



ISOAKER.COM

ROGUE REPORT V03 I01

FORWARD ::

Spring, 2008, arrives, bringing with it the start of "on-season" for iSoaker.com and a good part of the Northern Hemisphere. While those in the Southern latitudes prepare themselves for cooler weather, things are only just beginning to warm up here.

While 2008 has only just begun, a lot of things have already occurred. In the stock soaker realm, the majority of this year's lines from both Hasbro Inc. and Buzz Bee Toys Inc. are now viewable online. However, hands-on experience with this year's stock soakers remains limited, but with hopes that reviews can begin soon to greet the height of the soaker season.

On the web realm, iSoaker.com's Ikonboard forums were closed after an attempted upgrade ended up creating more problems than offering solutions. However, as even a fresh install of the newer version of the Ikonboard (i.e. Ikonforums) also failed and as the previous Ikonboard was already being hammered by spambots, it was decided that should a set of forums be continued, it would need to be something newer and more stable. Since new web space was recently acquired for a tangential project, it became possible to create iSoaker.net (<http://www.isoaker.net>) running phpbb as the new, official iSoaker Forums. iSoaker.net was officially launched on February 3, 2008.

As well, while a number of new articles have been posted as well as are under development for iSoaker.com, itself, those who are more familiar with some of the deeper content on the site would have noticed a series of articles had been missing from iSoaker.com since early January, 2008. One part of the now removed "Elite" section on iSoaker.com now finds new life in its own space online.

Perhaps the greatest development thusfar this year was my invitation to attend a product development meeting at Buzz Bee Toys Inc. Headquarters. This great opportunity was truly eye-opening regarding many of the challenges that face those who manufacture stock water blasters. The question whether manufacturers care or are even listening can now simply be answered with a definite "Yes". However, listening and being able to do something are still two different things. Time will tell how it all pans out. On the bright side, building better relations between the community and water blaster manufacturers has been a long time goal of iSoaker.com and I am most definitely glad

it has finally borne some fruit. I also look forward to further interactions in the future, but one step at a time. It has taken well over eight years to get this far and I am quite happy at developing positive relations further.

With the bulk of the year still to come, we look forward to being able to discuss and explore more developments as they reach fruition over the coming months. 2008 looks to be a great year for developments, paving the path for even better things to come in the future.

Fear NO soaker!

A GUIDE TO RECRUITING FOR YOUR TEAM ::

By: Water Wolf | Rogue Member

When an ambitious individual decides to form a water-warfare team, the biggest problem they are likely to face is that of finding and interesting others to join the sport. Many a potential team has floundered within weeks of its start, from a simple lack of interest.

This is a guide that I would *HIGHLY* recommend to anybody who intends to form a water-warfare team, as it will help you to gain the interest of people who would otherwise brush away water-warfare as "Little kid stuff."

Section 1: Location... Location... Location.

First, look for a gathering place, where you will be able to find plenty of people in the right age group (This number varies from team to team). Outdoor parties, or events where people will be in a relaxed and good natured mood are the ideal target.

Section 2: A menu for this little outing.

Bring along lots of guns.

Take water-weapons that are fairly sturdy, impressive to shoot and that you won't get too upset about if they break. Flash-Floods are an *excellent* choice for this, as they fill all of the above categories. I use several of these when I'm

recruiting and people particularly enjoy using the FF's big blast.

At the gathering, don't talk about it, just start handing out these guns. Usually In less than a minute, somebody is going to shoot someone else and at that point everybody holding a water gun will seize on the opportunity as if they had been waiting for it.

A large free-for-all will ensue. Don't try to control it much, but stick around and make sure that nobody is abusing your guns.

Section 3: But what will I wear?

Also come packed with one or two of the most powerful and awe-inspiring cannons in your armory, something to really impress people with.

I take along my trusty homemade Water-Cannon, which gets lots of attention and praise.

"DID YOU SEE THAT?!"

"I just got TOTALY DRENCHED by that thing!!!"

"Can I hold it?"

Using this as your own weapon of watery devastation, stride through the whirling mass of fighting people and target the driest of them with your big gun. This gives everybody a taste of envy for more powerful weaponry and leaves a *big*, memorable impression on them.

Section 4: Chose your friends wisely.

After things have wound down some, walk through the crowd, hone in on the people who seemed to have the most potential for your team and strike up some conversation with them. This is to figure out if these are the kinds of people you want in your water-warfare force. It's a tricky business, as you must figure out whether this person has the right mentality for your team. You're looking for minds that are level headed and able to work with other people. Watch out for those who are aggressive, hyper, irresponsible or just plain dangerous.

How the person thinks is top priority on your list of "must have" in a recruit, but there are other factors to consider. Next down on the list would be scheduling. If this is a person who's always got a full calendar, then trying to plan meetings that they can attend will be a nightmare. Another thing to consider is how far away they live. This part actually depends more on how many miles this person is willing to travel to be at a water-warfare meeting, but still, the closer to you they live to you the better.

Section 5: Blow on the spark of interest and hope it will ignite a fire.

When you've found out who here would be a good addition for your team, start talking to them about water-warfare. Having just played in a free-for-all, they will be hyped up at the moment and much less likely to disregard it as being beneath them.

Talk about how you are forming a team of water-warriors which will hold regular meetings during the warmer parts of the year. Impress them with talk of homemade water-weaponry, water-balloon-launcher artillery, coordinated team tactics and waging wars against rival teams.

Compare the team games of Water-Warfare to Paint-Ball or Air-Soft, except with several advantages.

- 1: It is about ten times cheaper to play.
- 2: There is no need to pay for more ammunition.
- 3: We have a much greater variety of equipment, ranging from side-arms to artillery.
- 4: The option to build your own, high quality, fully customizable equipment.

Once they've agreed to join your team, exchange email addresses and phone numbers, then start talking about when you plan to hold the next team meetings so that they have some time to figure out how it might fit on their calendar.

Also, give them the web address for www.isoaker.com, which is a great starting place for newer recruits to begin learning about what water-warfare really is.

Section 6: Play it again Sammy.

Keep repeating this recruiting method whenever possible. You will likely find a great number of good teammates this way and your water-warfare force will be off to a great start. When recruiting, don't *just* encourage people to join your team. If you encounter someone who seems particularly interested and quite smart, perhaps try and talk them into start a team of their own. After all, there's little point in water-warfare without a good rival to fight.

When you do find this kind of person, give him/her both the isoaker.com URL and either an oral overview of this recruiting guide, or directly email them its web-address. Hopefully this will give them enough of a start to continue on their own and give you a local opponent for your team to focus its energy on.

Another, more personal method of encouraging other teams to grow, would be to offer this team captain candidate a place on your own team for a few months. Here they can observe, fight and gain some experience before splitting off from the force and starting their own.

They are now empowered with a bit of first-hand knowledge in organized water-warfare and more likely to succeed in their attempts.

Much luck and good soaking.

The above article was written by myself, WaterWolf and I herby give permission for anybody to repost this information wherever they like, so long as credit for its creation remains with myself.

TACTIC: SPLITTING YOUR FORCE ::

By: mr. dude | Rogue Member




First of all, let me warn you that this is all theoretical. I didn't even think of this with soakers in mind, and have yet to test it.

Splitting your force has been around for a while. When your force is split, the opposition must decide whether to split their force and meet both of your squads at once, or to focus on one squad and then move on to the other.

To start, split your force (hence the title...) in half, and have each squad move towards either flank of your opponents.



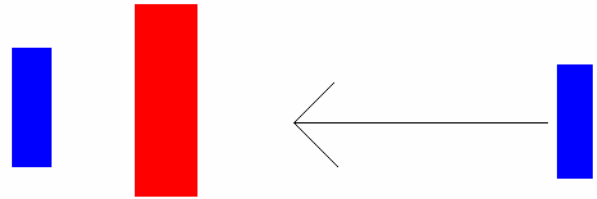
LEGEND:

-  =Opposition
-  =Your squads
-  =Where to move
-  =Where to shoot

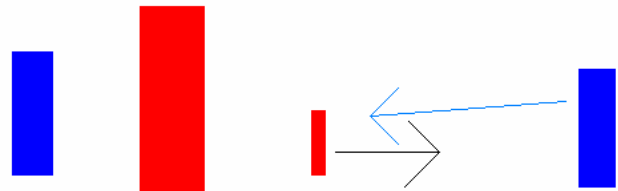
Should they decide to split their force, it's even, so use whatever tactics necessary to win.



However, if they gang up on one of the squads, then the other one has a clear view of the back. CHARGE!!



If they send a couple of people to intercept the flanking squad, take them out while they're on their way to the squad. Then charge the big group from behind.



Like I already stated, I have yet to try this, so there are other things the opposition may try, but you get the basic idea.

THE FUTURE OF WATER WARFARE ::

By: iSoaker.com

This topic has undoubtedly been covered numerous times in various forms on both water warfare websites as well as the assortment of online water warfare-related communities since the birth of the Internet. This topic has also probably been discussed countless times amongst water warriors through the decades since the creation of the first water gun. However, as the present keeps changing, so does our visions of the future and what possibilities it may hold, thus so long as there is water, there will be talk of water warfare and where to take it next.

In the past, water fights came in two primary flavours. There was the water fight whose sole purpose was really to get as many participants as soaked as possible. Water guns, buckets, cups, balloon, and any other device capable of delivering water to a target would be used in a pure free-for-all fashion. While partial alliances were formed, they could just as easily be broken come the next moment's opportunity. These were the fights found in all sorts of venues from pool parties to neighborhood battles to blasting action on the beach.

The other form of fight seen was more along the lines of tagging/annoying another using water. Water splotches used as a loose way to keep score/soak count, but the objective was not to necessarily soak another, merely to tag someone with a water stream. This second game format has recently evolved into a few citywide "Assassin" games where water guns of various sorts are still used as the tagging means, but the game play spans a much larger zone. That said, the Assassin-type games are not quite what I would consider following the true spirit of a water war; its pace is that of a drawn out stalk and "assassination", not engaged combat. As well, Assassin-type games span the time frame of weeks while a water fight should optimally span a few hours to perhaps a day depending upon the scale of the event. However, they do suggest that water guns, themselves, are not the root of the problem.

The Water Guns and Water Blasters :

While water blasters have undoubtedly gone through many changes since their first incarnation as a squeeze-bulb-based blaster. Outputs and ranges have increased overall even if factoring in the recent softening of power in recent years. However, despite the advancement in soaking technology, there really has been no significant change in the way the majority holds a water fight. There has been the limited few select groups that have held a structured, organized water warfare game, but these groups are truly rare, indeed. Despite these groups' ability to hold organized water fights, their participants primarily already knew one another making using honor systems for scoring and being able to quickly resolve disputes through in-game arbitration possible. The problem lies in that while groups were more-than-willing to share their limited working rule sets, it can be difficult to transpose local rules to other areas, particularly where attempts at organizing water fights are done with individuals less familiar with each other, thus resulting in problems with maintaining the honor system.

Then there's the "catch 22" situation some say we are in: without better equipment and a rule set, we cannot hold larger organized water fights; however without being able to get more interested, companies just are not willing to risk developing better equipment we want if they do not feel that there is enough demand for such products. Tack on the rising costs of manufacturing and shipping and creating new, higher end products to small markets becomes a near impossibility.

However :

There must be a way to break free from this situation and, if you are willing to believe me, there is. First, we need to come to an understanding. Over the past several years, the online soaking community has felt all but abandoned by

the manufacturers almost as if our concerns and requests are falling upon deaf ears. This is not so much true as it is a problem of failed understanding and communication: failed understanding by some manufacturers to be willing to tap into the creative power of the small, yet enthusiastic online community. It is also failure of the community in general to understand all the problems that face the manufacturers when they wish to develop a new product. For sake of argument, for a new product to be developed, it would require approximately at least 10000 units to be sold just for the cost of development to be covered, forget about making any significant profits. 10000 units may not seem like a huge number, but that's only part of the equation. As time and resources were put into that product development, since there are only a finite number of designs, engineers, and factories, those people and equipment were thus also taken away from developing other products which could have a much higher return potential. While we hope it is not only about the bottom line on an earnings report, for a company, if they don't make profits, they would not be around long at all. Presently, the only community is made up of a few hundred active members at best, but probably only several dozen who are truly active. If we assume that another 10-fold or even 100-fold members are out there but merely read as opposed to join the forums, that adds up only to ~10000. Thus, at present, the online communities simply do not hold enough consumer weight to be seriously considered...

... Or do we? :

The insights available from the online community often reflect much of the unspoken thoughts of many a general consumer. While the average shopper may not think of wanting to search for and do research on which current water blasters are good, they still have a basic underlying standard of what would be acceptable performance and value for their money. The more detailed critiques emanating from the online community thus allow manufacturers access to ideas and concerns that could very well affect how well their products are being perceived by the public in general.

But does the average consumer still want a better water blaster? I believe the answer to that is always a "yes". There's simply something very fun about soaking and being soaked in a water fight. The sheer popularity of the Super Soaker™ when first released shows that good marketing combined with a good product, worth its perceived value, would translate into not just thousands or tens of thousands, but millions of units sold.

However, I'm digressing.

Fact is, in our quest for better water blasters, the notion that the online community has no voice is purely wrong.

The online communities have a voice and manufacturers are listening.

Then Why Don't We See Better Blasters Already If They're Listening? :

As eluded to above, while the online communities have a voice, our voice is still small compared to the voice of the remainder of the consumer market. Even if we can affect the movement of 10000 units, that number simply pales in comparison to the millions of other consumers out there who do not quite see things the way we do. It would be unwise for manufacturers not to also listen to the larger market.

As well, listening, like speaking or even writing, only begins to matter once there is action. Some companies, despite listening, are just unable to move or overcome inherent internal problems, thus their lines begin to stagnate. Other companies hear the wrong things. While some do try, they may still be in the process of growing, themselves, thus cannot afford to take larger risks, particularly if products don't end up selling. For a smaller company, lack of sales has much greater repercussions than the typical end-user truly appreciates. On top of that, the manufacturers, themselves, are only a third of the equation.

Another third are the retailers. For a new water blaster to appear on the shelves, it must have been bought by the retailer from the manufacturer. If a retailer is unwilling to carry a particular product due to cost, size, transportation, or some other issue, even if the typical manufacturer were willing to make a product, it would never be available to the public if the retailer does not order any. Retailers, like consumers, need to be convinced that the large order of products they buy from the manufacturer will sell well in order to justify the expense of acquiring the product and distributing it to their various stores. Products that sell poorly take up space that could have otherwise been used for better selling items. The retailer must, too, be convinced that there is a large enough market before they would even consider carrying a line. Retailers don't typically bother going to forums to get an inkling on what type of water blaster people would like. For them, the total number of sales tells them all they truly care to know. If a product doesn't sell well, it won't be carried again, and related future products will also be questioned as well.

The last third are the consumers of which the online community is a part. While water warfare enthusiasts see and value water blasters primarily on performance, the average consumer uses a different scale. The typical water blaster user may not fully understand or even care for some of the specific details long-time soaker users look for. That said, most still have an inherent understanding and appreciation for a well performing water blaster. While they may not really know what makes it feel good, they do

have their own standards of what is good. With little doubt, most can tell which blaster performs and feels better when compared side-by-side.

What About Using Homemades and Modding Stock Soakers to Meet Our Needs :

Modded water blasters, while it can give performance or capacity boosts to stock soakers, are significantly limited on the foundation from which they build upon. Stock water blaster components are often just not able to keep up with increased pressures or weights for a long time, thus modded water blasters often need to have a lot of internals re-inforced or replaced altogether. Modded water blasters can help to some extent, but is not a good long-term solution.

Homemade water blasters do not suffer from the limitation of modded water blasters as the limits to what a home made water blaster can do are solely dependant on what the builder and physics allows him/her to do. With a homemade water blaster, you can build yourself a water blaster perfect for you. However, the biggest hurdle with this solution is that of time and knowledge. It takes additional time and desire to learn the knowledge and skills required to assemble a good homemade. While one would undoubtedly learn a lot of things useful in other areas along the way, such knowledge is not necessarily desired by those who simply wish to use a good performance water blaster and not need to think about what it takes to put it together.

Modding and building shall always remain an option for those who wish to dabble in improving their water blasting devices; however, to reach the much of the population, we still need the help of those willing to manufacture stock water blasters for those who cannot or prefer not to build for themselves. Of course, for areas that simply do not have access to good manufactured water blasters, building may truly be the only option, but that, too, is beside the underlying point.

The underlying problem, both with buying or building a high powered water blaster, remains the question of "why?" Why should someone bother spending either a bunch of money or time building a high performance water blaster at all when there are so many others things one could be using money and time on?

Thus, we need to offer reasons.

A Rough Roadmap :

While some manufacturers are listening and trying to do things within their limited capabilities, they need to feel that the time and time invested in creating better performing blasters will pay off. Retailers, in turn, must also feel that

their willingness to stock and carry higher performance water blasters will also translate into a good level of sales that justify a particular product's hidden costs (i.e. transportation, storing, shelf space use, etc.)

The way I see it, for water warfare to reach the point that larger, better performing stock blasters become commercially available, we need to convince more people the reasons why better blasters are desirable and needed, not just wanted by a small group of water war enthusiasts. This goes into changing the way the general public views water warfare. Presently, for good ol' soakfests, the majority of users are already quite content with the current state of stock water blasters simply since they already perform good enough for the casual soaker.

Better water blasters become necessary when one wants to be soaking another from greater distances as opposed to the typical point-blank-minimal-movement soaking that occurs in soakfests. The element of competitive play is needed to emphasize the importance of better performing equipment. This is not to diminish the importance of the general soakfest, but instead develop the higher level of water warfare for those seeking more.

We need a better, standardized water warfare game system. If we, as a community, can come up with a common, simple to employ, and more-objective way to determine who wins or not in a water fight, we shall be able to move perception away from water fights towards a sport rather than just being nothing more than random soakfests. Of course, fun should always remain an important part of the equation.

Organized water warfare teams such as Ridgewood Militia and Water Bridge have shown us that having great, organized battles is not only possible, but exciting both to participate in and to hear about. While these teams used a good set of rules, to make organized water warfare more universal, the presently available rule sets needs to be refined in order to appeal to a broader audience and attempt to better deal with certain known gaps.

In terms of currently available blasters, the membership should make as best use of what is locally available as possible. This could also include adding modded or homebuilt water blasters in the mix as well. No member should ever feel they should buy any blaster they do not like; members should only ever buy stock soakers they believe will make useful additions to their armoury and/or enhance their group's gameplay.

Once basic rules can be established, we then need to get our known groups to use the rule sets to actually test them out in practice as well as to build up local interest and create water war game histories. The initial rule sets may have certain holes or inconsistencies that will become

more apparent once different groups try using them in their local contexts. Once more have experience with organized water warfare games, more will have insight into what rules work and what rules need adjusting. Water warfare game history also adds to the whole maturity of the water warfare sport. Older games can be used as references for inspiring new members to participate or used as teaching/training guides for newly-formed teams.

As rule sets mature, those willing and able should try holding small local tournaments. I can foresee those in college or university being able to organize various scale events at their respective campuses. Those in senior years in high school can also likely be able to organize an organized water war with their school's permission.

While pushing the development of water warfare as a full sport, we should not forget the simple joys of freestyle water warfare for all ages. Less demanding games and/or events should occur alongside large events such that the next generation can also become initiated into the world of water wars. Though many wish to see an expansion in the older target audience, we must never forget that water warfare should be accessible to individuals of all ages.

As more people experience the joys of well organized water warfare games, I definitely believe interest will generally increase, thus pushing up demand for water blasters, notably better performing water blasters. As public interest increases, retailers and manufacturers should then be assured that higher performance stock water blasters would be a worthy investment. Organized game play would also even further encourage others to push the envelope further with their modded and homemade creations as there would be a definitive goal to reach, but I leave such developments to those doing the modding and/or homebuilding. In summary, all aspects of water warfare should be positively influenced by increased interest in water warfare.

Is This the Only Way? :

This, of course, is not the only way that can be used to promote and encourage more people to try out water warfare. It is, however, the main direction that I'll be emphasizing at iSoaker.com and iSoaker.net for the next while. Undoubtedly, further developing the sport of water warfare will take time. However, with desire and effort, we shall create the path from which our dream water warfare tournaments can become a reality. My personal objective for 2008 is to develop a base workable rule set with the community and test it out with some willing participants locally to see how the rules behave in actual games. In the meantime, I will be striving to work alongside manufacturers who have shown willingness to listen to see how much stock blaster performance can be currently improved within the present limitations.

In the end, for us to succeed, we need to keep pushing forward. The path may appear long right now, but each step forward brings us just that much closer to our goal.

Let us learn from our shared history and let us build a better water warfare future together!

LAST DROPS ::

So ends the first issue of Rogue Volume 3. There are, without doubt, many more intriguing developments both site-related as well as stock-soaker-related that are brewing behind the scenes. Hopefully, by the time the next Rogue Report is released, we will have more hands-on experience with more of the 2008 stock soakers, more ideas established about developing water warfare as a whole, as well as have some interesting tidbits on other things being developed. As always, keep an eye on the iSoaker.com Forums (<http://www.isoaker.net>) as new information will be posted as it can be made available. In the meantime, myself and fellow members of the iSoaker.com Rogue Group hope you have enjoyed the read and wish you outstanding future soaking experiences.



Spring, 2008, has finally arrived.

Soak on!

:: Fear NO soaker! :: iSoaker.com Rogue Group ::