

Action Rounds

If a group of Characters is acting at cross-purposes, you may wish to use an **Action Round**. An Action Round is an arbitrary period of time in which all Characters involved in a contested situation are allowed one action. In minor scuffles, or quick conflicts, you may decide to just invoke a single Action Round and state that whichever side accumulates the most successes from actions wins. Action Rounds are also used in Prolonged Conflicts, in both Generalised and Combat situations, but in that case, we would expect there to be a succession of Action Rounds, and for it to take much longer to determine a 'winner'. To make use of a single Action Round:

- Each side must state a goal: i.e. what do they 'win'.
- For a single Action Round it would be preferable if goals are not lethal. No one enjoys losing a Character over a couple quick rolls of the dice.
- Actions are declared and resolved. Tactically speaking, the order doesn't matter as rolls merely accumulate successes, and it is only the total number of successes that matter.
- Keep score of the number of successes scored by each side. Whichever side scores the most successes wins.

What if one side out-numbers the other?

This gives an advantage to the more numerous side. The more Characters you have on your side, the more likely you are to overwhelm the opposition with lots of successes.

Prolonged Conflicts

In a **Prolonged Conflict**, multiple **Action Rounds** are used to resolve a stated goal. Here are some examples of specific situations and 'win conditions' that you can employ.

Chases

You can run a chase as follows: the 'pursued' Character is always the 'active actor' (i.e. the Chased Character always declares what Contest of Skill will be required next), but they can only use a given Skill once per Chase. The Gamesmaster may also wish to set a number of rounds at the end of which the pursuer's will give up. The 'pursued' Character needs to justify or describe how their Skill is helping them escape. Some Skills (like Sprint or Manoeuvre) are obviously helpful in a chase, but you could attempt to escape with Climb, Hide, Wary Steps or even Ride (stealing a horse) or Swim (jumping in a river).

Drinking Contests

Each Character tests Endure against difficulty one, then two, then three, then four etc. A Character can fail as many times as they have points in Fortitude before falling over drunk.

Physical Attack

The attacker tests one of their **Fighting Skills** against an opponent's **Evasion**. If the attacker equals or exceeds the Evasion, then the attack lands. The attacker then checks their weapon's **Menace**. Each success increases wound severity by one level. The wound might still be caught on armour, but if it is not, then it is dealt to the opponent. More detailed combat rules are provided after the **Generalised Rules**.

Social Conflicts

An argument, attempt to outwit one another, or similar. You can run Social Conflicts using the following rules: Characters engage in successive **Contests of Social Skill**. Each time a Character loses a contest they temporarily (for the duration of the conflict) lose one rank from all Social Skills. When a Character reaches zero in all Social Skills, they lose the Social Conflict. This is a standard 'death spiral' set of rules. If you don't like this, you can just set a limit to the contest (say, three or five rounds) and whoever has the most 'wins' then wins the contest.

Prolonged Conflicts

Generalised Rules

A **Prolonged Conflict** occurs when two or more characters are acting against one another over a period of time, struggling to overcome the other side. One example of a Prolonged Conflict is combat, where physical attacks are used to try and wound, disarm, disable or kill an enemy. But other types of Prolonged Conflicts will occur during play. A heated argument, or an attempt to swindle or otherwise socially outwit another person might be handled as a Prolonged Conflict. A chase through a crowded city, or an attempt to escape pursuers in a wooded wilderness could also provoke a Prolonged Conflict. As could a mental contest of wills between two magicians, or any psychic battle that occurs entirely within the mind. You can also use a Prolonged Conflict to resolve a dangerous natural threat: a storm at sea, putting out a fire, escaping an avalanche, although the natural threat will not act with intent unless driven by some charmed will, force of spirit, or magic.

Action Rounds

Prolonged Conflict are divided into a succession of **Action Rounds**. As, above, an Action Round is an arbitrary period of time in which all Characters involved in a contested situation are allowed one action. A series of Action Rounds can be used to manage combat, or set piece conflicts, such as chases, as well as mental contests, including social conflicts, arguments or mental battles of magic.

Initiative

In a **Prolonged Conflict** it is often preferable and simpler to allow the Players to act before opponents, or otherwise, narrate who acts first, second, third in a way that makes sense given the conflict. However, if there is substantial disagreement about action sequence, **Initiative** can be used.

Generate Initiative scores: Roll 3d10. Take the highest die score that is not higher than your **Reflexes Skill**. Add your **Quickness**. Then, start at a high value, (15 or 20) and count downwards. When you arrive at an Initiative value rolled by any given Character, that Character's action is triggered. Re-roll to break ties. You can then reroll every round (more time consuming) or keep the same order each round (faster, more predictable).

Ask for an Action

The Gamesmaster asks everyone at the table if they would like to take the first action. If two or more Characters want to act first, test Initiative and determine order.

First Action

A Character declares an Action

Option to Respond

If a Character has been targeted with an Action (e.g. attacked), the targeted Character is allowed to declare a counter-action.

Contest of Skill

- 1) Each Character Tests their Skill
- 2) Whichever Character gets the most successes wins.

The Character that 'wins' notes down their number of successes. These will be pooled by side at the end of the Round.

The Character who took a counter-action should make a note of this. All counter-actions past the first in a single round are at Disadvantage.

Next Action...

The Gamesmaster calls for another action. If none of the Players are willing to act, the non-player Characters should act.

Generalised Rules: Elaborated

The following is a generalised system for resolving Prolonged Conflicts involving two or more Characters. Chases, battles of wits, scrappy fisticuffs, rough ball games, wrestling matches, mental contests, games of strategy could all be resolved using this method. In principle, you could use these rules to resolve a deadly fight, although this can lead to combat feeling somewhat abstracted. Alternative combat-specific rules are supplied below.

1 *Resolve Action Round*

Resolve the first Action Round using the rules above.

2 *Count Successes*

When one Character wins a Contest of Skill against another Character, tally up the Successes.

Keep track of these Successes.

3 *End of Round*

Pool the Successes each side earned during the Action Round.

Remember that successes from victorious counter-actions are also counted. This can mean that attacking a much more skilled opponent is foolhardy.

4 *Nominate Outcomes*

In secret, each side picks from the following list of Outcomes (one per round) at the end of an Action Round. You can nominate a leader, or work this out by consensus.

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Outcome Purchase List

1 success: Hindrance. One nominated opponent rolls at disadvantage for their next Skill roll (i.e. roll 4d10 and take 3 highest rolls).

2 successes. Block one Hindrance effect.

3 successes. Remove from the conflict one nominated opponent Character who failed their instigated Contest of Skill (i.e. they didn't win their 'attack').

4 successes. Block the removal of a failed Character from your own side (i.e. negates one 3 success move).

5 successes. One opponent team loses all unspent successes instead of carrying them forward.

5 successes. Remove from conflict any one nominated Character from opposing side.

6 successes. Block the removal of a Character from your own side (i.e. negates one 5 success move).

6 (+ 2 successes per character involved at the outset). Win the conflict.

Unspent Successes are carried forward.

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Resolve the Outcomes

Both sides reveal their list of outcomes to the other side.

Resolve the most expensive outcome first, then work your way down.

If two outcomes would occur at the same time and the sides cannot agree which goes first, roll a d10 each. Highest roll goes first.

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Win Conditions

You win either when all opponents are removed from the conflict, or you spend enough successes to achieve a win.

Prolonged General Conflict Example

Nimble Jen has escaped the town guard. It is now later in the evening, and she is haggling with a stall owner over the price of a smoked kipper. The stall owner will take a loss if she sells it for less than three copper groats, but Jen only has one groat and she decides to try and persuade the stall owner to sell the fish to her for one groat. The Gamesmaster decides that this will trigger a Prolonged Conflict.

Nimble Jen has a **Presence** of ■■ and two social skills, **Falsehoods** of 6, and **Ingenue** of 4. Her social **Weakness** is **Sagacity**. The fishmonger has the Social Skills **Affable** 6 **Badgering** 4 and also has a **Persuade** of ■■■, which is one better than Jen's. His **Weakness** is **Ingenue**, but Jen's player doesn't know this. They are strangers, so have no **Obligation** or **Influence** on each other.

The sides and leaders are clear in this case because there are only two people involved. As a condition of victory, Jen wants the fishmonger to sell her the kipper for one groat. The fishmonger merely wants Jen to go away and stop bothering him and his genuine customers.

Both Characters want to act first. They roll a d10 and add their **Wits**. Jen has a **Wits** of ■■■. The fishmonger has a **Wits** of ■■. Jen rolls a 6 and adds 3, scoring 9. The Fishmonger rolls a 9 and adds 2, scoring 11. He acts first.

He attempts to **Affably** persuade Jen to leave. He rolls 3d10 against 6, and scores a 2, 5 and 7. This is two successes against his **Affable** skill of 6. Jen responds with **Falsehoods** (this is her best social skill) and rolls 3d10, scoring 2, 7 and 7. This is one success against her **Falsehoods** of 6. The fishmonger wins his Instigated action, and notes down that he earned two successes. If Jen had won, she would have noted down her successes.

Now Nimble Jen is allowed an Action. She uses **Falsehood** of 6 to attempt to persuade the Fishmonger to sell her a cut-price kipper. She rolls 3d10 and scores a 1, 7 and 9. The 1 counts for two successes. The Fishmonger declares that he is going to be evasive. An evasive counter-action will win a tie, but doesn't score any points. He rolls 3, 4 and 8 using **Affable**, scoring two successes. This is enough to force a draw. Because the Fishmonger was evasive, he wins and no points are scored. Had he been aggressive, both Jen and the Fishmonger would have gained 2 points each.

The round now needs to be resolved.

Both Characters look at their pool of successes. Jen has none and the Fishmonger has just two successes. This isn't quite enough to remove Jen from the conflict (he needs three successes total). Jen's Character has no points to spend. The Gamesmaster decides to carry the Fishmonger's points forward to the next round and reveals this to Jen.

On the next round Jen manages to score two successes and the Fishmonger scores one success. The Fishmonger's one success added to the two from the last round makes three. However, Jen didn't fail her roll this turn, so he can't use a three point removal. The Fishmonger decides to carry forward all his points. Jen spends her two points on a **Hindrance Block**, because she is afraid the Gamesmaster will nominate a 1 point **Hindrance**. These choices are written down in secret.

Both sides reveal their choices. It turns out that Jen's hindrance block was wasted, as no hindrance was triggered.

On the next round Jen scores 3 points (but has nothing to carry over) and the Fishmonger scores two successes. The Fishmonger now has enough successes saved up (five) to remove Jen from the conflict whether or not she failed her test. He opts to do this. Jen, rather hopefully, spends one point on a **Hindrance** effect, but when the nominations are revealed, she finds that she has lost the conflict.

She slinks off unhappily and hungry.