



# ESOC AOE 3 Introduction Guide

*So you are new to Age of Empires 3 and want to join in on all the fun? Nice to have you on board!*

This is a basic guide to get you started with the game and multiplayer. It also provides a few tips, links to resources and troubleshooting for some known issues that might occur.

Almost everyone has the Age of Empires 3 (AOE 3) complete collection. This includes the basis Age of Empires 3 ("Nilla"), The War Chiefs expansion (TWC) and The Asian Dynasties expansion (TAD). As the vast majority is playing on TAD, that will serve as the basis for this guide. I recommend you to buy the complete collection as well, as this will make it easier to find games. Tournaments will also require you to have the complete collection.

*Have fun & Good luck with AOE 3!*

*~ Veni\_Vidi\_Vici\_W*



# GUIDE INDEX

## 1. Finding your way in Multiplayer ..... 3

### 1.1 – Getting into ESO..... 3

### 1.2 – ESO and how it works..... 3

#### 1.2.1 - Quick Search (QS) ..... 3

#### 1.2.2 - Game Browser ..... 3

#### 1.2.3 - Home Cities (HCs) ..... 5

#### 1.2.4 - Remaining options..... 5

## 2. Rankings, improving & recorded games ... 6

### 2.1 – Ranking System..... 6

#### 2.1.1 - Power Rating (PR)..... 6

#### 2.1.2 - ELO Ladders ..... 6

### 2.2 – Improving your gameplay ..... 6

#### 2.2.1 – Videos & Streams ..... 6

#### 2.2.2 - GoodSpeed's Guide ..... 7

#### 2.2.3 - The ESOC forums ..... 7

#### 2.2.4 - Some extra tips..... 7

### 2.3 – Recorded Games ..... 7

## 3. Troubleshooting ..... 8

### 3.1 – Failed to Join (FTJ)..... 8

#### 3.1.1 - Just a bug..... 8

#### 3.1.2 - Windows firewall & virusscanner..... 8

#### 3.1.3 - Incorrect Router Configuration ..... 8

### 3.2 – Lagg (bad ping)..... 10



# 1. FINDING YOUR WAY IN MULTIPLAYER

Here you will find some guidance on how to join in on the multiplayer games, how to find your way around in ESO (official AOE 3 servers) and an explanation of the options and possibilities to play.

## 1.1 – GETTING INTO ESO

You just got the game installed, ready to play. We play AOE 3 on the official ESO servers, which you can find via the *Main Menu > Multiplayer > ES Online (ESO)*. Login with your account credentials or make a new account.

## 1.2 – ESO AND HOW IT WORKS

Once logged in, you will find the ESO menu in the top left, your friends and pests (players you can block) in the bottom left. To chat with a friend, right click his name and choose “whisper”. **On the next page is a full-screen overview of how it looks live!**

### 1.2.1 - QUICK SEARCH (QS)

You will automatically get matched with another player, within the limits of the criteria you set. Note that the wider your criteria range, the faster you will find games. *Power Rating (PR)* refers to the skill level of your opponent, recommended is within 4 or 7. *HC Filter* refers to the HomeCity level of your opponent, recommended is “within same tier”. You can choose to allow for WarChiefs civilizations or not, which means that if you don’t enable this and someone else is QuickSearching with for example Iroquois (WarChiefs civilisation), you won’t be matched vs him. You can also record the game via the option at the bottom, so you can review your gameplay later.

### 1.2.2 - GAME BROWSER

Here is an overview of all the custom games hosted. It is important to have appropriate filter settings, otherwise you will see less games. Note that almost everyone logged in to The Asian Dynasties (TAD) expansion of AOE 3 also has The WarChiefs (TWC) expansion installed and will host a game where people are allowed to use TWC civilizations (note the little TWC icon behind the game name in the screenshot below).



Vent\_Vidi\_Vici\_W  
2396 Online

ESO Home

Game Browser

Quick Search

Home Cities

Chat Browser

Ladders

Clan

GoodSpeed

ramex12

Friends

GoodSpeed

maki762

OPTIMUS

Princeofk

ramex12

SomppuK

WickedCossack

H2O

Add

Remove

Custom Game Browser

Refresh

Filter

Game Name	Players	Map	Rules	Rank ^	Time
Team game	2/6	Silk Road	Standard	Brigadier	20
1v1 unrated	1/2	Standard Maps	Standard	Captain	2
3v3 2nd lt rdm	6/6	Standard Maps	Standard	1st Lieutenant	4
Part.: MANUTE	1/4	Deccan	Treaty - No Blockade	1st Lieutenant	8
eso-community.net	1/8	ESOC Kamchatka	Standard	1st Lieutenant	69
BACTI's Game	2/2	Lrg Texas	20 min. Treaty	1st Lieutenant	7
3v3	6/6	Deccan	Standard	2nd Lieutenant	3
2 VS 2 3 VS 3	3/6	Asian Maps	Standard	2nd Lieutenant	2
nr 55 hm nws nrw nb	3/6	Orinoco	Treaty - No Blockade	2nd Lieutenant	1
1v1	2/2	ESOC Maps	Standard	2nd Lieutenant	10
1v1	2/2	Standard Maps	Standard	2nd Lieutenant	1
2 v 2 Nr40	4/4	Deccan	Treaty - No Blockade	Master Sergeant	75
Partie de millenair120	1/2	All Maps	Classic	Master Sergeant	1
WOLO	3/6	Scenario	Standard	Master Sergeant	2
nr 55 hm nws	5/6	Orinoco	Treaty - No Blockade	Master Sergeant	3
2v2	2/4	Standard Maps	Standard	Sergeant	5
2v2 noobs	3/4	Standard Maps	Standard	Sergeant	3

Host Game

Join

Game Settings

Map

SIBERIA

ESOC Kamchatka

City Levels

Unlimited

Game Speed

Medium

Starting Age

Discovery Age

Cheats

Disabled

Players

GoodSpeed

The Comanche were known to U.S. settlers as the "Cossacks of the Plains."



This requires people to have TWC installed to join that game. If you click on “Filter” (right top in screenshot above) you can choose how to filter. To see the most games, I recommended choosing “*All games, All Maps, All Game Types – Show Full Games, Show Restricted HC Games, Show games where WC civilizations allowed*”. You can change this at any time. You can also save your filter settings via the *left Menu > Home Cities > Options > Game Options > enable “Save game list Filter settings”*.

If you want to find specific games easier, you can also use the sorting functions; clicking on the name of the column (for example “Rank”, see “/\” in the screenshot above) allows you to sort all games on Rank. Click once for high-to-low, and twice for vice versa.

### 1.2.3 - HOME CITIES (HCS)

Here you can create and manage your Home Cities (HCs). The more you play, the more Experience Points (XP) you generate. This in turn allows you to unlock more cards and create better decks. From HC 40 onwards you are able to make decks with all the cards needed and have access to pretty much all age-up options. From HC 60 onwards you for sure can access all age-up options (such as fast age-ups for all). When you get a TAD HC (Japan, India or China) to a certain tier, for example HC 40, you can also create other civilizations of that same tier. This doesn’t work v.v. (i.e. if you got British to HC 40 you can’t create Japan HC 40, it will start at HC 10). Note that a higher HC is NOT an indicator for skill. On the right side “*Statistics*” you can also find your current rank (see Chapter 2).

### 1.2.4 - REMAINING OPTIONS

The other menu options are pretty self-explanatory. One extra tip is to change a few options of the game itself, just to make things easier when playing. Of course, a lot of option preferences depend on how you like to have it setup. However, some might be unclear to you or you simply don’t know about them yet. So, I recommend the following: go to *Home Cities > Options > UI Options*. On the right side you should enable ALL options, only the “Enable Friend or Foe colors” I personally don’t use. At “*Game Options*”, I have “*Enable Easy Drag Military*” on, though its personal preference as well. This allows you to easily select your army units when they are mixed with villagers (economy units). I also recommend “*Camera Zoom*” to “*Far or Very Far*”. It is also useful to set the “*Economic Gather Point Only on Right-Click*” for “*Only Town Centers*”.



## 2. RANKINGS, IMPROVING & RECORDED GAMES

This part provides information on the ranking system, how you can improve your gameplay and how to watch recorded games.

### 2.1 – RANKING SYSTEM

There are currently 2 ranking systems in use: Power Rating and ELO.

#### 2.1.1 - POWER RATING (PR)

The PR is the ranking system from ESO itself. You start at 0 and can get to a max of 50. With every numeric category of PR comes a certain army title as well. For example, you start with PR 0 as a Conscript and when you get to PR 35 you are awarded the title Colonel. If you win, you gain PR. When you lose a game, you lose PR. If you win vs a much better player (i.e. much higher PR) then you gain more, and v.v. There are ranks for Supremacy (the standard gameplay), Treaty (TR) and Death Match (DM).

#### 2.1.2 - ELO LADDERS

The second ranking system we use is the ELO ladder. In ways it provides a better way of judging a player's skill and it also distinguishes between 1v1 and teamgame skills. You start with 1600, and similar to the PR system you gain ELO by winning and lose ELO if you lose a game. More information about AOE 3 ELO and the rankings can be found at: <http://aoe3.jpcommunity.com/rating2/>

### 2.2 – IMPROVING YOUR GAMEPLAY

So you have played some games and got familiar with AOE 3? Perfect! You want to improve, but you are not really sure where to start? Here are some first steps:

#### 2.2.1 – VIDEOS & STREAMS

A good way to start is watching videos. I have made a lot of them over time, such as tutorials, commentary to explain what is going on and what could improve, and from my own gameplay (1<sup>st</sup> person POV). Have a look at: <http://youtube.com/user/venividiviciw> for example the playlist “AOE3 - Improve your Gameplay - Tutorials & Commentary”. You can also watch live streams, where you find gameplay and sometimes commentary



as well. All streams can be found at [www.eso-community.net](http://www.eso-community.net) (left side). A few regular and known streams are the AOE official channel ([www.twitch.tv/ageofempires](http://www.twitch.tv/ageofempires), all AOE's), ESOC ([www.twitch.tv/esoctv](http://www.twitch.tv/esoctv)) and mine ([www.twitch.tv/venividivici\\_w](http://www.twitch.tv/venividivici_w)).

### 2.2.2 - GOODSPEED'S GUIDE

Another way to learn is by improving your knowledge about civilizations and strategies. Have a look at GoodSpeed's guide: <http://eso-community.net/thread/140/tad-guide-3>.

### 2.2.3 - THE ESOC FORUMS

If you have more questions, you can ask them on the ESOC-forums where a lot of players including experts can help you further. See <http://eso-community.net/board/29/aoe3-strategy>. At the ESOC forums you can find much more, such as the new custom competitive maps made by Garja which are used in tournaments.

### 2.2.4 - SOME EXTRA TIPS

AOE 3 is, like any RTS, about 3 things. *Strategy* (Game plan, anticipation, scout & adapt and decision making), *macro* (managing your economy) and *micro* (unit control and countering). A plan is the start of a strategy, which can be improved by adapting and anticipation. Good macro results in a bigger economy and more units. Good micro results in greater battle victories. Note that if you have idle villagers, you will see a banner left-top of your screen. Click that to locate them and put them back to work.

## 2.3 – RECORDED GAMES

Another good way to learn, is to watch recorded games from other players, to see what they do. You can also find recorded games on ESOC, check out <http://eso-community.net/board/20/aoe3-recorded-games> or records in the tournament-forums. To watch a recorded game, just save the file to your pc. Then put it in the "Savegame" directory of AOE 3, typically: *C:\Users\[Your Username]\Documents\My Games\Age of Empires 3\Savegame*. To watch it, you need to launch AOE 3 and open the recorded game via the *Main Menu > Help and Tools > Recorded Games*. Simply select your game and click "open", that's it! Each expansion has its own recorded game extension: .age3rec for AOE 3 basis, .age3xrec for TWC and .age3yrec for TAD. You can't watch a recorded game from another expansion, for that you would have to launch that specific expansion.



## 3. TROUBLESHOOTING

Sometimes things don't go as planned. Here I will cover some of the known issues that you might encounter and provide solutions to solve them.

### 3.1 – FAILED TO JOIN (FTJ)

When you join a game in ESO via the game browser, you might run into the error “failed to join (FTJ)”. This error indicates that you can't join the game because you can't connect with someone who is already in that game room. This issue can be caused by a temporary bug, a sub-optimal configured router, or wrong settings in windows such as firewall and virus scanner.

#### 3.1.1 - JUST A BUG

Let's start with the easiest. Sometimes it's just a bug and will be fixed if you (and/or) the other player you bug with both re-log into ESO. It could also be the case that someone has such a bad connection that you can't connect with him.

#### 3.1.2 - WINDOWS FIREWALL & VIRUSSCANNER

You have to make sure that AOE 3 is allowed to use the network and connect to outside PCs. This requires adding AOE 3 as an exception to the windows firewall, see:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/communicate-through-windows-firewall#1TC=windows-7>.

Also make sure your virusscanner or additional firewall (such as Norton) isn't blocking AOE 3.

#### 3.1.3 - INCORRECT ROUTER CONFIGURATION

In most cases it's a bit more complicated and the cause is your router which isn't properly configured. AOE 3 requires you to forward the right ports for the IP-address (IP) you are using. Basically you have to forward TCP ports 80 and 2300 and UDP ports range 2300-2310, for your LOCAL IP. Your local IP is different from the external IP. The external IP is the one you use to communicate with others outside of your local network. You can find this via <http://whatismyipaddress.com/>. Your local IP is what you use to communicate with your router in your (home) network. You need this local IP for the



port forwarding and you can find it as follows:

Press both the Windows Key and the “R” key. In the window that pops up you type “cmd”. In the black window that opens you type “ipconfig”. Now, scroll down to your LAN Adapter or Wireless Adapter depending on how you are connected. You then copy the IPv4-address.

```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
C:\Users\Walter>ipconfig

Windows IP-configuration

Draadloos LAN-adapter voor Draadloze netwerkverbinding 5:
    Mediumstatus. . . . . : medium ontkoppeld
    Verbindingsspec. DNS-achtervoegsel:

Draadloos LAN-adapter voor Draadloze netwerkverbinding 4:
    Mediumstatus. . . . . : medium ontkoppeld
    Verbindingsspec. DNS-achtervoegsel:

Draadloos LAN-adapter voor Draadloze netwerkverbinding:
    Mediumstatus. . . . . : medium ontkoppeld
    Verbindingsspec. DNS-achtervoegsel:

Ethernet-adapter voor LAN-verbinding:
    Verbindingsspec. DNS-achtervoegsel:
    Link-local IPv6-adres . . . . . : fe80::2048:d6af:bc66:7594%10
    IPv4-adres. . . . . : 192.168.0.100
    Subnetmasker. . . . . : 255.255.255.0
    Standaardgateway. . . . . : 192.168.0.1
```

How to do the port forwarding depends on your router. If you don’t know how to do this, then have a look at :

[http://portforward.com/english/applications/port\\_forwarding/Age\\_of\\_Empires\\_III/default.htm](http://portforward.com/english/applications/port_forwarding/Age_of_Empires_III/default.htm). Remember that you are going to configure a set of rules for port-forwarding for a specific local IP. If your IP is given dynamically, then this will change from time to time meaning that the set rules won’t apply anymore. In your router you can often change these settings, but you can also set a static IP in the network settings of your PC. See this link for more info: <http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/19249/how-to-assign-a-static-ip-address-in-xp-vista-or-windows-7/>.

Sometimes you will find that you are behind an extra router (student homes) or another reason why your external IP can’t be recognised properly by AOE 3. In that case you can manually set your external IP for the game, see the “Override Address” section at:

<http://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/907880>.



### 3.2 – LAGG (BAD PING)

As you join a game room, you will see a bar below each players' name which indicates the connection (ping) between you and him. The optimal ping would be full green. However sometimes this is not the case. For example, even if both players in the EU and USA (west coast) have a good connection, they are still likely to see each other as "yellow-green" because of the distance. Often times though, a bad ping is caused by bad connections or bad PCs. If your connection is not sufficient or not stable enough (which is why playing via cable is preferred over wireless also), you might see other people as yellow or even red. While you can still start the game, it is likely to lagg (a bit). If your connection isn't sufficient then an upgrade would help. If you are sure your connection is good enough (keep in mind downloading, watching youtube videos, etc, does influence your ping), then it might be your PC causing issues. For example a windows update, a lot of programs opened which it can barely handle, etc. Lowering your AOE 3 graphics via the *Options > Graphic Options* in the game should also mitigate this problem, for example changing several settings to "medium".