

THE BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES

Elemental Magic

House rules for elemental magic unleashed by Wizards and Shamans in the Battle of Five Armies.

By Michael Duxbury

There are few magic users in Middle Earth, and even fewer of these are in fact true Wizards. These Istari are mighty spell casters, capable of using their powers to injure and demoralise their foes, or guide their allies through the fog of war. Although these Wizards are undeniably the most potent of enchanters, the Elves have magicians of their own to bolster the strength of their armies, whilst a rare few creatures amongst the craven Goblins of the Misty Mountains are granted the power of dark sorcery over their lesser minions.

Exactly where these beings draw these magical energies from is a mystery, for attempting to rationalise the supernatural is ever a difficult task. However, some believe that their power is derived from the four elements of water, air, earth and fire. To this end, many of the greatest magical artefacts within Middle Earth are directly linked to these elements- from the intricately crafted rings of the Eldar, to the crude staffs of some Goblin Shamans that seem to nevertheless be possessed by malicious yet potent entities.

Whilst these relics might outwardly appear to be mere trinkets, their importance is not lost on the conjurers of Middle Earth, who frequently utilise the power of these magic items. When the sorcery of these treasures is unleashed, they inevitably manifest in a manner symbolic of the element they represent. As such, the effects of these arcane creations can vary wildly- creating powerful gusts of wind that drive back the enemies of the caster, or unleashing a raging inferno within the ranks of the enemy that can immolate vast multitudes of the magician's foes.

USING ELEMENTAL MAGIC IN ENCOUNTER SCENARIOS

The rules that follow below explain the use of different spell lists for Wizards and Shamans in games of the Battle of Five Armies. These rules are not primarily intended for use in the actual Battle

of Five Armies scenario (however the rules can be adapted to allow you to do so- see below), and are instead more applicable in standard encounter scenarios between players. However, players designing their own scenarios should feel free to adapt these rules for their use where it is appropriate.

Please note that these rules are in no way 'official'- it therefore goes without saying that you should seek your opponent's permission before using these rules in a competitive encounter scenario.

NEW MAGIC ITEM – STAFF OF THE ELEMENTS

Use of the Elemental Spell lists described below is made possible by the use of specific magic items, collectively known as Staffs of the Elements. Only Wizards (including Goblin Shamans) may make use of a Staff of the Elements.

Any Wizard may choose to purchase a Staff of Fire, Staff of Air, Staff of Water or Staff of Earth. A Wizard may only choose one of the Staffs listed. Regardless of which magic item is chosen, the Staff has a points value of 10. These Staffs follow all the rules for Magic Items as listed on page 64 of the Battle of Five Armies rulebook.

If a Wizard chooses to purchase one of these staffs, then it will allow the Wizard to use spells from the spell lists below appropriate to the Elemental Staff chosen. However, if a Wizard chooses to purchase one of the Elemental Staffs, then he will be unable to cast spells from the spell list that was originally available to him.

Example: A Goblin Shaman chooses to purchase a Staff of Fire, allowing him to cast spells from the Fire spell list (Fireball, Flame Shield etc.). However, he will no longer be able to cast spells from the Goblin Shaman spell list (Foul Frenzy, Dark Swarm etc.).



PYROMANCY

Spells for Wizards bearing a Staff of Fire.

These spells manipulate the power of the flame to unleash fiery death upon the wizard's foes, or relight the fire within a broken ally's heart.

Flame Shield

4+ to cast

Range 60cm

The Wizard conjures a wall of fire before his comrades, through which no enemy can pass as long as the flames still burn.

This spell can be cast on any friendly unit within range regardless of whether the Wizard has line of sight or not. The spell takes effect until the end of the opposing player's turn.

Whilst the spell lasts the unit cannot be charged by any enemy unit. If the unit is already engaged in combat and is destroyed or forced to retreat, then any enemy unit that was engaged with them will be unable to advance or pursue. Note that this restriction applies to Flying Monsters as well- even Dragons! (The flames rise high into the sky, and can burn through even the hardened scale of Wyrms-kind)

Embolden

4+ to cast

Range – unlimited

The Wizard rekindles the flame that burns within the souls of his brethren, invigorating them to strive for greater acts of valour.

This spell is cast upon every friendly unit on the battlefield, regardless of range or line of sight. The spell lasts until the end of the following Combat phase.

A friendly unit engaged with a unit that causes terror whilst under the effect of this spell will not suffer the -1 attack modifier as is normally the case. In addition, no friendly units upon the battlefield will suffer the -1 attack penalty for being confused whilst this spell lasts- they swiftly recover from their panicked state to take up arms against their enemy! However, they will still suffer the other negative effects of confusion whilst they remain confused (also, remember that units recover from confusion at the end of their Command phase).

Fireball

5+ to cast

Range 30cm

The Wizard hurls a ball of fire straight at his foes.

The Wizard must have a clear line of sight to his target to cast this spell. The spell cannot be directed at a unit that is engaged in combat.

The Fireball is worked out exactly like three ordinary shooting attacks except that all targets count as having no armour- armour has no effect against a Fireball. Hits inflicted by a Fireball will cause drive backs just like ordinary shooting.

Inferno

6+ to cast

Range 30cm

Pits of lava open beneath the feet of the enemy, and maelstroms of fire burn through flesh and bone with frightening ease.

This spell can be cast on a single enemy unit within range regardless of whether or not the Wizard has line of sight. The spell cannot be cast on a unit engaged in combat.

The unit suffers six shooting attacks worked out in the usual way. Hits caused by an Inferno do not count when rolling for drive backs- the manifestations of the Wizard's fury erupt from within!

AEROMANCY

Spells for Wizards bearing a Staff of Air.

Manipulation of the flow of air around him allows the Wizard to hamper the advance of his foes, or be borne to wherever he should please.

Teleport

2+ to cast

Range N/A

A great tornado rushes towards the Wizard, engulfs him, and moves away, carrying the spell caster with it.

This spell is cast on the Wizard himself. The Wizard is removed from his current position and placed in a new location anywhere on the table. He may leave or join a unit if he wishes, enabling him to move in or out of combat for example. Once the Wizard has successfully teleported, he may cast a further spell, though this must be a different spell rather than a second Teleport. A Wizard that successfully casts Teleport can therefore potentially cast two spells that turn.

Aerial Shield

4+ to cast

Range 30cm

Swirling currents of air oppose those attempting to charge or shoot the Wizard's allies.

This spell can be cast upon a single friendly unit within range regardless of whether the Wizard has line of sight or not. It cannot be cast upon a unit that is engaged in combat.

The spell lasts until the end of the opposing player's turn.

The unit counts as occupying a defended position regardless of the terrain it is positioned in. Remember that the bonus for being defended is lost for future rounds of a combat if the unit charges, pursues or advances during that engagement.

Howling Gale

4+ to cast

Range 30cm

A spiralling windstorm gathers around the caster, hampering the advance of his enemies due to the breakdown of communication and plummeting of morale.

This spell is cast upon the Wizard himself, and affects all enemy units within range, regardless of line of sight. The spell lasts until the end of the opposing player's following turn.

The spell affects the opposing army's ability to issue commands. All enemy units within 30cm of the Wizard suffer a -1 Command Penalty. This penalty is applied when each order is issued; a unit might therefore be within 30cm of the Wizard for one order but not for a second, for example.

Unnatural Weather

5+ to cast

Range – unlimited

A fierce storm manifests upon the battlefield, making attempts of flight both difficult and dangerous.

This spell affects all units of Flying Monsters upon the battlefield, friend or foe, regardless of range or line of sight. The spell lasts until the end of the opposing player's following turn.

All Flying Monsters upon the battlefield suffer a -3 Command Penalty as long as the spell lasts. In addition, all units affected will not pursue or advance if engaged in combat- if victorious, the fliers must either stand or fall back. Fliers are still permitted to move as normal if homing back or acting on initiative.

HYDROMANCY

Spells for Wizards bearing a Staff of Water.

The magic of water can mirror the soothing and ethereal powers of that element, or be unleashed as spears of freezing ice.

Blizzard

4+ to cast

Range 30cm

Shards of ice descend from the sky, shattering into the enemy formation with devastating force.

This spell can be cast on a single enemy unit within range regardless of whether the Wizard has line of sight or not. It cannot be directed against a unit that is engaged in combat.

The Blizzard is worked out like three ordinary shooting attacks. However, hits caused by a Blizzard do not count when rolling for drive backs- the shards of ice descend from above!

Mirror Water

4+ to cast

Range N/A

The Wizard allows a drop of mystical water to fall into his cupped hands, through which the powers of his Staff grant him visions of the future.

This spell is cast upon the Wizard himself, and lasts until the end of the owning player's next Command phase.

The Wizard is granted a +1 Command bonus for any orders he issues in his next Command phase. This bonus will apply to all of the orders issued by the Wizard, including brigade orders.

Mystical Fatigue

5+ to cast

Range – combat only

By drawing energy through a vial of water, taken from the enchanted river that runs through Mirkwood, the Wizard sends his enemies into a deep sleep.

This spell can only be cast if the Wizard has joined a friendly unit that is engaged in combat. The spell can be cast upon any enemy character that has joined an enemy unit which the Wizard's unit is touching.

The character that is the target for this spell must make an unmodified Command check, exactly as though the character was issuing an order in the Command phase. If the enemy character successfully rolls equal to or lower than his Command value on 2D6 then the spell has no effect. However, if the character rolls higher than his Command value on 2D6 then he falls into a deep sleep and is immediately removed from play as though he was slain. However, as the character is not actually dead, the player casting the spell will not gain any Victory Points for that character if he is removed in this manner.

Eerie Mist

6+ to cast

Range 60cm

A thick fog of water vapour shrouds the enemy, severing their knowledge of the battle around them, and throwing them into confusion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Duxbury is a frequent Specialist Games player, regularly engaging in games of Necromunda, Mordheim, Inquisitor and the Battle of Five Armies, as well as all three of Games Workshop's Core Games. This is his third Fanatic article, following his Necromunda articles for making your own gangs and using Phanta Claws' as hired guns.

This spell can be cast upon a single enemy unit within range regardless of whether the Wizard has line of sight to it or not.

The enemy unit becomes confused, as described in the Confusion rules.

GEOMANCY

Dispells for Wizards bearing a Staff of Earth.

Mastery of this art allows the Wizard to thwart the attempts of his counterparts to cast spells, literally "earthing" any magic unleashed in his vicinity.

Wizards bearing a Staff of Earth are not conferred any extra spells for possession of this Magic Item- in fact they lose the capability to cast any spells whatsoever. However, the powers of a Staff of Earth can still be used to prevent enemy Wizards from casting spells in their own shooting phase.

If an enemy Wizard within 60cm of the bearer casts a spell, the Geomancer can attempt to 'anti-magic' it, even if he is unable to draw line of sight to the Wizard casting the spell.

To determine the effects of the dispel, roll a D6. On a 4, 5 or 6, the power of the Staff of Earth triumphs, and the spell has no effect (as though the enemy Wizard had failed to reach the minimum dice score to cast the spell). On a 1, 2 or 3, the enemy magician has overcome the Staff's power, and the spell is cast as normal. A Wizard carrying a Staff of Earth can attempt to anti-magic any number of spells a turn, but only one attempt can be made to anti-magic any individual spell.

Note that a character bearing a Staff of Earth still counts as being a Wizard even though he is unable to cast spells- he will retain a Command range of 20cm, for example.

USING ELEMENTAL MAGIC IN THE BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES SCENARIO

As explained earlier, the rules for Elemental Magic are ideally designed for Encounter Scenarios, or Scenarios specifically designed to accommodate for their use. However, if players agree, then the rules for Elemental Magic can also be used in the main Battle of Five Armies Scenario.

If players mutually agree to do so, then both Gandalf and the Goblin Shaman will receive a Staff of the Elements for free. Which Elemental Staff the players choose to give their Wizard is entirely up to them. Note that if players agree to this arrangement then it will be an exception to the normal rules that a character may only have one magic item, as Gandalf will be armed with both a Staff of the Elements and a Sorcerous Weapon.

CONCLUSION

Magic in the Battle of Five Armies is not an all powerful force- it is designed to compliment other troops rather than do the soldiers' jobs for them. Nevertheless, I hope that the rules presented here present players with the options to diversify their game, by seeing the effect that four very different spell lists can have upon an army's strategy. Once you see your opponent's weakened yet ultra-elite unit of Dwarfs immolated by an Inferno you'll wonder how you ever made do without it...

Have fun, and may the dice gods smile upon you!

