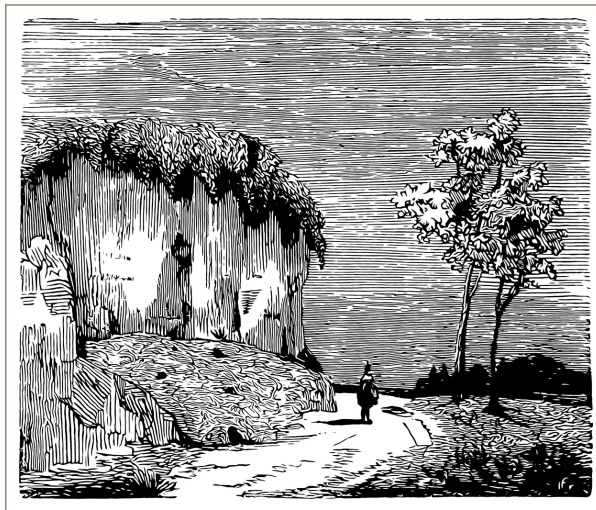


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

SKIRMISH COMBAT

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



B E T A

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Jon Mayo. PUBLIC DOMAIN (CC0-1.0)

CONTENTS

1. The Battlefield	2
2. Movement	2
3. Reach and Range	3
4. Position Modifiers	4
5. Cover and Elevation	4
6. Weapon Keywords in Play	4
7. A Round at the Table	4
8. Skirmish or Abstract?	5

The core runs combat as a **skirmish**: Speed is a distance, the table uses a sketch, tokens, or miniatures, and every range is measured in **spaces**. A space is one inch on the table, or one square or hex on a grid. This supplement is a full reference for that mode; use it alongside the core book or in place of the Position section when running a physical table.

Abstract combat (the companion supplement) is the **theater-of-the-mind** alternative: it swaps measured distance for named zones when your table wants a faster, mapless scene. Every other rule stays the same either way; only how you track position changes.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Draw the scene, or lay out a grid. Mark terrain: walls, doors, difficult ground, elevation. The GM places creatures at the start of the fight; combatants do not move until their activation.

A **space** is the common measure: one square or hex on a grid, one inch on an open table. All distances below are in spaces. A medium creature occupies one space; a **Large** creature occupies a 2x2 footprint (or the GM's call for its actual bulk).

MOVEMENT

A **Move** action carries you up to your **Speed** in spaces. Most combatants have Speed 2; heavy armor and some playbooks lower it to 1, and a few abilities raise it. You may split a single Move across your activation, moving some spaces before an action and the rest after. **Attacking ends the Move**, though: once you Strike, Shoot, or make a Maneuver against a foe, any movement you held back is lost, so a basic attacker cannot hit and then slip away on the same Move (a playbook may grant that hit-and-run). A **Disengage** is no attack, so you may still split a Move around one to thread past a line.

Standing from prone costs one action and no spaces.

Leaving melee is free unless a foe in reach is **holding its ground** (the Defend action), which readies it a free Strike for **each action it spent holding**, loosed at the first foe(s) to step from its reach, **no foe struck twice**. One held action taxes a single escapee; two or three wall a lane.

Disengage (a Maneuver, no roll) waives that Strike. For the rest of your activation you may leave the reach of every foe **currently** threatening you without drawing a held-ground Strike, so you can pull out of a crowd or a swarm and reposition. It lapses the instant you **enter a new threat's reach**: to peel off that foe too you must Disengage again. In practice Disengage and the Move it buys are a two-action pair, and with only three actions a second Disengage is seldom worth it.

Moving through a space. You may pass freely through an **ally's** space, but a standing **hostile** combatant blocks the way, you cannot move through its space. A foe that is **downed, unconscious, or prone** is no barrier, so move through its space at no cost. A conscious **prone** foe is still an active combatant, though: leaving its reach can draw its held-ground free Strike exactly as an upright foe's would. Only a truly inert (downed or unconscious) foe never reacts.

Ending your activation. You cannot **end an activation** sharing a space with another unit. The space you stop in must be empty, unless a trait permits sharing: a **Tiny** creature (a rat, an imp) may end in an occupied space, and a unit may end in a Tiny creature's. Sharing is only for stopping, it grants no exception to the rule above, so a Tiny creature still cannot move **through** a standing hostile.

Threading a line. A Move can be **split**, and a Disengage clears only the foes already on you, so a runner can advance, Disengage a defender met mid-move, and press on, spending actions to slip a rank and land behind it. That is a real play, but a costly one: two Disengages and a Move fill a whole activation, and the runner arrives with nothing left to Strike. The answer is depth. **Stack a second rank** to catch stragglers, since the Disengage that beat the front line has already lapsed against the foe behind it.

Slowed halves Speed (round down, minimum 1), with no -2 to rolls. **Entangled** means no movement at all until the target breaks free; one snare can catch up to 4 adjacent.

REACH AND RANGE

You can only **Strike** or make a melee **Maneuver** against a foe in an **adjacent** space (touching your space on all sides). A **Reach** weapon extends that to two spaces; you can Strike over an ally or past a foe in the way.

Ranged attacks use **Shoot** and carry to the weapon's **range band**:

Band	Clean range	Long shot (-1)	Out of range
Short (thrown, sling, hand-gonne)	up to 4 spaces	5–8 spaces	9+ spaces
Medium (bow, light cross-bow)	up to 8 spaces	9–12 spaces	13+ spaces
Long (long-bow, heavy cross-bow)	up to 12 spaces	13–16 spaces	17+ spaces

A shot one band past clean range is a **long shot, -1** ; past the long shot column is out of reach. **Sight lines** matter: a wall, a closed door, heavy smoke, or a tight corner blocks a shot entirely. A melee attacker sharing the target's space bypasses any cover the terrain offers.

POSITION MODIFIERS

The GM applies these flat modifiers to Strike, Shoot, and Maneuver as the fiction warrants. They stack with each other and with any condition penalties, but no single modifier stacks with itself (higher ground is +1, not +2 for two tiers): a **prone, flanked** foe is struck in melee at +3 (+2 prone, +1 flank).

Situation	Modifier
Charging into melee (moved into the foe's space this activation, then Strike)	+1
Outnumbering the foe (flanking: more attackers than defenders in reach)	+1
Higher ground (one full elevation tier above the target)	+1
Target behind cover (partial concealment from terrain)	-1 to hit
Long shot (past clean range, still within long-shot band)	-1

COVER AND ELEVATION

Cover is partial concealment behind terrain: arrow slits, low walls, a boulder's edge. It gives -1 to anyone shooting at a target behind it. Full concealment (behind a closed door, around a corner, out of sight) blocks the shot entirely; you cannot target what you cannot see.

Elevation grants +1 to attack for the higher fighter. Every step is an advantage, so a combatant on a barrel is a step above the floor, and the parapet is a step above the courtyard. A Strike from directly above (leaping down) may apply both the elevation bonus and the charge bonus if the GM rules the drop carries momentum.

WEAPON KEYWORDS IN PLAY

A weapon's keywords interact with position and terrain:

- **Heavy**: only one Strike per activation. On a Success or Critical, knocks the target Prone (or Staggered if it cannot fall).
- **Quick**: one action makes two attacks; the second takes the Multiple Attack Penalty.
- **Reach**: Strike at two spaces instead of one. Also lets you intercept a foe closing into your space, striking before it arrives.
- **Reload N**: spends N actions between shots; mark spent on your sheet until you spend those actions to reload.
- **Thrown**: a melee weapon that may also be hurled as a Shoot (short range).

A ROUND AT THE TABLE

To see the pieces move together, here is one exchange played out on open ground. The party guards the caster **Sela**, who has backed into a corner of a ruined hall (walls to her north and west). **Doran** (spear, **Reach**) and **Wick** (sword) stand between her and the room. A raider **duelist** (Speed 3) means to reach Sela.

	a	b	c	d	
	+-----				
1	S	D	.	.	S Sela, caster
2	.	W	.	.	D Doran, spear (Reach)
3	.	.	.	.	W Wick, sword
4	.	.	x	.	x the duelist (Speed 3)

Sela sits in the corner at **a1**. Three squares touch her: **b1** and **b2** hold Doran and Wick, and only **a2**, against the west wall, is open. Two bodies cannot cover a third side, so that gap is the caster's standing risk. The guards cannot wall it, but they can make it dear: **a2** lies inside the reach of *both*, so a foe who takes it stands flanked.

The party's side activates first. Doran and Wick each spend one action to **hold their ground** (a Defend), readying a free Strike; each keeps two actions in hand. They are not walling a corridor, they are covering the two open angles into the corner and daring the one square between them.

The duelist's turn. She has three actions and the whole open floor to work with, not a single lane. She reads the gap and takes it.

1. **Move** (Speed 3): the guards at **b1** and **b2** are impassable, so she threads the open squares past them, c4 → b3 → a2, two spaces to Sela's side. Watch **b3**: it lies inside Wick's reach, and inside Doran's spear reach too. Stepping *into* b3 draws nothing, held ground fires on the leaving, not the coming. And when she steps b3 → a2 she is still in both guards' reach the whole way, so she never **breaks from** it and never draws the Strike. Crossing a threat is free; only escaping one is taxed. She ends beside Sela, wedged between both guards.
2. **Strike Sela** (second action): 3d6 + Might – Sela's Defense. A 13 is a clean **Success**, and the caster takes a wound. First blood to the raider.
3. Her last action cannot buy a clean exit: leaving **a2** draws *both* guards' held-ground Strikes, and a **Disengage** would waive them but leave no action to Move. So she braces instead, a **Defend**, **dodging** the more dangerous of the two for **+2 Defense** against his blows. She ends her turn wedged beside Sela, flanked but harder to hit.

Back to the party. She dodged **Doran**, so his flanking **Strike** meets her +2 Defense and glances wide. But one Defend covers one foe, and a flank offers two: **Wick** she left uncovered. His Strike, 3d6 + Might + 1 for the flank – her Defense, lands clean, and a second blow from his last action drops her. That is the vise of a flank, a lone defender can dodge one blade, never both. Sela steps back out of the corner, no longer pinned, and looses a spell into the falling raider.

The line holds, but not by walling a door. In the open you cannot seal a point the way a corridor's second rank seals a lane, two bodies can never cover a caster's every side. You deny the easy lanes, leave the last gap as a flanked kill-space, and keep the protected piece moving. Out here, **depth becomes coverage**, and the trap replaces the wall.

SKIRMISH OR ABSTRACT?

The two are different **play styles**, neither more correct. Use **skirmish** play when your table wants **tactical combat** and the fight's interest is its terrain: a choke point to hold, a flank to turn, a rooftop to contest, a gap to cross under fire. Tokens on the table, on freeform ground or a grid, let everyone see the layout and make real spatial choices.

Reach for **abstract combat** (see that supplement) when your table prefers **theater of the mind**, or when you want the fight to move fast, there are too many bodies to place, you are playing online, or there is nothing to place tokens on. A table can switch freely from fight to fight.

Tested in the simulator. The project's combat simulator (`tools/sim/ --skirmish`) models the precise skirmish rules: measured spaces, reach vs. range, flanking, cover. It is the reference implementation the abstract combat zone model is calibrated against. Run the standard encounter suite (see `tools/sim/README.md`) to confirm a rules change has not shifted the balance.