

WAR OF THE RING

Rules Manual — the Free Peoples against the Shadow

This manual describes the digital recreation published by Tronsoft Games. It is an independent, non-commercial adaptation inspired by the classic asymmetric board game; it reproduces no proprietary components. Where the physical game uses cards, tiles, and a printed board, this version uses a strategic node-map, a curated event model, and streamlined bookkeeping handled for you by the engine.

1 · THE TWO SIDES

The Free Peoples and the Shadow are not mirror images. They have different armies, different dice, and — most importantly — different ways to win. One player commands a side while the built-in AI plays the other; you may also let both sides be played by the AI and simply watch.

- The Free Peoples are usually on the defensive. Their surest road to victory is the destruction of the Ring; their armies mainly hold the line.
- The Shadow is the aggressor, grinding toward a military conquest while its Hunt slowly corrupts the Ring-bearer.

2 · WINNING THE WAR

There are four victory conditions. The instant any one is met, the game ends.

PATH	SIDE	CONDITION
Ring destroyed	Free Peoples	The Ring-bearer reaches Mount Doom (Mordor step 5).
Ring corrupted	Shadow	The Ring-bearer's Corruption reaches 12.
Military (FP)	Free Peoples	4 Victory Points from captured Shadow settlements.
Military (Shadow)	Shadow	10 Victory Points from captured Free Peoples settlements.

Victory Points come from capturing enemy settlements: a city is worth 1 VP, a stronghold 2 VP.

3 · THE TURN

Every turn proceeds through the same sequence, tracked for you by the panel on the right:

- Roll Action Dice. The Free Peoples roll four dice; the Shadow rolls seven, plus one for each minion in play. Each Eye the Shadow rolls is placed immediately into the Hunt Box.
- Fellowship phase. The Free Peoples may keep the Fellowship hidden, or declare its position to rest at a friendly stronghold and shed a little Corruption.

- Hunt allocation. The Shadow commits dice to strengthen the Hunt for the turn ahead.
- Action phase. The sides alternate, spending one Action Die at a time, until both have used or passed all their dice.
- Victory check. If a condition is met the war ends; otherwise the next turn begins.

4 · ACTION DICE

Dice are your currency of action. Each die shows one of six results; what you may spend it on depends on the face. Arm a die by clicking it, then click the action you want.

FACE	CHIEFLY USED FOR
Character	Moving the Fellowship in secret; guiding companions.
Army	Moving and attacking with armies already At War.
Muster	Recruiting reinforcements and advancing nations toward war.
Event	Drawing and playing an Event.
Will of the West (FP)	A wild result — acts as any face, and crowns Aragorn / summons Gandalf the White.
The Eye (Shadow)	No action — it is committed to the Hunt for the Ring.

5 · NATIONS, MUSTER & WAR

Each nation sits on a political track and will not send its armies to fight until it is At War. Advancing a nation costs Muster actions (and certain events or attacks can force the step). Until a nation reaches war, its units hold their home regions and may not initiate attacks.

Muster actions also bring reinforcements — regular and elite units — into your strongholds and cities, replacing losses and massing for an offensive.

6 · ARMIES & COMBAT

- Movement. Armies of an At-War nation move between adjacent regions along the map's connections.
- Combat. Attacker and defender each roll combat dice scaled to army size, with re-rolls granted by leadership (leaders and companions). Hits at or above the required number inflict casualties.
- Casualties. A hit is absorbed first by downgrading an elite unit to a regular; only then are units removed. This makes elite-heavy armies resilient.
- Rounds. A battle is fought over several rounds; either side may break off. The attacker takes the region only if the defenders are destroyed or retreat.
- Sieges. A stronghold shelters its defenders: attackers score storm hits only on a natural 6, so fortresses such as Minas Tirith or Orthanc are very hard to take by assault.

7 · THE HUNT FOR THE RING

While armies clash, the Fellowship slips toward Mordor. Every secret move risks discovery:

- The Hunt Box holds the Shadow's committed dice and every Eye it has rolled. When the Fellowship moves, the Shadow rolls the Hunt: each 6 is a success.
- On a success the Fellowship draws a hunt tile and suffers Corruption. The Eye tiles bite harder the fuller the Hunt Box has grown.
- Corruption climbs from 0 to 12. Reach 12 and the Ring-bearer is lost — a Shadow victory.
- Resting the declared Fellowship at a friendly stronghold heals a little Corruption, but reveals its position.

8 · THE MORDOR TRACK

When the Fellowship reaches a gate of Mordor with survivable Corruption, it may enter and begin the final crossing: five steps to Mount Doom. Every step draws a hunt tile — Mordor is never safe — so the crossing is a genuine gamble. Reach step 5 and the Ring is destroyed; let Corruption hit 12 first and all is lost.

9 · SPECIAL ACTIONS

- Crown Aragorn — transforms Strider into the King, strengthening the Free Peoples and granting an extra Action Die.

- Summon Gandalf the White — returns the wizard after he has fallen, likewise adding to the Free Peoples' dice.
- Separate Companions — send a companion out of the Fellowship to aid the armies (at the cost of the Fellowship's guidance).
- Play Event — resolve an Event for a one-off political, military, or hunt effect.

10 · CONTROLS AT A GLANCE

- Drag the map to pan; scroll to zoom; click a region to command it.
- Click a die to arm it, then click an action to spend it; use Pass to forgo a die.
- Panel buttons let you choose your side, toggle AI-vs-AI Auto mode, and start a New Game.
- There are no typed commands — everything is button- and pointer-driven.

For a friendlier walkthrough see <docs/tutorial.html>. For tactics, see the Strategy Guide (<docs/strategy.pdf>).