

Rules for Overlord (by Tom Bell)

(Condor Playvalue, 1974)

1. Contents

1 x rules sheet
1 x 7x9 board including wall
14 x white pieces
14 x red pieces

2. Setup

Two players sit on opposite sides of the board, with the wall in between them. Players decide who will play white and who will play red. Each player takes the 14 pieces of his colour and places them all on the board, one in each of the 14 spaces in the back two rows on his side of the board.

3. Object

To win the game, a player must achieve one of two victory conditions:

- 3.1. All but one of his opponent's pieces have been captured.
- 3.2. His opponent is unable to move.

4. Definitions

A single playing piece, whether on its own or part of a column, is a 'piece'. A piece which is not part of a column is a 'lone piece'. A stack of two to five pieces is a 'column'. A column can never be more than five pieces high. A column is controlled by the player who owns the top piece of the column.

5. Moving

Beginning with the white player, players take alternate turns to make a move. A move consists of one of the following: a slide, a mount, a dismount, a capture, a launch, a chain move or a promotion.

5.1. Slide. The player moves either a lone piece or a whole column one space forwards, backwards or sideways into an empty space.

5.2. Mount. The player moves one piece, either a lone piece or the top piece of a column, one space forwards, backwards or sideways onto another piece or column he controls.

The mounting piece does not need to be higher than the piece or column it is mounting, as in capturing, eg., a lone piece can mount a four-piece column. However, the player must not create a column more than five pieces high.

5.3. Dismount. The player moves the top piece of a column one space forwards, backwards or sideways into an empty space.

The piece which has dismounted will necessarily become a lone piece. The column from which it has dismounted may become a lone piece or remain a column, depending on the number of pieces left in it. Control of the remaining piece or column is still determined by its colour in the case of a lone piece, or the colour of the top piece in the case of a column. Therefore, a dismount may release a previously captured piece, or give control of a column to the opponent.

5.4. Capture. The player moves the top piece of a column one space forwards, backwards or sideways onto an opponent's piece or column. The capturing piece must start the move from a height greater than the piece or column which it is capturing.

E.g., the top piece of a three-high column can capture a two-high column.

5.5. Launch. If the player moves a piece or column from the second-furthest row of the board onto the furthest row (his opponent's back row), using any of the allowed move types above, he may then take that piece, or the top piece of that column, and place it anywhere else on the board.

This may be on top of his own pieces or columns, his opponent's pieces or columns, or onto the wall. However, he must not create a column more than five pieces high.

A launch can only be made by making a move onto the furthest row from the second-furthest. A piece or column which is already on the furthest row cannot continue to launch pieces across the board from that position. To launch again it must move off the back row, then back onto it.

5.6. Chain Move. A player may make a sequence of several consecutive moves in one turn, as long as the sequence matches the following formula: one or more mounts, followed by zero or one dismounts or captures of an empty wall space.

In other words, if a player's move is to mount with a piece, then that piece may immediately make another move, as long as it is either a mount, dismount or capture of an empty wall space. If that move is also a mount, then it may make another move, and so on. A player may therefore move a piece several spaces across the board in one turn as long as he has a chain of his own pieces or columns (at most four-high) covering the distance.

The player can choose to end the chain move at any point with a mount, leaving the piece on top of a new column. He can choose to end the chain move with a dismount, moving the piece into an empty space to form a lone piece. Or he can choose to end the chain move with a capture of an empty wall space (see 6 below). A chain move cannot include a slide or a capture of the opponent's pieces.

The final mount or dismount of a chain move may be used to make a launch.

5.7. Promotion. The player takes the bottom piece of one of his columns, and places it on top of that column.

6. The Wall

The wall across the middle of the board functions as if it is a number of two- and three-high static columns belonging to a third opposing player. Only single pieces, not columns, may move onto and off the wall, following the rules for capture, mount and dismount as appropriate.

When a wall space is empty (it has no pieces on it) it counts as an opponent's column, and a piece may only move onto it by performing a capture move. For example, to move a piece onto an empty two-high section of wall, it must start on top of a three-high column adjacent to that space.

When a wall space has a piece on it, it counts as a column belonging to that player. A player may therefore move other pieces onto a section of wall with his own piece on it already by performing mount moves. For example, if a player has a piece on top of a three-high section of wall, and a lone piece adjacent to it, he may move the lone piece onto the wall space, forming a two-high column on top of the three-high wall.

The height of the wall counts towards the five-high column limit.

Therefore, no more than two pieces may be placed onto the three-high wall, and no more than three pieces may be placed onto the two-high wall.

Chain moves may be played onto, off and along the wall as long as they follow the rules for chain moves, mounting and dismounting, with the following exception: a chain move *may* end with a capture of an empty wall space.

7. Three Move Rule

A player may not move the same piece on more than three of his own consecutive turns.

No piece may be moved on more than three consecutive turns, regardless of whether it has changed status as a lone piece, part of a column, etc. For example, on one turn, a player takes a lone piece and makes a chain move of mounts, ending by mounting a column. On the next turn, he slides that column forward a space. On the next turn, he moves the column's top piece to capture an adjacent opponent's piece. On the following turn, he may not slide the resultant column, or move the top piece from it in any way, as that piece has now moved on his three previous turns. Instead, he must move another piece (he may, if he wishes, mount another piece onto that column, as this does not move the column), after which he would be allowed to move the first piece or column again as normal. A promotion counts as moving all the pieces in the column and therefore counts towards this rule.

Only the player's own turns count towards this rule. For example, if a player's opponent moves a piece on three consecutive turns, after which it comes under the player's control, the player is free to move that piece. A possible situation in which this might happen is if a player's piece has been captured and is moved by the opponent as part of a column, and its third consecutive move is to the back row where the top piece is launched, returning control of the piece to the player. The player is then free to move that piece immediately, discounting its consecutive moves under his opponent's control.