Strategic Warlord

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**Based on the Legend of the Five Rings
Strategic Rules by David Williams**

Strategic Warlord is a rules variant set up to allow players to simulate a war size conflict between the factions of the Accordlands using the existing *Warlord* Collectible Card Game, by Alderac Entertainment Group (AEG). This game is still in its infancy, so expect inevitable situations which will force the referees to make a decision -- that's what the referees are for.

Strategic Warlord is designed to be played with teams of five players for each faction of *Warlord: Saga of the Storm.*™ Each team consists of an Overlord, a Messenger, and three Warlords. The Overlord stays next to the war map watching the movement of the armies, discussing treaties with the other Overlords, and giving orders for the movements of his Warlords. The Messenger is the only person allowed to be in the War Room with the map as well as in the Battle Room to see the battles in progress. The Messenger will inform the Overlord of the progress of the battles as well as informing the Warlords of whom to fight and who the faction is currently allied with. Warlords are in charge of one of the faction's armies and stay in the Battle Room with their decks as well as making the movement orders each turn. Each Warlord must have a prepared deck (open format) of the faction they represent for use in battles yet to come.

Setup

Strategic Warlord needs above all else, a lot of players. With a recommendation of five players per faction team and at least four (of six) faction teams, that means you will need at least 20 players, and then of course a referee (or two). The next hardest thing to acquire is a suitable venue that has at least two separate areas isolated from each other yet easily accessible to each other. One area is called the War Room, where all the Overlords plot their armies' movements and conduct diplomacy with other factions. The second area is called the Battle Room, where the Warlord players actually play games of Warlord to determine the outcome of battles that were orchestrated by the Overlords in the War Room. Once you have these two crucial elements you will need the following materials to play Strategic Warlord:

A copy of the rules (preferably for all players)

A large map of the Accordlands designed for Strategic Warlord play

Tokens to represent each Warlord's army and conquered territories

Smaller copies of the main map for Warlords' reference

A timekeeping device (preferably a stopwatch)

Writing utensils for all players

Paper for sending notes and issuing orders (3 × 5 notecards are recommended)

A level one character card (recommend Tanner Trollson) for each Warlord specially marked to identify him as an "extra resource."

Referees

While Strategic Warlord has many elements of a classic strategy board game, it is not as simple as a couple of players grouped around a table. The referees are responsible for maintaining fair play in both the War Room and Battle Room. They are crucial for keeping track of time for turns. They are responsible for collecting orders from the Warlords and making sure those orders are reflected on the map in the War Room. Ideally at least two referees should run the event. The Battle Room referee will often have his/her hands full keeping time and collecting orders in addition to refereeing the games in progress.

Overlords and Setup

At the beginning of the game, each Overlord chooses where his three armies will begin — they must begin at different territories within the faction's lands. All of these positions are submitted secretly and revealed simultaneously — each army should be noted on the map with a clear marker of some sort (token, miniature, to clearly identify the faction and number of the army). Also, the Overlord must identify which Warlord is leading each army so that the referee running the War Room can accurately pair off the Warlords based on their position on the map. Once the starting positions are determined, the Overlord distributes the resource cards amongst his Warlords in any way he chooses. Then the game begins.

Only the Overlords know the actual positions of each army within the Accordlands, and use their Messengers to communicate to their Warlords where their armies should move each turn. As the only member of their team allowed to talk with players from other factions, the Overlord represents the diplomat of the faction. In addition, being the only member of their team who looks at the main map with all of the units, the Overlord is responsible for the overall strategy of the faction — an order from the Overlord should not be ignored by the Warlords.

Extra Resources

Overlords have another way to affect the future of their faction. This is to distribute extra resources (in the form of manpower) to their armies. These resources are represented by a level one character with the following stats: +1ATK / 11AC / Classless / May not play action cards or receive bonuses of any kind. The Overlord has one resource per Warlord. He/she can distribute them evenly or in any combination. These resources start in play for the Warlord who has them if they so desire. If a Warlord chooses not to play a resource, it cannot be played later (it is not part of their deck), but neither can it be lost. If a Warlord is defeated in battle, he must give any resources played to the victor, who may then use it in future battles. There is no limit to the number of resources a Warlord may have and play. Resources are not exchanged if a truce is called.

A Warlord who is not involved in a battle may give any resources to the Messenger. The Messenger may give resources to any Warlord who is not involved in a battle. This is usually done by order of the Overlord.

Armies

A turn happens every fifteen minutes. During that time, the Overlords should discuss alliances, consider strategy, and then send word to their Warlords (through the Messenger) where they should move/attack. Every 15 minutes, Warlords that are not currently in a battle with another army must submit a command to the referee for the turn (these must be submitted by the person playing that Warlord). Any command that the referee cannot interpret from what is written is considered "too confusing for his subordinates" — that army automatically stands still this turn. The Warlord cannot explain what "he meant to say," so he should make very clear instructions. As soon as 15 minutes have passed, the turn ends and no more orders can be accepted from the Warlords. If a Warlord is late with his orders for the turn for any reason, that army performs no actions or movements for the turn — it is the Warlord's responsibility to keep track of how much time they have remaining. It is perfectly acceptable (and advisable) to submit your orders to the Battle Room referee early.

Each army can move one space each turn. The only reason an army is unable to move is

if the Warlord is currently in a fight in the Battle Room. Otherwise, an army can move into any adjacent province each 15 minute turn. The possible commands for an army are:

1. "Stand" — don't move.

2. "Move" — to move from one province to an adjacent province. If two armies both move such that they would switch provinces, one of the armies moves first and prevents the other army from moving. This is determined by having players roll for initiative. Otherwise, all moves occur as listed in the commands (including if an army is moving into the province an army is leaving).

3. "Capture and Stand" — seize control of the current province. If an army makes a Capture command, it can be canceled by any Overlord that has an army at the territory when the Cap-ture is attempted. If there are no other armies in that territory before movement (or if they do not contest the control of the province), then that Overlord marks the territory as under his faction's control. The Capture command/attempt is always made before any moves are resolved for the turn.

4. "Capture and Move" — seize control of the current province, then move to an adjacent province. All of the same rules for capture apply as for a Capture and Stand order, but the army moves to an adjacent province after capturing the current province. All normal rules for movement apply, as well.

5. "Return" — return a destroyed army to play in its Capitol. Any Overlord with control of the Capitol may cancel the Return command (simply by saying "no") and prevent the unit from returning to play that turn.

Warlords

There should be a copy of the map in the Battle Room for the Warlords' reference, but the armies' current locations and province control are not marked on this map — it is solely for the Warlords to use as a reference (it may make sense to have the Warlords each have a small version of the map). The Warlords are responsible for issuing the commands for their armies each turn. If they are engaged in a battle, they can obviously not issue a command. If armies from two or more factions are moved into the same province, there may be a battle!

Battles

If two or more armies end up in the same province, then those Warlords must face off at a table. If all Warlords in the province

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agree to a truce, then no game is played and those armies may move out of the province on future turns. If even a single Warlord wants to fight, they play a (nearly) normal game of Warlord, until the only remaining armies in that province agree to a truce. If there is a truce right away, neither player should even begin playing. Typically, the Warlords will declare a truce or battle based on their instructions received from their Overlord via their Messenger.

Eliminated Warlords have their armies immediately removed from the map in the War Room for two turns (see above). The allied armies (those involved in a truce) stay in the Province. A destroyed army can be returned to play with a Return command in the second commands phase after it is destroyed, which can be in as little as 16 minutes.

Many games will continue longer than 15 minutes, so it is possible to have armies move into a province where there is already a fight in progress. If that happens, the current player finishes his order before they are added. Then, the entering Warlords are arranged randomly behind the last player to perform an Order. Each of the entering Warlords gets one "production turn" (in order to catch up a bit) — during this turn they can only bring cards into play, and they are assumed to have opponents who are continuously passing. Any actions that directly or indirectly affect another player's cards or army are canceled. After the production is done (preferably simultaneously for all entering armies to save time), the game continues normally with the first entering

Warlord taking a normal order.

The referee for the Battle Room should be aware of two possible abuses of the rules:

1. Stalling for time in the hopes of getting reinforcements.

2. Allied Warlords building forces to have unstoppable armies in case another army moves into the province. In both of these instances, the Storm may be called upon to destroy the offending army/armies.

Messengers

This can be the most interesting of the roles within the faction team. The Messenger doesn't get to make any official decisions, but is the only person in the faction that has complete knowledge of what is happening on both sides of the wall. An intelligent Messenger who clearly and quickly describes the scene in the other room is always the difference between the successful faction and the faction that is destroyed.

Optional Rules

Coup! — If all of the Warlords of a faction agree, they can raise one of their number to the rank of Overlord of their faction, returning the original Overlord to the rank of Warlord. The Warlords ought to keep in mind that this is horribly damaging to the diplomacy that has been performed so far,

and the only two factions that have done it so far ended up in last place...

Unique Warlords — If possible, Strategic Warlord should be run with no two players playing the same warlord (i.e. a Nothrog faction team may consist of an *Uthanak* player, a *Sceth* player, and a *Taoth* player, but couldn't contain two Uthanak players and one *Taoth* player). This can be taken even further by instituting the rule that no other players may bring the registered starting warlords into play (i.e. from the above example any player could bring a *Krun* or *Terror of Sharn Keep* into play, since they are not registered for the Nothrog faction team).

Winning the game

At the end of the last turn, any army that does not have any armies from another faction in the same province claims control of the province it is in. At that time, each faction that still controls its Capitol counts the total number of provinces it controls. The faction with the most provinces is declared the winner (ties broken by the number of their own provinces they control). Other players' Capitols are worth three provinces towards their total number of provinces.