



LION RAMPANT

Medieval Wargaming Rules

Daniel Mersey

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LION RAMPANT

MEDIEVAL WARGAMING RULES



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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4	5. SAMPLE RETINUES	58
2. BATTLE RULES	5	The British Isles	59
Setting up a Game	5	Western Europe	59
Commanding Your Retinue	6	Eastern Europe	60
Important Rules Conventions	7	The Middle East & Spain	60
Understanding Unit Profiles	8	Hollywood Legends	62
Unit Cohesion	9	Old-School Fantasy	62
Terrain	9	LION RAMPANT REFERENCE SHEET	63
Leaders	11	LION RAMPANT ROSTER	64
What Happens During Each Turn	12		
Activating Your Units	13		
Moving	17		
Shooting	18		
Attacking	21		
Testing Courage	24		
Ending the Game	27		
3. MUSTERING YOUR RETINUE	28		
Mounted Units	30		
Foot Units	34		
Missile Units	38		
4. SCENARIOS	41		
Scenario Basics	42		
Scenario A: Bloodbath	47		
Scenario B: Defending the Indefensible	47		
Scenario C: The Fugitive	48		
Scenario D: A Gentle Stroll	49		
Scenario E: Hold on Tight	49		
Scenario F: Sausages With Mustard	50		
Scenario G: The Convoy	50		
Scenario H: The Messenger	51		
Scenario I: A Taxing Afternoon	52		
Scenario J: Meeting the Neighbours	54		
Scenario K: Hammer and Anvil	55		
Scenario L: Bloodfeud	56		
Linking Your Games Together	57		

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Lion Rampant*, a set of simple miniature wargaming rules designed for fighting historical or Hollywood battles in the medieval period, from the rise of the Normans to the Hundred Years' War and beyond.

This period is well suited to retinue-sized games involving a few dozen models per side as it was a time of anarchy, feuds, and raiding. Although full-sized battles took place, wars were often ended by siege or diplomacy but small, ferocious actions were fought many times over throughout Europe and the Middle East. *Lion Rampant* also embraces bravehearts in kilts, men in green tights, do-gooders at round tables, and (so long as you whisper it quietly) 1970s-style fantasy wargaming. At this point, I hold my hands up and admit that I've been just as influenced by movies and fiction as I have reference books.

Alongside the straightforward battle rules, *Lion Rampant* presents a varied selection of scenarios and a Boasting system allowing players scope for choosing their own victory conditions. This means that you can concentrate on playing the scenario and enjoying yourself without getting bogged down in rules. The rules are model scale-neutral, although many gamers choose 28mm or 20mm armies; 15mm is more cost-effective but less heraldry-friendly.

Lion Rampant is a medieval-themed battle game rather than a detailed and scholarly simulation of combat in a specific century; I favour abstraction and stylization to allow quick and streamlined play, rather than rules that take into account the different types of arrowhead available. That said, good tactics will prevail and the scenarios prevent players from engaging in an arms race to find out who can paint 'the mostest knights the fastest'.

Gameplay rewards using your units in the correct tactical way: knights are great at charging down enemies, but less useful for guarding convoys; spearmen are jacks of all trades and masters of none; and archers are to be feared at distance but cut down if you can get close enough. Battlefield confusion and chaos means that you might not get to use every one of your units in every turn of the game, so start thinking about your unit's priorities during the game even before you've set the table up.

Removal of models as casualties doesn't necessarily reflect sudden and violent death (although if you're that way inclined...): some warriors run away, others are wounded, and the rest are killed. Model removal essentially tracks a unit's morale and current fighting ability rather than anything more literal: whether a unit is above or below half strength is important in the game.

My design goals for *Lion Rampant* tell you how I designed the rules and explain why they work as they do:

- Games about knights should be *fun*. The emphasis is on a playable medieval-themed game rather than an over-detailed simulation of medieval warfare.
- Use no unusual dice, cards, or supplements... make it *accessible* for gamers new to the hobby.
- Keep the rules *simple*, streamlined and abstracted where appropriate: don't make players continually thumb through the rulebook.
- *Quick play* and minimal record keeping to allow multiple games in a session.
- Gain *period feel* by differing profiles for troops; avoid complex core rules.
- Think small-scale combat: reflect *skirmish* warfare not huge set-piece battles.
- Let scenarios drive the game and make the victory conditions interesting and feel like a *narrative story*. Give players extra goals in each scenario to allow different ways to win.
- Offer *malleable* army selection: no hard and fast army lists.



- Embrace medieval *caricatures*: knights should be headstrong, spearmen resolute, tribesmen fierce, and light cavalry agile. Performance is abstracted: make sure units ‘feel’ right.
- Create a medieval miniature wargame that’s an excuse to push some *colourfully painted models* around the table.

My overall goal was to design a medieval miniatures game that is easy to learn, makes you think about how best to use your resources, and provides entertainment as you do so: I hope you find *Lion Rampant* achieves this. Roll sixes and enjoy!

Oh the glamour... Mounted Men-at-Arms swan about like they own the place (which they do). Crusader Miniatures from the author's collection. (Henry Hyde)

2. BATTLE RULES

SETTING UP A GAME

To play a game of *Lion Rampant* you’ll need to read through this section on Battle Rules first, and keep the book handy through your first few games. Most players will be familiar with the basics after a couple of games. To play, you’ll need to bring together the following:

- This book (of course)
- A list of unit profiles (there’s a blank one included at the end of the book)
- A friendly opponent (although you may make your own rules for play solo or playing with larger groups)
- An army of medieval miniatures for each player (the section on Mustering Your Retinue gives more detail on this, but you’ll usually field around 40–60 models in the standard game)