

The Gladiator Tables, V2.0

Avalon Hill's classic game *Gladiator* does a great job of simulating Roman gladiatorial combat. Its major shortcoming is in its character and armor generation tables – they yield a finite number of options, easily repeated if you play enough, and they are generally but unspecifically accurate from an historic perspective. The following tables allow you, using percentile dice, to create a wider range of gladiatorial combatants whose types correspond to the historical types found in the ring in imperial Rome.

These tables are the second generation of those originally made in The Cave at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, in the spring of 1990.

1. Origin

01-34	Slave
35-51	Criminal
52-77	Foreigner
78-97	Volunteer
98-00	Senator

3. Stat Mods

	TR	ST	AG	W	CON
Slave	+1	+1	-1	-1	-
Criminal	-	-1	+1	-	-
Foreigner	+1	+1	-1	-	-1
Volunteer	-1	-	+1	-	-
Senator	-1	-1	-	+1	+1

2. Type

01-09	Velite
10-22	Retarius
23-33	Secutor
34	Secutor dimachus
35-45	Myrmillon
46	Myrmillon dimachus
47-61	Thracian
62-72	Provocator
73	Provocator dimachus
74-88	Samnite
89-97	Hoplomachus
98-00	Crupellarius

4. Armor

	Move	Shield	1	2	3	4	5
Velite	6	S	A6	-	C7	-	-
Retarius	6	-	B5	-	C7	B7	-
Secutor	5	L	A8	C8	C	C7	B7
Myrmillon	5	L	A	-	C7	C8	B8
Thracian	5	S	A	-	C	B8	C
Provocator	5	L	A	C	C	C7	C6
Samnite	4	L	A	C7	C	B7	A8
Hoplomachus	4	XL	A	-	C	B7	B8
Crupellarius	4	L	A	C8	B	B7	A7

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5. Training (TR)

01-24	8
25-48	9
49-73	10
74-88	11
89-00	12

8. Wounds (W)

01-27	10
28-51	11
52-69	12
70-87	13
88-00	14

6. Strength (ST)

01-19	-1
20-43	0
44-64	1
65-79	2
80-94	3
95-00	4

9. Constitution (CON)

01-15	2
16-54	3
55-90	4
91-00	5

7. Agility (AG)

01-09	-2
10-27	-1
28-54	0
55-81	1
82-91	2
92-00	3

Special Rules:

Dimachus:

Fighting with two swords means no shield (treat S as P on the CRT), but the gladiator gets +4 CFs as long as he wields two weapons.

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XL Shield:

All attacks against him are at –1 on the CRT while the gladiator wields this shield.

Javelins:

In close combat they function as tridents, except that they have a range of one hex and can only be wielded one-handed (thus, attack CFs are halved). They can be thrown to a range of 4 hexes. Only one such attack is allowed in a phase (and still limited by max of half available CFs). Roll 1d6 for body area targeted; 6 results in a miss.

Crupellarius:

This gladiator's armor is so weighty that he cannot rise if he falls prone.

Missus:

A gladiator need not be unconscious (or even prone) to call for a missus. He need only drop his weapon and shield and raise a forefinger to indicate his appeal to the elector and the crowd. (This is done at the end of any phase.) Every 4 CFs he's lost because of wounds improves his column by one on the missus table. If the bout is in turn 5 or later, improve his column by another 1. An attacker is obligated to respect a call for a missus, except when he still has opponents on the field.

XP Awards:

Instead of a base 10 xp for a kill plus additional for slow & fast kills, there should be a base 10 xp award for surviving, with the kill points and general CF points on top of that. This makes it more possible for truly powerful gladiators to survive multiple bouts and become truly difficult to kill (which is historical – the famous guys survived dozens of fights).

Notes, Historical & Otherwise

I have made modifications to the frequencies of origins in Table 1. Condemned criminals were common in the arena but primarily as unarmed, unarmored cannon fodder. Actual criminals who fought professionally were much rarer, and the numbers now reflect this. Historically slaves formed a majority of gladiatorial combatants, but I maintained a broader range for variety's sake.

The types now reflect more closely the major gladiator categories of imperial Rome. A few exceptions and liberties: the Samnite was actually the republican-era predecessor to the Thracian and Myrmillon; I kept him in anyway. The dimachaerius is mentioned in passing in

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some classical texts but without details; I've assumed that it's an adjective that can apply to some of the medium gladiators in general.

The Velite is another case where there's not a lot of information. The more reliable sources portray him as a lightly armored fighter with a single javelin connected by rope to his own wrist; other sources mention multiple javelins stored behind his shield, which I figured was a little cooler. The Thracian, incidentally, doesn't fight with a *gladius*, the typical short sword, but with a *sica*, a curved blade. I didn't think it was worth it to introduce special rules about it, though.

The crupellarius is another one of those mentioned-only-briefly types. But the bit about him not being able to get up if he fell is historical, so I just had to include him. I also considered including the scissores, the “carvers,” but there's no information about them besides the name, so I left him out.

Regarding armor: note the absence of chest armor for a lot of these guys. That's historical. The Retarius doesn't actually have head armor per se, but his arm-guard (*manica*) was so big that it is angled up and partially protected his head. Everyone else's armor reflects what the actual guys wore in the ring. Of course the historical information only gives enough info to establish partial or complete (one or both legs or arms, etc.), and whether the armor was metal or leather; I've nudged the numbers from there to create variety and balance. Note that I've weakened the power of the XL shield from -2 to -1, which is where we had it in the original Gladiator Tables.

Historically, more matches ended with a plea for missus than in a combat death; in some of the larger events the majority of the gladiators lived to fight another day. The rules as they are don't really support this, and one place they go wrong is in making a missus so hard to call for: you have to be prone, you have to either be unconscious or have someone collide with you while prone. It was actually much more common for the loser to drop his shield and call for mercy. The crowd tended to like those who had been brave and aggressive, who had fought for a long time, and who were in genuine danger of dying if they didn't stop. I added the column-shift caveats and the XP changes to reflect this.

I recalculated the distribution for the stat tables, too, and shortened them somewhat – the extreme results at either end are now possible with the right origin, but not otherwise.