

Adam Troke looks at the heroic trinity of Might, Will, and Fate and how they can be used in games of The Lord of The Rings to achieve the best results.

One of the things that has always captivated me about story of The Lord of The Rings is how it focuses on the heroes and their grand deeds – mighty warriors involved in tremendous adventures, stirring the hearts of those around them, and conquering Evil (or perpetrating it) through strength of will and force of arms. And that's one of the great things about The Lord of The Rings strategy battle game. It captures the same sense of heroism and allows players to

# MIGHT, WILL & FATE

## Heroic Characteristics in The Lord of The Rings

create heroic moments of their own as they play.

The thing that really separates the Heroes from the Warriors in The Lord of The Rings is their heroic characteristics. A well-spent Might Point can be the difference between a dozen models fleeing the board in cowardice or standing their ground courageously. It's all a matter of knowing when it is worth using your Heroes' heroic characteristics and

spending valuable Might, Will, and Fate Points to turn the tide of the battle or to save the life of a valuable member of your force.

The heroic characteristics fall into three categories: Might, Will, and Fate. Each Hero has a space on its profile where these characteristics are recorded (even if the Hero in question has none), and each of these heroic characteristics can have a valuable and decisive effect on your game.

## MIGHT

Might Points are often described as the backbone of an army. Many players measure the effectiveness of their force by the number of Might Points it can muster. Generally considered to be the most valuable of the heroic characteristics, Might certainly has the most uses, and only the greatest of Heroes ever has 3 or more Points of Might.

Essentially, Might Points can do two things. They allow a Hero either to modify a die roll by 1 or to perform a Heroic Action.

### Changing Die Scores

Might can be used to change most die rolls that are made on behalf of a Hero. For each Might

Point that you spend, you can alter the score of a die rolled on behalf of the Hero up or down by 1. There are some occasions that this ability is especially useful and worth using.

The golden rule to remember when using Might in this way is that you should always do so if it will save your Hero's life. Let's face it, there's no point saving Sam's Might for later if he slips and breaks his neck climbing a rock face now. The other time it becomes a very good idea is if it will allow you to slay an enemy model. Doing so reduces the forces arrayed against you and brings your enemy closer to 50% of its starting strength.

### When NOT to Use Might to Change Die Scores

When rolling to hit in the Shoot Phase, it is almost never worth spending Might Points to increase your chances of hitting. Even if your shot hits, there's no guarantee that you'll have any luck on the roll to wound.

### HEROIC ACTIONS

Compared to using Might to change your die scores, spending Might on Heroic Actions is quite complex and a little harder to do effectively. A Heroic Action can reverse the tide of a battle and turn a scenario from defeat to victory. The key is in knowing what Heroic Action to perform and when.



**Save a Hero's Life.** Here, Sam is attempting to leap a chasm. Having rolled a 1 on his Jump Test, Sam will plummet to his death unless the Good player uses Sam's Might Point to raise the score of 1 to 2 and thereby save his life. Just as it is important to pass rolls like this one, it is often worth spending Might Points to raise failed Fate rolls (see below for more on Fate) and turn them into successes, especially if the Hero would otherwise die.



**Kill Enemy Models.** When a Hero wins a fight and fails to score Wounds on enemy models, it is often worth spending Might Points to change failed rolls into successes. Here, Boromir needs a 5 or more to wound an Uruk-hai scout equipped with a shield. It's probably worth spending Might Points to change any scores of 4 to 5. Very often, time is of the essence in scenarios, and the stronger Heroes must kill their enemies quickly to enable the Heroes to protect their weaker friends.



## HEROIC MOVES



**Allow/Prevent a Charge.** Cavalry are truly effective in combat only if they have charged in that turn. By using Might Points to call Heroic Moves, you can ensure that your cavalry charge more often and gain the bonuses that charging affords them. Likewise, if you are facing an imminent threat of a cavalry charge, you can use a Heroic Move either to pull back out of the range of the attack and buy yourself some time or to charge first and rob the enemy cavalry of their charge bonus. Here, the Riders of Rohan have priority and are all set to smash into the Uruk-hai. Thanks to his Might Points, though, Lurtz can issue a Heroic Move and allow his warriors to charge the Rohirrim and deprive them of their valuable charge bonus.



**Allow/Prevent a Stand Fast!** Once a force is broken, each model must test against its Courage or be removed from play as a casualty. There is a serious risk that the warriors, with their lower Courage, will flee the battle unless Heroes can inspire them to stay and fight by passing a Stand Fast! Test. Since models that are already in combat with an enemy cannot take Courage Tests, it can be incredibly important to allow your Hero to make his Stand Fast! before he is charged. Likewise, you should take strenuous efforts to prevent your opponent's Heroes from using their Stand Fast! ability. In this picture, the Orcs have priority, so Elendil will benefit from making a Heroic Move so that he can call a Stand Fast! and keep the warriors around him steady before he is engaged.



**Capturing an Objective.** Often, in battle scenarios, the objective might be to secure an item or an area of the battlefield. Careful use of Heroic Moves can enable your warriors to reach such an item or area first and secure it for your side. Here, we can see a group of Goblins and Dwarves racing to take control of an objective. The Goblin Captain can use a Heroic Move to get his warriors onto the objective before the Dwarves and force the Dwarves to have a hard time pushing the Goblins off. Often, scenarios will end at a random point (usually determined by a die roll at the start of the turn). In these cases, it's handy to control the objective as quickly as possible.







## HEROIC SHOOT

Heroic Shoot is the least used of the three Heroic Actions and requires lots of bow-armed troops to prove effective. There are times, however, when a well-timed Heroic Shoot can really help sway a battle in your favor. Generally, it's only useful to use a Might Point to do a Heroic Shoot, if not doing so would allow your enemies to kill your own bowmen (or something else valuable in your force).



**Heroic Shooting.** The key to Heroic Shooting is to fire at something that will really harm you unless you shoot at it. This Gondor Trebuchet, with a Captain crewing it, can fire at the Mûmak before its crew has the chance to fire back and hopefully destroy the howdah or at least some of the archers on board. The important thing to remember with Heroic Shooting is to kill the enemy before he kills you.

## HEROIC COMBAT

Heroic Combats can be devastating if used correctly, as they allow a Hero to fight twice in the same Fight Phase. Heroic Combat is worked out before any other combats in that turn. If the Hero manages to slay all the enemy models he is fighting, he can still make a full move. This move allows him to charge (and fight) again if he wishes.

### When Not to Call a Heroic Combat

It's important to remember that, for a Heroic Combat to work, the issuing Hero and any friends helping him need to be able to slay all the enemies involved in the fight. If he or they fail to do so, then the Might Point is wasted, and the Heroic Combat fails. With that in mind, make sure that you never call a Heroic Combat if your Hero is unlikely to kill all of his foes (and don't even think of it if he is fighting more enemies than he has Attacks on his profile). Also, bear in mind any Fate Points your enemy might have. More than once, my plans have been ruined by an enemy Hero passing his Fate roll!



**Remove Enemy Advantages.** Heroic combats are ideal for eliminating valuable enemy warriors. Both banners and Goblin drums enable nearby friends to reroll dice. Killing them quickly can deprive your enemy of a significant advantage. Note that you can use this technique in concert with the "Kill More Enemies" ploy, allowing you to cut your way through enemy troops to engage your intended target.



**Kill More Enemies.** The most common use of a Heroic Combat is to allow a Hero to kill more enemies than normal. Since many scenarios are won when a force is reduced to a certain point, killing enemy models quickly via Heroic Combats is a great way to achieve a win. This technique is ideal for breaking the enemy force and forcing Courage Tests. Here, if Gothmog wins, he will knock down his opponents and probably kill them both, allowing him to move on and attack new enemies.



**The Slingshot.** Essentially, the "Slingshot" involves charging a single enemy warrior (or perhaps a pair of them). By slaying him (or them), your Hero is free to move again, allowing him to gain valuable ground, potentially get out of danger, or move near an objective. Here, if Sharku uses a Heroic Combat, he can easily overwhelm the single warrior he is fighting and rush onward toward his objective.



## WILL

**W**ill is the measure of a Hero's ability to use and resist magical powers as well as his determination. Will Points can be spent like Might Points to pass Courage Tests and also to employ a magical power. A character with lots of Will Points will be determined and well-motivated, a powerful and dangerous user of magic or possibly just plain stubborn.

**Resist Magical Powers.** The second way to use Will Points is to resist magical powers. Often a magical power will have a negative effect on one or more of your models. Resisting spells, thus, can be very important. Each Will Point you spend in this way lets you roll one die to resist the enemy. To succeed, your score must equal or beat the highest die score your enemy rolled. Sometimes, if the magical power in question does not put your Hero into any significant danger, it's worth saving your Will Points for a more important moment later, but that should be judged on a case-by-case basis. If the power will slay (or seriously jeopardize) your Hero, it makes sense to try.

**Passing Courage Tests.** Just as Might Points can be used to pass Courage Tests, so can Will Points. Make sure to use Will Points in this way when there are no enemies on the board with magical powers, because you won't have to worry about resisting spells. Use all your Will Points to bolster your Courage rolls and keep your Heroes and Warriors fighting to the last.

***Use Magical Powers.** The first way to use Will Points is to spend them to employ a magical power. For each Will Point you spend, you may roll one die in your attempt to make the power work. Since you must choose how many Will Points you are going to spend before you roll any of the dice, be sure that you use enough to get the job done – there's nothing more irritating than spending Will Points and then failing to make the spell work!*



## FATE

**F**ate Points are a representation of a Hero's destiny and can preserve him from harm. Each Fate Point a Hero spends allows him to ignore the effect of a single Wound on a 4+. As soon as your Hero suffers a Wound, spend a Fate Point to prevent it. More than once, I've suffered a Wound with one of my Heroes and, in the excitement of battle, forgotten to spend my Fate Point. Normally, this isn't a problem, but in certain scenarios, it's important to have as many Wounds left on your Hero as possible. Take a look at *Scenario 3: Cornered* in the rules manual to see what I mean.



## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, that's my take on using Might, Will, and Fate in your games. Most players will find that they quickly develop their own favorite tactics and methods to use them. It's clear to see that Fate is the most straightforward of the heroic characteristics to use, since there's nearly no decision required in using it. With both of the others, however, the best uses are fairly clear cut. With a little trial and error, you will soon find yourself launching daring heroic combats, cutting through your enemy, and transfixing his Heroes.