

LIVE FREE OR DIE

Throughout the play-testing and development of this game, we added, subtracted, and considered a number of concepts that did not make it into the final version. The optional rules listed below are the ones we liked and enjoyed, but did not see as absolutely necessary for a fast-play system. Each of the advanced options here can be added ala carte if you want to add greater complexity to your games.

INITIATIVE BIDDING

We initially allowed Leaders to spend CPs to boost their initiative roll. This enabled a player who valued going first in the charge phase to spend CPs toward his initiative.

In practice, the defender in a scenario wound up winning the initiative too often, as a player on the defensive inherently has less reason to spend his CPs moving units. It didn't feel right for the attacker in a scenario to be disadvantaged in this way.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

For added historical flavor, we tinkered with the notion of giving the overall Leader on each side personality traits/abilities based on his historical performance. For example, rating Washington with a special "Into the Smoke" command ability at Princeton, where historically he rode between the lines under fire to rally his militia.

We still love this concept and you could consider creating some special traits, but we ultimately dropped it for the sake of simplicity. The Star Rating does offer some of that flavor, but with less to remember for players.

ARTILLERY BOUNCE-THROUGH

The earliest version of our play-testing included artillery "bounce through" fire where the nearest enemy unit behind the initial target could suffer hits on a roll of 6 (instead of the usual 5+ for the initial target). For example, if you roll 2d6 against the main target and need a 5+, you could also roll 2d6 against the nearest enemy regiment behind it, needing 6s. The maximum range of the artillery is still enforced.

We liked this historical flavor of this rule due to the bouncing round-shot used in the era, but found it generated too many extra rolls for little net result.

TEST TO CHARGE

We initially considered whether regiments with a charge order should be required to take a Morale Test. For this optional rule, regiments that wish to charge an opponent of a higher class must first pass a Morale Test. If failed, suffer 1 DMZ and do not make the charge. The regiment may still move and fire later in the turn.

While this is historically accurate, charging in *Live Free or Die* is already an expensive proposition in CP cost. This rule also slows down the action and our goal is generally to keep the pace of the game moving briskly. This rule is a tradeoff because historical accuracy and speed of play.

EVASION

Fairly late in the play-testing process the notion of evasion was raised. Some of our players felt that Skirmish and Cavalry units should enjoy the chance—but not the guaranty—of evading a changing enemy. We came up with a fun way to represent this. Before the charger rolls his dice for distance, the defender must declare if he is attempting to evade. If so, he forfeits any hasty closing fire and instead rolls 1d6 to retreat that number of inches directly backward (still facing the charger). Evasion always incurs 1 DMZ. The charger then rolls his normal dice for distance and if he still reaches the defender, the melee will result.

Evasion adds a bit of a "gambling" mechanic that we liked, but given the general lack of Skirmish and Cavalry units, it didn't come into play often enough to be essential. And some of us felt that if you stuck your Skirmishers out too far in front into a position of vulnerability, evasion shouldn't be there to bail you out of that decision.

CHARGE BONUS

We considered and tested giving bonuses to 1st and 2nd Class units. We allowed 1st Class units to re-roll both charge distance dice if they elected, and allowed 2nd Class units to re-roll one die. This made it more likely for high quality regiments to close a charge.

Ultimately we did not include this in the final version of the rules because it made the charges less unpredictable and higher class units already enjoy other major advantages in the game. Giving them a further advantage didn't feel necessary.