

Sauron's Thoughts on Evil—version 1.0.

1. **Overall philosophy**: the Ring's the Thing! Capturing citadels is fun and all, and gives us something to do until 3:30, but in the end, they're just a distraction. I want to win by capturing the Ring! The biggest advantage that Evil has (other than our treacherous nature, of course) is that sooner or later, *Good must bring the Ring to us*. All we have to do to win is be *properly prepared* for them! I call this the James Longstreet Philosophy of Defensive Ring-Warfare.*

I plan to gather the Evil team together before going to starting positions and ask for a show of hands of people who (be honest now) won't be at Mt. Doom. That way, I'll be able to plan properly and not assign a Mt. Doom patrol zone to someone absent—eg. the Red Eye orcs who sit on Barad-Dur all day and do nothing. I'm also thinking perhaps those people can be sent to help take Lothlorien, if needed.

2. **From noon 'til 3:00**, the Evil team will be pretty much on its own to do what they want. If you want to chase hobbits, chase hobbits. If you want to sack citadels, sack citadels. Go nuts. Hopefully this will let the young punk Nazguls and anyone else who wants to run around “doing something” to get that off their chest, so they'll be ready to pay attention and follow instructions on Mt. Doom. However, there are certain standing orders for this time:
 - a. **Capture, don't kill**. There has been a trend in recent games that unless defeated characters are wizards or hobbits, Evil usually doesn't bother taking them prisoner. This has *got* to change! I don't care how unimportant the characters may seem, or how many times you've been in a battle with them before, I want *half the good characters taken prisoner in every battle Evil wins*, whether or not they are hobbits! This will serve several purposes:
 - i. The more questions I get to ask, the more intelligence we will have to help us defend Mt. Doom.
 - ii. We will keep the Good team broken up into smaller units. If you kill a big group of Good and just leave them all together, they are still going to be a big group of Good when they come back to life fifteen minutes later (eg, the Good army that was on Barad-Dur last fall). Our goal is to break up big, capable-of-defeating-evil armies, or preferably, to prevent them from forming such armies in the first place.
 - iii. We will delay people from reaching planned rendezvous. This in turn may make it easier for us to capture citadels such as Gondor & Lothlorien (because former prisoners will be stuck out in the middle of the wilderness somewhere instead of tripling their points on the bridge/stone!).

I will be handing out notes to various leaders the morning of game day (eg., the Captain of the Corsairs, the Vampire Queen, etc.) that (among other instructions) details where to bring prisoners to me at any given time.

- b. **Tokens**. It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway. Take tokens, and bring them to me along with your prisoners. It is especially important to get the Stone of Galadriel,

* A gold star to anyone who knows who James Longstreet was.

Horn of Boromir, and Wind Lord tokens. Exception: allow Bard to keep the Black Arrow token. Joe and I both agree that the kid playing the Menace is a little prick and we'd both be delighted to see him orced early on. When we get to Mt. Doom, tokens will be distributed among the leftenants (see below) to prevent them all falling back into Good hands if I get miracled.

- c. **Rohan/Gondor.** Don't even go near Rohan/Gondor until at least 2:00 PM. If we don't show up at 1:00 and start pestering them, Good will get bored and leave, allowing us to take the flag without all the usual fuss and commotion. Good rarely defends the other citadels, so feel free to sack them at their normal times (exception: Lothlorien, see below).
 - d. **The Dark Elves are not the enemy!** They have a very specific mission, to become Sauron's Chosen. Keep in mind that becoming the Chosen is *not* the goal of the Dark Elves, it's a means to a goal, which is to gain ten extra points apiece to help in the Final Battle.[†] Seventy points could mean the difference between victory or defeat, so if you get bounced by them, be cheerful about it and just sit out your fifteen minutes. You are helping out the Evil team in the long run. I realize this is a very difficult mental adjustment to make, but I'm counting on everyone to pitch in for Evil!
 - e. **Saruman.** A group of loyal-to-the-red-eye players will be assigned to keep an eye on Saruman (no pun intended), and to report if he somehow gets the Ring. In this unlikely event, the Mt. Doom strategy merely shifts from the Good team to Saruman. Unless there's some ridiculously huge number of white hand orcs, simple vigilance should suffice to negate Saruman. And of course, I will use my ability to command him to keep him under control when possible.
 - f. **Fun's fun, but...** Whatever you're doing between noon and 3:00, get your self to the Lothlorien/Iron Hills crossroads by 3:00 PM. (exception: one force of scouts will be assigned to take the Gondor-Mt. Doom horse trail to roust out any Good armies coming that way, and will meet up with the rest of the Evil army at Mt. Doom).
3. **Assembly.** The Evil Team will congregate at the Lothlorien/Iron Hills crossroads at 3:00 PM *sharp*. By this time, scouts should have determined what sort of strength/mustering (if any) is going on at Lothlorien. The bulk of the Evil army will depart to take up positions at Mt. Doom, to ensure that the perimeter is secure by 3:30. The Dark Elfs and a reasonable number of others will be assigned the task of taking the Lothlorien flag.[‡]

Given how slow Evil has been to get into position around Mt. Doom the past few games, I don't put it past Joe to attempt a preemptive strike on the mountain right at 3:30. Thus, it's *imperative* for us to be ready for him on time.

4. **Leftenants.** Approximately 5-6 hand-picked Evil characters will be designated by me as "Sauron's Leftenants," and given badges of office. The leftenants will be in charge of organizing the Mt. Doom defense, and any orders from them should be treated as though they

[†] This is something that has really gotten "lost in the shuffle" over the years because of some poor playing by dark elfs who shall remain nameless. It's pointless to become the Chosen of Sauron if Sauron loses!

[‡] I do have more specific (if scenario A, then B; if scenario B, then C) type plans for Lothlorien depending on what number and combination of Good are at Lothlorien. I'll discuss these in greater detail in the next set of Thoughts.

have come from Sauron himself (that is, obeyed without question or hesitation). These players will be chosen on the basis of their experience, their understanding of The Plan, and their confidence in giving orders. The goal here is to minimize the amount of “what should we do?” type arguing that can really bog down the Evil team. The lieutenants will report on doings in their sector to the Mouth (via shouting), who will relay them to me (via shouting). Anyone else should keep quiet and keep a sharp lookout for the Good army!

5. **Anticipating Joe.** Joe is likely to attempt to win the same way that he has as a hobbit: by engaging the Evil team outside the perimeter to whittle down our forces piecemeal, giving Good the advantage on a Final Assault. DO NOT engage the Good team outside the perimeter! Avoid being tagged at all costs! Wait until the Good army crosses the perimeter then raise the “Good is on the Mountain!” alarm. When the alarm goes up, DO NOT tag anyone on the Good team; instead, haul ass up to the Crack of Doom as fast as possible. NO TAG should be made by the Evil team until I am in position at or near the top of the Mountain and has shouted to “Make the Tag!” The object here is to get as many of our forces within the 25 pace freeze zone as possible. Assuming Joe uses the Miracle to take me out (see below), we will need every point to defeat the Good army.

When will Joe attack? I predict he will either attack right at 3:30, hoping to catch us unprepared, or he will wait until after 4:30 (when he will have been able to get the Army of Eagles token), hoping that many of us will have given up and left. The Three Ps (punctuality, persistence, and patience) are our Keys to Victory!

6. **Mt. Doom.** Each of the lieutenants will be assigned a sector of the perimeter and a number of Evil players to patrol that sector. Sauron will be on the Saddle, ready to run up Mt. Doom as soon as Good crosses the perimeter. NOTE to anyone on the Saddle—the main “easy” path up Mt. Doom along the Saddle has been severely washed out by the fallen tree (the one that crosses the path that we used to just jump over), so be prepared to go around to the right of the fallen tree!
7. **The Miracle.** I fully expect Joe to use the Miracle token on me. If we have prepared properly, the Evil team should still be able to defeat the Good team. Don’t forget to add in ten points for each citadel flag!

I’m going to check with Jeff to get a pre-Game ruling on this, but if Evil is victorious, I want the Red Eye team to bounce Saruman *before* Good prisoners are taken or interrogated. (If Jeff says this is not allowable, I may just have to bounce Saruman myself before Good arrives, but this could get real ugly real quick, so I’d prefer not to have to do that).

The Miracle takes me out for thirty minutes, and I plan to start sitting it out immediately. The time it takes to add up all the points for the battle should cause me to revive in plenty of time to still be within the “30 minutes to take prisoners to Sauron” window. The lieutenants will have absolute authority to decide which hobbits to take prisoner, based on the intelligence we’ve gathered from captured prisoners and orders that I give before being miracled.

8. **More plans.** Joe and I *will* be coming to the “team meetings” meeting in Madison next Sunday! There are still lots of little details to work out, and I appreciate all your input! Hope to see you there!

