

## 25th Anniversary Project

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 27 Apr 2023 20:38

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Greetings, Warlords

Darklords Rising turns 25 this year. At the height of its popularity, the Warlords series has been considered a peer of Heroes of Might and Magic. Sadly, while the latter has an enduring fan community even for the older games, Warlords 3 has mostly sunk into obscurity.

I've been tinkering with the available modding tools for a while, and I've decided that for its 25th anniversary in August, I'm going to release an overhaul mod, to maybe give the old game a little shot in the arm, and give long-time fans an excuse to delve into it again.

My goals:

- Rebalance all the units in the game. For many, that means only recalibrating their gold cost and some light touches, others will be changed significantly. Outliers that used to dominate competitive multiplayer will be nerfed, many more which were unplayed will be buffed. Abilities that were only introduced in DLR or its 1.01 patch will be a bit more widespread. The intent here isn't to make every unit competitive, but to make all at least playable and not be made obsolete by another, cheaper unit.

- Rework the heroes from the ground up, drawing on lessons from the K4 and X multiplayer mods. This will be major work, and balancing them will be tricky and probably dependent on how much feedback I get. My starting point is to have a common xp chart and AP progression for all heroes, that may get tweaked later on.

- Some light tweaks to the default.rul ruleset. Greater XP rewards for hard quests, and fixed mana crystal rewards from ruins to eliminate the feast-or-famine randomness.

- Comprehensive gold cost standardization across all items, without changing any of their effects. Among other things, the gold cost determines which items are affected by the Shatter and Create Item spells, so this is a necessary step.

- Lastly, it seems possible to modify the 8x8 different default army sets for playing random maps. Once I'm happy with the unit and hero changes, I aim to recreate those 64 army sets to provide for default

sides that are both thematic and balanced, with every unit and hero class being well-represented across the board.

I won't be modifying the existing campaigns and scenarios directly, but the goal is that replaying them with the new units and heroes will give you more interesting options for stack building and hero selection. There's no intention to include new art or create new units outright, and the end result will probably not be very compatible with the Stormheim mod, as far as balance and unit costs are concerned.

I will be posting updates and my thoughts on game balance as I go along, both here and at a few other places, to hopefully get some feedback. I've never been a part of the multiplayer community back in the day, but I'd be especially interested to hear from those who were. I don't expect anyone is still playing Warlords 3 multiplayer competitively these days, but I'd be delighted to be proven wrong. Multiplayer isn't the main concern of my mod, but I want it to be a better experience than vanilla DLR for anyone who wants to try it.

Farewell, Warlords. Until we meet again.

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## Re: 25th Anniversary Project

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 16 Jul 2023 13:12

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To unpack that a little:

-Changes to View based on 5 as the default for scouting units, 4 for other high perception ones.

-A pretty comprehensive overhaul of PPDC units, with a couple of exceptions. Ghouls and Plague Carriers get toned down a bit, Curse units get matched to Banshees, Bashee and Giant Bee movement reduced.

-Since my changes to the Cockatrice already made it a buffed version of the SH Basilisk, I turned the Basilisk into a tough T3 unit.

-The Hydra is hero stack viable, but slow.

-The Wyvern gets turned into a T3 unit, but keeps equal poison/turn to the buffed Hydra.

-I reverted the Unicorn changes for now.

-If we have a T3 Morale 3 unit, a T2 Morale 2 unit is back on the table. However, it's the Pegasus now, which is more expensive than the old EC.

-Eagles stay the T3 flying Morale 2 unit, but Griffons get a role suited for raiding the backfield with Chaos 1.

-Elven Lords and Cavalry get a Field bonus from their role as cavalry, rather than the less useful elven Woods bonus. Lords are more combat focused than Unicorns now, but I'm unconvinced this really gives them a niche.

-Spectres join the faster-than-dragons niche.

-Movement buffs for Trolls and Slayer Knights.

I've left the Lamia and Beholder untouched for now. I don't think Curse is a good fit for the Beholder, and I think we've got Curse covered pretty well already. Assassin might be an option for all their instant death attacks.

According to Trolloc, the Lamia is a little too good on the efficiency curve, but I'd like to hear your opinions on her.

I'm fairly happy with Giants and Minotaurs relative to each other, but the Dwarf Mutants need something more to compensate for their slow movement. I'm considering either City+1 or Chaos 3.

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## Re: 25th Anniversary Project

Posted by Anomander Rake - 17 Jul 2023 10:04

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Lamia, Chimera, Barlog belong to the group of very useful units. I don't think any of them are clearly stronger or weaker. Lamia and Chimera are weakened by 2 reduced mobility. Which often makes them the slowest unit in my army. That's why I choose Barlog more often. IMHO nothing in this group below 20 moves will be playable.

Overall the changes look good.

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