



# News From Bree



The Official *Middle-earth*™ PBM Newsletter  
Issue 35, May '08

"Strange as News from Bree..."

*The Lord of the Rings* Chapter 9

The Talk at the Prancing Pony...

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## Middle-earth PBM

Middle-earth PBM is a turn-based strategic game set in the world of Middle-earth created by J.R.R. Tolkien. For more details, please take a look at our website:

[www.middleearthgames.com](http://www.middleearthgames.com)

## Featured Artist

Nathan Furman

## Using Food in Middle-earth: Four Useful Tips for Food Preparation

By Clint Oldridge

### 1: Being Fed in Middle-earth

Keeping moving armies fed is always difficult, but it's even more so when you get other friendly armies turning up at PCs you control. (Don't forget that it is your relations to them that is important, so that even if they're not friendly you will feed them).

If you have more than one army at a population centre the free food gets divided between the armies in proportion to their hunger (counting cavalry twice).

So, for example, if the following three armies are at a village:

Army A	100 Heavy Infantry
Army B	50 Heavy Cavalry & 50 Light Cavalry
Army C	500 Archers

Then they receive the following free food:

Army A	25 food
Army B	50 food
Army C	125 food

After that they consume food from their baggage train if they have any.

### 2: Another example of food use in Middle-earth.

Army A has 20,000 infantry troops and no food, Army B has 100 infantry troops and 101 food. If Army B 780s (transfers command) to Army A then Army A will move fed. Clearly you can make this more complex, but this is the simple rule to remember so that you don't need to travel with thousands of units of food when in the field.

### 3: Information Gathering

If you have a spare order at a population centre and one food, then I often use a 948 order (Transport by Caravans) from that PC to send a food to a location off map, in order to check whether the enemy has put up a camp there. If it fails then there's no PC, and it's also slightly confusing to the enemy!

### 4: Market manipulation

When the market is gutted with food it can often 'crash', reducing food stores available to low quantities. I find that around the 300,000 food on the market is sufficient to cause such a crash, so if you're able to sell additional food you can sometimes push the market to crash and then food sells at two or more next turn.

No doubt there are more uses for food, as snacks for the odd hungry Hobbit and the like, but for now the above should keep your belly nicely full.

Clint



## Games Starting Soon

The following new games are filling up, so if you wish to play, get in touch!

[Bracketed dates give the date the game started filling up.]

### 2950 2wk [Game 22]:

4 nations available. [2/11]

### 1650 ONE 2wk [Game 87]:

11 nations available. [16/4]

### 1650 2wk [Game 86]:

18 nations available. [9/04]

### 1000 2wk [Game 47]:

4 nations available [21/1]

### UW 2wk [Game 205]:

7 nations available: [17/4]

## Face to Face Games

We are able to organise Face to Face Games between teams in separate locations, and we currently have a US team looking to play a game over the weekend. So if you would be interested in playing, please get in touch.

### A Face to Face What?!

Face to Face Events are weekend-long games of Middle-earth which take place, as the name suggests, at a single location. Turns are run at regular intervals through the weekend, and teams are assigned their own private areas to plan and write orders.

A fixed cost is paid for the entire weekend instead of per turn, the pace is hectic, and it is great fun - virtually everyone who has played one of these games is dying to play another one as soon as they can. It's a great way to learn a lot about the game, to chat to fellow players, and to meet us. Sleeping space is always available, but don't expect much sleep!

# Kin-strife Sneak Preview: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

With the new module Kin-strife currently in the final stages of development, we thought that we would give you a quick glimpse at a few of the many new encounters waiting to be, well, encountered, and, in the case of those below, even recruited to join your nation.

## Goldberry

*Wife of Tom Bombadil, Goldberry is a spirit of the water, tied to the rivers and lakes even as Tom is to the earth. Hers is a beauty of joy and of life, inspiring not fear and reverence but laughter and hope.*

Coming upon a ford across a shallow river that laughed as it ran swift towards the distant ocean, [Character name] was but part way across it when, a little way downstream on the opposite bank, he espied a fair maiden. Long yellow hair rippled down her shoulders, and her dress was as green as the reeds on the river's banks. Gold was her belt, and shaped like lilies, and at her feet lay many pots of earthenware, clearly too many to easily carry. She smiled as [Character name] approached, laughing lightly as he floundered up the bank towards her. "I am Goldberry," she said, her voice as music come soft upon the breeze, touching upon his heart. "Well met."

Offer to AID her in carrying her pots.

Seek to ENLIST Goldberry

ATTACK her.

SAY \_\_\_\_\_ (one word).

ASK about the river.

STEAL some of the pots.

FLEE.

## Ji Indur Dawndearth Amaav III

*The Fourth of the Nazgul, Ji Indur was King of the southern lands of Mumakan, home to the legendary Mumakil, or Oliphants. And, on his rebirth in the year 1050 of the Third Age, he set to retaking his throne, so that the time of the Kin-strife sees him as King Ji Amaav III in the south, even as, among the Nazgul, he is known as Dawndearth, Sauron's knife in the darkness.*

The heat of the mid-day sun having forced him to seek shade, the heat too oppressive to even think of continuing onwards, [Character name] rested awhile beneath a stand of wide-leaved trees. Made drowsy by the sun's warmth, he dwelt between sleep and waking, imagination conjuring images from the heat haze that lay upon the land. So that it seemed as if in a dream that a figure came towards him, dressed in kingly array, silken robes richly colored. In its left

hand it carried a purse of coin, and in its right a wickedly curved knife, and these it placed on the ground before [Character name]. "The choice of King and peasant, wise man and fool," the figure spoke, though even so, [Character name] knew not for certain if it was real or a dream's phantom, for it seemed the voice came as much in his mind as spoken aloud. "The choice of Ji Indur. And now, your choice."

Take the purse of GOLD.

Take the KNIFE.

Offer Ji Indur TEN thousand gold.

ATTACK Ji Indur.

Seek to ENLIST Ji Indur.

FLEE.

## Malan-buri-Malan

*Headman, or buri, of the Woses. Unsurpassed in wood-lore, the Woses are among the most ancient of the races of man, thought to be primitive by those who judge civilisation only by its material veneer. Caring little for the affairs of the world of men, and peaceable by nature, nevertheless they will fight to protect their forests, and bear a hatred for those such as orcs who would burn and destroy them. And, as such, might be roused by any who can persuade them that their lands are at risk.*

The afternoon was growing late, the sun set and the land drained of color, painted now in shades of grey as dusk settled. And so it was that [Character name] had almost passed what he had taken in the gathering dark to be an upthrust boulder, when there came from it a grunt that might have been warning or greeting. And of a sudden, the boulder's contours and crooks seemed transformed from rock to flesh. Where before there had been but a notch in the stone there was now a nose, where there was a gash, a face. So that, staring, he saw now a strange squat shape of a man, gnarled as knotted, with the hairs upon his chin and chest as dry moss. Short-legged and fat-armed, thick and lumpen, he was clad only in grass about his waist, which [Character name] had taken as growing from the ground, so still had the had been sat. And in truth, only his eyes seemed truly alive, black and piercing. "Come no further," the figure spoke, voice deep and guttural and halting. "This Wild Men land. This Malan-buri-Malan land."

Offer a gift of FIVE Thousand gold.

Offer a gift of FOOD.

SAY \_\_\_\_\_ (one word).

Seek to ENLIST Malan-buri-Malan.

ATTACK Malan-buri-Malan.

FLEE.

# The Untold War of the Ring: Face to Face Game

## Feedback

“Thanks for the FtF last week, it was fun and enjoyable and I like the new 'Untold War' 5v5 variant. If you plan on releasing this as a module to play via email rather than just at a FtF, then let me know and I'll sign up for a game.”

*Kevin O'Keefe*

“Really enjoyed the weekend and would be up for another, maybe playing the dark servants this time.”

*Rob Glass*

“I had a great weekend. Pass on my thanks to Sam and Ed as well.”

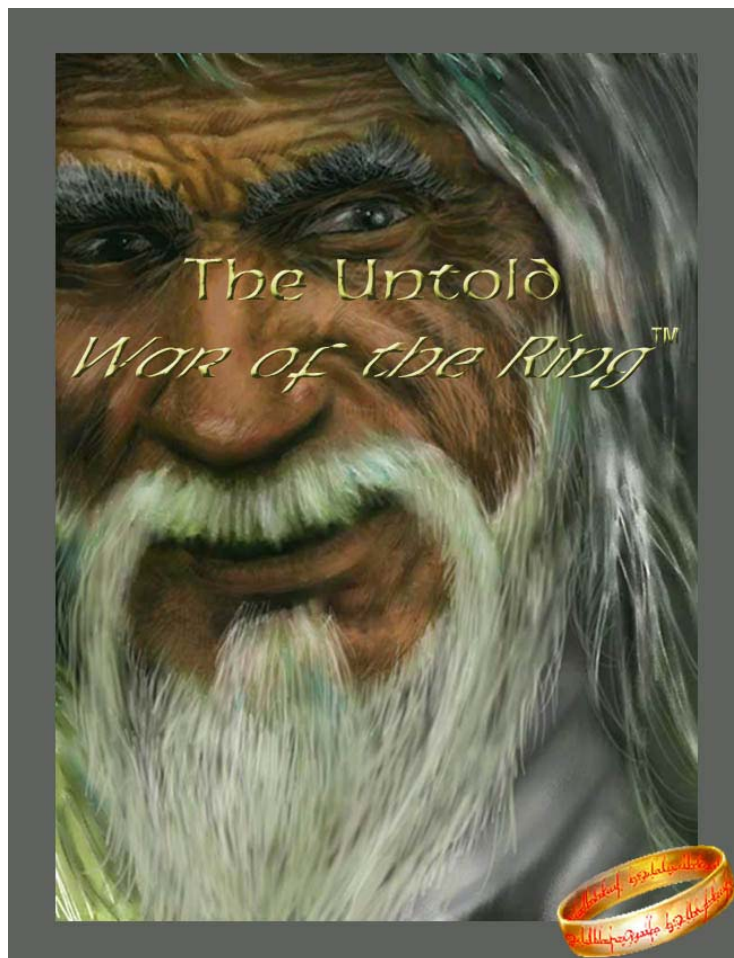
*Mike Sankey*

“I did enjoy the mini game which has more elements of the stuff that I like without the unbalancing rubbish in 1650, and I don't have to e-mail 7,000 people.”

*Chris Courtiour (Gunboat designer)*

### Medium Tip

Swap artifacts around, as it can be very confusing for the opposition when the lowly Northmen challenge Uvatha to death with Dwarven Command items. Many of us are used to giving agent items to the big killers, but even simply giving a combat item to an unexpected character can have dramatic effects.



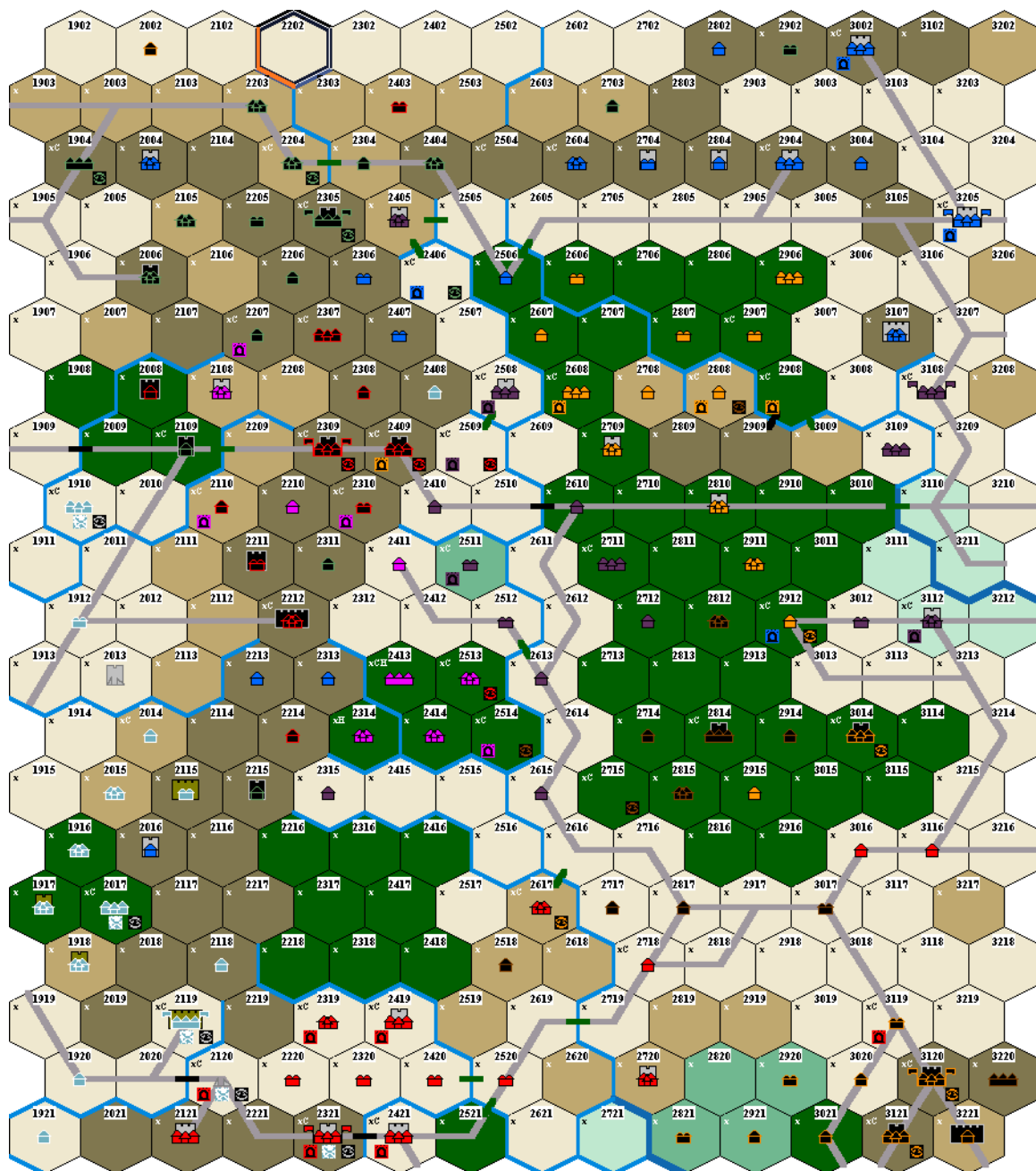
## Report from the Free People

*by Clint Oldridge*

Last weekend we had our FTF event. As usual it was a mixture of panic and madness, yet also allowed some quiet reflection. With the module being totally new not only to all the players (who only got to see it two days before the event) but also us as well, both teams spent a couple of hours discussing the game and strategy as soon as teams were announced. For the FP, the overall plan was to hold the North of Mirkwood and attack into the heartland of South of Mirkwood, keeping the pressure on there, whilst also holding off any attack on Imladris (2209) for as long as possible and keeping the Riders alive. A tall order, but one that was to prove interesting...

### Game Start: Turn One

Turn one saw the FPs move to consolidate their agent items onto one killer squad. The Noldo at 2209 vacated to take 2108 and the camp at 2210. Down south, bad news - the might of the WW was sent to 2120 against some forces of the Riders (both starting armies in the area). Theoden went north to 2617 to threaten the Dragon Lord PC there, and after dumping the 2720 army's food attempted to block any troops from the Dog Lord coming towards the Riders, though none appeared. The Dwarves sent one army south to 3109, and the Northmen defended 3112 ready to be aggressive in that area. The FK's 2409 force went towards the Northmen but failed to get past the blocks there....Duran turned up to take up the Noldo forces at the capital. Bad news was that the DS bought out all the mounts. WK up north moved towards 2405 ready to threaten next turn...Overall, honours pretty much even.



Turn 2 Map

### The Early Game: Turns Two to Four

Block two at 2120: this would continue for the rest of the game, the WW not able to move his forces off (the question later was who blocked whom!) FP threats at 2617, 2210 and 2108 all succeeded, and the FK troops at Imladris moved into the fray in the West. The first of the hordes of WK troops came south and were blocked by the Dwarves at 2506: this would be a continuing battle for the rest of the game as the FPs desperately tried to keep them from hitting the PCs at 2508 and 2608. The battle for Sarn Gorwing was also an interesting side battle, with the archers from the Silvan capital being obliterated by the infantry from the Dragon Lord, although there were no following recruitments from the DrL to stop the hordes descending. A cunning move to take 3104 from the Dog Lord backfired slightly with the Doggie blocking.

Noldo lost 2617 and 2513 to DS forces over turn 3, the Riders their capital to WW cavalry and an excellent Sabotage Fortifications (ditto the FP at 2715 for future aggression). Gothmog's threaten of 2617 was followed by taking 2419. The DS went for a quick Sickness squad that caused no end of trouble against the Riders, DS having decided to go for a Curse squad. With worries that 2514 would fall Riders turned up to assist there: if 2514 falls the game is pretty much over in favour of the DS if 2715 is not taken, so those two locations were key for many turns. Slowly the FP horde in Mirkwood took MT, City and left only 2715 for later attack, the DS not countering in that area but forcing the Riders into deeper and deeper trouble.

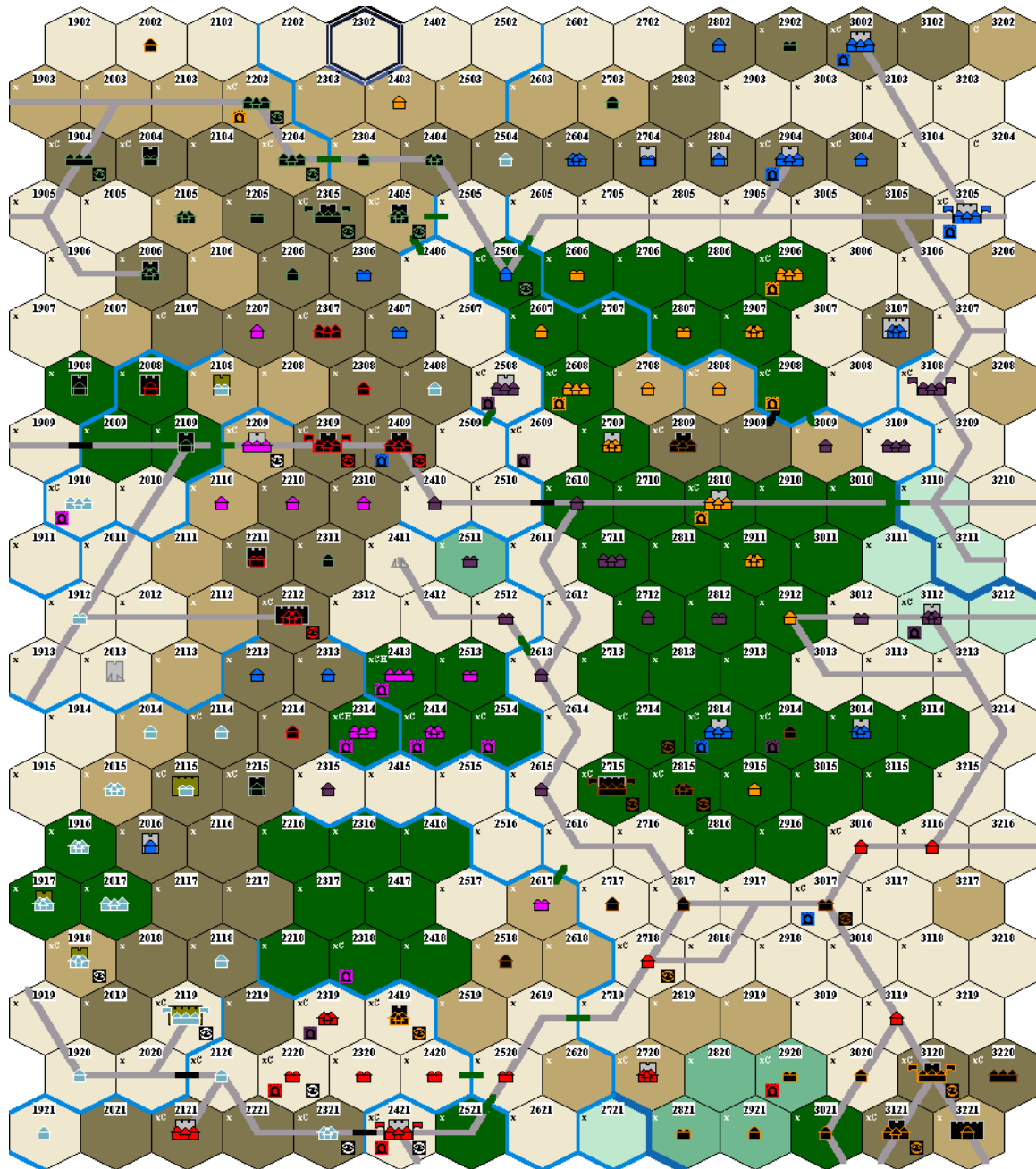
Throughout the game the Divine Nation Forces and Scry area were used to good effect by both teams, as in a restricted area map they get a lot of information.

## The Mid-Game: Turns Five to Eight

Imladris was revealed just as a Tower turned up on it: the next turn the FK turned up with more forces only to find a Fort there, eventually the place fell to FK aggression, backed up by WW. However, lucky Eagles (the FP were blessed throughout the game with lucky encounters in this manner), helped take out the main WW force around Imladris, and a sneak attempt to take 1910 failed in much the same manner as the remnants of the Silvan capital force failed to take 2809 on its first attempt. Turn 5 saw the first dragon for the DS, causing no end of mayhem as the FP attempted to hold it off in the North West Mirkwood arena. 2321 fell, quickly followed by 2419, 2220 and 2320, leaving the Riders desperate for a back-up (the NM kindly

offered 2711, later to cost the FP a MT), but there the rots stopped as the FP killer agent supported by the now active Curse squad meant that the FP Sick and Killer moved northwards, wreaking havoc in that area.

Turn 7 saw the main DS attack on 2514 just fail to take the PC, a fluffed 925 and inept play by the Noldo meant that his main army was away blocking attacks onto 2711, but earlier intel caused a Sick to be misplaced, lucky for the Noldo. 4800 troops a side created probably the biggest battle of the game, with honours even: 279 HC on the DS side remained after the battle (the Dog Lord's forces had arrived!).



## End-game: Turns Nine to Thirteen, and the demise of the DS

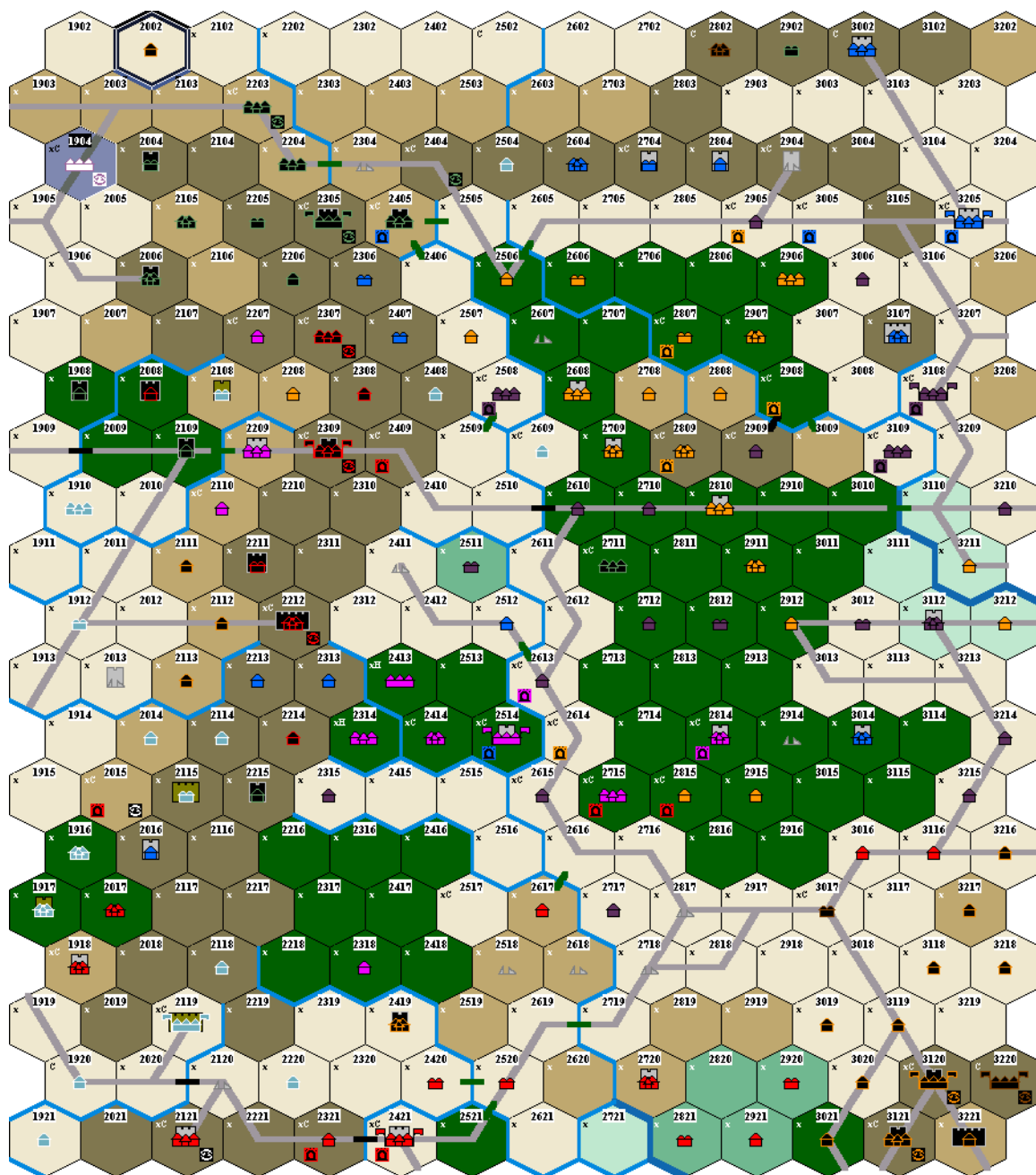
These turns saw the FP push home their advantage. The DS had managed to gain some early War Points, and turn nine saw 2609 taken by them (they kept it to the end of the game in one form or another). The WW, however, got unlucky with more Eagles and saw the Riders move through 1918 with a threaten to take the prize of a WW MT at 2017 the following turn. 2409 also fell to the Dwarves, so that meant that the DS had lost 4 MTs to the

FP's loss of only two. Agents and Curse/Sick continued to wreak havoc throughout the game, and a sneaky attempt by the WK to create camps off map and attack the weak underbelly of the Northmen's capital region was spotted and dealt with. The Silvan Elves had attempted to both draw off attention by forcing their way into the WK's homeland, but soon got defeated. At this point the Dragon Lord managed to bring off a

nasty surprise with Duran moving from off map to hit 2904 – the FP being unable to defend that location and in deep fear that 2608 (Silvan) would fall as well, thereby bringing the DS back into parity.

At one point the FP almost took out a key component of the DS Sick squad only to find it had several back-up mages ready to take up the mantel! The strength of that DS squad was shown on turn 11/12 when it turned up at 2711, killed the army and influenced the PC – 250 War Points to the DS – along with 2904 the very next turn. However, all this aggression meant that the Dragon Lord capital was left without enough resources to

defend it and the horde of Silvan, Noldo and Dwarves descended to take it on turn eleven, having the turn before having cleared it of fortifications and armies. The last few turns were a mad rush for War Points, making the last few turns very competitive as hard choices had to be made: some War Points weren't able to be achieved (the DS pulled off some excellent ones towards the end, whilst the FP floundered slightly behind), but with four MTs per side taken/destroyed (WK and Silvan kept theirs), the key loss of 2715 to the FPs cost the DS the game.



Overall it was enormously competitive, with strong economies, stronger armies and even stronger characters (relative kills per side were higher than normal). Eagles (and one Ent) clearly helped the FP, as three to four times they provided an advantage, once a key advantage to taking out a rampaging WK army and another in annoying the WW. Agents were used primarily to remove the fortifications of the enemy, but kills were important

as well. The game could have gone either way at least three times during the thirteen turns the game lasted, with the Riders on the ropes at several points, the Dragon Lord in a similar situation, the defence of North Mirkwood only just holding off the WK, Imladris slowing down FK assistance in that area, and battle royale after battle royale around 2514/2715, and to Emissary Squads taking key PCs. Whew....

# Hall of Fame: Game Winners

## Game 20

2950 module, *Gunboat Game*

Ended on turn 26, 04/03/08

### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Bill Tallen
Dragon Lord	Whit Cooper
Dog Lord	John Wall
Cloud Lord	John Wall
Quiet Avenger	John Lamulle
Fire King	Clif Weatherford
Long Rider	John Lamulle
Dark Lieutenants	Clif Weatherford
Corsairs	Bill Tallen

## Game 28

2950 module, *Individual Game*

Ended on turn 22, 22/02/08 (!)

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	James Amberson
Northmen	Jonathan Steer
Riders of Rohan	Eric Knapp
Dunadan Rangers	Paul Brandon
Silvan Elves	Erik Duffey
Northern Gondor	Philip Swiderski
Southern Gondor	Steven Brydges
Dwarves	Steven Mariner
Sinda Elves	John Wall
Noldo Elves	Jonathan Steer
Corsairs	Mark Somerset
Rhun Easterlings	Steven Mariner
Dunlendings	Mark Lyon

## Game 39

1650 module, *Individual Game*

Ended on turn 35, 24/03/08

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Michael
	Grazebrook
Northmen	Michael Everard
Eothraim	Michael
	Grazebrook
Arthedain	Bettina Wagner
Cardolan	Bettina Wagner
Northern Gondor	Mark Stuckey
Southern Gondor	Paul Roberts
Dwarves	Mike Grundy
Sinda Elves	Darrell Swoap
Noldo Elves	Alex Everard
Corsairs	Richard Wilson
Dunlendings	Gary Hood
Easterlings	Daniel Cosby

## Game 61

1650 module, *Gunboat Game*

Ended on turn 16, 22/04/08

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Wade Frost
Northmen	James Christensen
Eothraim	Simon Tvede
Arthedain	Wade Frost
Cardolan	Mark Anthony
Northern Gondor	Mike Bateman
Southern Gondor	Simon Tvede
Dwarves	James Christensen
Sinda Elves	Mark Anthony
Noldo Elves	Mark Stuckey
Haradwaith	Mark Stuckey
Dunlendings	Mike Bateman



## Game 62

1650 module, *Individual Game*

Ended on turn 18, 04/03/08

### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Michael Kamine
Dragon Lord	Bryn Lloyd
Dog Lord	Gary Hood
Cloud Lord	Mike Barber
Blind Sorcerer	Bob Chronley
Ice King	Paul Wilcox
Quiet Avenger	Tony Ackroyd
Fire King	Mark Lyon
Long Rider	Gary Hood
Dark Lieutenants	Erik Duffey
Corsairs	Gerhard Kille
Easterlings	Adrian Baker

## Game 67

1650 module, *Grudge 12 vx. 12 Game*

Ended on turn 12, 27/02/08

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	David Holt
Northmen	Tony Huiatt
Eothraim	R Kevin Given
Arthedain	Drew Carson
Cardolan	Drew Carson
Northern Gondor	R Kevin Given
Southern Gondor	Tony Huiatt
Dwarves	David Holt
Sinda Elves	James Howl
Noldo Elves	Martin Cinke
Corsairs	Timothy Huiatt
Dunlendings	Bernd Luehrsen

## Game 80

1650 module, *Individual Game*

Ended on turn 13, 23/04/08

### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Nicholas Grant
Dragon Lord	James Mcisaac
Dog Lord	John Lamulle
Cloud Lord	Mike Bateman
Blind Sorcerer	Bob Chronley
Ice King	John Seals
Quiet Avenger	Brad Brunet
Fire King	Keith Bowen
Long Rider	Brian Porter
Dark Lieutenants	Wade Frost
Corsairs	Michael Welsch
Haradwaith	Bradford Fisher

## Game 114

BOFA module, *Beginners' Game*

Ended on turn 10, 13/03/08

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Elves	Gajendra Singh
Dwarves	Franklin Parris
Men	Alan Jeffrey

## Game 115

BOFA module, *Beginners' Game*

Ended on turn 9, 03/04/08

### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Elves	Derek Hall
Dwarves	Brian Craypoff
Men	Brian Craypoff

### Complex Tip

Using the Mantle of Doriath to hide PCs can be very effective. Although it can't stop a gold transfer, it can stop product being transferred (948 comes after 945), and also 949 (Transfer Pop Centre), thereby possibly taking a nation out of the game, or wasting a horde of the enemies' troops in attacking a now-hidden PC.

# The Lord of the Rings™ – So What's It All About Then

By John Davis

## A-Z of Tolkien...

Taken from [tolkiengateway.net](http://tolkiengateway.net)

### Drúedain

The Drúedain were the race of Men that lived in the Drúadan Forest at the end of the Third Age. Often referred to as Woses, they were one the least numerous and most mysterious races in Middle-earth.

Contents

### History

The Drúedain lived among the Second House of Men, the Haladin, in the First Age in the forest of Brethil.

Later, a number of the Drúedain were present in Númenor, but they had left or died out before the Downfall, as had the Púkel-men of Dunharrow. At the end of the Third Age they still lived in the Drúadan Forest of the White Mountains, and at the long cape of Andrast west of Gondor. The region north of Andrast was still known as Drúwaith Iaur, or "Old Drúg land".

Though the Drúedain largely held themselves apart from the troubles and calamities of Middle-earth, they were clearly a good-hearted people: their most significant contribution to the Free Peoples was showing the Rohirrim paths through their forest. Without their aid, the Rohirrim would have arrived at the Pelennor Fields much later, suffering losses from an Orc army that was waiting for them. The Woses then used poison-darts and arrows to hold off an army of Orcs searching for the Rohirrim.

Beyond that, though, their contribution to the history of Middle-earth is little. Even after the War of the Ring, when King Elessar granted the Drúadan Forest to be theirs forever, they never showed their faces again, nor was any alliance or trading system struck up between them and Gondor.

There is no record of their acts in the Fourth Age, but it is clear that they never mingled with the Free Peoples, content to live their mysterious life in the Drúadan Forest, until they faded away into the mists of history and legend.

*The Lord of the Rings* is one of my favourite books. Right up there in my top three, in fact (the others, since you didn't ask, being *War and Peace* and *Generation X*). And I'm know that I'm not alone. Yet for all its legion of fans, there are many who just don't like it, don't get it, perhaps. Can't see the point. After all, it is just a load of characters – many of them not even human – in an imaginary fantasy world, with fighting with swords and magic, right? Childish, kid's stuff.

Of course, we know that there is more to the work than that. But even so, it can be hard, when pressed, to say exactly what. Hard to say, in fact, just what it is about. For ostensibly, it is indeed about people fighting in an imaginary world. About a villain, Sauron, whose actions Tolkien has apparently made no effort to explain or justify, who is pitted against any number of stereotypical fantasy archetypes, from the king who has no throne to the elf with a bow and the dwarf with an axe. Of course, these characters were not all stereotypes at the time the book was written, but even so, if that was all there was to *The Lord of the Rings*, then perhaps critics would be right to dismiss it as mindless escapism.

Yet really, that is not what the book is about at all. It is far richer than that, is far more than the mere series of conflicts and battles it appears at first glance to consist of. Which is not to say, I hasten to add, that this means it is an allegory, where everything in the book stands for or represents something else. And Tolkien was right to dismiss this sort of reading of his work, although his outspoken dislike of allegory was perhaps exaggerated for effect, since he himself was not above writing allegorical works when it suited his purpose, such as the story about the interpretation of *Beowulf*, or, more famously, *Leaf by Niggle*. But rather, there are other themes, hinted at but rarely made explicit, which run like mithril seams through *The Lord of the Rings*.

Perhaps its most obvious theme is that of the corrosive and addictive nature of power, as manifest in the One Ring and the influence that it has over those who wield it. Indeed, this point is made clear on many occasions, including, most famously, Gandalf and Galadriel's refusal to accept its burden. And the influence of the Ring corrupts not only those who wear it, those with power, but also those who come into its proximity, those who lack but crave that

power. In Denethor, Boromir, even in Saruman, we see this affect.

Beyond this explicitly-stated theme, many people, including Tolkien himself, see *The Lord of the Rings* as a religious work. They believe that the hand of God – Eru, in the language of the book, but explicitly stated by Tolkien in interviews as being the Catholic Christian God – can be seen to be at work, in the various 'coincidences' with which the book is riddled, and without which the various heroes would have certainly failed. The most obvious examples of this, perhaps, are those concerned with the Ring – its finding by Bilbo, and of course its falling into the fires of Mount Doom in the clutches of a clumsy Gollum. But there are others to be found as well, in chance meetings both explicit and implied. And beyond that, the work itself can be seen as a Christian parable, with its central concept of undeserved forgiveness and pity being the saving grace of not only the character forgiven, Sméagol, but also the one who forgives, first Bilbo and then Frodo. Although here it is always interesting to note that it is Sam – a character who for many is among the chief heroes of the book – who is responsible for Sméagol not achieving the redemption offered him by this forgiveness.

So is that what *The Lord of the Rings* is about then? Is it, like the Narnia series (written in the same period by Tolkien's friend C. S. Lewis), primarily a religious text? Maybe. But that would hardly explain its immense appeal to non-Christians. And indeed, some have seen in the work a pre-Christian, pagan message. Seen in its reverence of the natural world, as personalised in ents and elves, a call to return to such beliefs. This, perhaps, is a little fanciful, interpreting as fact fictional creatures such as ents. But related to this is another theme of the book, that of the struggle against industrialisation, as made most clearly manifest in Saruman's near-destruction of the Shire. Indeed, Tolkien, as is well known, was strongly opposed to the advance of technology. Or rather, this is thought to be well known. But in fact, what he opposed was not so much the technology itself, but rather its misapplication. (His famous blessing of a tape-recorder before use was only in jest, and some sources claim that

#### Missing Tip

Your tip could be here! Please feel free to offer some tips/suggestions of your own.

Email:

[bree@middlearthgames.com](mailto:bree@middlearthgames.com)



## Characteristics

In appearance, the Woses were short, stumpy-bodied men, possibly related to the Pukel-men of ancient Rohan. They had disproportionate bodies and small, sunken eyes that glowed red when they were angry or suspicious. Elves described them as 'unlovely', and it is clear that they were, though not evil, as their appearance led many to believe.

## Names

The term Drúedain is Sindarin in origin, the singular being either Drûg or Drúadan. However there are many terms used for the same peoples in the various languages of Arda. The most common are listed below:

### Drughu

The Drúedain's own name for themselves. Drughu is ultimately the source of the Sindarin 'Drúedain' and many of the other names they are known by.

### Drúath

An earlier Sindarin term for the Drúedain, modified as early as the First Age when it became known that they were enemies of the orcs. Later used to refer to a large number of the Drúedain as opposed to 'Drúin' which was a simple pluralisation (As 'Woses' to the singular 'Wose') and Drúedain, used to refer to the race as a whole.

### Drúin

Plural of 'Drûg' or 'Drúadan'.

### Drúadan

Singular term in the same manner of 'Dúnadan' is to 'Dúnedain'. It also has possessive qualities as in the case of Drúadan Forest

### Drûg-folk

Rarely used collective term.

### Róg/Rógin

Rohirric terminology, singular/plural respectively (as in 'Drûg'/'Drúedain')

### Rú/Rúatani

Quenya terms for the Drughu, derived from their Sindarin counterparts. Singular/plural respectively.

### Wose/Woses

A term borrowed from Old English by Tolkien as a translation of the Rohirric 'Róg'. This is perhaps the most common term used by readers of the text.

he had a delight in such inventions.) His hatred was not of the car itself, for example, but the destruction of the country that its proliferation caused. Magic, in Middle-earth, takes two forms. One is the magic of the elves, that of 'sub-creation', concerned with tending to and guarding the world that is the creation of God, of protecting it. The other is that same magic, but bent to dark purpose, used to control, to impose and work one's will upon the world. This is the magic of Saruman, of Sauron. This magic is technology.

So, then, is this what the book is about? Is it simply a lengthy diatribe against industrialisation, its various forms made manifest in Saruman, in Sauron, in the greed of the Dwarves? Again, perhaps. But again, if this were so, if this were all the book were about, would it really have caught the minds and hearts of so many people? For me, the answer is no. Certainly this message exists in the book, as does the Christian one. But this is not at its heart, not what it is about. And for me, what it is about is the search for courage, the struggle to seek to do what is right, even when there seems no hope, no possibility, of success.



It is this need for courage which Frodo wrestles with throughout the book, the despair he fights against made manifest in the Ring he bears, his struggle portrayed in the journey he undertakes. It is this courage which Aragorn seeks, the courage to accept the burden of his birthright. Theoden searches for, and with Gandalf's aid finds, the courage to ride, not from hope of victory, but because it is the right thing to do. (Gandalf, who is servant of the Secret Fire, that some associate with the creative life force of Eru, but many have suggested is, in fact, no more or less than hope, the hope he brings to others. Whilst one of Aragorn's names, Estel, itself means hope, which, having accepted his birthright, he then gives to the world.) Merry, Pippin, Gimli, to name but a few, all struggle, at one time or another, to find the courage to do what must be done.

These people succeed. Others fail. Denethor, whose great wisdom and far-sight prove no more than his downfall, when he can see only darkness, not cause for hope. Saruman, who, seeing no chance of victory against Sauron, turns instead to join him. Boromir, whose desperation leads him to turn against the company. Perhaps even, though this is unstated, Sauron himself, long-since robbed by Melkor of any faith in goodness, or courage to hope for it. But, succeed or fail, this same theme remains, that of courage.

Courage, to fight against the forces of evil, not from hope of success, but because it is the right thing to do. This is the theme which I see as central to the book, and the message I take from it. This is what makes it not just some story set in an imaginary world, but a book as relevant today as when it was first written, and one that will, I have no doubt, be as relevant in years to come. Morgoth's shadow darkens our world just as it did the lands of Middle-earth in ages past. There is so much evil in the world today, billions of beings suffering and despairing and dying, that any attempt to stand and fight against it seems futile, with no hope, no possibility, of success. And perhaps the hope of victory that is there in *The Lord of the Rings* is in fact, like the work itself, only a fiction. But perhaps, just perhaps, even as we struggle, "naked in the dark", if we can but find the courage to do what is right, then not all hope is lost.

## Movement Costs

Just a quick reminder that movement cost is:

terrain + bridge/ford cost

x 4/3 if moving unfed

x 2 if moving evasively

# Player Ratings

For more information on how these ratings are calculated, and what each means, please take a look at our website:  
[www.middleearthgames.com](http://www.middleearthgames.com)

## Valar Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>John Seals</b>
↑2	1821	Jason Vafiades
↓3	1804	Andrew Jones
=4	1781	James Adams
↓=4	1781	David Ruzic
↓6	1758	Ben Shushan
↓7	1751	Sam Roads
↓8	1750	Steven Johnston
↓9	1746	Scott McKennon
↑10	1737	Robert Turkot

## Maia Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>1936</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
2	1848	Andrew Jones
↑=3	1841	Alan Jeffrey
↑=3	1841	David Holt
↓5	1831	John Briggs
↓6	1828	Paul Moreno
↑=7	1825	Clint Oldridge
↑=7	1825	Bernd Luehrsen
↓9	1823	Alain Deurwaerder
↓10	1822	Mike Barber

## Istari Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
↑ <b>1</b>	<b>2090</b>	<b>Kim Andersen</b>
↑2	2032	Andrew Jones
↑3	1970	Ernst Hakey
↑4	1940	Frederick Young
↑5	1938	Clint Oldridge
↑6	1867	Chelsey Coughlin
↑7	1841	Mike Sankey
↑8	1810	Eric Lundahl
↑9	1790	Perry Carlson
↑10	1783	Bradford Fisher

## Nazgul Rating

Ranking	Nazgul	Player	Games Played	Games Won	Games Dropped
<b>=1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>David Ruzic</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>=1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>James Adams</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
↑3	100%	Robert Turkot	8	8	
↑=4	100%	Michael Childs	7	7	
↑=4	100%	Brian Jurczyk	7	7	
↓=6	100%	Marcin Dylewski	5	5	
↑=6	100%	Stuart Milligan	5	5	
↓8	92%	Sam Roads	13	12	2
↓9	90%	Kim Andersen	10	9	
↓=10	89%	Steven Johnston	9	8	
↑=10	89%	Dave Griffiths	9	8	

## Ainur Rating

Ranking	Rating	Team Name Or Captain
<b>1</b>	<b>1912</b>	<b>David Ruzic</b>
2	1793	GM
3	1774	John Simpson
4	1720	US 2
5	1716	The Sarumen – Retired
6	1685	Aussie
7	1672	US 1
↑8	1663	Veta Schola
↓9	1660	Jerry Mellerick
↓10	1656	Alain Deurwarder

## Council of the Wise – Enemy Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>=1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Guy Roppa</b>
<b>=1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>John Briggs</b>
=3	8	Steve Muller
↑=3	8	Thomas Kristiansen
↑=3	8	Perry Carlson
↓=6	7	R. Kevin Given
↓=6	7	Paul Brandon
↑=6	7	Clint Oldridge
↑=6	7	David Holt
↓10	6	Matt Ashley

## Council of the Wise – Individual Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
2	24	Brad Brunet
3	21	Clint Oldridge
4	18	Michael Welsch
↑=4	18	David holt
↑=6	16	Ian Eтчells
↑=6	16	Drew Carson
↑=6	16	Jeffrey Horne
↑=9	14	John Lamulle
↑=9	14	Matt Ashley
↑=9	14	John Gates

## Council Of the Wise – Team Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
2	24	Brad Brunet
3	22	John Briggs
=4	20	Michael Welsch
=4	20	David Holt
=6	18	Mike Barber
↑=6	18	Ian Eтчells
8	17	Drew Carson
9	16	Stephen Allen
↓10	15	Laurence Tilley

### Simple Tip

Don't forget that with Conjure spells you don't need to put in a number: it will default to the maximum possible. The main advantages of that is that if you get challenged or somehow gain a stat increase you'll summon more, and you don't need to calculate the amount each turn.



# Dungeons & Dragons: Dissent in the depths

By Sam Roads and John Davis

In memory of Gary Gygax, without whom...

[This article first appeared in [Flagship](#).]

## The Argument Against

Sam Roads

The 30th anniversary of D&D? Seems as good a time as any to spark the revolution. Bring me my torch and lets have a bonfire!

I hate D&D. Yes I know that 3rd edition is really cool: “y’know, like, they’ve swapped the 1 and the 20 round on Armour Class dude”. But that doesn’t make up for decades of malevolent, Microsoftian, hegemonic control of the RPG market, based on what is surely the worst system that there has ever been. And so I say to you, rise up! Rise up my minions, and strike it down!

But what is it that so awakens my anger, and incites my ire?

Is it the wonderful class system? “I’m sorry Frodo, you can’t wear that mithril armour as a thief. Now stop moaning about being ring-bearer, and for Eru’s sake try and stab some people from behind, eh?”

Or maybe its the clever levelling system? Ever wonder what level boxer Muhammed Ali was? Well, if only he’d boxed on for a few more years, he’d have become even better!

Perhaps it could be the realism of a system where more blows miss you the heavier the armour you’re wearing? (Well, all right, so I know they say that heavy armour means you are being hit but it just doesn’t hurt. But explanation or justification? I’ll let you be the judge.) Or maybe the pleasure of starting your adventuring career with 2 hit points so that a kobold sneezing will have you pushing daisies, but finally retiring with enough of them to survive several ninjas sawing at your neck for hours.

And I won’t even plumb the rich depths of awfulness which is the television cartoon, or shoot at the soft underbelly of a system which needs ‘player guides’.

No. The thing which really gets my molars grinding is the collateral damage of the alignment system. Aaarrgh! Imagine building a system which actually gives demerits for role-playing? Allow me to provide example.

Me: OK, my face is red, tears are seeping out from the corners of my eyes. I shout out that ‘You, sir, have murdered the only one true thing of beauty in the world. I damn thee and swear I will take a terrible vengeance on you and your House!’

Referee: Oh ho ho! Stop there a moment Sam. Your character is...um...Lawful Good. You wouldn’t say something like that, because you’re Lawful Good. I’m afraid you’ll be getting less experience points this session. Never mind, watch how the others play and you’ll learn more about proper role-playing.

I mean...what is good? Churchill defeated Hitler, but whilst doing so endorsed firebombing and furthered his own political career. So he’s a good/evil/neutral character then, eh?

Thankfully, these days there are legions of rival systems which, perhaps surprisingly, have elected not to use D&D’s alignment system. If you like a system, White Wolf have something that gives a little structure if you’re learning how to role-play. But I don’t suppose there’s any chance of D&D learning from its rival. Why does it need to? Since licensing the D20 system is proving so successful, pretty soon there may not be any more rivals.

So if you like a system that promotes role-playing, try White Wolf. If it’s game balance you want, perhaps the Hero System can provide. Maybe you’re looking for cinematic moments? Try Feng Shui.

Or, if you want a history lesson into what role-playing was like 30 years ago, try D&D.



# The Argument For

John Davis

Find any group of gamers, age fourteen to forty, ask how many of them were introduced to gaming through Dungeons & Dragons, and I'll bet my last platinum piece that a fair number of them will own up. A rare few – those same few, doubtless, who prefer Pepsi to Coca Cola, or the original Buffy film to the series – might cite Tunnels & Trolls. A handful might even wax lyrical about Steve Jackson's Sword and Sorcery Books. But most, I feel safe in assuming, lost their gaming virginity to D&D.

I, myself, am proud to be counted amongst their number. And the memories of those first campaigns are still, after more years and characters than you could shake a D20 at, among my fondest. I remember those little blue dice from the old Basic box set (for levels 1 to 3 – and what wonderful hope did even that title conjure, that one day I might progress to Expert, or Advanced, and the higher levels therein?), and which came with a bit of white crayon so that you could colour in the numbers. I remember where I was on the day I first opened an Advanced Player Guide, with its myriad options and possibilities that surely it would take one a lifetime to explore. Books that were not just pages of charts and rules, but were, really were, portals to another world.

But most of all I remember the adventures. I remember watching with fascination as the Dungeon Master carefully drew the map...a corridor, a bend, a door. And I remember the fear – the real, delicious, spine-tingling fear – of wondering if I dared open it, knowing that from behind it I could hear “a soft, snuffling sound, punctuated by the padding of large feet”.

Later came more complex campaigns. Military strategies, diplomacy, and of course a finger-twitching magic-user at your side were required. Then forays into other game systems, some more complex, some more realistic, some horrific and some just plain strange. And each had something to offer, and each brought its own memories to cherish. But none would ever come close to matching the sense of wonder and excitement of D&D. Well, you never forget your first time, do you?

This alone, surely, would be enough to enthrone D&D in its rightful place as the King of all RGS. But not only was it responsible for setting so many of us on the path towards a lifetime of gaming, influencing, as it did so, not only most other games that have come since, but also the perception style of generations of gamers; but it is also, I believe, still, after all these years, one of the finest RPGs one can play.

In terms of sheer scope and vision, it is simply unparalleled. Some games describe a land, some even a world; but D&D covers scores of worlds, universes, and realities. Hundreds of sourcebooks, modules and guides depict and describe worlds of variety and wonder enough to suit even the most jaded of gamer. In recent years, it is true, White Wolf, through their systematic rape of the horror genre, have created a detailed environment of their own. But neither in terms of detail or of scope does it even begin to compare, and the fact that it is held up today as an example of a detailed game world to compete with D&D just shows how little competition for D&D's throne there is.

Some people object that the game mechanics of D&D are not realistic. They complain that simply killing kobolds, exploring and doing great deeds should not transform your character from one who fears a blow from a giant badger (to a family of which I

once carelessly lost an entire adventuring party) to one who could cheerfully plough through an army of berserking giants without breaking a sweat. And yes, it is true, in real life that probably wouldn't happen. But – and I know that this might come as a shock to some people – D&D is a fantasy game. It was designed to emulate the fantasy genre, where – gasp and shudder at the lack of realism, even a hobbit might slay an immortal servant of darkness, or chance to save the world. The mechanics of D&D are there to support a fantasy world, not the real one. And whilst, yes, it is true, the journey from first to thirtieth level is sometimes an unrealistic one, it is none the worse for it; and I, for one, took more pleasure and satisfaction, nay, sense of achievement, from guiding my thief up through the years and levels, than in any other gaming accomplishment.

Others reflect that the game mechanics of D&D are combat-orientated, and therefore do not encourage role-playing. Well, yes, the game mechanics are largely combat-orientated, though less so than many systems. And that is because combat is the element of a role-playing game where the greatest level of moderation is required, to ensure that it does not appear merely arbitrary. But if a campaign lacks role-playing, that is the fault of the players and the referee, not the system. True, I have played in D&D adventures that were little more than a monster-bash, characters battling in search of experience and gold. (And a great deal of fun they were too.) But equally I have played in campaigns where, for weeks on end, not even a single die was rolled. If a campaign is orientated towards combat, that is a fault of the group, not the system. And if orientation towards combat is a criticism to be levelled at game systems, it is one that most are guilty of. At least a battle in D&D doesn't take upwards of twelve hours, naming no names, Feng Shui, or require one to purchase several dozen D6 to make your attack roll, unlike some games which wear their underpants on the outside.

But I have saved addressing the biggest source of complaint against D&D until last. And that is, of course, alignments. They have been called the bane of role-playing, objected to and criticised and railed against. Yet I would argue that to do so is not only plain wrong, but damnably ungrateful; the actions of a teenager who thinks they know it all thinking to criticise the parent who has helped and guided them in the very freedom of thought that they now use to complain.

We take it for granted, now, us veterans of role-playing campaigns, how to role-play. What it means to sit down and take on the role of someone else; how to interact, how to respond. But think back, if you will, to those first heady days of gaming. When, with character sheet gripped in sweaty hands, you opened a door to see a knight and an orc fighting over a bag of gold, ignored by both of them for the moment. What should you do? Or rather, and this was the point of distinction it was important to make, what would your character do?

This was where the concept of alignments came to your rescue. Because, in broad strokes, they painted your character's moral world. They gave you an indication of how to respond. Were you good? Then go to it, help the knight. Evil? Well, there you had a choice – steal the gold, or help the orc. But whatever the case, the point was, you had a point of reference for your actions. You could begin to role play.

Later on, of course, you began to learn that not all decisions were that simple. Not everything is black and white. You might be told that you had walked into a hut where an armoured knight was about to kill a starving peasant for stealing his loaf of bread. The lawful thing here might not be the same as the right thing. What should you do? And so here, again, alignments came to your aid, their scope and nature growing more complex even as you developed. Characters were not just good and evil, but lawful and chaotic as well, with all the wealth of subtlety this paradoxically connected dichotomy allowed. Then, later still, if this too became too limiting? Still failed to properly describe the gamut of human – and, of course, let us not forget dwarven, elven and non-human – nature? Well, then, there were Tendencies, allowing for greater variety, and possibilities for change, so that even as characters grew and developed, their alignments would also shift and alter.

And, what if, at the end of all this, one still felt that alignments were too restricting, and now stifled rather than encouraged role-playing? Well, the answer was simple. Don't use them. It has always been a central tenet of the D&D system that the rules are there as a guide and an aid to adventuring. They are to be employed in service to the exploration of a world in as enjoyable

and fair a fashion as possible. And if a certain portion of the mechanics or rules do not suit a referee or group, then one is not only invited but actively encouraged not to use them.

So, then, not only is the alignment system not the enemy of role-playing that it is made out to be, it is instead, for many, the underlying cause of role-playing. It was our guide, our teacher, our mentor, and it taught us not only good from evil, but also that those distinctions are never as clear as they first appear. And if, now, some of use feel that we have out-grown the need for its guidance, then surely that is the very measure of its success. Does the wise pupil, having surpassed his teacher, criticise that teacher for his lack of knowledge? No. And so, similarly, it is time that the alignment system is acknowledged for the truly inspired piece of game mechanic that it is – a mechanic that not only encouraged, but actually taught good role-playing.

I should like, then, to propose a toast. To the greatest role-playing game. Unparalleled in its vision, scope, depth, influence, and – perhaps most importantly of all – its capacity for inspiring a sense of wonder. I hope that I am in such good shape thirty years into my gaming life.



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Got something to say about playing a nation?

Disagree with advice you have read in this newsletter?

Either way, if so we would like to hear from you!

We are looking for articles of advice for all nations in all modules. So if you think you can help, please get in touch: [bree@middleearthgames.com](mailto:bree@middleearthgames.com)

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