

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



**GAME
SYSTEMS
INC.**

PO BOX 160129 Miami, FL 33116-0129

forwarding & address correction requested



100



WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Welcome once again to Whispers of the Wood, the newsletter that dares to be different!! This month--Middle-earth Monster Truck pulls!!! That's right! We're going to turn the floor of Mordor into a four foot MUUUUUD PIIIIHT!!!! See axle-swamping, gear grinding excitement as the Gondor Goliath takes on Adunaphel's Assassin!! Watch the sparks fly as Murazor's Mauler goes head to head with Khazad-Doom!! Witness the heart-stopping, blood pumping action as the Cardolan Crusher sets a collision course for the Rhodaur Rampage!!! This is one event that will turn your head so fast you'll have whiplash!!! So get your tickets now!!

We have so much to talk about and so little space. First, This is the Free Peoples issue we have been promising you for so long. We have an article by Brian Mason on strategies for the Free Peoples in the far Northwest. We also have the Top Ten Reasons to Join the Free Peoples, submitted by Steve Stetler--who did the same for The Dark Servants in the Dark Servants issue. Lastly, we have a poem entitled "War Song of the Free Folk" by Ian Keane. Unfortunately, space constrictions would not allow further articles--but that doesn't mean we can't do it again!

Now for some special announcements. First, we have a new Resultsheet format. This format will print your results in a condensed version where you will see two pages of information per page. The first page and the maps will still be the normal size. This makes the envelopes we send to you thinner and should result in faster mail times. It also makes it easier to digest information, as you will be able to see most of your pop centers by looking at only one page, six characters per glance, etc... It also makes it easier to store the information for your records. We are also including sketches of your opponents when personal challenges are fought. For those of you who wanted to know what your opponent looks like when you fight 'em, now you'll know!

We also have a new Dedicated Fax Line!!!! This line will be open 24 hours a day and will work with those machines which were incompatible with our previous arrangement. The new lines are as follows:

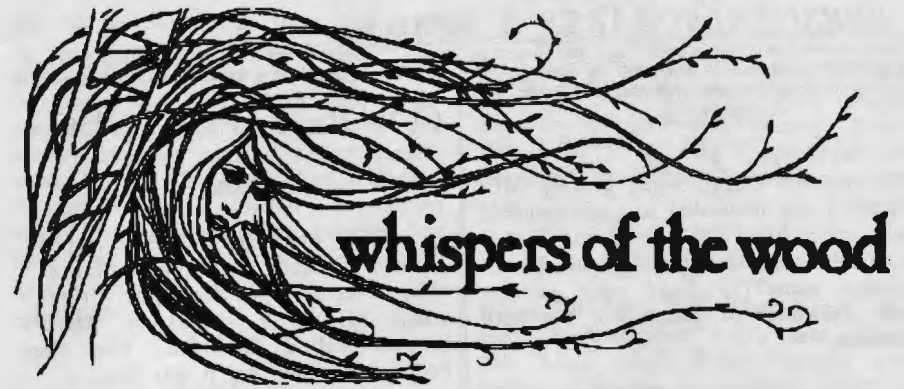
New Fax-In Line: (305) 274-5618 24 Hrs
 New Phone-In Line: (305) 274-2302 6 pm to 9 am
 New Office Line: (305) 274-5559 2 pm to 5 pm

Please note these new numbers, as they are now operating on this schedule. We hope this will solve some of those fax problems.

ATTENTION: NEW RULES/MECHANICS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Yes, we have listened to many of your suggestions and these changes are going into effect. Before I go into the rules changes, I want to list a rules CORRECTION. There was an error regarding Lost List prerequisites and artifacts which allowed access to those lists. It was brought to our attention that the Curses spell could be learned WITHOUT learning the prerequisites. That was NEVER our intention--it was an error in the code. To learn the spell, you must first learn the prerequisites. Furthermore, to use any artifact's powers or benefits, you must be of the right alignment. There was a bug regarding this restriction and this also has been fixed. These were NOT rule changes but rather corrections to fix errors with our program.

Now, to the rules changes. First, agent actions will still be used to great effect, but now many of them will be riskier than they were. There will be more chances for the agent to be injured, captured or killed while performing those actions. We are not giving specific actions which this change affects--but some



whispers of the wood

ALONG THE PATHWAYS

Words From the Wood	Inside Cover
EDITOR'S COLUMN	
Personals	1
COMMUNICATIONS.	
Top Ten Reasons to Join The Free Peoples.....	12
HUMOR	
Basic Strategy for the Free Peoples in the Far Northwest	13
STRATEGY	
War Song of the Free Folk.....	15
POETRY	
Hobbiton Square.....	15
FORUM	
Observer.....	16
HEADLINES	
Hall of Heroes	17
THE VICTORS.	

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD is a monthly publication primarily for the use and enjoyment of GSI players of STATE OF WAR and ME-PBM™. Subscription rates: \$15.00 for one year (12 issues) or \$25.00 for two years (24 issues). Individual issues cost \$1.75. GSI reserves the right to change these prices without prior notice of any type.

Credits

Editor..... Stuart Taft
 Staff..... Jason Duerstock, Keith Fast, Harold Ford,
 Michelle Heath, Gisela Perla, Sean Taft, Anthony Vialon
 Publishers..... Pete Stassun & Bill Feild Jr

This Month's Cover: "Enemy of the Free"
 by Glenn Godard

Volume X Issue #7
 Published by GAME SYSTEMS INC
 October 1, 1993
 Copyright GSI 1993

PERSONALS: BARBS & BRAGS

Every current GSI player is entitled to a free 40 word personal in this column each issue, for each game they're in. Submissions require a \$2.00 charge for each additional set of 40 words (41-80 is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to edit or refuse material deemed unsuitable.

GENERAL

Do you use E-mail when playing ME-PBM? I am interested in corresponding with other ME-PBM players via E-mail (possibly even setting up an all E-mail grudge game??). Send your address via GSI mail to Game 60, Southern Gondor.

Old players and new: Looking to trade information, especially concerning encounters and riddles. If interested, write to: Tom Walton, 3016 Friendly St., Eugene OR 97405

Thank you T.W. for the information. Your intentions are honorable and much appreciated by myself and the other new arrivals that came with me. (5)

Ryan Davis

State of War wants you! So sign up now because I cannot wait any longer for the next exciting game to start. My best advice to R. Davis is to play SOW.

SJF

STATE OF WAR

GAME 81

The Peace Talks with Virginia have failed. Actions speak louder than words could ever have. Is there any friend of Massachusetts? Player #13 will perish in due time. I have no regards for thieves in the night.

Governor of Massachusetts

Middle-earth™ PBM

GAME 3

It is over. Balin was kidnapped. Tormog killed Curugala. Flakrak's army overran and destroyed Urdrek's army, killing 3 characters. Haruth Ramam killed Baaltroc. The Free People have lost, but it was fun!

Baaltroc's Ghost

Observe--

2 years of struggle, and our Empire grows. After 52 turns, we control:

4 cities, 13 major towns, 18 towns, 24 villages and 12 camps. Not bad, considering our modest beginnings as 8th of the Nine!

The Flamelord

GAME 6

Wise Noldo,

You don't kill us when you had the chance. Now you will lose everything when we return the RING to Sauron. Drop now and save yourself an embarrassing defeat.

Urzahil
Mouth of Sauron

GAME 13

HEADQUARTERS

JOINT MORDOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

TO: The High Lords of the Noldo
(The successors to the House of Elrond)

My dear leaf-eating brethren. With the death of Elrohir, Elrond's seed is now dead. No longer will the Dark Servants -- or the rest of Middle-earth

for that matter--suffer from the deeds of his House. The recent demise of your FOUR henchmen is a foreshadowing of events to come. Your stealth no longer protects you and neither do your cousins' homes remain hidden to us. The Joint Mordor Special Operations Forces (JMSOF) neutralized nearly half a dozen Free Peoples last turn. Our ranks swell each turn with new agents. Welcome to our nightmare.

Cormic

GAME 21

Only the Long Rider remains to fight five Free Peoples. Our nation now has over one million gold in reserve, two Lord Marshals, and 17 artifacts. The One Ring will not reach Barad-dûr. Sauron is finished.

Baaltroc

GAME 35

As the dismemberment of traitorous Harad proceeds apace, the time will soon come when that pest, the Cloud Lord, will soon meet his maker as well. Haradian losses last turn: 3 characters, 2 armies, 1 city.

DOOMSDAY IS HERE!

For the Harad, that is. However, unlike the Mighty Man of Steel, you shall not rise again, but instead burn in (censored) for all eternity.

Marl Tarma was not pleased when he found out that his home, Tarmabar, was being given to the Noldo. In fact, he just had to attack someone. Sorry, Khamûl.

Baaltroc

GAME 37

It seems as though the gods do not favor the Dark Servants, even though they are bloated with victory. Don't believe it? If Tormog could speak he would tell you, but he's taking a dirt nap.

GAME 42

Where did you go, Arthedain? We used to correspond every turn. Have you been hurt? Don't worry, I'm sending a cavalry army north ASAP to check on you.

Enion

GAME 43

Well General, it seems the people of Buhr Thurasig are not easily threatened. They are tough little villagers. Keep trying though, I wouldn't want your army (?) to stumble across a real threat, I like having you around. Haradwaith, you serve the Servants well but do some checking of your own. The West is ours. So too, most of the North. It is now only a matter of time. As the Last Neutral, choose your allies well.

Eoder

My friend (#6),

Welcome to the Wold of Rohan.

I am anxiously expecting you. I trust your journey from Anórien has been a happy one, and that you will enjoy your stay in MY beautiful land.

Your friend,
D (#12)

GAME 45

FROM THE WANDERING PROPHET'S ARCHIVES:

CLOUD 1. Visible mass of vapor. 2. Defect or spot. 3. Cover with obloquy; disgrace.

LORD 1. One possessing authority.
2. Title.

CLOUD LORD 1. Master of nothing. 2.
A noble defect. 3. Respected disgrace.

Why is it that the "Wondering Weenus" and I are the only ones who write into this magazine for Game 45?
disgruntled
-Cardolan-

Happy, Happy, . . . Joy, Joy . . .

GAME 48

The Rhudaur Empire now claims all territory of Rhûn as Rhudaur lands. Any nation wishing to stake a claim for any part of this area as theirs, should contact our real estate office immediately. Dark Cowards need not apply.

Fire King--Thank you for telling me the names of your characters in your capitol. The Rhudaur put them to good use.

I come for your capitol.
Harad

GAME 52

Corsairs,

There is only 1 ring. How can it be divided among so many players?
Dendra Dwar

GAME 53

Oh Mighty Dark Lord--

As per Your command, we march into Gondor once more, while expelling the Dúnadan from Near Harad. We await further instructions; until then, we loot, pillage, rape and loot. (We like to loot)

Haruth Ramam

Haruth Ramam looked down at Celdrahil's lifeless body, flicking blood from his Mace while 4000 Haradan cheered wildly. 1200 Dúnadan stood stunned into silence by their General's swift defeat--demoralized, they would be easy prey. "Sound the advance," Haruth sneered. "Before the day is over, let us feast in the halls of Celdrahil's palace!" The battle was bloody and long, but the end was certain--Morthondost now serves the Dark Lord . . . and flies the Haradwaith banner. The Eye Rules!

GAME 55

20 kills and climbing.

Long Rider

P.S.: We will miss Lomëlinde.

So North Gondor finally destroyed the southern bridge over the Anduin. Too late! I am well established on your side and will grow like an untreated cancer and consume both you and your southern cousin.

Ren

GAME 56

If Indûr, your lackey Grasty is my prisoner along with his former artifacts. Kâl Nargil has fallen to my armies. Where will you run to now? Your agents can't save you now.

Zarendarger (25)

GAME 60

The light of good grows dim in its hour of need. Dwarven troops abandon all hope in the darkness of Morannon and the Sinda hide in homes as Mirkwood's shadow strikes into Dunlending and Cardolan. Dragons! Dragons! Dragons!

Dragon Lord

The duns laugh at you, Mordor. If that's the best you can do, we'll have this war wrapped up in no time.

Enion, still alive and kicking

Apparently the good nations are having internal strife. Perhaps a greedy Noldo. Although my navy has been occupied, I grow. The biggest mistake you made was to allow me to grow.

Adûnaphel
The Seventh

Call us thick, call us slow,
But it was us that struck the blow
Trashed the Dark Servants good and well
Gonna send the nasties straight to hell.
Enion and his Merry Men

GAME 61

Believe it or not!

On turn ten, Uvatha the Brave landed his battle craft on the shores of Rhun. He quickly discovered that his feared enemy the "Crazy" Northmen had never started the game. So he sailed home.

GAME 62

Dwarven stew, so good to eat
Made of tasty Dwarven meat,
We like those dwarves, so plump and sweet
For a hearty meal, they can't be beat.
Dancu and the Angmarites

GAME 64

Odagavia, Leader of the Northmen, politely requests a private audience with that sexy, studly man, Elatar of North Gondor.

Don't be late blue eyes.

GAME 65

Thanks to all and sundry for the most convoluted, treacherous game I've been in to date. Hats off to the Fire King, Cloud Lord, Dragon Lord, Blind Sorcerer, Haradwaith, Corsairs and Dwarves. Good luck against your enemies--internal and external.

Easterlings

GAME 66

On Aug 27 a new war-gamer was born, Anthony Russell Kapelka, 7 lbs. 11 ounces. In light of this blessed event I will impose a one turn moratorium on all assassinations. Which will work out fine, since I don't have anyone in the cross hairs this turn.

The Cloud Lord

As North Gondor I did my best. No allies that helped except South Gondor.

To all Goods except South Gondor, Thanks for nothing!
God help South Gondor if he has to rely on you for help.
Good Luck my friend!

GAME 69

Enion, where are your vaunted DUNLENDING armies? DEAD! Only raw recruits remain for target practice. Your agents are pesky but will not win you the day. GOTHMOG'S minions are headed my way. Hmmm . . .

Zarendarger (10)

I will have revenge on the ones who nearly knocked me out of the game.

Cloud Lord

Overheard in the Depths of Mordor--

"Well, how did it go?"

"They had catapults, and ballistas, and . . ."

"Oh."

"Yeah, the fort fell over, and sank into the volcano."

"I hate when that happens!"

"I know what you mean . . ."

Arglûk Zog

GAME 70

Dunedain,

Sauron will choke you with your foolish pride. You stand against a master now, newly risen amongst his Lieutenants. Let's see how you fare with Mordor unified.

Khamul's a stubborn old wight
Doesn't know when to give up the fight
Keeps plodding right on
Though Dol Guldur is gone
(I didn't say he's particularly bright).

The Seven Dwarves

GAME 77

Is the Dragonlord first to go?

M'lord, we have intercepted the Quiet Avenger army with our cavalry. Their clever ruse did not fool our scouts. The battle will be close but we have a good chance of victory.

GAME 78

On a quiet morning, the evil hordes massed for their assault on the Eothraim capitol. Suddenly, the foul orcs and trolls began to quake in fear; the settlement below them wavered and vanished into the morning mist! All that remained was the hearty laughter of a lone Elf; this, too, then faded into the distance.

Hide and Seek are games for children. How petty the Freebies lower themselves. Is Romper Room next? My game is simple: Conquer, Devour and Destroy?

Ice Master

P.S. Elrond, I know where you are.

GAME 79

Beware! I rise again in power to claim that which is mine! Men of Gondor, know my strength and quake in fear!

Okay, could you at least humor me and quake a little?

GAME 80

The Dog Lord runs rampant
The Rhudaur hideout has been found
The agents fail in droves
Fleets land, troops die
The Witch King spends his last Ice King gold piece . . .

All tolled not a bad Friday after the Thirteenth.

Celdrahil

Harad,

You will soon regret the choice you have made.

Khamûl

Rhudaur flees south to a Corsair haven, and loses it. Shadows grow over Mirkwood. The Easterling tribes disband. Allies trade towns to maintain vitality. Ebb and flow; which way will this contest go?

Ensam Harskare (5)

GAME 81

To the Witch-King, Lord of the Nazgul

Cardolan Ad Portas!

The Sea Wolves are bloodied, but unbowed. We have survived the first onslaught, and are preparing to repel borders. My thanks to all the Dark Servants lending aid; you have repaid my trust, and left me in your debt.

Harad, your betrayal shall be paid in blood. By the time you read this, you'll understand. And payment has only begun.

I have been at sea far too long; it's time to come home.

Angamaitë

GAME 82

If South Gondor had fought one-tenth as well as his northern cousin, Mordor would be broken. The chance is missed and may not present itself again. North Gondor, we salute your continuing courageous efforts. You are a worthy opponent.

If the Woodmen and I are the only ones who are writing here, I'm droppin' this game!

Sinda

Woodmen: Barf! (Gotcha again!)

GAME 83

Welcome to the Free Peoples. Rhudaur! With your help, everything west of the Misty Mountains will soon be ours. Meanwhile, the stalemate at Osgiliath continues.

Baaltrac

GAME 84

Woe to all the Forces of Good,

For I have joined the Game!

Soon the Good shall feel my Wrath,

Soon they will feel great Pain!

Know this, all Goods, your First and Final Warning!

The DETH SHREDDER is Swarming!

The Southwest remains quiet. The Dunlendings and Northern Gondor argue and fight. Ice & Fire Kings still cannot take Osgiliath. Corsairs & Haradwaith remain neutral, yet name no price for declaring Free. --The view from Dol Amroth.

Ensam Harskare (5)

GAME 85

I reject thee, foul demon Sauron, with thy false prophets and dark prophecies. Your paltry promises and unashamed lies are blasphemous in the eyes of our just and right gods. The Five Tribes declare Jyhad against all that is evil in this world. To all Easterlings! Rise up and destroy the infidels. Burn the soil under the feet of our aggressors. Send them back to the hell where they were spawned.

GAME 88

Rules for Negotiating with Dunland

- 1) Don't over-exaggerate with your assassination activities in Southern Gondor when I can check the facts.
- 2) Don't promise artifacts and then put me off repeatedly by saying you are busy.
- 3) Don't convince me to scout Khazad-dum for you and then, oops! forget to send assassins there.
- 4) Never, ever, suggest I talk to Arthedain to find out if he'll call off his attack. I might be persuaded to go the other way . . .
- 5) Don't discount your adversaries just because they are rookies. A few neutral nations providing detailed information on the game to the right rookies make a world of difference . . .

Dunland agents to invade a Dark
Servant nation near you . . . and sorry
Rhudaur, the crossfire can be vicious!
Mindrey Uld
Head of Dunland Operations

GAME 90

For kicks Ji Indur has kidnapped
Camlin. Nightly his cries lull me to
sleep as my trainees develop their
skills. His wee artifact rides the hip of
an eager assassin. Someone make the
Cloud Lord an offer, then the ransom
order will be issued. Otherwise, the
orcs will gladly dine on Gondorian
flesh!

GAME 91

Haruth Ramon: "Well, Shabla, were you
able to locate our loyal friend Ulfacs?"
Shabla: "I don't really know, I mean it
looked sort of like him; that is, what
was left of him."
Haruth Ramon: "Did you recover his
sword?"
Shabla: "Yes, it was in his quarters all
this time"
Haruth Ramon: "If I told him once, I
told him a thousand times; 'Don't leave
home without it.'"

Noldo. I come for you!
Rhudaur

Mahrcared,
Taking Morannon is more
dangerous than scaring little camps, so
you will probably delegate the job
(again) and lose (again). That smell
over Morannon is burning horse flesh
and the howling is coming from well
fed Warhounds.

Dendra Dwar

GAME 92

Where are all the goods? Come on,
girls! Let's rock! To the Neutrals: Heh
Heh.

Er-Mûrazôr

In the Vales of Anduin--
Woodmen and Beorning stand firm,
Though Sauron himself does interfere.
Wodurishak first did know defeat,
Durkarian then did battle lose.
Witch-king's minions now retreat,
While Urgubal bleeds from wounds,
And Dûran flees in fear.

Hey,
Witch-king has been kind of
quiet lately (I suppose it has
something to do with dead characters
and decimated armies)?

Congrats to the Greenwood crew.
Nice job, gentlemen!

Murazz (Uncle let's
do this again, so there!)

GAME 93

Could someone please direct me
to the school where almost everyone I
play with learned their military
operations from? I want to burn it
down. Hey Celedhring! You gotta bring
it to get it.

Woodmen

The Dwarves and Woodmen will
hold Mirkwood even though the
Eothraim did not try to play his
position correctly and the Sinda Elves
refuses to play his correctly.

"It's better to burn out than fade
away"

Dwarves

GAME 94

Words of wisdom from Deomosthenes:
A Nazgul without a sword is like
. . . well . . . alot like Ji Indur.

Its princes return on their
shields, poison-pierced or frost-bitten
by Death, victims of Nazgûl. Its cities
shudder beneath the silent screams of
shadow-terror. Its might bends before
the dark wave of foul monsters. Its
Tree yet stands, but its realm is
falling--into the Dead Marshes; I see it
now, its marred reflection drowns
beneath the slain. Its end is begun.

Prophet Icetongue

GAME 95

Sindarin response to Lame and Idle
Threats and Boasts of the Dragon Lord

Greetings Spectral Knight (Spectral
Slime),

I have lost plenty of wood
faeries, and I'll lose plenty more.
"Crunch all you want, I'll make more!"
As you can see, the Free Peoples are
acting as one, and many of your forces
will soon be skewered by Eothraim
lances.

After that, it's pure mathematics,
I can recruit 2000 troops per month
right on your doorstep compared to
your 800. The Woodmen and Dwarves
can get some as well (so long as the far
fetched plan of your northern ally
fails, as we plan).

We look forward to stopping by
Dol Guldur, which will be a mere
"speed bump" on our way to
conquering all of Mordor.

Regards,
Thranduil

P.S. Congratulations on your recent
victory, it will be your last.

Minions of Sauron,

I mourn the loss of Uirdiks, and
am displeased with the theft of my
gold.

DEATH TO SAURON!
DEATH TO YOU!

Kiss your babies one last time
before they burn in the pyres that was
Mordor.

Mahrcared

GAME 96

Tarondor,
The Ice Man Cometh.
Hoarmurath

What in Udûn is going on around here
anyway? I'll write my own comments
from now on if you don't all mind very
much. A foolish consistency is the
Hobgoblin of little minds.

Howling Mad,
The Dog Lord

Witch-king,

Abandon this mad purpose while
choice remains to you. I tell you that
you are the plaything of powers which
will destroy you, and all your allies
with you. This attempt upon Cardolan
must not be made.

-Argeleb-

WANTED

Hostages.

No resumé required. Inquire in the
same hex with Din Ohtar. Bring your
own manacles! (We're running out . . .)

Hail to all! Be it known that I am
seeking "The Amazing Witch King." I

have a special place for those who dare mock the Lord of the Nazgul! It warmed my black heart to see my noble opponent, Argeleb II, debase himself by pleading with the Neutrals. Those who join the rising tide of darkness join as partners and allies--not mere thralls. Even the more duplicitous Neutrals are still welcome. But our patience does have limits. Especially with those who break promises!

Murazor-
Lord of Angmar

Free People and Neutrals!

The Gates of Mordor have fallen, and soon one of the Nine will fall. Which of the Dark Lords will be next?
Prince Celdrahil

GAME 97

Diary of a Hunchback:

Research this, locate that, perceive this, divine that. I'll show these slave drivers. I'll conjure my own hordes and conquer Middle Earth. Yeah, that'll show them. And the Arthedain will be first . . .

Ozzymodo
the Hunchback of Lugalrak

To the traitorous Cloud Lord:

So you trade information about us, your "allies," for favours with the Freeps? Anyone guilty of such treachery will feel the wrath of Sauron!

Your "fellow" Dark Servants

GAME 98

Ding-Dong! The tune cries out across the Land. Only 9 Shades left. You face inexperience, we face incompetence! Let's go Shades, you're not measuring up to your boasting or expectations.

Mithnyano

The Witch is Dead! The Witch is Dead! Thanks for the artifacts. And to think we were worried the Shades of Madness were actually good at this game. Back to monopoly for you guys.

Mithchost

"My lord, the time of decision is come. Know that whichever way we turn, the other side will seek our end."

"Yes; but if we choose not, then both become our foes. Well do I know this. Summon the Grand Council. We shall decide ere the quarter moon."

"Many are discontent, my liege. They may not come."

"I am Emperor, and you are under my orders. Slay any who would disobey."

"As you command, your majesty . . ."

The rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.

Eothraim

GAME 99

Oh Dear.

I need a facial, perm and manicure.

What are all my boys up to anyway . . .

Oh . . . who cares.

Where's that hunk Tarondor?

He's my kind of man!

Adûnaphel the Vain

Lord Tarondor,

I hope you have been pinching your pennies. You will need them. Strangely, I seem to be accumulating more pennies everyday.

Has anyone seen my dagger? I seem to have misplaced it between someone's ribs.

Ji Indur

From Fuinir on the Northern Front:

Ack, Woses!!!

I hate Cardolan!!!

They will pay.

From Adûnaphel in the Southern Headquarters:

Oh Dear, that hair colouring made my shade too dark again.

CRY

Oh what shall I ever do.

GAME 100

Rot N Bart is to speak
That I'm still neutral indeed
The Corsairs and I will not be meek
For those whose armies lie at our feet
We'll squash them to defeat.

Rot N Bart
of Rhudaur

LOST:

1 Nazgûl
About 6'
200 pounds
Mean Nasty
Wears black
Answers to Khamul
Reward

1 Little . . . 2 Little . . . 3 Little Nazgûl,
4 Little . . . 5 Little . . . 6 Little Nazgûl,
7 Little . . . 8 Little . . . 9 Little Nazgûl
Hey! Where's the Tenth!?

Celedring,

Congratulations on your daring escape from the Noldo. What a shame it was spoiled by the mishap with King Thelór. Rest in peace.

The Khazad Kings

"1,000 gold says he takes half of dem Eothraimies on the first pass," Gothmog said.

"You're on!" replied Urzahil.

ssssssssSSSWOOSHhhh . . . FRY!

"Damn!"

"He Hee. Ol' Urzy, wanna go double or nuthin' on the other half?"

GAME 101

Dragon Lord,

Thank you for the pop centers and for the training materials for my armies. Please, send more orcs! Enclosed are remains of that molester of small dogs, Capt. Wodurishak.

Darrowdelf of the Dwarves

GAME 102

Free Peoples thy doom is at hand. Know that you cannot stop the tide of Darkness. Cardolon, Woodmen, and Eothraim rejoice for thy end was swift, For the rest, it will be a lingering Death.

GAME 103

King Macbeth of Rhudaur, Amend your ways and join victory, else

"We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,

Painted upon a pole . . ."

Macduff,

Tenth of the Nazgûl

"People hate those who make them feel their own inferiority." -- Lord Chersterfield

Northern Gondor--I hate your pitiful,
insignificant kingdom.

Ren

Eoder,

I shall feast upon thy bones at
Shrel-Kain, as I feast upon thy gold
from your vaults.

The True Lord of Rhun
Uvatha

GAME 104

"We're back!"

El and the Vaders

GAME 106

Drip . . . Drop, Drip Drop,
Drip Drop, Drip
. Drop, Drip
. . . . The deep Freeze has just hit.

Ice King

GAME 107

Remember, Free Peoples:

You don't tug on Mûrazôr's cape
You don't key Adûnaphel's car
You don't make a fool of dat old
Khamûl
And you don't mess around with Dwar!

GAME 108

Faintly, at first, we hear the
pounding of thousands of hooves.
Rapidly the sound increases until it is
Deafening. The Eothraim are come.

And so the game begins anew
and I got stuck with the Woodmen
twice.

Oh well. I'll take Gundabad by turn
two--
Well, wouldn't that be nice!

Evils!

Sticks and stones will break your
bones!

Gadzooks! Was that you that just
parted?

Sorry to see the Evils die . . .

Although the game just started!

Us Good Guys

Hail--All Nations of the Realm,

This is North Gondor calling all
who are able to war. Know ye that the
evil which is Sauron must be
vanquished for our freedom to be
reality. Good luck and good gaming.

Tarondor

Evil arises yet stronger in the
land. Let all Free Peoples gather and
take counsels together, ere the Dark
Storm falls. Let neutrals beware the
guile of Mordor, and remember the
friendship of the Eldar, and the race of
Numenor.

By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a Trysting Day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and West and South and North,
To summon his array.
Wierdstone (quoting Macaulay)

To all Free Peoples (especially #1, 6, 7,
8, 9 & "The Riddler"):

It's amazing that the collective
brains of seven of you could come up
with such gems as: "Take a bath;"
"Future Landlord;" Ivory Soap;" and
"Pepto Bismol." Just remember, "A
mind is a terrible thing to waste" . . .
Minds sure are wasted on you guys.

"Fire King"

GAME 109

Let the Great Cleansing begin.
Woodmen

To All:

The Dunlendings are neutral and
will remain neutral, until the die is
cast. Competence will be rewarded.
Ineptitude punished. Fools will not be
suffered. We will be watching.

Oshane

High King of Dunland

GAME 110

We the Corsairs are open to
discussing terms for treaties and non-
aggression pacts with all sides. Any
violation of our sovereignty will bring
swift and immediate reprisal and may
decide our final alliance.

Laurëquen

Prime Minister of Umbar

TOP TEN REASONS TO JOIN THE FREE PEOPLES

BY
STEVE STETLER

10. Amazing *palantir* scrying abilities make it easier than ever to find Waldo
9. Walt Disney would never have made a movie called "Snow White and the Seven Orcs."
8. Thanks to constant Cloud Lord assassinations, there are always positions open in the Gondorian officer corps.
7. Friendly Dragons always willing to aid traveling wayfarers.
6. Rivendell now accepts American Express.
5. Free Peoples won't kill you and then enslave your soul for all eternity, like some allegiances we could mention.
4. Only the Dwarves understand how to program your VCR.
3. Glorfindel looks handsome and cool; Bolvagh looks like Homer Simpson. 'Nuff said.
2. Easy to trick dim-witted Hobbits into going on suicidal quests while you stay at home drinking schnapps.

And the number one reason to join the Free Peoples is:

1. Because Professor Tolkien would have wanted it that way.

Basic Strategy for the Free Peoples in the Far Northwest

by
Brian Mason

The geographic groupings of Free Peoples allows for the discussion of strategy as it applies to those isolated areas. While these areas have overlap, no region is more geographically isolated than the Free Peoples in the far northwest of Middle-earth: Arthedain, Cardolan, the Noldo Elves, and elements of the Dwarves. This article will discuss strategy as it applies to these nations, specifically: the neutrals, characters, use of the palantiri and strategic locations, military strength, and economic development.

How well the Free Peoples do in the far northwest can depend a great deal on what course of action the neutrals take. The strengths of the two neutrals are more or less equal, so if they both go Free Peoples it can go very easy whereas if both of them become Dark Servants it can go very poorly. If they split then they more or less cancel each other out. If one of these (or both) neutrals join the Dark Servants they are the most vulnerable, both due to the fortification strength and the number of their major towns. As they are the most vulnerable, taking one of them out first (before the Witch-King) might be easier. However, taking on and doing considerable damage to the Witch-King early might convince the neutrals to join you. It is very important that all of the Free Peoples put forward a united front and establish communication early.

The Free Peoples in the far northwest are rich in good commanders, however only the Noldo have good character types among agents, emissaries, and with one exceptions, mages. Unfortunately, the Noldo do not have armies which are, at game start, good enough to go into battle with a good chance of success. Looking at the big picture, the Noldo mages can be used to learn spells which will be valuable later in the game (e.g. Reveal Population Center or Perceive Secrets) or can locate and retrieve artifacts. Often the two nation leaders of Arthedain and the Dwarves, Argeleb II and Bain I, are listed as termination victory conditions for other nations. It is often wise, because of this, to transfer their very good command artifacts to some other army commander. Both the Noldo and Cardolan have three harbors and a port each. This not only is expensive to maintain, but also can serve as a location for navies from the South to invade. A way to increase security, reduce costs, and improve agents would be for the Noldo and Cardolan to sabotage each other's harbors. This improves agents at twice the rate of those simply guarding location or characters, cuts the maintenance costs at 250 gold per turn, and removes one more location for enemy fleets to land.

The Free Peoples in the Northwest have three palantiri which can be used very effectively for "filling in the gaps" present on their maps. The maps of the Dwarves, Cardolan, and Arthedain have some blind spots which can be covered by effective use of the three Palantiri possessed by Arthedain and the Noldo. It is important to get these artifacts in the hands of characters who will have a spare order each turn. The critical "blind spots" of the Free Peoples are hexes 1814, 1812, 1819, 1808, 1606-1806, 1705-1805, 1604-1804, and 1703-1803. These spots can be most effectively covered by either having a cooperative Rhudaur player willing to provide you with accurate intelligence information, or having the three palantiri investigate the following hexes (and, thus, the six

surrounding hexes as well): 1704, 1907, and 1911. This will cover all of these "blind hexes" except for 1814 and areas to the South.

The army strength of the Free Peoples in the northwest is formidable, not so much because of their at start strength, but because of their impressive array of Major Towns and Cities which can build their army strength up very quickly. The tendency of the Dwarves is to take their armies at Kazad-Dum and to attack the Dragon Lord Major Town of Goblin Gate. If, rather than this, the Dwarves attack Mt. Gunabad of the Witch-King from the East of the Misty Mountains, while Cardolan and Arthedain attack Mt. Gram and Carn-Dum, there is a potential to take out all three Witch-King Major Towns early in the game. A possible idea would be to transfer many of the Noldo combat artifacts to army commanders or characters travelling with the armies of Arthedain and Cardolan so that these artifacts can be fully utilized. Another possibility would be for Noldo characters to follow armies so that they can be at the site of a battle to challenge Dark Servant characters. The Dwarves have the advantage of, like the Noldo, having many combat artifacts. Fortunately, the Dwarves have a very effective military which can put these combat artifacts to very effective use. The Witch-King characters are quite formidable, so when going into combat, it is usually advisable for the Free Peoples to Refuse Personal Challenge unless you know for certain you can dramatically out-challenge, not only the army commander, but also any characters travelling with the army. If the neutrals have not declared one way or the other, hitting the Witch-King early and hard can perhaps persuade them to join your cause. Another effective technique might be for Cardolan to transfer all his transports and warships to the Noldo. This will increase the warship strengths and will concentrate the navies into a force comparable in strength with the large navies to the South.

There is, for the Free Peoples in the northwest, a great opportunity to engage in long term development of their economies using the relatively safe regions in and West of the Blue Mountains on the Noldo map. Camps placed in this area can be monitored for nearby enemy activity by the Noldo, and can provide most of the resources which they might need. An abundance of all type terrains with relatively mild weather can insure production of all types of materials. Another strategy is pooling resources. Pooling resources between the Free Peoples early can allow for the rapid development of forces in materials not suspected. For example, independently not one of the Free Peoples has a tremendous production of Timber. However, if the resources are pooled it is possible by about turn five to have enough timber to make the thirty war machines necessary to destroy a fort (like the one at Mt. Gram or Mt. Gunabad), which is much sooner than might be expected in the game by the Witch-King player. Another concern which can easily be addressed by cooperation is that the Arthedain player does not have a back-up capital. The Noldo player could transfer one of his Major Towns in exchange for an Arthedain Town and Village which will still give both nations the same tax base but dramatically affect the security of Arthedain.

All of these things are strategies which may or may not be successful, but the most important factor in all of these strategies, and which can be applied to any region within the game is the regular and open communication among players. Setting aside individual goals temporarily can result in tremendous gains and secure your nation's place for later in the game.

War Song of the Free Folk

by
Ian Keane

ACROSS THE NORTH THE WAR-HORNS SHOUT;
OLD ARNOR ECHOES WITH THE BLAST!
FROM FORNOST ERAM WORD GOES OUT:
OUR ANCIENT FOE HAS STIRRED AT LAST!

ELENOIL'S CHILDREN, MAKE YOUR STAND!
THE STARS MUST HEAR YOUR WARRIORS' SONG!
GIL-GALAD'S KIN MUST RISE AGAIN:
AWAKE, FOR WE HAVE SLEPT O'ER LONG!

NOW DWARVEN SONGS OF WAR RING HARD
AS CLASHING STEEL-SHOOD BOOTS ON STONE.
THEIR BLOOD IS SINGING IN THEIR HEARTS
AND FIRE COURSES IN THEIR BONES!

AND IN THE VALE THE ANSWERING CRIES
OF PAGAN CHANTS FROM CARROCK SOAR,
RED FLARING TRACKS FROM MOON-WILD EYES
HUNT FREE UPON THE WOODLAND SHORE!

THOUGH GENTLY FALL THE FAOING YEARS
WHERE BANDS OF ELDER CHILDREN DANCE,
AND SING THE STARS LIKE SILVER TEARS--
THEIR HANDS NOW GATHER UP THE LANCE!

AND FAR ACROSS THE WILDERLAND
THE RIVER FOLK UNFURL THEIR SAILS,
ON SAND-DASHED DECKS THEY'LL MAKE THEIR STAND,
AND TRY THEIR STRENGTH AGAINST THE GALE!

WHEN THE CHILL RAINS DRIVE A RAGGED HOST
OF GHOST-GREY SAILS ABOVE THE STEPPE,
THEN ASHEN SPEARS, AND HORSE-LORDS' OATHS,
AND SPARK-HOODED MOUNTS TO WAR ARE SWEEP!

ALONG THE HILLS THE WATCH-FIRES FLOWER,
FROM HAND TO HAND THE ARROW FLIES!
THE GREY-EYED LORDS OF GONDOR'S TOWERS
CALL FORTH THE FREE TO STAND OR DIE!

Hobbiton Square

An open forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions.

Is Bigger really better? Everyone I've encountered insists that heavy infantry and cavalry are the only troop types worth recruiting. I'd like to challenge the idea.

Although I love the heavy hitters, my particular nation has limited monetary power so I often horde together lighter stuff in order to bolster my numbers without straight-jacketing my economy. I then use these numbers to threaten and take enemy population centers. Typically the enemy armies chase after me, but instead of catching me, the army commanders catch knives in their sides or bags over their heads from my agents who were strategically placed in waiting. Thus, the enemy forces often come to an end without direct

confrontation and I'm free to take what I want without much troop loss or much destruction to the newly-seized property.

Now of course this is a simplified version of my strategy and it wouldn't work nearly as well with most nations, but I think it illustrates my point that the lighter troops are useful (in fact, I believe each troop type has its own particular usefulness).

But does anyone, anyone at all out there happen to agree with me?

Man-With-A-Crazy-Notion

☼☼☼ Middle-earth PBM Observer ☼☼☼

Head Lines from the Front Lines

OH DEM CRAZY DRAGONS

In one of the most talked about conflicts of the week, Mûrazôr made short work of Aivnec after the dragon refused the Witch-king's kindly offer of remuneration for services rendered. Mûrazôr, at a victory celebration in Carn Dûm, put it this way: "It was very simple, really. I offered the overgrown reptile a 'fee' for wreaking havoc on my enemies. You know what he says? 'I don't take bribes!' An ETHICAL dragon. I had to kill him on principle alone."

It seems the saurian wonders which inhabit Middle-earth are favorite subjects for the rumor mill. Conflicting reports say Smaug has joined the Dragon Lord, the Witch-king (maybe after hearing what happened to Aivnec?), and the Long Rider; rumor has Lamthanc siding with the Cloud Lord and the Ice King; and whispering winds report Culgor throwing in with the Long Rider and the Dog Lord. Just remember -- you didn't hear it here. We at the Observer would never spread GOSSIP!

BLOOD, GUTS AND GLORY

On the battlefield, the Sinda maintained the tactical advantage of air power with the assistance of Scorba, Throkmau and an aerie of giant eagles. The destruction was awesome and vast. How long the alliance will last is anybody's guess. We heard the capricious elves were fond of practical jokes--and that dragons most emphatically were not. Stay tuned for more on this powder keg!

The Hall Of Heroes

Game 14 - The Free Peoples: #7, #8 & #10

The Light of the Free has banished the foul creatures of Sauron from the Land, wiping the taint of the Dark from Middle-earth. Final standings are as follows:

#7 South Gondor - 2267

#8 Dwarves - 2050

#10 Noldo Elves - 1984

Top Dark Servant: #23 Dunlendings - 1383

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 266

Highest Net Commander Rank - Camlin/Southern Gondor & Threlin/ Dwarves (tie): 155

Highest Net Agent Rank - Serenthal/Ice King: 130

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Greselda/Ice King: 107

Highest Net Mage Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 196

Most Mithril - Southern Gondor: 9590

Most Artifacts - Noldo Elves: 25

Most Kills - Northern Gondor: 12

Congratulations to the Free Peoples!

Game #17 - The Dark Servants: #18

The Fire King cleansed Middle-earth with the flames that are his namesake, taking the land for his Dark Master. Final standings are as follows:

#18 Fire King - 1950

#8 Dwarves - 2300 (did not win)

Top Free People: #8 Dwarves - 2300

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Bain I/Dwarves: 178

Highest Net Commander Rank - Bain I/Dwarves: 155

Highest Net Agent Rank - Enokrad/Sinda Elves: 95

The Hall Of Heroes

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Skyzog/Fire King & Eluria/Fire King: 100

Highest Net Mage Rank - Garinor/Dwarves: 114

Most Mithril - Dwarves: 2986

Most Artifacts - Dwarves: 16

Most Kills - Dwarves: 11

Congratulations to the Fire King!

Game #22 - The Dark Servants: #21, #22 & #14

The baying of the Warhounds rings across Middle-earth and Sauron's Servants offer up the heads of their foes to their Dark Lord. Final standings are as follows:

#21 Corsairs - 2200

#22 Haradwaith - 1875

#14 Cloud Lord - 1799

Top Free People: #4 Arthedain - 1367

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Hoarmúthath/Ice King: 215

Highest Net Commander Rank - Araudágal/Cloud Lord: 177

Highest Net Agent Rank - Borhan/Dog Lord: 164

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Vesnerd/Cloud Lord: 98

Highest Net Mage Rank - Ashburgnúll/Dog Lord: 170

Most Mithril - Haradwaith: 2139

Most Artifacts - Ice King: 26

Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 22

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

The Hall Of Heroes

Game #57 - The Dark Servants: #20, #16 & #25

Hot blast-winds of destruction blow over a scorched Middle-earth and the corpses of the Free Peoples swing from stunted trees. This land bears the mark of Sauron and his servants dance with malicious glee after wiping out the Free in only 20 turns. Final standings are as follows:

#20 Dark Lieutenants - 2025

#16 Ice King - 1708

#25 Easterlings - 1700

Top Free People: #10 Noldo Elves - 733

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lieutenants: 229
Highest Net Commander Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lieutenants: 181
Highest Net Agent Rank - Carrog/Dark Lieutenants: 129
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Erzbet/Dark Lieutenants: 90
Highest Nest Mage Rank - Krûsnak/Dog Lord: 150
Most Mithril - Dark Lieutenants: 962
Most Artifacts - Dark Lieutenants: 18
Most Kills - Easterlings: 5

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

A clarification from last month's Hall. It was reported that player #21 was the winner in Game #46. This is **INCORRECT!** The only reason for mentioning player #21 was his victory point total--he ranked in the Top Three--that's all. My apologies if this misled anyone; that was not my intention. I hope this clears it up.

should be obvious. Agents guarding will now also be more effective and survive failures more often. Also, the sabotage fortifications and ports/harbors orders will be modified by the level of the target involved. Thus, a castle will be harder to sabotage than a tower and a port more difficult than a harbor, etc... Overall difficulty will remain as listed in the rulebook.

Certain emissary actions will now be easier to carry out. Again, specifics are left to be discovered during play. The 525 order will now report the current loyalty level, regardless of success or failure, in general terms--i.e. average, below average, above average, etc. The 500 order should be somewhat easier also. The 948 order can now be given from either the capitol **OR** the origination hex. This allows for greater flexibility in using this order. Please watch your resultsheet for a full print out of these rules changes.

O.K., Contest of Champions time. We are very close to filling this game but there are still a few final slots available. If you wish to join this game, the deadline for consideration is October 31, 1993. That's right, the end of this month. So if you think you can play with the best, send in those resumé--do not delay!

Many of you may have noticed a space for emergency phone numbers on the turnsheet. Let me take this opportunity to explain the reason for this. If there is a problem with a turn--a turn that got mauled in the mail, an unclear fax, disconnected phone-ins, etc.--and we need to get in touch with you, we will have someplace to look for a contact number. Please note that this is **NOT** so that we can call you if your turn does not arrive in time, or your orders are incomplete. Unfortunately, logistics make that impossible. We handle hundreds of turns each day and if we called every player whose turn we did not have, we would never finish the work we need to do to get the turns out on time. If there is an emergency problem with a specific turn, we can now try to reach you--but that is all we can do.

Recently, there has been a suggestion to run a one week game for fax users. Well, how about it? How many of you would be interested in playing in such a game? Let us know if the idea appeals to you. If enough interest is generated, we will be happy to try and set up such a game. So let us know what you think! We also ask that if any of you attend AndCon, or plan to attend next year, let GSI know so that we can consider whether to attend next year as well!!

We are currently looking for a team of 10 Free Peoples for a three week grudge game. We are also looking for a team of 10 Dark Servants for a two week grudge game. So if any of you have a team ready, we have a spot reserved just for you. As an addendum to the previous item, we just started a special 25 player grudge game--all from Texas! They provided all 25 players and we provided the game. We are happy to try and grant special requests when it comes to our games, so if you have any ideas--let us know.

If anyone is interested in a stand-by position, we are running low on stand-by players. This involves taking over a position in a game which is already running. If, for some reason, a player cannot continue playing, we monitor each game to try and maintain the balance between Free Peoples and Dark Servants. When a position becomes available, we go to our stand-by list. This is generally recommended for experienced players, as you are stepping into someone else's position. The rewards can be great, however. And the first two turns are free!! Again, if you are interested, simply let us know.

Finally, I'd like to say that . . . I'm finished! Whew. Never thought I'd see it happen. That's all for this month, campers. See you in thirty.

Stuart