL player seeks new opponents. Are there any ASLers nearby? Robert Orf, 1166 East Alexander Avenue, San Bernadino, CA 92404. 883-4898.

Would like opponent and/or gamemaster for PBM: FT, Pacific War, VITP, PL, PB, TLD, 5th or 7th Fleet. AREA 1500. Michael S. Fleming, 555 John Muir Drive #B621, San Francisco, CA 94132. (415) 333-0502.

AIR FORCE Campaign Game "Battle of Britain". Fly for the Luftwaffe or RAF. Only players interested in long-term play. C. Webb, c/o Hulett Associates, 701 Santa Monica Boulevard #200, Santa Monica, CA 90265.

Adult gamer seeks FTF opponents for ASL. San Fernando Valley area. SL Okay. Competitive but easy-going. Don Burton, 16601 Osborne Street, Sepulveda, CA 91343. (818) 893-3955.

Adult gamer seeks FTF opponents for ASL, AF, FT, FL and VG Fleet series. Kim Mark, 33648 Hartford Drive, Union City, CA 94587. (510) 471-6443.

Seeking FTF opponent in Fairfield-Vacaville area for ASL, W&P, 3R, WS&IM. Willing to play almost anything. Scott Peuse, 317 Ogden Way, Vacaville, CA 95687. (707) 451-0394.

Serious gamer seeks FTF ASL tutor or TPS opponents. Or, let me know what you've got and we'll explore options! Kurt Ballard, 2285 Parliament Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920. (719) 548-1328.

Experienced but rusty adult gamer getting back into the hobby. Seeks AREA/non-AREA PBM/FTF for FE, PK, TRC, BB'81, TPS, TLD or FT. Jeff Martin, 38 Hannah Street, Bristol, CT 06010. (203) 585-6827.

Old Guard wargamer new to AREA. Will play AK, BB, TRC, FE, PGG, TPS. No beginners or SL players please. Randy Heller, 138 Osprey Drive, Groton, CT 06340. 448-0198.

Non-rated PBM games of "ChopperBlitz" (from Wargamers Guide to PB). We'll play wide open, using all optional and experimental rules. NYSE divide by 6 for die roll. Ron D'Oria, 140 NorthEast 58th Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334.

FTF, PBM; it matters not. Your army will be broken, your country plundered. WSIM, 3R or any other. John Moulton, 12262 South-West 114 Avenue, Miami, FL 33186. (305) 233-5714.

Wanted: Adult PBM, rated or unrated, for RF, 3R, Pacific War. Have playable postal systems. Dave McFarland, 2247 Quail Ridge South, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418.

The ASL Schwerpunkt is advancing in Tampa. ASL players of all abilities are invited for lots of killing and fun. Evean Sherry, 503 Manatee Drive, Ruskin, FL 33570. (813) 645-6264.

MAGIC REALM PBM! Have 5 players - want more! Never too late to join. Beginners welcome also. C. Young, 13748 Hooli Circle, Pearl City, HI 96782.

Any gamers going to UOI this fall? Looking for wargaming roommate. Any gamers/game clubs at UOI? I own lots of games. Jeff Tabian, 439 East 168th Street, South Holland, IL 60473. (708) 596-1255.

Opponent wanted, very understanding. I will play anyone in MD, WSIM and EIS. Please respond promptly. Kevin Sheetz, 58371 C.R. 115, Goshen, IN 46526.

Have games; will travel! FTF/PBM ASL, FP, BB'81, GE'77, WS&IM, Vietnam, NB, many more. Reasonable travel distances not a problem for me. Paul C. Worthington, 83 Maple Court, Hebron, IN 46341. (219) 996-5789.

Novice gamer in Kokomo area seeks FTF opponents in AK, MD, TRC, SL, VITP, W&P, WAT. Willing to learn others. Brian Gifford, 738 South Washington, Kokomo, IN 46901. (317) 452-4955.

FTF in or near Lafayette, Indiana. Will play most historical games. Carl Schwamberger, 1212 North 18th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904. (317) 742-7995.

Wanted: PBM PL, PB, 3R, W&P; AREA or non-AREA. Michael Patterson, 9833 Overbrook Court, Leawood, KS 66206.

I would like to PBM in a multi-player game of 3R run by a GM/referee. Leave message. Ernest Bartis, 71 Longwood Drive, Portland, ME 04102. (207) 772-1462.

13-year-old gamer seeks ROR player(s). Novice to PBM - need help. Solitaire driving me nuts! Send salvation to Gabriel Cookson, 12 High Street, South Berwick, ME 03908. (207) 384-5758.

Aberdeen area wargamers seek new opponents. Meet every Sunday. EIA, CM, CIV, MACH, EIS, KR, BRIT, MOV, ASL, UF, TPS. Kurt Schlegel, 708 Clayton Street, Aberdeen, MD 21001. (410) 272-3248.

Taking all comers for rated PBM: FE and TRC. Will consider AAOC with system. Still looking to GM/participate in multiplayer 3R PBM. All letters answered. David Insley, 101 Rambler Road, Cambridge, MD 21613. (410) 228-4298.

Looking to have KM tournament in DC metro area. All welcome. Call/write for details. Kirk Harris, 1639-G Carriage House Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20904. (301) 622-2618.

Pbm opponents wanted for BL, PB, BB'65, many others. AREA 1600 verified. Would like to try/learn SON and EIA. Douglas Ilioff, 1087 Buckhorn Road, Sykesville, MD 21784.

Gamer with eclectic tastes seeks same for FTF. Some favorites are ASL, DIP, NAP, TT, UF; but will try anything. Seth Owen, 62 Howland Road, Fairhaven, MA 02719. (508) 999-6118.

Seeking PBM or FTF BB'91, PL, VITP, MD, others. AREA/non-AREA. Any clubs in southern MA? Michael Powell, 1054 County Street, Somerset, MA 02726. (506) 674-3340.

Looking for FTF opponents for BRIT, 3R, TRC, STAL, KREM, DIP, HW, VITP, 1776 from eastern and central Massachusetts. David Gage, 8 Massachusetts Avenue, Worcester, MA 01609. (508) 752-2077.

Adult PBM (AREA : 1500 Prov.) for AZ, TRC, BL. Non-AREA play in GOA, GE'77, BB, RF. Quick, friendly, competent player seeks same. Jeff Scholz, 1908 Menominee SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. (616) 245-8316.

Seek PBM or FTF opponents for GE'88, BR, DEV, PB, PL, MD, RW, TRC, VITP, W&P. Barry Shoults, 3961 South Shore Drive, Lapeen, MI 48446. (313) 664-0739.

St. Louis area FTF players wanted for 1830, CIV, CONQ, DIP and RF. Edward Kazzimir, 629 West Canterbury, Apt. B, University City, MO 63132. (314) 569-5967.

PBM: AK, STAL, PN, PL. Reliable 30-year old seeks friendly, reliable, unrated competition. Jeff Wise, 4711 North 118th Street, Omaha, NE 68164. (402) 498-3525.

Adult gamer seeks PBM for PB, PL, MD, SL, TRC, FE; rated or non-rated. Any PBM systems for ASL? John A. Trosky, 247 Woodlawn Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07205. (201) 433-4784.

Queens resident looking for NYC area opponents for serious, FTF FL, AF, UF, WSIM, RW and other games. Adults, please. David Angus, 98-17 H.H. Expwy. #8-C, Corona, NY 11368. (718) 271-4428.

Local opponents wanted in Albany area for MD, MBT, RB, DUNE, CIV, UF and more. Michael Charbonneau, 224 Shirlwood Drive, Rotterdam, NY 12306. (518) 356-5813.

Experienced gamer relocated to Buffalo area. Prefer FTF ASL, 3R, others. Will also PBM. Will travel reasonable distance. Kevin Koenig, 255 Palmdale Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221. (716) 631-8615.

Adult player needs DEVIL's DEN opponent. Learn best while under fire. Need PBM system. Willie Voll, 250 Underhill Avenue #31, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. (914) 245-4636.

Annyone play UP FRONT in the RTP area? Looking for FTF AREA-rated games, weekends or week nights. Jeff Paull, 404 Trappers Run, Cary, NC 27513. (919) 469-5045.

Average gamer wants FTF opponents in SE North Carolina. Play for fun and experience: FT, KM, CASS, ASL, TRC, BB'81. Lee Massey, South Raleigh Road #2B, Wallace, NC 28466. (919) 285-6152.

East-sider seeks same for FTF play of ASL, CAE, WS&IM, MD, others. Peter A. Shelling, 2891 East 111, Cleveland, OH 44104. (216) 229-0438.

Beginning adult gamer in north central Ohio area willing to take his lumps seeks FTF opponents for BB, SOA, CASS, STAL. John Simatacolas, 25 Cedargate Court, Galion, OH 44833. (419) 462-5883.

Beginning adult wargamer seeks FTF or PBM opponents in WAT, WS&IM, DEV, BB'81, BR. Michael O'Connor, 19901 Laurel Avenue, Rocky River, OH 44116. (216) 356-1539.

12 ASLers now in OKC/Tulsa metro! More in OK for friendly fun and future State Championship! Novices and old SL players welcome! Call or write John Farris, P.O. Box 547, Norman, OK 73070. (405) 799-8691.

UF, TPS, FT, NAP, GWE, BB '91, RF, HW, ASL, DEV, VITP, WS&IM. Anthony Toglia, 2404 Hirst Terace, Apt. 5, Havertown, PA 19083. (215) 853-2671.

Seeking ASLers in King of Prussia area. Experienced adult gamer, will teach all, including juniors. Other AH titles too. Andy Hershey, 361 Hilltop Drive, Apt. 335, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

Serious adult novice seeks FTF experienced or novice player to help play through SL scenarios. Also have PL. Ted Femeza, 482

Laurel Hill Road, Cranston, RI 02920. (401) 434-9870.

PBM for AK, FR'40 and TRC. Vance Hughes, 7302 Noah Reid Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421.

FTF opponents wanted in Knxoville and Morristown area. Rated and non-rated play for ASL system. Adults 19+ only. Tim Deane, 2110 Carolyn Drive, Jefferson City, TN 37760. 475-9286.

I'm looking for teacher/opponent for FL in Memphis area. Also play RW, Statis-Pro Baseball. Gregory K. Smith, 6641 Cedarbrook Lane #1, Memphis, TN 38134. (901) 383-9759.

The "Sports Page", zine devoted to the play of AH sports games, needs readers, writers. Contains variants and replays. David Baumbardner, 3621 Wayland, Fort Worth, TX 76133. (817) 294-5717.

Forth Worth group meets weekly to play: RB, ACQ, CIV, KREM, DIP. Chuck Foster, 6108 Waco Way, Forth Worth, TX 76133. (817) 292-6861.

Adult gamer seeks FTF opponents for ASL. Have most modules and boards. Leave message. David Goodrich, 14825 Omicron Drive #204, San Antonio, TX 78245. (512) 677-0052.

Mountain State ASL fan needs FTF opponents. (R.Bamette of Romney, are you listening?) I consider myself a good gamer who needs a challenge. Rick Haines, P.O. Box 384, Augusta, WV 26704. (304) 496-9391.

Wanted: opponents for ASL RB CG3 within one hour of Madison (including Milwaukee and Rockford IL). Will travel. Let's get started. Rich Summers, 2207 Woodview Court #2, Madison, WI 53713. (608) 258-8262.

AREA 1500 player looking for rated/non-rated PBM games of SOA, 3R, PB. Will also play FTF games locally. Steve Cochran, 5452 West Green Tree Road, Milwaukee, WI 53223. 358-0949.

Adult FTF opponent wanted for AH and VG games. Brian Clemens, Site J2, C5, RR #2, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K2. 722-2555.

Boardgames veteran, miniatures novice. Looking for FTF play in DASL/ASL and other WWII boardgames. Blair Bellamy, 105 Duckworth Street, Apt. #1, Barrie, ONT L4M 3V9. 737-0783.

PBM for DD, AK, STAL, BL, TLD. Must be willing to play both sides. AHIKS or AREA matches OK. Paul Martin, 1914-1971 St. Laurent Boulevard, Ottawa, ONT K1G 3P8. (613) 739-7053.

Windsor-Detroit area gamer would like opponents for FT, 3R, FP, 1776. David Micola, 2957 Meadowbrook Lane, Windsor, ONT N8T 3C4. 974-1822.

Average Brazilian player needs opponents. CIV, DIP, GOA, MOV, ROR, 3R; rated or not (my AREA, 1500 Provisional). All letters answered. Luiz Claudio Duarte, SHIS-QI19, Con Junto 7, Casa 35, Brasilia, DF, 71655, BRASIL. Phone: 366-3432.

Reliable adult gamer in Great Britain wants opponents for 3R, WS&IM, and DIP. All letters answered. Jonathan Smith, 90 Alderney Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 4EY, GREAT BRITAIN. Phone: 071-2336810.

US Army officer in southern Germany (Bad Kissingen) seeks ASL opponents. I have all modules. Lt. Dale Martin, C Co 2/15 Inf Unit 25804, Box 381, APO AE, 09033. Phone: 0971-65634.

Adult gamer seeks FTF players in Switzerland. Happy to travel. Speak French and German; play all games: ASL, 3R, TLD, W&P. Alex McCusker, Rue du Clar de Bulle 5, 501, Lausanne, CH-1004, SWITZERLAND. Phone: (021) 23-89-85.

THE QUESTION BOX

BLACKBEARD

2.6 & 5.2 Is there a limit to the number of pirate ship types available, or can we make our own to augment those supplied with the game?
A. The limit is intentional.

4.22 After Voluntary Retirement, does a Pirate have to travel safely to his Safe Haven to collect his stash?
A. No.

6.21 Is it permissable to activate a Pirate directly atop a Merchant so as to be able to attack the Merchant in a subsequent turn?
A. Yes - an activation which does not occur atop a Merchant is a rarity, although often the Merchants will "move" away before the new Pirate can attack - much to the glee of his opponents.

6.34 Does a newly-drawn Warship get to move on the turn it is drawn? Can a player move more than one Warship if they are already present? Does a newly-drawn warship get a chance to intercept if in the same hex as a Pirate?
A. No. Yes. Yes.

6.35 & 17G If there is a tie for "Most Notorious Pirate" (such as for Event 17G), does the drawing player choose between the tied Pirates?
A. Yes.

8.51 Can a Pirate choose to be intercepted by a weak KC/Warship to gain notoriety and forego the interception die roll?
A. No.

8.52 Does the statement "otherwise ignored" imply that, if there is an automatic intercept there will be no random event draw?
A. Yes, however, the effects of blockades (14.3), Scurvy (17C) and Transit Box (8.6) apply normally.

8.6 Is a ship required to stop on the lines between Transit Boxes, so it takes twice as many full moves as Transit Boxes to go from one ocean to another?
A. No.

8.7 Can a ship enter a Port and leave it in the same turn?
A. No. A KC/Warship must anchor to Oust a Pirate and, in so doing, ends its turn.

8.7 Do Warships pay a Movement Point to enter a Port of their own nationality?
A. Yes. Anchored Warships must be flipped to leave their Nationality side face-up.

9.3 Can a Pirate search after moving a number of hexes equal to his full movement allowance, even if he ends his turn in the same hex with a Merchant?
A. Yes. Note that a Pirate can't search on the turn that he leaves Port because it costs one MF to hoist anchor.

9.6 Would a Pirate who is damaged while attempting to take a Merchant lose an additional space on the Crew Unrest Track if he doesn't attack it again on the next turn?
A. No. The Crew Unrest penalty applies only to the turn of inspection.

9.62 Does a failed attack on a Merchant create an Attack History versus that Prize's nationality?
A. No.

9.8 Is a Pirate with a schooner engaged in D&R still able to attempt Evasion and, if so, does he subtract 2 from his Evasion die roll?
A. Yes, yes.

9.8 May D&R be declared after a successful raid or sack of a Port?
A. No.

9.8 Does D&R affect a pirate's Duel ratings?
A. No.

9.81 If a pirate enters a port with an opposing pirate already under D&R, is a duel required?
A. Yes. Duelling is required of every Pirate in the same location until the D&R marker is removed or that Pirate has been in a duel. If there is no other Pirate in that location, no duel occurs.

10.21 & 10.4 Can a pirate buy and retain more than one safe haven?
A. Yes.

REPUBLIC OF ROME $35.00
Game of Political Intrigue in the Ancient World, 264-43 BC

A significant reader response this time indicates that *REPUBLIC OF ROME* is a sound design effort (an Overall Rating of 3.19), and a wonderful game for those who enjoy the multi-player venue. Winner of the "ORIGINS Award for Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame" in 1991, this seems to be one of those rare cases when critics and players agree that a game is worthy of a few hours (between two and seven) of one's hobby time.

Although the components individually are not perceived as outstanding, the rating for "Components" in toto is above the average of the titles listed on the RBG. But the game's real strengths obviously lie in its unique game system, as reflected by the relatively high values for "Excitement Level" and "Play Balance". *ROR* also scored well for "Authenticity", not unexpected given that the designer is a professor of ancient history.

This is not to say that the game is without blemish. As reflected by values in several of the categories, many readers made mention of perceived failings in the pre-

sentation and format of the rules. Despite this, however, all also noted that it had become one of their favorite social games.

Overall Value: 3.19
Components: 2.84
Map: 3.38
Counters: 3.57
Rulebook: 3.81
Complexity: 6.42
Completeness of Rules: 3.43
Playability: 3.65
Excitement Level: 3.34
Play Balance: 2.53
Authenticity: 3.23
Game Length (average): 27.94
    Shortest: 3 hrs., 19 mins.
    Longest: 7 hrs., 1 min.
Year: 1990
Type: MP
Sample Base: 72

READERS BUYER'S GUIDE

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated Overall Value. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where each title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that ratings take the form of a numerical value ranging from 1 to 9 (with "1" equalling "excellent" and "9" equalling "terrible"). However, the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours). A "+" following the Year of release indicates that the game is continued or complemented by additional modules in successive years (for instance, the ratings for SL reflect the entire system - original game plus add-on modules). Game Type is broken down into three broad categories: SO = Solitaire; MP = Multi-Player; 2P = Two Player. Finally, it should be noted that a minimum requirement of 50 responses (see the Sample Base) was judged necessary for a valid representation; additional titles that garner such will be added to the RBG in the future.

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness	Playability	Authenticity	Game Length	Year	Type	Sample Base
ADVANCED SL	1.80	1.77	9.25	2.11	3.44	2.04	33.02	'85+	2P	172
1830	1.85	2.00	3.88	2.72	2.04	3.20	24.52	'86	MP	50
CIVILIZATION	1.97	2.60	3.20	2.03	1.72	4.09	32.08	'82	MP	152
FLATTOP	2.00	2.47	3.61	3.12	3.56	1.76	43.96	'81	2P	95
EIA	2.08	2.45	8.08	2.94	3.84	2.11	156.86	'86	MP	71
TP STALINGRAD	2.10	2.14	3.42	3.56	2.23	2.94	30.00	'89	2P	61
UP FRONT	2.11	2.24	4.36	2.83	2.98	3.56	10.16	'83+	2P	126
RUSSIAN FRONT	2.12	2.33	5.32	2.88	2.67	2.40	40.16	'85	2P	113
KREMLIN	2.28	2.51	3.64	3.33	1.81	5.24	11.94	'88	MP	63
BRITANNIA	2.31	3.08	2.93	2.89	2.07	3.52	23.72	'87	MP	77
TAC AIR	2.38	2.39	5.02	2.91	2.77	2.72	33.65	'88	2P	88
GETTYSBURG	2.42	2.61	1.79	3.32	1.64	4.43	9.11	'88	2P	66
MOV	2.50	2.42	3.38	2.46	2.24	3.53	15.42	'88	MP	79
LONGEST DAY	2.53	2.65	6.35	3.52	4.29	2.88	189.10	'80	2P	62
VITP	2.55	3.12	2.56	3.32	1.91	5.16	21.09	'77	2P	183
TRC	2.60	3.35	3.85	3.10	2.28	4.22	35.44	'76	2P	220
ENEMY IN SIGHT	2.61	2.88	2.30	2.63	1.87	5.76	7.73	'88	MP	68
7th Fleet	2.62	2.77	6.47	2.96	3.04	3.16	38.01	'87	2P	50
CASSINO	2.68	2.71	4.43	2.75	2.32	2.63	23.67	'88	2P	52
DIPLOMACY	2.71	3.36	3.00	2.69	2.92	5.16	33.26	'76	MP	169
ST. NAZAIRE	2.72	2.56	4.01	3.12	2.80	2.52	18.92	'87	SO	98
FIREPOWER	2.76	3.03	6.42	3.63	3.76	2.88	15.48	'85	2P	94
FLIGHT LEADER	2.79	2.20	4.62	3.00	2.77	3.20	10.18	'86	2P	76
MBT	2.80	2.68	5.37	3.16	3.36	2.67	15.08	'89	2P	51
DEVIL'S DEN	2.81	2.85	5.04	2.99	3.52	2.61	24.58	'85	2P	60
B-17	2.83	2.87	2.93	2.83	2.00	3.33	8.82	'83	SO	192
SQUAD LEADER	2.84	2.11	8.05	3.68	4.27	3.00	21.37	'77+	2P	231
2nd Fleet	2.89	3.35	5.27	3.44	3.28	3.55	32.23	'86	2P	55
WS&IM	2.92	3.24	5.64	3.00	3.04	2.60	20.07	'75	2P	172
THIRD REICH	2.95	3.56	8.83	3.70	4.00	3.51	45.83	'81	MP	227
PANZER LEADER	3.12	2.79	5.63	3.72	3.32	3.82	19.47	'74	2P	210
WAR & PEACE	3.13	3.44	4.55	3.68	2.95	3.15	36.80	'80	2P	138
TITAN	3.16	2.68	3.48	2.66	2.47	4.48	29.08	'82	MP	65
REP OF ROME	3.19	2.84	6.42	3.43	3.65	3.23	29.94	'90	MP	72
Civil War	3.20	3.69	6.95	3.92	4.17	3.58	46.96	'83	2P	112
MAGIC REALM	3.29	2.44	8.41	4.08	4.20	3.79	20.76	'79	MP	75
NAVAL WAR	3.35	4.20	1.12	3.40	1.60	6.72	6.00	'83	MP	81
KINGMAKER	3.39	3.21	5.65	3.48	3.49	4.63	27.98	'76	MP	141
PG GUDERIAN	3.40	3.24	5.44	3.20	3.28	3.32	22.87	'84	2P	90
PATTON'S BEST	3.43	3.22	4.16	4.23	3.25	3.87	14.13	'87	SO	109
GLADIATOR	3.44	3.36	3.89	3.32	2.56	3.20	8.69	'81	2P	56
CM	3.47	3.60	3.28	3.39	2.64	3.36	11.70	'80	2P	91
6th Fleet	3.48	3.04	5.64	3.73	3.88	3.64	47.67	'85	2P	59
AIR FORCE	3.48	4.27	5.36	3.64	3.61	3.12	12.90	'80+	2P	76
PANZERBLITZ	3.56	3.55	4.92	4.16	3.26	4.50	18.25	'70	2P	215
Pacific War	3.64	3.57	7.98	4.32	5.28	3.19	120.63	'86	2P	66
Pax Britannica	3.64	3.60	4.85	3.91	4.25	4.61	52.14	'85	MP	50
MIDWAY	3.65	4.48	2.80	3.16	2.43	4.52	21.10	'64	2P	130
Ambush	3.68	4.08	4.94	4.40	3.91	4.61	19.69	'83+	SO	121
AFRIKA KORPS	3.77	4.43	2.20	2.84	1.88	5.40	21.44	'64	2P	167
HITLER'S WAR	3.80	3.89	4.20	4.25	3.44	4.68	34.79	'84	2P	78
WIZARD'S QUEST	3.82	3.07	2.11	2.94	2.15	4.92	20.92	'79	MP	85
WAR AT SEA	4.04	3.94	1.40	3.40	1.87	6.72	12.80	'76	2P	155
BLITZKRIEG	4.19	4.36	5.84	3.87	3.60	5.57	33.76	'65	2P	136
1776	4.25	3.64	5.28	3.88	3.24	4.40	26.30	'74	2P	154
D-DAY	4.32	4.73	3.56	3.45	2.91	5.08	27.16	'77	2P	125
RICHTHOFEN'S	4.33	3.78	3.99	3.60	3.24	4.87	8.23	'83	2P	53
WATERLOO	4.44	4.48	2.24	3.08	2.21	5.55	17.99	'62	2P	104

As expected, given our concentration on multi-player games (not to everybody's taste) meant that Vol. 27, No. 4 of The *GENERAL* rated a tad lower than other recent issues (an Overall Rating of 3.83). On the other hand, we received a number of very complimentary letters concerning our in-depth coverage of *RoR, EIA, CIV* and *DIP*. Indeed, the highest-rated articles this time were the lengthy "Campaigning in Arms" and "Leviathan". Based on a random sampling of 200 responses (with three points for a first-place listing, two for a second and one for a third), the collective readership ranked the articles of 27-4 as follows:

CAMPAIGNING IN ARMS	250
LEVIATHAN	216
NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE	147
ADVANCED CIVILIZATION	137
PRINCEPS	126
SERIES REPLAY	121
AH PHILOSOPHY	70
THE AUGUST COUP	68
AREA NEWS	24

It seems only fitting that we make mention of Richard Berg's latest venture, *Berg's Review of Games*. This "BiMonthly Newletter of Independent Opinion" is offered by Mr. Berg (P.O. Box 567, White Plains, NY 10602) for $19 for six issues, $5 per single issue. Always witty, and never without a touch of controversy, *BROG* usually carries a half-dozen or so reviews of wargames newly released. And offers Mr. Berg's occasionally outrageous views on our hobby and its lesser insanities - such as his annual "Little Mac" awards for dubious achievement in the gaming industry. Lest the reader think this a one-man show, however, it should be noted that Mr. Berg has recruited some of the most insightful, and painfully honest, of wargamers to pen the reviews found in *BROG*. For more information, feel free to contact Mr. Berg (at the address above, or by phone: 914-723-0506).

Equally timely, given our coverage of *BULGE '91* last issue, a copy of the *Bulge Bugle* arrived in our offices recently. This

Infiltrator's Report

28-page quarterly is the official publication of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Now in its tenth year, each issue offers personal reminiscences and historical studies of the American involvement in the campaign, along with news of the "VBOB" organization. Of particular interest is the regular feature, "Bulge Incidents", offering unedited and unpublished accounts of experiences by members of the VBOB during the campaign. For more information on the *Bulge Bugle* or the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, contact that organization (at P.O. Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210).

I (Rex A. Martin) have been invited by the committee for DipCon XXV (3-6 July) to be their guest at this year's event. There I will pass along news of Avalon Hill's plans for a new "Deluxe" edition of the classic multi-player game (replete with wooden pieces), for a new 64-page "Gamer's Guide", and for the AvalonCon competition in *DIPLOMACY*.

Contest 157, our attempt at a "logic" puzzle, wasn't very challenging, it seems. We had several hundred correct responses within a couple of weeks. So we were forced to fall back upon the tried-and-true random drawing to determine ten winners. They are: Michael Arrighi, Chapel Hill, NC; Robert Banozic, Chicago, IL; Friedrich Helfferich, State College, PA; Michael Knautz, Brookfield, WI; Eric Magnuson, Ruston, LA; Robert Nansteel II, Valley Park, MO; Tony Perkins, Layton, UT; Pete Thompson, Lexington, KY; Michael Tsuk, Arlington, MA; and Mark Van Loon, St. Clair Shores, MI.

"Crossed Words", Contest 158, was certainly unique in the long line of our offerings. Hopefully, despite the obscurity (or plain cussedness) of some of the clues, you managed to complete the grid. For those who may have stumbled, the following is a complete list of the answers:

ACROSS:	DOWN:
A1: MARTIN	B1: AMBUSH
K1: PBY	D1: TRIREME
T1: DOUGLAS	K1: PM
G2: DELIM	O1: CUT
N2: JUTLAND	Q1: GLADIATOR
S3: VA	T1: DDAY
W3: CAG	V1: UF
D4: RULES	Z1: SL
Q4: DDAY	G2: DIE
X5: HEX	S2: NVA
F6: WARGAME	Y3: GREENWOOD
P6: WATERLOO	F4: LAWYER
C7: ME	H4: STRATEGY
N7: UNIT	L4: VIETNAM
P8: ROF	N4: ACQUIRE
T8: AREA	J5: LAND
F9: REED	V5: KOREANWAR
K9: CARRIER	P6: WIRE
V9: AMMO	C7: MIDWAY
K10: AM	W8: AM
B11: CAN	K9: CAESAR
H11: YORE	D11: NATO
P11: MYSTICWOOD	R11: SYRIA
C12: YANKS	X11: OIL
I13: FLATTOP	F12: KREMLIN
R13: ROGER	N12: OOB
X13: LEE	Z12: JET
C14: MOVEOUT	I13: FT
N14: BOX	O13: POL
R15: ALESIA	T13: GREEKFIRE
C16: STALINGRAD	C16: SUBMARINE
N17: AFRIKAKORPS	K16: ACE
A18: TUBE	A17: ETO
L19: PANZERBLITZ	Y18: NUKE
X19: GUN	H19: UNION
C20: ALEXANDER	M19: ANZIO
M21: ZOCCHI	O19: ZOC
V21: RACES	V19: ZERO
B22: RICHTHOFEN	P21: CRETE
F23: RUN	Z21: SAIL
K23: IRONMEN	F22: TRACK
Y23: MI	G22: HUN
A24: SHERMAN	K22: NIT
J24: ETA	L23: RACE
O24: IT	O23: MIG
U24: USA	U23: BULB
O25: GENERAL	A24: SAM
C26: AMOK	D24: RAM
H26: ARNHEM	J24: EON
U26: BULGE	R24: TET
	W24: AIL

Next

Vol. 28, No. 2

Vol. 28, No. 3

It's called Earth!

Adventure with No Name

It's an unimportant barbaric planet known throughout the universe as a center for beer production! But Earth has just changed its barley output to producing only light beer. What dastardly, inhuman mind could conceive such a plot?

This is the great challenge facing the TALES FROM THE FLOATING VAGABOND patrons in ADVENTURE WITH NO NAME.

The future of all bar kind is up to the players (patrons) . . . they alone have the power to save The Floating Vagabond and the universe as a whole from the horrors of beer that not only tastes great but is less filling. Given the creative and imaginative dimensions of players in this, the third Floating Vagabond adventure supplement, players will first be required to go back in time to Classical Greece and sink the legendary island of Atlantis, then chase the Vikings away from North America, ensure the secrecy of Jack the Ripper in Victorian England, and erase 18 minutes of incriminating dialogue from the private tapes of Richard Nixon. Here one has the makings of an adventure better left anonymous.
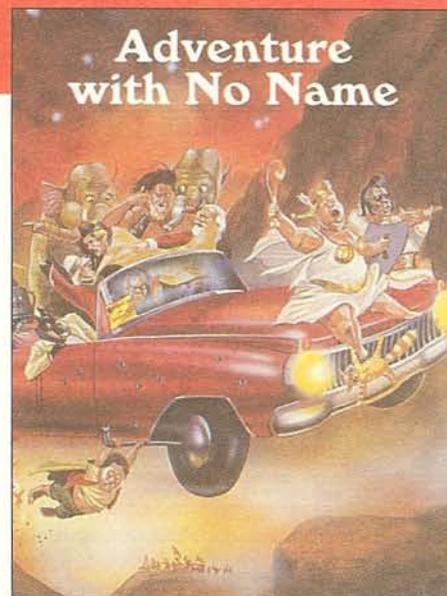
NO.	TITLE	PLAYERS	AGES	SUGGESTED RETAIL
9003	ADVENTURE WITH NO NAME	Any Number	10 & Up	$13.95

Ownership of Tales From The Floating Vagabond is required for play of Adventure With No Name.

#9000 TALES FROM THE FLOATING VAGABOND . . . $13.95
#9001 BAR WARS . . . $13.95
#9002 THE REICH STUFF . . . $13.95
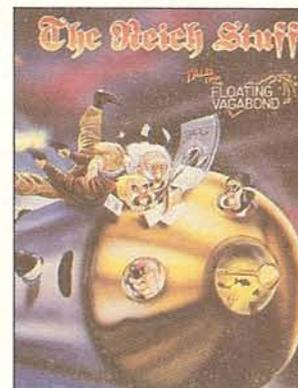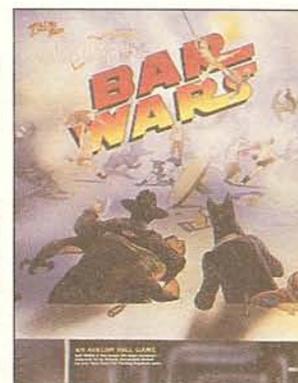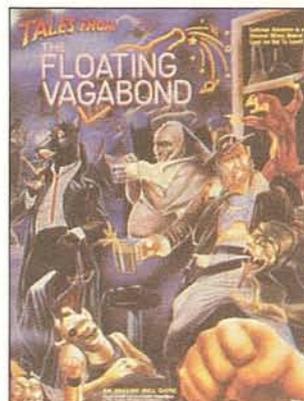
New 5-Scenario Gloranthan Campaign Supplement for RuneQuest!
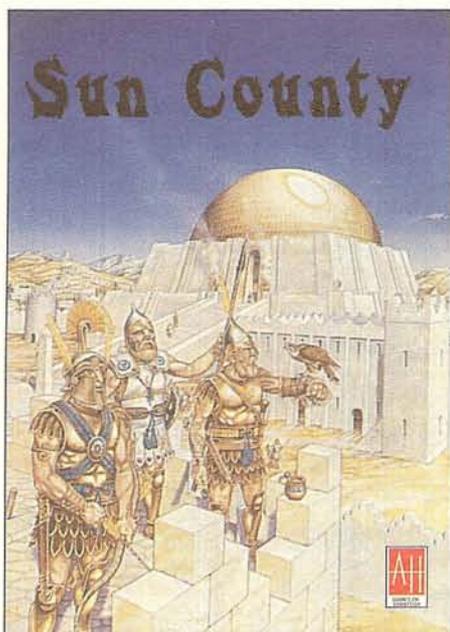
Includes extensive historical notes on the region and its culture, profiles of important persons, comprehensive encounters tables and entries, and sundry other useful and ornamental details of interest to the inveterate Gloranthan scholar.

Also included are personal notes and observations of Jaxarte Whyded, Commissioner of the Imperial Census, on his travels throughout this hard, dry land inhabited by the Children of the Sun, a hard, fierce, and proud people.

Only a fool seeks his fortune in the Land of the Sun. But devotees of RuneQuest won't be able to resist the challenge.
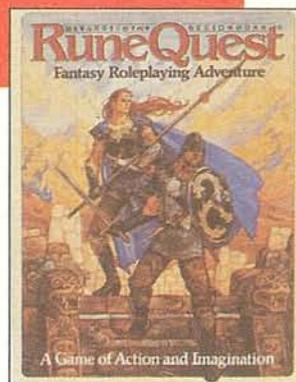
NO.	TITLE	PLAYERS	AGES	SUGGESTED RETAIL
8590	SUN COUNTY	Any Number	12 & Up	$18.95

Ownership of RuneQuest is required for play of Sun County.
#857 RUNEQUEST DeLuxe . . . $29.95

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are always in vogue—be the subject books, television, shows, movies or even games. The public seems never to tire of seeing how its favorite way of spending their leisure time stacks up against the competition. So, to cater further to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity), this is The *GENERAL*'s version of the gamer's top ten. From the responses to this form the editors produce the regular column "So That's What You've Been Playing" found elsewhere in this issue.

We aren't asking you to subjectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or fewer) games which you've spent the most time playing since you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With the collation of these responses, we can generate a consensus list of what's being played by our readership. This list can serve both as a guide for us (for coverage in these pages) and others (convention organizers spring instantly to mind). The degree of correlation between this listing, the Best Sellers Lists, and the RBG should prove extremely interesting.

Feel free to list any game of any sort regardless of manufacturer. There will be, of course, a built-in bias to the survey since the readers all play Avalon Hill games to some extent; but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other periodicals with special-interest based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's own evaluation.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

BLACKBEARD $35.00
Avalon Hill's New Game of The Golden Age of Piracy

INSTRUCTIONS:
Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right ("1" equating to excellent; "5", average; "9", terrible). EXCEPTION: Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *HITLER'S WAR*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 24, No. 5. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity, Year of Publication and Type (2P=two player; MP=multi-player; SO=solitaire) have been provided for your information.

1.	Overall Value	_____
2.	Components	_____
2a.	Mapboard	_____
2b.	Counters	_____
2c.	Rulebook	_____
3.	Complexity	_____
3a.	Avalon Hill Complexity	5
4.	Completeness	_____
5.	Playability	_____
5a.	Excitement Level	_____
5b.	Play Balance	_____
6.	Authenticity	_____
7.	Game Length	_____
7a.	Shortest	_____
7b.	Longest	_____
8.	Year of Publication	1991
9.	Type	MP

Opponent Wanted   50¢

_____   _____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____   _____

NAME_____   PHONE_____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP ____

CONTEST #159

The last time we presented the readership with a cryptogram (see Contest #154 in the first issue of this volume year), far too many of you smart fellows solved it. What really "hurt", however, was that so many commented upon how easy it was to break the code used therein. To redeem ourselves, we offer the following challenge - another message (one of the more famous in seafaring history) in code:

ΓΚΞΟ ΔΞΟΟΒΠΙΘΚ ΥΠ ΔΡΥΘΓ ÇΒΑΥΓΥΔ ΓΩΘΘΝ

ΒΔΝΥΞΠ ΔΞΟΟΤΠΥΔΒΝΥΞΠ ΝΡΥΚΙ ΓΩΘΘΝ

ΑΡΘΚΘ ΥΕ ΚΘ͜ΘΒΝ ΑΡΘΚΘ ΥΕ ΝΒΕΨ ΓΞΚΔΘ 34 ΝΡΘ ΑΞΚΩΙ ΑΞΠΙΘΚΕ

To enter the contest, simply enter the decoded message in the space provided. The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a reasonable facsimile). Ten winning entries will receive a merchandise credit voucher from Avalon Hill. To be valid, an entry must also include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgement of the contestant. The solution to Contest #159 will appear in the next issue, and the list of clever winners in Vol. 28, No. 2 of The *GENERAL*.

Issue as a whole _____ (Rate from 1 to 10, with "1" equating excellent and "10" terrible). To be valid for consideration, your contest entry must also include the three best articles, in your view:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP ____

The 25 Best-Selling Games . . .

The economy got cold . . . but our games got hot! What irony! And these are the games that made 1991 a good year for us. Many of these are repeat best sellers. That's because most Avalon Hill/Victory games remain popular year after year due to the high repeat sales and "friends recommendation" they enjoy.
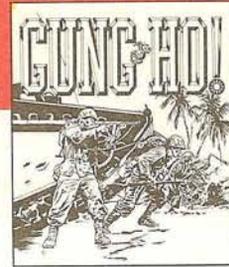
1. GUNG HO #8233 $50. The chinese are featured in this ASL module.

**2. BLACKBEARD** #887 $35. One to 4-player strategy game recreating Piracy's Golden Age.
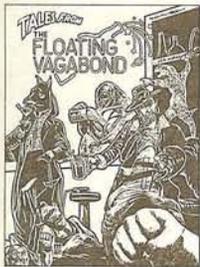
3. TALES FROM THE FLOATING VAGABOND #9000 $13.95. Role playing that mixes action and adventure in a humorous fashion.
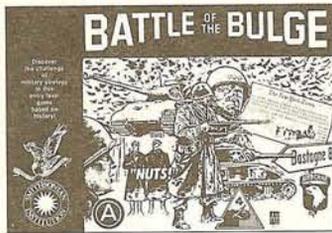
4. BATTLE OF THE BULGE #732 $21. Smithsonian American History Series game re-creating WWII's Ardennes campaign.

5. ADEL VERPFLICHTET #6415 $25. Germany's "Game of the Year" in which players acquire art by hook or crook.
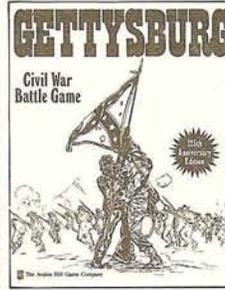
6. GETTYSBURG #731 $20. Historically-accurate entry-level battle game designed for the novice.
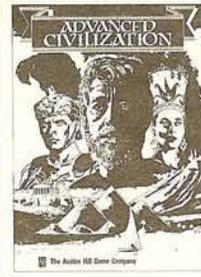
7. ADVANCED CIVILIZATION #8372 $30. An expansion kit adding diversity of cultures; ownership of Civilization required..

8. FLASHPOINT:GOLAN #30032 $40. Simulation that examines the military tinderbox: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.
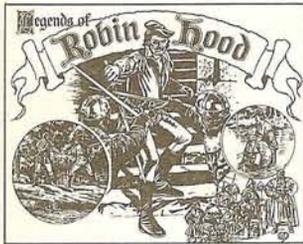
9. ROBIN HOOD #6425 $13.95. Quick-play card game with high interplayer action for 2 to 5 players.
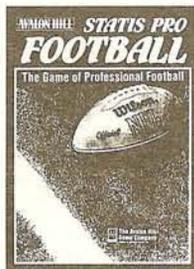
10. STATIS PRO FOOTBALL #9250 $40. A statistical re-creation of an NFL season; includes over 1300 individual player cards.
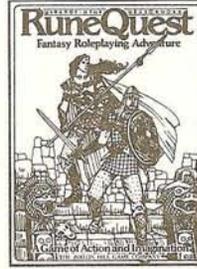
11. RUNEQUEST #857 $29.95. Time-tested role playing system with many adventures; voted "best RPG" at Games Day 5.
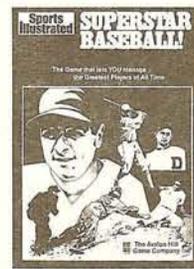
12. SUPERSTAR BASEBALL #9140 $22. Solitaire or 2-player game features player cards of 96 Hall of Famers.
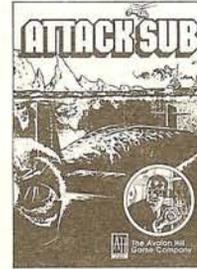
**13. ATTACK SUB** #886 $25. A 2-player card game of contemporary hi-tech undersea warfare.
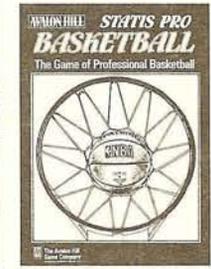
14. STATIS PRO BASKETBALL #9260 $28. Stat game including individual player cards representing NBA performers.

15. REPUBLIC OF ROME #885 $38. Diplomatic game for 3 to 5 players vying for power during the days of Caesar.

16. ASL #870 $49.95. Complete set of rules only, in a 3-ring binder; required for all ASL game modules.
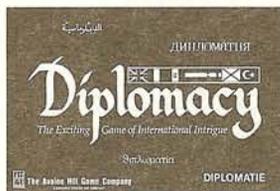
17. DIPLOMACY #819 $25. Up to 7 players negotiate for control of Europe; elected to *Games Magazine*'s Hall of Fame.
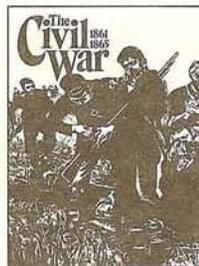
18. CIVIL WAR #30003 $25. Dynamic portrait of the immense struggle from its infancy to its end on a grand strategic level.
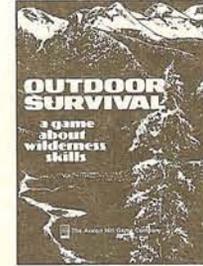
19. OUTDOOR SURVIVAL #895 $25. Five games in one, each re-creating an adventure in the wilderness.
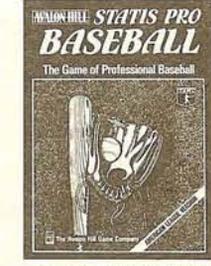
20. STATIS PRO BASEBALL #9240 $40. Every player on individual cards, offering gamers opportunity to relive entire season

21. ACQUIRE #GA140 $25. Two to 6 players attempt to build the biggest hotel chain. In *Games Magazine*'s Hall of Fame.

22. PAST LIVES #6390 $35. Up to 8 players seek to find out who they were in a previous life.
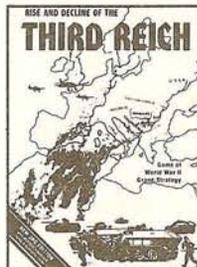
23. THIRD REICH #813 $26. Re-creation of entire European theatre in WWII; voted "best wargame of all time."
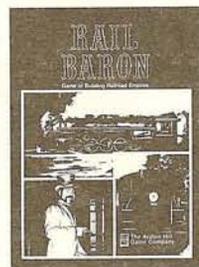
24. RAIL BARON #GA295 $22. 3 to 6 players seek to build the best rail empire during railroading's heyday.
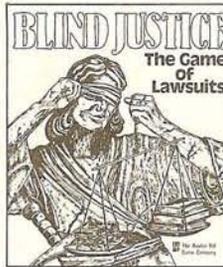
25. BLIND JUSTICE #6385 $25. Great social interaction for 2 or more players acting as plaintiff and jury in real cases.

The Avalon Hill Game Company
4517 Harford Road
Baltimore • MD
21214

Toll-Free Number:
1-800-999-3222

# THE SMITHSONIAN
American History Series
of Battle Games

An interesting and entertaining re-creation of history, D-DAY is also a highly-competitive game of chess-like strategy. Players move the playing pieces (called units) representing armor, infantry, airborne, and air formations present during the historic campaign across an authentic gameboard showing actual terrain of western Europe as it existed back in June 1944.

Game is designed to get novice gamers and historians into play quickly. There is but one sheet of rules. A lengthy battle manual also included provides a detailed illustrated account of the historic event, plus additional rules for those players wishing to play a more detailed and complex version.
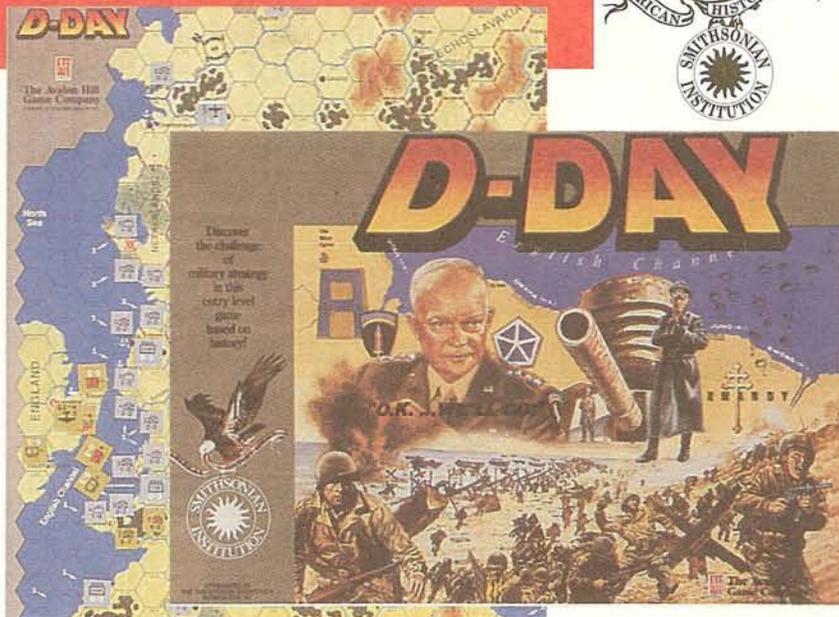
NO.	TITLE	PLAYERS	AGES	COMPLEXITY	SUGGESTED RETAIL
732	Battle of the Bulge	2	12 & Up	Easy	$21
733	D-Day	2	12 & Up	Easy	$21

The American History Series is authorized and endorsed by The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved.

The first in the Smithsonian American History Series of battle games, BATTLE OF THE BULGE is an authentic re-creation of the largest sustained land battle fought by the U.S. during World War II. No WWII action is more well-known than this Ardennes campaign made famous by General Anthony C. McAuliffe's legendary reply of "nuts" to the German surrender demand.

With but one sheet of rules, players can recreate this event without having to digest a plethora of detail.

A lengthy battle manual is also included for hard core history buffs desiring extensive background material and who revel in playing a more detailed version. BATTLE OF THE BULGE appeals to novice and aficionado alike.