

Portugal Tactical Journal

By Paul Goodman.

All nations in Austerlitz have their good and bad points. Portugal is no exception. Whichever Nation you play there are 3 facets of the game you must overcome if you are to play the Nation well.

Economics, Militarily and Diplomacy they all interlink, a weakness in one area cannot usually be compensated by strength in the remaining 2 areas.

Diplomacy.

This is fundamental to Portugal early on. In Europe you must either work with Spain or fight Spain. It can be played either way, initial troop set up favours Portugal, so if you decide to strike against Spain, strike early, otherwise Spanish economy will soon overtake that of the Portuguese. The other option is to work with Spain suggesting a coalition against an aggressive France? Make contact with Morocco early as well, Morocco may allow you to take some neutral co-ordinates in Africa to develop? In the colonies GB needs to be cultivated for your expansion in Northern India and some agreement with the Dutch in the Caribbean. What Portugal does not need is a Spanish/French alliance, if this happens the writing is on the wall for Portugal as Spain will have nowhere to expand initially other than to take out Portugal. As the game develops your strategy may change but if you make an agreement to work with another Nation, try and stick with it. You do not want to be known as a 'back stabber'. You will be surprised how easy it is for rumours about players can be spread through out the Austerlitz scene.

Economics.

Portugal by itself has very limited co-ordinates to build a vibrant economy. Expansion is limited in Europe, however you have as Portugal, a vast opportunity to expand in the colonies. You have in India the chance to build up quickly with lots of neutral C-co-ordinates around your start up position. Get a commander out there ASAP and link it up with a colonial brigade. You can take 2 neutral co-ordinates a move by this at little cost. Go for the mines where you can, without stepping on GB'S toes!!! Another ore mine, albeit in India and not Europe is a must. You will struggle to get one in the Caribbean.

In Europe build 2 factories which will be supplied adequately by your European Ore mine. Do not waste resources early on, on building Horse farms or Vineyards. If Portugal stays in past the first year then those builds can be made then. Instead sheep farms, food estates and Lumbercamps should by the summer of the first year be the main builds along with 2 factories, 2 weaving mills and the Ore mine. Food will become an issue for Portugal for the second year so build sheep farms on all land that is not arable, save most of those for food estates. If Morocco allows you some spare co-ordinates than get a few quarries as the two you have in Portugal is not enough to increase your European Population. Increasing the population is a must, this provides additional revenues for you to re-invest in Economy and Troop builds. Try and keep reserves of ECPS and Louisdore if you can and do not sell into your trade cities until they are at 6, unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise, such as your war chest has diminished and you are under attack!!! Always keep enough Louisdore in reserve to empty your trade cities when they are at 2. The profits you can make by buying and selling is the key to building up your military strength. To minimise the effect of other Nations doing the same in your own trade cities try and get an agreement with your allies that no sales will take place in the others trade cities without their permission.

In the colonies when cash and time permits build up production sites where you can, it is good for trade and some surplus maybe shipped back to Europe as well. If you can get to having the infrastructure to support a Factory in both India and the Caribbean, then do so. The extra money generated by sales of all production, including ECPS in the colonies, is one of the strength's that Portugal has. Grab a trade city of your own in India. If you are working with Spain or GB then Calcutta is a realistic target. If you are in with France against Spain then Goa is a target. If Holland gets into trouble then Padany can be taken with a landing force. But remember the game is never one by what you do in the colonies, ultimately it is what you do in Europe that determines your success, or not? Consider the colonies as the icing on your cake, not the cake itself.

Military.

This is a war game and so to win you must fight and defeat your enemies. The Portuguese army list is not as strong as most other Nations. Yes it is stronger than Morocco, Ottomans but in comparison to most European Nations it is fairly low down in the ratings. I would recommend building 4 brigades a turn early on, 2 militia and 2 foot rotating between Grenadiers and Cazores. Make sure early on you have enough Artillery to take a large fortress, if need be, but other than that concentrate on Foot troops. Do not waste resources on expensive builds, you need numbers early on. The 2 militia brigades a turn bring down to 3 battalions per brigade, the other 2 battalions transfer each turn to the 2 foot brigades. That way in 5 turns you should have 10 brigades of militia and another 10 brigades of foot soldiers to compliment your start-up. Try and not engage the enemy with your better troops if they are not fully trained. Experienced troops make all the difference in battles. The Militia columns can be used for grabbing your enemy's territory.

Do not waste valuable resources building European troops for the colonies until you are sure that your foothold in Europe is strong. Everything should be geared to surviving in Europe. Your fleet can be used for transporting troops and goods to and fro from Europe to the colonies, try and keep your warships in 1 fleet and escort your merchants bringing valuable metals back from the colonies. Cavalry is very useful in simulated battles, but of little relevance in mathematical so do not waste resources on building them early on.

Finally, remember to defeat a Nation you have to not only take his country but wipe out his armies, both must be achieved for victory, if one is still standing he is still in the game. But besides this, the critical area that you can over look is diplomacy. Get that right then everything else is easy, get that wrong and you will be dumped out very quickly. And as Portugal, being a smaller Nation Diplomacy is the real key to Portugal's survival. Best of luck and enjoy, it is a cracking game.