ODD ENCOUNTERS

A Fantasy Miniatures Skirmish Game

by
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Forward

I did not set out to write my own miniatures combat rules. In fact, you will find little that is unique in these rules, being an amalgam of things I liked from other systems. Rather, these rules were written out of necessity for a very specific play style. I work at an office filled with people who have a casual interest in war-gaming. That is to say, many of them are curious and would play if it were easy to do and consumed little time or energy. Experienced war-gamers will recognize that to be the exact opposite description of most war games currently on the market.

I wanted a game that could be set up in the corner of the office, on a break room table, and be played casually now and again much like a game of chess. Individual players should be able to take their turn without need to consult with the other players. A single player's turn should be quick and easy to execute, allowing the player to return to work without arousing the boss's ire.

It began when I played a game written by a dear friend of mine, Dan Collins, called *Book of War*, and read reports of Dave "Fargo" Kosak's *Small Wars*. I noticed a key similarity: in both games a player could take his turn without requiring any input or counter actions from other players. I ran a test game with my cubicle mates using bits of pieces from both systems, as well as a healthy dose of the original D&D mechanics. It seemed to work quite well, and I wanted to expand it to include more people in the office.

As I started to write down the "house rules" for this game, it became unclear to me which system to use as a base, and which rules were the modifications. Clearly I had to write a complete document from scratch. That document became what you now hold in your hands.

As I said, nothing here-in is original, and none of this would exist without the excellent works of Mr. Collins, Mr. Kosak, and of course Gygax and Arneson. I hope my efforts here add another interesting variation.

Overview

This game is meant to model conflicts between small groups of skirmishers. Each model represents a single individual, and moves of its own accord, without reference to other models. That is to say, there are no unit formations, no special rules for turning, each model is simply moved from point to point and need not stay within any range of other friendly models.

Each player may assemble his force per the rules outlined in the **Assembling Forces** section. No special rules are given for laying out scenery, an arbitrary referee may lay out the battlefield purposely ahead of time, or players may come up with some other random means of assembling terrain features.

Players should roll randomly to determine turn order at the start of the game, and then proceed by cycling through that order until the game ends. This usually occurs when only one player still has forces on the board, though other scenarios with special win conditions may be invented.

Scale

The basic scale of this game is 1 inch equals 10 feet. This works fine with current popular 28mm figures, but may be more accurate with 10-15mm figures.

Turn Sequence

On a player's turn, he should perform the following in order:

1. Move all models.
2. Fire missile weapons.
3. Cast spells.
4. Make melee attacks.

Each of these actions is described in detail below.

Movement

Models may move up to their movement rate (**MV**) in inches. MV is based on the type of armor worn by the model (see **Equipment**). Measurements should be made from a constant point on the model (center to center, edge to edge, or corner to corner). Facing is never tracked or relevant, it can be changed arbitrarily as frequently as desired during the course of a single movement, so long as total movement does not exceed the specified movement rate.

Models wishing to fire missile weapons must sacrifice half their movement rate (eg. a model with 4" MV may only move 2" if he also wishes to fire his bow). Models wishing to cast a spell may not move at all.

Models who start their movement not in melee combat may opt to run, moving up to 3 times their normal movement rate. A model that runs on its turn may perform no attacks or other actions, and becomes fatigued until the start of his next turn. Any attacks made against a fatigued model gain +2 to hit.

Terrain

The above movement rules assume flat open terrain. Various forms of other terrain may have impact on the distance a model may move in one turn:

Woods

Movement costs double when moving through woods, thus for every inch a model moves while touching the boundaries of a wood he should deduct 2 inches from his allowed movement remaining.

Woods of less than 2" depth may be fired through with missile weapons at a penalty of -4. More than 2" of woods will block line of sight and make missile fire impossible.

Hills

Movement costs double when moving up-hill. Descent costs the same as movement across a flat plain. Slopes greater than an inch of height per inch of forward movement are impassible unless a ladder, rope, or other climbing device is present.

If you use flat stepped terrain or draw elevation lines, simply charge an extra 1" of movement for each line crossed. Any place where two lines or steps are too close together such that a model's base does not fit between them is too steep to climb.

Difficult Terrain

Any agreed on terrain (marsh, swamp, rocky, etc.) may be indicated as difficult, which like woods costs double when traversing.

River

Any fordable point should be treated as difficult terrain. Bridges can be moved across as open terrain. Otherwise, rivers are impassible.

Missile Fire

Models may fire on an enemy model within range, based on the type of missile weapon being used (see **Equipment**). Attacks are made at -1 if the distance to the target is greater than half the maximum range of the missile weapon. The attacker must have a direct line of sight to the target. Interposing scenery such as buildings, other models, or more than 2" of woods make missile fire impossible.

If a missile weapon is shot into a melee, randomly determine which combatant is the target before rolling the attack roll.

Magic

In order for a model to cast a spell, he must sacrifice all movement on the turn he does so. Spell descriptions can be found at the end of this book, consult them for the actual effect. In general, the caster must be able to draw line of sight to his target much like with missile weapons. Spell may indicate a duration in number of turns, this count should be incremented at the start of each of the caster's turn.

Melee

Models must have base contact with their target along an edge (corners do not count) in order to make a melee attack. Attacks are made by rolling a single twenty sided die and adding the To Hit (**TH**) value of the attacker and the Armor Class (**AC**) of the defender. If the total equals or exceeds twenty, a hit is scored. Expressed as a formula:

$$d20 + \text{Attacker's TH} + \text{Defender's AC} >= 20$$

The amount of damage is determined by roll of a six sided die. The amount of damage is deducted from the Hit Points (**HP**) of the target. Note this on a piece of scratch paper, or with dice placed near the wounded model. When a model reaches 0 HP it is dead and removed from the game.

Assembling Forces

To play a balanced battle, each player should be allotted a certain amount of gold pieces (**gp**) with which to purchase his forces. Follow the rules below for determining the individual cost of each model

Pricing Models

To start with, each model should be assigned a race, a class, and a level. The choices for race and class are detailed below. Level is a general indicator of power, and while a higher level is always desirous, it costs more to hire a higher level model. Starting cost of a model is indicated by his level on the chart below:

Level	Cost	Level	Cost	Level	Cost
1	75	5	300	9	1,200
2	100	6	400	10	1,600
3	150	7	600		
4	200	8	800		

Races

Human

The default race of Human may choose any class with a maximum level of 10.

Dwarf

Dwarves purchase all arms and armor at 20% less than the listed cost. Dwarves are too short to properly utilize weapons with reach. Dwarves may not be Magic-Users, and are limited to level 6 or less as Fighters or Clerics.

Halfling

Halflings have the ability to hide in woods. When ending a movement in a wood, a halfling model may be declared hidden and removed from the board (record his location for future reference). A hidden halfling cannot attack nor perform any other actions – once hidden the halfling's turn ends. Like dwarves, halflings are too short to use reach weapons, cannot be Magic-Users, and are limited to level 6 or less as Fighters or Clerics.

Elf

Elves have the ability to choose Fighter/Magic-User as their class. They must pay for all levels (eg. An F3/M2 elf costs 500 gp, the total of both his Fighter and Magic-User levels). A Fighter/Magic-User can use all equipment available to a fighter and cast magic-user spells if not wearing plate armor. Elves cannot be Clerics, nor exceed level 4 as a Fighter or 8 as a Magic-User.

Monster

Any monster can be translated from other D&D sources. Treat HD as Level and use the Fighter class for HP and TH. Additional abilities (eg. spell casting, special attacks, etc.) will likely warrant an increase in price as agreed upon by the players.

Maximum Level by Race and Class				
	Human	Dwarf	Halfling	Elf
Fighter	10	6	6	4
Cleric	10	6	6	N/A
Magic-User	10	N/A	N/A	8

Classes

Fighter

Fighters can use all forms of arms and equipment. Fighters have 4 HP per level and a +1 TH per level. Thus a 5th level fighter would have 20 HP and +5 TH.

Cleric

Clerics may use any armor, but may only use non-edged hand weapons and slings for weapons. They have 3 HP per level and a +1 TH for every 2 levels. Thus a 5th level cleric would have 15 HP and a +3 TH. Clerics can memorize a number of cleric spells based on their level as indicated on the chart Below. Unlike Magic-Users, clerics need not pay for access to their spells.

	Spell Level				
Cleric Level	1	2	3	4	5
1	-	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-
3	2	-	-	-	-
4	2	1	-	-	-
5	2	2	-	-	-

	Spell Level				
Cleric Level	1	2	3	4	5
6	2	2	1	1	-
7	2	2	2	1	1
8	2	2	2	2	2
9	3	3	3	2	2
10	3	3	3	3	3

Magic-User

Magic-Users may not wear any armor, and can only wield a dagger as a weapon. They have 2 HP per level, and a +1 TH for every 3 levels. Thus, a 5th level magic-user would have 10 HP and a +2 TH. Magic-Users can memorize a number of magic-user spells based on their level as indicated on the chart below. In order to have spells to memorize, a magic-user must purchase spells for his spell book (see **Equipment**).

	Spell Level				
Magic-User Level	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-
3	3	1	-	-	-
4	4	2	-	-	-
5	4	2	1	-	-

	Spell Level				
Magic-User Level	1	2	3	4	5
6	4	2	2	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-
8	4	3	2	2	-
9	4	3	3	2	1
10	4	4	3	3	2

Equipment

All models are assumed to have a single hand weapon with which to make standard melee attacks. Additional equipment must be purchased using the costs indicated below. Rules for extra equipment are included after the cost listing.

Item	Cost
Hand or Thrown Weapon	5
Pole Arm	10
Two-Handed Weapon	15
Sling	5
Short Bow	15
Long Bow	35

Item	Cost
Crossbow	30
Leather Armor	20
Chain Mail Armor	40
Plate Armor	60
Shield	10
Magic-User Spell	20/level

Equipment Descriptions

Hand Weapon

Any weapon that can be held in one hand fits this category. A model holding one hand weapon in each hand still makes a single attack, but gains a +1 TH.

Thrown Weapon

Small hand weapons such as daggers may be used as a normal hand weapon or thrown a maximum range of 6". Once thrown the weapon is permanently lost.

Pole Arm

Pole arms are any weapon that comprises a point or blade attached to a long wooden pole (spear, halberd, pike, etc.) Pole arms have an extended reach, allowing the attacker to hit any model up to 1" away, and can make attacks through a single interposing friendly model.

Two-Handed Weapon

Any heavy weapon that takes both hands to wield but is not a pole arm causes +1 damage due to its heavy weight and hitting power.

Sling

A sling can be wielded one handed, and thus can be used alongside a shield. It has a maximum range of 12".

Short Bow

A short bow has a maximum range of 15" and requires both hands to fire.

Long Bow

A long bow has a maximum range of 21" and requires both hands to fire.

Crossbow

A crossbow has a maximum range of 24" and requires both hands to fire. A model using a crossbow may not move at all on a turn he wishes to fire.

Armor

A model's Armor Class (**AC**) and Movement (**MV**) are both dictated by the type of armor he wears.

Shield

A model holding a shield cannot use a pole arm or two-handed weapon. The shield grants a -1 to AC, thus a model with chain armor and shield would be AC 4.

Armor	AC	MV
None	9	4"
Leather	7	4"
Chain	5	3"
Plate	3	2"

Spells

In order to cast a spell the caster must sacrifice all movement. Individual spell descriptions will indicate ranges and numbers of targets. Durations listed as turns count caster's turns, with the first turn counted being the turn the spell was cast. For spells that target a group, a group consists of a collection of models where no model is more than 2" from another model in the group.

Targets of spells are granted a saving throw to resist all non-damaging effects and/or take half the damage rolled. To make a saving throw, roll 1d20 and add the level of the target plus 4, with a total of 20 or higher indicating success.

These spells have been adapted from OD&D and B/X D&D. Care was taken to select only spells that would have tangible effects in a miniatures battle. Conversion of additional spells is left as an exercise for the reader.

Cleric Spells

	Level				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	Cure Light Wounds	Bless	Dispell Magic	Cure Serious Wounds	Insect Plague
2	Protection	Hold Person	Striking	Protection 10' Radius	Raise Dead

First Level

Cure Light Wounds – Caster must have base contact with target. Target heals 1d6+1 HP of damage.

Protection – Caster gains -1 AC for 12 turns.

Second Level

Bless – Caster and all friendly models within 2" of caster receive +1 TH and damage for six turns.

Hold Person – Target a group of models with 12" of the caster. The spell effects 1d4 targets chosen by the caster, or a single target with a -2 to saving throws. Held models can take no actions and will be immediately killed by any model making a melee attack against it (no hit roll is required). Lasts for 6 + caster level turns.

Third Level

Dispell Magic – Cast upon a model within 12" to remove all spell effects on that model. May also be cast upon an area under the effect of a spell (held door, webbed area, etc.) to remove that spell effect. This does not undo instantaneous effects such as Cure spells.

Striking – Adds d6 damage to the cleric's next successful attack.

Fourth Level

Cure Serious Wounds – Caster must have base contact with target. Target heals 2d6+2 HP of damage.

Protection 10' Radius – Grants -1 AC to all friendly models no more than 1" from caster for 12 turns.

Fifth Level

Insect Plague – Select a point within 48" of the caster. A 3" radius circle centered on that point is filled with swarming insects for the remainder of the game. This area completely blocks line of sight. Moving through the swarm costs 6" of movement, and the exit point should be determined randomly (roll d12 and read it like a clock).

Raise Dead – Returns a dead model to life with 1 HP.

Magic-User Spells

	Level				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	Hold Portal	Invisibility	Fly	Confusion	Cloudkill
2	Magic Missile	Knock	Fireball	Dimension Door	Conjure Elemental
3	Shield	Levitate	Haste	Fear	Pass-Wall
4	Sleep	Web	Lightning Bolt	Wall of Fire	Wall of Stone

First Level

Hold Portal – Holds a door, gate, or other portal magically shut for 2d6 turns. Portal can be forced open using a Knock spell, or by a level 3 or higher character that spends an entire turn breaking it open (no move, no other action).

Magic Missile – Causes 1d6+1 damage to target within 15". Always hits (no roll) even when cast into melee.

Shield – Grants caster AC 2 vs. missiles and AC 4 vs. other attacks for 2 turns.

Sleep – Cast on a group within 24", roll 2d8 for total levels affected. Sleep affects lowest level models first, excess levels are wasted (eg. If a 3 is rolled against a group of 2 1st level and a 2nd level model, only the 2 1st level models are affected). Models level 5 and above are immune to Sleep. Models affected fall asleep (lay model on side) for 4d4 turns.

Sleeping models can be woken up using the full action of an adjacent awake model (no move, no attack) or immediately killed by any model making a melee attack against it (no hit roll is required).

Second Level

Invisibility – Remove target from the board and make secret note of his location. Update the note on subsequent turns. An invisible model may move and act as normal. Lasts until the model makes an attack or casts a spell. Range: 24".

Knock – Opens any hidden, locked, or magically held portal. Range: 6".

Levitate – Lifts the caster in the vertical plane, allowing vertical movement at the rate of 6" for 6 + caster level turns.

Web – Select a 1" square area within ½" per level of the caster. This area becomes filled with sticky webs for the rest of the game. Models stuck in the web

will take 11 – level turns (eg. 10 turns for a level 1 model) to forcibly remove themselves. Flames destroy the web and cause 1d6 damage to any model caught in the web.

Third Level

Fly – Caster may move in any direction and over any obstacle or terrain at a rate of 12" for d6 + caster level turns. Caster must end turns on the ground.

Fireball – Target a point within 24" of the caster, all models within 2" of this point take a d6 of damage per caster level.

Haste – Select a friendly model within 24" of the caster. This model and all friendly models within 6" of that model are hasted for 3 turns. Hasted models may move double their normal rate, and make two missile or melee attacks per turn.

Lightning Bolt – Select a point within 18" of the caster. Using the caster and the point as the angle of a line, measure 6" from the point further away from the caster. Any model this line touches takes d6 of damage per caster level.

Fourth Level

Confusion – Select a point within 12" of the caster. Roll 3d6 for total levels affected, and select models within 6" of the target point up to that number of levels. Lower level models are affected first (as per Sleep). All models affected must roll 2d6 for the next 2 turns to determine their action: 2-5 Attack caster's team, 6-8 do nothing, 9-12 attack own team.

Dimension Door – Instantaneously transport the caster's model up to 36".

Fear – Measure a cone from the caster 6" in length, 3" in diameter at its end, and ½" at the base. All models in this area must on their turn move away from the caster at their full move rate and cannot attack or cast spells. This lasts until the model can no longer draw a line of sight to the caster.

Wall of Fire – Place a 6" length of string on the board to represent the wall of fire. One point of the wall must be within 6" of the caster. The wall is 1" tall, blocks line of site, and cannot be passed by models less than 4th level. Models level 4 or higher can pass through the wall but take 1d6 points of damage. The wall lasts as long as the caster remains stationary and concentrates on it (concentration is lost of the caster takes any damage).

Fifth Level

Cloud Kill – This spell creates a cloud of poisonous vapor 3" in diameter in front of the caster. It moves 6" per turn preferring first to go downhill, second in the direction of the wind (if outside wind is present on a 4+ on a d6, roll a d12 to determine direction based on clock face), and finally away from the caster. Models level 5 or greater take 1 point of damage every caster turn they are touched by the cloud, models less than level 5 are killed instantly.

Conjure Elemental – Place an elemental figure within 24" of the caster. The elemental has the following stats: (Level: 16, MV: 6", AC: -2, TH: +16, HP: 64) and does 3d6 damage when it hits. The caster may only move half while controlling the elemental, and must stay within 24" of it and have line of sight to it. If any of these conditions fail, or the caster takes damage, he loses control of the elemental, which will then move directly towards the caster each caster turn attacking anything in its way until it can attack the caster. The caster may dismiss a controlled elemental on his own turn before moving.

Pass Wall – The caster may move through up to 1" of solid surface (wood, rock, stone, etc.) on his next movement.

Wall of Stone – Place a 10" length of string on the board to represent the wall of stone. One point of the wall must be within 6" of the caster. The wall is 1" tall, blocks line of site, and cannot be passed by models. It is a permanent structure like any other stone wall.

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