

Double-Blind *PanzerBlitz*

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Introduction

These rules are for a more realistic form of *PanzerBlitz*, in which the players do not benefit from their usual omniscient view of the battlefield. In this game, each player uses his own set and board, and a referee places enemy units on the player's board only when they are spotted. This is *PanzerBlitz*, not *Panzer Leader*, so to start out with there is no opportunity fire, no spotting by muzzle flash, and no combining fire and movement, except for close assaults. See also Designer's Notes.

Scenario Selection and Modification

Any scenario is suitable, though (as in the regular game) some are more interesting than others. When using a printed scenario, divide the number of mines and blocks in half, and allow half again as many turns--a 12-turn scenario becomes an 18-turn scenario.

Set-Up

The two sides set up on separate boards out of sight of one another, and play under the attention of a referee. The referee places enemy counters on the players' boards when necessary. Experience has shown that the referee does not need a third board of his or her own if the two players' boards can be seen at once, and are in the same orientation.

Spotting

At the beginning of each player's move, including the first, is a spotting step for both players. All units that can be spotted according to the game's sighting rules are revealed, i.e. they are placed on the enemy's board by the referee.

Fire

Fire then occurs normally. Units that receive direct fire from an unspotted unit do not spot it, but they do learn the strength and type of fire, and the hex from which it originates.

Movement

Units move normally, one at a time. For the sake of referee sanity, moves cannot be retracted. After the player has moved all units desired to move, the referee considers the moves in the order in which the player made them and determines whether or not it would be possible in light of the referee's knowledge of the other player's board. If a unit has been moved in an impossible way, e.g. into a hex containing a block, into an enemy unit not eligible for an overrun attack, into an overstack of friendly units, or out of a hex containing mines, the referee deems that unit to have stopped at the point where the infraction occurred. The player's board is adjusted to reflect the unit's new position, and the next unit is considered in turn. Note that, as in real life, pile-ups can occur if, for example, an unexpected block is encountered on a road. Note also that this rule requires stacking limits to be observed during movement. After movement has been resolved, units get to spot the enemy units, blocks or mines that stopped their movement. (They don't yet get to spot anything else that they might see from their new positions.) These newly spotted units, blocks, and mines are placed on the player's board. Mounted units may then unload if desired. A unit that conducted an overrun attack while carrying infantry may, if otherwise eligible, retroactively unload the infantry in the hex from which a *PanzerBlitz* assault would be made. (See also original rules.) This is the

only case in which the player can do anything retroactively.

Close Assaults, Overruns, and *PanzerBlitz* Attacks

These are then resolved normally.

Multiple Players on a Side

Different groups will find different ways of handling this. One good house rule is to allow the players to talk to each other, but not to point at the board. This minimizes talk, and lets each person play his own part of the game.

Designer's Notes

These rules, like the original *PanzerBlitz* rules, are certain to provoke a barrage of "You mean I can't..." questions:

"You mean I can't use those great Panzer Leader rules like opportunity fire, fire-and-move, and spotting units by their muzzle flashes?"

That's right, you can't. And it's not because of the double-blind rules -- you can't in regular *PanzerBlitz* either. (Players should be sure they understand the original LOS/LOF rules; the Examples card is very instructive.) Moreover, given that either system is a simplification, I'd say that the *PanzerBlitz* rules are closer to being correct. Only the German 88 was made to fire at a moving target -- and imagine hand-cranking the turret of a T-36 around to take aim at a half-track barreling across your field-of-view. I don't agree that muzzle flash provides enough information to allow a shot back, though it may (as in these rules) identify the type and general location of the firing unit.

"You mean I don't even notice units moving past me?"

Ideally, you should probably be able to if they spend half (or a quarter) of their movement points in the view of any one of your units. However, such a rule creates a refereeing nightmare of constantly faking spotting so that the moving player doesn't know when he's being spotted and when he's not. It's not worth the trouble, because it seldom makes any difference: people move from bush to bush anyway, and they get spotted when they try to move into an occupied bush, which happens pretty often.

"You mean when I'm moving I can't see what's up ahead as I go along?"

No, you can't. *PanzerBlitz* makes you the battalion commander, and if you tell units to advance, they should advance if they can, not second-guessing you every step of the way. Also, it's hard to see what's in those hexes. If you don't believe this, try driving on the Washington Beltway. Notice that people seldom react to anything more than 250 meters (1 hex) ahead, even if they're going at 25 miles per hour in rush hour.

"You mean he can stop my tanks with trucks?"

For one turn, yes -- as in the original game. I don't find this as bad as most people seem to: some dark shapes in the woods up ahead would make anyone hesitate.

The main thing to keep in mind about these rules is not how they compare to perfection, but how they compare to the regular rules, in which everybody knows everything. With perfect knowledge of the enemy's deployments, people are able to avoid mines, blocks, and getting stuck in the open. One can play *PanzerBlitz* for years without ever seeing an overrun attack, much less the *PanzerBlitz* Assault from which the game takes its name. One certainly never sees a traffic jam at an obstacle, or units running into a trap laid with AT guns, even though these things happened constantly in the real war. They happen in this

game.