

Sellswords & Godwars

Player's Options for Fantasy Roleplaying

Core Systems

Sellswords & Godwars is my own contribution to the burgeoning market in "old school" simulacrum games— in this case, stretching the definition to include the late '90s, just before the advent of "modern" D&D and the *d20 System*. The primary inspirations for *Sellswords & Godwars* are AD&D's *Player's Option* rules, ICE's *Middle Earth Roleplaying*, and various Palladium Books games, but it is not compatible with them; it uses the SRD 3.5, PFSRD, and SRD 5.1 rules to recreate what I enjoyed about those older systems, and *hopefully* will recreate what others enjoyed about them.

These alpha design documents are not intended to be a playable game. These rules are merely a demonstration of the design principles I am using to develop the finished product; when in doubt, assume that any rule not included here works according to the SRD 5.1.

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Core Mechanics

Ability Scores function similarly to the SRD:

- 10-11 is the average human score, with an ability modifier of 0
 - Every 2 points above 10 is a +1 bonus.
 - Every 2 points below 11 is a -1 penalty.
- **Strength:** Strength adds to melee attacks and damage and to Maneuver Saves.
- **Dexterity:** Dexterity adds to all attack rolls, Armor Class, Reflex Saves and Initiative checks.
- **Constitution:** Constitution contributes to maximum hit points and healing, and adds to Fortitude Saves.
- **Intelligence:** Intelligence adds to Perception and Initiative checks and Reflex saves. Intelligence is the spellcasting ability for Arcane spells.
- **Wisdom:** Wisdom adds to Perception checks and Will Saves. Wisdom is the spellcasting ability for Divine, Primal, and Psychic spells.
- **Charisma:** Charisma adds to Focus pool, Fortitude and Will Saves, and bonus spell slots.

Checks – All checks take the form of $d20 + \text{two ability mods} + \text{bonuses}$ to meet or exceed either a set DC or an opposed roll.

- **Critical Success:** Checks have a **Critical Threshold** (normally 20); if the unmodified result on the d20 roll equals or exceeds the Critical Threshold, record the original result. Then, reroll the d20 and add the result to the original total before applying modifiers.
 - If the reroll equals or exceeds the Critical Threshold again, add the result to the original result, record the sum, and then reroll again. Continue rerolling until the result is less than the Critical Threshold.
- **Degrees of Success:** If the roll meets or exceeds the DC, the character achieves 1 degree of success. Every five full points by which the roll exceeds the DC is an additional degree of success.
- **Degrees of Failure:** If the roll fails to meet the DC, the character incurs 1 degree of failure. Every five full points by which the roll falls short of the DC is an additional degree of failure.
- **Advantage and Disadvantage:**
 - **Advantage:** When a character rolls with Advantage, they roll 2d20 and take the higher roll. Multiple sources of Advantage do not stack.
 - **Disadvantage:** When a character rolls with Disadvantage, they roll 2d20 and take the lower result. Multiple sources of Disadvantage do not stack.
 - If a given check has both Advantage and Disadvantage, they cancel each other out.

Archetypes are the *Sellswords & Godwars* equivalent of both races and classes in the SRDs.

- **Ancestral Archetypes**, or **Ancestries**, are the equivalent of races.
- **Occupational Archetypes**, or **Occupations**, are the equivalent of classes.
- **Ancestries** and **Occupations** are mechanically interchangeable.

Level: *Sellswords & Godwars* runs from level 1 to level 36.

- Characters gain a Proficiency Slot every level after 1st.
- Characters gain a Feat every odd level.
 - Every sixth level after 1st, characters gain one Occupational feat and one Ancestral feat instead of the usual free feat choice.

Category Bonuses replace the majority of class-based numeric bonuses (or the Proficiency Bonus) in the SRD rules. Category Bonuses are granted by Archetypes and Feat selection.

- **Combat Bonuses:** Stamina, Vitality, Combat, Fortitude, Reflex, Will.
 - **Stamina** and **Vitality** determine maximum hit points and healing.
 - **Combat** adds to attack rolls and Maneuver saves and governs combat proficiencies.
 - **Fortitude**, **Reflex**, and **Will** contribute to their respective Saving Throws.
- **Skill Bonuses:** Prowess, Perception, Influence, and Savvy.
 - **Prowess** skills involve athleticism, gross motor control, and endurance.
 - **Perception** skills involve awareness and insight.
 - **Influence** skills involve social niceties and un-niceties.
 - **Savvy** skills involve special knowledge, research, and techniques.
- **Magic Bonuses:** Valence, Potency, Focus; By Sphere; By Circle
 - **Valence** contributes to how many spells you can cast per day.
 - **Potency** contributes to your maximum spell rank.
 - **Focus** determines Focus Pool and magical Save DCs.
 - The maximum Focus you can spend on a single ability one-half your Focus Bonus.
- **Sphere** and **Circle** bonuses determine a spellcaster's access to spell lists. Circle bonuses add to Save DCs and have a significant effect on the power of spells.

Proficiencies are divided into categories:

- **Combat Proficiencies** grant characters weapon and armor proficiency/expertise, unarmed combat ability, and unarmored defense.
- **Skill Proficiencies** grant skill training and skill unlocks.
- **Magic Proficiencies** grant characters additional spells known, cantrips, and invocations.

Feats are more substantial than Proficiencies. There are multiple categories of Feats:

- **General** Feats may be selected by any character who meets the prerequisites.
 - Prerequisites are *substantially* reduced from PFSRD, with most feats having no prerequisites or only a level prerequisite.
- **Archetype** Feats may only be selected by characters who belong to the listed archetype(s).
 - **Archetype** Talents are similar to Feats, but more limited: they grant only the bare minimum ability.
- **Bloodline** feats allow characters to have a powerful supernatural bloodline. Characters may only select Bloodline feats from a single Bloodline.

Feats have the following features:

- **Ability Score Increases:** Each feat grants a +1 increase to two ability scores.
- **Category Bonuses:** Each feat grants a bonus (up to +2) to one or more category bonuses
- **Special Abilities:** Most talents grant additional special abilities.
- Many feats can be taken more than once.

Save Bonuses:

- Standard Saving Throws are d20 + two ability modifiers + Save Bonus +1/2 levels.
- **Fortitude** (CON/CHA) is used to resist effects that affect the character's body or magical life force, such as poisons and diseases or necromantic magic.
- **Reflex** (DEX/INT) is used to avoid area of effect attacks.
- **Will** (WIS/CHA) is used to resist effects that attack the character's mind, emotions, or spirit; these effects are almost always magical.
- **Maneuver Saves** (STR/DEX) resist the effects of combat maneuvers, and are based on the character's Combat bonus.

Action Economy

Action Economy and **Round Structure** follow the SRD 5.1:

- Characters make an **Initiative** check at the beginning of each round
 - Initiative check is equal to $d20 + \text{DEX/INT} + \text{Reflex Bonus}$
- Characters have a **Major Action** and one **Minor Action** during their turn and one (or more) **Reactions** between the end of their turn and the beginning of their next turn. Characters may move up to their speed as part of any major action.
 - Characters may gain access to more than one Reaction per turn, but rules for taking Reactions are limited.
 - Generally characters may only take each type of Swift Action they are entitled to once per turn.
 - Characters may only take one Reaction per triggering incident, no matter how many Reactions they are entitled to.

Major Actions function as Actions in 5.0 SRD.

- **Attack Actions:** There are multiple kinds of attack action.
 - **Single Attack** is a single attack with one weapon, unarmed strike, or natural attack at the character's full Attack bonus.
 - **Multiattack** allows characters with the Extra Attack ability or multiple natural attacks to make multiple attacks at one-half their Attack bonus.
 - Extra Attack (and Extra Attack II and III) functions as in SRD 5.0 as a Class Feature/Feat available to most archetypes. Multiple Extra Attack abilities do not stack.
 - **Double Attack** allows characters wielding two weapons to make a single attack with each weapon at their full Attack bonus, with penalties that are reduced by the Two Weapon Fighting proficiency.
 - Other types of attack are described by the ability that grants them.
- **Cast a Spell** – Some spells have different action requirements, including taking multiple actions.
- **Dash** – Move up to twice the character's Speed.
- **Disengage**
- **Dodge**
- **Help**
- **Hide**
- **Invocation** – Invocations are their own kind of action, described by the Invocation itself.
- **Ready**
- **Search**
- **Use an Object**

Minor Actions

- **Attack/Attacks** – Some Proficiencies/Feats allow characters to make one or more attacks as a Minor Action, usually in conjunction with using a Standard Action to Attack or Cast a Spell.
- **Cast a Spell** – Some spells can be cast as Minor Actions, while others require multiple actions.
- **Dash** – The Athletics proficiency allows characters to spend a Focus point to Dash as a minor action.
- **Disengage** – The Acrobatics proficiency allows characters to Disengage as a Swift Action.
- **Dodge** – The Patient Defense proficiency allows characters to spend a Focus point to Dodge as a Swift Action.
- **Hide** – Stealth mastery allows characters to spend a Focus point to Hide as a Swift Action.

Reactions

- **Gaining Extra Reactions** – characters can make one Reaction per round, plus one per point of the lower of their Dexterity and Intelligence bonuses.
 - The **Initiative** skill grants additional Reactions.
- **Attack of Opportunity** – When an enemy within reach exposes themselves to an AoO, characters may spend a Reaction to make a single melee attack.
- **Parry** – Characters who are struck in melee while wielding a melee weapon may spend a Focus Point to make an opposed Parry check to negate the attack.
 - **Riposte** – The Dueling proficiency allows characters who roll a critical success on a parry check to make a single melee attack against their attacker.
- **Maneuver** – The Canny Defense proficiency allows characters to spend a Focus point to perform a Combat Maneuver against a character who misses them in melee.

Hit Points & Healing

Hit Points, Damage & Death

- Characters' ability to endure damage and recover from it is measured by **Hit Dice** and **Hit Points**, which are derived from **Constitution**, **Stamina**, and **Vitality**.
- **Hit Dice:** Characters have a pool of Hit Dice they may spend to recover hit points. The size of the hit dice depends upon the character's Occupation.
 - When a character spends one or more Hit Dice, they roll that number of dice and recovers hit points equal to the total. Characters may only spend Hit Dice under certain circumstances, including rest and receiving magical healing.
 - Characters have a number of Hit Dice equal to the sum of their Vitality Bonus and one-half their character level.
- **Hit Points:** Characters have maximum hit points equal to their Constitution score *plus* their Stamina times their Hit Dice.
- **Disabled:** Characters are disabled when reduced to 0 or fewer hit points. Disabled characters are considered helpless and cannot take any actions.
- **Dying:** Characters reduced to negative hit points are dying. Dying characters must roll Endurance checks to avoid taking further damage.
 - Every turn on their initiative order, dying characters roll a Fortitude Save with a DC equal to 10 + their negative hit point total. On a failure, they lose 1d4 more hit points. On a success, they lose no further hit points and may spend one Hit Die per degree of success; once they have reached a number of degrees of success equal to their negative hit point total, they stabilize.
- **Death Threshold:** Characters die when they reach negative hit points equal to their Death Threshold. Death Threshold equals Constitution Score + Vitality Bonus + Character Level.

Rest & Recovery

- **Short Rest:** Whenever you stop adventuring for at least fifteen minutes and engage in no strenuous activities, you gain the benefits of a short rest. You may only benefit from a short rest once every two hours.
 - Regain hit points equal to your Constitution modifier plus your Vitality Bonus. You may spend as many Hit Dice as you wish, up to the number you have remaining.
 - Regain spent focus points equal to your Focus Bonus.
 - Refresh any encounter abilities you possess.
- **Long Rest:** Whenever you rest for at least eight consecutive hours, you gain the benefits of a long rest. You may only benefit from a long rest once every 24 hours.
 - **Healing:**
 - **Hit Points:** Regain hit points equal to your Constitution modifier plus your Vitality Bonus. You may roll all of your remaining Hit Dice without expending them.
 - **Hit Dice:** After rolling to regain hit points, regain Hit Dice equal to your Constitution bonus plus your Vitality Bonus.
 - **Rejuvenation:** Regain all expended Focus points and spell slots.

Magic

Spellcasting Basics – Spellcasting is similar to SRD 5.1:

- All characters have a spellcasting progression based on spell slots.
 - Spells per Day are based on the spellcaster's Valence Bonus and character level.
 - Saves DCs are based on the spellcaster's Charisma, Focus Bonus, and Circle bonuses.
 - Circle Bonus
- **Prepared and Spontaneous Casters:** There are four means of accessing spell lists:
 - **Spells Known:** Most spellcasters have some Spells Known, either through an archetype feature or through proficiency slots. Characters can learn any one spell they can cast by spending a proficiency slot.
 - **Prepared Spells:** Characters who can prepare spells, from a familiar or spellbook, treat those spells as temporary spells known. Prepared spellcasters can pick new spells by re-preparing them during a short rest.
 - **Granted Spells:** Clerics and Paladins automatically know all of the Divine spells they are capable of casting.
 - **Retrieved Spells:** Shamans can "prepare" a limited number of spells from the list of spells they are capable of learning, but these spells are forgotten once they are cast.
- Casting a spell requires using one's Action and expending a spell slot.
 - Each spell has a minimum rank of spell slot needed to cast it and most spells have increased effects when cast using a higher-rank spell slot.
- Casting spells within reach of enemies provokes opportunity attacks.
 - Getting hit while casting a spell forces the caster to make a Concentration check with a DC equal to 10 + spell rank + damage or lose the spell slot without effect.

Spheres and Circles

- Magic is divided into **Spheres** that determine the rules for spellcasting, and **Circles** that determine access to spell lists.
 - Each Sphere has its own spellcasting ability.
 - **Arcane** and **Psychic** use Intelligence.
 - **Divine** and **Primal** use Wisdom.
- Spell Save DC equals 10 + ability mod + the caster's Focus and Circle Bonuses.
- The maximum spell rank a character can learn is equal to one-half the sum of Sphere Bonus and Circle Bonus. The spellcaster must have at least +1 in both the Sphere and the Circle to cast spells from a Circle.
- Feats that grant Sphere and Circle bonuses are balanced so that characters can either have the spells per day progression of a Tier 1/2 spellcaster, or the broad spell list of a Tier 1/2 spellcaster, but not both.

Cantrips & Invocations

- **Cantrips** are minor at-will magical effects granted by proficiencies. Cantrips cannot be cast using spell slots.
 - Cantrips are not spells, but they do provoke Attacks of Opportunity.
- **Invocations** are more powerful at-will effects. Each invocation is its own separate proficiency, though higher ranks often allow more varied effects.
- Some cantrips can be augmented in a variety of ways by spending Focus points.

Concentration

- Certain spells require the caster to maintain concentration on them. If the caster stops concentrating, the spell effect ends immediately.
- Casters can only concentrate on a single spell at a time by default. Character options might allow a caster to concentrate on more than one.
- Casters who take damage while concentrating must roll a single Concentration check with a DC equal to 10 + damage taken. Each degree of success allows them to maintain concentration on a single spell of their choice.