

BtB Cyberboard Basics

There are many ways to use Cyberboard. One is as a computerized duplicate of the physical game. The main advantages being that you can send the mapboard and all the pieces over the net to another player. Also the cat won't knock the pieces around. If used with other programs, such as ACTS, Barbarossa to Berlin (BtB) can be easily played over the net. I'll call this use of Cyberboard, "Basic".

The next step up on the cyberboard scale is that instead of sending the whole map to your opponent, you just send the moves. There is some information in the move itself that can more easily be explained if you could just have your opponent see it. Also move files tend to be smaller. If you are playing a game by sending moves, the problem of keeping the different gameboards in sync arises. Cyberboard does a pretty good job of handling this and the mechanism is almost too simple. Cyberboard also gives the option of displaying messages during your move and rolling dice. I'll call this use of Cyberboard, "Move File".

Finally, some games require that some pieces be hidden from your opponent. Both players cannot play with the same board, because they would see their opponents hidden pieces. Cyberboard 2.0 solved this problem with new abilities like ownership. If you wish to use BtB's cards with Cyberboard, this hidden feature must be used, as the cards in your hand as well as your discard pile should be hidden from your opponent. Cyberboard 2.0 also introduced new mechanisms to shuffle and display cards. I'll call this use of Cyberboard, "Hidden pieces". All three uses of Cyberboard are discussed below.

Basic Cyberboard

If you are new to Cyberboard you should probably play a game using the basic system first. Some people prefer to use Cyberboard this way. If you play BtB via text email or using ACTS or some other net program, Cyberboard can be used to store your game position. If a dispute arises as to the position of units, you can mail a copy of your Cyberboard game to your opponent to help resolve the issue. If you play a game using ACTS, it would probably be a good idea to compare board positions every game turn or so just to make sure mistakes in unit positions won't cause problems down the road.

To start a Basic Cyberboard game of BtB, double click the "CBPlay" icon. You will be presented with an empty Cyberboard Player window. Choose "New" from the "File" menu. Make sure "Game" is highlighted and click ok. You will now be asked to find the "scenario" to be used for the game. A scenario defines two things. First what game you are playing, BtB as opposed to PoG. Second the initial position of all the units. Navigate to then chose the "Basic BtB Campaign".

You should now see a portion of the board and will notice that the board is already set up! Before you go further you should name your new game. If you look in the top bar,

you will see that Cyberboard has named your game "Game1". We can do better than that. Choose "Save" from the "File" menu and type in the name for your new game. Any title will do from "Larry vs. Moe" to "Soviets will crush" will do. You will see that the top bar is updated with your new name.

You now have your gameboard and can do everything to this computerized version that you could do with the real thing. Just a few pointers and I'll let you experiment.

- move pieces by dragging them
- if a piece is under another piece, either move the top piece out of the way, or send the top piece to the bottom of the stack by choosing "Move to back" under the "Actions" menu. You can also move pieces to the front.
- Pieces can be rotated with a command under the "Actions" menu. You can restore the piece to normal by choose "Reset Rotation". Some pieces are rotated in the BtB setup to show that they need to be placed before the game can start.
- Under "View" you can see Tray palettes. These are pieces available for play but aren't on the board for some reason. Trays "A" and "B" are identical but you might want both open at sometime with different trays showing.
- You can also "View" a marker palette. Markers are pieces like control markers or OOS markers that have no counter limitation. You can drag as many markers out of the tray as you wish and there will still be another one in there. Finally, you won't run out of control markers! But unlike normal pieces you can't drag the markers back into trays. Just move them to the side out of play, or if you wish, delete them using the "Edit" menu. Don't worry, another marker will be available from the Marker tray if you need it.
- If you need a wider view of the gameboard, select "Half scale" from the "View" menu.
- Most often used commands have either keyboard shortcuts or Toolbar icons.

That's enough for now, you can discover the rest of Basic Cyberboard capabilities on your own. If you wish to send your position to another player, just send a copy of the file.

Move File Cyberboard

Basic cyberboard suffers under two problems. First the game files are somewhat big and may take some time (for those of use still using dial up) to send and receive. Also, how do you know that the map you see really is the map your opponent sees. Comparing maps of two different files is somewhat tiresome and still subject to error.

Cyberboard solves these problems with move files. Move files give you the following advantages.

- much smaller files to send to your opponent
- two different gameboards are kept in sync
- comments can be added to the move file
- dice could be rolled and the results added to the comments
- earlier turns can be replayed. You could even replay an earlier turn, save it, then start

again from that position.

Most of the work for move files is already being done by Cyberboard and you didn't even know it. From the time you open a game, cyberboard records all the changes you make to it. You can save the record of the changes, or moves to a file. Lets do some experimentation. Start a new Basic BtB Campaign game, just make sure you name it something like "Just Playing" so you won't get it confused with your real games.

We won't worry about the few pieces that need to be set up for a real game, just move a few pieces around as if you were playing a turn. Now chose "Send Recorded Moves to File..." from the "File" menu. You don't need to change the name of the move file, but for this tutorial we will use "Just Playing". You will be asked for a title for your move. You might want to come up with a system like "G3P2" which to me means Germans turn 3 phase 2. But the title can be anything you wish. Also you can add any comments, for example "The Germans fight bravely but loose control of Odessa". Click ok and it seems like nothing has happened.

But now we'll reveal a secret, close the Game Map window (not the Cyberboard window please!) and you'll see another window you may have never known was there. This is your game project window. You can redisplay your game map by selecting "Barbarossa to Berlin" under Playing Boards and clicking the "View" button at the bottom. But what is really interesting is the Game History.

Select your move file by clicking on your move title. Then click on the "Replay" button at the bottom. Open up your map window again. At the top, some of the toolbar icons that look like VCR controls just became active. Use these to view the moves you just made. When you are done, close the playback by clicking on the square (or choosing "Close History Playback" from the "Playback Menu". By the way, if you are trying to move pieces or Load a move file but can't seem to do it, it is probably because you are in the middle of a playback and forgot to close it. The history is now a permanant part of your game and can be played back at any time. The game remembers what your last real position was and will restore it after you are through with any playback.

Experiment now, by moving some more units and creating another history/move file (for the purposes of this demonstration, name the move file something different). Try out the following:

- Enter a message using "Enter Message.." from the "Actions" menu.
- Roll dice
- Try out the compound and plotted moves

Playback your new history file. You may notice that it is easier to follow if you say what you are going to do then do it. Follow this general rule as a courtesy to your oppoenent. If you are going to leave a message about a move, give some indication of what you are doing in a message, then do it, then explain further as necessary. The best way to learn how to create a good move file with explantions is to replay the files you make.

Now that we are old hats at creating move files and replaying history, how do we send

these file to our opponent and how does he use them? First notice that on your desktop is a move file (Cyberboard icon with a document and an arrow) for each set of moves you sent to a file. Usually you would create only one move file then send it to your opponent. Lets pretend we are your opponent. What would be the status of his game file? If you are doing the first move, his game file would be the same as yours when you first created your game. So close your current game and create a new game file using the Basic BtB Campaigning scenario and call it "opponent".

Now from inside your opponent game, select "Load Recorded Move File.." from the "File" menu. Select your "Just Playing" file. The Video Player controls will become active again and you can again step through the moves. But remember, this is what your opponent would see after he received your file. At the end of the playback, choose "Accept Move File Playback.." from the "Playback" menu. Your opponents game now records your first move and makes it a part of its history. If you now load your second move file and play it back, then accept it, both of the game files would be in sync.

So to play a game via move files. One player, makes his moves, records them, sends the recording to his opponent, who loads the move file then accepts the file to bring both games in sync. That's how it supposed to work, but sometimes things can get out of sync. Sombody runs the wrong move file. In this case you might get a message that the files game state doesn't match yours. You will have to chose which is more correct, the files start state or your current position.

Also notice that since every move is recorded, if you fiddle with units, moving them slightly to see things, all this fiddling goes into the move file and your opponent must step through all this. At the beginning of your turn, move things around as you wish, try out moves, etc., but then choose "Discard Current Move Recording" from the "File" menu. All your fiddling will go away, and your board will return to the state it was after your opponents last move. Then make your 'real' move and record it.

Now how do you replay an earlier turn and save the game as though that turn was just played? Cyberboard does its best to prevent you from doing stupid things. It knows the state of your board, and if you replay some history and save, the game will still be saved in the most current form. But you can extract a history. Click on one of your move files from Game History then click on the export button. Your move file from that turn will be recreated. (Because if this it really is necessary only to keep your last move file and overwrite it when you generate another one. You can always recreate an earlier move file if necessary) You can then Load this move file and replay it. You will be quized about the gamestate because you game won't agree with the move file, tell Cyberboard to use the move file's game state then accept the playback. Your gameboard will now be reset to that time.

Thats more than enough information to run games using move files. I'm still discovering new things Cyberboard can do and discovered a few of them while I was writing this. You may wish to use move files to play cyberboard BtB but not use the comperized dice or cards, using ACTS instead for these functions.

Hidden Pieces Cyberboard

Now for the final step in understanding how to fully use Cyberboard to play BtB. New capabilities are built into Cyberboard 2.0 especially for cards. In some games, combat units are hidden. This isn't so in BtB, but the cards may be hidden from your opponent. In order to hide units or cards, your copy of the game file must be different than your opponent's. When you see the game you should see your units but not your opponents hidden pieces (or just the back of the hidden pieces). To solve this Cyberboard has the concept of players. Each player sees only what he or she should see.

When you first start a hidden pieces game you will see this added "complexity". Start a new game of BtB, but use the BtB Campaign scenario instead of the Basic scenario. The first difference will be readily apparent. The "Creating Multiplayer Game" window tells you that there are two players for this game. One player is known as "Axis" the other "Allies". You can change these names if you wish. You also have the choice to create a Referee file. More on that later. Most of the time you will just click "OK" when presented with this window.

Now you type in a name for the new game. You may wish to make the name a little shorter as Cyberboard will be adding onto it. Assume you type in the name "Test". The next window will tell you what files have been created. One will be created for each player, named "Test-Allies" and "Test-Axis". One will be made for a spectator and if you chose the option, one for the Referee.

Click OK... and nothing seems to have happened. But if you look on the desktop you will see files have been created. Usually the first player that has a turn in a game will create these files. But if in a tournament or for some reason a referee is necessary, he will be the creator of the files. The differences between the files are as follows

- Each player will be able to see his units, but not his opponents hidden pieces.
- The spectator won't be able to see any hidden pieces
- The referee will be able to see all hidden pieces

The files should be sent to the players/spectators. Normally, the first player will make his first move and send the opponent his game file along with the first move file. Simulating you are the first player, the Axis, open the "Test-Axis" game file. Look at the cards down at the bottom of the screen. If you try to click on the Allied cards you will be disappointed. Can't do it, they might as well be part of the map. They are owned by the Allies and you can't do anything with them. If you let your mouse pause over the cards you may get the message of who they are owned by. If you don't get the message, click on the balloon with the "o" in it in the toolbar. This will allow the showing of the ownership tips. The three face up Axis cards are currently not owned. In the first Axis move, the player would choose whether to use Barbarossa or Von Paulus. Assume you played Barbarossa, move it over to the Perm. Removed box on the right. Now click on

Von Paulus. Chose "Take Ownership" from the "Actions" menu. Now your opponent wont be able to do anything with it. Also he will see only the back of the card, regardless of how you have it flipped. Flip the card over and move it onto your Blitzkrieg cards. That's it, you are ready to place your Move/Attack markers and continue with your first turn.

The playing of cyberboard with hidden pieces from now on is the same as previous. However you will be sending a move file with your player name on it and receiving a move file with your opponents player name on it. Here are a few of the extra features:

- when you record your move, you may replay it and see what your opponent would see by selecting "Simulate Spectator Player" from the "View" menu.
- You may handle the deck in one of two ways
 - 1 - You may leave the deck on the board. Before you draw from the deck you need to shuffle it. You shuffle by selecting all of the cards and choosing "Shuffle Objects" from the "Actions" menu (if the option is greyed out, you just clicked and chose the top card. You need to drag a selection box around the deck to select all the cards). If you use this method, you should shuffle the deck once, just before you draw any number of cards from it, as after you draw you can see the top card. This would give you unfair advantage knowing a future draw.
 - 2 - You may move the deck into "Cards Draw - Axis" tray. The final Axis in the title shows the you own the tray and are the only one that has access to it. But even though you can see the cards in the tray, when you draw one out, it will be a random draw.
- If you want your opponent to see a card, e.g. you are playing a card, then you "Release Ownership" of the card from the "Actions" menu.
- When you don't want your opponent to see a card, take ownership of it again.
- You handle discards in one of two ways
 - 1 - You can just take ownership of the card, turn it face down and move it to the discard pile.
 - 2 - You can drag the card to the "Cards Discard - Axis" tray where ownership will automatically be reassigned to you.
- you can leave your "hand" face up on the playing board. Remember your opponent cannot see cards that are owned by you. Or you could move your hand into the "Cards Hand - Axis" tray.
- there is a special stacking option to stack all the cards vertically instead of offsetting them. Choose the "Auto Deck Stack" from the "Actions" menu.

That's it. You should now be able to play BtB using Cyberboard alone or Cyberboard in conjunction with any other game aid. Good Luck

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