



## Wessex variant

Campaign style variant for 2+ players



*Wessex was one of the four great Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Prior to the arrival of the Vikings, Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria ruled the four quadrants of the Anglo-Saxon world in Britain. With the arrival of the Danes the greatest of these kingdoms, Northumbria, fell as did East Anglia. With both coastal kingdoms broken the Vikings fell upon Mercia, bringing it to the edge of collapse.*

*Only Wessex, Alfred the Great's homeland, remained mostly intact. But it too would soon fall under the gaze of the invaders.*

*Ortus Regni – Wessex offers you the chance to play out a longer legacy style campaign game to truly dominate and secure your claim to the crown of Wessex. Can you do it before the final kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons is incorporated into the growing Danelaw creeping across Britain!*

### Victory conditions:

- 1) Owning the King Card and the Cathedral at the start of your turn, wins you the game.
- 2) If you are the only Earl on the table (i.e. the other Earls have no Fiefs), at the start of your turn, and before the Vikings have arrived, you win the game.
- 3) *Once the Vikings have arrived on the table special Danelaw victory conditions apply. You will either save Wessex or the Vikings will take the Kingdom!*

### Wessex campaign game sequence:

In this campaign mode players will play a series of Ortus Regni games, each linked with and effected by the previous “game round” played. Earls can acquire Legacy points when a game round ends, which allow them to start the next round with added resources.

Earls cannot be eliminated outright in this campaign mode, there is no player elimination. But a single Earl can suddenly win and unify the Kingdom under their rule in certain circumstances. But, unlike in normal Ortus Regni, the Vikings can also win the game. Once the Vikings' Great Heathen Army has made its way to Wessex the game will resolve, either with Anglo-Saxon Earls saving the day, and themselves, or with the final collapse of the kingdom and its absorption into the Danelaw.

Game rounds end either with outright victory – or defeat – in the kingdom or by a successful call for the Winter Season. Think of the multiple game rounds of *Ortus Regni – Wessex* as representing the strong seasonality of medieval campaigning. The Earls themselves, as representatives of the fighting caste, help enforce the reality that gathering otherwise independent feudal warriors for a prolonged campaign was a hit or miss operation.

The first game round of *Ortus Regni - Wessex* begins normally. The Viking bag is used to determine the starting player, as in a normal game of Ortus Regni, and the Viking time markers are set behind the Viking deck in the normal way.

## Overview of Wessex ameplay

- A game of Ortus Regni (also called the Summer season, of fighting).
- Winter season, entered by Vote. Legacy points gained, Vikings moved and their approach shortened, and then Legacy points are spent.
- A game of Ortus Regni.
- Winter season, entered by Vote... etc.

*...Until the Vikings arrive or an Earl wins the Kingdom.*

If the Vikings arrive on the table, or if they begin a game round already on the table (!), then that game of Wessex will conclude in the Danelaw phase.

**Free Mulligan rule** – All Earls may reject their 5 card starting hand and reshuffle and redraw their hand once. This occurs just before play begins, each Summer Season, in turn order, with each Earl making their Mulligan in turn.

## Winter Season

**Once a Wessex game round of Ortus Regni has ended by player Vote (see Voting below), and the Winter Season begins then:**

A) Immediately calculate the Legacy points that each Earl has earned, including those Earls who are able to show a Monk & Banquet card pair in their Hand. Then clear the table of your Earldoms.

B) Move the Vikings **one** Earl to the left in the turn order. The previous starting player will now be last player in the turn order, and the former second Earl will be the new starting player for the next round of Ortus Regni.

C) For each round of play after the first 1 black Viking timer marker will be pushed forward **prior** to gameplay. Thus, in the 2nd round of Ortus Regni - Wessex 1 marker will start out; and in the 3rd round of play 2 markers will start out, and so on, as the Vikings approach ever closer!

D) Going around the table, beginning with the new starting player, each Earl spends 1 Legacy point, if they have one, on an addition to their Earldom. Until all Legacy points are spent.

E) Earls then make new Earl gameplay decks of 24 cards based on the new table situation; to prepare for the next Summer Season of the struggle.

F) The starting player is already determined by the new Viking placement, so all Earls can then draw and in turn order decide if they want to Mulligan.

A new round of Ortus Regni - Wessex then begins!

## Player Elimination

Does not happen.

When you run out of cards in your Earl Deck you are **not** eliminated, a lesser relative of your House inherits your title and continues the struggle on your behalf. But you do lose all your Earldom's Fiefs, and Banners placed for Kingship, into the discard pile, which is then reshuffled immediately into your new Deck (as if you had Bequeathed). But **Towers** and the **King card** remain on the table when you run out of cards.

When you lose your last Fief you are also **not** eliminated. You need to have a Fief to place Properties or Lords, of course, and you can **only** earn a maximum of 1 Legacy point when Winter Season arrives and you hold no Fiefs. You are off the table and now a noble refugee hiding in the marshes with your retinue, as

Alfred the Great famously once did. You can continue to play your Hand, and Vote, and you might also get back onto the table by placing a Castle or Palace down on your turn. Note also that Towers and the **King card** still remain on the table when your last Fief is gone.

## Voting - game round cessation and entry into the Winter Season

You **cannot** initiate a Vote for Winter on your first turn in a game round (i.e. just like you also cannot Attack on the first round of Ortus Regni).

You **must** possess either a **religious building** (i.e. a **Church** or the **Cathedral**) or be **King** to initiate a Vote on your turn. This is similar to the way that you must possess a Land in normal Ortus Regni to have the Recruit action available to you.

On an Earl's turn they may then, as their Action, initiate the Vote for the Winter season to arrive. The Earl calling the Vote has voted first, and voted for Winter. Voting then goes around the table in the turn order. Votes follow this formula:

1 vote - each Earl (you **always** have 1 vote as an Earl)

1 vote - Prince Lord

1 vote - Church

1 Vote - the King card

The Cathedral - Votes equal to the # of players in Wessex\*

A Monastery - Votes equal to the # of players in Wessex\*

A **single** Fief can only vote with **one** of the above listed Fief based voting powers. For example, having a Prince Lord and a Church in the same Fief only gives an Earl 1 additional vote from that particular Fief.

An Earl can also abstain from voting, if they wish, of course.

If a simple majority of the votes cast declares for the Winter Season the game round immediately ends, and Legacy points are counted.

*\* The voting power of Monasteries and the Cathedral scales with game size. Both get +1 vote for each player in a game of Wessex. For example, in a 4 Earl game of Wessex the Cathedral or a Monastery would have the power to cast 4 votes.*

## Special Vote - The Vikings' Long Boats have been Spotted!

A special immediate and automatic Vote occurs in a game round when the Vikings are about to arrive. That is, when all 8 black Viking timer markers are out and at the start of the Viking turn, just when you would normally start flipping over Viking cards for their arrival on the table... this causes a free automatic and immediate Vote for Winter (i.e. also without costing anyone an Action or requiring that an Earl have the ability to call the Vote). The starting player of that Wessex game round Votes first, in this case, the player immediately to the left of the Vikings.

Thus Earls have a last chance to vote either for Winter or to "fight on" and allow the Vikings to arrive and drive Wessex into the final chaos Danelaw phase.

Because each Winter Season pushes an additional Viking timer marker out automatically - prior to gameplay - eventually all 8 markers may be pushed out before a game round begins! In this case the automatic Vote never happens. *The Vikings are already amongst you, and it is too late to run for the protection and warmth of your fortresses and hearths! You are unavoidably in the crisis of the Danelaw phase.*

## Winter Season & Legacy points

### 1) Winter season - Legacy points and new game rounds

When the Winter Season occurs that game round of Ortus Regni is over. But players will be able to gain Legacy points which they can then spend to augment their refreshed Earldoms for the start of their next round of play, the next Summer Season.

Players use the colored cubes already provided in Ortus Regni as Legacy points, to keep track of how many you have earned as Wessex progresses. Simply place the correct number of colored cubes to the right of your Earldom on the table.

Legacy points are immediately gained (calculated) by each Earl when a game round ends, in the following way:

- 1 Legacy point - the King card
- 1 Legacy point - the Cathedral
- 1 Legacy point – a Prince Lord
- 1 Legacy point – a Fief with the combination of a Land and a Market Town
- 1 Legacy point – a Monastery Fief
- 1 Legacy point - possessing a Monk **and** a Banquet in your final Hand, limit of 1 Legacy point gain per Earl for holding this combo.

*Important note on Fiefs and Legacy points: A given Fief can **only** provide a maximum of 1 Legacy point. Points do not “stack” inside a single Fief.*

Legacy points accumulate over game rounds and Winter Seasons. So, if you won 1 Legacy point after the first game round, and then spent it, and then gain an additional 2 points in the following round... you

then have 3 Legacy points to spend that coming Winter Season.

You can keep a little pile of cubes to your right, and when you spend them push them forward, then pull them all back when you start the next round of gameplay.

*In practice, an Earl will be fortunate to have accumulated 3 or 4 Legacy points by the time Wessex ends.*

### 2) Winter season - The Approaching Danes

Once a round has ended and Legacy points have been counted, the Viking bag and markers are moved one Earl to the Left. Thus the former second player will be the new starting player, and the former starting player will be the last player in the next game round.

After the first round of Wessex 1 additional black marker will be automatically pushed forward, prior to the start of play. Thus the first Wessex round is like a normal game of Ortus Regni, with 8 black Viking timer markers before their arrival. But on the second round 1 is already **out**, so that the Viking timer is now only 7 markers long. On the subsequent game round 2 markers will already be out, shortening the timer to 6 markers!

When all 8 markers are forced out in the Winter Season then the Vikings start the game on the table! In this case flip over the appropriate number of Viking cards immediately, those will start on the table. Then move the 8 black markers back behind them; the markers will now be used again for the Danelaw countdown. In this case the Vikings, as always, are the final “player” on the table, and will be active after every Earl has taken their first turn in that game round.

### 3) Winter Season - Spending Legacy points on your Earldom

Starting with the new first player, in the turn order, after the Vikings have been moved sideways, each Earl who has Legacy points must spend 1 Legacy point, going around the table, until all points are spent. These points can be spent on the following things in your Earldom (which already contains your Palace, as normal):

1 point - 2 Towers

1 point - a Banner card played out for Kingship (i.e. on the table)

1 point - a Castle or a Property on the table (**excluding** the Cathedral!)

1 point - Placing a Lord (or Abbot) into a Castle or Palace

Note that these are indeed additional cards in play from your complete Earl Card Set **beyond** the 24 cards that you will make your Earl gameplay deck with! Also note that you cannot “buy” the Cathedral prior to gameplay.

But importantly, an Earl may indeed **start** as King prior to a round of play... once all Earls have spent all their Legacy points if an Earl has managed to place 2 more Banner cards down on the table, for the Kingship, than any other Earl has, then at the very start of the next game round they immediately get the King Card (i.e. before the first player even takes their turn) and all Banners that were placed on the table in the Legacy phase for Kingship go into their Earls’ discard piles.

After spending all Legacy points, players will then design their 24 card Earl gameplay decks for the new round of *Wessex*.

*Remember that after the first game round the turn order has changed along with the placement of the Vikings and this can have important effects on how you need to plan for the first couple of turns in the upcoming game.*

### Important limit on Fiefs – Votes & Legacy points

A given Fief may contain multiple items that earn Votes or Legacy points. But these benefits do not “stack” up in a single Fief.

If you have a Fief with a Prince Lord and a Church, for instance, it would provide you 1 additional vote only, not 2. It is more efficient to spread such assets over multiple Fiefs. And because Fiefs can only provide 1 Legacy point when entering the Winter Season it is also important to spread out Legacy assets between multiple Fiefs, if you can.

Earls are able to select the resource they want to benefit from in a given Fief, of course. If for example you had a Prince Lord and a Cathedral in the same Fief you would use the greater voting power of the Cathedral, rather than the single vote of the Prince Lord.

Your Hand has a similar limitation, you can only get 1 Legacy point for possessing the Monk and Banquet card pair in your final Hand - *in your Great Hall* - when Winter arrives. Multiple pairs of these cards will not gain you additional Legacy points.



## The Danelaw

*You will not necessarily ever reach the madness and chaos of this final Danelaw phase. It is a unique crisis period for the Kingdom. Ideally an Earl will arise, before this happens, to unite and save Wessex.*

In Ortus Regni - Wessex the Vikings not only roam the coasts, but have already conquered much of England... and are now closing in on the Kingdom of Wessex.

The Vikings can win the game! By establishing their hegemony over the land and creating a new and greater Danelaw. As Wessex game rounds progress the arrival of the Vikings inevitably approaches, and it will happen unavoidably if 8 Wessex game rounds occur.

When they have arrived a campaign of Wessex will be resolved in the Danelaw phase, come what may! Special victory conditions apply in the Danelaw phase.

Once Viking cards are out on the table there is no retreating into Winter quarters. Either an Earl will win the Kingdom, or the Danes will take over. It is the moment of crisis for the Anglo-Saxons. The Great Heathen Army is on the march.

The Danelaw phase is no more than 8 game turns long.

Once the Vikings have arrived the 8 black markers are all pushed back behind the Vikings, and re-used. At the start of each further Viking turn after their arrival turn (i.e. not on the very turn of their arrival) 1 black marker is pushed forward again. The white combat marker is no longer in use. And sending Emissaries after the Vikings have arrived no longer pushes an extra black marker out.

Otherwise the Vikings themselves play by the normal Ortus Regni rules. With control going to the Earl whose cube is drawn from the bag when they are active and with the Vikings gaining a card each turn, etc.

At the start of the Viking turn when all 8 black markers are out **again** the Danelaw phase is over and the game is resolved!

### Danelaw victory conditions:

Original Victory condition number 2 is gone. You no longer win Wessex if you are the only Earl on the table at the start of your turn... *because only the combined forces of the Anglo-Saxons can now save the land, and you cannot hope to stand alone.*

And... If there are **no** Earls with Fiefs on the table at the **start** of a Viking turn during the Danelaw phase the Vikings win immediately. All hail King Cnut!

The primary Wessex victory condition still applies. If an Earl holds the Kingship and the Cathedral at the start of their turn they have won and united the Kingdom, *just in the nick of time!*

When all 8 black markers are out again, and the close of the Danelaw phase has arrived on the Vikings' turn, the following occurs:

**1) Greater solo victory** - If there is a **King** and that Earl has a **Fief** on the table... then that player is acclaimed the true King "by all the land" in the chaos of the Viking crisis. And that Earl is written into the history books with the added moniker "The Great."

**2) Dual victory** - But if there is a **King** with a Fief on the table, and another Earl holds the **Cathedral** then they share the victory. Wessex has been saved, but two great Houses share the two key power centers of the land. The future of these two great families is unknown, but certainly something like a Tudor era War of the Roses is probably going to come to pass. Thus, the King has saved the Anglo-Saxons but has not managed to guarantee an undisputed place in history.

**3) Lesser solo victory** - The Archbishop can win alone. If there is no King, or the King fails to stay on the table at the close of the Danelaw phase, and another Earl holds the **Cathedral** then they have saved themselves. However, in this case the victor has only secured the prestige of their family and House... as the Danes come to rely on the power and prestige of the Church during their dominion. You have **not** saved Wessex, though, and everyone better start to learn a little Old Norse to prosper. There is still a new Danelaw.

**4) Complete Viking Victory** - If there is no King with a Fief on the table, if no Earl holds the Cathedral, then it is a complete Viking victory at the close of the Danelaw phase.

*Alfred the Great pulled it off. Can you?*

Games of Ortus Regni – Wessex are relatively easy to pause between game rounds and restart on a later gaming night. Players only need to store in the Viking bag the correct Legacy point cubes for each Earl, the correct black Viking markers. And note, by using an Earl card in a specific spot in the box, which Earl is the proper starting player for the upcoming game round.

