

Vanilla Retraced Challenge M80

To take part in the Challenge, **starting on Friday the 17th of March 2023**, you will have to abide by the rules stated in this document. As Stronghold Crusader has a lot of exploits that have been discovered but never been fixed over the years, the rules provide a fair playing field!

You will need the game itself (Stronghold Crusader v1.41) and a working installation of **Vanilla Retraced** with the preset configurations from the Skirmish Setup provided in the download. For instructions, please refer to the readme.md on the frontpage of the github repository.

The Challenge

The hardest mission of the second trail by far is M80 - The Big One! This mission will be the subject of our Challenge. There are three categories to take part in:

1. Be the first to beat M80 besides me, submitting your run before anyone else.

Prize: Either a custom skirmish map of your choice or 5€ Steam giftcard

2. Be the first to beat M80 besides me, and be faster by in-game time than my secret currently set record and submit your run before anyone else.

Prize: Either a custom AIV + AIC combination, a custom skirmish map or a 10€ Steam giftcard

3. Submit the fastest in-game time to beat M80 until April 16th 23:59 CET.

Prize: Either a custom skirmish Scenario (including custom Ais) or a 25€ Steam giftcard

All prizes are provided by Krarilotus, for further details about the Ais or maps, that will be created in a cooperation with the winners, please talk to Krarilotus directly. You will automatically take part in the highest rewarded category for which your submission qualifies, but only in one of them!

If you don't have access to M80 and don't want to unlock it by playing the whole 2nd trail, you can message Krarilotus#6749 on Discord or e-mail to shc.aicontest@gmail.com to get a savegame shortly before the end of M79, unlocking M80 for you.

Required For Submission

To make sure everyone abides the rules and plays fair, submissions are only valid, if they are handed in before the **cut-off date** of **April 16th 23:59 CET**, and are either a full gameplay recording + the endscreen of your playthrough or contain the following saves as a minimum to proof, that all rules were followed (time will be counted from first save + 2 months):

1. A savegame after 2 in-game months from the start of your M80
2. A savegame after 1 in-game year from the start of your M80
3. One savegames per in-game year after the first one for the first 10 in-game years or until the launch of the first big attack
4. A savegame per launch of an attack on each of the AI opponents and one savegame right before the death of each of the AI opponents
5. Screenshots of the end screen statistics of your playthrough

To submit a run for the challenge, you submit all required files via e-mail to shc.aicontest@gmail.com or alternatively message them to **KrariLotus#6749** via Discord. For submitting recordings, please upload them unlisted on YouTube and share a link in your submission message. **Only your last submission will count** and you can only take part in one category, keep this in mind for challenges 1 and 2.

Submissions will be scanned by KrariLotus as the arbiter of the challenge. If any rules were broken, the submission is rendered invalid. More information could be requested if exploitation is suspected. Feedback over invalidity is only given after the cut-off date.

Rules

Any attempts at beating the challenge have to abide these rules:

1. There is no exploits or cheating allowed. This non-exhaustive list of exploits here are just examples of what isn't allowed.

- Double-worker glitch (using more workers per workshop than usual)
- Fast-worker glitch (recruiting workers for faster jobs like the fire department, then reassigning them jobs with slower movement pace)
- Invulnerable ranged units behind crenellations or towers that still shoot enemies
- Teleportation of resources
- Teleportation of units
- Engineer duping
- Creating permanent impassable terrain
- Bugging out or deleting AI units through overbuilding
- Placing buildings in AI castle range that have an impact on the AI's ability to pathfind or might make the AI behave in weird ways
- Double-walling or walling the Lord in separately, for example with assassin proof walls, bugging out the AI's attacks in some way
- Long stretched labyrinths of moats or wall, artificially funneling the AI's attacks through an artificial small corridor of fire while keeping the castle open this way and having the AI not attack the structures because of a clear path to your lord

Anything that might bug out the AI or abuses the AI's stupidity in a big way is probably forbidden. If you are unsure about something that you want to do, because you think it should be forbidden but isn't necessarily falling under the rules, please contact me immediately, so I can clarify for everyone if it is counted as an exploit.

2. You are not allowed to attack any troops on enemy keeps for the first in-game year
3. You have to keep all relevant configurations of the **Vanilla Retraced** installation and you can only change the WASD and quicksave feature for your setup.
4. The M80 has to be played through the 2nd skirmish trail map-menu and has to be played in normal Stronghold Crusader, so everyone has to struggle with the maps troop limitations in the same way.

You may save the game and load the game as many times as you want and you can also slow down the game with the in-game speed controls as much as you deem necessary to beat M80.

Some additional notes

I wish you a lot of fun and an enjoyable grind but don't expect to beat the challenge easily. Here are a few hints to keep you going:

- You can reuse engineers from shields that you've already placed on your towers by unmanning them. This not only frees up an engineer, it also makes sure, that the engineer is not subtracted from your troop limit, once the shield dies.
- Crossbowmen are the superior ranged unit, but might not always be a cost efficient way to deal with catapults, fireballistae or even melee troops like assassin, so mix up your army composition accordingly!
- Grab as many resources as you can and don't shy away from enemy fire. It's almost guaranteed to be worth to defend them effectively over just giving them up!

Looking forward to your submissions, good luck!