

RACE TO BERLIN 1945

RULEBOOK

SPECIAL ONLINE EDITION



REKOMENDACJA
MUZEUM II WOJNY ŚWIATOWEJ



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"Race to Berlin"

is a wargame depicting the last days of the Second World War in Europe. Players represent commanders of the Red Army and the Western Allies, and their task is to reach Berlin, the capital of the Third Reich, as quickly as possible. Both players also direct the German armies: the Soviet player moves them on the Western Front, the Allied player on the Eastern Front, each trying to slow down their opponent. The winner takes all, and the goal is to beat your "ally" in the race to Berlin.

1. Game components

- ♦ A map showing areas of Western and Central Europe, where the last battles of World War II took place in 1945.
- ❶ Front line markers (2x25 pieces), to show the Western and Soviet front lines, which shifted during the operations.
- ❷ Logistics blocks (2x8 pieces), which form the basis of players' military maneuvers on the board,
- ❸ Action cubes (2x20 pieces), to mark the number of actions made by a logistics block.
- ❹ Military unit tokens (40 pieces) with historical markings of armies (Germany, Western Allies) or fronts (Red Army). In the game there are three forces: the Western Allies, the Soviets and the Germans. German units have a current strength, shown by their current orientation. A German unit's current strength is the number on the side facing west (for Western Front German units) or east (for Eastern Front German units). As a German unit takes losses, its block is rotated to show its new status. The West and the Soviets were allied in the war, but compete against each other as players in the game. Germany has no ally, and is divided into the Western Front and the Eastern Front.
- ♦ Special action tokens (16 pieces), for use during combat.
- ❺ Fortification tokens (16 pieces) in 3 types: improved positions, regular fortifications, and major fortifications. These represent important defensive lines, e.g. the Siegfried Line (Westwall), Pomeranian Wall, etc.
- ❻ Victory point tokens (2x4 pieces) for areas of crucial importance for military operations (e.g. Essen, Breslau, etc.).
- ♦ This manual.



All game elements are limited by the physical amount provided.

2. Game preparation

After choosing sides, players place units, fortification tokens, and front line markers as shown on the game board. Each side's action cubes, front line markers and logistics blocks go near the board in front of their owner, with logistics blocks standing vertically so that only their owner sees their numbers. Victory point tokens go near the top edge of the board. See the setup illustration at the end of rulebook).

At the beginning of the game all German units have 4 strength points (marked by "+"). Western and Soviet units do not have strength points and do not incur any strength losses.

The only way Allied and Soviet units are eliminated is by being isolated from supply and by being forced to retreat but unable to.

3. Game goal

The player's goal in "Race to Berlin" is to be the first to reach and occupy the center of Berlin (B1 on the board) before the end of the third round. This can be achieved through effective use and management of the available resources necessary to conduct military operations. However, the opponent's Allied forces are also racing to Berlin, so skillfully directing the actions of the German

troops opposing them is a key to effectively delaying the opponent's operations. Victory can also be achieved by forcing the opponent to lose more action cubes than they have left. If neither of those happens before the end of the game, then the winner is determined by victory points. In that case, ties are possible.

4. Sequence of play

Each game turn of Race to Berlin is divided into 3 phases:

1. Logistics Phase
2. Action Phase
3. Strategic Movement Phase

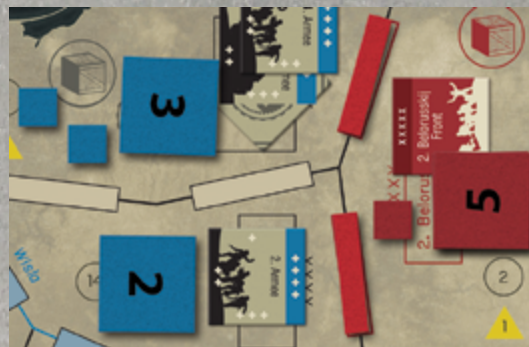
After each Strategic Movement Phase, the next game turn begins. Exception after the Action Phase of the third game turn, the game ends.

4.1 Logistics Phase

In the Logistics Phase, players place logistics blocks onto the board. Logistics blocks are the most important tool for both players, reflecting the logistic potential and accumulation of military resources in an area. They are used to attack, defend, and do some special actions. Each player has an identical set of 8 logistics blocks (2 of each numeric value 2, 3, 4, 5). A logistics block cannot exist on the map alone; it must always be accompanied by a friendly unit.

Logistics blocks on the board can be either standing vertically with their number visible only to the owner, or lying flat visible to both players. When a vertical block attacks (i.e. during its first attack), it becomes horizontally revealed on the board (its number becomes permanently visible to both players for the rest of the game turn). Logistics blocks off the board stand vertically with their number visible only to the owner (their value should be unknown for other player).

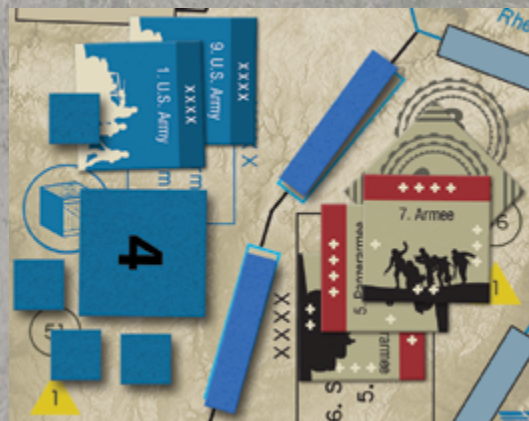
In addition, logistics blocks can be either active (i.e. the number of action cubes played so far on it is less than the block's printed number) or exhausted, i.e. either off the board (due to having been removed voluntarily or due to failed retreat) or on the board with its number face down (a logistics block is turned face down when the number of action cubes played on it reached the block's printed number). Exhausted logistics blocks cannot be used for actions.



Examples:

Active logistics blocks: A 3-point logistics block with 2 action cubes; a 2-point logistics block with 0 action cubes; a 5-point logistics block with 1 action cube.

Example exhausted logistics blocks: Adding a fourth action cube to a 4-point logistics block with 3 cubes will exhaust it.



4.1.1 Placing logistics blocks onto the board during the Logistics Phase

- ◆ Players take turns placing a single logistics block onto an eligible board area until all blocks are placed.
- ◆ In the first game turn, the Soviet player places first. In the second game turn, the Western player places first. In the third game turn, the player with more victory points places first. (In case of a tie for victory points, determine the first player randomly.)
- ◆ A player must place their logistics block in an area with a unit controlled by that player, i.e. a Western unit or East German unit for the Western player, or a Soviet unit or West German unit for the Soviet player.
- ◆ Each area can have at most 1 logistics block (exception: the area B1, see Berlin).
- ◆ Blocks are placed vertically, so that their numbers are visible only to the owner.
- ◆ On their turn to place, players freely choose any one of their remaining blocks.
- ◆ Once placed, a block may not be moved again during the Logistics Phase.
- ◆ A player must place a block if possible.
- ◆ If there is no eligible area left for a player (as described above), then the player's remaining blocks are not placed on the board. Such blocks will be unused in this game turn.



- Berlin)

- ◆ Units can be moved only into friendly areas

At every moment, an area will have one of the following control statuses with respect to a given force (West, Soviets, Germany):

- ◆ **Friendly** - an area with pieces (units, logistics block) of a given force (West, Soviets, Germany). (Western Front and Eastern Front German units are all friendly to each other

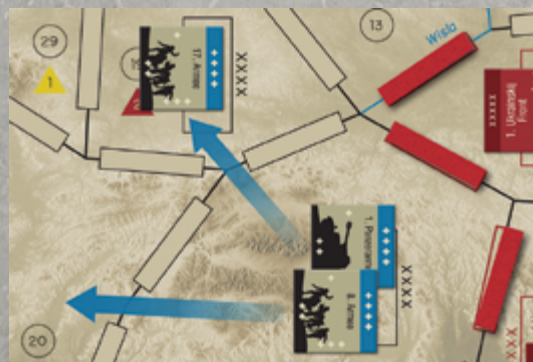
and may exist in the same area). Pieces can be moved by a movement action only into friendly areas. Strategic movement may be made only into a friendly area which has a contiguous chain of friendly areas connecting it to: the southern or western board edge (for Western units); the eastern edge (for Soviet units); a victory point (eagle) area or B1 in Berlin (for German units).

Western (and similarly Soviet) friendly areas normally form a single contiguous group, with Western (respectively Soviet) front line markers along a continuous front separating it from neighboring non-friendly areas. Front line markers are only used to separate non-friendly or allied areas, so any time a front line marker separates 2 friendly areas (due to areas changing control), it is removed and available for immediate reuse to mark the new front, or returned to the owner's pool.

- ◆ **Enemy** - an area with pieces controlled by the enemy. I.e. German areas are enemy with both the West and the Soviets. An attack action can be made only against enemy areas.
- ◆ **Allied** - Western areas and Soviet areas are allied to each other. Neither Western nor Soviet pieces can move into or attack an allied area.

4.2 Action phase

In the Action Phase, players alternately perform one of their available actions until one of the players has no logistics blocks remaining on the board. The first player in this phase is the same as in the Logistics Phase of the current game turn. Once some player has no remaining logistics blocks on the board, the Action Phase is over. In the Action Phase, the player currently performing an action is called the active player, and the other is the inactive player. Some actions require the use of action cubes.



Example: A 4-point logistics block can be used 4 times in a game turn. Each attack action performed with it will generate strength 4 and will be marked by placing another action cube with the logistics block.

4.2.1 Possible actions:

1. Move a unit or logistics block
2. Attack
3. Remove a logistics block from the board

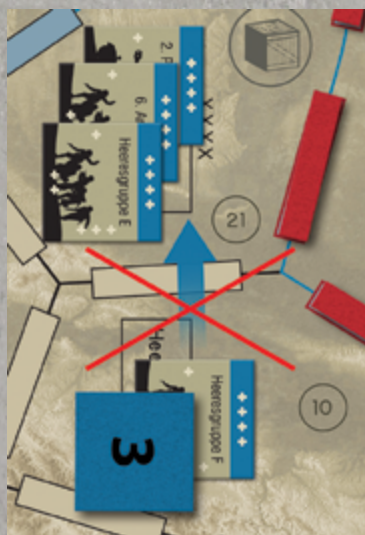
4.2.1.1 Move unit or logistics block

Movement does not require action cubes. During a move, a player can move pieces from a player-controlled area to an adjacent area of that same force:

- ◆ one or more units
- ◆ one or more units plus a logistics block with them
- ◆ only a logistics block.

Restrictions on movement actions:

- ◆ Each area can have at most 3 units at all times
- ◆ Each logistics block must always be in an area with at least 1 friendly unit
- ◆ Each area can have at most 1 logistics block (exception: the area B1



4.2.1.2 Attack action

An attack action is done to seize an enemy area. The active player is the attacker, and the inactive player is (usually) the defender. An attack proceeds as follows:

1. Select the area from which the attack will take place

The attacker chooses an area with one of their logistics blocks.

2. Select the target area

The attacker chooses an enemy area adjacent to the area launching the attack. This target area may contain enemy units but does not have to.

3. Decide whether to attack with 1 or 2 action cubes

The attacker decides whether to play 1 or 2 action cubes next to the attacking logistics block. Using 2 cubes will double the value of the logistics block in the attack.

Exception: If German troops are attacking, then 2 cubes must be used to attack. In this case, the value of the logistics block is not doubled.

4. Declaration of support of the defending area using a defending logistics block

- ◆ If the defending area has an active logistics block, then the defender must play an action cube next to it. The value of the logistics block will be added to the defense strength.

◆ If the defending area has no logistics block, then the defender may use a logistics block in an adjacent area to help the defense. To do this, the defender plays an action cube with the adjacent logistics block. Only one logistics block may be used this way for defense in a battle.. The value of the logistics block will be added to the defense strength.

◆ If the defending area has an exhausted logistics block, then no adjacent logistics block can help the defense.

◆ If the defender has no remaining action cubes to place, then the logistics block in the target area is immediately removed from the board without adding its value to the defense.

◆ If the defending area has no defending units, then no adjacent logistics block can help the defense. The defense strength will depend only other modifiers.

5. Reveal logistics blocks

If any of the participating logistics blocks are standing (hidden to the opponent), then they are revealed now. Revealed blocks remain revealed until the end of the game turn. A standing logistics block can attack any adjacent enemy area. An already-revealed logistics block can attack an adjacent enemy area with a concealed enemy logistics block, or with a revealed enemy logistics block with a value less than or equal to the attacking block's value (taking into account possible doubling from using 2 action cubes).

6. Determine attack and defense base strengths

The attack strength is the value of the attacking logistics block, or twice that value if 2 action cubes were used.

The defense strength is the sum of:

◆ The value of the defending logistics block, if any. Otherwise, if the area has a defending unit, then 1. Otherwise, 0.

◆ The value of any defending fortifications in the target area.

◆ The types of defenses:

In the game there are three types of fortifications: improved positions, regular fortifications, and major fortifications.

An improved position (1) adds +1 to the defense strength. If the defender retreats, the fortification is removed.

A regular fortification (2) adds +2 to the defense strength. If the defender retreats, the fortification is removed.

A major fortification (3) also adds +2 to the defense strength. But if the defender loses, the defender does not retreat. Instead, the major fortification is replaced by an improved position and the defending units stay. (Unless there were no defending units; in that case, the major fortification is removed).

(Note that the attack and defense strengths depend primarily on the values of the logistics blocks involved. The number of units involved or German unit strengths do not directly affect the attack and defense strengths.)

◆ Difficult terrain - the defense strength is increased by the value printed on the board (1 or 2).

◆ River - if the border between the attacking and defending areas has a river, then add +1 to the defense strength.

7. Add random bonuses to the attack and defense strengths.

Each player individually rolls 2 dice and adds the positive difference of their dice result to their side's strength. (E.g. rolling 3 and 5 gives a +2 bonus.) Thus each side's total strength receives a random bonus between 0 and 5.

8. Combat result

The attacker wins the attack if the total attack strength is greater than

the total defense strength. Otherwise the defender wins the combat.

9. Apply combat effects

If the defender wins, then the board state does not change. If the attacker wins, then the defending pieces must retreat (unless they are with a major fortification).

Losses: attacking or defending German units which lose in combat must lose 1 strength level. The losing player chooses which German unit will lose the 1 strength and rotates that German unit block to reduce its strength by 1. If it was already at 1, then remove it from the board, eliminating it from the game. If it was the last unit in the area and there is a logistics block, then remove the logistics block (even if still active) from the board, exhausted for the rest of the turn. Action cubes there return to the owner's pool.

Retreat: If the attacker wins, then all defending pieces must retreat to one or more adjacent friendly areas. A logistics block cannot exist alone in a space without friendly units. If retreat is not possible, then defending units are eliminated from the game and a defending logistics block is removed from the board, exhausted for the rest of the game turn. Then all fortifications are removed from the area. Then the front line markers are shifted to show that the target area is now friendly to the attacker. If there are not enough front line markers to do this, then the front line does not shift. If the successful attack was by German units, then a defender with not enough front line markers permanently loses 3 action cubes from their pool. If that player does not have enough cubes in their pool to be removed, then they immediately lose the game.

Special rule: if a German attack succeeds against an area with a player's supply base, then the player must permanently lose 1 action cube. In this case defending units do not retreat from the target area.

When Western and Soviet areas are adjacent, put both a Western and a Soviet front line on the border between them.

Retreating pieces which cannot withdraw to any friendly area (e.g. due to the stacking limit of 3 units per area) are removed from play. Removed units are permanently eliminated. If a logistics block is retreated with such eliminated units, then it is removed from the board for the rest of this game turn (as if it was removed as a player action).

If even one unit has the ability to withdraw, then a logistics block must also withdraw with a friendly unit to an adjacent friendly area (instead of being removed from the board). A logistics block cannot retreat without an accompanying unit from the battle withdrawing to the same area.

Advance: Successfully attacking units and logistics block may advance into abandoned target area. Any or all of the attacking pieces may advance. The only restriction is that the logistics block cannot end up by itself (with none of the attacking units).



In some situations, combat may occur between Soviet units and Western Front German units, or between Western units and Eastern Front German units. Combat is resolved normally except that the one player who controls the units of both sides resolves both sides of the combat. However, if German units from both fronts are defending together, then the inactive player resolves the defense as usual (even if the logistics block on the target area belongs to the active player).

It can happen that all Western and Soviet logistics blocks are exhausted, but there are still active German logistics blocks. Even if the Germans don't have a supply line, they remain provisionally in the game.

In such a case, when some German area or areas are cut off from supply (box symbol) but there are still active German logistics blocks, the isolated German areas are not taken over by the Western or Soviet player until the moment when the last German logistics block is exhausted.

In such a case, the unsupplied German areas are taken over by the forces (Western or Soviet) which surround the isolated German areas. If both Western and Soviet areas are adjacent to the cut-off German areas, then the player who started the game turn gains them.

If the player who should take over these German areas does not have enough front line markers to annex them, then that player permanently loses 3 action cubes, and the other player should annex them. If that other player also does not have enough front line markers, then that player also loses 3 action cubes.

All German pieces (including fortifications) in these areas are removed from the game, even if neither player had enough logistics blocks to annex them. If neither player annexed the areas, then they remain German and can only be taken over by an attack action as usual.

Special tokens

In each game turn, each player has 8 special tokens available for use during combat. Each special token is assigned to a specific force. After use, a token is turned face down and cannot be used again during this game turn.

Logistics - can be played only by the attacking player after revealing both sides' pieces, but before rolling the dice and before playing a Support token (if any is played). It doubles the value of the attacker's logistics block. It can be played even if the logistics block is exhausted from having received its final action cube. This token cannot be played if the block was already doubled from playing 2 action cubes.

Support - can be played only by the attacking player after revealing both sides' forces, but before rolling the dice. It adds +1 to the attack strength of the West or the Soviets if they are attacking with 1 action cube. It adds +2 to the attack strength of the West or the Soviets if they are doubled from using 2 action cubes or using the Logistics token. It always adds +1 to the attack strength of Germans.

Counterattack - can be played only by the defender after losing a combat in which the defender's German units have at least 2 strength points collectively. It cancels the normally required retreat. (It does not cancel the strength loss to German units.) The defender may play Counterattack only if there was a supporting logistics block which is still active. The defender must add another action cube to this defending logistics block. (If the defender has no action cubes left, this token cannot be played). Defending unit takes additional loss of strength.

Reserves - can be played to reroll a combat dice roll. The player must accept the rerolled dice result and cannot reroll again. The attacker decides first whether to reroll. A player's reroll applies only to that player's own forces.

4.2.1.3 Remove logistics block

This action allows the player to remove their own active or exhausted logistics block. Action cubes from the block's area return to the owner's pool and are available for immediate reuse. When either player removes their last logistics block, the action phase ends.

Strategy note: This action is needed to regain action cubes for reuse, and it is usually best to use it

on exhausted logistics blocks.

4.3 Strategic Movement Phase

At the end of the 1st and 2nd game turns, each player may make a strategic move with 1 of their side's units and 1 of their German units. A strategic move can go through any number of adjacent friendly areas. For purposes of strategic movement, Western Front and Eastern Front German units are treated as two separate forces. The first player in this phase is the same as in the Logistics Phase of the current game turn.

After Strategic Movement, turn all special tokens face up so that they are ready for use in the next game turn.

Special rule: 6th SS Panzer Army - after the first game turn's Strategic Movement Phase, remove the German 6th SS Panzer Army from the Western Front. Then, the Western player places the second (Eastern Front) 6th SS Panzer Army token onto any area adjacent to the Eastern Front line. The newly placed unit must have the same strength level as the unit removed from the Western Front. If the 6th SS Panzer Army was already destroyed, then ignore this procedure.

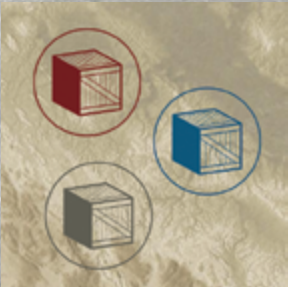
4.4 Supply

Supply line - a contiguous chain of adjacent friendly areas extending from a friendly supply base to a given area of action or other operation.

If as a result of combat and front line shifts an area becomes cut off from supply, then the isolated area is immediately annexed by the force which cut off its supply line. All units and fortifications there are eliminated from the game, and exhausted logistics blocks return to the owner's pool. Adjust front line markers accordingly.

Supply bases:

- ◆ Soviets: the eastern edge of the board,
- ◆ Western Allies: the western and southern edges of the board,
- ◆ Germany: the victory point areas (with eagles): regardless of whether they are western or eastern, they supply all German units.



Exception: Active logistics block.

An active logistics block in an unsupplied area delays this annexation and piece elimination. Annexation and unit elimination occur in an unsupplied area when there is no longer an active logistics block, or when the current game turn ends.

Unsupplied areas with an active logistics block may try to restore a supply line by attacking only in the direction of the nearest friendly supplied area. Unsupplied areas which still have an active logistics block must suffer annexation and piece elimination at the end of the actions phase. If any German units occupy a Western or Soviet supply base at the end of a game turn, then the supply base's owner permanently loses 5 action cubes from their pool.

4.5 Special area - Berlin

Berlin is a special area with 5 sub-areas: B1 (the center), B2 and B3 (eastern Berlin), B4 and B5 (western Berlin). Berlin as a whole has a limit of 3 units for each force (Western, Soviet, German), i.e. the total sum of that force's units among all the Berlin sub-areas may not exceed 3, so there is a maximum of 9 units total in Berlin.

All 5 of these sub-areas are considered adjacent to each other for purposes of moving, attacking, defending with an adjacent logistics block, etc, and all 5 Berlin sub-areas are equally adjacent to the areas 31 and 32 which touch Berlin.

However there are restrictions for Western and Soviet units: Western units which successfully attack Berlin from outside (area 31 or 32) may advance only to the western Berlin areas B4 and B5 (and there may be 1 Western logistics block in each of those 2 areas). They may attack the center B1 only from B4 and B5. Similarly, Soviet units which successfully attack Berlin from outside may advance only into the eastern Berlin areas B2 and B3 (and there may be 1 Soviet logistics block in each of those 2 areas). They may attack B1 only from B2 and B3. Soviet units may never enter or attack B4 or B5, and Western units may never enter or attack B2 or B3.

Note that if both 31 and 32 are Western controlled, for example, then the Soviets have no access to Berlin, because the West and the Soviets are allied and may not attack or enter each others' areas. Similar situation occurs when areas 31 and 32 are controlled by Soviets.

German units in Berlin, on the other hand, can exist only in B1, not in the other 4 Berlin areas. German units in B1 may attack all adjacent areas (B2, B3, B4, B5 in Berlin and 31, 32 outside Berlin). If they win an attack against B2, B3, B4 or B5, then the area is annexed back to Germany as usual, but the German units stay in B1 without advancing. A German logistics block in B1 could be used to help defend German units in either adjacent area 31 or 32 if those units have no logistics block with them, and conversely. As in other areas, B1 may have a mixture of Western Front and Eastern Front German units. If Western or Soviet units attack into any of the 4 outer Berlin areas, the German units from B1 automatically defend as if they were in the target area, and they remain in B1 regardless of the attack result.

B1 may exceptionally have 2 logistics blocks: one West German (belonging to the Soviet player) and one East German (belonging to the Western player). If B1 has 2 logistics blocks, then only the one belonging to the player controlling the Germans during the battle is used.

5. Game end

The game can end during any game turn with one player's automatic victory or after the third turn, when all the points are totaled.

Automatic victory happens when:

- ◆ When a player occupies B1 with at least one Western or Soviet unit, that player immediately wins, regardless of victory points.
- or**
- ◆ When a player does not have enough action cubes needed to pay any penalty, that player immediately loses, regardless of victory points.

Victory based on points

If no automatic victory happens, then after the Action Phase of the third game turn, whoever has the most victory points wins. Ties are possible.

The West receives a victory point for advancing into an area with a blue eagle. (The Western player takes a victory token.) The Soviets receive a victory point for advancing into an area with a red eagle. (The Soviet player takes a victory token.) If one player occupies a goal area of the opponent, then neither player gains a point for the area. If a player later loses control of a victory point area, then the player loses the victory point marker.

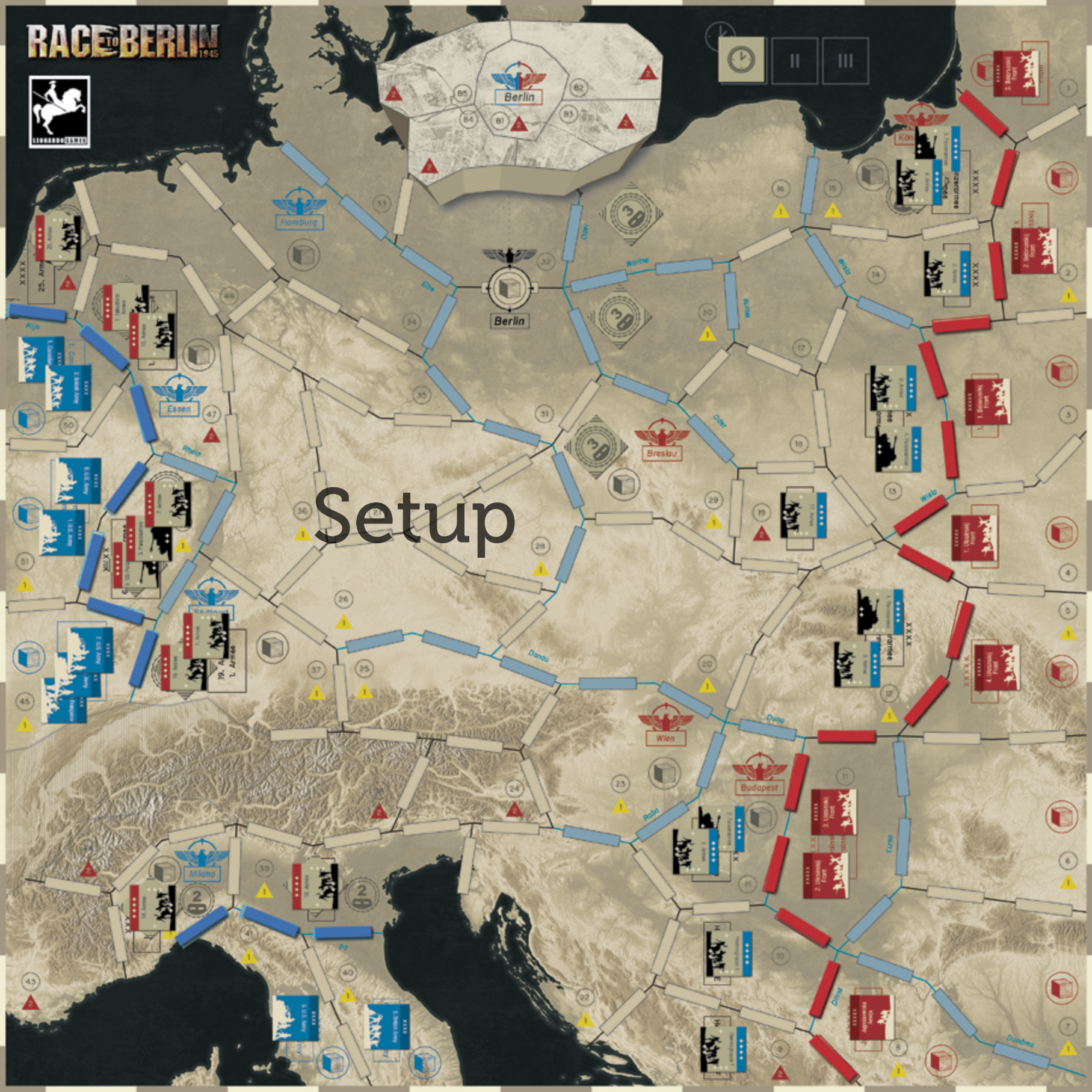
Area B1 (Berlin) has a 2-color eagle; occupying B1 does not give a point, but rather automatic immediate victory!

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Setup