Dwarves of Runeguard
Miners
Playtest Rules

"I don't care what Stigzin found! The Dwarves are before us! I won't be denied my slaughter because that fleabitten dog-rider is scared of holes in the ground! Attack!"

- the last known command of Hurak, Orc warlord

Miners are part of a semi-holy triumvirate in Dwarven society, along with Longbeards and Forge Guard. Where Longbeards and Forge Wardens are seen as paragons of martial virtue and craftsmanship, respectively, Miners are considered intrepid explorers. They venture deep underground, finding seams of valuable ore and pioneering vast caverns to be transformed into new settlements.

Miners delve deep, not knowing what they will discover. And if they encounter danger, they are often the only protection Runeguard has. Many do not return, collapsing their tunnels on themselves rather that let their homes be overwhelmed. Their victories go unseen and often their sacrifices are unknown. Dwarves hold Miners as the pinnacle of humble bravery and steadfast resolve.

These are Playtest Rules. They are draft rules under consideration by our Rules Team, and are unofficial. If you wish to use them in a game you must have your opponent's consent beforehand. If you play in any Battleground event (such as a tournament), they may not be used without the organizer's agreement.

	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes			Points Cost	Type
Miners	⚔(4) 4 / 7	🛡 1 / 2	-	12	2.5"*	4	4	4	162	Standard
Natural Sprinters, Tunneling.										

Natural Sprinters: This unit's MC is 3.5" when Final Rushing or Routing. During your Movement & Command Phase, you can expend a Command Action to make this unit's MC 3.5" for the turn. You may affect multiple units by spending one Command Action per unit.

Tunneling: When using the Standard Deployment Procedure, this unit may be deployed anywhere within 15" of the owning player's long table edge. They may not be deployed in Impassible Terrain or Terrain that gives them a Movement Category penalty.

Design Notes

Dwarf Miners were the very first Runeguard unit we redesigned. It was considered a "stay in the box" unit because of its specialized stats.

Sure, Power 7 was good, but their low Offensive Skill meant that the Miners seldom hit an opponent of average Defense Skill. They were best used against monsters like Trolls...but those monsters often moved fast enough to avoid this bad matchup.

Once you took into account their mediocre defensive stats and the fact that they weren't Core, the wiser choice often was to either take a dedicated tank unit at the same price (i.e. Militia) or spend the points on a high Power unit that could fight even if it didn't get the ideal matchup (i.e. Battleaxemen).

The challenge we faced in fixing this was something we called the Optimization Problem: If you have two units (i.e. Miners & Battleaxemen) that fulfill the same role (i.e. "high Power to fight armored guys or big monsters"), then one of them will almost always be the better choice.

Which is better depends on a host of variables: What are the other stats of the two units? What other units are in the army? What are the special abilities of the faction? What other factions are in the game (i.e. how many Elf/high defensive skill factions are there)? What are the fundamental mechanics of your game? These variables make it difficult to predict which unit is the better choice, but it doesn't change the fact that one of them will be the optimal choice.

(We also liked to joke that "Real Companies" with "Real Playtesting Budgets" haven't cracked this problem, so it's hubristic to think we would either)

All of which is to say that if we improved the Miners to the point that they were worth taking, we'd very likely only change which unit, Miners or Battleaxemen, was a "stay in the box" unit.

If you can't solve the Optimization Problem, the solution is to end-run around it: give the two units different roles. Units with similar stats can have different roles with a few adjustments. We accepted that Battleaxemen (now Hinterland Foresters) would be better at the role of fighting high Toughness units, and that the Miners should fulfill a different role.

So we asked ourselves, what was the Dwarf faction missing? The obvious answer was: mobility.

Dwarves are slow. It's pretty much a defining feature. Dwarves are slow and tough. But in a game of maneuver, being slow was crippling.

What do you do solve a problem (i.e. being slow is crippling) while not changing a fundamental aspect of a faction (i.e. Dwarves are slow). The previous version solved the issue by including a unit of non-Dwarven cavalry. The issue with this was that Antonian Cavalry was essentially an auto-include in every Dwarven

army, to protect their flanks and to exploit breakthroughs. "Stay in the box" units are bad for a game; auto-include units are just as bad.

The solution was, in retrospect, obvious: Miners would dig.

We decided not to make Tunneling a type of in-game movement, because the rules for it would just be a headache for players. And tunneling is slow (we're not experts on civil engineering, but we never got the impression that digging through the ground is a speedy process).

We decided to represent Tunneling as a form of forward deployment. The Dwarves would dig through the night, popping out of the ground to ambush the enemy right as the battle starts. Being part of deployment means you could wait to place them onto the table until almost the very end, giving your opponent only a little time to respond to this sudden threat.

What we liked about this is that we gave the Dwarves mobility, but not speed. The Miners can deploy halfway across the table. And you measure their deployment from your table edge, not your deployment zone. Meaning you can deploy them on the far edge of the battle, already in a position to flank the enemy line.

However, once they're placed, they move no faster than any other Dwarf unit. They can't race across the battlefield. Mobility, not speed.

Early playtesting has us very excited about the Miners. So far feedback has been that they play very different than the Battleaxemen, fulfilling a completely different role. But also they function differently that the Antonian Cavalry, who use speed to achieve mobility but sacrifice durability (something the 12 hit box Miners do have).

We're very eager to see what you think of the Dwarven Miners, and encourage you to give us feedback on our Facebook page or our forum!

Till the Next Missive. . .

The Outlaw Alchemist