

‘Fast Play’ Rules and QRS Changes for Grand Tactical Rules Series: *1871/1866/1864/1859* by Bruce Weigle

This document summarizes the various changes made to the 1859, 1864, and 1866 Quick Reference Sheets to bring them into conformance with the Fast-Play 1871 QRS.

The main difference between the 1870/1859/1864/1866 rules and the new 1871 Fast Play rules lies in the considerable simplification of the combat resolution and morale sections, enabling a much quicker game. The original rules featured point elimination, frequent morale checks, detailed charge and melee resolution, and a host of interesting, but time-consuming modifiers and steps. 1871 uses stand elimination, has far fewer modifiers, eliminates morale checks and suppression rolls in favor of a single combat resolution table. It also greatly simplifies the charge and melee business, making those more historically decisive. As a result, it plays about twice as fast, but gets pretty much the same result as the earlier rules.

For games with a corps or so on each side, the original rules work fine. For larger games, or with less time, the Fast Play versions are my recommendation. These are the changes, as found on the Fast Play 1871, 1859, 1864 and 1866 QRSs:

Morale Ratings/troop types: Are now reduced to four; the MR 10 units having been consolidated with the MR 9’s. No big deal

Command radius: Is now standardized at 4 inches for all commanders

Order activations: To keep the game moving, an order chit is now *automatically activated* after two failures, instead of being removed

Fire points/combat points: Have been consolidated as ONE point per stand, whether infantry, artillery, or cavalry. The combat distinctions between these disparate units are found in the modifiers. Point elimination has been replaced by stand elimination. To compensate for this rapid reduction, however, there’s a provision for stand reconstitution: a reduced unit can – if you’ve got a commander nearby – roll to gather in all the unit’s scattered and traumatized soldiers, and reform them into a viable stand again.

Formations: Are pretty much the same. *Supported line* distance is now set at 2 inches instead of 3 but it provides the same function: a supporting stand can add another point to the melee calculation, and automatically counter a flanking move by the enemy. The importance of the front line needing space to retreat is also mentioned in the “two wings” formation (on the formation diagrams on the QRS).

Disorganized and *disarrayed* units are contrasted, *disarrayed* just being a mild form of *disorganized*. Disorganized units still need a REFORM chit to reform themselves, but disarrayed units can return to good order as a change of formation (costing a third of their movement, like any other formation change). Until then, disarrayed units move at half speed, but suffer no other ill effects

- One important change is the Austrians' half- and quarter-scale **1859/1864** formations, which have been upgraded to **1866** standard (see diagram below)
- The "Free shot" rule has been discarded, too (it was never used anyway).

Spotting Table: Now standardizes units in *all* cover being spotted if within an inch of the spotting unit

Movement Table: Specifies that a unit deployed *in line* that ends its move in woods becomes "disarranged". This is how a "woods movement rate" is now handled.

"Grand tactical movement" is eliminated because it was hardly ever used and didn't reflect normal battlefield caution anyway.

Misc Handy Rules (the blue box): Standardizes artillery *danger close zone* (friendly units in front of guns and near arty targets) at 2 inches. Cleans up the battlefield by removing all single routed stands. Imposes a partial fire penalty on artillery during their unlimbering turn. Lays down the *partial fire* criteria and specifies that only *stationary* units get to engage an enemy during the enemy's approach (This is important, as it requires one side to be immobile throughout the turn in order to fire at its optimum engagement range – 1870 French, and 1859 and 1866 Austrians, take note!). Being stationary can also give a big advantage to the defender during melees: it replaces the old defensive fire step during the charge phase (another step eliminated!).

1859 Furia advantage is now gained in the same manner that cavalry gains its "surprise" against defenders. French attackers become furious with a pre-charge 9-0 roll; Italians and Austrians get it with a 0. Furia doesn't lower the enemy morale any more, it gives the attacker a valuable +2 to his D6 melee resolution die roll.

Artillery Hits Table: Reduced and consolidated range bands, modifiers, and die rolls:

- All artillery has been homogenized into generic batteries, no matter what the poundage of the pieces. Yes, I know: a terrible loss of nuance – but it saves time and really doesn't affect combat that much
- "Friendlies passed thru" is gone, it's covered by "Partial Fire"
- A new "shooter under fire" criteria replace "firer suppressed"; if the artillery got a *stopped* result against it last turn on the Combat Results Table, it's marked as being "under fire" this turn (I suggest a brown marker). Unless renewed, the under-fire penalty goes away after one turn
- The French air burst bonus (at 12 and 28 inches) is gone in **1871**. It was never a big deal anyway.
- Mitrailleuses (in **1871**) are now lumped in with the artillery, rather than infantry. Like all French guns, they suffer an efficiency penalty compared to German artillery
- The extra roll required for resolving "½ casualties" against troops in buildings or earth works is also gone; that's covered by the "target under cover" modifier

- The range bands have been arbitrarily reduced from nine to four (in **1859**) or five (in **1866**), with the poor French guns (in **1870-71**) being limited to 25 rather than 28 inch range

The rocket modifier has disappeared from **1859** and **1866**. It's now just a range limitation, so rocket batteries can be grouped with field artillery batteries (up to their maximum range). *Fewer die rolls!*

Rifle Hits table: More consolidation/reduction of modifiers and range bands

- Plus ONE to die roll for partial fire *or* if firer is disorganized, not both.

- A reminder that a disorganized unit is allowed to shoot with only one stand

- The **1871** Chassepot advantage is reflected in its longer range (twice that of the Needlegun), and its superior ballistics (at 5 inches or less). The Needlegun's *schnellfeuer* bonus is reflected in **1871** not with an extra point per stand, but a -2 modifier on at close range, where it was normally employed

- Riflemen defending buildings or field works get two advantages now: they shoot better than if they were standing out in the open and are harder to hit for being under cover. The ½ casualty business is gone

- Against cavalry and deployed artillery at close range, infantry gets triple fire points (if breechloader-equipped) or double fire points (for muzzleloaders). This just reflects 19th century battlefield realities; no real change here

Specific to 1864 and 1866 rules: Prussian Needlegun-equipped riflemen get a big -2 modifier when shooting, but only at close range ...Austrian and Danish line infantry get a +1 shooting disadvantage, though, because they were lousy shots. Austrian Jägers, however, aren't affected by this modifier, and can shoot further than the Needleguns as well.

Fire Combat Results Table: This replaces a lot of steps. Both the artillery and infantry hits tables feed into the Combat Results Table, using a white D10 to determine the outcome. Apply the number rolled to the target's Morale Rating line and drop down to the results. There are only three modifiers:

-- If a command stand is within an inch of the *hit* unit, its inspiring presence mitigates the result number by one point (i.e., shift one number to the right)

-- If the hit unit is disorganized or routed, or if it is shot in the flank or rear, naturally it's going to be worse: shift two numbers to the left

-- "Stopped" is the near-equivalent of the old "suppressed" result. A stopped unit loses its MOVE marker but is otherwise okay. Stopped artillery is considered "under fire" (a modifier on the Arty Hits Table) next turn

- Fire combat (like melees) is still resolved by Core Morale Unit. If the unit (a regiment in the full-scale game, a battalion in half- and quarter-scale) suffers a bad result, that result is applied to the whole contiguous unit

- A “0” *No effect* result could kill a nearby commander (just like a “6” result in the melee resolution does).

- A “Back” result for cavalry is still a *repulse* of 10 inches, as before.

Town defense: A clever innovation concerns defenders in towns or field works. Unlike a unit in the open, a defending unit in a town or in works now gets a choice when dealt a “back” result. How important is holding that position? With a “back” result, the other penalties on the line are ignored, and the ensconced defender gets to choose whether he will:

- Give up the position and go back the stated distance (in good order), *or*

- Sacrifice a stand and remain where he is (in good order), *or*

- Become disorganized, trusting that he’ll be able to reform the unit before an enemy assault hits it. Your choice! (if the unit is *already* disorganized, its choices are reduced to just losing a stand, or withdrawing)

Charge sequence: Incorporates the concept of “surprise” in cavalry attacks, thus giving the poor horsemen a generous 20% chance to stealthily approach their target by taking advantage of notional concealment or obscurity. Surprise is gained if the charge bonus roll is a 9 or 0, and reduces the defenders’ firepower dramatically.

- No more defenders’ fire, prep fire by charging units, or pre-charge, “fear of charge”, or post-melee morale checks; the attacker closes with his enemy if his CHARGE order is activated, period. In a charge launched on the local commander’s initiative (3 inches or less from the enemy), even the activation formality is dispensed with (*fewer die rolls, hurray!*)

- A single stand can be charged and engaged by, at most, two enemy stands – a concession to battlefield space limitations

- Disorganized units are not allowed to charge, nor can they support a charge. They’re *disorganized!*

- Square-forming is abandoned; it’s part of the multiplied fire point and “formed infantry” advantage

- All stands are rated as one point in melees (unless disorganized); to this single point, they add more points via five or six modifiers and a D6 die roll

- Note that the poor **1859**-model Italians are the only ones to suffer a minus modifier in melees
- because their battalions were so small

1864 and 1866 Stosstaktik rule: Although the Austrians and Danes usually attack in mass formation under the Stosstaktik rule, this does not confer a *furia* advantage – just the ability to ignore *Back* and *Stopped* results if shot during the move to contact. The Danes – being less wedded to the concept than

were the Austrians -- may precede each charge with a die roll: with an **even** number, the attacking Danish unit uses the Stosstaktik criteria; **odd** it doesn't.

Melee: The melee (that is, an assault to contact/point-blank fire combat and a few bayonet strokes) is resolved by simply adding up the attacker's and defender's participating stands and pertinent modifiers, adding a D6 die roll to their totals, and comparing the results. The result incorporates casualties, morale, leader losses, and retreats, all in one die roll

- The pre-charge morale business is also reflected in the results. If the loser rolled poorly, his morale was apparently deficient, and his losses will be greater. A disparity of 7 or more between winner and loser's total simulates the loser routing away before contact was even made

- Tie scores are immediately re-rolled, except when fighting in towns. Urban combat could be a prolonged business, so a re-roll after a tied combat in a town fight is deferred until next turn

- Notice that the poor Austrians will suffer at least a stand's loss against a Needlegun-equipped adversary even if they win the melee. Historical realities: whether they pushed back the Prussians back or not, they *always* lost more men. This applies only to results in which the winner would not ordinarily lose a stand, e.g., when he enjoys a +2-6 point advantage

Post-melee morale check: gone

Morale Table: gone. The only morale rolls remaining are to rally routed units, or reconstitute lost stands – both are completed with a single die roll (score the unit's Morale Rating less 2 for each lost stand in the full- and quarter-scale game, or -3 in half-scale). Rallying and reconstituting requires the presence of a commander within an inch of the unit, but does not need an "R" chit

- Replacing a lost commander also takes a quick roll: score one less than his command rating and you have a new commander. Alternatively (but not mentioned on the QRS), a new commander can be automatically generated if a superior officer moves to the scene of the former commander's demise, and appoints a successor on the spot.

- Routs are now a single 12" move, not two. Single routed stands are removed from play (reduces clutter on the battlefield)

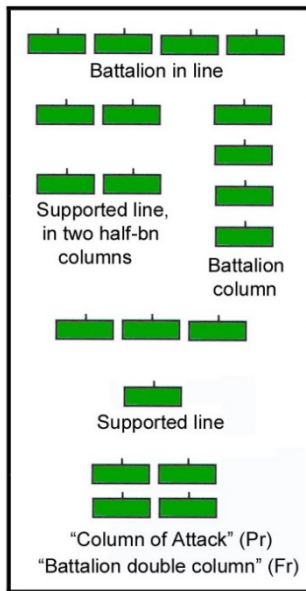
Half- and Quarter-Scale organization: The original division of Austrian battalions into three *Divisions* in the **1859** half-scale variant, and into six companies in the **1864** quarter-scale variant made them too unwieldy, and too powerful vis-à-vis their opponents. So, Austrian **1859/64** battalions in half-scale are divided into two half-battalions like everybody else (inauthentic as that might be) and into three *Divisions* in quarter-scale. While this rather unfairly gives them one fewer stand than their opponents,

the Austrians habitually left a higher proportion of each battalion in reserve (something I've conveniently ignored in the half-scale examples).

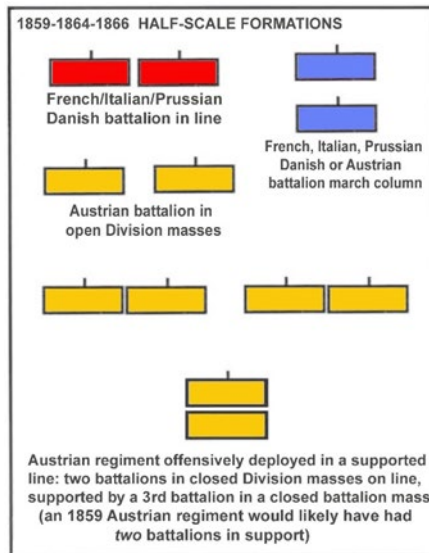
To compensate them for this inequity, you could forgive them the +1 fire modifier on the Rifle Hits Table in the quarter-scale variant only. In melee, however, they're simply disadvantaged: four companies are more maneuverable than three double-company Divisions – thus they'll be flanked if opposing a full strength Prussian or Italian battalion. In compensation, however, you could count an Austrian quarter-scale line in open Division masses as being a "supported line" in melees.

As a rule of thumb, the visual difference between a "column" and a "supported line" is that in a march column, the stands are separated by about a stand's *depth*; in a proper supported line deployment, the separation is about a stand's *width* or more. In an Austrian "mass" formation, there's almost no separation between stands. The Prussian so-called "Column of Attack" and the French "double column" were the same as a simple battalion column, i.e., they were march, not assault formations.

1870-1859-1864-1866
non-Austrian Quarter-Scale Formations



1859-1864-1866
Half-Scale Formations



1866
Quarter-Scale Formations

