

# McDowell vs. Pond

April 6th, 1862

## Background

As Sherman's other two brigades around Shiloh Church (Col David's Stuart's brigade being far to the east near the Tennessee River) were fighting for their survival against the Confederate assaults, Colonel John A. McDowell's brigade near Owl Creek had a relatively easy time. General Cleburne's Brigade didn't stretch that far to the west, and subsequent rebel brigades followed in his footsteps, or engaged farther east. The Confederate high command didn't overlook this opportunity to flank the Union line. When Cleburne sent back for support, his superiors dispatched Colonel Preston Pond's mostly Louisiana brigade to his left. The problem was a mix of terrain, and Pond's timidity. The woods and Shiloh Branch slowed his approach to McDowell, and being alone out on the flank produced a caution that exasperated it. In addition, he had to cover the ground between Owl Creek and Cleburne's left flank. The result in Pond splitting his brigade. Half of it advanced toward the bridge that carried the Hamburg-Purdy Road across the creek, and the other half keeping close to Anderson's Brigade, which followed in Cleburne's footsteps.

McDowell had heard the early morning firing, and had his men in line of battle before their camps at immediately. They listened as the skirmish intensified, and then roared to life as Cleburne hit the rest of the division. The fighting slowly spread to the west toward their position. McDowell sent the 40th Illinois across a ravine to bolster the right flank of Colonel Ralph P. Buckland's brigade, and the regiment formed to the right of the 72nd Ohio. There, the Illinoisans engaged portions of Ponds men. However, the rest of the brigade, and Captain Frederick Behr's 6th Indiana Battery, barely got engaged. When Sherman's line crumbled and fell back because of attacks from the east, McDowell retired his brigade to the new line around The Crossroads almost completely intact.



Colonel John A. McDowell

## Game Overview

The game explores what might have happened had Pond engaged McDowell more aggressively. The Confederates outnumbered McDowell slightly, but the Federals had the advantage of terrain. Can the Confederates catch Sherman's division in a vise?

The terrain map is 3' x 3'. The game ends on Turn [10/7/5].

## Terrain

The broad valley of Shiloh Branch crosses the center of the battlefield. The slopes of the valley form high ground to the north and south. The elevations should be gentle and beveled. The lighter woods are light woods for visibility. They should also only deduct 1 inch from normal, open movement. The darker woods are broken terrain and visibility for heavy woods. The creeks are broken terrain. They can provide a cover bonus for any infantry or dismounted cavalry unit that is standing in the creek bottom. Fences should only subtract an inch from movement.

The infantry and cavalry camps are obstacles and should be represented on the board by tents.

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Looking down the Hamburg-Purdy Road toward the Owl Creek Bridge in the background. This picture was taken from the camp of the 6th Iowa. In 1864 there the area in this field of view was more wooded.

They can only be moved through in disorder, march column, or skirmish formation. Moving through this collection of large Sibley tents, their poles and staked lines, and other camp equipment in line of battle will instantly throw the unit into disorder.

### **Deployment**

Set up the regiments and batteries where they appear on the map. All are in line of battle. McDowell and Pond may begin the game anywhere within 1 inch of a regiment in their brigade. The 72nd Ohio may act independently. However, there is no officer present to give them any bonuses, or rally them.

Any Confederate infantry unit that comes within 3 inches of a Union camp, is not currently under fire from an enemy unit, and cannot see an enemy unit, must make a morale check, tactical competency roll, or comparable roll. Officers and morale levels are the only modifiers that provide a bonus. Cover, terrain, or other modifiers do not. If the unit fails, they will

immediately move to the camp and stay there in disorder. They will continue to stay there and loot the camp until the following conditions release them. Either they pass a future morale check made each turn, or [5/4/3] Turns pass (about 40-45 minutes). Finally, coming under direct fire from an enemy unit will release them immediately. Once a unit has plundered a camp and has been released, it will not have to make the check again at future camps, or even the same one if it does not move.

### **Victory Conditions**

The game continues until McDowell is driven from the board, or forced to leave because of morale/cohesiveness, or Pond can no longer advance. If McDowell remains on the board and Pond can no longer advance, it is a Union victory. If McDowell must leave the board, the Confederates win. If the victor is not as clear or time runs out, add up the Victory Points from casualties. The side with the most points wins.

## Order of Battle

### Union

#### *Army of the Tennessee*

##### **Fifth Division**

<u>First Brigade</u>	PFD	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
Col. John A. McDowell [+1]	1,930	1,628	82	54	41	33	17		
40th Illinois	597	478	24	16	12	10	5	2	M
6th Iowa	632	600	30	20	15	12	6	2	R(p) <sup>1</sup>
46th Ohio	701	550	28	18	14	11	6	2	M

<u>Fourth Brigade</u>	PFD	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
72nd Ohio	647	518	26	17	13	10	5	2	R

<u>Artillery</u>	PFD	ES	Status	Armament
6th Indiana Battery	115	107	2	4x 6 lb. SB, 1x 12 lb. H

#### *Army of the Mississippi*

##### *Second Army Corps*

##### **First Division**

<u>Third Brigade</u>	PFD	ES	20	30	40	50	100	Status	Arm.
Col. Preston Pond [+1]	2,641	2,230	112	75	57	45	22		
16th Louisiana	518	330	17	11	8	7	3	2	R
18th Louisiana	618	500	25	17	13	10	5	2	R
Crescent Louisiana Regiment	753	700	35	23	18	14	7	2	R
Orleans Guard Louisiana Bn.	372	346	17	12	9	7	3	2	R
38th Tennessee	381	354	18	12	9	7	4	2	M(f) <sup>1</sup>

<u>Artillery</u>	PFD	ES	Status	Armament
Ketchum's Alabama Battery	105	98	2	4x 6 lb. SB, 2x 12 lb. H

<sup>1</sup> (p) Poor quality or (f) flintlocks. Reduce firing strength by one column/row/die strength according to the rules set.

### **Optional Rules**

There are no optional rules for this scenario.

### **Author's Notes**

I like to offer scenarios of different sizes. This battle offers a good example of a brigade

vs. brigade match-up. There wasn't very much fighting between them in 1862. Pond was too cautious. However, this battle allows the players to explore what may have happened if Pond had been more vigorous. Maybe Sherman would have been outflanked on his right as well as his left!

