

Initiative Experiment

As of late March 2024, we are trialing this initiative system as an alternative to the one described in the current [Combat Procedure](#).



This page is a sketch of a system we have just started to playtest and will likely be updated frequently.

Reasons

- Players interested in having more meaningful choices to make in combat, to add depth. DM interested in the cool interactions that could result.
- Dissatisfaction on both sides of the screen with certain results of the hard-line “you go then I go” initiative.
- With ADDICT/quantum initiative, it's hard (or impossible) to tell what segment things happen on. Also, stuff like potions taking effect and scroll reading time and item retrieval are often inconsequential.
- One of this group's core tenants is exploring and improving at AD&D, and thereby making our game as enjoyable as possible. It seems right to experiment with initiative.

The Big Picture

There are two major changes you should be aware of, from which everything else stems:

1. For initiative, **the face shown on your die is the segment on which your side begins to act**. This means lower is better.
2. **You can now do more varied declarations, as long as the rules don't prohibit it**. For example, you can now move and then fire a wand. You could also parley while moving. You could even move after you finish casting a spell. But you could not close to striking distance and then melee, since moving and meleeing is only allowed via the charge. You could also not start casting two spells in the same round.

Things typically stay the same otherwise. Still use weapon speed for tied initiative (except against natural weapons of course). Attacks at the end of charge are still resolved via weapon length (including missile fire and turning still beating a charge, as long as the shooter or turner is targeting the charger). You can still prepare actions.

Procedure

Phase 1: Opening

Reaction, surprise, distance, morale.

Phase 2: Surprise

If there is surprise, declarations and resolutions occur as normal for each individual surprise segment.

Phase 3: Regular

1. DM notes monster and hiring actions.
2. Players declare PC and henchman actions. Note that with this system, **declaring several types of actions A-H is possible, provided they do not conflict**. For example, moving and then discharging a magic device is permissible. In contrast, closing to melee and then attacking is illegal since the only way to close and attack in the same round is via a charge.
3. Both sides roll d6. **Face indicates the segment where their action starts (so lower is better)**.
4. Actions are resolved. Actions cannot be changed at this point, but they can be canceled.
 1. For weapons with **RoF greater than 1, subsequent shots come two segments after the previous**. (Excludes surprise segments.) Note that this means if a charge starts really close, the defender may not be able to get off all their RoF before the charge is met.
 2. Multiple attack routines (including [sweep attacks](#)) advantage is affected by the opponent's initiative, so that routines before the disadvantaged side go on the advantaged side's initiative segment, and routines after the disadvantaged side go in the segment following the disadvantaged side's initiative segment.

Phase 4: Reset

1. Characters who reached 0 or fewer HP on a previous round (who have not been stabilized) lose 1 HP.
2. If combat has been ended, play moves to either (1) pursuit rules, or (2) 1 turn post-combat rest. During post-combat rest, no exploration can take place, but bleeding can be staunched, spells can be cast, and prisoners tied up.
3. If combat has not been ended, move to phase 3. **Actions which were started on this round which did not complete (e.g. spell, movement, retrieving an item) continue into the next round unless canceled!**

Q & A

- What happened to melee vs caster ignoring initiative and instead comparing weapon speed vs spellcasting segments?
 - I'm not sure how/if that fits in with this system. For now, it is gone.
- What happened to caster vs caster ignoring initiative and instead comparing spellcasting segments vs spellcasting segments?
 - I'm not sure how/if that fits in with this system. For now, it is gone.
- Does this mean that I will move less than my full movement distance if my side starts on segment 2 or later?
 - Yes, if movement starts this round. If you were already moving to a declared destination on a previous round, you will continue that movement on segment 1, even if your party's initiative die says 2-6.

- Isn't it weird that with multiple attack routines, the advantaged side's later attacks are effectively slower (come on a later segment) if the disadvantaged side has a worse initiative?
 - Yes, that does seem weird. Though I haven't produced a better solution yet which still ensures multiple attack routines work the way they are supposed to in the rules (before and after). Perhaps it's not weird though, perhaps the advantaged side's latter attacks are enabled by the disadvantaged side getting close for their attack?
- What happens with reaction modifier for ranged fire?
 - It means action is taken on an earlier or later segment, as early as "segment 0".
- Is there a problem where spellcasters can avoid melee hits by going later, and therefore worse initiative is actually better in some cases?
 - No, because being hit at all during a round before the spell completes loses the spell. Even if actual casting hasn't started yet, all segments up to that point are used preparing to cast (e.g. retrieving components). This is the same reason that casters cannot move on a round that they want to cast a spell, until the spell is complete.
- What happens if a spell starts on segment 5 and it takes 7 segments to cast?
 - Casting continues into the next round and the spell can complete on segment 2 of that following round.
- What happens if I finish a spell I started on the previous round? Am I allowed to cast a different spell this round?
 - Yes. The rule is that you can only begin casting a single spell on a round. (Note that this is different than how I ruled on our trial run during the Wednesday session.)
- What happens if I charge but I don't make it to my target point?
 - If you have remaining charge distance left, the charge will continue on segment 1 of the next round. However, if you have expended all of your charge distance at any point, the charge stops. (Note that this differs from how I hand-waived it on our Wednesday trial, where I just let the charge keep going.)

References

- **Interesting quote here:** Close to striking (E): "All normal activity and bonuses are permitted when so doing. This action is typically taken when the opponent is over 1" distant but not a long distance away. Play goes to the next round after this, as melee is not possible, although **other activity can, of course, take place such as that detailed above.**"
- **Useful section to read:** Actions During Combat And Similar Time-Important Situations (DMG 71)

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