

Sellsword

Miniatures Skirmish Game

FAQ Summer 2013

The Sellsword system is based on rolling a d20?

Yes. The d20 provides a great mechanism for incremental advancement of skill. It also allows for a greater range of defensive statistics for defending creatures. We also have an option that allows it to be played using d6s, and this will be released as an optional module in 2014.

How does the Sellsword skirmish game work?

The game is designed to allow 2 or more players (but usually 2) to play in head to head battles with different but generally equal warbands. Each warband is made up of men and monsters who share core ideals (their faction) that guide their conduct. A warband is constructed by first adding to it units, based on their victory point cost, then adding modifications to those units having prerequisites to carry them to round out the victory point total. In some scenarios, the overall fantasy level is limited as well. Then, a player simply picks miniatures from their collection that match the brief description on the stat card, and the two warbands enter a battlefield. Combat proceeds in rounds, with each unit taking a turn in each round. Units move, make attacks, and deal damage, dropping their enemies. Once you've played a few times, matches resolve in about 40 minutes.

So - if it is a head to head game, will there be organized Play?

Yes, it is coming- likely to start at GenCon 2013. We'll have medieval style organization to our tournaments, to reflect the gritty and retro feel of the game. We'll pair with other companies to provide prize support. And we'll be giving prizes not only to top finishing players, but also to the folks that bring the coolest warbands.

Umm - I don't actually like organized play. Can I do campaign play at home with friends?

Hah. Yes again. Planned for the fall of 2013, we'd like to release the first campaign in which each battle has meaning for the next. Warleaders will advance and gain specific mods or loot based on the results of prior battles. You see, we like organized play AND campaign play.

You said 'advance...' that sure sounds a little like an RPG to me.

Well, Ok. You caught us. There will be an actual RPG-version released in 2014 using our core system. However, it is going to be a *lite* RPG. What is a lite rpg? Think of it as the kind of 'back-up' campaign your GM can quickly throw together, say, when you find out your main Friday night group is going to be missing a key player and you still need your RPG fix. It will be the kind of game a new-to-gaming person will play for a month or two before they realize they are RPGing. Trust us. We've already got months and months of playtest in. And we'll give you the web tools to make this easy.

So, can I design my own *S*ellsword miniature stats?

Of course! On the downloads page of the website you can find some blank cards. These aren't legal for organized play, but they definitely let you get your creative freak on. Use existing miniature stats as guides. Post your best ones on the forums!

How often will you design new miniatures stats?

Initially, pretty often. We are aiming for a core of about 350 different units in 7 factions. This means our original release schedule will be pretty hectic – 3 to 4 times a year, slowing to twice a year in the future, and building to over 1000 different stat cards.

The *S*ellsword system – is it complicated? I understand that every unit gets a turn each round. Can you give me a brief overview of a unit's turn.

Wow. Ok. Here is a slightly complicated example, that sums up some choices mid battle.

A Landed Knight (Valor) is in mid-battle. He's tiring; he's lost most of his Vigor, and has only 10 Vigor left. If he loses much more, he's not going to be able to avoid taking actual wounds. The kind that slow you down, or kill you. To make it even more complicated, he has also been poisoned, so at the beginning of his turn, he is due to take 5 recurring toxic wounds.

He uses 5 of his 10 remaining Vigor to avoid the recurring toxic wounds. Then, like other units in *Sellsword*, he has three Acts to spend. He uses the first Act to attack an Orc Raider in a square adjacent to him. He rolls a d20 and gets a 15. With his +11 attack bonus, he gets a total of 26. The Orc's armor is only 16, a full 10 points below his roll. Since he is 10 above his target number, he scores a critical strike, doing 10 bonus damage, for a total of 30. The Orc doesn't have nearly enough Vigor left to avoid wounding; it avoids 10 using its Vigor, but then takes 20 points of wounds and drops. At this point, he could use an Act to celebrate the kill, restoring 5 Vigor to himself. But he decides not to. He has other things to do.

Instead, as his second Act, the knight advances 4 squares (his full move, likely due to his heavy armor), ending 3 squares from an Orc Warleader. The player controlling the knight has already decided that the knight would not shy away from him.

So, with his third and last Act, he charges, a special attack act that grants 10 feet (2 squares) of movement and an attack as well, but also costs 5 Vigor to execute, since it is a tiring activity. The move will end with him adjacent to the targeted Warleader, which will allow him to make his attack. He rolls a natural 20; another critical strike. This time it is a critical strike because natural, unmodified rolls of 20s are always critical strikes, even if you are not 10 above the target number. The bonus again increases the wounds caused to 30, and he does 'Cut' wounds. The Orc is immune to the first 5 Cut wounds due to armor, and expends 20 Vigor to avoid (dodge) most of the rest of the wounds, but 5 wounds still hit. The Warleader checks off a defensive wound box, reminding him that he must reduce armor and other stats by 2. Each wound also imposes a -1 penalty to that unit's attacks and recovery checks. But for all that, the Warleader remains alive. If the Warleader had possessed a 'react' token, he might have even been able to declare a reply (counterattack) to the knight's attack. Luckily, his were all previously expended (clearly, the Knight took him by surprise) and had not yet been recovered.

Finally, the turn ends. At this point, the Knight can try to recover, shaking off the effects of the poison. For the recovery roll, he needs to roll low. This poison requires him to roll below his Brawn stat. He tries, but he rolls another natural 20! This is above his Brawn stat, so he fails to recover. With no Vigor left, he will take 5 wounds next turn. Things look grim for the young lord.

Why do you do wounds and Vigor, etc., in multiples of 5?

This is a commonly asked question. On the one hand, it is convenient for the level of vigor that players expect from a variety of creatures, and it fits nicely with our '10 above is +10 wounds' model of critical strikes. But future expanded rules will include head to head tests using the d20, and for this the 'groups of 5' mechanic shines, along with a future 'telling blow' mechanic.

Does *Sellsword* have its own world?

The *Sellsword* system can be used for any mythical world, but we have developed our own as a guideline for how we want its inhabitants to act. The world we have developed for *Sellsword* is dark and gritty, and mostly 'low' fantasy. It is a place where humanity nominally rules the world, dominating the lands along the seas and many of the rivers. But humanity is nonetheless in decline. Their great empires are gone. The golden age is spoken of by many, but is remembered by none. The world of the ancient kings is long gone.

No men remember those days, now more than three centuries in the past, but some few who know the secrets of sorcery have caught glimpses of what was, and what could be again. Yet these few seers are feared and persecuted by common folk. Perhaps, rightly so. Both of the prior great empires of men ended in cataclysm.

Deeper into the mountains and forests, there are others. Many others. Others, who remember.

Sellsword is no world where old allegiances are honored. Elves live hidden in great forests, the servants of the Fey court who brook no passage by strangers. Dwarves carve their clanholds deep into their mountains, providing space to mine, forge and craft. Both, but especially the elves, have been known to blame men for the coming of the *Orcani*, but no single reason is apparent. When the Orc waves come, though, all must stand ready; man, dwarf and elf alike.

The creatures and men in our world are frequently based more on European mythology than on current idioms distributed in video games or pen and paper RPGs. We like this. As much as I like the idea of big-ass goblins, Tolkien (admitted that he) blew it when he made hobgoblins bigger than goblins. In our world, and in medieval earth, Hobgoblins are little magical goblins, it turns out. Who knew? *Sellsword* has big goblins, but we call them Bugbears.

You create and distribute *Sellsword* for free?

Great question. Yes, the game is free, and is completely run by volunteers, at least for now. We are well aware that this is a terrible business model. It is one of those mysteries. For example, how can someone make a massive social media website free? We don't know. But it seems to us that if the game is good, maybe somewhere down the road there is a way to make the website earn its way. We'll see. That's not really the point, right?

First, let's make a good game, and take care of our key priority.

Can I help with *Sellsword*?

Always. The reason for gaming is community, and the game is itself community driven. The minis community is filled with incredible people. We are focused on having self-appointed leaders get involved locally, nationally and internationally. Contact us online and let us know what you most like, or most want, to contribute to. After all, if you like what are doing, it doesn't really feel like work.