

Texas Team Tournament

Description



Over the past weekend, I attended the Texas Team Tournament in Austin, Texas. I had a great time and I want to take a moment to tell you why I think you should attend this tournament. The Texas Team Tournament is perhaps my favorite ASL event, ranking right up there with ASLOk. I want to share with you what I think makes this tournament great.

The Atmosphere

I have been to many ASL tournaments throughout the world. The [Texas Team Tournament](#) is the most relaxed, laid back experience of all the tournaments I have attended. Rick Reinesch, The Tournament Director and host of the Team Tournament, goes to great lengths to make sure every player attending enjoys the experience. From arranging games and keeping score, to having snacks and drinks on site. Rick's dedication to his players shows through it all.

Being in Texas, the food around the venue is amazing if you like barbecue and TexMex. A group of guys went out on the first evening and had some world class barbecue at [Terry Black's Barbecue in Austin](#). The brisket was damn good, and the sides were crazy good. Getting to Terry Black's was a 30 minute drive through rush hour traffic but it was a trip well worth taking.

The other food options around the venue ranged from burgers, to tacos and the hotel's own food service. Attendees can eat very well while in Austin.

Ferocity Fest

This is an ASL game I have seen nowhere else. I am sure it exists, but I have never seen it. For this, Rick picks a meaty scenario and then arranges games between players. The entire purpose of Ferocity Fest is akin to ASL bingo. Everything you do in ASL comes with a point value and something you have to say. If you say the thing, you collect the points. What sort of things do you ask? If your Sniper eliminates a leader, you get points. You ambush in CC, you get points. You eliminate a bypassing AFV with CC reaction fire, you get points. Impress Rick with some bit of ASL finery, he might award you with bonus points. (I witnessed a player being rewarded for eliminating an enemy AFV with one of his own captured DCs). At the end, the winner of the scenario will also receive some small bonus which accounts for less than 5% of the total score. That's right, the winner of Ferocity Fest isn't always the winner of the scenario. It's all about flair and style.

The Main Tournament



This is what you expect when you come to a tournament. As players play on Thursday, they accumulate a win-loss record. On Friday morning, Rick asks who wants to be in the main tournament based on record. He starts with those at two wins and zero losses and fills an eight-man bracket. For those who make it into the bracket, it is a single elimination from there on out.

Players are free to choose any scenario they wish to play in the main tournament and decide who plays which side as they see fit. These games are some of the most intense games as you can imagine. The margin between victory and defeat can be very slim. I watched one player lose a game when his opponent successfully made a Panzerfaust check to attack his Infantry, then roll a hit against units in +3 TEM. Rather than select the unit attacked, the Faust player elected for random selection resulting in two units being eliminated. This last chance elimination put him over the VP cap to win the game. Talk about the slimmest of margins.

The winner of the main tournament is awarded the 10 -3 Champion's glass and has their name added to the 155mm champions shell casing. The runner-up receives the 9-2 Runner Up glass.

Team Tournament



Upon arrival, Rick divides the attendees into even teams. He does this with an eye towards balancing teams. Teams consist of players of all skill levels. Occasionally a new player will get in that no one knows about and this will skew the results but Rick does a fine job making the teams fair.

As players from the team play games, their wins and losses are totalled among all members and the teams are ranked. These teams can fluctuate as wins and losses pile up. At the end of the tournament, the winningest team receives small dice glasses marking their victory.

The Major Johnson Competition

This is the second "major" prize awarded at the Texas Team Tournament but it is perhaps the prize most fiercely competed for. Every person who walks through the door can win The Major Johnson. To understand why, you have to understand the scoring.



Every scenario you play awards points based on the pieces in the game and how long they could theoretically be in play. Vehicles are worth more than Infantry. Fortifications add points. The points awarded are then multiplied by the number of turns you played. A game played to the end of the scenario is worth more points than one completed early. Finally, there are bonus points awarded for games that have unique complexity such as PTO, air drops, night scenarios, seaborne invasion, and others.

You add these base points gathered every game into a total then multiply the base by the total number of games. It sounds easy, but it isn't. Imagine playing five scenarios with 10 points. This yields 250 total points. Meanwhile, another player plays four scenarios worth 15 points, each having a 10% bonus, yielding him 264 points. Monitoring where you are relative to every other player is a challenge and the points can really swing when you get to the 10th game (which is where you will have to *at least* get to).

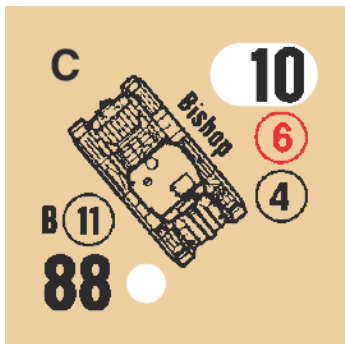
Notice what I didn't mention here because it is important to understand why everyone can win The Major Johnson: winning. Winning the scenario plays no part in the scoring. All you have to do is play ASL. The Major Johnson winner could conceivably be zero wins and ten losses and run away with the trophy. Past winners have had a losing record. All those players in the main tournament are also still in the running for Major Johnson. It might be even more difficult to win than the tournament main.

What Makes The Team Tournament So Good

It is possible for players of all skill levels to come to Texas and take part and be competitive in some aspect of the tournament if they so choose. The winners of the 10-3 Champion's Cup reads like a list of the "usual suspects" although I sneaked in there in 2016. But past winners of The Major Johnson cup are far more varied than any list of champions I have ever seen. The same goes for winners of Ferocity Fest and the Team Competitions. Team competitions are often carried by an SK player having a good grouping of games as much as they are by some top player doing his normal ASL weekend. And this makes Texas such an outstanding tournament.

There is something for everyone of all skill levels. One of the biggest prizes-The Major Johnson-doesn't require a single win! It is possible to play SK-only scenarios for the entire week and be competitive if you play enough ASL. Where else can every player in the room be competitive just by walking through the door? I cannot think of anywhere.

Conclusion



I haven't mentioned the raffle yet, but that is also a tremendous event on Saturday. I don't go in for those sorts of things since I have spent a lot of time culling my belongings to reduce clutter in my life. The table was well stocked and had lots of contributions from the various ASL vendors, as well as other games and prizes ASL players would find of interest. Some might find this another drawing point so I thought I would mention it here.

In the end, what makes the Texas Team Tournament so special is Rick's attention to detail and the service he provides to his guests. Top that with the opportunity for players of all skill levels to compete for one of the top prizes and you have the makings of a great ASL event. If competition doesn't interest you, there are also plenty of people around willing to play ASL and Rick will find you a game if you can't find one on your own.

I often say ASLOk is the Mecca of ASL. If you have not made the pilgrimage to Cleveland, then it should be the first choice on your list of tournaments to attend. But if Cleveland



has been checked off your list, go to the Texas Team Tournament. I have been to three different events and I plan on returning. I cannot say enough good things about it. If you go, tell Rick I sent you. And ask him to show you the current Major Johnson standings ten times a day