

SAGA

Rulebook



Contents

YOUR SAGA Begins Here	p. 4-8
The Basics	p. 7-9
The Orders Phase	p. 10-13
The Activation Phase	p. 14-18
Movement	p. 18-18
Charging	p. 20-21
Shooting	p. 22-28
Melee	p. 28-29
Resting and Fatigue	p. 30-32
Terrain	p. 34-38
Special Rules	p. 38-39
Saga Abilities	p. 40-42
Assembling a Warband	p. 44-47
Clash of Warlords	p. 48-49
Glossary	p. 50

Saga - The Rulebook • By Alex Buchel • Graphic Design: Fred Machu • Translation: Matt Moran • Proof-reading and editing: Arnaud Lapeyrate • Photos and painting: Richard Lloyd, James Sharpe, Daniel Wegmann and Fred Machu • Illustrations: Fred Machu

The figures shown in this book are produced by: Gripping Beast, Mantic Games, North Star Military Figures Limited, Perry Miniatures, Footsore Miniatures, Curteys Miniatures and Hexy-Shop.

Particular thanks go to our playtesters and to all those who have contributed to Saga's success. The list is in a totally random order and far from exhaustive! Laurent Bouilly, John «Fry» Ducat, Manu Kraft, Greg Licitri, Andrew Hanlon, Alex Meyers, Kurt Engelrest, Jan de Neve, Andy Lyon, Craig Woodfield, Julie Plagès, Fabien Delpu, Olivier Montrose, Phillipe Caille, Emmanuel Antoni, Matt Moran, Mathieu Allard, Michel Gauthey, Cedric Lejeune, Joaquin Ruiz, Mirco Wenning, Michal Molenda, Andrew Sherwell and Darren Harding.

Thanks to Gripping Beast, Stronghold-Terrain, Wargamer Games Studio LTD and BreakingWar for their support.

Get all your Saga news at www.studio-tomahawk.com
or at [Facebook.com/studiotomahawk](https://www.facebook.com/studiotomahawk).

Saga is published by Studio Tomahawk SARL, 3 Rue d'Athènes, 67380 Lingolsheim

Saga is a copyright (c) of Studio Tomahawk SARL

ISBN: 979-10-95599-06-7

Printed in Lithuania in 2018 © Studio Tomahawk 2018

YOUR SAGA begins here!

Saga allows you to recreate battles between rival warbands during many periods of history and within fantasy worlds. During this age of heroes, warriors confront each other on the field of battle, guided by your instinct and tactical nous (and a bit of good luck too!!)

It is time to write the epic story of your deeds. Let steel be your pen, and blood your ink...

Welcome to Saga!

The book you hold in your sweaty, trembling palms is a gateway to playing games in several universes. It contains the basic rules for the Saga miniatures game, and the fundamental principles which will apply no matter which universe you set your games in. You'll discover that these rules are simple to learn and memorise, but contain many hidden subtleties which take time to master. To help accelerate your apprenticeship, the rules contain lots of advice, and examples of how to play the game.

As well as the game engine you have between your hands, you will need a Saga Universe. Some are already available, while others will follow later to illuminate the manuscript begun by Saga. You can play during the Viking Age, in the era of King Arthur and the great invasions, in a fantasy medieval land, amid the Crusades, and more. The universe you choose should suit your personal tastes & figure collection, and those of your gaming buddies. The rules in this book apply to all these universes.

Are you frightened by the thought of a warlord on the battlefield, surrounded by the still-warm dead with bloody steel in hand? If not, Saga will be just your cup of tea. If you are, then we can only advise that you choose a more peaceful hobby, suitable for those of a weaker disposition. Like knitting.

The Scribe will guide you...

I am the Scribe, the indefatigable chronicler of the Saga Universes, and I will guide you through these pages. I will dispense certain counsels which will aid you no matter which era the game leads you to. Keep them in mind, even in the face of the direst perils, for cold-blooded composure is all that separates a hero from their tomb!



What you need to play

Let us immediately go over a list of what you'll need to play Saga.

To begin with, since Saga is a miniatures game, you'll need model soldiers. Each player is the leader of a warband made up, on average, of 20 to 50 models. The size of the figures is not important, but you will guess our personal preferences from the pictures illustrating this tome. We usually opt for 28mm, but the decision is yours. We haven't yet established a 'Saga Purity Brigade' to control what players choose to do with our products.

You'll also need a gaming surface to put your figures on. A Saga board is 120cm by 90cm (or 48 inches by 36 inches). That leaves enough space around the edge of the table for the indispensable snacks and drinks that players need when clashing this savagely!

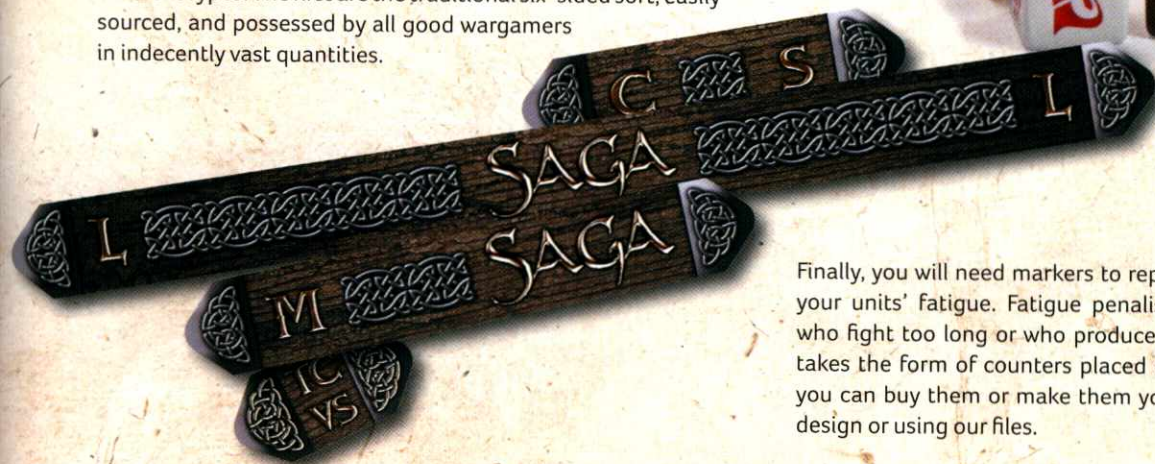
Scenery is also necessary to decorate the board – the areas occupied by these scenic elements can have an effect on the game. At a minimum, a wood can be represented by its outline on the table, using a bit of material suitably cut-out and decorated. But honestly, dressing the wood up with a few model trees doesn't spoil the game – quite the opposite, in fact!



To measure distances, you will need four measuring sticks of particular lengths. Saga uses four different units of measurement: Very Short (**VS**, or 2 inches), Short (**S**, or 4 inches), Medium (**M**, or 6 inches) and Long (**L**, or 12 inches). Official measuring sticks are available, but you can make your own using the downloadable templates from our website (www.studio-tomahawk.com). Remember that the measuring sticks will usually be the only things approaching a real weapon in your possession. You'd better make sure they impress your opponent so you get the psychological upper hand!

Because gamers need something to focus their anger on when Lady Luck turns her back on them, Saga uses dice of two different types. The first are the traditional six-sided sort, easily sourced, and possessed by all good wargamers in indecently vast quantities.

The other sort are Saga dice. These are six-sided dice on which appear specific symbols. There are several types of Saga dice, and you can buy them or make them yourself (using the files available on the Studio Tomahawk website). Each player must have 8 of their faction's dice, as defined in its Saga Universe.



Finally, you will need markers to represent your units' fatigue. Fatigue penalises troops who fight too long or who produce crazy results. It takes the form of counters placed next to units. Once again, you can buy them or make them yourself, either to your own design or using our files.





The Basics

In this chapter we are going to deal with the various elements that make up the game, as well as a few general rules and principles which will apply throughout the book.

Warbands and factions

In Saga, each player leads a warband, which as we saw earlier is generally made up of about thirty models. This warband is part of a faction, which can represent a historical people (Vikings, for example), a fantasy race (orcs) or a mythological group (the Argonauts). Each faction is part of a specific Saga Universe, and the options that they have access to are described in detail in the corresponding supplement.

Each faction has a Battle Board. This is not a board with which to beat your opponents, but a cardboard sheet displaying the abilities available to your faction. As we will see later on, it is the interaction between Saga dice and Battle Boards that gives Saga its flavour.

A points system allows encounters to be balanced, and generally forces players to collect warbands of similar size and strength. Saga warbands are between 4 and 8 points. 6 points is the usual size, but we recommend 4 points for your first few games so that you can familiarise yourself with the system more easily. Each point allows you to recruit a variable number of models which together form your warband (see *Assembling the Warband*, p. 44).

TYPES OF TROOPS

In Saga, each figure belongs to one of the four types of troops below.

⊙ Heroes

Heroes are the main characters of each era of Saga. They form units by themselves and possess extraordinary abilities which greatly outstrip those of mere mortals. They are the ones who give life to legends.

Each warband is led by one hero in particular: the Warlord. He is a seasoned warrior, cunning and powerful, ready to throw himself into the thick of battle. A sort of fantasy alter ego for most players!

Other Heroes appear in the Saga Universes, like historical figures, wizards, or legendary creatures.

⊙ Hearthguards

Hearthguards are the best troops you have at your disposal. They represent very well-trained soldiers with the best equipment available. They generally form a bodyguard for Warlords and Heroes. They are definitely not the sort of lads you bump into in a tavern!

⊙ Warriors

Warriors form the core of most warbands. They are the typical fighters of any faction; they have had basic but effective

training and are equipped with weapons that can be acquired without too much expense. They are rarely armoured and often rely on numbers both in defence and attack. If you come across them at the tavern door, count them to see if you can take them on without too much risk!

⊙ Levies

Levies haven't provoked anyone, but they still have to fight – their Warlord forces them to! He relies above all on their numerical superiority, and makes the most of any battle to get rid of his most wayward and indolent servants without the nuisance of courts, due process or paperwork. If they get in your way at the tavern door, make them get you a beer!

CHARACTERISTICS

Miniatures in Saga have two characteristics:

Their **Armour**, which represents the quality of their protective gear and how difficult their enemies will find putting them out of action. Depending on how they are equipped, the model might have different armour values against hand-to-hand and ranged attacks. Armour can never be less than 2 or higher than 6.

Their **Aggression**, which determines how many dice they contribute to their unit when attacking. Aggression is different in hand-to-hand and shooting, and is given either as a number or a fraction.

These two characteristics depend on the class of warrior to which the miniature belongs. Thus, all Hearthguards have the same basic characteristics, and the same is true of Warriors and Levies.

Apart from Warlords, which all also have identical basic characteristics, Heroes are an exception, since their Armour and Aggression varies according to their type.

As previously mentioned, a unit's equipment can alter these scores. For example, an archer sacrifices their armour to more easily use their bow.





UNITS

Each figure belongs to a unit, which starts the game with between 4 and 12 figures – no more, no less. All the figures in the same unit must be of the same type and have the same equipment. Units cannot split or join other units during a game.

Heroes (them again!) are an exception. They form a single-figure unit, and unless otherwise specified, cannot be accompanied by other figures.

The Scribe will guide you...

It is quite common for Saga fans to model their Heroes on a large base, accompanied by other figures like servants, pages or ferocious pets. These miniatures are purely decorative, and the diorama they create only counts as a single model in terms of the game and the rules.

FORMATIONS

Once a unit is deployed or has finished moving, it has to conform to some rules on formations.

Firstly, each figure must be within **VS** of another figure in their unit, so that a line could be drawn connecting all the figures

in the unit without any gaps of more than **VS** between two figures. You may never break this chain voluntarily, even when removing losses from shooting, hand-to-hand or other events.

Secondly, no figure in the unit can be more than **S** away from the first figure to be moved or deployed (mounted units have a wider formation radius, of **M** – see Mounts: Horses, p. 39). All of them must therefore fit within an imaginary circle centred on the first figure to be deployed or moved.

Note that in Saga, the facing of models does not affect the game. We still advise that you let your models face the enemy though, to avoid heckling from your spectators!

⊙ Bases

Figures must be on bases – the shape of which, rectangular, circular or otherwise, is left up to the players' tastes. They must however fulfil the following criteria.

- ⊙ The base of a mounted model must fit within a 50mm square, and cannot be smaller than a 40mmx20mm rectangle.
- ⊙ The base of a model on foot must fit within a 30mm square, and cannot be smaller than a 20mm square.
- ⊙ The base of a Hero, whether mounted or on foot, must fit within a 60mm square. The minimum size of the base depends on whether they are mounted or on foot, as detailed above.

The minimum diameter of any round base, and minimum width of any square base, is 20mm.

Principles of the game

Here are a few elements of the game which will illustrate the basic principles of Saga. You should keep them in mind while reading the rest of the rules.

THE TURN

A game of Saga takes place over a variable number of turns, in which the players take turns acting. A player's turn is divided into two phases: the Orders phase, during which the player rolls their Saga dice and places them on the Battle Board, and the Activation phase, during which their units act according to the placement of dice in the previous phase. Once a player's Activation phase is finished, their turn is over and their opponent begins their own turn.

THE SCENARIOS

Games of Saga are always played according to a scenario which outlines the victory conditions, how the troops are deployed, any special rules, and the number of turns each player will have.

At the end of this book, you will find the basic scenario to set you on your war-torn journey through the merciless lands of Saga – Clash of Warlords. The Saga supplement titled *The Book of Battles* provides numerous other scenarios with more unusual situations and fresh reasons to fight.

MEASUREMENTS

As we discussed earlier, Saga has four units of measurement.

- ⊙ Very Short, equal to 2 inches, abbreviated to **VS**.
- ⊙ Short, equal to 4 inches, abbreviated to **S**.
- ⊙ Medium, equal to 6 inches, abbreviated to **M**.
- ⊙ Long, equal to 12 inches, abbreviated to **L**.

In this book, as in all other Saga publications, we will only use these abbreviations – so memorise them quickly! For example, we will say that a bow has a range of **L**, and not that it can shoot 12 inches.

Saga allows you to measure at any time, in any situation. Therefore, before loosing a shot, you may absolutely use your measuring stick to check that your figures are in range.

The need for a unit, figure or piece of terrain to be “within X” will come up quite frequently – X being **VS**, **S**, **M** or **L**. For this to be the case, it is enough for a part of the unit or the terrain piece to be X or less away for the condition to be fulfilled.

It is therefore sufficient for a part of the base of one of the unit's figures, or one part of the terrain piece to be within X for the entirety of the unit or terrain piece to count as being within X.

The only exception is when you read “entirely within X”, which means that the whole unit or terrain piece must be within X.

The Scribe will guide you...

*Intent is very important in Saga. It avoids arguments and endless quibbling. If you move a unit intending to keep it out of shooting range of the enemy, tell your opponent you wish to stay more than **L** away. Then when it is their turn, even if the tiniest part of one of the unit's bases is within **L**, the situation can be quickly resolved with a quick readjustment given that your intent was explicitly clear. This is how we avoid shouting, tears and needless bloodshed.*

RE-ROLLS AND MODIFIERS

Several game effects will allow you to re-roll the dice (we are talking about ordinary dice with six sides). Each player can re-roll each die a maximum of once a turn, and the final result always stands, even if it was worse than the original.

A die roll can be modified up or down during the game (+1 or -2 for example). All results modified to less than 0 count as a 0, but a positive modifier can increase a result to more than 6. For example, a roll of 5 modified with a +2 becomes a 7.

These rules do not apply to Saga dice, which can be re-rolled as many times as desired and which never have any numerical modifiers applied.

FRACTIONS

Saga regularly uses fractions, both as words (a third, for example), or as figures (e.g. $\frac{1}{2}$).

In all cases, a simple rule applies: fractions are always rounded up to the nearest whole number. If, for example, a third of one of your 8-figure units develops a desperate need to relieve themselves in the bushes, 3 figures will attend to their natural urges out of the enemy's view.

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH

Occasionally in Saga, different rules or abilities will seem to contradict each other and create an unsolvable problem. It is very common for an ability to require a unit to do something, while another renders it impossible. The rule to follow here is that prohibition beats compulsion – “cannot” beats “must”.

What you must remember

- ⊙ Each unit has a troop type: Hero, Hearthguard, Warrior or Levy.
- ⊙ Saga units, except for Heroes, are made up of 4–12 figures.
- ⊙ Any distance can be measured, at any point in the game.
- ⊙ During a game, players take their turns alternately.
- ⊙ A turn is made up of two phases: the Orders phase and the Activation phase.
- ⊙ Fractions are always rounded up to the nearest whole number.

The Orders Phase

As we have seen previously, a turn is comprised of two consecutive phases: the Orders phase and the Activation phase. This chapter covers the first and, in the eyes of Saga veterans, most important one: the Orders phase.

Battle Boards and Saga dice

Each faction has its own Battle Board (you will find these in the Saga Universe you have chosen to explore), which is used together with a specific set of Saga dice.

Here is an example of a Battle Board and a breakdown of the information it contains.



- 1 The name of the faction.
- 2 Their Saga abilities. Generally there are fifteen of these, and while some appear above the faction name, others will be below. We will see later on what differentiates them. For now, just know that Saga abilities allow units to act during the game.
- 3 The dice you need to play this faction. Each Saga ability indicates which die result or results are necessary to activate it.

The Battle Board is used with Saga dice. At the start of each turn, you roll a certain number of dice and place them on the appropriate Saga abilities.



All the Saga dice in the same set are identical. They have one symbol on three sides, a second symbol on two sides, and a rarest third symbol which only appears on one side.

You play with **eight Saga dice**. No more, no less. Having more than eight Saga dice is like sliding an ace out of your sleeve during a poker game.

THE ORDERS PHASE

During the Orders phase, you plan your actions for the coming Activation Phase. To achieve them, just follow these four steps.

- ⊙ Throw as many Saga dice as your warband generates.
- ⊙ Let your opponent react with their Orders/Reaction abilities if they want to.
- ⊙ Place your Saga dice and trigger your Orders abilities (you can alternate at will between these two actions).
- ⊙ Let your opponent react again with their Orders/Reaction abilities if they want to.

The Scribe will guide you...

When the enemy reacts, they trigger Saga abilities that will undermine your well-oiled plans. You had better get used to it quickly though – Saga opponents who let you do everything you want are very rare!

Generating Saga dice

At the start of the Orders phase, you must work out how many Saga dice you can roll. There's nothing simpler!

Take **one die** for:

- ⊙ Your Warlord, if he is on the board.
- ⊙ Each unit of Hearthguards on the board.
- ⊙ Each unit of Warriors on the board and at least 4 figures strong.
- ⊙ Each unit of Levy on the board and at least 6 figures strong.

- ⊕ Add to these dice those generated by your other Heroes on the table. Heroes each generate different numbers of dice, which you will find in their descriptions.

Occasionally your warband may generate more than 8 Saga dice. But whatever happens, you can never throw more than 8 at the start of your turn!

The Scribe will guide you...

Imagine Myrmidons about to crash into their Trojan foes. After the first blows are exchanged, there are a unit of 6 Hearthguards, a unit of 2 Hearthguards, a unit of 10 Warriors, a unit of 3 Warriors and a unit of 9 Levy left on the board, all led by their Warlord.

At the start of the turn, the would-be Achilles playing them must generate their Saga dice. He gets one die for the 6 Hearthguards, one for the 2 Hearthguards, one for the 10 Warriors, one for the 9 Levy and one for their Warlord. The unit of 3 Warriors does not provide a die, because they have less than 4 figures. In total, our player will roll five dice during this Orders phase.

Rolling Saga Dice

Now that you have worked out how many Saga dice you can roll, pick them up.

It is possible for you to have dice left on your Battle Board from the previous turn. This usually happens when you have prepared an ability but did not or could not use it. Before throwing your dice, you may choose to remove some or all of the dice remaining on the Battle Board. You may want to do this if you don't have enough other dice available to roll as many as your warband generated.

The Scribe will guide you...

Let us imagine that our Myrmidons still have four dice on their Battle Board. They generated five Saga dice, but cannot roll them all unless they remove at least one die from the board – remember that each player may only have a maximum of eight Saga dice!

As we will see later on, certain Saga abilities require two dice to be activated. If you choose to remove dice from one of these abilities, you must remove them both. You cannot leave some of the dice needed to activate the ability and take back the rest.

When you have made your choice, roll your dice. Until they are placed on your Battle Board, these Saga dice are **inactive**. The dice you haven't thrown yet and which are not on your board are called **available Saga dice**.

Once you have rolled your Saga dice, your opponent can trigger their **Orders/Reaction** abilities (we'll come back to this later).



Placing Saga dice

Now that you have rolled your dice, you have before you several symbols, which correspond to those illustrating the Saga abilities on your Battle Board. Before going over at how to use these dice, take a look at a Saga ability.

1 CHARGE
Melee **2**

A mounted unit which charged.

3 Gain 2 attack dice (4 if you used a).

Your unit may gain an extra 3 attack dice, but will suffer an extra fatigue at the end of the whole melee if they do.

1 The name of the ability

2 The ability's keyword. It indicates the "timing" of the ability, which is when it can be triggered. Here, we have a Melee ability, so you can use it while resolving a hand-to-hand combat. Certain abilities have several keywords, which gives you more freedom in choosing the moment to trigger them.

3 The description of the ability. In other words, the effects of the ability when it is triggered. Restrictions on the use of the ability may be written in italics directly below the keyword. For example, certain abilities might be only be usable by certain units of types of troops. This one is exclusively for the mounted units in your warband which have charged. Your infantry therefore cannot use it.

4 The ability's cost, indicated by the symbols on the dice. These show the die or dice necessary to activate and trigger the ability. We will study this more closely.

Above the name of the faction are the **basic** abilities. Beneath your faction's name are the **advanced** abilities.

The basic abilities can be triggered several times a turn, whereas each **advanced** ability can only be used **once** a turn.



Occasionally, an ability will appear in the lower part of the board with the words basic ability. In these cases, the ability can also be triggered several times a turn.

Each Saga ability has a cost in Saga dice. This is the die symbol which appears in the space dedicated to the relevant ability.

Certain Saga abilities give you the choice of which die to use, for example.

FRIGG
Melee

Remove a fatigue from your unit
OR gain 3 attack dice.

You can activate this ability by placing on it a die showing either of the two symbols. Once this is done, we say that the ability is **activated**, and by extension that the Saga dice placed on it are **active Saga dice**.

Some abilities require two dice to be activated. In this case, the two dice necessary are separated by a "+", like in this example.

ODIN
Shooting/Reaction

The shooting unit takes as much fatigue as necessary for it to become exhausted.

You must place the two dice at the same time. You **may not** place just one of the two dice while waiting for Lady Luck to provide you with the second one.

You may activate basic abilities by placing several die on them and then triggering them several times a turn. Conversely, you may only activate and trigger the advanced abilities once a turn. That means that you may only place the die or combination of dice on them once per Orders phase, and therefore only trigger them once per turn.

Triggering Orders abilities

During the Orders phase, you may trigger abilities with the keyword **Orders**, even if you have only just activated them. The Orders abilities often have an influence on the phase itself, since – for example – they allow you to reroll inactive dice or throw extra dice. Equally, they can have effects lasting for the remainder of the turn.

To **trigger** an ability, take the die or dice to pay its cost (in the case of a basic ability, only take the dice needed to pay for it once), and discard them. Discarding the dice consists of putting the dice you have used into your pool of **available dice**

(the ones that you did not throw). Then, resolve the effects of the ability. Once that is done, you may place other Saga dice or trigger a new Orders ability, etc. Continue until you decide to end your Orders phase.

Triggering a Saga ability

- ⦿ The description of triggering an Orders ability applies to all the Saga abilities in the game (and we shall see later on that other types of abilities exist). To trigger an ability, you just have to remove the necessary die or dice, put them with your available Saga dice and resolve the effects of the ability.

Ending the Orders Phase

Just before your Orders phase ends, you must let your opponent trigger Orders/Reaction abilities.

Once this is done, in the unlikely instance that you still have some inactive Saga dice (which are dice you have rolled but not placed on your Battle Board), they rejoin your pool of available Saga dice.

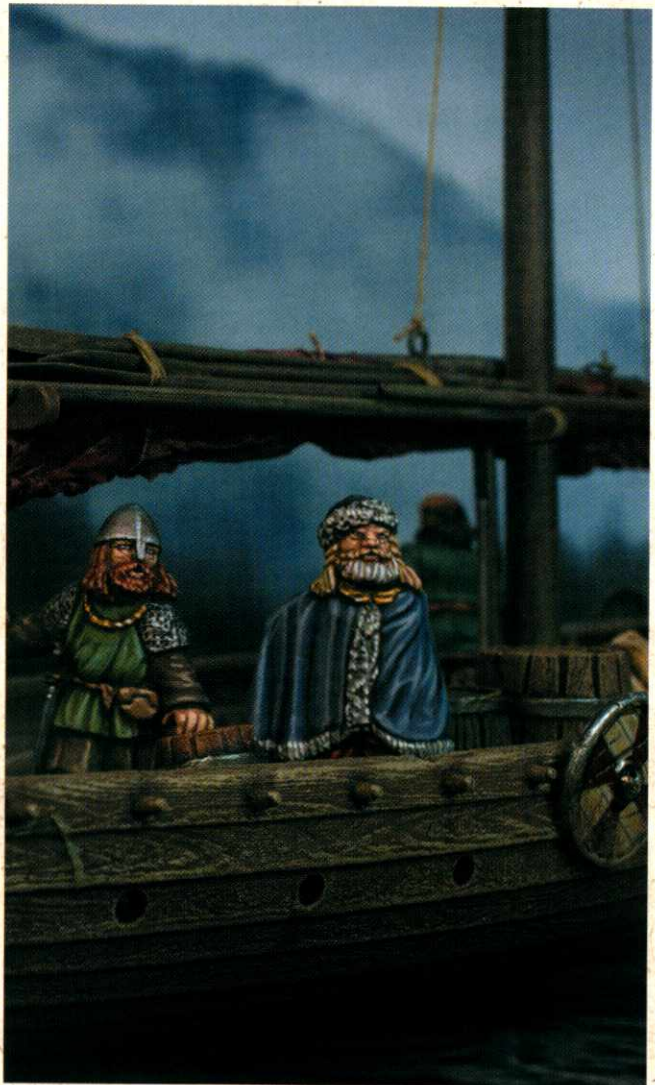
This concludes your Orders phase, and brings us to the heart of the turn: the Activation phase.

The Scribe will guide you...

Although the Activation phase is the most turbulent phase of the turn, with all its shooting, melees and grand manœuvres, nothing can be undertaken without an sagely reflective Orders phase. Saga is a game of planning and anticipation. Even after your first games, you will often feel the sudden need to whip yourself with fresh nettles, having suddenly realised that you forgot to place a Saga die on the ability which allows you to activate your proud Hearthguards! And during the Activation phase, it will be too late to remedy it.

So prepare your blow during the Orders phase. Try to think through each move you want to make during the Activation phase, of the abilities that will render your shooting more effective and your melees more deadly. Don't forget the ones you'll need to block the backlash coming in the enemy turn. Nothing is better for this than practice, and a good knowledge of both your and your enemy's Battle Boards.

Thanks to the Battle Board, Saga is a game in which you must rely on your instinct and tactical nous above all else!



What you must remember

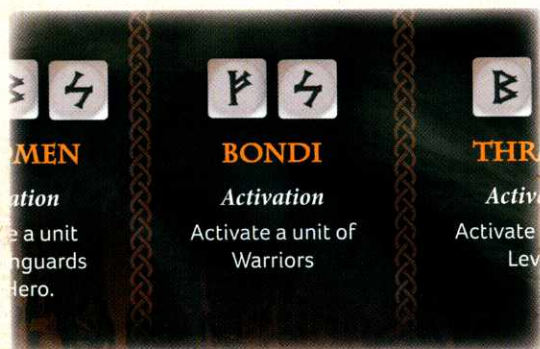
- ⦿ At the beginning of the Orders phase, you roll your Saga dice.
- ⦿ The number of dice you roll depends on the units you have on the board.
- ⦿ You play with a maximum of 8 Saga dice.
- ⦿ When you place a die on an ability, you activate it (the ability is ready to be used).
- ⦿ The basic abilities are usable several times per turn, whereas the advanced abilities can only be triggered once per turn.
- ⦿ During the Orders phase, you can trigger abilities with the keyword Orders, and only those abilities.
- ⦿ Your opponent can use their Orders/Reaction abilities: just after you have thrown your Saga dice, or just before you move on to your Activation phase.

The Activation Phase

After you have carefully prepared your turn in the Orders phase, it is time to unleash hell on your unfortunate adversary by triggering one Saga ability after another from among those activated on your Battle Board. That is the purpose of the Activation phase, which we will cover in this chapter.

Activation Abilities

The majority of the actions you will take during the Activation phase will follow the use of Activation abilities. These abilities are simple to identify – they have the keyword Activation beneath their name.



All the Battle Boards have Activation abilities. On the majority, you will find one ability for activating your Hearthguards and Heroes, one for your Warriors and another for your Levies. The cost of these abilities is variable, and it is easy to imagine why Levies would be harder to activate than Hearthguards. After all, the Levies haven't come to the battlefield of their own free will!

To trigger an Activation ability, the same procedure must be followed as the one for Orders abilities. Just discard the necessary combination of dice when triggering the ability and resolve the effect. To discard the dice, take the active dice on the ability and put them in your pool of available dice. Nothing too complicated, right?

During the Activation phase, you trigger Activation abilities one after another until you want to stop or you have no more abilities to unleash.

Activating Units

As soon as you use a Saga ability to activate a unit, it has the choice of four possible actions. It can perform:

- ⊙ A **move** activation
- ⊙ A **charge** activation
- ⊙ A **shooting** activation
- ⊙ A **rest** activation

The **move activation** allows a unit to move on the battlefield (see Movement, p. 16).

The **charge activation** also allows it to move, but with one goal: to engage an enemy in hand-to-hand combat (see Charging, p. 20). If, when the charge move is made, the unit comes into contact with an enemy unit, you must immediately resolve a melee (see Melee, p. 26).

The **shooting activation** is only available to units equipped with ranged weapons. It allows them to immediately resolve a shooting attack against an enemy unit (see Shooting, p. 22).

The **rest activation** has certain conditions, but allows a unit to recuperate by getting rid of some of the **fatigue** it has accumulated. This fatigue takes the form of counters (see Resting and fatigue, p. 30).

In the following pages, you will find a chapter dedicated to each type of activation.

You can activate a unit as many times as you wish during an Activation phase, as long as you have enough Activation abilities to do it. It isn't necessary to resolve all of a unit's actions one after another. You can activate one unit, then another, then return to the first unit for a new activation. All the same, you should know that a unit which activates several times in a turn receives fatigue tokens.

Free Activations

- ⊙ The rules will often mention free activations. These are activations for which you do not need to use a Saga ability (nor, therefore, your precious Saga dice)! Sometimes the type of activation is fixed, so you will find text along the lines of "Your mounted unit has a free move activation". Other times, the choice is left to you, in which case you will see a rule like "Activate your unit for free", leaving you the choice of whether to make them move, shoot, charge or rest. These activations remain subject to the normal rules, and "free" applies only to the cost in Saga dice.





The Activation phase ends when you no longer wish to trigger Activation abilities, or when you are no longer able to. You can of course keep active abilities on your Battle Board at this point, either to keep them for your enemy's turn, or because you didn't get the chance to use them during this phase. The dice stay patiently in their places while they wait to be used.

Once your decision is made, your turn ends.

The Scribe will guide you...

Prepare yourself for eventful Activation phases! Unlike other games, there is no specific phase for shooting or melee. You want to shoot? Activate a unit to do it. You're charging? Resolve the combat immediately, and if you breach the enemy line, follow up with another unit to demolish the survivors!

Saga offers you great freedom of action, but the price paid is the impossible choice of what order to resolve these activations in. However, with experience you will get better and better at handling this phase, adapting your rhythm to events, and drawing massive satisfaction from it all.

What you must remember

- ⦿ During the Activation phase, you trigger Activation abilities and resolve their effects.
- ⦿ An activated unit has the choice of: moving, charging, shooting or resting.
- ⦿ There is no limit to the number of activations which one unit may take advantage of as long as you have the means to activate them.
- ⦿ When your Activation phase ends, so does your turn.
- ⦿ A free activation does not cost any Saga dice.

Movement

Much of the time you devote to Saga will be spent moving your figures around the board, before those delicious moments in which you throw your dice to smash enemy units to a pulp. The majority of these moves are the result of movement activations. The rules which describe them are simple, but precise, so pay attention!

Moving a unit

Even though it is usually a move activation that allows a unit to move, that is not the only way it can happen. Special rules, Saga abilities and several other elements of the game can lead a unit to change position. All these movements follow the rules written below.

Move distances

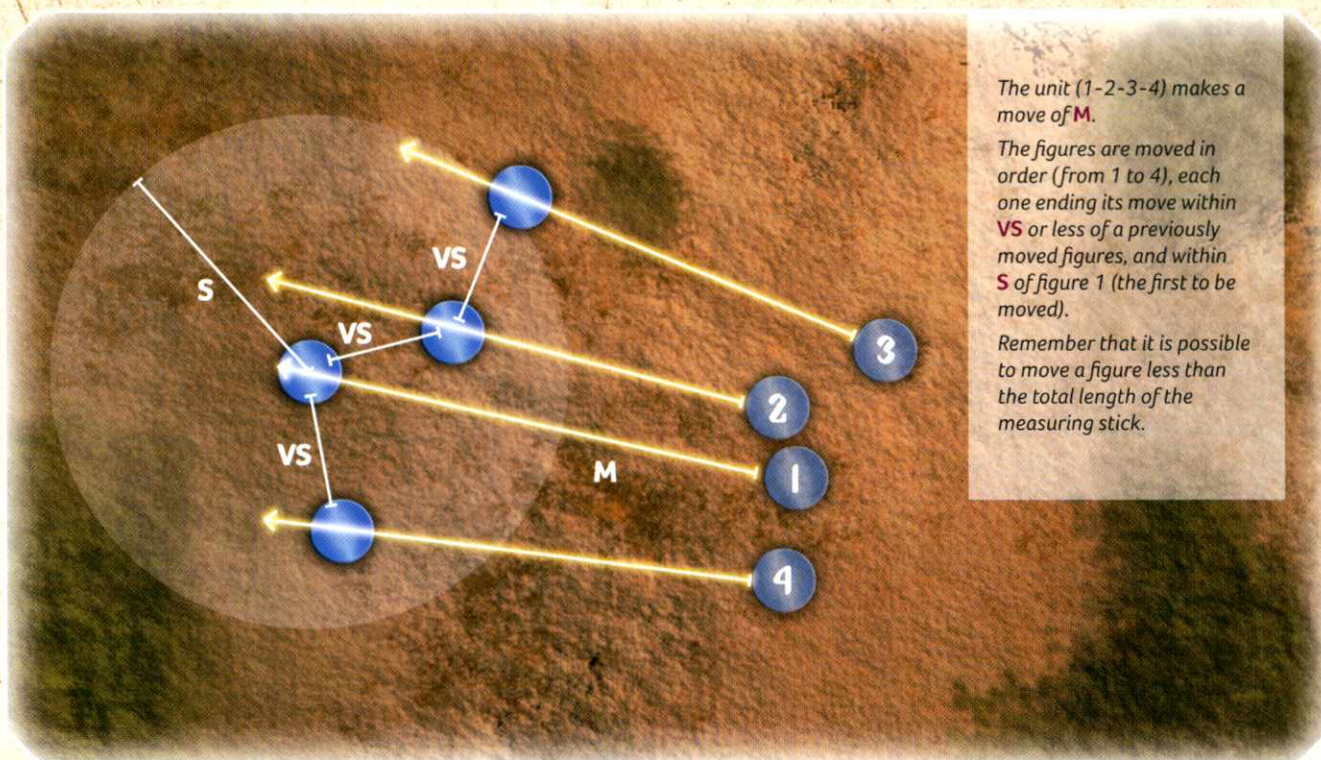
The normal movement allowance for a figure is **M**. You will often find wording like "a unit has a move of **M**", which means that all the figures in the unit can move **M**. This distance can be increased (notably for units mounted on horseback) or even reduced, particularly by the effects of terrain, special rules or Saga abilities. The movement distance will always be one of Saga's units of measurement – **VS**, **S**, **M** or **L**.

A figure's move distance is always the furthest they can go in a move activation. A figure can make a shorter move by stopping before the end of the measuring stick.

How to move

To move a unit, no matter its movement distance, follow the steps below:

- ⊙ Choose one of the figures in the unit to move. Place it in contact with the measuring stick that corresponds to its movement allowance and move the figure along its length, stopping when you want. You can never bend the stick – the figure has to travel in a straight line. At no point in its movement can the model cross an impassable area, or come into contact with an enemy model. During its movement, the figure can freely move through the figures in their own unit. The figure cannot end their movement in contact with friendly figures from any unit but their own.
- ⊙ Once the first figure has finished their movement, choose another figure and resolve their movement following all the above rules. At the end of their movement, this figure must be within **VS** of another figure in the unit AND within **S** of the first figure in the unit to be moved.
- ⊙ A figure can **never** exceed their movement allowance.
- ⊙ Continue in the same way with all the figures in the unit.



The Scribe will guide you...

You will have noticed that you cannot bend your measuring sticks while moving a figure. Therefore, their move must always be made in a straight line! Consider that before moving your units and leave them all room to manoeuvre.

Movement of L

If a figure has a movement allowance of **L** (usually mounted figures), they can replace the **L** measuring stick with two **M** sticks. That way they can get around the straight-line movement enforced by using a single measuring stick.

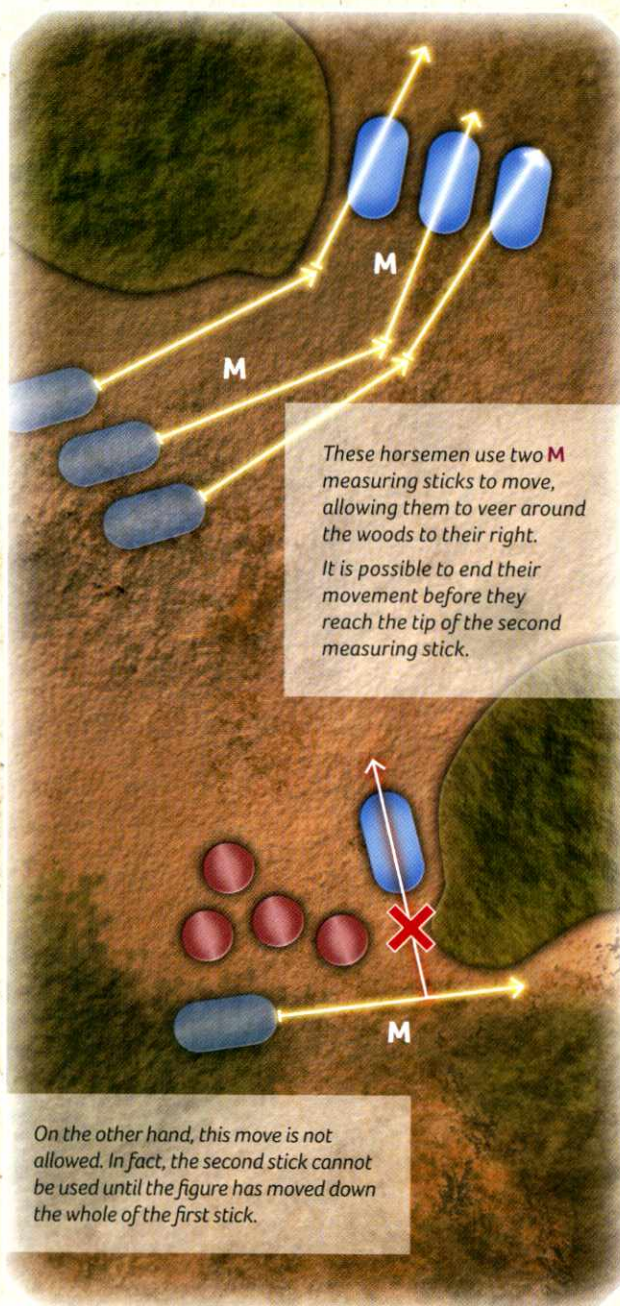
When you use two measuring sticks in this way, the end of the first must touch the end of the second (see the picture below). To be able to use the second measuring stick, the figure must move all the way along the first – they cannot move only part-way down the first stick and then move using the second. On the other hand, the figure may end their move at any point on the second measuring stick.

The rules above apply to all increases in movement which require the addition of a ruler. Therefore, a foot soldier who receives an increase in movement of **S** uses a measuring stick of **M** and one of **S** for their movement. They can only use the latter if they have moved all the way down the former. If more than two measuring sticks are used, a figure must travel all the way down one in order to use the next.

Effects of terrain

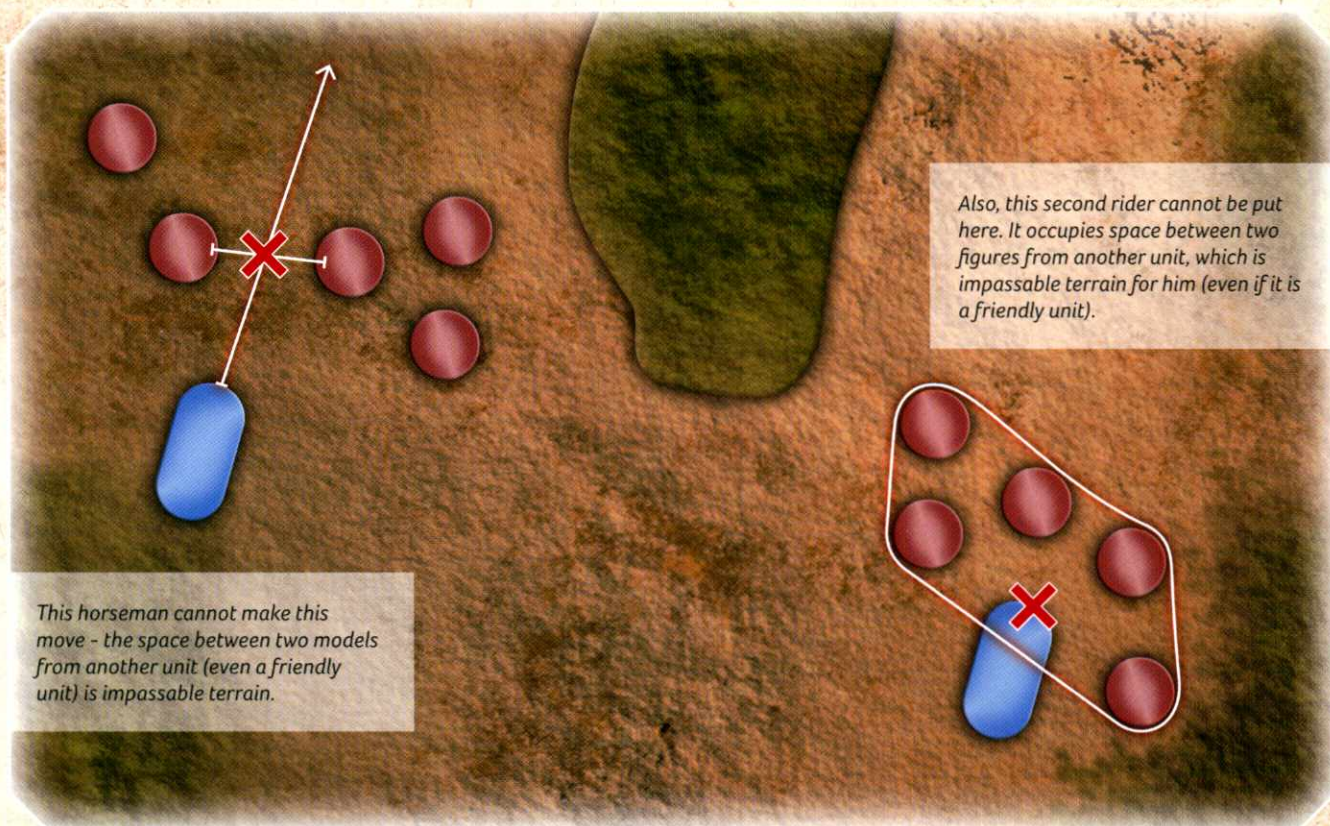
In Saga, there are four types of terrain:

- ⊙ **Open terrain** has no effect on movement. This is a stretch of ground not covered by terrain, or an area of clear terrain which therefore has no effect on movement – a gentle hill, for example.
- ⊙ **Uneven terrain** covers all types of terrain that might reduce movement (woods, undergrowth, rocky ground, etc.). Movement by any unit across uneven ground is performed with a measuring stick of **S**, no matter their usual movement allowance or any bonuses they receive. For example, an infantry unit which has a movement of **M + S** thanks to a special rule – a measuring stick of **M** and one of **S** – only uses a single measuring stick of **S** while they are crossing uneven terrain. This substitution of measuring sticks occurs whenever at least one figure from the unit starts or ends their movement in uneven terrain, or if their base even partially enters uneven terrain during their movement. Note that in this case, the reduction in movement allowance applies to **ALL** the figures in the unit, including those who stay in open terrain during the entirety of their movement.
- ⊙ **Dangerous terrain** is similar to uneven terrain, but presents risks to those who cross it. They could be marshes, bramble thickets or any other spot born from the fertile imaginations of your players. They follow all the same rules as uneven terrain. Additionally, a unit ending a move



or charge activation in dangerous terrain gains a fatigue (see Accumulating fatigue, p. 30). Note that this fatigue is only applied to the unit ending their move or charge in dangerous terrain. Crossing dangerous terrain or starting your movement in it does not add fatigue.

- ⊙ **Impassable terrain** covers all terrain that cannot be entered or crossed, like lakes, lava pits and any other similar terrain features. No figure can enter or be deployed into impassable terrain.



Effect of models

In addition to terrain, the presence of both friendly and enemy figures can considerably disrupt your units' movement. Here are some rules to bear in mind when you are moving figures.

- ⦿ Friendly figures belonging to other units and all enemy figures are treated as areas of impassable terrain.
- ⦿ The space between two figures of the same unit (friend or foe) counts as an area of impassable terrain, if the gap is no greater than **S**.

You must follow these rules at all times during the game, including when deploying units to the board.

Manœuvres

During your Activation phase, some of your units are able to perform a **manœuvre**. The units in question are those further than **L** from all enemies and in open terrain. A manœuvre is a free move activation. To use it, your units must be in open terrain and further than **L** from all enemy figures.

The manœuvre must always be the unit's first activation of the phase. So if they have already been activated during this phase, they cannot perform a manœuvre.

During a manœuvre, the activated unit can **never** come within **L** of an enemy figure and must make the entire move across open terrain.

These free activations simulate manœuvres which take place far from the enemy, free from the constraints imposed by their presence.

What you must remember

- ⦿ The basic movement distance is **M**.
- ⦿ A unit which has a movement of **L** can use two **M** measuring sticks instead of an **L**.
- ⦿ When a unit is moved, each figure moved must end their movement within **S** of the first figure in the unit to have been moved, and within **VS** of a previously moved figure.
- ⦿ You can never bend your measuring stick when moving a figure.
- ⦿ Movement in uneven terrain reduces movement to **S**.
- ⦿ Units more than **L** from the enemy and in open terrain may perform a manœuvre – a free move activation.
- ⦿ During a manœuvre, the unit must stay in open terrain and at least **L** from all enemy models.



Charging

One of the most gratifying moments in Saga is when you send your best units to destroy their enemies at the sword's point before jumping up and down on their bodies and capturing their womenfolk. But for that to happen, your units must make contact with the enemy – and to do that, you need to make them charge.

The Scribe will guide you...

You will see that the rules on charging are similar to those on movement. There are however several subtle differences, which is why charging has its own chapter despite the risk of occasional repetition.

The charge activation

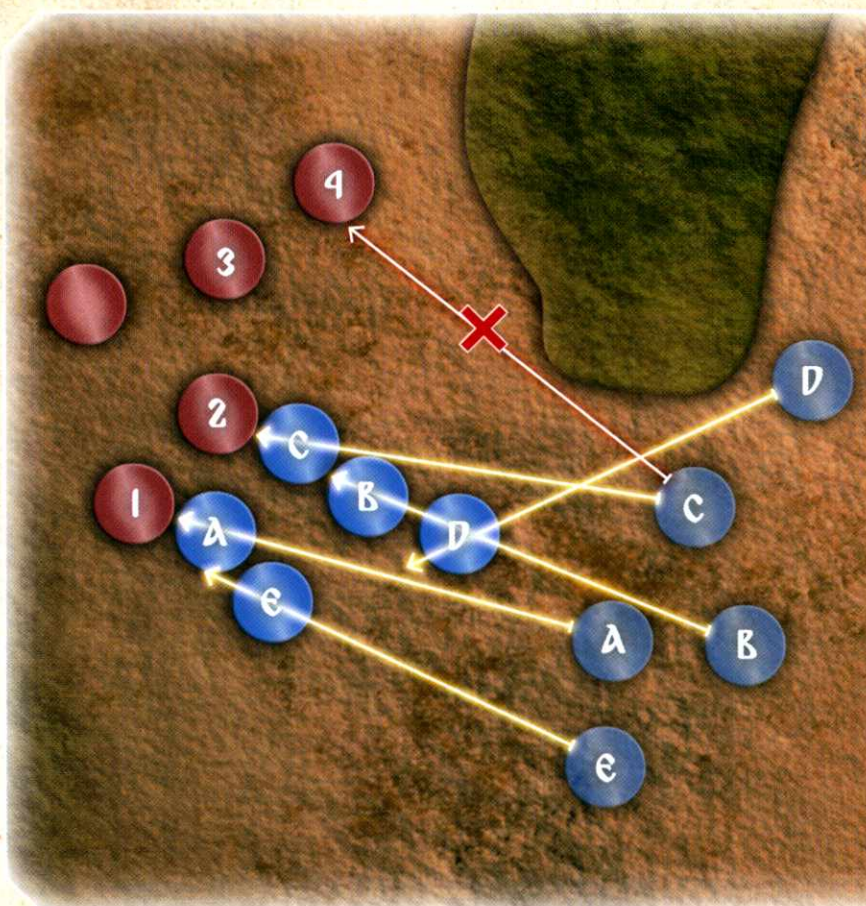
A charge only happens during a charge activation. No other effect allows a unit to charge. A charge is simply a move which allows a unit to end up in contact with an enemy, in order to engage in hand-to-hand combat.

Charge distance

A figure's usual charge distance will usually be written along the lines of "a unit charges **M**", which means that all the figures in the unit move **M** when they charge. This distance can be increased, usually by being mounted, or even reduced due to terrain effects, special rules or Saga abilities. The charge distance will always be one of Saga's units of measurement: **VS, S, M or L**.

Charge distance and movement distance are two different things – it is possible for a unit to have a move of **L** and only charge **M**, or vice versa. Effects which increase one of these distances will not necessarily modify the other.

A figure's charge distance is always the furthest they can travel. It is rare for the entire charge move to be used, since it ends as soon as the figure makes contact with an enemy model.



The blue unit charges the red unit. The player chooses to move figure **A** first, which contacts **1**. The charge has succeeded.

They then move **B**, which does not have enough movement to make contact with an enemy and so just gets as close as possible.

C is moved next. It cannot move into contact with **4**, because it would end its move more than **VS** from a previously moved figure from its unit.

It must therefore contact **2**.

Figure **D** is then moved, and since it cannot cross the terrain (since doing so would reduce the entire unit's movement to **S**), it settles for staying within **VS** of another figure while getting as close to the enemy as possible.

Finally, figure **E** gets as close as possible to the enemy.

Of course the final situation could have been very different if another model had moved first. Try it for yourselves!

How to charge

Before moving the charging unit's figures, you must tell your opponent clearly which unit you are targeting. "I'm charging that unit of warriors" is acceptable, but we recommend a bit more gusto in order to attract the favour of the gods. You can choose any enemy unit. A unit can only charge a single enemy unit – there are no exceptions to this rule!

When all is clear, follow the steps below to move your figures one after another.

- ⊙ Choose one of the figures in your unit. Place the measuring stick corresponding to their charge distance in base contact with them and move the model along the stick, until they are in base contact with at least one model of your choice from the target unit (that they can reach). You may never bend the ruler: the figure must move in a straight line. At no point may the figure cross impassable terrain or be in contact with any enemy figures except those in the target unit. The figure can freely pass through figures in their own unit.
- ⊙ If this move does not allow the figure to make contact with any models from the target unit, the charge activation is cancelled (see Cancelled activation, p. 31). This usually happens when the opponent uses the unit's fatigue to reduce its charge distance.
- ⊙ Once this charge move has been made, choose another figurine and move it according to the rules above. It must end this move within **VS** of another figure in its unit which has already moved, and within **S** of the first figure that was moved.
- ⊙ If, while following the rules above, the figure can come into base contact with a figurine from the enemy unit, it must do so.
- ⊙ If a figure cannot end its charge in base contact with an enemy figure, it will move as far as possible towards any figure in the charged unit while obeying the rules above (ending its move within **VS** of another figure in the unit, and within **S** of the first figure to be moved).
- ⊙ A figure can never exceed their charge distance.
- ⊙ This process is repeated for each figure in the charging unit.

The Scribe will guide you...

Occasionally while moving charging figures, you will realise that the charge is impossible. The potential reasons are varied, but not being able to maintain the unit's formation, or a figure having no choice but to cross a terrain piece and reduce the entire unit's charge distance are the most common reasons.

That's why, before declaring the charge, we recommend that you take a few moments to check that there are no models that can compromise the charge. And if you come to realise that the charge is impossible during their move, the charge is cancelled and the figures return to their original position.

Once the charge movement has been resolved, a melee immediately follows between the two units in contact with each other (see Melee, p. 26).

Movement of L during a charge

Figures with a charge distance of **L** can **never** replace their **L** measuring stick with two **M** sticks for a charge! A charge must always be made in a straight line.

The Scribe will guide you...

In Saga, there is no separate hand-to-hand combat phase. Charge your troops into the enemy, and immediately resolve the melee. It guarantees quick and exciting games!

Effects of terrain and enemy figures

Terrain and figures have the same effects on charge moves as on ordinary moves (see Effects of terrain, p. 17). Therefore, a figure charging out of, into or across uneven terrain has their charge distance reduced to **S**, treats friendly and enemy miniatures (and the space in between them) as being impassable terrain, etc.

Whenever a unit ends their charge in dangerous terrain, they take a fatigue token before the melee begins.

What you must remember

- ⊙ The basic charge distance is **M**.
- ⊙ When charging, the first figure to be moved must make base contact with an enemy figure in the target unit, otherwise the charge is cancelled.
- ⊙ The other figures move to contact an enemy, or if impossible, to get as close as possible to them.
- ⊙ The measuring stick can never be bent when moving a figure.
- ⊙ Uneven terrain reduces the charge distance to **S**.



Shooting

There is nothing better than ending an ancient feud by burying your axe deep into an old enemy's skull. But it would be dishonest not to admit the guilty pleasure of loosing an arrow or a javelin into a far-off adversary. They say history is written by the victors. This is particularly true when they are happy to turn their opponents into porcupines using ranged weapons.

The shooting activation

The shooting activation allows a unit equipped with ranged weapons to resolve a shooting attack against an enemy unit. Units without ranged weapons cannot activate to shoot, except if a Saga ability, special rule or other exception allows them to.

When you activate a unit to shoot, you must also identify their target. There is no specific shooting phase in Saga – you resolve your shooting after pointing out your intended victim. Certain Reaction abilities may take place between the activation of the shooting unit and the resolution of the attack, but except for those specific cases, the shooting is resolved directly after the target unit has been chosen.

Note that Saga abilities or special rules can lead to a shooting attack being resolved without an activation. Imagine for example a scenario which states that a unit crossing “the river of lava full of flaming pyrogators” suffers a shooting attack as soon as they enter the river. In this case, the somewhat deranged author of the scenario will let you know how to resolve that shooting attack.

You may activate a unit to shoot several times a turn, either aiming at the same target every time or at various different units. But nothing in this old world is free, so any unit that activates several times a turn takes a penalty in the form of fatigue tokens. If all this talk of fatigue is starting to intrigue you, have a look at the fatigue chapter (see Resting and Fatigue, p. 30).

Targeting a unit

When one unit wants to shoot at another, they must be within range and have a line of sight to at least one of the figures in the target unit. These conditions only apply to units that are shooting – other sources of shooting attacks (like the terrifying lava river above) are not affected.

Your unit can only aim at a single enemy during a shooting activation – they cannot split their shots between two or more targets. This applies even if some members of the unit are out of range or cannot see the target. We imagine that they are supporting their comrades with encouragement and extra ammunition.

Line of sight

Line of sight is simply an imaginary straight line connecting the shooter to their target. This line must not be obstructed by anything.

What obstructs a line of sight? Any of the following.

- ⊙ All figures, friendly or enemy, except those in the shooting unit.
- ⊙ The space between two figures in the same unit (friendly or enemy), which is not the firing or target unit.
- ⊙ The second time that the line of sight crosses the edge of an area of high terrain (see Terrain, p. 34).

Keep in mind that the facing of Saga figures has no effect on the game.

Range

Each weapon has a range, which is the maximum distance at which they are allowed to shoot. The distance between a shooter and their target must not exceed their range, outside of which the figure cannot shoot. Here are some examples of ranges for the most common weapons.

Weapon	Range
Javelins, composite bows	M
Bows, crossbows, slings	L

Measuring

As we said at the start of this book, you can measure distances at any time. Therefore, before choosing whether to activate a unit to fire, you can choose to check the number of figures in range and line of sight in order to choose the best target for your men.

How to shoot

There are just a few simple steps to resolve a shooting attack, which you should resolve in the order below. When resolving a shooting attack, the shooter is the **attacker** and their target is the **defender** from start to finish.

STEP 1: ASSEMBLING THE COMBAT POOL

The attacker must work out how many figures are going to be shooting. A figure in the shooting unit must have line of sight to the target and be in range in order to participate.

Note: Between the moment when you designate the target and when you get to shoot, the enemy might react with a Saga ability! Certain figures might therefore no longer have line of sight, or be in range, reducing your attack dice. If, at the start of this step, you no longer have any enemy figures in your line of sight or in range, the shooting activation is cancelled.



Once you know how many figures can fire, consult the table below to work out how many dice they will add to the **combat pool**. To do that, just multiply the figures' ranged Aggression by the number of figures who can shoot.

Type	Ranged Aggression
Warlord	4
Hearthguards	1
Warriors	1/2 (half the number of models)
Levies	

Heroes other than Warlords do not feature in this table because you will find their shooting Aggression in their profile (use the Aggression value in brackets). If a unit is made up of figures with different Aggression values, simply add up the Aggression of all the figures to determine how many dice they add to your combat pool.

Note that since fractions are always rounded up, nine Warriors (or Levies) would bring 5 attack dice to the combat pool.

Once the combat pool has been put together, add any **bonus attack dice** granted by Saga abilities or special rules that were either triggered when the unit activated to shoot, or earlier in the turn. Note that special rules and Saga abilities can also give **bonus defence dice** to the defender. This is the moment for them to take any such dice and keep them in front of them.

If the combat pool exceeds eight dice, remove any excess. A unit can only ever have a **maximum of 8d6** in their combat pool during a shooting attack.

STEP 2: SAGA ABILITIES AND FATIGUE

Starting with the attacker, both players may take turns triggering a Saga ability. That means that the attacker can trigger one ability, then the defender, then the attacker will have a chance to trigger a second ability, and so on. This step is a back-and-forth between the attacker and the defender, each able to trigger one of the Saga abilities which have been activated on their Battle Board.

Saga abilities affect the resolution of the shooting attack. They can grant additional attack dice, give modifiers to the attacker or defender, or increase the target unit's Armour.

If the attacker gains extra attack dice, they are added to the attack dice in the combat pool. If the defender gains bonus defence dice, they place the dice in front of them and will use them later.

The attacker can only use Saga abilities which have the keyword **Shooting** (the keyword appears directly beneath the ability's name), whereas the defender can only use abilities with the keyword **Shooting/Reaction**.

Instead of using a Saga ability, the defender can choose to use one of the attacking unit's fatigues to increase their armour. This will be detailed in the chapter on fatigue (see Using fatigue, p. 31). If a game effect prevents the defender from triggering Saga abilities during this shooting attack, they will not be able to use their attacker's fatigue either.

Any player can choose to skip an opportunity to use a Saga ability. This does not stop them from using Saga abilities later in the same phase, but if both players pass one after the other, the step ends immediately. So if you pass, you risk seeing the step end if your opponent decides to do the same.



STEP 3: ATTACK ROLLS

During this step, the attacker throws their attack dice, which is to say the dice in their combat pool and those acquired during Step 2. First however, they must check that the number of dice is not more than double the initial combat pool (those granted by the Aggression of the shooting figures rather than bonus attack dice). If the number of attack dice exceeds this total, then any excess dice are discarded. Logically then – though with some exceptions – you will never throw more than 16d6 when shooting.

The attacker rolls all their dice and applies any modifiers given by their weapons and triggered Saga abilities, as well as any re-rolls they are entitled to. Once this is done, the defender applies their own modifiers, re-rolls or effects from previously triggered Saga abilities to these same dice. Each player applies their own effects in the order of their choice.

The attacker then compares the final score on each die with the target unit's Armour (specifically, their Armour versus shooting attacks). Each die which has a score equal to or higher than the target unit's Armour after modifiers have been applied is a hit. If the attacker has triggered an effect which grants them automatic hits, they add them to the tally.

Using Saga abilities

- ⦿ Often in Saga, you will trigger shooting or melee abilities in order to use them in a subsequent step. For example, an ability stipulating that "you may re-roll all your attack dice which do not score a hit" is triggered in Step 2, before you have even rolled your attack dice. You must therefore trigger it BEFORE knowing how many hits you will score, and once the Saga abilities step is over, you cannot return to it – even if your rolling is good enough to render the ability rather useless.



STEP 4: DEFENCE ROLLS

Now that the attacker has done their worst, the defender must try and stop the hail of missiles. They will roll their defence dice in order to try and cancel the attacker's hits.

For this, they take one defence die for each hit inflicted by the attacker and add them to any defence dice acquired previously.

The defender throws these dice, and applies all the modifiers or re-rolls which they are entitled to (thanks to Saga abilities, special rules, etc...). If both players must apply modifiers to these dice, the attacker's are applied before the defender's. Each player applies their own effects in whatever order they choose.

Once this is done, each die showing a result of **4 or more** (3 or more if the defender is in cover – see below) after any modifiers are applied, cancels one hit.

Each remaining hit becomes a **casualty** for the defender.

STEP 5: REMOVING CASUALTIES

Certain abilities or special rules can reduce casualties. These effects are applied now.

Next, the defender must remove one figure from their unit for each remaining casualty. They can freely choose which figures

they remove, even those which were out of range or line of sight. The only restriction is that the unit's formation may not be broken, as described on page 8.

COVER

The placement of a defending unit can have an impact on the effectiveness of shooting. The trees of a wood block arrows and a stockade is often a better defence than armour.

There are two types of cover in Saga: **light cover** (undergrowth, woodland) and **solid cover** (rocky ground, walls, palisades). To benefit from cover, **the entire unit** targeted must be within terrain offering cover.

If the defending unit is in an area offering cover, they cancel hits on a 3 or more, instead of on a 4 or more. A unit in solid cover also increases their Armour versus shooting by +1 while in the terrain piece. However, since Armour can never go above 6, a unit with an Armour of 6 does not benefit from this bonus, though they would still cancel hits more easily as indicated above.

The Scribe will guide you...

Here is a complete example of a shooting attack. Imagine a unit of nine Warrior archers, taking aim at a unit of Hearthguards.

Seven archers are in range and line of sight of their target. The others cannot shoot, either due to the range or because their line of sight is blocked.

They assemble their combat pool. Warriors have an Aggression of $\frac{1}{2}$ when shooting, or 1 die for every 2 figures. With seven shooters, they get 4 dice because you always round up. The ability which activated them said "Activate a unit to shoot – it gains 2 bonus attack dice during this shooting activation", so the player adds 2 dice to their combat pool. They have a total of 6 attack dice.

Since the shooter is the attacker, they trigger the first Saga ability, which allows them to re-roll any dice showing a 1 or a 2. The defender can in turn trigger a Saga ability, but declines. Our archers get another chance to trigger an ability and take it with both hands: they gain 6 extra attack dice. The defender, even though they previously passed, can trigger an ability: they choose to use one which gives them 3 defence dice. The attacker, having no more abilities, passes on their turn and so does the defender. Step 2 is over.

The archers take their 12 attack dice (6 from the combat pool and 6 acquired during Step 2). They have exactly double the dice in their initial combat pool, and so do not need to discard any dice.

Once the dice are cast, they apply the effects, re-rolling their 1s and 2s. Since the Hearthguards' Armour is 5, the Warriors must get 5s or more. In the end they inflict five hits on the Hearthguards.

Now the defender rolls their defence dice. They take 1 die per hit they have suffered – five – and add the defence dice they gained earlier, for a total of 8 dice. They roll them, and each score of a 4 or more cancels a hit. With four results of 4 or more, only one hit is left to become a casualty. They must choose one of their figures to be removed.

What you must remember

- ⦿ A shooting activation pits a shooter (the attacker) against a single target (the defender).
- ⦿ When shooting, figures in range with line of sight to the target add dice to the combat pool according to their shooting Aggression.
- ⦿ When shooting, the combat pool cannot exceed 8 dice.
- ⦿ Both players can trigger Saga abilities in turn, until both players pass one after the other.
- ⦿ Each attack die showing a result equal to or higher than the target unit's Armour inflicts a hit.
- ⦿ The defender gets a defence die for each hit suffered, and adds any defence dice they got earlier. Each result of a 4 or more (3 or more in cover) cancels a hit.
- ⦿ All remaining hits become casualties. The defender removes a figure from their unit for each casualty suffered.

Melee

Now it's time to devote ourselves to one of the most thrilling moments in Saga: hand-to-hand combat. This is the point when ferocious warriors slice apart their foes and break their bones, turning the field of battle into a field of corpses. And incidentally, the climax of most games of Saga.

You will see that a melee has roughly the same steps as shooting. If you read the previous chapter closely, you will be on familiar ground.

Beginning a melee

A melee starts as soon as a figure comes into contact with an enemy figure. Since this is usually only possible following a charge, the melee is resolved immediately after the charge and before anything else happens in the game.

We have already mentioned it, but it bears repeating: hand-to-hand combat in Saga is always between two units – and only two units. It is never possible to charge more than one enemy unit at once, and as soon as one unit makes contact with another, the melee is resolved immediately, obviously preventing two units charging the same enemy at once.

Resolving a melee

Like shooting, hand-to-hand combat follows a process divided into several steps which you must resolve one after another. During each of these steps, the charging unit is designated the attacker, while the unit being charged is the defender.

STEP 1: CLOSE RANKS!

During the first stage of combat, the defender has the chance to **close ranks**. It is traditional for the attacker to ask the defender if they want to close ranks, generally by asking a yes or no question like “Are you closing ranks, you cowardly wretch?”

This option allows the defender (usually the unit being charged, although some Saga abilities and special rules can change that) to adopt a defensive posture, sacrificing some of their attacks to improve their chances of surviving the impact of the charge. In game terms, a unit which closes its ranks counts as being in **solid cover** for the duration of the melee. They will therefore cancel the attacker's hits more easily, but will roll fewer attack dice.

A unit which is already in solid cover can choose to close ranks, but will not gain any extra advantage by doing so.

Some equipment prevents units from closing ranks, for example ranged weapons, mounts and heavy weapons. If this is the case, it will be clearly marked in the equipment's description (see Equipment, p. 37).

STEP 2: ASSEMBLING THE COMBAT POOL

The attacker and the defender each collect the attack dice granted by the figures taking part in the melee. All the figures from both units participate, even if they are not directly in contact with an enemy (hand-to-hand combat is not as static as our figures would have us believe)!

Similarly, if one side grossly outnumbers the other, it does not matter – everyone will fight. It is certainly cowardly to throw ten men against a lone enemy, but it's not forbidden!

Each player consults the table below to determine how many dice the Aggression of each figure in their unit adds to their combat pool.

Unit Type	Melee Aggression
Warlord	8
Hearthguards	2
Warriors	1
Levy (without ranged weapons)	1/2 (half the number of models)
Levy (with ranged weapons)	1/3 (a third of the number of models)

Heroes other than Warlords do not feature in this table because you will find their Aggression on their profile. If a unit is made up of figures with different Aggression values, simply add up the Aggression of all the figures to work out the number of dice added to your combat pool.

Note that since fractions are always rounded up, seven Levies without ranged weapons would add 4 attack dice to the combat pool.

Next, add any **bonus attack dice** granted by the Saga ability or special rule which launched the charge, or one which was triggered previously. Special rules and Saga abilities can also give **bonus defence dice**. This is the moment when each player takes these dice to keep in front of them.

Once this is done, if the defender closed ranks, they must discard half their attack dice (rounding up). These dice are lost for good, but the loss is made up for by an improved chance of cancelling any hits the defender suffers.

If the combat pool exceeds sixteen dice, remove all dice over that threshold. A unit always has a **maximum of 16d6** in their combat pool during hand-to-hand.

The Scribe will guide you...

During a melee, you will need to differentiate between attack dice and defence dice. I can only suggest using different coloured dice for each type in order to avoid any confusion.

STEP 3: SAGA ABILITIES AND FATIGUE

Starting with the attacker, each player takes turns triggering Saga abilities or taking advantage of the opposing unit's fatigue. So the attacker will trigger an ability or use an enemy fatigue, then the defender will do the same before the attacker has another chance to trigger an ability, etc. This step is a back-and-forth between the attacker and the defender, each having the opportunity to use the enemy unit's fatigue or trigger a Saga ability which has been activated on their Battle Board.

Saga abilities can affect the resolution of a melee. They can grant extra attack dice, defence bonuses, or increase the Armour of one side or the other. These are only a few of the possibilities offered by the Battle Boards, and you will see abilities which have even more savage effects!

The attack dice gained in this step are added to those collected previously, while any additional defence dice are put to one side to await their use.

During this step, the two players can only use Saga abilities with the keyword **Melee** (the keyword appears directly underneath the ability's name).

A player can choose to use one of the enemy unit's fatigues instead of a Saga ability. This will be detailed in the chapter on fatigue (see Using fatigue, p. 31). If a game effect prevents one or more players from triggering Saga abilities during this combat, they will not be able to exploit their opponents' fatigue either.

Each player can decide to pass rather than use an ability. This does not prevent them from triggering Saga abilities later on in the step, but if both players pass consecutively, the step ends immediately. Therefore, when you pass, you run the risk of ending the step.

STEP 4: ATTACK ROLLS

During this step, each player rolls their attack dice – those in their combat pool and those acquired during Step 3. But first, each one must check that they do not have more than double the number of dice in their initial combat pool (the dice provided by the fighting figures' Aggression and their bonus attack dice). If the player has more attack dice available than this maximum, the excess dice are discarded. Logically then, except when certain special rules or Saga abilities change things, you will never roll more than 32d6 during a melee.

Example: A unit of 6 Hearthguards had a combat pool of 12 (Hearthguards have a melee Aggression of 2). If they currently have 28 attack dice, the excess 4 are lost – they will roll 24 attack dice.

Each player rolls their attack dice. The attacker applies all the effects which modify the results of the dice, usually due to triggered Saga abilities or the unit's equipment. Once the attacker has finished, the defender does the same thing, applying all effects which modify the results of the dice. They can modify dice which have already been modified by the attacker. Each player applies the effects they have triggered in the order of their choice.

Next, each player compares the final result of each die to the opposing unit's Armour (using their melee Armour). Each die showing a result equal to or higher than the target's Armour, after modifiers, is a hit. If a player has triggered an effect which grants them any automatic hits, they are added to the total number of hits inflicted on the opponent.

STEP 5: DEFENCE ROLLS

Each player takes a defence die for each hit inflicted on their unit, as well as the defence dice they acquired earlier. Everyone rolls their defence dice, and applies all modifiers or rerolls which they are entitled to thanks to Saga abilities, special rules, etc. If both players have to apply modifiers to these dice, do all of the attacker's before any of the defender's. Each player applies their own effects in the order of their choice.

Once this is done, each die which scores a result of **5 or more**, after modifiers have been applied, cancels one of the hits suffered by the unit.

If the unit closed ranks or is in solid cover, they cancel hits on a **4 or more**.

Any remaining hits become **casualties** for the unit.



Using Saga abilities

- ⊙ Often in Saga, you will trigger shooting or melee abilities in order to use them in a subsequent step... I was going to repeat the same things I said in the chapter on shooting. Not being senile quite yet, I invite you instead to re-read my words in Using Saga abilities, p. 23.

STEP 6: REMOVING CASUALTIES

Certain abilities or special rules can cancel losses. We apply their effects at this moment.

Each player, starting with the defender, must remove a figure from their unit for each hit suffered. The choice of which figure to remove is left to their player, with the following conditions.

- ⦿ You cannot remove a figure if it breaks the unit's formation.
- ⦿ You must leave at least one figure in contact with the enemy while respecting the previous condition.

Note that the conditions above apply to all losses suffered, in any step of the melee. For example, there are Saga abilities which cause immediate casualties during Step 3.

Once both players have removed their casualties, compare the number of casualties suffered by each unit engaged in combat. Only count losses incurred during this step (Step 6). All casualties suffered at other points in the melee – due to Saga abilities for example – are ignored.

Also remember to only count casualties which were actually inflicted. Those which were cancelled by special rules or a Saga ability at the start of Step 6 should not be taken into account.

The side which caused the most casualties is the **winner** of the melee and their opponent is the **loser**. If there is a tie, neither side is the vanquisher or vanquished.

If a unit has eliminated all the enemy figures in the unit it was fighting, it wins the melee, no matter how many casualties were suffered and inflicted. If both sides annihilated each other, neither side is the vanquisher or the vanquished.

STEP 7: END OF COMBAT

Each unit engaged in melee, starting with the attacker, suffers a fatigue. To mark this, simply place a fatigue token near the unit. It is added to any previously accumulated fatigues. This token represents the stress and tension caused by combat.

If neither unit was completely eliminated, one side will have to break contact with a **withdrawal**.

Generally, the loser will have to withdraw. However, there are a few specific instances where this is not the case.

- ⦿ If the melee was drawn, the attacker must withdraw.
- ⦿ If the defender benefited from solid cover (due to closing ranks, for example) and the attacker does not outnumber them, the attacker must withdraw.
- ⦿ If either unit was completely destroyed, there is no withdrawal.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal is a move which brings a melee to an end. It does not count as a movement or an activation.

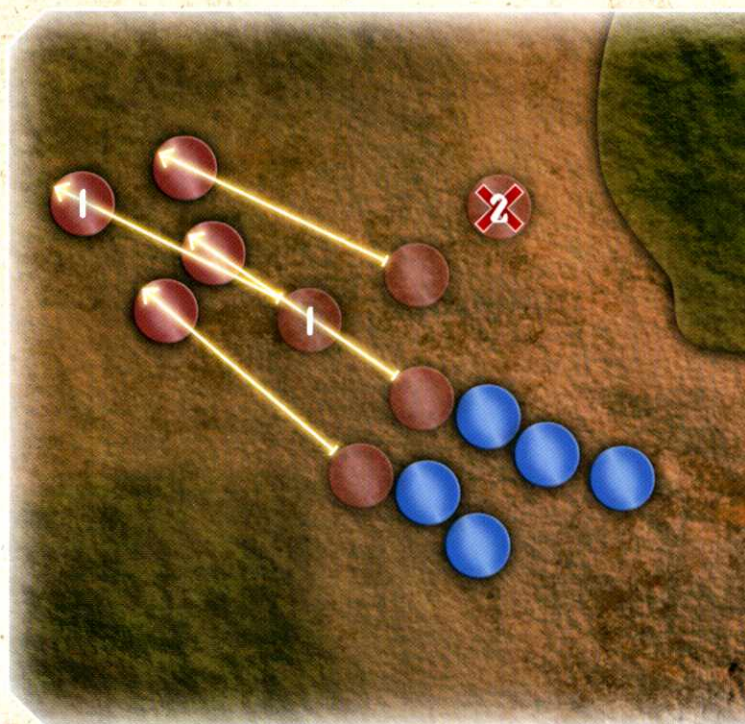
When a unit withdraws, their player begins by moving the figure furthest away from the enemy unit they have just fought. This figure **must** make a move of **S** (you cannot choose to move less far) directly away from the closest figure in the enemy unit they fought.

However, sometimes friendly or enemy units, impassable terrain or the edge of the board will make such move impossible. Then, the figure may move less than **S**, in any direction, but must do its best to move as far away as possible from the closest enemy model. The figure can only move less than **S** if they have no other choice!

This move is not affected by terrain but the other restrictions on movement still apply – you still cannot cross friendly or enemy units, or end your move in contact with them.

Once the first figure has been moved, the player moves the unit's other figures. They must also move **S** (they can stop short if they cannot move the whole distance) while following the rules on movement and unit formation.

If it is impossible for the unit to withdraw while following the rules above, the opposing unit must withdraw instead.



(Following on from the example charge on page 20)
The melee has taken place. The red unit loses figure 2 and with it, the combat. Now it must disengage.

The first figure to move is figure 1, since it is the furthest from the enemy. It gets as far away from the closest blue figure as possible, making a move of **S**.

Next, each of the other red figures is moved **S**, finishing their moves within **VS** of a figure from their unit that has already been moved.

Remember that while they can choose the direction of their retreat, they must make a move of **S** and end their move within **VS** of another figure from the same unit who has already moved.

COVER

Light cover has no effect on hand-to-hand combat.

If the defender is situated entirely within a piece of terrain offering solid cover, they cancel any hits suffered on a 4 or more instead of a 5 or more. On top of that, if they have at least one figure remaining at the end of the melee and the attacker does not outnumber them, then the attacker must withdraw.

The attacker never benefits from the cover bonus during a melee.

The Scribe will guide you...

On a plain strewn with corpses, five Hearthguards charge ten Levies. Neither unit has any fatigue.

During Step 1, in fear of their terrible foes, the Levies decide to close their ranks.

In Step 2, each unit assembles their combat pool. The Hearthguards have an Aggression of 2, and therefore have 10 attack dice (5x2). Since the Hearthguards have been activated by an ability reading "Activate a unit to charge. This unit gains 8 bonus attack dice during the ensuing melee", they add 8 attack dice to their combat pool, for a total of 18 attack dice. But since their combat pool cannot contain more than 16 dice, they must discard 2.

The Levies have no ranged weapons, and therefore have an Aggression of ½ and gain 5 dice (10x ½). Having closed their ranks, they must discard half the dice in their combat pool, which since fractions are rounded up means 3 dice. Only 2 attack dice remain in their combat pool.

Let's move on to Step 3. The attacker (the Hearthguard unit) is the first to be able to trigger a Saga ability, but chooses to pass. The defender (the Levies) therefore triggers an ability giving them 2 defence dice and increasing their Armour by +1. After a moment's thought, the Hearthguards decide to trigger an ability to force their opponent to re-roll any defence dice which cancel a hit. The Levies pass since they have no more abilities at their disposal. The Hearthguards pass too and the step ends.

The Hearthguards still have 16 attack dice, while the Levies have a sorry 2 dice, and their prayers.

The Hearthguards roll their 16 dice. Each result of a 5 or more (the Levies' modified Armour) is a hit. The Levies roll their dice, also against an Armour of 5 (the Hearthguards' basic Armour). The Hearthguards get five hits and the Levies just one.

Each player takes their defence dice. The Hearthguards take 1 (having only suffered one hit), and the Levies receive 7 (5 for the hits suffered, and an extra 2 thanks to their Saga ability).

The Hearthguards need a 5 or more to cancel their hit, but do not manage it. Thanks to having closed ranks, the Levies cancel theirs on a 4 or more. They manage to cancel four hits, but since the attacker triggered an ability which forces them to re-roll successful defence dice, they re-roll those 4 dice. In the end, they only cancel three of the five hits suffered.

The Levies remove two figures as casualties, while the Hearthguards remove one. Since the Levies are still not outnumbered by their adversary and benefit from solid cover, the Hearthguards must withdraw.

Thus ends the melee, and our example.

Special cases and other oddities

- ⊙ Saga is a game where surprising things can happen. Let us therefore try and cover them here.
- ⊙ If a unit is completely destroyed before the end of combat, the remaining steps are still worked through. Also, the player still rolls the attack dice in front of them, and can inflict losses on their enemy.
- ⊙ On the other hand, if a unit breaks contact before Step 4, the melee ends. Do not go through the remaining steps.

What you must remember

- ⊙ A melee generally takes place after a charge.
- ⊙ Hand-to-hand combat is always between a single unit from each side.
- ⊙ The defender can close their ranks to count as being in solid cover for the rest of the combat, but if they do so they must discard half the dice in their combat pool.
- ⊙ Each player assembles their combat pool, which depends on the number of figures fighting, their Aggression and any bonus attack dice given by Saga abilities, with a maximum of 16 dice.
- ⊙ Players cancel hits on a roll of 5 or more (4 or more if the unit is in solid cover).
- ⊙ At the end of combat, each unit takes a fatigue and one of the units must withdraw.

Resting and Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most distinctive elements of Saga. It adds a good dose of strategy to the game and seriously limits your units' apparent freedom of action. It influences several aspects of the game: movement, shooting and hand-to-hand combat.

What is fatigue?

Fatigue represents the stress and pressure units suffer during battle. It is represented by fatigue tokens or markers placed next to units. These markers can take any form you like.

You will find downloadable markers on our website which you can print and cut out, but fatigue tokens are also available in the official range of Saga accessories. Finally, certain players (modellers at heart) make their own markers using figures of dead warriors, loose weapons or abandoned shields.

Accumulating fatigue

Several reasons exist why a unit would accumulate fatigue markers. When a unit takes a fatigue, you place a marker next to them which accompanies the unit in all its moves, no matter where it goes. There are dire consequences to accumulating too much fatigue. When a unit has 3 fatigue markers, it is **exhausted**.

Here are the circumstances which will add fatigue to a unit.

A unit takes a fatigue after each activation to move, charge or shoot if they have already been activated to move, charge or shoot this turn. In other words, the first move, charge or shooting activation does not add fatigue to a unit, but all successive activations will add a fatigue each. Fatigue is given at the end of the activation, before the resolution of any other game effects, and in the case of charges, before the start of the ensuing melee.

Keep in mind that only activations generate fatigue, and not movement or shooting which instead takes place due to special rules or Saga abilities.

Finally, if a unit is activated more than once during the enemy turn, they accumulate fatigue in the same way.

A unit takes a fatigue at the end of a melee they participated in. Each unit which takes part in a hand-to-hand combat takes a fatigue during Step 7 of the melee (see Step 7: End of combat p. 28).

A unit takes a fatigue each time a friendly unit is destroyed within S. A unit is considered destroyed when its last figure is removed from the gaming board. A fatigue is immediately placed on each friendly unit within S, no matter the manner of its destruction. "Friendly unit" means any unit from the same warband, and in certain multi-player scenarios, the units of allied players.

Certain special rules or Saga abilities can cause fatigue. Among the most common causes are dangerous terrain (see Dangerous Terrain, p. 35), mounted units ending their move in

uneven terrain (see Mounts: Horses, p. 39) or the Heroic special rule Resilience. The relevant special rule or Saga ability will always tell you when to apply this fatigue in its description.

Now that you have been warned, you'll only be taken by surprise if you take fatigue for reasons not listed here!

Activations which do not generate fatigue

- ⊙ Certain Saga abilities or special rules grant you activations which do not generate fatigue. When you resolve this type of activation, do not place any fatigue on the unit – even if it has already been activated in the same turn. In other words, ignore the first reason for taking fatigue in the list above.
- ⊙ That said, the unit is still subject to the rules. For example, if the unit uses an activation which does not cause fatigue to enter dangerous terrain, it will still acquire a fatigue token because of the terrain, but not the one caused by previous activations.
- ⊙ An activation which does not cause fatigue does count when working out whether later activations cause fatigue.





Resting

Resting is the last type of activation left to describe. This activation allows you to remove a fatigue from the activated unit.

When a unit activates to rest, remove one of its fatigue tokens. A rest activation only allows you to remove one fatigue, and if the unit has several, several rest activations will be required to remove them all.

The rest activation has one very important restriction: **a unit cannot be activated to rest if it has already been activated this turn.**

This means that if your unit has previously been activated this turn, it cannot be activated to rest. Therefore, a unit can only be activated to rest once a turn, since resting prevents any further rest activations later on in the turn.

Nevertheless, it is possible to remove fatigue in other ways, such as special rules or Saga abilities. Since these do not count as rest activations, they do not prevent a unit from also activating to rest.

Using fatigue

During your first few games of Saga you will quickly learn that your opponent will frequently remove fatigues from your units in order to use them. **Using fatigue** consists of removing a fatigue (sometimes two) from an enemy unit in order to trigger an effect. Let's have a look at the circumstances in which you can use fatigue.

USING FATIGUE WHEN A UNIT IS ACTIVATED

When an enemy unit is activated, you can use two of that unit's fatigues to cancel their activation, no matter what it is. These fatigues are used after your opponent has chosen the unit and their activation they wish to use, but before the start of the action.

To avoid any rows with your gaming buddies, let's be more precise about the moment when you have to decide whether to cancel an activation.

If your opponent activates a unit to move, you must declare that you are cancelling the activation before they move a single figure. In this case, we recommend always giving your opponent a few seconds to choose whether or not to use your fatigues.

If your opponent activates a unit to charge, they must also choose a target for them to charge. You may then choose whether to cancel the activation before they move any figures. As above, always give your opponent a moment or two to think before rushing forwards headlong with your impetuous cavaliers.

If your opponent activates a unit to shoot, they must also choose a target. You can then choose to cancel the activation.

If your opponent chooses a unit to rest, you can cancel their activation. It is up to you whether you really want to help them get rid of their fatigues.

Cancelled activations

- ⊙ Certain in-game effects cancel activations, notably using fatigue or certain Saga abilities. A cancelled activation is not resolved, and does not count as an activation for the unit which suffered the cancellation. Therefore, if you cancel a unit's move activation and then they activate to move again, they will not suffer a fatigue since it will be the first movement activation they actually complete.
- ⊙ Nevertheless, the Saga dice spent to trigger the activation are lost. If the activation resulted from a special rule which can only be used so many times in a turn, the cancelled activation counts as a full use of the special rule.

USING FATIGUE DURING A MOVE OR CHARGE ACTIVATION

When an enemy unit is activated to move or charge, you can use 1 of its fatigues to force the activated unit to replace their movement stick with a single **S** stick. Note that if a unit moves through difficult terrain, it will already use an **S** stick, rendering the use of its fatigue redundant and unhelpful.

See the rules above for when you have to declare you are reducing an enemy unit's movement.

USING FATIGUE DURING A SHOOTING ATTACK

During Step 2 of a shooting attack, rather than using a Saga ability, the defender can use the (shooting) attacker's fatigue to increase their Armour by +1 against their shots. If the shooters have several fatigues, the defender can do this several times, but each use of fatigue replaces the use of a Saga ability.

Warning: When shooting, only the defender can use the enemy's fatigue. The attacker never can!

USING FATIGUE IN A MELEE

During Step 3 of a hand-to-hand combat, rather than using a Saga ability, a player can use the fatigue of the enemy unit they are engaged with to do one of the following: increase their unit's Armour by +1 or decrease the enemy unit's Armour by -1. You can choose a different effect each time you use a fatigue, or apply the same effect several times. If your opponent has several fatigues, you can use them all one by one, but each use of fatigue replaces the use of a Saga ability.

Remember that an Armour value can never go below 2 or above 6.



The Scribe will guide you...

Managing your fatigue - and your enemies' - is one of the most tactical aspects of Saga. Even the most experienced players think very hard to work out the best way to use fatigue, and at which moment. Sometimes it is better to not use fatigue, so that the enemy unit accumulates more. So consider your every move and adapt to the situation.

Exhaustion

There are dire consequences to accumulating too much fatigue. When a unit has 3 fatigue markers, it is **exhausted**.

An exhausted unit can only be activated to rest. All other activations are forbidden. Once the unit has 2 or less fatigues again, it can be activated normally. Once a unit is exhausted, it can no longer suffer extra fatigue. All further fatigue it should take is ignored.

A unit which starts combat exhausted has a -1 modifier to all attack dice during melee combat, and this applies even if the opponent uses enough of their fatigue that they are no longer exhausted once they roll their attack dice. Note that a unit which becomes exhausted during a melee does not suffer this penalty: they have to be exhausted from the very start of the combat.

What you must remember

- ⦿ When a unit resolves several move, charge, or shooting activations in a turn, every activation after the first inflicts a fatigue.
- ⦿ Units take an additional fatigue token after every melee.
- ⦿ When a unit is destroyed, every friendly unit within **S** takes a fatigue.
- ⦿ The rest activation allows a fatigue to be removed. This activation is only possible as the first activation of the turn.
- ⦿ You can use two fatigues to cancel a unit's activation.
- ⦿ Using a fatigue allows you to reduce a move or charge distance to **S**, to increase your Armour by +1 against shooting or melee attacks, or to reduce your opponent's Armour by -1 (during melee only).
- ⦿ A unit with 3 fatigues is exhausted: they can only be activated to rest, and suffer a -1 modifier to their attack dice during melee combat. An exhausted unit ignores all further fatigues that it should suffer.





TERRAIN

It's always more fun to play on a beautiful gaming board. Of course scenery isn't just there to pretty up the table, but to provide tactical challenges and scenario objectives.

*In this chapter we are going to cover the various types of terrain. Bear in mind that we have chosen to do this in quite an abstract and simplified way, since there is an infinity of different scenery pieces. Between the plethora of ready-made ones and those that players make themselves, it is difficult to cover all of them! You will find additional rules covering specific terrain pieces in *The Book of Battles*, the *Saga* supplement dedicated to scenarios and narrative games.*

Buildings

- ⊙ This book does not include rules for buildings. Given the unique nature of this sort of terrain, we have decided to cover them in the supplement dedicated to scenarios, *The Book of Battles*. Nevertheless, if you wish to cover your table in houses, huts and other edifices, simply treat all your buildings as ruins (see the characteristics of ruins in *Clash of Warlords*, p. 48).

CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRAIN PIECES

In *Saga*, a terrain piece always occupies a precisely defined area, marked by a clearly defined perimeter (generally the terrain piece's base). Therefore, rather than a tree, put down a wood, with any number of trees in it – how many is up to your tastes and your terrain collection. All the way through this chapter we will refer to both “areas” and “pieces” of terrain. The two terms are interchangeable.

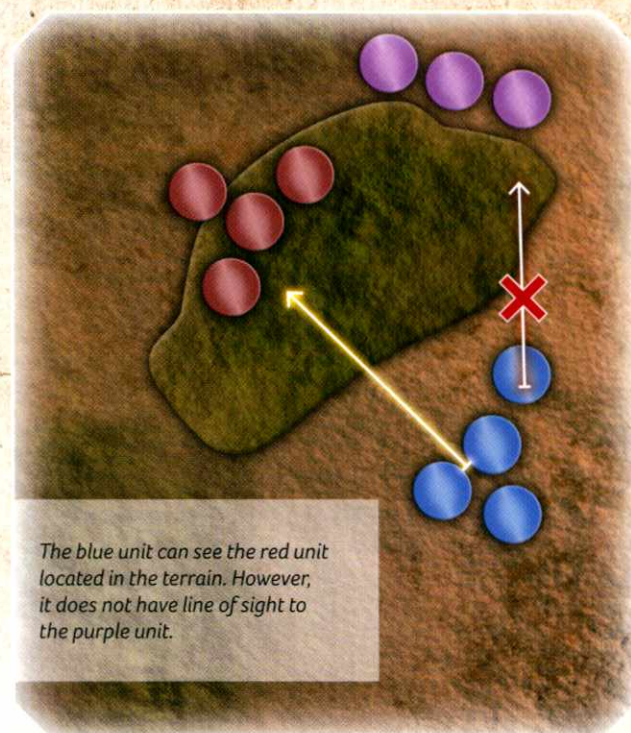
The Scribe will guide you...

*If possible, we recommend that *Saga* players separate terrain pieces from their bases. Due to the practicalities of moving figures, it is easier to have a textured base with a few loose trees placed on it to represent a wood, than to have the trees glued directly onto the base. That can cause problems when moving or placing units on or in the scenery.*

A piece of terrain has four characteristics.

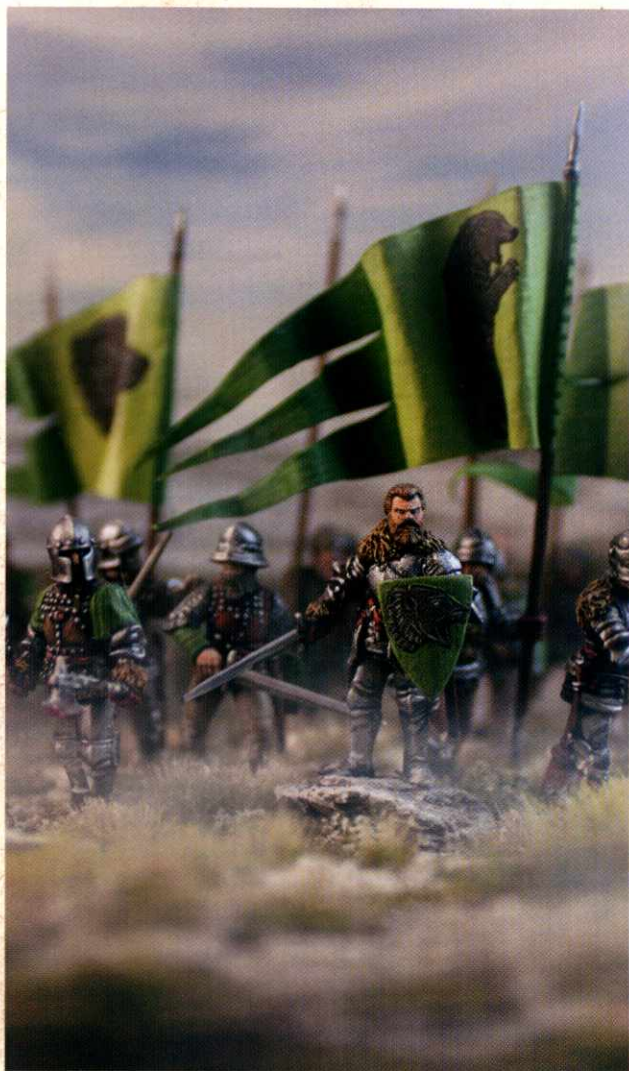
HEIGHT

A piece of terrain can be **high** or **low**. Low terrain has no effect on lines of sight. High terrain blocks line of sight if it crosses it twice at two different points. More simply, you can see into high terrain, but not through it. Note that in *Saga*, being on high ground does not give you a longer line of sight. At this scale, the hill your men are holding is just a small elevation or large mound of earth...



COVER

Most terrain pieces provide cover, which can be **light** or **solid**. Both offer protection against shooting, but only solid cover helps in hand-to-hand combat. For a unit to benefit from cover, all its figures must be within the terrain piece.



The effects of terrain

These have been covered previously, but let's recap the effects of uneven and dangerous terrain here, along with cover.

UNEVEN TERRAIN

A unit which finds itself in uneven terrain at any point in their move or charge, replaces their movement stick with a single **S** stick. This affects all models in the unit, even those moving solely in open terrain.

DANGEROUS TERRAIN

This has the same effect on movement as uneven terrain. Also, a unit which finishes its movement or its charge in dangerous terrain takes a fatigue. It is enough for a single figure from the unit to be in the area of terrain at the end of the move or charge for this penalty to apply.

LIGHT COVER

Shooting: A unit in light cover cancels hits on a 3 or more.

Melee: No effect.

SOLID COVER

Shooting: A unit in solid cover increases their Armour by +1 and cancels hits on a 3 or more.

Melee: A unit in solid cover cancels hits on a 4 or more. This bonus only applies to the defender!

DIFFICULTY

A piece of terrain can be **open** (no effect on movement), **uneven** (slowing movement) or **dangerous** (slowing movement and inflicting a fatigue).

SIZE

A piece of terrain can be **small** (fitting completely within an **M+VS** x **M+VS** square, which is 20cm x 20cm) or **large** (fitting entirely within an **L** x **L** square, which is 30cm x 30cm). Large terrain pieces cannot be narrower than **M** when measured from any two points on opposite sides of the terrain piece. Small terrain pieces cannot be narrower than **C** when measured from any two points on opposite sides of the terrain piece.

The Scribe will guide you...

These limitations on size have been put in place to stop certain players from abusing terrain. If your wood exceeds these limits by a few centimetres, you can of course still use it as long as your opponent agrees to it. And if they refuse even though you have no intention at all of abusing this freedom, remind them that the authors of the game have made dark pacts with carbuncle demons in order to deal with tiresome players like them!

Location of figures

- ⊙ A figure is considered to be in an area of terrain as long as part of its base is within the terrain piece.
- ⊙ A unit is considered as being entirely within a terrain piece when all its figures are within the area of terrain.

What you must remember

- ⊙ A piece of terrain can be high (blocking line of sight) or low (not blocking line of sight).
- ⊙ It can count as light cover (against shooting attacks) or solid cover (against shooting and hand-to-hand attacks).
- ⊙ It can be open (no effect on movement), uneven (slowing movement), or dangerous (slowing movement and inflicting a fatigue).

Special Rules

In this chapter, we will go over the special rules which affect certain units. These rules can be linked to equipment or a unit's status, and when troops have access to them, they are always indicated in the faction's warband-building rules. You will find detailed army lists in the Saga Universe that you have set your sights on.

Special rules

The special rules below are mostly for Heroes, but occasionally other troops will have access to them too.

DETERMINATION

During its player's Activation phase, a unit with this rule can make one free activation of any type. The player can trigger it at any point in their phase.

PRESENCE

When a special rule or a Saga ability requires you to count the figures in a unit, each figure in a unit with the Presence rule counts as **four** models.

Note that this does not apply during deployment, or when calculating victory points. The Presence rule has no effect on the number of figures in a unit when calculating the combat pool. Therefore a figure with an Aggression of 4 adds four dice to the combat pool whether they have Presence or not.

RESILIENCE (X)

When a unit with this rule must remove one or more figures as casualties, it can take a fatigue to cancel (x) casualties. It is possible to use this rule several times in a row in order to cancel as many casualties as desired. However, the unit cannot use Resilience while it is exhausted, and cannot use this rule anymore once exhausted (in other words, you cannot take a fatigue to cancel hits if adding that fatigue token would bring you over the threshold to exhaustion). If your unit benefits from both the Resilience and Bodyguards special rules, you may use both to cancel casualties.

Example: A Warlord with Resilience (1) takes three hits during a shooting or melee attack and does not cancel them with his defence dice. With the Resilience rule, he can cancel the casualties caused by these uncanceled hits by taking a fatigue for each hit he wants to cancel. In this case, he must take 3 fatigues to cancel the three casualties (since he is a single-figure unit, he must cancel all the casualties to survive). If he had had Resilience (2), he would only have needed to take 2 fatigues to cancel all the casualties (the first cancels the first two casualties, and the second cancels the remaining one).

WE OBEY

Once during the owning player's Activation phase, a unit with the We Obey rule can choose a friendly unit within **S** and give it a free activation of any kind.

An exhausted unit cannot use its We Obey special rule.

BODYGUARDS

Each time a unit with the Bodyguards special rule must remove a figure as a casualty, they can instead remove a friendly Hearthguard figure within **S** of them: If this rule is used during a melee, the figure removed does not count as a casualty. If your unit benefits from both the Bodyguards and Resilience special rules, you may use both to cancel casualties.

PRIDE

If an enemy Hero is within range, a unit subject to Pride cannot choose to charge an enemy unit which is not a Hero. In this case they must always charge the enemy Hero. If they could charge one of several Heroes, they may choose which one to engage.

HEROIC UNIT

A unit with this rule is made up of two types of troops, generally a Hero and some figures of another type. All figures in a heroic unit must have the same equipment.

As long as the Hero has them, the whole unit benefits from the following special rules: Determination, Resilience (x), We Obey, and Pride.

A heroic unit never benefits from the Bodyguards rule.

A heroic unit generates its Hero's Saga dice, but the accompanying figures do not generate Saga dice. The unit is activated as if it were a unit of Heroes.

When trying to calculate how many figures are in the unit when the Hero has the Presence rule, the Hero counts as four figures. Simply add that the number of figures accompanying them.

Always use the Armour of the figures accompanying the Hero during hand-to-hand, shooting and for any other game effects.

If a game effect requires the heroic unit's type, it is the class of figures accompanying the Hero which is used.

The Hero in a heroic unit is always the last one to be removed as a casualty. If this is impossible because it would break the unit's cohesion or would break any other rule, the Hero must be



swapped with another figure in the unit before removing the casualty.

As soon as the Hero becomes the only figure in the unit, the unit stops being a heroic unit and becomes an ordinary Hero unit. The Hero can once again use their Bodyguards special rule.

A Hero can never leave their heroic unit.

Equipment

Saga does not clutter itself up with detailed musings on the equipment carried by the majority of combatants. By default, it is assumed that a figure's Armour and Aggression values are sufficient to represent its martial prowess, whether it holds a sword, spear or axe, and whether or not it has been gifted with a shield or a hauberk. This gives players more freedom to convert and personalise their warband and the figures within.

However, certain weapons or pieces of equipment justify the introduction of special rules. The faction descriptions in the Saga Universes indicate the special equipment which troops have access to.

BOWS AND SLINGS

Bows and slings are ranged weapons with a range of **L**. A unit with bows or slings has an Armour of -1 against shooting and melee attacks. It can never close ranks in hand-to-hand combat.

Only figures on foot can be equipped with bows or slings. Mounted figures, whether riding horses or anything else, cannot carry bows or slings.

COMPOSITE BOWS

Composite bows are ranged weapons with a range of **M**. A unit with composite bows reduces its Armour by -1 in melee combat, and can never close ranks. Only mounted figures (whatever they are riding) can use them.

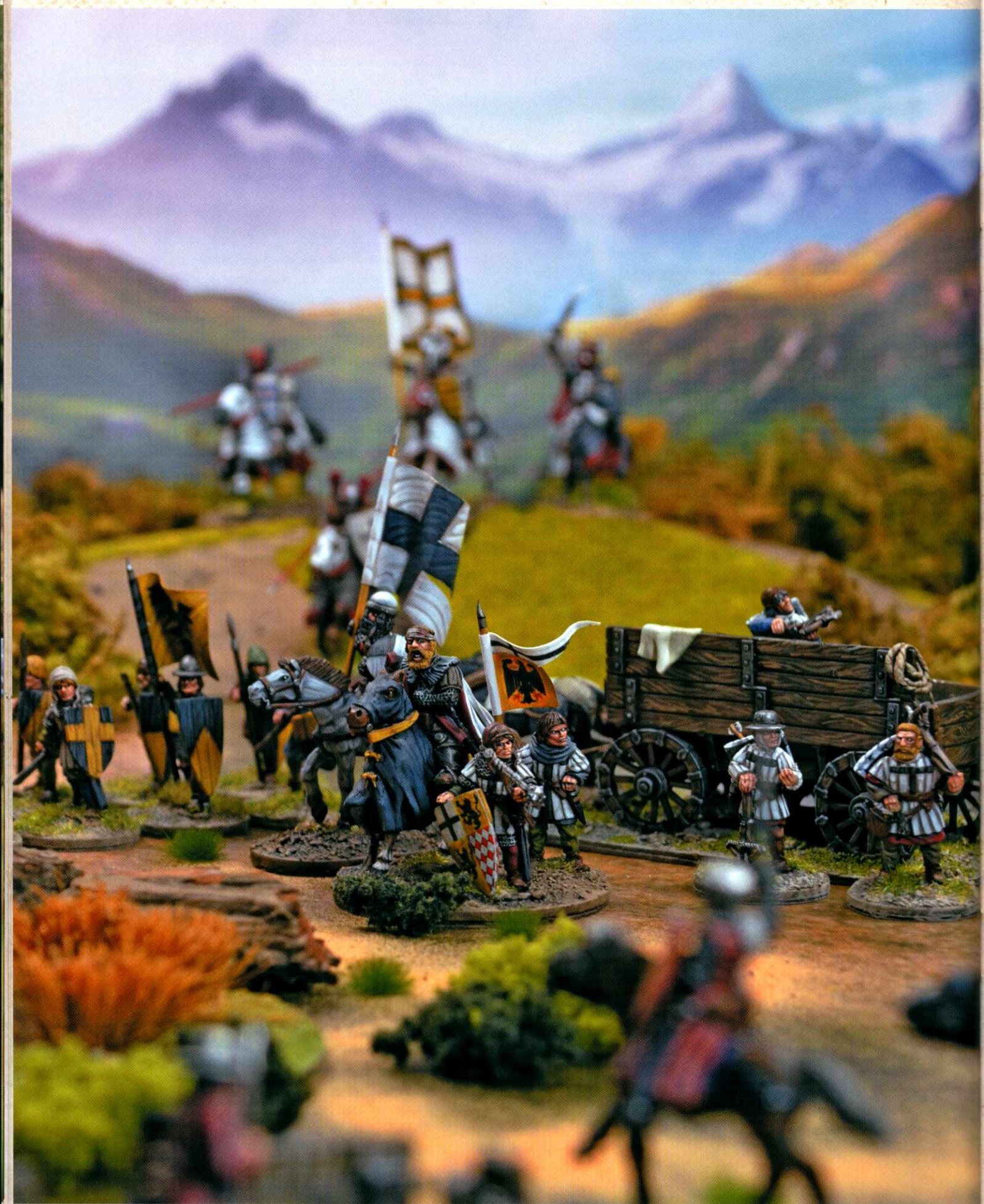
A unit using composite bows has the following advantages.

- ⊙ Its shooting activation are free activation any number of time per turn and do not generate fatigue (see Free activations, p. 14 and Activations which do not generate fatigue, p. 30). Note that shooting activations granted by Saga abilities generate fatigue in the normal way.
- ⊙ It can never resolve two shooting activations consecutively in the same turn. The unit must resolve another type of activation (so cancelled activations do not count!) before being able to shoot again.

The Scribe will guide you...

If your warband includes several units with composite bows, it can be useful to leave yourself a reminder after one such unit shoots, that they must resolve another activation before being able to fire again. This is particularly useful if you are going to switch back-and-forth between activating different units.





CROSSBOWS

Crossbows are ranged weapons with a range of **L**. A unit equipped with crossbows has its Armour reduced by -1 against shooting and melee attacks. They can never close ranks during hand-to-hand combat.

A unit which shoots with crossbows gets a +1 bonus on all their shooting attack dice. However, they can never resolve two consecutive shooting activations in the same turn. They must resolve an activation of another type (so a cancelled activation does not count!) before being able to activate to shoot again.

Only figures on foot can be given crossbows. Mounted figures, whether riding horses or anything else, cannot use crossbows.

JAVELINS

Javelins are ranged weapons with a range of **M**. A unit equipped with javelins has -1 Armour during hand-to-hand combat (their Armour value against shooting attacks is unchanged). They can never close ranks.

A unit equipped with javelins has the two following advantages.

- ⊙ During the resolution of a melee, they get a +1 to their attack dice if they charged.
- ⊙ After a movement activation - if they want to - they can immediately have a free shooting activation which generates no fatigue (see Free activations, p. 14, and Activations which do not generate fatigue, p. 30). Note that shooting activations provided by Saga abilities generate fatigue in the usual way.

IMPROVISED PROJECTILES

These are objects which were hastily collected to be thrown at the enemy - stones, pinecones, &c.

Improvised projectiles are ranged weapons with a range of **S**. A target shot at with improvised projectiles gets a +1 bonus to their defence dice.

HEAVY WEAPONS

Heavy weapons are imposing weapons like two-handed axes, warhammers and flambards. A unit with heavy weapons has -1 Armour in against melee attacks and can never close ranks. However, they benefit from a +1 on all attack dice during hand-to-hand combat.

Only figures on foot can use heavy weapons. Mounted figures, whether riding horses or anything else, cannot have heavy weapons.

UNARMED

Sometimes, certain units are forced to do battle without weapons or any experience of combat. Units fighting against an unarmed enemy get +1 to their defence dice. An unarmed unit can never close their ranks.

Note just because specific weapons are not mentioned in a unit's description, that doesn't mean they are unarmed! Which units are subject to this rule will be clearly indicated in their faction rules.

MOUNTS: HORSES

Many factions can have units mounted on horses. They are subject to the following rules:

- ⊙ The unit's movement is **L** if the move takes place entirely in open terrain. In uneven or dangerous terrain, the movement is reduced to **S** like it is for infantry. Note that this movement can be made using two **M** movement sticks (see Movement of **L**, p. 17).
- ⊙ The charge distance of a unit with this special rule is **L** if the charge takes place entirely in open terrain.
- ⊙ If a unit mounted on horses finishes its move or its charge in uneven terrain, they take a fatigue once the move is over. This fatigue is added to any they would normally take for the move or charge. Note that this penalty only applies to a unit which ends its move in uneven terrain, not one which starts its move there or which crosses it. Keep in mind that a unit mounted on horses which ends its move or charge in dangerous terrain will suffer 2 fatigues (1 because dangerous terrain also counts as uneven terrain, and 1 for the basic rules on dangerous terrain).
- ⊙ The Armour of a unit mounted on horseback is reduced by -1 against shooting.
- ⊙ Units mounted on horseback can never benefit from cover, whether against shooting or melee attacks.
- ⊙ A mounted unit can never close ranks.
- ⊙ The formation distance of units mounted on horses is **M** rather than **S**. It means that during the initial deployment, after a movement or a charge, all models must end within **M** of the first model, and not within **S** as would be the case with foot models.

What you must remember

- ⊙ Certain units and pieces of equipment have special rules.
- ⊙ If nothing is noted in the unit's description, it fights with ordinary weapons, whether they are spears, swords, clubs or axes. It has no effect on their characteristics!



Saga Abilities

In this chapter, we are going to study Saga abilities, and more specifically the necessary conditions for triggering them.

Basic and Advanced abilities

We looked at these at the start of this book, but in order to make sure that everything is perfectly clear, here is the difference between basic and advanced abilities in a few words.

Basic abilities generally appear in the top part of the Battle Board, above the faction name. These abilities can be triggered several times a turn, and the die (or combination of dice) required to trigger them can be placed on them several times over.



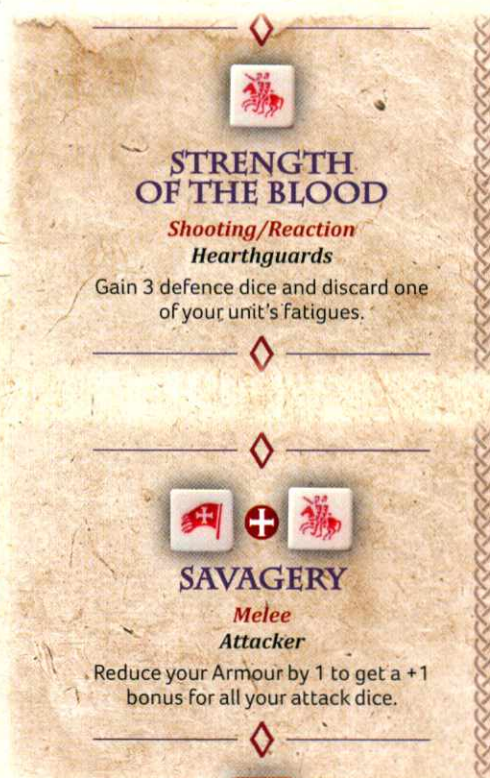
Advanced abilities generally appear beneath the name of the faction. There are more of them than of the basic abilities. Each one can only be triggered once per turn, and the die (or combination of dice) needed to trigger it can only be placed on it once. Therefore, an ability needing one die to be activated cannot have two or more dice placed on it. Note that if you have activated an ability, you cannot activate it again until the end of the turn. This is even the case if during the turn, whether via Saga abilities or special rules, you roll one or more Saga dice and place them on your Battle Board.



The majority of factions have identical basic abilities. They enable the activation of different classes of troops, the rolling of extra Saga dice, and the acquisition of extra dice during shooting or hand-to-hand combat. But this is not an ironclad rule, and some Battle Boards might have totally different basic abilities.

RESTRICTIONS

Underneath an ability's keyword there can appear a word in italics, for example "Hearthguards" or "Attacker".



This is a restriction on the ability. Only the units listed can use the ability or benefit from its effects. If the unit does not fit the ability's restrictions, you cannot even trigger it.

Thus, in our examples, only Hearthguards can use the ability on the top, and only an attacker in a melee can benefit from the one at the bottom. In this last case, if your unit is the defender in a melee, you cannot trigger this ability.

It is also possible for the restriction to be part of the ability's description: an ability which says "activate your Warlord" does not need to specify a restriction, because it is already included in the text.

KEYWORDS

Abilities always have a keyword which indicates when you can trigger the ability. You cannot use an ability outside the phase or the sequence indicated by its keyword.

Certain abilities have several keywords – you therefore have more freedom to trigger them.

Let's have a look at the keywords individually.

⊙ Orders

Orders abilities are triggered during your Orders phase, after you have rolled your Saga dice.

These abilities often affect the Orders phase itself, or trigger game effects which stay active during the whole turn (and sometimes the enemy's too).

You can trigger these abilities before, during or after you place your Saga dice. It is of course totally possible to place a Saga die on an Orders ability and trigger it immediately!

⊙ Orders/Reaction

Orders/Reaction abilities are triggered during your opponent's Orders phase.

Unless indicated otherwise, you may only trigger an Orders/Reaction ability at two specific points in the enemy Orders phase.

- ⊙ After your opponent has rolled their Saga dice, but before they have started to place them on their Battle Board. The opponent must always give you a chance to trigger your Orders/Reaction abilities at this point.
- ⊙ Once your enemy has done everything they wish to do during their Orders phase and has announced that they are done. Before the phase ends, you may trigger as many Orders/Reaction abilities as you like.

⊙ Activation

Activation abilities are triggered during your Activation phase.

Most Activation abilities allow you to activate units, but they can also produce other effects – for example, removing fatigue from a unit without having to activate it to rest.

Activation abilities generally target one or more units, saying for example “Activate a unit of Warriors”, or “Activate two friendly units within **M** of your edge of the table”. In any case, when an Activation ability gives you a choice of targets, you must indicate your target or targets when triggering the ability. Your Activation abilities can never activate enemy units.

Multiple Activations

- ⊙ Certain Saga abilities and special rules allow you to activate several units. When you trigger one of these abilities, you must clearly indicate which units you intend to activate with the ability. Even if all the units will be activated, they must be activated in turn – each unit resolves its entire activation (and any melees resulting from a charge) before you move on to the next.
- ⊙ If the type of activation is not mandated by the ability, the player does not have to announce it until the moment they activate the unit in question. In other words, if you activate three units with one ability, you indicate them when triggering the ability, but you do not announce the type of activation until you use each unit.
- ⊙ An ability which activates several units can never be used twice on the same unit. When you activate “X” units, they must be “X” **different** units.

⊙ Activation/Reaction

Activation/Reaction abilities are triggered during your opponent's Activation phase.

The descriptions of Activation/Reaction abilities state very clearly when the ability can be triggered. This is generally before or after the activation of an enemy unit, although the ability could equally be triggerable in other circumstances too.

It is not uncommon for an Activation/Reaction ability to be triggered after an enemy unit has been activated, but before the resolution of its activation. In this case, you trigger your ability and resolve it completely before the enemy player can resolve the activation they announced.



You may **never** trigger two Activation/Reaction abilities in response to the same thing. Therefore if you have two different abilities, each saying "Trigger this ability after the activation of an enemy unit, but before the activation is resolved", but only one enemy unit is activated, you may only trigger one of them.

If, once an Activation/Reaction ability has been resolved, the initial activation or game effect can no longer be resolved itself (e.g. if the unit which was going to activate has been destroyed), its effects are cancelled without any other consequences.

☉ Shooting

The attacker uses their Shooting abilities during Step 2 of a shooting activation.

During Step 2 of a shooting activation, the players alternate triggering Saga abilities. The attacker (the shooter) can trigger abilities with the Shooting keyword. As we saw on page 23, the effects of certain abilities triggered during Step 2 are applied during subsequent steps. For example, an ability gives re-rolls on attack dice which do not score a hit. While it would be triggered during Step 2, its effects would be felt during Step 3, when the attacker rolls their attack dice.

If a Shooting ability refers to an Armour value, you must always use the unit's Armour value against shooting attacks.

☉ Shooting/Reaction

The defender uses their Shooting/Reaction abilities during Step 2 of a shooting activation.

Most of what was said above in the description of Shooting abilities is true for Shooting/Reaction abilities. The fundamental difference is that they are triggered by the defender (the target of the shooting) and not by the shooter. In general, they help to survive the incoming volley of missiles.

If a Shooting/Reaction ability refers to an Armour value, you must always use the unit's Armour value against shooting attacks.

☉ Melee

Melee abilities are triggered during Step 3 of hand-to-hand combat.

During Step 3 of hand-to-hand combat, the players take turns triggering Melee abilities (or using fatigue – see Saga abilities and fatigue, p. 27). Their effects are generally applied in a later step in the melee (the ability will always state exactly when).

If a Melee ability refers to an Armour value, you must always use the unit's melee Armour value.



Resolving effects during shooting or melee

- ☉ Some abilities have varying effects or restrictions. The conditions or effects must be met at the moment when the ability is triggered.
- ☉ Let's look at an example. An ability states "Gain attack dice equal to your Armour value". The unit's current Armour value is used to determine the number of additional dice. Therefore, if your opponent previously lowered your Armour, the number of dice the ability grants you will also go down. On the other hand, once the dice have been acquired, you will not lose or gain dice due to this ability, even if the unit's Armour value fluctuates later on. Abilities never work retroactively!

Important Notes

Here are a few important concepts to help resolve any conflicts between Saga abilities.

- ☉ **Must vs cannot:** Sometimes two abilities have opposite effects – e.g. one ability forces a unit to charge, while another prevents it. In this case, prohibition prevails. If you don't want to forget, just remember that "cannot" beats "must".
- ☉ **Attacker/Defender:** If the effects of several abilities must be resolved at the same time, resolve the attacker's effects before the defender's. If there is no attacker or defender, the player whose turn it is resolves their abilities' effects before their adversary.
- ☉ **In Order:** If a player is supposed to resolve the effects of several abilities at once, they resolve the effects one after another in the order of their choice.
- ☉ **Immediacy:** Always use the current circumstances to determine the effects of an ability, unless otherwise specified.
- ☉ **Abilities trump the rules:** If a Saga ability explicitly contradicts the rules, obey the description of the Saga ability. For example, if an ability says "Your unit counts as being in solid cover, even if it is mounted on horseback", your opponent may well flip frantically to page 39 of this book (where it says that units mounted on horses never benefit from cover), but you will be in the right – without even cheating!





Assembling a Warband

In the previous chapters, we saw how to run across the battlefield, loose torrents of arrows on our enemies, slaughter them with axe-blows to the throat, and end the afternoon exhausted by our mighty deeds. But all these explanations make hardly any sense if we don't explain to you how to assemble a warband.

Your faction

As mentioned at the start of this book, each warband belongs to a historical, mythological or fantasy faction. These factions are described in your chosen Saga Universe. They will give you access to your chosen faction's Battle Board and any necessary information about the troops it is made up of – the types of troops available, their equipment options as well as all the elements specific to that faction.

Your warband

A Saga warband is made up of 4 to 8 points. You can play larger games using the rules described in the supplement *The Book of Battles*. Before starting a game, you must agree the size of the game with your opponent, which is to say how many points you can each spend to recruit troops. Standard games are generally played with 6 points, but we recommend that you start with 4 point games to familiarise yourself with the rules. In Saga, you will command an average of 30 to 50 figures.

THE WARLORD

Each warband **MUST** contain a single solitary Warlord. This is your alter ego during the game, the testosterone-laden projection of your most fevered fantasies. Since we force you to take him, he is free and does not cost any points. The Warlord is a **Hero**.

Let's have a look at his characteristics.

- ⊙ The Warlord generates 1 Saga dice at the start of the turn.
- ⊙ He is a single-figure unit, comprised only of himself.
- ⊙ This champion has an Armour of 5. It is good armour, and hard to penetrate.
- ⊙ When shooting – if he has a ranged weapon – the Warlord has an Aggression of 4. That's 4 attack dice. That's very good, and allows him to transfix more than one enemy with a javelin or a bow.
- ⊙ In hand-to-hand combat, this brute has an Aggression of 8. Thus he has 8 attack dice. Considering the power of his blows, you'd be wrong to try and keep him out of melee.

On top of this, the Warlord benefits from a whole load of special rules: *Determination, We Obey, Presence, Bodyguards, Pride and Resilience (1)* (see Special rules, p. 36).

To simplify, here is a summary of the Warlord's characteristics in a table.

Saga Dice	Armour	Aggression Melee (shooting)
1	5	8 (4)
Special Rules: <i>Determination, We Obey, Presence, Bodyguards, Pride and Resilience (1).</i>		

OTHER HEROES

Certain factions have access to other types of Heroes. The problem with these characters is that since they are highly individual, each one is unique. The relevant faction will therefore provide the characteristics of any available Heroes, their special rules and their cost.

THE HEARTHGUARDS

Hearthguards are the elite of most factions. These are often the best-trained soldiers, the Warlord's kith and kin, who have gifted with the best equipment.

Here are their characteristics.

Saga Dice	Armour	Aggression Melee (shooting)
1	5	2 (1)
Special Rules: <i>None.</i>		

THE WARRIORS

Warriors are the backbone of most armies. They are not necessarily professional soldiers, but can turn the tide of battle when led by a wise chief.

Here are their characteristics.

Saga Dice	Armour	Aggression Melee (shooting)
1*	4	1 (1/2)
Special Rules: <i>A unit of Warriors generates 1 Saga die, but only if it has at least 4 figures.</i>		



THE LEVIES

Levies, as their name suggests, are gathered together to face an urgent need. These are not men trained for combat, and they are cruelly lacking in determination.

Their characteristics are:

Saga Dice	Armour	Aggression Melee (shooting)
1*	4	1/3 (1/2)
Special Rules: A unit of Levies generates 1 Saga die, but only if it has at least 6 figures. Levies without ranged weapons have an Aggression of ½ in hand-to-hand combat.		

Recruiting figures

Not having the heart to devise complex mathematical formulas for the cost of troops, the authors of Saga decided to make things as simple as possible. The advantage of simple warband creation is that it leaves more time for players to indulge their favourite pastimes – painting figures and socialising.

Therefore, each point gives you a certain number of figures, depending on which class of soldier you are buying. You are free to spend your points however you like. You can recruit an army made up of a single class of troops, or mix them up to your heart's content. Certain factions can have recruitment restrictions, but this is rare.

For one point, you have the choice of:

4 Hearthguards **OR** 8 Warriors **OR** 12 Levies

This can be summarised in the following formula:

1 point = 4 Hearthguards = 8 Warriors = 12 Levies

Imagine that you have 6 points to spend, and try to spend them in several different ways. You will see that you could have an elite warband (with 24 Hearthguard for 6 points), or a gaggle of paupers stretching as far as the eye can see (72 Levies for the same cost).

Add your Warlord to this (he's free!) and you've made a playable Saga warband. We must admit that we are quite proud of having created a game where an army list can be written on a beer mat or a bar receipt.





Organising the Warband

You now have a band of loyal men under your command, thirsty for blood and hungry to face the foe. You will need to organise these figures into units. This step is generally taken during the deployment of your warband, which leaves you free to tailor your organisation and equipment to the opposing army.

Your figures must be assembled into units, obeying the following rules.

- ☉ All the figures in the same unit must be the same type of soldier.
- ☉ All the figures in the same unit must have the same equipment (thus if you have chosen an equipment option like horses or bows, all the figures will have this equipment).
- ☉ Units of Hearthguards, Warriors and Levies must have between 4 and 12 figures. No more, no less.
- ☉ Heroes (including Warlords) are deployed individually, in single-figure units.

How your figures are organised is at least as important as the way in which you spend your points. Large units are better in combat, and in the case of Warriors and Levies, will generate their Saga dice for longer. On the other hand, by taking more units you increase the number of Saga dice at your disposal at the start of the turn, and therefore your tactical options. It is a delicate choice, and each player has their own idea of the perfect balance.

The Scribe will guide you...

With my 6 points, I recruited: 12 Hearthguards (3 points), 16 Warriors (2 points), and 12 Levies (1 point). It is a balanced force, which has both quality and quantity.

While deploying, I organise my warband. I decide to deploy my Hearthguards in two units of 6 figures. I mount one as allowed by my faction, and the other stays on foot.

I split my Warriors into two units, one of 10 figures, the other of 6. I give the 6 figures bows – since they are less numerous, I want to keep them far from melee. Finally, I leave my Levies in a single 12-figure unit. They are equipped with javelins, as required by my faction's rules.

I have therefore deployed 6 units: two of Hearthguards, two of Warriors, one of Levies and my Warlord (don't forget him!). It is now time to start the battle...

To close the chapter, here are two supplementary options which you will have access to while assembling your warband.

Mercenaries

This is not a different class of soldier to those we previously looked at. Several Saga Universe supplements allow their factions to recruit mercenaries. The mercenaries' descriptions cover their rules, characteristics and conditions of recruitment. However, all mercenaries are subject to the following rules.

- ☉ Mercenary units have a fixed composition which cannot be altered. You cannot add or remove figures from the unit, or give them equipment options which are not clearly contained in their description.
- ☉ When a unit of mercenaries belongs to a certain class of troops (they could be Hearthguards, Warriors or Levies), they are subject to the rules regarding that type of figure. They generate the same Saga dice as that class of soldier and activate in the same way.
- ☉ Mercenaries cannot be activated by an advanced Saga ability from your Battle Board.
- ☉ When a unit of your mercenaries is the attacker or defender in a shooting activation, you cannot trigger advanced Saga abilities.
- ☉ When a unit of your mercenaries is fighting in a melee, you cannot trigger advanced Saga abilities.
- ☉ You can never spend more than half your points on recruiting mercenary units.

Apart from these rules, mercenary units act like any other unit in your warband.

Legendary units

Like mercenaries, Legendary units appear in Saga Universe supplements. They are improvements on the units available to certain factions. By paying the appropriate number of points (usually 1 point), you can upgrade a unit into a Legendary unit so that they benefit from the advantages in its description.

The most common Legendary units are improvements on Warlords, often known by the name of "Heroes of the ... Age", or "Legends of...". Unless otherwise specified, the improved versions of Warlords keep all the standard Warlord rules and gain specific new special rules or improvements on their characteristics. Each Saga Universe supplement will let you know how to use them.

Each warband is limited to a single Legendary unit, whether it upgrades warriors or a Warlord. Above all, these Legendary units have been designed to bring colour to a faction and allow to you approach your warband from a new angle – certainly not to systematically squash your opponent! Therefore, they can only be used with your opponent's approval. Agree before the game whether you will allow the use of Legendary units or not.



Clash of Warlords

The field echoes with warcries. Two warlords are face-to-face, determined to end their ancestral quarrel or bring to a close a bloody power struggle. Only one can emerge the victor...

Clash of Warlords is the basic Saga scenario. It allows you to play balanced games full of twists and turns of fortune. Follow the steps below to set up the table, deploy the warbands and play the scenario.

*For players who want to vary the games they play, the supplement *The Book of Battles* is entirely dedicated to scenarios and narrative games. You'll also find rules for multi-player games inside it.*

Setting up

This scenario is played on a 120cm by 90cm (or 48 inches by 36 inches) board. Each player chooses a long board edge, which becomes their board edge for the rest of the game.

Each player rolls a die. The player who rolls highest is the first player throughout the scenario. If the rolls are drawn, the player with the hairiest face is arbitrarily designated first player. Another possible option is an arm-wrestling match between the opponents.

The first player chooses a terrain piece from the table below and places it anywhere on the table.

Type	Classification	Maximum	Possible size
Fields or scrubland	Low, uneven, light cover	2	Small or large (1)*
Hill	High, open, no cover	1	Large
Marsh or fen	Low, dangerous, no cover	2	Small
Rocky ground	Low, uneven, solid cover	1	Small
Ruins	High, uneven, solid cover	1	Small
Steep hill	High, uneven, no cover	1	Large
Woods	High, uneven, light cover	3	Small or large (1)*

* Only one Large terrain piece of each type may be placed on the table.

Next, the opponent takes a turn placing a terrain piece on the board, anywhere they like which is at least **S** away from an area of terrain already on the board. At no point can the number of terrain pieces on the board exceed the maximum number allowed by the table on the previous page.

The players alternate placing terrain pieces until the end of the step.

If at least three pieces of terrain have already been put on the board, a player can choose to not put down another, but instead move an existing piece of terrain up to **M**, as long as it ends up at least **S** away from all other pieces of terrain. If this happens, their opponent may, if they want to, place one final piece of terrain. As soon as this is done, the battlefield is ready for its belligerents, and the players can move on to deploying their warbands.

Deployment

The first player rolls a die on the table below to determine how the warbands will deploy in this game. After the die roll, he can modify the result by +1 or -1, which lets him influence which method of deployment is used.

Dice	Deployment Method
1-2	Method A
3-4	Method B
5-6	Method C

The first player deploys half the units in their warband in the zone defined by the deployment method. This must include their Warlord. Their adversary then deploys their entire warband before the first player puts down the rest of their figures.

When deploying a unit, you must follow the rules on cohesion (no figure more than **S** from the first figure deployed, and each figure must deploy within **VS** of another figure already on the board).

Method A: Each player deploys their units within **L** of their board edge.

Method B: Divide the table in half by tracing an imaginary line between two diagonally opposite corners of the first player's choice. Each player must deploy their units in the zone which includes their board edge, at least **M** away from the centre line.

Method C: Each player deploys their units within **L** of their board edge. No unit can be deployed within **M** of a friendly unit.

Special rules

In the first turn of the game, the first player cannot roll more than 3 Saga dice.

If both players want to, they can roll against the battlefield chaos table below to add a specific rule to the game.

Dice	Special Rule
1	Dawn: During the first two turns, no-one can shoot or charge more than M .
2	Exhaustion: Each player rolls 1d6 for each of their units. On a roll of 5+ they start the game with a fatigue.
3	Cursed Ground: All uneven terrain on the table becomes dangerous.
4	Old Grudge: During the first turn, each unit's first activation is free.
5	Judgement: For the duration of the game, each warband generates 1 extra Saga die.
6	Slaughter: At the end of the game, each unit which was entirely destroyed brings an extra 2 massacre points.

End of the game

If a player starts their turn and their warband generates no Saga dice, the game ends. The enemy wins the game.

Otherwise, after each player has played 6 turns, calculate massacre points as follows.

- ⊙ Each enemy Hero slain (Warlord included) brings 4 points.
- ⊙ Gain a point for each enemy Hearthguard figure slain.
- ⊙ Gain points equal to half the number of enemy Warrior figures slain.
- ⊙ Gain points equal to a third of the number of enemy Levy figures slain.
- ⊙ Each entirely destroyed enemy unit (excluding mercenary and Legendary units) provides an extra 1 point on top of those for the deaths of the figures in the unit.
- ⊙ Each enemy mercenary unit entirely destroyed provides 2 extra points on top of those for the deaths of the figures in the unit.
- ⊙ Each enemy Legendary unit entirely destroyed provides 4 extra points on top of those for the deaths of the figures in the unit.

If a player has earned at least 8 massacre points in total, and at least 3 massacre points more than their opponent, they win the game. Any other result is a draw.



Glossary

Below you will find quick explanations of the most frequently used terms in the game.

Activation: A game effect allowing a unit to act, by choosing one of the four possible types of activation: movement, charging, shooting or resting.

Activation (ability): A keyword designating abilities which are triggered during the Activation phase.

Activation, cancelled: An activation which was not resolved due to a game effect.

Activation, free: An activation which does not require a Saga die to be triggered.

Activation (phase): The second phase of the turn, during which a player activates their units.

Activation/Reaction (ability): A keyword designating abilities which are triggered during the enemy Activation phase.

Aggression: A figure's characteristic, indicating how many dice the figure adds to the combat pool during shooting or hand-to-hand combat.

Armour: A figure's characteristic, indicating the difficulty of inflicting a hit on them.

Attack dice: Dice rolled in order to inflict a hit on the enemy during shooting or melee.

Attack dice, bonus: Attack dice which are added to the combat pool in Step 2 of a melee, generally obtained thanks to Orders or Activation Saga abilities.

Attacker: During a shooting activation, the unit who is shooting. During a melee, the unit which charged.

Automatic hit: An automatic hit is a hit that was inflicted without any attack dice generating that hit. They are usually caused by Saga abilities or special rules. Automatic hits are added to hits inflicted by successful attack dice. The target benefits from defence dice against these hits, as they would against hits caused by attack dice.

Battle board: A sheet presenting all of a faction's Saga abilities.

Casualties: Each hit which has not been cancelled by defence dice, a Saga ability or anything else, becomes a casualty. Each casualty forces the player to remove a figure from the unit.

Charge (activation): An activation which allows a unit to move and end up in contact with an enemy.

Charge distance: The charge distance is the maximum distance a figure can travel during a charge activation. The default distance is **M**.

Close ranks: An option the defender has during hand-to-hand combat, where they lose attack dice in order to more easily cancel enemy hits.

Combat Pool: All the attack dice and defence dice gained before triggering Saga abilities. It is based on the Aggression of the unit's figures, their numbers, and any bonus dice granted by previously triggered Saga abilities.

Cover: An advantage for units who are entirely within an area of cover. It can be one of two types: solid (bonus for the target of a shooting attack or the defender during melee), or light (bonus for the target of a shooting attack).

Dangerous terrain: One of the three types of terrain. It slows movement and can inflict a fatigue.

Defence dice: Dice thrown to cancel a hit caused by a shooting or melee attack.

Defender: During a shooting activation, the unit being shot at. During a melee, the unit which was charged.

Dice: Traditional six-sided dice.

Exhausted: The state the game considers a unit to be in once it has at least 3 fatigues.

Fatigue: A game effect, represented by a marker or token placed next to a unit.

Fatigue, using: An action, effected during a movement; charge; shooting attack; or melee, which consists of removing one or more fatigues from the target in order to penalise them.

Fatigue, removing: A game effect which removes one or more fatigue tokens from a unit.

Fatigue, suffering: A game effect which adds fatigue to a unit.

Formation: The term 'formation' encompasses all rules on positioning units during the game.

Foot: Unless otherwise indicated, all units without the special rule Mount: X are foot units.

Hearthguards: One of the four types of troops.

Heroes: One of the 4 types of troops.

Hits: Each attack dice which gets a result equal to or higher than the Armour of their target becomes a hit.

Keyword: This indicates at which point in the turn a Saga ability can be triggered.

L: Abbreviation of "long", one of the Saga measurements. Equal to 12 inches.

Levies: One of the 4 types of troops.

Light cover: See 'Cover'.

M: Abbreviation of "medium", one of the Saga measurements. Equal to 6 inches.

Manœuvre: A particular type of movement activation.

Melee (ability): A keyword designating abilities triggered by units during a melee sequence, whether they are attackers or defenders.

Mounted: A unit is mounted if they have the special rule Mount: X (no matter what they are mounted on).

Move (activation): An activation allowing a unit to move.

Movement distance: The movement distance is the maximum distance a figure can travel during a movement activation. The default distance is **M**.

Open terrain: The default terrain type on the gaming board. Every part of the table surface not covered by a piece of terrain counts as open terrain.

Orders (ability): A keyword designating the abilities which can be triggered during the Orders phase.

Orders (phase): The first phase of the turn, during which the player rolls their Saga dice and places them on their Battle Board.

Orders/Reaction (ability): A keyword designating the abilities which can be triggered during the opposing player's Orders phase.

Rest (activation): An activation allowing a unit to remove one of its fatigues.

S: Abbreviation of "short", one of the Saga measurements. Equivalent to 4 inches.

Saga ability: A faction-unique game ability, appearing on Battle Boards and triggered by Saga dice. A Saga ability is active when dice are placed on its space, and inactive when no dice are on it.

Saga dice: Dice which are specific to Saga, with different symbols on each face depending on the type of die. They always have three different symbols, each appearing respectively on 1, 2 and 3 faces.

Saga dice, active: Saga dice which have been placed on a Saga ability.

Saga dice, available: Saga dice which have not been rolled. You cannot use or wield them, unless a game effect indicates that you may roll available Saga dice.

Shooting attack: A game sequence during which a shooting activation is resolved between the shooter and their target.

Shooting (ability): A keyword designating the abilities which can be triggered by the shooter (attacker) during a shooting attack.

Shooting (activation): An activation allowing a unit to attack from a distance.

Shooting/Reaction: A keyword designating the abilities which can be triggered by the target unit (defender) during a shooting attack.

Solid cover: See Cover.

Terrain: See Open terrain, Uneven terrain and Dangerous terrain.

Trigger: The act of removing Saga dice from an ability in order to unlock its effects.

Troop type: Each figure belongs to one of four troop types: Heroes, Hearthguards, Warriors or Levies.

Turn: A turn is made up of a player's Orders phase and Activation phase.

Uneven terrain: One of the three types of terrain. It slows movement.

Unit: Each figure in a warband belongs to a unit. Apart from Heroes, every unit is made up of 4 to 12 figures at the start of the game.

VS: Abbreviation of "very short", one of the Saga measurements. Equal to 2 inches.

Warlord: The most frequent type of Hero. Every warband is commanded by a Warlord.

Warriors: One of the 4 types of troops.

Withdrawal: At the end of a melee, one of the units (usually the loser) must withdraw.

SAGA

Rulebook

Every age has its heroes. Singular men, whose prowess and virtue have raised them above mere mortals, and who have forged their own fates through their determination, courage and strength. Their names have survived the passage of time: King Arthur, William the Conqueror, Achilles and Conan.

Whether they were born in popular legend, the fertile minds of writers or the annals of history, they live forever in our collective memory as the most celebrated figures of ages past.

However, for each surviving legend there exist innumerable others still waiting to be written. Thousands of heroes wait to prove themselves on the battlefield, to speak with fire and steel, and to carve their mark on the world around them. With the book in your hands, you have the unique opportunity to take part in the creation of these legends and to see them master their destinies in turn.

Your Saga begins here...

Saga is a skirmish game taking place in the heroic ages, whether they are historical, mythological, or sprung from the minds of writers. It brings to life the battles between exceptional warriors - Warlords, who defy their enemies on the battlefield at the head of their warband.

This game puts you at the head of one such warband, made of thirty or so figures, and lead by your heroic alter-ego. Each warband is chosen from among the available Saga factions, and has a specific Battle Board and Saga dice which grant them particular abilities in battle and reinforce their identity.

This book contains Saga's simple and innovative basic rules. They are easy to learn and illustrated with numerous examples which apply to all the universes you might explore. These rules are the fruit of years of development and the contributions of a large community that plays Saga all around the world.

Once you've read this book, all that's left for you to do is to choose a Saga Universe from the array available, assemble your figures and write your legend!

