

Being able to play a game of Warhammer 40,000 in under an hour isn't the easiest thing to do and doesn't allow for the huge games that most of us are used to. Sometimes though, gamers have specific needs and have to find ways to cater for them. Tim Eagling tells us all about the set of guidelines he developed to allow members of his school gaming club to play Warhammer 40,000 in their lunch breaks.



40K IN 40 MINUTES

By Tim 'AHOY!' Eagling



Tim Eagling

Running a club in school presents its own set of unique problems, the biggest one being finding enough time! Most school clubs operate

in a lunch time or after hours and it is extremely unusual for these sessions to last more than an hour – in most cases they probably get no more than fifty minutes.

I began to run a 'painting only' club at my school a couple of years ago as I thought that playing would be impractical. As soon as the kids in my painting club started asking about playing some games as well I realised I would have a big challenge on my hands.

We started by running some introductory games with my miniatures and terrain. These were very successful, but the kids naturally wanted to use their own figures. I suggested they brought in everything they had for their respective armies so I could have a look at what they had, and if any of them had what could be considered to be an army then I was pleased to promise them a game. In short, they didn't have coherent armies.

Setting up something different

After some thought, I decided that what was required was a set of guidelines for playing in school. Time was my overriding concern. Even if you are extremely well prepared – having exactly the figures you require, a fully detailed roster including any special rules, and a prepared table – it is extremely difficult to play in such a restricted time as 40 minutes. Considering the relative inexperience of the players and the fact that I also wanted to play every now and then, not just be a walking, talking rulebook, meant that the guidelines had to keep it all small, but not so small as to lose the character of the different armies.

The nature of the Warhammer 40,000 game allows for small forces whilst still using the main rules. To begin with, we just put a limit on points and troop selection but this didn't work very well. I had in mind the kind of forces I wanted to see in use and realised that they made pretty good patrols, a small scouting force sent ahead of a main army, which was most likely to run into the enemy first. The short nature of the games also suited two patrols coming together as I felt that this kind of force would not often get involved in a protracted fire fight, but be more likely to get in and out fast.

Short-form Warhammer 40,000

The guidelines for force selection we have settled on are as follows:

- Patrols are no more than 400 points.
- You must have one Troop choice.
- You may have one HQ choice, but no more than one.
- You may spend remaining points on anything in the Codex.
- No character can have more than 2 Wounds.
- No special characters.
- No 2+ saves.
- No vehicles with a total Armour value greater than 33.
- You must have a completed, detailed roster and access to the relevant Codex.
- Painted models only.

These rules do not necessarily cover every army – some exceptions need to be made. In the club, rules exceptions are okayed by me after some deliberation, always sticking to the spirit of the game.

Example:

In the Imperial Guard codex, an Armoured Fist squad is a Troop choice, but it must be attached to an infantry platoon.



It seems perfectly reasonable that a mobile unit such as this would carry out patrols, so I allow them to be selected as a separate unit.

As you might not pick an HQ choice, the patrol should still have a commander, who gives the orders and against which Leadership tests are made. This, of course, would be the most senior ranking figure. In the case of two figures being of an equal rank then the player may choose which is the patrol's leader, and only that figure may confer its Leadership bonus to friendly squads.

These rules are fairly logical and lend themselves to simple scenarios. We considered that beefy characters and famous personalities are unlikely to be involved in forward reconnaissance, nor would troops in huge suits of Terminator or mega-armour get out on a limb in these small actions. We also feel that only light vehicles, not main battle tanks, would be on patrol.

Terrain

Battles are fought on a number of different sized tables, the most common being a 3 by 4 table, which is conveniently half a battle mat. Forces are set up with an 18" - 24" gap between them. Most scenario rules are ignored, as we feel that nobody should be deep striking and the like, but you could use infiltrators.

The battle is a straightforward firefight. Deploy as per the standard order. Roll to see who goes first then let forth the dogs of war! All usual rules apply for the armies.

When a patrol has taken 50% casualties it must start to take Leadership tests based on the commander's ability at the start of its turn or break from combat and subsequently lose the battle. If neither force breaks then at the end of the session the patrol inflicting the most damage in points wins.

It works!

Since introducing these rules my club has expanded to three lunch times to paint and make scenery, and after school one day a week to play games. The Patrol rules have led to some very competitive games. They have provided my club members with the opportunity to start to really learn the rules, and collect a proper army.

Fighting battles this way has proved to me that with a bit of determination and a fair amount of preparation, it is possible to overcome the great time difficulty of running clubs in schools. With these rules, it is a real possibility and great fun to boot!

EXAMPLE ARMIES

Here at Games Workshop people have been trying out these great rules. Below are a few example of 400 points armies chosen specifically for playing a game of 40 minute Warhammer 40,000. We asked their commanders to tell us a little bit about them.



Che Webster, UK Events: The force was an easy one to get painted in about a week – something that was very pleasing to achieve. The Fire Warriors were fun to model, the Devfish was the heaviest tank the system allowed, and the battlesuited Shas'v're stood in as a solid commander. All in all, after six games, they are still a pretty hot choice!



Gareth Harvey, GW Events: 'Sabre Squadron' represents the reconnaissance element of a much larger Imperial Guard force, consisting of an Armoured Fist squad and a Command section in a heavily converted command Chimera – I call this a 'Centurion' but in game terms it's simply a Chimera with a single heavy bolter. This force can seem quite daunting to face as until the troops dismount, it's immune to most armies' small arms fire. Larger monsters and enemy armour can be handled with the Chimera's multilaser and, in dire need, each squad comes with a meltagun for close range tank stalking! The greatest weakness of the Guard is their comparative lack of hand-to-hand punch (no pun intended) but the Lieutenant's squad is quite toolled up with a power fist and a Veteran Sergeant. upgrade. The final element in the force is a Deathworld Sniper, in small games such as these his ability to pin entire units is particularly useful and besides he looks great!



Mark Wells, GW UK General Manager: A Space Wolves patrol would be adaptable and hard hitting, so I went for a Rhino with smoke launchers to get my ferocious Blood Claws into combat fast and Grey Hunters to provide flexible support. To cope with enemy armour, both units have a meltagun and power fist. The Wolf Guard leader can be assigned to whichever unit needs him most.

JOIN THE CLUB NETWORK

If you're already running a gaming club, but haven't got around to registering it yet, here's how. Either log on to the Gaming Club website and fill in the on-line form at www.gamingclub.org.uk, or drop into your

local Games Workshop store and ask for a registration form.

If you would like to send us news and photos, ask a question, or drop us a line, you can

e-mail us at: clubguy@games-workshop.co.uk

or write to: UK Gaming Clubs, Games Workshop HQ, Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2WS.