

Tactical Journal

SWEDEN - FROM LITTLE ACORNS.....

by Dominic Cook

Sweden remains my favourite position to play in Austerlitz despite having played most other countries.

This is not just because it was my first country in the game (AUS12) but also because it allows the player to experience the full glory of the game, a quality army, navy and trade, without getting embroiled in one of the larger positions.

In some ways it is a good starting position for a novice to the game – as long as you don't have an aggressive Denmark as a neighbour that is – and as long as you don't tell anyone you are a novice (for novice read big fat target!).

Make Friends With Your Neighbours

Diplomacy, of course, is vital in Austerlitz, and particularly for Sweden. Sandwiched between the might of Russia and a similar sized Denmark, it is vital that you make friends, particularly Russia.

Russia has little to gain by war with Sweden. Finland is worth little in terms of population to Russia and since she has only a small navy in the Baltic, it takes a major expedition to threaten Sweden proper, something she can ill afford early in the game, and then more likely as not, Russia will lose out to Denmark for an race to the Swedish ore mines.

Denmark, on the other hand, has a long border with Sweden and could benefit from war. However, since both countries are of a similar size, it is a difficult fight, particularly if she gets bogged down in a long war since Jutland is at risk if her armies are elsewhere.

It should not be difficult to persuade Denmark and Russia that peace is a good option. But make sure you have a spy in St Petersburg and Norway from the first turn, and leave them there! At the first sign of Danish allies its continental neighbours, watch your frontiers!

Peace Allows Growth

Peace in the first year of the game enables Sweden to build up its army, and most importantly its population. The goal must be to get the inhabitants up to one million plus. But don't neglect your army.

Sweden has one of the strongest armies in Austerlitz. Your Grenadiers cost only 150 compared to most countries cost of 160. Best value without doubt are riflemen, at a cost of 120L and only 4 Ect Pts, they give excellent firepower and can rise to level 8 experience.

Also good are Hussars (100/5), very cheap for cavalry.

In Austerlitz you must always keep building your armies up, once you slip behind the arms race, you stay behind!

Famines

Famines are the bane of Sweden. With few coordinates below the vital 10 line for food growing, it is vital that you put up estates very early on to build a surplus of food. Unlike any other country, I would recommend building estates very early on, even in the winter months because any food is better than none and once the famine hits, you are in trouble.

Trade food for ore is another option worth pursuing, however, be aware that if you capture Norway from the Danes, this is only going to make the food situation worse! That is why I favour an invasion of Warsaw first!

If you are lucky, if you get a good colony going you can ship in food from there, but it is a long process and colonies are hard to hold unless you are 'in' with one of the major powers.

Never, but never, trade away food. You need it too much!

Colonies Are A Bonus

Do not be distracted by your colonies.

They are a benefit but not worth a hard fight to hold onto since it is a long and tortuous route to India from the Baltic. The vineyards are your greatest assets. With no European vineyards, they are invaluable if you plan a navy, and that is essential if you are ever to leave Sweden!

As Austerlitz progresses, more and more European forces arrive in the colonies, and you cannot really afford to commit too many men. So take what areas you can, but try not to draw too much attention to yourself or try and form an alliance with one or more of the big colonial powers. You should be able to land a force on the peninsular with the zinc mine at 76/87 and the ore mine at 77/90. If the Confederation of the Rhine dies early, their gold mine at 90/95 is a good target.

Do not be tempted into the Caribbean early on, concentrate on India as you are weak anyway, and the Caribbean is even more hotly contested than India where at least there are a few places to 'hide'.

Another option is to trade one of your islands in the Baltic for a co-ordinate in Ireland, Spain, France, Morocco or even Portugal. This greatly enhances your colonial opportunities since produce can be shipped home in two turns once you have build a port. Obviously this doesn't help the military build up, so again don't get too attached to those colonies!

Trade Is All Important.

Until you manage to conquer territory, money is tight for Sweden. Without the benefit of a home gold mine, money must be raised by extensive trade.

There is always a large surplus of ore with two mines working at capacity and by buying and reselling at Karlskrona, considerable profit can be made.

A couple of baggage trains permanently based at Helsinki and St Petersburg, also allow for valuable trade, particularly buying much needed wine for the navy at low cost.

Merchant ships should also regularly visit Copenhagen.

If you manage to swap an island for a port elsewhere as suggested above, this obviously also greatly helps your trade opportunities so make sure you base a baggage train and merchantman there permanently.

Targets for Conquest

If you have a strong Russian alliance a joint invasion of Warsaw from the three co-ordinates off the country pays good dividends, particularly if you can get to the gold mine at 55/20.

You need help though, and must feel confident about your neighbours. The best option is that you go in with Russia and only commit a small force – mainly militia maybe, that way you grab land you need badly, but have the forces at home to deter Denmark.

If you have no alliance with Denmark, or enjoy treachery, then an attack there is very worthwhile. However, be wary, without a 2nd or 3rd country involved, or treachery, it is a very tough fight!

There are clear advantages - you will end up with just one land neighbour, and providing you retain a sufficient occupying force to drive away any relief columns which might arrive by sea, you will not have a backdoor to worry about.

If this is your route then you need to discreetly build up your army for an early attack perhaps whilst making friendly overtures. This is a sound tactic, albeit you will not be Mr Popular when you strike hard and fast! You should watch the Danish barracks with your spies, because one of the most problematic scenarios can be the Danish/Russian sandwich with Sweden as the filling to be squeezed. The Danes unlike the Swedes however have the disadvantage of having part of their initial troop deployment in mainland Europe, where there are likely to be other possibly complex distractions.

Again my preferred route is to slowly and quietly build up your forces and keep friendly with both of your neighbours. Then watch what happens. If Denmark is tempted into a war in Europe, then you might get the chance to sweep into Norway – particularly if he gets bogged down. Or if Russia gets

attacked, you can switch your forces east and a quick campaign secures St Petersburg and the rest of Russia is open to militia columns allowing you to swap your forces back home again before Denmark gets ideas.

In the event of Sweden coming under attack from both Russia and Denmark, Sweden can pull through. A fortress at 52/2 will act as a holding measure whilst you bring your numbers to bear on the Danes. It would also be wise to have your diplomats busy in Warsaw and Turkey to perhaps distract Russian attention, and once all Scandinavia is yours, you may well want to co-operate in a carve up of Russia. You want to try and buy time and get help!

If necessary talk to Britain too, for a reasonable reward they might help you in "Norway" and prevent the Danes bringing in reinforcements by sea, and of course, you wouldn't want them to side with Denmark. The later conquest of Russia has the beckoning attraction of all those wheat fields to feed your rapidly growing hungry populace, although if you could absolutely trust Russia, a very strong alliance is possible. In this case Russia would be acting as a defensive buffer, but your troops would have a long march to get to the action.

Conclusion:

Sweden is definitely a minor nation in Austerlitz, but suits a player who would rather slowly build, rather than leap into wars from April onwards! That said it is a varied position with immense possibilities, and more often than not is in at the game end if it survives the first year.

Good Luck!