

# OFFENSIVE OLIPHAUNTS

## *Fighting with and against Mûmakil*

Mûmakil are huge monsters that make a fearsome addition to any Evil force. Veteran Mahûd Adam Troke discusses how to use one of these awesome beasts to its full crushing potential, as well as how the forces of Good can stop the unstoppable.

I believe I was the first member of Games Development to kill a Mûmak. Others in the office and amongst our play-testers had beaten Haradrim armies containing one, but I believe I am correct in saying I killed it first. With Dáin Ironfoot, a wedge of Khazâd

Guard and Dwarves with two-handed weapons, I charged towards the beast. Down came their axes and, as they bellowed the warcry of their ancestors, the mighty creature staggered and toppled to its doom, trumpeting fitfully as it fell.

*A sight that could put a dampener on any general's day.*



I have also managed to get some very pleasing results from my own Mûmak. The psychological effect it has on your opponent alone justifies its enormous points cost.

But the Mûmak can be an intimidating proposition to play with and against. It has four pages of rules, making it the most complex model in the game. It also dominates whatever battlefield it is placed upon. Fortunately for you, I'm going to share my hard-won experience. This is not to say I always beat Mûmakil, or always win with them, but even when you lose, you learn something new.

## Squashing the Enemy

Mûmak tactics have, to my mind, four laws. Follow these laws and you will never go far wrong. They are:

1. **Crush the weak**
2. **Beware speed bumps**
3. **Show no mercy**
4. **Keep moving**

**Crush the weak:** Let's not beat around the bush here. Killing the weak warriors of Good is what the Mûmak does best. That's why we (us Evil players that is) are willing to pay out premium points for one. The best

way to go about this is to make the most of the trample attack. The Mûmak is most deadly when it is on the move. If your enemy can bog you down and prevent you from moving, beware! Worse, once he has stopped your precious Oliphaunt, he might be able to muster enough attacks to wound it. This can send the beast raging off into a stampede, something no Evil general wants. Always aim your Mûmak at the largest concentrations of enemy warriors. It doesn't really matter if they are mounted or on foot, either way you'll likely kill them. So long as you are trampling through as many as you can, you're fulfilling Law 1. With three Strength 9 hits against each model you contact, large groups tend to become red stains beneath your Mûmak's feet. Killing anything other than Mighty Heroes of the scariest type is really a foregone conclusion. Only bad dice rolls will save them!

**Beware speed bumps:** Too many times I've thrown away a game with a Mûmak because I've deviated from this law, and it is so simple! Speed bumps fall into two categories: terrain and Heroes. Terrain is easy to avoid. Plan your moves carefully, ideally before the battle. Always know what you want to do in your next turn. In your mind's eye, decide where you want your lovely Oliphaunt to go, who you want it to squash, and how you will avoid scenery as you do so.

Heroes present a much deadlier threat to your glorious beastie. They have multiple Wounds and Fate. Aragorn or Imrahil, for example, are nearly impossible to kill in one fell charge. Your opponent will be willing (if they are smart) to throw such a Hero in your path. Be wary of falling for the ruse and trampling into them. Kill their weaker friends first, isolating them from support and optimising your chances of bringing down the Hero later. Since the Mûmak causes terror, the Hero might not be able to charge you anyway.

**Show no mercy:** Don't feel bad about crushing your own men. Life is cheap in the armies loyal to the Red Eye. This law sounds a little mean and nasty. To be honest, it is. But if you can pin a Knight of Dol Amroth in combat with a Haradrim spearman and then reduce them both to jam with a charging Mûmak, why not? This isn't to say you should make a habit of killing your own warriors for its own sake, but don't shy away from it. It can be a highly effective battle tactic. I've been known to use a Haradrim Chieftain to launch a heroic combat to keep enemies in battle long enough for the Mûmak to smooch them all.

**Keep moving:** Whenever possible keep your Mûmak on the move. The Commander on



the howdah has two Might points, three, if you splash out on a Mahûd. These are best spent on Heroic actions which can allow you to get the jump on an enemy. There is simply no point spending the better part of 300 points on a Mûmak to have it charged and pinned in place by a plucky Knight of Dol Amroth or an Elf. Keep that monster moving and squashing your enemies, and you're that bit closer to victory.

### Stampede!

Mûmakil are sturdy beasts, easily capable of slaughtering far more points worth of troops than they cost to field. But that deadly power comes at a cost: Stampede. One Stampede can ruin everything. There are a number of times that I have lost whole wedges of men to a Mûmak that, stricken by pain, and moved by my cackling opponent, has crashed through my own lines. Be aware of this. One well-placed arrow can ruin all your carefully laid plans. Since it can only move 8"/20cm, keep it that far away from your other men until the battle lines crash and you are at reduced risk from your opponent's archers. Archers, along with the already mentioned mighty Heroes, are the largest threat to the animal. Close on the enemy fast to minimise the number of shots that come your way. Also fill your howdah with bows. Haradrim bows are excellent, thanks to their (incredibly tricky) Poisoned Arrows rule. From the top of a howdah they are both well protected and given a marvellous field of fire. By concentrating your own arrows on the enemy's bowmen, you give them something very serious to worry about and can hopefully kill enough of them to keep your Mûmak safe.

### Stop that Mûmak!

The Mûmak is a deadly monster, capable of crushing your best efforts if given the chance. By now you could be forgiven for thinking that defeat is certain if one of these behemoths is arrayed against your army. But it is not invincible. By picking your fights carefully, concentrating your forces and running away when you need to, victory can be yours! Below I have listed six basic tips that best highlight the ways of negating, killing or crippling the mighty Mûmak:

1. **Avoid it**
2. **Pin it down**
3. **Hide like a coward!**
4. **Everything counts in large amounts**
5. **Bodyguards and Mighty Heroes**
6. **Trebuchet!**

**Avoid it:** Don't worry too much. As frightening as a Mûmak may be, the first thing to realise when taking one on is that you don't have to kill it unless the scenario you are playing demands it. Make the most of this by avoiding it and picking off

everything else in the enemy force. Haradrim Warriors are not especially well armoured or armed, so kill them off as quickly as you can. Sometimes, in tournament scenarios, this on its own can be enough to secure you victory.

**Hide like a coward:** It's not brave, it's not heroic and it is certainly not befitting of a Hero, but it does work. Find a piece of difficult terrain and stay in it. Your warriors can waggle their tongues, beat their shields and cry defiance from the safety of their cover. Mûmakil cannot enter difficult terrain for fear of stumbling or damaging their howdah. Still, more often than not, scenarios call for you to move your models, so it doesn't always work. While spending the whole game lurking in difficult terrain is a little dull, and often unproductive, nobody would blame you if you used terrain to your best advantage. After all, who wants to be squashed flat by a Mûmak?

**Pin it down:** Stop the thing moving. This is the most obvious way of reducing the amount of damage it can do. Keep Heroes with Might nearby, and if priority is lost, declare a heroic move and get something into base contact with the Mûmak to stop your men being squashed. This is a risky plan because the commander can issue heroic moves too. However, in a world where options are very limited, a little gamble might be your best choice. Of course, if you can shoot the commander first (made easier if he is a Mahûd, thanks to his position on the Mûmak) then you can curtail this risk altogether.

**Everything counts in large amounts:** It's a good expression when it comes to Mûmak killing. Inevitably there will be those games where staying out of a Mûmak's way or slowing it down is not enough, especially when bringing the beastie down is the order of the day.

If you are going to kill it, kill it properly. Don't make half efforts. When I slew the Mûmak I charged it with Dáin and about ten other Dwarves. With the best will in the world no monster can prevail long with that many axes tearing chunks out of it. Everything counts, so throw it all in! The same is true of cavalry charges. Half a dozen Knights of Dol Amroth or Knights of Minas Tirith led by a Hero can cause the Mûmak some very serious grief. The bonus that a two-handed weapon or a lance gives you in combat can really put the frighteners on a Mûmak. It's far easier to wound a Defence 7 monster with one of these in your hands!

If you are going to shoot it, really shoot it. Fire every available shot you have, pepper it with arrows, and cause the Commander to

take Courage test after Courage test! Make the thing's life a misery. It's not subtle, but it works better than most tactics.

**Bodyguards and Mighty Heroes:** Warriors with the Bodyguard rule always pass Courage tests while the Hero they are protecting lives, so they make the perfect candidates to slow rampaging Mûmaks. They won't flee the beast due to a failed Courage test. As well as this they generally have a higher Fight value too, often as good as the Mûmak's. If you charge a Mighty Hero into the combat too, you are more likely to win, and do some serious wounds to the beast. Imrahil with a lance will wound it on a 5+, and Aragorn with Anduril on a 4+. Heroes of other races are just as good. Dáin and Balin with their dreaded axes are a menace to the Mûmak, Glorfindel and Elrond equally so. All these Heroes can withstand a pounding from the beast, and so are ideal for the dangerous duty of confronting it. Wound it multiple times in combat and watch as the Commander fails his Courage rolls and the Mûmak begins to Stampede away.

**Trebuchet:** I've been nice until now, I really have. But there is one dirty trick I've been saving until last. If you are feeling really mean this is the one for you. Include a Battlecry Trebuchet and an Engineer Captain in your force. Target the howdah with your Trebuchet, and laugh like a hyena! Make sure that your shots hit and wound thanks to the Captain's Might points. The rocks hurled by the Battlecry Trebuchet are powerful enough to shatter the howdah like matchwood, making every model on it take falling damage as they crash to the ground. Any survivors are in dire peril as the Mûmak must then pass Courage tests on its paltry Courage value of 2 or begin Stamping.

But you'll have to be lucky. Lucky and fast. The Trebuchet only has a 50% chance of hitting, and even then you'll need to roll on the Scatter table. The Mûmak will close on you quickly and you have a minimum range of 18"/42cm, so you will only get two or three turns of shooting before the Mûmak gets too close to target. This is not a friendly tactic, and requires use of a costly siege machine. But when it works, it works brilliantly. We swears it on the precious.

In the end, fighting a Mûmak is an incredibly heroic thing to do. I'll personally never forget the incredible feeling of bravery and honour as Théoden and his Rohirrim gather their might and charge the lines of approaching Mûmakil in The Return of the King film. You can recapture that feeling by taking one out in the game. There are worse ways to lose than sallying valiantly against a raging Oliphant!