

Battle Line Tactics

2 players

Short Version

playing time 15 minutes

Needs

- one deck
- 5 tokens or coins to use as flags
- Two reference cards

Long Version

playing time 30 minutes

Needs

- Two decks
- 9 tokens or coins to use as flags
- Two reference cards

Online play

<https://rsandzimier.github.io/battleline/>

http://www.gourmetgaming.com/battleline_details.php

In person play with cards

Setup

Remove the court cards from one deck for the Tactics deck.

Short Version

The ace to ten of one deck becomes the Troop deck.

Deal 7 troops to each player. Place the 5 flags between the players. Place the remaining cards become the troop deck.

Long Version

The ace to ten of two decks becomes the Troop deck.

Deal 7 troops to each player. Place the 9 flags between the players. Place the remaining cards become the troop deck.

Object of the Game

The players aim to create powerful formations on their side of the Flags to beat the formations on the opponent's side of the respective Flags.

Short Version

The first player to win three Flags achieves victory.

Long Version

The first player to win three adjacent Flags (a Breakthrough) or any five Flags (an Envelopment) achieves victory.

Taking Turns

The non-dealer plays first; play alternates thereafter. On his turn, a player selects either a troop card or a tactic card from his hand and places it face up on his side of the battle line. At the end of his turn, the player draws one card from either deck to refresh his hand to seven. When both decks run out, no further cards can be drawn, but play continues.

Winning Flags

The Flags are won by formations of Troop cards played adjacent to the Flags.

When placing a card on the battle line a player places it face up on their side of the line adjacent to one Flag. There are three imaginary card "slots" on each side of the flag. In the course of the game each player may place a maximum of three Troop cards adjacent to each Flag, in order to create formations. The order in which the cards are played is irrelevant. To save space, later cards are placed partially covering former cards at the same flag.

Formations

The different formations from highest to lowest are:

- **Straight Flush:** Three cards of the **same suite** with **consecutive values**.
- **Three of a Kind:** Three cards of the **same value**.
- **Flush:** Three cards of the **same suite**.
- **Straight:** Three cards with **consecutive values**.
- **Sum:** Any other formation.

When comparing two formations in the same category, the formation with the **higher sum** of all three card values is higher than the opposing formation. Kings count as 13, queens as 12, jacks as 11, pips as their face value and aces as 1.

If the two involved sums are equal, the formations are tied, then the player who played (or would play) the last card into the formations loses the Flag.

Tactics cards

There are twelve Tactics cards. Tactics cards are played instead of Troop cards to influence the formations. A player may hold as many Tactics cards as he wishes within his hand size of seven, but may never play more than one more than his opponent has played. That means, a player can always play a Tactics card unless he has already played more than his opponent. Each Tactics card has a special function and belongs to one of the following three categories.

1. Morale Tactics

These cards are played into the player's layout in place of, and in a similar way to, Troop cards:

- **K ♥♦ Leader** : The Leaders are wild cards. Play a Leader like any Troop card, but define the suite and value when the Flag is resolved.
- **Q ♥♦ Companion Cavalry**: Play this card like any Troop card of value 8, but define its color when the Flag is resolved.
- **Q ♠♣ Shield Bearers**: Play this card like any Troop card, but define its color and its value not larger than 3 when the Flag is resolved.

2. Environment Tactics

These cards are played face up on the player's near side of an unclaimed Flag, so that there is enough space for the Troop cards to be placed next to the Flag.

Once played, the Tactics cards stay in their position until the end of the game.

- **K ♣ Fog**: The fog card disables all formations, and the Flag is merely decided on the basis of the total value of cards on each side.
- **K ♠ Mud**: The claim for this Flag is now based on four cards on either side, so the formations need to be expanded.

3. Guile Tactics

These cards are played face up on the player's own side next to the Tactics card deck. All cards played there must be clearly visible and remain there until the end of the game.

- **J ♥ Scout**: The player draws a total of three cards from one or both decks. Then he chooses any two cards from his hand and places them face down on top of their respective deck or decks.
- **J ♠ Redeploy**: The player chooses anyone Troop or Tactics card from his side next to an unclaimed Flag, and places it face up into another of his available slots, or discards it face up on his side next to the Tactics card deck. Do not cover any other discard.
- **J ♦ Deserter**: The player may choose any one Troop or Tactics card from the opponent's side next to an unclaimed Flag, and discards it face up on the opponent's side next to the Tactics card deck. Do not cover any other discard.
- **J ♣ Traitor**: The player may choose anyone Troop card (but not a Tactics card) from the opponent's side next to an unclaimed Flag, and places it into an empty slot on his own side.

Claiming Flags

On his turn and before drawing his card from the deck, a player may claim one or more Flags. In order to do so, he must have a completed formation of three cards on his side of the Flag, and he must be able to prove that Troop cards on the opponent's side of the Flag cannot beat this formation.

When a player successfully claims a Flag, he takes the Flag and moves it to his side, beyond the cards that he played. Then neither player may place further cards adjacent to that Flag

Game End

When one player has successfully claimed three adjacent Flags or any five Flags, the game ends immediately with this player winning. Play halts; no other Flags may be claimed after that.