

SPQR BATTLE PLAN

The Battle of Cannae, 216 B.C.

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Hannibal Barca

Rome: Look at all those counters. You've got eight, count'em, eight double legions worth of infantry out there, with a whole bunch of mediocre cavalry in the wings. Believe it or not, you have the advantage here. Hannibal has to come to you, and do a lot of pretty tricky stuff to win.

The key is to be very slow and methodical. Think of your army as a giant phalanx – your best bet is a head-down assault on the Carthaginian center while guarding your vulnerable flanks and rear. Your right wing cavalry is going to lose, and there's not much you can do about it. Try to keep them around long enough to cause the Carthaginians some hits, but that's about all you can get out of them. Your left wing cavalry (the *alae*) actually have the advantage. They outnumber the Numidians opposite them. As long as they keep their flanks secure, they should be able to hold their own.

Use your line commands to move the cohorts straight ahead, being careful to drop off units to protect your flanks as you move forward. Don't worry,

you've got plenty of cohorts to do it with. Leave one leader behind to give the *triarii* a line command once the Numidian cavalry makes contact (remember – the *triarii* doctrine rule, written specifically for this purpose, prevents you from doing this sooner), allowing them to about face and close off the Roman rear with a solid wall of defense superior heavy infantry.

That done, with your flanks and rear secure, just keep plowing straight ahead. Don't panic or get flustered if it looks like you're doing poorly – the Carthaginian infantry only has about eight hexes behind them to retreat into, and the mathematics are on your side. The Roman rout level is huge, and chances are that you'll finish off the Celts long before the Carthaginian phalanxes and cavalry can inflict that much damage.

Carthage: This is a very difficult battle for Carthage to win. Hannibal doesn't have many tactical options here; he will either win the battle historically, or not at all. Your advantages are a lot of excellent Carthaginian cavalry and a truly terrible Roman command situation. You'll need help from both of them to pull this one off.

Do just what Hannibal did. Give the Celtic and Iberian infantry an order

for pre-arranged withdrawal, creating as much room between them and the cohorts as possible. But, as I said above, they've only got eight hexes behind them, so be sure to leave enough room for them to rout without exiting the map. Then hit the Romans with your cavalry. Your left wingers, all those great lancers, are your best troops. Blow out the Roman cavalry right away, then swing them around to hit those juicy flanks. They have an excellent leader in Hasdrubal, so try to get as much momentum out of him as possible. The other wing, the Numidians, are more tricky. They are outnumbered and outclassed; so be judicious in using them. Try to shake the Roman cavalry up with javelins, then attack their flanks if they're open. If you're not careful, the Romans will blast them, so watch yourself.

Then, just hang on and try to wear the Romans down. If the lancers can break into the Roman formation, they can wreak havoc. If you're lucky, the Romans might try for some unwise momentums, giving you a chance to trump them and move early. Hannibal will be busy rallying routed Celts (sounds familiar, doesn't it ?), but don't forget to activate the phalanxes if the cohorts start to look shaky.

