

Condotiere



Rules of Play

THIRD EDITION

Introduction

During the Renaissance, Italy was divided into numerous independent city-states, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile. The best known of these were Genoa, Florence, the Duchy of Milan, and the Republics of Venice.

This is the era in which the Condottieri appear: leaders of mercenary armies who offered their services to the most powerful cities. Formidable strategists and highly skilled soldiers, the Condottieri were not content to just hire out their command and their troops; they reshaped the political map of Italy with their intrigues, alliances, battles, and sieges. The most daring among them founded new dynasties: Francesco Sforza took possession of the Duchy of Milan, and Giovanni de Medici made Florence his kingdom.

In CONDOTTIERE, you relive this incredible age, when anything seemed possible for a handful of determined men. In this game, you represent a Condottiere trying to conquer the most famous cities in Italy. But be careful, you are not alone! You must take into account the ambitions of the other Condottieri. The strength of your army alone will not suffice: You must use diplomacy if you want a chance at victory.

Object of the Game

The goal of CONDOTTIERE is to conquer city-states, unite them, and create the most powerful kingdom in Italy.

The first player to control a certain number of regions wins the game. A player can win more quickly if he controls adjacent regions. Regions are adjacent if they share a common border.

In a game with 4, 5, or 6 players, the first player to control 5 total regions or 3 adjacent regions wins the game. In a game with 2 or 3 players, the first player to control 6 total regions or 4 adjacent regions wins the game.

For more details on the game's victory conditions, see "Winning the Game" on page 16.



Components

- 1 game board representing a map of Renaissance Italy. The game board is divided into 17 regions, each of which is marked by its dominant city.



- 110 cards, which are used to resolve battles between the Condottieri.



- 1 Condottiere token. The player with this token chooses the region in which the next battle will be fought.



- 1 Favor of the Pope token. Any region with this token is said to "have the favor of the Pope" and may not be attacked.



- 36 control markers in 6 different colors. These are used to mark which regions have been conquered by the players.

- This rulebook.



The Game Round

A game of CONDOTTIERE is played over many game **rounds**. During each game round, one or more **battles** will be fought. When all but one player has played all their last card, new cards will be drawn and a new game round will begin.

At the beginning of each battle, the player with the Condottiere token must place it in a region of his choosing. This region will be the site of a battle between the players.

The Play Area for a 4-Player Game



Important: The Condottiere token may not be placed on a region that has the favor of the Pope or on a region that has already been conquered by another player.

Battle Overview

During each battle, players take **turns** placing cards faceup on the table in front of them, forming their **battle lines**. A player's battle line shows the forces he will take into battle. Once all players are done placing cards, the battle is concluded, and the player with the highest total strength in his battle line conquers the contested region. Then a new region is chosen, and another battle is fought.

Starting the Game

1. Place the game board on the center of the table.
2. Each player chooses a color and places his control markers in front of him. These pieces will mark the regions conquered during the game.
3. The youngest player takes the Condottiere token, placing it in front of him. He then shuffles the deck and deals 10 cards facedown to each player (including himself). Finally, he places the Condottiere token in a region of his choice. This is the site of the first battle.

The first game round can now begin with its first battle.



Starting a Battle

The player who placed the Condottiere token always takes the first turn in the battle, then the other players follow in clockwise order.

On a player's turn, he must either **play a card** or **pass**.

Play a Card

If you choose to play a card, place **one** card faceup in front of you, next to any of the other cards you have played during this battle. These cards form your **battle line**. A player's total strength is the sum of the strength values of all of the cards in his battle line, taking into account any modifications caused by special cards (see "Card Explanations" on pages 10-15). You may play any type of card as the first card in your battle line, even a special card.

After you play a card, announce the total strength of your battle line.

Note that players are never required to play a card in a battle. That is, a player can choose pass on any of his turns. Even the player who placed the Condottiere token can decide to pass his turn at the beginning of a battle.

Pass

If you choose to pass, simply announce "I pass." You may not play any more cards until the next battle. (If your turn comes around again during this battle, you are simply skipped.) However, a player who has passed may still win the current battle, if he has the strongest battle line at the end of the battle.

Note that the other players may continue playing cards after other players have passed. Even after all but one of the players have passed, the player who has not passed may continue playing cards, one at a time, until he chooses to pass.

City and Region



Concluding a Battle

Players continue taking turns, choosing to either play a card or pass, until either all the players have passed or one player plays a “Surrender” card. Then the battle is concluded, following the steps below.

1. Compare Strength

All players announce the total strength of their battle lines. The player with the strongest battle line conquers the region. He then places one of his control markers on the conquered region and places the Condottiere token in front of him.

Exception: If a player’s battle line contains the most Courtesan cards, that player receives the Condottiere token instead of the player that actually won the battle (see page 13).

If two or more players are tied for the most total strength, no control marker is placed on the board, and the Condottiere token is passed to the player to the left of the person who last controlled it.

2. Choose the New Battle

The player who has the Condottiere token now chooses the region where the next battle will be fought. He can choose any region on the game board, as long as it does not contain a control marker or the Favor of the Pope token. He can even choose a region where an unsuccessful (tied) battle was just fought.

3. Discard Battle Lines

All the cards in each player's battle line are discarded. This is not optional.

4. Discard Cards from Hand

If a player has no Mercenary cards in his hand, he may choose to discard all the cards in his hand. Discarding is not required, but is instead just an option for players with no Mercenary cards. If a player has one or more Mercenary cards in his hand, he may not discard his hand.

End of a Round

A round ends when, after the "Discard Cards from Hand" step of a battle's resolution, only one player (or no player) has cards remaining in his hand. If one player has cards left in his hand, he may keep up to two of them, but must discard the rest. Then the player controlling the Condottiere token shuffles all the remaining cards (including all discards).

The player with the Condottiere token deals each player, including himself, enough cards so that each player has 10 cards in his hand. Then, the player with the Condottiere token deals each player 1 additional card for each region the player controls.

Example: A player with no cards in his hand who controls Parma, Venezia, and Siena would receive 13 cards.

If a Player Has No Cards

During a battle, when a player has no cards in his hand, his only option is to pass. He will not be able to participate in battles until next round. The other players continue resolving battles without him. If a player wins a battle in which he plays his last card, he still receives the Condottiere token and chooses the site of the next battle, even though he cannot participate in that battle.



Card Explanations



Mercenary Cards

These are distinguished from the other cards by their orange border and the shape of the shield in their upper left-hand corner. The numeric values in the shield range between 1 and 10, and indicate the strength

of the card. Mercenary cards are the most common type of strength-providing card, although some other non-Mercenary cards (the Courtesan and the Heroine) also have strength values.

There are 10 of the 1-strength Mercenary cards and 8 each of the 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-, and 10-strength Mercenary cards in the deck.

Special Cards

The number in parentheses indicates how many of each type of special card there are in the deck.



Winter (3)

When a Winter card is played, immediately discard all Spring cards in play.

Winter's harsh cold and famine reduce the effectiveness of soldiers.

If a Winter card is in play when a battle is concluded, all Mercenary cards are considered to have a printed strength of 1. This applies to all Mercenary cards in every player's battle line – including the cards of the player who played the Winter card.

Example: A player has two 10-strength Mercenaries, one 5-strength Mercenary, and one 4-strength Mercenary, for a total strength of 29. However, if a Winter card were in play, the player's total strength would be 4.

The effect of Winter cards is not cumulative; if more than one Winter card is in play, the effect is the same as if only one Winter card were play.

Spring (3)

When a Spring card is played, immediately discard all Winter cards in play.



The warmth of spring improves the morale and vitality of soldiers. If a Spring card is in play when a battle is concluded, each player adds 3 strength to each of his Mercenary cards that is among the highest-strength Mercenaries in play. If two

or more of Mercenary cards are tied for the highest strength, all the tied cards gain the 3 additional strength.

Example: In a two-player game, Scott has one 2-strength Mercenary and two 5-strength Mercenaries in his battle line; Chris has one 1-strength Mercenary, one 4-strength Mercenary, one Heroine, and a Spring card in his battle line. Because Scott's 5-strength Mercenaries are the highest-strength Mercenaries in play, he adds 3 strength to each of them, for a total strength of 18. Chris's total strength is 15. None of Chris's cards gain 3 strength, since none of his cards are the highest-strength Mercenary cards in play.

The effect of Spring cards is not cumulative; if more than one Spring card is in play, the effect is the same as if only one Spring card were play.



Bishop (6)

When a Bishop card is played, all of the highest-strength Mercenary card(s) in play are discarded. If two or more of cards are tied for the highest strength, all of the tied cards are discarded. A player's Mercenary cards may still be discarded by a Bishop card even if he has already passed during that battle. The Bishop card is discarded after it has been played and its effects have been resolved.

The player who played the Bishop card then receives the Favor of the Pope token, and must immediately decide whether to place it on a region that does not contain a control marker or leave the token off the game board.

The Condottiere token may not be placed on any region that has the favor of the Pope. The Favor of the Pope token represents the Church intervening on the region's behalf and ensuring that no battles are fought there.

Example: In a two-player game, Chris has one 6-strength, one 3-strength, and two 1-strength Mercenary cards in his battle line. Scott has one 6-strength and two 1-strength Mercenary cards in his battle line and plays a Bishop card. Since the highest-strength Mercenary card in play is 6, all 6-strength Mercenary cards are discarded from both players' battle lines (even the player that played the Bishop card). Scott then receives the Favor of the Pope token, and must decide whether to place it on a region that does not have a control marker or leave the token off the game board.



Courtesan (12)

If, during the “Compare Strength” step of a battle’s resolution, a player’s battle line contains the most Courtesan cards, that player receives the Condottiere token instead of the player that actually won the battle.

The player who won the battle places his control marker on the contested region, but the player with the most Courtesan cards receives the Condottiere token (he chooses where the next battle will be fought, and takes the first turn in the next battle).

If two or more players tie for the most Courtesan cards, the winner of the battle receives the Condottiere token. If two or more players tie for the most Courtesan cards *and* two or more players tie for the most total strength, then the Condottiere token is passed to the player to the left of the person who last controlled it.

The Courtesan has a strength of 1 but is **not** considered a Mercenary card (and is therefore not affected by Winter, Spring, Drummer, or Scarecrow cards). Note that the Courtesan card has a red rather than an orange border and that its strength value appears on a silver seal rather than a shield.

Drummer (6)



A Drummer card adds to the morale of the battle line it is played in. When a battle is concluded, Mercenary cards in the same battle line as a Drummer card have their printed strength doubled. Playing multiple Drummer cards is allowed, but has no further effect (that is, the value of the Mercenary cards is not tripled, quadrupled, etc.).

If a Winter card is in play during the battle's resolution, each Mercenary card of the player with a Drummer card will be worth 2 strength instead of 1 strength.

Example: Carrie has a total of 21 strength from three Mercenary cards. If she plays a Drummer card, her army would be worth 42 strength, or 6 strength if a Winter card is also in play.

If a Spring card is in play during the battle's resolution, a player with a Drummer card in his battle line should double the printed strength of his Mercenaries before adding the additional 3 strength granted by the Spring card.

Example: John's battle line consists of one 2-strength Mercenary, one 4-strength Mercenary, and a Drummer. A Spring card is also in play, and the highest-strength Mercenary card in any player's battle line is the 4-strength Mercenary. John's total strength is 15.



Heroine (3)

The Heroine has a strength of 10, but is **not** considered a Mercenary card (and is therefore not affected by Winter, Spring, Drummer, or Scarecrow cards). Note that the Heroine card has a red rather than an orange border and that its strength value appears on a silver seal rather than a shield.



Scarecrow (16)

Scarecrows are intended to trick the enemy. Playing a Scarecrow card allows a player to retrieve one of his own Mercenary cards from his battle line back into his hand. When a player plays a Scarecrow card, he may choose not to pick up a Mercenary card. A player may not use a Scarecrow card to retrieve a special card, a card from another player's battle line, or a card from the discard pile. The Scarecrow card is discarded after it has been played and its effects have been resolved.



Surrender (3)

When a player plays this card, he immediately brings the battle to an end, and the region is captured by the player who has the strongest battle line at the moment the Surrender card is played.

Deals Between Players

At any time during the game, players can make deals and discuss strategies with each other. They are allowed to show each other their cards, but they may **not** exchange cards. Furthermore, players are not required to abide by any agreements that they make.

Winning the Game

In a game with 4, 5, or 6 players, the game ends as soon as, at the end of the “Compare Strength” step of a battle’s resolution, a player controls 5 total regions or 3 adjacent regions. In a game with 2 or 3 players, the victory condition is 6 total regions or 4 adjacent regions.

If, after a battle is concluded, all the available regions on the board have been conquered without the above victory conditions being met, the player that controls the most regions wins. (This may happen when all regions except one have been captured, and the uncaptured region has the favor of the Pope.)

Breaking Ties

If two or more players are tied for the most regions, a final battle is fought. Only the tied players participate in this battle. First, all players discard their hands. The player with the Condottiere token shuffles all 110 cards and deals each tied player 10 cards, plus 1 card for each region that player controls.

In this final battle, the player with Condottiere token goes first. If the player with the Condottiere token is not among the tied players, then the tied player closest to the left of the player with the Condottiere token goes first.

The player who wins this final battle wins the game. If this final battle also ends in a tie, then the tied players share the victory.

Optional Rules

If players wish to have a longer or more detailed game of CONDOTTIERE, they can incorporate one or more of the following rules.

Draw After Battle

With this variant, each player draws cards at the end of each **battle** instead of drawing cards at the end of each round. In fact, with this variant, there are no “rounds” in the game, only a series a battles.

When playing with this variant, at the beginning of the game, players start with 7 cards instead of 10 cards.

During the game, battles are concluded following the steps below.

1. **Compare Strength** (as per the normal rules)
2. **Draw Cards**

Each player may draw up to 3 cards, but may not exceed his hand limit. A player's hand limit is 10 cards plus 1 additional card for each region that the player controls.

Example: Chris has 9 cards remaining in his hand at the end of a battle and controls 1 region. Therefore, he has a hand limit of 11 cards. He may only draw 2 new cards, since drawing 3 cards would exceed his hand limit.

If at the end of a battle, **no players have cards** in their hands, then each player draws 10 new cards instead of 3 new cards.

3. **Choose the New Battle** (as per the normal rules)
4. **Discard Battle Lines** (as per the normal rules)

With this variant, players do not have the option to discard cards from their hands after each battle.

Playing for Points

This variant adds more strategy and negotiation, since several games are played to determine the overall winner.

The players can decide to assign a score (20 or 30 points, for example) that must be attained over a series of games of CONDOTTIERE. Points are assigned at the end of each game in the following manner:

- One point for each region a player controls.
- If a player wins a game by controlling 3 adjacent regions (4 adjacent regions with 2 or 3 players), he is awarded a bonus of 5 points in addition to the points scored for each region.

Continue playing games until one or more players reach or exceed the designated score. At that point, the player with the most points wins. (If players are tied for points, fight a final battle as per the normal rules.)

Note: When playing with this option, we suggest that you do not also use the “Capturing Regions” variant discussed below.

Bigger Kingdoms

This variant increases the game’s playing time and makes it more difficult to win by controlling adjacent regions.

Increase the number of adjacent regions required to win by one. So, for games with 4, 5, or 6 players, 4 adjacent regions are required for victory (but a player still wins if he controls 5 total regions). In 2- or 3-player game, 5 adjacent regions or 6 total regions are required for victory.

Capturing Regions

This variant allows you to capture regions that are already controlled by another player.

The Condottiere token may now be placed on a region already controlled by another player, but that player (the region's "defender") will benefit from an important advantage in the course of the battle: The region's defender may pass his turn as many times as desired without losing the right to play cards later in the battle. However, as soon as he has plays his first card, he must follow the normal rules (if he subsequently passes, he will no longer be able to play cards during that battle). This ability allows a region's defender to play cards even after all the other players have passed their turns.

If the battle ends in a tie, the region's defender keeps control of the region and also receives the Condottiere token.

When a player plays a Bishop card, he may either place the Favor of the Pope token on **any** region (even a region that contains a control marker) or remove the token from the game board.

Hidden Cards

This variant provides a greater element of bluffing.

When a players plays Mercenary, Drummer, Heroine, and Courtesan cards, he places them facedown into his battle line. The next time that player plays a card, he turns up any facedown card in his battle line. However, if a player with a facedown card in his battle line passes, he may choose not to reveal his facedown card. At the end of the battle, before players determine the total strength of their battle lines, all players must reveal their facedown cards.

After you play a card, announce the total **revealed** strength of your battle line (do not count hidden/ facedown cards).

Facedown Mercenary cards may not be retrieved with Scarecrow cards.

If a Bishop card is played, only faceup Mercenary cards are counted. Any hidden Mercenary cards are completely ignored by the Bishop.

Example: In a two-player game, John has two 6-strength Mercenary cards and one facedown 10-strength Mercenary card in his battle line. Scott has one 5-strength and two-1 strength Mercenary cards in his battle line and plays a Bishop card. Since the highest-strength revealed Mercenary card in play is 6, all 6-strength Mercenary cards are discarded from both players' battle lines. The hidden 10-strength Mercenary card is not affected by the Bishop card.

Credits

Game Design: Dominique Ehrhard

Game Development: John Goodenough

Editing: James Torr

Graphic Design: Scott Nicely

Card Art: Tomas Jedruszek

Cover Art: David Palumbo

Art Direction: John Goodenough

Executive Developer: Christian T. Petersen

Publisher: Christian T. Petersen