

THE FIRST ISLE

2 PLAYER STARTER SET



The Chronicler Speaks

You force your way through the purposefully obstructive foliage to a clearing containing a single, stone build house. Smoke is surreptitiously creeping out of the chimney stack and, through the windows, the dull glow of a single candle light loiters.

You approach and, as you near, the door creaks open. The candle light approaches, turning the jet black interior into something more defined and visible.

The darkness gives birth to a shape, an ancient man clad in coarse, black robes. His eyes are devoid of shape or form and seem to draw in the light from the surroundings, pulling even the flame of the candle towards them.

He aims his face at you and cracks a smile. "Ah Traveller, finally your wanderings have brought you here. I am the Chronicler, tasked with watching this world. I bid you welcome, please enter freely."

His voice seems to emanate from the house itself and the words, despite having heard them countless times before, felt unnatural.

He shuffles into the house and the light leaves the wick of the candle, moves up to the rafters and hangs stationary for a heartbeat before it grows, offering a clear illumination. He then points to a wooden chair at the sole table in the centre of the room with his hand.

As you sit, he approaches the chair facing you, reaching into the depths of his robe. As he too sits, he covers his mouth with his hand and swallows heavily. He then looks at you and the darkness in his face is gone, replaced by two pale blue eyes.









He clears his throat. "I need not ask what has brought you to this world, as you need not ask why I watch and record all of its history. But, with your permission, I will now show you this world."

The table between you bubbles, then the wood bleeds coloured ink and, in seconds, bare wood has become a moving, living map, a vast ocean world, with three large continents constituting the majority of the land mass.

"This world is a curiosity. Those who exist here are in a state of constant, endless war. Barely a moment passes without blood being shed. Kingdoms rise and fall, borders shift and change, sometimes several in a single...year. Even by this world's standards though, you have come at a particularly busy time. The common squabbles may involve three of four of the known races at most, but this time feels different, feels...well, let us look at the First Isle."

The map moves, rotating and growing until only one of the three continents fills the table.

"The seventeen known races of this Isle are all at war. The ultimate victor does not concern me, but who will entertain us today, that is a question I care about. Ah, here we are."

The map drops to ground level, to a battle raging across its surface.

"Humans and Orcs, two races that, if nothing else, lend credence to the old adage 'What's blood for if not for bleeding?"

He falls silent as, between you, the axes fall and the arrows fly. What you came to see has begun. You suspect you will be here for some considerable time.











Message from the Game Creator

Thank you for purchasing The First Isle 2 Player Starter set. In this box you will find everything you need for two people to play a complete and comprehensive war-game. But what sets it apart from the multitude of other games of this kind currently available? Three key inter-connected elements.

Firstly, there is the UCS - Universal Card System - a method of ensuring that every action that would normally require a tape measure or template can be accomplished with a custom poker size card.

The second is the Rules Tableau, a method of using cards to enable a flexible series of rules specific to each individual player that can be made as simplistic or as complicated as you wish. A standout of this system is that each player can operate under a different set of rules that matches their age and skill level, so that a father could play with their son and both find the game understandable and suitably challenging.

The third and final element is the absence of luck. Combat in this game is based on calculations rather than dice, meaning that your skill alone determines your level of success. How well you employ your chosen rules, those applicable to terrain, unit match-ups, positioning and carefully timed special abilities determines whether you succeed or fail.

Ultimately it is all in the cards...and those cards are now in your hands.

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Contents

Human Army (41 cards)

Ork Army (41 cards)

Rules Cards (50 cards)

Walls Terrain (40 cards)

Token Envelope (100 tokens)







Unit Card Breakdown



The front of a unit card contains all of that particular unit's essential information.

Attack - The base amount of damage the unit causes with an attack activation.

Defence - The base reduction the unit applies when subjected to an attack activation or other activation that results in damage.

Life - The amount of damage the unit can take before being removed from the game.

Movement - The unit's base movement measured in Universal card.

Name - The unit's name.

Character Class - The unit's designation and armour weight (Heavy, Medium or Light).

NB - Each army possesses one specialised unique unit which is exceptionally powerful. This unit is denoted by the following symbol on its card:















Rule Card Breakdown

Rule Class - Level

General Rules - Beginner

1. Flow of the Game

Players take turns activating units Rule 1

Rule 2

Rule 3

Possible activations are 'move', 'charge', 'attack', 'occupy' or 'special'. Available actions (or combinations of actions) depend on the chosen rules

2. Movement Action Units move in straight lines with one rotation permitted per movement action and can be reoriented at the end of their move. Movement is up to the unit's movement statistic (can be less) and measured with the Universal cards.

3. Attack Action

Attacker's attack - Defender's defence = Base Damage done to life. (Minimum Base Damage = 1).

If a unit retreats voluntarily (is purposefully moved by controlling player) from melee combat it immediately loses 1/2 of its total life value.

Combat Calculation Bar

The front of a rule card contains the following information.

Each rule card contains 3 rules, each named and numbered.

The rule class and level (Beginner, Medium or Advanced) are shown at the top of the card.

The final piece of information on the card is the 'Combat Calculation Bar'. These are colour coded to clearly indicate when the associated rule is applied to the damage calculation.

These can either be: Blue - Base damage

Red - Attacker modifiers

Black - Defender modifiers

Green - Shenanigans

These are explained fully in the combat calculation sections - Pages 17 and 18.



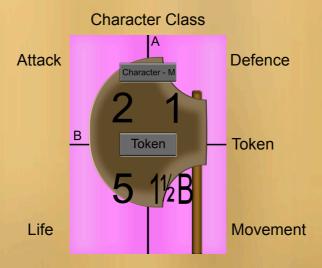








Universal Card Breakdown



Attack, Defence, Life and Movement are as defined in the Unit Card Breakdown (Page 5).

Any reference to 'A' and 'B' relate to the vertical side of a Universal Card 'A' or the horizontal side - 'B'.

The 'Token' slot on a Universal Card is used to designate a persistent AoE (Area of Effect), measured in universal cards.

For example, to show an area of 'A by 2B' set on fire, two universal cards are placed side by side to form a rectangle measuring A by 2B.



A fire token, see Token Breakdown on Page 8 is then placed on the cards.

(The universal cards shown opposite reverse side of the rule cards and are functionally identical to the above universal cards).













Token Breakdown



This token is placed by a unit to signify it has suffered 1 point of damage.



This token is placed by a unit to signify it has suffered 3 point of damage.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a fire effect.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a water effect.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify an air effect.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify an earth effect.



This token is placed by a unit to signify it occupies a piece of terrain



This token is placed by a unit to signify it has been activated this round.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify an objective.



This token is placed by a unit to signify it has used a 'once per battle' ability.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify arrows fired into the ground.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify an artillery impact on the ground.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a reduction in movement of A.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a reduction in movement of B.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a reduction in movement of ½ A.



This token is placed on a universal card to signify a reduction in movement of ½ B.











Getting Started

If this is your first time playing this game, it is advisable to do the following to learn the basic rules and principles it operates under:

Scenarios 1, 2 and 3. (Identical for both Human and Orks).

Once these have been played, you will be ready to play the full game.

Step 1: Determine the playing area.

This depends on the highest number of a single regiment unit each player has in their army.

Heavy Infantry will be used as an example.

ie: 1 Heavy Infantry - Play Area of 3A by 5A

2 Heavy Infantry - Play Area of 4A by 7A

3 Heavy Infantry - Play Area of 5A by 9A

Step 2: Place all tokens within easy reach of both players.

Step 3: Each player takes an army deck and a rules deck.

Step 4: The terrain deck(s) is / are divided amongst the 2 players as per terrain set up rules (see page 11). Each player takes the specific rules for the chosen pieces of terrain and adds them to their rules deck.



Step 5: Depending on the chosen game mode (See Page 22), each player takes 2 objective tokens.



Go to Page 10 to begin setting up the game.









Setting up Rules Tableau

A key component of the game is the Rules Tableau. This is made up of the rules cards and determines the depth and complexity of your game and your army.

Your tableau is set up as follows (Human Army used as an example):

- 1. Separate you rules deck into the named groups of cards General, Infantry, Cavalry, Ranged, Artillery, Magic, Monster, Characters, Terrain (add to this one the specific terrain rules), Human.
- 2. Arrange them horizontally from left to right as follows:

3. The following columns can be swapped amongst themselves so any can be furthest to the right (relevant to the 'Rule of Right' principle - see Page 21):

(Infantry, Cavalry, Ranged) (Monster, Magic, Characters) (Terrain Rules can be ordered within their column as you wish)

The Artillery, Terrain and Army rules are always set in place and cannot be swapped or moved.



- 4. Any rules cards you do not wish to use in your game can be removed from the tableau.
- 5. If you wish to use one or two rules from a particular rule card, tuck it under another card in its column. If the rule you do not wish to use cannot be obscured by the above (for example, you are using General Advanced rules 1 and 3, rule 2 can be covered with a spare token.
- 6. Your individual Rules Tableau is now complete.









Setting up Terrain

Terrain is quite possibly the most impactful and important element of this game. The proper use of the chosen terrain pieces can have enormous influence over who wins. To set up the terrain, complete the following steps.

- 1. Each player receives an equal number of terrain cards (In the case of this starter set, that is 18 wall terrain cards).
- 2. Each player alternates setting up a terrain feature (for the starter set, a house or a keep is considered a single feature) within their half of the play area.
- Terrain is classified as follows:

Flat terrain is placed flat on the table.

Light terrain is a 'building' or single card orientated horizontally in a card stand.

Heavy terrain is a 'building' or single card orientated vertically in a card stand.

Each terrain set has specific rule cards that provide further specific details for

- 4. A 'building' is constituted of 5 or 6 cards (4 sides and a 'roof').
- 5. Once both players have placed all their terrain cards, this section is complete.









Setting up an Army

An army is composed of a number of different units, with a standard army deck containing 27 regiment units (9 each of infantry, cavalry and ranged), 3 artillery pieces, 3 characters and 3 monsters. This starter set contains 2 full armies, the Humans and the Orks.

An army is set up and deployed as follows:

- 1. Each player chooses an army and decides which units to use from their deck.
- 2. Each player takes turns deploying units within 'A' of their edge of the play area, with the exception of Light regiments units (infantry, cavalry and ranged), which can be deployed anywhere in the player's half of the play area.
- 3. Units can be deployed directly into occupying terrain (chosen rules permitting) and are marked with the occupy token.
- 4. Units occupying buildings are placed on top of the building.



- 5. Once both players have deployed their entire chosen army, the game begins with the player who deployed the first unit taking the first activation.
- 6. Setting up for the game is now complete.







Flow of the Game

A game of 'The First Isle' is broken up into a number of rounds which are composed of the two players taking turns to activate one of their units. Once a player has activated a unit, it is marked with an 'Activated' token and the other player takes their turn.

Play continues in this fashion until all units have been activated. (If one player has units still to activate and the other has activated all of his, the player with units still available activates all his remaining units). Once this has happened, all 'Activated' tokens are removed and a new round begins.

The game is won by fulfilling the appropriate victory for the chosen game mode.

Here are a few examples of possible game modes and associated victory conditions.

- **1. Annihilation** The default game mode, won through the complete elimination of the opposing players army.
- 2. Objectives After terrain set up, each player places two objectives (signified by a single universal card with an 'Objective Token' placed on it), one in their half of the play area, one in their opponents. The game is won by reaching 10 points, each objective held (majority of the units within the objective card area) at the end of a game round is worth 1 point. In the event of an army being annihilated, the remaining player gains 3 points highest points then win.
- **3. Assault** Players take the role of attacker and defender. Defender has half the number of units that the attacker has and is not allowed to use artillery, but places all terrain and 4 objectives, numbered 1 through 4, in the play area (1 in their opponents half of the play area). The attacker then fully deploys their army, followed by the defender.

For the attacker to win, they have to either annihilate the defenders or capture all remaining objectives in numerical order (rules for capture as per 'Objectives' game mode). The defender wins by burning all 4 objectives (1 objective per round can be declared 'burnt' if held by the defender at the end of a round), or by annihilating the attackers.

4. Scenario - Each individual scenario will have it's own set up, play rules and victory conditions. For examples of this, see the Ork and Human Scenario Booklets.











Activations

A player's turn involves selecting a single unit and then activating them. There are 5 basic activations available which can be altered and influenced according to player's rules tableau.

Move - A move activation utilises the unit's movement statistic to move from one spot in the play area to another. One rotation is permitted in a single move activation. This can be either before moving or during the move and, once movement begins, it is in the direction the unit is facing in a straight line. The movement can be less than the whole movement statistic should the player wish.

At the end of a move activation, the player can 'reorientate' the unit to face any direction they wish.

A move activation can be followed up by further activations according to the player's rules tableau. The most common of these is, after moving into contact with an opposing unit, an attack activation.

Charge - A charge activation is similar to a move activation, but offers powerful bonuses to an attack activation. This is offset by the fact that a unit can only charge in a straight line into direct contact with an opposing unit. No rotation is permitted before or during a charge.

Attack - An attack activation instigates a combat calculation (see Pages 17 and 18) between 2 opposing units. This follows and is influenced by each player's rules tableau.

Terrain and a specific area can also be subject to an attack should such options be available in the player's rules tableau.

Occupy - A unit can be marked as occupying a suitable piece of terrain if the player's rules tableau permits. This can be described as 'garrisoning', 'manning', 'hiding' or other flavourful terms within individual rules, but they all qualify as 'occupying' a terrain piece.

During deployment (see Page 12), suitable units can be placed directly into occupying suitable terrain. Occupying units are marked with the relevant token.

Special - Special activations are any that do not fall into the above 4 activations and are fully detailed in the relevant rules within the player's rules tableau.

These include 'once per battle abilities'. If the player's rules tableau offers a unit multiple 'once per battle' abilities, only one can be chosen and, once used, the relevant token is placed by the unit.

Once a unit has been activated, an 'activated' token is placed by it. A unit can only be activated once per game round and cannot be reactivated until the 'activated' token has been removed.





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Sample Activation - Simple

This activation involves a Medium Ork Infantry unit moving to then attacking a Light Human Infantry unit. The following rule card(s) should be set aside and viewed as you read the below:

General Rules - Beginner (1,2,3)

- 1. Using rule 1 on General Rules Beginner, the Medium Ork Infantry unit is activated.
- 2. Using rule 2 on General Rules Beginner, the Medium Ork Infantry unit moves 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ B, measured using the short side of a Universal Card, into contact with the Human Light Infantry.
- 3. Using rule 3 on General Rules Beginner, the Medium Ork Infantry unit attacks the Light Human Infantry.

Please refer to Page 18 - 'Combat Calculation - Simple' to see how this attack is resolved.









Sample Activation - Complex

This activation involves a Heavy Human Cavalry charging into then attacking a Heavy Ork Infantry, then following through to attack the Heavy Ork Ranged unit that was placed behind it. The following rule card(s) should be set aside and viewed as you read the below:

General Rules - Beginner, Medium, Advanced

Cavalry Rules - Beginner, Medium, Advanced

- 1. Using rule 1 on General Rules Beginner, the Medium Ork Infantry unit is activated.
- 2. Using rule 2 on General Rules Medium, the Heavy Human Cavalry unit charges '1 A $\frac{1}{2}$ B' into the Heavy Ork Infantry unit. This activation also complies with rule 3 on Cavalry Rules Advanced.
- 3. Using rule 3 on Cavalry Rules Beginner, the Heavy Ork Infantry unit is forced back into the wall (Light man made terrain). A combat calculation is resolved (see Page 18 Combat Calculation Complex) for the initial attack.
- 4. Using rule 3 on Cavalry Rules Medium, the Heavy Human Cavalry unit then follows through to the Heavy Ork Ranged unit and attacks it, resulting in a further combat calculation (see Page 18 Combat Calculation Complex) occurs.
- 5. Using rule 3 on Cavalry Rules Medium allows the Heavy Human Cavalry unit to apply rule 3 on Cavalry Rules Beginner once again, forcing the Heavy Ork Ranged unit back into the wall (Light man made terrain).

Page 19 - Combat Calculation - Complex will show the full effect of this activation.







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Combat Calculation

The combat calculation is how attack and other activations that result in a unit being damaged are resolved. They follow a set pattern as follows:

- Establish base damage.
- 2. Apply attack modifiers.
- 3. Apply defence modifiers.
- 4. Consider applicable shenanigans.
- 5. Obtain the final damage number that is applied to the defending unit.

The base damage is obtained as follows:

- 1. The attacker uses their attack statistic. The defender uses their defence statistic.
- 2. Each player reviews their rules tableau and applies all applicable rules with a blue bar on the right hand side to this number following the 'rule of right'. At each step, the resulting number is always rounded up.
- 3. This gives you the base attack and defence numbers.
- 4. Base attack base defence gives the base damage number.

The attacking player then reviews their rules tableau and applies all applicable rules with a red bar on their right hand side, following the 'rule of right' and rounding up each time.

The defending player then reviews their rules tableau and applies all applicable rules with a black bar on their right hand side, following the 'rule of right' and rounding up each time.

Both players then review their rules tableau and apply all applicable rules with a green bar on their right hand side rounding up each time. The defending player does this first, then the attacking player does this.

This final number is the damage from the combat and is measured against the defender's life statistic. If it exceeds this, the defender is removed from the game.

Key rules of Combat Calculations:

- 1. Every time a modifier is applied to the damage number, the result is always rounded up.
- 2. If attacking and defending player's rules appear to clash, the attacker's rule always takes priority.
- 3. 'The rule of right' applies through the combat calculations.
- 4. The final outcome of a damage calculation will never be lower than 1.









Combat Calculation - Simple

This combat calculation refers to Page 15 - Sample Activation - Simple. The rules cards used remain unchanged.

Step 1 - Establish the base damage as follows:

Medium Ork Infantry unit has a base attack statistic of 3.

Light Human Infantry unit has a base defence statistic of 1.

Next look at the combat calculation bar on the rule card. These always follow this specific order. Blue, Red, Black Green.

Blue affects base statistics.

Red provides an attack modifier.

Black provides a defence modifier.

Green provides 'shenanigans', affects that occur at the end of the combat calculation.

General Rules - Beginner 1,2, 3 do not affect either statistic, which gives a base damage number of 2.

Step 2 - General Rules - Beginner 1, 2, 3 does not provide attack modifiers.

Step 3 - General Rules - Beginner 1, 2, 3 does not provide defence modifiers.

Step 4 - General Rules - Beginner 1, 2, 3 does not contain any 'shenanigans'.

Step 5 - This gives a result of 2 damage. As the Light Human Unit has 3 life, tokens amounting to 2 damage are placed beside it.

This is the end of this combat calculation and the Medium Ork Unit's activation is finished. An activated token is placed beside it.







<u>Combat Calculation - Complex</u>

This combat calculation refers to Page 16 - Sample Activation - Complex. The rules cards used remain unchanged.

- **Step 1** Using unit statistics, the base damage of the initial charge and attack is 5. This comes from Heavy Human Cavalry having a base stat 3, raised to 8 due to Cavalry Rules Advanced 3. The Heavy Human Infantry's defence of 3 gives the final number of 5.
- **Step 2** Using General Rules Medium 3, Cavalry charging Infantry provides a multiplier of 1 ½ times, giving a result of 7.5. As per the Key Rules (see Page 17), this is rounded up to 8.
- **Step 3** None of the available rules in this example provide any defence modifiers.
- Step 4 Using General Rules Medium 1, the number is halved giving a final damage outcome of 4.
- **Step 5** Since the Human Heavy Infantry has a life statistic of 5, normally they would survive this attack. However, they were thrown into a nearby wall and, as per Cavalry Rules Beginner 3, suffer 2 more points of damage. As this gives a total of 6, the Heavy Ork Infantry is removed from the game.
- **Step 6** Using Cavalry Rules Medium 3, the Heavy Human Cavalry instigated a further combat calculation against the Heavy Ork Ranged unit.
- **Step 7** Repeating Step 1, the modified Heavy Human Cavalry attack of 8 against the Heavy Ork Ranged defence of 2 gives a base damage of 6.
- Step 8 Repeating Step 2, the multiplier is now 2, which gives a result of 12.
- Step 9 Repeat Step 3. No change to the number, which remains 12.
- **Step 10** Repeat Step 4. This gives a final damage number of 6.
- **Step 11** As this exceeds the Heavy Ork Ranged unit's life statistic of 4, the unit is dead before it is thrown against the wall as per Cavalry Rules Beginner 3. It too is removed from the game.

This is the end of the combat calculation and the Heavy Human Cavalry's activation is over. An 'activated' token is placed beside it.









Key Terms

Activation - The means of making a single unit act in the game.

AoE - Abbreviation for Area of Affect

Armour - All units are classed as 'Heavy', Medium' or 'Light'. With the appropriate rules, this can have a number of effects on how a particular unit acts during the game and resolves combat calculations.

Casting - An activation resulting in the casting of a spell.

Chanting - An activation taken by a unit employing magic. Empowers a spell.

Combat Calculation - The means of determining the outcome of activations that result in combat.

Flank - Engaging a unit in either their left or right side (based on where the front of the card is).

LoS - Abbreviation for Line of Sight

'Once per Battle' - Powerful abilities that, once used, lead to the placement of the relevant token by the unit.

Push - An effect where a unit is moved due to the actions of another player. Unless stated in rules tableau, is directly opposite the direction the unit is facing.

Rear - Engaging a unit in the back (the universal side) of their card.

Regiment - A unit that is either Infantry, Cavalry or Ranged.

Retreat - The act of voluntarily moving one of your units out of melee combat

Round - A single game period made up of a number of turns.

Rules - Cards that determine a particular players means of playing the game, split into 'Beginner', 'Medium' and 'Advanced'. Sub-split into 3 rules per card.

Terrain - Structures or features present in a play area.

Token - A small marker used to signify a particular event or condition.

Turn - A time period where a player activates a single unit card.

Universal Cards - Used to measure AoE and distances in game.





Key Concepts

'The First Isle' is a game based around 2 key concepts, the 'Rule of Right' and 'Active Player Priority.

The Rule of Right - In any clash between individual rules in a player's rule tableau, priority is always given to the rule furthest to the right.

The reason behind this rule is that the game is designed for certain elements to have greater effect on the outcome of combat and play in general and subsequently, these are given an inherent priority in the hierarchy of rules.

Active Player Priority - If 2 players sets of rules result in a direct conflict, then priority is given to the active player's rule. In other words, the conflict is resolved in favour of the player whose turn it is.

This rule also extends to a dispute over whether or not an attack hits the rear, flank or front of the opposing unit. (Should a player chose to abuse this rule, they should naturally expect similar treatment when it is the other player's turn.

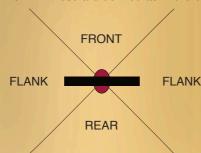
Additional Concepts

LoS - Although not a key concept, the issue of (LoS) Line of Sight bears further explanation, especially with regards to terrain and how you set up your terrain.

In the simplest of terms, if a unit is 'taller' than a piece of terrain, then it does not obstruct LoS. Since all unit cards are placed vertically in the card stands, any terrain feature that is orientated horizontally does not obstruct LoS (this includes buildings). In other words, Heavy terrain obstructs LoS, light terrain does not affect LoS.

With the terrain included in this box, barricades and towers obstruct LoS, walls and houses do not.

Front, Rear and Flank - These are defined as in the below image.



Each angle is 90 degrees, based about the centre of the card stand.







FAQ

- Q What do I do if I run out of a particular token?
- A Use the Objective tokens (or the Occupied tokens if it is clear that the unit is not Occupying terrain.
- **Q** My rules tableau contains multiple 'Once per Battle' abilities for a particular unit, can I use them all on one individual unit?
- **A** No, you have to pick which you would like to use. Once any of them has been used, that unit can no longer employ any 'Once per Battle' abilities for the remainder of the game.
- **Q** Certain rules refer to 'ground', 'flyers', 'sharp' or 'blunt', how can I tell which is which?
- A These relate to clear visual differences in the unit card artwork. If a unit has wings, it is a 'flyer', if not, it is 'ground' based. Weapons that have a point or an edge (say a sword or a spear) are 'sharp', weapons without one (clubs and maces) are 'blunt'.
- Q I don't like cards, can I proxy minis in their place?
- **A** Yes, minis can be used in place of the cards, although you will have to make some house rules regarding their use if you choose some particularly large ones.
- Q 2 armies and 1 set of terrain is quite limiting, will there be more releases?
- A Yes, the First Isle contains 17 different races and multiple different biomes.

The first wave of releases coming after the starter set will consist of 5 armies - Dwarves, Elves, Undead, Centaurs and Mermen.

And 5 terrain types - Rives and Lakes, Forests and Shrubbery, Hills and Knolls, Roads, Fields and Hedgerows.

- **Q** Will there be further units, specialist characters and the like coming for the Humans and Orks?
- **A** I would certainly like to do this in the future, but will be prioritising additional armies and terrain types first.













