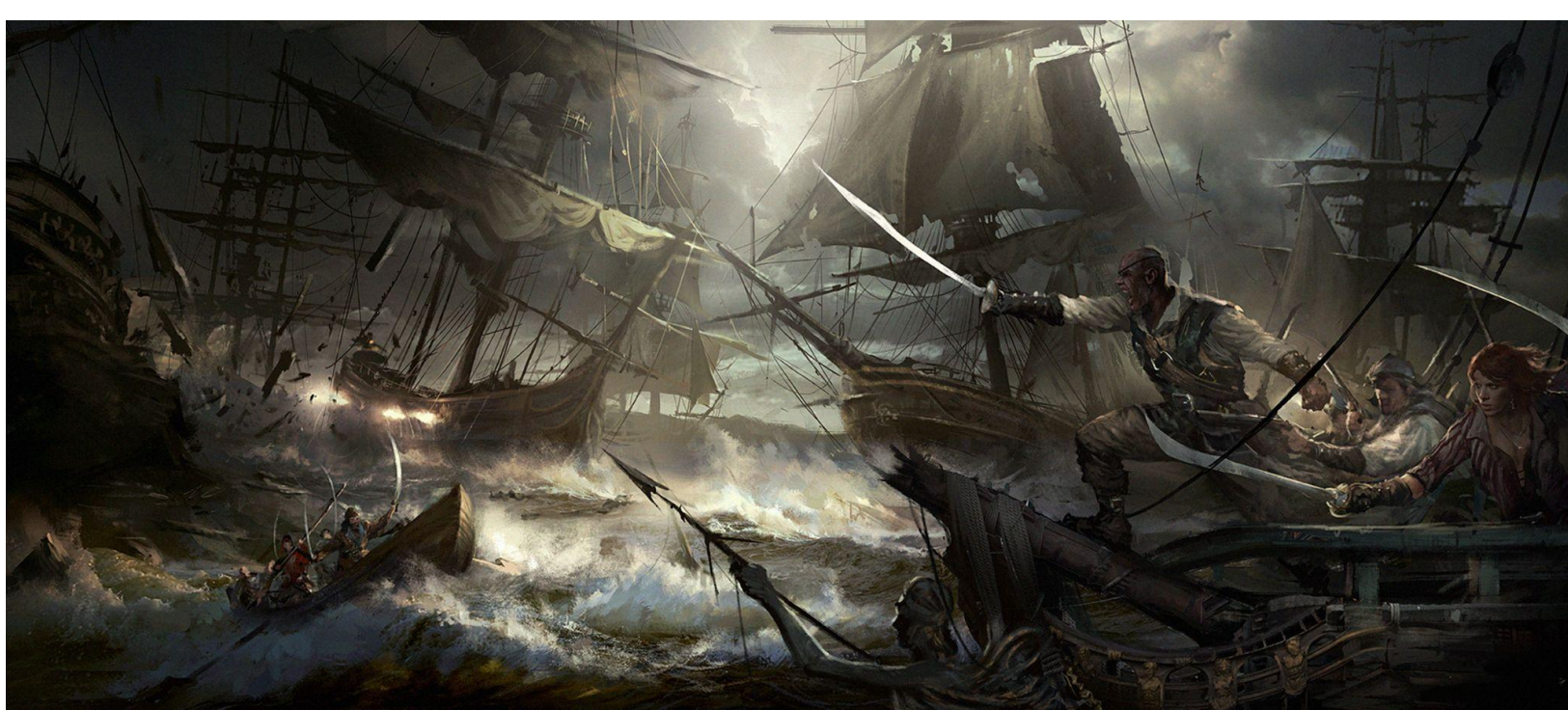


LAW OF THE SEA

(Updated 7/12/2022)



Simulated Naval Battles for LARP Adventures

Shiver me timbers! Adventures on the high seas are some of the greatest, and most exciting parts of many epic fantasy and historic tales. Whether it's a pirate raid for ships and booty, or war at sea between factions, these rules will allow us to play them out.

BASIC TERMINOLOGY

Bow/Stern: The bow is the front of the boat or ship, the stern is the back. Anything near the front of the boat or ship is referred to as being “forward,” and anything toward the back is “aft” or “astern.”

Port: Facing forward, this is anything to the left of the boat. When you're onboard, you can use this term pretty much any time you would normally say “left.”

Starboard: Facing forward, this is anything to the right of the boat. Same deal as “port”—only the opposite.

TYPES OF BOATS & SHIPS

Boats and ships will be represented by a framework made of padded pvc, and rope. The size and number of crew will define what type of vessel it is. There are three types of basic boats and ships, boats & skiffs, trading vessels, and war galleys.

Boats and Skiffs

Description: Boats and skiffs are representative of small coastal watercraft that are usually part of fishing fleets, or used to patrol coastlines, and ports. They can be stored onboard larger ships and used as landing craft. They are generally more maneuverable than larger vessels and this is reflected in their movement.

Phys Rep: The bow (front of boat) should be made of pvc or other core material, covered for safety by padding in the shape of a "V" at least 3' wide, and a maximum of 4'. The stern (rear) may be in the shape of a "V" like the bow or straight across a minimum of 4' across and a maximum of 6'. Starboard and port sides of a boat or skiff are represented by rope, these rope sides are to be a minimum of 8' and be a maximum of 15' per side. Crew: 2 minimum crew, one in the bow, and one in the stern.

Occupants & Cargo: Boats and skiffs can carry a maximum 10 occupants including crew, there is minimal cargo capacity, hand held items only. Alternatively, a sea chest may be transported at the cost of 2 occupancy spots.

Movement: Boats and skiffs may only operate in coastal hexes or as boarding vessels between ships at sea. To represent their maneuverability at close quarters, the crew and occupants may jog during movement.

Damage Points: 4 points of damage to sink

Trading Vessels

Description: Trading vessels are the most common type of sailing ship, and may be of many different designs, they are used for hauling cargo and travelers across lakes and great seas.

Phys Rep: The bow (front of ship) should be made of pvc or other core material, covered for safety by padding in the shape of a "V" at least 3' wide and a maximum of 6'. The stern (rear) is a straight pole made of pvc or other core material, covered for safety by padding, a minimum of 6' across, and a maximum of 10'. Starboard and port sides of a trading vessel are represented by rope, these rope sides are to be a minimum of 15' and be a maximum of 25' per side.

Crew: 6 crew at minimum are needed to properly operate a trading vessel. It takes 5 crew members to move, one in the bow, one port, another starboard, and two in the stern. The sixth crew member is the Captain, they give movement orders to the crew and work to keep the pretend framework of pvc and ropes looking like a ship.

Movement: Trading vessels may operate on coastal hexes and in open water. The crew and occupants of a trading vessel may walk during movement. It takes a coordinated effort of the crew to maneuver a ship, and it is the Captain's job to give them orders and keep them working together.

Occupants & Cargo: Trading vessels can carry a maximum 25 occupants including crew, there is excellent cargo capacity, these vessels can carry the harvest from a province of a whole season.

Offensive Weapons: A trading vessel may mount one ballista or catapult.

Damage Points: 6 points of damage to sink

War Galleys

Description: War galleys are ships of war used to bring forces for invasion, and project power across the seas.

Phys Rep: The bow (front of ship) should be made of pvc or other core material, covered for safety by padding in the shape of a "V" at least 3' wide. The stern (rear) is a straight pole made of pvc or other core material, covered for safety by padding, a minimum of 8' across, and a maximum of 16'. Starboard and port sides of a war galley are represented by rope, these rope sides are to be a minimum of 20' and be a maximum of 35' per side.

Crew: 8 crew at minimum are needed to properly operate a galley. It takes 7 crew members to move, one in the bow, two port, another two starboard, and two in the stern.

The eighth crew member is the Captain, they give movement orders to the crew and work to keep the pretend framework looking like a ship.

Protection: The raised sides, and subdecks of war galleys offer protection for the crew. Crew members may not be targeted by ranged weapons, other occupants and passengers of war galleys may be targeted as normal.

Movement: War galleys may operate on coastal hexes and in open water. The crew and occupants of a war galley may walk during movement. It takes a coordinated effort of the crew to maneuver a ship, and it is the Captain's job to give them orders and keep them working together.

Occupants & Cargo: War galleys can carry a maximum 50 occupants including crew, there is excellent cargo capacity, these vessels can carry the supplies needed for an extensive campaign, and a considerable amount of treasure as well.

Offensive Weapons: A war galley may mount two ballista or catapults, and may have a battering ram.

Damage Points: 8 points of damage to sink

MOVEMENT

Crew

In order for boats or ships to move the minimum number of crew must be in position, and each crew member must have at least one hand on the framework of the vessel.

Boats and Skiffs

Small vessels have the advantage of maneuverability and when moving the crew and occupants may move at the speed of a jog. This is not running at full speed, and care should be taken not to get crew or passengers tangled in the ropes.

Ships

Trading vessels and war galleys move at a walk. All crew members must be in place and orders must be given by the Captain in order for ships to move. While ships are restricted to a walking speed a good crew can achieve considerable movement and maneuverability, by learning to work together. A chant, shanty, or song can help keep the pace at a purposeful gait, and add to the camaraderie, and esprit of the crew.

Captains

It takes leadership and teamwork for a ship to function at sea. It is the Captain's job to organize the crew, get them working in unison, and give orders. The Captain's orders are instructions to get the crew to move the ship in a direction. The Captain must work to keep the crew in position as the ship is moving, they are also responsible for their passengers and cargo. A ship must have a designated Captain, along with the minimum crew to function.

Swimming

Anyone in AC2 or lower may swim. Swimming is represented by crawling on all fours on the field in the places in between boats and ships. Swimming players may be arched at, or subject to catapults and ballista fire as normal. Only other swimming players may engage swimming players in combat, and they may only use single handed weapons effectively. It is not possible to use a shield in combat while swimming. Swimming players

may board boats and skiffs without a grappling hook or sea rope. Swimming players may use a grappling hook or sea rope to board trading vessels or war galleys. Players with the Climb ability may also use that to board ships. Two swimming players may help another player that can not swim due to their armor or wounds, to either get out of their armor (may be role played), or make it to safety. Only physical armor applies to the swimming rule, Skills, Abilities, and Spells do not count against buoyancy for swimmers.

NAVAL COMBAT & BOARDING

Combat At Sea

Sinking Boats & Ships: Ships can be damaged by heavy weapons and special attacks. When a boat or ships Damage Points are taken to 0 or below they are considered to be sinking. Most boats will go down immediately casting all occupants and crew into the water. In the case of ships the organizers may give a countdown to allow for role playing on the sinking ship before players are cast into the sea. Remember not everyone can swim.

Capturing Boats & Ships: Boats and ships may be captured during the course of combat. If an enemy force can defeat the passengers and crew of a boat or ship without destroying it they may claim possession of it and any cargo it was carrying. Ownership will then be transferred in the land game. Damaged ships may be repaired.

Structural Damage

Boats and ships are made of sturdy stuff, timber and beam give them structural damage points, normal attacks have little or no effect, but heavy weapons like ballista and catapults will damage and can even destroy them. Special abilities and combat magic can also do damage to boats and ships.

Cost of Repairing Damaged Boats and Ships

Boats and ships are expensive to build and must be maintained, or they will fall into disrepair. In addition to normal upkeep costs boats and ships can be repaired and brought back to their original glory after the rigors of battle. Depending on the amount of damage sometimes costs can become prohibitive and difficult decisions must be made.

Boat and Ship Repair Costs

Boats = 2 wood + 3 gold per point of damage

Trading Vessels = 5 wood + 7 gold per point

War Galleys = 5 wood + 15 gold per point

Ranged Weaponry

Ballista & Catapults: The damage caused by siege weapons is based on the size of the projectile. A 3" projectile will do 2 points of structural damage to a boat or ship. A 6" projectile will do 4 points of damage, and so forth.

**Optional rules for ship mounted ballista and catapults: It is difficult and expensive to build working highly mobile siege weapons, so instead they can be simulated. Gun crews are made up of 3 players, one carries the ammunition, another is the loader, and the third is the gunner. In play the gun crew must stay together (within 3' of each other) to operate the gun, the carrier hands the ammunition to the loader, who in turn gives the ammo to*

the gunner, and the gunner may throw the ammunition. As per standard siege engine rules as long as the three are together they may move the gun on the ship, and as long as there are at least two gun crew they may continue to fire.

Archery & Thrown Weapons: All crew and occupants on boats & skiffs, or trading vessels may be targeted by archery, and thrown weapons as normal. The crew on war galleys are offered some protection by the raised wall and crenulations, as well as below decks where they work.

Ramming

Ramming another ship is a dangerous way to attempt to board or sink another vessel. Ramming may be attempted when two ships are at least 20' apart. When a boat or ship rams another ship it will do structural damage equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of its structural points to the enemy ship, and take $\frac{1}{4}$ to itself, rounding up. So, a trading vessel ramming will inflict 3 points of structural damage, but take 2 points. War galleys equipped with a battering ram are reinforced to absorb the shock of ramming other ships, and therefore do not take damage when ramming another ship. A successful ram will bring both ships to a dead stop, and it is difficult to untangle the two ships.

Battering Rams: War Galleys may be fitted with a battering ram at additional cost of 50 gold when built. A battering ram will do 4 points of structural damage when the bow of the war galley comes in contact with any part of an enemy boat or ship. It will also cause both ships to become dead in the water unless the ramming war galley disengages. To disengage the Captain must give the order 'Disengage ram!'. The defending vessel may then attempt boarding actions, or allow the war galley to disengage. Once disengaged a war galley must be at least 20' away from the opposing ship to ram again.

Phys Rep: A representation may be incorporated into the bow prop of the war galley, alternatively a player may stand at the bow of the ship with a polearm, this player is then considered part of the crew for targeting purposes.

Boarding Actions

In order for players to board a boat or ship it must first be dead in the water. It is very difficult to get onboard a moving vessel, so in order to get troops onto a boat or ship they must first be stopped. There are several ways to stop a boat or ship, the first is coming alongside and securing the vessel with sea ropes, or grappling hooks, another way to stop a ship or boat is with a battering ram. The Organizers will let you know when you are dead in the water. Once secured individuals may use the hooks and ropes to pull the boat or ship closer together, and then deploy their boarding planks for group boarding, or swing over as individuals. It takes two sea ropes or grappling hooks or a combination of the two in order to bring a ship to full stop, only a single line is needed in the case of boats & skiffs. A battering ram will outright destroy boats & skiffs, but it will hold fast another ship to be boarded, unless it is disengaged by the ramming war galley.

Repelling Boarders

When an attacking ship gets close enough to throw grappling hooks and sea ropes, the organizers will alert the players when the boats in play are entangled, and dead in the water, at which point the attackers will attempt to drag the vessels together in order to perform a boarding action, moving their vessel close enough to deploy boarding planks.

This occurs when the appropriate number of grappling hooks and sea ropes have been thrown over the ropes, bow or stern of the opposing vessel. Then players repelling the attack must prepare to be boarded, and defend their boat, or ship.

Dead in the Water

Once a boat or ship stops moving it is considered dead in the water, the crew should put down the framework of the boat where they stand and prepare to be boarded. Grappling hooks, sea ropes, and boarding planks can not be removed until after the combat is resolved.

Grappling Hooks

Description: Grappling hooks are devices with iron claws, attached to a rope and used for dragging or grasping.

Phys Rep: Using PVC or other safe material for core, surround it with coreless representations of hooks with LARP safe foam, finish to look the part, and affix to a rope.

Sea Ropes

Description: Heavy ropes used to tie off boat and ship equipment.

Phys Rep: Rope of reasonable thickness, preferably sissle or hemp for looks.

Boarding Planks

Description: Planks lashed or nailed together that are laid between boats and ships decks to gain access for group boarding actions.

Phys Rep: Boarding planks may be made from cardboard, or sheet foam. They may be a minimum of 2' x 4' and a maximum of 4' x 8'

Hand To Hand Combat

Once boarding has occurred hand to hand combat plays out as normal. Only archery and polearm attacks may be used from the opposing decks as the fighting begins, but once onboard normal combat rules apply. Battle at sea is a series of small bridge battles that devolve into meat grinders as attackers make their way onto an opposing vessel.

Falling Overboard

The only exception to normal combat rules is that a player may fall off of the boat or ship during combat. On board a boat or ship you are fighting in a small enclosed space, often precariously over the waves. If a player steps outside of the framework of the boat or ship they are considered to have gone overboard, and then swimming rules apply. Players that can not swim are drowned, and are considered casualties. As per normal combat rules you are never to push, grapple, or shield bash another player.