RANGED ATTACKS or "WHAT CAN I SHOOT AT?"

Wargaming terrain comes in all shapes and sizes. I would go so far as to say our collections are all different. To accommodate this, for The Barons' War game, when we refer to Line of Sight (LoS), it doesn't mean getting your head down behind your figure to see what they can see. It is about the line across the tabletop from the centre of the Attacker's base to the centre of the Defender's base being clear from obstacles and, if not, what impact the intervening obstacles have in the given situation.

This article has been put together to clarify how this works. It recaps Line of Sight, being Hindered, who can shoot and finishes with the effects of Terrain.

LINE OF SIGHT - p.13 TBW

First up, we need to clarify Line of Sight (LoS). In the '10 Key Principles' on p.11 of the rulebook, point 5 states, "Line of Sight is always drawn from the centre of a warrior's base to the centre of another warrior's base."

*p.13 of the rulebook goes on to cover this in more detail.*

Line of Sight (LoS)

Being able to see the enemy and engage them in combat is essential during a game. You have to be able to see a Group to shoot at them or engage them in melee. This is called Line of Sight or LoS.

LoS is calculated by using the centre of one base to the centre of another base. A Group has LoS if one of its Warriors can draw a straight, unobscured line over the tabletop from the centre of its base to the centre of the base of at least one Warrior in the target Group.

Why is it done this way? Well, as it goes on to say on p.13, "This accounts for different sized bases being used to base your warriors; we know you won't be able to help yourself. This method also doesn't penalise those who want to mount their leaders on elevated bases. We all like an elevated, heroic base, right?"

p.13 in The Barons' War also further explains how LoS can be obscured and is worth reading again to refresh our memories.
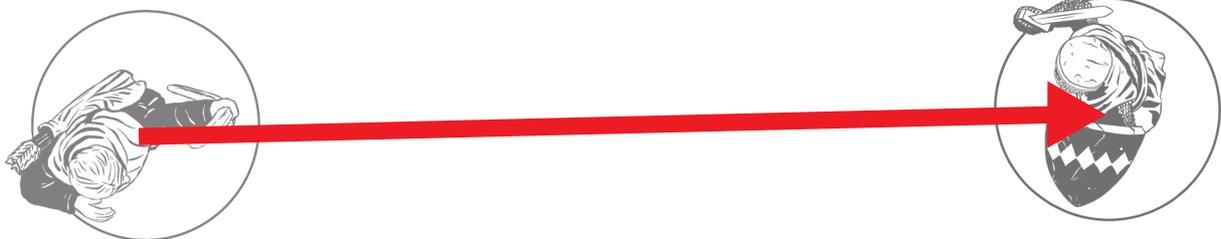
BEING HINDERED - p.14 TBW

Ranged attacks can be Hindered if LoS is established, but there are other Warriors close to the path of the shot. To determine if anything is in the way after establishing LoS, mentally draw a straight path between the Attacker and target, with the path width being the same as the Attacker's base.

• If the path is clear of other Warriors, then the shot goes ahead as normal.

• If another Warrior's base (or a combination of bases) cuts completely across this path, LoS is blocked, and the Action is not allowed as the enemy is not visible.

• If a Warrior lies in the path but not all the way across to block LoS, then they are only Hindering the shot.

LINE OF SIGHT

WARRIOR HINDERING LINE OF SIGHT
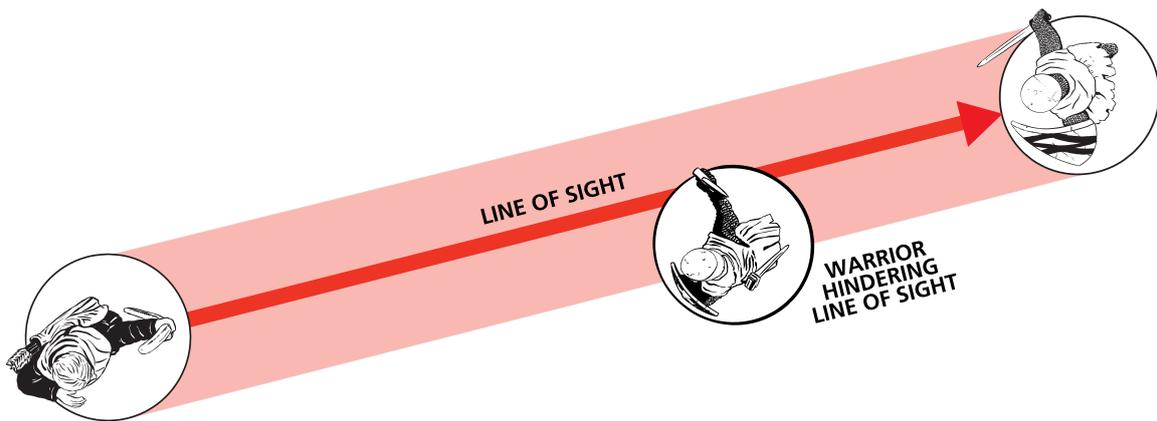
Hindered Shooting

Warriors who choose to shoot past friends and foes alike are Hindering their shot. For each separate Group hindering a shot, the attacking Group suffers -1 Attack Dice. Any natural 1s rolled on the Attacker's dice will cause one casualty to any friendly Group that hindered them. Note this will not harm enemy Groups in the way.

WHO CAN SHOOT? - p.35 TBW

When you declare a ranged attack, you must first ensure that the Attacker has LoS to at least one Warrior in the Defending Group. A Group can only be targeted if they can be seen and there is a passable route to them.

Check the number of individual Warriors that have LoS to the Defending Group. Only those Warriors that have LoS to the Defending Group will provide Attack Dice to the upcoming combat. When shooting, those Warriors that do not have LoS will not take part, and their dice are not counted.

Generate Attack Dice

For Ranged Attacks, all Warriors with LoS at the start of the attack will count. Add up the Group's Attack Dice, one for each eligible Warrior. This is the number of dice that will be rolled. Remember, if their Ranged Attack is Hindered, remove 1 Attack Dice from the pool for every Group Hindering the Attacking Group.

CHECK RANGE

CHECK LINE OF SIGHT

CORRIDOR TO CHECK IF HINDERED

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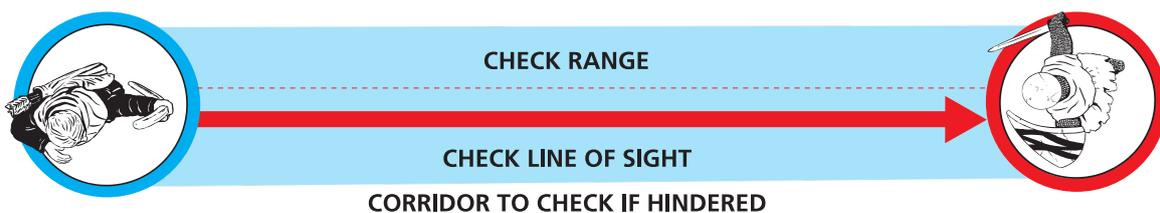
Casualties

It is worth noting here for ranged attacks the nearest visible Warriors are removed first. Once all visible casualties are removed, the remaining casualties are taken from the non-visible figures from the same Groups, p.21 TBW.

TERRAIN

We use the term Terrain to mean woods, hills, buildings, rivers and other gaming scenery that make up our tabletop battlefield. Besides setting the scene for the upcoming encounter, these features have their part to play and can have both a positive and negative outcome on each battle depending on how both players use them to their advantage. This is, after all, a skirmish game, where one man equals one man, with each having a lot of freedom of movement with the idea being, they will be ducking, diving, hiding and defending areas as needed.

Defence Bonuses for Occupying Terrain Groups would be wise to make good use of terrain to protect themselves, especially from ranged attacks. Taking up defended positions behind an obstacle, in a wood or a doorway, can grant them a defence bonus and increase survivability.

Area Cover

Warriors are within area cover if the centre of their base lies within a terrain area that offers a Cover Bonus to their Defence Roll. More than half of the Group must be inside the area terrain to receive the Defence Bonus. While a Group remains in cover, they will receive a bonus to their Defence Dice. When a Group is Forced Back, they will continue to receive the cover bonus if the cover rule still applies.

Soft cover provides a +1 bonus to Defence Rolls, and Hard Cover gives +2 to Defence Rolls.

Defensive Positions

When a Group is placed behind an obstacle, with their bases touching it, that Group is in cover from any enemy drawing LoS over the obstacle. Groups in a defensive position remain so as long as they keep the obstacle between them and their enemy! As soon as a Group makes a Move Action, or are Forced Back, away from the obstacle, so that less than half the Warriors in the Group have bases touching it, they are no longer in a defensive position.
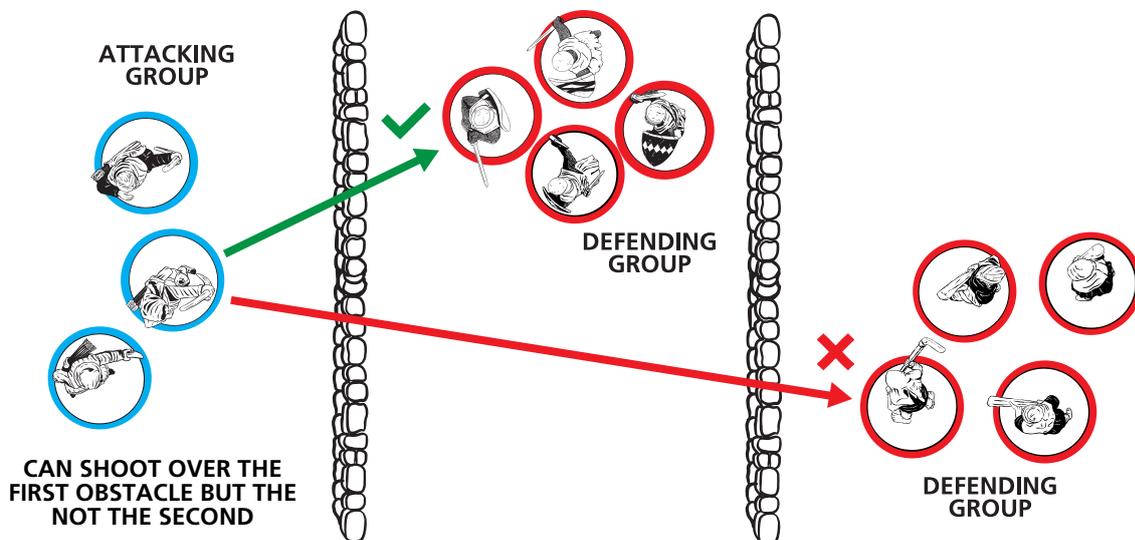
If Warriors are in a defensive position behind an obstacle, they are in a more defendable position 'shielded' by their environment and issued a Defence Action for free.
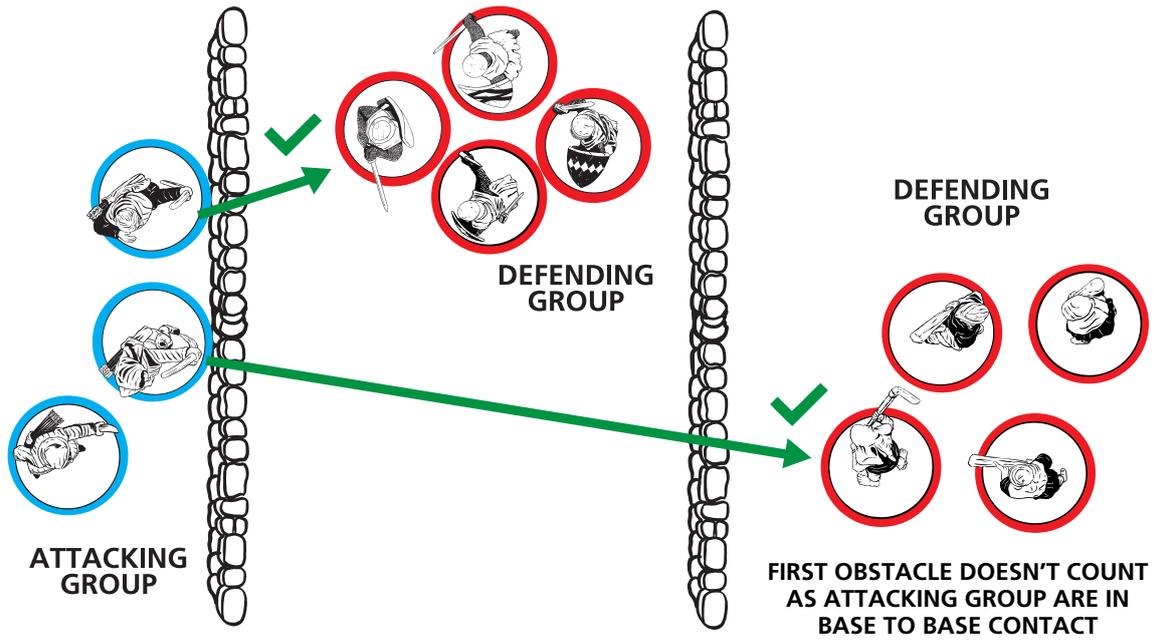
TERRAIN & RANGED ATTACKS - P.117 TBW

If the Attacking Group and the Defending Group are situated at the same level on the battlefield, Terrain hinders ranged attacks precisely the same way as an enemy Warrior being inside the fire corridor hindering a shot, unless the shooting Warrior is touching the terrain.

Shooting Over Obstacles

Groups can draw LoS over a single Obstacle up to one 1" high but not a second intervening Obstacle.

ATTACKING GROUP

DEFENDING GROUP

DEFENDING GROUP

CAN SHOOT OVER THE FIRST OBSTACLE BUT THE NOT THE SECOND

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DEFENDING GROUP

DEFENDING GROUP

ATTACKING GROUP

FIRST OBSTACLE DOESN'T COUNT AS ATTACKING GROUP ARE IN BASE TO BASE CONTACT
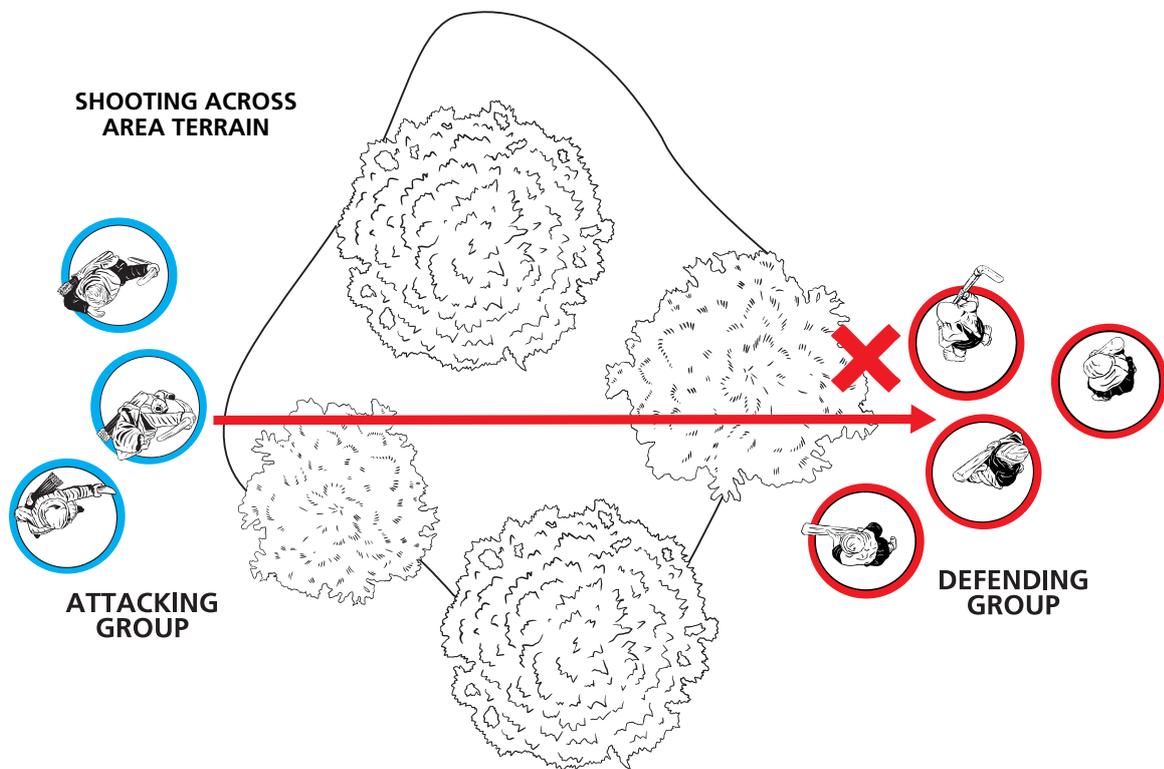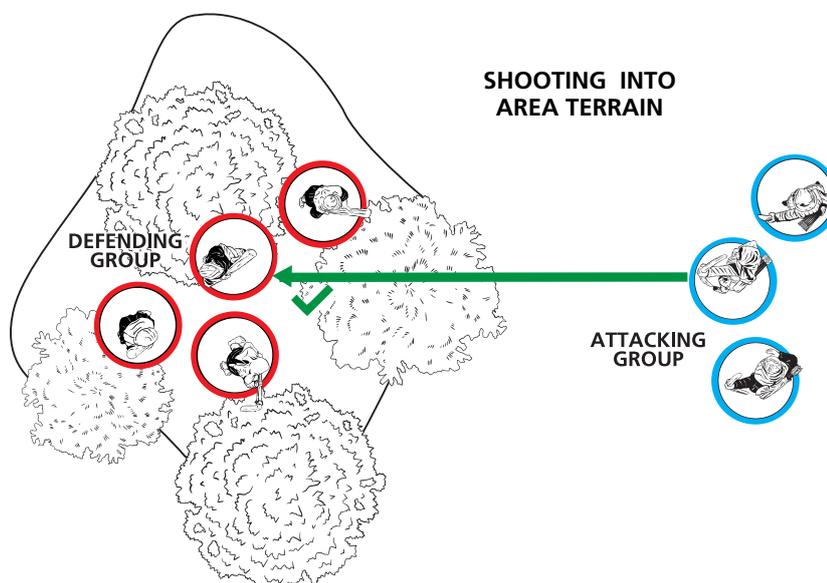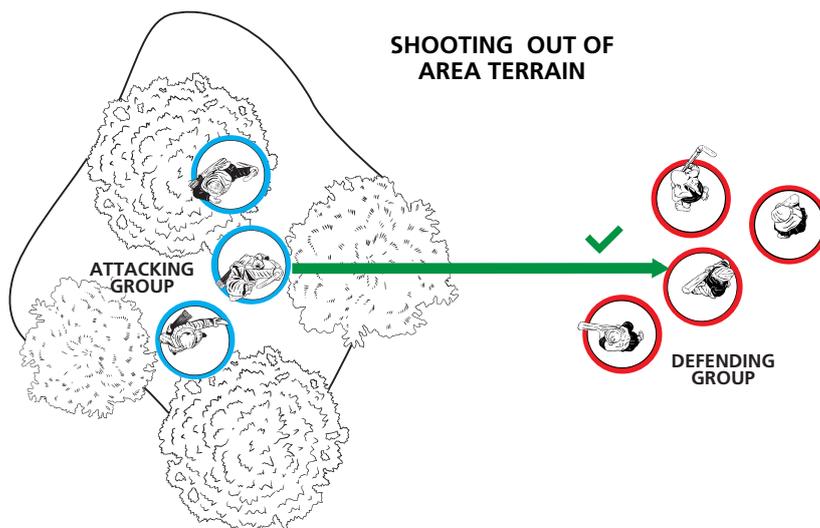
Shooting into & out of Area Terrain

Area Terrain does not block LoS into or out of a single feature. Groups within Area Terrain can shoot out of it. Groups outside Area Terrain can shoot into it. Imagine the feature isn't there when working out LoS from or to Groups that occupy terrain.

Area Terrain blocks Line of Sight drawn directly through it, a group of Warriors do not have LoS across a piece of Area Terrain, from one side to the other.

SHOOTING ACROSS AREA TERRAIN

ATTACKING GROUP

DEFENDING GROUP

SHOOTING OUT OF AREA TERRAIN

ATTACKING GROUP

DEFENDING GROUP

SHOOTING INTO AREA TERRAIN

DEFENDING GROUP

ATTACKING GROUP

Higher Ground

Before a game starts, both players agree which pieces of terrain are classed as higher ground. They should also agree to LoS rules for this higher ground. In short, if a Group of Warriors are located on higher ground which other pieces of terrain will it grant LoS over.

The higher ground should provide the tactical advantage of having improved LoS over being at ground level, primarily as at the same level, Warriors would not be able to see enemy Groups through Area Terrain.

SHOOTING OVER AREA TERRAIN & OBSTACLES - p.41 TBW

When shooting over terrain, LoS is still measured from the centre of the Attacker's base to the centre of the Defender's base, a straight line across the tabletop. The elevated Attacking Group will have LoS to the Defending Group if the players have agreed all the terrain pieces it crosses grant LoS.

• Each piece of Area Terrain the Attacker's LoS crosses counts as hindering the ranged attack. Remove 1 Attack Dice from the pool for every piece of Area Terrain Hindering the Attacking Group.

• Each obstacle the Attacker's LoS crosses counts as hindering the ranged attack. Remove 1 Attack Dice from the pool for every Obstacle Hindering the Attacking Group.

Shooting Options From Higher Ground

The following diagram illustrates shooting options for a group of four warriors on a hill located in the centre. Each option illustrates how many of the warriors are eligible to shoot, any bonuses they receive and any penalties they occur, resulting in the number of Attack Dice (AD) they would roll. It also indicates any bonuses the Defenders would receive from a ranged attack.

1. NO LINE OF SIGHT
Players agreed
before game
these woods block
line of sight.

2. ATTACKERS
4X Warriors AD
+1 AD - Higher Ground
-3 AD - Hindered Shooting
Total AD (4+1) - 3 = 2AD

DEFENDERS
Defensive Position:
+2 bonus to each
Defence Roll

3. ATTACKERS
4X Warriors AD
+1 AD - Higher Ground
-1 AD - Hindered Shooting
Total AD (4+1) - 1 = 4AD

DEFENDERS
No Bonus

7. ATTACKERS
3X Warriors AD
+1 AD - Higher Ground
-3 AD - Hindered Shooting
Total AD (3+1) - 3 = 1AD

DEFENDERS
No Bonus

ATTACKING
GROUP

LINE OF SIGHT

6. ATTACKERS
3X Warriors AD
+1 AD - Higher Ground
Total AD 3+1 = 4AD

DEFENDERS
No Bonus

5. ATTACKERS
4X Warriors AD
+1 AD - Higher Ground
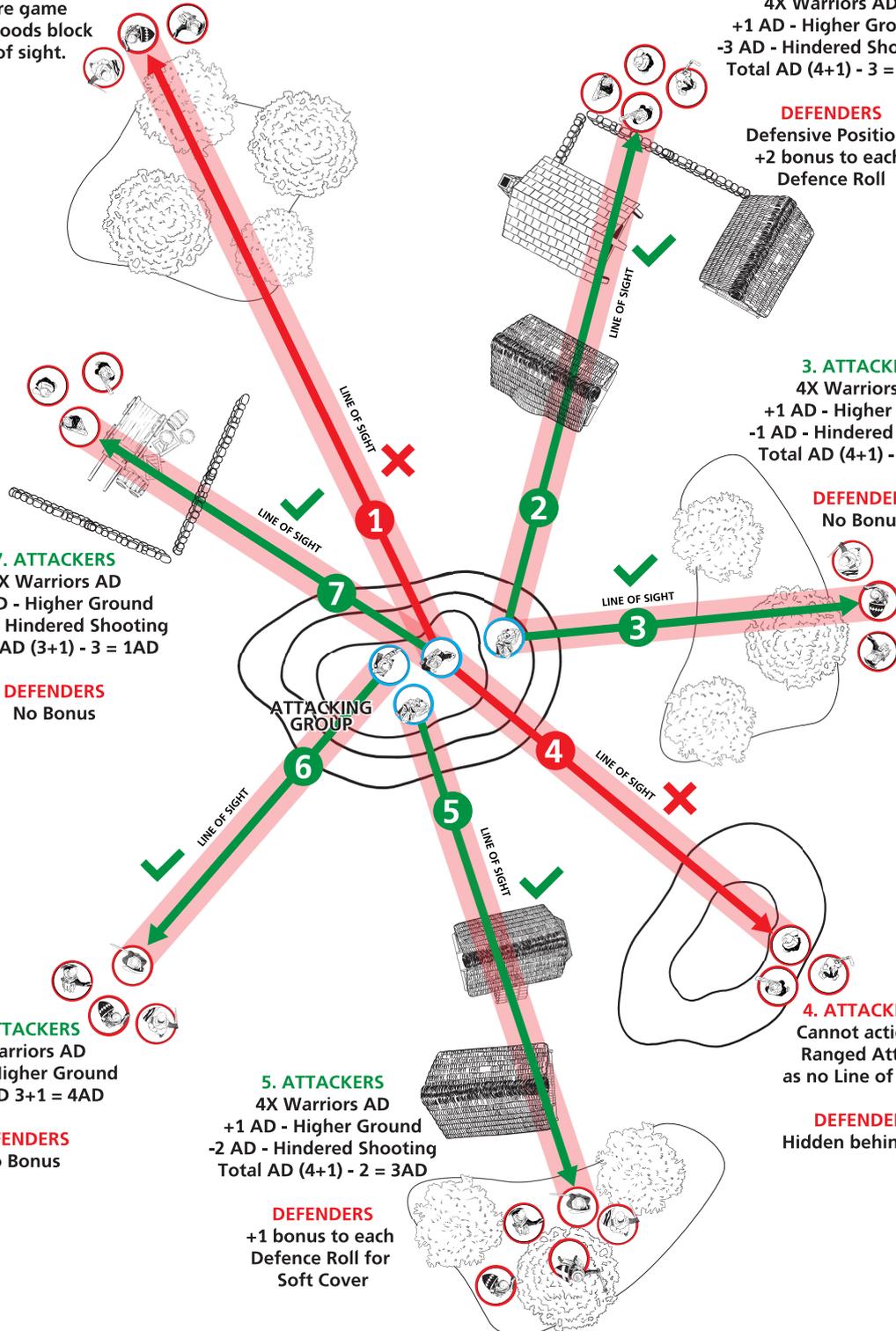-2 AD - Hindered Shooting
Total AD (4+1) - 2 = 3AD

DEFENDERS
+1 bonus to each
Defence Roll for
Soft Cover

4. ATTACKERS
Cannot action a
Ranged Attack
as no Line of sight.

DEFENDERS
Hidden behind hill.

If all the Attack Dice are removed from the pool due to Hindering terrain, the attack is not viable as there are no d10s to roll.

Higher ground also grants the ranged Attacker an advantage; if shooting from a position that is clearly higher than the target, such as on a hill, a Group adds +1 Attack Dice. Players should apply common sense here.

Shooting Uphill! - Targeting an enemy located on Higher Ground

The reverse applies for a Ranged Attack against a Group occupying the Higher Ground. They can be targeted over Area Terrain and Obstacles. The Attacking Group, in this instance, does not receive any advantage for shooting at an elevated enemy.

Authors note: When shooting over terrain, is treating higher ground in this way realistic? Probably not. If the battlefield has a massive hill, say 12" in height, when crouched behind your group of archers perched on top to see what they can see, you will most likely be able to 'rain death' on everything on the tabletop. Because of this, I've found that abstractly dealing with terrain keeps things simple. When it comes to ranged attacks and determining being able to hit, we don't have to deal with height, gravity and all the other technical aspects of shooting which, to be honest, hurts my brain. Doing it this way just works.