



MASS COMBAT RULES

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*Entertaining, philosophical roleplaying articles
and spoiler-free reviews.*

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Only in German so far...

RULES FOR MASS COMBAT

This is a guide to mass combat in roleplaying, also known as MASS COMBAT RULES. It assumes that combat is represented by miniatures, tokens, or the like, on a grid or hex background.

The rules emphasize handling the combat without much effort or computing power. The rules are just detailed enough so that the outcome of the battle is not predictable and the battle still leaves some strategic options.

OPPOSED CHECK

As a basic roll, there is a comparison roll (Opposed Check) with 1d20 per unit. It is assumed that basically one unit fights against one unit. Exceptions will be discussed later.

There is no Difficulty Challenge (DC), only the opponent's opposed roll. Both units have a modifier, unless they consist only of individuals with the value of 1 and both sides are equally strong. But this will explain itself later.

MODIFIERS

If a unit has numerical superiority, each excess creature counts +1 for the comparison roll, with the exception of goblins, halflings, heroes, monsters, and artillery guns.

Heroes affect the modifier according to their level. The following list helps determine the modifier.

Hero Modifier

<i>Level 1, 2 and 3</i>	=	<i>+level</i>
<i>Level 4 and 5</i>	=	<i>+level-1</i>
<i>Level 6 to 8</i>	=	<i>+level-2</i>
<i>Level 9 to 13</i>	=	<i>+level-3</i>
<i>Level 14 to 20</i>	=	<i>+level-4</i>

Monster and Artillery Modifier

<i>Monster (according to size)</i>	<i>+3 to +16</i>
<i>Artillery (according to size)</i>	<i>+3 to +8</i>

Examples (how many points creatures count)

<i>Goblin, Halfling</i>	<i>1/2</i>
<i>Orc, Human, Dwarf, Elf, Humanoid</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard Hero (NPC), Ogre, Troll</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Elven Warrior NPC</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Giant Spider</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Witch</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Nightmare</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Elven Lord</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Wizard/BBEG</i>	<i>15</i>

DAMAGE AND HITPOINTS

Whoever wins the comparison roll does 1d4 damage by default. As many creatures with value 1 fall out of the unit as damage points are dealt.

Heroes no longer have their usual HP from the character sheet in Mass Combat, as they do in Single Combat, but as many as they are worth of points in Mass Combat. They are usually the last to die. Unless the damage is explicitly assigned to them and the DM allows it. This can be done for monsters as well. Example: The 1d4 damage goes to the monster that has +5. After two turns it can be defeated.

If a monster (or an exceptionally strong hero) joins a unit, such as a giant spider, then the unit's damage increases from 1d4 to 1d6.

The damage die of the unit the monster or hero joined is now equal to the monster's modifier level. See the table below.

Damage dice of unit with a monster

<i>from +6</i>	=	<i>1d6</i>
<i>+7</i>	=	<i>1d8</i>
<i>+8</i>	=	<i>1d8</i>
<i>+10</i>	=	<i>1d10 etc.</i>

CRITICAL HIT AND FAIL

A rolled 20 is a critical hit. This means the attack succeeds and damage is done, no matter what the opponent rolls or what modifiers are added.

On a roll of 1, the damage dealt to the one rolling the 1 is doubled, so 2d4 damage by default, instead of just 1d4. If monsters or heroes have joined the unit, damage is doubled on a 1 roll as well.

DEATH

Heroes are the last to fall. Maybe because they are heroic or because they are protected by the unit or because of Plot Armor, it doesn't matter. Example: If the 1d4 roll says 4 damage is taken and there are only the hero (+3) and a warrior +1 left, then the hero falls too. So it is worth to retreat from the battle in time.

MANEUVRE

Movement is possible only directly before or after a combat action. The distance corresponds to the usual distances of the individuals of the unit. So mostly 30 feet.

A unit can sprint, but it has a disadvantage in the following combat in this round, so it gets a penalty die.

In combat it is like in single combat of some systems: Movement and combat is possible in the same turn, but the units are bound. To be unbound, the units must first separate, i.e. retreat or flee.

Once the enemy unit being fought has fled or been destroyed, the remaining unit can join another unit.

RETREAT AND ESCAPE

If you want to retreat from the enemy, you have to use an action for it, with the certain risk. When retreating, 1d20 is rolled against each other normally, but no damage can be dealt by the retreating unit. It suffers damage or gets off scot-free.

If the enemy wants to pursue, there must be a new battle at a new location. The enemy cannot be pursued on the current battlefield. If a unit is considered to have fled and has not joined another unit, it must be removed from the battle and the battlefield.

However, if an escaped unit is only regrouped and remains on the battlefield, then it can

- *still fight in the same turn (together with the unit it joined)*
- *be attacked again*

If the enemy flees, you can use the action of your own unit to move (9 hexes, or 30 feet). After disengaging from the enemy, the remaining unit can regroup and join up with other units.

Units that have fled can no longer participate in this battle and must be removed from the battlefield.

REINFORCEMENTS

Reinforcements are added after the battle round for the next round. They are placed at the edge of the battlefield, so it is not clear where exactly they will help, but already how many there are. In the next combat round, they enter the battle and join a unit already in combat.

TROOP CHANGE

Heroes, monsters and artillery can change units in one movement, individuals with value 1 or $\frac{1}{2}$ cannot change units.

PHASES OF BATTLE

Each battle includes the following three phases:

1. deployment
2. intelligence (diplomacy/espionage)
3. battle (including regrouping and escape)

DEPLOYMENT

If there is a clear attacker and defender, the defender may position first, provided he can take advantage of the terrain.

If the terrain is flat, with no advantages, the attacker positions first so the defender can think of a strategy.

If there are two forces where there is no clear attacker and they both meet on the flat field, there is a 1d20 comparison roll (Opposed Check). If you have the higher result, you win and line up second.

The players must decide before a battle which troops they will throw directly into the fight and what they will hold back as reserves (outside the battlefield). See Reinforcements!

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

For fluff and to make the clash more exciting, three defining rolls apply, and the DM decides how to apply them. The three rolls can also be applied when the attacker and defender are clear.

The players decide before the battle which units they will send to the battlefield. They do this using intelligence information defined by the first two rolls.

If these are too complicated to use, they can be omitted without further ado.

THE THREE OPPOSED CHECKS

- *Deception*
- *Insight*
- *Charisma*

DECEPTION ROLL

A deception roll defines who is better at misleading the other in terms of strategy. The DM rolls the dice hidden, so the player cannot assess whether he wins the comparison. He can only assess whether his roll was good or not.

In case of success, you can send misinformation to the enemy.

In case of a failure, you will get wrong information from the enemy.

Based on your own roll, you can roughly estimate whether the information is trustworthy or not.

INSIGHT ROLL

The **insight roll** against each other defines who finds out more about the opponent.

In case of success, you learn who and how many your opponents are.

In case of a failure, your opponent knows a lot about you.

CHARISMA ROLL

A **charisma** roll (persuasion / intimidation) defines who commands his troops better. The DC (Difficulty Challenge) to be surpassed is a 10.

In case of success, the player places his units himself.

In case of a failure, the DM places the player's units.

ADVANCED RULES

These rules are to be understood as suggestions and require your own interpretation. Almost all of them complicate the battle, as they require markers or notes.

Mounted units count as +2 per individual. You can also make it so that mounted units only count double on the first attack, since they come with speed and can ride down foot troops. Example: 12 riders attack, they count as 24. After the first attack they still count as 18 points, since they still have an advantageous position, but not as advantageous as when they first approached.

Test the morale of the units. For example, through charisma and leadership tests, with increasing difficulty, depending on the threat and position.

Suggestion 1: If the charisma roll fails, the whole unit flees.

Suggestion 2: If the charisma roll fails, then some of the combatants flee. Roll a die (rounded down) equal to the number of individuals in the unit to see how many flee.

Distinguish between ranged and melee units. At the beginning, define whether a unit is a ranged or a melee unit. Then the unit has advantage at the beginning from range or then disadvantage in melee. Two dice, the better or worse one counts.

Artillery in action. Artillery shoots (aimed or aggravated) without the attacked units being able to dodge. One turn off, this is needed for reloading.

Attack from behind. If additional unit attacks from behind, then there is a second attack (because second front), but the defender must decide whether to align/defend to the front or to the back.

Spells are played. However, no "creative" spell uses, only damage dealing spells with Saving Throws. If the spell is successful, it deals damage according to the level. In this round, the unit cannot deal any more damage or make any more attacks.

Veteran Status. Once a unit has survived a battle, it gains an automatic +3 additional modifier, called Veteran Status, as a whole unit in the next battle.

