



# SPI Musket & Pike 2024 VASSAL Tourney

## Musket & Pike Update Newsletter #6 - 2/13/24

Five weeks into the tournament, 7 days since the last update, and an avalanche of game finishes to report! Here is the current status of the games played in the tournament.

### GAME STATUS – ROUND 1

As of this writing, only two first-round games remain unfinished!

Round 1 Games Still in Progress			
ID	Name	Side	Last Response?
MP003	Forest Cole	Royalists	T5 - 2/6/24
MP004	Stephen Chin-Quee	Huguenots	T5 - 2/6/24
MP17	Peter Hansen	Huguenots	T4 - 2/4/24
MP18	Tom Johnston	Royalists	T5 - 2/4/24

No rush – that is the nature of VASSAL games and the beauty of a Swiss tournament!

### Round 1 Games Completed as of 2/12/24

ID	Name	Side	Last Response?	Results
MP001	Pascal Toupy	Royalists	Finished	Toupy Wins
MP002	Mark Goss	Huguenots		
MP013	Dan Delmerico	Huguenots	Finished	Delmerico Wins
MP014	John Thornton	Royalists		
MP019	Mark Acres	Huguenots	Finished	Acres Wins
MP020	Don Maclean	Royalists		
MP005	Joe McCarthy	Royalists	Finished	McCarthy Wins
MP010	Russ Gifford	Parlamentrians		
MP007	Andrew Lorenzo Cozzi	Royalists	Finished	DRAW
MP008	George Curtiss	Huguenots		

More Completed Round 1 Games below

MP012	Simon Bracegirdle	Royalists	Finished	Bracegirdle Wins
MP011	Dave Forsyth	Huguenots		
MP016	David Waxtel	Royalists	Finished	Waxtel Wins
MP015	Stephen Oliver	Huguenots		
MP023	Mike Dyer	Huguenots	Finished	Dyer Wins
MP022	Alan Snider	Royalists		
MP019	Mark Acres	Huguenots	Finished	Acres Wins
MP020	Albert Brasington	Royalists		

Note that so far, only one of the initial-round games has ended in a draw. I had thought many would. (See a great after action report on that game here [LINK](#))

Another hard-fought game was the battle royale between David Waxtel and Stephen Oliver. According to David, who prevailed, it ***“Came to last die roll of the game. Stephen Oliver is a tough competitor.”***

## GAME STATUS – ROUND 2

Round 2 Games in Progress				
ID	Name	Side	Last Response?	Scenario
MP001	Pascal Toupy	Protestants	SU - 2/4/24	<b>Fleurus</b>
MP013	Dan Delmerico	Spanish	Q - 2/4/24	
MP019	Mark Acres	Swede	R - 2/3/24	<b>Breitenfeld</b>
MP005	Joesph McCarthy	Imperialist		
MP016	David Waxtel	Imperialist		<b>Breitenfeld</b>
MP012	Simon Bracegirdle	Swede		
MP023	Mike Dyer	Spanish		<b>Fleurus</b>
MP008	George Cuttiss	Protestant		
MP007	Andrew Cozzi	Spanish		<b>Fleurus</b>
MP015	Stephen Oliver	Protestant		
MP011	David Forsyth	Swede		<b>Breitenfeld</b>
MP010	Russ Gifford	Imperialist		
MP002	Mark Goss	Swede	Q- 2/4/24	<b>Breitenfeld</b>
MP020	Albert Brasington	Imperialist	M - 1/31/24	

Notes on those above matchups:

**Pascal Toupy and Dan Delmerico both picked the meeting engagement at Fleurus.**

Both picked the Protestant side, though, and Pascal won the coin flip.

**Mark Acres is paired with Joe McCarthy at Breitenfeld.**

Mark is the Swedish player. Joe has the Imperialists – and their cannon.

**David Waxtel will play Simon Bracegirdle. The place is Breitenfeld.**

Since neither chose a side, the dice determined Simon is the Swedish player.

**George Curtiss will play Mike Dyer at Fleurus.**

George is the Protestant, while Mike is the Spanish player.

**Andrew Cozzi will face Stephen Oliver. They are also at Fleurus.**

Cozzi, by die roll, is the Spanish player, while Stephen is the Protestant.

**Dave Forsyth will face Russ Gifford at Breitenfeld.**

David is the Swedish Player. Russ is the Imperialist.

**Mark Goss and Albert Brasington meet at the battle of Breitenfeld!**

Mark is the Swedish player.

**Thoughts to consider on these Scenarios:**

Here is what I have found playing and testing these for the tourney:

1 – there is a trick to every one of these scenarios in this book. *You NEED the optional rules to make some of these scenarios work.*

2 – *your setup is danged important.* Don't think you have withering fire to dispatch the attackers. You get one, maybe two shots before they are on you. If you are not careful – you get NO shots before you are dead!

3 - with no ZOC, and no Defensive Fire, *if there is an opening, the Calvary is going to pour through it.*

**Which is to say – if you are not using EVERY ACE in your deck, some of these are a TOUGH GO.**

Of course, figuring it out on the fly is the test, right?

Yet you KNOW Breitenfeld HAD to be the MOST PLAYTESTED scenario of the entire game – at least by John Young (the designer / developer.)

**And for the record, one group of intrepid players has already reached the 3 round!**

Dennis Sheppard, who has just joined the tournament, will face off against Albert Brasington, at Killiecrankie, from July, 1689!

**AN EXCITING FINISH!**

**Round 1 - Gifford vs McCarthy wraps up!**

In a nailbiter, my 1<sup>st</sup> round game of Brentford with Joe McCarthy came down to two back-to-back 3:1 attacks. One for me, and one for him!

Two final turns witnessed back-and-forth battles between the Parliamentarians in 1642 holding the bridge outside of London. The Royalist harassing force had taken the bridge twice, and this time in turn 9 of a 10 turn game, it looked like the LAST turnover. But one of the things I love about these games - where it looked hopeless for me at the end of turn 9, a sudden breakthrough attack by my Professional Muskets changed everything! In the turn ten fire phase, my 8 Firepower attack obliterated the Royalist Light Cavalry holding the bridge! My troops flooded across, taking station on the far side to keep the Royalists an arms' length away from the prize – the bridge itself. But there was still the Royalist Cavalry forces above and below the bridge to force back – and only three groups of Militia Pikemen to do the work. Could I pull it off at this late hour?

**Below – the scene in the Parlemenarian's turn 10 following Movement and before the Melee phase, from the Brentford Scenario, 1642**

My Pikemen eliminated the triced-damned Reiter Cavalry unit that had harassed me the entire game. Located in support below the bridge in hex 1821, they fell to a 4:1 attack – which was necessary to close off Royalist reinforcements from below the bridge. When the victorious Blue Militia Pike advanced in, it would prevent any counterattack from below reaching the bridge.

This set the scene from my final Melee. The target – the Light Cavalry unit in 1819.



This attack was a flanking attack by the remaining two Militia Pikemen. If this melee were to go through, it would prevent any Royalist from reaching the bridge! Why? If I could get a Disruption in Melee, it would cause the Green Light Cavalry unit in 1819 to flee – and the MP in 1818 could advance in, sealing the bridge in a protective cordon of blue troops. This would effectively shut the door to any counterattack as the attackers could not reach a hex adjacent to the bridge. The Royalists in their turn 10 Melee phase could not attack the

defenders on the bridge, and thus could not advance in to control it with a melee victory. And the only other hope – removal of a unit in the Turn 10 Fire Phase to cause access – is not possible at less than 3:1 Fire odds. (The Green MM unit only has 4 FP, vs the 2 FPS is 2:1 on the PM unit in 1920. Not enough.)

*it all rides on my turn 10 melee!*

*The Flank attack on the Light Cavalry (LC) gave me a 3:1 attack – 4 pips out of six favor me. A respectable 66.6% chance to win!*

**But I came up short, with a 1.**

While I failed, the game was not over. I still held the bridge, however, tenuously.

But the Reiter Cavalry in 1918 and the Light Cavalry in 1819 were now a breach in the wall of Blue.

Joe could now reinforce his LC through that breach, and attack my two units holding the bridge.

The irony? Joe's attack, too, would be a 3:1 attack!

The Difference? His worked! **Congratulate Joe on his victory, sending him into the second round at 1-0!**

**And don't even THINK I am saying Joe was luckier than I.** Remember – it was my 6 in MY first Fire attack – *a 1 out of 6 chance* - that returned an E1 which eliminated HIS defender at the START of the turn. Yes, BEFORE my troops moved. *Without that 16.7% chance, I was done already.*

So which one of us is luckier? Me, I think! That roll made this dramatic and exciting showdown possible!

Remember - lucky is as lucky does. You can have great dice – but a 6 on a 1:2 is no better than a 1 on a 3:1. Joe and I had both put ourselves in position where a good die roll COULD win the game – and THAT is what makes these scenarios so much fun!

#### **PARTING THOUGHTS:**

As of this, the 5<sup>th</sup> week, we have enticed 25 players to push counters in this 50-year-old game. Personally, I am very glad I did. The game is still delivering some good times!

There was a reason **Musket & Pike** was a surprise hit. As with that brief replay above, **M&P** was the Roc'em – Soc'em Robots of the simulation game world. Simple mechanics, fast action, and total destruction!

OK this will sound crazy – but this game is **Squad Leader** before John Hill had the idea. Look at it. Ranged weapons. No ZOC. Run away but come back the next turn unscathed. Fighting for a fixed point or an exit condition.

Just as it is easy to see the steps from **PRESTAGS** to **Terrible Swift Sword**, it is equally easy to see the steps from the **TAC** games to this to **Squad Leader**.

Good luck to you all, and good gaming in the coming week!

---Russ