



Shieldwall

Battles in Early Medieval Europe

AD 500-1100

Game Scenario

Maserfield

AD 642

Background



Following his victory over Cadwallon ap Cadfan at Heavenfield (634), the 'saintly' Oswald of Northumbria is looking to extend his power. The pagan Penda, King of the Mercians is an obstacle to this and Oswald supports Penda's brother Eowa's claim to the Mercian crown. Oswald advances southwest into what is now Shropshire.

Mercia and Powys have been allies for some time. In an attempt to block Northumbrian power and they join forces to meet the invading Northumbrians at Maserfield (modern location unknown but possibly Oswestry, Shropshire or Forden, Powys).

Oswald was defeated and both he and Eowa were killed. Oswald's head, hands and arms were placed on stakes and later Oswald became revered as a saint and martyr.

Orders of Battle

We really do not know how many troops were involved — perhaps up to a couple of thousand on each side with the Northumbrians possibly having fewer men. The inclusion of Welsh allies on the Mercian side allows for cavalry and light infantry to be involved.

Given his saintly reputation Oswald must have a holy person (priest) as one of his supernumerary choices. The allies may not include a holy person as Mercian pagans joined forces with Welsh Christians.

Mercians and Welsh

King Penda of Mercia

Penda's Retinue: 2 Shieldwall Infantry, A Grade
Mercian Followers: 4 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade

Coenwalh Prince of Mercia

Coenwalh's Retinue: 2 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade
Mercian Followers: 4 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade

Cynddylan ap Cyndrwyn of Pengwern

Cynddylan's retinue: 2 cavalry, A Grade
Pengwern followers: 2 light cavalry, B Grade

Cadafael Cadomedd of Gwynedd

Cadfael's retinue: 2 Medium infantry, B Grade
Gwynedd followers: 2 Medium Infantry, C Grade
Gwynedd archers: 1 Light Infantry, C Grade

Northumbrians

King Oswald of Northumbria

Oswald's Retinue: 2 Shieldwall Infantry, A Grade
Northumbrian Followers: 4 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade
Scouts: 2 Light Infantry, C Grade

Oswiu Prince of Northumbria

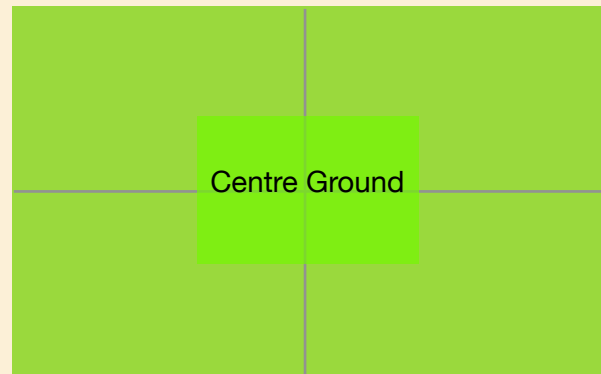
Oswiu's Retinue: 2 Shieldwall Infantry, A Grade
Northumbrian Followers: 4 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade

Eowa of Mercia

Eowa's Retinue: 2 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade
Mercian Followers: 4 Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade

Terrain and Deployment

You do not really need more than a 6 x 4 foot table to play this scenario even in 28mm scale. The battlefield should represent rolling wooded country with a clear area in the centre where the armies will meet. The centre ground (see map) extends 18" each side of the horizontal centre line and 12" from the vertical.



Deployment Option 1.

The Mercian/Welsh player chooses and lays out the terrain. The centre ground must be kept free of difficult terrain except for up to one low hill. Any number of wooded areas and low hills may be placed in the flanking and deployment areas. There may also be a fordable stream on one of the flanks. Once the terrain is laid out the Northumbrian player chooses which side he wishes to deploy on. He also has the option to add or remove one terrain piece, again keeping the centre ground free.

Deployment Option 2.

Umpire lays out terrain and the Mercians

Both sides deploy one contingent at a time up to 12" from the centre line. Roll dice, high score choose whether to deploy a contingent or let opponent do so. LI may be in front of one of the Welsh units otherwise all units must be in a single line.

Victory Conditions

The Northumbrians need to drive the Mercians from the field, ideally killing Penda in the process. This would allow Oswald to place Eowa on the Mercian throne. It is less important to destroy the Welsh as they could probably be persuaded to switch allegiance or remain neutral.



