

“All that befell both peoples, the Roman and the Carthaginian originated from one effective cause—one man and one mind—by which I mean Hannibal.”

Polybius, Book IX The Rise of the Roman Empire

“Pride of Carthage”: The Battle of Cannae 216 BC

Gamers Note: I put this special bonus ‘deluxe’ scenario together because, quite frankly, the scenario in the rules booklet is obviously unsatisfying for gaming out this classic historic battle of encirclement and annihilation. The Romans still have some chance to pull out a victory with these rules, however, given the luck factor inherent in the system and the possible results of capitalizing on poor choices and bad luck on the part of the Carthaginian Player. Also the victory conditions are more stringent for Carthage. In order to claim the win the Roman Army has to be all but totally destroyed. The scenario has a focus on the main part of the Cannae battle, from the point at which that savage and bloody struggle between the two masses of contending troops began in earnest.

Historical Background:

“The next day Hannibal ordered all his troops to prepare themselves and their equipment for action, and the day after he drew up his army along the bank of the river and made it plain that he wished to give battle at once. Paullus, however was still dissatisfied with the ground on which he found himself; he saw that the Carthaginians would soon be obliged to move their camp to obtain supplies, and after strengthening his two camps with additional guards he made no further move. Hannibal waited for some time, and then as he found no response from the Roman side he marched his troops back to their entrenchments, but he still sent out his Numidian cavalry to attack the enemy’s water carriers from the smaller Roman camp. The Numidians rode up to the actual palisade of the camp and prevented the men from drawing water. Not only did this action serve as an added provocation to Varro, but the soldiers who had shown themselves eager for battle became more and more impatient at the delay....”

“...On the next day Varro took over command, and immediately after sunrise he moved his force simultaneously out of both camps. He crossed the river with troops from the main camp and immediately drew them up in order of battle, followed by those from the other camp who were ranged next to them in the same line, the whole army facing south. The Roman cavalry were stationed next to the river on the right wing, and the infantry next to them on the same line. Here the maniples were grouped more closely than in their normal formation, so that the depth of each was several times greater than its width. The allied cavalry was placed on the left wing...The total strength of the Roman forces including allies amounted to some 80,000 infantry and a little over 6,000 cavalry. At the same time Hannibal brought his slingers and pikemen over the river and placed them in forward positions. Then he led the rest of his troops out of their camp, crossed the river at two points and drew them up opposite the enemy. On the left flank close to the river he stationed his Spanish and Celtic horse opposite the Roman cavalry. Closer to the centre were placed half of his African heavy infantry, then the Spanish and Celtic infantry, next to them the other half of the Africans, and finally on his right wing the Numidian cavalry.

At this stage the whole army was in a straight line, but then he moved forward the central contingents of Spaniards and Celts, keeping the flanking units in contact with them to suit his plan; this formation produced a crescent shaped bulge, with the line of flanking companies thinning out as it was extended. The object of this arrangement was to begin the battle with the Spaniards and Celts and use the Africans as a reserve to support them.”

“The Africans were equipped with Roman armor and weapons for Hannibal had fitted them out with the finest of arms he had captured in previous battles. The shields used by the Spaniards and Celts were very similar to one another, but the swords were quite different. The point of the Spanish sword was no less effective for wounding than the edge, whereas the Gallic sword was useful only for slashing and required a wide sweep for that purpose. The troops were drawn up in alternate companies, the Celts naked, the Spanish with their short linen tunics bordered with purple—their national dress—so that the line presented a strange and terrifying appearance.”

“The Carthaginian cavalry was about 10,000 strong, and their infantry, including the Celts, not much above 40,000. The right wing of the Roman Army was commanded by Paullus, the left by Varro, and the centre by the consuls of the preceding year. Hasdrubal commanded the Carthaginian left, Hanno the right, and Hannibal, with his brother Mago the centre....”

“The battle opened with a clash between advance guards, and at first, while only the light infantry was engaged, the fighting was evenly balanced. But as soon as the Spanish and Celtic horse on the left wing came in contact with the Roman cavalry, the action began in earnest and the fighting which developed was truly barbaric. There was none of the usual formal advance and withdrawal about this encounter: once the two forces had met they dismounted and fought on foot, man to man. Here the Carthaginians finally prevailed, and although the Romans resisted with desperate courage, most of them were killed in hand to hand fighting. Their opponent drove the rest of them remorselessly along the river bank, cutting them down as they retreated, and it was at this point that the heavy infantry took the place of the light armed troops and came to close quarters. For a while the Spaniards and Celts held their formations and fought with great gallantry, but then they turned tail, forced back by the sheer weight of the legions, and the convex center of the Carthaginian line was driven in. The Roman maniples surged forward triumphantly and easily pierced the enemy’s front, since the Celts were extended in a thin line, whereas the Romans had thrust their way in from the wings towards the centre where the heaviest fighting was taking place. The Carthaginian centre and wings did not go into action at the same moment—it was the central units which were engaged first because the Celts were drawn up in a crescent shaped formation which placed them ahead of the wings... However... because the Romans were pursuing the Celts and pressing inwards against that part of the front which was giving way, they penetrated the enemy’s line so deeply that they then had both contingents of the African infantry on their flanks. At this point the African infantry on the right wing turned inwards so as to face left, and then charged the enemy’s flank beginning from the right, while those on the left wing likewise turned inward and attacked in similar fashion, the action in each case responding to the needs of the moment. The result was exactly what Hannibal had planned: the Romans by

pressing too far ahead in pursuit of the Celts were trapped between the two divisions of Africans. They could no longer hold their maniple formation, but were compelled either singly or rank by rank to defend themselves against the enemy who were attacking their flanks.”

“Meanwhile Paullus, although he had been on the right wing since the beginning of the battle...was still safe and unwounded. But he wished to translate the words he had uttered in an address to his soldiers into deeds and to take part in the fighting. He saw that the outcome of the battle was likely to be decided by the legions, and so he rode into the centre of the line; there he threw himself into the thick of the fighting, exchanging blows with the enemy, and cheering on and encouraging his men. Meanwhile Hannibal, who had taken his place in this part of the field since the beginning of the battle, was doing the same.”

“While this was going on the Numidians on the Carthaginian right were attacking the cavalry opposite them on the Roman left; they did not inflict many casualties, however nor did they suffer any serious losses themselves because of their peculiar methods of fighting. Nevertheless, they kept the Roman cavalry effectively out of the battle by drawing them off and attacking them now from one quarter and now from another. By this time Hasdrubal had virtually destroyed all the enemy’s cavalry by the river, and rode up to support the Numidians. The cavalry of the Italian allies, seeing that he was about to charge them, broke and fled. At this point Hasdrubal seems to have handled his forces with rare skill and judgement. He saw that the Numidians...were at their most effective when they had the enemy on the run. He therefore left them to deal with the retreating Romans, while he led his own squadrons to the part of the battlefield where the infantry were engaged, and galloped to support the Africans. He fell upon the Romans from the rear, and by launching a series of charges from several directions he at once put fresh heart into the Africans and dealt another blow to the sinking spirits of the Romans. Here Paullus was killed in the thick of the fighting after receiving several terrible wounds. This was a man who had discharged his whole duty to his country throughout his life, and not the least at the end of it.”

“Now so long as the Romans could keep an unbroken front and turn to meet successive attacks of the encircling enemy they were able to hold out. But as their outer ranks were continually cut down and the survivors were forced to pull back and huddle together, they were finally all killed where they stood. Among them were Marcus Atilius Regulus and Gnaeus Servilius, the consuls of the preceding year; both had conducted themselves in the battle as brave men who were worthy to be citizens of Rome.”

“While this hand to hand fighting and slaughter were still going on, the Numidians pursued the fleeing Roman cavalry, killing many of them and tearing others from their horses. A handful of men escaped to Venusia, among whom was the consul Varro, who thus matched a tenure of office which had proved disastrous to his country with an equally disgraceful flight.”

“So ended the battle between the Romans and the Carthaginians at Cannae, a struggle in which both the victors and the vanquished fought with indomitable courage. The proof of this is the fact that out of the 6,000 cavalry on the Roman side only seventy escaped with Varro to Venusia, while about 300 of the allied horse took refuge in different cities in scattered groups. Of the infantry some 10,000 were captured fighting, although not in the actual battle, and only 3,000 got away from the field to the towns in the neighborhood. All the rest to the number of about 70,000 died gallantly....On Hannibal’s side about 4,000 Celts were killed together with 1,500 Spanish and Africans and about 200 horsemen....”

“.....After the battle had been decided as I have described, the consequences which both sides expected soon followed. The Carthaginians as a result of their victory became masters of almost all the rest of the coast....Arpi and a number of Campanian towns invited Hannibal to come to them, and all eyes now turned upon the Carthaginians, who for their part cherished great hopes that they could even capture Rome by assault. As for the Romans, after this defeat they give up all hope of maintaining their supremacy over the Italians, and began to fear for their native soil, and indeed for their very existence, since they expected Hannibal to appear at any moment....”

(The above extended & edited annalist account of the Battle of Cannae is from Book III of Polybius’ Rise of the Roman Empire written in the 2nd century BC)

Terrain Setup:

Fordable River(the Aufidus River): A12, B12, C13, D12, E13, G13, I13.

Hills (really they are small hill-locks): G4, G10, I5, I7, I9

Order of Battle and Setup for Pride of Carthage: The Battle of Cannae 216BC

Roman Army:

X8 Medium Infantry: E6, D5, C6, C7, C8, D8, E9, C5 (“raw troops” see special rules)

X4 Heavy Infantry: E7, E8, D6, D7

X4 Medium Cavalry: D2, D3, D10, D11

X4 Light Infantry: E5, D4, D9, E10

X2 Leaders: Paullus (D9) Varro (D2)

Carthaginian Army:

X4 Heavy Cavalry: H10, G12, H12, G11 (see special rules on Carthaginian cavalry)

X1 Medium Cavalry: H11 (see special rules on Carthaginian cavalry)

X2 Light Cavalry: G2 & G3 (see special rules plus these are considered to be elite)

X4 Heavy Infantry (African Infantry—see special rules) G10, H9, H4, G4

X2 Auxillia H8, H5 (see special rules may evade in certain circumstances)

X1 Slingers: I7 (these are the fearsome elite Balearic slingers see special rules below)

X1 Medium Infantry: G7

X4 Warriors I9, I5, G6, G8 (one add’l warrior unit should be made up from spares)

X4 Leaders: Hannibal (G7) Mago (G6) Hasdrubal (G11) Maharbal (G2)(its suggested that one of the Roman (gray block) Leaders be used to represent Hannibal put a blank spare Burgundy Block on top and on the bottom to indicate Hannibal.)

War Council:

Carthaginian Army:

Leader: Hannibal

7 Command Cards (chosen randomly)

Move First

Roman Army

Leader: Varro

4 Command Cards (includes initially 2 line command cards and 2 chosen randomly)

Victory:

Carthaginians need to get to 12 Banners to win—the Romans need only 10 Banners, but score 3 banners (instead of 1) if they eliminate Hannibal, however if the unit Hannibal is with is eliminated he automatically evades from that hex without having to roll for elimination. Additionally the Roman can score up to one(1) Banner **for each** of the following hexes **when first entered** at any point in play by a Roman **unit**: I6, I7, I8. (not by just a Roman Leader).

Special Scenario Rules:

- 1) **Roman Line Commands:** Roman Line Command cards, with one exception having to do with missile fire, may only be utilized to move units into a hexrow closer to the Carthaginian end of the map, and/or to order units to attack into a hex in the next hexrow closer to the Carthaginian end of the map. Units moved under a Roman Line Command card may only close-combat into hexes in the next hexrow over that is closer to the Carthaginian map-edge. Roman light infantry units, ordered by a Roman line command card, may missile fire in any direction.
- 2) **Roman Battle Plan:** The Command Card played in the very first Roman Turn of the game **must be** a Line Command card.

3) **Outflanking---***This is an easy way of introducing facing and flanks to the game with little fuss—it can be retrofitted to other scenarios where appropriate:*

A unit is said to be “Outflanked” if it is surrounded **in all** six adjacent hexes by either enemy units, or hexes adjacent to an enemy unit. The presence of friendly units does not negate an “Outflanked” situation **in any way**. Units on the board edges (and not surrounded by six adjacent hexes) **cannot** be “Outflanked”.

Effects of being Outflanked: “Outflanked” units when battling back roll only half the normal number of dice they would be normally entitled to rounded up—to a maximum of only two dice—“Outflanked” units when battling back **never** hit on helmet rolls even if supported by a leader. A unit’s “Outflanked” situation is judged at the instant it battles back.

- 4) **Leader Special Rules:**

A Leader attached (stacked with) a friendly unit may cancel one sword hit on the unit **in lieu** of canceling a retreat hit. Hannibal can cancel **both** a retreat **and** a sword hit if present

A unit involved in close combat with the support of a Leader may only count one helmet hit amongst those rolled to inflict a hit on an opposing unit.

A Carthaginian unit **in the same hex with Hannibal** can count up to two helmets when inflicting hits in close combat or battle back rather than just one.

5) **Raw Roman Troops & the Voltumnus Winds:** The bulk of the Roman troops were recently recruited facing a dusty wind blowing into their eyes, all Roman Medium Infantry battles back “normally” with only three dice (instead of the usual four).

6) **Elite Carthaginian Troops:** In contrast to the Romans many of Hannibal's men (perhaps up to half or more of his force on the field that day) were the hard-bitten fighters that had followed him from New Carthage in Iberia over the Alps to the Italian plains. The victors and survivors of many a hard fight both in Spain and Italy.

- a) Carthaginian Auxillia may evade if attacked in close combat by Roman Medium or Heavy Infantry.
- b) The Carthaginian Light Slingers are elite Balearic mercenaries, when firing their missiles at Roman Light (Green) units they hit on swords—in battle back they also hit on swords.
- c) The Carthaginian Light Cavalry are the elite Numidian cavalry—practically born in the saddle, the veterans of countless skirmishes and battles---in battle back they hit on swords.
- d) The Carthaginian Heavy Cavalry units are a well-mounted and extensively trained & experienced mixture of Gallic tribal fighters and Spanish mercenaries, salted with elements of North African Liby-Phoenician mounted nobility. They may move three hexes per turn when ordered and may evade as if they are Medium Cavalry.

7) **African Heavy Infantry Special Move:** On his 4th Player-Turn or later the Carthaginian Player may, **once per game**, may declare a special move by all three or four block Carthaginian Heavy Infantry **in lieu** of playing a card for the turn. **All** Carthaginian Heavy Infantry with 3 or 4 blocks may move 2 hexes and battle at +1 dice.

8) **Carthaginian Cavalry Retreats and Evasions:**

- a) Carthaginian Cavalry, when Flag results are inflicted upon them, can retreat a maximum of two or three hexes (at the choice of the Carthaginian Player and thereby satisfy the result of **all** Flag results inflicted upon them during that particular battle.
- b) Carthaginian Cavalry may retreat **in any** direction, and not just towards their army's edge of the board, however if any portion of the retreat is in a direction **other** than towards their map-edge **none** of the hexes of the retreat path may pass through or end in hexes adjacent to Roman units. A Carthaginian cavalry unit retreating or evading in any direction must end its retreat that number of hexes equal to the retreat from the hex it started from.
- c) Carthaginian Cavalry units may evade in any direction exactly in the same manner as if they were retreating in any direction. If any portion of the evasion is in a direction **other** than towards their map-edge none of the hexes of the evasion path may pass through or end in hexes adjacent to Roman units. Evasions must be at least two hexes if possible, if not evade only one hex.
- d) Carthaginian Leaders may evade exactly as if they were Carthaginian Cavalry, at their option.

9) **Carthaginian Cavalry Special Moves:** At the start of his 3rd Player-Turn or at the start of any later own player-turn the Carthaginian Player may, **twice per game**, declare a special move by the Carthaginian Cavalry. **Up to Five** Carthaginian Cavalry units may

immediately move up to 5 hexes as if the cavalry units were making a normal move, however this special move may not enter hexes adjacent to enemy units. After the “Cavalry Special Move” the Carthaginian Player plays his card normally and may even have his just moved Cavalry move again and have combat—being ordered now via the card. Cavalry Special Moves may not be executed on consecutive Carthaginian Player-turns and the African Heavy Infantry Special Move (see section 7) above) may not be executed on the same turn as a Carthaginian Cavalry Special Move.

10) **Optional Rule: Hannibal’s ‘Punic Trick’**

“Meanwhile on the Roman left, where the allied horse confronted the Numidians was also engaged...About 500 Numidians pretended to desert: in addition to their weapons they concealed swords under their tunics and rode up to the Roman line with their shields sling behind their backs. Suddenly dismounting, and flinging their javelins and shields on the ground, they were taken into the line by the Romans, and then conducted to the rear, where they were ordered to remain. While the general action was developing they kept quiet enough; but as soon as no one in their vicinity had eyes or thoughts of anything but the progress of the battle, they picked up their shields from where they lay scattered amongst the heaps of dead, and attacked the Roman lines in the rear, striking at the soldiers backs, hamstringing them, and causing terrible destruction, and even more panic and disorder.” (from Livy Book XXII)

At the very start of any Carthaginian turn—Carthaginian Turn 3 or later only, the Carthaginian Player may declare “Punic Trick” ---and he proceeds to indicate **any two** Roman foot units on the Roman left flank that are adjacent to each other to undergo a ‘special attack’. The Carthaginian Player rolls 2 dice for each attacked Roman unit and hits on the units’ color, helmet, or swords—one block is removed per hit. There is no battle-back or any other post ‘special attack’ activity by either side & the Carthaginian Player proceeds with the rest of his Player-Turn normally.

After Cannae: The Gift of the Pride of Carthage

(The Scene: The Council chamber of Carthage in late 216BC. Hannibal’s younger brother Mago stands before the assembled Carthaginian oligarchs giving an accounting of the recent victory over Rome at Cannae and demanding assistance in Italy from the senators)

...Another voice, one of the younger Hannons’ added, “Your brother did not ask our guidance when he began this war; why now seek our help to finish it ? This war is not even truly Cartage’s doing. This is Hannibal’s fight, and the outcome rests on his head alone.”

“Does all the glory go to him in victory then?” Mago asked.

The answer came from another section of the chamber. Hadus did not rise. He spoke softly but somehow his voice carried all the authority it needed. “Hannibal will get what’s Hannibal’s”, he said. “But let us not speak out of turn. You said you brought proof young man. Show it to us.”

Mago seemed to debate this a moment, but he nodded that the time was right enough. He tilted his head and projected his words high. “Honorable sirs. You are quite right. I will show you what I’ve brought. I’ll do just that. I bring you a present from my brother, Hannibal Barca, son of Hamilcar, Pride of Carthage !!”

His voice rose toward the end of the sentence so that he shouted those words. This was obviously a signal, for a moment later there was a commotion in the foyer outside the Council courtyard. Several men, slaves naked from the waist up...pushed and tugged a heavily laden cart into the center of the Council. It was covered in a thick cloth that hid its contents, hinting that it was piled high with some sort of booty. Mago paced around the cart a moment, running a hand over the cloth.

“When we report to you the greatness of our victory at Cannae I hear many questions. Some doubt the facts as they have been relayed to them. Some ask for numbers, for proof, for some way that you here in the safety of Carthage can understand what Hannibal’s army has accomplished in your name. But how to bring the reality of our victories in the field to this chamber? And how to name with certainty the number of enemy dead? Who but Baal knows the exact number? I’ve yet to count them myself, but honorable men if you would know the number, feel free to count these, taken each from the hand of a dead Roman citizen! A gift from Hannibal and the field of Cannae!” With theatrical grandeur Mago yanked the sheet from the wagon. Almost simultaneously, the slaves tilted it from the back. The contents poured onto the stone slabs in a clattering avalanche. At first it was hard to tell what the objects were in the unsteady light. They shimmered and bounced on the stones, rolling, skipping, and sliding. Strangely enough, it was a single item out of those thousands that made it clear. It rolled forward away from the others, an erratic path that took it near the councilors’ benches before it turned every so slightly and arced back. Mago with quick finger, snatched it up and held it aloft. It was a gold ring. One of thousands. Roman rings, so many that the sight was unbelievable.

The councilors were silent. The hush was strangely pronounced after the clattering of the rings. Mago stood beaming, watching the surprise and awe and dawning understanding on the men’s faces. He forgot the sense of reserve his brother so often exemplified. He could not help himself. He grinned from ear to ear.

Nor did he stop smiling for several days, not until the Council ordered him to return to the field with a new army. But, despite all he revealed to them, they refused to let him return to Hannibal in Italy. Instead they sent him to Iberia...Hannibal, they told him, would manage without him for a little longer...

(The above selection is from the excellent book: Pride of Carthage a novel ‘inspired’ by the events of the 2nd Punic War. David Anthony Durham authored that work.)