

Battle Breakdown: Bull Run I

Name _____

Instructions: Read the narrative and fill in the chart on the next page.

A Nice Day at the Battlefield!

The first major battle of the American Civil War occurred on July 21, 1861, in Manassas, Virginia. The Battle is known both as the First Battle of Bull Run, after the creek that ran through the battlefield, or, the First Battle of Manassas. Union forces under General Irvin McDowell, hoping for a decisive blow against the newly formed Confederacy, planned a surprise attack against the left flank of Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard's forces at the railroad junction of Manassas. Both sides were unseasoned and unprepared for the carnage that would ensue. Hundreds of spectators from Washington lined the hills of the battlefield to cheer on the Union. McDowell, who was skeptical of the Union plan, amassed 35,000 soldiers - the largest land army ever assembled in America at the time, to attack the Confederate positions.

"Stonewall" Saves the Day

At 2:30 in the morning on July 21, McDowell sent two detachments from nearby Centreville toward Confederate positions. By 5:15, the first shots had been fired. Through the morning, Union forces had slowly pushed Confederate forces back until they broke through the Confederate right flank at about 11:30, sending them into a disorganized retreat. Gen McDowell elected not to pursue the retreating Confederates, who were able to regroup at the Henry Hill House. At 12:00, Confederate reinforcements under General Thomas J. Jackson arrived on the battlefield. It was at this moment, when Confederate General Bernard Bee is said to have uttered the timeless words "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall." From that point on Thomas J. Jackson would be known as Stonewall Jackson. Some historians believe Bee was actually angry at Jackson for not sending his troops directly into battle. The tide of the battle soon changed when Confederate forces under Jackson and Calvary Commander J.E.B. Stuart captured Union artillery around 3:00. Jackson commanded his soldiers to press on and for the first time in the war, Union forces would be horrified by the "rebel yells" screamed by Confederate soldiers on the attack. At 4:00, more Confederate reinforcements led by Kirby Smith and Jubal Early crushed a Union brigade and caused the collapse of McDowell's Union Army. Union forces began a disorderly and poorly managed retreat, accompanied by screaming spectators who clogged the retreat path. Confederate forces, also in a state of disarray, captured several hundred Union soldiers but failed to pursue the remaining forces back to Washington.

A Grim Reality

The First Battle of Bull Run proved to be the deadliest battle in American history to that point. Nearly 5,000 total casualties were recorded, with Union forces suffering roughly 1,000 more than the Confederates. The North was shocked and dismayed at the Union defeat and many feared the Confederacy would move immediately on Washington. At the very least, the First Battle of Bull Run proved the war would be long and violent. President Lincoln was forced to sign a bill that allowed for the enlistment of up to 500,000 additional soldiers.

What was the cause of the battle?	
What were the roles of each of the following players?	
Irvin McDowell	
P.G.T. Beauregard	
Stonewall Jackson	
Jeb Stuart	
Jubal Early and Kirby Smith	
Which side won the battle?	
What was the effect of the battle?	

Answers:

What was the cause of the battle?	
Union Forces wanted to deliver a decisive blow against the newly formed Confederacy with a surprise attack at Manassas – an important railroad center in the Confederacy.	
What were the roles of each of the following players?	
Irvin McDowell	Irvin McDowell was the Union General in command at the First Battle of Bull Run. McDowell was in charge of the largest land force ever assembled in American history.
P.G.T. Beauregard	P.G.T. Beauregard was one of the Confederate generals at Manassas. Union General Irvin McDowell first planned to attack Beauregard's Army.
Stonewall Jackson	Stonewall Jackson was a Confederate general at the Battle of Bull Run. The momentum of the battle shifted toward the Confederacy when he came with reinforcements around noon. Jackson also received his nickname "Stonewall" during the battle.
Jeb Stuart	Jeb Stuart was the cavalry commander for the Confederate Army at the First Battle of Bull Run.
Jubal Early and Kirby Smith	Smith and Early were Confederate generals that led the attack that ultimately crushed a Union brigade and sent the army into a disorganized retreat.
Which side won the battle? Confederacy	
What was the effect of the battle?	
The First Battle of Bull Run proved the war would be long and deadly. It forced President Lincoln to call for 500,000 additional soldiers.	