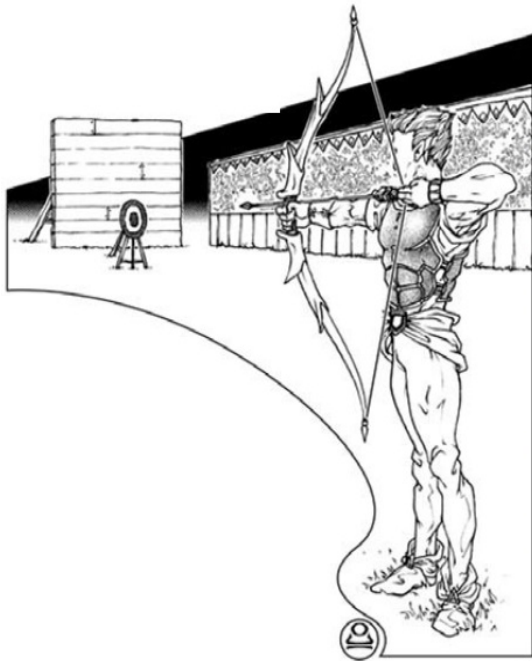


Archery Competitions



Combat and defense is one of the foremost concerns of societies and civilization, so it is not surprising that many competitions focus on martial skills and exposition. Warrior societies put great stock in such tournaments, while more secure cultures, which tend to find martial competitions to be quaint throwbacks to more dangerous times, enjoy combat competitions as entertainment detached from actual needs for military might. This interest might hail from a chivalric sense of honor and nobility, or in the simple debauched bloodlust of a decadent nation.

Archery competitions are one of the most common martial competitive events. The rules are quite simple: competitors fire at a target and score points depending on how close to the center of the target the arrow strikes. The archer with most points wins. A staple of medieval tournament events, the archery contest draws bowmen from far and wide to compete in this test of skill and accuracy.

Contests can sometimes attract up fifty or more skilled competitors, and the winner often receives a valuable prize – cash, jewellery or, more commonly, a fine bow or quiver of arrows.

In traditional archery contests, contestants fire arrows at a stationary target, though some tournaments use moving targets or have the archers fire from horseback. Usually the target has different locations that are worth different points in a contest, though some contests simply require a contestant to hit the target at all to progress.

Mechanics

These mechanics assume an archery contest whose target has different locations worth different amounts of points. Each archer gets a certain number of shots, usually one or three, and winners are determined by who gets the most points in either an elimination or round robin tournament. For each shot, the archer makes an attack roll, and his total attack roll determines how many points he gets. In the case of ties, the target is moved back 100 ft per round thereafter that there is no winner. Make sure to take into account range penalties.

The first thing you, as the DM, need to do is determine how

difficult this tournament is. If it's a simple village affair, the shots may be quite easy for seasoned adventurers; but a tournament involving the cream of a mighty empire might begin with very difficult targets – and many more contestants!

The table at the end of this article shows the attack bonuses of the contestants at each round of a contest. The AC of the target at that contest level is **the attack bonus of the competitors +10** (thus giving the average competitor at a given tier of the tournament a 50% chance to succeed). The progression is fairly linear up until the finals and semi-finals, where the talent level jumps up a bit. You, as the DM, are free to adjust these numbers, of course.

Example

A competition spanning a whole country begins with The Masses. In the first round, the target's AC is 16 and the competitors have an attack bonus of 6. The following round involves a target with an AC of 18 and 512 competitors with attack bonuses of 8. By the semi-final, there are 4 competitors with attack bonuses of 24 shooting at a target with an AC of 34, and the final involves two competitors with attack bonuses of 28 shooting at an AC 38 target.

Points

A competitor hits the target and scores 1 point if he rolls high enough to hit the target's AC. If he beats it by 5, he hits the middle ring and scores 2 points; if he beats it by 10, he hits the bullseye and scores 3 points. In each round, half of the competitors progress (the half with the most points).

But there are 512 competitors!

You're not expected to roll attack rolls and tally the points for each of 512 competitors in a world-wide tournament. In fact, above 4 competitors, a PC will progress to the next round simply by scoring higher than average number of points. Once you reach the semi-finals, though, you should handle each competitor individually to increase the drama of the occasion.

The average is easy to determine. Over three shots, each competitor is expected to score 3 points. If the PC scores more than 3 points, he progresses to the next round.

Of course, there aren't always 512 competitors. The blank areas on the table represent levels of talent which don't exist in local areas. A village will only provide 8 competitors of note, a town only 64.

Always include a nemesis

You should create an individual nemesis for the PC in order to personalize the whole process. This nemesis provides narrative background for most of the competitions – jeers, insults, challenges, bets, etc. - but should be rolled for directly once the semi-finals are reached. The nemesis will have the attack bonus given in the table for the Top Rating level for the region size used.

Example

Robin Fairfoot, an elven ranger, is competing in a regional tournament. His nemesis in this tournament is Boris the Blue, an obnoxious man and the current favorite. Boris' attack bonus is +22. Up until the semi-final, Boris interacts with the PC in a non-

mechanical way (the DM plays him taunting Robin); at the semi-final, with 4 competitors, two are regular competitors, one is the PC, and the last is Boris. At this point, the DM starts rolling Boris' attack rolls against the target. He and Robin will likely progress.

Tier	Village	Town	Region	Country	World	Planar
Top Rating (2 competitors)	12	17	22	28	38	48
Second (4 competitors)	8	13	18	24	34	44
Third (8 competitors)	4	9	14	20	30	40
Fourth (16 competitors)	-	7	12	18	28	38
Fifth (32 competitors)	-	5	11	16	26	36
Sixth (64 competitors)	-	4	8	14	24	34
Seventh (128 competitors)	-	-	10	16	26	36
Eighth (256 competitors)	-	-	8	14	24	34
Ninth (512 competitors)	-	-	-	12	22	32
Lowest of Note (The masses)	-	-	-	10	20	30

Variants and Optional Rules

Common variants involve using other weapons than bows. Halflings favor slings or javelins, Gnomes enjoy watching blindfolded archery, and Dwarves are renowned for throwing hand axes through kegs of ale. You can also use these rules for darts, throwing horseshoes over stakes, shooting clay pigeons, or any other type of missile-based contest.

Orcs practice Punctureshot Archery contests, where the goal is to shoot through several archery targets. Each target is a sheet of painted paper attached to a thin sheet of wood. After the arrow hits, roll for damage. For every 5 points of damage, the arrow punctures one target and hits the next. Magical arrows are usually forbidden, but most Orcs won't know the difference unless the arrows are obviously enchanted. For every target punctured, 1 point is earned. Sometimes, instead of archery targets, Orcs line up prisoners of war, which take 10 points of damage to puncture through a torso.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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