

THE RULES OF BATTLE

Some fantasy role-playing games have rules for combat that can be more involved than the players really want. Most games limit the types of weapons that a particular class can use. These rules are provided to give ideas in your fantasy role-playing game. Maybe combats take too long for your taste, if you were to do things “by-the-book”. Maybe you want a wizard swinging a great sword in your games. These options will help you add this flavor to your games.

A CALL TO ARMS

If you do not use rule aspects such as weapon speed, range, damage versus armor, specializations, or damage versus size...you may want to remove the variable weapon damage rule from your game. This will better help you in allowing for any class to use any weapon. If you want a mage that wields a two-handed sword or a priest with a holy spear...this rule will allow for that without removing the importance of the warrior classes. This rule sets all weapon damages based on the class of the character. Below is a table that shows what damage particular weapons do, dependent on who is wielding the weapon. There are 3 categories of adventurers. There are Warriors (warriors, barbarians, rangers, or paladins), Partial (priests, druids, thieves, or bards), and Non (wizards or illusionists). There are 4 “types” of weapons listed below.



| Type | Warriors | Partial | Non | Weapons |
|--------|----------|---------|-----|--|
| Tiny | 1d6 | 1d4 | 1d4 | Daggers, darts, stones, light quarrels |
| Small | 1d8 | 1d6 | 1d4 | Arrows, heavy quarrels, axes, fauchards, glaives, javelins, light lances, horseman maces, partisans, awl pikes, spears, staves, short swords |
| Medium | 1d10 | 1d8 | 1d6 | Battle axes, military forks, guisarmes, medium lances, footman's maces, ranseurs, scimitars, broadswords, bastard swords, longswords, tridents |
| Large | 1d12 | 1d8 | 1d6 | Halberds, heavy lances, two-handed swords, great axes |

A BATTLE WITH THE CLOCK

Some fantasy role-playing game's battle systems are really good systems. My goal, over many years, was to reduce combat times and continue with the exploration. This combat system has been used for many years and it does work well. It does not work under the concept of “everything happening at once”, but instead follows a more “cinematic” type approach. Characters declare what they are going to do when it is time for them to move...not before initiative is rolled. There are no concerns about hallway widths when it comes to who can perform an attack. Other sacrifices need to be made when using this system...

1. Weapon Speed
2. Weapon Length
3. Damage versus Armor (and/or Small, Medium, and Large)
4. Fire Rate
5. Spell Casting Time

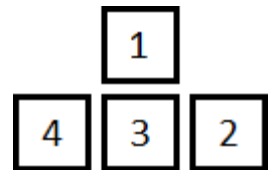
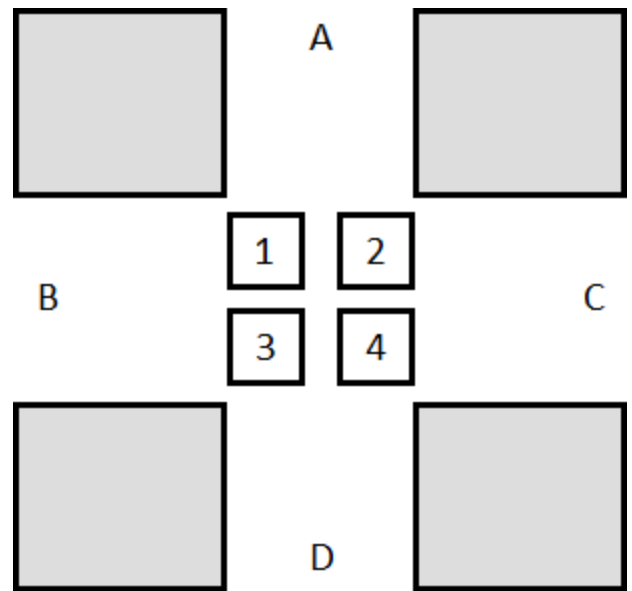
Once you are ready to get rid of these elements, then you can begin. The steps to battle are listed below...

1. Declare spells to be cast
2. Determine initiative
3. Party with initiative goes first
4. Party that lost initiative goes next
5. Any declared spells may now take effect (unless interrupted)
6. Repeat until a party is victorious

If surprise needs to be determined, whoever gains surprise over the other gets to do a round of attack on the surprised group. This is basically performing steps 1, 3, and 5. Once the surprise round is complete, then steps 1-6 are repeated until there is a winner. If initiative is a tie, then everyone resolves their actions but it really happens simultaneously in game time (meaning two opponents have a potential to kill each other). Ranged weapons happen when melee weapons do. Spells are cast with no regard to casting time. They simply take effect at the end of the combat round they were cast.

Battlefields are imagined in a “who is in front” and “who is in back” layout. This is a simple matter of having the players show how their characters are marching along. In the example on the right, the warrior is in position **1** and the priest is in position **2**. Position **3** is the wizard and position **4** is the thief. If a group of goblins are coming down corridor **A**, then the warrior and priest can attack with melee weapons. The wizard and thief will need to use ranged weapons (or a wizard can cast a spell that does not require a touch on the goblins). If the goblins only have melee weapons, they can only attack (and “all” of them can attack) the warrior and priest. If the goblins have some archers in the rear, then they have the potential to attack any of the characters. Weapon ranges are important to determine if a ranged weapon is able to hit its target. With this example done, we now move to goblins approaching down corridor **B**. Now the warrior and wizard are on the front lines. If the goblins win surprise (or initiative) then that wizard has the potential of getting clubbed. During the players’ turn, then **2** can switch places with **3** to solidify their front line, while still getting in an action. If the wizard wanted to switch with the priest, they would not be able to cast a spell that round because they will be moving to a new position that round, thus ruining the spell casting.

In larger spaces, enemies in the rear may move around the front lines and face off with the thief and/or wizard. This may be avoided with a different marching formation. The formation, to the right, allows for the other characters to protect the wizard. The only flaw would be if someone were to come up behind the wizard. This is another example of why it is important for marching order in this combat system.



The goal of this system is to have a combat that is easy to track and with fewer variables. It is also designed in an older gaming style of combat where miniatures were not often used. It should only be used if you feel combats are taking too long in your games.