

HEROIC SAMURAI



One Brain Cell Wargame Rules
for Clan Feuding in Classical Japan

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INTRODUCTION



These are rules for playing a wargame with toy soldiers. It is intended for several players - say 4 or more. Players control significant leaders - the key samurai of a clan, who in turn have contingents of fighters under them.

Why 'One Brain Cell'? Well, many sets of wargame rules these days are horrendously complicated, with big thick rule books to read, dozens of additional books to get (at unreasonable expense) and exceptionally complicated rule mechanisms that take ages to work out.

My brain is too simple for this, so I tend to write rules that only require a single brain cell to use and understand. This tends to make games easy to learn and play, and, amazingly, are just as much fun as the dense and complicated game rules for which you have to pay a fortune. Odd, isn't it?

Jim Wallman





GAME BACKGROUND AND ASSUMPTIONS

These rules are intended to simulate some of the small-scale conflicts that went on from time to time in Japan.

There are many sets of wargame rules that simulate the epic battles of the Sengoku era, and a number of games about individual skirmishing. These rules are intended for situations in between these two scales.

There are many examples of fights breaking out between smaller families or clans – or even between factions within a clan.

These fights might involve only a few hundred fighters – too small to be counted as a battle – too big to be a man-to-man skirmish.

In this game, players are significant individuals – leaders with great martial skills – and they have a following composed of their friends, family, vassals and servants.

This means that the composition of the force controlled by a player can be highly varied.

The rules are written with 15mm scale figures in mind – but there is no reason why they can't be adjusted for other figure scales – or even played with cardboard figures or counters depending on the sort of resources you have at your disposal.





SETTING UP THE GAME

To set up a game you need a reasonable sized playing area. A large table or floor area is ideal. Depending on the story you have in mind, this can be laid out with terrain. A green cloth makes suitable ground.

Model trees, lichen etc makes woods, hedges and undergrowth. Cottages, hovels, even mansions can be easily made out of cardboard.

This is the playing area.

The players should have at least one leader each.

They *can* take control of more than one leader each - but this might make the play more difficult in some ways.



Each hero has a **contingent** of fighters that are their followers in the fight - their contingent is made up of a number of **elements**.

The elements are represented by a base representing a small group of individuals. If you are using toy soldiers then this can be a group of 15mm scale models.

Each of these bases is treated as indivisible.

All the element bases are roughly 60mm x 60mm. The exact size isn't too important, but try not to make them much larger or smaller than this.

If you don't want to mount your figures on bases, you can just as easily move them around in clumps of separate figures - but you'll obviously find it takes longer to play the game and it will be a bit more confusing.

An element will be one of the following types:

Type	Description	Figures
Leader	This is represented by a single figure. This is the only example of an element that doesn't need to be on a 60 x 60mm base. This is the player. There is just one leader per CONTINGENT.	A single figure.
Samurai	A group of clan samurai with little or no armour, usually just armed with personal swords, but might bring their bows.	6 figures
Armoured Samurai	A group of clan samurai on foot arrayed for combat. They will have a mixture of swords, spears and bows depending on the personal preferences of the individuals making up the group. The player has no real choice in the matter.	
Ashigaru Spear	Hastily called out clan foot soldiers, who have grabbed their spears and joined the fight.	10 figures
Armoured Ashigaru	Clan foot soldiers arrayed for battle. They will have their armour and be better mentally prepared for fighting than Ashigaru Spear.	
Ashigaru Musketeers	Specialist foot soldiers with firearms.	
Armoured Ashigaru Musketeers	Specialist foot soldiers with firearms and armour and are well prepared for battle. They will have extra ammo and have higher morale.	
Mounted Samurai	Clan samurai who have grabbed a horse. The horse will have no armour. As above there is no choice as to how they are armed.	4 mounted figures
Mounted Battle Samurai	Fully armoured and mounted samurai ready for the most extreme combat. As above there is no choice as to how they are armed.	
Warrior Monks	A group of militant monks with little or no armour, usually just armed with staff or naginata.	10 figures
Battle-ready Warrior Monks	A group of armoured militant monks with some armour, usually armed with naginata or spear	
Armed Peasants / Townfolk	Local farmers encouraged to take up bamboo spears and defend themselves.	
Bandits	Rag-tag bunch of variously armed and armoured ruffians.	4 mounted figure
Mounted Bandits	An element of mounted bandits can't effectively fight on horseback - it will always dismount to fight - replace it with a bandit base when dismounted.	



ACTIONS

In each game turn every **player** gets to perform **ONE Action**.

All actions are assumed to happen simultaneously.

Have a set of the supplied ACTION CARDS per player, so that they can select the appropriate card and put it face down. All the players then reveal their cards simultaneously.

The sequence of action in each turn goes like this:

1. Players REVEAL their ACTION CARDS.
2. Players can move their personal figure and any elements under their command in accordance with the ACTION.
3. If movement brings elements into weapon range then work out who killed who. Work out archers and musket effects first. Then work out hand to hand.
4. At the end of the turn, all elements that have been fighting have to take a test to see how they are feeling (called the *Resolve /Morale Test*)



These are the **ACTIONS** you can do:

Engage in Personal Combat. (with another specific named Player). If you choose this you cannot move your elements around that turn because you are too busy concentrating on your immediate enemy to tell them what to do.



Shout "BANZAI!" ...and charge Personally lead your elements towards the enemy (assuming that's where you're heading). All your elements within 20cm of your figure will follow you by the most direct route to the limit of their movement distance (See **Movement** below)



Inspire Your Contingent. Sometimes your following elements might get a bit downhearted (especially if they've been taking casualties and their morale is low). You can make them happier by stopping what you are doing and giving them a stirring speech (See below for **Resolve/Morale Test**).



Regroup your contingent. This removes the effect of one **Distraction** counter to each element within 12cm (see below).



Converse, Send or Receive a message. Sometimes you need to tell someone something, or send a message. **If you are not within 12cm of that person then you can't talk to them**, you must write a note – yes, *really* write with a pen and paper. This is an **action**. The message does not have to be in Japanese.



The note is then transported using a messenger from your followers to the person its meant for. Reading the note is an **action** too, so they might not have time to read it when it gets there!

Shout "Attack them!" This is where you can send all your elements to attack a specific, named, enemy element. You don't have to accompany the attack. All your followers move towards the enemy you pointed at as fast as they can move until they get within weapon range - then they fight. If you are not with them they might not fight as well though (see **Resolve/Morale Test**).



Issue an Order. Give a more complex order like - "stay here and shoot at the enemy", or "Defend the bridge". If you are not present and leave your contingent, then they will be less effective. Don't forget that all your elements amount to a single contingent so directing elements off to do separate and independent tasks is not very realistic. If an umpire is running the game, the umpire will always be the final arbiter as to how detached or abandoned elements act in a given situation.



Shout 'Follow Me' and move off. Your contingent will attempt to follow you by the most direct route possible.





MOVEMENT

Each individual element moves as directed by their leader using ACTIONS, up to the following maximum distance each turn:

Type	Distance (cm)
Unarmoured Ashigaru or Warrior monks	15
Unarmoured Samurai	20
Armoured Samurai, Ashigaru or Monks	12
Mounted	35
Carts and other slow stuff.	8

Obstacles

If crossing a low wall or fence take one move delay.

Wading through paddy fields, mud, a ford or shallow stream, count the distance crossed as double distance.

Climbing a high wall or crossing a canal or moat takes two moves delay.



DISTRACTION AND HITS

Because each element in a player's contingent represents many individuals, and because I don't want to detach figures from the base to represent casualties, the effect of combat stress and losses on a contingent is shown in two ways.



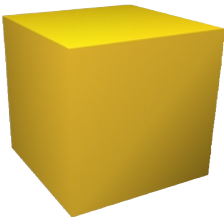
Distractions (D). This is a representation of how nervous, distracted or upset they are, as well as the cumulative effects of exhaustion and wounds.

It affects their ability to close on the enemy and their ability to shoot straight.

These are represented by Green Counters placed by (or on) the base.

D can be removed by resting the element.

For every 5 D received, replace them with one yellow HIT counter. **5D = 1H**



Hits (H). This might be people killed, or wounded, or merely scratched.

Its a vague indication of the actual level of injury or death sustained by the group.

These are indicated by yellow counters placed on or near the base. An element can receive up to 4 Hit counters and still fight on.

On receiving the **fifth hit** counter the element is out of combat and removed from play (the surviving members of the group, if any, are assumed to help the wounded to safety). **5H = out of combat**

HITS can never be removed.





SHOOTING

Samurai Archers: Bows are the weapon of the samurai class – so any base of samurai is assumed to be bow-armed. Ashigaru rarely use bows.

Samurai Elements on foot cannot move and shoot.

Samurai elements on horseback can move and shoot, but count the range as one range band worse.

Ashigaru Muskets: The musket is the weapon of the common ashigaru (it is regarded as only suitable for the lower orders and samurai would rarely use it).

An element of ashigaru cannot be mixed, they are either all musket or all spear/sword.

Ashigaru Musket Elements cannot move and shoot.

Muskets take one turn to reload (this can be done on the move)

Muskets generate a lot of smoke, so use cotton wool puffs to show smoke. Musket smoke remains for two turns after shooting.

Shooting / Firing Results

Draw one Result Card for each element shooting.

Look up the results in the table on the card.

Count the range as one range band greater for EACH of the following situations:

- If the element has a casualty
- If the element has a D
- If the target is in cover or obscured by smoke

Ranges over 90cm automatically MISS.

Results are shown in terms of adding a 'D' to the target, or a Casualty (D + Hit).

Hitting Leaders : When shooting at a Player/Leader figure, the target can ignore D results. Leaders take 5 hits to kill just like any other element.

3 MORALE **HAND TO HAND +1**

Samurai Shooting
 RANGE = up to 30 up to 60 up to 90

Target Armoured	X	X	D
Target Unarmoured	X	D +Hit	D

Muskets Firing
 RANGE = up to 30 up to 60 up to 90

Target Armoured	X	X	D
Target Unarmoured	D +Hit	D	D +Hit



KAIKETSU (RESOLVE) TEST

Events and circumstances can make your followers' morale low so they are less keen to fight, so we test their resolve to fight or KAIKETSU.

The entire contingent (that is all the elements led by a single Leader) is affected by the resolve rules, whatever their type.

If one of the following occurs:

- The contingent loses an element
- The contingent is surprised.
- If the player in command wants the contingent to take a test

then draw a RESULTS CARD and look at the **MORALE** number.

Add or subtract the following factors:

- 1 for each Hit this turn (total for all elements)
- 1 for each element lost in game
- 1 visibly outnumbered.
- +2 having a stirring speech from a friendly leader this turn.
- 1 if the contingent's leader is **not** present (in sight and within 30cm)



Then check the result in this table

Score	Outcome
3+	Morale is fine - carry on as desired.
0-2	Contingent may not move closer to any enemy forces. It has to pass a morale test next turn to move closer to the enemy.
Under 0	Contingent must move away from the enemy as quickly as possible. It must pass a morale test next turn to stop running away.

The figure representing the leader/player leading the contingent is not bound by these results and may fight or run away as desired.



HAND TO HAND COMBAT

STEP ONE: pair up elements in the combat into 'fights'.

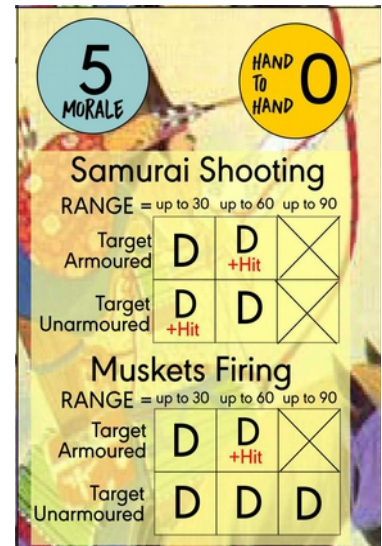
A fight is one element vs one or more enemy elements.

STEP TWO: For each 'fight' decide which side is the 'attacker'.

This is usually the one that moved forward to contact. If both moved and you can't agree then roll a die to decide.

The attacker draws one RESULTS CARD and looks at the HAND TO HAND score.

Add the following numbers to the score



ATTACKER MODIFIES THE SCORE IF:

Armed peasants or townfolk	-2
Musketeers	-1
Samurai or Leader	+2
On horseback	+1
Outnumbered 2-1	-2
Outnumbered 3-1 or more	-3
For each D on the element	-1
For each HIT on the element	-1

DEFENDER MODIFIES THE SCORE IF:

Armed peasants or townfolk	+2
Musketeers	+1
Samurai or Leader	-2
On horseback	-1
Outnumbered 2-1	+2
Outnumbered 3-1 or more	+3
For each D on the element	+1
For each HIT on the element	+1
Behind field defences	-1

You will notice that most of these modifiers cancel each other out. You only really need to count the ones that make a difference.

Final Score	Result	Effect
-4 or less	Attacker loses and must fall back 6cm. Defender loses nothing and may follow up if they wish.	Attacker takes 2 x D and 3 x HITS.
-3		Attacker takes 1 x D and 2 x HITS.
-2		Attacker takes 1 x D and 1 x HIT.
-1		Attacker takes 1 x D and NO HITS.
0	Draw. Both remain in position.	BOTH take 1 x D
+1	Attacker wins. Defender must fall back 6cm. Attacker may follow up if they wish.	Defender takes 1 x D and NO HITS.
+2		Defender takes 1 x D and 1 x HIT.
+3		Defender takes 1 x D and 2 x HITS.
+4 or more		Defender takes 2 x D and 3 x HITS.

Armoured elements can IGNORE ONE HIT in each result.

Outnumbering

If an attacker is fighting more than one enemy it draws a card for each of its opponents, BUT can only count any positive effects on ONE of these. If it has a positive effect on both then the player can choose which one to use. Negative effects apply fully from both cards.

Usually, when an element is outnumbering its enemy it is the attacker. Draw a card for each attacking unit in the usual way, and the results apply to the outnumbered element cumulatively.

Field Defences

Elements wholly behind field defences or defending buildings can ignore push-back results.



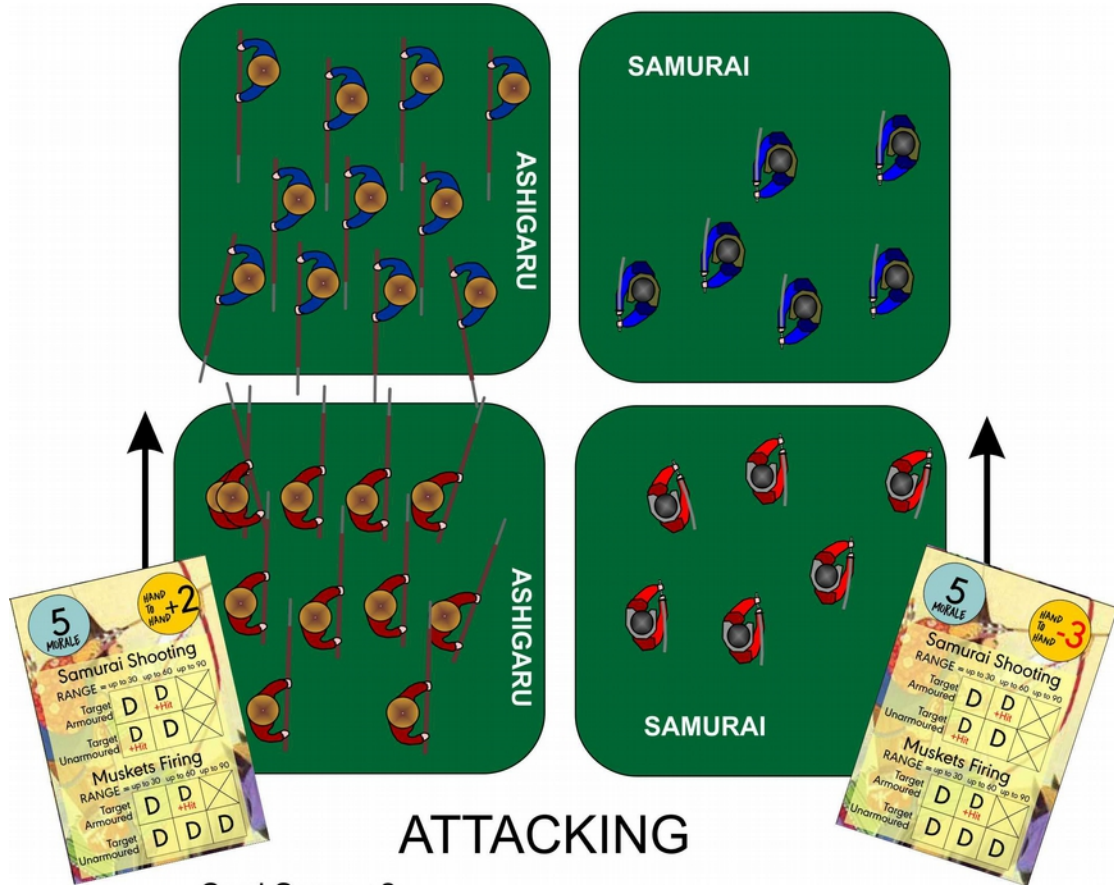
Elements maintaining contact

Where elements in a contingent are fighting together (i.e. as part of a fighting line) they will always tend to stick together and try to maintain a common front. This means they cannot advance or retreat more than 60mm ahead or behind an adjacent element. This might mean they cannot follow up from a victorious combat.

Contingents as a whole can move out of contact from other contingents, however.

EXAMPLE COMBAT

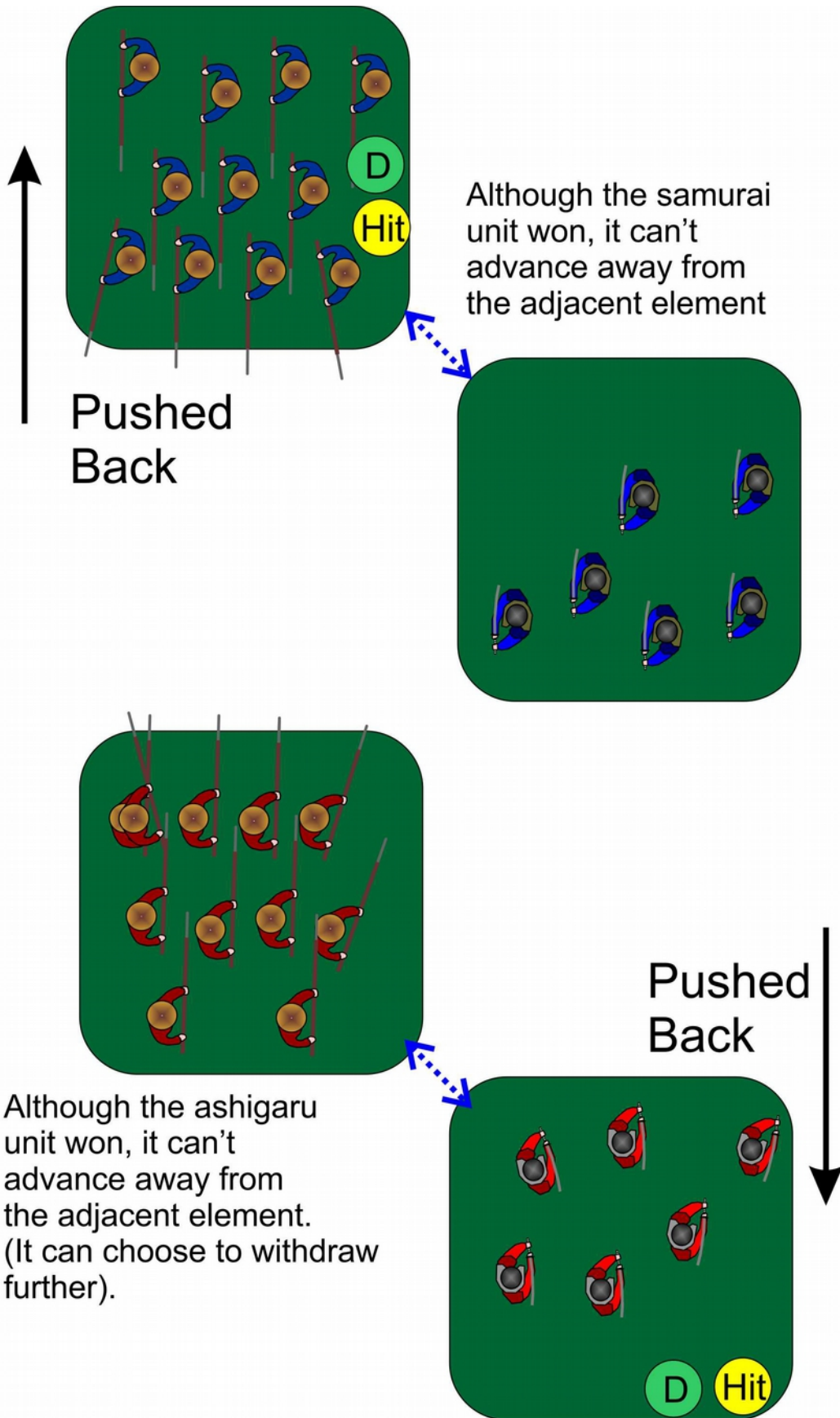
ROUND 1



Card Score +2
 TOTAL +2
 Defender falls back 6cm
 & takes 1 D and 1 Hit

Attackers Samurai +2
 Defenders Samurai -2
 Card Score -3
 TOTAL -3
 Attacker falls back 6cm
 & takes 1 D and 2 Hits
 (but armoured - so that
 reduces to 1 Hit).

RESULTING POSITION





PERSONAL COMBAT

Leaders are a special case.

If they fight just the followers of other leaders, then use the rules above, treating the leader as an element in his own right.

If they fight other Leaders - i.e. people of similar standing, then the following rules apply.

Leaders **never** outnumber other leaders.

In the event of a multiple fight between leaders, those not involved will watch and cheer from the sidelines until their turn comes.

Personal combat starts with an INTENTION' - decided secretly by placing d6 covered with the player's hand.

The options are:

- 1 = Fight** - if the opponent breaks off do not follow.
- 2 = Pursue** - if the opponent breaks off, you can follow.
- 3 = Stay your hand** - if the player wins he doesn't score HIT but can negotiate with his enemy (or call on him to surrender).
- 4 = Break off** and move out of combat

Each player chooses an INTENTION out of sight and reveals at the same time.

If a player has chosen BREAK OFF and his opponent has not chosen PURSUE then there is no combat round.

Then - each game turn of combat is three rounds of paper - stone - scissors.

The player with the best of three inflicts one HIT on their enemy (Unless they have chosen an INTENTION of 'stay your hand', of course).

Distractions and HITS are ignored.

Leaders may break off combat and try and run away - but then that wouldn't be very heroic would it? Whatever would their followers think?

