

SCENARIO REPLAY using Warfare in the Age of Discovery

The summer campaigns are drawing to a close in 1522 and both armies have been weakened by months of campaigning, battles, and desertion. The French army has paused to lick its wounds and prepare winter quarters. After taking the local town they discover the Italian commander's mistress lives here and they take her hostage for ransom.

The Italian army was also moving into winter quarters when a message was received that the commander's mistress was being held for ransom. Not wanting to let this slight go unpunished the Italians and their Spanish allies move towards a rescue and one last battle before winter sets in.

The commander's mistress is being held in either the town or a large estate on the other side of the river. If a unit from the Italian army enters either place and stays there for one turn the mistress is considered rescued and the game ends.

ORDER OF BATTLE

French

- A Two units of Gensdarmes
- B Four units of crossbowmen
- C One Swiss and one German pike unit
- D Two medium guns
- E One German pike unit
- F One mounted crossbow unit

Italian

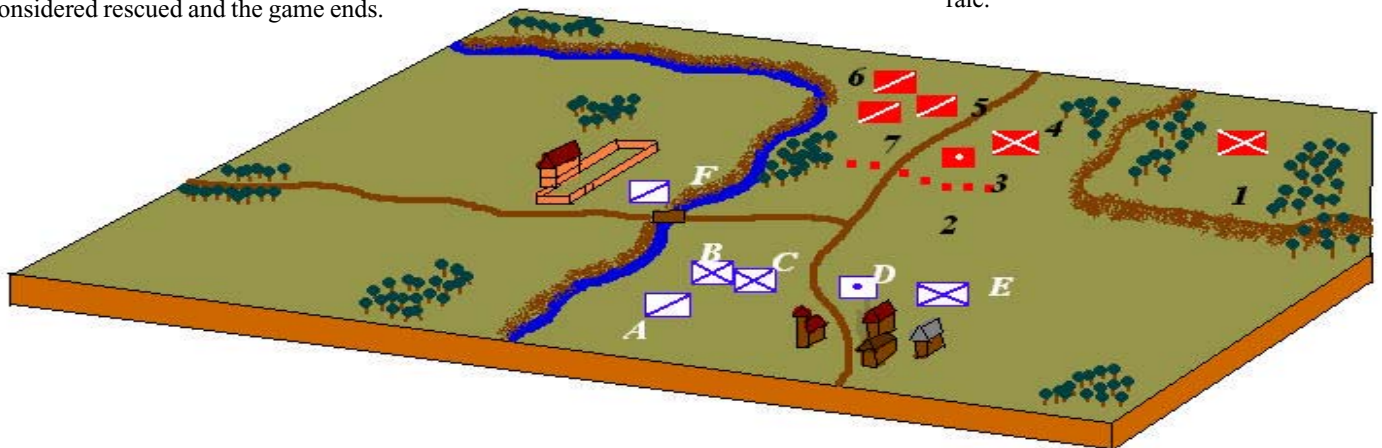
- 1. Two Spanish pike units
- 2. Two units of crossbow armed skirmishers and one unit of arquebus armed skirmishers.
- 3. Two medium guns

- 4. Two Italian pike units
- 5. One unit of stradiotti
- 6. One unit of gensdarmes
- 7. Two units of heavy cavalry in full armor.

The Italians could enter the board anywhere along the edge while the French could set up anywhere up to half way across the board.

There is a bridge across the river and the river possibly has fords along its length. A unit had to spend an entire turn searching and then roll a 5 or 6 on 1D6 to find a ford.

The numerical value of a leader's ability was randomly determined by the roll of 1D6 the first time the officer needed his ability to be added into melee or morale.



Opening Moves

Although I had playtested this set of rules with another member of the group, it was the first time we had played this as a group. Everyone confessed to having limited knowledge of the period, which made tactics innovative and unpredictable, which nicely simulated actual renaissance warfare! Although we have a veteran group and have played many periods, this one was quite a shock after we had finished.

The French deployed to cover the town and the estate, figuring that the main Italian force would try to move towards the town first while pinning the rest of the French against the river. The French cavalry was placed as to offer morale support for the infantry and to reinforce the units near the estate if the Italians crossed elsewhere. The French plan was to go on defense and reinforce critical sectors when necessary.

The Italian plan was not to waste time searching for a second crossing, but to deliver a crushing blow against the town. Covered by swarms of skirmishers, they hoped to get their infantry into striking distance of the town quickly. The Italian horse deployed to intercept the French heavies and prevent them from destroying the infantry. Hopefully, the French forces closer to the river could be delayed long enough to seize the town.

The Battle Develops

On the first turn the Italian skirmishers moved forward, screening the deployment of the artillery as it tried to set up in the middle. The cavalry began to move up in anticipation of a clash with the French heavies. The French hung back, still unsure which direction the main attack would be taking.

The French mounted crossbowmen came across the river and along with a foot crossbow unit began to exchange fire with the Italian skirmishers. The French artillery was particularly effective, driving back some of the skirmishers to their front.

After several turns near the river the Italian skirmishers emerged triumphant, driving back both French crossbow units. They in turn were hit by the French heavy cavalry, driving them back to the Italian center. The center of the battlefield became a swirling melee as the French cavalry defeated two Italian horse units, then crashed into more skirmishers, forcing

them back also. Their glory ride came to an end when they contacted the Italian pike units and on the second turn of melee they fell back. After ruining the Italian center they fell back through artillery and skirmish fire with only 4 of 12 figures remaining.

The Swiss and German pike units then both advanced, running into heavy and effective fire to clash with the Italian pikes. After what seemed an eternity to the French players they got into melee, but

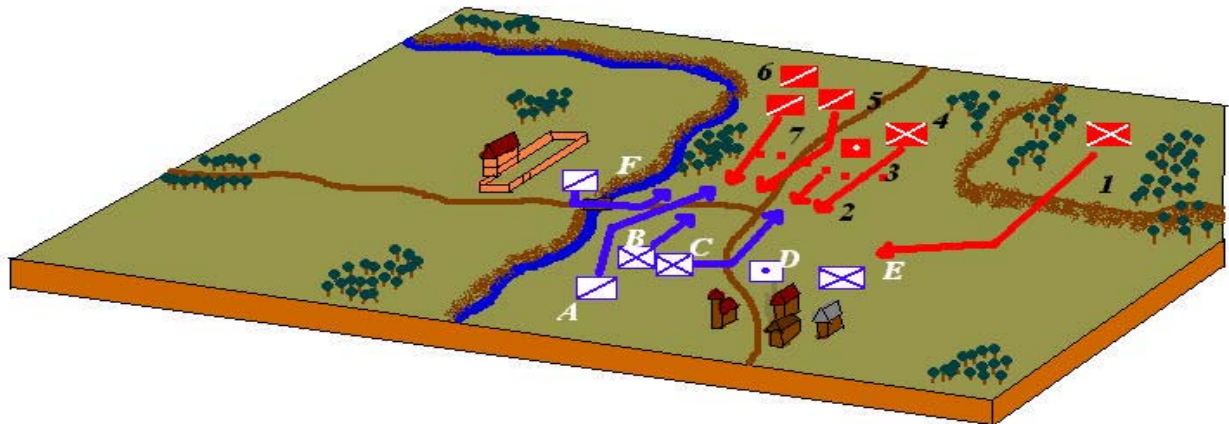


were so depleted that they had to withdraw.

This left the final action on the far flank where the Spanish clashed with a German pike unit. After several turns of the push of pike, the second Spanish unit flanked the German unit, causing it to rout away.

The French right flank was now completely gone, even as cavalry rushed to plug the hole. In the center the Italians were regrouping under artillery fire in preparation for another try. The French were busy rallying any troops they could to maintain a defense.

Both sides were now dangerously close to their withdrawal numbers as the casualties began to mount. Each side was trying to force the issue, but was running out of troops. After a few more turns and our allotted time being up, we called it a draw as both sides would probably fail their withdrawal checks next turn.



Endgame

Definitely a well fought game which saw a great deal of imagination on both sides. Even though both sides had no idea how units would perform and what their true capabilities were, it was a n unusual and interesting scenario.

The deployments created a lot of “what if” variations and it was interesting that neither side tried crossing the river other than on the bridge. The Italians

could certainly have spread the French even more thinly, while the French could have launched a counterattack from a different direction.

We learned a lot of lessons for future scenarios, mainly what each troop type could or could not do. It is advisable to keep reserves and flank supports close at hand, especially when advancing into contact. The strict rules on supports al-

most forces you into sticking close together. Crossbow armed skirmishers are something to be feared, as they can defeat almost any force in a firefight. Cavalry is fragile and must be saved for the final blow as with their small units they will not last long in the open.

Everyone had a great time and we look forward to many other scenarios in this era and with many more units.