

Games Developer Adam Troke reports on a series of tense and exciting games from the new Mines of Moria introductory box set. In control of the forces are *White Dwarf* staffers Andy Stewart and Sean Turtle.

# INTO THE DARK

## *A Battle Report for the Mines of Moria*



**A**dam: The Mines of Moria boxed set is released this month and serves as the perfect introduction to The Lord of The Rings strategy battle game. Total beginners and established gamers

alike will find the rules easy to come to grips with, and the scenarios are great fun. We thought it would be a great inauguration for our new introductory boxed set to give two newcomers to The Lord of The Rings hobby the chance to play through the scenarios in the *Getting Started* booklet and share their experiences. Andy Stewart is

the international *White Dwarf* managing editor, a position that allows him to liaise with *White Dwarf* teams around the world and strive to provide the best possible articles. Sean Turtle works on Andy's team as a magazine designer and is a regular face around the Studio as he gathers up the miniatures and information necessary to put together awesome looking articles. While both of our players have dabbled in wargaming, neither of them has had any more experience with The Lord of The Rings than an in-store introductory game. As such, both are ideal candidates to give the Mines of Moria a run-through and to report on how they got on.

Andy will be using the Fellowship of The Ring, while Sean will be taking control of the denizens of Moria, the Goblins and the Cave Troll. Over the course of four scenarios, both players will learn to move, shoot, and fight with their models; battle their way through the first three scenarios; and participate in the final climactic battle in Balin's Tomb.

## THE RING MUST BE DESTROYED



**Andy:** The first and last time that I played The Lord of The Rings strategy battle game was one of the in-store introductory games. The battle pitted Orcs against Riders of Rohan, as Merry and Pippin made a break for the relative safety of the board edge. If my memory serves, I lost that game – which may go some way to explaining why I haven't played since. However, my almost total lack of experience makes me an ideal

candidate for taking the new boxed set for a spin, and I'm happy to oblige.

Unlike that in-store game, these scenarios are set in the dark confines of Moria, and I'll be playing as the Fellowship with significantly more power at my fingertips than the Riders of Rohan afforded. As an introductory game, the Mines of Moria boxed set is intended to be quick to play and easy to grasp, and restricts players to a limited number of rules. Advanced rules are kept under lock and key, as the core rules of the game are built up progressively.

Despite having some impressive warriors in Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas, and Gimli, the Hobbits are my Achilles heel. They're slow moving and have only 1 Attack and 1 Wound. I'll have to resist the overwhelming desire to wade in and hack away at Goblins, since I'm going to have to defend the Hobbits from the start. The outcome will rest on whether I can make the restrictive rules and terrain work in my favor.







## FOUL THINGS IN THE DEEP



**Sean:** I've been here before – not the Mines of Moria but a battle report. It didn't make for pretty reading last time, at least not for me. Playing in the introductory battle report for the Warhammer 40,000 starter set, the Battle

for Macragge, I was on the wrong end of a drubbing in those games with a miserable success rate. I swore that I would never again embarrass myself in the pages of *White Dwarf*. But time heals all wounds (or so they say), and I didn't want my only appearance in this hallowed magazine to conjure feelings of

ineptitude. So here I am again, hoping to redress the balance.

One thing I learned from my previous experience was that it's important to take the time to develop a plan. Also, I need to react to my enemy's maneuvers – a basic enough requirement for any seasoned player but not a beginner such as myself. In the Battle for Macragge battle report, I had been too busy enjoying the fact I was in *White Dwarf* to see the forest for the trees when it came to my tactics. This time, I need to try and remain aware of the bigger picture.

So, the forces of Evil are mine to control! That was my one stipulation for participation. I fancied being the one who employs the evil laugh after the finale (positive thinking, you see). Now, I've watched the movies and

recorded enough battle reports for The Lord of The Rings to know that the Fellowship can be a fearsome enemy. However, with the advanced rules not in consideration for this battle, the scales were a little more even. Unfortunately, I won't be able to deploy the Cave Troll until the final scenario. Thus, I will have to try and bring the Fellowship to its knees with little more than a handful of Goblins at my disposal.

Since they are the Fellowship's weakest members (physically at least), I plan on targeting the four Hobbits throughout these games. At some point, I'm going to have to try and remove one or two of the more powerful members of the Fellowship from the field of play. When it comes to that, I'll need to find some lucky die rolls somewhere.



# SCENARIO 1 – INTO THE DARK

Trapped in the darkness, Gandalf leads the Fellowship into the ancient Dwarf mine. The heroes must race through the gloomy corridors as swiftly as possible and avoid the black arrows of the vile Moria Goblins.

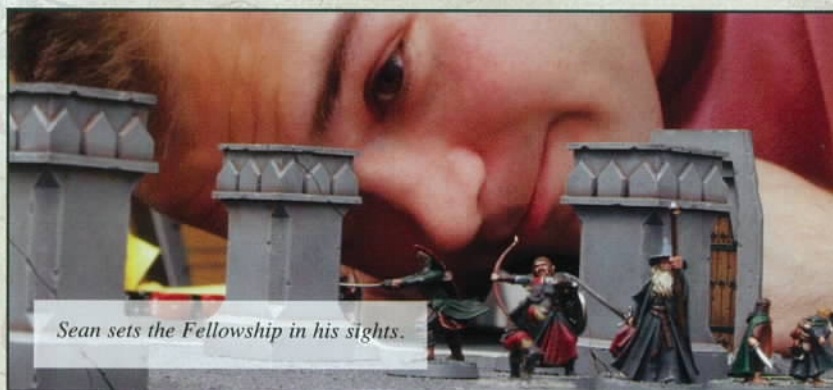
## WINNING THE GAME

- The Good player wins this scenario if every member of the Fellowship can escape through the doorway without any of Good models being slain.
- The Evil player wins if his Goblins can kill any member of the Fellowship with their bows.
- The game ends as soon as one player completes his objective.

## MOVING AND SHOOTING

If models wish to fire their bows in the Shoot Phase, they must not move more than half their total movement, since they need to take the time to aim and make the shot.

**Andy:** This scenario seems a simple enough – get the Fellowship from one end of the board to the other without suffering any (or many) casualties. An obvious strategy, given the low Wounds and Movement characteristics of the Hobbits, is for Frodo and his friends to be protected by the stronger members of the Fellowship.



*Sean sets the Fellowship in his sights.*

As I had priority, my first move would be to create a shield to obscure the Hobbits from the Goblins' arrows while still allowing Aragorn and Legolas freedom to shoot. Fighting was not an option in this particular scenario. The Hobbits' 10-cm Movement also means that the Fellowship would only be as swift as its slowest members. Thus, progress was likely to be slow.

**Sean:** On first glancing at the scenario, I thought that this one stood out as one of my best chances to score victory over the forces of Good. After all, how hard can it be to shoot one measly Hobbit? However, my confidence was taken down a peg or two when I saw that a Goblin's ability to fire a bow with any great accuracy is less than impressive. Still, surely the law of averages is on my side. My intention is to focus on the Hobbits. They have the lowest Defense and only 1 Wound each, and thus they looked like my best shot (pun intended).

**Adam:** The Good side starts this scenario with priority, and Andy wasted no time moving the Fellowship forward in the Move Phase. Gandalf and Aragorn led the way, running as fast as they could through the center of the pillars. Andy kept Boromir, Legolas, and Gimli back a little, closer to the Hobbits. It seemed that Andy was hoping to shield them from the Moria Goblins. When it was his turn to move, Sean moved his Moria Goblins to places where they could open fire on the Fellowship.

Andy had moved Legolas and Aragorn their full move. As such, they didn't have time to pause and use their bows in the Shoot Phase. Sean had been careful not to move his Moria Goblins more than half of their move (6 cm), which enabled them to fire. The two closest to the Fellowship loosed their arrows at Merry and Pippin. Pippin was fortunate, and the arrow narrowly missed. However, Merry was struck. Sean was overjoyed when he rolled to see if the shot had caused a

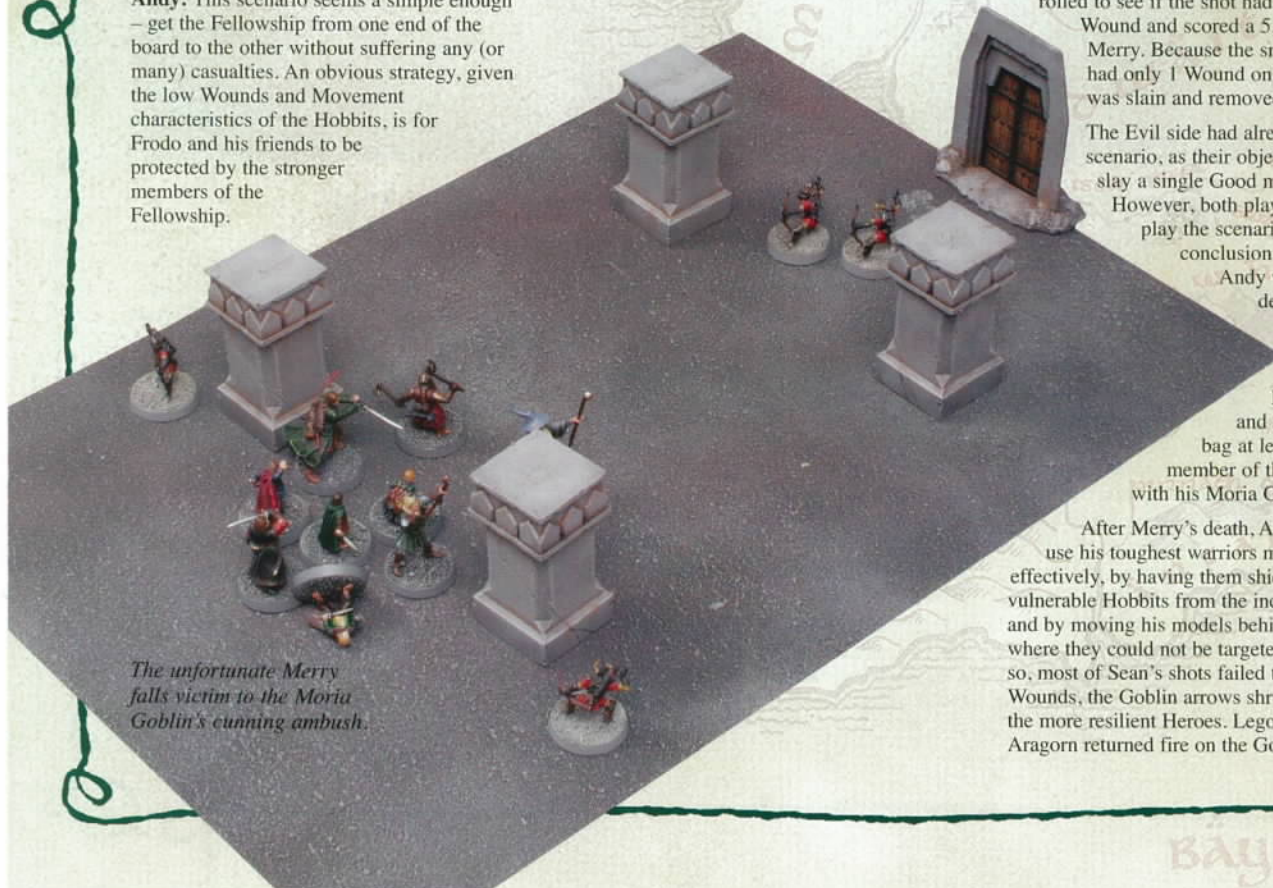
Wound and scored a 5, enough to fell Merry. Because the small Hobbit had only 1 Wound on his profile, he was slain and removed from play.

The Evil side had already won the scenario, as their objective was to slay a single Good model.

However, both players wanted to play the scenario to its conclusion anyway.

Andy was determined to escape with the rest of the Fellowship, and Sean hoped to bag at least one more member of the Fellowship with his Moria Goblin archers.

After Merry's death, Andy began to use his toughest warriors more effectively, by having them shield the more vulnerable Hobbits from the incoming fire and by moving his models behind the pillars where they could not be targeted. By doing so, most of Sean's shots failed to cause Wounds, the Goblin arrows shrugged off by the more resilient Heroes. Legolas and Aragorn returned fire on the Goblins, the



*The unfortunate Merry falls victim to the Moria Goblin's cunning ambush.*



keen-eyed Elf felling one of the Moria Goblins with his finely wrought Elven arrows.

As Andy moved the Fellowship closer to the doorway, Sean's Goblins became bolder, making sure they were in position to fire at the models in the Fellowship with lower Defense values. Thus, the Goblins had to stand in places where Aragorn and Legolas could fire back at them. Though the Goblins were able to score a Wound on Aragorn, two more Goblins died as the Good Heroes unleashed their own arrows with deadly accuracy.

The remaining Hobbits were the first to make their escape, with Frodo, Sam, and Pippin all moving through the door to safety. Gandalf, Boromir, and Gimli made ready to move off of the board next turn. In the Shoot Phase, Legolas shot the last of the Moria Goblins, killed him, and ended the game. The scenario had been a victory for the Evil side, with Merry slain by a cruel Goblin arrow, but both players seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

**Andy:** Whoops! I had a momentary lapse of common sense right at the start and didn't anticipate Sean skirting round the pillar and shooting poor Merry in the back. Still, one less Hobbit to worry about. Not a great start. In retrospect, taking the middle path was perhaps a bit risky compared to going down the side and using the walls to protect my rear. A bit more time spent considering my next moves

*Boromir and Gandalf shield the remaining Hobbits, while Aragorn and Legolas hunt down the last few Goblins.*

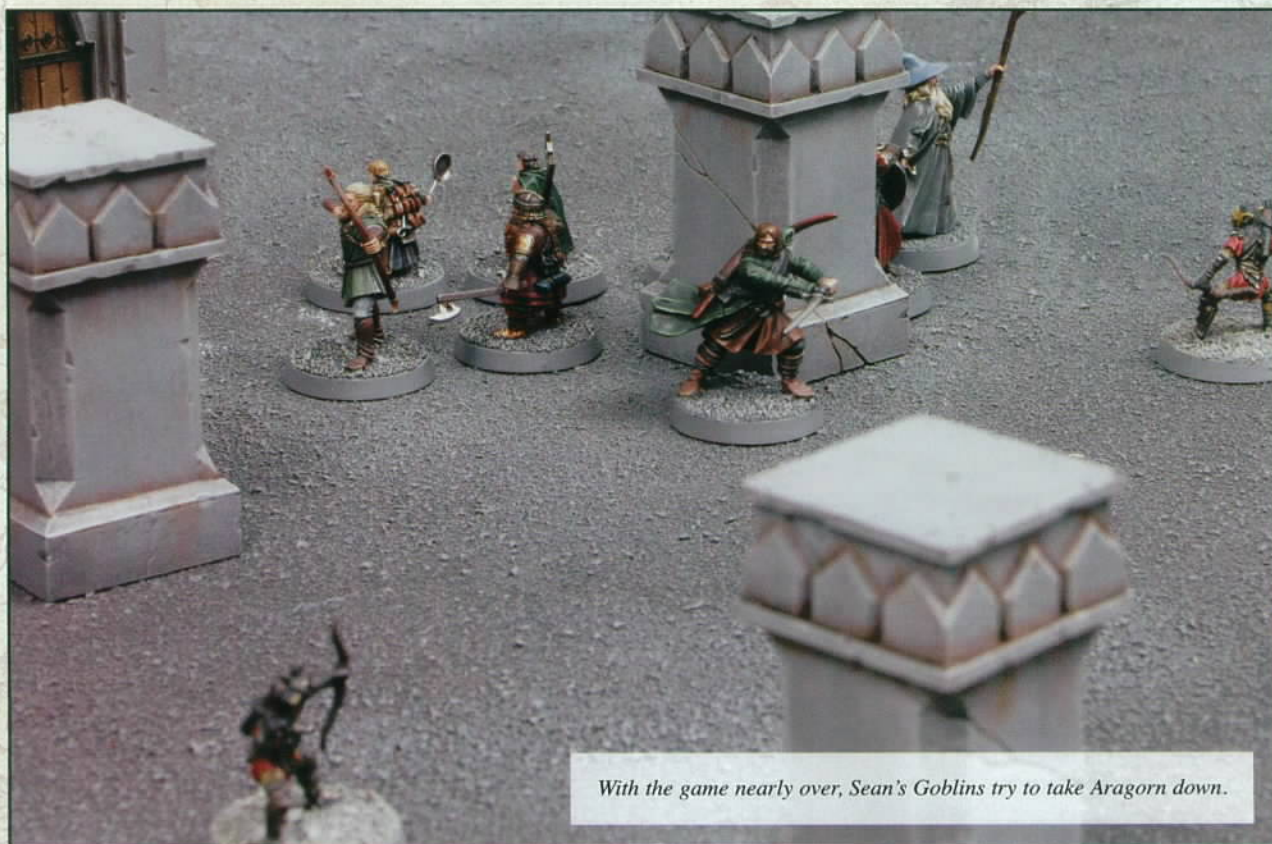


**Sean:** So, I actually can win games! At first I was a little confused as to how I would be able to get a clear enough shot at one of the Hobbits. It seemed unlikely that I would be able to get a fatal arrow on Gimli, Boromir, or Aragorn (Andy's meat screen for those pesky little Hobbits). However, the fact that Andy started the game with priority actually went in my favor, as I was able to react to any chinks in his armor (ahem).

So, at this point, I'm extremely happy. My only real goal was to ensure that I won at least one game, and that has been achieved. Now I can look forward to enjoying myself!

saw the rest of the game going my way.

Aragorn and Legolas did all that was required of them and systematically took out the Goblins over the next 6 turns. With an important lesson learned, I'll go into the next game slightly more wary of Sean.



*With the game nearly over, Sean's Goblins try to take Aragorn down.*



## SCENARIO 2 – AMBUSH!

Having outrun the archers, the Fellowship rests for a moment, while Aragorn scouts ahead. More Goblins ambush the brave ranger, who must fight his way clear of the trap and get back to his companions.

### WINNING THE GAME

- The Good player wins if Aragorn can fight his way clear and move through the doorway.
- The Evil player wins if the Moria Goblins can slay Aragorn before he escapes.
- The game ends as soon as one player completes his objective.

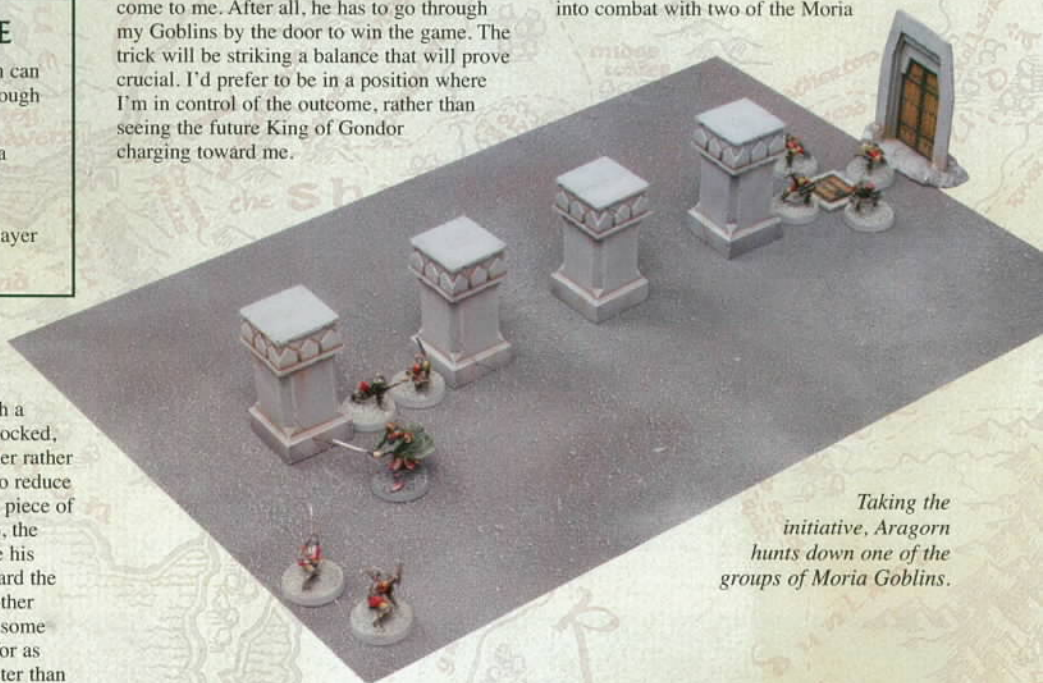
**Andy:** With Aragorn by himself in a room with a bunch of Goblins, I may have the power advantage, but the Goblins have the numbers. In such a small space, with the only way out blocked, the inevitable combat will come sooner rather than later. The best chance I have is to reduce the number of Goblins trying to get a piece of Aragorn. With no one to back him up, the walls and the columns will have to be his allies. I've no choice but to head toward the exit, and it's quite likely that all the other Goblins will as well. I'll aim to keep some distance between Aragorn and them for as long as possible. Since Aragorn is faster than

the Moria Goblins, I'll try to use his extra 2 cm of Movement to my advantage. However, the more turns there are, the more likely it is that Aragorn will die. Thus, this game needs to be a quick one.

**Sean:** Usually, outnumbering your opponent 8:1 is almost a certain victory, but when that lone warrior is Aragorn, you should be wary. After all, this guy can wade into a group of Ores and still come out with a heroic grin on his face. To a certain extent, I can let Aragorn come to me. After all, he has to go through my Goblins by the door to win the game. The trick will be striking a balance that will prove crucial. I'd prefer to be in a position where I'm in control of the outcome, rather than seeing the future King of Gondor charging toward me.

**Adam:** In his first Move Phase, Andy took the initiative and moved Aragorn straight toward the Moria Goblins furthest from the door – not what anyone had expected. Sean kept the Moria Goblins closest to the door where they were and covered the doorway in case Aragorn tried to make a break for the exit. The four Moria Goblins on the other side of the board closed in on the lone Hero and attempted to encircle him.

In the next turn, Aragorn charged into combat with two of the Moria



*Taking the initiative, Aragorn hunts down one of the groups of Moria Goblins.*



*As a desperate battle takes place between the pillars, Aragorn begins to approach the doorway.*





*With time on his side, Aragorn chooses the best moment to strike at the Goblins.*

Goblins, while Sean moved another Goblin behind the Hero to trap him. The other Moria Goblin nearby began to make his way toward the door. Thus, the Goblins would have additional help when Aragorn eventually reached them.

Over a series of several turns, Aragorn and the three Goblins that he was fighting battled furiously between the pillars. Thanks to Aragorn's excellent Fight value and his 3 Attacks, Andy was able to overwhelm all three of the Moria Goblins he was fighting and kill them with relative ease. Once they were dead, Andy moved Aragorn down toward the door, where he would have to fight his way through the Moria Goblins still standing sentry.

For a few turns, Andy and Sean's warriors faced off against each other. Andy didn't want to commit Aragorn to a fight where he might get outnumbered and surrounded. A model that gets surrounded can find itself in real danger. Thus, Aragorn hung back, biding his time. Because Aragorn can move 14 cm, while Moria Goblins can move only 12 cm,

Andy was confident that he would be able to choose when and where he fought Sean's Goblins.

Andy waited for Sean to win the Priority roll and move his models before he charged Aragorn into combat with a single Moria Goblin. He chose the Goblin closest to the doorway and hoped that he would kill it and then win the Priority roll in the next turn. If this happened, Aragorn would be able to slip past the remaining Goblins and escape from the battle. Fortunately for Sean, despite Aragorn pushing the Goblin back, the mighty Hero failed to cause any Wounds.

In the next turn, Andy did win Priority and looked to see if Aragorn could move through the doorway. Unfortunately, he would have to enter the control zone of a least one Goblin to reach the door. Thus, he retreated, deciding to bide his time. Sean, wise to Andy's tactic, now gave chase with his Moria Goblins and hoped to catch up with Aragorn and trap him.

Aragorn was forced to fall back, defend himself in the following turns, and retreat all the way to the corner of the board where he would be trapped, but fewer Moria Goblins would be able to fight him at once. For a couple of turns, things looked like they would go all right for Aragorn, as Andy rolled high enough to push the Moria Goblins back and even kill a couple. However, it wasn't long before their weight of numbers paid off. Aragorn was gradually wounded and eventually killed by the Goblins, their spears and swords cutting him down.

Sean had won again, giving two victories for the Evil side. With two scenarios left to go, though, there was everything to play for.

**Andy:** The King is dead-ish. With all the Goblins on the table swiftly congregating around the door, I had no choice but to wade in and hope to wear them down. By drawing them out and skulking in the corner, my aim was to minimize the number of Goblins in base contact with Aragorn. However, what seemed like a sound tactic is never going to withstand a relentless onslaught, especially when losing Priority leaves you at the mercy of your opponent. At this rate, there isn't going to be much of a Fellowship escaping Moria, let alone making it to the final credits. Thankfully, the rules governing these particular scenarios are a bit more forgiving and allow Aragorn to dust himself off and head in the direction of the next game where hopefully he'll be able to make a bigger impression.

**Sean:** Phew! That one was actually tougher than I had expected. In that game of cat and mouse, I was torn between moving all my forces to the doorway and making a valiant stand and rushing Aragorn and hoping for strength in numbers. I was wary of giving Andy any sort of gap to exploit. Therefore, I tried to divide my forces accordingly. It wasn't really working to be candid, and Andy was definitely calling the shots as he bided his time

looking for any weakness. In all honesty, I think my victory in this scenario was definitely down to luck, but you won't find me complaining.



*With his plan gone horribly wrong, Aragorn makes his last stand.*



# SCENARIO 3 – SURROUNDED!

Aragorn has not yet returned, and the rest of the Fellowship is assailed from all sides by Moria Goblins. Boromir, Legolas, and Gimli must defend the Hobbits. Will Aragorn arrive in time to help his friends?

## WINNING THE GAME

- The Good player wins if both trapdoors are sealed.
- The Evil player wins if four or more Good models are slain.
- The game ends as soon as one player completes his objective.

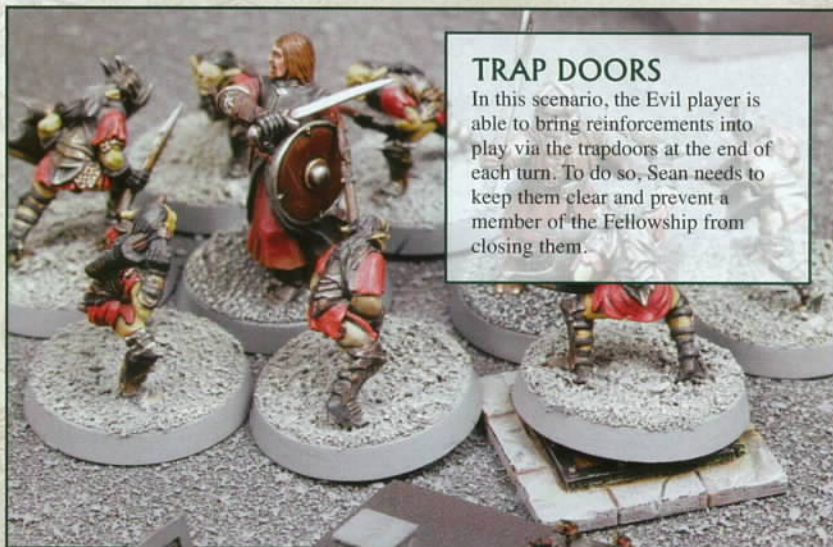
**Andy:** I must survive long enough to break the Goblins' numbers down while closing the trapdoors and keeping the Hobbits alive. These seemingly straightforward goals should become a lot easier as soon as I roll a 6 for Aragorn to burst through the doors. Fighting over one trapdoor while Goblins pour forth from the other will split the Fellowship between at least two objectives. Thus, the sooner I can close the first then the sooner I can focus on stemming the tide from the other side of the table. From the outset, I'll send Boromir and Gimli to fight over one trapdoor. They can look after themselves. Meanwhile, the rest of the Fellowship will make for the other.

**Sean:** I've drawn confidence from my two victories thus far, but as a beginner, I'm a little nervous at having to divide my attention between two points on the (admittedly, rather small) battlefield. It's vital that I can maintain my tactics on both sides of the battlefield. At least Aragorn isn't around (yet) to cut down any more Goblins. However, with the threat of his arrival hanging over me, I can't afford

to let Andy draw out the fight. I think this scenario will call for quick, decisive measures. If I can keep Lady Luck interested a little longer, I might be able to score a hat-trick.

## TRAP DOORS

In this scenario, the Evil player is able to bring reinforcements into play via the trapdoors at the end of each turn. To do so, Sean needs to keep them clear and prevent a member of the Fellowship from closing them.



*Their ambush laid, the Moria Goblins prepare to pounce.*

**Adam:** The Moria Goblins sprang their ambush and leaped into action. Sean moved four Moria Goblins with spears around the pillars in an effort to encircle the Fellowship, while the rest of the Moria Goblins stayed put, guarding the trapdoors against attack. Andy responded by charging Boromir and Gimli straight at the Goblins guarding the nearest trapdoor. Gandalf cast the spell Blinding Light. Glowing brightness emanated from his staff, offering the Fellowship a measure of protection from the Goblins armed with bows.

*Boromir leads the charge against the foul Goblins.*



## WHERE WAS ARAGORN?

In this scenario, at the end of each turn, the Good player gets the chance to see if Aragorn has arrived to rescue his friends.

Andy seemed to have trouble rolling the requisite 6 in the End Phase throughout the game. Aragorn must have been taking his time dusting himself off!



In the Shoot Phase, the Moria Goblins missed with their arrows, thanks to Gandalf's Blinding Light. Legolas struck one of the Goblin archers in return but failed to wound it. In the Fight Phase, Gimli easily bested his opponent by cutting him down with Dwarven axes. However, Boromir didn't fair so well. The two Goblins he was fighting managed not only to push him back, but to score a wound on him too – hardly the result anyone expected.

As the battle continued, Andy went on the offensive and sent Gandalf, Legolas, and the Hobbits charging toward the other trapdoor. Legolas cut down one Goblin with his keen Elven blades, and even Gandalf pushed back his foe. Boromir and Gimli continued to fight on, whittling down the number of Goblins surrounding the trapdoor. In the End Phase, Sean and Andy rolled for reinforcements. Sean scored well, with two new Goblins arriving, one on each trapdoor. Unfortunately for Andy, Aragorn was nowhere to be seen.

By the 3rd turn of the game, the fighting had really intensified. Boromir and Gimli found themselves totally surrounded by Goblins. While Boromir was able to defeat the four Goblins fighting him, Gimli was trapped by his attackers and suffered a Wound. Legolas shot and killed a Goblin, while the Goblins were unable to score any hits in return thanks to Gandalf's Blinding Light spell.

As the game continued, Boromir and Gimli continued to clear the Goblins away from the trapdoor they were fighting to control. Gimli was beaten by his opponent. However, when Andy moved him back 2 cm, Gimli ended up on the trapdoor – it would be jammed shut at the end of the turn. Beside him, Boromir was proving to be an unstoppable fighting machine. No matter what Sean threw at the son of Gondor, he cut it down. It wouldn't be long before the Dwarf and Boromir would be able to rush to the aid of Gandalf and the Hobbits.

On the other side of the battle, Gandalf, Legolas, and the Hobbits were under serious attack from the Goblins. Frodo and Merry managed to best a Goblin between them and kill it despite its armor and shield. Sam and Pippin were far less fortunate and found themselves struck down by their opponents, both slain by cruel Goblins. Gandalf struggled too, was pushed back, and was wounded again. Andy was glad that Legolas was able to hold his own against his two Goblin adversaries and push Sean's warriors back.

In the End Phase, Gimli jammed shut the trapdoor that he was stood on, halving the number of reinforcements that the Moria Goblins could receive. Sean rolled well for the other trapdoor though, and another of his Evil warriors emerged to join the fight. Andy was not so lucky in his own reinforcements roll, and once more, Aragorn failed to arrive.

As the battle raged on, Sean, reasoning that the Hobbits were much easier to slay than the larger members of the Fellowship, tried to isolate the Hobbits with his Moria Goblins. Frodo was caught and killed by three spear-wielding Goblins, although the rest of the Fellowship did well against the Goblins. Andy, realizing that Merry was next in line



*Together, Boromir and Gimli clear the trapdoor of Goblins.*



*With the battle in full swing, the Fellowship waits for Aragorn to come to the rescue.*



*Andy continues to go on the offensive with Boromir and Gimli.*



for the same treatment, moved the last Hobbit toward Boromir and Gimli, and hoped that they could protect Merry and overwhelm anything that Sean sent after him.

With one trapdoor closed and Merry safely hidden behind a pillar, Andy set to work slaughtering the rest of Sean's Goblins. Gimli and Boromir tipped the balance of the fighting in favor of the Fellowship and took the strain off Gandalf and Legolas with their presence.

Realizing that unless he could kill another member of the Fellowship quickly he would lose, Sean sent a Moria Goblin chasing after Merry. This decision

*Gandalf and Legolas protect the Hobbits from the Goblin counterattack, while Boromir and Gimli struggle to close the trapdoor.*



*After several turns of fighting, Gimli finally closes the trapdoor.*



*Having encircled Gandalf and the Hobbits, the Goblins pick off Pippin and Sam.*

left only a couple of warriors to hold off Gandalf and the others from closing the trapdoor.

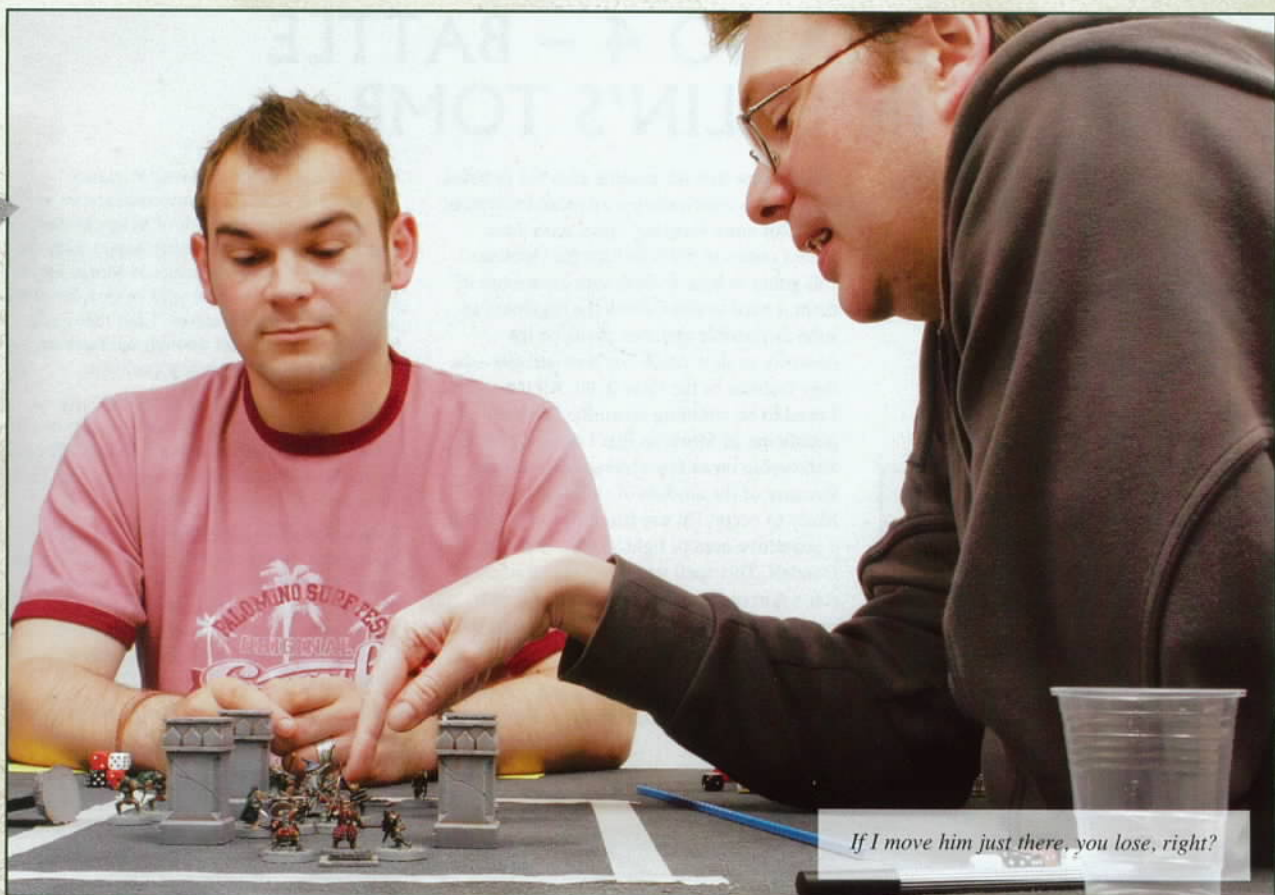
Unfortunately, it was too little too late, and Gandalf and Legolas were able to intercept the unlucky Goblin and kill it. Boromir then closed the last trapdoor. The Good side had won.

At the end of a hard-fought scenario, Andy had scored a victory for the Fellowship, having closed both trapdoors and slain every Evil model on the table – all without the help of Aragorn! Still, the game had been a close run thing. Sean needed to kill only one more member of the Fellowship to achieve a victory himself.

**Andy:** Success at last! But not without its problems. Two Hobbits dead, including the Ringbearer, seems a little careless, even by my standards. Despite rattling the handles, Aragorn never made it through the doors. Thus, the game lasted a few more turns and raised the danger of more Hobbits falling prey to Goblins. Having said that, Sean and I had hit our stride by this stage and were storming through the phases of each turn. Blaming the dice is too easy an excuse to make. However, they seemed to mock me at every turn – whether I was rolling to win Priority or to get Aragorn into play. After 10 turns, all the Goblins lay dead, and the remnants of the Fellowship were nursing some wounds.

**Sean:** Ah well, I knew fortune would desert me at some point, and so it proved to be. What's frustrating is that, despite Aragorn insisting on pushing on a door that clearly said "pull," I didn't manage to put up more of a fight. Andy was very clever in his tactics to close off the trapdoors. He put me in a position where I had to keep a Goblin on top of the trapdoors to prevent the Fellowship from shutting out my troops. However, in so doing, I couldn't call on any more reinforcements. Andy had obviously found his feet, and I can only hope that the introduction of a Cave Troll in the final scenario will swing the battle in my favor.







# SCENARIO 4 – BATTLE IN BALIN'S TOMB

The Fellowship finds a stone chamber where Gimli's cousin Balin met his tragic fate. Their grief is interrupted by the booming of drums and the arrival of yet more Goblins with a monstrous Cave Troll. Can the heroes survive?

## WINNING THE GAME

- The Good player wins if the Fellowship slays the Cave Troll.
- The Evil player wins if any four members of the Fellowship are killed.
- The game ends as soon as one player completes his objective.

**Andy:** Now that the gaming area has doubled in size, I'm anticipating a lot more movement and a lot more shooting. Also, with three access routes to the board for the Goblins, I'm going to have to deal with even more of them. I need to close down the trapdoors as soon as possible and then focus on the doorway to slow down any new arrivals – be they Goblins or the Cave Troll. All the while, I need to be whittling down the Goblin population of Moria so that I can focus the Fellowship on as few combats as possible. Because of the amount of shooting that's likely to occur, I'll use Blinding Light to cast a protective aura of light within 14 cm of Gandalf. This spell will force the Goblins to roll a 6 in order to hit the Fellowship with arrows. First chance I get, Gandalf's lighting that thing up like a Christmas tree.

*With the board set for the final confrontation, Sean and Andy prepare to re-create the battle in Balin's Tomb.*

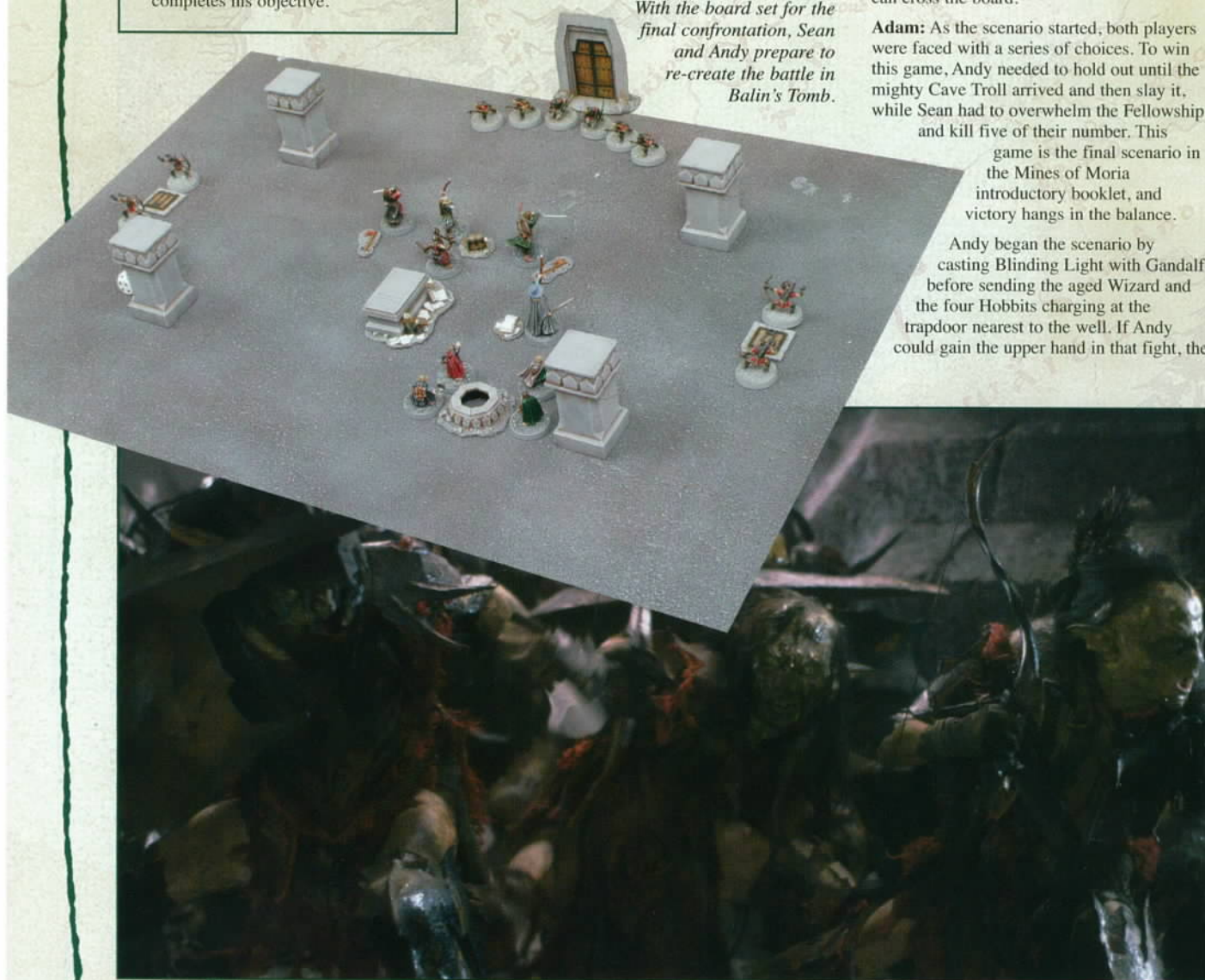
**Sean:** Defeat in the previous scenario stripped me of some of my confidence. However, I have a wealth of troops to call, and thus far, I've been pretty happy with the performance of the denizens of Moria. Once more, my troops will be split in two, but with a finite amount of reserves, I felt that I will still be able to muster enough numbers to cause the Fellowship a few problems.

I'd like the Cave Troll to show up early so that I have a warrior who can face any one of the Fellowship and bash some heads. Though I don't exactly have a plan for my Cave Troll, I know he'll be a huge asset.

I hope that the two Goblins deployed at the far trapdoor might be able to lead one or two of the Fellowship on a merry dance for a while. This distraction might enable me to try and whittle down the "weaker" members (i.e., the Hobbits) before the taller forces of Good can cross the board.

**Adam:** As the scenario started, both players were faced with a series of choices. To win this game, Andy needed to hold out until the mighty Cave Troll arrived and then slay it, while Sean had to overwhelm the Fellowship and kill five of their number. This game is the final scenario in the Mines of Moria introductory booklet, and victory hangs in the balance.

Andy began the scenario by casting Blinding Light with Gandalf before sending the aged Wizard and the four Hobbits charging at the trapdoor nearest to the well. If Andy could gain the upper hand in that fight, the





Goblin reinforcements would be slowed down. Aragorn and Legolas held their position in the center, opposite the doorway, and hoped to fire on the Goblins with their bows. On the other side, Boromir and Gimli headed for the other trapdoor.

Reasoning that Gimli and Boromir would easily defeat his Goblins guarding the trapdoor, Sean retreated rather than standing and fighting. He moved the Goblins away from the warriors opposing them and into cover behind the pillars. The swathe of Goblins that started by the door all made for the trapdoor where Gandalf and the Hobbits were headed. The denizens of Moria were eager to lend their support there and prevent that door from being closed.

Aragorn and Legolas managed to slay a Goblin between them with their shooting. Aragorn making the kill. In the Fight Phase, Gandalf didn't fare so well. The Goblin he was fighting wounded the old Wizard and pushed him back.

In the 2nd turn, Sean continued to avoid fighting Boromir and Gimli, and kept his Goblins at a safe distance, where they could shoot at Legolas if the chance arose. The Moria Goblins that were heading for Gandalf and the Hobbits closed in – they would be able to charge Gandalf and his allies next turn.

Andy responded by throwing Aragorn into battle alongside Gandalf, while Legolas tried to hold the center and use his bow to keep the number of Goblins down. Boromir reached the trapdoor he had been aiming for and stood atop it, ready to slam it shut and seal it in the End Phase. Meanwhile, Gimli chased after a Goblin with a bow and moved further and further away from the bulk of the fighting.

The Goblins armed with bows all fired at Legolas, who, despite the protection of the Blinding Light, was wounded by one of the arrows. Aragorn and Gandalf fought against the Goblins guarding the trapdoor, and Gandalf managed to slay his opponent.

Sean scored a four for the number of reinforcements that arrived through the doorway this turn, and yet another Goblin arrived through the trapdoor nearest Gandalf and Aragorn. Despite the fact that Boromir was able to close the other trapdoor, the Goblin reinforcements were arriving at a startling rate, and the Fellowship hadn't really begun to kill the Goblins in large numbers yet.

The next couple of turns saw the fighting around the remaining trapdoor grow even more furious as all four of the Hobbits were drawn into the battle. Gandalf and Merry fought side-by-side, slaying one Goblin and fending off several others. Aragorn managed to fight his way onto the trapdoor itself, and despite taking a Wound from his opponents, was able to close. Frodo was the first of the Hobbits to fall in the battle. A Moria Goblin beat him and scored the Wound needed to remove him from play. Legolas lost the duel he was having with the Goblins armed with bows and, despite the power of Gandalf's spell, was killed by their arrows.



*Even the Hobbits are forced to fight, as the Goblins ram home their assault.*

On the other side of the board, Boromir and Gimli attempted to deal with the Goblins near the doorway. Despite winning their fights, the two heroes were unable to score high enough to wound. Thus, Sean's Goblins cheated death for a while.

Back at the trapdoor, Andy's Hobbits soon found themselves in even more trouble as the Moria Goblins were finally able to start surrounding them and killing them one by one. Although Aragorn and Sam both defeated and killed their opponents (Sam wielding a frying pan to great effect!), Pippin was not so lucky and was pulled down and killed by the three Goblins fighting him. Gandalf was beaten too and suffered another Wound. Elsewhere, Gimli and Boromir fared

## KEEPING HOBBITS SAFE

As the battle raged on, Andy realized that his Hobbits were at risk of being surrounded and killed. To keep the Goblins from breaking through, Andy carefully spaced the Hobbits so that it wasn't possible for Sean to get his own models through the gaps.

significantly better than their friends. Both bested the Goblins they were fighting and killing them.

With the Cave Troll now on the board, Andy had a chance to get into combat with it and possibly win the scenario. Three members of the Fellowship were dead, and Gandalf was severely wounded. As such, time was of the essence for the Good side. Sean had to keep his momentum going – the Fellowship was surrounded, and now he had his mightiest model on the board!

Boromir and Gimli wasted no time at all charging into the Cave Troll. Andy knew they were his only chance to win now. The

## REINFORCEMENTS

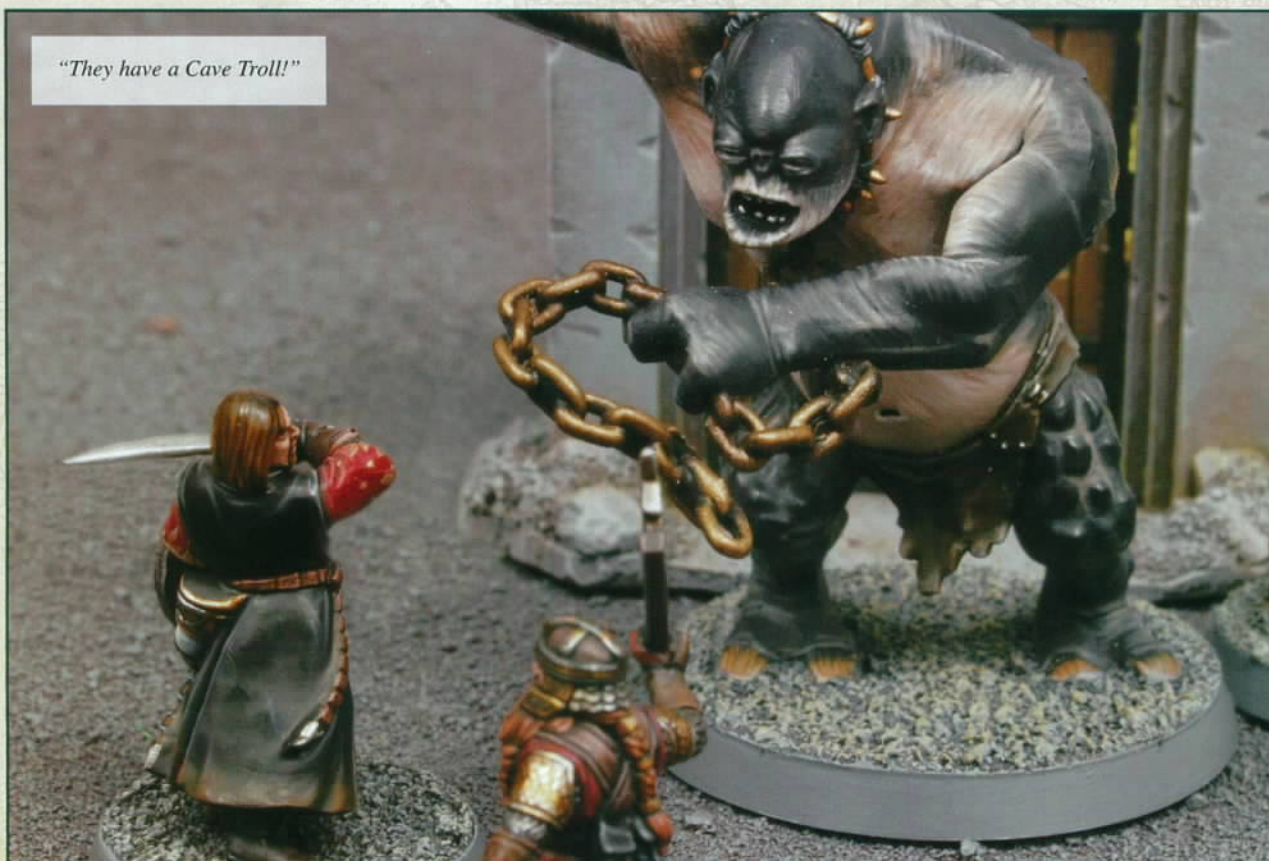
To represent the claustrophobic feel of the battle in Balin's tomb and the vast number of Goblins rushing to the scene, the Evil reinforcements arrive in two ways in this scenario. Two trapdoors work the same way they do in the previous scenario, and the doorway provides Sean with a die worth of extra models every turn.

*The tide of Moria Goblins crashes into the Fellowship of The Ring.*





"They have a Cave Troll!"



## THE ARRIVAL OF THE CAVE TROLL

The Priority roll for Turn 6 was a draw. Thus, in the End Phase, in addition to the other reinforcements that arrived, Sean was able to place the Cave Troll in base contact with the door. Boromir and Gimli were about to have the fight of their life on their hands!

remainder of the Fellowship fought bravely on. Despite their predicament, Sean, capitalizing on his advantage, swarmed his Goblins into the Fellowship. He used three Goblins to draw Gimli away from the combat with the Cave Troll and totally surrounded Gandalf, Aragorn, and the remaining Hobbits.

The combats were a mixture of success and failure for both sides, with Merry and Sam both surviving their combats and Gandalf killing one of the two Moria Goblins fighting him. Boromir was beaten in his fight against the Cave Troll and suffered 2 Wounds, bringing him close to death and jeopardizing the whole scenario for the Good side. Aragorn fended off four Goblins and killed one, and Gimli managed to prevail against his three foes too. Unless Andy was very lucky in the next turn, Sean was going to win the game.

Sean won priority for the Evil side in Turn 8 and wasted no time encircling the Fellowship to bring his superior numbers to bear. There was no shooting, with

every model that was on the board fighting desperately in hand-to-hand combat.

Merry once again managed to defeat his opponent and pushed the spear-armed Goblin back. Aragorn killed the Goblin he was fighting, but elsewhere, the Good side didn't have so much luck. Gandalf, who had been fighting furiously since the 1st turn of the scenario, suffered his final Wound and was slain. Sam was facing three Goblins at once and was killed as well, his frying pan finally proving no match for the swords and spears of his Goblin attackers. Gimli overpowered his attackers and pushed them all back but failed to wound any.

*Gimli and Boromir fight to bring down the Cave Troll, as one by one, the members of the Fellowship are picked off.*

By now, all eyes were on Boromir who was fighting against the Cave Troll and two Moria Goblins. With five members of the Fellowship dead, the Good side could no longer score a victory but could scrape a draw if Boromir killed the Cave Troll. Both sides scored a 6 when rolling to determine the winner of the fight, forcing Sean to make a roll to determine the winner. The dice showed that the Good side won the fight. Andy declared all of his strikes against the Cave Troll and rolled the dice... Sadly, his rolls were as unlucky as they could have been, and Boromir inflicted no Wounds on the Cave Troll at all! With that, the game ended. In a stunning reversal of the books and films, the Goblins of Moria and their Cave Troll had stopped the journey of the Fellowship and slain the Ringbearer. Sean had beaten Andy three games to one.







**Andy:** Everything started promisingly. I split the Fellowship in two and sealed the trapdoors, as I did in the last game. Aragorn and Legolas tried to stem the flow of Goblins coming from the doorway. My first mistake was to send Gimli after a lone Goblin bowman instead of toward the door. By about the 3rd turn, there was very little shooting going on. In fact, no firing from my side at all as Legolas lay sprawled out on the tomb floor, and Aragorn was battling away at a swarm of Goblins. From then on, the Fellowship and Goblins were locked in combat, turn after turn. Something, inevitably, had to give. Despite attempts to keep the Hobbits safe, repeatedly losing Priority left them at the mercy of Sean and his bugged-eyed friends. So goodbye to Pippin, Frodo, Sam, and Gandalf. It all hung on the last roll of the game with Boromir against the Cave Troll. I had managed to roll three 6's in a previous scenario, when a simple 5+ would have sufficed – so it's not impossible. However, as this throw of the dice was my last gasp of combat in the game, I suspected the laws of probability would be stacked against me. And so it came to pass.

**Sean:** It was a very close run thing, but my Cave Troll, ably supported by a swarm of Goblins who had done all the dirty work, had just swung the battle for me. By this stage, I'd like to think I'd gotten to grips with the rules and had managed to establish some tactics of sorts. My ploy to try and keep Boromir and Gimli occupied had worked (to a certain degree, at least) and had enabled me to focus my attentions on taking out the Hobbits. Legolas's early departure was something of a boon, especially as I had managed to hit him despite the annoyance of Gandalf's Blinding Light spell – a most irritating advantage I must say.

The game hinged on the final die rolls. It had been a battle fought on a knife-edge, and it was poetic justice that the entire battle came down to the combat between Boromir and the Cave Troll. If you asked any one of the select few people I have played games with, they would tell you that my ability to roll low dice is frighteningly consistent. Today, however, my form (thankfully) deserted me, and I managed to best Andy in the final confrontation.

## NOT WITH 10,000 MEN COULD YOU DO THIS!



**Andy:** So victory to Sean and his daylight-dodging friends. I can console myself by remembering that I didn't lose by much or too quickly. But curse my wretched die rolls! I could spend the next couple of paragraphs complaining about bad dice. Despite reasonably sound tactics, more often than not, fate conspired against me, resulting in near bloodless Fight Phases. Those black, dimpled cubes of woe taunted me at every turn, leaving the Fellowship foundering in the face of overwhelming numbers. If you think I sound bitter, you'd be right. But, of course, it's all part of gaming.

I defy anyone to get through some of these games without losing a Hobbit or two. From the 1st turn on, you're in combat and with very few hiding places. There's nowhere to run. In retrospect, I should have modified my tactics slightly to make it easier to weather the storm that a few bad rolls can create.

## AGAINST THE POWER OF MORDOR, THERE CAN BE NO VICTORY!



**Sean:** I know it's something of a cliché, but I can honestly say that I really, really enjoyed myself in these battle reports. I got off to a very fortunate start, but by the fourth scenario, I was really immersed in the action and was more than a little deflated when the battle finally drew to a close. I could happily have played on.

Once Andy and I had fully grasped the rules, the game really started to flow, and that's probably why I enjoyed it so much. As a relatively novice gamer, battles, regardless of the game system, tend to be a stop/start affair. This fact makes it difficult to generate any sort of flow to the game. Thankfully, this problem wasn't an issue in our later games. Once I fully grasped the rules, I really started to enjoy myself and to make sound tactical decisions. Time for a trip to my local GW Hobby Center to create my own forces of Sauron.

