

A Beginner's Guide to

Samurai Blades

Samurai Blades is a simple game which recreates warfare in feudal Japan. Two players or two teams control counters which represent men (characters) and move them over a map which represents the terrain. There are two mapsheets included in the game, one of the Village of the White Dragon, the other of The Temple. The maps are broken up into hexagons (or hexes for short).

There are four playsheets included in the game. By looking at the upper right of one of the playsheets, a player will see the effect the terrain on the map will have on the game. Players should look at each example illustration on the terrain types chart and compare these with the same features on the map. The play sheet also has other tables on it, which will be needed for play.

You will notice that all of the pieces are joined together on a piece of card. Before you punch them out look carefully at the bottom left hand corner of the sheet. You will see two counters representing a samurai monk called Hocht. The left hand counter shows him at full strength, the other is used when he is wounded. Only one counter at a time is used for each man. On the left hand counter we see three numbers. The black number shows his strength in attack points for hand to hand combat. The red number shows his defence strength and the blue shows how many movement points he has. You notice that all of these numbers are reduced when the character is wounded. Turning the counter over shows the character stunned or dead. Looking at the top left hand side of the counter sheet we see that Jichu is represented by four counters. Two show him on foot and two on horse. You will see that counters are grouped together on the card in a certain way and that the counters are edged with a colour. Before you break all of them out read the beginning of the Historical Background booklet which will tell you how to organise the counters into packs.

There are three booklets, the first of these is the rules. Players should have a quick read of these to get a general idea of the game. They should read them thoroughly before playing. During play they should be on hand for both sides to refer to.

The second booklet deals with the scenarios or the different versions of the game. The scenarios describe the set up in which the sides fight each other. They list which men each side has, how the maps are set up and what players have to do to win.

The third booklet gives background information, a description of the pieces and their uses. It also has the list of which men should be put together in packs and competition rules.

Players do not throw the dice to move their pieces. The distance they move is printed on the counter, but this may be modified by difficult terrain such as trees. The dice is used in combat to give a chance factor. It gives a score of 1 to 10 (the 0 face on the dice equals 10).

Players take it in turn to move, fire and fight.

There are two different ways to fight. Hand to hand is dealt with in the section on COMBAT. Firing from a distance is dealt with in the section on SHOOTING. Only certain pieces have bows for missile fire. Everyone can fight in close combat. As an example of COMBAT we will have Jichu (mounted) and Tomomori (mounted) against the monk Hocht. Look on the White Dragon map for an area of clear terrain. Place Hocht in the middle of it with the two mounted samurai on either side of him. The mounted samurai have a total attack strength of 58. (Jichu 28 + Tomomori 30) Hocht has a defence strength of 9. This means that an attack on Hocht is at 58 points to 9. As odds are always rounded down in the defender's favour this gives odds of 54 to 9 or 6-1. Pick up the playsheet. On the lower right of the sheet are the combat results tables. Look for the table COMBAT AGAINST INFANTRY as Hocht is not mounted. Look along the top of the table for the 6-1 column. Now throw the dice. Look down the left of the table until you see the number you have rolled. Look across the table until you are under the 6-1 column. This gives you a letter which indicates the result of the combat. This letter is explained at the bottom of the table.

Now read the rules thoroughly and set up and play the first scenario.

Best of luck.

"From youth my heart has been inclined towards the Way of strategy. My first duel was when I was thirteen, I struck down a strategist of the Shinto school."

Miyamoto Musashi.
A Book of Five Rings.