Volley Rounds

How many rounds before mêlée?

- Arctic, desert, farmland, or grassland: 6d6/6
- Forest, swamp, or woodland: 2d8/6
- Hills, or wasteland: 2d10/6
- Jungle: 2d6/6
- Mountains: 4d10/6
- Dungeon: always 1

Ranged Attacks
...can reach on the last two volley rounds, or up to two escape points.
Two-handed ranged weapons reach up to ten (at disadvantage until the last two).

Spells with a range of at least 300 feet:
range/60 ← round up (Without disadv.)

The rounds tick down as long as at least one side wants to close in, and if there are no ravines or similar in the way.

Usually there is no chase and only a single volley round.

Chases

Compare speeds (spending actions and bonus actions on speed first—if people hesitate, have them commit and reveal secretly). Escaper more than pursuer? Add one escape point. Pursuer more than escaper? Remove one escape point. A tie? Neither add nor remove escape points.

Separate pools for each escaper/pursuer pair.

Make attacks if you have actions left. That’s how you catch them! You need ranged attacks if there are escape points.

Escaper can roll to hide from those with at least one escape point on them. Once an escaper has hidden from a pursuer, that’s it. That pursuer has lost that escaper. See DMG p. 253 for ideas for hiding adv/disadv and complications.

If there are still pursuers, start a new round of compare → attack → hide.

Front rank
- Shoots at disad
- Can be in mêlée groups
- Can be shot

Back rank
- Can shoot
- Can’t be in mêlée groups
- Can be shot

To be in the back rank, you need to be guarded, or able to Levitate or similar ability, or be in a safe or unseen place.

Free Air
- Can shoot
- Can be only in air mêlée groups
- Can be shot

To be in the free air, you need a flying speed. You can go down to normal front rank by flying low.

Dashing 3× con times is fine. Beyond that you need to make DC 10 constitution checks or rack up temporary exhaustion.

The “Speed” number can take terrain, conditions, encumbrance etc into account even when we’re not tracking exact positions.

Mêlée Groups

A fancy word for standing next to someone. Fights start with everyone unengaged. Join a mêlée group with an enemy in order to make mêlée attacks on them. And monsters do the same to hit you. Multiple people can join the same mêlée group.

Targets in AoE

How many?

x/5, cone/10, line/30 ← round up
So a fireball (20’ radius) hits 4 targets.

Where?

If you target someone in a mêlée group, you need to target everyone in that group before selecting more targets outside that group.

Ranks

Guarded
- If there are less than two monsters per hero and either
  - At least two front rank heroes guarding you, or
  - At least three front rank heroes for each monster.

The guards decide who they protect if there’s an argument. Conjured creatures can’t be guards. You also can’t guard against swarms or incorporeal movement.

No Initiative Rolls

Just let everyone get an action every round. Holding light, or being in the same mêlée group as an ally with light, lets you strike before than your foe. If the light situation is equal, the side that didn’t start the fight can strike first.

“Reach Attack”

If you are unengaged and have longer mêlée reach than your target, you can make “reach attacks” against enemies without having to join their mêlée group (even if one or both of you are in the back rank).

Movement

You can always switch ranks unless you’re restrained or grappled, but to change mêlée group, you need to move.

Speed 1’-24’: you are slow. You can move into one group if you’re unengaged, or move out of one group.

Speed 25’ or more: you are fast. You can move in and out of any amount of groups.

You can use your reaction to make an opportunity attack on enemies in your mêlée group (or the enemy last you hit with a “reach attack”) if they move away from you without disengaging; “moving away” means moving anywhere except into your group.
Keeping Track

Example: six heroes vs a wight and three skeletons!

Heroes! Any non-halfings in class order (fighters first) then any halfings, also in class order.

Square grid, dotted, or lined paper all work great! But use pencil so you can erase dots and Xs.

X means mêlée group. In this example, Mike and Wendy are both unengaged, Cecilia is in a mêlée group with one skeleton, Terry in one with another, and then there's a big group with Felix, Doris, the wight and a skeleton.

As you leave a group, erase your Xs (and take opportunity attacks from them).

When you join a group, get an X with every enemy in that group (copy the Xs your allies in that group have).

In a chase write the number of escape points instead of Xs, and (unlike mêlée Xs) don't keep the rows in sync; allow each pursuer/escaper pair to be independent.

C for common sense around concentration, conjurations and other considerations, such as Armor of Agathys.

O for oh-no-you-didn't. Normal and extra attacks and cantrips are fine, but if you use slotted spells, Sneak Attack, Action Surge etc and manage to deal any damage, you get a mark here that remains until the fight is over.

N for knocked down or other things that lets the monsters gain advantage or avoid disadvantage.

F for front rank, L for light.

CON T L

HP
05 13 13 13
18 6 7
24

Monster columns! I usually use the starting HP to identify them but you can also jot down a name or initial. I like counting up the damage the monsters have taken until the damage reaches that starting HP. Jot down status effects like Vicious Mockery or conditions in these columns too.

Heroes are listed in class order; monsters are the most dangerous on the left to more minion types on the right.

I go through the mêlée groups from right to left; resolving actions in one group (both heroes and monsters) before going to the next. And lastly any unengaged combatants on either side.

In the example, a skeleton will hit Terry, Terry can act back, then Felix and Doris (they have light) and then their skeleton and wight, and then Cecilia (she has light) and then her skeleton, and finally Mike and Wendy.

Example

In the example, the order is Wendy, Doris, Mike, Felix, Cecilia, then Terry. This complex situation has gradually built over six rounds.

Mike and Wendy are in the back rank, and the limit on rank makes the undead all be front rank and unable to shoot them.

Doris and Felix are in a group that already has one enemy per hero; the limit on ganging up means the other two skeletons can't join that group unless someone took their place fighting Cecilia and Terry.

So the wight, being the most dangerous, attacks Doris. The skeleton in the same group also attacks Doris, while the last two skeletons attack Cecilia and Terry.