

# THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

## Additional Scenarios for TRIREME

By Rex A. Martin

The Peloponnesian War, like the Persian War a half-century before, turned on sea power. Unlike the earlier war, however, the struggle between the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League was waged not for territorial expansion, but rather for commercial control of the extended lines of Athenian trade and the profits that went with such a monopoly of trade.

From the dawn of history, Greece had been an agricultural civilization, economically self-contained. In the 8th Century BC, the region began to be overpopulated and, so Plato claims, therefore the city-states planted colonies on the shores of Asia Minor, Sicily and even Italy to avoid revolution and war. The colonists did not seek to settle the interior, but maintained themselves as seaport centers of trade to draw the products of the region and distribute them to the "civilized" Mediterranean world. The commercial relations with their colonies (often independent city-states) enabled the still growing population of the homelands to support themselves increasingly by manufacturing items which were exported to pay for the imports of grain and raw materials. Even the non-maritime states shared in the general prosperity.

Athens took no part in the early colonization; but early in the 6th Century BC, the legal reforms of Solon induced her to turn strongly to commerce as the basis of national prosperity and power. Athens became wealthy, giving over her meager lands to growing agricultural luxuries and buying her grain abroad. By the time of the Persian War in 480 BC, Athens had the greatest navy in Greece to protect her commercial interests, which lay chiefly eastward. Corinth, Athen's principal commercial rival and the leading commercial state in the Peloponnese, had connections with the Greek colonies to the west.

After the victory of Mycale and the seizure of Sestos, the allied Greek fleet pursued its advantage and conquered the regions of both Cyprus and Byzantium. Possession of the latter assured Greek control of the rich wheat trade of the Euxine, the first step in the formation of the Delian League. The Delian League (so called for its treasury on the tiny island of Delos) initially was comprised only of the members of the original anti-Persian alliance. Soon, Sparta, militaristic and self-sufficient, with little commerce and little inclination to strive for it, withdrew. Like Sparta, Corinth too withdrew, taking her allies with her and her thriving western trade routes. Thereafter, as possessor of the greatest navy, Athens was the natural leader of the Delian League.

Until the formation of the League, Athens and Corinth, while trading rivals, had maintained cordial relations. Now, an intense rivalry was to grow between the powers, sparked by the Megaran dispute.

In 459 BC, the city of Megara on the Isthmus of Corinth had a dispute over trading rights to the west with Corinth and applied to Athens for support. The latter promptly seized Megara and its two seaports, Pagae and Nisaea on opposite sides of the isthmus. Athenian engineers built walls from Megara to Nisaea; manning these were an Athenian garrison. Thus Athens now had a port on both sides of the isthmus; a short portage enabled her shipping to avoid the long passage of west-bound merchants around the mainland, putting her commerce in equal competition with that of Corinth. Thus began the active distrust which led to immediate war between Corinth and Athens.

Little is known of the Corinthian-Athenian conflict of 459. At first, Athens seemingly had a strong grip on the western trade routes, maintain-

ing fleets at Megaris, Naupactus, Zacynthus and Cephalonia—dominating the Gulf of Corinth. But the war was costly for both. In 453 BC, the war died away and was followed by a truce, followed in turn by a definite treaty of peace signed to last thirty years. Athens lost most of her gains.

After the war, Athens found it necessary even in peace to maintain a large fleet distributed at various bases to protect its wide-flung interests. The Athenian fleet, supported by tribute from the members of the Delian League, was too often used to enforce the loyalty of the minor members of the League. Meanwhile, Corinth formed its own League, drawing members from the city-states of the Peloponnese. And a vast fleet was built by the Peloponnesian League to protect its shipping from depredations of the pirates and members of the opposing League.

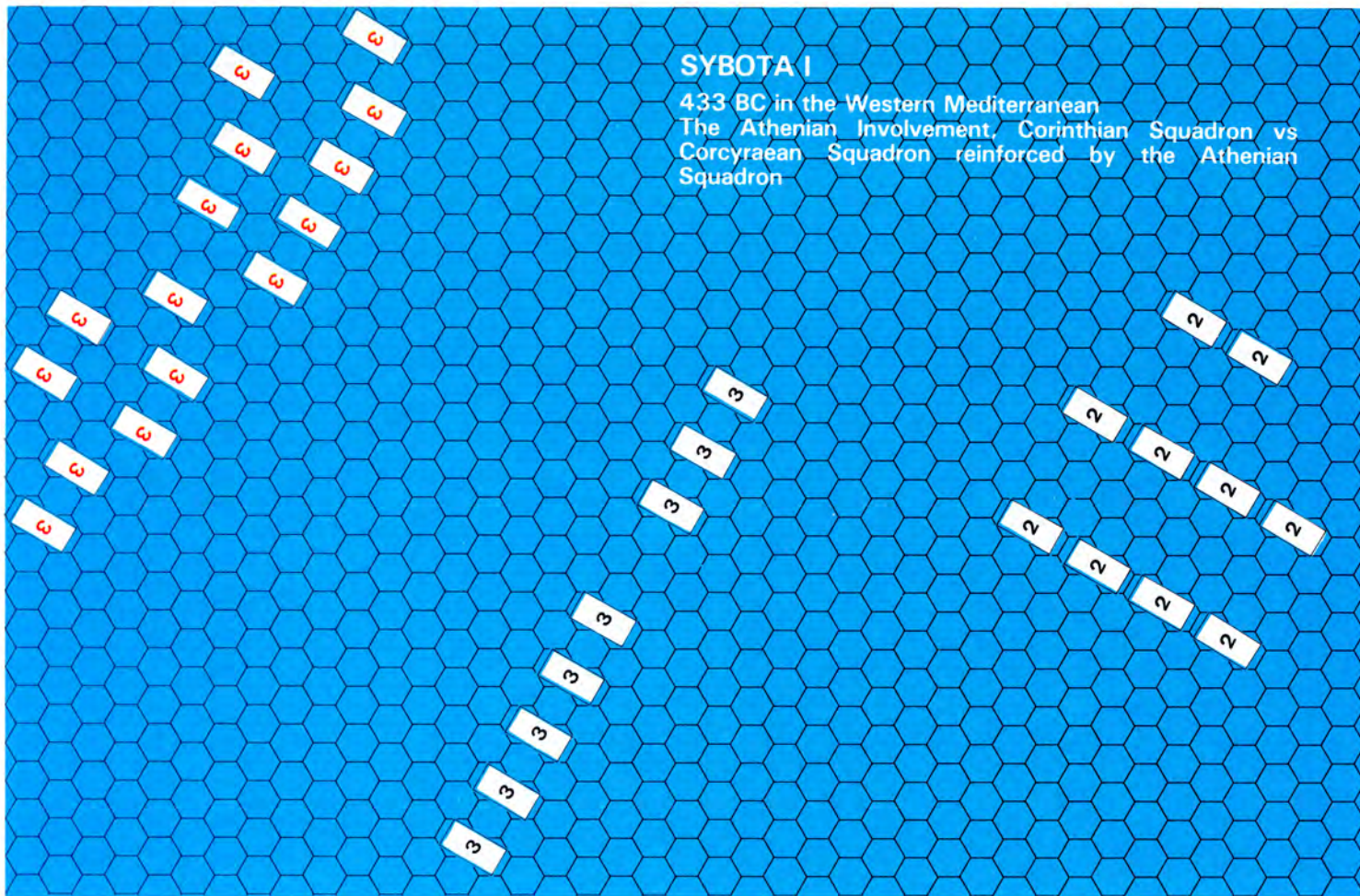
The thirty years' peace, declared in 446 BC, lasted until 432 before it was shattered. The Peloponnesian War which then began was fired by arrogance on the part of the Athenians and jealousy on the part of the Corinthians, the immediate spark being an active dispute between Corcyra (now Corfu) and Corinth. Although Corcyra had been a Corinthian colony, since its successful revolt it had become the most important port on the great Greek trade route to Italy. And its bad feelings toward Corinth were vocal and continuous. Corinth found reason to quarrel with Corcyra in 436, and the next year dispatched a fleet and army to reconquer the city. The expedition was defeated, but with heavy losses. Corinth immediately began to prepare another fleet.

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## SYBOTA I

433 BC in the Western Mediterranean  
The Athenian Involvement, Corinthian Squadron vs  
Corcyraean Squadron reinforced by the Athenian  
Squadron



In 433, the expected Corinthian expedition sailed, Corinth committing 90 ships and her allies contributing some 60 more. Learning of the enemy's approach, the Corcyraeans manned 110 ships and set out with the ten Athenians to take up positions near the Sybota islands on the mainland side of the channel abreast of the southern point of Corcyra. On a morning in late September, the fleets sighted each other and both formed lines of battle. The Corinthians put their allies on the right of their line, near the shore, and themselves occupied the left. The Corcyraeans formed into three squadrons, placing the Athenians on their right on their uncovered seaward flank where the light craft had room to exercise their superior maneuverability. The Athenian squadron, under orders from the politicians at home to avoid precipitating a war, were unwilling to engage the Corinthians and hung back.

The Corinthians and Corcyraeans closed. There was no breaking through either line; the battle was fought on the decks. On the shoreward flank, the Corcyraeans overcame the Corinthian allies, pursuing them to Chimerium, where they put ashore to loot the Corinthian camp. But on the outer edge of the confused melee, the Corcyraeans were hard-pressed. Seeing them being beaten, the Athenian captains sailed into the fray and engaged the Corinthians to cover the rout of their erstwhile allies. Being outnumbered, the Athenians withdrew, utilizing their superior speed and expertise. The Corinthians now proceeded to kill the swimmers surviving from the floating wrecks, and in their haste inadvertently included some from their own defeated right wing.

The next day some twenty Athenian vessels were spotted to the rear of the Corinthian fleet. In spite of their own success the day before, the Corinthians feared these reinforcements. After a parley, it was agreed that the Corinthians would return to their home port. The Athenians, who had not wanted war, were well and truly now embroiled.

### Victory Conditions

Athenian/Corcyraean player(s) scores two points for each enemy ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck; six points are scored for being the sole occupant of the playing area at the conclusion of play.

Corinthian player scores two points for each Corcyraean ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck; one point for each Athenian ship in such straits. He receives ten points for being the sole occupant of the playing area at the conclusion of play.

### Special Rules

1) Athenian ships may not engage any Corinthian ship unless and until a minimum of *two* ships (25%) of the Corcyraean squadron have been lost (sunk, captured or turned into floating wrecks) or an Athenian ship has been attacked in any manner by the Corinthians.

2) Exit from the southern edge of the playing area is prohibited; ships or wrecks forced off the southern edge are considered lost with *no* points awarded. However, one point is deducted from the owning player's total points for each such ship he has lost.

3) Should three players be involved in the scenario, the Athenian player and the Corcyraean player may not coordinate their moves or attacks, nor may they transfer marines from ships of one to the other. In all other respects, they are considered friendly to each other.

### FLEET GAME SCENARIO

All squadrons set up as shown (Corinthian ships are in red).

Athenian squadron has expert crews; Corcyraean squadron has green crews.

Corinthian squadron has average crews.

Corinthian ships move first, Corcyraeans second, Athenians third.

Wind is from the southwest.

### SHIP GAME SCENARIO

#### Athenian Squadron

10 Biremes, expert crews, each with two points light marines

#### Corcyraean Squadron

8 Triremes, green crews, each with two points heavy marines

#### Corinthian Squadron

15 Triremes, average crews, each with two points heavy marines

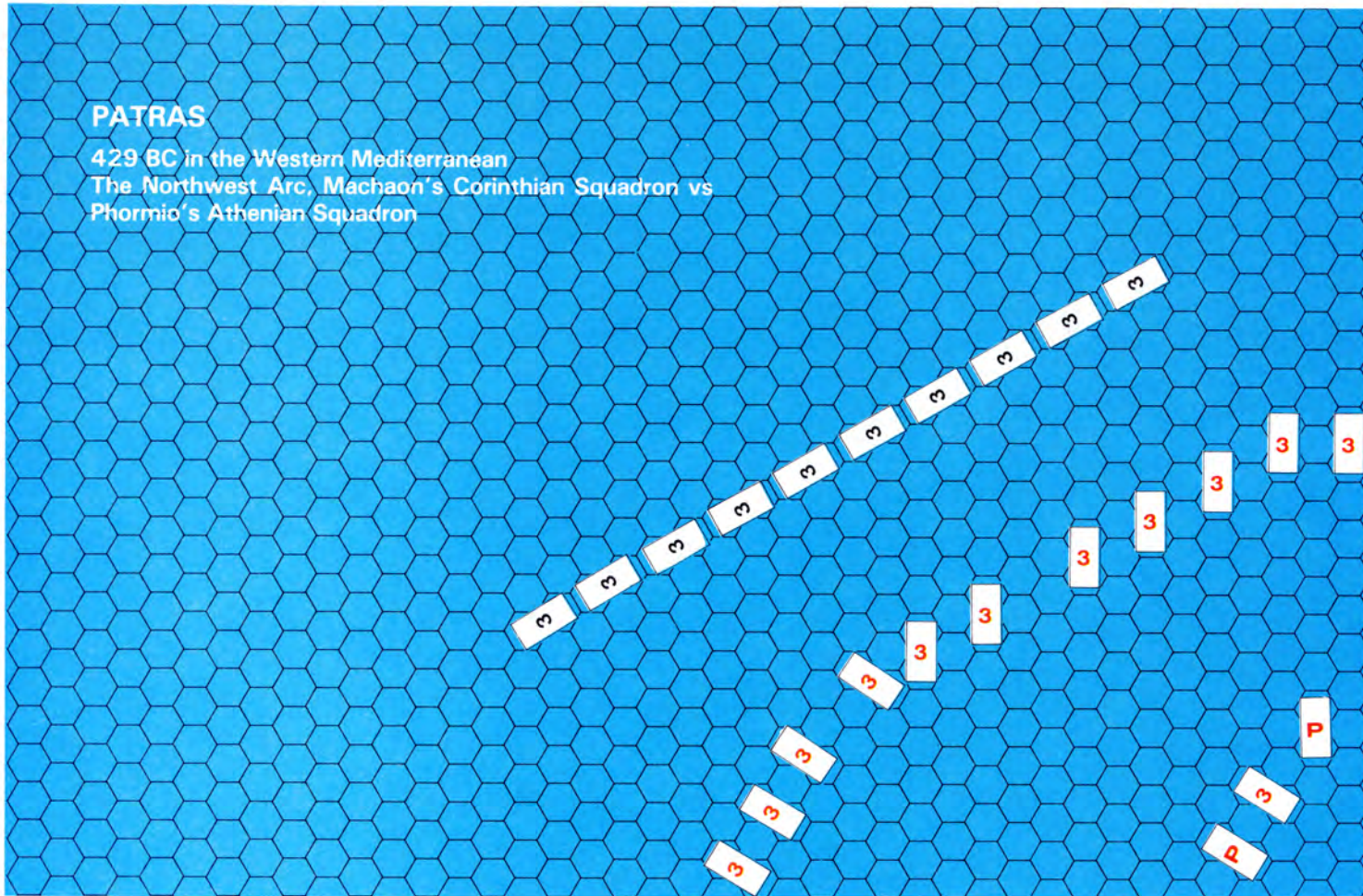
#### Optional Rules

Floating Wrecks, Oar Rakes and Drift are required. If other options are used, wind is light airs from the southwest, sea state is swells, ocean current is running with the wind.



## PATRAS

429 BC in the Western Mediterranean  
The Northwest Arc, Machaon's Corinthian Squadron vs  
Phormio's Athenian Squadron



The course of the naval war was dominated by the campaigns to control the lands along the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth. The Athenian base at Naupactus with its squadrons was a constant threat to Corinthian trade out of the gulf, while the Peloponnesians strove to hold Acarnania to isolate Naupactus and sever the trade to Megara and thence overland to Athens. In 430, Athens sent a squadron of twenty ships under Phormio, its leading admiral, to lie at Naupactus and operate against the Corinthians. Meanwhile, a Corinthian fleet and Spartan army were moving on Cephallenia. But it was only after a disastrous Spartan defeat, due to Cnemus' premature invasion, that the Corinthian fleet of 47 triremes appeared.

As the Corinthian expedition moved westward along the south coast of the gulf, Phormio was made aware of its approach and moved abreast of it to the north. He hoped to attack when it was in open water. As the Corinthians attempted to cross to the northern shore to support the Spartan abreast of Patras, Phormio turned against them with his twenty ships. It was early morning; the usual easterly breeze had not risen and the sea was calm. The Corinthians, knowing they could not match the skills of the Athenians, put themselves in a circle facing outward ready to ram, with their small craft and five triremes in the center as a reserve.

Seeing the enemy immobile, Phormio drew near in column and began to circle the enemy formation at a leisurely pace. He feigned attack several times, waiting for the morning breeze to spring up and throw the Corinthians against each other in the rising sea. Too, he realized that the Corinthian ships, being immobile, would be slow to get in motion, thus giving him ample time to respond should they attack.

When the wind did freshen, Phormio swung his ships into line and charged the disordered enemy. All the Athenians found targets, quickly sinking one of the flagships. The Corinthians stood little chance. The Athenians took some dozen ships in a matter of minutes, whereupon the Corinthians disengaged and fled to safe ports. Phormio dedicated a ship to Poseidon and made ready to return to Naupactus in triumph. He was unaware that this battle would mark the high-water mark of superior mobility in naval tactics by Athenian admirals.

### Victory Conditions

Athenian player scores two points for each Corinthian *trireme* sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck.

Corinthian player scores three points for each Athenian ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck.

### Special Rules

1) Due to their immobile state at the beginning of play, the movement points expended by Corinthian ships may never exceed the number of the current game turn.

2) The scenario immediately ends upon the complete destruction of all Corinthian triremes or six triremes (60%) of the Athenian fleet.

### FLEET GAME SCENARIO

Both squadrons are set up as shown (Corinthian ships are in red).

Athenian squadron has expert crews.

Corinthian squadron has average crews.

Athenian ships move first, Corinthian second.

Wind is from the northeast.

### SHIP GAME SCENARIO

#### Athenian Squadron

10 triremes, expert crews, each with two points of heavy marines

#### Corinthian Squadron

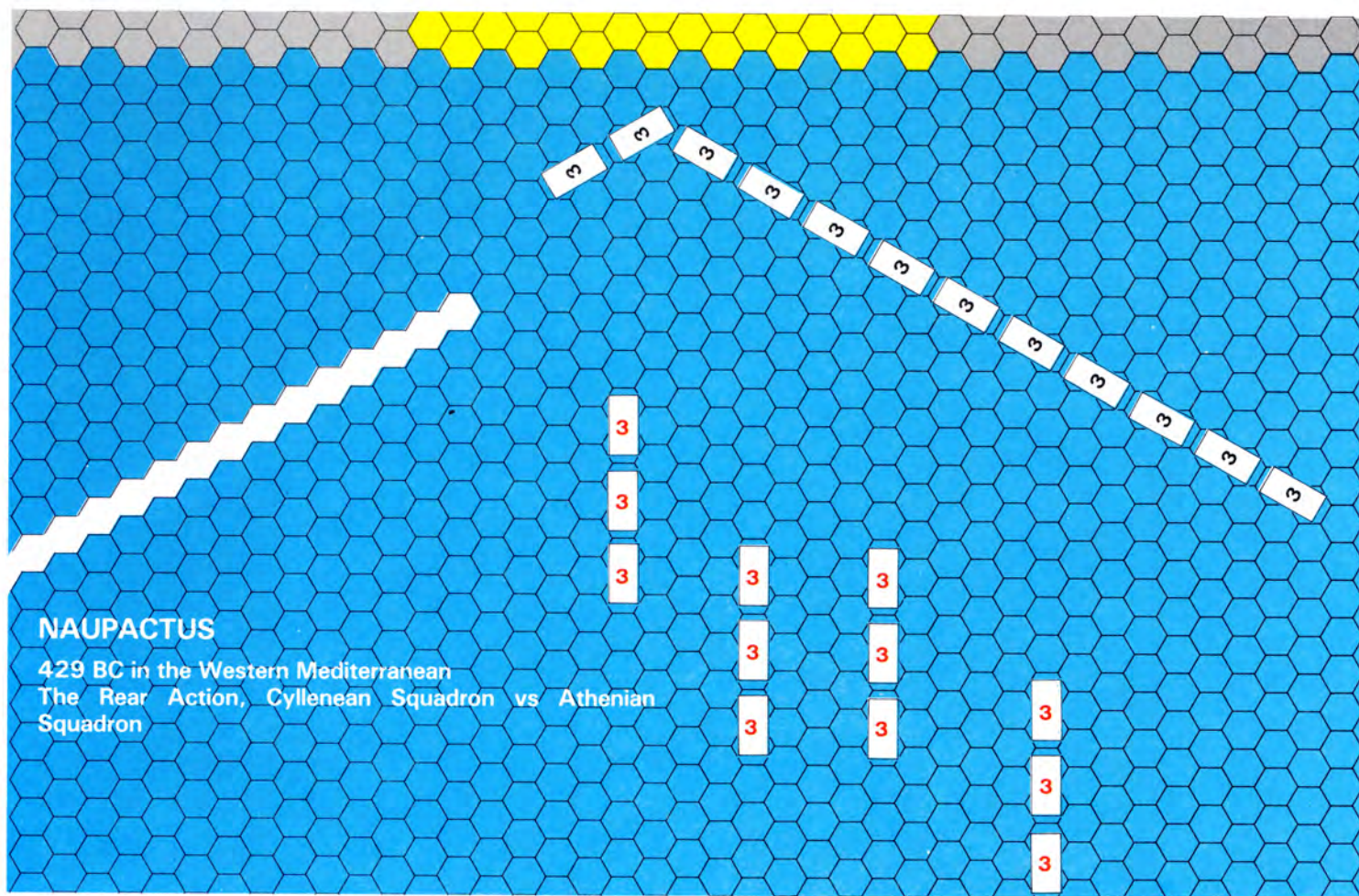
12 triremes, average crews, each with two points of heavy marines

2 pentakonters, average crews, each with one point of missile marines

#### Optional Rules

Floating Wrecks, Oar Rakes and Drift required. If other options used, wind is breeze from the northeast, sea state is swells, ocean current is running with the wind.





After the action near Patras, Phormio sent to Athens a request for more ships, expecting a severe reaction by the Peloponnesians. The ships were sent, but with orders to undertake a secondary action on their route. While these reinforcements were ravaging Crete, the Cylleneans mobilized their fleet and started north with 77 ships. Phormio left Naupactus with the twenty ships that had fought at Patras to close the narrows through which they must pass. For a week, the two fleets faced each other. Phormio wanted to draw the enemy outside the narrows where his captains had plenty of sea room. The Cylleneans wished a battle inside the narrows, where the shores were not far distant and their advantage in numbers would be telling. And the Peloponnesians feared undue delay, whereas it pleased the Athenians, since both were aware of the approach of the Athenian reinforcements.

As time passed and the Athenians showed no urge to enter the narrows, the Cyllenean admiral decided to threaten Naupactus to oblige Phormio to give battle before he was reinforced. A squadron was dispatched toward the port while the rest of the fleet moved to interpose themselves between the enemy and Naupactus. As they had hoped, Phormio embarked his crews in the greatest haste and hurried toward his threatened base.

When the Cylleneans saw the Athenian squadron within the gulf, coasting near the shore, their ships turned simultaneously and charged in four lines. Owing to a misjudgement of the Athenian speed and distance, eleven passed the Cyllenean flank and proceeded eastward. But nine were forced to run ashore, where some were seized and those of the crews who had not fled were killed. Several were saved by local troops, loyal to Athens, who rushed into the shallow water in their armor and fought the enemy troops who were trying to capture them.

As for the escaped ships, these continued to Naupactus, where the enemy fled at first sighting. The Peloponnesians, fearful of being caught by the overdue Athenian reinforcements, withdrew to their base at Cyllene.

#### Victory Conditions

Cyllenean player scores two points for each Athenian ship sunk, captured (including those captured after beaching) or turned into a floating wreck.

Athenian player scores one point for each Athenian ship exited off the western or southern edges of the playing area; and scores one point for each Cyllenean ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck.

#### Special Rules

- 1) A reef exists as shown and all relevant rules for such are in force.
- 2) Athenian ships which beach are open to capture. The Cyllenean player may opt to attempt to capture these at any point in play by moving a trireme within two hexes of the beached ship, deducting one point of marines from that ship (who leap overboard into the shallows to attack), and rolling a single die: a 4-6 results in the capture of the beached ship; a 1-3 in the loss of the marines. Upon successive turns, successive attempts to capture may be made, each requiring the expenditure of one point of marines. Even if successful, the ship may not be relaunched nor the marines recovered; both ship and marines are removed from play.

#### FLEET GAME SCENARIO

Both squadrons are set up as shown (Cyllenean ships are in red).

Athenian squadron has expert crews.

Cyllenean squadron has average crews.

Cyllenean ships move first, Athenian second.

Wind is from the southeast.

#### SHIP GAME SCENARIO

##### Athenian Squadron

12 Triremes, expert crews, each with one point heavy marines and one point missile marines

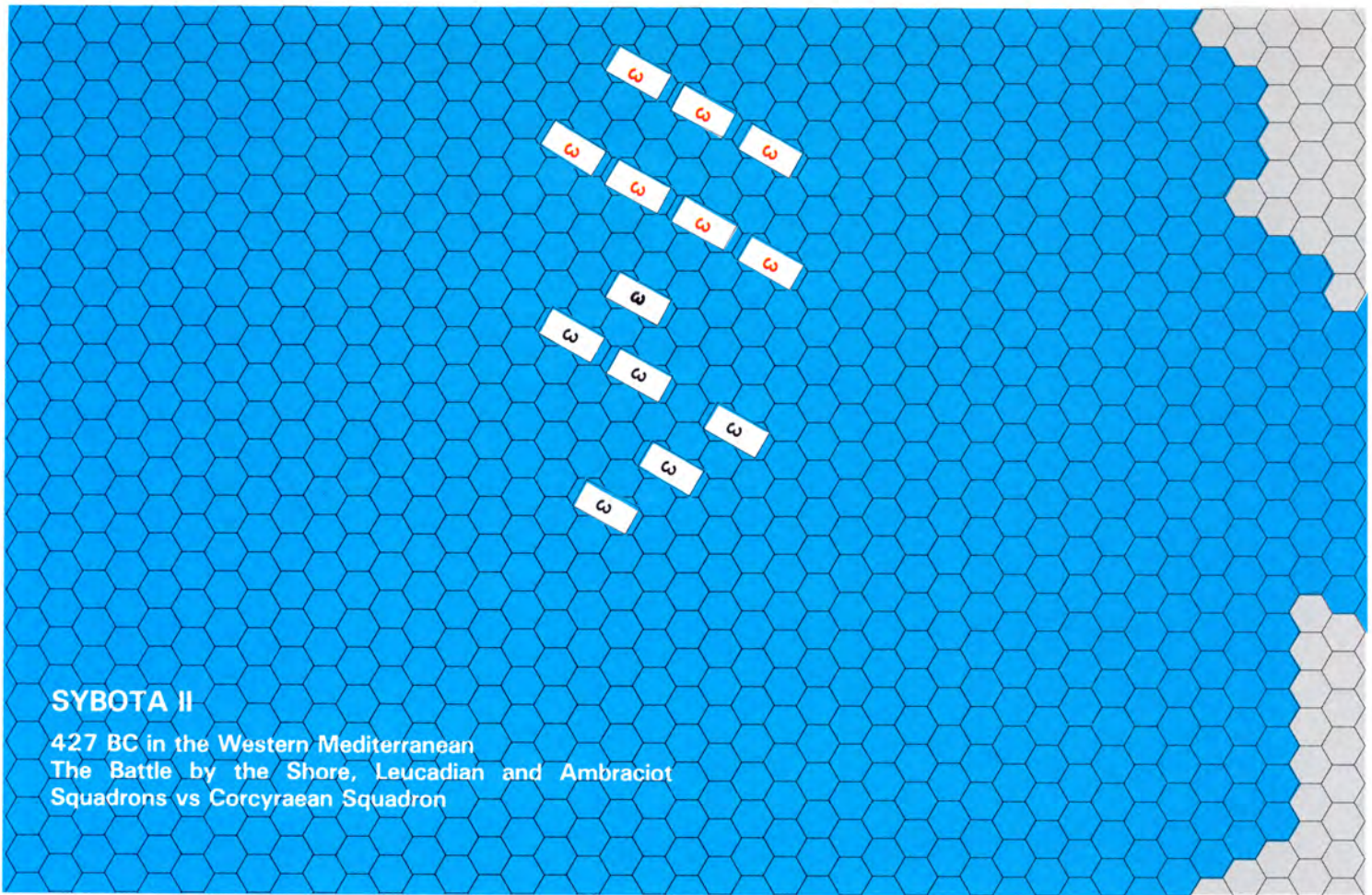
##### Cyllenean Squadron

12 Triremes, average crews, each with three points of heavy marines

##### Optional Rules

Floating Wrecks, Oar Rakes, Drift and Ships On Shore required. If other options used, wind is light airs from the southeast, sea state is swells, ocean current is running with the wind. There is a tidal current flooding toward the north.





## SYBOTA II

427 BC in the Western Mediterranean  
The Battle by the Shore, Leucadian and Ambraciots  
Squadrons vs Corcyraean Squadron

After two years of in which the prosecution of the war was limited to siegework, the Peloponnesians resolved that it was time to attack Corcyra, where a party was anxious to revolt and sever their ties with Athens. At Cyllene were thirteen ships of the Leucadians and Ambraciots. The Athenian squadron at Naupactus had been reduced to twelve ships at this point, and the time seemed fortuitous. Civil war broke out in Corcyra, and the Athenians proceeded there to restore order. Meanwhile a Peloponnesian fleet gathered at Cyllene, numbering some 53 ships. It sailed for Corcyra even as the revolt was put down.

After a quick passage, it drew up near Sybota opposite the harbor of Corcyra. At dawn, the Corcyraeans in great confusion manned 60 ships and went out in succession to drive them away, despite the warnings of the Athenian admiral who urged that he first meet the enemy while the Corcyraeans organized themselves for battle. The Peloponnesians dispatched but twenty ships to meet the Corcyraeans, while 33 faced the Athenians who issued from the southern entrance to the port. The Corcyraeans were easily met and defeated in detail by the ships of the Ambraciots and Leucadians. But the Athenians, by their greater skill and speed avoided the enemy center and sank a trireme on the flank of the foe they faced.

With this the Peloponnesians abandoned maneuver and once again formed a defensive circle—a favorite tactic. Again the Athenians began to circle, looking for the right moment to shatter the ring. But the Ambraciots and Leucadians, seeing the course of the battle, left off their massacre of the Corcyraeans and rowed to the attack. Seeing this, the Athenians backed slowly astern into shallow waters, giving the Corcyraean survivors time to return to the shelter of their city. They themselves then fled for Naupactus. The victors did not pursue nor attack the city, being content to retire to Sybota with thirteen prizes. The next day the approach of an Athenian fleet of 60 was signalled to the Peloponnesian admirals and they turned for Cyllene.

### Victory Conditions

Leucadian/Ambraciots player(s) scores one point for each Corcyraean ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck. To relieve the predicament to the Corinthian wing, the ships must hurry to the south; for each Leucadian/Ambraciots ship exited off the southern edge, *between game turn 15 and game turn twenty inclusive*, score two points.

Corcyraean player scores three points for each enemy ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck.

### Special Rules

1) Corcyraean ships must enter piecemeal to represent the initial confusion. On the first turn of the game, and every odd-numbered turn until all ships have been on board, three Corcyraean triremes may enter play. However, the Corcyraean player may opt to delay entry of any or all such ships until a declared later game turn. Delayed ships *must* then enter play on the game turn previously declared by the Corcyraean player.

2) Should three players be involved in the scenario, the Leucadian player and the Ambraciots player may not coordinate their moves or attacks, nor may they transfer marines from ships of the one to the other. In all other respects, they are considered friendly to each other.

3) Leucadian and Ambraciots exit is prohibited to the east; allied ships which are forced off the eastern edge are considered captured by the Corcyraean player.

### FLEET GAME SCENARIO

All squadrons set up as shown (Leucadian ships are in red).

Corcyraean squadron has green crews.

Leucadian squadron has average crews; Ambraciots squadron has average crews.

Corcyraean ships move first, Ambraciots second, Leucadian third.

Wind is from the northwest.

### SHIP GAME SCENARIO

#### Corcyraean Squadron

18 Triremes, green crews, each with three points heavy marines

#### Ambraciots Squadron

6 Triremes, average crews, each with one point light marines and one point of missile marines

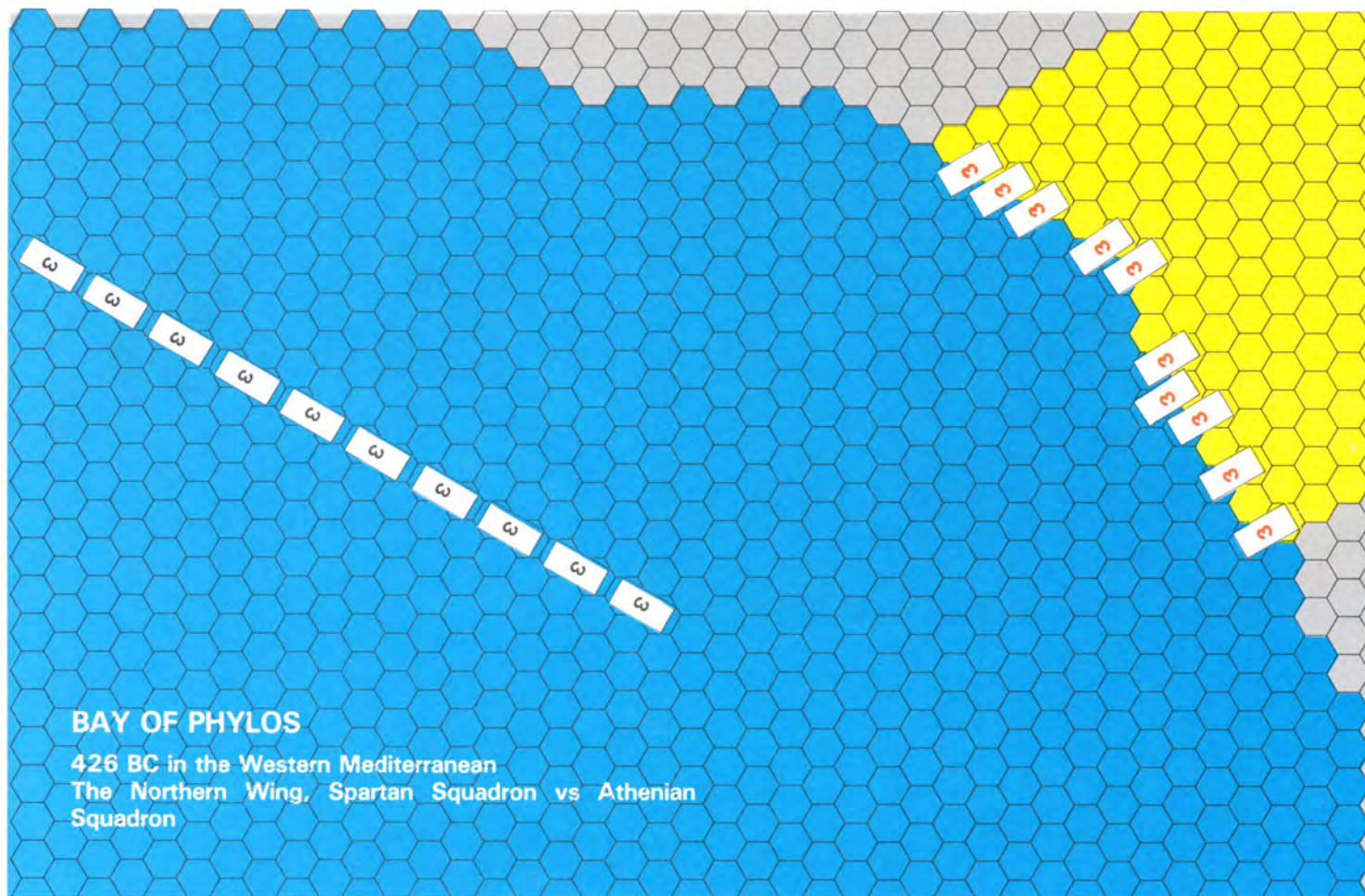
#### Leucadian Squadron

7 Triremes, average crews, each with two points heavy marines

### Optional Rules

Floating Wrecks, Oar Rakes and Drift required. If other options used, wind is breeze from northwest, sea state is flat, ocean current is running with the wind. There is a tidal current ebbing to the west.





## BAY OF PHYLOS

426 BC in the Western Mediterranean  
The Northern Wing, Spartan Squadron vs Athenian Squadron

In the fall of 427 BC, with both sides exhausted and deadlocked, the Athenians sent a squadron of twenty to prevent the flow of grain to the Peloponnese. The next year Athens reinforced this with 40 ships, who were ordered to pause enroute and support the government of Corcyra against yet another revolt. When off the west coast of the Peloponnese, a gale blew these ships into the harbor at Phyllos. Demosthenes, one of the Athenian admirals, sought to convince his comrades to fortify Pylos and use it as a mid-stage port, thus insuring that the blockade would stand. After six days, the body of the fleet moved on; Demosthenes with five ships remained behind to try as best they could to hold the position.

The Spartans, being advised of this, moved to recover the harbor. Demosthenes dispatched two ships to recall the fleet, now at Zacynthus, where it had arrived on its course to Italy. The Spartans, aware of this new development, moved their fleet and army into the harbor and attacked Demosthenes' tiny force. Despite heavy losses, the Athenians held out for two days. In the meantime, the Athenian fleet had returned and, finding the harbor occupied by the enemy, retired to an island near the entrance for the night.

The next morning, splitting their fleet in half, the Athenians charged into the bay even as the Spartans were rising and making ready to launch their ships. Many of the Spartan vessels got off into deep water, but these the Athenians soon put to flight. Five were captured and the others returned to beach. The Athenians pursued these to the shore. Seeing the straits their fleet was in from the heights, the entire Spartan army hurried to the beach to protect the ships. A stalemate thus developed; the Athenians unwilling to face the Spartans ashore and the Spartans afraid to put to sea. The Athenian fleet settled into a blockade of Pylos while a large expedition set out from Athens, alerted by messenger, to overwhelm the isolated Spartans.

A month later, the Spartans were defeated in an Athenian land victory that rocked the Peloponnesian League.

### Victory Conditions

The Athenian player scores two points for each Spartan ship sunk, captured (including those captured after beaching) or turned into a floating wreck.

The Spartan player scores three points for each Athenian ship sunk, captured or turned into a floating wreck.

### Special Rules

- 1) Spartan ships may not exit the playing area. Such that do are considered captured by the Athenian player.
- 2) All Spartan ships are beached when the scenario commences. Each may be launched on the roll of a single die 4-6. Once launched, such ships, should they beach again, may not be relaunched.
- 3) Spartan ships which are beached are open to capture. The Athenian player may opt to attempt to capture these using the same procedure as found in the scenario **Naupactus** (Special Rule 2 above).

## FLEET GAME SCENARIO

Both squadrons are set up as shown (Spartan ships are in red).  
Athenian squadron has expert crews.  
Spartan squadron has green crews.  
Spartan ships move first, Athenian second.  
Wind is nonexistent.

## SHIP GAME SCENARIO

### Athenian Squadron

10 Triremes, expert crews, each with two points heavy marines

### Spartan Squadron

10 Triremes, green crews, each with three points heavy marines and one point missile marines

### Optional Rules

Floating Wrecks, Oar Rakes, Drift and Ships On Shore required. If other options used, wind is calm, sea state is flat, there is no ocean current. There is a tidal current flooding to the northeast.