



Shieldwall

Battles in Early Medieval Europe

AD 500-1100

Game Scenario

Maldon

August 991

Background

Olaf Tryggvason led a Viking raid against the east coast of Britain in August 991. After raiding Ipswich he beached his ships on Northey Island. His next target was the Royal Mint at Maldon.

Byrhtnoth, Ealdorman of Essex gathered his levy to oppose the raiders. A few of his men were able to hold the causeway which was exposed at low tide, connecting the island to the mainland. Byrhtnoth, however, wanted to defeat the Vikings rather than allowing them to continue raiding so he eventually allowed them to cross the causeway so he could meet them in battle.

In the battle that ensued Byrhtnoth was killed and his men defeated. King Æthelred bought off the Vikings to leave with 10,000 pounds of silver.

The field of Battle



The map opposite shows the general area of the battle. It could easily be fought out on a 6 x 4 foot table even with 28mm figures.

I used an 8 x 6 foot table to allow some of the coastal waters to be represented alongside farms and the Saxon camp. These could easily be cut out if space is limited. Gridded at 2' intervals the 8 x 6' tabletop map is below. I added in some small copses of woods around the margins.



Orders of Battle

Each stand represents approximately 200 men with best warriors in the front. Lesser warriors including a smattering of archers and slingers could be intermixed.

Vikings

Olaf Trygvason (Commander in Chief) dice for Leadership Points re-roll 2 once only.

Olaf's Retinue: 2 stands A Grade

Olaf's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands B Grade

Svein dice for Leadership Points

Svein's Retinue: 2 stands A Grade

Svein's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands B Grade

Offa dice for Leadership Points

Offa's Retinue: 2 stands A Grade

Offa's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands B Grade

All Vikings start with 3 DPs per unit and 'formed-up' aggression.



Saxons

Byrhtnoth (Commander in Chief) dice for Leadership Points re-roll 2 once only.

Byrhtnoth's Retinue: 2 stands B Grade

Byrhtnoth's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands C Grade

Aelfwin dice for Leadership Points

Aelfwin's Retinue: 2 stands B Grade

Aelfwin's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands C Grade

Godric dice for Leadership Points

Godric's Retinue: 2 stands B Grade

Godric's Followers: 2 units each 2 stands C Grade

Gadda dice for leadership points

Gadda's Retinue: 2 stand B Grade

Gadda's Followers: 2 stands C Grade

All Saxons start with 2 DPs per unit and 'formed-up' aggression.

Deployment

Saxons initially place one contingent opposite the causeway (see map) up to 9" from table centre.

Then roll dice, +1 to result for Saxons. Low score places another contingent anywhere up to 9" from table centre. Continue until all contingents deployed. Saxons have a deployment advantage as they know the ground whilst the Vikings are streaming over from the causeway.

Initially all units in a contingent must be in base to base contact, side by side. Retinues may be in the centre or on one of the flanks. Contingents do not have to be in base to base contact with each other.

Objectives



The objective for both sides is simply to close with and destroy the enemy.

Killing the opposing commander in chief (CinC) or driving him from the field will be a bonus.

If a result is not obvious then tally up points for the following:

- +1 Each enemy stand eliminated
- +2 Enemy CinC killed or driven from the field.
- +1 Other enemy leader killed.

If one side has more than double the points a clear victory has been achieved. More but less than double is a marginal victory.

The Saxons have more men but the Vikings are of higher quality.

As the options for manoeuvre are limited the outcome will very much depend on the fates