

# For the People

## Opening Theory

By Mark Herman



### Introduction

Chess was my first wargame. One of my personal interests is in studying how the rules of Chess

evolved from its likely Indian origins to the version of the game that has been played since the turn of the twentieth century when *en passant* was internationally accepted into the core rules. A complementary interest has been the evolution of Chess theory with its named openings that conjure images of the geometry of the position (e.g., Accelerated Dragon variation of the Sicilian Defense), some key feature of the opening (e.g., Maroczy Bind), or are named for its originator (e.g. Ruy Lopez). This article will transpose my interest in the evolution of Chess theory into how to think about starting, or to use the Chess term *opening*, a game of *For the People* (hereafter FTP).

With the 2006 reprint of FTP the design has completed its evolution. This version of the design has been the one played and used for the last half decade. In that half decade a dedicated group of players have created and explored a multiplicity of openings focused on gaining advantage into the middle and end game portions of the campaign scenario. This article is my attempt to create a construct on how to think about the broad spectrum of potential openings and how they confer advantage.

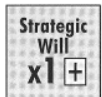
### Definitions

For my purposes the opening of a FTP game begins with the Spring 1861 turn (game turn 1) to the conclusion of Fall 1861 game turn (game turn 3). From that point going forward is the middle game, which is book ended by the emergence of Lee in the Spring of 1862 and the finish of 1863 when Grant begins to impact the military situation. The end game is heralded by the appearance of Sherman in the Spring of 1864.

One of the key elements of the design is my view that an outright Southern political victory was possible in 1862 before the industrial might of the North could be fully mobilized. This makes the middle game the critical portion of any FTP campaign game. How a player comes out of the opening sets up the early character of the middle game and often determines its course prior to the arrival of Grant in the Spring of 1863.

### How To Create A Winning Advantage

I view generalship as the ability to manipulate the factors of force, space, and time to achieve military objectives. The American Civil War was a war of maneuver (space and time) and the ability to generate armies from scratch (force). In a FTP game, the player who prevails has manipulated these factors better than their opponent. Of course fate in the guise of dice and card distribution play a part, but I have seen the better FTP players over the course of time consistently win with either side, giving me some level of faith that it is skill, not luck, that determines the winner in an FTP contest.



Strategic Will (SW) is a reflection of each sides political support for continuing the prosecution of the war. Things that impact SW can be

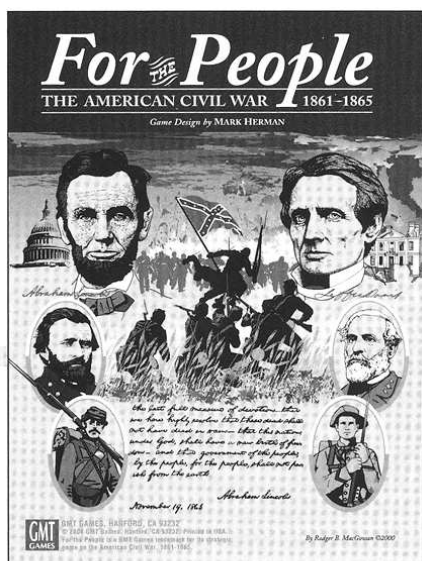
thought of as newspaper headline events that drive public opinion up or down. For those who have not played FTP there are several paths to

victory, but the most common ones are either a Southern automatic victory when they double the Union Strategic Will in the middle game or a Union automatic victory when they drive old Dixie down in the End game (Strategic Will of zero). There are several other paths to victory, the most notable being a Southern survival victory on the last game turn, but the automatic SW victories are the most common.

Players manipulate SW through their ability to weave together political events with military success. The timing of success and failures carries the fortune of war benefit-penalty, so players who are more adept at how they sequence their political and military fortunes gain a series of small numerical advantages that can, over the course of the game, determine victory or defeat. An example of this is often found in the middle game when the South finds itself one SW point short of automatic victory due to superior Union timing.

Given that Southern victory is usually accomplished during the middle game or on the last game turn many Confederate openings focus on setting up an 1862 win or failing that the highest SW total possible to weather the big Union offensives that occur after Grant and Sherman enter the picture. Conversely Union opening objectives are set on the long game when eventual Union strength superiority enables military victory in 1864 by reducing Southern SW to zero. A perfect historical outcome would see the Confederate SW reduced to zero on the last Union card on the last turn.

Players have discovered that the best metric for determining advantage is the relative count of strength points on the map. Both sides generate a base level of strength each game turn (except the Fall of 1861 when the 3 month volunteers muster out). The Union base is 18 versus a Confederate base of 13 strength points. The Confederate base level strength can be reduced due to Union control of Confederate States, the Union naval blockade, control of the Mississippi, and closure of blockade zones through physical occupation. The Union base level of strength can be reduced through Southern rail isolation of DC, foreign intervention, and the occupation of Union State Capitals. Both sides can gain and lose strength due to card events whereas the South can increase their strength through the control of the border states of Kentucky and Missouri. The other key skill is how to minimize attrition that in the aggregate



The American Civil War, 1861-1865  
 Card Driven Game System  
 Published: 2000/2006 by GMT Games LLC  
 Designer: Mark Herman  
 Developer: Mark Simonitch  
 Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan  
 Map Art: Mark Simonitch  
 Counter Art: Mark Simonitch  
 and Rodger B. MacGowan  
**Winner of Charles S. Roberts Award:**  
 • Best Pre-WWII Game of the Year



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can confer battlefield equivalent losses.

The **FTP** player community has determined that it is the confluence of SW and relative force strength that indicates at any given moment who is winning or losing a game of **FTP**. The goal of an **FTP** opening, as in chess, is to create spatial and strength advantage for the middle game. However, **FTP** uses my card driven game (CDG) design, whereby a player needs to accomplish their objectives in an environment of uncertainty. The best CDG players say that you have to do what the cards will let you do. What the cards do is determine how mobile your forces will be and the events that are available to be exploited.

## Cards and Mobility

Although there is great variety of card combinations that can constitute any given hand in **FTP**, there are some constants that you should focus on. The first thing to focus on is how much mobility is possible from the cards. Due to the small hand sizes in the opening the mobility for both sides is naturally limited from what is possible in the later stages of the game. Using this mechanism, a player can determine whether his hand confers low or high mobility. Low mobility is when a player can move forces with less than fifty percent of their hand sans operations queue whereas high mobility is the ability to move with half or more of your cards.

When making this calculation one needs to subtract out important events that should not be used to move forces unless it is an emergency. Events that should not be used by either side for mobility are reinforcements (e.g., *Emergency Call for Volunteers*) and card reduction (e.g., *Choctaw Indians*) with strong SW events requiring serious assessment. For the Union key events are blockade, naval attacks, political control (PC) events, and potentially free changes in army leadership. For the South events that place PC markers, multiple forts, and ironclads deserve consideration whereas the *Forward to Richmond* card often shapes how a hand is played. Both sides need to consider how to avoid or employ the *Emancipation Proclamation* and *Foreign Intervention* when they end up in your hand.

## The Map in the Opening



Where a player focuses his efforts is as much a matter of player style as strategic imperative. Strategy in **FTP** is driven by SW, but how players want to drive SW is what makes each game different. There are three theaters of operation in **FTP**, the East, the West, and the Southern coast.

The East is defined as the Virginia and West

Virginia front. The East is dominated by the maneuverers that occur between and around the two Capitals of Washington DC and Richmond. The players represent the respective Presidents of their respective countries (e.g., Lincoln and Davis). Therefore your house is represented by a counter and you should and will be upset if you have to move because an enemy army has burned it to the ground. Keep this in mind when you thin out your capital's defenses.



In most games Richmond will eventually fall, so the later the better, but for the Union the loss of DC is a disaster. The fall of

Washington is often the event that triggers an automatic Confederate victory. The Union must remember to defend Washington at all times. You do not have to, but to do otherwise is to court disaster. The other key dimension of the East is West Virginia, which can be an axis for Confederate advance toward Pittsburgh and from there to locations East or West. Union strategy in the East is about securing the three ingress points into the North (Pittsburgh PA, Harper's Ferry VA, and Frederick MD). A Union player does not have to defend in these locations directly, but can create a forward and layered defense, which is often preferable to a point defense.

For the Confederates, although Richmond must be secured in the opening, the Union does not usually possess sufficient strength or general die roll modifiers (drams) to succeed in a resource space medium battle. However, the South needs to consider the potential threat posed by a Union build up at Fort Monroe when it occurs. The South also needs to consider the value of the Valley as applied toward space control in Virginia and as a base from which to launch offensives.

The West is characterized by the Kentucky and Missouri front. Technically the area west of the Mississippi is usually called the Trans-Mississippi, but in the opening it is rare for threats to range south of Missouri, so in this context I see them as one contiguous front. Kentucky is a critical border state whose control grants powerful spatial advantage to the side that controls it. For the Union control of Kentucky denies Confederate access to Indiana via Louisville and is a springboard from which an attack on Nashville and Dover can be launched. The Union also possesses with the right naval cards some interesting riverine opportunities against Dover, whose loss seriously impacts Southern western strategy. For the South control of Kentucky poses a long term threat to the Union western states, while defending Tennessee.

Usually Missouri is of secondary importance to Kentucky. When this is not the case is when the cards say otherwise. The deck contains a number of PC event cards (e.g., *Nathaniel Lyon*) that can allow a Union player to cheaply gain control of Missouri or allow the South to do likewise (e.g., *Quantrill's Raiders*). Missouri offers the Union its historical avenue of approach through New Madrid to both eliminate the South's upper Mississippi defenses and threaten Memphis. For the South, Cairo via Paducah is an avenue of attack into Southern Illinois. There also exists a rarely used attack route for the South through St. Louis, but this usually requires more effort in the opening than is prudent.

The Southern coast is any location that is accessed by naval vice riverine operations. For the South losing coastal forts causes a one point SW loss and a one point Union SW gain. This is why the South should be circumspect in using SW events for mobility. However, the major consideration is how to avoid losing a blockade zone, which is a permanent loss of a strength point each game turn. It should be noted that there are a couple of cards that enable the South to reverse the loss of a blockade zone, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in this situation. In the opening the South will find it hard to avoid losing any coastal forts if the Union strategy has a strong naval element, but the South must avoid losing a blockade zone this is a 10 strength point loss per zone for the remainder of the game.

One of the central asymmetric advantages the Union has over the South is its naval capability. If the South is allowed to concentrate the majority of its strength on the Eastern and Western fronts, the Union is conceding a potential spatial advantage to the South. The Union needs to play a 360 degree game against the Confederacy threatening to close a blockade zone, particularly the West and East Gulf, while setting up the conditions to gain control over Florida or Texas. Texas is usually the better early game choice as the capture of Sabine City Texas both closes one of two West Gulf blockade runner ports and also threatens the remaining two spaces of Texas.

## How To Think About Openings in a Combinatorial Environment

**FTP** was designed to create large numbers of very interesting combinatorial effects between the cards and the map position. There are times that a good hand is neutralized by what the opponent is holding and there are times when two mediocre hands play into each other creating devastating combinations when played correctly. Every card thematic has at least one

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counter card in the deck. So, you should never feel entirely secure as you balance strategy and risk. The caveat is all comments on openings have exceptions, some of which I will cover later in this article, but these comments are valid for the vast majority of situations, although your mileage may differ.

All of the preamble was to get us to this place. In my lexicon an opening can be characterized by how mobile a player's forces can be and where the player wants to focus his initial strategy. This yields a simple matrix (right) for each side. Each box carries a title for a specific opening that will be described below.

## Union Openings

### Low Mobility Openings

The Union needs 3 value operations cards (30C) to move all but two of their generals (Pope and Burnside) in the opening. It is often the case on the first turn that the Union cannot move any general, in particular the Army of the Potomac (AoP). The Union is almost forced to concede the initiative to the Confederates in low mobility openings. This is only a problem if the South is aggressive early, but based on tournament play this is likely to be an early Union issue. In these types of openings the Union is not going to be particularly aggressive in the East or the West. Depending on the events, the Union in low mobility openings may find most of its offensive activity directed through its naval opportunities with cards such as *Strategy board* or any of the Admiral Cards (e.g., Foote, Porter, Farragut). The desired outcome of low mobility openings is to keep from getting hurt, parry the enemy thrusts, and seize the initiative by opportunistically creating threats as they become available.

The first order of business in low mobility openings is to take advantage of all of the 10C cards in your hand by using the Union advantage in fort building to start digging (*All Along the Watchtower*). Ideally the Union will build a layered defense that is augmented with its Summer 1861 reinforcements (game turn 2) to create a barrier guarding the avenues of approach to Pittsburgh, Harper's Ferry, and Frederick. A great Union event is *Washington Defenses*, which allows the Union to build three forts with one 20C. I have seen the *All Along the Watchtower* opening used effectively at the World Boardgaming Championships (WBC) as an effective response to a hyper-aggressive Confederate player.

No strategy should exclusively focus on defense. If you can wrest Manassas from the Rebels, this is a great forward defense location

Union	Low Mobility	High Mobility
Eastern Theater	All Along the Watchtower	On To Richmond
Western Theater	They Shall Not Pass	On To Nashville
Naval Campaign	Deep in the Heart of Texas	Western Gulf
Confederate	Low Mobility	High Mobility
Eastern Theater	Richmond Defiant	Down in the Valley
Western Theater	Old Man River	Center Game



## Strategic Will

*"A reflection of each sides political support for continuing the prosecution of the war."*

and creates an opportunity for future offensives. McClellan, with 4-to-6 strength points (SP) in a fort at Manassas is very hard to dislodge. If Manassas is supported by a ring of forts around DC, to include Baltimore (also prevents Baltimore Revolts), the South with its usually limited manpower resources will be unable to mount a significant threat against Washington. An important element in low mobility openings is the use of the operations queue. This can be a very useful tool to gain an additional activation, but at a cost in cards.

In the West a low mobility set of hands requires that the Union guard the river crossings (*They Shall Not Pass*). Paducah-Cairo and Bloomington-Louisville are the critical river crossing spaces. The Union needs to put forts and forces into these locations to prevent the South from creating an early crossing point that can be exploited in 1862 when the South gains a significant mobility advantage with 2 - one initiative generals with plus 3 battle ratings (Lee and Jackson). A potential bright spot in a low mobility Western opening occurs if the Union possesses one or more political event cards that enable efficient placement of PC markers in Kentucky or Missouri.

On the offensive side there are some interesting riverine situations that can be exploited. The center of the Confederate defenses is the fort at Dover Tennessee (Forts Henry and Donaldson). The South usually places a minimum of 2 SP in this location to prevent a 3 SP Union riverine attack from gaining a force ratio advantage. A vicious attack combination is to attack Dover, using Porter or Foote to move Fremont and the 2 SP in St. Louis, combined with Union Siege Guns. If the Amphibious Assault modifier had been raised earlier the attack is even that more potent. An attack like this neutralizes the Confederate fort modifier and adds +2 to the die roll for the Admiral, with potentially +1 more for Gunboats (remember the Amphibious Assault modifier cannot be greater than +3). This gives the Union an even or better chance of knocking Dover and the Southern defenses

apart with one blow. I call this variation the Dover skewer!

Low mobility hands in general tend to force the Union player into opportunistic attacks as some amount of his limited mobility needs to be preserved for reaction movement. However sitting totally on the defensive lets the South dictate how the opening develops. Naval operations in the aggregate are a critical Union resource that based on observation has eluded many Union players. One of the most popular variants is what I call *Deep in the Heart of Texas*, whereby the Union captures Sabine City Texas with the 1 SP in Philadelphia and then reinforces this force to threaten Texas. If Texas falls the Union can look to develop the attack further north into Arkansas. This Union opening if left unchecked can permanently remove up to 20 Confederate SP (loss of two states over 10 turns) and neutralizes two Confederate reinforcement cards to boot. One of the advantages of this attack is it has the potential for seizing the initiative if it provokes a Confederate reaction.

### High Mobility Openings

Every so often *tyche* (fate) smiles on the weary Union gamer and he gets an abundance of 30C cards that when enhanced with a Campaign card means he needs to use his initial force advantage and attack. A vicious opening combo is a big reinforcement card (3-5 SP the best being *Emergency Call for Volunteers*) in conjunction with a campaign card and one additional 30C. When this happens it is time for the *On To Richmond* Opening. This is an 'in your face' kind of attack that takes no prisoners and is favored by aggressive players at WBC. This opening is one of the few situations where the infamous *Forward to Richmond* card in the Union hand only makes a great situation better.

One way this offensive can develop is the Union opens up with an attack into the Valley to eliminate Joe Johnson with his 1 SP force. Joe Johnson sometimes gets away with his 2 defense rating, but 2 out of 3 times he is eliminated. This is important as it prevents the

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South from forming an early Army of Northern Virginia (AoNVa). Next the Union plays its reinforcement card to reinforce the AoP and Butler at Fort Monroe. This will definitely get the Southern player's attention even if you do not have the mobility to back it up. However assuming that you do, the Southern player will need to start pulling Beauregard's force in Manassas back toward Richmond or risk being cut off from his capital. What follows next is the AoP advances, while creating a LOC. The finale is Butler moves behind Richmond to cut it off and attacks followed by the AoP for the kill. It usually takes three attacks, but you can get lucky and even if it doesn't succeed Richmond is cut off without an army and will probably fall next game turn.

This forward position of AoP is not without its potential consequences, such as the Confederates playing last with a Campaign card and cutting off the AoP. However, if you cover the army's flanks with small forces at Lynchburg and Williamsburg Virginia the threat is manageable.

Akin to the *On to Richmond* opening is the *On to Nashville* opening in the West. In this situation the Union should aspire to control Kentucky and develop an attack toward Nashville and Dover Tennessee. The South has only a picket line of forces in the West, but they possess greater overall mobility due to their lower initiative rated generals, so they are capable of massing them to block an early offensive. The Union needs to use the first turn to move forces into Kentucky with early division moves or if blocked by Southern PC markers Fremont enters Kentucky through Louisville. The biggest impediment to a game turn 1 Kentucky offensive is the paucity of SP, so this opening is usually augmented by a reinforcement card or sufficient support with PC marker placement.

Another variant to this opening is if mobility and PC events are coupled with the Kansas or Sigel events placing a 1 SP reinforcement in Missouri. In this situation a rapid conquest of Missouri should not be overlooked. At all times in this variant keep an eye on Little Rock. If the Confederate does not build a fort in Little Rock or shifts the initial SP to Fort Philip Jackson, which is a common Confederate turn 1 play, take a shot at opening up Arkansas and exposing the entire Southern position in the Trans-Mississippi.

A dangerous Union opening occurs when the Union gets *Farragut* or *Ship Island/Key West* and any other naval card in their opening hand. This gives the Union the potential to shut down the Western Gulf Blockade zone in the first two

cards while initiating the *Deep in the Heart of Texas* opening. *Farragut* is always a dangerous event in the Union hand, but it is especially dangerous as an opening card play as the only Southern fort that is garrisoned in the opening is Fort Sumter. The sequence for this opening is initiated by the quick capture of Fort Philip/Jackson before the South can reinforce the location using the SP in Little Rock Arkansas. This is followed by the capture of Sabine City Texas. A common Confederate response is to have Price move to Sabine City ahead of the second Union assault to prevent the loss of the blockade zone. The *Western Gulf* opening will cost the South 12 SP and 22 SW, plus an additional 10 SP if Texas falls, so there is gold at the end of this rainbow.

There is also the alternate *East Gulf* variation, which uses *Farragut* versus Fort Gadson to capture Columbus Georgia and destroy the resource space. This is followed up by a second assault against Fort Morgan closing down the East Gulf Blockade zone. A common Confederate response is to use a 10C riverine move to send the SP in Mobile Alabama to reinforce the fort prior to the second Union assault. It should be clear that the Union can be quite powerful in the opening if he can get his naval game in gear early.

## Union Opening Summary Thoughts

Mobility is the long pole in the Union tent and the odds are the Union will more often than not find themselves in the low mobility openings. The operations queue is often the path to salvation in these situations. As a first priority the Union opening strategy must always focus on defending Washington. The high mobility Eastern openings achieve this by defending forward, but ever be conscious of covering your flanks in these situations. Often it is the Union naval advantage that enables it to seize the initiative. Taking out a blockade zone pays immense dividends and the loss of either or both of the Western Confederate forts at Dover Tennessee and Columbus Kentucky can cripple Southern opportunities in the West.

## Confederate

### Low Mobility Openings

As the South begins the game with 4-two initiative generals and receives a 1-one initiative plus additional two initiative generals on turns 2 and 3, it is rare that the South is saddled with a low mobility hand in more than one turn in the opening. But it does happen, so the Southern player needs to be prepared. A low mobility opening in the East necessitates the *Richmond Defiant* opening. Holding Richmond is the goal, so concentrating your Northern Virginia

forces in Richmond both threatens to build an army and puts sufficient forces in Richmond that the Union will be hard pressed to threaten it on turn 1. However, do not panic in this situation by pulling back too soon. Make the Union show you how mobile he is before bugging out. The chances that the Union is also suffering from a low mobility hand can allow you to keep a forward Northern Virginia defense until late in the turn. If the Army of the Potomac makes an early Valley attack, then watch your flanks in Manassas. A good flank defense for Richmond is to leave 1 SP in Williamsburg effectively corking Butler in the Peninsula bottle and preventing him from getting behind Richmond to cut a rail line.

In the West low mobility is less detrimental. You can use 1 OC cards to shift divisions around although on game turn 1 the high general to SP ratio limits this tactic as you cannot leave generals without a command. Holding the river defenses is the goal of *Old Man River*. The first priority in this situation should be to reinforce the forts (Columbus Kentucky and Dover Tennessee). In addition an early riverine move from Little Rock to place a garrison in Fort Philip-Jackson is a prudent measure especially if the Union takes Sabine City Texas. Beyond reinforcing the forts try and prevent the Union from gaining control of Kentucky. It is unlikely that the Confederates will suffer two low mobility turns in the opening, so keeping the Union north of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers is a success. Ironclads are very useful for denying Union naval control if a fort falls, so be mindful of the limited naval events that present themselves.

As a basic rule for all Southern openings coastal defense is a necessity, but too much of it in the opening will rob the South of any offensive or defensive resilience. Consequently, the South should focus on picking one fort-port combination in each blockade zone. In each case garrison the coastal fort and when possible have a back up SP in the associated port. In this manner if the Union unsuccessfully attacks a fort killing the garrison, the back up SP in the port can be sent forward on a 1 OC to replace the garrison. This is about as good a defense as you are going to achieve unless you can augment the defenses with Torpedoes or an Ironclad, and creates a deterrent against the Union from trying to shut down a blockade zone in the opening. The bottom line is you need to pay sufficient attention to coastal defense to avoid losing a blockade zone, but you need to accept some set backs or risk having this mission dominate your opening and severely limiting your options.

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## High Mobility

The more likely condition for the South to find themselves in is a high mobility opening. The major Southern limitation is its initial inferiority in strength. The South in these situations has the resource of usually going last and a game turn 1 grab of West Virginia with a possible raid through Pittsburgh is often possible. This type of aggressive southern thinking is the province of the Master, James Pei, seven times WBC champion (2006). James probably understands the Eastern theater better than anyone and he has often gone *Down in the Valley* to launch another aggressive attack into the North. I would like to call this *Pei's gambit* where he eschews his flanks and uses the Shenandoah valley to swing west toward Pittsburgh or north through Harper's Ferry followed by a wide swing to the east to cut DC off from the North. If Washington is poorly garrisoned an early fall of the Union capital is possible. This maneuver reduces Union turn 2 reinforcements by 4 effectively achieving Confederate strength parity.

If this situation is accompanied by reinforcement cards and a campaign card sparks will fly. This situation is a classic defense-offense battle whereby the Confederate wants the Union to come forward so he can sweep around their flanks to either destroy the AoP or conduct a raid. Woe to the Union when this scenario is played out against a low mobility Union opening where only the *Along the Watch Tower* opening offers refuge. The bane of this opening is a high mobility Union opening where an aggressive offensive can use the Northern strength advantage to pull the fangs of this Southern attack before it gets going.

In the West the high general to SP ratio is advantaged by the high mobility hand. The South will usually be capable of taking Kentucky on the last card play of turn 1 unless the Union has put blocking forces in place. Early capture of Kentucky allows the South, as in chess, to dominate the center of the board. I call this playing the *Center Game*. The way it works is the South places PC markers in Louisville and Falmouth blocking Union division moves. The Union is now reduced to either playing PC markers into Kentucky or swinging Fremont through Louisville, the latter being a rare move unless the Union has a high mobility hand. The South then uses his last card to use Polk and A. S. Johnson to move the Memphis, Nashville, and fort SP into Kentucky to take the state. The importance of this opening to the South is they finish out game turn 1 with a SW of 110 and the possibility of Foreign Intervention on game turn 2. In this circumstance the Union first play of game turn 2 should be to launch a naval move

against a coastal fort to drive the SW level back below 110 as a preventative measure.

Once Kentucky has been taken the South should build a fort or use an ironclad to deny Union naval control at Paducah or Louisville Kentucky. This will force the Union to defend against the threat of a raid, potentially creating an opening in the East that can be exploited. The name of the game is to create threats and wait for the cards to make them real.

## Confederate Opening Summary Thoughts

The likelihood is the South will possess superior mobility in the opening. The South needs to take advantage of this state of nature and ensure that they gain spatial advantage to enable either immediate or future raids once Lee cometh (game turn 4). Gaining one or more border states is key to Southern hopes for Foreign intervention. It doesn't happen often, but if you do not position for it, the foreigners never show. Note that a Arne turn 2 Foreign Intervention will cost the Union 20 SP over the course of the game. Always remember to

conduct sufficient coastal defense to not lose a blockade zone in the opening, but too much of a good thing will rob you of offensive chances.

## Conclusion

The main goal of the opening is to create the conditions for SW and strength advantage. These are the twin objectives that any viable strategy must satisfy. The skill is to accomplish your objectives in an environment of uncertainty where mobility and timing options can fall prey to how the enemies resources do or do not complement your own. It is in the opening when resources of both cards and strength points are in short supply and when significant advantage can be gained or lost. I have tried to broadly catalogue the current state of opening theory resident in the continuing FTP tournament scene. It should act as a guide for new players and offer some new ideas to the veterans. Hopefully this treatise will spur others to take up the pen and add to the FTP strategic tapestry.



## Counter Index C3i Magazine Nr19

- **Empire of the Sun**  
*Optional Rules* article on pg38 (first 20 counters)
- **Pax Romana**  
*Two Scenarios* article on pg29 (next 32 counters)
- **GBoH-C3i Battle Manual**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 8 counters)
- **Great Battles Am. Civil War**  
*Out of Command* markers (next 6 counters)
- **Gustav Adolf the Great**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 5 counters)
- **Down in Flames Series**  
*Clare* pilot (next counter)
- **Onward Christian Soldiers**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 8 counters)
- **Crisis: Sinai 1973**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 20 counters)
- **Pax Romana**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 24 counters)
- **Empire of the Sun**  
Updated & fixed counters (next 16 counters)

• 140 Counters Total

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