

Warsaw. By George Hornby

In the beautiful game of Austerlitz most questions have the same answer: "Depends". On the intentions, strengths, and characteristics of yourself and all your rivals. These you deduce by reading between the lines of diplomacy, by spy reports, and by observing economic and trade activity.

Having said this there are some early decisions which this guide hopes to clarify.

DIPLOMACY

The big issue is Russia. Warsaw is his easiest target so you must gauge his intentions. A hostile Russia sends you scurrying to Vienna, Istanbul, Karlskrona, and Berlin in search of military or financial help, but they all have their own agendas. A friendly Russia raises the option of sending the Polish Lancers west or south.

A united and strong Austro-Prussian alignment is formidable. Therefore if that seems to be developing you can work on everyone else's fears. It may be worth your while to try and persuade Holland, France, and Naples to free, or even join, Italy and the Rhine Confederation for a general war against Austria and Prussia.

The best defence against Austro-Prussian hegemony is to join one of them in a war to destroy the other.

In passing wars need to be swift and decisive. Or else your rich developed heartlands will tempt third-party opportunism.

Your neighbours' neighbours are your natural allies. Unless they are committed elsewhere to some pre-game covert alliance.

ECONOMY

The first thing is to photocopy the East European game map. Then highlight the terrain types for your territory. I use yellow for arable, green for wood, blue for swamp, etc. Mark your intended use of each square, bearing in mind that with your two mines you will eventually want three factories, four mills, five lumberyards, and twenty sheep farms. You will also want ten estates per million population/ army. And horses for baggage trains, remounts and new mounted battalions. And quarries for fortifications and increases in population. Beyond all these you will want to produce surplus goods so that every turn you use all thirty six trade opportunities. However your decisions will be affected by the size of your warehouse and by your deductions as to your neighbours' intentions.

First turn I build both mines, one factory, one mill, one mint, three sheep farms, one lumbercamp, and one quarry. It is worth twisting your builds to emphasise early those areas you know will be choke points to the economy. For instance, Warsaw tends to suffer from stone shortage.

It is also worth building the extra-yield horse and arable squares early. In the long run you are most likely to have surpluses of wood and food for sale. You can observe the levels at which the population buy out the trade cities. One strategy is to sell only enough to keep below the buy-out levels, intending to buy everything back when the prices drop; others sell enough to trip population buy-outs most turns. Some only sell economic points but this is a less profitable strategy, especially since a strong economy needs a strong army to keep covetous neighbours away.

Don't build any vineyards before the autumn.

BRIGADES

You have a lovely fast moving army. Don't hamper its future operations by building any extra heavy artillery. If you have an early war you may have to use all your starting artillery offensively. Otherwise send your heavy guns to the colonies or reserve them for static defences.

Build the best and most brigades you can afford. What they are "depends" as above. However, only build what you can train and pay for, so don't blow your starting cash and economic points on garde cavalry. At first go for militia, fusiliers, and voltigeurs. Then when you can keep them grenadiers, cuirassiers, and light artillery. When you build a main battle army add in pioneers, lancers, and mounted riflemen.

Many experienced players conceal the size of their armies by hiding fully trained brigades where spies rarely look.

At first it makes sense to build five-battalion brigades to maximise the number of commanders recruited, and to create by exchange even smaller brigades for marine or garrison purposes. Later on it makes sense to have seven battalion mixed brigades to minimise extra losses in simulated battles.

SHIPS

Warsaw has a small navy. If you have a colonial presence you will need it all. Otherwise it may be worth selling or demolishing your warships. Merchantmen are invaluable for trading: by 1809 you could be making several million louisdore every month selling at Petersburg, Karlskrona, or Copenhagen.

Similarly, unless you are invaded by all three of your major neighbours, you will find baggage trains very profitable.

COLONIES

You have three KT brigades in Europe. These can establish a small but profitable colony, probably in the Caribbean. Don't step on any shoes too heavily. Do remember to take some economic points, a couple of hundred tons of food, at least four hundred tons of timber, and fifty textile bundles.

If imminent Polish Partition threatens, you may want to keep brigade 4189 in Europe. If so, consider amalgamating the KT brigades to save cash; or at least exchange them so that they are always the last claim on your limited resources.

STRATEGY

The more thought and effort you put into gaining good information the better your assessments of the "depends". Some players are addicted to the double-cross; others will go to the wall for an ally. Whichever you are go out and enjoy Austerlitz.