sport match rules

An Introduction

Welcome! This document is a set of rules that allows you to integrate sports rules into a combat encounter.

These rules are not system agnostic, as they use the 5e combat rules as a base to build on, but with tweaking they can be adapted to any system. These rules introduce brand new actions and reactions, so we strongly recommend letting your players familiarize themselves with them some time before the actual combat encounter so that it goes smoothly; consider sharing them the session before the sports match is set to take place.

The sport being played in question is left vague on purpose so that you can flavor it to something that will fit your setting. This sport could be played underwater, or floating through the sky, or involving advanced magitech, for example. We invite you to create a story behind the sport, as well as to think of how this sport affects and fits into your world. Useful questions to ask yourself when introducing something like a sport into your world are: How popular is this sport? Is this something that everybody is familiar with and most people enjoy at least watching? How did this sport come to be? Are there professional players of this sport? How are they treated by the general populace?

If your players enjoy their first sports match, consider making them a regular thing in your campaign. Maybe they can join a league and participate in matches at stadiums all across the nation they are traveling in in order to become the current champions. You can even create an entirely separate arc off of these rules.

Sport Rules

These are the general rules to play a sports match. We encourage you to add or change rules to suit the feel you want for the sport in your world. You could, for example, add underwater combat rules if the sport is played underwater, or make a team receive a point if they down a rival team member for more of a blood-sport feel, or add monsters to the field for a more gladiatorial arena vibe.

- The goal is to score as many points as possible within a set amount of time.
- A game lasts for 10 rounds. (For a longer match, consider 20 rounds.)
- A team scores a goal by shooting the ball into the enemy team's goal.
- No player can enter the 15-foot-radius zone around the goal known as the Goal Zone except for the goalie.
- The sport has only one set position: goalie. A member of each team is designated as the goalie. This member cannot leave the Goal Zone, and their mission is to stop the ball when an enemy team player shoots it towards their goal.
- When a team scores, the defending goalie takes immediate control of the ball, all players go back to their starting positions, and the match continues. Time spent going back to previous positions doesn't count as time spent in the match and initiative doesn't change but continues as it was before the goal.
- If by the end of the 10 rounds the teams have the same score, the winner is decided by a penalty shoot-out. Each team gets to shoot three shots against the enemy team goalie. If both teams score the same number of points during the penalty shoot-out, the match ends in a draw.

Sport Actions, Bonus Actions and Reactions

Actions:

Pass: Pass the ball from one teammate to another. A pass can travel a maximum distance of 30 feet. To make a pass, make a Dexterity-based attack plus proficiency. A pass is successful if the result of the roll is higher than 10.

Ex: A pass for a level 6 character with a Dex Score of 20:

d20 + Dex Modifier (5) + Proficiency Bonus (3) = 7 + 5 + 3 = 15

Shoot: Shoot the ball in a certain direction. The maximum distance the ball can travel when shot is 30 feet. To shoot, make a Strength-based attack plus proficiency.

- 10 or lower: The ball travels 10 feet
- 11 to 15: The ball travels 15 feet
- 16 to 20: The ball travels 20 feet
- 21 to 25: The ball travels 25 feet.
- 26 or higher: The ball travels 30 feet.

Tackle: Tackle a creature to take the ball from them and push them 10 feet away. To tackle a creature, make a Strength (Athletics) check. The creature makes a contested Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If your check is higher than theirs, the tackle is successful and the creature lets go of the ball, the ball now occupying the space the creature previously did, and the creature is pushed 10 feet away.

Steal: Take the ball away from the grasp of a creature. To steal the ball from a creature, make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. The creature makes a contested Wisdom (Insight) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If your check is higher than theirs you take the ball away from the creature.

Bonus Actions:

Pick Up: Pick up the ball when the ball is within 5 feet of you. This action can only be executed if the ball is not in possession of a creature.

Reactions:

Intercept: Stop a pass or shot. If a ball not in possession of a creature enters your range as it is being passed or shot, you can use your reaction to try to intercept the ball. To do so, roll a Dexterity saving throw. If your roll is higher than the roll of the initial pass or shot, you successfully intercept the ball, and it is now in your possession.

Lunge: Lunge in a direction of your choosing. You can invoke this reaction at any time except during your turn to move up to 10 feet in any direction. You can use this reaction to set yourself up for passes.

Concentration:

If a creature receives any damage while in possession of the ball, they must immediately make a concentration saving throw, as if concentrating on a spell. On a failure, they let go of the ball. The ball now occupies an empty space of the GM’s choice within 5 feet of the creature.

A Note: In order for these rules to work, class abilities or items that allow players to interact with objects as a bonus action or a free action should not work when dealing with the ball.

Sport Tips

This is a section of tips to play a match to its fullest potential. We greatly encourage sharing these with your players before the match.

- Use a ring (if playing in person) or a stamp (if playing online) to keep track of who has possession of the ball on the map.
- The goalie should be someone with a high dexterity, as their job is to intercept the ball.
- The goalie should be a ranged combatant, such as an archer or a caster, as they’re going to be away from the action for most of the match.

- Casters may wish to spend their time as defenders in the backline, close to the goalie, where they have the most range to influence the battlefield with their spells.
- Ranged combatants and characters with dexterity-based builds are better in the middle of the field to facilitate passes to attackers.
- Characters with strength-based builds are best as attackers, as the only way to gain points is to Shoot the ball into the enemy team’s goal.
- Be careful with using your reaction to hit a passing enemy with an opportunity attack, as you won’t have your reaction to intercept a ball if it comes near you or to lunge to receive a pass.
- You can get someone to drop the ball they are holding in several ways: You can tackle them, steal the ball from them, or damage them to make them lose concentration.

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