

THE BADLANDS

New Battlelands for TITAN

By Bill Scott and Gerald Lientz



TITAN is a most intense, challenging and enjoyable game (some readers might claim *the* most). From its first appearance it has been on of our favorites. However, after playing several hundred games and fighting several thousand battles over the last few years, we have grown a bit weary of the same 11 Battlelands. Too, we came to feel that the brush and jungle creatures tend to dominate. The best remedy for these two minor faults seemed to be the creation of some new Battlelands. On the following pages, readers will find ten of our initial attempts.

No doubt many fans of TITAN have already crafted their own new boards. It is fairly easy to do. First, duplicate the originals at your local copy shop or library. Make four or more copies of each, and 20 or so of the Plains. Get sharp scissors or a hobby knife, glue, a fine-point black marker, and perhaps a pair of tweezers. Study the original Battlelands, noting the principles of layout. Decide how you wish to alter these for variety. Remember that a small change can have a large impact on tactics; resist the temptation to clutter your new boards with too much terrain. Cut out the individual hexes of your photocopies, and then arrange them on the Plains board as you've planned. Glue them down when satisfied, and use your marker to correct any flaws (or even draw your own new terrain type) on your final version. (Shading to show the different levels is the most difficult to reproduce, but with a little effort and practice can be created.) Now take the finished "master" to the copier and duplicate them onto stiffer stock (colored or not).

The following are examples of our work. We have quite an assortment these days, but for those who want to experiment with the joys of re-fighting old battles over new terrain, institute the following rules to get these into play:

For certain (Tundra, Marsh, Swamp, Jungle, Woods, Brush and Desert) Battlelands, upon a battle occurring in each terrain type, a single die roll will determine which card is used. The defending player, before setting up his pieces, rolls a single die. On a roll of "1-3", the new board is substituted for the original. (Players may, in fact, use any die roll division to indicate which of the two Battleland boards is to be used, so long as there is a 50% chance for either being in play). All other rules remain in force.

The most distinctive difference will come in the play when a battle occurs in the Plains. It has always seemed strange to us that the plains of TITAN are so uniformly featureless. Hence, we've crafted three new boards. Should a battle occur in the Plains, the defender rolls one die, which will determine which of the following boards is to be fought over:

- Die Roll "1"=Waterhole
- Die Roll "2" =Town
- Die Roll "3"=Fort
- Die Roll "4-6"=original Plains

These three new Plains Battlelands contain one new type of Hazard, the Lake. Add the following to your Hazard Chart:

LAKE



EFFECT ON MOVEMENT: Entry forbidden to all non-flying characters. A flying character cannot end his movement on a Lake hex.

EFFECT ON STRIKING: No effect.

EFFECT ON RANGESTRIKING: No effect.

All the rules for battle remain the same, and mustering done on any of these new Plains Battlemaps is allowed in the same fashion as though they were plain Plains. For even more variation we have at times, and upon consent of all the players prior to the game, attend Rule 10.1 for the defender. In effect, if using the "Waterhole" Plains, he must place his characters on the Battleland first in such a manner that all defending characters are adjacent to at least one Lake hex. In a case of the "Town" being used, the defender places his characters in or adjacent to the "tower", Bog and/or Lake hex. For the "Fort", the defender must place his characters in or adjacent to the "tower" and/or lake hex.

With these alternative Battlelands, players will have the chance to sharpen their tactical skills. While several of the excellent points made by Mr. McAllister in his article "The Tactical Titan" (Vol. 20, No. 2) so many years ago remain quite valid, the details change. The challenge lies in how well players can adapt. No more need a battle in the Plains resemble two lines slugging it out, or degenerate into a "Custer's Last Stand". Nor does McAllister's suggestion regarding leaving weaker creatures out in order to bring in the more powerful (especially as they contribute little) necessarily hold water, for even a weak creature may make taking a fort or town costly. Rangestrikers do not have unlimited fields of fire. Some creatures not normally native to the Plains may come into their own in a battle therein. The tactical problems, and possibilities, are expanded.

We have now embarked upon the task of crafting enough additional boards for the non-Plains, non-Tower Battlelands to have six for each type. There are several methods of using these. The first, and most obvious, would be simply to roll a single die each time a battle occurs, with the board number corresponding to the die number. Another possibility is to label the specific hexes on the main mapboard (a small number in each should serve) to show which of the Battlelands are used should combat rage there. Still another possibility would be for the defending player to be allowed his choice of which can be used, with none repeatable until the full cycle of six have been used. We are sure that the inventive sorts who play TITAN can devise other methods of randomizing the use of the variant Battlelands.

But the key is that this is an extremely easy variant to incorporate, requiring little in the way of new rules, and does not significantly alter the style or feel of play. Those who wish to craft new Battlelands may, of course, devise new Hazards. We experimented with several. But the range of possible effects on movement and combat have already been pretty well covered. (Should you stumble upon something truly unique, we'd love to hear of it.)

So, we'd hope that next time you sit down to a game of TITAN with your buddies, you bring out this issue. Then watch the fun as they struggle through their first battle at the Waterhole. It should give you some new stories for your gaming lore.

As there are no plans to produce a variant kit for the game, full permission is given by the authors and The Avalon Hill Game Company to photocopy (for personal use only) the following TITAN variant battleboards. Those readers interested in learning more about crafting variant battleboards for TITAN may wish to contact Mr. Scott at 2317 Barracks Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901.