

AXIS & ALLIES TOURNAMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

(by Dave Jensen & Greg Smorey)

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

Tournaments are a great way to test your skills against other Axis & Allies players but it's definitely a different experience than playing at home with friends for hours upon hours. I worked with Greg Smorey ([SmoreySwamp](#)), who has been organizing Axis & Allies tournaments for 20+ years, to come up with this Tournament Survival Guide.

Have Fun

Your primary motivation for entering a tournament should be to have fun playing any Axis & Allies game. Stressing about bad dice or proving that you're the best player in the world will just distract you from meeting new and interesting players. If the dice are treating you badly, you can't do anything about it so relax, remember this is just a game and who knows what the will happen next.

Be Courteous

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

If you are playing in any Miniatures sealed event, please be courteous regarding the event. If you register for any event, please play in that event. Don't just come, get your miniatures and then leave.

Tournament Play is Not the Same

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

Different People Play Differently

Not everybody plays the way you do so be open minded and flexible. Some people, like Dave, like to use poker chips for money while others like to

write it down. Some like to use small dice to indicate how much movement each aircraft has remaining or has already moved. Others like to keep track of income on the chart; others like to quickly count it up at the end of the turn. A few people have a color coded dice scheme so that they only have to throw dice once per battle round. If you don't understand the color scheme, then use a few dice to create a key. If you don't want to use their methodology when you roll your dice, then inform your opponent of that.

Play Quickly

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

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

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

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

Prepare Before the Tournament

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

If you can pre-determine opening moves for both the Axis and the Allies, do it. You can find **(Over)** tournament rules beforehand at: [SmoreySwamp AA Rules Page](#): or at the AAHQ during the CON.

Finding a teammate in advance of the tournament is also a good idea. Not only is it a good idea from the standpoint of collaboration on decisions, which still need to be made quickly, but you also have help with logistics like being able to leave the table to get food, drink or going to the restroom. But it is not mandatory. If you don't have a partner and need one, there will be plenty of great players at the CON looking for the same...

Etiquette

Forgetting something. If at any point of the game you forget a move, as long as the other player has not started moving pieces or on their turn, tournament etiquette is to go ahead and move the piece. If it is after, tell the judges.

If you have a complaint or concern, come ask the judges and judges are the final arbiter on the rules. You may think you know the rules backwards and forwards but the organizers collectively know them better.

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

The Dreaded Dice

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

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

Don't blame the dice if you lose. Everybody complains a little about bad dice rolls, it's part of Axis & Allies world, but in the end don't go around saying I lost because of dice. It just looks bad and you look like a sore loser. Furthermore, if the dice really did appear to be a factor in your loss, then you might want to consider a strategy that reduces the possibility of that happening in the future. Regardless, save that discussion for post-game chat with your opponents.

Big Fish in a Big Pond

So you're the best player in your group. The first time you go to a regional game CON and enter a tournament, you may not be the best player anymore. There are a lot of great Axis & Allies players out there and they may have different

strategies that you've never experienced. Just be prepared and don't be upset if you lose, it can happen.

Little Fish in a Big Pond

If you're a beginner, don't be afraid to enter a tournament. You might lose on the first round or you might get lucky but you will definitely learn something new about how to play Axis & Allies. The only thing that you will need to know to enter a tournament is a strong knowledge of the rules of the game. At the end of the match, consider asking your opponent for advice on how to play better next time. We truly believe that the Axis & Allies community of players is one of the best and friendliest in all of gaming!

Event Tickets & Starting Times

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

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

And last, remember, people's schedules change like the wind at GEN CON. One moment, an event is sold out at the registration booth, and then when you get to the AAHQ, you find you are the only one that has shown up for the event. This does happen. The AAHQ will always give any event a 15 minute window for other players to show up and play in the event. If, unfortunately, no one else shows up and the event becomes cancelled, Greg will sign the back of your ticket and you can get reimbursed at ticket registration for a full refund of your event ticket cost. The AAHQ will NEVER nor are they permitted to give cash back in return for any cancelled events.

Need Generics

If you need Generics for any event & you don't want to wait in the long line @ the registration, don't fret, someone else, (beside the AAHQ), has generic tickets that you can buy!

Last

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

Dave Jensen
Creator of
[Axis & Allies.org](#)



Gregory J. Smorey - EO/GM
SmoreySwamp AA Gamers
[headlesshorseman2.com](#)