

## MERCATOR – THE MARKS

Information Sheet for VB organizers and for would-be GM's

Mark 1 was a prototype, played FTF but never published.

Mark 2, Mark 3 and Mark 3½ were the forerunners of Definitive. The Variant Bank should have copies, but there is no reason why anyone should want to play them anymore. Definitive is now the 13-player game and has been for over ten years.

Mark 4 was likewise made redundant by Mark 5. Again, the Variant Bank should have both, but anyone wanting a 14-player version should play Mark 5.

Mark 6 is for 15 players and remains a front line Mark.

Marks 7, 8, 9 and 10 are for 19, 21, 24 and 26 players respectively. They form a set and all suffer from the problem that two or three countries get a raw deal. The Bank should have copies, but as far as players are concerned they come with a health warning. Mark 15 is part of this set and has the same problem. It is for 20 players. It is numbered out of sequence because, for some reason, it got overlooked and wasn't published until later. Unfortunately, the maps and set-up sheet have the game labelled as Mark 14: Doug had forgotten its existence when the real Mark 14 was given its label. So if the Bank has a 20-player Mercator labelled "Mark 14", renumber it 15. Then put it in the "collectors only" file along with 7 – 10.

Marks 11, 12 and 13 are for 16, 17 and 18 players respectively. These are almost as well balanced as one would hope. The one problem they have concerns the position round the North Sea. Two solutions were proposed for this: Marks 13a and 14. Mark 13a made it easier for the two problem countries to live together; Mark 14 got rid of one of them altogether. The Mark 13a amendments were fed back into Mark 11 to give 11a. So the position on this group now is that 11a, 13a and 14 are the live Marks and that 11, 12 and 13 have the same "interesting forerunner" status as 2, 3 and 4. For 16 players use Mark 11a; for 17 players use Mark 14; and for 18 players use 13a. (A 12a was designed, but it is unpublished, as the 17-player slot is better catered for by Mark 14.)

Mark 16 is for 26 players and is the replacement for Mark 10. At the time of writing it has not been played, but it looks to be well balanced. Some work has been done on bridging the gap between Marks 13a/14 and 16 so as to give replacements for Marks 7, 8 and 9, but as yet they are unpublished.

Finally, there are two one-off Marks: Waterways is for 18 players; 5-up is a special "stripped-down" game for just five countries.

All Marks with the exception of Mark 14 are the sole work of Doug Wakefield. Mark 14 was my idea, and I devised the map and victory conditions; but since Doug gave both the initial go-ahead and final approval, and since most of the map is identical with that for 13 and 13a, he should be regarded as at least co-author of this one also.

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