

# Valhalla's Gate

## A Game of Broken Shields & Iron Wills

### Foreword

The horns fell silent an hour ago.

From the hilltop, you can see them. A sea of wolves, their round shields forming a patient, encircling ring at the base of the slope. Your shieldwall is a small, battered island in that sea. There are maybe forty of you left. There are hundreds of them.

The skalds have a word for a day like this: *örlög*. Destiny.

Some of you are here for a king, your oaths heavier than the mail on your shoulders. Some of you are here for plunder, the promise of silver now a bitter taste of ash in your mouth. Some of you are simply here because the sea-road brought you to this forsaken hill, and there is nowhere left to run.

But the *why* no longer matters. All that matters is the *how*.

How will you meet your end? Will you lock your shield with the man beside you, your spear a thorn in the side of a kingdom? Will you cast aside all thought of defense and charge down the hill, a berserker whirlwind seeking a glorious death worthy of a song? Will you outwit the brutes below, your commands a sharper weapon than any axe?

**Valhalla's Gate** is not a game about lining up soldiers. It is a game about this moment. It is about the choice you make when the odds are impossible and your only remaining resources are the iron in your will and the courage of the warrior next to you.

The enemy horns sound again, this time not a challenge, but a final, hungry call. They are coming.

Your chronicle is about to be written. Make it a great one.

## Part 1: The Call to Arms

# Chapter 1: The Wolf Age, The Axe Age

## 1.1 What is Valhalla's Gate?

The North Sea is a road, not a barrier.

From the frozen fjords of Norway and the misty shores of Denmark, the longships come. To the people of the settled lands—the Anglo-Saxons of England, the wealthy Franks of the continent, the wild tribes of the Scottish highlands—they are a terror, the "fury of the Northmen" made real. They are a storm of axe and shield that descends upon unprotected shores to burn, to slay, and to plunder.

To the raiders themselves, this is an age of opportunity. It is a time for the bold to carve out a new destiny. It is a chance to win glory that will be sung of in the halls of their children, wealth to raise a great household, and land worthy of a saga. This is the Viking Age.

**Valhalla's Gate** is a tabletop wargame for 2 to 8 players that thrusts you into this turbulent era. It is a game of fast-paced, brutal combat where the will of an army is as important as the strength of its shield arm. You will take command of your own warband, leading legendary heroes and grizzled warriors in a clash of steel and spirit.

You will out-think your opponents in a pre-battle council of boasts and schemes. You will give secret orders to your units, trying to anticipate the enemy's plans. And when the time for talk is over, you will charge headlong into the fray, fighting for glory, for your homes, or for a place in the chronicles that will be told for a thousand years.

In this core rulebook, you will find everything you need to command one of the four iconic factions of the early Viking Age:

- **The Vikings:** Ferocious sea-borne raiders seeking plunder and glory.
- **The Anglo-Saxons:** Grim defenders of their hearth and kingdom.
- **The Franks:** The armored might of the continent's greatest empire.
- **The Scots & Picts:** The wild, untamable tribes of the northern mists.

Will your name be remembered as a great king who defended his realm, or as a fearsome raider who brought kingdoms to their knees? That is for you to decide. The gates to legend are open.

## 1.2 What You Need to Play

To wage war in **Valhalla's Gate**, you will need the following:

- **Miniatures:** The game is designed for 28mm scale miniatures representing the warriors of the Viking Age. Each player will command a **Warband** of 15-40 models, organized into **Units**.
- **The Battlefield:** A playing area, typically 4'x4' for smaller games or 6'x4' for larger ones. Some terrain features like hills, woods, and buildings are highly recommended to make your battles more tactical and visually interesting.
- **Dice:** You will need a handful of standard six-sided dice (D6), with about 10-12 dice being sufficient for most situations.
- **Tape Measure:** All distances are measured in inches (").
- **Tokens:** You will need a set of **Order Tokens** (Charge, Move, Shieldwall) for each of your units, as well as various other tokens or markers to track Resolve loss and other game effects.
- **This Rulebook:** Your guide to glory and conquest.
- **A Worthy Opponent:** The most important component of all!

### 1.3 The Core Concepts

The rules of **Valhalla's Gate** are designed to be learned quickly so you can get to the action. All the detailed rules will be explained later, but the entire game is built upon these three core concepts:

- **Units:** Your army is not a disorganized mob. It is composed of **Units**—groups of 5 to 12 warriors of the same type who move and fight together. The key to victory is using your different units (hardy spearmen, ferocious berserkers, swift archers) for the right task at the right time.
- **The Clash:** Combat is not a long, drawn-out affair of endless dice rolls. It is a **Clash**—a single, decisive, and brutal event. When two units meet, they each make one opposed roll, modified by their skill and the weight of their numbers. The loser suffers a blow not just to their bodies, but to their courage.
- **Resolve:** A warrior's greatest weapon is their will to fight. In this game, a unit's health is its **Resolve**. This single number represents a unit's morale, stamina, and ability to hold its place in the shieldwall. Every hit, every shock, every loss chips away at a unit's Resolve. When it finally breaks and their Resolve reaches zero, the unit is **Broken** and removed from the battle. The path to victory is paved by shattering your enemy's spirit.

**Table 1.1: The Factions of the Core Game**

Faction	Playstyle Summary	Strengths	Weaknesses
Vikings	Aggressive Rushdown	Elite infantry, high damage potential, strong charges.	Can be fragile, relies on winning early.
Anglo-Saxons	Defensive Attrition	High Resolve and Armor, powerful defensive abilities.	Slow, can be passive, struggles against maneuver.
Franks	Combined Arms	Heavy cavalry, crossbows,	Expensive elite units, vulnerable to

		disciplined troops.	being outmaneuvered.
Scots-Picts	Guerilla Ambush	Speed, terrain use, unpredictable shock attacks.	Poor armor, can 'break' easily if their charge fails.

## Part 1: The Call to Arms

### Chapter 2: The Unit & The Warrior

Every warrior who stands in your shieldwall, from the lowest levy to the mightiest Jarl, is defined by their capabilities on the battlefield. This chapter explains how to read a unit's profile and understand the role of the great leaders who command them.

#### 2.1 Reading a Unit Card

All the information you need about a unit is presented on its **Unit Card** or in its profile in this book. A unit's profile is made up of four key statistics:

**Move (M):** This is the maximum distance, in inches, that a unit can move during its activation. A standard human warrior typically has a Move of 6". Lighter, faster troops may have a Move of 7", while heavily encumbered warriors might have a Move of 5".

**Fight (F):** This represents a unit's skill, aggression, and prowess in melee combat. It is not the number of dice you roll, but a **bonus** that you add to your combat roll during a Clash. A higher Fight value means the unit is more likely to win an engagement. A levy of farmers might have an F of +0, while a legendary Huscarl could have an F of +3.

**Armor (A):** This represents a unit's physical protection—its shield, helmet, and mail—as well as its defensive training. It is a **bonus** that you add to your combat roll when you are defending in a Clash. A higher Armor value means a unit is better at deflecting blows and holding the line. A lightly-equipped skirmisher might have an A of +0, while a heavily-armored Frankish Paladin could have an A of +3.

**Resolve (R):** This is the most important statistic. Resolve is a measure of a unit's courage, stamina, and will to fight. It is effectively the unit's "health." A standard unit might have a Resolve of 5. As the unit suffers losses, sees its allies fall, and weathers the storm of battle, it will lose Resolve points. When a unit's Resolve reaches 0, its spirit is broken. The unit is considered **Broken** and is removed from play.

#### 2.2 The Hero & Champion's Role

The leaders of your army are more than just skilled warriors; they are the figures around whom legends are made. There are two types of leaders in **Valhalla's Gate**.

## The Hero

Each player's warband must be led by one **Hero**. A Hero is not a model that fights on their own. Instead, a Hero is an **upgrade** to one of the units in your army. This unit becomes the **Hero's Unit** and functions as their personal bodyguard and retinue.

- **Presence:** To represent the Hero, you can either use a special, more ornate model within the unit, or place a small token next to the unit's base.
- **Abilities:** A Hero's presence unlocks the ability to use powerful, game-changing **Heroic Actions** and gives access to unique **Hero Archetypes** that define their leadership style. They are the heart and soul of your force.

## The Champion

A **Champion** is a lesser leader—a beloved veteran, a minor chieftain, or a Jarl's ambitious son. Like a Hero, a Champion is an **upgrade** to a Warrior or Elite unit, making it a **Champion's Unit**.

- **Role:** Champions provide a small but reliable bonus to their unit and have access to a single, potent, once-per-game ability. They are a way to make your key units more dependable without the high cost and strategic importance of a full Hero. You may include 0-2 Champions in your warband.

## 2.3 Keywords & Special Rules

Many units have **Keywords** listed in their profile. These are special rules that grant the unit a unique ability or modify how it interacts with the core rules of the game. They represent the specialized training, cultural tactics, or unique equipment of a unit.

Always check a unit's keywords, as they are key to understanding its role on the battlefield.

### Common Keyword Examples:

- **Shieldwall:** This unit is expert at forming a defensive line. It gains a bonus when given the **Shieldwall** order.
- **Rage:** This unit is filled with a berserker fury. It may be forced to Charge and has special rules for ignoring damage.
- **Skirmish:** This unit is trained in hit-and-run tactics and may be able to move after making a Ranged Attack.
- **Linebreaker:** This unit is exceptionally brutal in combat and inflicts extra Resolve loss when it wins a Clash.

All keywords and their effects are detailed in the Faction chapters of this book.

**Table 2.1: Example Unit Profile**

Move (M)	Fight (F)	Armor (A)	Resolve R
6"	+2	+1	5

## Part 1: The Call to Arms

### Chapter 3: The Battlefield

The ground upon which a battle is fought is as much a weapon as the axe in a warrior's hand. A cunning Jarl uses a dense forest to hide his advance, while a wise Thegn makes his stand on a high hill where the enemy must struggle to reach him. This chapter details the rules for terrain and the proper formation of your units on the field of battle.

#### 3.1 Setting Up the Table

A game of **Valhalla's Gate** is typically played on a surface of 4'x4' for a **Warband Clash** or 6'x4' for a larger **Host Battle**.

Before a battle, players should work together to create an interesting and balanced battlefield using a variety of terrain features. A good battlefield tells a story—is it a settled village with buildings and fields, a misty forest trail, or the rocky shoreline of an enemy coast? A mix of 3-6 pieces of terrain is ideal. Unless specified by a scenario, players should take turns placing one piece of terrain at a time.

#### 3.2 Terrain Rules

Terrain features can provide vital cover and tactical advantages. The core rules for the most common types of terrain are as follows:

- **Woods / Forests:** These dense thickets of trees offer excellent protection from missile fire but are ill-suited for a coordinated charge.
  - **Cover:** A unit with at least half of its models inside a forest gains **+1 to its Armor (A) roll** against any Ranged Attack.
  - **Hindrance:** A unit cannot perform a **Charge** action if its movement would begin, end, or pass through a forest.
- **Hills / High Ground:** Controlling the high ground gives a significant advantage in a melee, allowing warriors to charge down upon their foes with greater force.
  - **Advantage:** A unit on a hill gains **+1 to its Fight (F) roll** when making a **Charge** action against an enemy unit that is not on the same hill.
  - **Line of Sight:** Hills are solid objects and block line of sight. Models cannot see through them.
- **Buildings / Fortifications:** Whether a humble village church or the palisade of a mighty burh, fortifications offer the best protection a warrior could hope for.
  - **Garrison:** A unit can use a **Move** action to enter an unoccupied building. A standard building can hold one unit.
  - **Superior Cover:** A unit inside a building gets **+2 to its Armor (A) roll** against Ranged Attacks and **cannot be targeted by a Charge action**.



- **Assault:** To attack a garrisoned unit, the attacker must move into base contact with the building and use their activation to perform a special **Assault** action. The subsequent Clash is resolved as normal, but the garrisoned unit adds a massive **+3 to its Armor (A) roll**.
- **Rivers / Deep Water:** A river can divide a battlefield, turning a single bridge or ford into a bloody chokepoint where the fate of the battle is decided.
  - **Impassable:** This terrain is impassable to all infantry and cavalry units.
  - **Crossing:** The only way to cross a river is via a designated **Bridge** or **Ford**.

### 3.3 Unit Coherency & Movement

A warband fights as a collection of disciplined units. The following rules govern how your warriors must be positioned and how they can move.

#### Unit Coherency

To represent a fighting formation, all models in a unit must remain close to their shield-brothers.

- **The Rule:** Every model in a unit must be within **1 inch** of at least one other model from the same unit.

#### The Stationary Point Rule

To ensure units maneuver realistically, all moves that involve a change of formation or facing must use this rule.

1. **Choose a Stationary Point:** Before moving, nominate **one model** in the unit to be the **last model you move**. This is your pivot or anchor.
2. **Move the Other Models:** Move all other models in the unit up to their M value, measuring **from their own individual starting spots**.
3. **Move the Stationary Point:** Finally, move the anchor model up to its M value **from its own original starting spot**.

### 3.4 Formations & Combat

The shape of your unit is a critical tactical decision that directly impacts its performance in battle.

#### Unit Formations

As long as it maintains coherency, a unit can adopt any shape. A long **Line** is best for fighting, as it maximizes contact with the enemy. A deep **Column** is best for moving through narrow gaps. A loose **Skirmish Screen** can cover a wide area.

#### Maneuvering Around Terrain

Models cannot move through solid terrain (like a building wall) or enemy models. To move around a corner, you must use the Stationary Point rule to "wheel" your unit around the obstacle, ensuring no single model moves further than its M value. Models **can** move through friendly models, but cannot end their move on top of them.

## Frontage and its Effect on Combat

The single most important factor affected by your formation is the **number of models in base-to-base contact** during a Clash.

- **A wide frontage** allows more warriors to fight, adding a larger bonus to your Clash roll.
  - **A narrow frontage** means fewer warriors can fight, resulting in a smaller bonus.
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### Example 3.1: The Importance of Frontage

*A unit of 8 Hirdmen (F+2) charges an enemy unit. If they are in a wide line and all 8 models make contact, they will add +8 to their Clash roll. If they are in a deep column and only 2 models make contact, they will only add +2. Forming a wide battle line before a charge is crucial!*

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## Multi-Unit Combats: The Grand Clash

It is possible for a single defending unit to be charged by multiple enemy units in the same round. When this happens, the combat is resolved as one **"Grand Clash"** during the Grand Clash sub-phase at the end of the round.

1. **Determine Pools:**
    - The **Defender's** combat pool is: **1D6 + their A bonus + 1 per model in contact with ANY enemy unit.**
    - The **Attackers'** combined combat pool is: **1D6 + the highest F bonus among the attacking units + 1 per model in contact from ALL attacking units.**
  2. **Resolve:** Compare the two totals. If the Attackers win, only the defending unit loses Resolve. If the Defender wins, the **"Primary Attacker"** (the first unit that declared a charge against the defender that turn) loses Resolve.
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### Example 3.2: The Grand Clash

*A line of 10 Saxon Thegns (A+2) is charged by 5 Viking Hirdmen (F+2) and later in the same round by 8 Viking Bondi (F+1). During the Grand Clash sub-phase, this combat is resolved.*

- **Saxon Defender's Pool:** They are in contact with 13 enemy models (5+8). Their roll is **1D6 + 2 (A) + 13 = 1D6 + 15.**
- **Viking Attackers' Pool:** They have 13 models in contact. The highest F bonus among the Hirdmen (+2) and Bondi (+1) is +2. Their roll is **1D6 + 2 (F) + 13 = 1D6 + 15.**
- *The Clash is perfectly balanced! If the Saxons win, only the Hirdmen (who charged first) lose Resolve. If the Vikings win, the Saxon Thegns lose Resolve.*

**Table 3.1: Terrain Summary**

Terrain Type	Rules Summary	Tactical Role
Woods / Forests	+1 Armor vs. Ranged; Cannot Charge in/out of.	Anti-archer cover; Charge disruption.
Hills / High Ground	+1 Fight when charging downhill; Blocks Line of Sight.	Power positions; Gaining a charge advantage.
Buildings / Fortifications	+2 Armor vs. Ranged; Immune to Charge; Assault action gives defender +3 Armor.	Defensive anchors; Key objectives in settlement battles.
Rivers / Water	Impassable except at Fords or Bridges.	Battlefield division; Creates natural chokepoints.

## Part 2: The Rules of War

### Chapter 4: The Game Round

A battle in **Valhalla's Gate** is a dynamic and chaotic affair. To represent this, the game is played over a series of **Game Rounds**, each referred to as a **Chapter** in your warband's ongoing chronicle. A standard game lasts for four Chapters.

Each Chapter is broken down into three distinct phases, which are resolved in order. Once the third phase is complete, the round ends and a new one begins, unless the game has ended.

#### 4.1 Phase 1: The Oaths Phase (Simultaneous Planning)

*Before the clash of steel, there is a contest of wills. Leaders survey the field, warriors mutter oaths to their gods, and plans are set in motion.*

The Oaths Phase is performed simultaneously by all players.

1. **Generate Command:** Each player on both sides rolls 3D6. The results of this roll form that player's personal **Command Dice Pool** for the round. Keep these dice visible in front of you; they are a precious resource you will spend to influence the battle.
2. **Give Secret Orders:** After generating Command Dice, each player must secretly assign one **Order Token** to each of their units on the battlefield. The token is placed face-down next to the unit. The three primary types of orders are **Move**, **Charge**, and **Shieldwall**.
  - **Engaged Units:** A unit that starts this phase already in base-to-base contact with an enemy is **Engaged**. An Engaged unit cannot be given a Move, Charge, or Shieldwall order. It must be given a **Fight!** order, which allows it to initiate a Clash during its activation without moving (see Chapter 5.4).
3. **Declare Stratagems:** After assigning Orders, a player may choose to use one of their faction-specific **Stratagems**. To do so, they declare the Stratagem and immediately pay its cost by spending the required dice from their Command Dice Pool. A player may only use one Stratagem per round.

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#### Example 4.1: The Oaths Phase

*The Viking player has two units: Huscarls engaged with Saxon Thegns, and Raiders who are free to act. He rolls his Command Dice. He must assign an order to his Huscarls; since they are Engaged, this must be a "Fight!" order. For his Raiders, he sees an opportunity to flank the Thegns. He secretly places a **Charge** Order token next to his Raiders. He decides to save his Command Dice for later.*

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## 4.2 Phase 2: The Clash Phase (Action & Combat)

*The horns sound. Oaths have been sworn. Now, the battle is joined!*

The Clash Phase is where your units carry out their orders. It is broken into two parts: Activations and the Grand Clash.

### Part A: Activations (Alternating Turns)

1. **Reveal Orders:** All players now flip their Order Tokens face-up simultaneously.
  2. **Roll for Initiative:** Each team's Warlord rolls a D6. The side with the higher roll wins the initiative for this round and decides which team will take the first activation.
  3. **Activate Units:** Starting with the team chosen by the initiative winner, players take turns activating a single unit that has not yet acted this round. The chosen unit immediately resolves the action shown on its Order Token.
    - **Move & Shieldwall:** These orders are resolved in full immediately.
    - **Charge:** A unit with a Charge order moves into base-to-base contact with an enemy unit. **Do not resolve the combat yet.** The unit has "declared a charge." Place a 'Charging' marker next to it.
    - **Fight!:** A unit with a Fight! order does not move. It immediately "declares a charge" against the unit it is in contact with. Place a 'Charging' marker next to it.
  - 4.
  5. Once a unit has completed its activation, flip its Order Token to the "Activated" side. The turn then passes to the opposing team to choose one of their units to activate. This continues until every unit on the battlefield has been activated.
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### Example 4.2: Activations

*The Viking player wins initiative. He activates his Raiders, who have a Charge order. He moves them into contact with the Saxon Thegns, who are already fighting his Huscarls. He places a 'Charging' marker next to the Raiders. Now it is the Saxon player's turn to activate one of their units.*

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### Part B: The Grand Clash Sub-Phase

After all units have completed their activations, it is time to resolve the bloody work of combat.

1. **Resolve Combats:** Starting with the player who had initiative this round, players take turns choosing one combat to resolve. A "combat" is any situation where one or more friendly units have declared a charge against one or more enemy units.
2. **The Grand Clash:** If a defending unit has been charged by multiple enemy units, the combat is resolved as a single **Grand Clash** (see Chapter 6.1).
3. This continues until all combats on the board have been resolved.

### 4.3 Phase 3: The Reckoning Phase (Cleanup)

*The cries of the wounded fade, and a brief lull settles over the field. Both sides take stock of the dead and prepare for the next onslaught.*

1. **Resolve End-of-Round Effects:** Any special rules or abilities that last "until the end of the round" now expire.
2. **Remove Broken Units:** Any units that were **Broken** (their Resolve was reduced to 0) during this round are now removed from the battlefield.
3. **Check Victory Conditions:** Check to see if any scenario-specific victory conditions have been met. If so, the game may end.
4. **Advance the Round Tracker:** If the game has not ended, advance the round tracker by one.
5. **Prepare for the Next Chapter:** Remove all "Activated" tokens from all units. A new game round begins, starting with the Oaths Phase.

**Table 4.1: Game Round Sequence**

Phase	Step	Description
1: Oaths Phase	Generate Command	Each player rolls 3D6 to create their Command Dice Pool.
1: Oaths Phase	Give Orders	Secretly place one Order Token (Move, Charge, Shieldwall) next to each unit.
1: Oaths Phase	Use Stratagems	Players may spend Command Dice to use a faction Stratagem.
2: Clash Phase	Reveal & Initiative	All Orders are revealed. Teams roll for initiative.
2: Clash Phase	Activations	Teams alternate activating units to carry out their Orders. Charges are declared but not resolved.
2: Clash Phase	Grand Clash Sub-Phase	After all units have acted, all declared combats are resolved.
3: Reckoning Phase	Cleanup	End-of-round effects expire, Broken units are removed.
3: Reckoning Phase	Check Victory	Check if the game has been won.
3: Reckoning Phase	Advance Round	If the game continues, advance the round tracker and clear tokens.

## Part 2: The Rules of War

### Chapter 5: The Actions of a Warrior

A unit's activation is the moment it carries out the secret plan you laid for it in the Oaths Phase. The Order Token you assigned dictates what the unit will do, from maneuvering for a better position to a glorious, all-out charge. This chapter details the actions your units can perform.

#### 5.1 The Three Primary Orders

When a unit that is not engaged in combat is activated during the Clash Phase, it must resolve the action corresponding to its revealed Order Token.

- **MOVE:** The unit is focused on repositioning.
  - **Effect:** Move the unit up to its **Move (M)** value in inches. The unit must end its move in coherency. Remember to use the **Stationary Point Rule** (Chapter 3.3) for any complex maneuvers. A unit that performs a Move action cannot initiate a Clash this turn.
- **CHARGE:** The unit is committed to a ferocious assault.
  - **Effect:** Move the unit up to its **Move (M)** value. This move **must** end with one or more of the unit's models in base-to-base contact with an enemy unit. The unit has now **declared a charge**. Place a 'Charging' marker next to it. The combat itself will be resolved in the Grand Clash sub-phase.
  - **Failed Charge:** If a unit with a Charge order is unable to reach an enemy unit, the charge fails. The unit moves its full M value directly toward the intended target but does not receive a 'Charging' marker.
- **SHIELDWALL:** The unit digs in, bracing for an impending blow.
  - **Effect:** The unit may not move. It gains a **+2 bonus to its Armor (A)** roll in any Clashes where it is the defender. This bonus lasts until the start of the next Oaths Phase.

#### 5.2 Ranged Combat

Some warriors are skilled with the bow, javelin, or axe. A unit with a ranged weapon may choose to use it instead of performing its assigned Order.

##### Making a Ranged Attack

During a unit's activation, instead of carrying out its Order, you may declare it is making a **Ranged Attack**.

1. **Declare Target:** Choose an enemy unit within the weapon's **Range** and in line of sight.
2. **Roll to Hit:** Roll 1D6. If the roll is equal to or greater than the weapon's **"To Hit"** value, the attack is successful.
3. **Inflict Effect:** The target unit suffers the weapon's **Effect**.

4. After the attack, the unit's activation is over. Flip its Order Token to the "Activated" side.

### 5.3 The Volley System & Ranged Weapon Types

The type of ranged weapon a unit has determines its limitations.

- **Dedicated Ranged Units:** Units like Archers and Crossbowmen have **Unlimited** shots.
- **Hybrid Ranged Units:** These units have **Volley Tokens**. Each Ranged Attack spends one token. When tokens are gone, they can no longer make Ranged Attacks.

### 5.4 Engaged Units & The Fight! Order

Once a unit is in base-to-base contact with an enemy unit, it is considered **Engaged**. An Engaged unit is locked in a desperate, swirling melee and its tactical options are severely limited.

#### Restrictions for Engaged Units

An Engaged unit **cannot** be given a **Move**, **Charge**, or **Shieldwall** order. Its warriors are too busy fighting for their lives to reposition or form a defensive line.

#### The "Fight!" Order

If it is your turn to activate a unit that is already Engaged, it performs the **Fight!** order.

- **Effect:** A unit with a Fight! order does not move. Instead, it immediately **"declares a charge"** against the enemy unit it is already in contact with. Place a 'Charging' marker next to it. This allows the unit to be an "Attacker" in the upcoming Grand Clash sub-phase.
- **Note:** Because the unit did not actually move, it does not gain any bonuses for charging (like those from a Hero's Archetype or a faction Stratagem that specifies "on the turn they Charge"). It simply allows them to initiate a new round of combat.

#### Disengaging from Combat

A unit cannot voluntarily move out of combat. The only ways for a unit to become disengaged are:

- The enemy unit it is in contact with is **Broken** and removed from play.
- A special Stratagem or ability is used that allows a unit to fall back.

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#### Example 5.1: The Engaged Unit

*A unit of Saxon Thegns is Engaged with Viking Hirdmen at the start of the round.*

- **Oaths Phase:** The Saxon player must assign an order to his Thegns. He places a token face-down, knowing it must be a "Fight!" order.



- **Clash Phase:** When he activates the Thegns, he reveals the order. They perform the Fight! action. They do not move, but he places a 'Charging' marker next to them, ready for the Grand Clash sub-phase.

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**Table 5.1: Ranged Weapon Profiles**

Weapon Type	Range	To Hit	Effect	Special Rules
Thrown Javelins	8"	5+	Target loses 1 Resolve.	Harass: Target suffers -1 to its combat roll if the Attacker has its next Clash this round.
Thrown Axes	6"	5+	Target loses 1 Resolve.	Shatter Shield: On a hit, you may force the target's owner to discard one "Shield" type Command Die this round (4 or 5).
Short Bow	18"	5+	Target loses 1 Resolve.	Arcing Fire: Can fire over a single friendly unit if the target is more than 6" behind it.
Crossbow	24"	4+	Target loses 1 Resolve.	Armor Piercing: Target must make a casualty roll on a hit. Reload: Unit cannot be given a Charge order next round.

## Part 2: The Rules of War

### Chapter 6: The Clash of Shields

The planning is over. The maneuvers are complete. Now, steel rings on steel, shields splinter, and the fate of warriors is decided in a brutal, decisive moment. This chapter explains how to resolve combat when your units charge the enemy.

All combats resulting from **Charge** orders are resolved during the **Grand Clash sub-phase**, which takes place at the end of the Clash Phase after all units have completed their activations.

#### 6.1 Resolving a Clash

A **Clash** is the term for a single combat engagement. It is resolved with a simple, opposed D6 roll, modified by key factors.

1. **Determine Attacker and Defender:** The unit that was activated and performed the Charge action is the Attacker. The unit which is charged is the Defender.
2. **Attacker Rolls:** The Attacker's player rolls **1D6** and adds the following bonuses:
  - Their unit's **Fight (F)** value.
  - **+1 for each of their models** in base-to-base contact with the enemy unit.
3. **Defender Rolls:** The Defender's player rolls **1D6** and adds the following bonuses:
  - Their unit's **Armor (A)** value.
  - **+1 for each of their models** in base-to-base contact with the enemy unit.
  - Any other applicable bonuses, such as the +2 bonus for being in **Shieldwall**.

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#### Example 6.1: A Simple Clash

*A unit of 8 Viking Hirdmen (F+2) charges a unit of 8 Saxon Select Fyrd (A+2) who are in Shieldwall. All 8 Vikings make contact.*

- **Viking Attacker's Roll:** 1D6 + 2 (Fight) + 8 (models) = **1D6 + 10**.
  - **Saxon Defender's Roll:** 1D6 + 2 (Armor) + 8 (models) + 2 (Shieldwall bonus) = **1D6 + 12**.
  - *The Saxons have a clear advantage due to their defensive posture!*
- 

#### 6.2 The Grand Clash (Multi-Unit Combat)

If a single defending unit was charged by multiple enemy units in the same round, the combat is resolved as one "**Grand Clash**." This single, massive roll represents the total weight of the combined assault.

1. **The Defender's Pool:** The defending unit makes one roll. Its combat pool is:
  - **1D6 + their Armor (A) value + 1 per model in contact with ANY charging enemy unit.**
2. **The Attackers' Pool:** All attacking units combine their strength into a single roll. Their combat pool is:
  - **1D6 + the highest Fight (F) value among all attacking units + 1 per model in contact from ALL charging units.**
3. **Resolve:** The two totals are compared as normal (see below). If the Defender wins, the **"Primary Attacker"** (the first unit that declared a charge against them that turn) suffers the full Resolve loss.

### 6.3 Suffering Resolve Loss & Casualties

Combat in **Valhalla's Gate** is a contest of wills as much as a contest of arms. The loser of a Clash has their courage shattered.

1. **Compare Totals:** Compare the final modified totals of the Attacker and Defender. The side with the **lower** total has lost the Clash.
2. **Suffer Resolve Loss:** The losing unit immediately loses **Resolve** equal to the difference between the two totals. Mark this on the unit's profile or with tokens.
3. **Suffer Casualties:** For each point of Resolve lost in the Clash, the losing player must roll one D6. On a roll of **1**, the unit suffers a casualty. Remove one model of your choice from the losing unit. *Note: Some weapons and abilities can modify this roll.*

---

#### Example 6.2: Resolving the Clash

*In the clash from Example 6.1, the Viking player rolls a 5, for a total of 15 (5+10). The Saxon player rolls a 2, for a total of 14 (2+12).*

- **Result:** The Vikings win by 1 (15 vs 14).
- **Resolve Loss:** The Saxon unit loses **1 Resolve**.
- **Casualties:** The Saxon player must roll one D6 for the one point of Resolve lost. They roll a 4. No models are removed, but the unit's morale has been damaged.

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### 6.4 Guts Tests & Broken Units

The ultimate goal of combat is to break the enemy's will to fight.

- **Broken Unit:** When a unit's **Resolve** is reduced to 0, it is immediately **Broken**. Its warriors throw down their shields and flee the field, or are cut down where they stand.

- **Removal:** A Broken unit remains on the table until the **Reckoning Phase**, at which point it is removed from play. A Broken unit cannot be activated, attacked, or affected by any ability for the remainder of the round.
- **Victory Points:** When an enemy unit is Broken, your side immediately scores **1 Victory Point (VP)**.
- **Guts Test:** This is a special test of courage that only **Heroes** are required to make. It uses their **Guts** value (e.g., 3+). The most common time for a Guts test is when a Hero's unit is Broken, to see if the Hero is slain or survives the rout (see Chapter 7.4).

**Table 6.1: Clash Resolution Summary**

Example	Attacker: 1D6 + F + models. Defender: 1D6 + A + models (+ Shieldwall).
Step	Action
1. Determine Pools	Attacker & Defender calculate their combat pools.
2. Roll Dice	Both players roll 1D6 and add their bonuses to get a final total.
3. Compare Totals	The side with the lower total has lost the Clash.
4. Suffer Resolve Loss	The losing unit loses Resolve equal to the difference between the totals.
5. Suffer Casualties	For each point of Resolve lost, the loser rolls 1D6. On a 1, one model is removed.
6. Check for Broken	If a unit's Resolve reaches 0, it is Broken and will be removed in the Reckoning Phase.

## Part 2: The Rules of War

### Chapter 7: Command & Heroes

A shieldwall is more than just a line of warriors; it is a body, and at its head is a mind—a leader whose courage and cunning can turn the tide of battle. Heroes are the focal point of your army. Their actions are decisive, their survival is paramount, and their fall can shatter the morale of your entire Host.

This chapter explains how to use your Command Dice to control the flow of battle and how your Heroes can perform legendary deeds.

#### 7.1 Using Command Dice: The Will of the Jarl

In the **Oaths Phase**, each player rolls 3D6 to form their Command Dice Pool. These are not just for determining initiative; they are a vital tactical resource representing your leader's influence, your warband's luck, and moments of battlefield opportunity.

A Command Die can be spent at any time by a player to use one of the abilities below. Once spent, the die is removed from your pool for the rest of the round.

The value of the die determines its function:

- **AXE (Die roll of 1, 2, or 3) - Represents Raw Effort:**
  - You may spend one Axe die to **re-roll** any single D6 you have just rolled. This can be your combat roll, a casualty roll, a Guts test, or any other roll you make. You must accept the result of the second roll.
- **SHIELD (Die roll of 4 or 5) - Represents Tactical Intervention:**
  - You may spend one Shield die to force an **opponent to re-roll** any single D6 they have just rolled. You can use this to turn their successful combat roll into a failure, or make them re-roll a crucial Guts test. They must accept the result of the second roll.
- **HELMET (Die roll of 6) - Represents Heroism & Decisive Action:**
  - A Helmet die is the most powerful and versatile. It is required to activate your Hero's most powerful abilities or your faction's ultimate Stratagems. Its primary use is to fuel **Heroic Actions**.

#### 7.2 Heroic Actions

A Hero is a figure of legend, capable of feats beyond those of a normal warrior. During the activation of your **Hero's Unit**, you may declare that your Hero is performing one of the following Heroic Actions. This is done **in addition** to their unit's normal Order action.

A Hero may only perform **one** Heroic Action per round.

- **Challenge (Cost: 1 Axe Die)**
  - When your Hero's unit declares a **Charge** against an enemy unit that also contains a Hero, you may spend an Axe die to issue a Challenge. During the Grand Clash sub-phase, instead of a normal Clash, the two Heroes fight a duel.
  - **Resolution:** Both players roll **1D6 + their Hero's Fight (F) bonus**. The loser's unit immediately suffers **2 Resolve loss**. The losing Hero must then immediately make a **Guts test**. If they fail, they are slain!
- **Rallying Cry (Cost: 1 Shield Die)**
  - Your Hero lets out a mighty shout of encouragement, steeling the nerves of wavering warriors.
  - **Effect:** Choose one friendly unit within **6 inches** of the Hero's unit. That unit immediately **regains D3 Resolve** (roll a D6: 1-2=1, 3-4=2, 5-6=3). This cannot take a unit above its starting Resolve value.
- **Tactical Genius (Cost: 1 Helmet Die)**
  - Your Hero spots a flaw in the enemy's plan or a fleeting opportunity on the field.
  - **Effect:** Choose one other friendly unit within **12 inches** of your Hero that has not yet activated this round. You may immediately **swap its face-down Order token** with a different Order token from your supply. The opponent will not know what the new order is until it is revealed.

### 7.3 The Warlord's Edict

The Warlord is the supreme commander of your entire Host. In addition to their normal Heroic Actions, the Warlord (and only the Warlord) has access to a single, game-changing ability that can shape the course of an entire round.

- **The Rule:** Once per game, at the start of any **Clash Phase** (after Orders are revealed), the Warlord may declare an **Edict**. They choose **one** of the following effects, which lasts until the end of the current round:
  - **"ALL-OUT ASSAULT!"** All friendly units add **+1 to their Fight (F) rolls** when resolving a **Charge** action.
  - **"HOLD AT ALL COSTS!"** All friendly units add **+1 to their Armor (A) rolls** when benefiting from a **Shieldwall** order.
  - **"SWIFT REPOSITION!"** All friendly units performing a **Move** action may add **+2 inches** to their movement.

### 7.4 The Fall of a Hero

A Hero cannot be targeted individually by Ranged Attacks or Charges. To defeat a Hero, you must first break their loyal bodyguard.

If a Hero's unit is **Broken** (its Resolve is reduced to 0), the Hero is immediately in peril. They must make a special **Guts test**, called a **Hero's Fate** roll.

- **The Roll:** The Hero's owner rolls a D6. They must score equal to or higher than their Hero's **Guts** value.
- **Success:** The Hero survives! They are left as a single model on the battlefield. A lone Hero is a non-combatant. On their next activation, they may perform a single **Move** action to join a friendly unit within 6". If they cannot, they are removed from play.
- **Failure:** The Hero is slain! They are cut down in the rout. Remove the model from the game.
- **The Death of a Warlord:** If the **Warlord** is slain, a shockwave of despair runs through the army. Their side immediately loses all unspent **Boons** they earned in the Boast & Scheme Phase.

**Table 7.1: Command Dice Summary**

Die Value	Name	Function
1, 2, or 3	Axe	Spend to re-roll any single D6 you just rolled.
4 or 5	Shield	Spend to force an opponent to re-roll any single D6 they just rolled.
6	Helmet	Spend to use a Heroic Action or a powerful Stratagem.

**Table 7.2: Heroic Actions**

Action Name	Cost	Description
Challenge	1x Axe Die	Initiate a Hero vs. Hero duel instead of a normal Clash during a Charge.
Rallying Cry	1x Shield Die	A friendly unit within 6" regains D3 Resolve.
Tactical Genius	1x Helmet Die	Swap the secret Order token of another friendly unit within 12".

Of course. Here is the complete and finalized Chapter 8. This chapter provides the essential framework for players to agree on a game size and build fair, balanced, and thematic armies.

## Part 3: The Armies of the Age

### Chapter 8: Mustering the Host

A battle is won long before the first warrior draws their sword. It is won in the planning, in the gathering of forces, and in the careful composition of the army. This chapter provides the rules for building your warband, from a small raiding party to a grand host ready for a decisive battle.

#### 8.1 Game Sizes & Points Limits

**Valhalla's Gate** is designed to be played at different scales, each offering a unique experience. Before a game, players must first agree on the size of the battle they wish to fight. The three official game sizes are:

- **Warband Clash (Small Battle):** The perfect introductory game, ideal for learning the rules or for a quick, bloody skirmish.
  - **Players:** 1 vs 1
  - **Points Limit:** 500 points per player.
- **Host Battle (Standard Game):** This is the core experience of **Valhalla's Gate**, emphasizing teamwork and grander strategy.
  - **Players:** 2 vs 2
  - **Points Limit:** 1000 points per side (each player builds a 500-point warband).
- **Shieldwall (Epic Battle):** A massive, multi-player battle suitable for conventions or club events, where each player has a highly specialized role.
  - **Players:** 3 vs 3 or 4 vs 4
  - **Points Limit:** 1500 points per side (each player builds a warband of 500 or 375 points, respectively).

#### 8.2 The Points System: The Price of Glory

To ensure games are fair and balanced, every unit and upgrade in the game has a points cost. Before a game, players agree to a points limit and then spend these points to purchase the units for their warband.

The full points list for each faction's units can be found in Chapter 10. A unit's cost is determined by its statistics, its keywords, and its overall battlefield role. Powerful Elite units will naturally cost more than a common Levy.

##### Unit Size:

Unless specified otherwise, a unit must consist of a minimum of **5 models** and a maximum of **12 models**. The base cost listed in the army lists is for a unit of 8 models; you must adjust the cost if you take more or fewer models.



### Hero & Champion Costs:

A Hero or Champion is an upgrade purchased for a specific unit. This cost is paid in addition to the cost of the unit's models. For example, to have a Hero lead a unit of 8 Hirdmen, you would pay the base cost for the 8 Hirdmen models *plus* the "Hero Upgrade" cost.

## 8.3 Army Composition: The Laws of the Host

An army is more than just its strongest warriors. It is a balanced force of elites, core troops, and common levies. To ensure your army is both thematic and legal for gameplay, you must follow the composition rules below when building your personal warband (e.g., your 500-point contribution to the Host).

Each player's warband must contain:

1. **Leader (1 Required):** You must include exactly **one Hero**. This Hero must be assigned to lead one of your units.
2. **Champions (0-2 Optional):** You may include up to **two Champions**. Each Champion must be assigned to a different Warrior or Elite unit.
3. **Warrior Core (1+ Required):** You must include **at least one** unit with the **Warrior** keyword. These professional soldiers are the heart of your force.
4. **Elites (0-1 Restricted):** You may include **no more than one** unit with the **Elite** keyword. These powerful units are rare and valuable.
5. **Levy (Unlimited):** You may include any number of units with the **Levy** keyword.

### Host-Level Rule:

Before the game begins, the players on one side must nominate one of their Heroes to be the **Warlord** for the entire Host.

**Table 8.1: Game Size Summary**

Game Size	Player Count	Points Limit Per Side	Description
Warband Clash	1 vs 1	500 pts	A small, fast game perfect for learning.
Host Battle	2 vs 2	1000 pts	The standard, core game experience focused on teamwork.
Shieldwall	3v3 or 4v4	1500 pts	An epic, multi-player convention-style battle.

**Table 8.2: Army Composition Checklist (per player)**

Unit Type	Requirement	Notes
Hero	Exactly 1	Your warband's leader must be assigned to a unit.
Champion	0-2	Optional lesser leaders for Warrior or Elite units.
Warrior Unit(s)	1 or more	The required core of your professional fighting force.
Elite Unit(s)	0-1	Powerful but rare troops. You can only have one of these units.
Levy Unit(s)	Unlimited	You may include as many units of common troops as you can afford.

Of course. This chapter is one of the most unique and defining elements of **Valhalla's Gate**. Here is the complete and finalized Chapter 9.

## Part 3: The Armies of the Age

### Chapter 9: The Boast & Scheme Phase

The battle does not begin with the first charge. It begins with the meeting of the Warlords. In the quiet moments before the bloodshed, leaders gather to boast of their strength, scheme for advantage, and make offerings to their gods. This contest of wills can grant a crucial edge before the first shield is splintered.

This phase takes place once per game, after the battlefield has been set up but before any units are deployed.

#### 9.1 The Warlord's Council

1. **Gain Boast Points:** Each **Side** (or **Host**) receives **12 Boast Points (BP)**. This is a shared pool of points for the entire team.
2. **Allocate Points:** The players on one team must now confer and decide, as a group, how to allocate their 12 BP across the five categories listed below. The team's **Warlord** has the final say in any disputes. This allocation is recorded in secret, hidden from the opposing team who is doing the same.

#### 9.2 The Five Contests

There are five categories where you can invest your Boast Points. Each represents a different aspect of pre-battle preparation and strategy.

- **1. The War Cry (Might):** Represents your warriors' martial fervor, terrifying war cries, and displays of physical strength.
- **2. The Lay of the Land (Cunning):** Represents superior scouting, knowledge of hidden paths, and bribing locals for information.
- **3. The Favour of the Gods (Faith):** Represents sacrifices, prayers, and rituals performed to win divine aid for the coming battle.
- **4. The Forgemaster's Gift (Wealth):** Represents your Host's riches, allowing you to outfit key warriors with superior arms and armor.
- **5. The Whispered Word (Intrigue):** Represents spreading dissent and fear among the enemy ranks through rumors, treachery, and psychological warfare.

#### 9.3 The Reveal & The Boons

Once both teams have locked in their decisions, the Warlords reveal their allocations simultaneously.

- **Determine Winners:** For each of the five categories, compare the total BP spent by each side. The side that spent more points in a category wins that contest.

- **Ties:** If both sides spent the same number of points in a category, the tie is broken by a single D6 roll. The higher roll wins the contest.
- **Gain Boons:** For each contest a side wins, they gain a powerful, single-use advantage called a **Boon**. The specific Boon they receive is unique to their faction. A team can win multiple Boons. These are a shared resource for the entire team, and the Warlord typically decides when they are used.

The full lists of faction-specific Boons are detailed in Chapter 10.

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### Example 9.1: Allocating Boast Points

*The Viking team (2 players) discusses their strategy. They fear the Frankish knights. Player A says, "We need to win Cunning to get The Hidden Path and hide our spearmen in the woods." Player B agrees, "And let's win Intrigue to soften up one of their knight units with Seeds of Doubt." The Warlord decides: they allocate 5 points to Cunning, 5 points to Intrigue, and the remaining 2 points to Might, hoping for a lucky tie-breaker.*

*The Frankish team, meanwhile, wants to press their advantage. Their Warlord says, "Our knights are our strength. We must win Might to get the Knight's Charge Boon." They allocate 7 points to Might, 3 to Faith, and 2 to Wealth, ignoring the other categories.*

*The Reveal:*

- *Might: Vikings (2) vs. Franks (7). Franks win the **Might Contest**.*
- *Cunning: Vikings (5) vs. Franks (0). Vikings win the **Cunning Contest**.*
- *Faith: Vikings (0) vs. Franks (3). Franks win the **Faith Contest**.*
- *Wealth: Vikings (0) vs. Franks (2). Franks win the **Wealth Contest**.*
- *Intrigue: Vikings (5) vs. Franks (0). Vikings win the **Intrigue Contest**.*

*The battle will begin with the Franks holding three Boons and the Vikings holding two. The stage is set for a fascinating clash.*

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### Designer's Note: The Power of Twelve

*You might wonder why we chose 12 Boast Points. The number is not arbitrary; it is steeped in the lore that inspires this game. In Norse mythology, the number twelve holds a special significance, often associated with divine authority and completeness. In the poem Grímnismál, the god Odin reveals that he has twelve names, and the council of the most powerful Aesir gods was said to be comprised of twelve deities. Therefore, when your team gathers for its council, you are not just spending points. You are a council of twelve, an echo of the gods in Asgard. Each point you allocate is a declaration of your host's nature for the coming battle.*

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**Table 9.1: The Five Contests**

Contest Name	Represents	Boon Type
The War Cry	Might	Typically provides a bonus to movement or combat actions.
The Lay of the Land	Cunning	Typically provides an advantage related to terrain or deployment.
The Favour of the Gods	Faith	Typically provides a defensive or 'miraculous' saving ability.
The Forgemaster's Gift	Wealth	Typically provides a permanent upgrade to the equipment or stats of certain units.
The Whispered Word	Intrigue	Typically provides a way to directly disrupt or demoralize the enemy.

Of course. Chapter 10 is the heart of the rulebook, the grand library of armies that players will spend hours poring over. Due to its size and importance, I will structure it clearly with each faction getting its own dedicated section.

Here is the complete and finalized Chapter 10.

## Part 3: The Armies of the Age

### Chapter 10: The Factions

While the rules of war may be universal, the warrior is a product of their culture. A Viking Jarl fights for glory and gold, while a Saxon Thegn fights for the preservation of his home and king. Each faction in **Valhalla's Gate** has a unique roster of units, distinct leadership styles, and their own cunning schemes for achieving victory.

This chapter contains all the information you need to command one of the four core factions. Each entry includes:

- A brief description of the faction's playstyle.
- Their three unique **Hero Archetypes**.
- Their unique menu of **Boons** from the Boast & Scheme phase.
- Their full **Unit Roster** with stats and points costs.

*(Note: The base points cost listed is for a unit of 8 models. Adjust the cost for more or fewer models using the "Per Extra" value. A Hero or Champion upgrade is a separate cost.)*

#### 10.1 The Vikings: The Sea Wolves

The Vikings are a faction of pure aggression. Their strengths lie in their ferocious elite infantry and their ability to close with the enemy quickly and decisively. A Viking player must be bold, using their powerful charge bonuses and offensive abilities to break the enemy's will before their own lesser numbers or weaker defenses become a liability.

##### Viking Hero Archetypes (Choose one for your Hero)

- **The Berserkergang:** Your Hero's unit re-rolls Charge combat rolls, but cannot use the Shieldwall order.
- **The Skald:** Once per game, your Hero's Rallying Cry has 12" range and heals the full 3 Resolve.
- **The Jarl:** Your warband contributes +1 Boast Point to your side's total (13 instead of 12).

**Table 10.1: Viking Boons**

Contest	Boon Name	Effect
Might	The First Blood	Make 2 consecutive unit activations once per game at the start of any Clash Phase.
Cunning	The Hidden Path	One unit may move through impassable terrain for one Move action once per game.
Faith	Odin's Favour	On a 4+ roll, a unit ignores all Resolve loss from one Clash once per game.
Wealth	Master-Forged Steel	Give a permanent +1F or +1A to up to two of your units.
Intrigue	Seeds of Doubt	Choose one enemy unit to immediately lose 2 Resolve once per game.

**Table 10.2: Viking Unit Roster**

Unit Name	Tier	M	F	A	R	Base Cost (8)	Per Extra	Hero/Champ Upgrade	Keywords & Notes
Bondi	Levy	6"	+1	+1	5	60	6	+15 Champion	Generic Levy Spearmen
Thralls	Levy	6"	+0	+0	4	40	4	N/A	Expendable: Friendly units ignore Resolve loss when this unit Breaks.
Hirdmen	Warrior	6"	+2	+1	5	90	10	+25 Hero / +15 Champ	Shieldwall
Viking Archers	Warrior	6"	+0	+0	4	75	8	+20 Hero / +15 Champ	Short Bow (Unlimited)
Huscarls	Elite	5"	+3	+2	6	140	16	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	Linebreaker: Inflicts +1 Resolve loss on winning a Clash.
Berserkers	Elite	7"	+3	+0	5	125 (for 5)	25	+40 Hero / N/A	Rage: Must Charge if able, ignores first point of Resolve loss.

## 10.2 The Anglo-Saxons: The Shieldburg

The Anglo-Saxons are the anvil against which enemy hammers break. Their playstyle is defensive and resilient, built around the unyielding shieldwall. They excel at absorbing a charge and grinding their opponents down in a war of attrition. A Saxon player must be patient, using their powerful defensive abilities to blunt the enemy's assault and win the long game.

### Anglo-Saxon Hero Archetypes (Choose one for your Hero)

- **The Thegn:** As long as this Hero is not slain, their unit's Resolve cannot be reduced below 1.
- **The Reeve:** Friendly Levy units starting their activation within 6" of this Hero may add +1" to their movement.
- **The Priest:** This Hero's unit, and all friendly units in base contact with it, automatically pass any Guts tests.

**Table 10.3: Anglo-Saxon Boons**

Contest	Boon Name	Effect
Might	The Unbreakable Line	For one entire round, all friendly units add +1 to their Armor rolls when defending in a Clash.
Cunning	The Ambush	After Orders are revealed, you may change one friendly unit's Order token to any other Order token once per game.
Faith	For the King!	The first time your Warlord's unit is Broken, it is not removed. It remains on the field with 1 Resolve.
Wealth	Shields of the Realm	Give a permanent +1 Resolve to up to three of your units.
Intrigue	Whispers of Duty	Choose one friendly unit to immediately regain up to 3 lost Resolve once per game.

**Table 10.4: Anglo-Saxon Unit Roster**

Unit Name	Tier	M	F	A	R	Base Cost (8)	Per Extra	Hero/Champ Upgrade	Keywords & Notes
Fyrd Spearmen	Levy	6"	+1	+1	5	60	6	+15 Champion	Generic Levy Spearmen
Thralls	Levy	6"	+0	+0	4	40	4	N/A	Expendable
Select Fyrd	Warri	5"	+1	+2	6	85	9	+25 Hero / +15	Resolute: Once per



	or							Champ	game, can ignore the result of one lost Clash.
Ceorl Archers	Warrior	6"	+0	+0	4	70	8	+20 Hero / +15 Champ	Short Bow (Unlimited), Volley Fire: Hits on 4+ if it did not move.
Thegns	Elite	5"	+2	+2	6	135	15	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	Shieldwall
Hearthguard	Elite	5"	+2	+3	6	145	16	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	Bodyguard: Hero's unit can use this unit's Armor value if in base contact.

### 10.3 The Franks: The Iron Empire

The Franks are a disciplined, professional military force. They rely on combined-arms tactics, using their solid infantry to fix the enemy in place for a devastating charge from their elite heavy cavalry. A Frankish player must think like a general, coordinating their different unit types to create tactical superiority and execute precise, battle-winning maneuvers.

#### Frankish Hero Archetypes (Choose one for your Hero)

- **The Paladin:** If this Hero is in a cavalry unit, its Charge action causes the target to get -2 to their combat roll.
- **The Count:** Once per round, can issue a "Coordinated Order," allowing another friendly unit within 6" to activate immediately out of sequence.
- **The Bishop:** The first time a friendly unit is Broken during the game, ignore it.

**Table 10.5: Frankish Boons**

Contest	Boon Name	Effect
Might	Knight's Charge	Up to three friendly cavalry units may make a free 6" move before the first round begins.
Cunning	Disciplined Volley	For one entire round, all friendly ranged units may re-roll their missed Ranged Attack rolls.
Faith	The Oriflamme	Friendly units within 12" of your Warlord may re-roll any failed casualty rolls.
Wealth	Heavy Mail	Key units have improved casualty rolls (only die on a 1). Applied to up to two units.
Intrigue	Break Their Spirit	When an enemy unit is Broken by a Clash, another enemy unit within 6" immediately loses 1 Resolve.

**Table 10.6: Frankish Unit Roster**

Unit Name	Tier	M	F	A	R	Base Cost (8)	Per Extra	Hero/Champ Upgrade	Keywords & Notes
Levy Spearmen	Levy	6"	+1	+1	5	60	6	+15 Champion	Generic Levy Spearmen
Scara Infantry	Warrior	5"	+1	+2	6	95	10	+25 Hero / +15 Champ	Discipline: Can spend a Command Die to re-roll their combat die.
Crossbow	Warrior	5"	+0	+0	4	85	10	+20 Hero / +15	Crossbow (Unlimited),

men								Champ	Reload
Milites (Mounted)	Elite	9"	+2	+2	5	150 (for 5)	30	+40 Hero / N/A	Devastating Charge: Enemy cannot add models bonus to their roll.
Paladin Guard	Elite	5"	+2	+3	6	140	16	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	Unbreakable Will: First time Broken, set to 1 Resolve instead.

## 10.4 The Scots & Picts: The Northern Fury

The Scots & Picts are a force of wild, unpredictable aggression. They cannot match their southern neighbors in armor or discipline, so they rely on speed, ambush, and terrifying shock tactics. A Scots-Picts player must embrace chaos, using terrain and surprise to isolate and overwhelm their opponents before their own fragile warriors can be pinned down and destroyed.

### Scots-Picts Hero Archetypes (Choose one for your Hero)

- **The Mormaer:** The Mormaer's unit gains +1 Resolve.
- **The Druid:** Once per game, can create a 6" circle of "mist" on the board. The mist blocks line of sight for one round.
- **The War-Leader:** When this Hero's unit wins a Clash, they inflict +1 additional Resolve loss on the enemy.

**Table 10.7: Scots-Picts Boons**

Contest	Boon Name	Effect
Might	Highland Charge	For one round, all friendly units get +1 to their Fight roll on the turn they Charge.
Cunning	Ghosts of the Glen	Up to two friendly units may be deployed using the Ambush rule (deploy hidden).
Faith	Ancient Curses	Once per game, choose an enemy Hero's unit. It suffers -1 to all combat rolls for one round.
Wealth	Tribute from the Isles	Your side starts the game with an extra D3+1 Command Dice in your Warlord's pool.
Intrigue	Woad Paint	After deployment, three friendly units get -1 to be hit by the first Ranged Attack against them.

**Table 10.8: Scots-Picts Unit Roster**

Unit Name	Tier	M	F	A	R	Base Cost (8)	Per Extra	Hero/Champ Upgrade	Keywords & Notes
Levy Spearmen	Levy	6"	+1	+1	5	60	6	+15 Champion	Generic Levy Spearmen
Highland Warriors	Warrior	6"	+2	+0	5	85	9	+25 Hero / +15 Champ	Wild Charge: +1 to combat roll when charging.
Moray Javelinmen	Warrior	7"	+1	+0	4	75	8	+20 Hero / +15 Champ	Skirmish, 2 Javelin Volleys

Pictish Berserkers	Elite	6"	+3	+1	5	130	15	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	Terrifying: Enemy must pass the Guts test before charging this unit.
Tribal Champions	Elite	6"	+3	+1	5	135	16	+35 Hero / +15 Champ	2-Handed Weapons: Inflicts -1 penalty on enemy casualty rolls.

## Part 4: The Chronicles

# Chapter 11: Playing a Game

You have mustered your host, studied the arts of war, and sworn oaths to your chieftain. Now it is time to put your skills to the test on the field of battle. This chapter provides the final sequence of steps for starting a game and explains the **Chronicle Objective** system, the primary means by which victory is won or lost.

### 11.1 The Pre-Game Sequence

To ensure a smooth and fair start to your battle, follow these steps in order.

- **Step 1: Muster the Host.** The players agree on the Game Size (Warband Clash, Host Battle, or Shieldwall) and the corresponding points limit for their armies.
- **Step 2: Choose Factions.** The players declare which of the great factions of the age they will be commanding.
- **Step 3: Determine Scenario.** The players choose a scenario to play from Chapter 12. If the scenario is asymmetrical (e.g., "The Raid," which has an Attacker and a Defender), the players roll off. The winner decides who will be the Attacker and who will be the Defender.
- **Step 4: Prepare the Battlefield.** The players work together to set up the terrain according to the scenario's map or guidelines.
- **Step 5: The Boast & Scheme Phase.** This crucial phase is now resolved. The Warlord of each side convenes their council. Each side secretly allocates their 12 Boast Points, then reveals them simultaneously to determine which faction-specific **Boons** they have earned for the coming battle (see Chapter 9).
- **Step 6: Deploy Forces.** Starting with the Defender (or the player who lost the roll-off in a symmetrical battle), players take turns deploying one unit at a time wholly within their designated deployment zone.
- **Step 7: The Chronicle Begins.** With all forces deployed, it is time to determine your secret missions.
  - Starting with the player who deployed first, each player secretly draws **two** Chronicle Objective cards from their faction's unique deck. After looking at them, they choose **one** to keep secret and discard the other.
  - After all players have their secret objective, each team's **Warlord** draws one more Chronicle Objective card from their faction's deck. This objective is revealed to all players and becomes a **shared goal** for their entire Host.
- **Step 8: Start Round 1.** The battle is about to begin. Proceed to the first Oaths Phase of the first game round. Good luck, and may the gods favor your cause!

### 11.2 The Chronicle Objective System

In **Valhalla's Gate**, victory is not just about slaying the most enemies. It is about achieving the strategic goals of your people, whether that is plundering a wealthy village, defending a sacred site, or proving the valor of your heroes. These goals are represented by your Chronicle Objectives.

### Scoring Victory Points (VP)

At the end of the game (typically after 4 rounds), players calculate their side's total Victory Points.

- **For Breaking the Enemy:** Your side scores **1 VP** for each enemy unit that was **Broken** during the battle.
- **For Achieving Objectives:** Each player reveals their secret Chronicle Objective card. If they have met its conditions, their side scores the listed VPs.
- **For the Warlord's Decree:** If a side met the conditions of their shared, open objective, they score the listed VPs.

The side with the most Victory Points at the end of the game is the winner.

## 11.3 Faction-Specific Objective Decks

Each faction has its own deck of Chronicle Objectives, reflecting its unique culture and way of war. Below are a few examples from each of the core factions' decks. A full deck would contain 6-8 different cards.

**Table 11.1: Viking Chronicle Objectives - "For Glory and Gold!"**

Objective Type	Card Name	Condition	VP
Secret	Slay the Champion	Gain VP if the enemy Warlord's unit is Broken by a Clash involving your Hero's unit.	3
Secret	First to the Feast	Gain VP if one of your units is the first in the game to Break an enemy unit.	2
Secret	Pillage	Gain VP if, at the end of the game, you have a unit wholly within the enemy's deployment zone.	2
Warlord's Decree	Make Them Fear Us	As a Host, gain VP if at least half of the starting enemy units are Broken by the end of the game.	3

**Table 11.2: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Objectives - "For Hearth and Home!"**

Objective Type	Card Name	Condition	VP
Secret	Stand Your Ground	Gain VP if none of your units were Broken during the final round of the game.	3

Secret	Protect the Lord	Gain VP if your Warlord's unit ends the game with more than half of its starting Resolve.	2
Secret	Defend the Realm	Gain VP if there are no enemy units in your deployment zone at the end of the game.	2
Warlord's Decree	The Line Did Not Break	As a Host, gain VP if you have an unbroken line of at least three friendly units in the center of the table at game end.	3

**Table 11.3: Frankish Chronicle Objectives - "For the Emperor!"**

Objective Type	Card Name	Condition	VP
Secret	Shatter their Elites	Gain VP if you Break an enemy unit with the 'Elite' keyword.	3
Secret	Overwhelming Force	Gain VP if you destroy an enemy unit in a single Clash (it went from full Resolve to Broken in one go).	2
Secret	Cavalry Supremacy	Gain VP if you have more surviving cavalry units than your opponent at the end of the game.	2
Warlord's Decree	Absolute Domination	As a Host, gain VP if you control the center of the table AND both Warlords are still on the table at game end.	3

**Table 11.4: Scots-Picts Chronicle Objectives - "A Spoil of War"**

Objective Type	Card Name	Condition	VP
Secret	Lead them a Merry Chase	Gain VP if your Hero's unit ends the game in the opposite table quarter from where it started.	3
Secret	Claim the Trophy	Designate one enemy unit after deployment. Gain VP if that specific unit is Broken.	2
Secret	Melt into the Mists	Gain VP if all of your surviving units are within 6" of any table edge at the end of the game (a successful fighting retreat).	2
Warlord's Decree	Humiliate their Champions	As a Host, gain VP if you successfully win a Challenge with any Hero.	3



## Part 4: The Chronicles

### Chapter 12: Scenarios

A battle is more than two armies meeting on an open field. It is a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. A scenario provides this story. It defines the layout of the battlefield, the goals of each army, and any special rules that are in effect.

This chapter provides three standard scenarios for one-off games, as well as special rules that can be used to create your own narrative battles.

#### 12.1 Scenario 1: The Shield Wall

*The scouts have returned. The enemy is marching to meet you. There will be no surprises, no terrain to hide behind—only the strength of your shield arm and the iron will of your warriors. The horns sound. Banners are raised. Today is a good day to die.*

- **Forces:** Equal points per side.
- **Setup:** Players deploy their forces wholly within 12" of their long table edge.
- **Objective:** Victory is determined by the **Chronicle Objective** system (see Chapter 11). In addition, the side that has more units (of any kind) wholly within 12" of the center of the table at the end of the game scores a bonus **2 VP**.
- **Game Length:** 4 rounds.
- **Victory:** The side with the most Victory Points at the end of the game wins.

#### 12.2 Scenario 2: The Messenger

*A vital message must reach the King, but the enemy has been sighted in the woods ahead. A small, elite force has been dispatched to escort the messenger through the hostile territory. The enemy, meanwhile, knows that stopping this message could change the course of the war.*

- **Forces:** Asymmetrical. The **Escort** player has 25% fewer points than the **Ambusher** player.
- **Setup:** The board should be covered in dense terrain. The Escort player nominates one of their models (not a Hero or Champion) to be the **Messenger**. They deploy their entire force within 6" of one corner of the board. The Ambusher player then deploys their entire force anywhere on the board that is more than 18" away from the Escort force.
- **Objective:** The Escort player must move the Messenger model off the diagonally opposite corner of the board.
- **Special Rules:**
  - **The Message:** The Messenger model must always remain in coherency with its unit. If the Messenger's unit is Broken, the message is considered lost and the game ends immediately.
- **Game Length:** 5 rounds.

- **Victory:**
  - **Escort Victory:** The Messenger model successfully exits the board via the designated corner.
  - **Ambusher Victory:** The Messenger's unit is Broken.
  - *(The standard Victory Point system is not used in this scenario).*

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### 12.3 Scenario 3: Trial of Champions

*The armies are arrayed, but the leaders, to spare bloodshed or simply for glory, have agreed to a trial by combat. The battle will be decided not by the shieldwall, but by the prowess of heroes.*

- **Forces:** Equal points per side.
- **Setup:** Standard pitched battle deployment.
- **Objective:** This scenario is about heroic deeds. Victory is determined solely by **Glory Points (GP)**.
- **Special Rules:**
  - **The Central Ring:** A 12" circle is marked in the center of the board. It is considered hallowed ground. Only units led by a **Hero** may enter this area.
- 
- **Scoring Glory Points:**
  - **+1 GP:** For each enemy unit Broken by your Hero's unit.
  - **+2 GP:** If your Hero successfully wins a **Challenge**.
  - **+3 GP:** If your Hero's unit is the only unit within the central ring at the end of any round.
  - **-2 GP:** If your own Hero is slain.
- 
- **Game Length:** 5 rounds.
- **Victory:** The side with the most Glory Points at the end of the game wins.

### 12.4 Special Scenario Rules

The following rules are not standalone scenarios, but are modules that can be added to any game (especially custom ones) to create a more narrative experience.

#### The Landing (Amphibious Assaults)

In a scenario with this rule, one table edge is the **Shoreline**. The Attacker's army begins off-board. At the start of their turn, the Attacker's Warlord declares how many units will attempt to land. For each, they make a **Landing Roll (D6)**:

- **1: Disarray!** The unit deploys within 6" of the Shoreline but cannot be given an Order this round.
- **2-5: Ashore!** The unit deploys within 6" of the Shoreline and may act normally.
- **6: Perfect Landing!** The unit deploys normally and gains a "Momentum" token. The first time it makes a Charge action, it adds +2 to its Fight roll.

## Sentry Posts & Alarms (Defender's Vigil)

In a scenario where one player is a surprise Attacker, the Defender may use this rule.

1. **Designate Sentry Posts:** The Defender designates up to three terrain features (Hill, Tower, Forest Edge, etc.) as Sentry Posts.
2. **Alarm Roll:** Before the first round, the Defender rolls a D6 for each Sentry Post. On a **4+**, the alarm is raised, and they gain one **Alert Token**.
3. **Using Alert Tokens:** An Alert Token is a shared team resource that can be spent at any time to:
  - **(1 Token) Redeploy:** Allow a friendly unit to make a free 6" move in response to an enemy deployment.
  - **(1 Token) Early Volley:** Allow a friendly ranged unit to make a free Ranged Attack against a newly deployed enemy unit.
  - **(2 Tokens) Set Defenses:** Declare one piece of terrain to be Difficult Ground for the rest of the game (movement is halved within it).

**Table 12.1: Scenario Summary**

Scenario Name	Forces	Primary Objective	Key Special Rule
The Shield Wall	Equal	Score VP via Chronicle Objectives & controlling the center.	Standard battle, tests core competency.
The Messenger	Asymmetrical	Escort a model across the board OR intercept it.	Focuses on movement and board control over combat.
Trial of Champions	Equal	Score Glory Points (GP) through heroic actions.	Unique scoring system, emphasizes Hero vs. Hero combat.

## 12.3 Scenario 3: The Tithe of Steel

### General Information (To be read aloud to all four players)

*"The harvest is in. The local farmers, their backs aching, have rendered unto God and King their due. The granaries of the local church are overflowing, and its reliquary heavy with the tithes of the faithful. It is a time of bounty and celebration.*

*But the sea has brought different tax collectors. Jarl 'Blood-Eagle' and his war host have beached their longships in the nearby cove. They smell weakness and wealth, and their target is the unsuspecting church.*

*The local Thegn, alerted by a panicked farmhand, is scrambling to muster the Fyrd. He is outnumbered and caught off guard. He must act quickly and decisively to drive the invaders back into the sea."*

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## The Battlefield & Setup

- **Board:** A 6'x4' table is recommended.
- **The Church:** In the center of one of the short table edges, place a large **Church** building.
- **The Shoreline:** The opposite short table edge is the **Viking Deployment Zone**.
- **Terrain:** The board represents a settled English countryside. Place a few small **Woods**, some **Fences** or low stone walls (these provide light cover, a +1 Armor bonus vs. Ranged Attacks), and a **Road** leading from the Shoreline towards the Church.
- **The Treasure:** Place **3 Treasure tokens** inside the Church building.
- **Deployment:**
  - The **Viking Host** deploys their entire force wholly within 12" of their Shoreline edge.
  - The **Saxon Host** does **not** deploy on the table at the start. Their forces are "mustering" (see Special Rules).

## Special Rules

- **The Muster (Saxon Reinforcements):** At the start of each of the Saxon team's turns (Rounds 1, 2, and 3), the Warlord declares how many of their off-board units will attempt to muster. For each unit, they roll a D6:
  - **1-2:** The unit is delayed. It does not arrive this turn.
  - **3-6:** The unit arrives! It may be placed anywhere wholly within **12 inches of EITHER of the long table edges**, but not within 6" of a Viking unit. The unit may be given an Order and activate normally this round.
  - *Any Saxon units that have not arrived by the end of Round 3 arrive automatically at the start of Round 4.*
- **Looting the Church:** A Viking unit that is inside the Church and not Engaged can perform a special **"Pillage"** action instead of its normal Order. For each unit that does so, remove one Treasure token from the Church. The unit is now **carrying Treasure**. A unit can only carry one Treasure token.
- **Securing the Loot:** A Viking unit carrying Treasure that moves off the board via the **Viking Deployment Zone (Shoreline)** has successfully secured its loot. The unit does not return to the game.

## Game Length & End-of-Game

The game lasts for a **minimum of 6 rounds**.

Starting at the end of the **Reckoning Phase** of Round 6, the Viking Warlord's player must roll a D6 for the **Horns of Retreat**:

- On a **1-2**, the raid is over. The game ends immediately.

- On a **3-6**, the battle rages on for another round.

If the game continues to the end of **Round 7**, the roll is made again:

- On a **1-3**, the raid is over.
- On a **4-6**, the game continues.

**Round 8** is the final round. The game ends automatically at its conclusion.

### Victory Conditions

This scenario has asymmetrical victory conditions. The winner is determined as follows at the end of the game.

- **For the Viking Host:** Victory is determined by how much Treasure is secured.
  - **Major Victory:** 3 Treasure tokens secured.
  - **Minor Victory:** 2 Treasure tokens secured.
  - **Draw:** 1 Treasure token secured.
  - **Defeat:** 0 Treasure tokens secured.
- 
- **For the Saxon Host:** Victory is determined by the fate of the enemy Warlord.
  - **Major Victory:** The Viking Warlord is **slain**.
  - **Major Defeat:** The Viking Warlord is **alive** at the end of the game (either on the board or has escaped).

### Secret Information: The Viking Briefing

*(To be given only to the two Viking players)*

*"Jarl, your thrall, once a slave at this church, has told you a secret. The silver crosses and plates are a fine prize, but the true treasure is the **Gospel of St. Aidan**, an ancient, illuminated manuscript adorned with gold and jewels. It is priceless. He says the monks keep it hidden beneath a specific flagstone.*

*This is the prize that will make you a legend.*

### Your Secret Objective:

- The **third** Treasure token to be looted from the church is considered the **Gospel of St. Aidan**. All other treasure is secondary.
- If you successfully secure the Gospel of St. Aidan (the third token), your victory is elevated by one level.
  - If you secure only the Gospel (1 token total), it counts as a **Minor Victory** instead of a Draw.
  - If you secure two tokens including the Gospel, it counts as a **Major Victory**.

## Secret Information: The Saxon Briefing

*(To be given only to the two Saxon players)*

*"Thegn, a local seer, known for her grim but accurate prophecies, has foretold that if the Viking Jarl known as 'Blood-Eagle' escapes this raid alive, he will return in five years not as a raider, but as a conqueror at the head of a great army that will burn the entire kingdom.*

*The treasure, the church, even the lives of your men—all are secondary. The prophecy is clear: the Jarl must fall today, on this patch of English soil. The future of the realm depends on it.*

### Your Secret Objective:

- You must **slay the Viking Warlord, Jarl 'Blood-Eagle'**. This is your only true objective.
- **Major Victory:** If the Viking Warlord is slain, you achieve a Major Victory, **regardless of how much treasure the Vikings secure.**
- **Major Defeat:** If the Viking Warlord escapes (his unit moves off the board) or is still alive on the board at the end of the game, you have failed in your sacred duty.

## Pre-Made Warbands (Approx. 500 pts each)

### Viking Host

#### Player 1: Jarl "Blood-Eagle" (Warlord)

- **Hero:** Jarl (Archetype: Jarl) leads **8 Huscarls (Elite)**. [170 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **12 Hirdmen**. [130 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **12 Hirdmen**. [130 pts]
  - *Role: The main assault. This force is designed to march directly up the road, smash any opposition, and storm the church.*
- 

#### Player 2: "Erik the Swift"

- **Hero:** Erik (Archetype: Skald) leads **10 Viking Raiders (Warrior)**. [125 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **10 Viking Raiders**. [115 pts]
- **Levy:** 1 unit of **12 Bondi**. [84 pts]
- **Levy:** 1 unit of **12 Bondi**. [84 pts]
  - *Role: Flankers and carriers. This faster force is meant to sweep around the flanks, engage any arriving Saxons, and be the ones to grab the loot and run for the ships.*

### Saxon Host

#### Player 3: Thegn Aethelgar (Warlord)

- **Hero:** Thegn Aethelgar (Archetype: Thegn) leads **8 Thegns (Elite)**. [170 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **12 Select Fyrd**. [121 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **12 Select Fyrd**. [121 pts]
  - *Role: The Shieldwall. This force is designed to intercept the Viking main body and pin it down.*

#### **Player 4: Father Michael**

- **Hero:** Father Michael (Archetype: Priest) leads **8 Hearthguard (Elite)**. [180 pts]
- **Warrior:** 1 unit of **12 Ceorl Archers**. [118 pts]
- **Levy:** 1 unit of **12 Fyrd Spearmen**. [84 pts]
- **Levy:** 1 unit of **12 Fyrd Spearmen**. [84 pts]
  - *Role: The Hunters. This force uses its ranged superiority to weaken the Vikings and its elite Hearthguard to deliver the killing blow to the enemy Warlord.*

## Part 4: The Chronicles

### Chapter 13: The Fates' Decree (Optional Rules)

The core rules of **Valhalla's Gate** are designed to provide a fast, cinematic, and balanced experience. However, the sagas are filled with tales of desperate last stands, legendary heroes, and the unpredictable chaos of battle.

This chapter contains a collection of **optional rules**. These are modular additions that players can agree to use before a game to add new layers of tactical depth and narrative flavor. It is recommended that new players learn the game using only the core rules first.

To use an optional rule, all players in the game must agree to its inclusion before the battle begins.

#### 13.1 Optional Rule: Outnumbered but Unbroken

This rule gives smaller, elite units a fighting chance against a horde of lesser foes, representing the desperate courage of warriors who know there is no retreat.

- **The Rule:** During a Clash, if a unit has **fewer models in base-to-base contact** with the enemy than the enemy has in contact with it, it is considered **Outnumbered**.
- **The Effect:** A unit that is Outnumbered for a Clash adds its **Unit Tier** as a bonus to its final combat roll total.
  - **Levy Tier:** +1
  - **Warrior Tier:** +2
  - **Elite Tier:** +3

##### Example 13.1: The Last Stand of the Huscarls

*A small unit of 5 Elite Huscarls (F+3) is charged by a large unit of 12 Levy Bondi (F+1). All 5 Huscarls and 12 Bondi are in contact.*

- **Bondi Attacker's Pool:**  $1D6 + 1 (F) + 12 (\text{models}) = 1D6 + 13$ .
- **Huscarl Defender's Pool:** The Huscarls are Outnumbered (5 models vs 12). As an **Elite** unit, they gain a +3 bonus. Their roll is:  $1D6 + 2 (A) + 5 (\text{models}) + 3 (\text{Outnumbered}) = 1D6 + 10$ .
- *Without this optional rule, the Huscarls would have been at a huge disadvantage. Now, they have a much greater chance of weathering the storm, just as a true saga hero would.*

#### 13.2 Optional Rule: The Fury of the Weather



This rule introduces the unpredictable nature of Northern European weather. At the start of the game, before deployment, one player rolls a D6 and consults the **Weather Table**. The rolled effect lasts for the entire game.

**Table 13.1: The Weather Table**

D6 Roll	Weather Condition	Effect
1	Gale-Force Winds	All Ranged Attacks suffer a -1 penalty To Hit. Flying banners and stinging dust make aiming difficult.
2	Lashing Rain	Visibility is poor. The maximum range for all Ranged Attacks is reduced to 12". Line of Sight is limited to 18".
3	Thick Fog	The battlefield is shrouded in mist. Line of Sight is limited to 12". Units with the Ambush rule may deploy anywhere more than 9" from an enemy.
4	Clinging Mud	The ground is a quagmire. All infantry units suffer -1" to their Move value. Cavalry units suffer -2".
5	Bitter Cold	The warriors are weary and slow to react. Each player receives one less Command Die during each Oaths Phase.
6	Clear Skies	A perfect day for a battle! The weather has no effect on the game.

### 13.3 Optional Rule: Shield-Brothers

This rule emphasizes the bonds of loyalty within an army and the devastating impact of seeing your comrades fall.

- **The Rule:** When a friendly unit is **Broken**, all other friendly units within **6 inches** of it must immediately take a **Guts test**.
  - **The Guts Test:** For a normal unit, roll a D6. On a **1**, the unit loses **1 Resolve**. For a unit with a Hero or Champion, they use their leader's **Guts** value instead. If they fail the test, they lose 1 Resolve.

### 13.4 Optional Rule: Legendary Heroes

This rule allows a player to field a single, specific, named character leading their Host.

- **The Rule:** Before the game, a player may upgrade their **Warlord** to a **Legendary Hero** by paying an additional **+25 points**. They then gain the powerful ability listed below for their faction instead of choosing a normal Hero Archetype. A side can only ever have one Legendary Hero.
- **Legendary Viking - The Unstoppable Raider:** This Hero is a peerless warrior. When this Hero makes a **Challenge**, they roll **2D6** and pick the highest result for their combat roll.

- **Legendary Anglo-Saxon - *The Uniter*:** This Hero is a master of the realm. The range of their **Rallying Cry** Heroic Action is increased to 12", and once per game, they can use their faction's "For Wessex!" Stratagem for free.
- **Legendary Frank - *The Holy Conqueror*:** This Hero is blessed by God and Empire. All friendly units within 6" of this Hero automatically pass any Guts tests they are required to take.
- **Legendary Scot - *The Highland Ghost*:** This Hero is a master of the ambush. They may nominate **one additional unit** from their warband to be deployed using the Ambush rule.

### 13.5 Optional Rule: The Fog of War

This rule introduces an element of uncertainty and chaos to command, representing the difficulty of issuing orders in the heat of battle.

- **The Rule:** During the **Oaths Phase**, after all players have secretly placed their Order Tokens, the player with initiative for the round rolls a D6.
  - On a roll of **1 (The Blunder)**: A wave of confusion! Every player must choose **one** of their units at random. That unit's Order token is immediately flipped face up. The owner cannot change this Order.
  - On a roll of **6 (The Insight)**: A moment of clarity! The Warlord on the team that won initiative may immediately look at **one** of the opposing team's face-down Order tokens.

### 13.6 Optional Rule: Fatigue & Weariness

This rule adds a layer of resource management, representing a unit's growing exhaustion as the battle rages on. It makes players think twice about constantly pushing their best units into the fray without a moment's rest.

- **The Rule:** A unit gains one **Fatigue** token (to a maximum of 3) when it does any of the following:
    - Performs a **Charge** or **Fight!** action.
    - Loses a **Clash**.
  - **The Effect:** For each **Fatigue** token on a unit, it suffers a **-1 penalty to its combat rolls** (both its Fight and Armor rolls).
  - **Removing Fatigue:** A unit removes **all** of its accumulated Fatigue tokens by being given a **Move** or **Shieldwall** order and doing nothing else during its activation. This represents the unit taking a moment to catch its breath, reform its ranks, and steady its nerves.
-

**Example 13.2: The Weight of Battle**

*A unit of Huscarls charges in Round 1, gaining 1 Fatigue token. They win their Clash. In Round 2, they use a "Fight!" order to continue the melee, gaining another Fatigue token. They now have 2 Fatigue tokens and will suffer a -2 penalty on all future combat rolls. Their player decides that in Round 3, he must preserve his elite warriors. He gives them a "Shieldwall" order. They do nothing during their activation, but they remove all their Fatigue tokens, ready to fight at full strength again next round.*

## Part 4: The Chronicles

# Chapter 14: The Path to Legend (Campaign Rules)

A single battle can make a warrior a hero, but a long and arduous war can make them a legend. The **Path to Legend** is a campaign system for **Valhalla's Gate** that links your battles together into an ongoing story. Your warband will grow, your heroes will gain skills and scars, and you will fight for control of entire kingdoms.

This system is best played with a consistent group of players over several sessions. All you need is a copy of the **Warband Roster** from the appendix for each player to track their journey.

### 14.1 The Campaign Map & Territories

A campaign is played out across a **Campaign Map**, a stylized map of a historical region (such as the Danelaw in England) divided into several **Territories**.

- **Starting a Campaign:** At the start of the campaign, players agree on a starting points value (e.g., 600 points) to create their initial warbands. Each side or player then claims one "home" territory on the map.
- **Territory Bonuses:** Each territory on the map provides a small, unique bonus to the player who controls it. This bonus applies to all their battles as long as they hold the territory.
  - *Example: Controlling the "Forest of Sherwood" might allow your archer units to gain the Ambush special rule.*

### 14.2 The Campaign Turn

A campaign is played over a series of Campaign Turns. Each turn follows these simple steps:

1. **The Challenge:** Players decide which enemy-controlled territories adjacent to their own they wish to attack. This determines the battles for the turn and the scenario to be played (the scenario can be linked to the territory being fought over).
2. **Fight the Battle:** Players fight a game of **Valhalla's Gate** using their current Warband rosters.
3. **The Aftermath:** This is where the consequences of the battle are resolved. After the game, both the winner and the loser must resolve the steps in the Aftermath phase below.

### 14.3 The Aftermath Phase

Win or lose, every battle leaves its mark.

#### A) Determine Casualties & The Hero's Fate

- **Shattered Units:** For each unit that was **Broken** during the battle, its owner must roll a D6. On a roll of **1-2**, the unit is permanently destroyed and must be erased from the warband roster. On a 3+, it survives but is "understrength" and must miss the next battle to recover.

D6 Roll	Result	Effect
1	A Glorious Death!	The Hero is slain and removed from the roster. Your next-in-command is promoted to a Hero, but starts with a negative 'Inexperienced' trait (cannot use Heroic Actions in their first battle).
2-3	Grievously Wounded	The Hero survives but must miss the next battle. Roll once on the Lasting Scars Table.
4-5	A Close Call	The Hero is shaken but unharmed. They can fight in the next battle with no ill effects.
6	A Legendary Stand!	The Hero survives and is inspired by their own valor. They immediately gain 1 Experience Point (XP).

- **The Hero's Fate:** If a player's **Hero's Unit** was Broken, that player must immediately roll on the **Hero's Fate Table** instead of the normal Guts test for survival.

D6 Roll	Scar	Effect
1	Lost Eye	The Hero cannot lead a unit with a Ranged Attack, but gains the 'Fearsome' trait (+1 to their roll when making a Challenge).
2	Limping Gait	The Hero's unit suffers -1" to its Move value, but the Hero gains the 'Stubborn' trait (their unit can re-roll failed Guts tests).
3	Shattered Shield-Arm	The Hero suffers a -1 penalty to their Armor roll when making a Challenge.
4-6	An Ugly Scar	The Hero gains a fearsome scar but suffers no negative effects. They may add +1 to their roll on this table next time.

## B) Gain Experience & Spoils

- **Experience (XP):** Each **Hero** gains **1 XP** for participating in a battle. They gain an additional **+1 XP** if their side won, and **+1 XP** if they personally achieved their secret Chronicle Objective.

- **Leveling Up:** When a Hero accumulates **5 XP**, they "Level Up." They may choose one permanent upgrade from the **Heroic Virtues Table**. After leveling up, their XP resets to 0, but they keep the upgrade.
- **Spoils of War:** The **winner** of the battle gains **D3x100 Spoils**. Spoils are the currency used to improve a warband. They can be spent at any time between battles to:
  - Recruit new units.
  - Add models to existing units.
  - Upgrade a Levy unit to a Warrior unit (e.g., Bondi to Hirdmen) for 50 Spoils.

Virtue Name	Effect
Legendary Courage	Improve the Hero's Guts value by 1 (e.g., from 3+ to 2+).
Master Tactician	The Hero may use their Tactical Genius Heroic Action by spending a Shield die instead of a Helmet die.
Inspiring Presence	The range of the Hero's Rallying Cry Heroic Action is increased to 9".
Mighty Blow	When the Hero makes a Challenge, they inflict +1 Resolve loss on the opposing unit if they win.
Favored by the Gods	Once per campaign, the Hero may automatically pass one Hero's Fate roll.