

# **Battletech Escalation League Rules**

Original rules By Luke Baringer, modified by Mark Havener

## **Dates:**

Start Date: (Any Given Sunday) January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Example)

End Date: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Example, 62 days from start date)

Big Battle: (1 week after League End)

**1.0 Purpose:** An escalation league is a campaign that is meant to give a beginning player an incentive to build, paint and fight up to a company-sized core force against multiple opponents.

## **2.0 League Parameters:**

**2.0.1 Pre-campaign meeting:** A pre-campaign meeting is needed to verify multiple points, namely:

- Confirm all who are interested in playing
- CM (Campaign Manager) will collect and distribute all players contact information
- Players agree on which era (if any) for unit availability
- Players decide which optional rules (if any) are in play.

**2.0.2. Standard rules:** All standard rules are always in play.

**2.0.3 Optional rules:** The following optional rules are suggested but is open to revision by a vote of the players:

- Forced Withdrawal (*TW*, p.258)
- Sprinting (*TO*, p.18)
- Floating Critical Hits (*TO*, p.77)
- Advanced Charging Rules (*TO*, p.91)
- Level Changes while moving backwards (*TO*, p.22)

**2.1 Players:** While a minimum of eight players is required, the maximum number of players is theoretically unlimited, but a practical maximum of 16-20 is advised.

**2.2 Campaign length:** The League will run for nine weeks. A “Big Battle” will then take place after the final week with the top few players to determine the “Supreme Team” of the campaign.

**2.3 Starting forces:** A player will start with a Lance (four units) and a roster size of 6,000 BV2 points. A “handicapping” feature (2.3.1) is included to help less experienced players remain viable and not “steamrolled.”

**2.3.1 Increasing roster total:** If a player wins a battle (see (3.5.1) for determining a winner) their roster build total for their next game will remain the same. If a player loses a game, they get to add 500BV to their next game. If a battle is a tie (3.5.2), then each player may increase their build total by 250 points. These increases are a cumulative effect. This is designed to be a “self-handicapping” system to prevent less experienced players to have larger rosters and thus continue to be competitive throughout the campaign.

*Example: Bill and Joe face off in their first game of the campaign. They each have a roster of 4 units and 6,000 BV. Bill defeats Joe. Joe faces off against Sally in his second game for week 1 with a roster of 4 units and 6,500BV. Bill gets his next battle in during week 2. Bill gets to field a roster of 5 units and 6,000 BV.*

**2.4 Total units:** A player must field the number of units required by the week of the campaign (*i.e.*, you must field nine units during week 6), which units are at the discretion of the player.

**2.5 Force composition:** Except for (2.5.1), you may use any combination of BattleMechs, IndustrialMechs, ProtoMechs, Vehicles (including VTOLs), Battle Armor and Conventional Infantry in your force.

**2.5.1 Excluded units:** Aerospace assets, LAM’s (Land-Air ‘Mechs) and Superheavies are specifically excluded to prevent new players from being overwhelmed by taking on too many rules at one time.

**2.5.2 Exact unit composition:** You are required only field exactly the number of units. What exact units you field is not dependent on any prior battles. As

your force grows, a veteran player with several wins will likely have to switch to lower point cost units to accommodate both the unit quantity and total BV requirements.

**2.6 Battle frequency:** A player may participate in a maximum of TWO battles per week with their forces, or up to eighteen battles over the entire campaign.

**2.7 Ending forces:** A player will end the League with a company-sized force (twelve units) on week 9.

**2.8 Painted miniatures:** Since the object of this League is to inspire the new players to build a force of painted miniatures, a 3-color minimum is required on each unit before it can take to the field of battle. New players, don't worry about the quality. As long as you paint better today than what you were yesterday, we will all take that as a win. Do the best you can and don't be afraid to ask for help with painting techniques, color selection or anything else.

**2.9 Final standings:** The League will end at the end of Week 9 and the players will be ranked by the total points they have accrued in all their battles. HINT: the more battles you play, the more points you can have.

**2.10 The Big Game:** The top six players will be offered the chance to compete in the Big Game. The Big Game will be a Battalion vs. Battalion fight with the 6 players organized into 2 teams (1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Place vs. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Place). Each player will command a Company of 12 Units and a build total of 20,000.

**2.10.1 Big Game roster:** Each player in the Big Game will field a force of 12 units and a roster total of 20,000 BV. Variance (3.1.1) will not be allowed during this fight.

**2.10.2: Campaign final standings:** The winning Team will become the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place winners in the League. Each place will be decided according to the points accrued in the Big Game according to (3.5.1).

**2.11 Joining after league start:** If a new player wants to join the League after the announced start date, it will be allowed until the end of Week 4. Once week 5 has started, no player can join until the next League.

**2.11.1 Late arrivals:** A new player joining the League after the start date will start with a unit count appropriate for the week and a point total 1,000 points above the first-place player (*i.e.*, the lowest roster size) in the League.

## 3.0 RULES

**3.0.1 Never forget this:** The most important rule is “the purpose of the game is to win. The object of the game is to have fun. Never confuse the two.”

**3.1 Roster variance:** Since it is difficult in BattleTech to hit the build total either exactly (you’re either 20 points over or 300 points under), a 1% variance is permitted (60 points in a 6,000 point battle).

**3.1.1 Variance adjustment:** To encourage a minimum use of variance, for any points you are over your given build total is doubled and added to your opponent’s total at the end of the battle.

*Example: Bob and Sally are having a battle, each having a build total of 6,000 BV2. Sally’s roster has 5,982, Bob’s is 6,027. Sally gets 54 points added to her total at the end of the battle.*

**3.2 Pilot parameters:** It is encouraged for players to adjust pilot stats to “fill out” your roster. The maximum difference between a pilot’s piloting and gunnery cannot be greater than two (3/5 or 2/4 pilots are acceptable, a 2/5 pilot is not).

**3.3 Battles:** It is the player’s responsibility to schedule and attend battles. Once a battle is completed, each player will separately report to the Campaign Manager the players names, who won and how many points each player accrued. Ideally, both players should communicate this information separately to provide verification to the Campaign Manager. If the Campaign Manager isn’t informed of the battle and the results, it didn’t happen.

**3.4 Battlefield:** Battles will take place on 2 standard mapsheets, or of any other hex-based system that has an area of 34x34 hexes. Maps will be rolled with the chart below. Do your best to represent the terrain your die roll selected with whatever maps you have available. If **both** players do not like the result it can be re-rolled. Both players may also decide to select a map type that they can both agree on skipping the dice setup entirely. The idea is to have

a fair way to select maps not to force you to be stuck with something that completely doesn't work.

Map Roll 1d6:

- 1: Flatlands
- 2: Hills
- 3: Mountains
- 4: Urban
- 5: Islands
- 6: Wooded

**3.5 Victory:** Winning a game will be determined by the amount of damage caused according to the table in (3.5.1).

**3.5.1 Damage Levels:** Consult *Total Warfare* pp. 128 to determine if a unit is destroyed. Consult *Total Warfare* pp. 258 to determine if a unit is in Forced Withdrawal. Determine the BV for every unit (including pilot skill adjustments) that you have on the board that is either Destroyed or in Forced Withdrawal (units in Forced withdrawal that make it off board do not count) and calculate their BV by below:

Forced Withdrawal (On-Board)	50%
Destroyed	100%

Total those damaged/destroyed units and give that total to your opponent.

*Example: In Bill and Joe's fight, Bill killed Joe's Marauder MAD-6L (2,322 BV), while Joe crippled Bill's Bushwacker BSW-X1 (1,223 BV) and Centurion CN9-D3 (1,324 BV). Bill gets 2,322 points, Joe gets 1,274 (1,223 + 1,324 = 2,547 / 2 = 1,274) points. Bill gets the win because he got more points than Joe, and the difference was over 1,000 points.*

**3.5.2 Draw:** If the difference between the players is less than 1,000 points, the battle is considered a draw. Each player will increase their BV build total by 250 points for their next battle.

## 4.0 OBJECTIVES

**4.0. Overall:** The below objectives are a way to get bonus points during a battle. This is entirely voluntary.

**4.0.1 Method:** After the battlefield has been set but before units are placed on the board, each player may roll a D20 and consult the numbered scenarios below to determine their objective. This roll, while you announce that you are rolling for an objective, revealing the objective is at the player's option unless it is required by the objective.

**4.0.1.1. Reroll:** If you cannot reasonably achieve an objective (no two-handed units for 4.9, etc.), you must reveal that objective, explain why you can't achieve it, then reroll until you get a different result from the first roll. If your second objective can also not reasonably achieve, announce "No objective" (or words to that effect), stop rolling and you don't get an objective this battle.

**4.0.1.2 Number of objectives:** Multiple objectives are prohibited. A player may only have one objective during a battle.

**4.0.2. Deception:** You may engage in limited deception. Purposefully set out buildings and/or markers (in accordance with 4.4, 4.8, 4.9, 4.17) when your actual objective has nothing to do with them.

**4.0.3. Objective completion:** Upon completion of an objective, record what turn it was completed and what level (Partial or Decisive) that was met. If a Partial victory has been achieved, there is nothing preventing the player in trying to achieve the Decisive victory.

**4.0.4. Points:** A Partial Victory will add 500 points onto your point total, a Decisive Victory will add 1,000 points. Not making either level will not penalize a player. If you accomplish both, you only get the Decisive Victory reward.

**4.1. Breakthrough:** You must cross the battlefield and escape off the opponent's map edge. Units in forced withdrawal do not count toward the escaped total.

Partial Victory: 50+% of your units make it off.

Decisive Victory: 67+% of your units make it off.

**4.2. Assassinate:** Your objective is to kill the enemy commander. He is in the highest BV point unit.

Partial Victory: If the enemy commander's unit is put into Forced Withdrawal.

Decisive Victory: If the unit is completely destroyed and/or the pilot/crew is killed.

**4.3. Honor Duel:** You must announce a duel to your opponent. After deployment, select one enemy unit and select one of your own units. Those units are now obliged to "Honor Duel" their opponent without assistance from friendly units. At the beginning of the duel (right after deployment) the unit may elect to leave equipment that would void the duel (C3, etc.) off.

The Honor Duel objective is considered revoked with no points or penalties applied as though the objective had not been taken if the duelists have not made line of sight to each other by turn 5. After which, the duel may continue only if both players agree. If one player wishes to continue the duel and the other does not, it immediately defaults a partial victory to the player opting to pursue the duel.

- If a duel is voided in favor of the opponent, he receives 250 points. The player with "Honor Duel" as an objective receives an extra 250 points if he disables his dueling opponent without voiding the duel (a decisive victory). However the "Honor Duel" objective is worth 250 points less than it otherwise would be if the player with the "Honor Duel" objective initiates the duel with a unit whose BV value is 90% or less than his unit.
- Use of any "group" equipment by the duelists voids the duel in favor of the opponent. This applies to any equipment that requires coordinated effort from other units to achieve its affect. While some features from C3/NOVA systems may be used, they void the duel the moment that they connect to a network.
- If at the end of the movement phase, you have lost line of sight to the opponent, and your opponent can demonstrate a move that would have made line of sight possible, you have earned a point against you. If 3 points are earned in this way it voids the duel in favor of the opponent.

- If a non-dueling unit directly damages one of the dueling units, interrupting the duel, the duel is voided in favor of the opponent.

Partial Victory: Putting the target unit into Forced Withdrawal while not voiding the Duel.

Decisive Victory: Destroying the target unit while not voiding the Duel.

**4.4. Take the Hill:** After deployment, select the highest-elevation hex or highest-CF building hex on the opposite half of the board from your deployment edge. Mark the turn the units enter the hex (or an adjacent hex if the unit cannot enter the hex) to start the “timer.” As long as this unit is in or adjacent to the target hex and there are no enemy units within four hexes of the target hex at the end of the turn, the “timer” is incremented by one. The timer is reset to zero if the unit which started the timer is destroyed or put into Forced Withdrawal.

Partial Victory: If the player has a unit on/adjacent to the hex and no non-crippled enemy units remain within four hexes for three turns.

Decisive Victory: If the player has a unit on/adjacent to the hex and no non-crippled enemy units remain within four hexes for six turns.

**4.5. Show of Force:** Engage and destroy enemy units in a show of force. Chase down the enemy and destroy him.

Partial Victory: You destroy 50% of the enemy BV.

Decisive Victory: You destroy 75% of the enemy BV.

**4.6. Raid:** Engage and damage enemy units while keeping your force intact.

Partial Victory: If the enemy units your forces cripple or destroy are equal to or greater than 50% of your deployed force by BV, **and** at least 75% of your deployed force by BV survives the scenario. Units in Forced Withdrawal count as half their BV.

Decisive Victory: If the enemy units your forces cripple or destroy are equal to or greater than 75% of your deployed force by BV, **and** at least 75% of your deployed force by BV survives the scenario. Units in Forced Withdrawal count as half their BV.



**4.7. Vengeance:** It's not enough to just ruin the enemy's combat capability. This is about sending a message. In this scenario if a crew/pilot ejects, track them. Units are not counted as killed until the crew/pilot is killed as well as the unit destroyed.

Partial Victory: You must totally destroy the two highest BV units AND kill the crews/pilots.

Decisive Victory: Completely destroy and kill crews/pilots of 50+% of the enemy force.

**4.8. Smash:** After deployment, secretly select a random building on your opponents half of the board. This building contains your objective. The building is considered as "heavy," (CF 75) (If no buildings are present, randomly select a non-water hex on the map sheet). You must destroy the building in the target hex. If there is no building, there is a "small camp" that 75 points of damage must be dealt to that hex. Any unit targeting the building/hex must be within 4 hexes when firing on it to reflect killing anyone who attempts to escape the building/hex.

Partial Victory: There is no partial victory.

Decisive Victory: Destruction of the building/camp.

**4.9. Grab:** After deployment, secretly select a random building on your opponents half of the board. This building contains your objective. (If no buildings are present, randomly select a non-water hex on the map sheet). To retrieve the objective a unit must spend a full turn in the objective's hex (or an adjacent hex if the unit cannot legally enter that hex) without expending MP or firing weapons. This unit must have two hands. It has no weight but takes up an arm or fully preoccupies infantry to actually carry it. This unit now has "the McGuffin" in its hands. If the unit carrying the objective is later destroyed or the hand holding it is rendered inoperable, the objective drops into that unit's hex.

Partial Victory: There is no partial victory.

Decisive Victory: If the unit carrying the "McGuffin" makes it off your board edge.

**4.10. Recon:** You must scan the enemy units. All of your units are capable of scanning enemy units. To perform a scan, one of your units must get within 6 hexes of an enemy unit and declare them a primary target (you do not need to

shoot). Secretly record the scanning unit, the target unit and the turn this was performed and reveal the record at the end of the engagement for verification.

Partial Victory: Scan at least 50% of the enemy units.

Decisive Victory: Scan all enemy units.

**4.11. PR War:** You have the “honor” of having a war correspondent “embedded” with your Command. The correspondent is intent on personally witnessing the conflict. Secretly and randomly pick one of your own ‘Mech or non-aero vehicle units. At the beginning of each turn you choose if the unit receives a +1 to gunnery OR piloting to represent the correspondent interfering with the crew/pilot. During any turn in which the correspondent’s unit has line of sight to an enemy unit that has been destroyed that turn, you gain a game point. During any turn in which the correspondent’s unit has line of sight to a friendly unit that has been destroyed that turn, you lose a game point.

Partial Victory: The correspondent’s unit survives the engagement.

Decisive Victory: The correspondent’s unit survives the engagement **and** you have a positive game point score.

**Special:** If the correspondent’s unit survives the engagement **and** participated in killing a unit, gain an additional 250 points. This is separate from the partial/decisive victory conditions.

**4.12. Civilian Duties:** A piece of equipment has entered the combat zone that was specifically reserved for parade duty. This unit must not be blemished. Randomly pick a unit on your side.

Partial Victory: If the unit receives no more than 10% armor damage to one location.

Decisive Victory: If the unit finishes the engagement with zero damage (ammunition expenditures are okay).

**4.13. Product Testing:** A new combat cup holder has been installed in one of your units and the techs are eager to see it perform. Randomly pick one of your non-infantry/power armor units. This unit has been outfitted with a piece of equipment that is expected to perform “miracles.”

Partial Victory: If the selected unit ends the battle in non-forced withdrawal status.

Decisive Victory: If the unit ends the engagement in non-forced withdrawal status and cripples or destroys another unit.

**4.14. Privileged:** An element of ruling party has saw fit to scare their child into shaping up by forcing you to give him combat duty. Pick a unit on your side. The selected unit's pilot now has a +1/+2 modifier to his skills to represent the "privileged child" replacing the assigned pilot. If he ever receives damage, roll a die and consult the following result table:

1. He is immediately put into forced withdrawal for the next turn only. If this takes him off the board he is removed from the player's applicable BV total for determining the BV of his force.
2. He may move or shoot, but not both.
3. Your opponent either controls his movement or shooting phase, your choice.
4. Nothing happens.
5. He permanently loses the +1/+2 mod and never needs to roll again.
6. He loses the +1/+2 mod, never needs to roll for this effect again, and gains a -1/-1 mod. With every turn afterwards, the player must assign the priority target to a unit that shot him last (player choice) that could have caused this effect roll. The priority target must continue to be assigned to this unit even if it is not a valid target. This priority target effect ends when the selected unit is destroyed and operates normally, with the -1/-1 mod, afterwards.

Partial Victory: After any turn in which he deals damage to an enemy unit.

Decisive Victory: If the pilot survives the battle and dealt damage.

**4.15. Cripple Recon ("Lyran Efficiency"):** Destroy all of your opponents units that can move faster than 8 hexes in a turn. You automatically receive a Decisive Victory if your opponents force starts the engagement with no units that can move faster than 8 hexes a turn.

Partial Victory: All units that can move faster than 8 hexes per turn are put into forced withdrawal or destroyed.

Decisive Victory: All units that can move faster than 8 hexes per turn are destroyed.

**4.16. Hotshot:** A pilot/crew of yours is gunning for glory and isn't taking orders from anybody. He wants to kill a specific enemy unit at any cost. After

deployment you may either pick your hotshot, or his target from your opponent's forces. Randomly pick the other. Your "Hotshot" afflicted unit must be mobile. After selecting a unit you control and an opposing unit, your unit is now head set on destroying it at all cost. Every turn when it moves it must move as to bring its distance as close as it can legally get to its target. It may only optionally stop if it is 1 hex away. It loses this affliction if the target is destroyed.

Partial Victory: Partial Victory is awarded if the Hotshot attains line of sight to the opponent.

Decisive Victory: The Hotshot's targeted unit is destroyed with a majority of the damage being delivered by the Hotshot unit.

**4.17. Search and Rescue:** A pilot has been downed in the local area and is requesting assistance. His last known whereabouts are in the area. Starting from the center, place a Search Point on the board. Then 10 hexes along the center of the board, parallel to your deployment edge, place 2 more points on either side of the center. These are the suspected locations of the pilot. During any weapons phase a unit that ended its movement in the hex may opt to search for the pilot. On a 8+ (2d6) roll, the pilot is found and is placed on the board in that hex as 1ton "cargo". He may board units with a rumble seat, carried away by infantry, or picked up by 'mechs with hands. If the search roll is unsuccessful, remove the Search Point.

Units with active probes may attempt to search for the unit within their effective range and add 2 to their die roll when doing so.

Partial Victory: The pilot was found, or all points were searched but the pilot was not found.

Decisive Victory: The pilot is escorted off the battlefield.

**4.18. Close Encounters:** After a heated exchange, your unit has been prompted to prove the value of close quarter training in an era of lasers and missiles. You must attempt a number of close combat attacks (frenzy, anti-mech attacks, and vehicle ramming are all applicable) equal to the number of units in your force.

Partial Victory: You attempt a number of physical attacks equal to the number of units in your force.

Decisive Victory: You successfully execute a number of physical attacks equal to the number of units in your force.

**4.19. Black Knight Autopsy:** Intel is questioning the durability of the equipment being fielded. Bring back an enemy carcass from the battle field and leave it at your deployment edge. It can be a destroyed tank, protomech, or sum number of limbs totaling 4. A unit must have at least one hand to grab and drag the part.

Partial Victory: You bring back less than the required number of limbs, but at least one.

Decisive Victory: You successfully bring back a destroyed enemy unit.

**4.20. Safeties are Dumb:** The maintenance crews have insisted that the restraints are there for your safety and that you don't know what you are doing. Prove them wrong... or right. Complete any of the following events to comply with the objective. You may repeat events to count toward the total.

- Successfully override a reactor shutdown.
- Hotfire an LRM launcher (shoot under minimum range) and hit.
- Disable the proximity sensor (shoot under minimum range) on a PPC and hit.
- Fire a Rotary Autocannon at Rate 6.
- Rapid fire an Autocannon (*TO*, pp.100).
- Use a MASC, or any other motive enhancement device, when failure is 5+.
- Execute a Death From Above.

Partial Victory: Successfully complete any 3 combination of the events.

Decisive Victory: Successfully 5 of the above.

Bonus points: You receive an extra 250 points if a unit you control suffers an ammo explosion from heat and the unit survives. You may only be awarded this once.