

Panzergruppe Guderian:

THE BATTLE OF SMOLENSK, JULY 1941

MODIFIED VICTORY CONDITIONS JOHN D BEARDSWORTH

When playing SPI's Panzergruppe Guderian as the Russian player, are you sick of seeing your gleeful German opponent wiping out your beautiful red rifle divisions and seizing the cities of Mother Russia? As the German player, do you get bored of removing those nasty red counters and having no real resistance or challenge after a few game turns? You can, at no cost to yourself, transform a reasonable exciting game into a veritable "slugfest" (an S&T creation roughly translated as a festival of fighting).

I have found that the major problem with this game about the Battle of Smolensk is the determination of victory — it is much too easy for the German player to win.

For those boardgamers who do not have this game, I shall outline the victory conditions. The

German player receives victory points for occupying Soviet cities and certain hexes. The Soviet player receives five points each time he recaptures a city. The Soviet victory point total is then subtracted from the German victory point total and the result is compared to a list of victory levels.

The Soviet player may often destroy individual regiments of a division but it is indeed rare that he can eliminate an entire division. This means that although the Soviets may inflict heavy losses, they do not get any credit for so doing, although losses inflicted on the Germans were important back in July 1941.

My solution is to award the Soviet player one victory point for each step loss inflicted on German units (including the cavalry division) and

to award one point to each player for each minor city he occupies at the end of the game (the German player still receives ten victory points for Yel'nya for which the Soviet player would receive one point).

Example: The Soviet player has eliminated an infantry division (4 steps) and a Panzer division (6 steps). He would thus receive ten victory points ($4 + 6 = 10$).

These modified victory conditions have the effect of encouraging the Soviet player to attack and make the game much more ferocious. They probably benefit the Soviet player more than the German but the game is already unbalanced so neither player is losing too much or gaining excessively.

