

# Age of Reason Kriegspiel

## Musket & Pike Historical Play Guide

*Recommended optional rules and gentlemen's agreements for new officers*

This guide is intended for club officers who want to play Wargame Design Studio's Musket & Pike titles with a stronger eighteenth-century flavour, without turning every battle into a second rulebook.

It does not replace the official game manual. It summarizes the spirit of play recommended by the club, proposes a common historical optional-rules standard, and records a few gentlemen's agreements designed to avoid obvious exploitation of the engine.

Players may agree different settings for friendly games, but official reported club battles should preferably use the Historical Standard unless both officers state otherwise before the first turn.

*Recommended website placement: Library > Club Documents. A short note and download link may also be placed in Club Rules under the optional rules section.*

### 1. What kind of game is Musket & Pike?

Musket & Pike is a tactical battlefield system for the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is not a modern free-movement game: formations, command, fire discipline, fatigue, disorder, morale, terrain and retreat routes all matter.

Infantry in line can deliver strong fire but manoeuvres poorly. Columns move better but are more vulnerable. Cavalry is best used for threat, charges, pursuit, flanks and exploitation, not as stationary infantry. Artillery needs position, preparation and a clear field of fire. Skirmishers should screen, scout and harass, not become an artificial wall.

A new player should think first about cohesion. Keep formations together, protect flanks, avoid mixing organizations unnecessarily, do not exhaust your best units, and do not attack merely because the engine allows it.

#### Basic historical approach

- Advance deliberately. Do not throw every unit forward at once.
- Preserve a reserve when the scenario size allows it, but do not make this a rigid rule.
- Use terrain, artillery and fire to prepare attacks before committing to melee.
- Treat disorder, fatigue, low ammunition and rout as central battlefield problems, not minor inconveniences.
- Try to win as an eighteenth-century commander, not by exploiting hex geometry.

## 2. Recommended Club Historical Standard

The following optional rules are recommended for official reported battles. They favour command cohesion, realistic movement, meaningful terrain, proper use of skirmishers and cavalry, fatigue, disorder, uncertainty, and the importance of flanks and isolation.

Activated rule	Why it is recommended
<b>Optional Melee Resolution</b>	Prevents gamey tactics in which a player opens a gap by melee and exploits it immediately in the same turn.
<b>Isolation Rules</b>	Makes flanks, retreat routes and being cut off matter. Isolated troops are more vulnerable and less reliable.
<b>Optional Fire Results</b>	Reduces extreme fire results and produces steadier combat outcomes.
<b>Optional Melee Results</b>	Reduces overly abrupt melee results and makes close combat less capricious.
<b>Melee Terrain Modifiers</b>	Ensures terrain affects assaults, not just movement and fire.
<b>Column Pass Through Fire</b>	Allows artillery fire to punish dense formations and columns more plausibly.
<b>Target Density Modifier</b>	Discourages artificial stacking and over-concentration of men in a single hex.
<b>No Retreat Overruns</b>	Avoids strange overrun effects during retreats, especially involving skirmishers.
<b>Movement Threat Disorder</b>	Makes movement under enemy threat dangerous, discouraging reckless manoeuvres.
<b>Night Movement Fatigue</b>	Makes night activity costly and discourages unrealistic night marches.
<b>Push Skirmishers</b>	Prevents skirmisher screens from becoming an unrealistically solid wall in open terrain.
<b>Line Movement Restriction</b>	Represents the difficulty of moving formed infantry lines without disruption.
<b>Flank Morale Modifier</b>	Rewards well-supported lines and reflects the morale value of secure flanks.
<b>No Opportunity Fire Against Skirmishers</b>	Stops small skirmisher parties from drawing excessive opportunity fire.
<b>No Detached Melee</b>	Prevents out-of-command units from launching aggressive melee attacks too freely.
<b>Mixed Organization Penalty</b>	Discourages mixing different brigades or organizations in the same hex.
<b>Column Movement Restriction</b>	Makes columns vulnerable to disorder in difficult ground such as woods, towns or marshes.
<b>Strict Line of Sight</b>	Works with Fog of War to restrict knowledge to what friendly forces can actually observe.
<b>Fog of War</b>	Essential for uncertainty. Without it, players know far too much about the battlefield.

### 3. Rules not recommended as club standard

These rules are not forbidden. Two officers may agree to use them. They are simply not recommended as the common club standard for normal PBEM play.

Rule	Why it is not standard
<b>Manual Defensive Fire</b>	More detailed, but too heavy for normal PBEM. It can greatly increase file exchanges and slow the game.
<b>Auto Defensive Fire</b>	Mainly relevant if Manual Defensive Fire is used. Not needed for the standard turn mode.
<b>Victory Points for Leader Casualties</b>	Can encourage hiding leaders or targeting hexes only because leaders are present.
<b>Rout Limiting</b>	Rout chains can be severe, but fatigue, morale, ammunition and night fighting should be allowed to matter.
<b>Partial Retreats</b>	Melee retreats should often be chaotic. A clean partial retreat can make defeat too orderly.
<b>Multiple Cavalry Melees</b>	Can make cavalry too destructive and encourage repeated attacks against the same defender.
<b>Multiple Infantry Melees</b>	Can encourage unrealistic repeated melees against one defender.
<b>No Melee Eliminations</b>	Useful by agreement, but not imposed. A unit with no retreat might historically collapse, surrender or be destroyed.
<b>Weak Zone-of-Control</b>	Optional by agreement. It may reduce hex rigidity, but can also allow too much freedom near the enemy.

#### Expert variant

Experienced players may agree to use Manual Defensive Fire, No Melee Eliminations, Weak Zone-of-Control, or other settings before the first turn. Such departures should be mentioned when reporting the battle result.

## 4. Gentlemen's Agreements

These agreements are not intended to police friendly play. They preserve the spirit of eighteenth-century warfare and reduce obvious exploitation of the game engine.

Agreement	Practical meaning
<b>No Undo scouting</b>	Undo is only for genuine misclicks. It should not be used to test movement, reveal hidden enemies, check lines of sight, or probe zones of threat.
<b>Coherent formations</b>	Formed troops should be handled in reasonable lines, columns or deployments. Avoid snake-lines, zigzags and artificial shapes designed only to exploit hex geometry.
<b>Skirmishers as light troops</b>	Skirmishers should screen, scout, harass and delay. They should not be used as a permanent ahistorical wall in front of an entire army.
<b>Cavalry according to role</b>	Cavalry should be used for manoeuvre, threat, charges, pursuit, flanks and exploitation. It should not be treated as stationary infantry.
<b>Leaders are commanders</b>	Leaders should not be used as independent scouts, blockers or expendable pieces. Their battlefield role is command.
<b>Respect command and organization</b>	Players should keep brigades and commands reasonably coherent, especially when using No Detached Melee and Mixed Organization Penalty.
<b>PBEM rhythm</b>	Before starting, players should agree a rough turn rhythm: daily, several turns per week, weekly, or casual. Absences longer than one week should be announced when possible.
<b>Changes before the first turn</b>	Any departure from the Club Historical Standard should be agreed before the first turn.
<b>Initial result for underdog bonus</b>	If the club disadvantage bonus may apply, both players should note or confirm the starting result before the first move.
<b>Final result evidence</b>	A screenshot of the final victory screen is recommended when reporting official results, especially if a bonus or award applies.

## 5. Surrendered Routed Units

This rule solves a practical PBEM problem: a routed unit may be trapped, unable to move, and militarily lost, yet still remain on the map as an obstacle. Repeated attacks against such a unit can waste turns and casualties without adding historical value.

### Rule of honour

- A routed unit that is completely trapped and has no realistic path of escape may be declared surrendered by its owner.
- From that moment, the unit is considered out of action. It may not fire, melee, recover, block deliberately, scout, or take any further active part in the battle.
- If the unit physically blocks movement, both players may agree a destination hex or route. The owning player then moves the unit passively towards that point, when the engine allows it, as if the prisoners were being escorted away from the battlefield.
- The rule applies only to routed units that are trapped and militarily lost. It must not be used to remove a routed unit that still has a realistic chance to escape or rejoin friendly lines.

### Suggested PBEM wording

*"Routed unit in hex 23,18 is surrendered. It will no longer take part in the battle. I will move it passively towards hex 28,22 when possible, as if escorted prisoner troops were being taken to the rear."*

### Final note

The aim of these recommendations is not to make the game slower or more legalistic. The aim is to make PBEM battles clearer, more historical in spirit, and less vulnerable to obvious engine exploits. Good faith between officers remains more important than any written rule.