MOUNTED COMBAT

Mounted Combat Against Unmounted Foes

A mounted warrior fighting an unmounted one gets +1 to his ATTACK score while the footman gets -1 to his ATTACK score unless the footman is armed with a great spear, halberd or pole-arm. In the latter case, there is no penalty for the footman, but the mounted warrior still gets the +1 bonus.

Mounted Combat: use of two-handed weapons

It is impossible to retain proper control of a normal horse in combat while wielding a two-handed weapon other than a spear. A well-trained war-horse, however, allows the rider to let go of the reins long enough to engage in combat with an opponent - the rider uses his knees to guide his steed. Due to the rider’s slight loss of control over the movements of the war-horse, a warrior using a two-handed weapon from horseback suffers a penalty of −1 to both ATTACK and DEFENCE, unless he is wielding a great spear; which can be used without penalty.

The great spear is the only two-handed weapon that can be used while riding an ordinary horse (a rouncy, courser, palfrey, etc.), although the warrior would suffer a penalty of −1 to ATTACK and DEFENCE as he would have to try harder to control his horse. No other two-handed weapons can be used while riding an ordinary horse.

Mounted Combat: firing from horseback

Firing from the back of a moving animal is tricky. Most missile weapon require two hands to use, and so all the penalties for using two-handed weapons on horseback apply (exempt from this are thrown weapons and slings). If the character’s horse is absolutely still, then there is no further penalty. However, if the horse is moving, then the character suffers an additional penalty based on the horse’s speed; if it is moving slowly (at a walk) the penalty is −2 to ATTACK, if it is moving fast (at a canter or a gallop) the penalty is −4.

Example

*Sir Richard is on horseback chasing a deer. He fires at it with his bow. He is using a two-handed weapon (−1), the deer is moving fast (−4) and he is riding at a gallop (moving fast; −4): the penalty to his ATTACK score is −9 before taking account of any cover the deer might benefit from!*

Mounted Combat: charge damage bonus

Mounted characters who have spent at least one Combat Round closing with their adversary at a canter or faster (at least 4× horse *Movement Rate*) can be said to be charging. In the next Combat Round the rider brings his horse to a gallop (8× horse *Movement Rate*) and can strike; if he hits, he inflicts a greater amount of damage due to the momentum of his attack. This damage bonus is not cumulative with the damage from a lance charge. The rider can strike at his opponent at any point of the charge; either at the start of the move, or almost at the limit of the steed’s move for that Round.

Note that the charge attack is the only attack where a character can move at higher than standard *Movement Rate* and attack. The attack must be delivered at a gallop, and so this will carry the rider past his foe - to continue the combat he will need to wheel his horse round for another pass, or come to a stop and approach at a normal pace (room to manoeuvre is obviously a factor to bear in mind).

Only war-horses are aggressive enough to charge down an opponent - other horses tend to slow down or veer away from obstacles and the rider loses impetus as he controls his steed to force it closer.

 *Horse Damage Bonus*

 charger +1

 destrier +2

Note that the bonus is gained to damage only, and not to the **Armour Bypass Roll**. Two riders charging each other do not increase the damage bonus - they only gain the bonus due to their own steed.

Example

*Sir Richard, fighting at the Battle of Breylak, sees a group of enemy footmen before him and decides to attack…*

*The enemy are only 40 metres away, and Sir Richard is riding a charger (*Movement Rate *of 8) so he can just bring his mount up to a canter before attacking; covering 32m in one Combat Round, the minimum distance he needs to cover to gain the charge bonus (4× 8 = 32). The enemy footmen hold their ground.*

*At the start of the next Round Sir Richard urges his charger to a gallop and attacks. He has higher* Reflexes *(Combat Initiative) so he strikes first; he gains +1 to ATTACK for being on horseback against footmen and he hits easily, inflicting 5 points of damage (4 points for his sword, +1 for his charge); the footman dies.*

*The surviving footmen now strike back, but they are armed with shortswords and so have −1 to their ATTACK; Sir Richard fends off their attacks and ends the Round unharmed.*

*There are enough footmen to stop Sir Richard’s progress and so he begins the next Combat Round without the benefit of charging… Had he been able to, his charge would have carried him beyond fighting range, and he would have had to consider how best to turn around to carry on the fight.*

In the above example, Sir Richard’s horse was forced to stop due to the number of opponents. A charge normally carries the mounted warrior past his opponent, to the limit of the steed’s *Movement Rate*; this happens unless there is a significant obstacle preventing the move. If a knight charges at a group of men, there is a chance that his horse will be brought to a stop by the press of bodies. If there are two rows of opponents or less, the knight will be able to force his way through; if the knight charges three or more rows of opponents then his horse will be stopped (and he will find himself in the thick of the melee).

As stated in Basic Combat, a character who runs must either run, move normally or do nothing in the following Round: this also applies to steeds moving at a gallop. Thus, if the knight’s charger is brought to a stop, it is effectively being forced to ‘do nothing’ for the next Round. However, the knight (who wasn’t running) can still attack normally.

Non-Combat-Trained Horses

Non-combat-trained horses will often panic in a fight so the rider must concentrate on controlling his steed as well as fighting an opponent. A character mounted on such a steed gets no charge damage bonus, cannot make a lance charge, nor does he get the mounted vs. foot modifier; instead he fights at −1 to ATTACK and DEFENCE. It is absolutely impossible to fight effectively with a two-handed weapon of any sort while riding a non-combat-trained horse.

If the horse is injured, it will try to break free. The rider must roll *Horsemanship* or *Reflexes* (whichever is higher) or less on d20 to avoid being thrown and must spend the Round bringing his horse under control. While he is attempting to control his horse, a character cannot attack, and fights with only half DEFENCE (fractions rounded up). A Critical Success on *Horsemanship* (not *Reflexes*) means the rider can use his full DEFENCE against his foe.

Jousting

In a joust, two warriors with lances charge one another on horseback, each attempting to knock the other from his saddle. If both are still in the saddle after three charges (or if both of them fall together), they dismount and continue the fight with sword and shield. This goes on until one of them falls or surrenders.

The jousting rules are slightly different from the normal DRAGON WARRIORS combat. As the combatants meet, both **Hit Rolls** are made simultaneously. There is a chance that a successful blow will glance off the opponent’s shield; this is indicated by a roll of 1 or 2 on d6. Otherwise, a character who is hit must roll under his *Strength* + Rank + *Reflexes* to stay in the saddle. This roll is made on 3d20 if he is riding a war-horse (charger or destrier) and on 4d20 if it is a normal horse (rouncy, etc.).

Jousting lances break very easily. If the **Hit Roll** was an odd number between 3 and 19 or if an unmodified 20 is rolled, the lance breaks (the lance never breaks on a Critical Hit - a **Hit Roll** of 1). If the **Hit Roll** was an unmodified 20, this indicates that the jouster did something terribly wrong, like striking his foe’s horse (roll damage), falling without being struck, or having the saddle girths break, as well as uselessly breaking his lance.

The jousting lances are blunted to avoid serious injury, but a successful hit well still inflict damage as though from a lance charge (see the section on Lance Combat). This varies depending on the steed, but a d4 is used instead of a d6 to resolve damage; i.e. a rouncy does 2d4 + 3 *Health Points* damage, a charger does 3d4 + 1 *Health Points* damage. Armour will give some protection by absorbing its AF from the damage roll. A lance-propelled fall from the saddle of a charging horse can also be quite painful. Usually the only damage taken will be 1d6 − 2 *HP* (assuming some form of armour is worn) but there is a 15% chance of a more serious injury. If this is indicated, roll on the table below:

Joust Fall Damage

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| --- | --- |
| *d100 Roll* | *Nature of Injury* |
| 01 - 20 | Sprained / dislocated shoulder: regardless of armour, character takes a 1d4 *HP* wound; he loses 2 from ATTACK and inflicts 1 less point of damage than usual when striking until injury heals. |
| 21 - 45 | Sprained / dislocated arm: character takes 1d3 *HP* wound and is at −2 off both ATTACK and DEFENCE until healed. |
| 46 - 75 | Sprained / dislocated leg: character takes 1d3 *HP* wound; until healed, he loses 1 from both ATTACK and DEFENCE, halves his EVASION and *Movement Rate* (fractions rounded up), and cannot run. |
| 76 - 85 | Broken arm: character takes a 1d4 *HP* wound; he loses 2 from both ATTACK and DEFENCE and cannot use two-handed weapons (including bows) until the fracture heals. |
| 86 - 97 | Broken leg: the character takes a 1d4 *HP* wound; other effects are as for a sprained leg, above. |
| 98 - 100 | Broken neck: character dies unless a spell of *Greater Healing* is cast upon him within one minute, and even then he cannot fight for the next 1 - 3 days; *Miracle Cure* is also needed 20% of the time to prevent paralysis. |

Non-fractures are split evenly between sprains and dislocations. In all cases, unless magic is employed, the healing times are the same: 1 - 10 days for a sprain, 1 - 12 weeks for a dislocation, 4 - 6 weeks for a fracture. The healing times can be reduced by successful use of the skill *Chirurgery*. Dislocations involve torn ligaments and may recur unless *Miracle Cure* or *Purification* is used to effect a permanent cure. The chance of this is 2% each month - and the GamesMaster will also use his own judgement at other times (e.g.; a dislocated knee may well be put out again in a fall).

Lance in Combat

Using a lance in a battle is very different from a joust - the opponents will not be contestants aiming at each other’s shields to avoid serious injury, but rather will be warriors intent on killing each other.

To be fully effective, a lance must be used when charging, otherwise it is the same as a great spear (2d4, 4). The horse must spend one Combat Round picking up speed before combat can be resolved (the absolute minimum distance it must move is equal to 4× its *Movement Rate*). **Hit Rolls** are only simultaneous if the lance is used against another knight charging the attacker with another lance, otherwise the lance always attacks first, gaining the initiative on the opponent, regardless of the wielder’s *Reflexes*. In addition, the lance gives +1 to ATTACK versus weapons other than a lance or pole-arm; this bonus is cumulative with the bonus for mounted attacks against footmen.

Unlike a joust, the opponent’s shield only protects on a roll of 1 on d4. If successfully parried, the shield does not deflect all the damage, but rather adds 6 to the defender’s Armour Factor. If the damage done by the lance is less than the Armour Factor plus the 6 points of shield protection, the shield can be said to have blocked the lance completely.

If hit, a character (whether or not the shield protects the character) must roll under his *Strength* + Rank + *Reflexes* (as in a joust) to stay in the saddle or to avoid being bowled over if on foot. The roll is made on 3d20 if he is riding a war-horse, and on 4d20 if on a normal horse or if he is on foot.

Lance strikes are done while passing the target, who may strike back if he survived and was not pushed over by a successful blow. Unless unhorsed, the lancer must further continue in a straight line for at least one full Combat Round.

Combat lances are not blunted and do considerably more damage on impact; a successful hit well inflict the full damage listed for the steed minus the target’s Armour Factor. If a Critical Hit is made for the lance attack, then the lance ignores the target’s Armour Factor; only a successful shield parry can reduce the damage (by 6 points).

Lances break more easily than other weapons, but combat lances are thicker and stronger than lances used in jousts; if the **Hit Roll** is an unmodified 5, 10, or 15, then the lance breaks after doing damage. Also, an unmodified roll of 20 indicates the weapon broke before doing damage.

Standard lance charge damage due to the breed of horse are:

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| --- | --- |
| Rouncy | 2d6 + 3 |
| Charger | 3d6 + 1 |
| Algandarve Charger | 3d6 + 2 |
| Zhenir Charger | 3d6 + 1 |
| Destrier | 3d6 + 3 |
| Kurlish Destrier | 4d6 |

Note: only combat-trained horses may make lance charges.