



# News From Bree



The Official *Middle-earth™* PBM Newsletter  
Issue 33, March '07

## "Strange as News from Bree..."

*The Lord of the Rings* Chapter 9

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## Middle-earth PBM

Middle-earth PBM is a turn-based strategic game set in the world of Tolkien's Middle-earth. For more details, please take a look at our website: [www.middleearthgames.com](http://www.middleearthgames.com)

## Featured Artist

Pauline Marshall.

## Rewriting the Tolkien Canon

By Michael Martinez

The process of reinventing Tolkien goes on continuously. It's been going on in one form or another since *The Lord of the Rings* was first published, perhaps even since *The Hobbit* was first published.

But reinvention is no longer the purview of the critics, either the cynical foes of the Tolkien literary legacy or its staunch defenders who good-heartedly reclassify Tolkien's motivations and inspirations according to their own visions.

In today's world, everyone reinvents Tolkien, although some are more active than others. Fan fiction writers, for example, inject their own visions into Middle-earth, carving out parallel universes in a quantum fashion faster than hard-core fans can cry "Foul!".

And there are hard-core, self-appointed pontificators who have taken it upon themselves to sew up all the texts in concise little histories that prove that there was indeed only one mythology, that all passages can be used interchangeably to argue any point, and that Tolkien really meant what his after day spokesmen feel is most important.

The trouble with revisionism is that it invariably displays its colors before it's complete. It can salt the waters of many wells and deprive people of the sweet taste of pure Tolkien literature, but the books themselves remain untouched. The initial impressions of readers remain untouched, even if the revisionists win a few battles here and there with magical treasures that combine the various mythologies in ways they should never be joined.

It's unfortunate that Christopher Tolkien himself anointed the process by writing and publishing a *Silmarillion* that took on the force of canonical text. By the time Christopher tried to explain what he had done it was too late. Even after the publication of the 12 volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*, most readers still

accept the published *Silmarillion* as an authoritative source of information on Middle-earth.

Christopher's revisionism was not intended to mislead or stoke up the fires of a particular point of view. He was striving to open the doors to his father's imagination a little wider, and provide a glimpse of things that might have been, had oh so many other things happened or not happened.

J.R.R. Tolkien himself was the worst possible revisionist, dropping mythology after mythology, only to turn back to them to borrow ideas, names, themes, and even occasional characters. But these were his worlds to revise. He was the craftsman, sifting through his pile of previously partially completed works to see what could be reused, incorporated into a new work.

The Tolkien critical world, both professional and amateur, is today awaiting the publication of two books that may settle some questions. But more likely they'll add fuel to fires that simply won't go out. *The History of The Hobbit* and *The Children of Hurin* are not themselves canonical works, though they will be heard to speak with the voice of authority.

Revisionism continues today at all levels, and Tolkien purism itself is bound to be questioned regarding whether it provides any value. True purism, free of any agenda, at least provides a baseline for the study of Tolkien's various mythologies. It knows better than to treat all the stories and versions as if they are part of a single, concise whole work.

The reinvention of the Tolkien canon cannot wholly obscure the original works themselves, but unfortunately it can position itself so as to be mistaken for authority by people less schooled in the arts of reinvention.

Taken from Michael Martinez's Blog: <http://www.tolkien-studies.com/blog>

# Economic Strategies

Mike Johncock

There has been much discussion on the Middle-earth forum regarding economic issues. As Australian team captain I liaise with my team-mates regularly to ensure we are doing what is necessary to have the economic upper hand. It is a constant effort to which our team pays close attention as we attribute a lot of value to winning the economic war. Here, then, in the interest of sharing economic theories in Middle-earth, is my input regarding economics.

## Overview

The general consensus of players I have sided with, and my own opinion as a result of discussions with those I've opposed is that the DS are incredibly poor, and need to offset their team deficit or they'll die before they get going. As the FP, then your object is to bankrupt the enemy into submission or keep removing their MTs until back-up capitals are no longer available. As DS, the objective is to survive long enough to have your superior SNAs, characters and artefacts win the war for you. So with this in mind, here are some ideas on dealing with economic issues

## Dark Servants

At game start the DS team have a deficit of roughly 100,000, and need to name 48 new characters, adding 29,000 to costs. So they have to make large economic gains or they'll be dead very quickly. Ways of dealing with such deficits are:

### 1) Taxes

Taxes are the easiest way to start offsetting this deficit. Raising to 60% for all nations will reduce the deficits by 68,000, leaving a deficit of over 60,000. Only Rhu, WK, Harad and maybe the Drld have tax bases that would warrant raising above 60%, and of these nations Harad would risk degrading his unfortified pops, and the DrLd would be giving up his loyalty-inspired population defence.

### 2) Disbanding armies

This is another way to cut costs and can be done in some theatres. However, for the most part the DS will be recruiting not disbanding. Disbanding troops saves cash, but you run the risk of you loosing extra pops because you can't defend them.

### 3) Selling food

Pulling food out of existing armies can net the team over 150,000 gold for very little effort. Some nations really benefit from fed armies, but others can easily afford unfed moves without much compromise to their manoeuvrability.

### 4) Disbanding characters

This is very unpalatable in some cases, but can make the difference between life and death. Many of the DS multi-class characters have second, third and fourth skill abilities that only add to cost and will rarely if ever be used. Khamul, for example costs 2600 gold a turn and a max rank of 40. Unless you value stealth 30 agents as worth an extra 2K a go, he's really draining the bank. Adunaphel is another example as she costs 2000 gold a go and can't even fall back on stealth as a valid justification, since she has no agent skill. Mages are another character issue. The DS have more than they can really afford or need, and getting more productive characters on line like campers and thieves is important. The DS have 2xM70, 2xM60 and 11xM50, which can be used to hunt artefacts, make some curse squads and do some reveal pop or perceive secrets type stuff. So any mage below 50 needs to do some quick talking to avoid the chop in my opinion, not that I've had much success in convincing my team mates of that. Finally, there is the issue of disbanding the low-life guys that need to train for 20 turns to become useful. By this I mean any character that has no command ranks, or a

maximum of rank 20 in agent/emissary or 30 in mage. Characters like Virsh, Rosalyn and Ar-Glar. Replacing disbanded characters does generate additional costs, but is quickly off-set by the new characters' ability to camp, steal or maybe recruit to capture pops, whichever is appropriate.

### 5) Capturing more pops than you're losing

If you are doing this early on then the FP need to pick up their efforts as the game is all but over. But far more of the DS are vulnerable to attack than the FP: Harad, Mirkwood and Angmar are all under a real threat of military assaults driving the DS out of that area. Agents can counter the FP in some of these theatres, but not all of them, so expect more economic pain from the military outcomes, especially early on.

### 6) Deliberate bankruptcy

What I call the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the one. A very rare strategy where if you see a nation is facing imminent death, then you bankrupt the nation deliberately to put maximum stores in pops that you then transfer to your allies. For



example, the IK is going to go bankrupt as both his capital and Barad Paras both have sizeable armies on them that will attack resulting in an immediate tax raise to over 100%. So why not have a character at a non-sieged pop buy all of a product available? He'll drive the tax up to say 500%, but that is just a dead as 100%, so the team will benefit at no cost.

### 7) Market manipulation

Market manipulation can net the dark servants 100,000 gold if not effectively blocked by the FP. There is some risk, but generally the rewards are worth it. What the DS do is buy out a product with a very low price, using at least half a dozen nations. The market will be augmented by the high demand for that product by so many nations, and on the subsequent turn all DS can sell that product for a substantial profit. Those that didn't buy need existing stores, or to have allies transfer them a percentage of what was purchased. Even if the six purchasing nations only break even, the money their allies will gain from the sale of products in store should mean the DS make a net profit. If you use some bids over buys you'll have more success, as the bid amount is more important than the units purchased.

### 8) Stealing

Thefts are unreliable and shouldn't be used as a factor in economic survival. They should, however regularly supplement DS income, especially if you're stealing when characters are to be named or replaced. If the FP don't name to starve you of gold then you are at least restricting FP character development

### 9) OBN (One Banker Nation)

OBN is not allowed, and, it seems, with good reason. Although I've never faced such strategy, and never will (thanks MEPBM), data I've seen shows this economic strategy to be insurmountable. No need to discuss this any more other than to say that the fact that OBN is banned should enlighten people to the fact that the DS were designed with economics as their Achilles heel. So make sure you take advantage of this, FP.

## Free Peoples

The Free People need to have a plan to counter as many of the above strategies as possible. The following are methods on countering the tactics described above.

### 1) Countering tax spikes

The only real counter to tax spikes by DS nations is to monitor the morale of suspect nations, and if loyalties are bad enough threats can be used, or emissaries can flip the pop. For example, The WK, with all his pops fortified and a big deficit, could quite possibly raise his taxes to extreme levels. Early strikes by Noldo emissaries can flip village very easily, and this will also block WK army moves. Even his bigger pops will like Towns and MTs may be vulnerable, especially if he has some pops burned down prior to assault by threat or influence

### 2) Countering army disbanding

If the DS disband armies, the only counter the FP have is to fight aggressively and force the loss of pops to counter any savings they may make through reduction of troops numbers. CL and BS armies are the most likely to retire some troops or disband, so monitoring those armies may alert the FP to opportunities created by the DS need to save cash.

### 3) Countering sale of food

Nothing you can do here as the FP except monitor army movements, and try to get a tactical advantage if you notice armies that are moving unfed.

### 4) Countering retirement of characters

Nothing you can do about the enemy retiring expensive/useless characters either.

### 5) Taking population centres

Beating up on the enemy more than they beat up on you is a must for the FP. Armies and pops are your major advantage, so you have to use them effectively. As the FP don't fear losing pops too much as long as the enemy are losing some too. Even if the enemy are doing better than you, continue attacking. FP can afford to lose far more pops than DS, so as long as the enemy are on a downward spiral then you can afford to be in a similar position.

### 6) Countering deliberate bankruptcy

No real counter to this strategy, but on the other hand if you are knocking out DS nations that is a good thing. You could go looking at the bankrupt nation's surviving pops hoping to catch emissaries flipping them, but that's about it.

### 7) Countering market manipulation

You can counter market manipulation, but it is order intensive and costs you money. Generally as FP you start doing it when sell prices are down to 1-3, and the buy price is only one or two higher. Mi and Mo are harder to target due to price variation and the fact few FP produce Mi. The DS can all net good profit once the price drops on Mi and Mo too, but it's harder to know when this will happen. What the FP have to do is have nations sell products even though the price is really low. Do this regularly for le/br/st/ti, and try to have two or three nations each sell a bit. With people off-loading products, the market prices will never spike to those horribly high sell numbers (like 5+), and will ensure DS sales stay at a minimum.

### 8) Countering Theft

Most nations can ensure that they keep no gold in the bank, and for the majority or even all of FP this is recommended. Doing so when it comes to character-naming turns will slow down the development of your nation, but starving the DS of gold is essential. There is nothing worse than naming three characters and having gold thefts stop that naming, with the result that you've wasted 3 orders in the attempt and the enemy have stolen your 15K.

### 9) OBN (One Banker Nation)

There is no need to counter OBN as it is now an illegal manoeuvre. But you do need to keep the market low. While the reserves of the richest nation has shown to be crucial to prices, the reserves of other nations do have some effect too. For this reason, and to avoid feeding the thieves, you want to keep reserves to a minimum.

So. I hope this information is useful, and hopefully it will help you gain a greater understanding of tactics and counter-tactics used in the economic war.

#### Simple Tip

##### Conjure Spells

When casting conjure food, mounts or hordes there's no need to enter an amount. The program will automatically work out the maximum you can conjure and enter this amount, so it's easier for you to just put in nothing in the <quantity> section.



## 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.]

**BOFA TournyPoWeR [Game 117]**  
3 FP nations available. [02/03/2007]

**1650 Gunboat 2wk [Game 60]:**  
9 duos available. [01/03/2007]

**1650 2wk [Game 59]:**  
11 nations available. [10/01/2007]

**2950 2wk [Game 27]:**  
7 nations available. [18/03/2007]

**1000 2wk [Game 43]:**  
15 nations available. [08/02/2007]

## Grudge Games

**The French Nation Teal:**  
1650, 12 vs. 12

## Face to Face Games

We are able to organise Face to Face Games between teams in separate locations. So if you live outside the UK, and have a group of friends interested in playing in a Face to Face Game, please get in touch and we will see if we can organise a game, perhaps against a team in the UK.

### 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.

# The Flagship Challenge Cup

by Mike Sankey

This article was first published in Flagship Magazine: <http://www.flagshipmagazine.com>.

One common type of MEPBM game is the grudge game. This is where 2 teams of players play each other. One side will take the Free Peoples and the other the Dark Servants. Usually only 24 nations are played, with 12 on each side. Several years ago Flagship Magazine offered a Virtual Cup, and 2 teams were invited to play for the honour of being the first holder of the cup. At the time I was part of a team of players named Team Sarumen and we were asked to take part in the first Challenge Cup, which we ended up winning to become the first holder of the Flagship Challenge Cup. Last year we successfully defended the cup, and early this year began our 3<sup>rd</sup> game to defend the cup. This was to be Game 6, and the following is what happened in the game.

For game 6 Team Sarumen (Mike Sankey, Kenneth Weed, Ed Mills, Kim Andersen, Marcin Dylewski and John Seals) would play as Dark Servants with each player controlling 2 nations.

After some discussion the nations are decided: I will play Witch-king and Rhudaur. This is a very good combination. They are located in the far north of Middle-earth in Angmar and are adjacent to each other, giving one another mutual support. They start with large armies, and the characters for the Witch-king in particular are powerful. The disadvantage for these positions is that they are surrounded by enemies, with armies of the Noldo Elves, Arthedain, Cardolan, Dunlendings, Dwarves and Woodman surrounding them. This will mean that I would be under constant military pressure, the strain of which will hurt my economy and be a constant drain. The other disadvantage is that my allies are all far away, the closest being the Dragon Lord, who would have problems of his own, being surrounded by enemies in Mirkwood.

Several days later my initial turns arrive. My starting armies are scattered amongst my various population centres, as were my various characters. The Witch-king starts with powerful artefacts which boost the abilities of some of my main characters. My main character – Murazor – the Witch-king himself, starts with a reveal population centre spell. This will be useful as I know that several major Free People centres are magically hidden at the start of the game, including Rivendell, located on the edge of my territory. I will be unable to attack it

until I manage to reveal it. I can, however, already see the starting positions of some of the Free armies to the west, south-west and south on my initial maps, which cover my starting home territory. Also, my economies show large deficits of expenses over income due to my large armies, so increasing my tax rates to cover this will be a priority. Murazor also starts with an artefact that allows him to learn curses. Three powerful mages casting curses together can kill an adjacent enemy character in one turn. This is the only artefact giving this ability at the start of the game, as the other half-dozen or so others giving this ability have to be located and recovered. News from some of my allied nations shows that two other mages have the curse spell: Urzahil from the nation of the Dark Lieutenants, and Akhorahil from the Blind Sorcerer. This means that if Murazor can learn the spell, we can combine the three mages to give us a powerful offensive force.

The first turn goes well for me. I manage to improve the Witch-king capital to a city, which will give it better recruitment and defence. Murazor manages to learn his spell, and I create 2 new characters for Witch-king and 1 for Rhudaur. I manage to recruit more troops for my armies and move my main Rhudaur army to engage the Noldo Elves at Rivendell. I also move a small Rhudaur force along the road to the west, which manages to block an incoming Cardolan army. My map, however shows four other incoming armies to the west and south which will make the upcoming turns interesting. I am particularly worried about the armies to the south as one of them must be the Dwarves coming out of Moria, and will be a particularly large and powerful force. I didn't manage to increase my tax rates and my gold reserves are quickly depleting.

### Medium Tip

Troops.

It's better to increase armour than weaponry. Simple stats show that adding bronze to weapons only gets a 20% bonus  $\times 1/4 = 5\%$  attack bonus (you have wood weapons) whereas bronze armour has a 30% bonus to your defence.

The second turn shows the pressure is mounting. My large Rhudaur force manages to destroy the Noldo army at Rivendell but I lose a character to personal challenge in the process. However the real coup here is that my backup commander then moves the army to my major town in the south of my territory where it intercepts three incoming free armies, one of which is the feared dwarves. To the west I manage again to intercept two incoming armies, but a huge Arthedain army slips through and is on a Witch-king town. It he takes this, which appears certain my economy will start to deteriorate as I lose income. Fortunately a transfer of 35,000 gold from one of my allies has given me a margin to play with. Locate spells cast by the team on the first turn have discovered the Ring of Curafin, a powerful agent artefact, and acting on this intelligence one of my Witch-king characters has moved to the location and triggered the encounter to recover it.

The third turn sees the pressure from the Free increasing. My main Rhudaur army is destroyed, and although the enemy armies do not take my major town another Free army arrives there so it will fall this turn. The Witch-king loses the town as expected and the invading army moves onto another town. I am still throwing armies at him but I am outnumbered. My character recovers the Ring of Curafin after defeating the Wights protecting it, and moves it to safety. Elsewhere we have now pinpointed the location of all the curse artefacts and are moving characters in to recover them. Murazor gets his first success, moving onto the Sinda Elf capital in Lorien and revealing this hidden centre. As we have timed this with the arrival of the Dragon Lord's main army we are confident of destroying this capital.

Over the next four turns we have mixed success. The relentless Free People assault into Angmar continues. Rhudaur loses all centres except the capital, with Free People adjacent to it in three separate locations. Witch-king is in the same position with all centres gone except the capital with four separate armies on it ready to storm it. This is nothing short of a military disaster. However, we are having success elsewhere. We have recovered all the curse artefacts for our team – a major coup. In addition, at the location of one of these artefacts the Free People's most powerful character, Elrond of the Noldo Elves, turned up at the same time as us and we managed to kill him with our curse spells. As expected the Sinda capital has been destroyed and my allies have agreed to give my nations back-up capitals within Mordor to keep them alive. So overall, despite the military setbacks in the far north we are doing well.



The next five turns see a change in direction for my nations. I am now established in Mordor, not withstanding the fact that the Rhudaur capital in Angmar managed to hold out, not falling till turn twelve. This was due to my being able to recruit several dragons in succession who joined my capital army, which was then able to do immense damage to the invading enemy armies. My Witch-king forces have also managed to start taking over some Dwarf towns in the far north, which will become a new base of operations. Elsewhere our holdings in Mordor are secure and we are attacking in Mirkwood. Powerful Cloud Lord agents are doing damage, kidnapping enemy characters. In the south the nation of Harad is under immense pressure, having lost over half his centres to the invading Free armies. But the biggest disaster for us, however is the loss of the Dragon Lord nation. After the

storming of his capital at Dol Goldur by the Free he could not cover his deficit and he went bankrupt. We are now down to 11 nations. But whilst this will leave us at a disadvantage, our strategies are working and we are confident that in the end we will prevail.

The game actually lasted another eleven turns, by which time we had a clear advantage. In the far south we had turned the tide, recovering lost territory in Harad, we had taken the Corsair capital and were poised to take his remaining centres within three turns. Mordor was still intact with all the capitals at the gates of Mordor upgraded to cities. In Rhun we had cleared the area of all Free People centres, forcing the Northmen to relocate to the far west. In Mirkwood the same had occurred with the Eothraim, who had just one of his original five centres left. The Dwarves had been removed from the Iron Hills, and in the far north a Witch-king resurgence was underway with a city in the northern mountains as a centre of operations. We had three teams of mages capable of delivering curse kills, and our agents were numerous and

powerful, holding 30 enemy characters hostage – a serious dent into the enemy's ability to carry out orders. At this stage the Free morale was at its lowest ebb, and they decided to throw in the towel, bow to the inevitable and concede defeat.

We were victorious!! For the third time we had defended and continued to hold the Flagship Challenge Cup. Having successfully defended this three times, we have now decided to step down. Retiring at the top of our game as undefeated champions is a good feeling, and also leaves to cup open to be battled over by two new teams across the battlegrounds of Middle-earth.

# The Flagship Gaming Awards

Forget the Oscars. Ignore the Baftas. Because the truly important awards are upon us once more – the Flagship Gaming Awards.

Flagship have only nominated three games in each of several categories. And, sad to say, Middle-earth PBM is not amongst them this year. However, in Flagship's own words: 'Because there are so many good games and only three nominations in each category, we will be operating a 'write-in' system: so if you want to vote for a game that isn't nominated, by all means do so. These votes will be as valid as any other.' So if you feel inclined to vote for Middle-



earth PBM, you are more than welcome to do so!

However, even more important than voting for our game is to vote at all. So if you have a moment, please do consider placing your votes for your favourite games. The full list of nominations can be found on their website ([www.flagshipmagazine.com](http://www.flagshipmagazine.com)) or in the forthcoming issue of Flagship, whilst you can vote either by email to [carol@flagshipmagazine.com](mailto:carol@flagshipmagazine.com), or directly on the website. Which, we are assured, has software to prevent anyone from voting more than once.



## Calling All Artists

As you may be aware, we are currently working on a brand new module for Middle-earth, set during the Kin-strife. The module has many new characters, and, rather than use character portraits from older modules, where possible we hope to feature new artwork. If, then, you think you – or anyone you know – might be interested in helping to create the new portraits, please do get in touch through any of the usual methods. For a change, we are in a position to offer financial remuneration!



## Game End Information

*By Clint Oldridge*

The following is my first attempt to collate all the game end information we have on games run from 2001 onwards. Feedback and comments are welcomed, since the results have thrown up several interesting points and questions.

### Fourth Age Games

#### At a Glance

- ❖ The FP win more often than the DS, despite player concerns about the agent superiority of the DS. No doubt LAS and NKA impacted on this.
- ❖ Grudge games are considerably more bloody (over faster) than normal games, ending after an average of 18 turns compared to 27 turns.

#### Normal Game Statistics

Total Games:	30	Average Game Length:	27 turns
FP Wins:	15 (50%)	Average Game Length:	28 turns
DS Wins:	10 (33%)	Average Game Length:	26 turns
Neutral Wins:	4 (13%)	Average Game Length:	29 turns
Draws:	1 (6%)		

#### Grudge Game Statistics

Total Games:	16	Average Game Length:	18 turns
FP Wins:	9 (56%)	Average Game Length:	20 turns
DS Wins:	6 (38%)	Average Game Length:	09 turns
Neutral Wins:	1 (6%)	Average Game Length:	21 turns

#### 3-Way Grudge Game Statistics

Total Games:	2	Average Game Length:	19 turns
FP Wins:	0 (0%)		
DS Wins:	1 (50%)		
Neutral Wins:	1 (50%)		

#### Gunboat Game Statistics

Total Games:	2	Average Game Length:	27 turns
FP Wins:	1 (50%)		
DS Wins:	1 (50%)		
Neutral Wins:	0 (0%)		



## 2950 Games

### At a Glance

- ❖ Neutrals change to FP more often than to DS, yet the DS win considerably more games.
- ❖ Neutral nations have less chance of being on the winning side than aligned nations.
- ❖ In Grudge and WotR games the split between FP and DS victories is fairly even.
- ❖ In 10 vs. 10 games, diplomacy is key.
- ❖ Compared to armies or a good economy, characters are key to victory.
- ❖ FP gain a favourable 3:1 split of neutrals 10% of the time. DS gain this 33% of the time.
- ❖ With regard to the neutral nations choosing an alignment, the way the White Wizard, Corsairs and Khand Easterlings change has the greatest impact on the chances of victory.

### Normal Game Statistics

Total Games:	40	Average Game Length:	25 turns
FP Wins:	15 (38%)	Average Game Length:	23 turns
DS Wins:	25 (62%)	Average Game Length:	27 turns

### Neutral Statistics for Normal Games

#### Allegiance chosen by neutral nations (rounded to nearest %)

All Games	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	20	50	30
Rhun	43	18	40
Dunlendings	53	18	30
White Wizard	43	28	30
Khand	13	58	30

Games with FP win	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	53	33	13
Rhun	53	13	33
Dunlendings	67	13	20
White Wizard	53	27	20
Khand	33	33	33

Games with DS win	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	0	60	40
Rhun	36	20	44
Dunlendings	44	20	36
White Wizard	36	28	36
Khand	0	72	28

\* Where the nation did not change allegiance before game end, or nation was eliminated before changing allegiance.

#### Percentage of the time neutral nations change to the winning allegiance (compared with 50% chance if an aligned nation)

All Games	Win %
Corsair	58
Rhun	33
Dunlendings	53
White Wizard	43
Khand	58
Overall	49

### Other information (bear in mind small sample size for data)

Nation	Allegiance Chosen	Then % Chance of FP win was	Then % chance of DS win was
Corsair	FP	8/8 = 100	0
	DS	25	15/20 = 75
Rhun	FP	8/17 = 47	1-8/17 = 53
	DS	1-5/7 = 29	5/7 = 71
Dunlendings	FP	10/21 = 48	52
	DS	29	5/7 = 71
W Wizard	FP	8/17 = 47	53
	DS	36	7/11 = 74
Khand	FP	5/5 = 100	0
	DS	22	18/23 = 78

### Split of Neutrals: FP Advantage

FP/DS Split	Number of FP Wins	Number of DS Wins	Total Games	% of games Split this way
5:0	1		1	3
4:0				
3:0		1	1	3
2:0	1		1	3
1:0	2	1	3	8
4:1	2		2	5
3:1		1	1	3
2:1	3	1	4	10
3:2	5	5	10	25
Total	14	9	23	58

### Split of Neutrals: DS Advantage

FP/DS Split	Number of FP Wins	Number of DS Wins	Total Games	% of games Split this way
0:1		3	3	8
1:2		1	1	3
0:2		4	4	10
2:3		1	1	3
1:3	1	2	3	8
0:3		5	5	13
1:4				
0:4				
0:5				
Total	1	16	17	43

### Grudge Game (12 vs. 12) Statistics

Total Games:	14	Average Game Length:	19 turns
FP Wins:	6 (43%)	Average Game Length:	15 turns
DS Wins:	8 (57%)	Average Game Length:	22 turns

### Grudge Game (10 vs. 10 & 5 neutrals) Statistics

Total Games:	6	Average Game Length:	22 turns
FP Wins:	1 (17%)	Average Game Length:	14 turns
DS Wins:	5 (83%)	Average Game Length:	24 turns

### WotR Grudge Game (12vs. 12 & 11 vs. 11) Statistics

Total Games:	7	Average Game Length:	21 turns
FP Wins:	3 (43%)	Average Game Length:	17 turns
DS Wins:	4 (57%)	Average Game Length:	23 turns

### Gunboat Game Statistics

Total Games:	6	Average Game Length:	30 turns
FP Wins:	1 (17%)		
DS Wins:	5 (83%)		

## 1650 Games

### At a Glance

- ❖ The FP are less dependent on neutrals joining them than the than DS.
- ❖ Neutral nations have less chance of being on the winning side than aligned nations.
- ❖ The Dunlendings nation is the most likely neutral nation to be on the winning side.
- ❖ Rhudaur is the second most likely neutral nation to be on the winning side.
- ❖ The game is very evenly matched in 2 and 3 week games.
- ❖ Contrary to popular opinion, the FP take longer to win the game than the DS.
- ❖ In an individual game, more neutrals align themselves with the FP than the DS 32% of the time, whilst more neutrals allign themselves with the DS 54% of the time. (13% of the time there is an even split.)
- ❖ The FP gain a better than 2 neutral nation advantage (a 3: 1 or better split) 14% of the time. DS gain this 29% of the time.
- ❖ With regard to the neutral nations chosing an alignment, the Harad joining the FP best improves the FP chances of victory. The Dunlendings joining the DS best improves the DS chances of victory.



### Normal Game (2 and 3 week turnaround) Statistics

Total Games:	91	Average Game Length:	26 turns
FP Wins:	45 (49%)	Average Game Length:	29 turns
DS Wins:	46 (51%)	Average Game Length:	24 turns

### Neutral Statistics for Normal Games

#### Allegiance chosen by neutral nations (rounded to nearest %)

All Games	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	28	52	20
Harad	30	32	38
Dunlendings	57	31	14
Rhudaur	31	50	19
Easterlings	26	52	22

Games with FP Win	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	31	53	16
Harad	42	29	29
Dunlendings	69	24	07
Rhudaur	40	44	16
Easterlings	13	58	29

Games with DS Win	FP %	DS %	Neutral % *
Corsair	24	51	24
Harad	18	36	47
Dunlendings	40	38	22
Rhudaur	22	56	22
Easterlings	38	47	16

\* Where the nation did not change allegiance before game end, or nation was eliminated before changing allegiance.

### Percentage of the time neutral nations change to the winning allegiance (compared with 50% chance if an aligned nation)

All Games	Win %
Corsair	41
Harad	39
Dunlendings	53
Rhudaur	48
Easterlings	30
Overall	42

### Other information (bear in mind small sample size for data)

Nation	Allegiance Chosen	Then % Chance of FP win was	Then % chance of DS win was
Corsair	FP	14/25= 56	44
	DS	51	23/47=49
Harad	FP	19/27= 70	30
	DS	45	16/29=55
Dunlendings	FP	31/51= 61	29
	DS	39	17/28=61
Rhudaur	FP	18/28= 64	26
	DS	44	25/45=56
Easterlings	FP	6/23= 26	74
	DS	55	21/47=45



### Split of Neutrals: FP Advantage

FP/DS Split	Number of FP Wins	Number of DS Wins	Total Games	% of games Split this way
5:0				
4:0	2		2	2
3:0				
2:0	3	1	4	4
1:0		2	2	2
4:1	1		1	1
3:1	4	2	6	7
2:1	3		3	3
3:2	9	2	11	12
Total	22	7	29	32

### Split of Neutrals: No Advantage for DS or FP

FP/DS Split	Number of FP Wins	Number of DS Wins	Total Games	% of games Split this way
0:0		1	1	1
1:1	2		2	2
2:2	5	4	9	10
Total	7	5	12	13

### Split of Neutrals: DS Advantage

FP/DS Split	Number of FP Wins	Number of DS Wins	Total Games	% of games Split this way
0:1		1	1	1
1:2		8	8	9
0:2		3	3	3
2:3	9	5	14	16
1:3	5	5	10	11
0:3		2	2	2
1:4	1	6	7	8
0:4		2	2	2
0:5	1	1	2	2
Total	16	33	49	54%

### Normal Game (1 week turnaround) Statistics

Total Games:	13	Average Game Length:	23 turns
FP Wins:	4 (31%)	Average Game Length:	21 turns
DS Wins:	9 (69%)	Average Game Length:	23 turns

### Grudge Game (12 vs. 12) Statistics

Total Games:	57	Average Game Length:	19 turns
FP Wins:	26 (46%)	Average Game Length:	19 turns
DS Wins:	31 (54%)	Average Game Length:	20 turns

### Grudge Game (10 vs. 10 & 5 neutrals) Statistics

Total Games:	5	Average Game Length:	13 turns
FP Wins:	3 (60%)	Average Game Length:	17 turns
DS Wins:	2 (40%)	Average Game Length:	07 turns

### Grudge Game (12 vs. 12 neutrals reversed) Statistics

Total Games:	6	Average Game Length:	18 turns
FP Wins:	4	Average Game Length:	20 turns
DS Wins:	2	Average Game Length:	14 turns

### Grudge Game (2 player) Statistics

Total Games:	5	Average Game Length:	10 turns
FP Wins:	2 (40%)	Average Game Length:	09 turns
DS Wins:	3 (60%)	Average Game Length:	12 turns

### Combined Grudge Game Statistics

FP Wins:	35 (48%)
DS Wins:	38 (52%)

### Gunboat Game Statistics

Total Games:	21	Average Game Length:	33 turns
FP Wins:	10 (48%)	Average Game Length:	28 turns
DS Wins:	11 (52%)	Average Game Length:	37 turns

## Hall of Fame: Game Winners

### Game 34

1650 module, Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 10, 13/12/06

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Dwarves	Steve Norlin
Sinda Elves	Robert Saponas
Noldo Elves	Simon Arnold
Woodmen	Bettina Wagner
Northmen	Bernie Gaider
Eothraim	Dan Miller
Arthedain	Chris Abernathy
Cardolan	Paul Moreno
Northern Gondor	Darren Beyer
Southern Gondor	Guy Roppa

### Game 25

2950 module, Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 13, 17/01/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Tim Jones
Dragon Lord	Clint Oldridge
Dog Lord	Clint Oldridge
Cloud Lord	Sam Roads
Blind Sorcerer	Mark Jeffries
Ice King	Mark Jeffries
Quiet Avenger	Sam Roads
Fire King	Ed Lane
Long Rider	Ed Lane
Dark Lieutenants	Tim Jones
Corsairs	Sam Roads
Khand Easterlings	Clint Oldridge

### Game 17

1650 module, Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 20, 04/01/07

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Andrew Schultz
Northmen	Mike Dunn
Eothraim	John Stagoll
Arthedain	Steve Latham
Cardolan	Keith Parker
Northern Gondor	Nick Schouten
Southern Gondor	Adrian Sheridan
Dwarves	John Briggs
Sinda Elves	Chris Meyer
Noldo Elves	Paul Bury
Corsairs	Mick Johncock
Dunlendings	Kerry Bridge

### Game 96

1650 module, Gunboat Game,  
Ended on turn 38, 15/01/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Bryn Lloyd
Dragon Lord	Henning Rindbaek
Cloud Lord	Matt Ashley
Blind Sorcerer	Matt Ashley
Ice King	Andrew Jones
Quiet Avenger	Andrew Jones
Fire King	James Ghiotto
Long Rider	Alain Deurwaerder
Dark Lieutenants	Bryn Lloyd
Corsairs	Henning Rindbaek
Rhudaaur	Alain Deurwaerder

### Game 23

2950 module, Individual Game,  
Ended on turn 10, 05/01/07

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Khand Easterlings	Andrew Jones
Woodmen	Ray Ulman
Northmen	Laurence Tilley
Riders of Rohan	Jonathan Steer
Dunadan Rangers	Brian Mason
Silvan Elves	Stephen Moore
Northern Gondor	Tony Zbaraschuk
Southern Gondor	Derek Hall
Dwarves	Craig Fiscofer
Sinda Elves	Mark Somerset
Noldo Elves	Laurence Tilley

### Game 18

1650 module, Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 18, 29/12/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Darrel Senior
Dragon Lord	Bradden Jenison
Dog Lord	John Simpson
Cloud Lord	Bettina Wagner
Blind Sorcerer	Paul Moreno
Ice King	Stuart Milligan
Quiet Avenger	John Taylor
Fire King	Martin Pfindtner
Long Rider	Edward Mills
Dark Lieutenants	Michael Grazebrook
Haradwaith	John Simpson
Rhudaaur	Chad Gilbert

### Game 38

1650 module, 1 vs. 1 Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 11, 19/01/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Clint Oldridge
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### Game 38

1650 module, 1 vs. 1 Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 11, 19/01/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

All Nations	Clint Oldridge
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### Game 118

1650 Module, Individual Game,  
Ended on turn 97, 08/02/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Dragon Lord	Jim Carson
Dog Lord	Jim Carson
Cloud Lord	Drew Carson
Blind Sorcerer	Steven Caskey
Quiet Avenger	Drew Carson
Long Rider	Jim Carson

### Game 19

1650 module, Gunboat Game,  
Ended on turn 41, 08/02/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	John Gates
Dragon Lord	Stephen Fortson
Dog Lord	Ian Wood
Cloud Lord	Timofey Dvoskin
Blind Sorcerer	Ian Wood
Ice King	Carroll Joseph Ganier
Quiet Avenger	Timofey Dvoskin
Fire King	Timofey Dvoskin
Long Rider	Carroll Joseph Ganier
Dark Lieutenants	John Gates
Corsairs	Stephen Fortson
Rhudaaur	Jonathan Hijuelos

### Game 50

1650 module, Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 7, 12/02/07

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Kim Andersen
Northmen	Kenneth Weed
Eothraim	Kim Andersen
Arthedain	Marcin Dylewski
Cardolan	Marcin Dylewski
Northern Gondor	Mike Sankey
Southern Gondor	Mike Sankey
Dwarves	Kim Andersen
Sinda Elves	Kim Andersen
Noldo Elves	Kenneth Weed
Corsairs	Mike Sankey
Dunlendings	Marcin Dylewski

### Game 7

1650 module, Gunboat Game,  
Ended on turn 26, 12/02/07

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	James Christensen
Northmen	Mark Jeffries
Eothraim	Bradford Fisher
Arthedain	Barry Guertin
Cardolan	Robert Saponas
Northern Gondor	James Christensen
Southern Gondor	Ken Shannon
Dwarves	Mark Jeffries
Sinda Elves	Robert Saponas
Noldo Elves	Mark Jeffries
Haradwaith	Mark Jeffries
Dunlendings	James Christensen

### Game 49

Fourth Age module, Individual Game,  
Ended on turn 11, 14/02/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

North Kingdom	Gordon Aitchison
Night Watch	John Bonadio
Baal Brotherhood	Didier Le Priol
Voodoo Trolls	Mike Barber
Fire Brands	John Wall
Moosa Loothfe	Charles Crooks
Cragarak's Folly	Jeffrey Young
Swertings	Frederick Young
Novo Kavorran	Ian Koxvold
Worldcrackers	Michael Donovan
Iron League	Mike Grundy
Stormbrood	Gavin Kenny
Dawn Traders	Nick Symons

### Game 36

1650 module, 1 vs. 1 Grudge Game,  
Ended on turn 12, 22/02/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	John Folz
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### Game 111

BOFA module, Beginner's Game,  
Ended on turn 10, 20/02/07

#### Victory went to the Free Peoples

Elves	Paul Moreno
Dwarves	Martin Sirois
Men	Francois Lavoie

### Game 29

2950 module, Gunboat Game,  
Ended on turn 50, 01/03/07

#### Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Scott Moyes
Dragon Lord	Chris Geggus
Dog Lord	David Crane
Cloud Lord	Chris Geggus
Blind Sorcerer	Phillip Vogel
Ice King	Mark Farrior
Quiet Avenger	Mark Farrior
Fire King	Phillip Vogel
Long Rider	David Crane
Dark Lieutenants	Mike Farrior
Corsairs	Chris Geggus

### Gollum!

Scientists in Spain have discovered a new invertebrate insect, which lives in caves in the Castellon province. In honour of Tolkien, these have been named Gollumjapyx Smeagol.

Like Gollum, the insect originated on the surface, but has since adapted to living permanently in caves.

## A-Z of Tolkien...

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

### Tom Bombadil.

In the first book of Tolkien's fantasy epic *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo and his company meet Bombadil in the Old Forest. He is a quite mysterious figure living far from any settlement with his wife, Goldberry, "Daughter of the River". He speaks in stress-timed metre. His appearance is brief, but behind Bombadil's simple façade there are hints of great knowledge – he can see the Ring-bearer when invisible and is unaffected by wearing the Ring himself. Gandalf later says that this is because the Ring has no power over him.

As to the nature of Bombadil, Tolkien himself said that some things should remain mysterious in any mythology, hidden even to its inventor. He placed the fate of the Entwives in this category, as well as the Cats of Queen Berúthiel, although hints of the latter story have emerged in posthumously released materials.

It is clear, though, that Bombadil was not in Tolkien's conception part of Middle-earth from the start; he was invented in honour of a Dutch doll belonging to his children, to whom Tolkien told stories about Tom Bombadil. These predate the writing of film and radio adaptations of the story, Bombadil is notable by his absence, possibly because nobody knows quite what to do with him.

The *Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, a book of verse published in 1966, purported to contain a selection of The Hobbit poems, two of which were about Tom Bombadil. See also: The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, with special reference to Letters 144 and 153.

#### Tom Bombadil's Nature

Tom Bombadil's mythological origins in the cosmology of Middle-earth have puzzled even erudite fans. Speculative ideas about his true nature range from simply a wise Elven hermit to an angelic being (a Maia or Vala), to the creator, that is, God, who is called Eru Ilúvatar in J.R.R. Tolkien's mythology. Tolkien explicitly denied this last possibility. Tom seems to have unlimited power inside the boundaries that he set for himself. The most common theory is that Bombadil is a Maia, and perhaps the reason of why he has such powers might be the fact that he set himself limits in which he is master. "Eldest, that's what I am... Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn... He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless – before the Dark Lord

# Dragon Lord, 1650: Are you Ready for a Challenge?

By Terry Wilson, aka HolyAvenger

I've always been intrigued by this position because I like 'edge of your seat' nations, the fact that every order you write has a huge impact on whether you live, die or thrive. No other position can lose a MT and your capital with absolutely nothing you do can prevent, given competent competition. So why even bother to play a position where you can easily be the first nation eliminated, and even if you do survive and the Dark Servants win, you cannot finish in top 3? Well, for me that is my reason for playing it. I love a challenge.

### Strengths

So what are Dragon Lord's strengths? In a word, characters: extremely versatile characters, and powerful mages. You have double recon with your agents, and this alone will get you the assistance you need to survive, since the Long Rider and the Cloud Lord both want you in the game to recon for them.

Khamul has 30 skill in every ability including stealth. Simply put he is the best artifact retriever in the game. The DS should locate the RoW and send Khamul to get it. Celedhring has 125 challenge supported by a 2000 combat artifact, which keeps the FP refusing personal challenges in the face of every army they encounter. He's also a 30 agent and a 50 mage. You also have a Regent, Duran, leading your strongest force at 2715 in most games. He is also a 20 emissary and a 20 mages. Lhachglin is also versatile, but not as powerful, being only a 20 agent, 10 emissary and 40 mage. Then you have Maben, a 20 emissary 50 mage with weakness spell: another mage very adept at artifact recovery. Orduclax, another straight 50 mage: at least this guy could be used for typical mage roles, with Locate Artifact True or even Spirit Mastery work-up. Yet I have also found that he's extremely useful for casting defensive spells when teamed with Celedhring, so that they can take towns with troops of Light or less. Then there are Urgubal and Wordurisak: 30 and 40 commanders with 10 emissary skill.

Most characters have emissary skill, and that is by design, as it gives the Dragon Lord a real chance to survive, and just maybe make a powerful comeback in the game after turn 10.

All of which said, it should be noted that you only have four commanders, and your early role is very military-based, at least until 2715 falls.

### Weaknesses

The weaknesses for the Dragon Lord are huge. No, let me rephrase that: HUGE. Surrounded by enemies with no chance of out-recruiting them, the Dragon Lord can lose both Goblin Gate and Dol Gudur on turn 3. With competent competition, neither you or the DS team can do anything other than delay this until turn 4. Then, the same powerful characters that are your strength also weaken you economically. Your 12K deficit per turn at game start means that you have no choice but to attack in order to reduce this debt and increase your tax and resource base. Your starting resource base is simply terrible, and will get worse because you will lose half your PCs by turn 4. So even your dismal starting production will get worse.

### Strategy

Strategy for the Dragon Lord is simple. Play to survive, by planning on rebuilding your nation at game start. Provide your Team with agents and recons when you can. Most DS teams will support you if you have a plan that does not require a gold transfer every turn. So acquire new PCs with military forces, and by posting/creating camps and improving them to at least villages. Also try to get your hidden town at 2809 improve to a Major Town as soon as possible!

### Military Strategy

Military strategy at game start. I have three very solid options: all good, but none perfect.

#### Plan A.

Attack the Woodmen. The choice target here is 2711. You could actually take 2711 on turn 2 by having the Goblin Gate army recruit 400 HI and move to 2711, with the second commander recruiting 400 HI, transferring everything but 100 troops into Duran's army, having Celedhring join Duran and marching on 2711. If the Woodmen do not block you – and that is a huge if – you could take 2711 with your combined forces, even with both Woodmen armies still at 2711 recruiting 400 HI of their own. This is an attack right through the defending troops, which if successful means you have a



came from Outside." The Dark Lord that Bombadil refers to is probably Melkor and not Sauron. But in that case, Tom was already there even before the Valar entered the world, dismissing the theory that he is a Maia. Bombadil could be part of the Music of the Ainur and that would explain why he was there in the beginning, but if he was indeed part of the music, it is not said why he exists.

Other possibilities (compatible with the above theory) are that he is an abstract, a concept; possibly the embodiment of Arda itself, a "Father Nature" if you will, or some kind of 'spirit' which (unlike the Maiar) was of non-divine nature. Not only does the Ring have no effect on him, Tom himself seems unable to affect the Ring in return which shows that Tom was outside the divine plan and struggle and had no position in it. When Goldberry was asked by Frodo Baggins who he was, she simply said "He is".

#### Other Names

Gandalf calls Tom Bombadil the eldest being in existence; this is also evident by his Sindarin name Iarwain Ben-adar ("Eldest and Fatherless"). Dwarves called him Forn, Men Orald. All these names apparently mean "Eldest". However, Fangorn is also called the eldest inhabitant of Middle-earth. If Tom Bombadil is indeed not a normal being but rather a supernatural being or "concept" this is, however, not necessarily a contradiction.

#### Inspiration

Tom Bombadil may have been inspired by the character Väinämöinen (spelt 'Wainamoinen' in English) in the Finnish national epic Kalevala, or Father Francis Xavier Morgan at the Birmingham Oratory:

#### Further Reading

*What is Tom Bombadil?* by Steuard Jensen (a detailed explanation)  
<http://tolkien.slimy.com/essays/Bombadil.html>

*Who is Tom Bombadil?* by Gene Hargrove (a somewhat unorthodox but well-presented essay)  
<http://www.cas.unt.edu/~hargrove/boombadil.html>

*Count, Count, Weigh, Divide* discusses Tom Bombadil's moral aspects at length  
<http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/olkien/76065>

*Images of Tom Bombadil*  
<http://images.google.com/images?q=%22Tom+Bombadil%22>

town, and have also crippled the Woodmen. On the negative side, you have practically given Give Goblin Gate away to Dwarves through a possible threat!

Note: I would use this tactic only when I am extremely confident in the Mordor players' experience in the game, and their commitment to support you in any need that may arise.

#### Plan B. Attack Sinda.

The choice target here is 2514. You could take this PC in the same manner as 2711 on turn 2 (as detailed above), and there is much less chance of being blocked. But there is one huge problem: you must learn the Reveal Population Centre spell, and get lucky and reveal 2514 on turn 2. If not, then reinforcements can arrive and foil your plan. Plus you are also vulnerable to the FP taking both Dol Gudur and Goblin Gate on the same turn again.

Note: I would use this tactic when there are only a couple of players on my side that I am confident are committed to keeping Dragon Lord in game.

#### Plan C. Attack Northern Gondor.

The choice target is 2617. This is simple: Duran increases the tax rate to 60 and moves on 2617. He normally leads the HC army, but any commander will do. Capture the PC! I have tried threatening it with 1900 troops: yes it can work, but as I have learned, it could also fail. And you cannot afford any failed threats as the Dragon Lord. Duran can then move to 2520 and take it the following turn. This allows you the most options to block the Eothraim if the threat is real turn on turn 2, whilst still leaving a garrison. Never leave any position without a capital garrison: you're just asking to be taken out if you do.

Note: I would use this tactic in any game. It's solid and it's safe and there is not much the FP can do about it. Even if the HC at 3116 move towards you, it still helps Mordor. And your fate is heavily tied to the Mordor nations around the Black Gate doing well.

#### Aiding the Dragon Lord

It has been suggested that the Dragon Lord should switch their back-up capital in Mordor. Now I have tried this, and while it helps Long Rider and the DS defend the back door into Mordor tremendously, it also hurts the Dragon Lord way too much in my view. Khamul usually starts at your safe MT in Mordor, and it is simply bad use of gold: the Dragon Lord cannot afford to waste any to hire an army here. If the transfer cannot happen on turn 1 then simply do not do it at all. But even doing so on turn 1 prevents Khamul from creating a camp for 2 turns, which is not only bad but insane. (I have no idea what I was thinking when I suggested the transfer!)

The absolute best thing the DS team can do for the Dragon Lord to help prevent the need for gold shipments to him in the future is for the Dark Lieutenants to transfer their emissary artifact to the Dragon Lord on turn 2, so the Dragon Lord can have that character post a camp and move to 2809. With the extra skill and a 20 point emissary artifact, he can then increase it to a MT. And this is a huge benefit, because as long as the Dragon Lord has 2809 he can establish a military force in Mirkwood, and scare 4 FP nations to death mid-game, cursing to death any army stopping so they can try and assault this stronghold.

#### Naming new characters.

This is the easy part. You need two 30 agents with a chance of stealth, and two 30 emissaries. The Agents are to support your team with recons: try to convince them to let one agent train to 40 skill by stealing whilst the other recons, then swapping. Scouting for characters at 80 rank should even find low level agents with stealth. The two 30 emissaries, on the other hand, are for your own survival! Yes, 30 emissaries will create camps at 30, but you must name them the first 2 turns, which means that should have a 40 emissary by turn 4. Also note that I had Maben, with 26 emissary skill on turn 3 create a successful camp, and got 7 points of skill making him a 33 emissary while also gathering Tinculin. The following turn: poof, Elrond shows up with my free 13 loyalty camp recon.

Now your team-mates, or at least, some of them, will be pressuring you into becoming a character nation with your 40 and 50 rank mages. Resist this. Every character *must* support your attempt to grow your economic tax base and resource base: hopefully faster than the FP can reduce it, in particular by taking Dol Gudur and Goblin Gate. You need to Gain 15k in tax base just to make up for those two alone. Speaking of which, do not fret over losing Dol Gudur, as it is expensive. But, that said, but guard it well: you never know, you might just get lucky and hold it!

While these are only vague opening strategies, if you think along these lines and accept the overall strategy of your rebuilding your nation on turn 0, then you will need very little gold support from other nations to survive. And in addition, if the game lasts 15+ turns you will actually be one of the most powerful and feared Dark Servants! So have fun with this position, and good luck, even if we are on opposite sides in a future game.

# 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>2070</b>	<b>John Seals</b>
2	1849	Mike Sankey
3	1797	Andrew Jones
↑4	1794	Steven Johnston
5	1767	Sam Roads
↓6	1758	Clint Oldridge
↓7	1725	Robert Turkot
↑8	1713	John Stagoll
↓9	1712	Jason Vafiades
↓10	1709	Richard Wilson

## Maia Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
↑2	1856	Andrew Jones
↓3	1841	Alan Jeffrey
↑4	1838	John Briggs
=5	1832	Jeff Glover
↑=5	1832	Alain Deurwaerder
↑7	1830	Clint Oldridge
↓8	1828	Michael Mulka
↓9	1826	Mike Barber
↓10	1822	Randall Brady

## Istari Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>2372</b>	<b>Steven Mcabee</b>
↑2	2098	Phillip Vogel
3	2053	Ernest Hakey
↓4	2033	Clint Oldridge
↑5	1971	Mike Sankey
↓6	1961	Chelsey Coughlin
↑7	1956	Andrew Jones
↓8	1909	Frederick Young
↓9	1900	Kim Andersen
↑10	1826	Jesper Lyster

## Nazgul Rating

Ranking	Nazgul	Player	Games Played	Games Won	Games Dropped
↑1	100%	James Adams	7	7	
=2	100%	Rober Turkot	7	7	
=2	100%	David Ruzic	7	7	
↑=4	100%	Tom Woestman	6	6	
↑=4	100%	Michael Childs	6	6	
↑=4	100%	Rick Halvorsen	6	6	
=7	100%	Marcin Dylewski	5	5	
↑=7	100%	Adrian Sheridan	5	5	
9	92%	Mike Sankey	13	12	
10	92%	Sam Roads	12	11	2

## Ainur Rating

Ranking	Rating	Team Name Or Captain
<b>1</b>	<b>1806</b>	<b>David Ruzic</b>
↑2	1790	GM
↑3	1788	Aussie
↓4	1760	US 2
↓5	1755	The Sarumen – Retired
↑6	1753	John Simpson
↓7	1711	Andraste
↓8	1704	US 1
9	1688	Jerry Mellerick
10	1675	Marc Pinsonneault

## Council of the Wise – Enemy Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Michael Reisfeld</b>
2	8	Ricard Pitarque
↑=2	8	John Briggs
↓=4	7	R Kevin Given
↑=4	7	Guy Roppa
↓=4	7	Paul Brandon
↑=4	7	Perry Carlson
↓=4	7	Clint Oldridge
↑=9	6	Matt Ashley
↓=9	6	Steve Muller

## Council of the Wise – Individual Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
2	25	Ricard Pitarque
3	21	Brad Brunet
4	20	Clint Oldridge
5	17	Michael Welsch
↑=6	16	Derren Beyer
=6	16	Harry Nikokavouras
=8	14	David Holt
=8	14	Matt Ashley
↑=10	13	John Gates
=10	13	Jeffrey Horne
=10	13	Jesper Lyster
↑=10	13	Simon Tvede

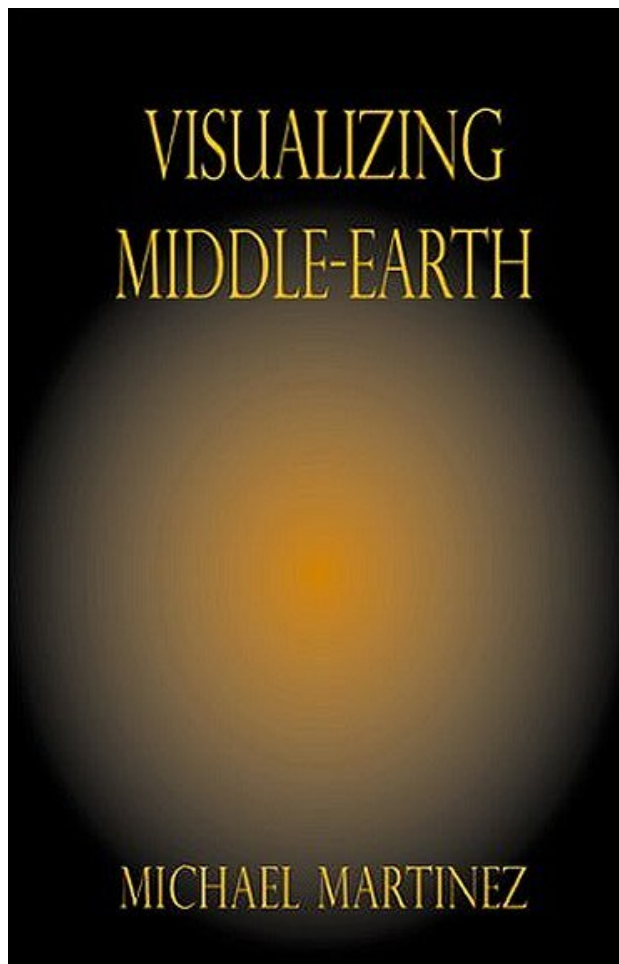
## Council Of the Wise – Team Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
<b>=1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Ricard Pitarque</b>
<b>=1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Ernest Hakey</b>
=3	21	Manolis Perakis
=3	21	Brad Brunet
↑5	20	John Briggs
↓6	18	Michael Welsch
↑7	17	Mike Barber
↓=8	16	David Holt
↓=8	16	Ian Etchells
↓=10	14	Matt Ashley
↓=10	14	Panayatois Mertikopoulos

## Complex Tip

Artefacts.

Moving them around can take a lot of time and co-ordination, but can be extremely effective - especially for nations that don't start with anything powerful. A quick surprise challenge with a Northman commander and the Long Rider cavalry becomes toast. Noldo start with way too many items to be effectively used (as does the Witch King, and Dog Lord, whilst the Cloud Lord in many situations will always end up with more). Why is this under complex not simple? You tell me... :-)



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### Articles Wanted!

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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