

MORE HOUSE RULES – COMBAT

By Bill Gant, August 2002

❑ ARMOUR

Compared with 1st edition HårnMaster, most of the armour types in the 2nd edition are significantly heavier – up to twice as heavy. A couple of types are even twice the price. And yet, aside from one or two exceptions, the Armour Protective Values have generally fallen. What happened?

I suspect that the main reason for the changes was simplicity. Although the real weight of medieval armour is often a topic of debate among members of re-enactment societies, I do feel that the “light” armour types in 2nd edition HårnMaster are just a bit *too* heavy.

The following table shows the weights, prices and APVs of the main armour types, tweaked to meet a point that (in my opinion) reasonably satisfies the criteria of simplicity, realism and game balance:

Material	Weight	Price	B	E	P	F
Cloth	8	150	½	1	½	1
Quilt	25	400	5	2	1	3
Leather	18	300	1	3	2	3
Kurbul	22	500	4	4	3	3
Ring	40	700	3	7	3	5
Mail	50	1500	2	8	6	3
Scale	65	1000	5	8	5	6
Plate	70	2000	6	9	7	4

Superior/Inferior Armour: For each +1 in AQ, the price of the armour is doubled. For each –1 in AQ, the price is reduced by a quarter. Hence, Mail +2 would have a base price of 6000d, while Mail –1 would have a base price of 1125d. No aspect can be raised above double its average (+0) quality, nor reduced below 0.

❑ *Optional – Overlapping Armour:* Wearing multiple layers of armour should not result in a simple linear increase in protective values in HårnMaster. If doubling a weapon’s size (e.g. Broadsword to Greatsword, or Club to Maul) does not double its base Impact, then doubling the thickness of a material (by overlapping) should not double its protective value either. Particularly for Cloth, Quilt, Leather, Scale and Plate, APVs are generally proportionate to the square root of the material’s base weight. Therefore, the protective values of layered armour should not be cumulative, but instead determined by taking the square root of the sum of the squares of the APVs of the layers (rounding up) – this is the *Mogensen Method of Armour Calculation* (see <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Klaudius/Harn3.htm>):

$$\text{Overlapping Armour APV} = \sqrt{((\text{APV of Layer 1})^2 + (\text{APV of Layer 2})^2 + (\text{APV of Layer 3})^2 \dots)}$$

For example, a knight wears a Quilt arming cap, Mail cowl and Plate half helm. The Edge APV of the layered armour is $\sqrt{(2^2+8^2+9^2)} = 13$, instead of $(2+8+9) = 19$.

❑ DODGE

Of all the defence options available to a character who is engaged in combat (i.e. Block, Dodge, Counterstrike, and Grapple), the *Dodge* is the most “defensive”. That is, a Dodge generally attempts to move the character *away* from his or her opponent, whereas Block, Counterstrike and Grapple actions tend to bring the character *closer* to the opponent. Therefore, Dodging should have an adverse effect on any subsequent *attacks* made by the character.

If a character Dodges, his or her *next Attack* roll (whether Melee or Missile Attack, Counterstrike or Grapple) in the following Turn must be made at a penalty of **EML -20**. However, if he or she achieves a DTA while Dodging, there is no penalty.

Note that there are no penalties if the Dodging character makes no attacks and instead continues to Block or Dodge.

❑ FUMBLE & STUMBLE ROLLS CAUSED BY INJURY

Any injury to a limb can cause a Fumble or Stumble Roll. The number of dice used depends on the level of injury. An **M1** Minor wound will cause a **1d6** Fumble/Stumble Roll, an **S2** Serious wound will cause a **2d6** roll and an **S3** Serious wound will cause a **3d6** roll. Grievous wounds render the limb unusable and any Fumble/Stumble Roll automatically fails. Fumble/Stumble Rolls are always affected by Physical Penalty.

❑ INJURY TABLES & IMPACT ASPECT

Particularly at low levels of impact, a sharp weapon is more lethal than a Blunt one. So, instead of using the default Effective Impact values for each of the 5 columns of the Injury Table, use the values below:

Impact Aspect	EFFECTIVE IMPACT				
	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
BLUNT	1+	7+	11+	15+	19+
EDGE	1+	5+	9+	13+	17+
POINT	1+	5+	11+	16+	21+
FIRE	1+	6+	11+	16+	21+

For example, a Club striking for 9b Effective Impact to the Thorax will inflict an S2 wound (second column of the Injury Table), whereas a Broadsword striking for 9e Effective Impact to the same location will inflict an S3 wound (third column of the Injury Table).

❑ INJURY TABLES & TARGET SIZE

The Injury Table assumes the target is human-sized; a given level of Effective Impact should cause more injury to a smaller target, and less to a larger one. To simulate this, modify the *Effective Impact* by the value listed below for the relevant Size Class (but do not reduce Effective Impact to less than 1):

SIZE CLASS	WEIGHT	EXAMPLES	IMPACT
Tiny	Less than 3 lbs.	Ferrets, Rats	+3
Very Small	3 lbs. or more	Chicken, Foxes, Geese	+2
Small	15 lbs. or more	Badgers, Gargu-Arak, Goats, Sheepdogs	+1
MEDIUM	75 lbs. or more	Most Gargun, Humans, Khuzdul, Sindarin	+0
Large	375 lbs. or more	Brown Bears, Cattle, Horses	-1
Very Large	1 ton or more	Hru, Oxen	-2
Monstrous	5 tons or more	Elephants	-3

For example, a hunter shoots an arrow into a large brown bear (a 10-footer!). The Effective Impact is 11p, but because of the bear's Large Size, it is adjusted down to 10p.

- ❑ *Optional:* Physical characteristics can affect the Size Class in certain locations. For example, a riding horse is a Large target, but its relatively thin legs would be treated as Medium.

❑ MELEE COMBAT TABLES

The following Melee Combat Tables are intended to replace the published one. It incorporates a few results from 1st edition HâmMaster that I happen to prefer over 2nd edition.

		BLOCK				COUNTERSTRIKE				DODGE				IGNORE		
DEF ►		CF	MF	MS	CS	CF	MF	MS	CS	CF	MF	MS	CS	No Roll	◀ DEF	
ATTACKER	CF	BF	AF	DTA	DTA	BF	AF	D*2	D*3	BS	AS	DTA	DTA	DTA	CF	ATTACKER
	MF	DF	Block	●	DTA	DF	●	D*1	D*2	DS	●	●	DTA	A*1	MF	
	MS	A*2	A*1	Block	●	A*3	A*2	B*1	D*1	A*2	A*1	●	●	A*3	MS	
	CS	A*3	A*2	A*1	Block	A*4	A*3	A*2	B*2	A*3	A*2	A*1	●	A*4	CS	

❑ REACTION ROLL

If a character is faced with a situation so sudden and surprising that he or she may be unable to react quickly enough, a 1d100 **Reaction Roll** must be made against his or her effective Initiative. Sometimes, an Awareness EML roll is required before the Reaction Roll can even be made. Reaction Rolls are affected by Physical Penalty. See below for an interpretation of the levels of success:

CS	Character recovers immediately and may defend at full EML.
MS	Character is caught off-guard but may defend at <i>half</i> EML this Turn.
MF	Character is surprised and automatically selects <i>Ignore</i> as a defence this Turn.
CF	Character is completely surprised: treat as <i>MF</i> but an additional Reaction Roll is required in the next Turn, if applicable.

Situations causing Reaction Rolls include: the character being ambushed; a friend unexpectedly attacking the character; a terrifying monster suddenly appearing before the character; etc.

REACTION ROLL FROM A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE

During melee combat, a Tactical Advantage represents a moment where a character sees an opportunity and quickly attempts to exploit it. Meanwhile, the target realises the opening that has been created and quickly seeks to close it. The end result is a brief flurry of activity for both opponents.

Under normal combat situations, the Attacker and Defender have full control over their action options. During a Tactical Advantage, however, this control is limited – the characters can still choose any action option (i.e. *Attack* for the Attacker, *Block*, *Counterstrike*, or *Dodge* for the Defender), but the manner in which these options are executed is determined by the **Reaction Roll**:

ATTACK

CS	Attacker may Attack with any weapon currently available.
MS	Attacker must Attack with his or her <i>primary</i> weapon (e.g. Sword).
MF	Attacker must Attack with his or her <i>secondary</i> weapon (e.g. Shield, Knee) or Pass.
CF	Attacker must Pass and forfeit the Turn.

BLOCK

CS	Defender may Block with any weapon currently available.
MS	Defender must Block with his or her <i>secondary</i> weapon (e.g. Shield, Forearm). If the Defender is wielding a two-handed weapon, treat it as the <i>secondary</i> weapon for this purpose.
MF	Defender must Block with his or her <i>primary</i> weapon (e.g. Sword). If the Defender is wielding a two-handed weapon, a different weapon (e.g. Forearm) must be selected to Block.
CF	Defender must Ignore.

COUNTERSTRIKE

CS	Defender may Counterstrike with any weapon currently available.
MS	Defender must Counterstrike with his or her <i>primary</i> weapon (e.g. Sword).
MF	Defender must Counterstrike with his or her <i>secondary</i> weapon (e.g. Shield).
CF	Defender must Ignore.

DODGE

CS	Defender may Dodge normally.
MS	Defender must Dodge into an adjacent open hex (if available) or Dodge at <i>half</i> EML.
MF	Defender must Dodge into an adjacent open hex at <i>half</i> EML (if available) or Ignore.
CF	Defender must Ignore.

❑ S2 BLUNT INJURY: FRACTURE OR SERIOUS BRUISE?

When a Blunt strike is inflicted and a Serious injury (S2 or S3) sustained, it is assumed that the location struck has suffered a **Fracture**. For S2 wounds, however, a Fracture would be too severe except to relatively vulnerable locations such as the nose and fingers.

Therefore, for most locations, treat an S2 Blunt injury as a **Serious Bruise**. The Injury Level remains unchanged but the Treatment will be as for a Bruise, except with only a +20 bonus to Physician EML instead of +30.

❑ SHOCK ROLLS

If a Shock Roll fails by only **1-3 points**, the character does not fall unconscious, but is instead temporarily **Stunned** from the pain. Any skill, psionic talent or spell currently engaged by the character fails critically, and his/her action in the next Turn is automatically *Ignore*. A Stun lasts for just one Turn, after which the character fully recovers.

❑ STRIKE RECOVERY

If the same weapon is used in quick succession (e.g. Melee Attack during a turn, followed by another Attack from a Tactical Advantage, followed by a Counterstrike in the opponent's turn, etc), the WAC for each subsequent strike is effectively the lower of its WAC and WDC. The greater the difference between a weapon's WAC and WDC, the more difficult it is for the wielder to recover from a strike to attack again.

For example, Curnach strikes at an opponent with his Battlesword (A/D 5/2). His swing causes the opponent to fumble and drop his own weapon, so Curnach is awarded a Tactical Advantage. He swings again, but this time the Battlesword's Attack Class is treated as 2 instead of 5, effectively penalising Curnach's attack by EML -15.

At GM discretion, alternating between different parts of a weapon (e.g. using either end of a Staff) may allow the weapon to be wielded at its full WAC in subsequent strikes.

❑ WEAPON COMPARISON

In the basic rules, a weapon's Attack ML (AML) and Defence ML (DML) are determined by adding 5 times the weapon's WAC and WDC values respectively. While this simplifies the combat system, it does not take into account the opponent's weapon.

As an alternative, instead of automatically including WAC and WDC in a skill, compare the attacker's WAC against the defender's WDC as per the Weapon Comparison Table. In this way, only one (or neither) opponent will receive a weapon bonus.

Dodge: Dodge has WDC 3 for the purpose of Weapon Comparison.

Shields: Shields generally provide a bonus against any melee weapon. Replace their WDCs with the appropriate letter: **B** = Buckler; **R/H** = Roundshield/Heater (Knight) Shield; **K** = Kite Shield; **T** = Tower Shield.

WEAPON COMPARISON TABLE

		DEFENDING WEAPON CLASS						SHIELD CLASS				
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	B	R/H	K	T
ATTACKING WEAPON CLASS	0	●	D05	D10	D15	D20	D25	D30	D15	D10	D05	●
	1	A05	●	D05	D10	D15	D20	D25	D20	D15	D10	D05
	2	A10	A05	●	D05	D10	D15	D20	D15	D20	D15	D10
	3	A15	A10	A05	●	D05	D10	D15	D10	D15	D20	D15
	4	A20	A15	A10	A05	●	D05	D10	D05	D10	D15	D20
	5	A25	A20	A15	A10	A05	●	D05	●	D05	D10	D15
	6	A30	A25	A20	A15	A10	A05	●	A05	●	D05	D10

Cross-index Attacking and Defending Weapon Classes.
A: Attacker Bonus D: Defender Bonus

Mounted Modifier: Attack Class +1 (Walk/Trot only), Defence Class -1 (except Shields).

Attack/Defence Class 6: Only achieved by mounted warriors Attacking/Counterstriking with a Class 5 weapon. A Defending Weapon Class above 3 only applies to weapons being used to Counterstrike.

❑ WEAPON DAMAGE CHECKS

Weapon Damage Checks occur when a *Block* is generated on the combat matrices. They may also be required, at GM discretion, when a weapon strikes a hard object such as a stone wall or steel armour.

Normally, the weapon with the lowest Weapon Quality (WQ) must check for damage first. However, Blocking *Shields* must *always* check for damage **first**, regardless of whether its WQ is higher than that of the attacking weapon. This is because most shields are made of wood, only about an inch thick, often faced with a thin (up to 1/8 inch) layer of metal or leather. They are designed for absorbing and deflecting blows, not for breaking opposing weapons. Most shields are not expected to survive a lengthy battle.

- ❑ *Optional*: If a Weapon Damage Check fails by only **1-3 points**, reduce WQ by **1** point.
- ❑ *Optional*: When making a Damage Check for a weapon, increase the 3d6 roll by the index (one tenth, rounded down) of the opposing weapon's base **Blunt** or **Edge** Impact value (whichever is higher) plus 2d6.

For example, a Battleaxe (9e) is Blocked by a Roundshield (WQ13) during battle. The Battleaxe's impact is 16 (base of 9 plus a roll of 7 on 2d6), the index of which is 1. Therefore, the Roundshield's Weapon Damage Check is made using 3d6+1. If the Roundshield succeeds, its impact is then generated to determine whether a penalty is applied to the Battleaxe's Weapon Damage Check.