

COSMOS Fantasy

Advanced tactics system

Optional add-on for the basic game rules

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This document details how the *advanced tactics system* from the COSMOS Fantasy advanced game may be used in the basic game. In games using the advanced tactics system but otherwise using the basic game rules, the rules detailed here replace the tactics rules (section 15.6) of the basic game rule book.

Apart from the tactics rules as such, a few other sections of the basic game rule book have to be modified to properly document the changes. These are section 15.7.2 on how a battle segment is executed and sections 2.3.2 and 11.7.1 on the effective presence and blocking size of units.

After the modified rules sections follows a few notes for players used to the basic game tactics rules.

Cross references within this document are printed in the same style as the main text, e.g. section 15.6, while cross references to the original basic game rule book are printed in italics style, e.g. section 15.6.

2 The game world

2.3 Units

2.3.2 Effective presence *

In some aspects of the game the *effective presence* of a unit is used. This is a number that expresses how much the unit can influence its surroundings.

The basic effective presence of a mass unit is computed as follows: The number of individuals currently in the unit is divided by the number of individuals in a standard unit of its size. The basic effective presence an individual unit is one (although most individuals have no effective presence after the modifications below).

The basic effective presence is multiplied by the unit's current *combat efficiency factor* (see section 15.3) which is a number between 0 and 1, usually expressed as a percentage. The resulting number is then modified by the following cumulative special modifiers:

1. Units which do not "influence control" have no effective presence. This means most individual units have no effective presence.
2. The effective presence is halved for a unit which has any of the movement tactics "flee", "stay", "trail", "cover" or "follow" (see section 15.6) or which has no attacks its tactics allow it to use (a missile attack is only deemed usable if the missile tactics of the unit are "use missiles").
3. The effective presence is halved for a unit which is either "stupid" or "mindless".

Example:

A Light Infantry unit (standard size: 50 individuals) of 60 individuals with a combat efficiency factor of 75% and the tactics "attack" has an effective presence of 0.9 (60/50 times 0.75).

11 Movement

11.6 Blocking *

11.6.1 Blocking size *

The success of a blocking attempt depends on the *blocking size* of the units involved. The blocking size of a unit is equal to the number of individuals in it (see section 2.3.1) multiplied by the unit's combat efficiency factor (see section 15.3) and adjusted as follows:

- Hasted units count double.
- Stupid or disabled units, units with movement tactics "flee" or units without any usable melee or missile attack do not count. A melee attack is not usable if the melee tactics of the unit are "never melee" and a missile attack is only deemed usable for blocking if the missile tactics of the unit are "use missiles" (see section 15.6.2).

- Mindless or dominated units count only half.
- Units with movement tactics “stay”, “trail”, “cover” or “follow” or with only missile attack capability count only half (see section 15.6.1).
- Units which cost more than one population per individual to recruit have their blocking size multiplied by the number of population per individual (all such units are special mounted units which have more than one rider per mount, e.g. Elephant Riders).

15 Battles

15.6 Tactics

In battles the behaviour of each unit is determined by its *placement*, its *movement tactics*, its *melee tactics*, its *missile tactics* and its *sortie tactics*. Together all these make up the unit’s *battle tactics*. The combination of the placement and the movement, melee and missile tactics is known as the *base tactics* of the unit.

To fully understand the interplay between the different tactics it is necessary to be familiar with how battles are resolved (see section 15.7) but this should not be necessary to get the basic understanding needed to choose the right tactics for your units under most circumstances. In fact you can probably also skip sections 15.6.1, 15.6.2, 15.6.3 and 15.6.4 on a first reading and go straight to section 15.6.5 where the base tactics are described in sufficient detail to allow you to choose between them.

15.6.1 Movement tactics *

The movement tactics are the most important part of the battle tactics and can be one of *charge*, *penetrate*, *advance*, *follow*, *cover*, *trail*, *stay* or *flee*. The meanings of these are explained below.

charge: Advance towards the enemy to engage them in melee or missile combat. If the unit has the special combat ability “charge” and the terrain of the battlefield permits, the unit will charge. When enemies are closer than the maximum missile attack range of the unit it has the option of falling back.

penetrate: As “charge”, but if there are both enemies who advance and enemies who try to stay behind the lines then attempt to reach the hindmost enemies. There is a penalty on combat performance if the penetration attempt does not succeed. Penetration will succeed if the unit is faster than all enemies it encounters, if all enemies are engaged by other units, or if the unit can fly over or bury under all enemies. Fall back as for “charge” above.

advance: Advance towards the enemy to engage them in melee or missile combat. Never charge. Fall back as for “charge” above.

follow: Try to keep up with the front-most units which advance, charge or attempt to penetrate. Units with the special combat ability “charge” will use it if required (i.e. if the front-most units charge). Units with movement tactics “follow” never advance on their own. If a unit with movement tactics “follow” should find itself in front of all units with more aggressive movement tactics, it may fall back.

cover: Advance or charge as far as the front-most units with less aggressive *placement* than the unit itself. Fall back if in front of all units with less aggressive placement.

trail: Follow the rear. Advance only as far as all other units advance. Fall back if in front of any friendly units.

stay: Stay in place.

flee: Stay in place and flee if attacked (or even when it looks like the unit could be attacked).

Movement tactics can only be selected through one of the base tactics “packages” described in section 15.6.5.

15.6.2 Melee and missile tactics *

The melee and missile tactics of a unit determine which attack mode(s) it will prefer to use. The melee tactics are one of:

prefer melee: Prefer to use melee attacks to missile attacks. The unit will advance or charge if it has aggressive movement tactics and the option to advance on an enemy it can attack in melee.

defer melee: Prefer to use missile attacks to melee attacks. If the unit can use a missile attack it will do so. If not, but if it can attack in melee, it will do so instead. Otherwise, if it has aggressive movement tactics and the option to advance on an enemy which it can attack with missile or melee attacks, it will advance or charge.

never melee: Never voluntarily attack in melee and never advance in order to attack in melee.

The missile tactics are one of:

use missiles: The unit will use missile attacks (if it has any) and if movement tactics allow will advance to be able to attack the enemy.

use missiles if safe: The unit will only use missile attacks if it can do so without being attacked (i.e. if the enemy cannot shoot back) and will only advance on enemies in order to use missile attacks if the enemy cannot retaliate.

never use missiles: The unit will never use missile attacks or advance to use them.

15.6.3 Placement *

The *placement* of a unit determines where in the ranks it is placed. The further up front the unit is placed, the more aggressive placement is it said to have. Units with more aggressive placement get to advance and attack in melee before units with less aggressive placement (for missile attacks the placement does not matter). Furthermore, enemy units must attack your ranks “from the front”, i.e. they must attack all more aggressively placed units before less aggressively placed units at the same position on the battlefield.

The placement options are, from front to back:

in the extreme front
in the far front
in front
in the middle
in back
in the far back
in the extreme back

If units have the same placement, their melee tactics determine who enemy units must attack first: Units with melee tactics “prefer melee” must be attacked before units with melee tactics “defer melee”, which must be attacked before units with melee tactics “never melee”.

Note that as placement determines “melee initiative”, the most aggressively placed units will get to attack first in melee (except that units already engaged in melee or which are making a charge attack gets to attack before other units). Attacking first will usually be an advantage as it allows your units to select their targets among the enemy units (thus first attacking the weakest units among them, subject to their placement) rather than having the enemy pick their targets among your front-most units. However, holding some units back a little may mean that they get to attack after the enemy units have spent all their attacks on your front-most units and thus are unable to strike back. So if you have a mix of units good on defence and some which are more vulnerable or a mix of cheap and expensive units you may want to put the less vulnerable or cheap units in the extreme front and the others further back. Of course, the more expensive units are usually also those which are less vulnerable...

15.6.4 Sortie tactics *

Units inside a *walled location* (see section 15.6.6) can make a *sortie* from the location in order to engage enemy units outside. The *sortie tactics* determine when and if a unit will sortie. The sortie tactics are either “do not sortie”, “sortie” or “immediately sortie”:

do not sortie: The unit should never give up the protection offered by a walled location.

sortie: The unit should leave its walled location to engage enemy units outside only after attacks on the location do not seem likely.

immediately sortie: The unit should exit its walled location at the very beginning of the battle.

For some units, e.g. mounted units, it may be an advantage to leave fortifications to fight outside, but for most units it is best to stay behind walls. Units with defensive movement tactics (“stay”, “flee”, “trail”, “cover” or “follow”) will never sortie regardless of their sortie tactics.

During battles a unit may engage other units that are at most one location removed from their position: Units may attack units inside locations located at their position but may not attack units further in. Units in a location may sortie into the hex or location immediately outside but may not venture further out. And units which sortie from a location may not engage units inside other locations at the position they sortie to, nor may they attack or be attacked by units outside the location they sortie into. Assume for example a hex containing a city which contains a castle. Units in the hex may attack other units in the hex and units in the city. Units in the city may attack other units in the city, may storm the castle or may sortie into the hex. Units in the castle may attack other units in the castle or may sortie into the city.

All units are created with the sortie tactics “do not sortie”. An exception is mounted units and other units with severely reduced combat efficiency when fighting over walls: these units are created with sortie tactics “immediately sortie”.

15.6.5 Setting tactics

The tactics of units are changed with the “tactics” order or the “mytactics” order:

tactics *tactics*

tactics *tactics list-of-unit-numbers*

This order changes the tactics of one or more units. In the first form, which is a unit order, all mass units in the force have their tactics set as specified while the tactics of any individuals in the force will be unchanged (exception: if the force is in *questing mode* (see section 20) all its units, including individuals, will have their tactics changed). In the second form, which can be used as either a unit order or a nation order, tactics are changed only for the specified units (which may be either mass units or individuals). If the second form is used by a unit, all the units specified must be in its force. If the order is used as a nation order, the units need not be in the same force but they must of course belong to the nation.

The distinction between mass units and individuals in the *tactics* order is made to prevent the tactics of leaders being accidentally changed (and thus leaders unintentionally being put at risk in battles). However, it also prevents the tactics of a scout or other individual being set immediately when it is recruited by putting a *tactics* order in the recruit order. For this special purpose, there is a *mytactics* order:

mytactics *tactics*

This order changes the tactics of just the unit executing it.

The tactics specified in a “tactics” or “mytactics” order can be composed of two parts: The *base tactics* and some *tactics modifiers*. Either part may be omitted.

The base tactics are a “package” which selects movement tactics, melee tactics, missile tactics and placement all at once. Selecting an appropriate base tactics “package” is the only way to change the movement tactics of a unit while the other tactics settings can be changed by specifying tactics modifiers.

The base tactics “packages” are:

charge: Package: charge, in the extreme front, prefer melee, never use missiles.

This is appropriate for cavalry or other units you want to charge ahead and engage the enemy in melee combat, or if you want your units to totally ignore their own missile capability (such as when you are up against foes with a much stronger missile attack than your units).

penetrate: Package: penetrate, in back, prefer melee, never use missiles.

As charge, but for light and fast units (or special flying units) you want to try to circle around the enemy in order to reach enemy missile troops or enemy leaders not advancing with the bulk of the enemy force. Remember that there is a penalty on combat performance if the penetration attempt does not succeed.

assault: Package: advance, in the far front, prefer melee, use missiles if safe.

This is appropriate for units which you want to engage the enemy in melee if possible, using missiles only if there is no other option and there is no risk of being involved in a missile duel.

attack: Package: advance, in the middle, defer melee, use missiles.

Advance towards the enemy and shoot at them if possible, otherwise engage them in melee. This is the default for most units when they are created and appropriate except for units with very weak melee attacks and strong missile attacks.

CAVEAT: As units with “attack” tactics will prefer missiles to melee, they may tend to become involved in pure missile battles (i.e. shootouts) if they have missile capability. Even when ordered to *storm* (see section 15.6.6) units with “attack” will prefer to shoot it out with any missile units defending the walls rather than actually trying to scale the walls and engage the enemy in melee.

shoot: Package: advance, in the far back, never melee, use missiles.

These are the tactics for dedicated missile units. Advance towards the enemy and shoot at them, if possible. Fall back whenever there are no enemies to shoot at but targets could become available later even from a position further behind. Never voluntarily advance into melee.

follow: Package: follow, in the middle, defer melee, use missiles.

Appropriate for any units you do not want to advance by themselves.

cover: Package: cover, in back, defer melee, use missiles if safe.

This is really designed to try to cover units with “shoot” base tactics as the units with “cover” tactics will advance as far as the front-most unit placed “in the far back” and this usually means the front-most shooting unit.

guard: Package: trail, in front, prefer melee, use missiles if safe.

Guard the rear. Advance only as far as all other units advance (which may mean not advancing at all). Attack in melee or with missiles as targets become available.

trail: Package: trail, in the far back, never melee, use missiles if safe.

This may be appropriate for leaders who would otherwise stay by themselves at the back of the battlefield and be vulnerable to enemy units with “penetrate” tactics.

receive: Package: stay, in front, prefer melee, use missiles if safe.

Appropriate for those units you want to hold the position and stay in cover if there is a chance of enemy missile attacks.

defend: Package: stay, in the middle, defer melee, use missiles.

Do not move on the battlefield but attack enemy units which come within range. “Defend” is not a viable choice for leaders who should only be involved in the battle if there is absolutely no way around it, leaders should have tactics “flee”, or possibly “trail” to avoid being caught by enemy units penetrating your lines.

avoid: Package: stay, in the far back, never melee, use missiles if safe.

Stay in the back and try to avoid all combat, attacking only with missile attacks and only when there is no chance of anyone shooting back.

flee: Package: flee, in the extreme back, never melee, use missiles if safe.

As “avoid”, except flee if attacked. This is the default for leaders.

You can modify the base tactics “packages” above by adding tactics modifiers. Valid modifiers are any of the placement tactics of section 15.6.3, any of the melee and missile tactics of section 15.6.2 and any of the sortie tactics of section 15.6.4. If you do not specify any base tactics “package” but just specify modifiers, the order will just modify the tactics of the affected units accordingly. If you e.g. just specify “sortie” it will just change the sortie tactics of the units and leave the rest unchanged. Note that a change of base tactics of a unit does not affect its sortie tactics or vice versa.

Examples:

Set the base tactics of all mass units in the force to “shoot”:

```
tactics shoot
```

Set the base tactics of 3211 and 3112 to “assault”:

```
tactics assault 3211 3212
```

Set the base tactics of all mass units in the force to “assault” and the sortie tactics to “sortie”:

```
tactics assault and sortie
```

Set the base tactics of all mass units in the force to “shoot”, with modified placement “in front” and the sortie tactics “do not sortie”:

```
tactics shoot in front and do not sortie
```

Set the sortie tactics of 3211 and 3212 to “sortie”:

```
tactics sortie 3211 3212
```

Set the base tactics of all mass units in the force to “follow” and modify with the missile tactics “never use missiles”:

```
tactics follow and never use missiles
```

Change the melee tactics of all mass units in the force to “prefer melee” and the missile tactics to “never use missiles”:

```
tactics prefer melee and never use missiles
```

15.6.6 Walled locations and storms

A *walled location* is any kind of location offering units inside it some form of protection against attacks from units outside, *whether the location actually has walls or not*. If a location offers protection to units even without the fortifications described in section 16 it will be stated in the blurb describing it.

Units will not automatically attack enemies inside a walled location as this could be pure suicide. You must specifically order your units to *storm* in order to get them to attack units in walled locations at their position.

You use the *storm* order for this:

storm

The force spends a phase preparing to storm enemy locations at its position. At the end of the phase, units in the force will attack even enemy units in walled locations, subject to their tactics. Units with melee tactics “never melee” will not storm but may use missile attacks against enemy missile units inside walled locations if their missile tactics allow (and they have a missile attack). Units neither going to storm nor use missiles *may* advance with other enemy units if their movement tactics require this (covering or trailing units going forward). Units which are going to either storm and melee or shoot and which have movement tactics “charge”, “advance” or “penetrate” will advance on and attack enemy units in walled locations at their position, while those with movement tactics “follow”, “cover” or “trail” may advance along with other friendly units and storm or shoot as their tactics allow. Units that do not need to advance in order to storm (e.g. units in a city in which there is also an enemy held castle) may storm regardless of their movement tactics; in this case storming or not depends solely on melee tactics and shooting or not on missile tactics. After a storm, the force will *not* move into the location(s) stormed even if all enemy units are successfully eliminated, the effect of the order is just to *attack* the enemy units.

Example:

Usually you intend to move into and even gain control of a location after storming it and thus a typical order sequence for attacking and attempting to control the walled location 1933 in hex 123 would be:

```
3101:
move 123
storm
move 1933
control -1
```

Units which storm a location are subject to an extra missile attack at point blank range from the defenders (if these have missile attack capability).

Note: Because units with melee tactics “defer melee” and a usable missile attack will shoot before storming the walls, you may want to select “prefer melee” for units with weak missile attacks before giving the *storm* order if you really want all your units to storm at once.

15.6.7 Charging *

Some units have the special combat ability “charge”. Units of these types can charge if they have the movement tactics “charge” or “penetrate” (and sometimes also if it is “follow” or “cover”) *and* if they are in a terrain for which their move cost is no greater than 6 and where their terrain combat modifier is no less than 75%. A charge has three effects:

1. A charging unit gets to move twice as fast as a non-charging unit during battles and may either move two times or both move and attack in melee in the same segment (see section 15.7.2).
2. A charging unit gets a 20% bonus (does 20% more damage) on its first melee attack after a charge. The bonus is cancelled against units in “defensive positions” (see section 15.7.2) as well as units who “cancel charge attacks” (see section 15.5.1).
3. A non-charging unit attacking a charging unit in melee (or defending against a charging unit) attacks at only about 90% efficiency.

New units which can charge will usually by default have the “charge” base tactics while most other unit have “attack”.

15.7 Resolution of battles *

15.7.2 The battle segment *

A battle is divided into *battle segments*, each segment representing a short amount of time. A battle will last for as many segments as are required before the battle is resolved, i.e. until no more units wish to or can attack other units.

In each battle segment the following events occur, in the following order:

1. Morale is adjusted downwards for special effects such as fear auras.
2. Units with movement tactics “flee” will flee if there are enemy units closer to them than any friendly units with movement tactics different from “flee”.
3. Units within melee range may attack each other in melee. Only units which are capable of melee attacks and which do not have the melee tactics “never melee” will attack in melee. If a unit with melee tactics “never melee” is attacked it *will* fight back however. Units with melee tactics “defer melee”, a usable missile attack and targets in range will only engage in melee if attacked.
4. Units which may *charge* and have not already attacked in melee in this segment may now charge one step towards the enemy. Units which plan to use missiles rather than enter melee and which only need to move one step ahead to come within range of enemy units may forego this step to advance normally instead.
5. Units capable of missile attacks and which have enemies within range, did not already melee or charge and do not have missile tactics “never use missiles” may now use their missile attacks. Units which have melee tactics “prefer melee” and which can advance to engage enemy units in melee will not use missile attacks. Enemy units involved in melee may not be attacked, nor may enemies in “defensive positions”.
6. Units which charged in this segment or which charged at the end of the previous segment and have done nothing yet this segment may now make a melee attack, if there are enemy units at melee range.
7. Units may now advance one step towards the enemy if they have not done anything earlier in the segment. First units with movement tactics “advance”, “penetrate” or “charge” will advance. Units which are capable of missile attacks and which do not have tactics “prefer melee” or “never use missiles” will hesitate until other units have advanced to see if further advance is unnecessary (i.e. if enemies should come within range). Then units with movement tactics “follow”, “cover” and “trail” may advance, in that order.
8. Units may now fall back one step if they have not done anything earlier in this segment and if their tactics allow it.
9. Units which may *charge* and have not attacked in the current segment may now charge one step towards the enemy (again).

10. Units which have done nothing during the segment and that can see enemy units that may attack them either with missile attacks or a charge may now enter *defensive positions* (take cover). Units in defensive positions may not be the target of missile attacks and they cancel the 20% bonus that charging units normally get on their first melee attack.
11. Morale is adjusted upwards for any heroes present or other morale-boosting effects.
12. Each unit's morale is averaged with its pre-battle morale.

Notes for players used to the basic game tactics rules

There are two related aspects of the advanced tactics system which might cause unpleasant surprises for players used to the basic game tactics system. The first of these is that the basic system tactics "charge", "attack" and "defend" are not identical in behaviour to the advanced system tactics of the same names. In fact, basic system tactics may be translated into advanced system tactics as follows:

The basic system tactics **charge** translate into the advanced system tactics package "charge, in front, prefer melee, never use missiles, immediately sortie". The main difference here is that in the basic system, "charge" automatically activates "immediately sortie" while in the advanced system, sortie tactics have to be specified separately.

The basic system tactics **attack** translate into the package "advance, in the middle, prefer melee, never use missiles". This is a most important difference, for in the advanced system "attack" implies "defer melee" and "use missiles". This means that units with missile capability given "attack" tactics will prefer to use missiles with the advanced system while they would not use missiles with the basic system. In some ways "assault" is closer to the basic system "attack" than the advanced system "attack" is, except that even "assault" allows for the use of missiles sometimes.

The basic **defend** translates into "stay, in the middle, prefer melee, use missiles". The difference here is that in the advanced system, "defend" implies melee tactics "defer melee" rather than "prefer melee". The effect of this is that opposing units with missile capability and within the same location would under the basic system get their initial point blank missile attack and then proceed to melee, while under the advanced system they will "shoot it out" using only their missile attacks.

The main potential for unexpected behaviour of units in battles compared to the basic system will be the advanced missile tactics. In the basic system there can never be a shootout between missile units: In order for two units to engage each other if they start out at the opposite ends of the battlefield, at least one of them must have "attack" or "charge" tactics and this means it cannot use its missiles. For zero distance battlefields (at sea or within locations) there is an initial round of missile fire if the two units have tactics "defend" and/or "attack". If on the other hand one unit has tactics "avoid" or "flee" it may not use its missile attack because it will be pinned by the other unit's missiles (with "avoid" or "flee" it has missile tactics "use missiles if safe"), but since it may not attack it will start the battle in "defensive position" which means the other unit cannot shoot at it, and hence neither unit can shoot.

In the advanced system there is ample scope for shootouts because the missile tactics "use missiles" is allowed. Indeed, any units with tactics "attack" or "shoot" (or even "follow") will happily advance to within missile range of the enemy army and start shooting. Of course they will only be allowed to shoot at enemy units not in "defensive positions" and not in melee, which basically means the enemy missile units which have missile tactics "use missiles" and are thus shooting back.

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