

Skirmish

One thing there was upon which more than anything else Grettir cast his eyes, a short sword, which he declared to be finer than any weapon which he had ever seen.

- The Saga of Grettir the Strong, 12xx

5th Edition

A game inspired by the Ancient Arts Fellowship (AAF) Dark Age re-enactment group.

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Number of Players

2-8

Average Playing Time

Half an hour

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Introduction

Skirmish is a game of warriors on the battleground fighting in the midst of chaos. Bodies lie everywhere, and there are enough of the armies remaining that none can retreat. Each warrior is without a side to aid them. All other players in the game are their enemy. The last warrior standing is the winner.

Edition History

Differences from the fourth edition

The shield is now always damaged when used to block. AXE's hook reduced to just a default attack when used defensively. TWO HANDED SWORD does extra damage with SLASH and THRUST. Two health points are now recovered. SCRAMASAX removed. All players now start with SWORD and SHIELD. Highlander option added.

Differences from the three point five edition

How weapons, shields and special cards function completely redefined. Every weapon now has a default attack and a selection of special attacks. SHIELDS can block without using cards. Special cards have been reduced to two types. Charge no longer requires a Shield but no longer disarms two handed weapons. Hook can now be dodged. DAGGER made slightly more useful.

Differences from the third edition

HTML errors fixed, rules clarified, SAX changed to SCRAMASAX, card colours defined.

Differences from the second edition

CRITICAL HIT card made more powerful. Spelling error fixed.

Differences from the first edition

Starting Health reduced to 12. Charge, Hook, SPEAR changed. Two Handed weapons now count to hand limit. Special and Basic attacks occur in any order. Players may now Recover equipment from the Discard pile. Free Basic Attack explained. CRITICAL HIT, DISEMBOWELLING, KICK, SAX cards added.

Setup

Each player takes a SWORD card and a SHIELD card. Place both in front of you with the undamaged SHIELD and the SWORD side (not the RECOVERY side) showing. If using a two handed weapon (either a TWO HANDED AXE or a TWO HANDED SWORD), turn your SHIELD sideways as it is not in use (it's slung on your back). Put the remaining SHIELD and **weapon cards** in the **weapon discard pile**, they may be **Recovered** during the game. Give each player 12 Health counters - poker chips or coins can be used. Shuffle the remaining deck and deal 6 cards to each player. Place the undealt cards on the table within easy reach of every player as the **Draw deck**. Play starts with the player to the dealer's left.

Discard Piles

There are two discard piles in this game.

- The **weapon discard pile** is for weapons and shields. It is never reshuffled and can be used later by any player wishing to make a **Recovery**,
- The **normal discard pile** is used for all other types of cards, and is reshuffled into the **Draw deck** when it runs out of cards.

Winning the Game

If you are ever reduced to zero or less Health, you are dead and out of the game. The winner is the last player with health remaining.

Turn Order

In a player's turn they may do the following actions in this order of play:

1. Wear Armour

- If you have a Mail card in your hand and wish it to protect you from attacks in the future, place it face up in front of you now. You may only have one armour card in play at any time. *Mail cards count toward your hand limit.*

2. Action

During your turn you may do **ONE** of the following:

- **Attack**
 - Every weapon comes with a default attack. See **Weapon Cards** below. Attacking with the default attack requires no use of cards, you just declare you are attacking with your weapon.
 - You may also play a Basic attack card. Most cause additional damage, and modify the default attack. **PUNCH, KICK** and **SHIELD BASH** are attacks made *instead* of a weapon attack and do not add to a Weapon Card. You cannot use these cards with a **SPECIAL ATTACK**.
 - Every weapon comes with several special attacks as well. To use a special attack, you must play a SPECIAL ATTACK card. Some special attacks also require a **basic attack card** to be played with them,.
 - The defender may use the SHIELD to **block**, play a SPECIAL ATTACK to CHARGE (with a basic attack card) or HOOK, play one of the purely defensive cards of DISARM, DODGE, BLOCK, and PARRY, or, if appropriate, the special card of TRIP.
- **Recover Armour**
 - If there is a MAIL card in the discard pile, you may take it and put it in your hand (see **Recovering**). On your next turn you may **Wear Armour** and play the MAIL card. You may not play any other cards this turn, this includes the TRIP card, except in defence.
- **Recover Weapon**
 - If you want to make an attack on another player using a weapon other than your current weapon, discard your current weapon card and replace it with a card from the **weapon discard pile** (see **Recovering**). Similarly, if you have been disarmed and wish to acquire a new weapon, you may use this option to gain a new weapon. If you play a two handed weapon, you cannot use your SHIELD - turn it sideways.
Two handed weapons count toward your hand limit
You may not play any other cards this turn. This includes the TRIP card, except in defence.
- **Recover Health**

If you plan to spend this turn Recovering (see **Recovering**), turn your **weapon card** face down to show Recovery. You may only play cards in defence this turn, this includes the TRIP card. Gain 2 Health back, up to your starting total.

3. Discards

You can discard any cards except for armour in play. Discarded **weapon cards** and SHIELDS are placed in the **weapon discard pile**.

4. Redraw

Draw up to your hand size of 6 cards. This hand size includes any MAIL card or two handed weapon card you may have in play. Every defender (or player who played TRIP) who used cards during your turn, now also refreshes their hand back to their hand sizes. If you spent this turn **recovering** turn your **weapon card** face up again.

Recovering

Recovering has two purposes. The first is to regain health, and the second to regain equipment.

You get no health back if looking for equipment on the battlefield.

While recovering, you may not play other cards in your turn. You can still discard cards and defend yourself.

It takes 1 turn of Recovery to-

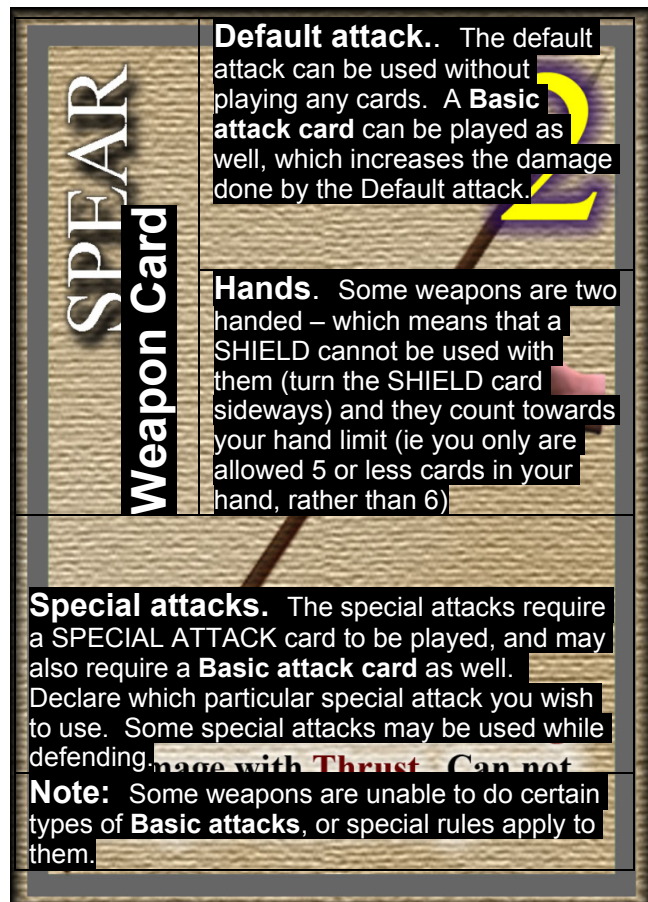
- regain 2 Health up to your original level, or
- to find an undamaged SHIELD, or
- to go through the **weapon discard pile** and choose a weapon to take into your hand, or
- to go through the **normal discard pile** and choose an armour to take into your hand, or
- to discard armour that you are wearing (you spend the turn taking it off).

You must discard down to 6 cards if this takes you over the limit. Please note – that any two handed weapon or MAIL card that you have in play (in front of you) counts towards this hand limit.

Losing your Shield or Weapon

To immediately show you have no SHIELD, or weapon, put them in the discard pile. They may be **Recovered**. A discarded damaged shield will be recovered as an undamaged shield.

If you have no weapon you may only play KICK, PUNCH, or (if you have a SHIELD), SHIELD BASH to attack. With no weapon you have NO default attack.



Special Attacks

The special attacks require a SPECIAL ATTACK card to be played, and may also require a **Basic attack card** as well. Declare which particular special attack you wish to use. Some special attacks may be used while defending.

- **Charge**

Then the king ordered his berserks, the men called Wolfskins, forward. No iron could hurt them, and when they charged nothing could withstand them.

- The Saga of Grettir the Strong, 12??

Requires a **Basic attack card**.

Increases Basic attack's damage by 1.

If **DODGED**, then goes to next clockwise person (unless there are only two playing), skipping the original player if necessary until a defender is unable to play a DODGE card (ie it keeps going until it is **BLOCKED**, **DISARMED** or it gets through).

You can counter charge someone currently charging you as a defence. This counts as a **BLOCK**, and you attack the original charger with your Basic attack card.

Cannot be **PARRIED**.

- **Disembowelling**

Fast from his wounds his blood was seen to gush.

- The Nibelungenlied, 12??

May be played with a **Basic attack card**, or used just with the **default attack**.

Damage +2 to whatever attack is made

- **Flurry of Blows**

They are careful not to waste their blows, but lay them on as best they may; they strike and bend their helmets, and they send the meshes of their hauberks flying so, that they draw not a little blood, for the hauberks are so hot with their body's heat that they hardly serve as more protection than a coat.

- Yvain or, The Knight with the Lion, Chretien DeTroyes, 12xx

May be played with a **Basic attack card**, or used just with the **default attack**.

This special attack is equivalent to two attacks of the same kind, or three if you are using a **DAGGER**. Each of these attacks requires a defence cards to stop it. Playing one defence card only stops one attack (even if the defence card is a **DISARM**).

- **Hook**

With the same movement he seized the viking's helmet with his left hand and dragged him from his horse, while with his right hand he raised his axe and cut off the berserk's head.
- Njal's Saga, 12xx

Requires **AXE** or **TWO HANDED AXE**.

If played after a defender's **BLOCK**, you get a **Default Attack** which the attacker may defend against. The defender is given the option of hooking first. If the defender does not hook, the attacker may hook.

If played after defender **BLOCKS** (and if the defender does not then hook), cancels the **BLOCK**.

If played as an attack, defender cannot play **BLOCK**.

A **BLOCK** is defined as using a **SHIELD**, playing a **BLOCK** card, or countercharging a charger.

- **Rend**

Now Hrut turns to meet Atli: he cut at once at Hrut's shield, and clove it all in two, from top to point;
- Njal's Saga, 12xx

Requires **TWO HANDED AXE** or **TWO HANDED SWORD**.

You choose which item of the defender to damage - armour, weapon or shield. However, if the defender chooses to play **PARRY** after you announce your target, then their weapon is destroyed instead. If they play **BLOCK**, then their shield is destroyed. Destroyed items are discarded. Discarded armour is put in the normal discard pile. Discarded weapons or shields are put in the weapon discard pile until new ones are found on the battlefield with **Recovery**.

Highlander Variant

Only two handed weapons are used. Everyone recovers 2 health every turn up to their starting health of 12. A player cannot be killed unless they suffer at least 5 points of damage in a single attack, and that attack takes them below zero health.

Card Descriptions

Armour cards

- **SHIELD**

There against the enemy stood ready Byrhtnoth with his soldiers. He with his shield commanded to form the battle ranks and that force of men to hold fast firmly towards the enemy.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

You may block any one attack (ie one **default attack**, one **basic attack**, or one part of a **Flurry of Blows**, etc) with a SHIELD without playing a BLOCK card. If you block with the SHIELD, the SHIELD becomes damaged (turn the card over). If a DAMAGED SHIELD is damaged again, it becomes destroyed (put it in the discard pile).

- **MAIL**

So she sees that the game goeth sorely against her brethren, and she gathers to her great stoutness of heart, and does on her a mail-coat and takes to her a sword, and fights by her brethren, and goes as far forward as the bravest of man-folk;

- The Volsunga Saga , 12xx

A stout hauberk of mail. Stops one point of damage from any attack except **THRUST** and reduces **Flurry of Blows** by 1 for each attack. If played, you may not put this card back in your hand - although it does count towards your hand limit. If damaged with a **Rend**, discard the card. You cannot discard this card if you have it in play unless you spend a turn **Recovering**, or it is **Rent**.

Basic Attack cards

- **CHOP**

Then Grim struck him with an axe between the shoulders, inflicting a deep wound.

- The Saga of Grettir the Strong, 12??

Requires weapon other than **SPEAR**.

Damage: +2

- **CRITICAL HIT**

Then he with another stab speedily pierced the ravager so that the chainmail coat broke: this man had a breast wound cut through the linked rings; through his heart stuck a deadly spear.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

Requires weapon.

Damage: +3

Alternatively this card can be used to perform a **Rend** special attack with any weapon.

- **KICK**

Grettir stepped quickly across the ground, and when he got even with the berserk's horse he kicked the shield with his foot from below with such force that it struck his mouth, breaking the upper jaw, and the lower jaw fell down on to his chest.

- The Saga of Grettir the Strong, 12//

Damage: 2

Can be used without a weapon. Does not add to a weapon's damage. Cannot be **DISARMed**. May not be used in a **Special Attack**.

- **PUNCH**

Melkorka got angry, and struck Jorunn on the nose with her fist, so that the blood flowed.

- Laxdale Saga, 1245

Damage: 1

Can be used without a weapon. Does not add to a weapon's damage. Cannot be **DISARMed**. May not be used in a **Special Attack**.

- **SHIELD BASH**

He thrust then with his shield such that the spear shaft burst, and that spear-head shattered as it sprang in reply.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

Requires shield.

Damage: 3

You can't have a shield if you've got a two-handed weapon.

Cannot be **DISARMed**. May not be used in a **Special Attack**.

- **SLASH**

Wounded was Wulfmaer, meeting death on the battlefield, Byrhtnoth's kinsman: he with sword was, his sister's son, cruelly hewn down.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

Requires weapon.

Damage: +1

- **THRUST**

Experienced was that warrior; he thrust his spear forward through the warrior's neck, his hand guiding so that he this ravager's life would fatally pierce.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

Requires weapon other than **AXE** or **TWO HANDED AXE**. I don't like this phrasing.

Should be "Requires weapon. May not be used with..."]

Damage: +1

Bypasses **MAIL** and is not reduced in damage.

Defence cards

- **BLOCK**

*Into the ship our brave lads spring, --
On shield and helm their red blades ring;
- Saga of Olaf Haraldson, 1030*

Requires SHIELD.

Stops attack. May be cancelled by a **Special Attack: hook**

- **DISARM**

*Kari had his shield before him, and the blow fell on it, and the spear stuck fast in the shield.
Then Kari twists the shield so smartly, that the spear snapped short off, and then he drew his
sword and smote at Modolf;
- Njal's Saga, 12??*

Requires SHIELD or weapon.

Disarms **one handed weapons** (put them in the weapon discard pile) and counts as a defence against one handed weapon attacks. Cannot be used against **SHIELD BASH**, **KICK** or **PUNCH**.

- **DODGE**

*Kari Solmund's son turned now thither where Ami Kol's son and Hallbjorn the Strong were
in front, and as soon as ever Hallbjorn saw Kari, he made a blow at him, and aimed at his
leg, but Kari leapt up into the air, and Hallbjorn missed him.
- Njal's Saga, 12??*

A defence against attack. Cannot be used against a **SPEAR** attack.

- **PARRY**

*Then Thorbjorn rushed upon Grettir and struck at him, but he parried it with the buckler in
his left hand and struck with his sword a blow which severed Thorbjorn's shield in two and
went into his head, reaching the brain.
- The Saga of Grettir the Strong, 12??*

Requires weapon.

A defence against attacks, except **CHARGE**.

Special cards

- **SPECIAL ATTACK**

I hear that Eadweard smote one fiercely with his sword, withholding not in his blow, so that at his feet fell a doomed warrior;

- The Battle of Malden, 991

You may use one of the special attacks associated with the weapon you are wielding. This card can be played out of turn as a defence if it is appropriate. You may not combine a SPECIAL ATTACK with **KICK**, **PUNCH** or **SHIELD BASH**.

- **TRIP**

Luck was also with the two; twice the regarded Herewulf struck out with vicious spear at Cynewulf Geneat; twice he missed, to his surprise; he paid with blood for his misfortune.

- The tale of Cynewulf and Swiffrin at Cadbury, 868

Cancels any card at any time (including cards that require multiple defences and other TRIP cards) and gives you a **Basic** or **Default attack** that cannot be defended against except with another TRIP card. Can be played at any time, even in other player's turns - you still get the attack. Also note that if you cancel someone's defence card, the original attack gets through as well as the bonus attack.

Weapon cards

- **WORD**

One handed

Default attack: 2 damage

Special attacks: **Charge, Flurry of Blows, Disembowelling**

- **AXE**

Then Kol sprang on him, and said, "More folk can hew great strokes than thou alone;" and so he laid the axe on his head, and smote him his death-blow, and rides home afterwards, and tells Hallgerda of the slaying.

- Njal's Saga

One handed

Default attack: 2 damage

Special attacks: **Hook, Charge, Flurry of Blows, Disembowelling**

Note: AXE cannot **THRUST**

- **DAGGER**

After they had eaten and drunk, and were much intoxicated, Hengist suddenly vociferated, "Nimed eure Saxes!" and instantly his adherents drew their knives, and rushing upon the Britons, each slew him that sat next to him, and there was slain three hundred of the nobles of Vortigern.

- History of the Britons, Nennius, 796

One handed

Default attack: 1 damage

Special attacks: **Flurry of Blows, Disembowelling**

Note: Increases **THRUST** damage by 1. **Flurry of Blows** gives you three attacks, rather than just two.

- **SPEAR**

Resolute they approached Earl to the lowest Yeoman: each of them intent on harm for the enemy. Sent then a sea-warrior a spear of southern make that wounded the warrior lord.

- The Battle of Malden, 991

One handed

Default attack: 2 damage

Special attacks: **Charge, Flurry of Blows, Disembowelling**

Note: Cannot be **DODGED** by the defender. **SPEAR** cannot **CHOP**. Increases **THRUST** damage by 1.

- **TWO HANDED AXE**

*And many a man laid low
By the battle-axe's blow,*

- Saga of Olaf Haraldson, 1030

Two handed

Default attack: 3 damage

Special attacks: **Hook, Charge, Rend, Disembowelling**

Notes: **TWO HANDED AXE** cannot **THRUST**, **BLOCK** or **SHIELD BASH**.

- **TWO HANDED SWORD**

*The black ravens wade
In the blood from thy blade.*

- Saga of Olaf Haraldson, 1030

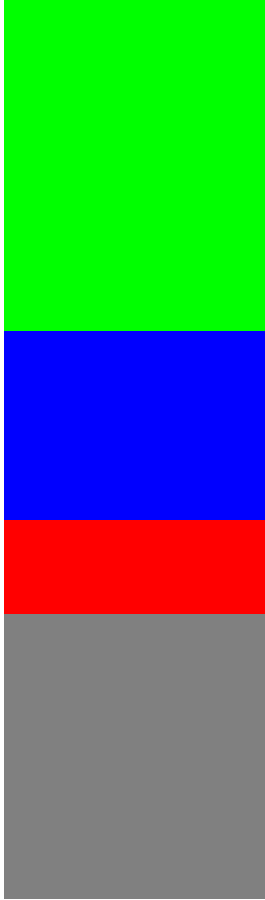
Two handed

Default attack: 3 damage

Special attacks: **Charge, Flurry of Blows, Rend, Disembowelling**

Note: **TWO HANDED SWORD** cannot **BLOCK** or **SHIELD BASH**. Increases **SLASH** and **THRUST** damage by 1.

Card List

Number	Type	Card Name	Card Back	Card Colour
4	Armour	Mail		
8	Armour	Shield	Shield Damaged	
6	Basic	Chop		
2	Basic	Critical Hit		
6	Basic	Kick		
6	Basic	Punch		
6	Basic	Shield Bash		
6	Basic	Slash		
6	Basic	Thrust		
10	Defence	Block		
6	Defence	Disarm		
8	Defence	Dodge		
8	Defence	Parry		
22	Special	Special Attack		
4	Special	Trip		
4	Weapon	Axe	Recovering	
2	Weapon	Dagger	Recovering	
8	Weapon	Sword	Recovering	
2	Weapon	Spear	Recovering	
2	Weapon	Two Handed Axe	Recovering	
2	Weapon	Two Handed Sword	Recovering	
128	Total Cards			