

Rules for Single Combat

- Conditions and Initiative

Since most combats roll initiative once before conditions can be imposed, conditions generally do not change the way initiative works. This changes in a situation where it is more likely that a creature rolls initiative while under a condition. The penalties are intended to be cumulative.

Blinded: -1 to initiative roll.

Frightened: Initiative roll is Disadvantaged (as ability checks)

Grappled: -2 to initiative roll (alternately use the amount by which the creature lost the most recent Athletics roll involving the Grapple)

Paralyzed: Roll is treated as a 1 before modifiers.

Petrified: Roll is treated as a 1 before modifiers.

Poisoned: Initiative roll is Disadvantaged

Prone: -2 to initiative roll.

Restrained: -3 to initiative roll.

Stunned: Roll is treated as a 1 before modifiers.

Unconscious: Roll is treated as a 1 before modifiers.

Exhausted: -1 to initiative roll for each level of exhaustion.

- Duel to the Death

This describes your trial-by-combat or your duel-to-decide-a-battle situations:

1. The direct Combatants both re-roll initiative each round.
2. Each Combatant may take an additional Action on their turn. This action can be used to:
 - Attack making a single attempt to shove or grapple the enemy.
 - Attempt to break a grapple.
 - Posture conferring a +3 to your next attack roll.
 - Posture conferring a -2 to enemy Combatant's next attack roll.
 - Cast a cantrip with casting time of one action. (Attack rolls have disadvantage and targets have advantage on saves.)
3. After each round, the combatant that went last in the round makes a Constitution or Dexterity save (its choice) against a DC of the minimum of half of the highest single instance of damage it took this round rounded down and 20. On a fail, the creature that went first can make an opportunity attack against the rival combatant as its reaction. The target of this attack can move up to half of its movement as a reaction to this attack.

- Fisticuffs

This describes a boxing match or with some re-flavoring can describe a wrestling match.

1. The direct Combatants both reroll initiative each round.
2. Attacks in a boxing match are all called shots. In a boxing match, this will be blows to the head or body blows. In a wrestling match, this will be throws or holds.
 - If a blow to the head hits, all damage dice are rolled again (this means 3 times in the case of a critical hit).
 - If a blow to the body lands, the target makes a constitution save against a DC of the damage taken. On a failure, the target takes a level of "Flagging" detailed below.
3. Each creature is assumed to have its guard up when fighting in this manner. The creature may add +2 to its AC against attacks targeting EITHER its head or its body.
 - If a creature has already had its turn this round, it can change the guard as a reaction to an attack, otherwise changing the guard is a bonus action.

Flagging Levels:

1. -2 to Initiative rolls.
2. Disadvantage on ability checks.
3. Disadvantage on attack rolls.
4. Guard is down, the creature cannot add 2 to either the AC against attacks to its head or the AC against attacks to its body.

A creature recovers one flagging level at the end of each round that it takes no damage.

- Showdown at High Noon

This is meant to represent an incredibly high-stakes battle where a lightning draw is important. It fits gunslingers and fencers particularly well.

1. The direct Combatants both reroll initiative each round.
2. Attacks by a main combatant that hit a creature that has not had a turn yet this round roll all damage dice twice. (This means 3 times in the case of a critical.)
3. As a reaction to an attack from the enemy that misses, the target of the failed attack can make an attack. On a hit, the creature that made the attack does no damage to the target, but instead can impose disadvantage on the target's next attack roll or gain advantage on the next initiative roll. (Someone using the riposte maneuver does damage and applies one of these effects.)

- Mage's Trial

This represents Dumbledore's fight with Grindelwald, Howl's fight with the Witch of the Waste, Gandalf's fight with Saruman and Dumbledore's fight with Voldemort. Dumbledore.

1. The direct Combatants both reroll initiative each round.
2. All spells with a casting time of a bonus action can be cast as a reaction which can be triggered by being a target of an attack or by seeing a spell being cast by another creature.

Similarly, a spell that can be controlled as a bonus action can be controlled as a reaction.

Taking damage while casting spell requires a concentration check as to maintain concentration to successfully cast the spell. The spell slot is not lost if the spell fails in this way.

3. The main Combatant to roll higher for initiative can choose either to cast a cantrip with a casting time of an action as a bonus action or sacrifice a concentration spell currently being maintained to take the Cast a Spell action. A spell cast in this way can be cast at a lower spell slot than normal. It can be cast at a slot as low as its original spell level less the half of the sacrificed spell rounded down.

- The Joust

This represents a combat for sport. The participants will strive against one another, but a death would be greeted with ambivalence or regret. This can be an actual joust, a sumo bout, or a gladiatorial contest.

1. The direct Combatants both reroll initiative each round.
2. Each Combatant may take an additional Action on their turn. This action can be used to:
 - Attack making a single attempt to shove or grapple the enemy.
 - Attempt to break a grapple.
 - Posture conferring a +3 to your next attack roll.
 - Posture conferring a -2 to enemy Combatant's next attack roll. Cast a cantrip with casting time of one action. (Attack rolls have disadvantage and targets have advantage on saves.)
3. After each round, the combatant that went last in the round makes a Constitution or Dexterity save (its choice) against a DC of the minimum of half of the highest single instance of damage it took this round rounded down and 20. On a fail, that creature has disadvantage on the next ability check they make.

This takes more setting up than a straight on fight. You should think about what the terms of the contest are and how it should be won. Are points scored by unhorsing an enemy or landing a hit on a pass down the tourney lane? When can a gladiator retire from combat honorably?

- Audience Intervention

Certain characters will have moments where single combat is the most realistic end to a story arc. Barbarians may need to prove their prowess, paladins have that monumental honor thing. Some of these will merit taking some time on the details. Other players need stuff to do even while the focus isn't on them.

Consider having plots by the antagonist to cheat, or encouraging the other players to cheat. Once the match begins consider how much enforcement there would be if other players intervened. In many cases, Guidance, Resistance and Bardic Inspiration may go unnoticed.