HÂRNMASTER GOLD HOUSE RULES - COMBAT

By Bill Gant, October 2002

❑ AIMED MELEE ATTACKS

In melee combat (only) a combatant may aim for a specific body location such as a hand or eye. However, the more careful the aim, the less chance the Attacker has of striking hard. To perform an aimed attack, the character must first state the general Aiming Zone targeted: **Head** (EML -10) if aiming for the Sk Fa Nk Sh; **Arms** (EML -15) if aiming for the Ua El Fo Ha; **Body** (EML +0) if aiming for the Wg Tx Ab Hp; or **Legs** (EML -10) if aiming for the Gr Ta Th Kn Cf Ft. The character then subtracts from Attack EML the appropriate Aiming Zone penalty, as well as any Encumbrance, Physical and Special Penalties. (*Note:* If this brings the EML to less than **05**, then an easier location must be targeted.)

Furthermore, the character may subtract **10** points from EML to aim for the right or left location (e.g. right elbow), giving a 95% (instead of 50%) chance of striking the desired side. This assumes an even chance of normally hitting either. The note above still applies.

From the remaining Attack EML, the character may remove as many points (called **Aiming Adjustment Points**, or AAPs) as he or she wishes, but EML may *not* be reduced to less than **05**. He or she must declare the exact location targeted (e.g. groin). Assuming a hit, all of the AAPs are used to adjust the Melee Strike Location roll so as to bring it as close as possible to the targeted location (this also applies to sub-tables, as for the Face). Less than the full AAPs may only be applied if less is needed to hit the targeted location.

> *Example 1:* During a tavern brawl, Nayraun swings his fist at Bralak's jaw. Nayraun's Unarmed EML is 65, including the -10 penalty for aiming at the Head Zone. Nayraun's player decides to put 20 points into aiming for Bralak's jaw, therefore EML drops to 45. Nayraun manages to achieve an A★1 strike; a roll is made on the Melee Strike Location table. Since the jaw is a subset of the face location, the Melee Strike Location roll is made with a 20-point modifier to bring the roll as close as possible to the face (17-27 on 1d100). The player rolls 54 (shoulder), so 20 points are subtracted from the roll - Nayraun punches Bralak's neck (34).

> *Example 2:* Let's say that Nayraun's Melee Strike Location roll was actually 34 (neck). The 20-point modifier moves the roll into the 17-27 (face) range, so Nayraun's fist connects with Bralak's face. Another roll is made, this time on the face sub-table, aiming for the jaw (01-14). The player rolls 31 (cheek), but the 20 AAP modifier reduces this to within the jaw range, so Nayraun punches Bralak's jaw as intended.

❑ ANGRY STRIKES

A combatant may sacrifice accuracy to inflict greater Impact during melee combat - this is called an *Angry Strike*, because it is a technique often employed by enraged fighters.

To make an Angry Strike, the Attacker must reduce his or her Melee Attack EML in units of ten (e.g. EML -20, -30, etc). EML may not be reduced to less than 05. For every 10 points of EML sacrificed, increase the Impact of a successful strike by +1. If the attack misses or is blocked, the Impact bonus is lost.

> *Example:* Harunel is engaged in hand-to-hand combat against a heavily armoured opponent. Seeking to increase Harunel's chances of penetrating the adversary's armour, Harunel's player decides to make an Angry Strike and sacrifice 30 points from EML. Assuming a successful Melee Strike occurs, Harunel's Impact is increased by +3.

Note that an Angry Strike can also be made when *Counterstriking*.

Angry Strikes can be made involuntarily when the Attacker is **enraged** - the GM may assess an automatic penalty of EML -10 or -20 and increase Impact accordingly.

❑ *Maximum Impact Bonus:* The maximum Impact bonus from an Angry Strike is equal to the Attacker's Skill Index (SI) for the weapon used.

❏ BLUNT TRAUMA INJURIES

Any non-penetrating (i.e. 1 to 4 Effective Impact to a clothed or armoured location) *Edge*, *Bite*, *Claw* or *Point* strike is recalculated using Blunt aspect values for the weapon and armour. The non-penetrating strike may then be converted into a blunt trauma injury. For this reason, all melee weapons in HârnMaster Gold are listed with at least a base Impact value of 0 for Blunt aspect.

An arrow or crossbow bolt has a Blunt aspect of **0** for this purpose.

> *Example:* During battle, an archer aims his 100-lb longbow at an enemy knight at a range of 100 paces and releases his arrow. The cloth yard shaft flies true and strikes the knight in the thigh for (11 on 2d6, plus 7 Base Impact =) 18 Point Impact. The knight is well-armoured, however - his thigh is protected by a mail hauberk, quilt gambeson, mail leggings and leather pants (P14 protection). The arrow's Effective Impact is (18-14=) 4p, which is insufficient to result in a penetrating wound. The Impact is therefore recalculated using the arrow's Blunt aspect and the knight's armour's Blunt APV (B10 in the thighs), so the Effective Impact becomes (11-10=) 1b, a 1d10 IPs bruise.

❏ *Minimum Injury:* If the Effective Impact from an Edge, Bite, Claw or Point strike is between 1 and 4, the target suffers at the very least a *bruise* of **one (1) Injury Point**, even if the recalculated Blunt Impact fails to cause injury.

❏ BRUTE FORCE & IGNORANCE (BF&I)

[ADAPTED FROM HÂRNMASTER 1ST EDITION]

PCs seem to consider brute force and ignorance to be the ideal solution to a wide variety of problems. Sometimes they are right. The application of sufficient force is indeed capable of solving certain kinds of problem. Things break, don't they? A common application of BF&I is to break down doors which have not yielded to more gentle persuasion. After twenty minutes of unsuccessful lockpicking, the most accomplished master thief has been heard to remark, "smash the *#*% sucker in…"

Inanimate objects may be attacked with weapons in an attempt to hack or bludgeon them into submission. An attack against a door can be made in the same manner as an attack against a person. Hopefully, the door will select an **Ignore** defence. It will also yield an automatic *Tactical Advantage*; in other words, the Attacker may strike twice per ten second Turn; two Attackers might be able to strike four times. **CF** will cause a Fumble Roll and a Damage Check for the attacking weapon.

An object attacked in this way will be (secretly) assessed a **Damage Factor** (DF) by the GM. When the cumulative damage inflicted exceeds DF the object is effectively destroyed. Doors generally have enough mass/inertia to have what amounts to Armour Protection; only damage in excess of its AP, rated for Edge and Blunt, is counted against the total. The following table is an example for doors; other objects can be handled at GM discretion.

DOOR	Blunt	Edge	DF
Plain wood	15	13	2d6*
Iron bound	16	16	3d6*

* per inch of thickness

BF&I generally causes a lot of noise and this will undoubtedly attract the attention of any animal or person within earshot. For as long as the noise continues, and probably for a few minutes thereafter, the chance of a random encounter should be (at least) doubled.

❏ COUNTERSTRIKING

A Counterstrike is simply where the Defender attempts to strike the Attacker first. Therefore, use the *Attack Class*, not the Defence Class, of the Counterstriking weapon when determining weapon modifiers.

❑ CUTTING VS. CHOPPING WEAPONS

Most *Edged* weapons used in Hârn are *Chopping* weapons - that is, they rely on a heavy, cleaving action to hack or sever a target location. The blades of Chopping weapons do not need to be especially sharp, as the effectiveness of the chop is dominated by the sheer weight of force behind the blow.

However, some Edged weapons are *Cutting* weapons. These weapons are drawn across a target location to slice or slash it. Cutting blades are usually curved, relatively light and must be kept sharp to maintain effectiveness. Examples of Cutting weapons are: any Knife; Longknife; Whip.

Cutting weapons tend to be less effective against thick or heavy armour. Therefore, use the **Tear** aspect of a target's armour when determining the Effective Impact from such weapons.

❑ DARKNESS MODIFIERS

Darkness affects all combat skills. The Special Penalty for fighting in the dark depends on the level of light available. The table below lists the Darkness Special Penalties when outdoors at night:

SKY	MOON		
	FULL MOON	HALF MOON	NEW MOON
CLEAR	EML -10	EML -20	EML -40
CLOUDY	EML -20	EML -30	EML -50
OVERCAST	EML -40	EML -50	EML -70

The *Full Moon* (Yaelah) penalty applies between the 13th and 17th day of a month. The *Half Moon* penalty applies between the 3rd and 12th of the month as well as between the 18th and 27th. The *New Moon* (Yaelmor) penalty applies between the 1st and 2nd of the month and also between the 28th and 30th.

❑ *Thrusting Weapons:* It is generally more difficult to hit an opponent with a *thrusting* weapon (e.g. Spear) in darkness than with a *swung* weapon (e.g. Mace). The Attack Class of any thrusting weapon used in combat in darkness is effectively *halved*.

❑ DISENGAGING FROM COMBAT

A Disengage action can only be attempted if the character is able to leave *all* opponents' Engagement Zones in a *single* hex move. If this is possible, he or she may attempt to Disengage during his or her Turn by making a roll against Initiative EML; each opponent who is engaged with the character may also test Initiative EML (if an opponent does not wish to make a roll, treat the result as MF).

A character achieving an **equal or higher** success level may move one hex out of all opponents' Engagement Zones, then up to ½ Mobility EML feet. This move terminates if another enemy Engagement Zone is entered, at which point the Turn ends.

A character achieving a **lower** success level may still move one hex out of all opponents' Engagement Zones, but must then stop and the Turn ends. If a CF was rolled, a Stumble Roll is also required.

❑ DODGING

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.

❏ ENCUMBRANCE & FATIGUE

The official rules determine a character's Fatigue Rate (FR) by dividing his or her Load (lbs.) by Endurance. However, the Condition of the character is probably a better method of calculation. As an alternative, use the following method to determine the Encumbrance (ENC):

$$\text{ENC} = (\text{Load} \times 20) / \text{Condition ML}$$

Reduce all skills affected by Physical Penalty by ENC.

For every minute of strenuous activity (e.g. combat), the character accumulates a number of Fatigue Points (FPs) equal to Fatigue Rate (FR).

$$\text{FR} = \text{ENC} / 10$$

The minimum FR is 1. FPs are recovered at a rate equal to Condition SI for every 2 minutes of rest.

❏ FEINT ATTACKS

A *Feint* is where an Attacker attempts to deceive his or her adversary by pretending to aim at one location when another is the real object of the melee attack.

To perform a Feint, the Attacker reduces his or her Melee or Grapple Attack EML by any number of points (e.g. EML -10, -20), but may not reduce EML to less than 05. The Defender must make a defensive action (e.g. Block, Counterstrike, etc) at a penalty equal to *half* the reduction.

> *Example:* While duelling against, Oldo the Swordmaster performs a Feint, sacrificing 20 points from his weapon EML and thereby forcing his opponent to defend at EML -10.

This action works best when the Attacker is significantly more skilful than the Defender, as it increases the likelihood of the Defender failing his or her Defence EML roll.

Note that flexible weapons such as flails, nets or whips *cannot* be used to make Feint attacks.

❏ *Feinting Counterstrikes:* A Defender is permitted to perform a Feint action when Counterstriking or attempting to Grapple as a defence. If the Attacker is making a Feint attack as well, the mutual EML penalties are cumulative.

❏ IMPACT & TARGET SIZE

The Injury Table on the HârnMaster Combat Tables assumes the target is approximately human-sized. However, a given level of Effective Impact should cause greater injury to a significantly smaller target, and less injury to a considerably larger one.

To simulate this, multiply the *Effective Impact* by the modifier listed below for the relevant Size Class:

SIZE CLASS	WEIGHT	EXAMPLES	IMPACT MODIFIER
Tiny	Less than 3 lbs.	Ferrets, Rats	×1.3
Very Small	3 lbs. or more	Chicken, Foxes, Geese	×1.2
Small	15 lbs. or more	Badgers, Gargú-Arák, Goats, Sheepdogs	×1.1
MEDIUM	75 lbs. or more	Most Gârgún, Humans, Khúzdul, Sindârin	×1.0
Large	375 lbs. or more	Brown Bears, Cattle, Horses	×0.9
Very Large	1 ton or more	Hrú, Oxen	×0.8
Monstrous	5 tons or more	Elephants	×0.7

> *Example:* A hunter shoots an arrow into a large brown bear (a 10-footer!). The Effective Point Impact is 11, but because of the bear's great size, it is adjusted down to 10.

❏ *One Creature, Many Size Classes:* The target's physical characteristics can affect the Size Class in certain locations. For example, a typical riding horse would generally be treated as a Large creature, but its relatively thin legs would be treated as one Size Class lower (i.e. Medium).

❑ INITIATIVE

Initiative determines the order in which characters take turns in combat – characters with higher INI move sooner. The official rules do not allow for randomness, however; the character with the highest INI *always* moves first. To vary the Turn sequence in a Round, add 1d100 to INI – the Turn sequence will be from the character with the highest total to the lowest.

❑ *Weapon Factor:* Add the primary Weapon SI and/or Attack Class to INI.

❑ *Quick Method:* Instead of INI + 1d100, use Initiative SI + 1d10 to determine the Turn sequence.

❑ INJURY TABLE & SHOCK / FUMBLE / STUMBLE ROLLS

One of the most frequent complaints from players regarding HârnMaster Gold's Injury Tables is that characters fail Shock, Fumble and Stumble rolls too easily against minor wounds. In the first edition, it was almost impossible for a minor wound to cause a previously uninjured character to fail these rolls.

An easy solution is to add a bonus to the Shock (E), Fumble (F) or Stumble (S) Roll, depending on the amount of injury sustained:

INJURY POINTS	E/F/S BONUS
1 - 5	+30
6 - 10	+15

There is no bonus if the wound inflicts 11+ Injury Points. Note that Shock, Fumble and Stumble Rolls are subject to Physical Penalty, so the bonus would be partially negated by the Injury Points suffered.

❑ *Grievous Wound Penalty:* E/F/S Rolls are more likely to fail against grievous injuries. If the wound inflicts 21+ Injury Points, a -15 penalty applies to the E/F/S Roll. If it inflicts 26+ IPs, a -30 penalty applies.

❑ *Using Skills for E/F/S Rolls:* Make *Shock Rolls* against **Condition** EML, *Fumble Rolls* against the appropriate **Weapon** EML, and *Stumble Rolls* against **Dodge** EML.

❑ LIMB INJURIES

Any 16+ Injury Points wound to a shoulder/arm/hand or hip/leg/foot, renders the entire limb unusable. Once the IPs have healed below 16, the limb may again be used. If the unusable limb is an arm, any items held by it are dropped; if the unusable limb is a leg, the character falls prone.

Note: The GM may expand the concept of unusability to include eyes and other discretionary body parts.

❑ MOUNTED COMBAT

Have you noticed with the Mounted Attacking Foot combat matrices, that the steed is far more likely than the rider to strike an opponent? In fact, the rider can only *ever* strike the opponent on a CS attack vs. MF defence, or a MS attack vs. CF (or Ignore) defence. It hardly seems necessary for a mounted character to bother wielding a weapon against opponents on foot.

The Mounted Attacking Foot combat matrices only make sense if the mounted attacker *enters* the hex of an opponent on foot. If the mounted rider instead attacks an opponent in an *adjacent* hex, a normal weapon attack should be made on the Melee Attack Matrix, but observing the following rules:

- Attack EML is the *average* of Team Initiative and the appropriate Weapon ML, adjusted by the Weapon Comparison Modifier, Physical Penalty, Hand Mode penalty, Special Penalty, etc.
- The rider gains a +1 bonus to Weapon Attack Class, but also suffers a -1 penalty to Weapon Defence Class (except Shields). The GM may apply Aiming Zone modifiers against opponents afoot.
- Any AF/AS result is treated as AU (Attacker Unhorsing Roll).

❏ NON-LETHAL MELEE ATTACKS

There are a number of non-lethal Melee Attack options available, one of which is already covered in the HârnMaster Gold rules: *Press* (see GlossDex 32). Three other options of note are *Disarm*, *Sweep* and *Tackle*. These attacks do not directly harm the opponent but seek to put him or her at a disadvantage.

DISARM

An attempt to disarm an opponent by twisting, bashing or jerking the weapon from the opponent's grasp. A Melee Attack is made against the opponent's weapon (**EML -15** Aiming Zone modifier).

If the Melee Attack results in an **A★** strike, the Defender must make a **Fumble Roll** to retain his or her weapon. The Defender has a default bonus of **+30** to the Fumble Target Level, less **10** points per A★ strike (e.g. if the strike was A★2, modify the roll by -20). No injury is inflicted from the A★ strike.

> *Example:* While duelling, a knight attempts to Disarm his opponent to force him to yield. He thrusts with his Broadsword and connects with his foe's Handaxe, viciously twisting his blade at the last instant to flip the axe away. The Melee Attack result is an A★1 strike, indicating that the opponent must make a Fumble Roll with a (+30-10=) +20 bonus to avoid dropping the axe.

If the Defender fails the Fumble Roll, his or her weapon falls and the Attacker obtains a TA. Roll 1d10 to determine in which hex the weapon lands: 1=N, 2=NE, 3=SE, 4=S, 5=SW, 6=NW, 7-10= same hex. If the Fumble Roll succeeds, the Defender retains the weapon and the Turn ends.

Note that the Fumble Roll is affected by Physical Penalty (see GlossDex 17 for more details). If the Defender's weapon is held in two hands, add the Defender's DEX to the Fumble Target Level. If the weapon is strapped or tied on, add 2 × DEX to the TL.

❏ *Weapon Mass:* The relative mass of the Attacker's weapon can affect the Fumble Roll. For every pound that the Attacking weapon is lighter than the Defender's, the Defender gains a +1 bonus to his or her Fumble Roll. For every pound that it is heavier than the Defender's weapon, there is a -1 penalty to the Defender's Fumble Roll. For example, if an Attacker uses a Bastard Sword VII to disarm a foe wielding a Handaxe III, the Defender must attempt the Fumble Roll with a -4 penalty.

SWEEP

An attempt to sweep or pull the legs out from under an opponent. This is a useful tactic when the opponent is heavily armoured. A Melee Attack with a weapon from the *Staves* or *Polearms* group is made against the opponent's legs (**EML -10** Low Aiming Zone modifier).

If the Melee Attack results in an **A★** strike, the Defender must make a **Stumble Roll** to retain his or her balance. The Defender has a default bonus of **+30** to the Stumble Target Level, less **10** points per A★ strike (e.g. if the strike was A★1, modify the roll by -10). No injury is inflicted from the A★ strike.

If the Sweeping weapon has a *hook* or *fluke*, subtract a further **-20** from the Stumble Target Level.

> *Example:* During a peasant uprising, an unarmoured serf wielding a crude Falcastra is confronted by a significantly better armoured yeoman who looks like he knows how to use his Falchion. Desperately seeking to take the yeoman out as quickly as possible, the serf attempts to Sweep with his polearm. Miraculously, the peasant succeeds, achieving an A★2 strike - the yeoman must make a Stumble Roll with a (+30-20=) +10 bonus, less 20 points because the Falcastra is a hooked weapon - the Stumble Roll is therefore made at a -10 penalty.

If the Defender's Stumble Roll fails, the Defender falls prone and the Attacker gains a Tactical Advantage. Otherwise, the Defender remains upright and the Turn ends.

Note that the Stumble Roll is affected by Physical Penalty. See GlossDex 40 for more details.

❏ *Big Targets:* Opponents who are at least **2** *Size Classes* larger than the Attacker may not be tripped in this manner (see page 4 for a list of *Size Classes*). For example, a human Attacker (*Medium*) may not successfully Sweep a Hrú (*Very Large*).

TACKLE

A Tackle is a leaping *Grapple* attack that forces an opponent into a prone position, but at the cost of the character becoming prone as well. To Tackle, the character must Grapple the opponent's legs with both hands (**EML -10** Low Aiming Zone Modifier); the opponent may choose any Defence Option *except* Block (treat Blocks as Counterstrikes against Tackles).

- If the attack result is a Strike, as long as the character is able to grasp the opponent's legs, both parties automatically fall prone in the same hex. Depending on the hardness and roughness of the ground, the opponent may suffer incidental Blunt Impact (no greater than 2d6, however). The character maintains his or her hold and gains a Tactical Advantage. At GM discretion, the opponent may be required to make a Fumble Roll to avoid dropping any items in his or her hands.

- If the attack result is a Strike but the character cannot grasp all of the opponent's legs (e.g. the opponent is a quadruped), the opponent must make a Stumble Roll, adjusted by Physical Penalty and a 5d6 Tangle Penalty for being held. If the roll fails, the opponent falls prone and the character (who also falls prone) gains a Tactical Advantage. Regardless of whether the opponent stumbles, the Tackling character automatically falls prone but maintains his or her hold.

- If the Tackle misses or is Dodged, the character falls prone in the opponent's hex and the opponent receives a Tactical Advantage.

Combatants who are both prone in the same hex may continue to fight, but in *Close Mode*. Since both parties are prone, the EML +20 bonus normally gained for attacking and defending against a prone opponent is disregarded. The Tackled character may *not* attempt to Rise from the prone position until the Tackler releases his/her hold – this may require kicking him/her in the head a few times…

❑ ONE-HANDED VS. TWO-HANDED WEAPON IMPACT

The base Impact values listed on the Weapon Data Table assume the melee weapon is wielded with the number of hands intended. However, if a two-handed weapon is used in only one hand, it not only becomes more difficult to use, the force of its impact is also reduced. The reduction in the weapon's base Impact is equal to **one tenth** the Hand Mode penalty (round down in the wielder's favour), although this may not reduce the base Impact to less than **0**.

> *Example:* A Bastard Sword VI's Hand Mode penalty is EML -10 if wielded in the primary hand only, or EML -20 in the secondary hand only. If the sword is used in both hands, the base Impact values are *5b 7e 5p*, but in the primary hand alone, they fall to *4b 6e 4p* and in the secondary hand, the values drop further to *3b 5e 3p*.

Note that there is *no* increase in Impact if a one-handed weapon (such as a Broadsword) is wielded in two hands, but doing so will halve the *Strength Requirement* for that weapon.

> *Example:* Astraleeta, a warrior with a Strength of 13, can wield her Broadsword IV with optimal effect (*4b 6e 4p*), either single-handedly or in both hands. If she attempted to wield a heavier Broadsword V in one hand (which has a Strength Requirement of 17), the base Impact is capped at the same level as the Broadsword IV (i.e. *4b 6e 4p* instead of *5b 7e 5p*). If she wields the Broadsword V in both hands, however, it can be used at full effect (*5b 7e 5p*) because her Strength meets the effective Strength Requirement (half of 17 = 8.5, rounded off to 9).

❑ *Hand Mode Penalty:* If a character wields a weapon that is *lighter* than optimal (e.g. a warrior with a Strength of 15 wielding a Mace IV instead of a Mace V), reduce the Hand Mode penalty by 5 points for every weight class lower, to a minimum penalty of 0 (e.g. a character with 15 Strength, wielding a Mace V in the secondary hand, will suffer a -10 Hand Mode penalty, but only -5 if wielding a Mace IV). Note that using a lighter weapon will *not* improve its base Impact values.

❑ PAIRED WEAPONS COMBAT

The traditional style of melee combat in Hârn is to fight with a weapon in each hand. Normally, the weapon in the primary (usually right) hand is a sword, axe or spear, and the weapon in the secondary hand is a shield. That is, one weapon is used primarily for offence, and the other is used for defence.

However, some warriors - particularly gladiators - practice a style of fighting with two weapons offensively. Two typical weapon pairing techniques are described below:

DOUBLE STRIKE

Both weapons are used to strike simultaneously. The two weapons are usually the same type (e.g. two Shortswords) but this is not a requirement.

In game terms, the Attacker may make **2** Melee Attacks during his or her Turn, suffering a penalty of **EML -20** in each hand - note that Hand Mode penalties may also apply. If both attacks are aimed at the same opponent, the Defender must defend as if fighting one extra opponent - for example, against a single Attacker striking with two weapons, the Defender suffers an Outnumbering modifier of **EML -10** against each attack.

The Defender must choose the *same* defence option for both attacks. That is, he or she must attempt to Block both attacks, or Dodge both attacks, etc. A separate defence roll is required for each attack. If the Defender chooses to Counterstrike, any **D★** result against the Attacker's *secondary* weapon attack is ignored (unless the Defender is Counterstriking with two weapons as well).

If the Attacker obtains two Tactical Advantages from a Double Strike, only the one generated by the primary weapon will count. If both the Attacker and Defender obtain TA's, they will cancel each other out and the Turn ends immediately.

> *Modifier summary:*
> - Double Strike with weapon in each hand: Attacker **EML -20** for each attack (in addition to any Hand Mode penalties).
> - Defend against Double Strike: Defender **EML -10** against each attack (assuming both attacks are against the same Defender).

TANGLE & STRIKE

The weapon held in the primary hand is used to tangle the Defender or the Defender's weapon to reduce defensive capability. Then, the weapon held in the secondary hand is used to attack a vulnerable location.

The most commonly seen use of this technique is by the *retiarius* (net fighter) in the Pàmesáni Arena, where the gladiator fights with a lead-weighted Net tied to his or her primary hand, and a three-pronged fishing spear (Trident) in the off-hand.

Another technique, sometimes employed by Kùbôran and Equáni warriors, is to use a Handaxe in the primary hand, and a Dagger in the other. The axe is used to hook and control the Defender's weapon (only), while the Dagger is used for the killing thrust.

Treat the first attack as a *Tangle* attempt on the Defender or the Defender's weapon. (With the Handaxe & Dagger pairing, only the Defender's *weapon* may be targeted for Tangling.) If successful, the Attacker gains a Tactical Advantage and should attack with the weapon held in the other hand - if the **Reaction Roll** rules are being used (see page 9), treat that weapon as the *primary* weapon. Meanwhile, the Defender will suffer a Tangle penalty to any actions.

> *Modifier summary:*
> - Tangle attempt with weapon in primary hand: Attacker EML +0 to -15 (depending on the area targeted).
> - Attack with weapon in secondary hand: Weapon's Hand Mode penalty.
> - Tangle penalty: Defender EML -4d6 or -5d6 (depending on the area entangled).

❑ 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 *half* EML this Turn.
MF	Character is surprised and automatically selects *Ignore* as a defence this Turn.
CF	Character is completely surprised: treat as *MF* 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 *primary* weapon (e.g. Longsword).
MF	Attacker must Attack with his or her *secondary* 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 *secondary* weapon (e.g. Shield, Forearm). If the Defender is wielding a two-handed weapon, treat it as the *secondary* weapon for this purpose.
MF	Defender must Block with his or her *primary* weapon (e.g. Longsword). 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 *primary* weapon (e.g. Longsword).
MF	Defender must Counterstrike with his or her *secondary* 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 *half* EML.
MF	Defender must Dodge into an adjacent open hex at *half* EML (if available) or Ignore.
CF	Defender must Ignore.

❑ *Random Aspect:* For greater variety, determine the Aspect (e.g. Blunt, Edge, Point) of the striking weapon by rolling 1d6: **1** Tertiary Aspect; **2-3** Secondary Aspect; **4-6** Primary Aspect. If a weapon does not have the generated Aspect, treat it as the Primary Aspect.

❑ RING & SCALE ARMOUR

It appears that the Armour Protective Values of Ring and Scale armour as they are listed in HârnMaster Gold do *not* include the Leather backing, although the weights and prices do factor it in. The correct APVs for Ring and Scale armour are therefore:

Material	Weight	Price	B	E	P	F	S	T
Ring	40	700	3	7	2	6	1	6
Scale	60	1000	4	7	5	7	1	7

❑ 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 Attack Class for each subsequent strike is effectively the *lower* of its Attack and Defence Classes. The greater the difference between a weapon's A/D, the more difficult it is for the wielder to recover from a strike to attack again.

> *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.

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 Attack Class in subsequent strikes.

❑ UNARMED COMBAT STYLES

There are four main unarmed combat styles in HârnMaster Gold, although there is scope for many more:

Style	Availability	Strike	Grapple	Specialised Techniques
Brawling	AUTOMATIC	ML -10	ML -10	None.
Classical Wrestling	Common	ML -10	ML +0	Passing Move, Pressure Point.
Kamtóla	Rare	ML -10	ML +0	Sweep, Pressure Point, Passing Move.
Sàshatá	Uncommon	ML +0	ML -10	Focussed Punch, High Kick, Drop Kick.

BRAWLING: All characters know how to brawl - this is an *unspecialised* form of unarmed combat and is an Automatic skill. Because it is unspecialised, Unarmed Combat ML is reduced by -10. There are no Teachers for brawling, so the skill may not normally be developed beyond ML 70 - a talented character should consider studying a specialised unarmed combat style.

CLASSICAL WRESTLING: Gladiators and characters in military occupations are commonly taught how to wrestle. Wrestling favours grappling over striking, hence unarmed strikes (e.g. punches and kicks) must be made at ML -10. Specialised techniques can be learned once SI reaches 6 and at each subsequent SI increase - until the technique is learned, it may not be used.

KAMTÓLA: A few Laránians and Peónians learn this rare style, although finding a teacher is difficult. Kamtóla favours grappling over striking, hence unarmed strikes must be made at ML -10. Specialised techniques can be learned once SI reaches 6 and at each subsequent SI increase - until the technique is learned, it may not be used.

> ❑ *Kamtóla Skill Base:* Kamtóla teaches the use of agility over strength, hence Unarmed Combat SB is determined by *Dex Agl Agl* instead of *Str Dex Agl*.

SÀSHATÁ: Members of Ágrikan fighting orders are often taught Sàshatá or a similar variant. Sàshatá favours striking over grappling, hence grapples must be made at ML -10. Specialised techniques can be learned once SI reaches 6 and at each subsequent SI increase - until the technique is learned, it may not be used.

❑ *Increasing Shock, Stumble and Fumble Rolls:* Many of the specialised unarmed combat techniques force the opponent to make a Shock, Stumble or Fumble Roll. The opponent must make the roll at a penalty equal to the martial artist's **Skill Index ×5** (CS), **×2** (MS) or **×0** (MF), depending on the level of success achieved by the martial artist.

❑ 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.

❑ *Shields Check First:* 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.

❑ *Weapon Damage Modifiers:* When making a Damage Check for a weapon, reduce the 1d100 Target Level by the opposing weapon's base **Blunt** or **Edge** Impact value (whichever is higher). Treat any impact bonus from a mounted charge as an addition to the base Impact for this purpose.

❑ WEAPON OML

Increase the OML of *Axes* and *Staves* from SB2 to SB3. These weapon types should be easier to wield than their larger cousins (Battleaxes and Polearms, OML SB2).

❑ WEAPON REACH

Nearly all melee weapons are able to reach any hex that is adjacent to the wielder. It is this reach that creates the wielder's Engagement Zone.

However, some weapons - such as a Pike or Ísagâra - are classed as 'Long Reach'. Such weapons allow an Engagement Zone extending 2 hexes from the wielder's hex.

Opponents entering this larger Engagement Zone must halt immediately. They may have to defend against an attack from the Long Reach weapon on its bearer's Turn. Assuming a successful defence, the opponent may then move during his or her Turn (or with a Tactical Advantage) one hex into the standard one-hex Engagement Zone and conduct a Melee Attack as normal.

Note that characters with Long Reach weapons may *not* use them to make weapon blocks when attacked from an adjacent hex, but can do so if attacked at long range by an opponent also bearing a Long Reach weapon. Long Reach weapons may not be used to attack an adjacent hex, either.

❑ *Relatively Long Weapons:* If a character wields a weapon that is at least **2** Attack Classes higher than the opponent's weapon (e.g. Glaive vs. Broadsword, Spear vs. Shortsword), and one moves to Engage the other, the character's **Initiative** test is improved by one success level (e.g. MS becomes CS). This increases the likelihood that the character with the significantly longer weapon will gain a Tactical Advantage against the opponent on the completion of an Engage Move.

❑ *Natural Reach:* Most creatures occupy a single hex and possess an Engagement Zone that extends to all adjacent hexes. *Very Small* or *Tiny* creatures such as cats (see page 4 for a list of *Size Classes*), however, do not have an Engagement Zone and therefore cannot attack opponents in adjacent hexes. *Very Large*, tall creatures such as Hrú possess only a 1-hex Engagement Zone, but may have a 2-hex Engagement Zone if they wield a weapon that is at least 4 feet long - that is, a Hrú can smite with its fists at a target in an adjacent hex, or with a massive Club XXIII(!) at a target two hexes away. *Monstrous* creatures standing over 20 feet tall would have a natural Engagement Zone extending up to two hexes away.