## Domains at War: A Revised Battle System

*A Revised Approach for Abstract Battle Resolution using* Domains at War: Campaigns

This article presents a set of revised rules intended to replace the Battles resolution mechanics found in *Domains at War: Campaigns* Chapter XX, p. XXXX. These new rules are more complex than the original rules, but In exchange for this complexity, they offer much sharper differentiation between unit types and a much larger opportunity for PC and NPC leaders to influence the outcome of the battle with their choices. As such the revised rules are perfect for those Judges who found the *Campaign* rules slightly too elementary but who do not have the time, space, or inclination to fight out battles on the tabletop using the rules in *D@W: Battles.*

## Preparing for Battle

###### Set Battle Phase Countdown

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6-Mile Hex | BPC Value (1d8) | | |  |
| Terrain Type | **1** | **2-4** | **5-7** | **8** |
| Clear or Grass | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Barren | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Desert | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Hills | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Scrub | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Woods | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Mountains | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Jungle | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Swamp | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

Before a battle begins, the Judge must determine the starting count of the **battle phase countdown (BPC)** of the battlefield. The battle phase countdown controls the pace at which opposing armies can move from long-range missiles to short-range skirmishing to hand-to-hand combat. Most battles are pitched across clear, firm ground on which both armies can easily approach or withdraw from each other. Such battlefields typically have a starting count of 1.

However, battles do sometimes occur across soft ground, rocks, mud, snow, or other terrain that is slow to traverse. Such terrain might have a starting count of 2, 3, 4, or even 5. A lengthy BPCs can have a dramatic effect on a battle. For instance, if a leader is commanding an army of heavy cavalry and facing an opposing army of longbowmen, he will want to get his heavy cavalry into melee range as soon as possible. However, if the battlefield is soft, swampy mud, it will take much longer for his cavalry to reach the enemy archers than if the battlefield is hard, dry ground.

The Judge may choose the starting count of the BPC based on his assessment of the terrain, or may roll 1d8 on the BPC Value table using the row appropriate to the terrain of the 6-mile hex where the battle is taking place. Increase the terrain minimum by 1 in conditions of heavy rain or snow to simulate muddy or snowy ground.

EXAMPLE: An English army with a BR of 18, consisting of 3 brigade-sized units of veteran longbowmen (BR 4 each) and 1 brigade-sized unit of heavy cavalry (BR 6 each), is drawn up in a grassy field. It is opposed by a French army with a BR of 23, consisting of 4 brigade-sized units of heavy infantry (BR 2 each), 2 brigade-size units of bowmen (BR 1.5 each), and 2 brigade-sized units of heavy cavalry (BR 6 each). The Judge rolls 1d8 on the BPC Value table and scores an 8 – so the starting count of the BPC is 2. In addition, there has been heavy rain, so the starting count of the BPC is increased by an additional point to 3. The French leader becomes concerned that this battle of “Agincourt” might be harder than the BRs otherwise suggest.

###### Assess Terrain Advantage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6-Mile Hex | Terrain Position Target Value | |
| Terrain Type | **Advantageous** | **Highly Adv.** |
| Clear or Grass | 6+ | 10+ |
| Barren | 5+ | 9+ |
| Desert | 5+ | 9+ |
| Hills | 4+ | 7+ |
| Scrub | 4+ | 7+ |
| Woods | 4+ | 7+ |
| Mountains | 4+ | 6+ |
| Jungle | 4+ | 6+ |
| Swamp | 4+ | 6+ |

Next the Judge must determine the whether each army begins the battle occupying **regular terrain** (such as meadows or steppe), **advantageous terrain** (such as hills or ridgelines), or **highly advantageous terrain** (such as steep hills, entrenchments, or river banks). The Judge may make this determination based on his own judgment based on the pre-battle movement and decisions of the armies on his campaign map, if desired.

Alternatively, the Judge can determine terrain advantage randomly based on the terrain of the 6-mile hex where the battle is taking place and the Strategic Ability of the opposing leaders. Follow these steps:

1. The defending army’s leader determines his **terrain advantage score** by rolling 1d6 and adding his Strategic Ability. The Judge then compares the score to the target values listed for the terrain type to determine if the leader’s army occupies regular, advantageous, or highly advantageous terrain.
2. The attacking army’s leader now determines his terrain advantage score by rolling 1d6 and adding his Strategic Ability. If his score exceeds that of the defending army’s leader (from Step 1), then he can choose either to have his army occupy advantageous terrain, *or* to reduce the defending army’s terrain advantage by one step (e.g. from highly advantageous to advantageous or from advantageous to regular). If his score is twice or more that of the defending army’s leader, he can choose either to reduce the defending army’s terrain advantage by two steps; to reduce the defending army’s terrain by one step while occupying advantageous terrain with his own army; or to occupy highly advantageous terrain with his own army. An army cannot have its terrain advantage reduced below regular terrain (there is no “disadvantageous” terrain level).

EXAMPLE #1: Artashumara (Strategic Ability +4) is attacking Ysgre the Hate Mother (Strategic Ability +3) in the rocky deserts of the Waste (Desert terrain). Ysgre rolls a 4 on 1d6, so her terrain advantage score is 7. She has exceeded the 5+ target value required for advantageous terrain. Artashumara then rolls a 5 on 1d6, so his terrain advantage score is 9. His score exceeds Ysgre’s score of 7, but does not double it. Therefore, Artashumara can choose to have his army begin the battle in advantageous terrain, or decide to reduce Ysgre’s terrain advantage by one step, from advantageous to regular. He opts for the latter. When the battle begins, both armies occupy regular terrain.

EXAMPLE #2: Artashumara again attacks Ysgre, this time in the Meniri Mountains (Mountain terrain). Ysgre rolls a 1 on 1d6, so her terrain advantage score is 4, enough for her army to be in advantageous terrain. Artashumara then rolls a 6 on 1d6, so his terrain advantage score is 10! Since Artashumara has doubled Ysgre’s score, he can choose to occupy highly advantageous terrain with his own army, or he can occupy advantageous terrain with his army while reducing Ysgre’s terrain advantage by one step to regular terrain. He opts for the former. When the battle begins, Artashumara’s army is in highly advantageous terrain and Ysgre’s army is in advantageous terrain.

**Both Armies on Offense:** If both armies have an offensive strategic stance, there may not be a clear defender. Use the following guidelines to determine which is the defending army for purposes of terrain position.

1. If one of the two armies is surprised, it is the defending army.
2. If both armies are aware of each other, the army that arrived in the hex first is the defending army.
3. If both armies are aware of each other and both armies arrived in the hex simultaneously, then the smaller of the two is the defending army.

**Surprise:** If an army is surprised, its leader suffers a -2 bonus on his terrain advantage score, and the opposing army’s leader gains a +2 bonus on his terrain advantage score.

###### Deploy Troops

Now that the battle phase minimum and terrain positions have been determined, it is time for the army leaders to deploy their units on the battlefield. Each unit can be deployed to either the **missile zone**, **skirmish zone**, **melee zone**, or **reserve zone**. (If any heroes are participating in the battle, these must also be deployed at this time; see below.) Deployments are made in secret and revealed simultaneously.

**Missile Zone:** Units in the missile zone are positioned to engage in long-range fire against the enemy army. In order to be deployed or move into the missile zone, a unit must be:

1. Equipped with arbalests, crossbows, composite bows, long bows, or short bows; or
2. Made up of spellcasters capable of casting at least three offensive mass combat spells with a range of at least 120’; or
3. Made up of monsters with a special attack with a range of at least 120; or
4. Made up of flyers (if using *D@W: Battles,* any FLY unit qualifies).

**Skirmish Zone:** Units in the skirmish zone are positioned in a loose cloud around and ahead of the main battle line. In order to be deployed or move into the skirmish zone, a unit must be:

1. Eligible to deploy in the missile zone; or
2. Light infantry equipped with slings, 3 or more javelins, or 5 or more darts; or
3. Light cavalry equipped with 3 or more javelins.

If using *D@W: Battles,* any LF unit equipped with slings, javelins, or darts, or any LM unit equipped with javelins, can deploy in the skirmish zone.

**Melee Zone:** Units in the melee zone are positioned in the army’s main battle line. Any unit can be deployed or move into, the melee zone.

**Reserve Zone:** Units in the reserve zone are positioned behind or to the side of the army’s main battle line, from where they can reinforce successful penetrations, strengthen weak points, and fill gaps. Any unit can be deployed or move into the reserve zone.

If there are any questions as to whether a unit qualifies to deploy in a particular zone, the Judge is the final arbiter.

## Resolving Battles

Once each army leader has deployed his units, the battle begins. To resolve the battle, the Judge should run a series of **battle turns** following the procedure below. Each battle turn represents approximately 10 minutes of game time. Each battle turn is divided into a series of phases, representing fighting occurring in various zones of the battlefield. Each phase represents approximately 1 minute of game time, or 6 melee rounds. 10 phases (of any type) make up one battle turn.

**BATTLEFIELD PHASE COUNTDOWN**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RESERVE ZONE | RESERVE ZONE |
| MELEE ZONE | MELEE ZONE |
| SKIRMISH ZONE | SKIRMISH ZONE |
| MISSILE ZONE | MISSILE ZONE |

1. **Missile Phase.** The two armies engage each other at long range with missile weapons.
   1. *Set Battle Phase Countdown.* The BPC is set to its starting count based on terrain.
   2. *Determine Participating Units.* All units that are in the missile zone participate in the missile phase. Units participating in the phase are called **participating units**.
   3. *Calculate Battle Ratings.* Each army leader calculates his army’s **battle rating** for this phase. An army’s battle rating is equal to the sum of the battle rating of all units participating in this phase of the battle.
   4. *Make Heroic Forays.* Heroic PCs and NPCs in the missile zone may make **heroic forays** to influence the battle rating in favor of one army or the other. All heroes’ heroic forays are revealed and resolved simultaneously. Lost units are then removed.
   5. *Determine Hits.* Each army leader simultaneously rolls a number of attack throws equal to his army’s remaining battle rating. The target value for the attack throws is **18+**, modified by the **Attack Throw Modifiers** listed below. For each successful attack throw, one hit is scored.
   6. *Apply Casualties.* Each army leader tallies the hits scored against his army. Each army leader then removes participating units from his army with a combined battle rating equal to or greater than the total hits scored against his army. These units are defeated. If all of an army’s participating units are defeated, any remaining hits are applied to units in the skirmish zone; if all of these units are defeated, remaining hits are applied to units in the melee zone and then to the reserve. Hits are applied simultaneously.
   7. *Check Morale.* The Judge now checks to see whether either army has reached a **break point** and if so resolves **morale rolls**, as explained in **Ending Battles**. If, after resolving morale, all units of one army have routed or been destroyed, then the battle is over.
   8. *Redeploy Troops.* Each army leader can move units between the missile and reserve zones. The maximum number of units that can be redeployed is equal to the leader’s Leadership Ability. The opposing leaders make their redeployments in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously.
   9. *Advance, Hold, or Withdraw.* Each army must now either **advance, hold**, or **withdraw**. The opposing leaders decide in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously. If an army is occupying **advantageous** or **highly advantageous terrain**, its leader *must* choose hold or the army loses the terrain.
      1. If both armies withdraw, increase the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now equal to or greater than twice the starting count, the battle ends in a draw. Neither army is allowed to pursue the other.
      2. If one army withdraws and the other holds, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now equal to or greater than twice the starting count, the battle ends. The army that withdrew is considered to have made a **voluntary withdrawal**. Otherwise, return to **step 1b** above and conduct another missile phase.
      3. If both armies hold, then return to **step 1b** above and conduct another missile phase.
      4. If both armies advance, reduce the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 2** to begin the **skirmish phase**. Otherwise, return to **step 1b** above and conduct another missile phase.
      5. If one army advances and the other army holds, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 2** to begin a skirmish phase. Otherwise return to **step 1b** above and conduct another missile phase.
      6. If one army advances and the other army withdraws, the opposing leaders each calculate an **initiative score** by rolling 1d6 and adding their strategic ability. If the advancing army’s leader wins, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 2** to begin a skirmish phase. If the withdrawing army’s leader wins, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now equal to or greater than twice the starting count, the battle ends. The army that withdrew is considered to have made a voluntary withdrawal. Otherwise, return to **step 1a** above and conduct another missile phase.
2. **Skirmish Phase.** Light infantry and cavalry deploy in loose skirmish lines to attempt to disrupt the enemy’s approaching formations.
   1. *Set Battle Phase Countdown.* The BPC is set to its starting count based on terrain.
   2. *Determine Participating Units.* All units that are in the skirmish zone participate in the skirmish phase. Units participating in the phase are called **participating units**.
   3. *Calculate Battle Ratings.* Each army leader calculates his army’s **battle rating** for this phase, as above.
   4. *Make Heroic Forays.* Heroic PCs and NPCs may make **heroic forays**, as above.
   5. *Determine Hits.* Each army leader simultaneously rolls a number of attack throws equal to his army’s remaining battle rating. The target value for the attack throws is **16+,** modified by the **Attack Throw Modifiers** listed below. For each successful attack throw, one hit is scored.
   6. *Apply Casualties.* Each army leader tallies the hits scored against his army. Each army leader then removes participating units from his army with a combined battle rating equal to or greater than the total hits scored against his army. These units are defeated. If all of an army’s participating units are defeated, any remaining hits are applied to units in the melee zone; if all of these units are defeated, remaining hits are applied to units in the reserve. Hits are applied simultaneously.
   7. *Check Morale.* The Judge now checks to see whether either army has reached a **break point** and if so resolves **morale rolls**, as explained in **Ending Battles**. If, after resolving morale, all units of one army have routed or been destroyed, then the battle is over.
   8. *Redeploy Troops.* Each army leader can move units between the skirmish and reserve zones. The maximum number of units that can be redeployed is equal to the leader’s Leadership Ability. The opposing leaders make their redeployments in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously.
   9. *Advance, Hold, or Withdraw.* Each army must now either **advance, hold**, or **fall back**. The opposing leaders decide in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously. If an army is occupying **advantageous** or **highly advantageous terrain**, its leader *must* choose hold or the army loses the terrain.
      1. If both armies withdraw, increase the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 1** to begin a missile phase. Otherwise, return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
      2. If one army withdraws and the other holds, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 1** to begin a missile phase. Otherwise, return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
      3. If both armies hold, then return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
      4. If both armies advance, reduce the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 3** to begin the **melee phase**. Otherwise, return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
      5. If one army advances and the other army holds, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 3** to begin the **melee phase**. Otherwise, return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
      6. If one army advances and the other army withdraws, the opposing leaders each calculate an **initiative score** by rolling 1d6 and adding their strategic ability. If the advancing army’s leader wins, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, proceed to **step 3** to begin a melee phase. If the withdrawing army’s leader wins, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 1** to begin a missile phase. Otherwise, return to **step 2b** above and conduct another skirmish phase.
3. **Melee Phase.** The main battle lines of the opposing armies clash in hand-to-hand combat.
   1. *Set Battle Phase Countdown.* The BPC is set to its starting count based on terrain.
   2. *Determine Participating Units.* All units that are in the skirmish zone participate in the skirmish phase. Units participating in the phase are called **participating units**.
   3. *Calculate Battle Ratings.* Each army leader calculates his army’s **battle rating** for this phase, as above.
   4. *Make Heroic Forays.* Heroic PCs and NPCs may make **heroic forays**, as above.
   5. *Determine Hits.* Each army leader simultaneously rolls a number of attack throws equal to his army’s remaining battle rating. The target value for the attack throws is **14+,** modified by the **Attack Throw Modifiers** listed below. For each successful attack throw, one hit is scored.
   6. *Apply Casualties.* Each army leader tallies the hits scored against his army. Each army leader then removes participating units from his army with a combined battle rating equal to or greater than the total hits scored against his army. These units are defeated. If all of an army’s participating units are defeated, any remaining hits are applied to units in the melee zone; if all of these units are defeated, remaining hits are applied to units in the reserve. Hits are applied simultaneously.
   7. *Check Morale.* The Judge now checks to see whether either army has reached a **break point** and if so resolves **morale rolls**, as explained in **Ending Battles**. If, after resolving morale, all units of one army have routed or been destroyed, then the battle is over.
   8. *Redeploy Troops.* Each army leader can move units between the melee and reserve zones. The maximum number of units that can be redeployed is equal to the leader’s Leadership Ability. The opposing leaders make their redeployments in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously.
   9. *Advance, Hold, or Fallback.* Each army must now either **advance, hold**, or **withdraw**. The opposing leaders decide in secret and reveal their decisions simultaneously. If an army is occupying **advantageous** or **highly advantageous terrain**, its leader *must* choose hold or the army loses the terrain.
      1. If both armies withdraw, increase the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 2** to begin a skirmish phase. Otherwise, return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.
      2. If one army withdraws and the other holds, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 2** to begin a skirmish phase. Otherwise, return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.
      3. If both armies hold, then return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.
      4. If both armies advance, reduce the BPC by 2. If the BPC is now zero or less, set the BPC to zero, then return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.
      5. If one army advances and the other army holds, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, set the BPC to zero, then return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.
      6. If one army advances and the other army withdraws, the opposing leaders each calculate an **initiative score** by rolling 1d6 and adding their strategic ability. If the advancing army’s leader wins, reduce the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now zero or less, set the BPC to zero and then return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase. If the withdrawing army’s leader wins, increase the BPC by 1. If the BPC is now greater than the starting count, proceed to **step 2** to begin a skirmish phase. Otherwise, return to **step 3b** above and conduct another melee phase.

A battle ends when all of the units of one army have voluntarily withdrawn, routed, and/or been destroyed. See **Ending Battles**. When the battle ends, the losing army must **retreat**. The winning army may **pursue** the defeated army. After pursuit, **casualties** are calculated. The winning army then seizes the **spoils of war**. See the **Aftermath of Battles**.

###### Advantageous Terrain

Occupying a hill, ridgeline, river bank, or other advantageous terrain can make an army very hard to defeat. Attack throws against units in advantageous terrain suffer a penalty of -1 to -4, depending on the terrain and the phase of the battle (shown below under **Attack Throw Modifiers**).

EXAMPLE: Moruvai’s army is attacking a defending army positioned on a river bank, which is highly advantageous terrain. Moruvai’s army will suffer a -2 to attack throws in the missile phase, -3 in the skirmish phase, and -4 in the melee phase.

However, an army cannot simultaneously maintain a position on advantageous terrain while also closing with an enemy which prefers to stay at long range, nor can an army occupy terrain while avoiding an enemy which prefers to charge closer – the army has to stay where the terrain is! If an army ever advances or withdraws during any phase of the battle, it immediately loses its terrain advantage. (The opposing army cannot gain occupancy of the advantageous terrain, nor can advantageous terrain be regained later. Judges seeking that much tactical detail should play *Domains at War: Battles*!)

EXAMPLE: Moruvai’s army consists of 20 units of goblin bowmen (BR 0.5), 4 units of goblin wolf riders (BR 6.5 each), and 5 units of ogre light infantry (BR 4 each). The defending army holding the river bank consists of 10 units of heavy infantry. In the first missile phase of the first battle turn, the 20 goblin bowmen (attack throw 20+) kill 1 unit of heavy infantry. Despite having a -2 penalty to its attack throws, Moruvai’s army will certainly destroy the defending army if the battle never progresses past the missile phase.

###### Attack Throw Modifiers

During a battle, each unit’s attack throws are modified by the following factors, depending on phase:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attack Throw Modifiers** | **Missile** | **Skirmish** | **Melee** |
| Lieutenant leading unit | 0 | +1 | +2 |
| Opposing army surprised (first three battle phases only) | +1 | +2 | +4 |
| Opposing army occupies advantageous terrain (hill, ridgeline)\* | -1 | -2 | -3 |
| Opposing army occupies highly advantageous terrain (cliffs, river bank)\* | -2 | -3 | -4 |
| \*An army that escalates loses advantageous terrain benefits until it deescalates. | | | |

###### Battle Ratings

A unit’s **battle rating (BR)** is a measure of its value on the battlefield. The **Unit Characteristics Summaries** and **Exotic Creatures Roster** in *D@W: Campaigns* have battle ratings for hundreds of unit types.

EXAMPLE: Moruvai has an army consisting of 20 units of 120 goblin bowmen (BR 0.5 each), 4 units of 60 goblin wolf riders (BR 6.5 each), and 5 units of 60 ogre light infantry (BR 4 each). If all of Moruvai’s army were participating in a particular phase of a battle, its battle rating would be [(20 x 0.5) + (4 x 6.5) + (5 x 4)] 56.

The battle ratings are for company-sized units. If one army has units at a larger scale than the other, increase the larger units’ BR proportionately or split them into smaller units. See **Organization and Command in Very Small or Very Large Armies** in *D@W: Campaigns*.

EXAMPLE: Among the forces facing Moruvai’s army are a battalion-sized unit of 480 elven longbowmen. Since a company-sized unit of 120 elven longbowmen has BR 7, a battalion-sized unit of 480 elven longbowmen would have BR 28. Alternatively, the elven longbow battalion could be split into four company-sized units of 120 troops, each with BR 7.

If both armies are organized into small- or large-scale units of the same size, use the BRs at the standard value. This allows you to quickly fight very large battles with the standard BR values.

EXAMPLE #1: A large dwarven army (6 brigade-sized units of 1,080 heavy infantry) is battling a huge goblin army (18 brigade-sized units of 1,080 bowmen). Rather than scale BR upward by a factor of 16, the Judge simply assigns the standard BR value to the larger units. Therefore the dwarven army has 6 units with a battle rating of 3 each while the goblin army has 18 units with a battle rating of 0.5 each.

EXAMPLE #2: A caravan of nomads (4 platoon-sized units of horse archers) are facing a village of goblins (7 platoon-sized units of goblin light infantry). The Judge assigns the standard BR value to the smaller units. Therefore the nomad “army” has 4 units with a BR of 5 each, while the goblin army has 7 units with a battle rating of 0.5 each.

**Strategic Ability:** A commander of great **strategic ability** increases the BR of the units in his division. At strategic ability +3 or better, each unit’s BR is increased by 0.5. At strategic ability +6 or better, each unit’s BR is increased by 1.0.

EXAMPLE: 4 units of longbowmen are led by a captain with strategic ability +3. Their total battle rating is (4) x (3 + 0.5) 14.

**Overwhelmed Commanders:** Commanders can only effectively command a number of units equal to their **leadership ability** (p. XX). If the number of units in a commander’s division exceeds the commander’s leadership ability, the BR rating of each unit in excess is halved.

EXAMPLE: 8 units of light infantry are led by a commander with a leadership rating of 4. The division’s battle rating is (4 x 1) + (4 x 0.5) 6. If the commander had a leadership rating of 8, his division’s battle rating would be (8 x 1) 8.

###### Surprise

In certain strategic situations (e.g. ambush, envelopment, deep envelopment, and rear guard envelopment), one army will have surprised the other. The effect of surprise on terrain advantage has already been noted. Surprise has two other effects on battle resolution:

1. A surprised army may not make any attack throws during the first three phases of the battle.
2. Units attacking the surprised army gain a +1 to +4 bonus, depending on phase, on attack throws during the first three phases of the battle. See the Attack Throws Modifier table.

Heroes may still make a heroic foray even if their army is surprised. See **Heroes in Battle**, below.

### Heroes in Battle

Great warriors, powerful wizards, and monstrous creatures can influence the outcome of battles far more than lesser mortals. In the *Revised Battle System* the activities of heroes are resolved by “zooming in” on a particular fight between the heroes and their foes, called a **heroic foray**.

###### Qualifying Heroes

To qualify as a hero, a PC, NPC, or monster must be present at the battlefield and meet one of the following criteria:

* The character is a PC (i.e. all player characters can act as heroes); or
* The character is a monster possessing at least nine Hit Dice; or
* The character is an NPC with at least seven levels of experience; or
* The character is the henchman of a qualifying hero, and has at least four levels of experience.

EXAMPLE: Several PCs and NPCs are present at a battle: Marcus (9th level PC fighter) and his henchman Peristo (6th level fighter); Zeodarë (7th level PC bladedancer) and her henchman Sera (3rd level thief); and Theon (6th level NPC Paladin) and his henchman Jonus (4th level paladin).

Marcus and Zeodarë both qualify as heroes because they are PCs. Peristo qualifies as a hero because he is the henchman of a qualifying hero and has at least four levels of experience, but Sera does not qualify because she is too low level. Theon does not qualify as a hero because as an NPC he needs at least seven levels of experience, and he only has six. His henchman Jonus does not qualify because Theon didn’t qualify. If Jonus were Marcus’ or Zeodare’s henchman, he would qualify as a hero.

In platoon-scale battles, decrease the level or HD requirements by two. In battalion-scale battles, increase the level or HD requirements by two. In brigade-scale battles, increase them by four. (And remember: Just because PCs *can* act as heroes, doesn’t mean they should!)

EXAMPLE: If the battle above were at platoon scale, NPCs would qualify with five levels of experience, and henchmen of qualifying heroes would qualify with two levels of experience. Therefore Sera, Theon, and Jonus would all qualify as heroes.

###### Heroic Forays

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BR Staked** | **Hero is …** |
| 0 | Entering the foray |
| 0.5 | Leading from the front |
| 1 | Heroically charging into battle |
| 1.5 | Attacking in front of the vanguard |
| 2 | Cutting a swath of glory |
| 2.5 | Carving his name into the epics |
| 3 | Seeking glorious death! |

In the *Revised Battle System*, the activities of heroes can be resolved by “zooming in” on a **heroic foray**. A heroic foray is a fight between participating heroes and a selection of foes drawn from the opposing army. There is an opportunity for a heroic foray to occur during **step d** of each phase of each battle turn. All heroes may fight in the same foray, or they may fight in separate forays, depending on the disposition of the heroes on the battlefield (Judge’s discretion).

To foray, a hero **stakes** between 0 and 3 points of battle rating. The amount of BR staked represents the risk the hero is taking at the point in the battle. Each hero chooses how many points of battle rating he will stake. The total amount of BR staked by all the heroes in the foray will determine how many foes the heroes face.

EXAMPLE: During step c of the melee phase, Marcus and Peristo decide to foray against Moruvai’s army. Marcus audaciously stakes 2 point of BR, while Peristo, more cautious by nature, stakes 1 point. They will collectively face 3 BR worth of foes.

The Judge should select foes for the foray from among the units of the opposing army participating in the current phase of the battle turn. Foes enter the foray in 1-4 separate groups. The Judge should allocate foes to the groups however he deems appropriate, but each group should be approximately equal in size. If desired, the Judge may have the heroes face partial units, reducing both BR and number of creatures proportionately.

EXAMPLE: The Judge selects 3 BR worth of foes. He had previously decided that 4 units of 60 wolf riders and 5 units of 60 ogres from Moruvai’s army would be participating in this phase of the battle. A unit of 60 wolf riders has 6.5 BR, so the Judge confronts Marcus and Peristo with 45% of that number - 27 wolf riders, equal to BR 3. The Judge divides the wolf riders into three groups of 9 wolf riders each.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Battlefield Encounter Distance (yards)** | | | |
| **Terrain** | **Missile** | **Skirmish** | **Melee** |
| Badlands or Hills | 2d6x10 | 2d6x5 | 1d6x5 |
| Desert or Plains | 4d6x10 | 2d6x10 | 2d6x5 |
| Fields, Fallow | 4d6x10 | 2d6x10 | 2d6x5 |
| Fields, Ripe | 5d10 | 3d8 | 2d6 |
| Fields, Wild | 3d6x5 | 5d10 | 3d8 |
| Forest, Heavy or Jungle | 5d4 | 2d6 | 1d6 |
| Forest, Light | 5d8 | 5d4 | 2d6 |
| Marsh | 8d10 | 4d10 | 2d10 |
| Mountains | 4d6x10 | 2d6x10 | 2d6x5 |

When the foray begins, consult the Battlefield Encounter Distance table and cross-reference the phase of the battle with the type of terrain to determine how many yards separate the heroes and their foes. Roll separately for each group.

EXAMPLE: The Judge consults the Battlefield Encounter Distance table for each group. The heroic foray is taking place during the melee phase and the battle is being fought on the plains of Southern Argollë. Cross-referencing the terrain type and the battle phase, he determines that each group will begin 2d6x5 yards distant from the heroes. Rolling for the first group of 4 wolf riders, the Judge gets a 9; the first group is 45 yards away from the heroes. Rolling for the second group of wolf riders, the Judge gets an 10; the second group is 50 yards away from the heroes. Rolling for the third group of wolf riders, the Judge gets a 3; the third group is 15 yards away.

The foray between the heroes and their foes should be resolved using the standard combat rules of *ACKS* (initiative, morale, etc.).The participating heroes may use any desired spells, magic items, or other powers they wish. The heroes may leave the foray by using Defensive Movement, but may not re-enter the same foray thereafter. The foray ends when all of the heroes or foes have been defeated, or when a total of six combat rounds have elapsed. Foes who voluntarily withdraw or who fail morale rolls and flee are considered defeated.

When the foray ends, the opposing army loses units with a combined battle rating equal to the total BR of foes defeated in the foray.

EXAMPLE: Marcus and Peristo kill half the goblin wolf riders, and the remaining goblins fail their morale rolls and flee. All of the foes are defeated, so the foray is over. The heroes defeated foes with a combined BR of 3, so the Judge must removes 3 BR worth of units from the goblin army.

###### Heroes versus Heroes

If there are heroes present in both armies, they will often end up foraying during the same battle turn. In this case, the heroes of each army might face each other in the foray. The highest total BR staked by either side is used. The heroes from each army will be supported by the staked BR worth of allies drawn from their army.

EXAMPLE: Next battle turn, Marcus and Peristo foray again, putting 1 BR each (2 BR total) at stake. Simultaneously, Moruvai, a 12th level ruinguard, also forays, and puts 3 BR at stake. The highest stake risked by either side is used, so 3 BR are at stake. Marcus and Peristo will face Moruvai in the foray. Each side will be supported by 3 BR worth of allies from their own army.

**Who Dares, Wins:** If one side’s heroes staked a higher total of BR than the other, all NPC troops on that side gain a +2 bonus to morale rolls during the foray.

EXAMPLE: Moruvai staked 3 BR while Marcus and Peristo collectively staked only 2 BR. Therefore, Moruvai’s allies will gain a +2 bonus to their morale rolls during the foray.

A foray with heroes on both sides ends when all of the heroes and creatures on one side have been defeated, or when six combat rounds have elapsed. Each side loses units with a combined battle rating equal to the total BR their side lost in the foray.

EXAMPLE: After a fierce fight, with many losses on both sides, Moruvai withdraws. He has lost 6 goblin bow units (0.5 BR each) in the fighting. Marcus and Peristo are victorious, though their side has lost 1 heavy infantry unit (2 BR). Moruvai’s army loses 3 BR worth of units, and Marcus’s army loses 2 BR.

###### Unopposed Forays

If heroes foray and there are no units of the opposing army participating in the current phase of the battle turn for them to fight, their foray is **unopposed**. An unopposed foray is treated as occurring against the units in the next zone. For instance, an unopposed foray in the missile phase is treated as a foray in the skirmish phase. If an unopposed foray occurs in the melee phase, the heroes may choose to fight units in any zone.

###### Lulls in the Fighting

In between each battle turn, there is a **lull in the fighting** during which PC and NPC heroes can treat injured comrades, use magical healing, or take other actions to prepare themselves for the next battle turn. If heroes from either army make any attacks or cast any spells affecting the opposing army, however, this immediately interrupts the lull and begins another battle turn. If not interrupted, the lull will last for 1 turn (10 minutes).

### Ending Battles

A battle ends when all of the units of one army have voluntarily withdrawn, routed, and/or been destroyed.

###### Annihilation

A battle immediately ends if all of the units of either army are destroyed. Such an outcome is rare unless the army’s leader has a very high morale modifier. In most cases, a battle will end from voluntary withdrawal or rout long before this occurs.

###### Voluntary Withdrawal

A battle immediately ends if either of the armies **voluntarily withdraws**. Armies which suffer a morale collapse are very vulnerable to pursuit, so a wise leader will conduct a voluntary withdrawal before this occurs.

###### Morale Collapse

Armies do not, as a rule, fight to the last man (or elf, or orc). Instead they suffer a gradual loss of morale, becoming increasingly disordered as casualties mount, until eventually the army is swept away in a rout. These effects are simulated with **morale rolls**.

During the Morale Phase, every unit in an army must make a morale roll if:

* One or more units in the army were destroyed during the preceding combat round; and
* The total number of units destroyed in the battle thus far is equal to or greater than the army’s **break point.** An army’s break point is always 1/3 of the army’s starting number of units, rounded up.

EXAMPLE: Marcus began the battle with an army of 12 units. The army’s break point is (1/3 x 12) 4. During the preceding battle turn, Marcus’s army lost its fourth unit. Since at least one unit was destroyed during the preceding battle turn, and the total number of units destroyed (4) is equal to or greater than the army’s break point, every unit in Marcus’s army must make a morale roll.

###### Morale Rolls

To make a morale roll, the unit’s commander rolls 2d6, adds the unit’s morale score, and consults the Unit Morale table. The die roll should be modified based on the army and unit modifiers listed on the Morale Roll Modifiers table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Unit Morale** | |
| **Adjusted Die Roll** | **Result** |
| 2- | Rout |
| 3-5 | Flee |
| 6-8 | Waver |
| 9-11 | Stand Firm |
| 12+ | Rally |

**Rout:** The unit immediately **routs** off the battlefield. It will play no further part in the battle, and counts as destroyed for battle resolution purposes.

**Flee:** The unit retreats in disorder. It may not attack next battle turn. If the battle ends before the unit can attack again, it counts as routed.

**Waver:** The unit’s morale is wavering. Its BR is halved when attacking next battle turn.

**Stand Firm:** The unit remains steady. No effect.

**Rally**: The unit rallies under the pressure of battle. Its BR is increased by half when attacking next battle turn.

EXAMPLE: Since a unit was destroyed during the preceding battle turn, and the total number of units destroyed is equal to or greater than his army’s break point, every unit in Marcus’s army must make a morale roll.

Marcus’s morale modifier is a confident +5. His army gains a bonus of ½ that, or +3. His army has lost 1/3 of its starting BR worth of units, which imposes no modifier. However, his army has lost more BR of units than the opposing army, which imposes a -2 penalty. The total army modifier is therefore +1.

The first unit is a unit of heavy infantry (morale score 0). Marcus rolls 2d6 and gets a 6, modified to a 7. The unit is wavering. Its BR will be halved from 2 to 1 when attacking next turn.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Morale Roll Modifiers** | **Modifier** |
| *Army Modifiers (apply to all units)* |  |
| Army leader present on battlefield | + ½ Morale Modifier (round up) |
| Army has lost 1/2 or more of its starting BR, but less than 2/3 | -2 |
| Army has lost 2/3 or more of its starting BR | -5 |
| Army has destroyed more BR of units than opposing army | +2 |
| Army has lost more BR of units than opposing army | -2 |
| Army cannot retreat (surrounded, trapped, etc.) | +2 |
| Army defending homeland / sacred ground | Judge’s Discretion |
| *Unit Modifiers* |  |
| Commander attached to unit | + Morale Modifier |
| Unit is wavering | -2 |
| Unit is fleeing | -5 |

The army’s general determines the order in which his units will make morale rolls. The effects of each morale roll are resolved before rolling for the next unit. It is possible for the results of earlier morale rolls to impact those of later rolls, causing a cascade of flight off the battlefield.

### Aftermath of Battles

When a battle ends, the defeated army immediately **retreats**. The victorious army has the opportunity to **pursue** the defeated army. (If both armies simultaneously withdraw, neither has the opportunity to pursue the other.) After pursuit is resolved, each army determines **casualties** and gathers the **spoils of war**. Finally, each army calculates **experience points** for its leaders, heroes, and troops.

###### Retreat

After a battle, the defeated army must retreat. A retreating army generally retreats 1 6-mile hex along its line of supply. If there is a friendly stronghold or urban settlement in the same 6-mile hex, the army may retreat into the stronghold or settlement. The victorious army might then begin a **siege**, as described in Chapter 5.

If an army’s line of supply is occupied by enemy troops, the army may choose to retreat into an adjacent empty hex (risking loss of supply), or it may retreat along its line of supply (risking a second battle with enemy troops, if they detect the retreating army).

###### Pursuit

As the defeated army retreats, the victorious army is eligible to **pursue**. Pursuit is handled with a series of **pursuit throws**. The victorious army receives one pursuit throw per **eligible** pursuing unit. Pursuing occurs within the same 6-mile hex that the battle took place in. The pursuing army does not follow the retreating army into its new hex.

**Pursuit Eligibility:** Determine which units from the victorious army are eligible to pursue as follows:

1. Did the defeated army end the battle without any cavalry or flyer units (e.g. all such units were routed or destroyed)? If yes, then *all* units in the victorious army are eligible to pursue.
2. In all other cases, only cavalry units in the victorious army are eligible to pursue.

EXAMPLE #1: A battle between Army A and Army B ended when all of Army B’s units were destroyed or routed. Army A had eight heavy infantry and four light cavalry units remaining when the battle ended. Army B had two light cavalry and four light infantry remaining, but all routed. Because Army B ended the battle with all of its cavalry units routed, Army A is eligible to pursue with all of its units.

EXAMPLE #2: A battle between Army A and Army B ended when Army B voluntarily withdrew from the battle. Army A had eight heavy infantry and four light cavalry units remaining when the battle ended. Army B had two light cavalry and four light infantry remaining, all of which voluntarily retreated. Because Army B still has unrouted cavalry units in its army, Army A is eligible to pursue with *only* its four light cavalry.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pursuing Unit** | **Pursuit Throw** |
| Light Cavalry or Flyer | 11+ |
| Other Cavalry | 14+ |
| Light Infantry | 14+ |
| Other Infantry | 18+ |

**Pursuit Throws:** For each eligible pursuing unit, the victorious army’s commander makes a pursuit throw against the appropriate value from the table below. Add +4 to the pursuit throw if all of the defeated army’s cavalry or flyer units were destroyed or routed. Each successful throw eliminates one enemy unit. If the defeated army ended the battle without any cavalry or flyer units, the victorious army commander may choose which unit(s) are eliminated. Otherwise the defeated army’s general may choose which unit(s) are eliminated.

EXAMPLE: Army B routed off the battlefield. Army A is pursuing with four light cavalry units. A’s commander makes four pursuit throws against 11+. He rolls a modified 6, 9, 12 and a 16, so two units of Army B are eliminated. Since all of Army B’s cavalry units were destroyed or routed, Army A’s general chooses which units are eliminated. He elects to destroy both of B’s light cavalry.

**Pursuit against Evading Armies:** As explained in **Types of Battles** earlier in this chapter, certain battles (rear guard actions, rear guard envelopments, and skirmishes) involve offensive armies fighting evading armies. The longer it takes to defeat an evading army, the harder it is for the offensive army to pursue. Each battle turn imposes a cumulative -1 penalty to subsequent pursuit throws against a defeated evading army. A natural roll of 20 always eliminates a unit, regardless of any modifiers.

EXAMPLE: Army A confronts Army B in a rear guard action. After six battle turns, Army B’s rear guard units have all been defeated. Army A is now eligible to pursue Army B but all its pursuing units suffer a -6 penalty to their pursuit throws.

###### Casualties

After pursuit, each army’s leader will determine his army’s casualties, using the following rules.

**Destroyed Units:** For each unit that was destroyed, 50% of its troops (rounded up) are crippled or dead, while the other 50% (rounded down) are lightly wounded. The victorious army’s wounded troops return to their unit in one week. The defeated army’s wounded troops become prisoners.

EXAMPLE: An army containing a unit of 120 orcs was destroyed. 60 of the orcs are crippled or dead, while 60 are lightly wounded. If the orc’s army won the battle, it will recover its wounded; it will be able to field a unit of 60 orcs in one week. If the orc’s army lost the battle, the wounded orcs become prisoners of the victorious army.

**Routed Units:** For each unit that was routed, 25% of its troops (rounded up) are crippled or dead, while another 25% (rounded up) are lightly wounded. 50% of the victorious army’s routed, wounded troops are lost to desertion (round up); the rest return to the unit in one week. 50% of a defeated army’s routed, wounded troops become prisoners of the victorious army (round up); the other wound troops are lots to desertion.

EXAMPLE: A unit of 120 orcs routed. 30 troops are crippled or dead, while another 30 are lightly wounded. If the orc’s army won the battle, 15 of the wounded troops are lost to desertion, reducing the unit to 75 orcs. If the orc’s army lost the battle, 15 of the wounded troops become prisoners of the victorious army and the other 15 are lost to desertion. The unit is reduced to 60 orcs.

Half-strength units may be consolidated to form a smaller number of full-strength units, if desired.

###### Spoils of War

Historically, most soldiers fought for the **spoils of war**. Those spoils could come in the form of booty from a pillaged city, food, wine and women from plundered cities, land captured in combat, or ransoms from captured nobility, but it was ultimately the prospect of economic gains that motivated ancient and medieval fighters. It was the nobility and leadership that were most motivated by the prospect of glory and renown from winning battles. To reflect this, *Domains at War* rewards leaders and heroes for the army’s valor at arms, while the common soldiers are rewarded only for their personal material gain.

The spoils of war from a victorious battle are equal to one month’s wages of each destroyed or routed unit. In addition, each prisoner captured is worth 40gp if sold as a slave or ransomed. (Higher level NPCs, monsters, and similar creatures can be ransomed for greater sums, at the Judge’s discretion.) If kept, prisoners can be used as **construction workers** (p. XX).

EXAMPLE: In a great battle, an army has destroyed or routed 7 units of 60 heavy cavalry (60gp/month per troop) and 10 units of 120 heavy infantry (12gp/month per troop). From the defeated units, the victorious army captured and ransomed 550 prisoners. The spoils for defeating the heavy cavalry are (7 x 60 x 60) 25,200gp. The spoils for defeating the heavy infantry are (10 x 120 x 12) 14,400gp. The spoils from ransoming the prisoners are (550 x 40) 22,000gp. The total spoils are 61,600gp.

Remember that casualties and prisoners can be consumed as supplies by **carnivorous units** (p. XX).

**Experience Points from Spoils:** Each participant (whether a commander, a hero, or a creature in a unit) earns 1 XP for each gold piece he collects from the spoils of war. Troops will expect that at least 50% of any spoils captured will be shared on a pro rata basis in relation to their wages. If this does not occur, the Judge should make a loyalty roll for any unpaid troops.

EXAMPLE: An army consisting of 8 units of 120 heavy infantry and 8 units of 60 heavy cavalry, led by a 9th level fighter, has gathered battle loot worth 10,000gp. The leader claims half (5,000gp) for himself and shares the rest of the loot among the men on a pro rata basis in relation to their wages, so that heavy infantry get 3gp each and heavy cavalry get 13gp each. The General earns 5,000XP, each heavy infantryman receives 3 XP and each heavy cavalryman receives 13XP.

For ease of play, troops’ XP can be tracked on a unit-by-unit basis. 0th level characters can be advanced to 1st level as per the rules in *ACKS* under **0th Level Characters and Experience from Adventuring** (p. 115). In general, it requires 100 XP for a 0th level character to become a 1st level fighter.

**Experience Points from Combat:** The army’s commanders earn XP equal to the value of enemy units defeated, less the value of friendly units defeated. 50% of the XP goes to the army’s leader, while the remaining XP is divided proportionately among the commanders based on the number of units each commander led. (This is why ambitious commanders always demand to lead more troops!)

EXAMPLE: An army of 10 100-man units (10XP per man equals 1,000XP per unit) defeats 12 units of 100 orcs (10XP per orc equals 1,000 XP per unit) while losing 3 units itself. The overall leader and three commanders of the army will split [(12 x 1,000) - (3 x 1,000)] 9,000xp. The leader receives 4,500XP. The first commander had 5 units, the second had 3 units, and the third had 2 units, so the commanders receive 2,250XP; 1,350XP; and 900XP respectively.

Characters also earn XP for the creatures they personally defeated. Troops organized in units (i.e. non-heroes) do not earn XP from fighting, only from spoils of war.