

WARMMASTER

Azhag the Slaughterer

An Epic Warmaster Campaign
By Ken South

With the Warmaster *Battles of Legend* series being a popular part of the Fanatic literary arsenal in the past I thought that it might well be worth exploring the history of the Warhammer world and recreating some of the campaigns that have helped shape the Warhammer world as we know it.

Bearing that in mind I delved into deleted army books and thumb worn copies of White Dwarf to find accounts of battles long since forgotten about yet shaped the world that is Warhammer.

The relentless wars of the Empire and the Orcs have been retold and reinvented since the earliest editions of the Warhammer game so I thought that this would be a good place to start my research. After reading through many books I came across the name Azhag. This Orc Warlord has appeared in countless army books throughout the years and his campaign against the Empire has grown through different iterations, over the years.

THE CAMPAIGN

The format for the campaign will follow these broad rules:

1. There will be no definitive army lists as such, but there will be notes on army sizes as well as sections covering special rules along with special units and any special characters for each battle in the campaign.
2. The battles and encounters featured have all been referenced from existing Games Workshop material and as such was initially designed for Warhammer so although some of the units mentioned may not be available you could convert or repaint existing models in the Warmaster range.
3. There will also be army and allies rules this is to allow for themed armies and their use as allies. The new rules for fielding allies can be used for other games if players agree.

SPECIAL CHARACTERS

Azhag The Slaughterer. Azhag is the leader of the Waaagh. He wears the Crown of Sorcery upon his head and has become unstoppable. His army is massive and every day more Orcs and Goblins flock to his banner. He flies above his green horde on his faithful wyvern.

Azhag has acquired the crown of Nagash, this potent magic item was found in a horde of troll treasure and when Azhag wears this item he becomes possessed by the unrelenting spirit of Nagash.

To represent this potent magic item the Orc player rolls a D6 at the beginning of each Orc turn. On a roll of 5 or 6 the crown exerts its influence on Azhag, and for that turn the Orc warlord has a leadership of 10. On a roll of 2, 3 or 4 the crown has no effect and Azhag's command is 8. On a roll of 1 the crown drains Azhag and he cannot issue any orders for that turn.

Marshall Otto Blucher. The characteristics of this brave and outspoken lord means that as a general he gets an improved command of 10. He is free to the Empire army at the battle of Osterwald. If placed with a unit it will automatically pass the first command test.

THE SETTING

The early battles of Azhag and his growing Waaagh were fought in the frozen north against the armies of Kislev. With his army growing Azhag would conduct raids against remote villages and isolated outposts. As his victories increased so did his daring and it was on the banks of Lake Tura that the first major pitched battle of the campaign took place between the amassed armies of Kislev and the green tide of Waaagh Azhag.

As if under some alien influence, Azhag shunned normal Orc tactics and instead ordered his batteries of Rock Lobbers to break the heavy ice as the forces of Kislev advanced across to the frozen lake.

This action won him the battle and sent many a brave horseman to an icy grave at the bottom of the lake.



Some skulkings Orcs from Rick Priestley's collection

THE BATTLE OF LAKE TURA

Table size. 6x4 feet.

Terrain. The tabletop represents the frozen lake and as such should be coloured white if possible. You could place some fir trees around the edges to represent the wooded banks of the lake.

Scenario special rules. You will need some counters to represent the holes made by the rock lobster, I used 1 pence pieces. You will also need a Warhammer scatter die.

Each time a rock lobster fires Place 1 counter on the battlefield where you'd like a hole to be made. Roll 3 dice on a roll of 4+ a hole is made in the ice where the shot was aimed. If more than one hit is scored by a Rock Lobber then roll a scatter dice and a D6 to see which and how far in centimetres the next shot lands. Do this for a third time if all 3 rocks successfully smashed the ice. If firing at troops then the Rock Lobber operates as in the Warmaster rulebook.

Orc forces. You must field an Orc army of up to 2000 points.

Orc Scenario specific units/rules. The victory of his battle was due largely to the bombardment of the Orc Rock Lobbers, to represent this the Orc army must field double the amount of rock lobbers than it may normally deploy. The army will therefore be allowed to field 4 rock lobbers instead of 2. The Orc army may not field any trolls. Azhag will be your general and replaces the usual Orc General choice. Pay out the cost of an Orc general as normal.

Kislivite forces. You may field a Kislivite army of up to 2000 points.

Kislivite Scenario specific units/rules. Use the normal Kisvelit army selector. No other special rules apply.

Victory conditions. The Orc army wins if it destroys 40% of the Kislivites who will retreat from the field of battle. The Kislivite army wins if it destroys 60% of the Orc forces or kills Azhag.



THE BATTLE OF GRIM MOOR

In this battle Azhag defeats the army of the Elector Count of Ostland, the Lord Von Raukov. The Empire army was reinforced on this day by warriors from the recently defeated Kislivite army. As for the horde of Azhag's force had been swelled by thousands of green skins that were still flocking to the Waaagh. The trolls of Jhorg had also emerged from the pine forests and had joined army of Azhag. This battle was a pitched battle and as such follows standard Warmaster rules.

Table size. 8x4 foot.

Terrain. The battlefield will feature a river and a wooded area as well as a slight rise where the army of Ostland stood. The river should be placed along the short side of the table and on the left flank of the Empire force.

The left flank of the Orc army should be the wooded area. The rest of the table should be left clear as the battle was fought over flat moorland.

Scenario special rules. see Allies section below.

Orc forces. You may field an Orc army of up to 3000 points.

Orc Scenario specific units/rules. There are no special rules but for this scenario, the Orc player must field at least one unit of Trolls per thousand points so in a three thousand point army will have 3 units of Trolls minimum.

Empire forces. You may field an Empire army of up to 3000 points.

Empire Scenario specific units/rules. The Empire army must field up to 1000 points of mounted Kislivite allies. You may only field lancers (knights) horse archers and steppe mounted archers. You may field 1 Kislivite general and one hero model. (See rules for allies)

The Empire general must also field one unit of Reiksgaurd. For these use a unit of halberdiers at normal cost. The Reiksgaurd will also use its initiative to charge and cannot be ordered otherwise and will never use initiative to evade. They will never roll for drive backs and will never be pushed back in combat. They do not suffer the minus 1 for fighting a terrifying enemy.

Victory Conditions. Either army wins if they destroy 50% of the opposing force.

ALLIES

When using allies you may have two generals on the same side, this makes for some really interesting scenario and situations. To recreate the use of an allied contingent with in your army I use the following rules.

1. An allied force of 500 points or less can be led by a hero.
2. An allied force of 500 points plus can be led by a general and can include other command characters as per the Warmaster rules.
3. For specific battles or campaigns allied contingents should be themed. So, for example, a Dwarf army may have an allied with a contingent of Knights of the White Wolf. This allied force could comprise of only mounted knights and be led by a master of the order.
4. The allied commander may only order his units during the battle and if the allied general fails an order then no more orders can be given to the allied contingent that turn.
5. Unlike games using multiple armies, when an allied contingent suffers 50% casualties it will not retreat unless the whole army is below the break point agreed at the start of the game.

THE BATTLE OF OSTERWALD

We now come to the last battle in our campaign and that is the famous battle of Osterwald. It was at this battle that the forces of the Empire amassed under the leadership of Marshal Otto Blucher and fought the horde of Azhag.

This battle was by far the biggest of the campaign and represents a truly epic encounter. This is what Warmaster is all about and as such, where possible, should be fought with huge armies. We have played this game on a 15x5 table with well over 10,000 points of miniatures on either side! But for the purpose of this article we will give more sensible guide lines.

Table size. 8x4 as a minimum with 12x4 foot being even better as this allows for out-flanking movements.

Terrain. The table can be kept relatively flat. Some buildings can be laid out to represent the village of Osterwald. Add some trees around the edges and a few low hills to break up the expanse of a large table.

Orc forces. The Orc player may field an army of up to 6000 points.

Orc Scenario specific units/rules. The Orc player/s must rout the opposing army to continue its advance into the realm of the Empire. If Azhag is fighting with a unit then he receives an additional + 2 attacks. The unit or brigade will automatically pass all its command checks whilst Azhag is in base to base contact so they will always pass the first order even if Azhag fails a command roll this does not if Azhag has rolled a one at the beginning of the Orc command phase as Azhag is unable to issue any commands.

Empire forces. The Empire player/s may field an Empire army of up to 6000 points

Scenario specific units/rules. The Empire player must destroy the Orc horde and crush Azhag and his Waagh for good. To win the Empire player must either kill Azhag or destroy 60% of the Orc force, causing a devastating defeat that will split the Waagh and disband the threat on the Empire.

CONCLUSION

There we have it. However, this is far from the end of the story. If the Orcs win then feel free to continue campaigning ever deeper into the provinces. Likewise, if the Empire win then again you can continue your relentless pursuit of the green skins from the lands of Sigmar.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken South is a great champion of Warmaster and has been playing the game since it's inception. His other mad projects include 'Double BoFA', and turly massive games of Warmaster, often over 10,000 points a side and fully painted!