

# AXIS & ALLIES TOURNAMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

(By Dave Jensen & Greg Smorey) Edited 4/30/2018

*"Good tactics can save even the worst strategy. Bad tactics will destroy even the best strategy." – General Patton*

Tournaments are a great way to test your skills against other Axis & Allies players but it's definitely a different experience than playing at home with friends for hours upon hours. I worked with Greg Smorey (The SmoreySwamp), who has been organizing Axis & Allies Tournaments & other game events for 25 years, to come up with this "Tournament Survival Guide".

## HAVE FUN!

Your primary motivation for entering a tournament should be to have fun playing any Axis & Allies game. Starting out by talking about Dice Rolling was not our intension but it is at the top of the list of things that players worry, way too much about! Stressing about bad dice or proving that you're the best player in the world will just distract you from meeting new and interesting players. If the dice are treating you badly, you can't do anything about it so relax, have fun, play the game and who knows what the dice will do next round?

## BE COURTEOUS

Be courteous and respectful of all players. A tourney is supposed to be fun, challenging, but can be stressful. If you're courteous, it will increase the fun and decrease the stress for everybody involved. It's okay to give reminders about the time and fast play, but do it politely.

If you are playing in any Miniatures event were you receiving product as part of the entry fee, please be courteous regarding the event. If you register for any event, please play in that event. **Don't just come, get your miniatures and then leave.**

## "Face To Face (FTF)" Tournaments are Different from playing at HOME or ONLINE play!

When you play Axis & Allies at home, in theory, you have infinite time to complete a game. Sometimes your home games will end with surrender (or *projection of a winner*) or you fight to the end. **In tournament play, the games must come to an end after a fixed period of time.** No matter how close the game is, a winner must be decided. The rules for victory in a tournament are different. Sure you can win outright but it most likely will not happen so change your strategy and your bid based on the given Tournament Victory Conditions for that game. A winning strategy for a game with unlimited time may not win a tournament. In fact, you can be outgunned and on the brink of collapse but still win a tournament game.

If your opponent is playing the unlimited time game and you're playing the tournament game, you probably already have an advantage.

## Different People Play Differently

Not everybody plays the way you do so be open-minded and flexible. Some people, like Dave, like to use poker chips for money while others like to write it down. **Some like to use small dice to indicate how much movement each aircraft has remaining or has already moved.** Others like to keep track of income on the chart; others like to quickly count it up at the end of the turn. A few people have a color-coded dice scheme so that they

only have to throw dice once per battle round. If you don't understand the color scheme, then use a few dice to create a key. If you don't want to use their methodology when you roll your dice, then inform your opponent of that. Just whatever the case, make sure it is for the purposes of playing faster than you are used to...

## PLAY QUICKLY/FAST

Remember this is a tournament; don't take forever trying to figure out what to do when it is your turn. The tournament "GUIDE" should indicate how many rounds you should be able to finish. Try to stay on track. When playing as a team, don't spend your turn arguing about moves - save that for before or after your turn. Arguing the finer points of Axis & Allies, like the order of loss, is for the forums not for tournament play. If it helps, assign one teammate as the captain to make final, quick decisions.

Be aware that the first 2 rounds take the longest but your 1st round moves should almost be done by rote. After the first 2 rounds, there should be fewer pieces on the board and fewer decisions.

**Plan your turn ahead of time.** Yes, things change but you should have at least your purchases laid out and combat moves planned several turns ahead. When I finish playing a country, I find it helpful to do my purchases for the next round almost immediately. If something changes, it's faster to adjust an already made decision than to start from scratch.

Another technique to keep things moving is not to wait to start your turn if your opponent is counting up their IPCs at the end of the turn. Just plop down your purchase and start your combat move.

## PREPARE BEFORE-HAND

Perfect practice makes perfect. Read the tournament rules and re-read the out of box rules (even if it is the 10th time you've read them). Try to play a game or two using a timer and the tournament rules. Be familiar with how you win the version of Axis & Allies you are playing in a tournament. One of the most **disappointing comments I hear after someone**

(OVER)

Just lost is "I did not know we were playing by those rules?"

If you can memorize opening moves for both the Axis and the Allies, do it. You can find tournament rules beforehand here: **SmoreySwamp Rules. Or at the AAHQ during the CON.**

Finding a teammate in advance of the tournament is also a good idea. Not only is it a good idea from the standpoint of collaboration on decisions, which still need to be made quickly, but you also have help with logistics like being able to leave the table to get food, drink or going to the restroom.

#### **ETIQUETTE (this is very important!)**

Forgetting something. If at any point in the game you forget a move, as long as the other player has not started **moving pieces** on their turn, tournament etiquette is to go ahead and move the piece(s). If it is after and you cannot make a judgement on your own, notify the judges!

If you have a complaint or concern, come ask the judges and judges are the **final arbiters** on the rules. You may think you know the rules backward and forwards but the organizers collectively know them better. Trust Us!

**\*No drinks or food are permitted on the tables around games that are NOT yours: Be considerate! These games are way too expensive to ruin based on an accident.**

#### **THE DREADED DICE!**

Tournament rules state that if you bring dice to the table, they are fair game for anyone playing in that game to use. If you don't want your opponent to use your lucky dice, then don't bring them.

**It is preferred to roll in a box top or some other dice rolling device.**

Don't blame the dice if you lose. Everybody complains a little about bad dice rolls, its part of Axis & Allies, but in the end, don't go around saying I lost because of dice. It's just bad form and you look like a sore loser if it was true. Furthermore, if the dice really did cause you to lose, then your opponent might realize it too and you can have a post-game discussion about it.

#### **BIG FISH IN A LITTLE POND**

So you're the best player in your group. The first time you go to a regional game CON and enter a tournament, you may not be the best player anymore. There are a lot of great Axis & Allies players out there and they may have different strategies that you've never experienced. Just be prepared and don't be upset if you lose, it happens and happens a lot.

#### **LITTLE FISH IN A BIG POND**

If you're a beginner, don't be afraid to enter a tournament. You might lose in the first round or you

might be more experience than you give yourself credit for, but you will definitely learn something new about how to play Axis & Allies. We guarantee it! The only thing that you will need to know to enter a tournament is a strong knowledge of the rules of the game. At the end of the game if you lose, consider asking your opponent for advice on how to play better next time. **We truly believe that the Axis & Allies community of players is one of the best and friendliest in all of gaming industry!**

#### **Event Tickets & Starting Times**

GEN CON can be an **overwhelming** place for cadets of the AA tournament world. If you want to get into an Axis & Allies event, the event start time is fast approaching, you don't have an event ticket in hand yet and you don't want to stand in line for it. **The SmoreySwamp Axis & Allies HQ always accepts generics for ALL events that are NOT SOLD OUT!** We will always try and get everyone to any event we run.

You have an Event Tickets for the same game at a different time. So, your schedule has changed and you don't want to go stand in line again, just check with **Greg or Mike** at the AAHQ and see if you can use your Event Ticket for another event.

And last, remember, people's schedules change like the wind at GEN CON. One moment, an event is sold out at the registration booth, and then when you get to the **SmoreySwamp AAHQ**, you find you are the only one that has shown up for the event. Unfortunately, this does happen! The SmoreySwamp AAHQ will always give any event a 15-minute window for other players to show up and play in the event. If again, no one else shows up and the event becomes canceled, **Greg or Mike** will sign the back of your ticket and you can get reimbursed at ticket registration based on the current **GEN CON Policy** for doing so. The SmoreySwamp AAHQ will **NEVER nor are they permitted to give cash back in return for any canceled events.**

#### **NEED GENERICS! (what are generics?)**


Generic tickets are typically \$2.00 and can be used for general entrance into any event that is not sold out or if any registered player(s) do not show up! If you need Generics for any event & you don't want to wait in the long line at the registration booth, don't fret, someone else, (beside the AAHQ), has generic tickets that you can buy! Also remember that Greg CANNOT take CASH to get into any event. You MUST have a ticket!

#### **Last**

The most important thing we want is for everyone to have fun! If you have a question, please ask!

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