

Ars Magica Combat System

by Steve Huntsberry, November 1999

Sequence

- 1) Decide what you want to do. Choices are melee, missile, or spell.
 - this does not need to be announced, but it must be decided
- 2) Roll initiative. Initiative Total = Initiative + modifiers + stress die
 - use normal Initiative scores for melee and missile attacks
 - use Quickness+Finesse+Encumbrance for any spellcasting
 - modifiers: formulaic +0, spont +10, melee +20, missile +30
- 3) Start at highest initiative and count down. Act when your initiative is called.
 - if your modified initiative is zero or less, you do not act that round
 - you may act at a later initiative than you rolled without any penalty
 - you may NOT “save your action” to act first on the following round
 - ties are resolved with the highest base Initiative being able to act first

Movement

Movement occurs on your action. You may move one pace and then cast a spell or make a missile attack. You may move half your Hustling movement and make a melee attack. Additional movement precludes other actions. Hustling = 15 + Qik + Enc (AM4, p.163). You may NOT attack and then move. Taking any action ends your action for that round. If all you want to do is take a full move, either to close or to retreat, use a melee action.

Melee

Attacker attack total = Attack + stress die. Defender defense total = Defense + stress die. Attack hits if attack total \geq defense total. Roll for Damage below (do not add difference). Note for mass combats with many grogs, defense total can be calculated as Defense + 6.

Missile

Attacker attack total = Attack + stress die. Defender defense total = Defense + stress die. Attack hits if attack total \geq defense total. Roll for Damage below (do not add difference). Number of attacks is as per chart (AM4, p. 164). Take all of your attacks on your action. Initiative -20 to $-\infty = 1/3$; -19 to $-10 = 1/2$; -9 to $0 = 1/1$; $+1$ to $+10 = 3/2$; $+11$ to $+\infty = 2/1$. Note 3/2 means 1 attack then 2 attacks; 1/3 means 2 missile actions to load, then 1 attack. Bow and crossbow Init includes loading time. Add +10 Init with a loaded bow or crossbow.

Damage

Attacker damage total = Damage + stress die. Defender soak total = Soak + stress die. Defender loses 1 Body Level per 5 full points by which damage total exceeds soak total.

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Targeting

Note targets for melee and missile attacks and targeted spells are determined when the action is taken. The specific type of melee (e.g. sword) or missile attack taken, or the spell being cast and its target(s) for non-targeted spells, is decided at the beginning of the sequence (in step 1).

Special

The following each take one spent action: activate power (e.g. Faerie Healing), change shape (e.g. to/from Bjorner Heartbeast). Most non-magical special actions take one melee action. Full movement is a melee action, as noted in the Movement section.

Fast-Cast

Fast-Cast spells may be used on any Initiative, but only if you have not acted in that round. Therefore, if you are casting a formulaic spell, you may stop it at any time and Fast-Cast. The Fast-Cast spell takes the place of your previous action, and prevents any more actions. If you Fast-Cast in response to stimulus, make a $Qik+Fin+Enc$ roll vs. an ease factor to see if you manage to cast the spell in time (e.g. when that arrow is coming towards your head).

Touch Spells

Touch spells require touching the target. This requires making a successful melee attack immediately upon casting the spell. Usually this is a Brawling attack, however it may be another skill, especially if a Talisman is used to touch the target. This special melee attack occurs at the same time as the casting of the spell. This attack does no damage by itself.

Scores

Weapons, Armor, Skills, Initiative, Attack, Defense, Damage scores are unchanged.

Formulae

- Initiative = $Qik + \text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon initiative bonus} + Enc$
- Attack = $Dex + \text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon attack bonus} + Enc$ (melee)
- Attack = $Per + \text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon attack bonus} + Enc$ (missile)
- Defense = $Qik + \text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon defense bonus} + Enc$
- Damage = $Str + Siz + \text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon damage bonus}$ (melee)
- Damage = $\text{weapon skill} + \text{weapon damage bonus}$ (missile) [only]
- Soak = $Stm + Siz + \text{armor protection}$; Enc = $Str + Load$

Notes

Not addressed: all-out attack and defense, brawling maneuvers, called shots, combat botches, combat fatigue, engagement, fighting from horseback, multiple attackers.

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