WARHAMMER WARBANDS

Multiplayer Warbands Games

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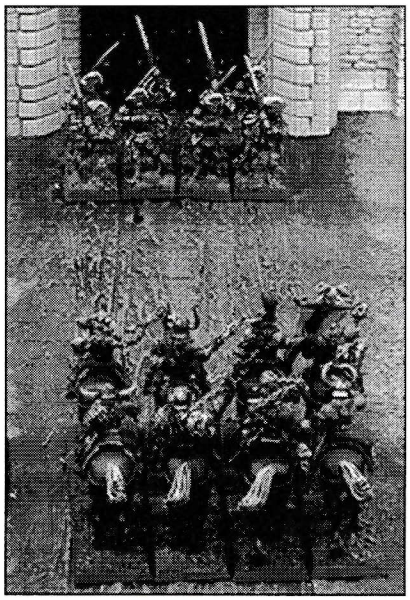

Multiplayer tabletop battle games are always something of a challenge for players and games designers alike. The simple fact is that most battle games are designed for two players and two players alone. Whenever a third (or fourth, or fifth...) player is introduced, some very fundamental game mechanics have to be changed. These changes can introduce confusion and unfairness into what was, in the original two-player version, a relatively fair and balanced system.

However, multiplayer games can still be fun to play and are often the only option when an odd number of players show up for an evening's gaming. Players should begin multiplayer games with the understanding that they generally won't be as equitable and elegant as the standard one-on-one match up. However, multiplayer games can be a fun alternative to more standard games of Warhammer. On the next few pages, we discuss two general approaches toward multiplayer battle gaming, the first of which is generally more fair and competitive than the second. We also suggest some ways that these approaches can be used for games of Warhammer warbands.

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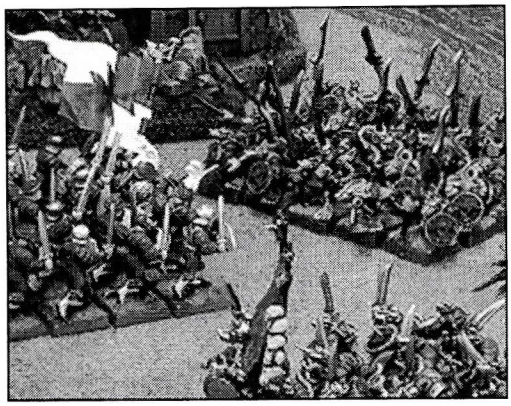
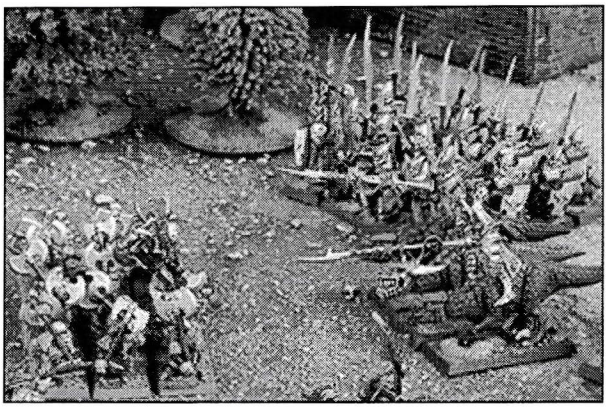
Multiplayer Warbands Games – Approach 1: Teams



One generally acceptable solution is to divide players into two teams. Rule sets designed for two players generally function well for games of multiple players divided into two teams. Each team functions essentially as one army or warband and moves in the same Move Phase, casts spells in the same Magic Phase from the same pool of Power Dice, shoots in the same Shooting Phase, and so on. Sometimes a few extra rules, such as those in the Allies and Multiplayer Games chapter of **The General's Compendium**, can add a bit of extra interest to the "team" approach to multiplayer games. However, by and large, team multiplayer games function much like regular games of Warhammer. Each side simply has more than one Army book's worth of troops to choose from.

In terms of warbands games, we have already used this team approach in the mega-battle games that end each week of the warbands escalation league. The rules for these mega-battles were first printed in **White Dwarf 297** and can be downloaded here. These mega-battle rules could be easily adapted by players interested in a multiplayer one-off game, and the article includes four different scenarios to choose from. Simply drop the **Warbands & Teams** rules from the scenarios and divide the players up into teams of equal points value. For instance, two warbands of 500 points each (for a total team value of 1,000 points) could face three warbands with values of 400 points, 350 points, and 250 points (again, a total team value of 1,000 points). Whenever scenario rules refer to statistics or ratings particular to escalation leagues, simply dice off to decide the issue. For instance, if the scenario indicates that the warband team with the lower combined league point score may choose to go first or second, players should simply dice off to determine who may choose to go first or second.

Players could also take the team approach to multiplayer games and modify the basic Little War scenario (from **WD296** and downloadable here). Suggested modifications include the following.



- Change the size of the battlefield and the shape of the Deployment Zones to something appropriate to the number of players and the size of the warbands involved. A 4' x 6' table for four to six warbands is about right.
- Each team's Deployment Zone should be divided into equally sized sections, one for each warband on the team. Deployment should change such that one player from Team 1 deploys a unit/model; then one player from Team 2 deploys a unit/model; then another player from Team 1 deploys a unit/model; then another player from Team 2 deploys a unit/model; and so on, until all units/models are deployed.
- There are two possible ways of altering the **Unknown Objective** rule. Either each team has a single **Unknown Objective**, or each player has his own **Unknown Objective**. Below are two revised Unknown Objectives Tables for you to choose from.

Multiplayer Unknown Objectives Table 1 (Each Team Has a Single Unknown Objective)	
D6 Result	**Objective**
1	**Assassinate.** The team of warbands must slay at least half of the enemy Commanders.
2	**Invade.** At least one-third of the starting Unit Strength of your warband team must end the game in your opponents' Deployment Zones. Fleeing models don't count toward this total.

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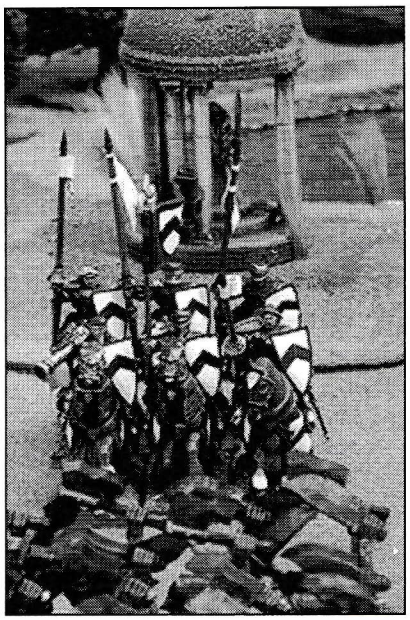
Multiplayer Warbands Games – Approach 2: Every Man for Himself



The second approach to multiplayer games allows for an individual player to rise to the top of a number of opponents but requires a more radical restructuring of the game rules and thus tends to be not quite as fair or competitive as the standard two-player and the team multiplayer versions. However, many players love this "every man for himself" (EMFH) style of game, and this approach has been used successfully in the multiplayer rules for Mordheim (see **The Best of Town Cryer** or **Mordheim: Annual 2002**).

In the EMFH approach, each player gets his own player turn in every game turn. Thus, in a four-player game, there would be four player turns each game turn, instead of two player turns as in a standard game of Warhammer. As you can imagine, the EMFH approach radically alters the basic structure of Warhammer, which can result in rules problems and imbalances.

There are several drawbacks to the EMFH approach. First, it can make for a long game with long waiting periods between turns for each player, particularly when four or more players are playing. Of course, in warbands games, the small size of the forces reduces turn length, but the EMFH approach would not be practical for full-sized Warhammer games. Second, the EMFH style can be unfair. Should two or more players gang up on your force, you would be hard pressed to do well in the game. Conversely, a highly effective strategy can be to hold back, let the other players damage each other for several turns, and then sweep in for final victory. Third and perhaps most importantly, Warhammer was designed as a two-player game. Adding additional turns can cause complications, which require a few stop-gap rules to resolve. Examples of these rules are explained in **Special Rules** section of the Little War with Many Factions scenario.

Even with all of these drawbacks however, the EMFH approach to multiplayer games has been vastly popular with Mordheim players for years. A similar approach works reasonably well for warbands-scale games and can make for some very enjoyable, if not exactly tournament-competitive, battles. We urge you to give them a try, either with the Little War with Many Factions scenario or with scenarios of your own design.

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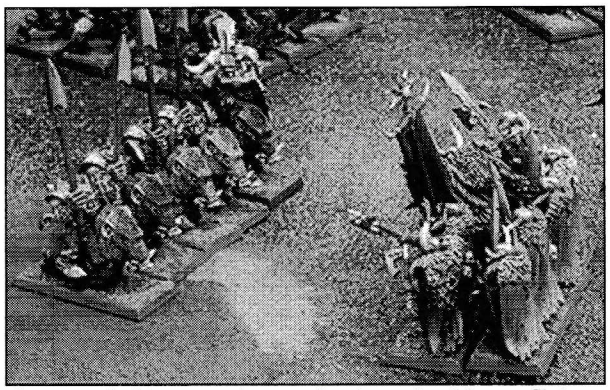
Multiplayer Warbands Scenario: A Little War with Many Factions



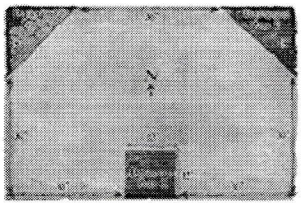
OVERVIEW
This scenario allows three to six warbands to do battle at the same time. Playing this scenario can be a fun way for a gaming group to spend an evening, but the game is not appropriate for escalation league or campaign play. As such, we strongly advise using this scenario only for one-off games.

There are many ways to imagine the scene of such a battle. Perhaps a several warbands have converged on the same tactically important piece of ground, or several small forces have been dispatched as patrols before the start of a major battle involving multiple armies. Intrigues, private grudges, and obtuse goals promise to make this conflict a swirling and bloody melee.

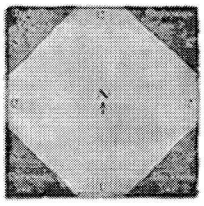
ARMIES
Three to six warbands may participate in this scenario. Each player chooses a warband per the rules in **White Dwarf 296** and **297** to an agreed upon points value up to 500 points.

BATTLEFIELD
The battlefield may be set up in any mutually agreeable manner. However, no more than four pieces of terrain may be used, and no single terrain piece may have a footprint larger than 12" x 12".

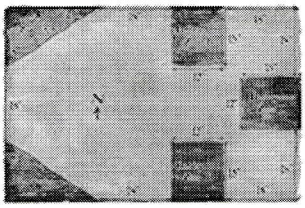
DEPLOYMENT
Deployment style is determined by the number of warbands participating in the game. Select the appropriate map and randomly determine which board edge is the northern edge.



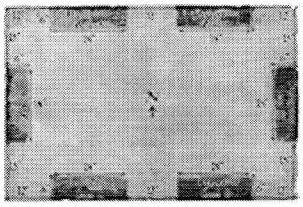
3-Player Map



4-Player Map



5-Player Map



6-Player Map

Thereafter, each participant rolls 2D6. Reroll to settle any ties. The highest-scoring player selects his Deployment Zone first. The second-highest-scoring player selects his next, and so on, until all players have selected a Deployment Zone.

Starting with the highest-scoring player and working down to the lowest-scoring player, each player takes it in turn to deploy one unit or individual model until all models are deployed. Unit champions are always deployed with their units. Character models may be deployed with a unit, if they will begin the game associated with that unit, or on their own as a unit of one.

Scouts and other models or units with special deployment rules may not use those special rules and must be deployed normally in this scenario.

WHO GOES FIRST?
Each player rolls 2D6. Reroll to settle any ties. The highest-scoring player goes first. Play proceeds clockwise (based on the position of each player's Deployment Zone) around the

table thereafter.

LENGTH OF GAME
The game lasts 8 turns.

SPECIAL RULES

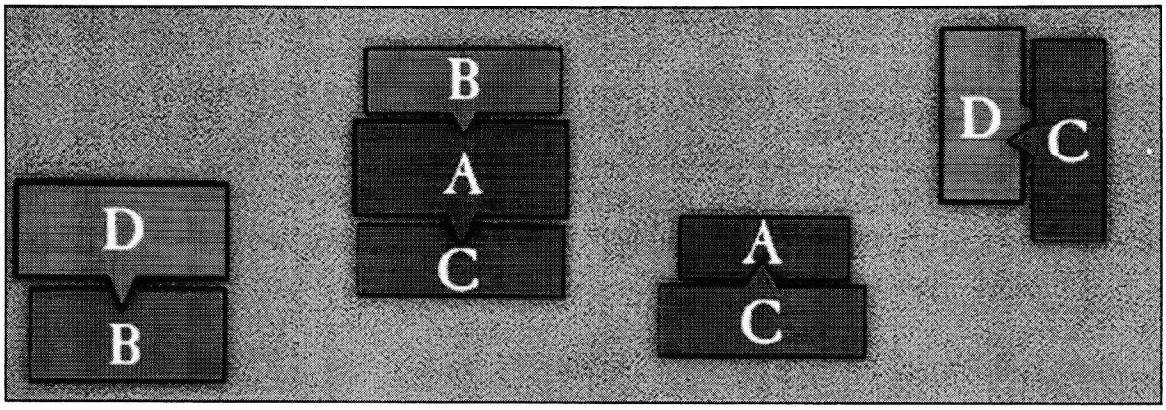
Unknown Objectives. Each player has two Unknown Objectives that he must attempt to accomplish before game's end. Before the Deployment Phase, each player should first roll a D6 and consult the table below to determine a primary objective and then do so again for a secondary objective (reroll if the secondary objective is the same as the primary). Players should secretly write down both of their objectives and indicate which is primary and which is secondary.

Unknown Objectives Table	
D6 Result	**Objective**
1	**Assassinate.** Your warband must slay the Commander of one of your enemies. Roll another D6 to determine whose commander is your target: 1-2, the player to your left; 3-4, the player to your right; 5, the player two to your left; 6, the player two to your right. As long as the Commander in question is off the table at the end of the game, you fulfill this objective, regardless of whether you are responsible.
2	**Invade.** At least one-third of the starting Unit Strength of your warband must end the game in an opponent's Deployment Zone (fleeing models don't count toward this total). Roll another D6 to determine your target Deployment Zone: 1, that of the player to your left; 2, that of the player to your right; 3-4, that of the player two to your left; 5-6, that of the player two to your right.
3	**Capture the Colors.** Your warband must capture at least one enemy standard and control it at the end of the game. If, after deployment, you discover that no opponents have standards, you must announce your original **Unknown Objective** and then secretly choose a replacement (choose – don't roll) and write it down.
4	**Annihilate.** Your warband has been assigned the task of reducing the numbers of one particular enemy. Roll another D6 to determine your target warband: 1-2, that of the player to your left; 3-4, that of the player to your right; 5, that of the player two to your left; 6, that of the player to your right. The target warband must be reduced to 50% or less of its starting Unit Strength by the end of the game. Units or models that are fleeing at the end of the game or that have fled off the board count as destroyed. Note that your warband does not have to do the dirty work itself. If other warbands are responsible for the destruction of your target warband, you can still fulfill your objective.
5	**Survive.** You must survive to fight another day. To fulfill this objective, your warband must end the game with at least 60% of its starting Unit Strength alive, on the board, and not fleeing at the end of the game.
6	**Choose.** Choose any objective from those listed above for your warband.

Turn Order. Each player plays a discrete turn. Therefore, there will be 3-6 player turns for each game turn played. For instance, in a four-player game, there would be 4 player turns in Turn 1, 4 player turns in Turn 2, and so on.

The player whose turn it is generates Power Dice in his Magic Phase as normal. All other players generate Dispel Dice in this Magic Phase but generate one fewer than normal. A player may attempt to dispel enemy spells only if models from his own warband will be affected. If multiple players' troops could be affected by the same spell, they may NOT combine their Dispel Dice pools; however, each player potentially affected by the spell may make a separate Dispel attempt.

In the Combat Phase, only those units/models involved in a fight with units/models of the player whose turn it is will fight. For instance, in the situation shown in the diagram, it is the Combat Phase of Player B's turn. Thus, only the two fights on the left of the table would be resolved in this player turn, as both fights involve Player B. On the furthest left, Player D's unit would fight Player B's unit in this player turn. Second to the left, Players A, B, and C would all fight in this player turn. Although Player C is not directly engaged with Player B, whose turn it is, Player C's unit is engaged in a fight involving Player B; thus, Player C will fight in that engagement only in this player turn. The other two fights occurring on the board would not be resolved in this player turn, as neither of them involve Player B's units.



Otherwise, play should proceed as in a normal game of Warhammer.

VICTORY CONDITIONS
Victory Points are scored for fulfilling objectives and nothing else. Players score 2 Victory Points for fulfilling their primary objective and 1 Victory Point for fulfilling their secondary one. The player with the most Victory Points at the end of the game wins. If two or more players are tied for first, they share victory. If all players are tied for first, the game is a draw.

3	**Capture the Colors.** Your warband team must capture a number of enemy standards equal to the number of individual warbands you face and control them at the end of the game. If, after deployment, you discover that the opposing warband team does not include a sufficient number of standards for you to fulfill this objective, you must announce your original **Unknown Objective** and then, as a team, secretly choose a replacement (choose – don't roll) and write it down.
4	**Annihilate.** Your team must destroy the enemy team by reducing it to 50% or less of its starting Unit Strength by the end of the battle. Enemy units or models that are fleeing at the end of the game or that have fled off the board count as destroyed.
5	**Hold Territory.** Your team must attempt to control the battlefield. At the end of the game, divide the table into four quarters. Your team must control more table quarters than the enemy. To control a table quarter, your team must have a unit at the minimum starting size for warbands in the table quarter with no enemy units at minimum starting size in the quarter. Fleeing units don't count. Independent character models cannot control table quarters.
6	**Choose.** Choose any objective from those listed above for your warband team.

Multiplayer Unknown Objectives Table 2 (Each Player Has a Single Unknown Objective)	
D6 Result	**Objective**
1	**Assassinate.** Your warband must slay the Commander of one randomly determined enemy warband. Roll a die before the game begins to determine which warband. If this Commander is removed from the board for any reason, even if your warband is not responsible, you fulfill your objective.
2	**Invade.** At least one-third of the starting Unit Strength of your warband must end the game in the Deployment Zone of one randomly determined enemy warband. Fleeing models don't count toward this total. Roll a die before the game begins to determine which warband's Deployment Zone.
3	**Capture the Colors.** Your warband must capture at least one enemy standard and control it at the end of the game. If, after deployment, you discover that the enemy warbands have no standards, you must announce your original **Unknown Objective** and then secretly choose a replacement (choose – don't roll) and write it down.
4	**Annihilate.** Your warband must destroy the enemy by reducing one randomly determined enemy warband to 50% or less of its starting Unit Strength by the end of the battle. Roll a die before the game begins to determine which warband. Enemy units or models that are fleeing at the end of the game or that have fled off the board count as destroyed. If the target warband is reduced to 50% or less for any reason, even if your warband is not responsible, you fulfill your objective.
5	**Hold Territory.** Your warband must attempt to control the one particular section of the battlefield. After table sides have been chosen but before deployment begins, divide the table into quarters and choose one quarter as your target. At the end of the game, your warband must control that table quarter. To control a table quarter, you must have a unit at minimum warband starting size in the table quarter with no enemy units at minimum starting size in the quarter. Fleeing units don't count. Independent character models cannot control table quarters. Allied models may be in the table quarter but cannot claim it for your warband.
6	**Choose.** Choose any objective from those listed above for your warband.

- Victory Conditions function as they do in the Little War scenario with one exception. If you are using Multiplayer Unknown Objectives Table 2, calculate Victory Point bonuses as follows. Each warband that achieves its **Unknown Objective** in battle may claim a bonus number of Victory points equal to 20% of the enemy team's starting points value, divided by the number of warbands in the player's own team. Thus, if one warband of a three-warband team achieved its **Unknown Objective** against an enemy team of 900 points, that warband would earn 60 bonus Victory Points [i.e., 60 = (20% of 900 or 180)/3 warbands on the team].
- The rest of the rules should function much as they are listed in the Little War scenario. Simply replace "team of warbands" wherever "warband" is listed.