

# The “Bid System” For The Conduct of DBA Campaigns

## Version 1.2

By Andy Hooper

This is a simplified campaign system, designed to generate battles that can be resolved using the De Bellus Antiquitatus rule system. Unlike the official campaign rules, this system produces battles that are resolved simultaneously, without the need to wait for one players' turn to be resolved before others may proceed. In addition, every battle is fought by full twelve-element armies. It was designed with 6 players in mind, but any even number between 4 and 12 would be practical.

### Game Materials:

Instead of using a standard campaign map, the Bid system uses the following materials:

- ▶ One large piece of paper or cardboard, divided into as many areas as there are players, each identified with the name of the nation they represent.
- ▶ A set of eight “bid cards” for each player, with numbered point values as follows: 1 x 4, 2 x 3, 2 x 2, 3 x 1. In addition to their numbered value, each card will have the name of a location or commodity that represents its value to the nation that possesses it. In a broad sense, the cards represent the resources that their corresponding nation is willing or forced to risk in war.
- ▶ Colored tokens or other unique marker for each player to mark his face-down bid cards on the bid board.

### Sequence of Play:

Each campaign year consists of two phases: The Bid Phase, and the Battle Phase. In the Bid Phase, players bid for the right to conduct a DBA battle against one of the other players in the campaign. In the Battle Phase, they resolve those battles, subject to all the standard rules of DBA.

### The Bid Phase:

During the Bid Phase players take turns wagering their bid cards in an attempt to control the opponent they must face in the coming battle phase, with the ultimate goal of winning the battle and receiving bid cards of an equal value from their opponent's hand.

### Bid Order Determination:

On the first turn of the game, players roll two dice, and place their bids in descending order corresponding to the rank of their die roll. On the second and subsequent turns, the player with the most cards places first, with ties broken by die roll.

### **Bidding Procedure:**

On their turn, the players place their bid cards on the positions corresponding to the players whose army they wish to face, and whose bid cards they wish to acquire. Each player may make up to three separate bids against three separate potential opponents, subject to the following limitations: A player may make only one bid of any specific number of points per turn: For example, if Early Egypt bids three points worth of cards against the Early Bedouins, they could not bid three points against any other opponent that turn. In addition, the following restrictions apply to the first two campaign years: In the first year, no bid can contain more than three cards. On the second turn, bids are limited to 12 points or less. On the third and subsequent turns, bids may be of any number of cards of any value.

When a bid is placed, it should be marked with a distinctive token or marker to identify who placed it; after the first turn, bid cards will be mixed around between the players, and it will no longer be obvious who has placed which cards.

### **Bid Resolution:**

After all players have placed up to three bids on the bid board, all bids are turned face up for resolution. Bids are honored strictly in order of point value; if two more bids offer the same total points, the bid which was placed on the board first is honored first. IF the second (or third) bid for the same amount has a valid target after the first (or second) is resolved, it too will be honored. A winning bidder immediately removes their other bids, if any, from the board, as does their chosen opponent. The defending player must select sufficient cards as needed to equal or exceed the winning bidder's bid. If the defender named in the winning bid has wagered any cards already, these must be put at risk first, and augmented as necessary to equal or exceed the bid.

After this operation is completed, the next highest surviving bid is honored; and this is repeated until all players are accounted for, or two or more players remain who have no bids standing against one another. In this case, the players may each move one bid from an ineligible opponent to an eligible one, in the same order in which bids were placed, until bids have been honored to account for all the players in the game.

### **Imbalanced Bids and Allied Bidding:**

If a player is the subject of a bid that exceeds the total bid points in their hand, they must put their bid hand "all in" and battle for their campaign life. Should they win the battle, they will receive only as many bid points as they risked, i.e., the best they can do is "double up." Additionally, other players may add their cards to an imbalanced bid on the defender's side as their allies; if the bidder wins the battle, the ally's cards go to them, while if the bidder loses the battle, the ally will receive cards of equivalent or greater value to the ally's contribution, from the losing bidder's bid cards. Allied bids are placed in the same order that bids were placed at the beginning of the phase, and the defender may not "refuse" their ally's "help."

### **OPTIONAL RULE: Modifying a Bid:**

After bid pairs are determined, but before the battles are resolved, both players may attempt to modify the selection of cards at risk. The Attacking player may attempt to “target” a specific card from the defender’s bid hand, not yet already at risk. The Attacker rolls one die; if the number is GREATER than the DEFENDER’s Aggression rating, the Defender must add the card to the bids at risk in the battle. If possible, the Defender must withdraw cards of equivalent value to make their bid equal to the attacker.

After the Attacker has attempted to modify the bid hands or declined to do so, the Defender may attempt to remove a single card from the bid hand, even if he has put his entire hand in the bid. To succeed, the Defender must roll his own Aggression or LESS on a single die. If he succeeds, he MUST replace the card with cards of similar value from his hand if he has them. If he cannot, the Attacker may then remove an equal number of bid points from his bid hand. No allied bids may be made after these modifications have been attempted.

### **The Battle Phase:**

The value of the bid has no impact on the battle it generates; the battle is conducted between two standard 12-element armies, using the regular DBA rules for board creation, deployment and winning and losing. However, the bidding player is always the attacker. The seizure of BUAs and camps, and the death of generals, have no impact on the battle’s bid value, but have the usual impact on the total of elements lost.

The nations represented by the players in this campaign are assumed to be large, wealthy empires with several field armies, generals and warlords to defend their interests. No matter how brutally an army may be beaten in a given battle, the player will still present a full 12-element army fitting any option of their list in the subsequent campaign year.

### **Effects of Losing all Bid Cards:**

If a player loses a battle that puts their last bid card at risk, they are assumed to become a puppet or vassal of the player that eliminated them. They receive three cards from the winning bidder’s post-battle bid hand, and continue play normally, but: They are not permitted to bid against their “masters” on the following turn nor may the patron nation attempt to bid for their client’s cards until such time as they have “rebelled” by placing a bid against the patron. The vassal’s bid need not be honored to break the client/patron relationship. If at any time the vassal nation acquires more cards than its ruler, it is automatically and instantly freed from vassal status.

### **Vassals and Bidding:**

A vassalized state may not make an “allied bid” against their ruling state. If the ruling power has committed all its cards and still cannot equal an attacker’s bid, the vassal must add any uncommitted cards in its hand as needed to equal the attack against the ruling nation. If the ruling nation wins, the vassal receives cards from the loser’s hand in proportion to their contribution. If the ruler loses, the vassal’s cards are lost as well. If

the vassal is reduced to zero cards by this event, the victor is the vassal's new ruler, and must give him three cards to play with.

### **Bid Card Bonus Points and Special Circumstances:**

In some campaigns, bid cards may have bonus point values indicated on them, which give them increased score when possessed by specific player nations. The player may add these bonus points to the value of their hand for determination of bid placement order, and for determining the final value of bid cards at the end of a campaign.

Some bid cards may also have "Special Circumstances" that affect any battles fought as a result of their play. Examples of special circumstances include compulsory BUAs and waterways, compulsory combat element garrisons in BUAs and Camps, or even compulsory littoral invasion.

### **Winning the Campaign:**

A campaign may be played for a set number of years, at the end of which the player holding the highest total of bid card points is the winner. If one player ever has more than 82 points in a standard six-player campaign, or 108 points in an 8-player campaign, they may be declared the automatic victor. In some campaigns, players may also accumulate a victory point for every year they have the most bid card points at the end of the Battle Phase, and award the victory to the player who "wins" the most years within the preset duration of the campaign.

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