

THE PREMISE

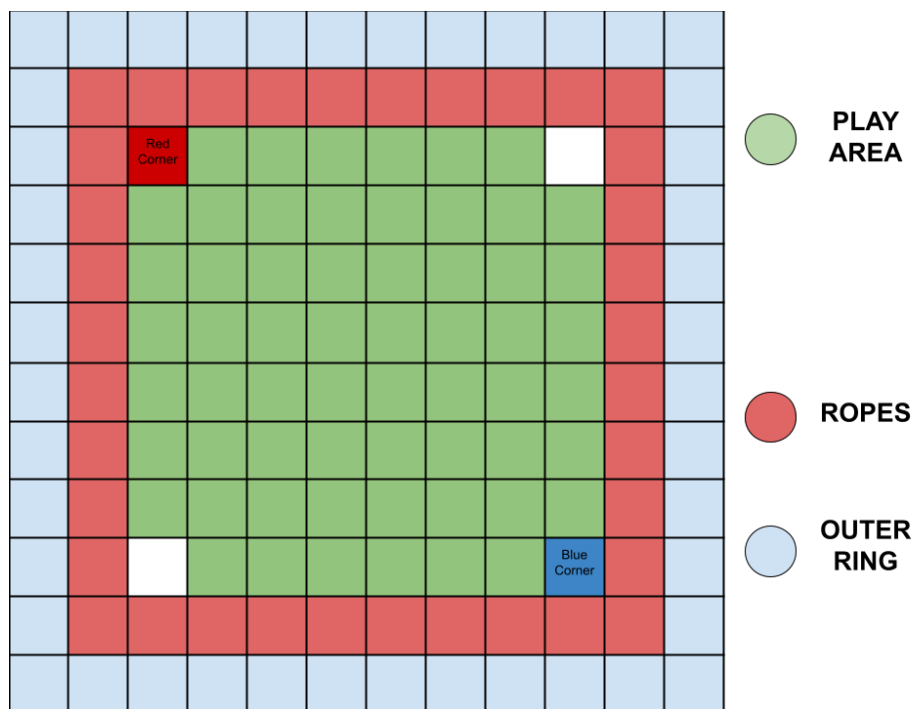
Every combatant has a deck of 13 cards, containing 6 attack types, 6 defense types and a "x2" card that indicates using the same attack twice. [Here's the list!](#)

Combatants take turns striking each other in an attempt to reduce their opponent's composure to zero. The first combatant to **KO** their opponent or score a **TKO** wins.

Composure is the only "resource" that needs to be tracked, but it is represented in two ways on the attack and defense cards:

Fatigue	Fatigue is a reduction in composure for the person playing the card. It represents an expenditure of energy, so even if an attack is negated or a defense was unsuccessful – the person who played the card still reduces their composure by the amount indicated. However, in the event that the first attack made in a bout knocks down the defender – fatigue from the second attack should be ignored. Similarly, if Player 1 knocks down Player 2 before Player 2 gets to attack, fatigue from Player 1's defense card should be ignored.
Power	Power is a reduction in composure for the person defending against the attack, which can be negated by choosing the right defense card. The only defense card (in the basic set) with a power rating is COUNTER, and the power from this card (if triggered) cannot be negated or reduced.

GAMEPLAY



Play Area	Contesters fight in this area alone. During the match, players cannot leave the ring by moving. Players can leave the area once the match is over. Each corner is still considered part of the play area, and can be moved around as if
Ropes	Ropes act as barriers to the outer ring. Once a player is in a rope space, they gain the following effects: - You must move into a Play Area space the next time you move. - Your movement speed is halved. - If you are knocked down while in a ROPE space, you gain a +2 bonus to your saving throw against being KO'd.
Outer Ring	Players can't enter these spaces at all.

GAME SETUP.

STEP 1	Players go to their corners. The challenger goes to the red corner, and the champion goes to the blue.
STEP 2	<i>Combatants roll for composure. Roll 1 Hit Die (this is different for</i>

	<i>different classes) with advantage and add 15, then add your CON modifier. If a character multiclassed, they may choose the larger available Hit Die when rolling for composure.</i>
STEP 3	<i>Combatants roll for initiative. The higher number is Player 1, and the lower is player 2. Reroll if there's a tie, as per usual 5e rules, then the fight begins!</i>

There are **12** rounds in a match, with **10** bouts per round. The bout ending early should a combatant be knocked down. In each **bout**, both combatants choose 2 attack cards and 1 defense card, placing them face down on the table. These cards are saved for when a **Clash** occurs,

In a **clash**, the combatants reveal their cards in the following order. **Clash**

- Initiator's attacks
- Defender's defense (negating any of defender's attacks if applicable)
 - Defender's attacks
- Initiator's defense (negating any of initiator's attacks if applicable)

In some situations (most notably when one or both combatants has very low composure), the order of the attacks matters. For this reason players should indicate which attack is being thrown first, either by stacking them one on top of the other or using the provided play mat.

For defense cards, fatigue is always applied last in a given sequence. For attack cards, fatigue is applied when the attack is made.

This flow of combat continues until a player is **knocked down** (*reduced to 0 composure*).

Combatants cannot fatigue themselves into being knocked down. A knockdown can only be achieved by an attack (*or COUNTER defense*) reducing a combatant to zero composure. If a combatant plays a card that would reduce their composure to zero, they are reduced to **1** composure instead.

A combatant who was knocked down must make a DC 5 Constitution saving throw. Each time a combatant gets knocked down, the DC for the saving throw increases by 12 - your constitution modifier - your proficiency bonus. A combatant can expend a hit dice to gain advantage on this saving throw. If they succeed, they make a new composure roll (as in step 1) but without advantage. If they fail, they are **KO'd** and fall unconscious, and the match ends. At the end of a round, this saving throw returns back to 5. After the **10** bouts, if no player was **KO'd**, the round ends. Players move back to their respective corner and regain COMPOSURE equal to 1 roll of their Hit Die (*Different for each class or creature.*) Then the next round begins.

Gameplay resumes if the player succeeds their Saving Throw, and repeats until one of the following conditions are met.

A combatant is KO'd , then the match ends.
A combatant is knocked down 3 times in one round without being KO'd . A player knocked down in this way is TKO'd , and the match ends.
Twelve rounds pass. After the twelfth round is over, players are scored based on how many knockdowns they scored in the match + their Charisma modifier. The player with the higher score is declared the victor and the match ends.

Tricky Situations

<i>Counter With Low Composure</i>	Player 1 (7 composure) attacks with BODY-HEAVY and HEAD-HEAVY, in that order. Player 2 (6 composure) defends with COUNTER. Normally when playing COUNTER, you are allowed to choose which HEAVY attack to counter, and given the choice would likely choose HEAD-HEAVY as it negates more power and deals more back to your opponent. However in this situation, the first attack would knock down Player 2, so they must use COUNTER against the first attack. Player 1 remains standing with 2 composure. Composure was reduced by 2 for the fatigue of playing BODY-HEAVY and then by 3 more after suffering the effects of COUNTER. Player 1 then attacks with HEAD-HEAVY, which knocks down Player 2. The fatigue from the second attack brings Player 1 down to 1 composure, since you can't fatigue yourself into a knockdown (as per step 3 – note #2).
<i>Counter with Low Composure for Both Players</i>	Player 1 (4 composure) attacks with BODY-HEAVY and HEAD-HEAVY, in that order. Player 2 (6 composure) defends with COUNTER. As in Tricky Situation #1, Player 2 must counter the BODY-HEAVY attack to prevent being knocked down. However, because attacks happen before defense (as outlined in step 3) and fatigue applies even if an attack is negated (as outlined in General Rules – Fatigue), Player 1 is knocked down before they make their second attack.

	Player 1 lost 2 composure due to the fatigue of playing BODY-HEAVY, and then was hit by the effects of COUNTER, which further reduces their composure by 3. Note that if you mistakenly applied fatigue after the effects of COUNTER, Player 1 would not be knocked down.
<i>Footwork with Low Composure</i>	Player 1 (11 composure) attacks with HEAD-JAB and HEAD-STRIKE, in that order. Player 2 (4 composure) defends with FOOTWORK. FOOTWORK will negate the HEAD-STRIKE attack, but the HEAD-JAB goes through. Player 2's composure is reduced by 2 due to the JAB, bringing them down to 2 composure. The fatigue from FOOTWORK is applied last (as per step 3 – note #3), and since you can't fatigue yourself into a knockdown (as per step 3 – note #2), Player 2 goes down to 1 composure instead. Note that if you mistakenly applied the fatigue from FOOTWORK before resolving the power of the HEAD-JAB attack, Player 2 is knocked down.

FAQ

Why would I play the BODY version of an attack when the HEAD version is objectively better?

- You're completely right that the HEAD versions of attacks (at least in the basic set) are objectively more powerful, but your opponent will know that! This game is all about playing/predicting your opponent. Because they know that HEAD attacks are more valuable, they might be more likely to use a defense like HEAD PROTECT, which gives you an opportunity to sneak in a BODY attack.

What is the order of events when a combatant is knocked down?

- The bout ends immediately when a combatant is knocked down. The fatigue costs of unused attacks and defenses are not applied. However, because the bout has still "ended" – a card like CLINCH (Fighter defense) still triggers its effects if it has been revealed. In the case of CLINCH, be careful not to count the fatigue spent for attacks and defenses that were not used due to the bout ending early.

What if I'm asked to halve an odd number?

- Always round down but to a minimum of one. Note that this can only occur when using class- specific cards or EDGE cards, such as defending with COUNTER against an attack like SELF- CONTROL (Cleric) or DRAW POWER (Sorcerer).

Do “next bout” effects still apply if a combatant is knocked down? For example, when using the Wizard attack QUICK STUDY or the Bard attack MOCKERY.

- Yes and no. If the combatant that suffers a “next bout” effect is the one being knocked down, the effect no longer applies. If the combatant that suffers a “next bout” effect is the one that has remained standing, the effect still applies. Think of being knocked down as a “hard reset” – all lingering effects are removed and you make a new composure roll to start anew.

What do I do with the cards I cannot play this bout, such as cards affected by MOCKERY or DEFLECTION?

- Place the cards you cannot play this bout face up and to the side of the play area. You are not allowed to hide the unplayable cards in the hopes that your opponent will forget which cards are affected.

EDGE

To give classes and characters that specialize in physical combat an additional advantage and to turn the tides of the battle, EDGE cards can be used to make combat more interesting. Each EDGE card is usable only once per match and is identifiable by their golden border.

After rolling for starting composure (as per step 1), combatants are given EDGE cards based on certain statistics. Each combatant draws one random EDGE card from the available deck of nine total cards for each of the following conditions that they meet:

- Draw one EDGE card for every 5 STR, DEX, or CON your character has above 10.

You must meet the conditions completely to draw an EDGE card, and STR/DEX/CON are not added together. For example, a character with 19 STR and 14 DEX still only draws one EDGE card. A character with 20 STR and 15 DEX, however, draws three EDGE cards.

All nine EDGE cards are unique and both combatants draw from the same pool of EDGE cards, meaning that two combatants will never share the same EDGE card in a given match.

When are Edge cards used?

- EDGE cards are played face down (beside the area of play) after both combatants have chosen their attacks and defense in a given bout but before revealing Player 1’s attacks. The EDGE card is revealed at the same time that Player 1 reveals their attacks.

A combatant can only play one EDGE card per bout, but both combatants can play an EDGE card in one bout (if they both have one available to play). The effects of an EDGE card apply only to the current bout.

After applying the effects of an EDGE card, remove it from the game. Even if the EDGE card failed to provide an effect, it is removed from the game.

- EDGE cards are not regained after rolling for composure following a knockdown.
- For the EDGE cards VIM, VERVE and VIGOR, you can decide which attack to apply the effects to after seeing your opponent's defense (only if both of your attacks qualify for the effects of the card).
- For the EDGE cards CONDITIONED and MITIGATED, an attack or defense cannot have its fatigue cost reduced below zero.
- For the EDGE card GOOD CHIN, you still only negate one attack with GENERAL DEFENSE (unless both attacks are JABs, in which case you still negate both).

<i>EDGE: VIM</i>	Discard this EDGE: One JAB attack gains +2 POWER.
<i>EDGE: VERVE</i>	Discard this EDGE: One STRIKE attack gains +2 POWER.
<i>EDGE: VIGOR</i>	Discard this EDGE: One HEAVY attack gains +2 POWER.
<i>EDGE: CONDITIONED</i>	Discard this EDGE: Reduce the FATIGUE cost of your defense by 2.
<i>EDGE: MITIGATED</i>	Discard this EDGE: Reduce the FATIGUE cost of your attacks that are negated by 1.
<i>EDGE: GOOD CHIN</i>	Discard this EDGE: Your GENERAL DEFENSE can negate a HEAVY attack.
<i>EDGE: MOMENTUM</i>	Discard this EDGE: Attacks you negate cost 1 additional FATIGUE.
<i>EDGE: BRACE YOURSELF</i>	Discard this EDGE: Attacks you fail to negate get -1 POWER.
<i>EDGE: DEEP BREATH</i>	Discard this EDGE: If you are knocked down, add +3 to your composure roll.