



490 BC: MARATHON



Player's Manual

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

While oftentimes depicted in gruesome detail in movies, videogames and popular literature, the nature of warfare during the golden age of Greece around the 5th century BC is a subject of fierce debate among scholars of the period. Classicists assert that the depictions on shields, pottery and other artifacts are a valid source of information in reference to tactical substance. Revisionists instead argue that most of the depictions are of a religious or ceremonial nature, and that in reality, combat was like that of the Late Bronze Age. My personal interpretation, which is arguably relevant given you've either purchased or are thinking about purchasing this game, falls inbetween the two, given aspects of both Classical and Revisionist interpretations have been supported by modern reenactments of different maneuvers in antiquity.

The Violent Schoolmaster Tactical Series (VSTS) seeks to balance interpretations of ancient warfare in a way which feels authentic and holistic without using chrome or leaning too heavily on either interpretation. What we do know about the battles themselves is that they were short, frantic, confusing, and gruesome (about the only thing popular culture sometimes gets right). Superior leadership, charisma or tactics could oftentimes overcome a deficiency in numbers, although strategic circumstances such as logistics, weather and/or intelligence could greatly change the outcome of events. Nine times out of ten, a battle would result in one side being completely or nearly wiped out with the other sustaining few casualties.

VSTS might feel a little unusual compared to other games: units must divide Strength Points against multiple adjacent enemies, and units have a harder time turning to the left than they do to the right. With that said, these battles are meant to be played several times, allowing players to attempt new tactics or strategies gaining insight into the tactical problems that likely existed at the time. Players may find that they sometimes have little control over what happens once two forces engage; this is intentional as once two forces collided, there was little anyone could do to influence the outcome. VSTS at its heart is an abstracted, conjectured simulation, but most of that work is baked into the game mechanics so that all you have to focus on is command and maneuver, making it play more like a game. Marathon seeks to be a digestible introduction to this new system which I plan to explore further in a quad on Sparta.

1.1 Scale

Design Note: It is obviously impossible to have an exact idea of what units during this period looked like in relation to a battlefield in scale given the lack of usable data, but for our purposes hexes are approximately 100 meters across and, depending on the type of unit, each Strength Point (SP) can typically represent anywhere from 15 through 100 armed men.

2.0 GLOSSARY

Glossary

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| DP – Disorganization Points | MC – Morale Check |
| DRM – Die Roll Modifier | MP – Movement Point |
| IC – In Command | MR – Morale Rating |
| LOS – Line of Sight | OOC – Out of Command |
| MA – Movement Allowance | RMA – Route Movement Allowance |
| MBR – Movement Bonus Rating | SP – Strength Point |

3.0 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

The following concepts are essential to playing VSTS. This is an unusual game so it helps to ease into it with no preconceived notions from other wargames. VSTS uses 10-sided dice to resolve mechanics. A roll of “10” on a 10-sided die in VSTS is treated as “zero”, not as “10.”

3.1 Units

VSTS features several unit types that each have their own unique functions depending on the module, but the two main unit types are Combat Units and Leaders. Combat units include everything from phalanx, archers, cavalry, hoplites, horse-archers, logistics trains, and more. Leaders are units which command forces under their army Wing and provide bonuses to units they are stacked with or adjacent to.

Combat units have 2 main attributes, from left to right: Strength Points (**SP**) and Morale Ratings (**MR**). SP determine how many d10 that unit rolls in combat, and the number of Disorganization Points (**DP**) the unit can absorb before the unit must make an Morale Check (**MC**) to see if they rout. MR determine Die Roll Modifiers (**DRM**) in combat and MCs. Leader units feature the wing of the army which they control underneath their unit ID. From left to right, their values include a MR and a Movement Bonus Rating (**MBR**). Units without a MR are considered to have a MR of 0. A leader’s morale rating is added to the MR of units in or adjacent to the hex they occupy for MCs. A Leader’s MR also affects Reactivation attempts. The backside of a Combat Unit features its Routed side, while the backsides of Leaders feature a replacement leader.



3.1.1 Unit Types

Unit types for the various games throughout the series vary depending on the conflict being portrayed. The following types of units are specific to this module on Marathon.

Archers (Skirmishers) – Light Infantry with bows and arrows, no ability for direct combat.



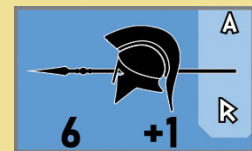
Cavalry – Well-armored horse-mounted warriors.



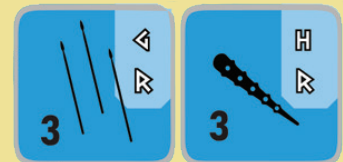
Hoplites (Shield & Spear) – The basic arm of infantry armed usually with a shield and spear.



Phalanx – A massed infantry formation with a limited capacity to maneuver.



Psiloi (Skirmishers) – Light Infantry better suited for non-clear terrain, skirmishing, and hit and run tactics. The Javelin Psiloi may use Missile Fire while the Club Psiloi may not.



Persian Skirmishers – Light Infantry better suited for non-clear terrain, skirmishing, and hit and run tactics. Can use Missile Fire.



Persian Shield and Spear – The basic arm of Persian infantry armed usually with a shield and spear.



Persian Hazarabam (Shield and Spear) – Heavily armed and armored warriors. These are classified as Elite Units.



Persian Marine – Ship-based Persian infantry.



3.1.2 Facing

When on the map, all units must always face towards a **hexspine**. The hexes in front of a unit are termed its front, hexes to the side are called their flank and hexes behind them are called their rear. Units can gain bonuses for attacking enemy units through their flank and/or rear hexes. The front of the unit is at the top of its unit icon. Skirmishers are an exception to this rule in that all adjacent hexes to them are considered front hexes. Units in March Formation (see 7.3.2) must face towards a hexside instead of a hexspine. See **Appendix**.

3.1.3 Stacking

Stacking refers to placing more than one unit on top of another. With the exception of units classified as Skirmishers, combat units may at no time stack with a different combat unit type unless specified otherwise in the exclusive rules. All combat units may stack with units of the same type up to three per hex. If a unit is temporarily stacked with a routing friendly unit in its path of retreat, the stationary unit must make a MC following the completion of Rout Movement. If failed, the unit making the MC suffers 1-2 DP (see 9.0 for procedure). Skirmishers may stack with other unit types (up to three units per hex) and have a special Pass Through (see 7.3.3.1) ability which allows them to move through friendly occupied hexes regardless of the unit type occupying the hex.

The main benefit of stacking is that SP may be combined between the units occupying the same hex. Phalanx-size units cannot stack. Units in different formations cannot stack. Units forced to stack with one another when not allowed are instead immediately eliminated.

3.2 Markers

Markers serve as mnemonic devices which relay information to the players. Each marker indicates its own unique status and otherwise has no effect on the game; they can be placed on top of or next to units affected, whichever you prefer. Markers include Activation/Events, HITS, Disorganization Points, Engaged, Out of Ammo and Out of Command Markers.

3.2.1 Activation Chits

Activation chits are special markers which are used to randomly determine which Wing activates during the Action Phase. They have no other effect in the game. For most games, Activation Chits will be broken into 3 wings for each side: Left, Center and Right. Reactivation chits are markers which allow you to possibly reactivate a formation which has already activated.

3.2.2 Event Chits

Event chits are special events that can take place during a game, see 5.2 for more details.

3.3 Morale Checks

Throughout the game, the rules will call on Combat Units and Leaders to perform a Morale Check (MC). A MC is successful on a result of 5 or higher. A MC may be modified by Die Roll Modifiers (DRM) depending on the context of the MC.

3.4 Disorganization

Throughout the game units suffer Disorganization Points (DP) as a result of failed MCs or combat. Each point of Disorganization halves 1 SP during combat, rounded down. *IE: Unit A has 5 total SP and 3 DP, during combat this unit would have 3 SP to contribute (.5 + .5 + .5 + 2 = 3 rounded down).* Units with a number of DP equal to or greater than their SP are at risk of routing and must pass an MC during Rout Movement. (Example: the unit mentioned above with 5 SP would check morale during the Rout Phase once their DPs equal or exceed 5.)

The number of DP markers is not a hard limit, players may make their own or borrow similar markers from other games. DP markers are cumulative, meaning that 4 DP can be denoted by a unit being marked with both a 3 DP and 1 DP marker.

3.5 Dice Mechanics

You will want to have a handful of ten-sided dice (d10) as it will make playing the game much quicker. Dice will produce an unmodified result of 0-9. Whenever rolling dice, whether in combat or performing a MC, the player must roll a 5 or greater in order to succeed. Die Roll Modifiers (DRM) from various statuses or tactical circumstances modify die results. Rolling higher is always better. In some instances, rolling a 0 or a 9 will have an effect regardless of modifiers.

3.6 Line of Sight

For ranged units to "see" the hex they are targeting, they must have a legal Line of Sight (LOS) to the target hex. A LOS is defined as a straight line of unlimited length between the center of two hexes, starting from the center of the firing hex to the target hex. Unless specified by Exclusive Rules, non-clear terrain always blocks a LOS. Friendly and enemy units do not block a LOS; however, see optional rule **10.1** for an additional mechanic. If traced along a hexside a LOS is considered clear if one hex adjacent to the hexside is clear. A LOS can be traced into non-clear terrain but not through.

A unit at a higher elevation can always see hexes beyond an "intervening hex" on the next descending elevation level but only certain hexes. If the distance (in hexes) from the intervening hex to the target hex is equal to or greater than half of the distance from the firing unit to the target hex, then the target unit is visible.

4.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

- 1. Marker Pull Phase**
 - a. Perform Event Marker instructions if Event Marker is pulled
 - b. Activate appropriate Wing indicated on the Activation Marker.
- 2. Activation Phase**
 - a. Command Check
 - b. Movement
 - c. Identify Engagements
 - d. Perform Combat for all Engagements
 - e. Rout Movement
- 3. Pull Next Activation/Event Marker and repeat until all eligible formations have been activated or End Turn marker is pulled.**
- 4. Victory Check Phase**
- 5. End Turn Phase**

5.0 ACTIVATION PHASE

Activations are at the heart of VSTS. Players pull Markers randomly from a cup (**called the Activation Cup**), and whichever Wing is pulled goes through the steps each detailed in the following chapters. If an Event Marker is pulled, players instead perform the event procedures detailed in the Exclusive Rules immediately. At the start of the game, refer to the scenario instructions to determine which Activation and Event Markers are placed in the Activation Cup at the start of a game.

5.1 Activation Markers

Activation Markers allow players to activate the Wing indicated on the chit itself. Units are grouped into Wing commands led by an associated Leader. When pulled, an Activation Marker is placed to the side and the player begins the sequence of play as detailed in the next chapters with the Wing labeled on the Activation Marker. During the End Turn phase, all Activation Markers are placed back into the cup unless dictated otherwise by Exclusive Rules. Exclusive Rules will also detail any end turn procedures for Event chits if they exist.

5.2 Event Markers

Event Markers are exclusive to individual games in the VSTS series and portray events specific to the topic covered. When pulled, players perform the events as described in the Exclusive Rules. The following event is standard for all games in the VSTS series.

End Turn – Immediately ends the Action Phase for both players and the turn moves directly to the Victory Check Phase. If this event is pulled before at least 1 Wing on both sides has activated, another Marker is pulled from the Activation Cup and the End Turn event chit is placed back into the cup.

6.0 COMMAND

When a Wing is activated, the leader or leaders of that Wing place all units in and adjacent to their hex In Command (**IC**), meaning they are freely allowed to do whatever they please during this Action Phase. Units which are In Command place adjacent units of the same Wing In Command. Units unable to receive Command are considered Out of Command (**OOC**) and are marked with OOC markers. OOC units suffer several penalties as explained below in **6.1**. Units placing one another IC through adjacency are deemed to be in a Chain of Command.

6.1 Out of Command

Units which are OOC must halve their normal MA (round up). Additionally, these units may not move adjacent to enemy units. OOC units have a -1 DRM to all MC made while OOC. Units remain OOC until the next Command Check in which they are able to receive Command. Engaged OOC forces remain OOC regardless of the presence of friendly leaders and cannot benefit from a Leader's MR.

6.2 Reactivation

Wings which have already activated can be Reactivated by pulling a Reactivation Marker. When a Reactivation Marker is pulled, the player chooses an already activated leader to make a MC modified by the Leader's MR. If successful, units eligible to be placed in command may activate while units which are OOC may not activate. If the MC is failed, no units inside of the Wing may activate. Engaged forces belonging to a Reactivated Wing must attack all eligible enemy-occupied hexes regardless of their Command status.

7.0 MOVEMENT

The various Movement Allowances for different units are dictated by the Exclusive Rules for each game or battle; however, Movement Points are used to move units using the same procedure throughout the series. Units spend MP from their MA in order to move into adjacent hexes and change facing. Units may only move into hexes adjacent to their front unless specified as otherwise in the Exclusive Rules. Assuming clear terrain (as most battles are fought on flat clear terrain in VSTS), it costs 1 MP to move into another hex. It costs an additional +1 MP moving up a slope hexside. The Terrain chapter for individual games in the series will list the movement costs of various terrain if non-clear terrain is present. Units may always move at least 1 hex but only units in March Formation (**7.3.2**) may move 1 hex and change facing to an adjacent hexside.

7.1 Movement Bonus Rating

At the start of movement, units in or adjacent to hexes with their relevant Wing Leader add the Leader's MBR to their MA for this Activation. Leaders do not add their MBR to their own MA. This does not affect units which are Engaged or Routed.

7.2 Changing Facing

For most units, changing facing costs 1 MP which allows a unit to rotate its front to face an adjacent hexspine. Phalanx units (which are two hexes long) spend 1 MP to turn their unit one full hex to the right, keeping the right half of the Phalanx unit in its original hex. When turning to the left, the rules are the same except the unit must spend 2 MP in order to turn their facing 1 hex to the left, keeping the left side of the unit in its original hex.

DESIGN NOTE: The reason for these rules is because of what is considered a likely phenomenon in ancient Greek warfare among most classical scholars of the topic, where because each man in the line drifts slightly to the right when trying to stay behind their comrade's shield, the whole formation had a natural tendency to "drift" to the right while moving in formation. Instead of forcing units to move to the right while moving every other hex, I figured this would be more elegant.

7.3 Changing Formation

There are two formations for non-skirmisher units, Deployed and March formations. Deployed units will face a hexspine while units in March Formation face a hexside. A unit must spend their entire MA to change formation. Missile and other light units have their own special Skirmisher formation where all adjacent hexes are considered front hexes. Front, flank and rear hexes are important when calculating modifiers in combat, and units may only move into front-facing hexes.

7.3.1 Deployed Formation

Units in Deployed formation must face a hexspine and are considered ready for contact with the enemy. When Deployed, the 2 hexes to the unit's front (3 in the case of Phalanx) are considered the unit's front hexes. The hexes immediately adjacent to the left and right of the unit are its flank hexes, and the 3 hexes to the back (opposite the front) of the unit are its "rear" hexes. During setup, Deployed formation is considered the default unit formation unless the Exclusive Rules state otherwise.

7.3.2 March Formation

Putting a unit into March Formation allows them to maneuver more easily compared to Deployed, but exposes a unit in combat (attacking units in March formation grants a +3 DRM). Units in March formation may change their facing to one adjacent hex for free whenever spending MP to enter a new hex.

Whenever Phalanx units enter March Formation, players must identify the new front of the unit to determine the unit's front, flank and rear hexes. The front of a Phalanx unit in March Formation must be either its left or right side (use one of the provided March markers to signify the new front of the unit if you need a visual reminder). Non-Phalanx units have one front hex, 4 flank hexes to their sides, and 1 rear hex opposite their front. Phalanx units have 1 front hex, 4 flank hexes to their sides (two on each), and 3 rear hexes to the rear.

7.3.3 Skirmishers

Skirmishing and other light missile units have their own special Skirmish formation which only they can use and they cannot switch formation. Skirmishers must face a hexspine and all their adjacent hexes are considered front hexes. This means that they may move or fire in any direction and need not worry about facing. Additionally, skirmishers can enter non-clear terrain without issues (Exclusive Rules will dictate when terrain can cause issues for non-skirmisher units).

7.3.3.1 Pass Through

Skirmishers have another special ability during movement called Pass Through which allows them to move through hexes occupied by friendly units with no negative effects (except when routing).

7.4 Missile Fire

During the Movement Phase, eligible activated units may spend MP to conduct Missile Fire against enemy units. Units can fire multiple times so long as they have the MP. Units may not combine fire against an enemy. In order to fire at an enemy target, the enemy unit must have a valid LOS to the target. Units cannot fire at targets which are Engaged and Engaged units cannot use Missile Fire.

7.5 Missile Fire Procedure

Eligible units may fire at enemy targets during Movement by spending 2 MP. Players use the Missile Fire Table to determine the number needed for success against an enemy unit within LOS. A modified d10 result equal to or greater than the Target Number will result in a HIT. After getting hit with Ranged Fire, players then resolve the HITs using MCs for each unit as stated in 8.3. Players also check for Rout Movement at this time using the procedure in 9.0.

Missile Fire Table

| <i>Range of Hexes</i> | <i>Target Number</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 8 |

7.5.1 Missile Fire Modifiers

Missile Fire rolls are affected by the following cumulative modifiers:

Flank Fire: +1 DRM if firing into enemy flank.

March Fire: +1 DRM if firing at a unit in March Formation.

Rear Fire: +2 DRM if firing into enemy rear.

Elevation Advantage: +1 DRM for each level of elevation higher than the target hex.

Elevation Disadvantage: -1 DRM for each level of elevation lower than the target hex.

Light Cover: -1 DRM firing into hex terrain classified as light cover.

Heavy Cover: -2 DRM firing into hex terrain classified as heavy cover.

Low Ammo: -3 DRM if firing unit is marked with Low Ammo marker.

7.5.2 Archers

Archers are special missile units that function a little differently than regular missile units, which are assumed to be using slings, javelins, or other light ranged weapons and all Missile Fire Modifiers apply to Archers. Archers can fire at any target within LOS using the following Archer Fire Table:

Archer Fire Table

| <i>Range of Hexes</i> | <i>Target Number</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Not Allowed |
| 2-3 | 5 |
| 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 7 |
| 6 | 8 |

7.5.2.1 Low Ammo Effects

Whenever Archers roll a raw 0 during Missile Fire, the firing unit is automatically unsuccessful, and a Low Ammo Marker is placed on the unit. Units with a Low Ammo marker suffer a -3 DRM during Missile Fire. Low Ammo markers are only removed if on a subsequent Missile Fire attempt the player rolls a 9.

7.6 Resting

A player may choose at the beginning of an activation to rest the activated Wing. Units of that Wing which are not engaged nor adjacent to enemy units all remove 1 DP but their activation is forfeited and

they are ineligible for any reactivations. Reactivated formations may not take a Rest action. Units already Engaged in a Wing which elects to rest must still perform combat. Place a Rest marker on the leader of the Wing taking a Rest action. If a unit is attacked while under Rest orders, they are not allowed to counterattack.

7.7 Engagement

Whenever a unit enters one or more front hexes projected by an enemy unit, those two forces are then considered Engaged. Place an Engagement marker on top of the two engaged units. Engaged units must attack/counterattack enemy units with which they are Engaged during combat.

8.0 COMBAT

Once movement ends, the active player then performs combat in any order they please, so long as several rules are followed, detailed in this chapter:

LAWS OF COMBAT

- i. Attacks and Counterattacks evenly split their SP among enemy units when front-facing more than 1 enemy occupied hex. Any excess SP is assigned to the rightmost front-facing enemy occupied hex.
- ii. All enemy units in front-facing hexes must be attacked/counterattacked unless facing an enemy flank or rear hex (in other words, units which are Engaged must be attacked/counterattacked). Units may allocate SP freely if front-facing enemy occupied rear/flank hexes.
- iii. While the same unit may attack/counterattack multiple times, enemy units may only be attacked/counterattacked once (all eligible attacks/counterattacks must be made against each enemy-occupied hex simultaneously).

8.1 Combat Procedure

The attacking player rolls a number of ten-sided dice equal to the number of SP attacking an enemy unit. For example, if a 5 SP unit is adjacent to the front hexes of 2 enemy units, the 5 SP unit would make two attacks assigning 2 SP against the enemy unit to its left and 3 SP against the enemy unit to its right (see **LAWS OF COMBAT ii** to see why). Defending units suffer HITS during attacks/counterattacks. Following this, defending units then counterattack the attacking units using the same procedure. After all attacks/counterattacks are made, any defending units with HITS must each make a MC. Units which fail their MC take the number of HITS in DP. Whenever rolling dice during combat, a modified result of 5 or greater is considered a HIT. HITS apply to all units in a stack but units make MCs to save against HITS individually.

8.1.1 Rout Before Combat

Any unit which is unable to attack or counterattack because they lack enough SP to target each adjacent unit with at least 1 SP is required to Rout Before Combat (see 9.0). Units adjacent to friendly units which Rout Before Combat suffer a penalty -2 DRM during combat (see 8.2). Any friendly units in the path of retreat must then immediately make an MC with a -2 DRM. See 9.0 for more effects related to Rout.

8.1.2 Retreat Before Combat

After any Rout Before Combat, any currently engaged Skirmisher units may attempt to Retreat Before Combat unless engaged with enemy Skirmishers. Units attempt to Retreat Before Combat by successfully making an MC. If successful, the Skirmisher may retreat a number of hexes up to their MA, otherwise they remain Engaged.

8.2 Combat Modifiers

Before any dice are rolled, the attacking player must calculate any relevant Die Roll Modifiers (**DRM**) applied to all dice rolled for the current attack. The following modifiers are cumulative and apply to both attacks and **counterattacks**:

- Leader stacked with unit making attack: +1 DRM.
- Attacking a Flank hex: +2 DRM
- Attacking a Rear hex: +3 DRM
- Non-Phalanx vs Phalanx: -1 DRM
- Skirmishers vs Non-Skirmishers: -1 DRM
- Elite Unit: +1 DRM (Will be indicated in Exclusive Rules)
- Enemy Skirmishers present in Flank hex: -1 DRM
- Enemy Skirmisher present in Rear hex: -2 DRM
- Friendly Adjacent Unit Routed Before Combat: -2 DRM
- Attacking a unit in March Formation: +3 DRM

Note that units attacked while resting may not counterattack, otherwise all of these modifiers also apply to counterattacks.

8.3 Morale Checks

Morale Checks are performed as a result of successful enemy HITs in combat. Once all attacks and counterattacks are performed, the players roll MCs for each of their units. This roll is modified by the presence of a friendly Leader (regardless of their Wing) by their MR if occupying or adjacent to the hex making the MC. If the check is failed, the unit receives the number of HITs inflicted this turn as DPs. If passed, there is no effect. HITs are removed once all units in a stack have made MCs. MCs are also made during the Rout Movement procedure (see 9.0).

8.4 Leadership Casualties

Leader units can be lost during combat when rolling morale checks during combat. A leader must make a MC before any other units in their hex and may not benefit from their own MR. If passed there is no effect, otherwise the leader is Eliminated and flipped to their Replacement side. If the leader is already Replaced, the Leader unit is removed from the game.

8.4.1 Activating Leaderless Wings

If all available Leaders are eliminated from a wing, the wing is considered Leaderless. Only units which are adjacent to one another are considered In Command, all other units are considered Out of Command.

9.0 ROUT MOVEMENT

During the Rout Movement step units which have accrued DP equal to or greater than their total SP are in danger of Routing and subsequent elimination. Units in danger of Routing must make an MC with the number of DP above their total SP expressed as a negative DRM. If passed, the unit reduces their DP to the number of their total SP -1. If failed, the unit is flipped to its Routed side and the unit must retreat into rear hexes using their MA +2 as their Rout Movement Allowance (**RMA**). For example: A unit with 4 SP has accrued 6 DP and must make a MC with a -2 DRM during the Rout Movement Step. If failed, the unit with 3 MP must retreat into rear hexes using 5 MP; if passed the unit's DP total is reduced to 3.

When performing Rout Movement, units must move towards the unit's rear-facing hexes regardless of units or terrain (except impassible: if forced to rout into or through impassible terrain units are instead eliminated). If a Routing unit is forced to retreat into a hex with a different unit type (other than Skirmishers,) they instead are eliminated. Once finished with Rout Movement the unit reverses their facing towards their rear and face the hexside. During the next Rout Movement Phase, any units which were already routing make a MC with a -4 DRM (only a 9 or above is successful). An adjacent leader can assist with this roll. If failed, the unit will continue to rout towards the edge of the map.

Make a note of any friendly units the routing unit moves through while performing Rout Movement. The units which were routed through must make an MC with a DRM of -2. If this roll is passed there is no effect, otherwise the unit immediately accrues 1 DP; if a raw 0 is rolled the unit instead accrues 2 DP. If a unit accrues an equal or greater number of DP than its SP in this fashion it immediately performs Rout Movement and is Routed. Units that move off map during Rout Movement are considered eliminated.

10.0 OPTIONAL RULES

These rules are not required to play VSTS, though players who do not mind additional die-rolling, chrome or complexity may pick and choose from these rules to tailor their game to their liking. Some of these rules will be tailored toward more realism while others lean more towards gameplay.

10.1 Friendly Fire (Realism)

When targeting an enemy unit while tracing an LOS through a friendly or engaged unit, raw rolls of 0 inflict 2 HITS and misses will inflict 1 HIT on the closest friendly-occupied hex in between the firing unit and its target.

10.2 Command Confusion (Realism)

Units with a DP level equal to or greater than half of a unit's SP cannot be used to continue a Chain of Command via units. While they may be placed In Command by an adjacent unit, they themselves cannot place an adjacent unit In Command.

10.3 Reverse Movement (Gameplay)

Units may move one hex towards their rear facing hexes while maintaining their facing by spending all of their available MP.

10.4 Low Ammo Recovery (Gameplay)

If a unit with a Low Ammo marker (see 7.5.2.1) begins the Command step of an Action Phase inside a hex with or adjacent to their relevant wing Leader, that unit removes the Low Ammo marker. Exclusive rules may specify units must instead be in or adjacent to a Supply Train unit. Supply Trains only exist when included in the counter mix. Units removing Low Ammo markers do not receive a Leader's MBR during the upcoming Movement step. Note that if a unit's Wing Leader has been eliminated the unit may recover ammo from any Leader.

11.0 MARATHON EXCLUSIVE RULES

The following rules are used to explicitly simulate the conditions and circumstances of the battle of Marathon, generally thought to be fought sometime around September 11th, 490 BC (among a number of other dates in 490 BC). Marathon is one of the few battles for which we have decent information both in thanks to Herodotus and archeological finds that have backed up his histories.

11.1 Historical Background

The dominant power of the 5th century BC was the Persian empire which comprised a sizeable portion of the known world. While many middle eastern kingdoms would simply surrender when Persia would show up at their borders demanding earth and water, the Greeks were infamously stubborn, detesting the notion of being beholden to another ethnicity. Even among themselves, the Greeks were fiercely divided between various city states and tribes further up north along the border of the Balkans. This greatly upset the leader of Persia, Darius, who was determined to humiliate the entire continent as opposed to just Athens, Corinth or Sparta.

After the Athenians and Spartans had each thrown Persian envoys into a ravine and well respectively, Darius planned to use the exiled Athenian king Hippias, who after being deposed by the Athenians fled to Persia, in order to attempt to stage a naval invasion close to Athens, using the presence of Hippias to rally Athenians who were still loyal to his rule. In what was likely the largest naval endeavor of the period, Darius sent a commander fairly familiar with the Greeks and their customs, Datis, with a gigantic force of some 25,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, not counting all the sailors and marines arranged as reserve troops whose main responsibility was to defend ships.

The Persian invasion force was led to the plain of Marathon at the direction of the exiled king Hippias primarily for its relatively level geography. Persian forces were trained/experienced in fighting wide open desert warfare which gave cavalry and archers plenty of room to maneuver. The Persian infantry was a mixed contingent of light, medium and heavy forces with a focus on lightly armed and armored skirmishers. Persian cavalry present at Marathon would have functioned as shock troops and the Greeks were wary of getting into an extended open battle with Persian cavalry.

Only the Athenians and their neighbors in Plataea led by well born Athenian Miltiades responded to the Persian invasion. Sparta refused to participate until they were finished with a religious ceremony scheduled to the phasing of the moon (a quick note about the Spartans, unlike the bloodthirsty autocrats they are depicted as in popular culture, were extremely pious, elitist and purposely mysterious). The Athenian marshal forces were not particularly known for their infantry and on paper the situation looked like an absolute nightmare for the Greeks. The only bit of good news was that there was to be no mass uprising to rally support for the former king Hippias.

While skirmishing or ranged forces made up small contingents of Greek forces during this period, most of the infantry was armored. They had no real subdivisions between light, medium or heavy infantry. Athenian forces were homogenous whereas the Persian forces were mobilized from all over the kingdom and relatively unfamiliar to one another. Most importantly, the armor worn by all the Greek forces was an essential technological advantage against the relatively light weaponry of the Persian forces.

The situation on the ground itself was also favorable to the Greeks. For days before the battle started, the two sides faced off in camps opposite one another with the Greeks occupying the high ground. Whereas the Greeks were sitting on internal lines of communications, the Persians did not have an infinite source of supply and could not afford to sit and wait for the Greeks to act, nor could they risk the casualties of a frontal uphill assault.

According to the latest research from Peter Krentz, Persian cavalry had already disembarked at Marathon, whereas most assumed previously that the cavalry was reembarking their ships when the Greeks began their famous charge towards the Persian camp. The difference Krentz points out was that it would have taken time after cavalry disembarked to then prepare the cavalry for action at Marathon. Cavalry during this period, nor many others for that matter, would not have been immediately ready for action upon disembarking a ship in unfamiliar (for the horse) territory. Most men also had to contend with sea sickness as the majority of people in Persia had little to no experience traveling by sea. Again, it would have took time to set up a logistics system for making sure horses were supplied with stirrups, hay, and

whatever other resources they needed. It was during this period that the Greeks would have decided to begin their charge.

After the initial shock of watching the entire Greek contingent run at a brisk pace in armor toward them for several minutes, the Persian archers began to fire at the large oncoming target (note that there is considerable debate about this amongst academics but it makes for a nice narrative). The Greeks could not afford to lose men to ranged fire and would have increased their speed towards the Persians. The Greek contingent then smashed into the Persian line and engaged in shock combat. Initially, while the weapons of the Persian forces were relatively useless and they suffered large casualties, it seemed as though the Persians would hold out regardless on account of their numbers.

While the Greek forces struggled to make progress in the center, their forces on the flanks of the Persian line decisively broke through light infantry assigned to patrol the Persian flanks. Once the Persian forces in the center realized what was happening, they quickly broke and routed towards their ships trying to outrun the flanking Greek forces seeking to encircle and slaughter them. While groups of the Persian infantry made it to the fleeing ships, a large contingent of infantry would be left to be quickly eliminated by pursuing Greek infantry. Herodotus notes that while 192 Athenians and 11 Plataeans died, 6,400 Persians were killed (modern estimates are around 4-5,000) and 7 ships destroyed.

While just having managed a glorious victory against a much larger enemy, the Greek forces had no time to celebrate or rest as they immediately began a forced march back towards Athens in order to prevent the next Persian landing attempt. The Athenians of course were successful and prevented the Persian empire from establishing a beachhead in Greece from which to conquer the rest of the known continent. Had the Athenians failed to repel the Persian landing at Marathon it is a certainty that the entire arc of history would have gone differently.

11.2 Movement Allowances

- Greek Phalanx: 3
- Greek Hoplite: 4
- Greek Skirmishers and Leaders: 5
- Persian Infantry: 4
- Persian Skirmishers & Archers: 5
- Persian Cavalry: 6

11.3 Terrain

Terrain is fairly simple for Marathon. Units may only enter clear hexes, they may not cross river hexsides or enter marsh or city hexes. Units in March formation may move through marsh hexes along roads only. Roads have no other effect on movement.

11.3.1 Coastal Hexes

Persian units in coastal hexes adjacent to ocean hexes suffer a -1 penalty to all morale checks during combat. Design Note: this is because historically the Persians began to panic and falter once they were literally driven to the shore by the Greeks.

11.4 Events

The Spartans Arrive! Event Marker is only used for the What If Scenario (see 12.2). Note that turns can end before any of these Event Markers are pulled:

Persians Disembark: The Persian player pulls 2 random units out of the Persian Ship Cup (See 12.1.1) and places them on any coastal hex adjacent to the printed Persian Ships. If no adjacent hexes are unoccupied Persian units are placed in the nearest open hex. These units cannot activate on this turn but may activate the next time the Persians Disembark marker is pulled. Ship units do not need to trace for Command. The Persians Disembark Event Marker is placed back into the Activation cup at the end of the current turn.

Spartans Arrive!: The Greek player may enter the Spartan units on one of the Roads leading off the edge of the map as if they had just activated the unit. The Spartan units enter in March Formation. The Spartans Arrive! Event Marker is then used as the Spartan activation marker for the remainder of the game.

11.5 Elite Units

Both Persian Hazarabam and all Spartan units are considered Elite Units and receive a +1 DRM in combat.

12.0 SCENARIOS

There are two main scenarios included in Marathon, each of which determine the Event Markers and units that participate in the game. The Spartan Arrive! Event Marker is only used for the What-If scenario (see 12.2).

12.1 Activation Cup Setup (Historical)

Place the following markers in the activation cup at the start of the game:

- Persian Left Activation Marker
- Persian Center Activation Marker
- Persian Right Activation Marker
- Persians Disembark
- End Turn Event Marker
- Greek Left Activation Marker
- Greek Center Activation Marker
- Greek Right Activation Marker
- Greek Reactivation Marker

12.1.1 Unit Setup

Printed on the map are the relative camps for each of the forces. Greek units set up with their front facing the Persian camp and Persian units set up facing the Greek camp. All units of the Greek Center setup on the hill with the camp, with units of the left and right formations setting up to the left and right of the center, respectively. Greek units may not set up further east than the hill with the Greek camp (**hexrow 04XX**). Persian units can setup anywhere east of **hexrow 2114**, if you wish to set them up historically simply place the center formation in the center (right near the middle Persian Camp), with the left formation to its left and the right formation to its right. All Persian units with the Wing designation S should be placed into a separate cup called the Persian Ship Cup. These units may enter on any coastal hex adjacent to the printed ships.

12.1.2 Victory Conditions

The Greek side wins a major automatic victory if they occupy all Persian Camp hexes printed on the map within 12 turns. If at the end of 12 turns the camp hexes are not all occupied players total the number of Routed/Eliminated SP on each side, the player with the lower total winning a marginal victory. If Datis or Miltiades and their replacements are eliminated, it results in a major automatic victory for either side.

12.2 What-If Scenario

The setup and victory conditions for this scenario are the exact same as the Historical setup except the players roll a d10 at the start of each turn, if this roll results in a 9, the *Spartans Arrive!* marker is placed into the Activation Cup.

13.0 CREDITS

Game Design

Developer

Counters & Box Art

Map

Manual Formatting

Manual Editing

Special thanks to Ryszard Tokarczuk for doing a deep dive on playtesting.

Thanks to Eric Lee Smith for Battle Hymn which was the inspiration for this series.

Ray Weiss

Matt Ward

Iván Cáceres

Ilya Kudriashov

Ryan Heilman

Dave Shaw

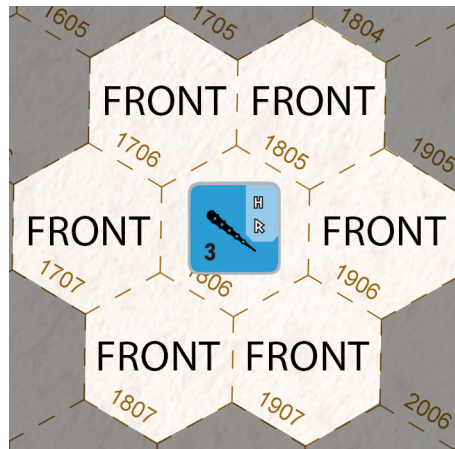
14.0 Appendix



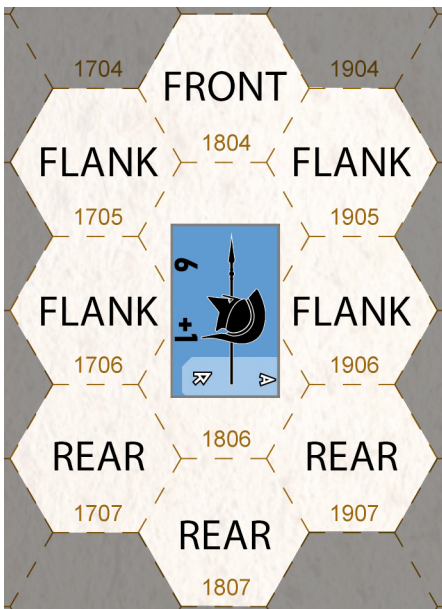
Hoplite Marching



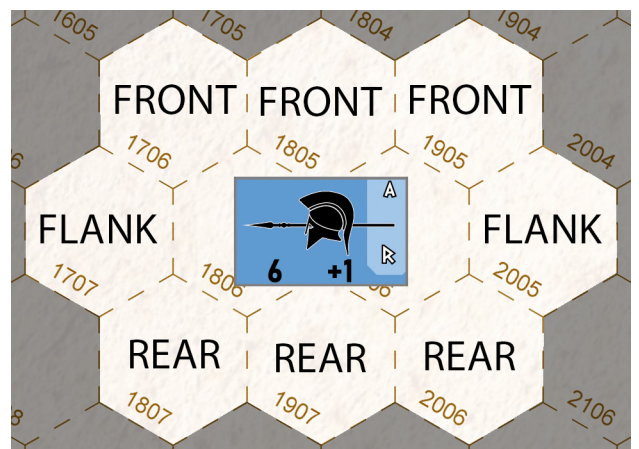
Hoplite Deployed



Skirmisher Deployed



Phalanx Marching



Phalanx Deployed