

WIZARDS' DUEL

This month, the Middle-earth team's rules writer, Jay Clare, focuses the Palantír upon the fierce battle between Gandalf and Saruman as they fight within the Tower of Orthanc, allowing you to re-enact this epic clash of Wizards for yourselves!



JAY CLARE

Jay has been enthralled by the Middle-earth Strategy Battle Game since the tender age of 10, and he remembers the classic *Battle Games in Middle-earth* magazines with great fondness. In fact, that's where his first miniature came from – Aragorn from Helm's Deep!

One of the most dramatic scenes in *The Fellowship of the Ring*™ is when Gandalf goes to visit Saruman in order to relay his concerns over the discovery of the One Ring in the Shire. Of course, Gandalf soon comes to realise that Saruman has abandoned reason for madness and thrown in his lot with the Dark Lord in exchange for the promise of power. This all comes to a head when Saruman shows his true colours to Gandalf, culminating in the two Istari engaging in a duel of sorcery inside the main chamber of Orthanc.

In the Strategy Battle Game, there is no real way to play out this event, what with it only featuring two characters and nothing else, and this felt like a real shame considering how important this scene is in the story of *The Lord of the Rings*™. This then got me thinking about how best to recreate the Wizards' Duel.

I then remembered an old article from the *Battle Games in Middle-earth*™ magazine that Games Workshop published back in the early 2000s. Within one of the issues there was a mini-game provided so that people could play through this exact scene, complete with a hex grid for the Istari to move around on.

Well, I thought that it would be fun to revisit this classic mini-game. So I set about playing through it (it's a tough life being a games developer!) and adapting the game for inclusion in *White Dwarf*. I must say, playing it again now is every bit as fun as I remember it being back when I was in school. Just remember that it is mandatory to shout the names of your Magical Attacks and Defences (perhaps using your best Ian McKellen or Christopher Lee impressions!) – it makes the game far more exciting and gives you the feeling of being an all-powerful Istari. Enjoy!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To play this mini-game, all you need is the playing surface included with this issue, miniatures to represent Gandalf the Grey, Saruman the White and the Palantír, a D6, and a pen and paper or two additional different-coloured D6s for each player.

OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

The objective is simple. The first Wizard to reduce their opponent from 15 wounds to 0 is the winner.

THE GAMING AREA

Setting up the gaming space is easy. Simply put the playing surface provided with this issue on a table, then place Gandalf and Saruman on their starting locations – Gandalf on the 'G' and Saruman on the 'S'. The Palantír is placed in the central hex. Once this is all set up, you are ready to play.

THE GAME

The game is played in a series of turns as usual, following the phases listed below:

TURN SEQUENCE

1. Priority
2. Move
3. Choose Attack and Defence
3. Execute Attacks

PRIORITY

In the first turn, Priority automatically goes to Saruman – after all, he does get the drop on Gandalf! In subsequent turns, both Wizards roll a D6 and Priority will go to whichever Wizard rolls highest. If the rolls are tied, Priority will go to the Wizard who did not have it in the previous turn.

MOVE

The Wizard who has Priority may then move one space into any adjacent hex. However, they may not move into a hex containing the other Wizard or the Palantír. Unlike the Strategy Battle Game, only the Wizard with Priority gets to move on each turn; the other Wizard does not get to move.

CHOOSE ATTACK AND DEFENCE

In this mini-game, the Wizards do not engage in hand-to-hand combat, even if they are next to each other; they are too busy trying to assert their magical dominance over the other. Instead, each Wizard secretly chooses one Magical Attack and one Magical Defence from the Magical Powers chart (see page 121) and writes them down or uses different-coloured dice to keep track of their selections, making sure that their opponent doesn't see what they have chosen.

Magical Attacks are made up of two components: Push and Crush. A Push forces the enemy Wizard

away (a horizontal blast), whilst a Crush damages the target by flattening them on the floor (a vertical blast). Each Magical Attack comprises different combinations of these two components, representing the magical blast coming from different angles (see Magical Powers chart, page 121). For example, the Bang! Magical Attack can Push 1 and Crush 2, whilst the Whack! Magical Attack can Push 3 and Crush 0, and so on.

Magical Defence powers can completely stop only one of the two components (cancelling all Push or all Crush), or protect the Wizard against both but to a lesser degree (–1 Push and –1 Crush).

EXECUTE ATTACKS

To execute their Attacks, both players simultaneously reveal their chosen Magical Powers. They must also shout the magic word attached to the selected Magical Attack and Defence. Yes, this is compulsory, and it makes it far more fun!

Starting with the Wizard who has Priority, compare their chosen Magical Attack with the opponent's Magical Defence. The Push and Crush components of the Magical Attack are modified by the protection granted by the Magical Defence. For each point of Push that makes it through the opponent's Magical Defence, the Wizard may move their opponent one hex further away, in a direction chosen by the attacker. For each point of Crush that makes it through the opponent's Magical Defence, the opposing Wizard suffers 1 point of damage.

If a Wizard would be pushed into an obstacle, such as if they cannot complete the push because a wall or the Palantír stands in the way, the Wizard will suffer damage. In this situation, the Wizard suffers damage equal to the number of hexes they should have originally been moved. The number of hexes the Wizard had been moved before they hit an obstacle does not matter. For example, if Gandalf would have been pushed two hexes, and he is moved one hex before colliding with a wall, he will stop next to the wall and will then suffer 2 points of damage.

THE PALANTÍR

If a Wizard is in a hex adjacent to the Palantír, and the opposing Wizard is not, then they benefit from the powers of the Seeing Stone. This means that, before the Wizard selects their Magical Defence, their opponent must declare one of their Magical Attacks that they have NOT chosen this turn – giving them a better chance of being able to protect themselves. If both Wizards are next to the Palantír, then its powers are cancelled out, and neither player gains the benefits.



GAME EXAMPLE

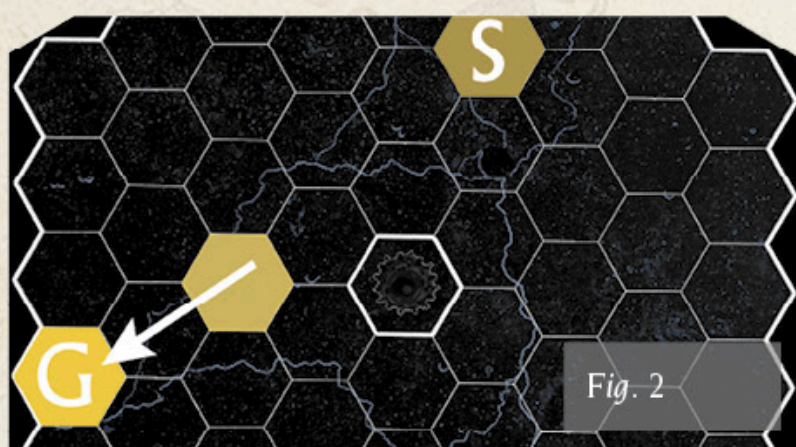
GANDALF'S ATTACK

Gandalf reveals he has chosen to attack with Slam! (2 Push/1 Crush). Saruman responds with Stop! (No Push). Saruman's Magical Defence prevents him from being pushed, and so he is only crushed for 1 point of damage (see fig. 1).



SARUMAN'S RESPONSE

At the same time, Saruman reveals he has chosen to attack with Whack! (3 Push/0 Crush). Gandalf has chosen the Shield! (-1 Push/-1 Crush) Magical Defence. This results in Gandalf being pushed two hexes and suffering no damage (see fig. 2).



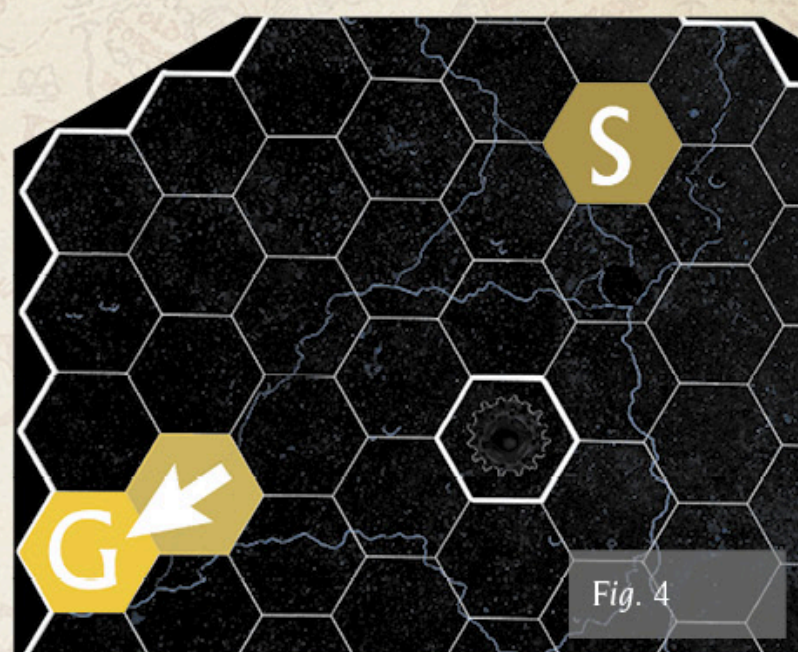
GANDALF RETALIATES

Later in the game, Gandalf attacks with the Smash! (0 Push/3 Crush) Magical Attack. Fortunately for the White Wizard, Saruman has chosen the No! (No Crush) Magical Defence, stopping all the Crush damage. This results in Saruman being entirely unaffected (see fig. 3).



SARUMAN'S ASSAULT

At the same time, Saruman has chosen to attack with Whack! (3 Push/0 Crush). Gandalf has chosen the Shield! (-1 Push/-1 Crush) Magical Defence again. This should result in Gandalf being pushed two hexes away from Saruman and suffering no Crush damage. However, Gandalf is only one hex away from the wall when he is pushed. As he cannot complete the push move away from Saruman, he is slammed into the wall and suffers two damage – one damage for each hex he should have been pushed in this situation (see fig. 4).



WINNING THE GAME

Each Wizard has a total of 15 wounds. Each time they suffer damage, reduce the number of wounds they have remaining by the number of points of damage they suffer.

When a Wizard loses their final wound, they are knocked out, allowing the other Wizard to take their staff and win the game! This happens immediately, so if the Wizard with Priority knocks out their opponent before they have a chance to resolve their Magical Attack, then their opponent cannot complete their Magical Power and the Wizard with Priority is the winner. As such, this mini-game can never end in a draw.

MAGICAL POWERS CHART	
Magical Attacks	Magical Defence
1. Whack! 3 Push/0 Crush	1. Stop! No Push
2. Slam! 2 Push/1 Crush	2. No! No Crush
3. Bang! 1 Push/2 Crush	3. Shield! -1 Push/-1 Crush
4. Smash! 0 Push/3 Crush	

WOUNDS CHART				
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
Defeat				

