

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® INITIATIVE AND COMBAT TABLE

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ENCOUNTERS, COMBAT, AND INITIATIVE

I. Determine if either or both parties are surprised.

A. Normally, a d6 is rolled for each party. A roll of 1 or 2 indicates surprise.¹

1. Some individuals, notably rangers, are surprised less often — 1 in 6 ($16\frac{2}{3}\%$) less often, in the case of rangers. This benefit accrues to the entire party.²

Tenser the Arch-Mage and Otis the Ranger are traveling through the Gnarlley Forest when a band of really stupid orcs attacks them. Our heroes have only a 1 in 6 chance to be surprised. Had Tenser been alone, he would have had the standard 2 in 6 chance of surprise.

2. Some individuals, notably rangers, surprise others more often — 1 in 6 ($16\frac{2}{3}\%$) more often, in the case of rangers.³ This benefit, however, does not accrue to the entire party.

After soundly thrashing the orcs, Tenser and Otis track them to their lair. They have only the standard 2 in 6 chance to surprise the orcs. Had Otis been by himself, he would have received his improved 3 in 6 chance to surprise them.

3. Where either side uses a die other than d6 to determine surprise, convert to percentages (e.g., 1 in 8 equals $12\frac{1}{2}\%$, 9 in 10 equals 90%, etc.).⁴

While Otis is investigating the orcs' underground lair (alone), he spots a group of duergar. Normally, the duergar are only surprised on a 1 in 10 (10%).⁵ However, the ranger surprises others 1 in 6 ($16\frac{2}{3}\%$) more often than normal. There is a $26\frac{2}{3}\%$ (or 27%) chance that Otis will surprise the duergar.

B. If neither party is surprised, proceed to step II.

C. If either or both parties are surprised, use the result of that side's d6 roll to determine for how long they are surprised.

1. Each pip on the d6 equals one segment of inactivity due to surprise.⁶

The duergar surprise others 1 in 6 more often,⁷ so Tenser and Otis will be surprised on a roll of 1 or 2 on d6. They roll a 2, and thus will be surprised for two segments.

2. In cases where percentages were used, divide the result of the d% roll by $16\frac{2}{3}$ (rounding all fractions up) to determine the number of segments lost.⁸

The duergar roll a 12 on d%, so they will be surprised for one segment.

3. If only one side was surprised, then it will be inactive for the indicated number of segments.

4. If both sides are surprised, subtract the lesser result from the greater to determine the net amount of segments lost to the more-surprised side.⁹

Since Tenser and Otis are surprised for two segments, and the duergar are surprised for only one segment, the net result is one segment of action lost to Tenser and Otis.

¹ Gary Gygax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Dungeon Masters Guide*, rev. ed. (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1979), 61.

² *ibid.*

³ Gary Gygax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Players Handbook* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1978), 24.

⁴ Leigh L. Krehmeyer, "Surprise!", *DRAGON®*, May 1988: 74.

⁵ Gary Gygax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Monster Manual II* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1983), 61.

⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 61.

⁷ Gygax, *Monster Manual II*, 61.

⁸ Krehmeyer, 74.

⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 61-62.

5. Characters with Dexterity reaction adjustments are individually surprised for more or less segments than the rest of their side, depending on the amount of the penalty or bonus.¹⁰
 - a. This only applies when the character's side is already surprised. A reaction penalty does not create surprise in an unsurprised individual.¹¹
 - b. Reaction bonuses do not apply to characters carrying more than "light gear" (12" base movement), although reaction penalties always do.¹²

Since Tenser has a 16 Dexterity,¹³ he is able to negate his one segment of surprise.¹⁴ Otis has a 17 Dexterity,¹⁵ which would normally offset two segments of surprise.¹⁶ However, on this trip, he is wearing non-magical chain mail (his chain mail +2 having been left in Nulb).¹⁷ This drops his movement rate to 9",¹⁸ and negates his reaction adjustment.
 6. A surprised character armed with a *crossbow of speed* can fire it in the 2nd segment of surprise, if he is surprised for more than one segment.¹⁹
- D. During each segment of surprise, members of the non-surprised side can perform one of the following actions.
1. Make a full round of melee attacks in one segment.²⁰
For the one segment that he is surprised, any duergar near enough can make their full number of melee attacks against Otis.
 2. Make a full round of missile attacks in one segment (or three times that rate if the missiles are ready).²¹
If, instead, the duergar have their light crossbows cocked and loaded, they can each fire three bolts at poor Otis. If the crossbows were not at the ready, they can still fire one bolt each.
 3. Take one segment of movement (1' per 1" of movement rate).²²
The duergar are wearing plate mail, and thus move at 6".²³ Several of them decide to advance, covering 6' distance in the one segment of surprise.
 4. Cast a one-segment spell, or begin casting a longer spell.²⁴
One of the duergar happens to be a cleric. He can cast a command spell at Otis in the one segment of surprise.²⁵ If he chooses to cast hold person instead, the spell will go off four segments into the first full round of combat.²⁶
 5. Spend one segment performing any other action that can normally be completed in six seconds (e.g., drawing a weapon, drinking a potion, activating certain wands, etc.).
- E. An individual who, due to a reaction bonus, is surprised for fewer segments than the rest of his side can only perform actions D 3-5, above, during the segments that he is no longer surprised.
For the one segment that Otis is surprised, Tenser (who is not) could choose to move up to 12',²⁷ or perhaps let loose a volley of magic missiles instead.²⁸ He could also choose to get a head start on casting a longer spell, such as death spell, which would then take effect five segments into the first full round.²⁹
- F. Similarly, an individual who, due to a reaction bonus, is surprised for fewer segments than the rest of his side cannot be targeted by actions D 1-2, above, during the segments that he is no longer surprised.³⁰
Since Tenser is up and on his guard (i.e., not surprised), the duergar cannot target him with their missile or melee weapons. The cleric, however, could choose to cast command on him, instead of on Otis.

¹⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 101.

¹³ Brian Blume et al., *The Rogues Gallery* (U.S.A.: TSR Games, 1980), 47.

¹⁴ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 11.

¹⁵ Gary Gyax with Frank Mentzer, *The Temple of Elemental Evil* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1985), 32-34.

¹⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 11.

¹⁷ Gygax and Mentzer, 32-34.

¹⁸ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 27.

¹⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 168.

²⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102-103.

²³ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 27.

²⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 61.

²⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 43.

²⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 45.

²⁷ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102.

²⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 67.

²⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 83.

³⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 71.

II. Determine distance, if unknown, between the parties.

A. Outdoors, base encounter distance is 6" to 24" (6d4).³¹

1. If either party is surprised, subtract the larger number of surprise segments from the distance.³²
2. Terrain may further modify the encounter distance.
 - a. Scrub — -1 per die on all 3's and 4's.
 - b. Forest — -1 per die on all numbers (0's are possible).
 - c. Marsh — -1 per die on all 2's, 3's, and 4's.³³

On another day, in another place, Lord Robilar is wandering through the swamps to the northeast of his castle with Quij, his orcish hero.³⁴ They are spotted (surprised on a roll of 1) by a group of lizard men. 6d4 are rolled to determine the encounter distance. The results are 1, 1, 4, 1, and 3. These are adjusted to 1, 1, 3, 3, 1, and 2, for a total of 11. The surprise roll further reduces this total by -1, so the lizard men sight them at 10", or 100 yards.³⁵ They will keep their distance if they know what is good for them.

B. Indoors, base encounter distance is 5" to 10" (d6 + 4).³⁶

1. **Line of Sight:** If this is unobstructed and light is involved, the distance possible for determination of another party present is virtually infinite. It could likewise be sharply restricted due to obstructions.³⁷

The lizard men did not know what was good for them, so now Robilar and Quij have to trudge down into their lair to exterminate the rest of them. As they proceed along the 200' long entrance tunnel, they gleefully note that the lizard men have been kind enough to light torches along its length, thus making surprise impossible.

2. **Noise:** If one party is making considerable noise which is discernible by the other party, the latter will have the options of fleeing or concealment; the former negating the encounter, the latter allowing distance to be 1" to 4" before discovery by the noisy party.³⁸

Robilar and Quij are congratulating each other on their fortune so loudly that they fail to notice the ten lizard men sneaking up behind them. The lizard men have the option of fleeing undetected, but, foolishly, they close to (d4) 3" (30')³⁹ before they are noticed.

3. **Actual Area:** If the encountered party is in a small area, distance between the two can be no greater than the maximum distance possible for discovery of the one by the other, i.e. opening a door into a 20' X 20' room will mean the distance between the two parties can be under 10', 10' or thereabouts, or 20' (d6, 1-2 = striking distance, 3-4 = 10' distance, 5-6 = 20' distance).⁴⁰

After cleaning off their weapons, Robilar and Quij make their way into a cave, which measures roughly 30' across. According to a d4 roll, the lizard men in the cave are: 1 = in striking range, 2 = 10' away, 3 = 20' away, or 4 = 30' away. The warriors' luck continues, as a roll of 1 shows that the lizard men are within striking distance.

4. **Planned or Unplanned Appearance:** The sudden precipitation of one party upon the other due to any of a number of factors (*teleportation*, *dimension door* spell, other magical means, a chute, etc.) will cause distance similar to that found when actual area is a factor.⁴¹

³¹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 49.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ Robert J. Kuntz with Douglas J. Behringer, "Robilar Remembered: Lord Robilar & Co.," *The Oerth Journal* 7 (June 1998): 41-43.

³⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 39.

³⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 39.

⁴⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

5. **Surprise:** Surprise can only be a factor in close encounter situations. If either or both parties are surprised, the distance must be either 1" to 3" or it must be less as determined under the actual area modifier. Thus if the actual area were a 40' X 60' room, if surprise exists the distance between the parties will be 1" to 3".⁴²
In the next cave, Robilar and Quij surprise another group of lizard men. Encounter distance would normally be 1" to 3", but, since this cave is only 20' wide, 2" is the maximum distance possible.
6. **Light:** The illumination factor or visual capability of the concerned parties will affect encounter distance as follows.
 - a. A light source reliance limits the encounter distance to twice the normal vision radius of the source (2 X radius of the light source).
 - b. Infravision and/or ultravision operate only to the stated limit of their range and limit encounter distance accordingly.⁴³
In the last tunnel, which is dark, Robilar uses his long sword +3 for light.⁴⁴ It sheds light in a 20' radius;⁴⁵ so the maximum distance for any encounter is 40'. If Quij looks up ahead with his infravision,⁴⁶ though, then the maximum encounter distance will be 60'.⁴⁷

III. Both parties declare their intentions.

- A. The DM should mentally note what actions the "monsters" plan to take, prior to knowing what the PC's will do.
- B. Each player should describe what his character will do this round.⁴⁸
 1. Spell casters must note what spell they intend to cast at the beginning of each round.⁴⁹
 2. Other intentions may be declared in a more general manner (e.g., "I fire my bow" or "I attack with my sword").
 3. Any delay on the part of a player to declare intentions should be considered as a like delay in the character's actions, on a six second to one segment basis.⁵⁰
Decisions, decisions... Poor Otto cannot decide whether to cast his irresistible dance or geas on the evil cleric. After about 20 seconds of hemming and hawing, he finally decides to go with the dance. The DM rules that the spell will go off three segments later than usual — in segment 8 instead of segment 5.⁵¹

IV. Pre-initiative actions are resolved.

- A. A bow specialist who begins the round with arrow nocked, shaft drawn, and target in sight is entitled to loose that arrow prior to any initiative check.⁵²
Yrag eyed his elven companion skeptically. "Specialists? Bah! In my day, we didn't have no stinkin' specialists. All weapons did the same amount of damage.⁵³ You either knew how to use one, or you didn't." Just then, a group of gnolls rounded a bend up ahead. Neither side was surprised, but the elf had an arrow nocked and readied, and loosed it before Yrag even knew what was happening. To Yrag's astonishment, the elf fired two more arrows thereafter,⁵⁴ hitting and killing three gnolls. "Gee, I only got two with my sword.⁵⁵ Tell me about this specialization thing again..."
- B. A crossbow specialist who begins the round with crossbow cocked and aimed, and target in range, also gets a free shot before initiative is rolled.⁵⁶
- C. Any other exceptional actions that occur prior to initiative should be resolved here.

⁴² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Kuntz and Behringer, 41.

⁴⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102.

⁴⁶ Gary Gyax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Monster Manual*, 4th ed. (U.S.A.: TSR Games, 1979), 76.

⁴⁷ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102.

⁴⁸ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 71.

⁴⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 65.

⁵⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 71.

⁵¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 90.

⁵² Gary Gyax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Unearthed Arcana* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1985), 18.

⁵³ Gary Gyax and Dave Arneson, *Dungeons & Dragons®*, ed. Eric Holmes, 2nd ed. (Lake Geneva, WI: TSR Hobbies, Inc., 1974, -78), 18.

⁵⁴ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

⁵⁵ Robert J. Kuntz and Gary Gyax, *Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1984), 31.

⁵⁶ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

V. Resolve psionic combat on a segment-by-segment basis.⁵⁷

- A. Compare each psionic's chosen attack mode to his opponent's chosen defense mode. ALL ATTACKS AND DEFENSES ARE SIMULTANEOUS.⁵⁸
- B. Adjust attack and defense strength totals to reflect that segment's expenditures, as well as any points lost due to attack.⁵⁹
- C. Repeat steps A & B until the psionic combat has ended, one or both psionics are affected by a more mundane attack form during the round, or ten segments have passed.⁶⁰

The young apprentice stared down the illithid. "Are you sure about this?" asked Mordenkainen. "Hey, trust me," the youth replied. "Them mind flayers aren't the only ones with psionic powers." In segment 1, the illithid attacked with its psionic blast,⁶¹ which the apprentice defended against with thought shield. Mordenkainen, too, was in the area of effect, and needed to make a saving throw of 5 or better.⁶² He passed easily. Then, the apprentice retaliated with a psychic crush, which the illithid defended against with mind blank. The psionic matrix gave a 9% chance of instant death.⁶³ A roll of 05 killed the illithid instantly. The smug apprentice looked back to his master. "See, I told you!" Mordenkainen fumed quietly. "I hate psionics. Who on Oerth came up with THAT idea?"

VI. Determine initiative for the round by rolling a d6 for each side. The higher of the two rolls is said to possess the initiative for that melee round.⁶⁴

- A. Each participant does not make a separate initiative roll. However, the Dexterity Attacking adjustment is added to (or subtracted from) the initiative roll for each missile-firing combatant on an individual basis.⁶⁵
 1. Initiative bonuses do not apply to characters carrying more than "light gear" (12" base movement).⁶⁶
 2. Initiative penalties always apply.
- B. One exceptional monster, the spectator, rolls d8 for initiative, rather than d6.⁶⁷

Leomund faces off against the spectators beneath Bone Hill.⁶⁸ The spectators score a 5 (on d8) for initiative. Poor Leomund can only roll a d6, but he, too, manages to roll a 5 — a tie! However, since Leomund is throwing his dagger +2,⁶⁹ he is able to add his reaction bonus to the die roll. His 16 Dexterity⁷⁰ gives him a +1 bonus,⁷¹ so his 5 becomes a 6, and he wins initiative.
- C. Certain magic items, notably the *crossbow of speed*,⁷² *short sword of quickness*,⁷³ and *scimitar of speed*,⁷⁴ allow the wielder to strike first regardless of the initiative result.

⁵⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 76-78.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 39.

⁶¹ Gygax, *Monster Manual*, 70.

⁶² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 78.

⁶³ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 76.

⁶⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62.

⁶⁵ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 64.

⁶⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102.

⁶⁷ Lenard Lakofka, *The Secret of Bone Hill* (U.S.A.: TSR Hobbies, Inc., 1981), 27-28.

⁶⁸ Lakofka, *The Secret of Bone Hill*, 14.

⁶⁹ Lenard Lakofka, "Leomund's Life," *The Oerth Journal* 10 (July 1999): 78-84.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 11.

⁷² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 168.

⁷³ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 104.

⁷⁴ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 106.

VII. Generally, the results of whatever actions are decided upon by the party with initiative are determined first, followed by the results of whatever actions are decided upon by the party which lost the initiative.⁷⁵ Ties usually indicate that attacks occur simultaneously.⁷⁶ Special cases are listed below.

A. **Multiple Attack Routines:** When one or more creatures involved in combat are permitted to use their attack routines twice or more often during the round, then the following initiative determinants are employed.

1. When the attack routine may be used twice, then allow the side with this advantage to attack FIRST and LAST with those members of its group who have this advantage.⁷⁷
 - a. If it is possessed by both parties, the initiative roll determines which group strikes FIRST and THIRD, which group strikes SECOND and LAST.⁷⁸
 - b. If one or both groups have members allowed only one attack routine, it will always fall in the middle of the other attacks, the order determined by dicing for initiative, when necessary.⁷⁹

Erac's Cousin squares off against Serten the cleric. As a 7th level fighter,⁸⁰ Erac's Cousin has an attack rate of 3/2,⁸¹ so he can attack twice in the first round.⁸² Serten has but one attack, so it will come between the two attacks of his opponent. If Tenser were to drop in and cast haste on Serten, then they would both have two attacks,⁸³ and would need to dice for initiative.

2. If one party has the ability to employ its attack routines thrice, then the other party dices for initiative to see if it, or the multi-routine group, strikes first in the mid-point of the round.⁸⁴
If, on the other hand, Erac's Cousin (being a 16th level magic-user⁸⁵) cast haste on himself, then he could attack three times per round,⁸⁶ and Serten only one. They would need to roll for initiative to determine who struck first in the middle of the round, but Erac's Cousin would always attack first and last.
3. Extrapolate for routines which occur four or more times in a round by following the method above.⁸⁷
4. Note that a *routine* is the attack or attacks usual to the creature concerned, i.e. a weapon (or weapons) for a character, a claw/claw/bite routine for a bear (with incidental damage assessed as it occurs — the hug, for example). A 12th level fighter is allowed attack routines twice in every odd numbered melee round, for example, and this moves up to three per round if a *haste* spell is cast upon the fighter.⁸⁸
5. This rule applies to multiple missile attacks as well as to multiple melee attacks; thus, a longbow (rate of fire 2) will generally fire FIRST and LAST in the round.

B. **Charge:** Normal melee is not possible when the opponents begin the round over 1" distant.⁸⁹ A round must be spent closing.⁹⁰ Alternatively, the attacker may choose to charge. This action brings the charging party into combat on the charge round, provided movement rate (plus bonus) allows this.⁹¹

1. Movement Rate of Charging Creatures:
 - a. Outdoors, charging bipeds receive a $\frac{1}{3}$ movement bonus. Charging quadrupeds receive a $\frac{1}{2}$ movement bonus.⁹²
 - b. Indoors, movement rate for all charging creatures is doubled.⁹³
 - c. Encumbered creatures may not charge.⁹⁴

⁷⁵ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 61.

⁷⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

⁷⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 62-63.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Blume et al., 42.

⁸¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 25.

⁸² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

⁸³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 74.

⁸⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

⁸⁵ Gary Gyax, "From the Sorcerer's Scroll," *THE DRAGON*, May 1980: 30.

⁸⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 74.

⁸⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

2. Armor Class of Charging Creatures:
 - a. There is no dexterity bonus allowed for charging creatures.⁹⁵
 - b. Creatures with no dexterity bonus become one armor class worse.⁹⁶
 - c. There is no penalty to AC 10 creatures for charging, however.⁹⁷
3. Melee at End of Charge:
 - a. Initiative is NOT checked at the end of charge movement.⁹⁸
 - b. The opponent with the longer weapon/reach attacks first.⁹⁹
 - c. Charging creatures gain +2 on their "to hit" dice if they survive any opponent attacks which occur first.¹⁰⁰
4. To determine the timing of a charge attack vs. an opposing spell caster, compare the segments of movement required to the casting time of the spell.

Bigby nervously tries to complete his grasping hand spell as the giant charges at him. The spell requires seven segments to cast.¹⁰¹ The giant moves at 12",¹⁰² which is doubled to 24", or 24' per segment,¹⁰³ indoors. He has 200' to close, and will do so in (200 ÷ 24) nine segments. Bigby will get his spell off after all.

C. **Spell Casting:** Even when a spell caster has won the initiative, it is possible for an opponent's attack to occur before the completion of (and thus disrupt) the spell.

1. If combat is spell vs. spell, the spell with the shorter casting time will be completed first, with the initiative result breaking ties in casting times.

Bigby and Riggby just cannot take the name jokes anymore. They decide to settle the matter with a magical duel. (The winner will deal with Diggby and the others afterwards.) Bigby decides to get it over with quickly, and starts casting meteor swarm (nine segments).¹⁰⁴ Riggby, on the other hand, opens with flame strike (eight segments).¹⁰⁵ Initiative is irrelevant; Riggby's spell will go off before Bigby's. If Bigby had been using his clenched fist spell (also eight segments),¹⁰⁶ then initiative would have decided which spell was completed first.
2. If the spell caster is being attacked by a melee weapon with a speed factor rating, use the following procedure to determine when the weapon strikes.
 - a. When the attacker wins initiative, the weapon will always strike prior to spell completion.
 - b. When initiative is tied, a straight comparison of weapon speed factor to spell casting time will determine which occurs first. Simultaneous results are possible.¹⁰⁷
 - c. When the attacker loses initiative, subtract the attacker's losing initiative die from the weapon speed factor (treating negative numbers as positive), and compare the result to the spell casting time to determine which occurs first. Again, simultaneous results are possible.¹⁰⁸

The two spell casters have closed to melee range. Bigby starts casting power word, kill (one segment).¹⁰⁹ Riggby attacks with his staff of the serpent.¹¹⁰ If Riggby wins initiative, he will strike first. If initiative is tied, the one-segment spell will beat the speed factor 4 staff.¹¹¹ As it turns out, Bigby wins initiative 6-4. Riggby's speed factor (4) minus his losing die roll (4) equals 0, so he actually beats the one-segment spell. (He still needs to score a hit, though.)

⁹⁵ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 86.

¹⁰² Gygax, *Monster Manual*, 44-45.

¹⁰³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 102.

¹⁰⁴ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 92.

¹⁰⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 93.

¹¹⁰ Kuntz and Gygax, 32.

¹¹¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

3. If the spell caster is being attacked by missile weapons, or by natural weaponry without a speed factor rating (such as a monster's claw/claw/bite), use the following procedure to determine when the attack strikes.

- a. When the attacker wins initiative, the attack will always strike prior to spell completion.
- b. When the attacker loses initiative, or when initiative is tied, the attack will occur on the segment indicated by the caster's initiative die. Compare this to the spell casting time to determine which occurs first. Simultaneous results are possible.¹¹²

The duel comes to a grinding halt when an out-of-control air elemental turns on Bigby.¹¹³ It starts to attack, while Bigby tries to cast protection from evil, 10' radius (three segments) to keep it away from him.¹¹⁴ Bigby wins initiative 4-1, so the elemental's attack will come on segment 4, after the spell is completed. Bigby is safe — for the moment.

4. When the attacker has multiple attack routines, only the first attack has an opportunity to disrupt a spell (unless the spell requires a full round to cast).

While Riggby takes the opportunity to cast cure light wounds on himself (five segments),¹¹⁵ Bigby's loyal archers¹¹⁶ begin firing on him. The timing of their first volley will be determined by initiative. Riggby wins initiative 3-2, but that means that the first volley of arrows arrives in segment 3, before the completion of the spell. If the spell is not disrupted, his spell will take effect in segment 5. The second volley of arrows will strike thereafter.

5. A magic-user may cast two cantrips in a single round.¹¹⁷ In such a case, the timing of the first cantrip is determined as above. The second cantrip will be cast 1-4 segments later.¹¹⁸

Having exhausted all of his more useful spells, Bigby must now resort to casting cantrips. Meanwhile, Riggby is preparing a light spell with which to blind Bigby.¹¹⁹ The light spell will be completed in four segments.¹²⁰

Bigby's first cantrip, spider, will be cast in the first segment. (No cantrip has a casting time longer than 1/2 segment.)¹²¹ His second cantrip, yawn, will be completed d4 segments later. Bigby rolls a 3, so his second cantrip will take effect in segment 4 — the same time as Riggby's light spell, so an initiative roll is needed to determine which spell will go off first in that segment.

6. The spell caster cannot use his or her dexterity bonus to avoid being hit during spell casting; doing so interrupts the spell.¹²²

7. Any successful attack, or non-saved-against attack, upon the spell caster interrupts the spell.¹²³

8. The above procedures for resolving the timing of attacks against spell casters also apply to opponents using magical devices with specific activation times (such as rods, staves, and wands). These functions, however, will not be automatically disrupted by a successful attack (unless the wielder is slain or otherwise incapacitated).

Completely out of spells at this point, and low on hit points, Bigby resorts to his wand of cold [frost].¹²⁴ He uses two charges to create a cone of cold.¹²⁵ This function has an activation time of only two segments.¹²⁶

Riggby tries to hit Bigby with his hammer +2.¹²⁷ Initiative is tied, so the weapon speed factor (4)¹²⁸ is compared to the activation time of the wand (2). The cone of cold will go off before Riggby can try to hit Bigby. Even if Riggby had won initiative and struck first, the cone of cold would take effect unless the blow incapacitated Bigby.

¹¹² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 65.

¹¹³ Gygax, *Monster Manual*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 75.

¹¹⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 43.

¹¹⁶ Gygax, "From the Sorcerer's Scroll," 11.

¹¹⁷ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 45.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 44.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 45.

¹²² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 65.

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Kuntz and Gygax, 31.

¹²⁵ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 135.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Kuntz and Gygax, 32.

¹²⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

D. **Weapon Speed Factor:** When initiative is tied, weapon speed factors are used to determine who strikes the first blow.¹²⁹

1. The opponent with the weapon which has the lower speed factor will strike first,¹³⁰ subject to the following conditions.
 - a. The initiative roll must be tied.¹³¹
 - b. Both combatants must be using melee weapons with speed factors.¹³²
 - c. Both combatants must have an odd or even number of attacks in the round (as per VII A, above).

Otis has finally caught up with Robilar, after the latter's reckless freeing of Zugtmoy.¹³³ The two come to blows. Otis is fighting with a battle-axe, while Robilar wields his long sword +3.¹³⁴ Otis, as a 10th level ranger,¹³⁵ is allowed three attacks every two rounds.¹³⁶ Robilar, as a 19th level fighter,¹³⁷ is entitled to two attacks every round.¹³⁸ Therefore, in the first round, they will each have two attacks.¹³⁹

Initiative dice are rolled, and tied 3-3. Speed factors are then consulted. Robilar's long sword (speed factor 5)¹⁴⁰ is faster than Otis' battle-axe (speed factor 7),¹⁴¹ so Robilar will strike FIRST and THIRD, while Otis strikes SECOND and LAST.¹⁴² In the second round, however, Otis will have but one attack, so initiative and speed factors will be irrelevant — Robilar will strike FIRST and LAST, with Otis attacking in the middle.¹⁴³

2. When weapon speed factor is the determinant of which opponent strikes first in a melee round, there is a chance that one opponent will be entitled to multiple attacks.¹⁴⁴
 - a. Compare the score of the lower-factored weapon with that of the higher.
 - b. If the difference is at least twice the factor of the lower, or five or more factors in any case, the opponent with the lower-factored weapon is entitled to two attacks *before* the opponent with the higher weapon factor is entitled to any attack whatsoever.¹⁴⁵
 - c. If the difference is ten or greater, the opponent with the lower-factored weapon is entitled to two attacks *before* the opponent with the higher weapon factor is allowed to attack, and one further attack at the same time the opponent with the higher-speed-factored weapon finally is allowed to attack.¹⁴⁶

¹²⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ Gygax and Mentzer, 28.

¹³⁴ Kuntz and Behringer, 41.

¹³⁵ Gygax and Mentzer, 32-34.

¹³⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 25.

¹³⁷ Kuntz and Behringer, 41.

¹³⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 25.

¹³⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

¹⁴⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

3. Note that such speed factor considerations are not applicable when either closing or charging to melee, but after an initial round of combat, or in cases where closing/charging was not necessary, the speed factor considerations are applicable.¹⁴⁷

Zagyg, amused by all this pointless bickering, plucks Tenser, Otis, and Robilar out of the space-time continuum, and drops them into a demi-plane of his own devising at a time in their pasts when they were all 1st level. He gives Tenser a dagger, Otis a club, and Robilar an awl pike. (Zagyg always did have a soft spot for ol' Robilar.) Zagyg also loads the mystical dice of fate such that the three always tie for initiative. Then he sits back to watch.

In the 1st round, the reluctant combatants close to striking distance, so no melee takes place.¹⁴⁸ In the 2nd round, a comparison of weapon lengths determines who strikes when. Robilar's pike (18')¹⁴⁹ is first, followed by Otis' club (3')¹⁵⁰, and, finally, Tenser's dagger (15").¹⁵¹ Speed factors are not considered (per 1 & 2, above) as this was their first round of combat after closing.

In round 3, however (with initiative tied), the speed factor rules apply. Because there is a ten-point difference in speed factors between Tenser's dagger and Robilar's pike, Tenser is allowed to attack twice before Robilar, and once more at the same time as Robilar. The difference between Robilar's pike and Otis' club is nine. Because the difference (9) is at least twice the lower factor (4) — or five or more in any case — Otis can also attack twice before Robilar, although without the benefit of a third attack as Tenser has. Thus, the attack sequence this round is Tenser/Otis, Tenser/Otis, Tenser/Robilar. At the end of the round, Zagyg loses interest in the whole thing, sends everyone back to his respective place and time, and takes it upon himself to start designing a completely new game system from scratch. THE END.

¹⁴⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

EXAMPLE OF MELEE

A party of good and neutral adventurers is exploring a dungeon. The party includes a cavalier, a paladin, a cleric, a druid, a fighter, a barbarian, and a ranger (all human). They round a corner and encounter a party of evil marauders, including a human magic-user, a human illusionist, a dwarven thief, a human acrobat, a dwarven assassin, a human monk, and a human bard.

Surprise dice are rolled. The barbarian — and, by association, his party — only has a 10% chance to be surprised.¹⁵² (The dungeon does not qualify as “familiar” terrain.) He rolls a 69 on d%, and thus is not surprised. On the evil side, the monk, being 7th level, (and thus the whole red party) is normally surprised 22% of the time.¹⁵³ However, the clever cleric had previously cast *silence 15’ radius* on his torch. The DM rules that the thus-silenced blue party will increase their surprise chances by 1 in 6 ($16\frac{2}{3}\%$). This modifier is added to the monk’s base 22%, yielding a net $38\frac{2}{3}\%$ (or 39%) chance of surprise. The monk rolls 38 on d%; therefore, his side will be surprised.

Dividing the monk’s result of 38 by $16\frac{2}{3}$ (and rounding up), we find that his party will be surprised for three segments. Several members of the red party have reaction adjustments from high Dexterity, though, and thus will not be surprised for the full three segments. The illusionist, the thief, and the bard each have a 17 Dexterity, so they will only be surprised for one segment.¹⁵⁴ The acrobat has a 16 Dexterity, and so will only be surprised for two segments.¹⁵⁵

A d3 is rolled to determine the distance between the parties. This is found to be 20’. The blue party swings into action. The cavalier and the paladin declare that they will charge the magic-user and illusionist, respectively. They are both wearing plate mail, and move at 6”.¹⁵⁶ Their doubled charge movement is 12”, or 12’ per segment. It will take them two of their surprise segments to complete the charge. The barbarian also decides to charge the magic-user. His movement rate is 15”,¹⁵⁷ doubled to 30” for charging. He can complete the charge and strike in one segment.

The cleric tosses away his *silenced* torch and begins casting another *silence 15’ radius* spell at the magic-user. The casting time is five segments,¹⁵⁸ only three of which can be completed during surprise. The spell will take effect two segments into the first full round of combat. The druid decides to throw his *spear +2* at the illusionist. The fighter will sip from his *potion of invisibility* in the first segment. A result of 2 on d4+1 indicates that the potion will take effect two segments later.¹⁵⁹ The ranger, meanwhile, decides to let loose with her light crossbow. She did not have it cocked and loaded, but is still entitled to take her normal rate of fire ($3/2$, as she is a specialist)¹⁶⁰ in each segment of surprise. She fires at the acrobat.

Now we begin to resolve these actions. First, in surprise segment 1, the ranger makes her first attack with her light crossbow. She is firing at the acrobat, who is AC 8 (but AC type 10). The ranger rolls an 11. Since she is a specialist firing at point blank range, she gets a +2 bonus.¹⁶¹ She also gets another +2 bonus because she is firing *bolts +2*.¹⁶² Finally, a light crossbow vs. AC type 10 receives an additional +3 bonus.¹⁶³ This makes the final result an 18. As the ranger is 8th level, an 18 hits AC -4, thus hitting the acrobat easily.¹⁶⁴ Damage is $2(d4+2)$,¹⁶⁵ +2 for magic.¹⁶⁶ The ranger rolls a 4, and inflicts 14 hp of damage.

The druid then throws his *spear +2* at the illusionist, who is AC 7 (AC type 10). The druid rolls a 5. The +2 magic bonus makes this a 7,¹⁶⁷ but the -2 penalty for medium range drops it to a 5 again.¹⁶⁸ (There is no adjustment for a thrown spear vs. AC type 10.)¹⁶⁹ As the druid is 12th level, this hits AC 9 — not quite good enough.¹⁷⁰

¹⁵² Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 19.

¹⁵³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 30.

¹⁵⁴ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 11.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 45.

¹⁵⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 119.

¹⁶⁰ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 168.

¹⁶³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁶⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

¹⁶⁵ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

¹⁶⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 168.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

The **barbarian** completes his charge at the **magic-user**, who is AC 10. He is wielding a *long sword +1*, with a hand axe in his off hand.¹⁷¹ The **barbarian** gets to make two attack rolls — one for each weapon. With the sword, he rolls a 17, hitting easily. Damage is d8,¹⁷² +1 for his 17 Strength,¹⁷³ +1 for magic.¹⁷⁴ He inflicts 7 hp of damage with the sword. For his axe attack, he rolls even better — a 19! This causes d6+1 damage, for 4 hp.¹⁷⁵ The **magic-user** sustains 11 hp of damage.

Now, the **ranger** fires her second crossbow bolt, again at the **acrobat**. A roll of 15 hits, causing another 8 hp of damage. At the end of the first segment of surprise, the **cavalier** and **paladin** are halfway through their charge, and the **cleric** is in the midst of casting a spell. We proceed to the second surprise segment.

As noted earlier, the **illusionist**, the **thief**, and the **bard** were only surprised for one segment, so they are on their guard now. In addition, the **monk** has a *heavy crossbow of speed*, which he can fire in this segment (despite still being surprised). He targets the **paladin**. The DM decides that the **illusionist**, who sees the **paladin** barreling down on him, will start to cast *improved invisibility* on himself. The casting time is four segments,¹⁷⁶ so the *invisibility* will take effect two segments into the first full round of combat.

The dwarven **thief**, who has been hidden from view in the second rank, will attempt to *hide in shadows*. The **bard**, meanwhile, begins casting *heat metal* on the entire **blue** party, save the **druid**. The casting time is also four segments;¹⁷⁷ thus, the spell will be completed two segments into the first full round.

On the **blue** side, the **cavalier** and **paladin** will complete their charge movement. The **cleric** is still casting *silence 15' radius*. The **druid** begins casting *barkskin* on himself. The casting time is three segments,¹⁷⁸ so it will be completed one segment into the first full round. The **fighter** slowly advances while waiting for his potion to take effect. The **barbarian** continues to attack the still-surprised **magic-user**, and the **ranger** continues firing her light crossbow.

Due to his magic *heavy crossbow of speed*, the still-surprised **monk** fires first in this segment. He rolls a 7. The +1 bonus for the magic crossbow, together with his *bolts +2*, makes this a 10.¹⁷⁹ However, the **paladin** is AC type 2, so the heavy crossbow takes a -1 penalty.¹⁸⁰ The net result is 9, which, for a 7th level monk, hits AC 7.¹⁸¹ The bolt glances harmlessly off the **paladin's** plate mail.

The **barbarian's** attack rate is 3/2,¹⁸² so he will attack twice this segment. As his "attack routine" is with two weapons, he gets to strike twice with each. His first attack rolls are 13 (for his *long sword +1*) and 8 (for his hand axe). Both hit the AC 10 **magic-user**, for a total of 10 hp. The **ranger** also has a rate of fire of 3/2, but, as she fired twice last segment, she can only fire once this segment. She rolls a 14, hitting the **acrobat** for 12 hp this time. The **acrobat** only had 10 hp left, so he is now unconscious.¹⁸³

The **cavalier** completes her charge against the **magic-user**, rolling a 4. She is 9th level, and receives a +2 "weapon of choice" bonus,¹⁸⁴ a +1 bonus for her magic *long sword +1*, and a +2 bonus for charging. The **cavalier** also receives a +2 bonus with a long sword vs. AC type 10.¹⁸⁵ This makes her net result 11, which hits AC 1¹⁸⁶ — more than enough to hit the **magic-user**. She rolls d8 for damage, +1 for her 16 Strength,¹⁸⁷ +1 for magic. The **magic-user** takes 7 hp of damage. She had only 4 hp left, so she, too, is now unconscious.

¹⁷¹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 70.

¹⁷² Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 37.

¹⁷³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 9.

¹⁷⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 165.

¹⁷⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 37.

¹⁷⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 97.

¹⁷⁷ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 56.

¹⁷⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 55.

¹⁷⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 168.

¹⁸⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁸¹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

¹⁸² Kim Mohan, "Arcana update, part I", *DRAGON*®, Nov. 1985: 14.

¹⁸³ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁸⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

¹⁸⁷ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 9.

At the same time, the **paladin** completes his charge against the **illusionist**. He rolls a 3. The **paladin**, however, receives +3 for his 18/00 Strength,¹⁸⁸ +2 for “weapon of choice”, +1 for his magic *long sword +1*, +2 for charging, and +2 for long sword vs. AC type 10. This totals 13, which, for an 11th level paladin, hits AC -3!¹⁸⁹ (The **paladin** could not miss.) Damage is d8, +6 for Strength,¹⁹⁰ +1 for magic. A roll of 5 equals 12 hp of damage to the **illusionist**, which also ruins his spell.

Since the **magic-user** has fallen, the **barbarian** wants to make his second attack routine against the adjacent **illusionist**. However, since the **illusionist** is no longer surprised, he is not vulnerable to “free” attacks anymore. The **barbarian** can engage him, but will not have an opportunity to score damage until the first full round of combat.

At the end of two surprise segments, the **cleric** and **druid** are still casting spells. The **cavalier**, **paladin**, and **barbarian** are engaged in melee. The soon-to-be **invisible fighter** is closing to striking distance, and the **ranger** has been firing her light crossbow.

On the **red** side, the **magic-user** and **acrobat** have been incapacitated, the **illusionist** is in melee with the **paladin** and **barbarian**, the **thief** is *hiding in shadows*, and the **bard** is casting a spell. The **assassin** and the **monk** are still surprised. The third and final surprise segment now begins.

The **illusionist**, who will not likely survive the first full round of combat (what with the **paladin** and the **barbarian** both wailing away at him), decides to start casting *mass suggestion*. The casting time is six segments,¹⁹¹ so it will take effect five segments into the first round. He hopes that the dice let him get this spell off in time. The **bard**, meanwhile, is continuing the *heat metal* spell that she started last segment.

In the **blue** party, the **cavalier** will attack the still-surprised **assassin**. The **paladin** and **barbarian** are still engaged with the **illusionist**, but do not get an opportunity to strike for damage until the first full round (since the **illusionist** is up and on his guard). The **cleric** and **druid** are still occupied with their spells. The **fighter** continues closing (at 9”, he moves a total of 18’ in the second and third segments), while the **ranger** fires her light crossbow at the **monk**.

The **ranger** again is entitled to two shots this segment. For her first attack, she rolls a 17. This should hit the **monk** without question; however, being a monk, he is allowed a save vs. petrification to dodge the missile.¹⁹² The **monk** rolls a 3, failing the save.¹⁹³ The **ranger**’s crossbow bolt hits for the maximum of 14 hp. At the same time, the **cavalier** takes the first of her two attacks against the **assassin**. She rolls an 18, undoubtedly enough to hit the AC 10 **assassin**. The damage is only 5 hp, though — barely a scratch.

For her second attack, the **ranger** rolls a 13. The **monk** again fails his save vs. petrification, and suffers another 8 hp of damage. The **cavalier** also hits the **assassin** again, for another 5 hp. At the end of this, the third surprise segment, the **fighter**’s potion takes effect. He is now *invisible*.¹⁹⁴ Surprise is over, and the first full round of combat begins.

Both sides declare actions. The DM decides that, while the **illusionist** continues casting his spell, the hidden **thief** will attempt to *backstab* the **paladin**.¹⁹⁵ The **assassin** will strike at the **cavalier**, the **monk** will return fire on the **ranger**, and the **bard** will finish her *heat metal* spell. The players announce that the **cavalier**, **paladin**, and **barbarian** will continue attacking their respective opponents, as the **cleric** and **druid** complete their spells. The **ranger** will again fire at the **monk**, while the *invisible fighter* moves into position to strike at the **bard** next round. For the first time in this encounter, initiative is rolled. Also for the first time in this encounter, the dice favor the **red** party, which wins initiative 6-5. Now, the timing of everyone’s actions is determined.

The **monk**, with his *heavy crossbow of speed*, automatically fires first. He rolls a 4. This is increased to 7 with magic bonuses. The **ranger** is AC type 5, which grants another +2 bonus, for a 9 total.¹⁹⁶ This only hits AC 7.¹⁹⁷ The **ranger** is AC 4, so the bolt again glances off harmlessly.

¹⁸⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 9.

¹⁸⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

¹⁹⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 9.

¹⁹¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 99.

¹⁹² Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 30.

¹⁹³ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 79.

¹⁹⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 126.

¹⁹⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

¹⁹⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

The **druid's** *barkskin* spell takes effect now, improving his AC from 6 to 5.¹⁹⁸ Next, the **cleric's** *silence 15' radius* spell goes off (without a saving throw) against the unconscious **magic-user**.¹⁹⁹ While this enhances the **fighter's** *invisibility* (and, unfortunately, the **thief's** *hide in shadows*), it is not quick enough to *silence* the **bard**. Having won initiative, the **bard's** *heat metal* spell takes effect just slightly earlier in segment 2 than the **cleric's** spell.

Since the **fighter** became *invisible*, he can no longer be targetted, but the **cavalier** and **paladin** (both of whom are wearing plate mail) are affected, as is the **barbarian** (who is unarmored, but wielding metal weapons). On this, the first round of the spell, their metal items become uncomfortably warm.²⁰⁰ Both the **cleric** and **ranger** are wearing magical *chain mail +1*, which is entitled to a save vs. magical fire.²⁰¹ They both pass the save, and their armor is unaffected by the spell (although they will be unable to draw any metallic weapons).

It was determined earlier that the **illusionist's** spell would be completed in segment 5. He is being attacked by both the **paladin** (with a *long sword +1*) and the **barbarian** (with a *long sword +1* and a hand axe). Subtracting the **blue** party's losing initiative roll of 5 from the weapon speed factors (5 and 4, respectively), and treating negative numbers as positive, it is seen that the weapons will strike in segment "0" (the very beginning of the round) and segment 1, both before the spell is completed. (The poor **illusionist** did not make out so well after all.)

The **paladin** rolls a 1. Unbelievably, this is sufficient to hit AC 1!²⁰² (No official AD&D® rule states that a "to hit" roll of 1 always misses.) The **illusionist** suffers 10 hp of damage, and loses his spell (again). The **barbarian**, for his part, rolls a 5 with his *long sword +1*. He receives +1 for his 17 Strength, +1 for magic, and +2 vs. AC type 10, giving him a total of 9. For an 8th level barbarian, this hits AC 5,²⁰³ and so causes 6 hp of damage. The **barbarian's** hand axe attack (another 19!) inflicts 4 hp more, killing the **illusionist**.

Now the hidden **thief** can make his *backstab* attack against the **paladin**. (Despite the fact that the **thief's** side won the initiative, the **paladin** is entitled to two attacks per round,²⁰⁴ while the **thief** has but one; thus, the **paladin** will always strike first.) The **red** party's luck being what it is, the **thief** rolls a 3. Even with a +4 bonus for striking from behind,²⁰⁵ he still suffers a -1 penalty for using a long sword vs. AC type 3.²⁰⁶ (The **paladin's** shield is negated.)²⁰⁷ This totals a 6, which, for an 8th level thief, doesn't even hit AC 10.²⁰⁸ He misses horribly, and is now plainly visible²⁰⁹ (and a likely target for the **paladin's** second attack routine).

The **cavalier** now makes her first attack against the **assassin**. (Again, since she receives two attacks per round,²¹⁰ and the **assassin** only one, the **cavalier** will always strike first, regardless of initiative.) She rolls an 11, and hits again, this time for a full 10 hp.

The **assassin** returns the attack, rolling a 17. This is modified by -2 for long sword vs. AC type 2.²¹¹ The net result of 15, for a 9th level assassin, hits AC 1.²¹² The **cavalier** is in plate mail and shield, with a 16 Dexterity, and so has AC 0.²¹³ The **assassin's** sword barely misses. She will need to roll an 18 or better to hit.²¹⁴

The **ranger**, who is entitled to only one shot this round, fires at the **monk**. This time she rolls a 5, +2 for specialization, +2 for magic, and +3 vs. AC type 10, for a net result of 12. This hits the AC 5 **monk**, who yet again fails his save vs. petrification, and suffers 14 hp of damage. The **monk** is now unconscious.

The **paladin**, as predicted, makes his second attack against the foolish **thief** who attempted to *backstab* him. As was illustrated earlier, the **paladin** cannot miss AC 1 or worse, and thus does not even bother to roll. He hits the **thief** for 11 hp of damage. The **cavalier**, meanwhile, makes her second attack on the **assassin**. She rolls a 17, and inflicts 9 hp more.

¹⁹⁸ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 55.

¹⁹⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 45.

²⁰⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 56.

²⁰¹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 43.

²⁰² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

²⁰³ *ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 22.

²⁰⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 27.

²⁰⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

²⁰⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 70.

²⁰⁸ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

²⁰⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 28.

²¹⁰ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 22.

²¹¹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

²¹² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

²¹³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 11, 36.

²¹⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

At the end of the first full round of combat, the **illusionist** is dead. The **cavalier** is engaged with the **assassin**, while the **paladin** and **barbarian** are similarly engaged with the **thief**. Except for the **cleric**, **druid**, and **ranger** (who never advanced forward), everyone is *silenced*. The **cavalier**, **paladin**, **barbarian**, **cleric**, and **ranger** are under the effects of the **bard's** *heat metal* spell. The *invisible fighter* is in striking distance of the **bard**. The **monk** is unconscious at -1 hp, while the **acrobat** and **magic-user** each suffer 1 hp of bleeding damage (leaving them at -3 and -4, respectively).²¹⁵

Actions are now declared for round 2. The DM decides that the **magic-user**, **acrobat**, and **monk** will all lay on the ground bleeding (not that they have much choice). The **thief** and **assassin** will continue attacking their opponents, while the **bard** (who is unaware of the *invisible fighter*) will drink half of her *potion of super-heroism*. The DM rules that she will need one segment to take it from her pouch,²¹⁶ one segment to drink it, and a further $d4 + 1 =$ three segments before it takes effect.

The players declare that the **cavalier**, **paladin**, and **barbarian** will continue attacking their respective opponents. The **cleric**, who is outside the *silenced* area, will cast *light* on the **bard's** eyes. The casting time is four segments.²¹⁷ The **druid** will cast *flame blade* (three segments),²¹⁸ while the **ranger** (also unaware of the *invisible fighter's* position) will fire on the **bard**. Initiative dice are rolled, and the **blue** party wins 4-3.

The **cavalier**, **paladin**, **fighter**, **barbarian**, and **ranger** are each allowed two attacks this round.²¹⁹ Initiative is irrelevant for them, even though they won. The **cavalier** hits the **assassin** with a roll of 8, causing 4 hp of damage. The **paladin** automatically hits the **thief**, for 11 hp. The **barbarian** hits with his *long sword +1*, doing another 3 hp of damage, but misses with his hand axe on a roll of 2.

The now-visible²²⁰ **fighter** strikes the **bard** for a whopping 17 hp ($d8, +6$ for 18/00 Strength, $+3$ for double specialization,²²¹ $+1$ for magic *long sword +1*)! Unfortunately, this puts him in the line of fire of the **ranger**. Since the **fighter** and **bard** are both humans (and thus about the same size), the **ranger** has a 50/50 chance of hitting either of them.²²² The DM's secret die roll indicates that the **fighter** will be the target. The **blue** party's luck continues, however, as the **ranger** rolls a 1 and misses her ally. The **druid's** *flame blade* spell now takes effect, followed by the **cleric's** *light* spell. The **bard**, however, easily makes her saving throw with a 16, so the *light* spell goes off immediately behind her.²²³

It is now the **red** party's turn to act. The **bard's** *potion of super-heroism* kicks in. She is a 7th level fighter, and so gains three levels and $2d10 + 3 = 17$ hit points.²²⁴ A roll of $5d4$ indicates that the effects will last for eleven rounds,²²⁵ but this is divided by two (six rounds), as she drank only half of the potion.²²⁶

Meanwhile, the **thief** attacks the **barbarian** (figuring he is less likely to hit the plate-armored **paladin**). He rolls a 10. As the barbarian is AC type 10, this is modified to a 12, which hits AC 7.²²⁷ The unarmored **barbarian**, however, with his 18 Dexterity, is AC 2²²⁸ — not much worse than the **paladin** after all! The **thief** does not feel at all good about this. On the other side of the melee, the **assassin** again swings at the **cavalier**. As was determined earlier, she needs to roll an 18 or better to hit. She rolls a 15, and misses again.

Now, the **blue** fighter-types get their second attacks. The **ranger**, seeing that she no longer has a clear shot, will hold her fire. The **cavalier** hits the **assassin** for 4 hp more. The **paladin** and **barbarian** kill the **thief**. The **fighter** hits the **bard** again, this time for 14 hp (which is subtracted from the temporary 17 hp the **bard** gained from her *potion of super-heroism*).²²⁹

²¹⁵ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 82.

²¹⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 71.

²¹⁷ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 44.

²¹⁸ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 42.

²¹⁹ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18, 22.

²²⁰ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 126.

²²¹ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

²²² Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 63.

²²³ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 44.

²²⁴ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 127.

²²⁵ *ibid.*

²²⁶ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 125.

²²⁷ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 74.

²²⁸ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 18.

²²⁹ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 127.

At the end of round 2, the arms and armor of the **cavalier**, **paladin**, and **barbarian** are now “hot”, and they each suffer d4 damage from the *heat metal* spell.²³⁰ The damage rolls are 3, 1, and 3, respectively (this being the only damage they have sustained thus far). The **illusionist** and **thief** are dead. The **magic-user**, **acrobat**, and **monk** each lose another hit point to bleeding, leaving them at -5, -4, and -2, respectively. The **assassin** is still engaged with the **cavalier**, and the **bard** with the **fighter**. Spells in effect are the aforementioned *heat metal* on most of the **blue** party, *silence 15’ radius* on all the melee combatants, and *barkskin* and *flame blade* on the **druid**. The **bard** will have the benefit of her *potion of super-heroism* for five more rounds.

Actions are now declared for round 3. The **assassin** continues fighting the **cavalier**, while the **bard** will attack the **fighter** with her *broadsword* +3. The **cavalier** will continue to attack the **assassin**, as the **fighter** will the **bard**. The **barbarian** will drop his hot weapons and pick up the unconscious **magic-user**’s staff. The **paladin** will drop his sword and shield, and begin removing his hot armor. The **cleric** and the **ranger** will move up behind the **cavalier** and **paladin**, respectively. The **druid** will charge the **assassin**.

Initiative dice are again rolled, and tied 5-5. The DM rules that the **barbarian** can easily retrieve the **magic-user**’s staff in one round. The **paladin**, however, will need four rounds to remove his plate mail.²³¹ The **cleric** and **ranger** each take their movement (which is of little consequence to the timing of attacks).

The **fighter** and **bard** are each entitled to two attacks this round. Since initiative was tied, weapon speeds are used to determine the order of attack. However, both swords have the same speed factor (5),²³² so the attacks will be truly simultaneous. The **fighter** hits the **bard** with a 13, causing 13 hp of damage. The **bard** hits the **fighter** with a 19, causing 10 hp of damage.

The **cavalier** is also entitled to two attacks this round, and thus she strikes before the **assassin**. She rolls an 8, and hits for 6 hp of damage. The **assassin** only had 6 hp left, so she is unconscious. The DM allows the **druid**, who was charging the **assassin**, to continue on to the **bard**. He will strike last in the round.

The **fighter** and **bard** now make their second attacks against each other. The **fighter** hits with a 12, causing 14 hp of damage. The **bard** also hits with a 12, causing 9 hp of damage. As she is less than 10’ away, the **cavalier** may also take her second attack on the **bard**.²³³ She rolls a 13, and hits for 9 hp.

Now the **druid** completes his charge. Unfortunately, he rolls a 3. The +2 bonus for charging makes this a 5. However, the *flame blade* is treated as a scimitar,²³⁴ which has a -1 penalty against the **bard**’s AC type 5.²³⁵ The **druid**’s net result of 4 misses.

The arms and armor of the **cavalier** and **paladin** are now “searing”, and they each suffer 2d4 damage from the *heat metal* spell.²³⁶ The rolls are 8 and 6. The **cavalier**, who is still in her helmet, passes out.²³⁷ The **paladin**, who would have removed his helmet first, does not pass out, but they will both be disabled for 1-4 days from the burns.²³⁸ (“Finally,” thinks the **bard**.)

At the end of round 3, only the **bard** remains active on the **red** side. She is engaged with the **fighter** and the **druid**. The unconscious **magic-user**, **acrobat**, and **monk** each lose another hit point, bringing them down to -6, -5, and -3, respectively. The **cavalier** and **paladin** are down on the **blue** side, with the **cleric**, **ranger**, and **barbarian** standing nearby.

Actions are declared for round 4. The **bard** will fight on. The **cleric** will help the fallen **cavalier** out of her armor, while the **ranger** does the same for the **paladin**. The **barbarian** will close with the **bard**, while the **fighter** and **druid** continue to attack.

Initiative is rolled, and the **bard** wins 3-2. However, the **bard**’s attack rate is 3/2,²³⁹ and she only has one attack this round. Therefore the **fighter**, with 2/1, is allowed to strike first. He rolls a 17, and hits for 15 hp. The **bard** returns the attack. She hits with an 18, but only does 5 hp of damage. Then the **druid** attacks, but, alas, he rolls a 1 and misses completely. The **fighter**’s second attack roll, though, is a 10, which hits for 17 hp and kills the **bard**. The melee is over.

²³⁰ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 56.

²³¹ Kim Mohan, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Wilderness Survival Guide* (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1986), 65.

²³² Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

²³³ Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 66.

²³⁴ Gygax, *Unearthed Arcana*, 42.

²³⁵ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 38.

²³⁶ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 56.

²³⁷ *ibid.*

²³⁸ *ibid.*

²³⁹ Gygax, *Players Handbook*, 25, 118.

What follows on the next two pages are a pair of charts, useful as a graphic tool for comparing which of two actions occurs first in a round. (Thanks to [Dragonsfoot](#) members [Link](#) and [WSmith](#) for their early work with this format!)

TIED D6 ROLL

	MELEE	MELEE W/ SF	MELEE MULTI	CHARGE	MISSILE	MISSILE MULTI	SPELL	TURN
MELEE	Same Time	Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Longer Reach	Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Caster's d6 vs. Casting Time	Same Time
MELEE W/ SF	Same Time	Low Speed Factor (after round 1)	Higher #AT, then as MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Longer Reach	Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Speed Factor vs. Casting Time	Same Time
MELEE MULTI	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Higher #AT, then as MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Higher #AT, then as MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Higher #AT, then Longer Reach	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	As MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Same Time
CHARGE	Longer Reach	Longer Reach	Higher #AT, then Longer	Longer Reach	Missile	Missile	Move vs. Casting Time	Turn
MISSILE	Same Time	Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Missile	Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Caster's d6 vs. Casting Time	Same Time
MISSILE MULTI	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Missile	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Higher #AT, then Same Time	Caster's d6 vs. Casting Time	Same Time
SPELL	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Casting Time vs. Speed Factor	As MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Casting Time vs. Move	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Shorter Casting Time, then Same Time	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6
TURN	Same Time	Same Time	Same Time	Turn	Same Time	Same Time	Caster's d6 vs. Casting Time	Same Time

MELEE: Natural attack forms without speed factor ratings.

MELEE W/ SF: Attacks with melee weapons; speed factor is used to break ties in 2nd & subsequent rounds.

MELEE MULTI: Combatant with more attacks strikes first & last; use d6 or SF when both have odd or even # of attacks.

CHARGE: Initiative not checked; weapon length / reach determines who strikes first.

MISSILE: Dexterity Reaction/Attacking Adjustment added to (or subtracted from) individual's d6 roll; "Tied d6" includes this.

MISSILE MULTI: Missile rate of fire greater than 1; treated the same as **MELEE MULTI**, but also includes DEX adjustment.

SPELL: Completed after # of segments casting time; includes scrolls, potions, & other magic devices with activation times.

TURN: Subject to initiative determination, but cannot be interrupted unless cleric is incapacitated.

HIGH D6 ROLL VS. LOW D6 ROLL

	MELEE	MELEE W/ SF	MELEE MULTI	CHARGE	MISSILE	MISSILE MULTI	SPELL	TURN
MELEE	High d6	High d6	Higher #AT, then High d6	Longer Reach	High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6	High d6
MELEE W/ SF	High d6	High d6	Higher #AT, then High d6	Longer Reach	High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6	High d6
MELEE MULTI	Higher #AT, then High d6	Higher #AT, then High d6	Higher #AT, then High d6	Higher #AT, then Longer Reach	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6	High d6
CHARGE	Longer Reach	Longer Reach	Higher #AT, then Longer	Longer Reach	Missile	Missile	Move vs. Casting Time	Turn
MISSILE	High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Missile	High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6 (+ DEX)
MISSILE MULTI	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Missile	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	Higher #AT, then High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6 (+ DEX)	High d6 (+ DEX)
SPELL	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Casting Time vs. (Speed Factor - Low d6)	As MELEE or MELEE W/ SF	Casting Time vs. Move	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6	Shorter Casting Time, then High d6	Casting Time vs. Caster's d6
TURN	High D6	High D6	High D6	Turn	High D6	High D6	High D6	High D6

Caster's d6 vs. Casting Time: Compare segment indicated by caster's initiative die to casting time.

Casting Time vs. Caster's d6: Compare casting time to segment indicated by caster's initiative die.

Casting Time vs. (Speed Factor - Low d6): Compare casting time to absolute value of (speed factor minus losing d6).

Casting Time vs. Move: Compare casting time of spell to segments of movement.

Casting Time vs. Speed Factor: Compare spell casting time to weapon speed factor.

High d6: Party with higher initiative roll acts first.

High d6 (+ DEX): Missile-user adjusts d6 roll according to Dexterity before comparing.

Higher #AT: Individual with most attacks acts first.

Longer Reach: Individual with longer weapon/reach strikes first.

Low Speed Factor (after round 1): Speed factor is used to break ties after 1st round of melee (unless no charging/closing).

Missile: Initial missile fire will always beat a charge, as the "reach" of a missile weapon is greater than any melee weapon.

Move vs. Casting Time: Compare segments of movement to casting time of spell.

Same Time: Both parties act simultaneously; damage accrues to each.

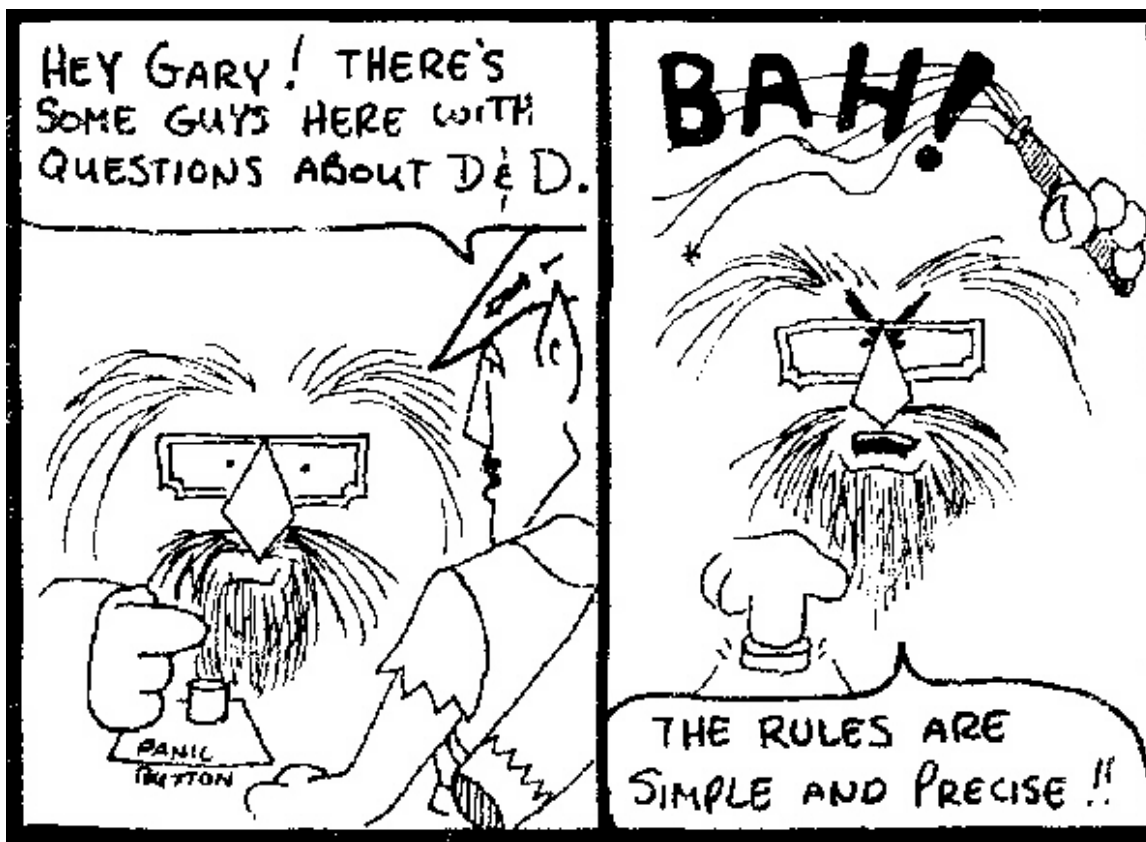
Shorter Casting Time: When combat is spell vs. spell, the faster spell will be completed first; initiative is used to break ties.

Speed Factor vs. Casting Time: Compare weapon speed factor to spell casting time.

Turn: Turning undead will always beat a charge, as the "reach" of the turning cleric is greater than any melee weapon.

This chart (also first developed by [Dragonsfoot](#) members [Link](#) and [WSmith](#)) illustrates the sequence of attacks between combatants with multiple attack routines. The timing of spells (and similar actions) is always keyed to the opponent's first attack, regardless of how many he is permitted. When two or more opponents have attacks in the same row, initiative (or weapon speed, where applicable) determines the order of attacks for that row.

1 attack	2 attacks	3 attacks	4 attacks	5 attacks	6 attacks
					1st
				1st	
			1st		2nd
		1st		2nd	
	1st		2nd		3rd
only		2nd		3rd	
	2nd		3rd		4th
		3rd		4th	
			4th		5th
				5th	
					6th



Cartoon by the late David C. Sutherland III, originally published in *The Strategic Preview* c. 1976.
(Thanks to [Paul J. Stormberg](#) for posting this on [EN World](#).)

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