



Fast Play Game for Battles in the Ancient Era

by Pierre Laporte

Virtus (a.k.a. Bravado) is a “Beer and Pretzels” game for two players. No rulers needed. Only one chart, and very convivial mechanisms inspired by cards games.

1 – SETTING ON THE GAME

1. 1 – Materiel required

Six sided dices, counters, ordinary playing cards, and figures (about 40 per side).

1. 2 - Recruiting

Each player recruits an army of about a dozen **units**, each unit consisting of **1 to 4 stands**, and at least one **leader**. The cost of an army usually runs from 150 to 200 budget points.

1. 3 – The stands

A *stand* symbolizes between 100 and 1000 men depending on the scenario chosen. All kind of basing works with the rules system, even unbased plastic soldiers “straight from the sprue”.

1. 4 – The decks

Each player selects a deck of 19 playing cards of the same colour:

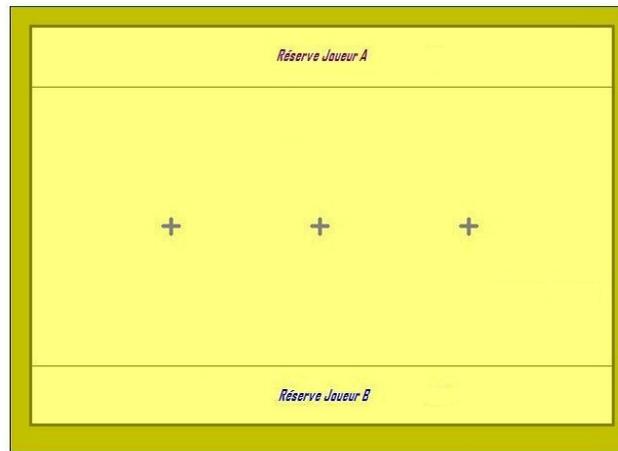
- Twelve cards, from « 1 » to « 6 »,
- The two Kings, two Queens and two Jacks cards, and one Joker.

Players shuffle the cards of their own deck, and keep it within reach, face down.

1. 5 – The battlefield

Tabletop is about 80 X 60cm.

Each side has a 10cm depth **reserve**, and four 20 X 20cm virtual **areas** (see diagram below).



For small scenarios (150 points or less), a 60 X 60 table with only three areas per side is recommended.

Players roll two dices (a light coloured one and a dark one) for each area, and then place the appropriate terrain if required.

- A hill (light coloured dice): **5 or 6** if flank area; **6** only if centre area,
- A wood (dark dice); **5 or 6** if flank area; **6** only if centre area.

1. 6 - Deployment

Place a screen in the middle of the tabletop (books, etc.) to hide deployment. Players then deploy simultaneously their units at will in their own areas and in their reserve.

Each player rolls one dice, and adds the number of terrain items located in his own camp; lowest begins, roll again if tie.

1. 7 - Victory

Player wins the game if he has conquered two opponent areas, with no enemy troops in it.

2 – GAME TURN (alternate)

1 – Tests

2 – Activation

3 – Combats, and moves

3 - TESTS

3. 1 – Morale tests

Each unit that took hits during the previous enemy turn must check its morale.

Roll two dice per hit (a light coloured one and a dark one):

- If the score rolled on the light coloured dice is equal or less than the Defensive Value (see chart) of the unit, the hit has no effect and the counter is removed; simply ignore the dark coloured dice result.
- If the number rolled on the light coloured dice exceeds its Defensive Value, the unit loses one stand; furthermore, if the score rolled on the dark coloured dice exceeds its Morale Value (i.e. its number of stands before the dice roll), the unit is routed (see below) and recoils, or is eliminated if routed twice during the same morale phase.

3.2 – Routed units

Routed units cannot be activated in the same turn, and are turned about face for visual effect until the end of the turn.

3.3 – Leaders tests

Check leaders who took hits, after all morale tests are resolved.

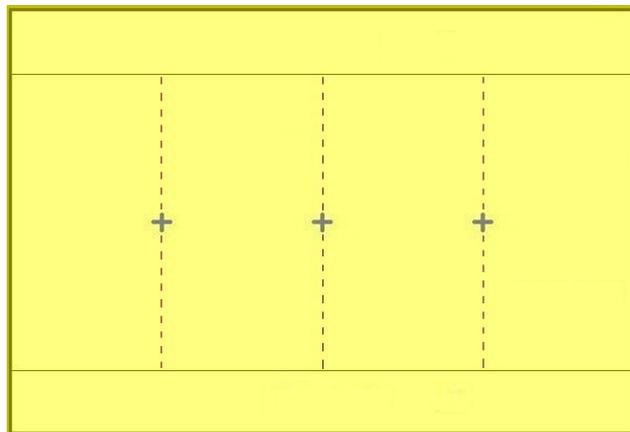
Roll one dice per hit:

- 1/5 : nothing,
- 6 : leader is killed.

4 – UNITS ACTIVATION

Units need to be activated in order to fight or move.

For activation, the tabletop is mentally divided in four virtual **segments** (or three if playing a small scenario). See diagram below:



4.1 – The hand

Once all his tests are resolved, the player drew cards to constitute, reconstitute or complete his hand. Drew **one card per segment under control** (i.e. containing at least one friendly unit), plus one extra card if the leader appointed as C in C is commanding from the rear (i.e. the reserve area).

4.2 – Cards distribution

During his cards distribution sequence, the player can either:

- Play cards from his hand, assigning one card and one only to a chosen segment,
- Discard as many cards as he wishes,
- Keep in hand as many cards as he wishes for the next turns.

If a player finds himself inadvertently with more cards than allowed, he must immediately discard the excessive cards, randomly chosen by his opponent.

4.3 – Using activation cards

- **“1” to “6” cards** settle the maximal number of activation points allowed in the indicated segment. Once played, those cards are discarded.
- **The Joker card** allows the player as many activation points as he wishes in the indicated segment. Once played, the Joker is discarded as other cards.
- **King, Queen and Jack cards** allow **no unit** activation, and are only intended to simulate unexpected events. They are discarded, or kept in hand if player wishes to hoax his opponent.

The deck is reshuffled at the end of a turn when the Joker has been played, or if there is not enough cards left in the deck to allow the player to re-constitute his hand.

4. 4 – Special moves

- A unit that starts its move in its reserve area is activated alongside with the units of the segment where the movement ends.
- A unit that moves from a segment to another is activated alongside with the units of the segment where the movement begins.

5 - COMBATS

Each activated unit may fight, at the cost of 1 activation point, agreed that a unit may not fight **and** move during the same turn, except light troops with *evade ability*.

Except if shooting (5. 3) or performing a flank attack (5. 4), units may only fight opponents located in the same area.

5. 1 – Combat procedure

Roll one dice per stand; each number equal or less than the *Fighting Value* (see chart) of the fighting unit is a hit. For each hit scored, a counter is attributed to an enemy unit located in the area where the fight occurs (opponent's choice).

If several hits are scored in the same area, the opponent player must distribute counters so that each unit is marked with one counter before any takes a second hit, etc.

5. 2 – Charges

Charges are resolved the same way as ordinary combats, but hits are concentrated on one unit (attacker's choice), instead of being distributed. Declare charges before the combat sequence begins, and resolve charges after every ordinary combat in the same area have been resolved.

Each charge requires one extra activation point for infantry units.

5. 3 - Shooting

Unlike other units, bowmen, slingers and arrow-shooting engines may aim at their adjacent front area. However, they may not shoot diagonally, or if the aimed area contains friendly troops or woods, nor if their own area contains enemy troops.

When shooting, player selects the Shooting Value of the unit instead of its Fighting Value.

5. 4 – Flank attack

A unit may attack an adjacent flanking area if there are no enemy troops in its own area. Simply wheel the unit for visual effect to indicate a flank attack.

If carried out in one of the player's side area, flank attack is allowed only if the opposing area contains no enemy troops unengaged in a fight. When carrying out a flank attack, player may choose to select the Shooting Value of the unit or its Fighting Value as well.

A player wins the game if he can carry out a flank attack at an opponent's side area empty of enemy troops.

5. 5 – Hits on leaders

A leader receives a hit each time a **6** is rolled by the opponent player when a fight occurs in the area where he is located.

6 - MOVES

Each activated unit that did not fight during current turn may move.

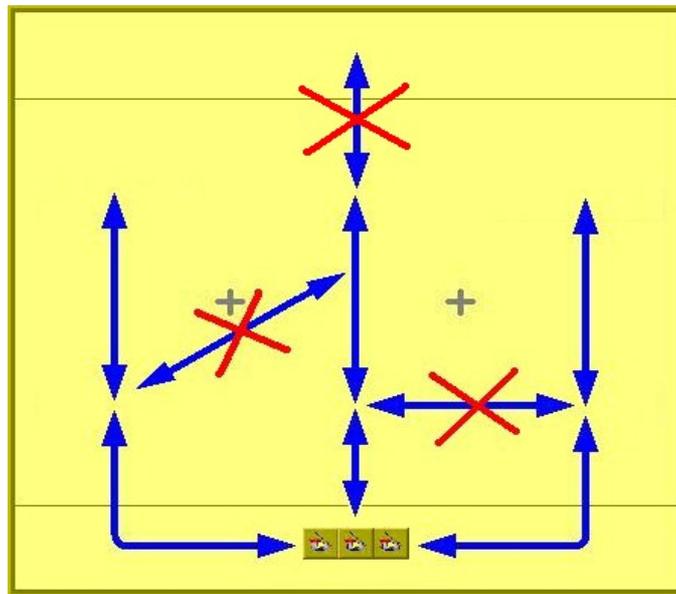
6.1 - Principles

Units are moved from one area to another. The exact situation of a unit in an area at the end of its movement is unimportant; units only need to be roughly orientated towards the enemy side, except if routed or if performing a flank attack.

6.2 – Movement allowances

See diagram below.

Units cannot move sideways, diagonally, or towards the enemy reserve. Moving a unit is forbidden towards an opponent's side area if there are enemy units in its own area.



Foot units may only perform one move during a turn; mounted units may perform two moves per turn, and leaders may perform three.

6.3 – Evade ability

Light infantry, light cavalry and light chariot units may move even if they fought during the combat sequence, but they cannot move **then** fight.

7 – TERRAIN EFFECTS

- Hill: units **defending** a hill (either in one of their own area or in a conquered enemy area) get one extra combat dice, at the cost however of one extra activation point.
- Woods: cavalry and heavy infantry fights into woods with a Fighting Value reduced to **1**, and light infantry gets a + **2** modifier to morale tests, except if charged.

8 - LEADERS

Unlike units, leaders don't have fighting characteristics. They may move freely without needing activation, and increase by one the number of activation points in their own segment, or by two if *superior*. If *charismatic*, then the Morale Value of all his units in his area increases by 1 for morale tests. A leader costs 10 points, or 20 points if superior or charismatic, or 30 points if superior **and** charismatic.

An army may muster two leaders or more, but they cannot occupy the same area except the reserve. Furthermore, one of them must be appointed as C in C for the entire game length. A leader is lost if let alone in an area with enemy troops during an opponent's turn.

9 - RALLYING

A unit that sustained losses may recover 1 Morale Point (i.e. one stand) for each turn spent rallying inactivated in its reserve area. In order to rally, a unit must roll \leq its Morale Value with 1d6, possibly modified by the presence of a charismatic leader.

10 - FORCED MARCH

Except arrow-shooting engines, units may perform one extra move but must pass a cohesion test. Roll one dice; if number scored exceeds cohesion number, unit loses one stand:

- 3 (heavy units)
- 4 (medium units)
- 5 (light units)

QUICK SHEET Rome and her enemies

	FV	SV	DV	MV	Mvt	Cost	Special :
Legionaries	3	-	3	4	1	11	Testudo/Pila
Vet. legionaries/Pretorians	3	-	4	4	1	12	Testudo/Pila
Veteran auxiliaries	3	-	3	4	1	11	
Formed auxiliaries	3	-	3	3	1	10	
Barbarian auxiliaries	3	-	2	3	1	9	Impetuous
Palestinian auxiliaries	4	-	2	3	1	10	2HW
Lanciarrii	2	-	3	3	1	9	TW
Formed bowmen	1	2	2	3	1	9	"
Javelineers	2	-	2	2	1	7	"
Light archers		1	2	1	2	1	7 "
Slings	2	1	1	2	1	7	"
Clibanarii/Cataphracts	4	-	4	4	2	28	Kontos
Heavy cavalry	3	-	3	4	2	24	
Medium cavalry	3	-	2	3	2	20	
Dromedarii	2	-	1	3	2	16	
Drom. cataphracts	4	-	2	3	2	22	Kontos
Light horsemen	2	-	1	2	2	14	
Mounted archers	1	2	1	2	2	16	"
Scorpions	1	3	2	1	1	8	Heavy TW
Balistae	1	4	2	1	-	8	"
Noblemen warriors	4	-	3	3	1	11	
Warriors	3	-	2	3	1	9	Impetuous
Warband	3	-	2	4	1	10	Impetuous
Fanatics	4	-	1	4	1	10	Fanatics
Dacian falxmen	4	-	1	4	1	10	A2M
Light chariots	2	-	2	2	2	16	TW
General	-	-	-	-	3	10, 20 or 30	

FV : Fighting Value, SV : Shooting Value, DV : Defensive Value, MV: Morale Value
Red underlining: heavy units; green underlining: light units

SPECIAL RULES

Impetuous: increases FV by 1 until first losses; must attack front sector if enemy present.

Fanatics: never routed (no dark dice for morale tests); activation costs 1 extra point.

Stubborn: original MV taken in account for morale tests; activation costs 1 extra point.

Elite: may re-roll failed dark dice; rally on original MV; budget cost + $\frac{1}{2}$ (round up fractions).

Levy: use a dark d8 for morale tests; half budget cost (round up fractions).

Dense woods: cannot be crossed throughout in a single turn.

River: limited passage; 3 units per turn if bridge/ford, 2 units if no ford; 1 unit if deep water.

Rocky ground: FV capped at 1.

Marsh: DV capped at 1.

Two handed weapons (2HW): blue “hit” counters; enemy DV capped at 2.

Pila: purple “hit” counters; enemy DV reduced by 1. Costs 1 extra point; forbidden if performing “testudo”.

Throwing weapons (TW): green “hit” counters, round (arrows, javelins) or square shaped (stones, slingshot, heavy arrows). Enemy DV increases by 1 if light foot soldiers, or decreases by 1 if medium or heavy mounted troopers. Enemy DV capped at 3 if “square hits”. TW rule not apply if attacker is charging.

Overhead shooting: formed archers may shoot over friendly troops contained in the opposing front sector at the cost of 1 extra Activation point; furthermore, SV is reduced to 1 if the intervening unit is not a light unit in open order.

Pikes/Long spears: hits on “1” are indicated with red tokens when attacking a sector containing pikemen; their DV increases by 1, but for ordinary hits only (no benefit apply for red, blue or green tokens, or if sustaining flank attack, or if attacker itself equipped with pikes or similar weapon). Furthermore, mounted troops charging pikemen must pass a cohesion test (10), and lose 1 MV point if it fails. On the other hand, pikemen perform forced march at the cost of 1 extra activation point.

Testudo: legionary units only; increases DV by 1, but decreases FV by 1; no forced march nor shooting allowed; testudo is broken if the unit is charged, charging, or routed.

Shieldwall: same as testudo, but allowed to any unit of DV 3 or more. No movement allowed.

Camels mounted units: inflicts yellow hits, against which the DV of cavalry units is reduced to 1. Cohesion tests on 4 – (instead of 3 – for light troops).

Fighting leaders/Heroes: a general may join a unit fighting in his area, in which case that unit benefits from one extra combat dice (two dice if the general is rated “hero” at the cost of 10 extra points). However, the general may not move nor give any activation bonus during the same turn. If hit during the next opponent turn, the subsequent saving rolls must be made **before** rolling for his unit’s morale, and if killed, the unit to which he was attached must pass a cohesion test with 1d6, and is routed if score > its MV.

