



I'm OK, You're Toast

MechWarrior Offers a Holistic Approach to Deck Improvement

BY TOM WYLIE

WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK OF BATTLETECH, they think of big, honkin' death machines stomping around the battlefield and blowing the snot out of each other. But every once in a while someone stops to ask questions like: Why are we here? What's the environmental-impact report say about this? And who's piloting these things, anyway? Usually we dismiss such questions as frivolous, but they've been mounting up for a while, so we decided to address all of these aspects of the game's backstory when we set out to design *MechWarrior*.

it on your Command Post to use whenever 'Mechs attack one of your Command cards. Civilian Settlement damages your opponent's Stockpile based on damage that attacking 'Mechs dish out in the region the card enhances (let's face it, blasting movie malls with PPCs won't make your opponent popular with the rubes). Play Civilian Settlement on your Stockpile, and whenever 'Mechs attack that region (or a 'Mech that's guarding it), you can reflect damage back onto the attacker.

Treats for All

MechWarrior also gives a boost to a couple of the undersupported Inner Sphere factions: the Free Rasalhague Republic and the St. Ives Compact. You can send your opponent on an express trip to the Stone Age with Rasalhague's new bombing cards like Airstrikes Close to Home, which scraps cards from his or her hand instead of the Stockpile. St. Ives gets a boost with various sneaky and underhanded cards like Work Stoppage, which lets you choose an asset—say Assembly—and force your opponent to pay related asset costs whether or not he or she has that asset in play. The Clans benefit as well, for example, from cards representing various internal classes and factions, like Crusaders Faction, which gives each of your attacking 'Mechs +1 attack.

And don't think we've forgotten 'Mechs after all that. This set includes a lot of flashy new 'Mechs, like the Hunchback IIC, which has a base attack of 5 and throws in dual Ultra AC/20's to get Alpha Strike: +5! Take that, Inner Sphere! (Of course, it only takes 5 damage to kill it, but you can't have everything...well, not for under 10 resources, anyway.) Probably the most exciting 'Mechs are the ones that come with the

Big, honkin' death machines don't do you much good if they don't know where to go or what to shoot at. Since autopilot technology apparently isn't what it used to be, you need good, solid MechWarriors to pilot those death machines. So the first thing we did was add some Pilot cards with interesting abilities...like Gearhead, who boosts his 'Mech in combat and makes the 'Mech tougher, or RiStar MechWarrior, who has a fifty-fifty chance of recovering any Mission card you play, as long as he's involved in the mission or battle. Plus, we've also included a wide range of cards to support your Pilots, making them better, stronger, or faster, returning dead Pilots from the Scrapheap, and so on.

We made the site of the battle a factor by introducing Terrain cards, enhancements that are played on an entire region rather than on a particular card. Each Terrain card has an ability that applies only when a target in that region is attacked, and represents the effect that physical terrain might have on a battle. For example, Rocky Gorge damages each attacking 'Mech, so you might play