Simpler Systems Options: Combat Scale or How Run Simple Mass Combat

Version 1.0

© Simpler Systems Options

Index:

Combat Scale or How Run Simple Mass Combat:

Melee or missile combat in most RPGs is run on an individual basis. One character is locked into desperate combat with another character or NPC.

Conflicts between masses of individuals can be extended by adding in Combat Scale. This takes your usual combat mechanics and uses them to run larger scale battles. Combat Scale is a factor that shows the size of the unit relative to their opponents. It is only applied to damage in combat between units of different size. Hit Points, AD and all other rules remain the same. For example, a unit of 20 wretches with 4 HP's will have CSx5 as per the table below. Against anything with the same Combat Scale (for example, a unit of 15 elves CSx5), combat is resolved normally as if it was one goblin against one elf.

Unit Size	Combat Scale	Unit Size	Combat Scale
2–5	x3	1.281–2,560	x12
6–10	x4	2,561–5,120	x13
11–20	x5	5,121–10,240	x14
21–40	x6	10,241–20,480	x15
41–80	x7	20,481–40,960	x16
81–160	x8	40,961–81,920	x17
161–320	x9	81,921–163,840	x18
321–640	x10	163,841–327,680	x19
641–1,280	x11	327,681–655,360	x20

Combat Scale is a multiplier for damage taken and divides any damage given. If the battle started between units of different CS, reduce the Combat Scale as casualties are lost.

Divide the number of combatants by their HP's. Multiply the combatants per HP by the CS adjusted damage for the number of casualties.

For example, if the twenty wretches above are reduced to 2 HP, they have lost half their unit. The ten remaining wretches are now CSx4. If they lose another HP, they will be CSx3 with just 5 wretches remaining. If the Combat Scale becomes the same for all opponents, resolve combat normally. Continue to apply unit casualties per HP lost.

Combat Examples:

Beastmen vs Elves:

Seventeen beastmen with 10 HP enter a forest glade where they are ambushed by eleven elven archers. As their CS is the same, it's treated as a straight single combat. The elven archers fire their longbows (+2 hit, 1d8), hitting for 6 points of damage. The beastmen unit is down to 4 HP. 6 HP x 1.7 HP per each combatant = 10.2.

10 beastmen fall to elven arrows. The beastmen unit drops to CSx4. The beastmen successfully make a morale roll. Screaming in rage and pain, they charge into the glade. The elves calmly fire another volley, hitting the unit. They roll 5 points of damage. CS 5/CS 4 = 1.25. 5 x 1.25 = 6.25 HP - more than the beastmen unit can take. They die in the arrow storm.

Wretches vs Lone Warrior:

Fifteen wretches with 4 HP's ambush a lone 5th level Fighter. Their CS is x5, so any damage they strike is multiplied by five. Also, any damage he does is divided by five. On the first round he hits three times out of his five attacks. He rolls using his battle axe two handed. His damage dice rolls are 8+3+7=18. That's divided by 5, to 3 HP are lost by the wretches causing 11

casualties. They drop down to CSx3. They're down to 1 HP. In reply, the Goblins hit, attacking with their Short Swords. The Fighter is hit for 4 HP, x3 due to their CS. He takes 12 HP of damage. Good luck to him! If he wins initiative, he will mop the floor with them. Otherwise, this could get real grim real soon.

Knights vs Dragon:

The 300 strong host of Duke Tanric stand ready against a Dragon.

300 Knights: HD 2: 10 HP, AD 15/16,
Lance +3 hit 2d8 charging or Long sword +3 d8, CSx9

Adult Dragon: HD10: 60 HP, AD 16,
Bite +10 hit d10 or Breath 2d6

The Dragon flies high above and breathes flame across their squadron for 9 HP damage. The knights duck under their shields, divided by CSx9 for 1 HP. The Knights are down to 9 HP. 30 knights die.

- Scenario #1: They ready their horses to charge as the Dragon lands, the thunder of 1,200 hooves causing the dragon to pause. They hit, scoring 8 HP damage, CSx9 for a fatal 81 HP damage. The lesson is, don't land.
- Scenario #2: The knights can't hit the airborne dragon. It will breathe 3 more time before it exhausts it's breath

weapon. This reduces the knights to 168 still CSx9. They fail their moral roll and flee. The dragon swoops down and uses it's bite and claws to harry the routed knights. Or if they don't rout, the dragon faces up to 10 knights at a time, CSx4, in combat until they do rout. The lesson is, smart dragons are terrifying.

Mercenaries vs Greater Beastmen:

The Knights of the Red Hand, bolstered by their recent battlefield successes decide to tackle the beastmen threat to the south. They ride out at full strength against the 300 Greater Beastmen of Karnac.

200 Mercenary Medium Cavalry: HD 2: 10 HP, AD 15/16, Lance +3 hit d8 or 2d8 if charging or Long sword +3 hit d8, CSx9

300 Greater Beastmen: HD 3: 12 HP, AC15, Battleaxe +3 hit d8/d10 or shortbow +1 hit 1d6, CSx9

The mercenary cavalry charges the beastmen as the beastmen fire shortbows into their company. The beastmen roll well (18+1 = 19) doing 5 HP damage. The Knights are at 5 HP as 100 riders fall from their mounts. The next round, the remaining 100 mercenaries, CSx8, hit hard (roll 14+3 = 17, easily beating AD 12) for 6 HP x2 for charging = 12 HP damage, multiplied by 8/9th for 11 HP. This leaves the beastmen with just 1 HP. Just 25 beastmen remain standing (300/12x11=275). The beastmen rout and the Mercenaries are victorious!

After the Battle:

Ending the Battle:
- Both side withdrawal from the field.
- One side withdrawals and the other side does not pursue.

- One side' morale breaks and the army routs. The winning side inflicts an additional damage die of casualties. They then break contact.

Casualties:

Determining Casualties:

D12
-1 if outnumbered.
-2 if routed.
-2 to footmen vs cavalry foes
+2 for elite troops.
+1 for veteran troops.
+1 for superior equipment.

1   All died.

2   75% died, 20% severely wounded,
        & 5% lightly wounded.

3-4   75% died, 15% severely wounded,
        & 10% lightly wounded.

5-6   50% died, 15% severely wounded,
        & 35% lightly wounded.

7-8   25% died, 35% severely wounded,
        & 40% lightly wounded.

9-10   25% died, 25% severely wounded,
        & 50% lightly wounded.

11   20% died, 25% severely wounded,
        & 55% lightly wounded.

12   15% died, 25% severely wounded,
        & 60% lightly wounded.

- Died: No longer among the living.
- Severely wounded: Likely to die without skilled healing. Likely to have infection, disease, scaring, or physical limitation complications without skilled healing.
- Lightly wounded: Likely to survive on own. Likely to have infection or minor scaring without skilled healing.

Thanks to Greywolf and the Microlite 20 Community for developing the concepts used in this document.

Yrsa: Designed by Rosetta, Anna Giedryś, David Březina From Rosetta Type Foundry.

fields within text or binary files as long as those fields can be easily viewed by the user.

3) No Modified Version of the Font Software may use the Reserved Font Name(s) unless explicit written permission is granted by the corresponding Copyright Holder. This restriction only applies to the primary font name as presented to the users.

4) The name(s) of the Copyright Holder(s) or the Author(s) of the Font Software shall not be used to promote, endorse or advertise any Modified Version, except to acknowledge the contribution(s) of the Copyright Holder(s) and the Author(s) or with their explicit written permission.

5) The Font Software, modified or unmodified, in part or in whole, must be distributed entirely under this license, and must not be distributed under any other license. The requirement for fonts to remain under this license does not apply to any document created using the Font Software.

TERMINATION: This license becomes null and void if any of the above conditions are not met.

DISCLAIMER: The font software is provided "as is", without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including but not limited to any warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and noninfringement of copyright, patent, trademark, or other right. In no event shall the copyright holder be liable for any claim, damages or other liability, including any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages, whether in an action of contract, tort or otherwise, arising from, out of the use or inability to use the font software or from other dealings in the font software.

Change Log:

February 13, 2024: First posting.