

Heroes of Hawkshold

“We are Heroes. Not Legends, mind you, but Heroes. The warriors of legend were chosen by the destiny, fated as part of some grand plan. But there is no grand plan anymore. The Age of Fate is over! Now it is with cunning and boldness that we Heroes carve out our own destiny!”

– Sir Steaphen, to his men before the Battle of Raven’s Clearing

These are Playtest Rules. They are draft rules under consideration by our Rules Team, and are unofficial. If you wish to use them in a game you must have your opponent’s consent beforehand. If you play in any Battleground event (such as a tournament), they may not be used without the organizer’s agreement.

Hero Units

Below are four Hero Units for the Men of Hawkshold faction. When building your army, you can include them as though they were Standard units. For campaign or scenario purposes they are Standard units. Each of these units has a new unit type keyword: Unique.

Unique: A unit with this keyword is a legendary regiment whose name is known in folktales and history. You may only have one of each type of Unique unit in your army. You can have multiple Unique units, as long as they are different units with different names. Example: you cannot have 2 Johan's Youngblood units. But you can have Yohan's Youngbloods and Sir Steaphen's Free Company. If you are playing a multiplayer game or a game with multiple factions on one side, you can only have one of each type of Unique unit per side. In all other ways Unique units are treated as Standard units.

Sir Steaphen’s Free Company - 363 pts

“Sir Steaphen’s men routinely make a mockery of the terms ‘grossly outnumbered’ and ‘tactical disadvantage.’”

-Lord Tristan, advisor to the Grand Duke of Hawkshold

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes		
Sir Steaphen’s Free Company	⚔(5) 6 / 6	♣ 2 / 2	-	13	3.5”	5	2	3
<p>Unique.</p> <p>Felling Blow: After rolling to wound, you can erase the Bravery box to roll an extra die for each die that shows a 1. (Further 1s do nothing). This counts as playing a Command Card.</p>								

Johan’s Youngbloods - 401 pts

“They surrender? Do I look like a constable? We ain’t in the prisoner-takin’ business!”

-‘Gentleman’ Johan Dietzel

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes		
Johan’s Youngbloods	⚔(7*) 6*/5*	♣ 3* / 2	-	13	3.5”	5	2	3
<p>Spearman, Unique. ♣+1/+0 while Charging (in addition to the normal Charging bonus). ⚔(+2)+0/+0 during post-Rout Free Attacks.</p>								

Cristof's Marksmen - 400 pts

"We had to march upwind of them. They stole everything that wasn't nailed down. And you couldn't understand a word they said. But I'll be damned if wasn't 400 paces and their chieftain put an arrow through the necromancer's throat."

– Reynaud, Hawkshold Spearman

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes		
Cristof's Marksmen	✂(4) 6* / 6*	🛡 1 / 1	21"	13	3.5"	3	3	2
<p>Unique. ✂(-0)-2/-2 while Engaged.</p> <p>Snipers: After rolling to hit, the first die with a result of "1" automatically wounds. Do not roll To-Wound with that die.</p>								

Royal Lancers - 329 pts

"Just fore the lines met, the Duke's horsemen turned left, ran right 'round us and into the flanks of them Orcs. Every man, every horse knew his place in formation. The knights of our high an' mighty Baron couldn't a done it."

– Raulf the Berger, to his astounded family

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes		
Royal Lancers	✂(6) 5 / 5*	🛡 3* / 2	-	12	6"	3	2	1
<p>Cavalry, Unique. ✂(+0)+0/+1 and 🛡+1/+0 while Charging (in addition to the normal Charging bonus).</p> <p>Command: If this unit is not Engaged at the start of your Movement & Command Phase, you gain 1 extra Command Action. This Command Action may only be used to Direct Control this unit or a unit within 6" of the Royal Lancers.</p>								

Dinant's Cavaliers - 455 pts

"Feint, our Grand Duke calls it? I say it is fleeing! Before ragged commoners, no less. I will not have it! Charge!!"

– Baron Dinant at the Hilltop Massacre

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes		
Dinant's Cavaliers	✂(6) 6 / 6*	🛡 2* / 3	-	13	5"	3	2	2
<p>Cavalry, Unique. ✂(+0)+0/+1 and 🛡+1/+0 while Charging (in addition to the normal Charging bonus).</p> <p>Bravado: If attacking a unit that currently has a Courage 11 or less, you may erase the Bravery box after rolling to hit. Reroll all failed to-hit dice. This counts as playing a Command Card.</p> <p>Impulsive: At the start of any turn if this unit is within 7" of an enemy unit's center point, its orders change to Close.</p>								

Proxies: There are not currently any proxies for these Hero units (these are stretch goals for our Kickstarter!). However they are based off of existing Hawkshold units, so you can use an existing Hawkshold unit and write the correct stats on the card with a dry erase marker. The corresponding unit for each Hero unit is:

Sir Steaphen's Free Company: Great Swordsmen

Johan's Youngbloods: Pikemen

Cristof's Marksmen: Longbowmen

Royal Lancers: Light Cavalry (or Lancers)

Dinant's Cavaliers: Knights

design notes

Designing units for Kickstarter stretch goals is a unique challenge. The usual requirements are there that they be balanced and tell a story through stats & rules. But these units also need to be “*Really Frikken Cool!*” and totally unnecessary at the same time.

Since these are stretch goals, we have to prepare for the likelihood that none of these units will see print. So these units cannot be integral to Hawkshold. The faction must be able to stand on its own without including any of these units, both from a play style perspective and a design perspective. The last thing we want is for Hawkshold to feel “unfinished” because these units are not present.

And at the same time, these units need to bring something fun & original to the faction. There needs to be a reason for people to be excited when we hit our stretch goals. I want people planning out armies that include these Hero units!

Our solution was to shift our design philosophy a little bit. Battleground is a very elegant system that captures the theme of a unit quite well with stats and stat modifiers. It's not reliant on special rules to achieve theme. And so our design philosophy is to avoid piling on Rube Goldberg-esque special rules when we can capture something by using the system we have.

For example, Great Swordsmen could have some “Cleave” special rule, but does it really add anything to the player experience? Or is it ‘just one more thing’ to remember, when making the unit Power 6 achieves the same outcome: a beatstick unit that you put out when you want to break through an enemy.

With the Hero units we let ourselves indulge a bit. For some units, we imagined what ‘even more elite’ units would do on the battle field. Sir Steaphen's Free Company and Cristof's Marksmen are examples of that. We crafted special rules that really show what a unit would look like when trained by a living legend.

For other units, we created something of a story. This was an extrapolation of some of the background we've laid down when reimagining Hawkshold. For example, the Communal Pikemen have been conceived as young mercenaries, eager to prove themselves. Johan's Youngbloods are hungry for blood and woe to anyone who tries to escape them.

Similarly, Baron Dinant is the foil to new Grand Duke of Hawkshold. The Baron's Knights are the epitome of the dark side of chivalry. And of course, the Royal Lancers are the young Duke's personal retainers. They serve as his bodyguards, but also as runners allowing the Duke greater control over the ebb and flow of the battle.

Again, we wanted these units to have an impact on Hawkshold without being integral. So most of these units can be classified as ‘do the same, only better.’ For example, Sir Steaphen's Free Company is going to be used in the same way any Great Swordsman unit will be: on the front line, thumping an enemy. And Cristoff's Marksmen will be hanging back and shooting the enemy, like any Longbowmen unit.

The value that these units bring is that they can often be a last minute upgrade. Many times when building an army, a player can end up with a spare 70-90 points. Now, you can grab an extra Peasant Mob, but is that the best value? Ideally you'd like to maybe upgrade a Spearmen unit to Great Swords...but you no longer meet the Core requirements.

These Hero units allow you spend those odd points and swap out a Longbowmen unit (or a Great Swordmen, or a Pikemen unit, etc.) for something better. The players is almost like a Hawkshold lord mustering his army for battle: he or she has a bit of extra coin and decides to hire the famed Johan.

The other thing these Hero units bring is in their unit type. We were very deliberate to set Unique units as Standard units. This allows a player to take Dinant's Cavaliers and two units of Knights, for example. It opens a new play style for Hawkshold, one with three Knight units crashing into the enemy. It is over 1200 points in three units, so meeting Core becomes an issue, but it is a glorious thing to put on the table.

And the Royal Lancers really changes the way Hawkshold can play. Functionally having 5 Command Actions during the early portions of the game is a major impact. The Royal Lancers themselves can refuse a flank by threatening a counter-charge all on their own, at no cost to your Command Actions.

We're really hoping to hit the stretch goals that allow us to include these units. Certainly Hawkshold is a fun and viable faction on its own, but we're excited at the idea of including them. If we do hit our stretch goals, these units will be included in the Men of Hawkshold set. They won't be extra or promotional cards, only available to Kickstarter. They will be actual stretch goals, improving the main product.

Till the Next Missive. . .

The Outlaw Alchemist