
Three House Rules for Conquistador

by Ross Menzies

Conquistador is a fine game but there were some rules aspects that the group I used to play with didn't care for much. In particular, there is a tendency for players to putter around the new world largely ignoring each other until the endgame when all hell would break loose - communities suddenly relocating to maximize political control, sudden wars of annihilation based around Pearl Harbor style surprise strikes etc. To minimize this unsatisfactory situation we played with the following house rules. Note that these *have* been tested - they were the standard rules we played with across many games - but you might want to modify them according to taste. All references here are to the SPI rules.

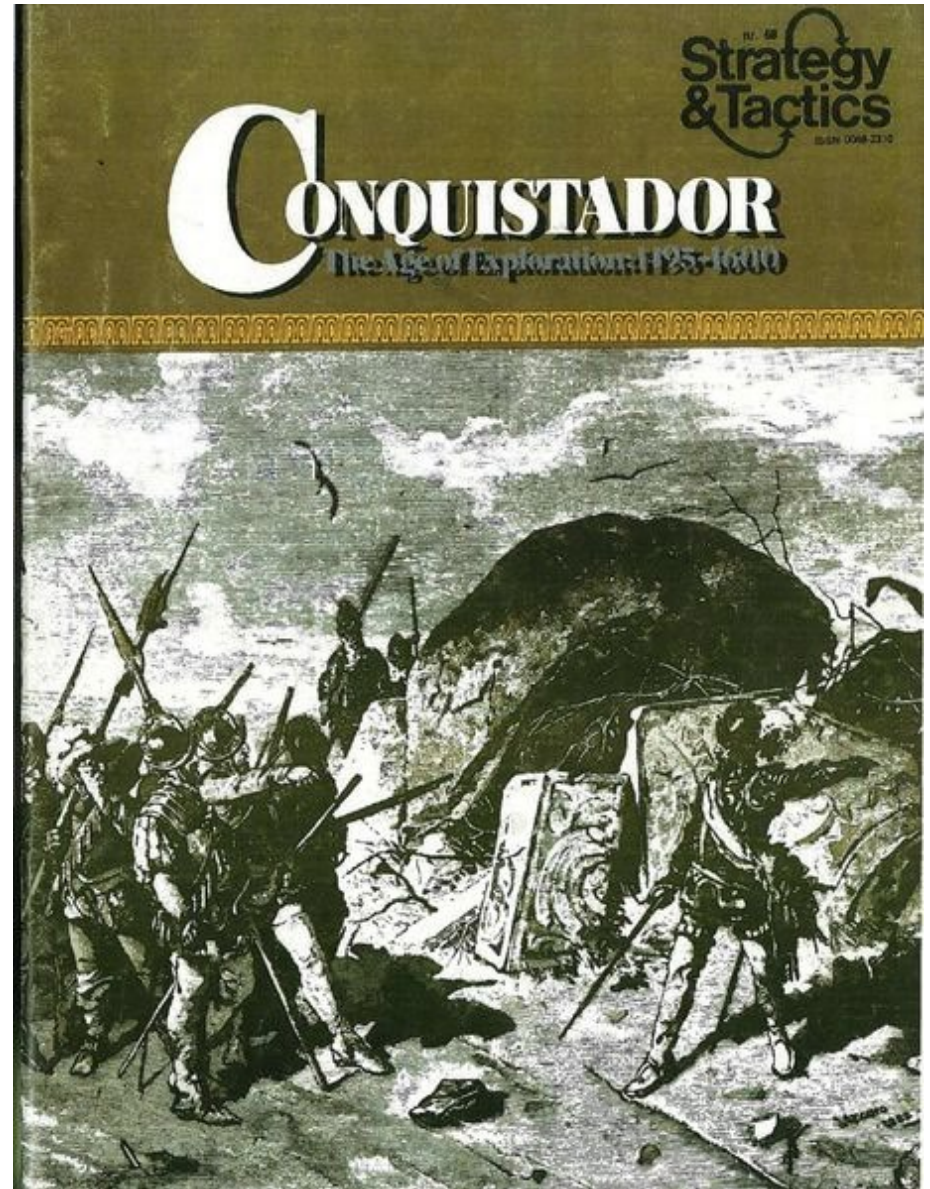
1. No VP are awarded for Political Control [19.0] at the end of the game. Instead, 15 VP are awarded at the end of each turn for each area in which the player satisfies the requirements for Political Control.

This rewards long-term political stability and gets rid of the endgame mass migrations to gain Political Control and raids to deny it.

2. Rule [14.21] is modified as follows: No more than 20 colonists may draw resources from a given area. If there are more than 20, the 'resource producing' colonists are distributed as equally as possible between the nations present (e.g if there are 17 Spanish, 5 English & 3 French colonists in an area, 5 of the Spanish wouldn't produce).

This gets rid of the illogical 'per nation' bit in the original rules & introduces tension over the access to resources in the middle game.

3. War is defined as consisting of attacks on other players' playing pieces. From turn three on, A State of War between nations is declared in the council phase of a turn. Without a State of War having been declared involving a given nation, no attacks as above may be made by that nation. The state of war may be ended by mutual consent at any time. There are two variants for this:





A - The State of War must be declared at least a turn in advance - e.g. to go to war in turn 13 a State Of War must have been declared in the Council Phase of turn 12.

B - Forces led by English Privateers are exempt from the above.

We used all combinations of the above at times. It gets rid of the Pearl Harbor syndrome of sudden annihilating attacks which can mar the endgame and which is totally at odds with the political niceties of the period. The first two turns are left open to allow for spats over treasure cities etc.

4. This is merely a suggestion for creativity in the political debate of the game. Try & see conflicts from the more dispassionate viewpoint of the period - come up with things which limit the impact of wars, for instance, a treaty that restricts the conflict to a given area or areas or which excludes certain actions etc. I would strongly recommend that all treaties be regarded as binding unless otherwise stated and that such binding treaties have clearly defined time limits or opt out conditions enshrined in the treaty.

As stated we used the above over many games and they worked well, minimizing a lot of the end-game shenanigans while still allowing the classic **Conquistador** paradigm - the come from nowhere to win - which makes it such a classic.

--- Ross Menzies