

Rock the Cabinet 2017: Map Making Guidelines

This document describes some of our design philosophies we take when building co-op maps. By following these guidelines, you will be increasing the likelihood that you'll receive positive marks from the judges who review your entries. Though these are not requirements, we strongly suggest you keep them in mind when creating your map.

Gameplay

- Maximum mission length: Missions should not go longer than 40 minutes.
- Never leave the player without apparent goals for more than a few seconds at a time.
 - For example: don't wait a minute to tell the player what the first objective is.
- Avoid using cinematics outside of mission victory.
- Do not use mechanics which rely on specific commanders to function.
 - Example: A map section where players must interact with an object using a hero unit. Not all commanders have hero units on the field.
- Avoid/adjust map mechanics where players who have lost the mission will continue playing for a long period of time.
 - Example: A map that requires you to destroy all objectives within 30 minutes. If players stumble at minute 5, the mission might already be over, but the players can survive for 25 more minutes.
- Players must achieve victory or defeat as a group. (Do not give the players different objectives that can result in only one player winning.)
- Focus on Normal difficulty, don't setup bullies for all.
- Be mindful of additional UI, each race has its own UI restrictions (top bar for Protoss, hero panel for Zerg, etc.)
- Design moments where the players need to fight together, and moments where they need to fight apart.
- Bonus objectives not required, focus on core mechanic(s) first.
- Avoid overloading the player with too many sequential transmissions, alerts, etc.
- In terms of story, these missions take place during the war against Amon. This is after the second mission of Legacy of the Void, but before the Epilogue.
- Try to keep all voice transmissions focused on gameplay relevant information for the player. There can be flavor here, but the most important part is conveying what is important for the player right now.

Layout

- Make sure there is enough area in the Player start locations, generally nine large grid squares.

- Focus on one enemy race, and don't worry about the Tag System.
- Focus on Normal difficulty, don't setup bullies for all difficulties.
- Avoid north/south/east/west facing ramps whenever possible; diagonal direction reads better for the player.
- Generally, use ramps which are 4 wide, this is better for two large armies.
- Avoid tight chokepoints; give enough room for two large armies to path or fight through.
- Avoid excess terrain deformation.
- Avoid placing large/tall doodads that require air pathing blockers. (Can use, just be aware that placing several next to each other causes issues air unit pathing issues.)
- Try to create your map so that the AI has multiple paths to reach the player. Single lane access to the player prevents the AI from reaching the player in most cases.
- Avoid excessive use of water.
- Avoid weather effects like falling snow, snow drift doodads, etc.
- Avoid excessive stacking/overlapping of doodads in concentrated spaces.
- Avoid excessive use of decals, custom decals.
- Avoid excessive use of doodads that produce dynamic shadows.
- Avoid doodads under the terrain.
- Avoid clusters of large/complex doodads.

Triggers

- Use the trigger queue system to sequence map events and ensure you're not giving the player multiple directions at the same time.
- Functional Victory/Defeat conditions.
- See co-op template map for additional trigger guidelines. (Coming Soon)