

# D6 System

# Dueling Blades

## Combat Variant

*By Peter Schweighofer*

Melee combat can play a vital role in *D6* games, especially those for *Star Wars* and *Hercules & Xena*. Although the *D6* and *D6 Prime Systems* have some of the easiest rules, there's always room for improvement and streamlining, especially when you're running a game for cinematic, fast-paced effect.

The *Dueling Blades* variant focuses on condensing melee combat, substituting simultaneous hit resolution for round-based attacks and defenses. It also produces more varied results besides simple damage. (The system can also streamline brawling confrontations, if you'd like.)

*Dueling Blades* handles melee combat simultaneously with opposed rolls. Instead of combatants rolling their *melee combat* and *melee parry* skills each turn, have them roll their *melee combat* skill dice simultaneously. For systems relying on dual combat/parry skills like *Star Wars*, use the higher skill. For *Hercules & Xena*, just use the *fighting* skill. Each round, opponents roll their combat skill. The higher one wins that round of melee repartee. The actual results depend on how much higher one opponent rolled above the other's score; check out the *Combat Results* table below.

*Example: Smuggler Dan has a melee combat skill of 5D, but his melee parry is 6D. Using the Dueling Blades variant, he'd roll 6D in melee.*

### ***Dueling Blades* Rule of Thumb:**

**Each combatant rolls her *melee/fighting* skill dice. The higher total wins that round. The difference between the two indicates combat results.**

*Example: Jedi Jane and Bob the Evil Jedi are facing off on a catwalk high above the industrial sector of some starport. Each rolls their lightsaber skill. Jane gets a 19, while Bob gets a miserable 11. Jane wins this round of fighting, and probably knocks Bob off balance (see the table below).*

Forget Defense Totals and minimum difficulty numbers to hit with various melee weapons. Just roll the appropriate skill dice each round, determine the winner and combat effect. This system certainly favors those with significantly higher skills, but with Force Points, Character Points and Fate Points, there's always a chance for the underdog to triumph at a critical moment.

## Combat Results

Winning <i>D6</i>	Difference <i>D6 Prime</i>	Combat Effect
1-5	1 Success	Force back.
6-10	2 Successes	Knock off balance: -1D to all rolls next round.
11-15	3 Successes	Wound: inflict damage per rules.
16+	4+ Successes	Trick: successfully executes combat-related maneuver--disarms opponent, slices suspenders and drops his pants, throws cape over his head and confuses him.

## Combat Effects

The *Combat Results* table above indicates various effects based on how much higher one opponent rolls over another. For *D6 System* games, this relies on the difference in skill roll totals; for *D6 Prime*, it's based on the number of successes rolled above the loser's score.

*Example: Pandemonios and Articles are fighting over some insult delivered in a tavern. Each is bashing away with their sword. Pandemonios rolls 6 successes on his fighting skill; Articles only rolls 4. Pandemonios knocks Articles off balance. Next round Articles has a -1D penalty to all his actions...including rolling his fighting skill dice.*

**Force Back:** The winner's blows are so well-placed and powerful the loser must retreat, often in a direction she'd rather not be heading. The winner (with the gamemaster's help) determines the direction based on the surroundings and combatants' placement. The loser might be steered toward another obstacle: a wall, chasm, trap, another opponent.

**Knock Off Balance:** The winner manages to knock the loser off balance, either through heavy blows, fancy maneuvering, or forcing the loser onto unsteady ground. This effectively "stuns" the loser, inflicting a -1D penalty against all actions for the next round only. The loser can still act, but at a significant disadvantage.

**Wound:** The winner strikes a blow on the loser. Follow normal damage rules for your particular game. If the loser was knocked off balance last round, the -1D penalty may also

apply to *Strength* rolls to resist damage; losing one's balance exposes more vital areas to hits, or can make certain body parts easier targets. The winner chooses exactly how much damage to inflict, within the range indicated by his weapon and any damage rolls made.

**Trick:** The winner is such a good fighter she manages to pull some kind of trick combat maneuver on the loser: disarming him, throwing a cape over his head, knocking him to the ground, slicing his suspenders and dropping his pants. The winner, with the gamemaster's guidance, can help determine the exact trick effect.

The winner may always choose a lower option, no matter how high she rolls. A good fighter knows how to produce the desired effect, whether it's to maneuver an opponent into a tenuous position or wound him just enough.

***Example:** Jedi Jane rolls a 28 against Bill the Evil Jedi's lightsaber score of 15. Theoretically Jane could inflict damage on Bill according to the regular wound rules. However, Jane wants to toy with Bill a bit more. She instead chooses to force him back toward the deep chasm. She could also choose to knock him off balance, lowering his roll next round by -1D. (This option is useful when the winner is trying to get a higher score next round to possibly execute a combat-related maneuver with the "Trick" result.)*

The *Dueling Blades* option simplifies melee combat into opposing rolls each round, with variable results on the battlefield. This variant is recommended for any melee-heavy games: *Hercules & Xena*, *Star Wars* lightsaber combat, a *Three Musketeers*-type campaign, even a pirate game.

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The author is a West End Games expatriate, formerly editor of *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal* and author of such game products as *Platt's Starport* and *Smugglers Guides*, *The Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook*, the *Star Wars Introductory Adventure Game*, *Imperial Double-Cross*, the *Shadows of the Empire Sourcebook*, and numerous *Journal* articles. He's currently an editor at a historical publishing institute in Williamsburg, Virginia.