The Throne of Cofain

Scenario description and special rules

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1 Introduction

The nations on the island of Cofain have been at peace with each other for almost a century. Only the occasional pirate or goblin raids have disturbed them, and those have always been swiftly and easily dealt with. In the interior of the island a few independent towns have grown strong, unmolested by all but the monsters living in the wilderness (and even the monsters have grown fat and lazy). It was not always so and indeed this tranquil state of affairs will not last long, for the battle for the *Throne of Cofain* is about to begin.

Once there was a mighty sorcerer who ruled all of Cofain from his castle at the centre of the island. Some say the sorcerer *created* the island while most others believe that he came from some far-away continent to which he went back when he left Cofain. In any case the island bears his name and most people think that his rule was a golden age where all prospered and lived in perfect harmony with each other. But apparently not all subjects were equally happy with the sorcerer Cofain, for about four centuries into his rule he found himself with a rebellion on his hands. The rebels were a minority and had no general support among the population except in a few towns in the south of the island, but the fact that *any* of his subjects were so unhappy with him that they would rebel first grieved and then angered the sorcerer immensely. As punishment for the ungratefulness of his subjects he called forth great hordes of monsters (whose descendants to this day inhabit much of the interior of the island) and cast a spell upon his castle which transformed the garrison into magically animated un-dead and caused the ground around the castle to sink until the castle and the treasures within came to be at the bottom of a new, great lake at the centre of the island. He then left the island Cofain and vowed never to return. But he left a message carved in 4 foot letters on a great rock on the shore of the new lake: “Let those who would inherit the throne of Cofain raise the castle from the lake, or have them wait full three centuries until the castle again shall rise by the power of its enchantment”. All this was nearly three hundred years ago.

After the sorcerer Cofain had departed there was chaos as the inhabitants were suddenly confronted with hordes of hungry monsters. Many were killed (and eaten) but most made it to the relative safety of the towns, most of which were at the shores of the island. Even the elves who had until now preferred to live in family groups scattered around the northern forests had to seek safety in numbers and form a city of their own. All the hitherto mostly peaceful inhabitants of the island of Cofain now had to arm themselves and learn how to fight off the monsters of the wild. After a decade the few towns in the interior had succumbed but the towns near shore had managed to clear their immediate surroundings of monsters and even to start cultivating the land again. Then came almost two centuries of wars: The leader of one town after another began to nourish the ambition of becoming the new ruler of all of Cofain and the first step would of course always be to conquer the nearest neighbouring town. In a complicated sequence of local wars, rebellions, alliances made and treachery committed the new nations of Cofain emerged: In the north the Blue Knighthood, in the east the Hidden Valley, in the south east the Red Warlords, in the south west the Whitehill Gnomes, in the north end of the western mountains the Dwarves, and in the north west the Greenwood Elves. The interior of the island was largely left to the monsters and here tribes of goblins forged a nation of their own. Add a few scattered settlements of hunters, some desert tribes in the south west desert, and the pirates inhabiting the small islands just off the coast of the large main island and you have Cofain as it looks today. After two centuries of strife even the most ambitious warlord tired of fighting and and peace broke out over most of the troubled island. Since then the independent towns have grown a little larger and the pirates a little more numerous but otherwise not much have happened for almost a century.

But now something will happen. For the three centuries since the sorcerer abandoned Cofain have almost passed and soon his castle will rise from the lake again. The four major nations have all recently had a change of leadership and the new

leaders are ambitious, ruthless and bored with peace (indeed they are very much like your average play by mail gamer). War will once again come to Cofain and much blood will be shed before the monsters have been driven off and a single nation controls the island, their ruler firmly enthroned on the

Throne of Cofain!

2 The Nations

Here follows a short description of the four player positions in the Throne of Cofain scenario.

The Blue Knighthood: These humans live in the north of the island. They believe in horses and heavy armour but lack the metal for equipping a large scale army. They have good potential for building a large cavalry force but cavalry may not be the ideal troops for taking on the monsters of the wilderness. The high priest of the Blue Knighthood takes care of magical protection against enemy strikes while the court wizard supplies fire strikes to weaken enemy armies.

The Red Warlords: This human nation is situated in the south east. While they are not so keen on horses they are the only nation to employ the dreaded war elephants in their army. The warlords themselves are renowned for their superior leadership skills and they will get the best out of their troops in any battle. Their mage can both provide magical protection and strike enemy armies with lightning.

The Greenwood Elves: The elves have their city in the woods of the north west. They are known to be deadly both when employing their bows and when charging the enemy astride one of their giant wolves. While the nation in general has the highest quality troops on the island, the big problem is the slow growth rate of the population which means they really cannot afford to lose many troops. The fact that they start with only one city also means that the scope for internal growth is very limited. The wood elven nobles can cast magical spells including protection spells and lightning strikes.

The Whitehill Gnomes: The gnomes live in the hills in the south west. Part of the nation's population is of dwarven origin and these few dwarves are the only really heavy troops available. Gnome wizards can call down fire strikes on enemy armies but know no spells which can protect their own troops from similar attack. Luckily both gnomes and dwarves are inherently fairly resistant to strike spells. The Whitehill Gnomes are the only nation capable of recruiting more full strength spell casters and thus have the best long term potential for delivering powerful strikes in combination.

3 Winning the game

The winner of the game is the nation which at the end of the last turn has accumulated the most victory points.

Victory points are awarded for enemies destroyed in combat, cities controlled, magic and special items owned and for the *Throne of Cofain*. At the start of the game all nations have zero victory points and as the game progresses points may be added or subtracted (it is possible to have a negative score!).

The points awarded for units destroyed in combat depend mostly on their (theoretical) combat value and range from 1 point per 100 individuals killed for human Light Infantry to 21 points per 100 individuals killed for Elephant Riders, with leaders and characters worth anything between 0.25 and 2.5 points. No points are awarded for wounded individuals or for individuals who flee, only kills count.

Cities are worth two victory points per size increment. For the original owner of a city it is worth an extra 10 points in addition to those awarded for its size. This means that if you lose a size 8 starting city of your nation you lose 26 points while if you gain a new size 8 city you gain only 16 points.

Magical and special items, whether produced by players or found by questing characters, are worth some victory points to their owner. All non-unique magic items are worth 3 victory points to whoever owns them. All non-unique non-magical items (e.g. an Adamantine Axe or a Poisoned Blade) are worth 2 victory points.

3.1 Castle Cofain and the Throne of Cofain

At the end of turn 7 (in the 12 turn game, later in a long game) *Castle Cofain* will rise from the lake at the centre of the island. The lake hex will be converted to *swamp* and the castle with its garrison of un-dead will appear. The castle contains the *Throne of Cofain* and is worth 50 victory point to any player nation owning it.

Note that as un-dead troops do not require any food or gold for their upkeep a siege of the castle will not have any effect; an attacker will have to take it by storm.

4 Design notes and game variants

Throne of Cofain is designed to serve as a player's first introduction to the COSMOS Fantasy game system. The game is designed to be a challenge in itself even without active opposition from the other players as your opponents are as inexperienced as yourself and thus may not initially put up a very good fight. Therefore the non-player positions are fairly strong, as are the roaming groups of monsters. Each monster group is set up to move around in a repeating pattern or possibly just to stay in one place. Each wilderness hex (un-owned by anyone at start) is frequented by one monster group and each monster group has a territory of at most three hexes. With this in mind you can scout nearby hexes to determine which monster group you will have to eliminate to be able to control them, what the groups' movement patterns are and how big they are. If you plan to venture out to sea (where there are three cities and a gold mine to be had on four small islands) you should also scout ahead as there are pirate forces patrolling the sea lanes much like monsters patrol the land. Monsters and pirates will never move into your starting lands or each other's territories, so once an area is cleared you are safe except from the other players' forces.

You will need more than your starting troops before you venture into the wild and you should therefore start by recruiting more troops and possibly replace some of your light troops by fewer, heavier troops. As you need to scout the surroundings for monsters you probably will not venture forth until turn 2 anyway, so use the first turn to get organised. You should also consider expanding your cities to increase your revenue (but be aware that you need to have enough food both to feed your troops and to supply your cities).

There are nice, juicy non-player towns to be taken, some of which are quite near your starting position. But be aware that every town is approximately equally far from at least two player nations and you will likely encounter the forces of one or more other players when you move out to take it. Do not be the one to take the heavy losses defeating the non-player garrison only to have your opponent squash your remaining troops and take the town itself...

Garrisons are fairly strong so usually it is worth considering a siege rather than a storm. Even non-player garrisons are not stupid however, so you need to bring enough troops that the garrison cannot neutralise your siege just by moving out of the town with "defend" tactics.

With only four player positions there is limited scope for diplomacy, but it is possible to ally with the other players. As the player nations are much closer to each other east/west than north/south the scenario almost invites the Knights to ally with the Elves in the north against the Warlord and the Gnomes in the south. But while you may agree with your ally how to split the towns between you there can only be one nation which gets the Castle Cofain and the Throne.

The scenario can be set up in various ways depending on how you prefer to learn the game system and whether you visit Cofain just as an introductory game before moving on to a more complex scenario or you are there to conquer all of the island and put yourself on the throne. You can play the game as a solo game in which case you only have to worry about the monsters and non-player nations and the challenge becomes to expand and develop as much as possible and also to take the Castle Cofain before the game ends. You can also play only two players where one takes a southern and the other a northern nation in order to have some space for initial expansion.

Throne of Cofain can be played over either 12, 18 or 24 turns. The shortest game is sufficient to learn the basics of the system, maybe attack (but probably not fully absorb) your nearest neighbouring player nation and/or possibly take the Castle Cofain. The 18 turn game is good for a north versus south war between two teams or just for four players who want to have a chance at really battling for the Castle. The 24 turn game should make it possible for a really good player to conquer most of the towns and cities in the game (plus of course the Castle Cofain) or for one player to completely eliminate the other in a north versus south two player game.

5 Questing

Around the island of Cofain the adventuring character (i.e. a character in quest mode) may find monsters and other nasties to battle as well as riches in the form of gold or magic items. There are also travel routes (ships) connecting coastal towns to other, nearby coastal towns.

Apart from a few wandering monsters, most monsters in quest mode are found in their lairs. Monster lairs are scattered around in the wilderness (hexes not controlled by anyone at the start of the game). Examples of monster lairs are bandits' dens and caves. When the monster(s) have been cleared out of a lair the lair will in not be re-populated. All lairs will contain treasure of some kind which can be picked up once the monsters are gone, so it is a good idea to *search* for a few phases after clearing out a lair to spot all the treasure there may be (small items such as magical rings are easy to miss).