

## RICKHOFEN 27 AVRIL 1809

Davout is trying another Auerstadt having found a restricted frontage good position. As the more manoeuvrable one, with a decent number of cavalries, is that a good idea? We are expecting more than twice our numbers of Kaiserlicks, hard day. The mission is to force a full lengthy deployment of the Austrians to delay them on their way to Regensburg and allow the Empereur to arrive with the main forces. The Austrians want to either crush Davout or push him away not losing too much time. He could also combine with sending a corps or less out of the table coming from the right in the woods or carrying on via poor roads to dislodge Davout by a turning move, but it would take a day. I was fortunate to have for the first hours of the game, my usual opponent which will give a whole different taste to the game, not the least being the ability to hide troops. He had the choice of deploying how he wanted on the small table facing the river. He could rush things (he did) deploying one corps and having the others deploy outside or on table (one hour later) one at a time from that single road (see the strategic map), with the possibility of a fumble and delayed entries (or slightly ahead!). He could wait half a day to have two set up, or the next day with everything. He was told that Napo was coming and here was the chance to do this Davout. He expected less than half his overall strength but did not know of the cuirassier division.



The French position seen from the left



From the right



Set up, Austrians second, for the camera, as we used counters for hidden troops, the actual figures were more for show. The Austrians having two high points could see quite well in depth though.

The Plans of both sides. French: quite simple 3 divisions up trying to stay out of range of the guns. As the perfidious white coats uncharacteristically rushed things, we did not have much time to improve the position, only the right hand village was strengthened. I deployed hidden terrain counters for the villages and stretches of the Grosse Lauer river. Between bridges and poplars. The French knew it all, being seconded by local Bavarians and having been there more than one day. Unfortunately when turning over the counters it came that two major stretches of the river were easily accessible (though artillery needs still bridges) on both ends of the front. The very center with its bridges was impassible.

The German names of the terrain between the rivers gives a hint that it was marshy places and often flooded, only used for pasture. The best French division was in reserve, together with the three brigades of grosse cavalerie.

The three forward villages were quite strong. I thought the most dangerous place was the right, I had that village use my only improved position capacity and garrisoned by converged elites. Davout corps was fresh and full strength having not done messy marches like in the real campaign. 4 B class (with 2 A class rgt 57e lign and 10e légère) big divisions (one lost a regiment in Regensburg), one big light cavalry division and one big Hell brigade (5+7 hussars!) plus the heavies.



As said the Austrians chose to try rushing things. Overall they have 4 full corps (even more as in my what if, I help them (?) with more Landwehr, volunteers and Insurrectionary cavalry.) plus the reserve corps. The catch is only one can come it at a time and deploy. They chose the 1<sup>st</sup> (it should have been the II but I don't have it) with its avant garde with plenty of Jaeger in front. The III. Corps was to arrive afterwards and try to force the center or at least pin the defenders in place. Then Rosenberg IV th would force the left, a short time later, the French supposedly having been sucked in everywhere, the Grenadiers from the reserve would pierce in wherever was deemed best. The last full corps was in the rear and most likely not able to deploy that day.



First attack seen from front.





French reserves in the center.



The right attack in full swing, just before the grand charges by Schwarzenberg Uhland and Blankestein hussars. This division(Fresnel) tried to rush the right hand zone with big bands of skirmishing Jaegers and columns in support. They happily found the terrain easy going, managed a cavalry charge to force some of Friant's division in squares. One brigade from Vogelsang division is coming in. T in the main the cavalry charges were repulsed, the uhlands put to flight, but Blankestein did manageto push in the forest one unit

and destroy one 8lb battery before being brought back to his senses by Pajol' 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars. Number of casualties on both sides but after several hours, the top quality of the French allowed them to get the best of the exchanges and stay longer, the Austrian wisely did not wait for his last supporting line to get repulsed (Landwehr) and whith drew. One hour reorganisation, and they came again, this time the two regular divisions, plus some jaegers still. Davout had to commit part of the center division to help, even the cuirassiers, uner cover of the center rise, moved nearby, in case. This attack lasted long enough to have the center corps appear but it came with two hours delay creating a traffic jam. Their avant garde found out they couls only cross in the center via the bridge, an unsavoury proposal, so a good deal of guns were deployed to shoot up the village behing the bridge.





End of the attacks on the right, just light troops harassing/ threatening.



Number of line units in rout, rshaken and quit damaged enough not to be able to attack again; regrouping, recovering etc.

Around 2/3 of the day, The Austrians are finally getting their left corps deploying and concentrating for a big blow.







Austrian center deploying.



French response, with the center division partly redeploying center left, some units damaged by the previous fight.



The left big Austrian coordinated assault, one and a half division (no space for the last brigade, in support just behind, no space for horse either, a gaffe that will be paid for just about soon. To simplify orders, he also chose to keep the "light divisions" not detaching some of the horse to support the big regulars.



One French brigade on the right, from Gudin center division is about to be put to rout.



They managed just after this pic to get a few batteries across, pounding the French in their village point blank. An assault was repulsed, then they just contended themselves with the artillery fire.

Marulaz cavalry hidden behind a hill came in, smashed some Austrians even one in mass, and generally interdicted movement, especially after the hole due to the lost fight on the center right of the French position. Lost of fights, skirmishers trying things, both sides pushing, but on the whole, the Austrians losing steam faster. It was a fight of quality vs numbers, but because of the limited space never more than 1.5 times more.



The Austrian right seen from Friant. Waiting.



It ended as Charles realized that with only 4 hours or so of daylight left, he won't get anywhere with more attacks, needing a couple of hours to regroup, recover and try to have a whole coordinated attack. He lost some 6000 vs the French 3500, not a satisfactory result. Davout disappeared in the night. The Austrians trusted numbers too much and did not coordinate, though they were put in a tight spot by the haphazard entry of reinforcements. The need for cavalry to help the attack is also much apparent. They could have, especially on the left as the ground was good enough and open behind the French. Obviously they could or would take a bit (or more) of a punishment in going in early but it is worth the combined arms benefits as they could not use their most numerous artillery till having properly secured bridges.