

Combat

Combat counts as a form of **Prolonged Conflict**, and can be resolved using the **Generalised Rules** (above), however, this will tend towards a more abstract or narrative battle. The default expectation in *Spellwoven* is that groups will use the following Combat specific rules instead. This involves weapons, armour and wounding systems.

Action Rounds

Combats are divided into a succession of **Action Rounds**. An Action Round is an arbitrary period of time in which all Characters and opponents involved in a contested situation are allowed one action.

Overview

The Action Round starts with Players declaring if their Character will **Defend, Attack** or **Cast a Spell**. Defensive Characters don't get to take any other actions, but gain a bonus if attacked. Attacking Characters can attack using a **Fighting Skill**, or undertake movement (like charging or trying to move to a better position), or use a **Talent** (special 'moves' gained from either **Mastery-at-Arms** or **Skulduggery**). Casting of spells includes all magical working of charms or spellcraft. Spellcasting always happens last in the Round.

1) First action: the Gamesmaster declares an action by one of the opponents.

GM: The outlaw leader draws her longsword and moves to attack Gunnafrew.

The Players can decide to allow this action to resolve, or, one of them can spend a point from the **Quickness Pool** to **Act First**. If two Players want to Act First you can use the basic Initiative Rules (above) to resolve who acts, or simply give the action to the Character with the higher Quickness.

- Whoever acts doesn't have to be the 'target' Character.
- i.e. in the example, Gunnafrew is attacked, but Tobias acts.
- But any attacks have to be directed at the active opponent.

*Jeremy: Tobias the Greenhood will move to intercede (he removes one of his Quickness Tokens). I'm going to **Act First**.*

If a Player Character **Acts First**, then the target opponent is moved to the end of the turn sequence. The Gamesmaster will have to keep track of this if multiple opponents are moved to the end. Each time a new opponent is moved to the end, those waiting in line move up.

Only non-player opponents are ever moved to the end of the turn sequence. **Non-player opponents have no Quickness Pool, so cannot interrupt a Player action.**

GM: Okay, Jeremy. Roll to attack. The leader's Evasion is three.

Jeremy: I'm using my battle-axe.

Jeremy has a **Two-Handed** weapon skill of 6. He rolls 3d10 and scores a 1, 5 and 8. This is three successes (remember that natural 1s score two successes). It is equal to the outlaw's Evasion of 3, so the blow lands.

A battle-axe has a **Menace of 7**. Jeremy rolls 3d10 and scores a 2, 7 and 10. This scores two successes. This inflicts a **Deep Wound** (see the wounding systems below).

GM: The outlaw leader isn't wearing any armour that will protect from a Deep Wound. The blow strikes home.

The Gamesmaster marks this off on the outlaw leader's Character Block. The Gamesmaster also makes a note that the outlaw leader will now act last in the turn sequence for attacks. After the attack sequence, spells can be cast if anyone on either side decides to invoke magical forces.

2) Next Action: The Gamesmaster then moves onto describing another action by an opponent. Someone other than Jeremy could interrupt this action, but because Tobias has already had his Action this round, so cannot act again.

3) Final actions: The remaining players who are Attacking but have not yet acted, now get to act before any opponents that have been moved to the end of the sequence. Players determine among themselves who goes first, second (or use Initiative Rules if there is a disagreement). If another outlaw has been moved to the end of the sequence, the final steps would look like this: **1)** Any remaining Players act. **2)** Outlaw leader acts. **3)** Second Outlaw acts. **4)** Move to resolving magical spells.

In More Detail...

Before you Start: Quickness

All Players write down their Character's Quickness on a piece of paper or gather aside some tokens to match this number. This is your **Quickness Pool**. the Quickness Pool is used to act before an opponent. It can be replenished to full by spending a point of **Effort** during a fight. It always starts at the full Quickness number at the start of a fight.

Wariness and Breaking Point

Non-player Characters or Creatures can have one or both of **Wariness** and **Breaking Point**. Wariness is a measure of morale or fear and is scaled 1-9. Whenever anything happens that is drastically in the Player's favour, the Gamesmaster rolls 3d10. If all three scores equal or are under the Wariness, the opponents break and run. Different groups might have different Warinesses. Two **town guards** with **Wariness Three** and a mob of **angry townsfolk**, with **Wariness Seven** might require separate rolls. What counts as 'drastic' is up to the Gamesmaster, but, some examples include: killing an opponent, receiving reinforcements, defeating the enemy leader or champion, pulling off an impressive conjuration of magic and so on. **Breaking Point** is simply the number of Action Rounds that opponents are willing to fight without obviously moving closer to winning. If the **Breaking Point** passes, and the opponents are not obviously winning, they will likely break and run. The only Characters or Creatures that will lack both **Wariness** and **Breaking Point** are those that have no care for their own lives, or perhaps have nowhere to retreat to (although in this case, they are likely to surrender and beg for mercy instead). Mindless undead, magical constructs, religious or cult fanatics, or a rabid wolf are all examples of things that might lack **Wariness** and/or **Breaking Point**, and so would instead fight to the death.

Players: Declare Intentions

As the Round Starts, need to declare if they will go on the defensive (**Defend**), go on the attack (**Attack**) or conjure magical forces (**Spell Preparation**).

Defend

You cannot make an attack, cast spells or take any aggressive action. Some minor manoeuvring or other movement may be allowed at the discretion of the Gamesmaster. All normal physical attacks against you trigger a Contest of Skill. Either **Reflexes** (dodging) or a **Fighting Skill** (parrying). The Gamesmaster can, however, declare that an attack cannot be parried and must be dodged (such as a magical fiery blast, or a big iron-bound giant's club). **The attacker must beat your counter-action and also equal or beat your Evasion** to land a blow. If you successfully Defend yourself (i.e. no attacks hit you) three times in a row, you can choose to escape the fight at the end of the round.

Attack

The Character either uses a **Fighting Skill** to attempt to inflict a **Wound**, or uses a combat relevant **Talent**, or can move or manoeuvre (maybe to move into a better position, or close the distance with an enemy).

Spell Preparation

All spell-casting and magical conjurations occur last (after Attacks are all resolved) and are usually deemed to happen simultaneously. If it's important which spell happens first, second, third etc, you can use the **Prolonged Conflicts Initiative Rules** (above) to resolve this.

Ask for Intent

The Gamesmaster asks everyone at the table if they intend to Defend, Attack or Cast a Spell.

First Action

Gamesmaster declares an opponent Action

Resolve or Interrupt

A Player can spend from their Quickness Pool to Act First. If this happens, the opponent is moved to the end of the turn sequence. Resolve use of a Fighting Skill to attack using a Test of Skill versus the target's Evasion as a Difficulty number. If the action is not an attack, then resolve it against Normal, Difficult or Very Difficult difficulty thresholds as normal.

Resolve Menace

If an attack is successful (i.e. equals or beats Evasion), then resolve the Menace of the weapon. This may or may not result in a Wound depending on the Menace roll, armour worn by the target and any Talents that may be invoked.

Next Action...

The Gamesmaster moves onto another opponent. Again, players can choose to Act First if they have an action left.

Resolving Attacks

Roll 3d10 against the relevant movement or **Fighting Skill** (Effort can be spent at any time to add bonus successes, as per normal). Attack rolls are resolved against a static difficulty based on **Evasion**:

1. **Evasion** is used to passively dodge an attack. This is a static number based on your **Quickness Attribute**. The attacker must equal or beat **Evasion** to strike a blow.
2. **Manoeuvre** can be used to actively dodge an attack, but it requires a Character to be in a **Defensive Intent**. To dodge, you must equal or beat the successes of the attack.
3. Any **Fighting Skill** can be used to block or parry an attack at the discretion of the Gamemaster (i.e. the Gamesmaster may decide that the attack cannot be parried). However, this also requires the Character to be in a **Defensive Intent**.

Note that you must declare that you intend to dodge or parry a blow before injury (Menace) is resolved.

Wounding

If you succeed on your attack, you then roll for **Wounding** using the weapon and **Menace** rules over-page (3d10 against **Menace**).

Character Defeat

Defeat either comes when a Character suffers either a **Felling** or **Mortal** blow. A Felling blow will merely incapacitate a Character. A Mortal blow kills outright.

Winning the Fight

It is unusual that opponents are willing to fight to the very last. More typically, a side will break and either run or surrender if a Wariness Test is failed, or the Breaking Point condition is met (see above).

Resolving Injury

Spellwoven uses a system of **Wounds** to track physical injuries, such as from fighting. As a roleplayer, you might be more familiar with hit point-based systems. In a Wounding system any wound can kill. However, *Spellwoven* is designed that that one-hit kills should be relatively uncommon. Combat in **Spellwoven** is intended to be a dramatic and fun, rather than realistically deadly.

Menace

Weapons or natural physical forces that can injure have a **Menace** rating. Menace scales from 1 to 9, although most melee weapons in the game will fall into the 3 to 7 range. Using edged weapons as an example, Menace scales up for more dangerous weapons.

Eating Knife	Menace two
Dagger	Menace three
Long knife	Menace four
Shortsword	Menace five
Longsword	Menace six
Great sword	Menace seven

When injured in a fight, Characters receive a wound. The seriousness of the wound is established by rolling 3d10 aiming to roll equal to or under the Menace of the weapon being used. A value less than or under the Menace counts as a success. A roll of 1 counts as two successes. Successes are summed to determine the wound severity. Wounds have six levels.

Glance	No successes
Shallow	One success
Deep	Two successes
Grievous	Three successes
Felling	Four successes
Mortal	Five Successes

Both Felling and Mortal wounds are special case. A single **Felling Wound** incapacitates a Character, so that they can take no more actions until tended to by a healer (or they heal naturally). Note that a Character can absorb multiple **Felling Wounds** without dying, assuming they have slots to do so. A single **Mortal Wound** results in death.

Wound Overflow

Whenever a Character suffers a Wound, it is marked off on their Wound track by crossing off a slot. Make sure to cross off slots lightly, as these can be healed (i.e. there is no reason to black out a slot permanently, when injured). Note that **Glancing Wounds** are not tracked, as they represent mere bumps and scrapes.

If you don't have any slots left for a given Wound level, the Wound flows onto the next category. If that Wound has no spaces left, the Wound flows onto the next Category and so forth.

Here is an example. This Character has suffered two Shallow Wounds, Three Deep Wounds and two Grievous Wounds. They have not yet suffered a Felling or Mortal Wound.

- If the next blow results in a Shallow Wound, then this is marked on the track, as there is space for two more Shallow Wounds.
- There are no Deep or Grievous slots left. A Deep Wound would flow to Grievous, and then onto Felling. A Grievous Wound would flow direct to Felling.
- A Felling Wound would be marked and result in the Character being incapacitated.
- A Mortal Wound will kill the Character.

Shallow	☒☒☐☐■
Deep	☒☒☒■
Grievous	☒☒■
Felling	☐■
Mortal	☐■

Bloodloss

Some rules in the game refer to **Bloodloss**. This is just shorthand for the total number of Wounds that a Character has taken, regardless of the severity of a Wound. Sometimes there is a requirement to **Test Bloodloss**. You can use either of two Methods:

- 1) The Gamesmaster rolls 3d10 against Bloodloss for a Character. Any value rolled below or equal is a success. Typically, one 'success' is needed to fail a Bloodloss Test.
- 2) The Gamesmaster rolls 3d10 against Bloodloss. The Player rolls 3d10 against their Endure. Whoever scores the most successes 'wins'.

Damage from Other Sources

Damage caused by magic, traps, curses, or spirits can be tested against dice pools that are smaller or larger than three. In these instances, the notation used is Xd10(Y) where X is the number of d10 and Y is the Menace. For example:

- 2d10(4)** Roll 2d10 against Menace 4
- 5d10(6)** Roll 5d10 against Menace 6
- 6d10(2)** Roll 6d10 against Menace 2

Basic Example

Jen attacks a street ruffian who is attempting to rob her. Jen is wearing no armour, and has a dagger (Menace 3). The ruffian has a cudgel (Menace 4) and is wearing a coat of untanned horse hide. This adds one soak to Shallow and one to Deep. Jen's Evasion is 2. The Ruffian's evasion is also 2. Jen attacks with One-Handed Slash (Rank 5). She rolls a 3, 3 and 3. This is a triplet, and represents three successes. The triplet means that armour is ignored. Jen then rolls to check wounding. She rolls a 4, 6 and 9. None of these are equal to or below the Menace of her Dagger (3), so only a Glancing wound is dealt.

*The Ruffian then returns an attack with one-handed bludgeon (Skill 4). They roll a 1, 4 and 7. The 1 counts as two successes. The 4 counts as one success. This totals 3 successes, which equals or beats Jen's evasion of 2. The Ruffian then rolls for wounding using their cudgel (Menace 4). He rolls a 1, 1 and 8. The two 1s count for two successes each (four total). This inflicts a **Felling** blow. Jen is knocked out. She wakes later with a headache and all her valuables stolen.*

Incidental Characters

Incidental Non-Player Characters can have a simplified Wounding System to help ease book-keeping for the Gamesmaster. Non-Player Characters might lack **Shallow**, and/or **Deep** and/or **Grievous Wound Slots**. A wound dealt to a 'missing' category flows onto the next level. Usually, such a Character would *also* lack armour in a Wound Slot they do not have, but this is at the discretion of the Gamesmaster. Minor Characters would typically still have separate **Felling** and **Mortal Wound Slots**, so can still be knocked out, incapacitated or killed with a single blow. Here is an example of a minor Character who lacks both Deep and Grievous Wound slots.

<p>Minor Brigand 1</p> <p>WOUNDS</p> <p>Shallow □ □ □ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Deep ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Grievous ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Felling □ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Mortal □ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shield</p> <p>Evasion: 2</p>	<p>Longknife / No armour</p> <p>ARMOUR</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p>
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Here's another minor Character, except that this Character lacks Shallow and Deep wounds. This second Character would be (somewhat) harder to kill than the first example. This is because in the first example, the Character can take three Shallow Wounds, but just a single Deep or Grievous Wound would flow automatically to Felling. In the Second example, the Character could take up to three Shallow, Deep or Grievous Wounds before the next wound flows to Felling.

<p>Minor Brigand 2</p> <p>WOUNDS</p> <p>Shallow ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Deep ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Grievous □ □ □ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Felling □ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p>Mortal □ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shield</p> <p>Evasion: 2</p>	<p>Longknife / No armour</p> <p>ARMOUR</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p> <p>■ ■ ■</p>
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Armour

Armour has a **Soak**, which represents how many blows it can withstand.

Soak cannot exceed 3 per Wound Level.

Armour comes in **Helms, Greaves, Suits, Under-armour** and **Over-armour**. You can wear one each of the types of armour, but you cannot wear two of any given type.

For example, you could wear a **Heavy Fur Cloak** (over-armour) on its own, or you could wear a **Quilted Tunic** (under-armour) on its own, or you could wear a **Scale Tunic** (suit) on its own. You could also wear a **Heavy Fur Cloak**, over a **Scale Tunic**, over a **Quilted Tunic**.

Here are the protective values for these armours:

Heavy Fur Cloak	S 2 / D 1 / G 0 / F 0 / M 0
Scale Tunic	S 1 / D 1 / G 1 / F 1 / M 0
Quilted Tunic	S 3 / D 0 / G 0 / F 0 / M 0

If you were wearing all three items, then you would have a **Shallow Wound Soak of 3** (2 + 1 + 3, but tops out at three), a **Deep Wound Soak of 2** (1 + 1), a **Grievous Wound Soak of 1** (1 from Scale), and an **Felling Wound slot of 1** (1 from Scale) and no Mortal Wound soak. When marking this on a Character Sheet, you black out the slots you don't have access to.

Shallow	□ □ □
Deep	□ □ ■
Grievous	□ ■ ■
Felling	□ ■ ■
Mortal	■ ■ ■

When you take a Wound you can choose to absorb the blow to the relevant armour soak instead of to the Wound Slot. When Armour soaks are filled up another blow will **either** overflow to the next armour soak **or** to the relevant Wound Slot **at the player's choice**.

Armour Penetration

If the attacking Character rolls a triplet (all dice are the same value) on *either* the **Fighting Skill** or **Menace** check, and the attack is successful, then armour and/or shields are ignored. The blow goes straight to causing a Wound.

Wound Overflow for Armour

Wound Overflow for armour works in the same way that it does for Wounding Levels except that Soak cannot 'jump' black squares. As an example:

ARMOUR

Shallow	⊗ ⊗ ■
Deep	□ ■ ■
Grievous	⊗ ■ ■
Felling	■ ■ ■
Mortal	□ ■ ■

- A **Shallow** soak will overflow to **Deep**.
- A **Deep** soak will cross off the **Deep** box.
- But a **Grievous** soak cannot 'jump' to **Mortal**.
- A **Grievous** Wound must flow to a **Grievous Wound**.

Shields

Shields come in three sizes, **Small, Medium** and **Large**. Small Shields have 1 Soak, Medium have 2, and Large have 3 Soaks.

- Shields can be used to catch any blow from any Wound Level.
- You do not need a successful Block Blow roll.
- You simply opt to catch the blow on the shield and mark it off against the Shield
- Shields that lose all their soaks are considered destroyed
- Shields that have lost only part of their Soaks can be repaired, albeit by a professional armorer

Arrows and Shields

Shields tend not to be as useful against arrows, as the arrow punches straight through the shield. You can implement a rule that an arrow can still be caught on a Shield, but the wound is reduced to Shallow, rather than stopped entirely.

Enchanted Weapons

Weapons that are magical can be of **Least, Lesser, Greater, Fabled** or **Mythic Enchantment**. Enchanted Weapons bypass armour that is of lower Enchantment (including natural armour). A Menace check is still needed to determine the level of wound. Note that Enchanted Weapons might well have other properties in addition to this basic level of magical advantage as well.

Enchanted Armour

Armour that is magical can be of **Least, Lesser, Greater, Fabled** or **Mythic Enchantment**. Enchanted armour only provides a bonus if it is a substantial piece of armour: that is a shirt, hauberk, coat or suit. A single enchanted gauntlet does not provide a general bonus. If a Character is wearing two or more layers of enchanted armour, use the armour of highest enchantment.

Enchanted armour reduces Wounds by one level from any source that is of lower Enchantment. Enchanted armour may have other properties in addition to this.

Also, Enchanted Armour (of any sort) does not count towards your encumbrance or Evasion penalty.

Example

A Least Enchanted sword would bypass ordinary non-enchanted armour. It would function normally against Least Enchanted armour. When used against someone wearing Lesser Enchanted armour (or greater), then Wounds inflicted will lose one level of severity.

Optional Combat Rules

The following are some Optional Rules for combat.

Ambushes

In the case of an ambush, allow the surprised party to **Test their Awareness**. Usually, this is at Normal Difficulty (Difficulty 1), but the pass condition is at the Gamesmaster's discretion. Any Characters who fails their **Test of Awareness** are open to 'free attacks' by the ambushers. However, only one attack per ambusher is allowed. A 'free attack' is simply a bonus attack that is directed against Evasion.

Arrows and Shields

Shields tend not to be as useful against arrows, as the arrow punches straight through the shield. You can implement a rule that an arrow can still be caught on a Shield, but the wound is reduced to Shallow, rather than stopped entirely.

Attack of Opportunity

Optional: If a Character decides to disengage from a battle, flee or is otherwise distracted elsewhere, any nearby Characters can be permitted a free attack of opportunity at the Gamesmaster's discretion.

Blackpowder Weapons

If you are including blackpowder weapons (flintlocks, wheellocks, carbines, muskets etc) in your game, you can employ the following. **1)** It takes one full action to load and prime a blackpowder weapon. **2)** Any wound inflicted by a blackpowder weapon is **dealt to both the appropriate Wound Slot and Armour Slot simultaneously**. This is intended to mimic the slow load-time and armour piercing qualities of these weapons.

Death at the Player's Discretion

If you prefer, you can leave it to the Player's discretion whether or not a Player Character dies due to a Mortal Blow. In this approach, if the Player doesn't wish their Character to die, then the Character will be incapacitated, but will recover in the normal course of healing. This is more in line with cinematic games or stories where the main characters have 'plot armour', so to speak. It may also gel better with some groups who don't like the idea of a much-beloved Character dying without warning. It's best to discuss this as a group at the outset of a game. Will you allow instant death due to a Mortal Wound, or will you consider a Mortal Wound to be

merely incapacitating for Players? The exact preference may even differ for each Player.

Death Most Heroic

Another option is to allow Players to trigger a **Heroic Death** at the point when they would otherwise be incapacitated or killed. When triggered, your Character becomes almost supernaturally animated and can take any injury (within sensible reason) until the end of the combat. They also get a bonus +3 successes to *all dice rolls* for the remainder of the battle. However, the Character is doomed to die at the end of the conflict. This is intended to mimic a 'heroic last stand' end for a Character, which is a trope in fantasy books, as well as myths.

If you are using Heroic Deaths in your game, and a Player doesn't trigger a Heroic Death, then the Character is merely incapacitated and will eventually recover, or simply dies outright if the Player wants that outcome (sometimes Players get bored with a Character and decide they'd rather create someone new to play).

Encumbrance

Wearing a lot of armour will eventually make you a bit encumbered and easier to hit. You can rule that this eventually results in an Evasion penalty.

Add your total Armour Soaks (don't include shields)

Every six soaks causes a -1 Evasion Penalty

6 slots = -1 | 12 = -2 | 18 slots = -3

Intentional Incapacitation

Whenever a **Mortal Wound** is rolled, you can give the attacker the option of leaving the Character incapacitated rather than killed outright (i.e. reduce the wound to **Felling**). Sometimes, Characters might be attempting to take prisoners rather than kill. If it seems possible that a blow could still kill by accident, then you can require a **Test of Quickness (Normal or Hard** at the Gamesmaster's discretion) to 'pull' the blow and avoid causing death.

Maiming

If you suffer a number of wounds exceeding your **Hale** (regardless of the wound severity), then all of your subsequent skill tests except for basic movement (walking, running) and defensive actions are tested at **Disadvantage** until fully healed.

Outnumbering

A Character that is outnumbered in fighting performs all **Tests of Skill** at a **Disadvantage**.

Over-swing

If you attack with a heavy weapon (Menace 7 or greater) and miss, then you will leave yourself open, and the next attack against you will be at **Advantage**.

Ranged Actions First

You can decide that all Ranged Attacks are to be declared and resolved before hand-to-hand attacks. This effectively splits the Attack Phase into two sub-phases. 1. Ranged attacks. 2. Hand-to-hand combat.

Shields & Arrows

A Character can catch any number of arrows on a shield, but each time they need to make a **Test of Manoervre**, either **Normal** or more difficult at the Gamesmaster's discretion.

Shield in the Way

Shield help deflect blows but a shield also makes it harder to attack cleanly. If using a light shield there is no penalty to attack rolls. If using a Medium or Heavy Shield, your next Attack roll (Test of Skill) after a successful block with your Shield is at **Disadvantage**.

Situational Modifiers

If a Player Character is fighting at a strong disadvantage, such as fighting blind, fighting uphill or in an environment that they are not comfortable with (such as in waist deep mud, fighting a huge serpent) then you can nominate that the Character has to take the lowest rather than highest dice rolled. You might impose this for just a single round (i.e. if stunned for a round), or for an entire combat sequence (i.e. if fighting in the dark against creatures that can see in the dark).

Spell Disruption

You can implement a rule that Characters who are injured during Spell Preparation cannot cast a spell. Either, the Character loses their turn, or you can switch them to an Attack Intent instead.

Wound Limit

If you suffer **twelve wounds** (regardless of the severity), you are incapacitated and cannot move until receiving a successful **Healing** action (see below for details).