

Avalon Hill Philosophy: Part 3: Why The Luftwaffe Never Loses

In spite of the fact that the number of loyal TAHGC fans grows larger everyday, we do not buy as many games as the general public. This means that even when we are wild about a game, it can be withdrawn from sales because the general public is apathetic.

LUFTWAFFE was designed to meet both market demands. The Public wanted something which was not too difficult and rather quick to play while the hard core wanted unlimited realism and a longer game. The general public will probably not go beyond the Tournament game. But the Tournament game is merely a transitional vehicle to teach the advanced game and all its options.

We did not expect the hard core to stop with the tournament or Advanced games or to FREEZE them into the formats used for initial presentation. This is why we opened the door to experimentation with paragraph A of the OPTIONAL GAMES section. We know that the Advanced and Tournament games are balanced for players who don't play too often. Naturally, those who play frequently discover ways to achieve superiority which will not be learned by the general public who plays occasionally. Those of you who are true fans have learned to make the Luftwaffe unbeatable. Here's why this is possible.

The Germans win because the game is too accurate! How is *that for a rapid fire contradiction?* Goering ordered his fighters to ignore American fighter escorts and concentrate on the bombers only. If the German player was forced to abide by Goering's orders in the game, there would be a different outcome. (To play out this situation, the close escort fires first at attacking fighters and extracts casualties before the surviving attackers may trade shots with the bombers.) Because such a foolhardy tactic puts the German at a decided disadvantage, we wrote the rules so that it would be impossible for the German to ignore the escort. We couldn't see any point in forcing the German player to limit his tactical options to loosing tactics. Players who rack up a string of German victories recognize the value of fighter superiority and exploit it properly. This is something Goering forbid his pilots to do.

Allied air commanders estimated that if the Germans had started using jets 6 months earlier the LUFTWAFFE would have regained air superiority. The Advanced game shows what would have happened IF the Germans had gotten their jets as early as it was possible for them to get them. What happens on the gameboard is what would have happened in real life if the Jerries had gotten their Jets sooner. While this is very realistic, it favors the Germans more as you learn how to properly employ the jets. The public thinks both sides have an even chance of victory because they do not play as often or as well as the hard core. Giving the Germans jets earlier makes them invincible when properly commanded, but WHAT IF HITLER had been obeyed back in 1941 when he ordered jet production discontinued because he didn't need them? To find out, play the Advanced game

without any jets at all. Where jets are authorized, use FW 190's.

These alternatives we've suggested are not balanced games. They are not meant to be balanced for people with game expertise. They are designed to show what WOULD HAPPEN IF for play balance instead of Historical accuracy, Paragraph A of the Optional Games specifies the procedures to follow. "Diminish German production if he wins too easily or increase it when he loses too often."

No two gamers have the same degree of skill and this made it difficult to determine the exact point of balance which is fairest for everyone. During the past months we've had several well known gamers working out the point at which the game balances for them. Although we've published their findings below, this does not necessarily mean that you and your usual opponent will find balance at the same point as our investigators. Since your degree of skill must be greater or less than the investigators, their suggestions will hold little validity until you pit yourself against the same conditions they've tried.

The investigators, almost to a man, determined that play balance was arrived at when the German Production rate was lowered to read, "German needs 9 undamaged factories to make one replacement factor." This was an adjustment to the original "4 for 1" requirement for the Tournament Game. Most claimed that this change applied also to the Advanced Game.

Rule Revisions Now Available

But this did not prove to be the end of our investigators' suggestions. Many other factors contributed towards the play imbalance of the original script. And so thoroughly were they tested, and so great was their validity, that many of their play balance changes have been incorporated in the second printing of the Instruction Folder, now available from the Parts Department for 50 cents. (Make sure you ask for "Second Printing," otherwise you are liable to get a copy of the original rules that may still be sitting around.)

Our thanks for taking much of their free time to conduct these experiments go especially to Tyrone Bomba, Michael Forte, Michael Dean, Leonard Devine, Rodger Hart, members of Interest Group Baltimore with Randy Reed, and a host of guinea pigs whose names were withheld from us (because they were losers, maybe?). And of course, to T/Sgt Lou Zocchi who initiated the experiment under the program he titled, "Field Marshals handicap."