

CAV 101: Setting Up a Game of CAV: SO

The two questions I hear most from a new player is one, how many points should I use to play and two, what's the best way to set up the game board?

Let's start with how many points to use. As most players start with just CAVs in their first few games, I'm going to use them for my examples here. You can adjust points later to allow for other model types.

Most CAVs have a Threat-Point Value (TV) between 200 and 1200 points, setting a mid-range value of 700 TV! This amount is pretty close to where most of your Large and Extra-Large Chassis CAVs are point-wise, and with a CAV squad having four to six models, the average squad would have 2800-4200 points to spend.

A typical number I see thrown out there for squad building is 2500 TV. Breaking that down to an average in four-six model squads, you still get a lot of points to use, 625-416, respectively. That's a lot of "weight" marching around on the battlefield and making it hard on the poor recon pilots trying to do their job! So what is the best number of points to use?

Before I throw any more numbers at you, another couple of points to consider are space and time. A large number of TV points allow for a lot of heavy models; they can also cause your game board to quickly turn into a parking lot that can take all afternoon to clear out. I find the best game board size to use for CAV: SO is 4'x6' (or even better, 4'x8'), with each starting along one of the short "ends." If your using the standard 6" deployment zones, you have already lost a whole foot of the board before the game has even begun, so bigger is better! A 4'x4' board can also work, but with the extended range of most CAV weapons, both sides will start in range of each other from the get-go¹.

Time-wise, I like a game to fall somewhere into the two to four-hour range. These days, real-life gets in the way of the all-day (and night) games I enjoyed in my younger days, so I try to shoot for this time frame now. Regardless of how fast any system plays, it takes a set amount of time per model to move and shoot. Even rock, scissors, paper can take 10-15 seconds to play one round.

So for this example, let's say both players have ten models each, and the average time to move and shoot a model is 30 seconds. That's a total of 10 minutes per turn, not taking into account any smack talk or any of the other delays that inevitability always shows up when playing. Needless to say, the more models you add, the longer the turn and more prolonged the game will be. I have found that, as a general guide, one squad per player equates to around one hour of play. This number, of course, will vary based on the overall knowledge of the rules by the

players but is pretty average for someone with only 2 or 3 games under their belt with a decent understanding of the game system.

With all that in mind and the different factors we need to consider, let's get back to how many points to use in a game. The average I like to use per model is 400 TV, setting the range for squads to 1600-2400 points with an average of 2000 TV per side. That lets a player use smaller TV CAVs as practical additions to their force group while also forcing them to consider just how bad do they want that bigger CAV(s).

As I know how much everyone loves a table, we can extrapolate those numbers like this:

No of Squads	Total TV	No of Models	Play Time
1	2000	5	1 hour
2	4000	10	2 hours
3	6000	15	3 hours
4	8000	20	4 hours
5	10000	25	5 hours

These numbers are per side for a two-sided game. Some other factors to consider, especially in larger games, is having more players than just two will typically help to speed up play. Also, with a larger number of models, killing a CAV can be quite sudden when targeted by several enemy models at once!

The last thing to consider time-wise is our other, earlier question. "How do I set up the game board?" A lot of terrain objects can mean a lot more maneuvering with shorter, narrower lanes of fire, both of which can affect the speed of the game as well. In the next edition of CAV 101, I will dive into setting up the game board in more depth!

CAVBOSS

¹ **So why are the weapon ranges so long in CAV: SO?**

After playing similar type games over the years, I realized that every one of them had one thing in common. Both sides set up their forces and started moving towards each other until someone was in range, and everyone began shooting! No matter what size of game board we used, the first few turns were always the same. Now I don't know about you, but I like to play a game for the action, and the sooner we get to it, the better.

With that philosophy in mind, I set the ranges in the game so that both sides would have a couple of turns to get into position before the fireworks began.

If these longer ranges bother you, cut them in half, especially if playing on a smaller battlefield. Leave the model's MV the same as most don't have that large of a move anyway.