

The Perfect Persian Plan: Free Deployment in **Issus**

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In my experience with **The Great Battles of Alexander**, I have found that the game system captures the essence of tactical ancient warfare, particularly as practiced by Alexander. The game appears so realistic, in fact, that the various scenarios can not help but heavily favor the Macedonians. Perhaps only through poor judgement and careless mistakes can the Persians claim victory on the battlefield.

Having watched Alexander conquer at will, I decided it's high time to turn the tables on the Macedonian Army, thanks to the Free Deployment Variant offered in the Issus scenario. I believe I have formulated an initial deployment for the Persians that can't be cracked, even by Alexander and his phalanxes. Provided below is my proposed Perfect Persian Plan. Go ahead and try this set-up for yourselves. If anyone comes up with a Macedonian plan to crack this set-up, I hope to see it set forth in these pages.

Persian Free Deployment for Issus

Pinarius River defense line:

Greek Mercenary 1 HO: 1418/1517 >> abatis

Greek Mercenary 2 HO: 1617/1716 >> abatis

Royal Guard 1 HO: 1816 >> abatis
Royal Guard 2 HO: 1916 >> abatis
Greek Mercenary 3 HO: 2016/2115 >> abatis
Greek Mercenary 4 HO: 2215/2315
Royal Guard 3 HO: 2416
Cardacenes 1 LI: 2515/2615
Cardacenes 2 LI: 2714/2814
Royal Guard 1 HC: 2913
Archers 1 + 2 SK: 3014
Cardacenes 3 LI: 3013/3112
Cardacenes 4 LI: 3111/3211
Royal Guard 2 HC: 3310
Cardacenes 5 LI: 3309/3409
Cardacenes 6 LI: 3508/3608
Cardacenes 7 LI: 3708/3808
Cardacenes 8 LI: 3807/3806
Cardacenes 9 LI: 3905/4005
Cardacenes 10 LI: 4104/4204
Archers 3 + 4 SK: 4304
Archers 5 + 6 SK: 4405
Archers 7 + 8 SK: 4505
Archers 9 + 10 SK: 4606
Archers 11 + 12 SK: 4706
Archers 13 SK: 4807
Archers 14 SK: 4808
Javelinists 1 SK: 4908
Javelinists 2 SK: 5008

Rhodes 1 SK: 5207

Rhodes 2 SK: 5307

Rhodes 3 SK: 5407

South of the Pinarius:

Archers 15 + 16 SK: 5209

Archers 17 + 18 SK: 5309

Archers 19 SK: 5210

Reserve line:

Median 1 LC: 1315

Median 2 LC: 1415

Royal Guard 3 HC: 1514

Bactrian 1 HC: 1614

Darius + Royal Bodyguard CH: 1613

Bactrian 2 HC: 1713

Median 3 LC: 1813

Median 4 LC: 1912

Nabarzanes: 1914

Median 5 LC: 2012

Hyrcanian 1 LC: 2512

Hyrcanian 2 LC: 2612

Hyrcanian 3 LC: 2711

Thymondas: 2812

Bactrian 3 HC: 2811

Bactrian 4 HC: 2810

Asian Levy 14 LI: 2809

Bactrian 5 HC: 2909

Hyrceanian 4 LC: 3009

Hyrceanian 5 LC: 3008

Persian 1 LC: 3107

Persian 2 LC: 3207

Asian Levy 1 LI: 3306

Asian Levy 2 LI: 3406

Asian Levy 3 LI: 3505

Asian Levy 4 LI: 3605

Asian Levy 5 LI: 3604

Asian Levy 6 LI: 3703

Asian Levy 7 LI: 3803

Asian Levy 8 LI: 3902

Asian Levy 9 LI: 4002

Aristomedes: 4004

Asian Levy 10 LI: 4101

Asian Levy 11 LI: 4201

Asian Levy 12 LI: 4301

Asian Levy 13 LI: 4402

Persian 3 LC: 4502

Persian 4 LC: 4603

Persian 5 LC: 5104

Reomithres: 5105

Initial Deployment Strategy Notes

A Macedonian attack on the Persian left flank is pretty much ruled out due to the Level 3 and 4 terrain in the area. Only infantry and skirmishers will be able to transverse this terrain, but only after absorbing several cohesion hits, thus weakening them before they are able to initiate shock combat. Should one or two Macedonian units actually slip across the Pinarius (having to absorb further cohesion hits), they will be easily overwhelmed by the Persian reserves.

The five Persian units deployed south of the Pinarius River should be withdrawn immediately to the northern side. One should not become overconfident; play conservatively. Advancing further to the south in strength robs the Persian player of his advantage and plays into the Macedonian's hands.

The most vulnerable part of the Persian line is the right flank, or upper Pinarius area, which consists solely of Level 1 terrain. Greek Mercenaries, with the help of abatis and supported by cavalry in the rear, should be able to counter any serious assault by Macedonian phalanx and hypaspists. Besides, enemy cavalry has no chance against them.

The same also holds true for the Persian center. Although only light infantry is defending this area, the inherent terrain advantage coupled with a strong cavalry and infantry reserve should be enough to stop any potential Macedonian breakthrough. Although the Persians may not hold every hex adjacent to the Pinarius, there certainly are sufficient reserves to counterattack immediately when necessary.

One final and critical point. As soon as you realize where the Macedonians are forming their Schwerpunkt, deploy your best leaders to this sector. In the meantime, watch those flanks!

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