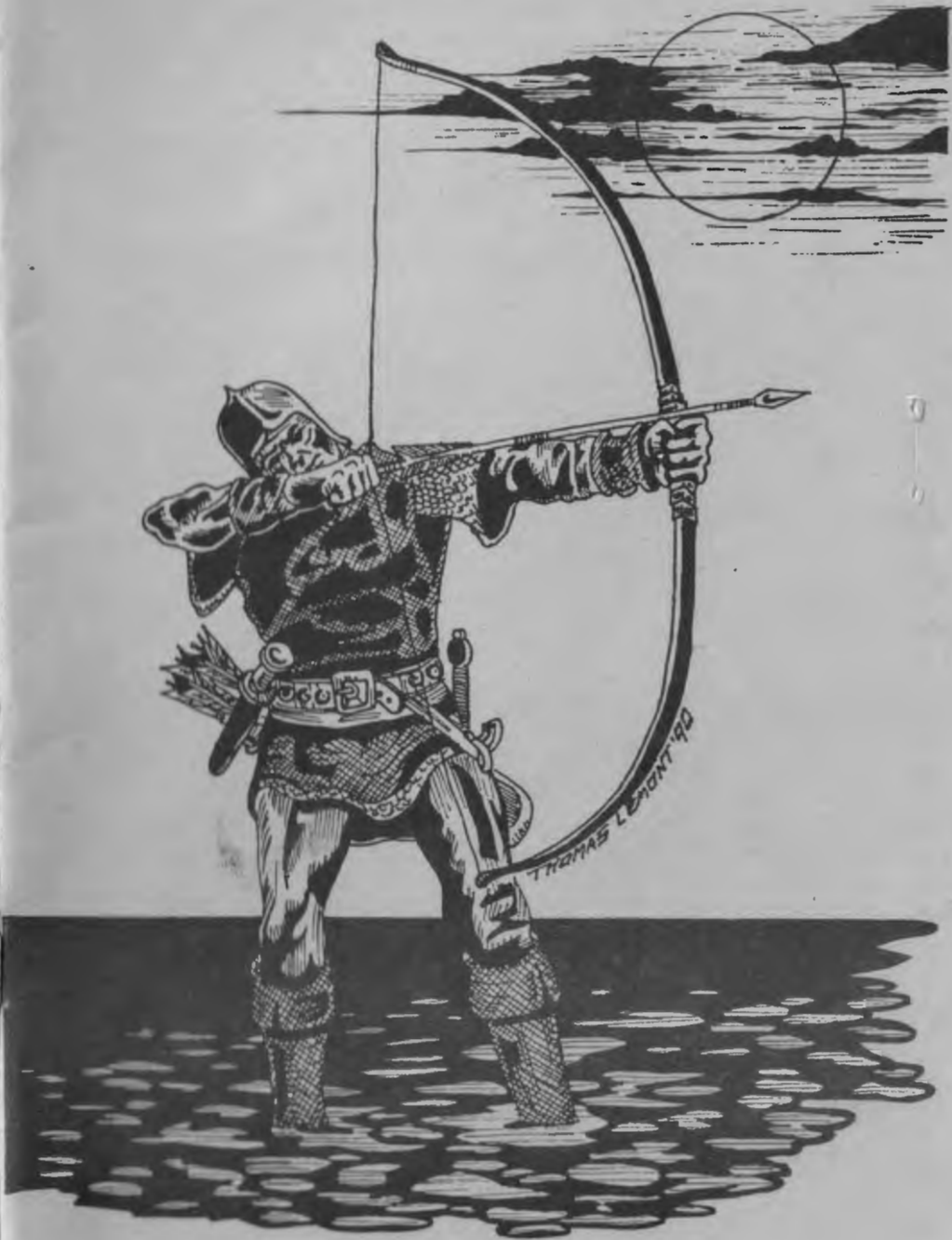


WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



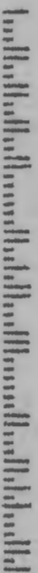
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WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Who was the guy who came to the conclusion that April is the Fool's month? Why is April Fool's Day in April and not in, say, March (which has no appreciable holidays that I can think of--as a survivor of public schools, I dreaded March--31 days of uninterrupted school!! It was Purgatory! I know I could have used a day where it was "legal" to annoy my friends, family and school chums.)? Is there some higher Holiday Assignment office who decides these things? Why is Secretary's Day on April 27th? I mean, someone had to decide this and what I want to know is who gave them this authority? O.K., some holidays are self explanatory. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The first of the new year. The explanation is right there in its name. Same with the 4th of July, Independence Day. No questions asked. But Mother's Day? Father's Day? Flag Day? I think there's more to this than meets the eye. I didn't vote for this guy--or guys. How did they get their power? To what authority do THEY answer to--if any? And what kind of connections do they have with the Greeting Card Lobby? Uh--I have to go. I think there's a tap on this word processor.

SERVICE CHANGES! SERVICE CHANGES!

Starting this month (as of 4/1/94), GSI will be offering some new services as well as changing some of our prices on our current services. The first one we'd like to announce is that we are now able to utilize credit cards to fund accounts. We will accept Visa and Mastercard initially, hopefully with others to follow -- we'll let you know when those become available. We ask that all charges be in amounts of \$25 or more. If you're interested in this service, contact our office for an authorization form.

Second on the list is that GSI will also begin accepting E-mail turns. **THIS IS ONLY FOR INCOMING TURNS!! We CAN NOT--REPEAT CAN NOT-- DELIVER turns via E-mail.** Also note that E-mail turns CAN NOT BE ACCEPTED ANY LATER THAN 9 AM EST OF THE DAY BEFORE THE TURNS ARE DUE. If you E-mail the turn in within 24 hours of the day it is due, the turn will not be run. Please make special note of this and, if you have friends who do not subscribe to this illustrious mag, please inform them of this information. There was a message saying essentially the same thing on the results of your turns, so you can refer them there as well. We can not make special exceptions and just run YOUR turn if it gets to us late.

The next item is fee changes. Most of our fax/phone charges have been reduced, with a few exceptions. The fee for turns reaching our office at least 24 hours before the due date have either been lowered or waived, while those reaching us within 24 hours of the due date are higher. Thus, the earlier you get the turns to us, the better (and cheaper) it is for you and for us. Fax and E-mail turns reaching us at least 24 hours before the due date are FREE!! Phone-in turns reaching us before 24 hours will cost \$3. Fax turns reaching us within 24 hours of the due date are \$2 and phone-in turns in the same time period are \$5. By 24 hours before the turn is due, we mean by 9AM EST OF THE DAY BEFORE THE TURN IS DUE. Again, we CAN NOT receive E-mail turns within 24 hours of the day it is due.

There are also some changes in the cost of faxing turns TO you. As usual, there is no cost to fax you your results if the turn was run 7 days before you want the turn faxed. If you want your turn faxed before 7 days have passed, it

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whispers of the wood

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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.

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This Month's Cover: "Take Aim" by Thomas Lemont

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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

To All players interested in info exchange:

I have information regarding pop centers, artifacts, characters, riddles and the following nations: Easterlings, Eothraim, Northmen and Dunlendings, as well as a summary that lists the special abilities of each position. If you wish to trade for any of the aforementioned data please contact me at:

Jessie Johnson/Landrum
PSC Box 70863
Peterson AFB CO 80914
CompuServe: CI\$ 71342,3237

Hey Naurmegil, leader of the so-called "Shades of Madness" team . . .

We're putting together a Dark Servant team that would be happy to kick your butts. I won't be a fool (like you) and say we're awesome because we've never played together as a team before, but if you're as good as you think you are then the game will definitely last longer than 20 turns no matter which way the neutrals turn. We've already sent our stuff in and we're just waiting for the first available victim (umm . . . opponent). So put up or shut up! Ask for the team headed by Greg Davis. Until we meet . . .

Tim Huiatt, contestant in the Contest of Champions. Something Nurmy and the boys obviously didn't feel they could compete in so they probably didn't even apply.

Middle-earth™ PBM

GAME 21

It's the final stretch! North and South are neck and neck, with Rhudaur in third. Which half of Gondor will win? As soon as Olbamarl falls, we'll know.

Baaltroc

Rot n Bart is still here to say I'm around but Baaltroc in no way can you think you're one. Well this is not to spoil your fun, but I plan to win this game.

Remember the Ring.

Rot n Bart of Rhudaur

Morlammen, how does it feel to be a hostage? I was quite pleased to recover Vilya and Elrond's other missing artifacts from you. As all of Rhûn is now mine, only Olbamarl prevents our total victory. Gondor is supreme!

Baaltroc

GAME 27

And so, the last of the Eothraim's traditional hunting grounds have fallen to a plague of darkness. These are difficult times for our people but we will suffer them gladly for we have seen the future, and it is ours.

Erinkroun

Lore-Keeper of the Nomads

GAME 35

The spirit of Enion smiled as Harad lay in ruins--a victim of Dunnish might. Soon the remaining Nazguls would cower in fear as well.

Curses! After keeping all 8 original characters alive for 45 turns, I lose one to curses! I'll really get mad if I lose the 4500 cavalry Sarkar commanded as well.

Baaltroc

GAME 43

The Harad are on the march and are finally getting revenge on their age old enemies! First the Havens fall, then Dol Amroth, Cirith Dunrandir and next Edhellond and Pelargir! (Unless, of course, the Elves can pull a miracle out of their nether regions.) Soon the whole South will be mine!

King Haruth Ramam I
(Need I say more?)

GAME 60

Gondor on its knees, Noldo dying, Rhudaur burning, Sinda losing, Eothraim hurting and Arthedain sitting in Arnor. Yet the Dark Servants still march on when two neutrals joined the forces of good. Currently left: Witch-king, Dog Lord, Cloud Lord, Fire King, Ice King, Quiet Avenger, the Eighth, Long Rider and the Dark Lieutenants.

Over 60 good characters died by: curse, challenge, assassination and battle. Quite impressive with only thirty turns passed. Not too bad for the Dark Servants.

GAME 61

Mahrcaered,

The Westernesse cannot save you! I'll do my best to ensure your destruction. The Bringer of War commands Rhovanion now.

Evil Eye

Mahrcaered,

Only five armies? Must be nice! If you are wondering where your allies are they are here with me. Just about all of them I'd say. I think I'll keep them for awhile. You have a nasty habit of coming back from defeat.

Good Hunting!
Murazor

GAME 66

The long awaited psychological profile data is in; The average Free-People player tends to be:

Arrogant, condescending, self absorbed, hypocritical and highly emotional. They enjoy white wine spritzers and playing backgammon. They tend to support ideas such as socialized medicine and unilateral disarmament. They believe all people should think as they do because, after all, they are right.

The average Dark Servant player tends to be:

Self reliant, independent, straight forward, and yes, even honest. They enjoy drinking cold beer, watching sporting events (tennis, gymnastics and figure skating not included) and listening to Rock and Roll music.

"GO FIGURE"
The Cloud Lord

3 1/2 free clowns left, which count the Woodmen in ICU. South Gondor cries curses!! Elrond and co. shows up. Next time silence will answer your plea. A curse shall be met by a curse. Stay tuned . . .

Sheik Alaa Kilhyuman

GAME 74

Greetings Evils,

We of the Great Noldo Nation wish to express our thanks for giving it a go. You do of course realize you will lose. My goal is to not die. This game will go on forever and Big Bill can retire.

B-Head

GAME 77

Alas--the North is slowly coming under the sway of evil. But the South still holds.

GAME 78

In remembrance of Matthew J.J. Anderson, who made our game more enjoyable and for those who had the privilege of talking to him on the phone, we all salute you Matthew!!

Matthew left us suddenly and I offer my prayers and hope for his friends and family.

Darin Thiessen
Ice Master

GAME 80

"Rhudaur lives!" What a lark! "Start dismantling the . . . Free People Coalition?" Rhudaur is dismantling itself. Unless he has learned to hide his population centers one size level at a time. Town . . . Village . . . Camp . . . empty hex!

Ensam Harskare (5)

The Dark Tide rises now to engulf thee,
As SAURON commands then let it be done.
Destruction upon all Goods that be,
Soon their forces shall be over-run!
So speaks Urzahil,
Chief Emissary of the ONE!

Ashdurbuk's War Ramblings:

Those broom faced Dwarves hit like soggy hobbits, and those shrub jumping Elves stop dancing real quick, with a knife in the ribs. But don't ya turn yer back on those Dunlendings . . . Oh, if I had an army!!

The Crimson Toad
The Witch Ork

GAME 81

Witchy-Poo gave me 5 turns to live. He died in 3. Then Dunlending decides to try the same. Well, his IQ in this decision went below plant life! Oops! There it is!!

Sir Arthur

GAME 84

The Dunedain of the South stand together.
The Kin-strife has been overcome.
The remaining spawn of Numenor are now allied with the Horse-lords to face the Evil Eye's scum.

Poor Ji Indur, empty PC again!
Ensam Harskare (7)

Killed Cardolan, wasted North Gondor, took the Dwarves' best punches and made him drop, and met South Gondor head on. When are the Evils gonna @%*#&! do something??!!

The Crimson Toad
Dunlend

GAME 87

O.K. Dark Servants, this is your last chance. Repent now and hand over all your artifacts or die. I'll give y'all a second chance.

Acting Commander-in-Chief
Regent Sulieman
Nation of the Haradrim

GAME 89

I have located IT.
Soon, IT will be mine.

The wise would be well-advised to treat with me now.

Offer your counsel
or your tribute to:
Slynfel, Lieutenant of Sauron

GAME 91

Mahrcared,

How long will you go on placing your men in harm's way as you cower in the rear with the gear. Your actions betray you for the pathetic, gutless coward that you are. Be careful the next time you suckle at the breast of your wet nurse.

The Dog Lord
(Hurt, but still Howling)

GAME 94

Woodmen, Noldo, Gondors, Cardolan, Arthedain, I see . . . I am your challenge, 6 good players against 1. Don't forget you only need one Waterloo. The resistance is more efficient than armies.

Enion

The only scared rabbits are anonymous hero wannabes that seek credit for the enemy's misfortune.

Evil Eye

We welcome, warmly, the return of the Noldo and the Ice King to the battle.

Greymist
PS. Anyone want a ring?

GAME 96

Easterlings, you chose your own fate, You cannot escape it.
Farewell Witch-king, I can't say you fought well.
Dark Lts., your doom approaches.
Hail Gondors!
Sinda: You're a coward; your allies need you and you hide!
The Dúnedain

GAME 99

Oh dear,
What do I do now? All the people of Gondor are flocking to me. I'll turn some tables over.

Dark

GAME 100

Though the war has been long and bloody, at last, a faint glimmer of dawn arises in the East. Ride forth, hosts of Gondor, and cleanse the land of its foul taint.

Narmacil, son of Telumehtar,
at his coronation celebration

GAME 103

Overheard in Bar-en-Tinnen

"Lord Dunsul was supposed to protect you? Ha ha ha! No really, who was in charge here?"

Regent Shogmog
Guardian of the Western Gate

Worry not, Noldor, we will bring the war to you.

GAME 105

In the remote Southeast, a savage storm lashes the land.

A figure calls to the winds . . .

And is answered . . .

"Yes, Akhōrahil!"

"Master, I have reclaimed my throne!"

"Good, now destroy my enemies!!"

"Yes Master!"

Ji Indūr smiles and departs . . .

Shadowspawne

GAME 106

We implore our allies to at least communicate with us as we have attempted to do so. If this is to be a game of mercenary nations, then we will have to play in the same fashion.

The Falcon

GAME 108

With the contest still in doubt why are my enemies speaking in riddles from beyond the grave about daisies and mornings?

Perhaps that their nation is now pushing up daisies and night draws ever closer?

Helrazor

Salut, well played.

Hail hail flounder and flail
Their troops doth seek to harm
The deeper they go
The more that they know
That all will buy the farm.

Helrazor

GAME 109

As the opponents circled each other, Tarondor's blade caught the throat of his foe, severing his head from his shoulders. Thus fell Hoarmurath, 6th of the Nazgul, at the hands of Tarondor, Lord of North Gondor.

Time to crash the party in Mordor--Sauron and his lackeys are being so cooperative in allowing Free Peoples into his front door.

How long will the Fire King Last?

GAME 112

The War Rages throughout the land as I take yet another Dragon Lord major town . . .

Soon the east shall be FREE . . .
A DWARF'S work is never finished. But if we didn't do it, Khamûl might start feeling lonely.

Shadowspawne

Boo hoo hoo
Goes the sound of the Dwarves
Carting the remains
of Bain and Brennor
Way Cool Khamul

Harondorians have recently experienced a rash of hemorrhoidal inflammations. Local doctors attribute the problem to "CourseHairs" and suggest a swift kick in their butt to remedy the situation.

Haradrim Associated Press

GAME 113

A recent survey of Human nations shows approval rating for the Non-Human nation at an all-time low. The non-humans seem to be blithely unaware of their low popularity though."

Palantir News Network (PNN)

Durthang and Morannon have cleansed. Barad Ungol and Barad Dur

are under siege. Our agent companies prowl the country side. The end is near.

THE WARLORDS OF GOOD

Indur Dawndearth; Ji Indur; Ji Amaav of Mumakan; Shadow of the South; the Cloud Lord; the Fourth has been slain in personal combat. He was slain by the sorcerer Ringlin. Bain has been avenged.

Amorth, King of the Sinda

GAME 114

Rhovanion and Rhûn are ours. Gondor topples, and Mirkwood will fall soon.

Excuse me, but are any of the Free Peoples actually playing this game?

Gaurhoth

GAME 116

The Witch-king siege of Cameth Brin is over! Three Witch-king armies have faced an army of Rhudaur, Noldo and Dwarves. The outcome was total destruction of the armies of Angmar and the death of Ulrac.

"Now what do we do?" questioned Broggha.

"Now we join the Free Peoples and march to Carn Dum!" answered Arfanhil.

The battle flags of Rhudaur were unfurled and began heading north.

Frodo gazed into Galadriel's mirror; shadowy runes of the future took shape:

After Action Report

Most Kills - Cloud Lord - 26

Most Kills of Enemy characters -
tie - Ice King, Dog Lord - 1

GAME 119

"My lord, it is my unfortunate duty to report that the Easterling tribes have chosen to follow the Dark Lord Sauron."

"That is tragic news indeed. They have chosen . . . poorly."

GAME 120

The strengthening wind blows up from the South. Like a scorching fire the hot breeze bears her whispers. Like tiny envenomed daggers, her words pierce the heart. The mere sound of her voice is death. Adunaphel speaks!

A conspiratorial cabal consisting of the conceited combatants of Cardolan and their consanguineous companions, the Arthedain, clamored crepitingly to the castellated Carn Dum.

On a cold chaotic morning, as his careless craven comrade's commanders casually crocheted and copied curvaceous calligraphy while carefully conserving their camouflaged corps, the contumelious canescent Cardolan conscripts were completely castigated, castrated and conquered by the cunning, competent and courageous commandos of the castle.

Common cubic coniferous coffins constructed for the crimson crusted cankerous Cardolan carcasses crated and consequently conveyed to the contemptible capital by his cowardly colleague's cantering caravan were compiled and catalogued at the corroded crackling crematorium by the cautious costive cantankerous coroner.

Clarification Excerpt by Murazor for
The Cardolan Post Predatory Epics
(Fleeing Period)

Let the will of Sauron be our will
The Dark Rises
The Seas Boil
Make way for the armies of Harad.
Death to all who oppose us!!
Let those who oppose us be cleansed
with Fire!

FREE PEOPLES ACCIDENTAL DEATH OR DISMEMBERMENT POLICY

We are proud to be able to
announce a NEW mortgage life
insurance policy. Should you be
accidentally killed or dismembered,
our company will pay off your
personal residence mortgage balance
all for the low, low premium of
10,000 gold pieces per turn. Call
before midnight so you don't forget.
Call 1-800-GET-HELP

SLICE

Sauron Life Insurance Company and
Eradicators
Ren Nazgul
Sales Manager

GAME 121

O.K. kids--short and sweet. The
Eothraim have been leaderless for
the last few turns. To the Dark
Servants, congrats on a few cheap
victories.

But to the Free People, please
get in touch on your tactical
situations so I know how this game is
organized.

To All, good luck and good
gaming.

Grendel

The time has arrived to ferret
out those pesky DWARVES. With
Rhovanion and Rhûn as a base, this
will not be difficult. Onward to Moria!
Zarendarger (13)

GAME 122

Hey Woody, Alpo, Chuck
Wagon, Kibbles & Bits, these would
be great names for yer next couple
new characters, cause yer dog
food!!!!
(Oh mouthy Grakius, be an Ork and
list yer position!!!)

The Crimson Toad
Dog Lord

GAME 124

Sarkar stood wearily upon the
battlefield, Gordur still clutched in
his blood-soaked hands. He stared
out over the field of seven thousand
dead at the fleeing Angmarrim.

"Witch-king," he said bitterly,
"this victory is only the beginning of
our crusade."

Burning inside
Godspeed in glide
Battle plan running
A killing machine
Just downright mean
And forever gunning.
Er-Mûrazôr
(My theme songs, quoting Megadeth)

GAME 125 CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS

Mommy?
Yes, Kurgan.

Those big nasty Eothraims took
away my town and really hurt my
feelings! If I were big, I'd punch him
in the knee. I'm gonna send him
nasty cards to let him know I'm mad
...

GROW UP!!

It was a hard winter. Spring is
upon us, let the campaign begin

anew. KURGAN is with us.
RHOVANION will become the Blood
Plains. SAURON will be pleased.
ZARENDARGER (15)

NAZGUL POETRY 'ODE TO TARONDOR'

Blood is red
Trolls are true
Vinyaran is dead
And so are you!!
(Unlife is good)

The Crimson Toad
Dirty Ren

Gaerandil slays Uvatha in
personal combat!! . . . NOT! Actually,
Gaerandil's navy sank Uvatha's, but
Uvatha is still dead, and that is what
really matters.

Baaltrac

GAME 126

I'm packing my bags for the Misty
Mountains . . .
Over the hills where the spirits fly.
Poetmir of the Gondors

The Free Nations hail noble
Rhudaur, now our valued brother.
The Shadow has been wiped from
Angmar, but we of Arthedain do not
stop to savor our victory, onward we
march. Mordor beware . . .

The Crimson Toad
Arthedain

GAME 128

To all Free Peoples:
You have us, right where we
want you! So last chance,
Surrender
or
Die!
The Bootlicks of Sauron

GAME 129

Mûrazor,
Thanks again for abandoning
your "ally" Khamûl, the agreed fee is
on the way to your capital . . . Oops.
I forgot . . . Khamûl, your current
misfortunes are due to our superior
strategy. Nothing else. Honest.
Nimrodel
Sinda-Elf Babe-in-Charge

GAME 130

Let it be known that the
Eothraim are cowards and hide
behind their horses for protection.

They are so terrified of my
might that their pitiful captain
refused my personal challenge.

Gothmog, Warlord and
Grand master of Barad-dur

GAME 131

Sauron's Monthly Review

Issue #1
Mûrazôr - Editor
Hoarmûrath - Publisher
Khamûl - Reporter
Ren the Unclean - Public Relations
Adûnaphel - Secretary

table of contents:
Those Wacky Neutrals
War Abroad
Death, Death, Death
Sports and Leisure

Those Wacky Neutrals

Rhudaur jumps Dunlending!
Dunlending dies!
Witch-king blitzes Rhudaur!
Rhudaur dies!
Easterling attacks Northmen!
Easterlings already decided!
Haradwaith liked by everyone:
Corsairs alienate everyone:
Corsairs harass Haradwaith.
Who dies?
None in the top three!

War Abroad

Goblin-Gate holds!
Mumakil at Osgiliath!
Three-way naval combat,
Sinda, QA, Corsairs!
Durthang burns!
Osgiliath holds!
Gothmog at Buhr Marling!
General Uklurg threatens Ithil!
Ice King attacks Sinda!
Cardolan attacks . . . then retreats.
Ohhhhhhhh my!

Death. Death. Death!

Personal challenges-
Balin, Falin, Threlin fall to
Celedhring, Mûrazor, Maben!
First, Second, and Third to Fry . . .
it was a matter of honor!
Eoder slain by Din Ohtar!
Athaulf killed by Bolvag!

Captured - Herumor
Assassinated - Mahrcared

Sports and Leisure

On safari -
Akhórahil bags spider!
Bairanax barbecues Virsh!
Riadeegha hunts artifacts!
Celgor stalks Kadida and Borhan
Eagles attack Dancu twice!
Ents play soccer with Dragon Lord . . .
skulls!
Arthedain, Eothraim, Woodmen,
Noldo, vacation two months!
---later!---

GAME 132

HEY CAMEL BOY!!

Lag-auris - Destroyed
Nahald Kudan - Captured
And Free armies all over Sarn
Goriwing and Goblin-Gate. My, My,
MY . . . Looks like you are running
out of population centers FAST

We really are sorry . . .
THE GOOD GUYS

My brethren . . .
Now the war has begun in
earnest! Soon many of you shall
march to the northeast, and many of
you shall not return. But the
DUNEDAIN shall not shirk their duty.
We shall sell OUR BLOOD Dearly!!
Shadowspawne

GAME 133

Overheard at Barad Ungol:

Messenger: Your filthiness, I bring
news from Barad Waith.
Ren: Speak you dirty Yrch.
Messenger: Commander Shagrat says
a white robed stranger approached
his patrol on the north road into
Barad Waith. As they attempted to
stop him, he a . . . um . . . well . . .
Ren: Finish, before you are Warg
food!!!
Messenger: Well Sire, the stranger
spoke, as he lifted his arms toward
the sky, "Fools! You know not the
powers with which you play. I am
Saruman the White. Fear ME!!! And
before he had finished 222 troops
were fell and the rest had fled. That
is all that has been told to me.
Ren: Leave here Yrch and tell Shagrat
if he lets this happen again he will
have reason to fear me. Go now!!!
Messenger: Yes, Insane one. (shaking
and bowing low)

GAME 134

Bree has fallen, the forces of
darkness control the great road.
Where shall Mûrazôr's dread fist next
fall? Let all who resist Sauron
tremble!

(Hey, Ji, you'll never guess
where Elrond showed up! I've got
this idea...)

Grendel

GAME 135

From the Halls of Mount Gundabad
To the Shores of Far Harad
We will fight Lord Elrond's Battles
We are the Noldo Elf Marines . . .
-excerpt from the Noldo Elf Marine
Corp Hymn

Poor Northern Gondor . . .
First, they lost their gold. Next,
an army here and there. Now their
towns are disappearing. Gee, I
wonder what's next . . .

GAME 137

Warning to All Nations:
The Easterlings remain neutral,
but will not allow foreign armies into
our Pop Centers.

Deep within the halls of Dol Guldur:
Dûran: "Caras Galadhon has been
destroyed my master! What is your
next command?"
Laughter fills the halls as Dûran
accepts his next task.

GAME 138

Recently, Jimmy 'Elrond'
Johnson, the coach of the FPL's Noldo
Elves with the Jiffy Pop hair,
guaranteed a victory by the FPL. The
Dark Servant League noted that
when dealing with Jiffy Pop some hot
air is expected.

Mordor leaves an open gate . . .
unleash the dogs of war!

GAME 139

After only 4 turns into the
game, the Northmen own nothing
south of the river Celduin. Come to

think of it . . . I own all of his stuff
south of Celduin. Now why are all
these Free Peoples so miffed?
Ovatha

GAME 140

In a tent just outside his
capitol, Ovatha sits . . . bored. No one
comes to negotiate, or lays gifts at his
feet. And he just bought that new
coffee service too!

"Damn it! I just want to kill
something!"

Grendel

War chief Bornbeneor had been
running his troops through on a
training march when scouts returned
with word of goblin spore. He quickly
issued orders to his captains and
ambush was set. Sure enough, comes
along a pile of hated goblins
trespassing in the sacred wood. The
order given, the ambush sprung! The
fighting was long and hard, many a
trainee would not be coming home
from this road march. The survivors
have been blooded and are eager for
more goblin blood. Soon war chief
Bornbeneor tells his troops, "Soon we
leave to cleanse the sacred wood of
all goblins. A three day pass for the
man who brings me Urgubal's head."

Excerpt from training records 162nd
HI training brigade, Southcom,
Woodmen Imperial Army

GAME 141

The Haradwaith, desiring peaceful,
secure borders, wish to announce our
alliance with the noble Corsairs.
While we are aware of the conflict
which rages around us, we wish to
remain isolated from it. We defend
the principles of free trade and
exchange of information. Any
challenge to the sovereignty of one

will be considered a challenge to both.

GAME 142

I can be anywhere at anytime.
I can be in two places at once.
I can be at the beginning
But I am always at the end.
Who am I?

Helrazor

GAME 143

Oh, this is too easy! South Gondor,
thanks for the Ring of Impersonation,
I'll think of you with every kill.
Eothraim, thanks for the 2,000 horsy
pops, my trolls love 'em. Give my
gales of laughter to the widows

Crimson Toad
Ice King

GAME 145

The trumpets sound as the Eothraim
march on the CHILDREN of Sauron.
The gleaming weapons are ready.
The enemy is meet. Beware Dark
Ones, I come for you.

Zanzabar
Rider of the Plains!!

To all FPs and DSs,

We of the Dunlending nation
hope for fair and honest negotiations
with all forces.

We may not come at a low
price, but once the right offer is put
forth, we'll come in a hurry. Act now
before a nation expires.

Lord Enion of Dunlend

Corsairs, your aggressiveness in
attacking is worthy of trying Fit a Fat
Boy In a Tight Suit. If South Gondor
helps, all other Neutrals will
probably go evil. Who will you help

then? Sinda? Not!!
Harry the Horrible Harad

GAME 146

A pool of gray in a sea of light.
Black crested waves,
Covered by valleys of white.
Time determines what destiny paves.
And destiny my friend,
Is one of your personal slaves.
The Sadistic Sage

As the flowers bloom in Arnor,
so will my rule over the West be
reborn.

Mûrazôr

GAME 147

Though the first stone has not been
cast,
There remains no doubt that peace is
past.

The END will come fast,
for viciously we will blast
Sauron's iconoclasts.

His empire shall become vast,
and forever shall it last.

Adunaphel
the Quiet

The Enlightened Ones are here.
They ready their populace,
Inspire their troops,
Unfurl their banners,
And say good-bye to their families.
For war has come.
As the first charges begin,
First armies meet,
And first arrows fly.
They will know DARKNESS HAS
COME!

GAME 149

All hail to the gods of War!!!

The Harad and Dunlendings are
of like minds and act in each others'
best interest. Toy with one, and go to
war with both.

BEWARE!!!

-Das Boot

Nemo me impune lacessit . . .

No one provokes me with
impunity.

King Macbeth of Dunland

THE KEYS TO NEUTRAL VICTORY!

In a recently completed ME-PBM "grudge-game", a tightly-knit Good team prevailed in 31 turns over a demoralized and disorganized Evil team. In that game, Haradwaith and the Dunlendings dropped by turn eight; Corsairs dropped on turn 15. Early in the game, the Easterling player joined the Good team; He played well but he was unable to form a strong alliance with any of the good players.

Around turn 25, with the Easterlings standing third in overall points, Good team members began to steal from them. Soon after, a company of Good agents and emissaries assaulted Luglurak (3929) to wrest it away from one of the last remaining Evil positions. An Easterling emissary found there was kidnapped by Gildor. On turn 28, an Easterling army encountered a North Gondor army at Osgiliath; the North Gondor army commander challenged the Easterling commander. On the last turn of the game, I got a 3x5 from the disgruntled Easterling players from his own side!

An analysis of the play of the five neutral positions in this game reveals the typical problems encountered by neutral positions in ME-PBM and emphasizes the importance of good diplomacy for neutral positions.

The Rhudaar position in this game sent his armies racing for Cardolan on the first turn! Astoundingly, he also sent 3x5's stating that he would only take two Cardolan pop centers, and urged the other northwestern Good positions to stand aside if they hoped to retain his good will!?!? Wanting to focus on the Witch King, and wishing to avoid a hostile Rhudaar meant losing pop centers. He also refused to communicate on the telephone. The Arthedain, Noldo, and Cardolan players deliberated for about 15 seconds, decided to eliminate this "loose cannon", and took him out by turn 12.

The Dunlendings position in this game went inactive on turn four and dropped around turn eight after spasmodic play in the initial turns; a very lucky outcome for the northwestern Goods who had their hands full with Rhudaar and Witch King.

The Haradwaith played an absolutely Machiavellian diplomacy game, attempting to manipulate the Corsairs into conflict with South Gondor and promising to join in an attack on the South Gondor capital along with the Quiet Avenger. On turn 2, most of the Corsair starting forces landed in the South Gondor capital-all by themselves. Haradwaith explained that he and the Quiet Avenger had "failed to change relations, and when their fleets collided they were stuck out at sea." The Corsairs smelled a rat and negotiated a peaceful withdrawal from the South Gondor capital. By turn 8, having failed in all his

machinations, the Haradwaith player dropped. His holdings were then quickly gobbled up by the Corsairs and the Gondors.

After the near-mishap with South Gondor, the Corsairs encouraged South Gondor to join in an attack on Haradwaith-an attack that occurred beginning turn 10 shortly after Haradwaith dropped. By turn 15, with three of the other four neutrals out of the game and the Easterlings having turned Good, the Corsairs dropped, even though they had the highest point total in the game! The Corsairs perceived that they could join the Goods and coast to a boring victory or join the Evils and be slowly but surely defeated. Wanting a challenge, the Corsairs dropped and joined a new game.

The Easterlings began attacking the Evils around turn 5, and turned Good shortly thereafter. His 3x5 card clearly showed that the Easterling player felt very bitter when he was attacked by other Good players in the endgame. After the game was over, I wrote to him and explained that inherent in the game design, there can be only three players getting those game winner certificates. Did he really expect our team members to sit back and let him cruise to victory? The members of our grudge team are long term PBM and over-the-board pals who have known each other, in some cases, for over twenty years. I told the Easterling that his position was impossible. He joined the Good side in this game early on because of our series of early victories, without getting any "goodies" for joining us. He made little effort at all to probe for and exploit conflicts among the Good team members. No matter how strong his position was, he had little chance for victory without gaining the acceptance of the rest of the Good team.

This story illustrates the unique difficulties faced by neutral positions, especially in grudge games, and highlights the importance of superior diplomacy if a neutral is to succeed in the game. While good diplomacy is important for all positions in ME-PBM, it is essential to successful play on the part of a neutral position. A neutral faces difficult decisions throughout the game. First, a neutral, often operating with no friends in the game, must gather sufficient information to choose the right allegiance to join. The timing of the allegiance declaration is also critical. A neutral must decide how much and what kind of price he will extract from the side he joins. The problems facing a neutral are more difficult in a team game, and even worse in a grudge game.

Getting information

Early in the Game, a neutral must try to identify the side with the superior players and measure their margin of superiority. Neutrals should take the initiative and communicate with everybody; events in far corners of the board can provide very valuable info. Good relationships can be built up with players on both sides through these early negotiations and these relationships will be very useful later in the game.

CHOICE OF ALLEGIANCE

If a player has any interest at all in winning the game, his choice of allegiance is strongly influenced by his perception of which side looks like it will win. His geographic position is also a strong influence. However, in a close game, a powerful, well-positioned neutral can decisively influence the balance of power, particularly if he can bring another neutral over with him. For example, in a game where the Easterlings have declared for Evil, and Rhudaur and Dunlendings have declared Good, Corsairs should carefully consider their choice.

Other things being equal, going Good in this case might seal the victory for the Good team, but will the Corsairs be among the top three at the end of the game in competition with the many very powerful Good starting positions? By going Evil, especially if Corsairs might have to fight long and hard for victory, he is much more likely to be among the top three at the end of the game...

TIMING OF ALLEGIANCE CHOICE

This is possibly the most difficult decision faced by a neutral. An early declaration forfeits the built-in advantages of neutrality; the untroubled build-up of your economy, armies, and character base comes immediately to an end. However, an early declaration (around turns 3 - 7) may gain you the genuine gratitude and friendship of the allegiance you join, particularly if your cavalry (literally) rides in at the crucial moment and saves the day.

A mid-game declaration (anytime after turn 7, but before the endgame) usually results in your position "jumping in front of the parade". Suddenly you vault into one of the top three positions for that allegiance. Everybody on your side knows it, and they will very likely resent it, especially if they have been fighting and bleeding while you have been sitting there getting fat.

An end-game declaration is the most dangerous strategy. With this type of declaration, you deliberately try to "jump in front of the parade" by timing your change of allegiance to be very near the end of the game. If the winning side detects that this is what you are trying to do, they might attack you militarily (until you declare) and/or with characters. You must be strong enough to repel or endure this attack and still be able to bring about the end of the game before your own allegiance members damage your winning chances.

A good rule of thumb: try to declare just as the game begins to tip in favor of one side or the other. As long as the game is still a toss-up, you can safely postpone declaration.

THE "PRICE" FOR JOINING

Many neutrals attempt to extract the maximum concessions (resources, gold, artifacts, pop centers, etc.) in return for joining a side. This is a bad strategy that causes resentment among the players of your own position. Greedy thinking like this can also distort your analysis of who is likely to win and influence you to join the losing side!

When negotiating to join a side, follow three basic rules. First, don't get greedy; the good will of your allegiance-mates is worth far more than an extra artifact. Second, accept what is offered. A player that freely offers you something is less likely to resent you for taking it. Third, get concessions that count - ask for the artifact or the pop center that you need for your individual victory condition, and only ask for one of them.

NEUTRALS IN TEAM AND GRUDGE GAMES

The situation of a neutral in a team game or grudge game is much more difficult. GSI will not tell a neutral player that they have been placed in a team game or grudge game (*Editors note: If you call us, we will tell you what type of game you are in*) therefore, this is possibly the most important information a player should try to ferret out early in the game.

The neutral must deal with the bonds of friendship that exist among the team members that often stretch back for years in the real world. These bonds

are difficult to overcome. The task of the neutral is to break in and become a team member. If it is a team game with more than one faction per side, the neutral must also decide which faction to favor - this can be as difficult as choosing allegiances. In a grudge game, attaining acceptance by the ten-man team of the allegiance you choose is even more difficult. It may be impossible. No matter what you do, you have a difficult time winning. A possible option is to try to split or divide the team and align yourself with the strongest faction.

Playing a solo neutral in a grudge game is possibly the greatest challenge available to a skilled ME-PBM player.

NEUTRAL PLAY IN THE END GAME

Neutral players should be prepared to be attacked in the endgame, especially in team and grudge games. This usually means the development of a strong agent corps to provide the best possible protection for key characters and large pop centers. Call on the help and influence of any allies you have in your allegiance - an ally's timely phone call can convince someone to pull out their agents and emissaries and save your hide. You must also be prepared to counter-attack with your own agents and emissaries.

Playing Neutrals is tough and requires solid diplomatic skills. I encourage everyone to try it - it's a challenge even tougher than playing the Woodmen!

Strategy and Tactics: Cardolan

by
Brian Mason

Hard lessons have been learned. In game 62 the Witch-King positively drubbed my Cardolan. The experience in that game has led me to develop what follows as a starting strategy for Cardolan. What follows will make specific moves for characters and count economics to the last piece of gold. While these will not necessarily be the same in every game, they certainly would have been true for one game.

How does the Cardolan compare to other nations? At the start of the game they rank as follows (Allegiance Comparison Tables, Tom Walton):

Descriptor	among all players	among Free Peoples
Total Tax Base	7th	4th
Resource Base	tied for 12th	7th
Combat Strength	tied for 19th	8th
Character points	tied for 23rd	10th
Artifacts	tied for 20th	tied for 8th

Cardolan is weak in very many areas. But the strength of the economy, its somewhat isolated location, and its ability to hire armies can make up for many mistakes.

Probably the most important capability of Cardolan is to hire armies at no cost. Without the split command orders, new Cardolan armies can be hired on the spot free of charge. Only Rhudaur and the Fire King share this ability. But the

Fire King does not have the population centers Cardolan does and Rhudaur must spend a turn by first hiring the army as Men-at-Arms before it can begin recruiting better quality troops.

The strategy is as follows:

Pre-existing conditions:

Characters: Aethelan is at 1317. Earnil is at 1614 with 900 men-at-arms. Echorion is at 1514. Finduilas III is at 1513. Hallas is at 1510. Imlach is at 1219 with 300 heavy infantry and 600 men-at-arms. Lanaigh is at 1510 with 600 heavy cavalry, 300 light cavalry, 300 heavy infantry, 300 light infantry, and 600 men-at-arms. Pelendur is at 1113 with 300 heavy infantry, 300 archers, and 600 men-at-arms.

Specific sales will be made. There will, no doubt, be errors in the sale values from game to game. However, the results do give a flavor for what can be done. Buy and sell amounts and prices will be based on game 62 values.

Opening Strategy

Turn one moves: Aethelan hires an army of 300 heavy infantry and moves the army northeast to 1513. Earnil recruits 400 heavy infantry and moves his army to 1513. Echorion influences the population center and hires an army of 300 heavy infantry. Finduilas sells all leather and prentices magery. Hallas guards Lanaigh and moves to 1513. Imlach conducts troop maneuvers and moves the navy to 1614. Lanaigh recruits 300 heavy infantry and does a recon. Pelendur recruits 300 heavy infantry and moves the army to 1513.

Turn two moves: Aethelan transfers all his troops and names a character of emissary rank 30. Earnil names a commander and moves his army to 1710. Echorion recruits 300 heavy infantry and moves his army to 1710. Finduilas sells all food and prentices magery. Hallas changes the tax rate to 70% and moves to 1614. Imlach recruits 400 heavy infantry and moves his army to 1710. Lanaigh recruits 300 heavy infantry and moves his army to 1710. Pelendur recruits 400 heavy infantry and moves his army to 1710.

Turn three moves: Aethelan sells all food and moves and joins Earnil's army at 1806. Earnil conducts army maneuvers and moves his army to 1806. Echorion transfers command to Earnil and moves to 1317. The new commander hires an army of 400 heavy infantry and sells all mounts. Finduilas researches a spell and prentices magery. Hallas hires an army of 400 heavy infantry and guards 1614. Imlach transfers command to Earnil and moves to 1113. Lanaigh transfers command to Earnil and moves to 1514. Pelendur transfers command to Earnil and moves to 1510. The new emissary names another emissary and moves to 1609.

Future turns: At this point, Cardolan is in a very precarious financial situation. While it has a large per turn deficit, it also has a large gold reserve of around 60000. However, continuing rotating sales of the four commodities it produces the most of: food, leather, mounts, and timber, should keep it in the black. It is currently poised to become the strongest military force West of the Misty Mountains. Earnil has an army of 7800 troops ready to strike at Angmar. Commanders are sitting at population centers, all within one-turns march of 1513, capable of recruiting 2000 troops per turn. It also has two new emissaries, and is poised, on turn four, to make a third.

If I were playing Cardolan I would move Earnil's army towards Cargash hoping to meet armies which it could destroy and destroy any population center it comes across, recruit at all available population centers, and create an emissary. Cardolan can build up armies faster than any other nation, and in a prolonged war of attrition, it will come out on top. So, contrary to conventional wisdom, I would go after the Witch-King's armies, hoping to wear him out.

Another important option which Cardolan should use would be to encourage significant early cooperation with the Noldo. Specifically, give the Noldo all the Cardolan ships (which at the end of turn one will be at 1614). This will give the Noldo a heightened naval power and will concentrate all the far northwest naval forces in one group so that they may form an effective fighting and naval operations force. Also, this will save Cardolan 1200 gold per turn. In addition to this the Noldo should be encouraged to sabotage all Cardolan harbors and ports. This will allow Noldo agents to improve faster, heighten (to a small degree) Cardolan security, and save Cardolan a further 1250 gold per turn.

This is an extremely aggressive strategy, and one which demands constant attention to finances. Cardolan's production should be used to generate more income to keep the armies growing. After two turns recruiting, the "in Cardolan" forces will total almost 5000 while Earnil's army will either be very small or destroyed. I would combine these 5000 troops together and start the process all over again.

The Silver Tongue: Emissaries and Neutral Nations

So, you have just received your new Middle Earth game set up. You have spent weeks, perhaps months, dreaming of leading the Witch King to glory in the destruction of Arthedain, or perhaps of reuniting Gondor and Arnor under the leadership of Northern Gondor. You open your game set up and what do you find? You are the proud leader of a neutral nation!

Wait! All is not lost! Perhaps you are dismayed that for each nation you wish to attack, you must first succeed in downgrading diplomatic relations with that nation first. Your armies, which you planned to use to take the nearest enemy towns (thereby decreasing your own maintenance costs), cannot even be sure that when they reach those towns they will be able to persuade the troops that the towns belong to an enemy!

Well, listen to Silvertongue, and learn. Use emissaries to further your ends. So what if you cannot immediately use your armies to reduce your maintenance costs. Those troops are in your way. Dismiss them! The chief reason that they are hard to use is that you (presumably) have not decided which cause to support. So during the time of negotiation, retire your standing troops, and reduce your maintenance costs.

Now the immediate use of emissaries is obvious: create camps. Next, increase the loyalty of your population centers to reduce the loyalty price of the tax increases you will require of your people (after all, these are troubled times). Hire more emissaries, and while you are continuing to negotiate with the Free Peoples and the Dark Servants, gain more experience for your emissaries.

While your emissaries are about planting camps, don't forget to Uncover Secrets. It is well known that some unworthy leaders abandon their people and leave the populace without leadership. Move your emissaries to the population centers of the now uncontrolled nation. Since they are likely to be neutrally

disposed toward you, you should find that their populace can be persuaded to join you.

Now decide which side to join. Perhaps both sides now mistrust you because you have remained uncommitted for so long. What better way to return to their good graces than by eliminating one enemy while you declare allegiance for your new allies.

Just before you declare for the Free Peoples or the Dark Servants, create two companies of emissaries to send to the Capital and back-up capital of the nation you target. Since the target nation very likely will have been trying not to offend you thereby avoiding downgrading diplomatic relations with you, he will likely be neutral toward you as well. If you have sent a large enough contingent to each site, you may well gain two large sources of income and a large enough gift (having eliminated one enemy) to your new allies that they will forgive you for delaying so long in choosing when to join them.

Remember the Emissary,
Legate Silvertongue

PS. Of course, all neutral nations are just as vulnerable to the emissaries of both sides, until diplomatic relations are adjusted.

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER)

will cost \$5. If the turn is faxed the same day or the next day after the turn is run, however, there is an additional \$3 charge, thus making the cost \$8 to have it faxed the same day. Please take note of these changes when planning to get your turn to us.

The new 7-hex maps that were announced last month also began as of the 1st of April. From now on, any pop center located off-map that are major towns/cities with a high loyalty will generate a 7-hex map similar to the recon report. New games will also have a combat artifact "in use" (i.e., a check will appear next to the artifact in use) for all characters that have one on Turn Zero (this used to be done on Turn One). If you wish to change the artifact in use, you still issue the 205 order as usual. The new 7-hex maps will begin on Turn Zero as well.

Free Peoples!! We need Free Peoples!! We currently have 3 Dark Servant Grudge teams awaiting Grudge teams of Free Peoples to match wits against. We also have a good number of Dark Servant teams (3-5 players) awaiting teams of Free Peoples. If you want to start a game quickly, you can request a Free People set-up with you and your friends. Actually, the fastest way to get into a game, be it a Grudge or a team game, is to give us selections for both Dark Servants AND Free Peoples. This way, we can see what we need and place your team accordingly. We also have a 3 Week game that is half-filled, for those of you interested in a slower game. And as always, we have openings for Neutrals.

Well, I've rambled on long enough. That's it for this month, campers. I'll see you same time next month.

Stuart

The Hall Of Heroes

Game #32 - The Dark Servants: #20, #18 & #14

Women shriek, men cry, Orcs rape and pillage, Wargs feast on human flesh -- it's all part of the Glory of Sauron and his most able Servants, the very ones responsible for the downfall of the hated Free. Final Standings are as follows:

#20 Dark Lieutenants - 2500
#18 Fire King - 2100
#14 Cloud Lord - 2000

Top Free People: #10 Noldo Elves - 1542

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Círdan/Noldo Elves: 227
Highest Net Commander Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lieutenants: 180
Highest Net Agent Rank - Faendril/Cloud Lord: 125
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Kylara/Ice King Hurshik/Dog Lord Sslith/Fire King Svidio/Dark Lieutenants Grishind/Fire King: 100
Highest Net Mage Rank - Círdan/Noldo Elves: 157
Most Mithril - Fire King: 906
Most Artifacts - Dark Lieutenants: 32
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 44

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #52 - The Dark Servants: #18, #16 & #14

Middle-earth is consumed by the Fire of Sauron's Lidless gaze, the Ice-cold fury of his vengeance, and the Cloud of his matchless power. Final Standings are as follows:

#18 Fire King - 2200
#16 Ice King - 2117
#14 Cloud Lord - 1883

Top Free People: #3 Eothraim - 725

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Hoarmú Rath/Ice King: 273
Highest Net Commander Rank - Araudgól/Cloud Lord: 130
Highest Net Agent Rank - Onoron/Ice King: 133
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Dónariel/Ice King: 100
Highest Net Mage Rank - Hoarmú Rath/Ice King: 157
Most Mithril - Dwarves: 3040
Most Artifacts - Ice King: 42
Most Kills - Ice King: 47

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #76 - The Dark Servants: #21, #23 & #13

Sauron's gauntleted fist has Middle-earth in its iron grip, crushing the life from the paltry Free who attempted to resist his rightful rule. Final standings are as follows:

#21 Corsairs - 2050
#23 Dunlendings - 1900
#13 Dog Lord - 1550

Top Free People: #4 Arthedain - 867

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Karyn/Rhudaaur: 174
Highest Net Commander Rank - Araudgól/Cloud Lord: 138
Highest Net Agent Rank - Hoarmú Rath/Ice King: 133
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Gorgûn/Dark Lieutenants: 105
Highest Net Mage Rank - Karyn/Rhudaaur: 144
Most Mithril - Dunlendings: 1420
Most Artifacts - Cloud Lord: 23
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 33

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

The Hall Of Heroes

Game #78 - The Dark Servants: #21, #25 & #16

Their enemies' heads firmly fixed to their battle standards, the faithful servants of Sauron lift their trophies in testament to their Dark Lord's power. Final standings are as follows:

#21 Corsairs - 1850
#25 Easterlings - 1425
#16 Ice King - 1150

Top Free People: #8 Dwarves - 842

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Celedhring/Dragon Lord: 174
Highest Net Commander Rank - Tónn Varthkúr/Dog Lord: 125
Highest Net Agent Rank - Izidol/Cloud Lord: 108
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Ruimgurth/Dragon Lord: 80
Highest Net Mage Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 120
Most Mithril - Dog Lord: 996
Most Artifacts - Dragon Lord: 15
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 9

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #79 - The Dark Servants: #19, #23 & #14

Elf liver and Dwarf brains are the delicacy of choice in the halls of those who brought Sauron's malevolent magnificence into domination over Middle-earth. Final standings are as follows:

#19 Long Rider - 1799
#23 Dunlendings - 1717
#14 Cloud Lord - 1642

Top Free People: #10 Noldo Elves - 825

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Araudgól/Cloud Lord: 173
Highest Net Commander Rank - Araudgól/Cloud Lord: 163
Highest Net Agent Rank - Croaker/Dunlendings: 116
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Urzaril/Dark Lieutenants: 103
Highest Net Mage Rank - Naldurgarth/Blind Sorcerer Hoarmú Rath /Ice King: 113
Most Mithril - Dwarves: 1887
Most Artifacts - Long Rider: 18
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 17

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #104 - The Free People: #6, #9 & #22

The Trolls are stone, the Orcs are scattered, the Balrogs but wisps of smoke in the Light of the Free. Sauron's minions have been eradicated from the land and Sauron's power broken. Final standings are as follows:

#6 Northern Gondor - 1734
#9 Sinda Elves - 1733
#22 Haradwaith - 1500

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Tarondor/Northern Gondor: 174
Highest Net Commander Rank - Tarondor/Northern Gondor: 154
Highest Net Agent Rank - Asprinil/Southern Gondor: 132
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Urzahil/Dark Lieutenants: 96
Highest Net Mage Rank - Saerol/Southern Gondor: 127
Most Mithril - Noldo Elves: 255
Most Artifacts - Dark Lieutenants: 13
Most Kills - Dwarves: 2

Congratulations to the Free Peoples!!