Finally, lunch – an army marches on its stomach, and I am pleased to report that I, Alexander, was able to dine on the finest food available to humanity as long as that included chorizo and potatoes. But the dessert was nice.

In the third matchup I found myself facing an opponent from the far future – no doubt in a time when my progeny would still rule the world after almost a thousand years of harmonious rule with all of my trusted and loyal current lieutenants working together in perfect harmony in a Diadochi-controlled empire of many nations.

They were an army of Knights, so the Indians with their elephant Corps were called again into service and anchored my left wing against a waterway. The enemy had squeezed themselves into a narrow defensive gap between the waterside and the terrain, seemingly – and rightly – petrified by the thought of my plodding Pikemen outmanoeuvring them in an open plain.

Yet again, paralyzed by fear, one of the opposing commands refused flat out to fight, rolling a 1 for their first pip dice! This gave my eager men a problem, as their willingness just to charge in and have at the opposition toe to toe now had to be mitigated by the opportunity to concentrate their efforts on the 2/3 of the army who actually wanted a fight!

With the opportunity to do something even cleverer than the things that I normally asked them to do presented on a plate by the static opposition, I sent the Javelinmen from the third command on a wide outflanking marhc, hoping to infiltrate them through the woodlands on the enemy left and threaten the flanks of the Swiss Pikemen, keeping them pinned back in the gaps between the terrain as the rest of my army advanced.

The enemy were commanded by a Frenchman, and had Asterix-like menhir ambush markers spouting in the woodlands. Past experience had told my men that such markers were more often than not a bluff, but the presence of the Elephant in the group would protect them if the wicked Frenchies had gone for a sneaky ‘knights in ambush, leaping out’ trick!

The Indians had gotten bored waiting, and powered up by the urgency of not wasting good dice decided the time had come to trigger the enemy into action. They surged forward…

The first ‘ambush’ was indeed revealed as a fake, allowing the Greeks under my command to filter through the woods. The Swiss could by now hear the rustling in the trees to their left and started to admit the beginnings of worry and doubt.

*Hint – the defender can place ambush markers over quite a wide frontage of the board, and they can be real or fake. Enemy troops have to approach all markers as if they were ‘real’, meaning they have to stop at march distances, and then also at 1MU away from any hiding in proper terrain. This does lead to an almost default use of 2-3 fake markers by a defender as a means of slowing an enemy advance. In your first few games this initially feels a bit cheesy and gamey, but after a while you realise that it is part of the overall balancing of the setup rules between attacker and defender.*

All of the French had dismounted at deployment, but unwise skirmishing and a rapid advance by my Pikemen meant that some of their LH were now trapped in front of the line of metal-clad men – unable to escape or interpenetrate the foot behind them.

My Indians and Agrianians were all shooting furiously, desperate to inflict even a single casualty on the advancing pedestrian knights,

Hint – You can dismount at deployment if the opponent has deployed Elephants, Wagons or Fortifications – and also if your troop type can be picked as either Mounted or Dismounted in its own list. This is a fairly big benefit, especially for Knights, but to balance this out Knights who dismount as HI only have 3 hit points rather than 4 – a big reduction in their resilience.

I instructed my men to simply stare down the French, confident that our greater number of shooters would eke out an advantage eventually, and but it was only the French LF crossbowmen who were finding their targets.

The French blinked first, and rolled forward towards my erstwhile allies – who, not being fine men of Makedonian stock, proved to be hopeless fighters and practically ran away the moment the first French foot plodded in front of another – suddenly my wide and coherent Indian ally was transformed into a handful of isolated Elephants!

But this standing and waiting had not been in vain, as my Agrianians, recalling may of my younger days back in Macedon, had been having a great time messing around in the woods where they had cut down with javelin fire a number of Swiss axemen allowing them to get in amongst the thinner and more boyish elements of the enemy line. The Swiss had aloowed themselves to get caught between the unpalatable choices of being overrun by my Elephants and leaving their main line of comrades isolated – this had meant I had tempted the Phalanx to split up, creating some juicy targets for my Greek-operated Elephant Corps to charge explosively into.

The Indian mahouts had been shamed by their embarrassing accompanying cast, and no doubt conscious of the possibility of being written out of the many exciting books and well produced Hollywood blockbuster films that will no doubt be created about me in future years, decided to get serious and fought back against the dismounted knights. Luckily, being a total genius, I had kept a reserve of Companions who I now unleashed into the overlapped and battle-worn Frenchmen to support the Pachydermery who now made up my main fighting force.

More Companions were roaming on the other wing, picking on enemy longbowmen who had been pressed into guarding the flanks of the Swiss pike.

The Elephants had heeded my words and grasped their opportunity - the French army imploded under their stamping feed like tin cans crushed in a recycling machine

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Everywhere along the line my brilliant deployment and instinctual decision to not just charge forwards and attack the uncommitted enemy forces but instead use the time this allowed me to work the flanks and pick apart their Pikemen was paying huge dividends. The Swiss were struggling badly and having overrun the Longbwomen these Companions now had an open path to the rear of the French army.

The Indians had done me proud! Even their hapless traditional and obligatory unit of Crap cavalry, in place in all wargames rules since time immemorial, had played a role in pinning some enemy dismounted knights and then remembering that they could actually evade when they were finally charged. It was a great victory for me and also for my men…