

BATTLE REPORT

Chronomancer

THE AWFUL TRUTH

The room was brightly lit, a bit too brightly for most humans. Here amid the Chronomancers tower Albinar Ran studied his prisoner carefully. After hours of raging against its bonds and the accursed lights no doubt burning its lidless eyes, the great fiend had slumped down into an exhausted torpor. No doubt the days of prodding and experimentation had helped reduce its infernal resiliency as well. He knew its stamina could not last forever.

"What secrets you must hold, trapped beneath that mouth plate." The Chronomancer thought aloud.

He had been assigned to escort the supply train through the Lowridge Highlands, across the Valkin River to the Garrison at Helmsford, a simple enough assignment were it not for the Devout besieging Helmsford at the time. His retinue would serve as relief and resupply to the beleaguered garrison who had been suffering hard under the Devout attack. Their carriages and wagons rode for days, resting only briefly before setting out again. Time, the Chronomancer knew, would not work against them.

For the young Chronomancer this had been a dream come true. He had studied hard for his many years of training, been tested by the Council of Twelve and passed and had served as one of Cassian Moladi's apprentices for five full winters. His time as a Chronomancer had been exciting and mysterious all at once. The study of the Great Weave was all he could think about, often to the chagrin of his masters who cautioned against seeking too much knowledge too quickly.

"What secrets shall you share with me?" he thought as he looked at the barely alive Shadow Stalker.

The battle at Helmsford had been decisive, their convoy reaching its walls during their darkest times. Their knights, fresh from their ride broke the siege lines of the Devout and sent them scattering. Their victory would have been flawless had it not been for this very fiend.

There amid the chaos of the battle the Shadow Stalker emerged and slew Sir Davit Loran, a Repulsar Knight and friend to Albinar. He watched painfully as the mortally wounded Davit collapsed weakly in his arms and gasped out his desire to be avenged. The knights' managed to hold off the skulking fiend long enough for Albinar to lay Davit down and summon up his power. Killing this fiend

was too easy; he would make it pay. He would learn its secrets.

Drawing on his powers the young Chronomancer froze the fiend in place where the knights could subdue it. It had taken all of his commanding ability to keep his men from killing the fiend that had dropped their leader. None-the-less he managed to do so and the fiend was captured and not killed. With Helmsford resupplied, Albinar was anxious to take his charge back to Tower Misanthis where it could be studied. He sent word ahead to his Master Cassian that they had obtained a live specimen and that they would be returning with it directly.

It was no small feat that a Shadow Stalker had been actually taken prisoner. To his knowledge such a thing had not been done before. He was proud and his men were proud. Davit's death would not be in vain. In fact, Davit's death could help to disprove an abhorrent story told to him winters earlier by an Elven Commander from the House of Helios that he had fought along side.

"Shadow Stalkers are an abomination, a tortured soul" he could remember the Commander saying in that dispassionate Elven way. "Unlike the other servants of the Dark One who for reasons petty chose to serve his cause, the Shadow Stalker is a traitor, a Firstborn Knight who, in dire peril, forsook his pledge to the One King and offered his arm to the Devout's Dark Master. He is the lowest of creatures and is punished to never be able to renounce his new oath by having his mouth sealed. He may never shirk from the evil he now does as his eyelids are removed. Pity it not for it is a traitor to your kind and the lowest form of villainy."

That story had bothered Albinar for many winters. Yes, the Dark One had ways of seducing many Firstborn to his evil cause, but to cast aspersions on the integrity of a Firstborn Knight was too much for him to bear. The smug indifference the Elven Commander had shown was palpable, though now he he was surprised he could not even remember his name. He hated the Elf Commander from that point forward and shed no tears when, as the tide of battle turned in their favor, he found himself stuck in time and beset by Dusk Realm Warriors, another unfortunate casualty of the war at Belois. That story had burned at Albinar since that day. Now, amid the tools of his art he would have his answers and that bastard of a Commander could eternally choke on his aspersions.

The Shadow Stalker hung limply on the great disc that was the Anthuse, a device of ancient design and great power. Here he would shed the veils of time and glimpse at the truth that spawned such a fell beast. The ritual had been exhaustive, but images of Davit and the Elven Commander spurned him on through the laborious process. He was now ready for the final spell.

Master Cassian entered the room as Albinar went through the final preparations. He was an older man of some years who still managed to appear vital and strong. Such were the benefits of mastering time.

"You have proceeded in this thing I see Albinar," he said calmly, "I thought I was clear that we could learn nothing from this beast. It is simply an animal trained to walk as a man."

"Perhaps Master Cassian, but I have my reasons. When the last veils of time are removed I will be able to see for certain the power that has created this monstrosity and know its origins. There, in the fullness of time it will tell me what I need to know."

With that Albinar incanted the ancient verse and activated the Anthuse. There, spinning on the great wheel the years seems to meld away and the beast began to transform. Leathery hide began to flicker with human flesh and the repulsive appearance of the creature began to resemble more of a human as the spell wore on. Cassian and Albinar peered closely as time dropped away and the being bound to the Anthuse was a fiend no longer but a human.

Albinar reeled. The damned Elf was right! The human wore the regalia of a nobleman, a servant to the One King. How could this be? The pain was more severe now and Albinar quickly realized it was not the stress from the spell but something more real. The Shadow Stalker again took on its vile appearance as the spell was released. Albinar, clutching his back found only a bloody mess to his touch.

There, two feet back Cassian stood with a drawn and bloodied dagger, the poison mixing obscenely with his blood. He could not concentrate as the poison had worked too quickly.

"Master why?" he uttered before his throat seized up with blood and the ground rose to meet him.

"Because there are simply some truths not meant to be shared, some realities we must never admit to."

Cassian leaned over the young Chronomancer brushing the hair from his eyes. On the Anthuse the Shadow Stalker did not move. While it betrayed no signs of wakefulness Cassian knew it was listening. With a gesture

the bonds slid away from the center of the circle drawing the fiend up to its full size.

He leaned over his former charge and locked eyes with him. "You were a bright student Albinar and your death will bring a new truth. You will serve the One King better next time."

Cassian moved to the Shadow Stalker and gestured again. The plate sealing its mouth glowed and strained against its flesh. If it could look worried this was as close as it could get. Cassian smiled.

"The secrets this creature holds are not for you my young apprentice." Cassian said as he intoned his powers and reached through time to loosen the plating. "What has your Master planned?" he questioned.

As the mouth plate tore free a cloud of blackness and flies filled the room. Cassian was consumed by the torrent of death and amid the screams of the Chronomancer a faint and distant laugh could be heard.

"I plan for you to join me in Hell" was what could be heard amid the screams.

The Shadow Stalker would never renounce its oath to the Dark One; in fact it would bring others to his Master who wished to hear his vile oath. As the Shadow Stalker decomposed, it's disgorged trap abating, young Albinar laid silent, a smile upon his lifeless face.

by G. Thantos

"But I thought this was supposed to be a battle report?" I can hear it before you say it faithful readers. This is a battle report. Or more accurately, it will be one with just the turn of a page.

We decided to base our first battle report of the second edition of Chronopia on a piece of fiction sent to us by Thom Talamini at Excelsior Entertainment.

After reading the story you've probably already figured out that we can't very well do a report representing the battle that took place that lead to the capture of the Shadow Stalker. What if the Firstborn were not able to catch it? You would know at least part of the outcome of the battle, if not all of it, before it even took place on the table and even if the outcome matched the story it would seem at least a little bit contrived.

So, what we've done is work up a plausible scenario to take place after the events in the story.

The Shadow Stalker was also a conduit for information as well as a trap. An Arch-Necromancer had been in contact with it the entire time and not only succeeded in killing Cassian, but also probed his mind for weak locations in

Firstborn defenses. Several Devout strike teams would be sent out to test various points of defense in preparation for an all out invasion.



The Devout

I decided to go with something completely new, new to me anyway, for a Devout army. I've played Devout against Chris for some time and figure that he'd expect me to go with my usual plodding army of lots of Risen backed up by a few demons and overwhelm him with sheer numbers once the bulk of my force finally got into contact. Instead I'll be trying a fast attack army with hopes of getting in quickly with some shock troops and then backing them up with some foot troops. I have a feeling that this will work really well or very poorly. I don't see much middle ground here, but what the heck.

The first part of my fast attack army will be made up of two warbands and an Individual. The warbands will come from the ranks of the Demon Wings, 4 strong, and Blood Hunters, 4 plus a leader, and the Individual will be my personal favorite of the Devout army, the Soul Flayer. That's 705 of my 1000 points already soaked up. I added a full warband (4 modes) of Dusk Realm Warriors. At this point I have to decide to go without something. It could be a spell-caster, missile weapon troops (even though the Blood Hunters can pitch their javelins they are not counted as a Missile Weapon Warband) or another warband. In the end I chose to eschew all of those options and went with another Soul Flayer (Yes, I do have two models) and came out to a total of 994 points.

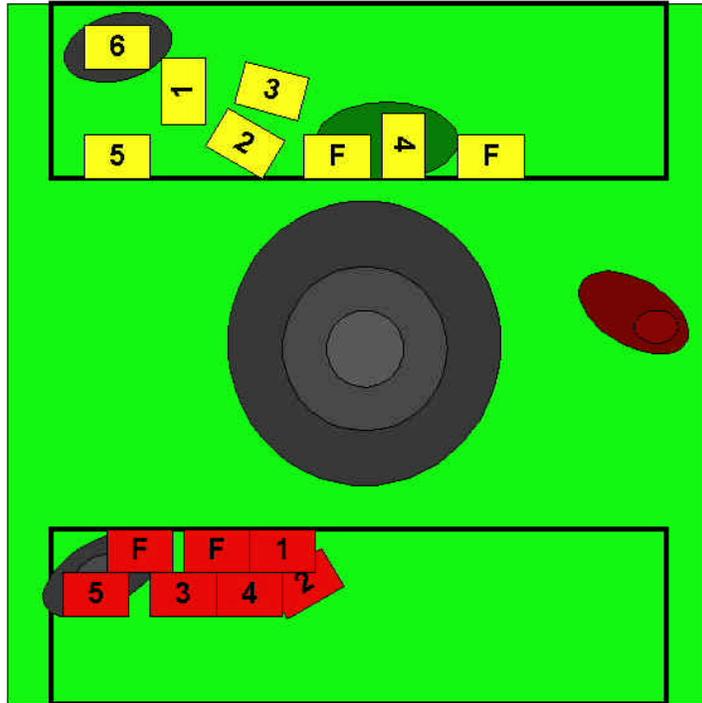
I expect Chris to lose control of his bowels at the sight of two Soul Flayers, which would be worth losing the game badly if that's how things go. I really don't expect him to see me using this kind of army with the Devout so it should be a pleasant surprise for at least one of us.

The Firstborn

I have been eagerly waiting for the new edition of Chronopia, and when Mark asked me to participate in this battle report the question was an immediate yes. 1000 points on the nose was chosen to be the army size. I was eager to take advantage of some of the new rules. The first rule being that the standard bearers could all take magical standards and standard bearers give you the added benefit of extending your command radius by an inch. This would have to wait as I picked the characters for my army first. My first selection was the (almost) compulsory Chronomancer. I originally left him free of spells until I got to my last 100 points spending 85 points. The Repulsar Knight was my immediate second choice. Besides being a bad man in his own right he enhances multiple troops within command, but his ability to cause fear will be wasted given mark's army. This choice brought me to 177 points spent. One more character to go and I can start on my squads. In the last editions chariots were very weak things. The ability to toss a mere swamp goblin in front of it and stop it while the riders and horse hack it to pieces relegated many a chariot to the shelf. Not so now, the Firstborn chariot has trample and a HUGE base to use it with. Moving onto the squads I had 731 points left to spend. My first squad was the ever-flexible squad of swordsmen. Wanting them to be able to absorb a decent amount of damage and still be viable, I made this a large squad. Seven Swordsmen, a leader, a Greatswordman, and a standard bearer put me back another 225 points. In large squads the standard bearer is very important as in the new edition the standard bearer increases your command radius by an inch. This helps you spread out your troops and not let them clump up as much. The Macemen in the last edition were largely ignored, but they were polished up and improved in Chronopia second ed. with the addition of the group attack ability. Another large squad was chosen to take advantage of their group attack, and six Macemen, a leader, a Greatmaceman, and a standard bearer were purchased for 230 points. With enough points for one more squad and spells I languished over the choice between archers and Crossbowmen, and saw the Crossbowmen's ability to shoot their crossbows in hand to hand. Ummm....yes please!! Six of these suckers and a leader cost a hefty 234 points. Off to choosing spells I picked the ever popular accelerate and setback. My goal was to accelerate the Crossbowmen or the chariot, and set back any big critter that Mark had up his sleeve. With ten points left I chose the standard of striking for the swordsmen. 1000 points on the dot. As far as strategy goes I plan on shooting the devout troops that actually accept arrows in the chest, and the trample over those things that are immune to missile fire. Big stuff can hopefully be setback while I deal with the rest of the army, and accelerated Macemen surrounding it should tear it down.

We started the game with a completely blank game table, devoid of any terrain. I won the first roll and dropped a large hill into the center of the board. We then alternated placement until the rather sparse set up you see to the right was complete. Each deployment zone contained a smaller hill and the North DZ also had a small wooded area. The East end of the board had a medium-sized rock formation.

Next came deployment of Unit Cards. They have been numbered on the map so you can see how deployment played out. Of course, we only saw the backs of the cards and did not know what each other put down until it was revealed.

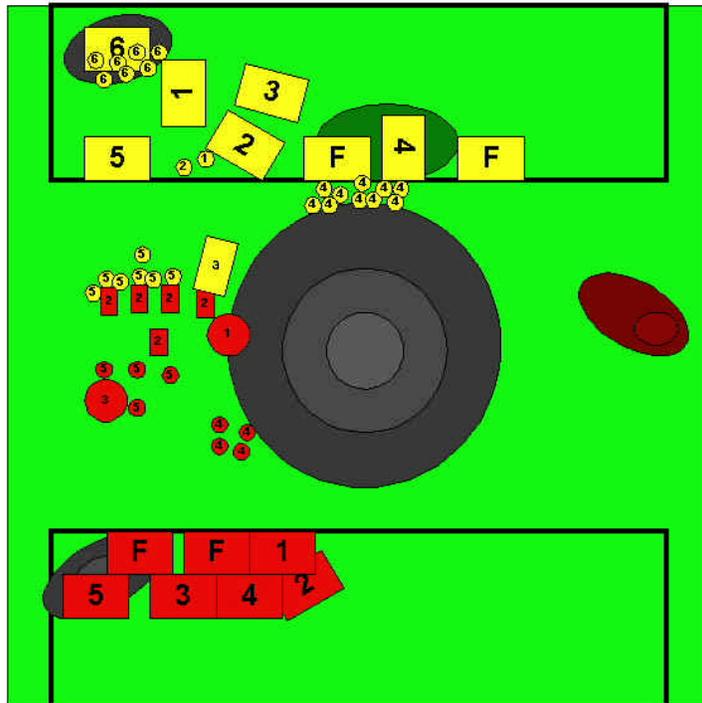


DEPLOYMENT

My plan was to concentrate all of my forces down one side of the table and kill whatever enemies happened to get in the way. From the looks of how the cards were deployed, remember we did not know what was under each other's cards yet, I figured that Chris would have to shift at least part of his army to meet my oncoming wall of demonic flesh. My running lane was pretty open, which would mean less maneuvering would be needed, but it also opens me up to more potential missile fire.

Turn 1 began with me winning the Initiative roll and opted to have Chris go first. The following is the order of our activations and you can take a look to the right for the map at the end of turn 1. We left the cards on the table to mark starting positions and for reference. The circles and rectangles represent the figures after they have been activated for the first time. If, after the end of turn 1,

you no longer see a circle or rectangle 'model marker' on the map it's because the model in question is dead, dead, deadsky.



END OF TURN 1

FIRSTBORN ROSTER

1. Chronomancer
2. Repulsar Knight
3. War Chariot
4. Swordsmen (7 + Standard with Standard of Striking + Leader + Great Swordsman)
5. Macemen (6 + Leader + Great Maceman)
6. Crossbowmen (6 + Leader)
- F. False Lead

DEVOUT ROSTER

1. Soulflyer
2. Blood Hunters (4 + Leader)
3. Soulflyer
4. Dusk Realm Warriors (4)
5. Demon Wings (4)
- F. False Lead

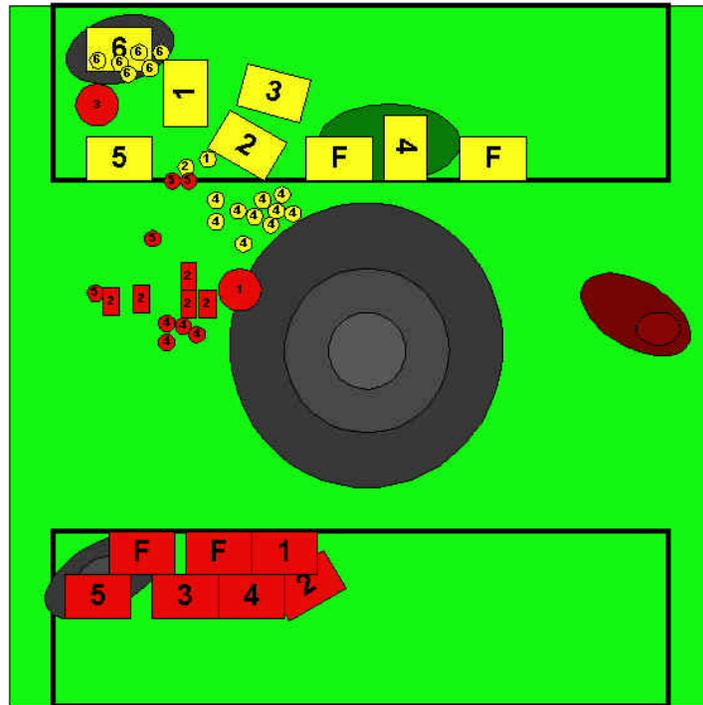
- Firstborn: False Lead
- Devout: False Lead
- Firstborn: Repulsar Knight
- Devout: Dusk Realm Warriors
- Firstborn: Crossbowmen (Fired at Dusk Realm Warrior)
- Devout: Blood Hunters
- Firstborn: Macemen (Charged Blood Hunters and caused 1 wound)
- Devout: Demon Wings
- Firstborn: Chronomancer (Concentrated and tried to 'Set Back' the Demon Wings but failed)
- Devout: Soulflyer
- Firstborn: Swordsmen
- Devout: Second Soulflyer
- Firstborn: False Lead
- Devout: False Lead
- Firstborn: War Chariot (Charged Blood Hunter and caused 1 wound)

At the end of turn 1 I had a very good feeling for the battle. I was able to make a rather large advance on the table with significant support for my big gurlies, the Soulflayers. Unsupported they have a tendency to get pulled down by mobs of enemy troops, but I have a good feeling about their current position.

Once again, I won the Initiative roll and went right to work. The more centrally located Soulflayer screeched at the Blood Hunters to follow her into combat and the War Chariot was broken into splintered wood and twisted metal. Horse, it's what's for dinner! My Soulflayer moving up caused several Dread tests, but the Firstborn soldiers stood their ground. The Blood Hunters also did a fine job on the Firstborn Macemen, leaving just a few standing. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on your point of view, the Macemen passed their Leadership test and did not panic. Besides foaming at the mouth at the major destruction that just took place Chris responded by using his Chronomancer to 'Accelerate' his Firstborn Crossbowmen in the hopes of shooting lots of small pointed sticks into my beasties.

Next, my Demon Wings swooped in and helped to finish off the remaining Firstborn Macemen and one even managed to cause a wound to the Repulsar Knight. The Knight must have been mighty pissed off because he promptly fumbled and stood there impotently.

Big Nasty Dominatrix #2 (aka the other Soulflayer) swept down by the Crossbowmen and scared the bejezzus out of them! They promptly failed their



END OF TURN 2

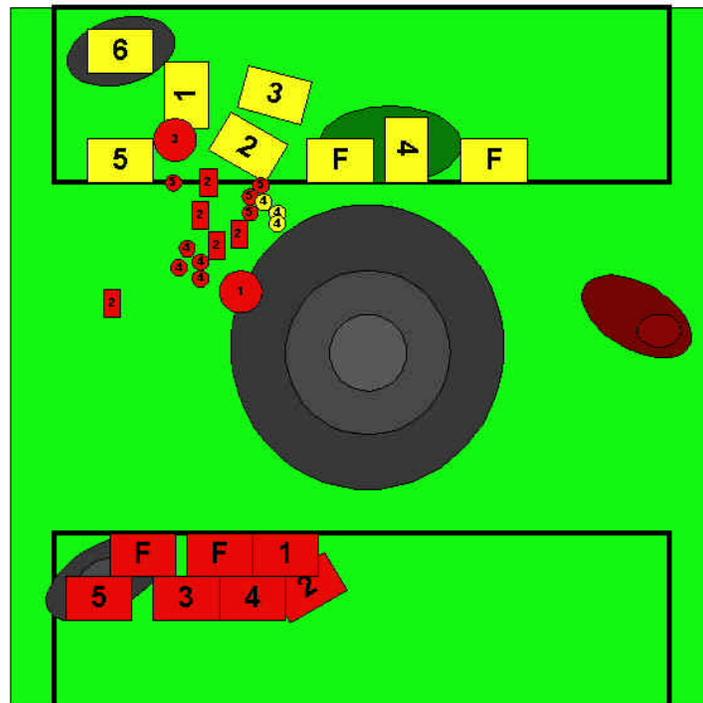
Leadership test for Dread and a proceeded to soil their pants. She also tore the head off of one of them and pitched it towards his mates. The Crossbowmen tried to shower her with bolts, but their shaky hands betrayed them and she just roared at their attempts.

The turn ended with the Dusk Realm Demons moving towards the fray that was moving further away from them. The battle line kept pushing North as more of the Firstborn died. The Firstborn Swordsmen ran towards the line in an attempt to step the tide of evil.

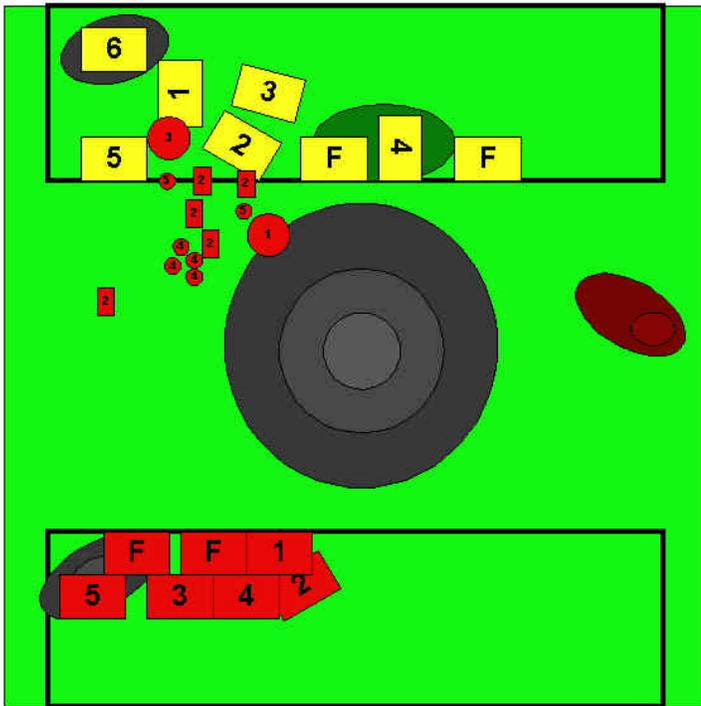
That turn, the torture just did not stop. My troops could do no wrong. Their reason to live was to kill and man were they doing it well. The battlefield must have looked like the floor of a slaughterhouse. The only thing missing were the flies, but they hadn't had a chance to get here yet.

Turn 3 started in pretty much the same fashion as the previous one with me winning Initiative and wading in deeper with the Soulflayer and Blood Hunters. Swordsmen die in droves and while the Chronomancer tried a valiant last stand by interrupting the Devout (he managed to cause a wound on one Blood Hunter) he was also cut down.

The Crossbowmen again tried to shoot at the rampaging Soulflayer, but to no avail. She responded by spiting gouts of Bale Fire on to them and watching five of them die in burning green flames. The remaining one was cut down by her mighty Bone Cleavers and then she got the Repulsar Knight in her



END OF TURN 3



END OF TURN 4

sights and went over to help ruin his day. The final standing warband of Firstborn, the Swordsmen, fought with the Blood Hunters and managed to pull one down and the Demon Wings assisted the Soulflayer by finishing off the Repulsar Knight and killing the Swordsman that was carrying the Firstborn Standard. It was quickly stained with mud, blood, and gore. Again, bringing up the rear were the Dusk Realm Demons, doubtful that they would be able to cleave man-flesh this day.

As you can see by the map turn 4 was really nothing more than mopping up. Chris did manage to kill off two of the Demon Wings before the rest of his army was driven into the ground.

The Devout Rejoice

Ouch! Man that was one royally brutal beating. My flying wedge worked as planned, but things could have turned out differently. I think that Chris suffered from four things in this battle.

- 2) Having to re-learn Chronopia 2. Things don't always work the same in this edition as they did before. I think that Chris learned some hard lessons and I think that he will be back in his old winning form soon.
- 3) Playing an unfamiliar army. This was the first time that Chris took the field with the Firstborn and it showed. Again, I think that experience is the best teacher and we've already talked about the better use of some of the Firstborn units.

- 3) Tactical Mistakes. There was one that really stood out in my mind. Accelerating the Crossbowmen to make up for their somewhat low ROF instead of giving the War Chariot one more action which could have been used to dig deep into my line via trample. I figure that it would have done some good damage, but it would have been out there on its own without any support and it's quite likely that it still would have died right around when it did.

- 1) Bad dice. Ok, nobody has control over this, but I had much better than average die rolls and Chris just couldn't catch a break. Having his Repulsar Knight fumble didn't help matters either and Dread is just great all day long.

I also think that using a completely different army from what Chris is used to seeing from me with Devout helped my cause tremendously. Expecting a slow, ponderous mass of skeletons and being confronted with what is essentially a fast-attack cavalry army is enough to make you want to puke. I really like the new deployment system that uses the unit cards. It definitely adds an element of uncertainty to the game. It also ensures that the first turn of the game will likely be the longest as you'll have to deploy your models after the cards are flipped.

The Lamentation of the Firstborn

Ouch that hurt. I haven't been old schooled like that in about as long as I can remember. Let's take a look at my mistakes and try to salvage some learning from this. First off for those of us who were big fans of the last edition of Chronopia, enough has changed in the game points wise and rules wise that we need to play a few games to learn the strategies that work now. I separated my swordsmen from the rest of my army and it simply took them much too long to get into the fight and by that time it was over. I should have held off on that initial charge of the chariot. Tossing it out there was a gamble that I lost. Missile fire less powerful in this edition and missile troops do not rule the game like they used to. My deployment on the hill put them so far back that they could not hit squat. The Chronomancer has been toned down a lot by taking away the ability to give orders when he interrupts a turn. As for Mark's army list all I can say is ouch. Two Soulflayers are rough. In tandem they can fly throughout the battlefield yelling, "Say my name!". This edition heavily favors the mobile armies. Fast troops become faster with the running rule, and armies with squads of mounted troops can run circles around the footsloggers. I also found that big squads are generally not as effective as two smaller squads. In hindsight I would have chosen two squads of swordsmen and one squad of macemen. Oh well, hats off to Mark on such a rough army list. It truly showed his devotion to the corrupting influence of the devout.

KICKED ANY UNDEAD ASS LATELY?



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