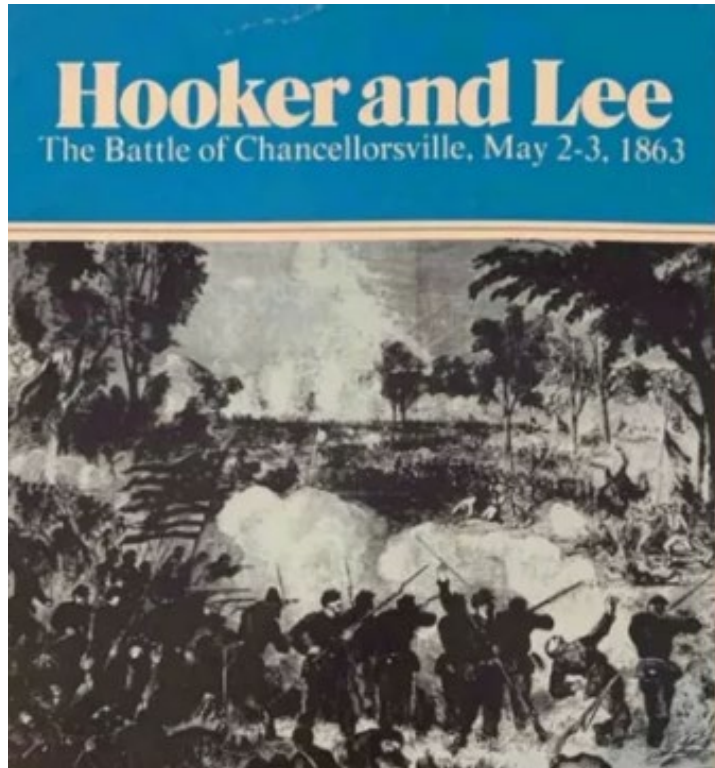


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# Hooker And Lee, SPI 1975

## *Replay by George Nap*

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### **Hooker and Lee – SPI Publications**

From the description: “a battle-level simulation of the engagement at Chancellorsville on May 2nd and 3rd, 1863. Union General Joe Hooker had just completed a brilliant strategic maneuver, trapping Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. Hooker’s failure to follow up this stroke not only enabled Lee to escape the trap, but also allowed Lee to inflict a tactical beating on the Union Army. Unfortunately, Confederate casualties made theirs a Pyrrhic victory.”

Taking this one out for a spin. Some rules to enforce the weakness of the US command. The US can only move six units per turn. The US does get points for exiting units from some Northern hexes. But given the movement restrictions  $6 \text{ units} \times 9 \text{ turns} = 54 \text{ unit turns} \times 6 \text{ movement points} = 324 \text{ movement points}$ , a significant portion of US forces would not be able to reach the exit hexes, so smashing north to leave is not a whole strategy.

Note: I like to first try to ‘break’ games looking for holes or weaknesses in the system. For instance, should the US be able to exit everyone they would garner a massive amount of VP – victory points – well in excess of the geographic and casualty VP ’s which would be forfeited to the CS. I offer this example of why the strategy will not work. 2/v US starts in hex 0912 18 movement points away from the

exit hex by the most efficient route, that is 3 unit moves out of the 54 available total, and this unit is closest to the board edge. Another unit is within three moves of exiting. Two more units are one more move away from exit, they would take 8 total unit moves to exit. Here we have 14 unit moves used to exit 4 units, leaving us 40 unit moves left. The next batch of units are five unit moves away, there are approximately 13 of these units, which would require 65 unit moves to exit.

This simple analysis does not account for any CS blocking actions and leaves other units immobile. So running for the exits is not a strategy likely to yield victory.

There may be some validity to heading to the clear ground in the north, turning the CS right and exiting what units can be spared late.



For the CS the problem is different. There are no VP available for exiting units, just geographic objectives and enemy casualties. I do note in this game the CS player gets 2 VP for each US sp eliminated, but the US gets 3 VP for each CS eliminated, so profligate spending of CS forces is not an option. The CS can simulate Jackson's flank march, pushing units off the south edge of the map and having them reappear in the west. There is some validity to this as one of the VP hexes is in the extreme south. Otherwise it seems like a waste to sent those forces all that way when the US is most likely to try and exit north.

So, this game will not simulate history, nor do I want it to. The idea is to explore what Hooker could have done had he not been vainglorious, addled by a possible concussion from an artillery near miss, and crippled by the blinding paralysis that the failure of hubris in key moments never fails to induce.

The US will move north. For the CS I will roll 1d20 to determine how many units make the flank march. I think this fair and takes some of the decision making out of my hands. The game is 9 turns long, so it begs quick and decisive action, there is only one night turn. The US army is powerful but slow, the CS nimble but individually weak. The CS may stack two to a hex, the US may not.



## Turn 1 – 2 May 1863

“Most damnfool thing I ever seen, sent into the woods without cavalry or artillery support, one brigade in front of an enemy army blundering about in the dark. Well, if you have to send somebody on a forlorn hope, send a Tarheel.” CPT Speight B. West, 5th NC Infantry Regiment

CS – Rolled a 1 on a 1d20, so only one unit will make the flank march, Iverson’s Brigade of North Carolinians is sent away. We will move to block the US movement north. Only rough, not forest offers a defensive benefit, so we have to seize and hold the ridge line 1012-1213 for as long as possible to delay and trap the bluebellies. We will pivot our forces northeast to block them. No attacks.







US – with only six units to move every move has meaning and we must plan ahead. With the CS moving to block our forces and the army spread – IX corps might not move at all – we have to strike in a meaningful way and demolish CS units. Combat itself and advances / retreats after combat do NOT count towards the six unit limit. There are two exposed CS units, Wofford and Perry, we can use four of our unit moves on them, then two to position for next turn. Herein lies the rub and the beauty of the design, do you go for for sure high odds attacks and run out of time, or low odds attacks and suffer excessive casualties. You can reduce odds to avoid the exchange result on the 3-1 table, but that also takes the DE result off the table.

With CS casualty points worth more

to the US than US casualty points are worth to the CS, an **EX** result is a win for old Fightin' Joe Hooker. Taking some chances on EX results here. 2/v and arty vs 2/F Lee/s 6-1 **EX**, ugh. 1/v et al vs PerryA 4-1 **EX**, double ugh, 1/ii vs Wofford 6-1 **EX**, horrid rolls. But the cs right is cracked, unfortunately the US is denuded of units there and the cs can shift more quickly.









US – We are only entangled in one favorable attack, but must move everything else into contact against a pretty solid line of defenders. V corps arty mandatory vs Ramseur /Cabell 1-4 **AE**,

US rolls continue to be really poor.

1/XII vs Beckham 6-1+ **EX** – rolled a 6 twice in a row, pretty much the game here on the

exchange 2/XII vs Flee 2-1 **AR** 1/II vs Semmes 3-1 **DE**, advance 1/V vs Kershaw 3-1 **DR** advance. Probably should not have advanced as the CS can cut off my retreat, but only low odds actions can put this anywhere near in reach, as the VP totals right now on losses are CS 86 vs US 45. Need some magic.



### Turn 3 – 2 May 1863

They stormed through the woods, right at us, trying to punch out of the sack they were in. We loaded triple cannister with cut fuses....Porter Alexander, Col CS artillery

CS – We will try and envelop and destroy the two Union Corps which are exposed. We can eliminate retreats, so this could get bloody. It will be difficult to get high odds and exchanges work against us based on the victory points, but I love a good aggressive defense, so forward boys. The best we can do is a 1:1 on both, our army will continue to march north to hold a line and prevent the bluebellies from escaping should the battle not go our way.

Cruchfield et al vs 1/II AR,

Colquitt et al vs 1/V AR, no harm but a lost opportunity.







US – we have a dearth of units and are out of position. We will try and eliminate the exposed rebels behind our lines, extracting our two corps which were overextended.

1/V et al vs Cabell 6-1 **DE**,

1/II et al vs Heth 6-1 **DE**.

Lots of risky rolls but we are behind. I should bring the cavalry back north because without low factor units, exchanges will be a killer. VP 's are about even right now in combat units.



## Turn 4 – 2 May 1863

“The woods were alive with noise and sound and smoke and confusion. Yelling, savagery, rebs coming from all points of the compass. We scattered ‘em to the wind.” Col Charles Prevost, 118th Pennsylvania

CS – Our flankers will come out of the woods on their forlorn hope. US troops approach according to our scouts. We will try to snip off some exposed bluebellies, but have to be careful as we cannot trade losses with them. We have sealed their escape route, though.

Iverson will seize Ely's Ford and take the high ground. We are forced into an unfavorable attack, so we will take a chance and cut off 3/II retreat. Thomas et al vs 3/II 1-1 **AR**.  
Doles vs 1/II 1-4 **AR** occupied.





US – Having the ability to move only six units makes decisions tough. We need to extend our left, we have reinforcements coming on, and we need to retake Ely's Ford. Priorities will be to get to US ford first before the CS can shut it off. We have one attack 1/II vs Doles 4-1, will risk an EX for a possible DE, **DR** result, oh well. We will not advance into trap.





**Turn 5 – 2 May 1863 NIGHT** – no combat, may not enter or exit ezoc

“We marched hard for Ely’s ford, arriving as the sun set, didn’t see a bluebelly the whole way. Easiest march I ever had.” Sgt Moses Willoughby, Iverson’s Brigade, Army of Northern Virginia

CS – We will occupy Ely’s Ford and make them dig us out. We also have victory points for the exit hexes. Although the rules say we have to occupy, it is pretty clear they are well behind our lines, excepting 1501, and I am not going to send and combat unit up there, tail wagging the dog, the US will have to crack our line to take those objectives from the CS. We will extend our lines head for the heights above US Ford and try to set up a stand there. We can set up a 1-2 in the AM denying a retreat route which gives us a 33% chance of eliminating a Yankee division.





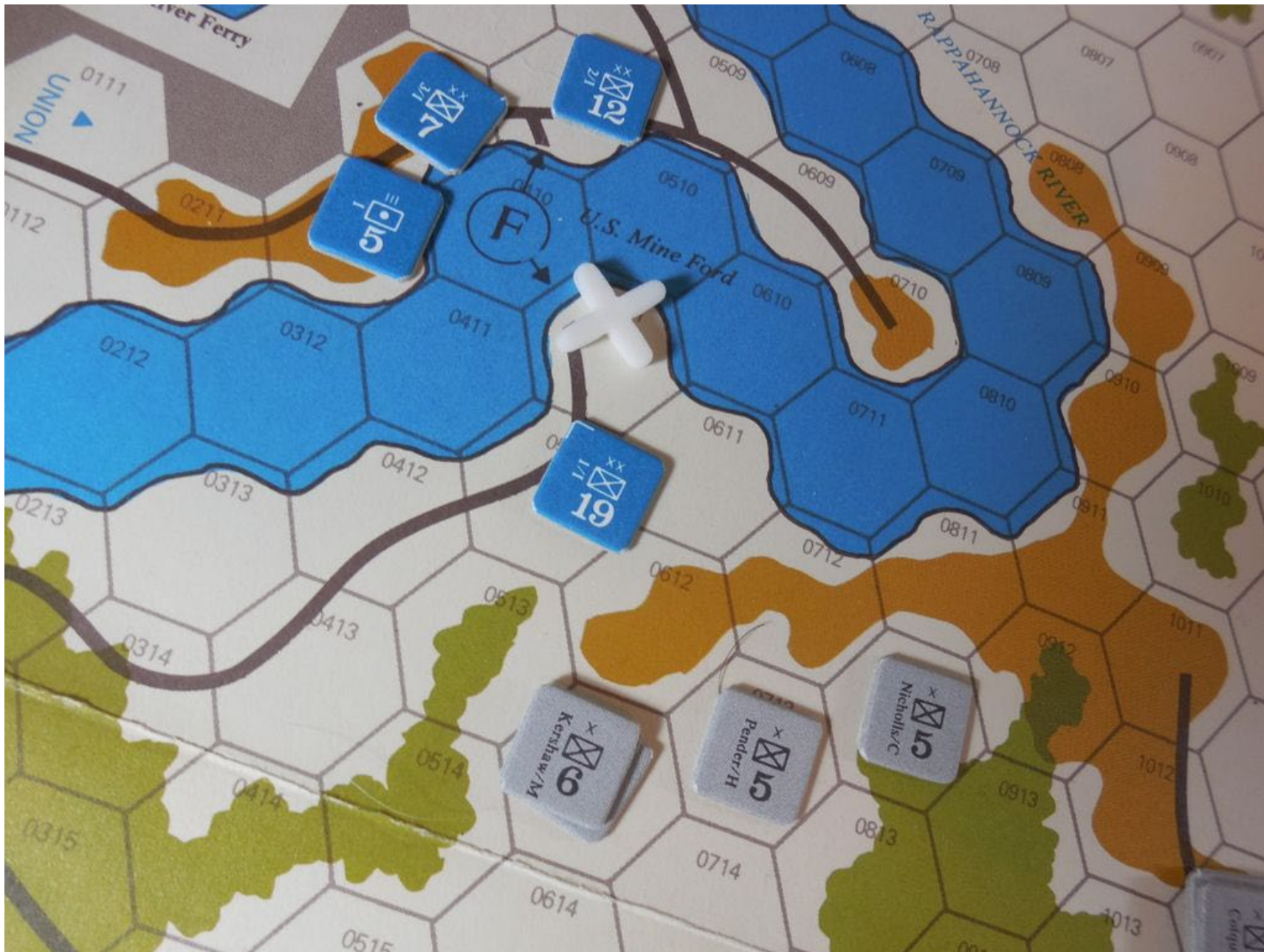


US – We will cross at US Ford, bring reinforcements on both flanks and set up next turn. The rules do not prohibit retreating across a ford, but if we just sit on the southern side we will be attacking against infantry in rough terrain, so will risk the 1-1 and no retreat option they can force on us. Our left hangs in the air, but we are also on both sides of them.



### Turn 6 – 3 May 1863

“Damn, they forgot about us again. Flea infested, tick infested Wilderness Church, no rebels, no orders, nothing. We can fight, proved ourselves before. Why don’t they call on us?” Col Gotthilf Bourry, 68th New York









CS – 1/I US Corps can be attacked at 1:1 with no retreat path, we will give that a go. We will have to extend our right to do so, but the US army is none too nimble, worth the gamble, a 50% shot. Kershaw et al vs 1/I 1-1 **DR, Elim**, no retreat, probably the battle right there, but we will play it out.









US – That probably did it, will have to attack as much as we can, striking the main line, with only six units to move, that makes things difficult and the EX result looms. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. A general assault on the CS center. 3/II vs Carter arty et al 2-1 **AR**, 1/V vs Thomas et al 2-1 **DR**, 1/II vs Walker arty et al 1-1 **AR**, 2/XII vs Mahone et al 1-1 **AR**, 2/I vs Kershaw et al at US ford 1-2 **AE**.





Turn 7 – 3 May 1863



“Them black-hatted fellows crossed the ford, right into our cannon, they shattered. Then came another division, across the ford and up the hill, they shattered too. It was shameful work, but work that had to be done.” Maj Robert C. Maffett, Commander, 3rd South Carolina

CS – we are pretty secure. 1/V is exposed in our center, we shall try to excise it. Thomas et al vs 1/V 1-1 **AR**.





US – we are in sad shape, but shall push for any redemption. US Ford is lost so we shall not attempt it. We shall save Ely's ford for the last moment. Perhaps we can defeat the CS left in detail.

2/XII vs Mahone  
1-2 **AE**, ugh

2/III vs F Lee 1-1  
**AR**

1/V et al vs  
Wright 3-1 **DE**.

A horrid turn of events.



## Turn 8 – 3 May 1863

“We were trapped, and many good men gone. What little success we had was offset by our failure in the face of the enemy.” Joe Hooker, Commander, Army of the Potomac



CS - We are locked into unfavorable attacks on our left flank. There is a temptation to counter-attack but this is almost done. The cavalry will screen we will strike at a weakness in their center to occupy them.

Mahone et al vs 1/V1-5  
**AE,**

McGwn et al vs II arty 7-1  
**EX**

The US center is shattered.





US – We will attempt to cauterize our center.

3/II vs Alex arty  
4-1 **DR**  
**Elim**,

Reserve arty et al vs McGown  
1-1 **AR**,

III arty vs archer 1-1 **DR**.

1/II et al vs Thomas et al 4-1 **DE**

Middling results, too little, too late.







## Turn 9 – 3 May 1863

“A battle won dearly as this is a battle lost, my last attack was not well conceived, and horrendous losses have made such a victory as that of Pyrrhus. We will extract what we can and protect what is remains.” RE Lee, Commanding, Army of Northern Virginia



CS – repair the center, guard against further losses. The day wanes. McGowan et al vs III arty 3-1  
**EX**, ugh





US –  
trying to  
inflict  
some  
casual-  
ties.  
2/XI vs  
Iverson at  
Ely's ford  
1-1 **AR**,

1/II vs  
Colston  
2-1 **DR**

3/II et al  
vs  
McGown  
3-1 **DR**  
no retreat  
**elim**,

1/V vs  
Paxton et  
al 1-1 **AR**



Victory points

**US** – CS casualties  $70 \times 3 = 210$ ,

**CS** – US casualties  $98 \times 2 = 196 + 45$  geographic = **241**.

**A closer run thing than it appeared**, probably close to historic.

Had the US been able to hold US Ford, then the totals would have been **US 225 / CS 226**,

Had Ely's ford been retaken also, **US 240 / CS 211**.

**A well balanced game.**

I am not sure had I pulled back instead of counterattacking as the CS if I would have fared better. We were on the last line of defensible terrain, pulling back put us in the open, as forest offers no defensive benefit. I might have been better not attacking the US center, but then they could have put more weight upon the CS center a turn earlier. An interesting game with many choices.

The price of Victory

