



Section 8 : Scenario Training 102

Inside the Gamesmaster

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Inside the Gamesmaster :

Playing scenario paintball as a mission team is analogous to being an actor in a play.

Wouldn't be nice to know what the play is all about...

Well there are a few guys who write clever plays, a few who write plays to make sure the actors return, and a few who just want the maximum amount of dollars per actor. Most players don't care too much about the motivation of the gamesmaster, but do want to have fun, and win the game. Winning the game may be tough sometimes because the motivation of the gamesmaster isn't always clear, **and the gamesmaster has the ability to change the game to suit his needs.**



This article discusses some of the ways the gamesmaster can change the game.

Gamesmaster Motivation: LETS KEEP IT CLOSE : many gamesmasters view a scenario game a success if the final score is close. They assume the players think that a close game is more fun than a blowout. They assume that a game that switches the lead back and forth is better than one where the game is a runaway win for one side.

Consequently, the gamesmaster may change the game if he sees things pulling away to once side. Being able to recognize (or predict) these changes quickly will help the scenario team overcome the changes, or take advantages of them - depending on which side they are on.

See you thought you were just playing against the enemy army... Now lets examine how you are playing against the gamesmaster.

Gamesmaster tools:

- The prop drop
- The flip-flop team
- Insider info into props
- Spies and spy missions
- Tank Troubles
- Late walkon's
- Bird-dogging Refs
- Amazing Fuel
- Early mission execution
- Biased Spawn

Gamesmaster tool#1: The prop drop

In a 24 hour game, come Sunday morning if Side A is way ahead in the score, and the ref goes out to drop gold bars on the field just prior to Sunday AM start up, there is a good chance Side B may get some easy points via close (or uncontested) prop drops.

- ▶ **ACTION:** If your mission team is Johnny-on-the-spot Sunday AM, **its a good idea to aggressively sweep for props** - first focused way down field, and sweep back towards your own base. This prop-sweeping technique also works for the night game insertion.
- ▶ **ACTION:** Always be aggressive about having your team on the field as soon as the rules allow. Many games are won or lost in the early moments. Be Johnny-on-the-spot Sunday AM.
- ▶ **ACTION:** Try and figure out who the prop ref is. MPPGames are prop heavy, use a dedicated props ref, and the props ref has a schedule and a list of props to drop in certain locations, with a very little wiggle room for bias. Furthermore, hw is going to try and sneak the props into place and on time - but some are large and heavy. Look for an ATV or similar. During dinner stand down and 1 hour before Sunday start up are heavy prop-drop times. Keep an eye out of the props ref - and don't be obvious about it. Send a sweep teams in his wake when possible. Big props are never dropped in high traffic areas. When sweeping for big props, search the low traffic areas well. Go the extra mile. Be tenacious. Saturday during game start up there are typically no props out yet.

Gamesmaster tool#2: The flip-flop team (SWINGTEAM)

On Saturday, if Side A is pulling away in score, there is a good chance that a team on Side A will end upon Side B come morning, or even Saturday night. This team is likely to be a very effective mission team, small in number, but with exceptional ability per player. The gamesmaster would hope that this change go unnoticed, or appear insignificant. In reality, it always makes a big difference. Wayne Dollack would frequently flip Blitzkrieg back or forth as needed. Many fields use the locals refs that are playing as the swingteam.

- ▶ **ACTION:** As a mission team, plan on changing strategic and tactical frequencies during each phase of the game (Sat/SatPM/SunAm) and never discuss strategies that last more than that period of the game. If you know the likely group to be flipped, you may want to keep them out of strategic discussions all together.

Gamesmaster tool#3: Insider info into props


To give one side a "leg up" a gamesmaster or ref may leak the location of a significant prop. This level of assistance is hard to notice, and hard to counter.


- ▶ **ACTION:** If you see enemy stragglers in your area, sweep'um out. Managed AO's can defeat random events and even referee interference.


Gamesmaster tool#4: Spies and spy missions


One of the most despised techniques for altering the balance of power is the amazing world of spycraft. A spy can be given amazing point heavy props, intel, weapons, etc. that can swing the course of the war with little bearing on how the battles


are fought. Wayne's World is famous for the overuse of spycraft. Most other gamesmasters view spycraft as a cop-out and would use this as a last resort. Novice gamesmasters may unknowingly use this technique.


 **ACTION:** If spies are allowed, get your own - up to and including having a member of your team register as on the opponents team side and feed you intel legally. If the gamesmaster plays dirty, you can at least keep up - but stay in the rules at all times.

 **ACTION:** Remove key items from play, and turn them in at the last minute for scoring. Its hard for spies to operate w/o props and cash.

 **ACTION:** Assume your operations XO and your security XO are spies - especially if they are familiar to the gamesmaster. Compartmentalize information.


 **ACTION:** On your own team, make it clear to all members that assuming a spy role without the knowledge of the whole team is a breach of honor. Make sure the whole team is on the same page and in support of this position.

 **ACTION:** On your own team, let all team members know that all props go to the team captain for any kind of exchange or deal.

 **ACTION:** Saturday after the safety briefing, keep an eye on the gamesmaster and see who he is talking privately with. Make notes. Odds are, it is someone who has an important role.


Gamesmaster tool#5: Tank Troubles

In a game I was running and Aerion was driving the one tank in the game, and the tank was to be "called in for fire missions", the tank would develop engine trouble when called in by the leading team.

 **ACTION:** If the gamesmaster controls a tactical asset, you can bet in it being used to help "keep things close". Becoming overly dependent on the asset is dangerous. If you find the asset hard to access, save your usage until its really needed, perhaps even making reservations w/ the gamesmaster.

Gamesmaster tool#6: Late walk-on's

As the game progresses, it is common for the gamesmaster to call into the registration booth and tell the counter clerk to put the late walk-ons on the losing side.

 **ACTION:** Its a good idea to keep an eye on the enemy's spawn and the staging areas. Its pretty nasty to find out a significant team just walked on the opponents side. Bellyaching to the gamesmaster "we could use some more guns" can help him counter his instructions to the registration desk. You can also ask for the SWINGTEAM to help you.


Gamesmaster tool#7: Bird-dogging & Biased Refs


While its unlikely that a gamesmaster will know of this, poor local refs may help their buddies out by bird-dogging enemy players, watching enemy players more closely than their friends, etc.



Case Study: At a game SCROADKILL played, we had a spy in the enemies base camp who witnessed the enemy base ref allow the enemy general to execute their missions early when we were required to open and execute missions on time. Since many of the missions were at the same objective and had required props (down pilot). This


had a significant swing on the game. Protests were called in to the gamesmaster and the base ref was ejected - but the game was lost.


 **Case Study :** At a game SCROADKILL played at, we witnessed field refs repeatedly wiping hits from their teammates on the opposing side. Protests were made. The reffing seemed preferential throughout the game. Later the local team was witnessed to have very poor sportsmanship. The behavior was consistent between the refs and the local team. We later learned they were teammates.


 **ACTION:** If you witness unfair or biased field reffing, call it in to both the head ref and to the gamesmaster. Its doubtful they know of it, and will take good care of the situation. Know what frequency the head ref is on, and **DO NOT ABUSE** the frequency. Know where the "God Box" is. Get witnesses, and **get the names of the refs involved**. Record all in writing and include all specifics possible. Always keep an eye on the refs.

Gamesmaster tool#7: Amazing Fuel

Occasionally the gamesmaster will write into the game certain elements that are "adjustable".


 **CASE STUDY :** Super 61 / Super 64: One example of an **adjustable tool** are fuel cards that each operate a helicopter for 15 minutes. 6 cards issued at game start. One card is turned in at each usage - but the gamesmaster can recycle the cards as needed to help out a side.

 **CASE STUDY :** **Small props can be recycled easily** as well. PBC is now famous for the tons of ceramic props used at Raiders. These props were recycled 3-4 times each - at least. I don't think they were placed to favor anyone. Small props are easily adjustable. MPPGames uses small camouflaged weighted ammo bags and wooden gold bars. Wayne's World is less small prop driven.

 **ACTION:** Read the rules well, and try and pick out the "loosely" defined areas. **Odds are they were written loosely on purpose**. If you don't like the looseness, ask for clarification during opening ceremonies.





Gamesmaster tool#8: Early mission execution

It is possible that a loosing side will be allowed to execute a mission early. Look for clarification in the rules. If the rules are clear, and this happens - its not allowed and you can protest. Its possible it is allowed and one tool the gamesmaster can use to adjust the game flow.

 **ACTION:** Read the rules well, and try and pick out the "loosely" defined areas. Look for mission execution timing instructions. Odds are they were written loosely on purpose. If you don't like the looseness, ask for clarification during opening ceremonies. If you think a ref is acting against the rules, protest. Also: Check the enemy's base refs watch and know it. It may be different that your base refs' "Hey ref, what time you got - exactly?" (& get a good look)

Gamesmaster tool#9: The Biased Spawn

If your spawn point is close to the action, the more troops you will have fighting at any given time. The side w/ more troops usually wins the engagement. In games that allow remote (or mobile) spawn points, look for the gamesmaster to use this to help keep things balanced : either by long spawn walks for the winning side, or short walks for the loosing side - especially as the final battle approaches - the gamesmaster may be desperate at this point.

-  **ACTION:** Read the rules well concerning spawning, and try and pick out the "loosely" defined areas. Odds are they were written loosely on purpose. If you don't like the looseness, ask for clarification during opening ceremonies.
-  **ACTION:** Expect spawn point adjustments late in the game. Have an off field member check out how then enemy side is spawning.
-  **ACTION:** Walk both spawns and count paces. Be sure to mention any dramatic differences early on to the gamesmaster. He may not be aware.
-  **ACTION:** Remote stage from your base (or remote spawn) - not the parking lot. A team box w/ a little paint and water may go a long way towards keeping your troops on the field. This will also help save personal energy wasted walking back to the staging area. Both are force multipliers. Using one player as a MULE may help also during critical battles.

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