

Raven's Brew

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Introduction

The rules that are described in this document are home-brewed rules for D&D 5e by me, one or some of my friends, or a combination of both.

More Reactions

Idea

Reactions are kinda iffy, let's change that.

Rules

Free Reactions: In addition to a Reaction, every creature also has a Free Reaction they can use. The options that are given for Free Actions¹ may be used as a Free Reaction, if there is a trigger that plausibly allows for such a reaction, at the DMs mercy.

Reserving Actions: If you end your turn and have at least one Action left, you gain 1 additional Reaction per Action left.

Reserving Bonus Actions: If you end your turn and have at least one Bonus Action left, you gain 1 additional Reaction per Bonus Action left.

Prey on the Vulnerable: If a creature that you can see and that is within your range receives one of the following conditions, you can take a Reaction to make one attack against

¹Compare PHB, page 190, “Other Activity on Your Turn” and “Interacting with Objects Around You”

that creature: grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious.

Blocking: As described in the chapter “[Blocking \(with AC\)](#)” or “[Blocking \(AC-less\)](#)”.

Dodging: As described in the chapter “[Dodging](#)”

Parrying: As described in the chapter “[Parrying](#)”

Reserving Reactions: If you start your turn and have at least one Reaction left, you gain 1 Surge Die per Reaction left. You can use them as described in the chapter “[Surge Dice](#)”.

Backstab Advantage

Idea

This is meant to be a variant to flanking. The main premise is that someone that attacks an enemy from behind should be handled like an unseen attacker und thus gain advantage.² To not incentivize circling directly around an enemy in their range to gain advantage, another rule was required to not make this too strong.

Rules

Backstab Advantage: Whenever you decide to attack an enemy that can't see you, you gain advantage on that attack.

²Compare PHB, page 194-195, paragraph “Unseen Attackers and Targets”

For humanoid creatures, for example, that is usually the case when being behind their back.³

Focus: As long as you are focused on a creature, you can rotate with that creature's movement, if needed, to keep that creature within your sight. This way, for example, a humanoid creature can save their back from another creature's attacks, leading to them not getting Backstab Advantage on their attacks.

You automatically focus the creature that you last targeted with a spell, attack, or other effect. You can only focus one creature at once.

Switch Focus: You may use a Free Action to Focus another creature of your choice. You may use a [Free Reaction](#) to Focus another creature that you notice moving towards you or being near you.

Losing Focus: You lose Focus if you receive any of the following conditions: blinded, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious.

A creature that you Focus may also make you lose Focus by applying the charmed or frightened condition to you, by successfully hiding behind full cover, or by spontaneously becoming unseen by you (be it through invisibility or teleportation, for example).

³ This is technically not homebrew. Taken and adjusted from the paragraph "Unseen Attackers and Targets", see above.

Escape Focus: To escape a creature's Focus, you can take a Bonus Action, making a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by the creature's passive perception. This only works against creatures that are larger than you.

This can, for example, be used to be able to attack the back of a humanoid creature that previously focused their vision on you. This way, you can gain Backstab Advantage for your attacks against that humanoid.

Draw Focus: You can force other creatures to Switch Focus by drawing their attention to yourself, another creature or something else. This may occur as a side-effect of anything you do that is sufficiently noticeable, at the mercy of the player controlling the respective creature whose Focus is to be drawn.

If a creature does take notice and the controlling player decides it would be plausible that their creature's Focus could be drawn, the creature may make a Concentration check to resist having to Switch Focus. The Difficulty Class of this check is determined by the controlling player and the drawing player in a way that should be plausible for whatever was done to attempt drawing attention.

Example Scenarios

A Halfling cutthroat is looking to take out a Human guard they lead into an alley. They are currently looking at another, and the guard charges forward to strike. To escape the guard's focus, the nimble cutthroat swiftly maneuvers around the guard, using their bonus action to make a Dexterity

(Acrobatics) check against 13, the guard's passive perception. They succeed and stand behind the disoriented guard's back, able to attack the guard with advantage.

A Bard attempts to draw the attention of a bloodthirsty Gnoll that prioritizes the weak. They attempt to do so by faking a scream of pain and acting hurt & vulnerable. The DM controlling the Gnoll may decide that the attempt is automatically successful and make the Gnoll Switch Focus to the Bard – they might also decide that the Gnoll might try to resist (for a reason) and roll a Concentration check contested by a Charisma (Performance) check by the Bard, only switching the Gnolls Focus if they lose the contest – they might also decide that the attempt automatically fails (for a reason).

Aspects of Stealth

Idea

When using stealth, there are multiple aspects that can lead to being detected. Most commonly, being seen or heard is key to being detected, but scent may also play a role at some points, especially when a creature that may detect you has a keen scent of smell, like a wolf.

Rules

Passive Stealth (Scent): You have a base passive Stealth (Scent) score of 15. You can mask your scent to gain a bonus of +5 to this score, but you can also receive -5 to this score when giving off a strong scent that is uncommon for the place you are traversing.

The bonus might be given after applying herbs or some magic to yourself or by being washed. The malus might be given after taking a tour through the sewers, after a tough battle that left you wounded or after strenuous activity that left you sweaty.

When you try hiding from a creature that is close to you, both your Dexterity (Stealth) check and your passive Stealth (Scent) must be below the creature's perception. If the Dexterity (Stealth) check fails, you are heard or seen, as usual. If the passive Stealth (Scent) fails, the creature smells you. This may only be a hint towards your presence (DMs choice) and may not lead to you being seen immediately, but it is reason for the creature to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to try and locate you. For some creatures it may be reasonable to have them be able to locate you based on scent alone, at the DMs discretion.

Example Scenario

A thief tries to sneak past a guard dog. They rolled a 21 on their Dexterity (Stealth) check and have a passive Stealth (Scent) score of 15, because they took no measures to mask their scent (no bonus) and do not smell strongly (no malus). The guard dog has a passive perception of 12, so the thief gets close to passing him with ease, without a sound, but the guard dog has a keen scent of smell, bumping up his passive Perception for scent to 17. The guard dog smells something unusual as soon as the thief gets too close, and, trying to investigate that unusual scent, the guard dog rolls a Wisdom (Perception) check, resulting in a 19. The guard dog did not

see or hear the thief through that, so the thief is still unnoticed and can pass without further worries.

AC-less defense

Idea

AC is boring, let's replace it.

Rules

AC-less: Creatures do not have an Armor Class anymore.

Missing attacks: An attack automatically misses its target if the attack roll⁴ isn't at least as high as the Missing Threshold.

Missing Threshold: The base Missing Threshold is 10.

Dodging attacks: You can dodge attacks using the rules that can be found in the chapter "[Dodging](#)".

Blocking attacks: You can block attacks using the rules that can be found in the chapter "[Blocking \(AC-less\)](#)".

Damage Reduction: Instead of Armor Class, creatures have a Damage Reduction value. This value is subtracted from any non-spell damage the wearer takes that is not a critical hit.

Damage Reduction from multiple sources stacks.

Every bonus to Armor Class that is not the Dexterity bonus can be converted 1:1 into a bonus for Damage Reduction.

⁴After adding attack bonuses

You also gain Damage Reduction equal to your Constitution modifier.

Cover: Instead of increasing the Armor Class of the creature that is behind cover, the Missing Threshold for attacks that target that creature increases by 2 for half cover and by 5 for three-quarters cover.

Shields: The creature also benefits from half cover. Remember that wearing a shield allows you to [block](#) attacks. Also remember that the Armor Class of any shield is converted to Damage Reduction.

Blocking (AC-less)

Idea

Shields are boring, let's change that with some features.

Rules

Blocking Bonus: Your Blocking Bonus is equal to:

8 + either your Strength modifier or your Dexterity modifier (your choice) + your Proficiency Bonus (if you are proficient with shields)

Block: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use a Reaction to block an attack that you can see and that targets you. Make an ability check and add your Blocking Bonus. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you block the attack, taking no damage from it.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Defensive Stance: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use your Action to focus on blocking attacks. You can use the Block Reaction (see above) a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Protection (Fighting Style Variant): If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use your Reaction to protect a creature within 5 feet of you from an attack that you can see that targets that creature. The attack targets you instead. Make an ability check and add your Blocking Bonus. If the result is at least as high as the attack's attack roll, you block the attack, taking no damage from it.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Protective Stance: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one and you have the Protection Fighting Style Variant (see above), you can use your Action to focus on protecting creatures close to you and yourself. You can use the Protection Reaction (see above) and Block Reaction (see above) a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Blocking (with AC)

Idea

Shields are boring, let's change that with some features.

Rules

Block: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use a Reaction to block an attack that you can see and that targets you. Your Armor Class increases by 2 against that attack, and if the attack hits, you only receive half of the original damage.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Defensive Stance: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use your Action to focus on blocking attacks. You can use the Block Reaction (see above) as often as you wish without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Protection (Fighting Style Variant): If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one, you can use your Reaction to protect a creature within 5 feet of you from an attack that you can see that targets that creature. The attack targets you instead. Your Armor Class increases by 2 against that attack, and if the attack hits, you only receive half of the original damage, the protected creature receives none.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Protective Stance: If you are proficient with shields and you are currently using one and you have the Protection Fighting Style Variant (see above), you can use your Action to focus on protecting creatures close to you and yourself. You can use the Protection Reaction (see above) and Block Reaction

(see above) as often as you wish without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Dodging

Idea

Dodging isn't really a thing, let's change that.

To be more elaborate, in the base game, in many cases, Armor Class includes the Dexterity Bonus of a creature. It is reasonable to assume that this is the case to portray some sort of ability to dodge – what else would the Dexterity Bonus be good for when it comes to avoiding damage?

This is completely lost on many tables, as AC is often perceived to be nothing more than a coherent mass of “all of this misses” or “all of this doesn't affect me”. To add to that, defending against attacks is easily perceived as something passive due to the nature of AC, while dodging should imply activity on the defendant's side.

Implementing some sort of mechanic that allows for reactive dodging would be quite nice for multiple reasons. It [a] makes defending against attacks part of the action economy, giving more weight to proper defensive strategies, it [b] presents the swiftness of some characters in combat, giving more flavor to their character and differentiating it mechanically from other characters, and it [c] gives the player the ability to actively avoid especially dangerous attacks while permitting weaker ones.

Also, adding an option to dodge & roll would be nice, especially because swiftly jumping away from the point of impact of an attack is something that feels like it should be possible.

Rules

Dodging Bonus: Your Dodging Bonus is equal to:

5 + either your Strength (Athletics) modifier or your Dexterity (Acrobatics) modifier (your choice)

Dodge: You can use your Reaction to dodge an attack that you can see and that targets you. Make an ability check and add your Dodging Bonus. If the result is at least as high as the attack's attack roll, you successfully dodge, taking no damage from the attack. If the roll fails, you take the full damage.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Dodge & Roll: You can use your Reaction to dodge an attack that you can see and that targets you. Make an ability check and add your Dodging Bonus. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you successfully dodge, taking no damage from the attack and moving to an unoccupied spot within 10 feet of you without provoking opportunity attacks. If this makes you leave the sight of a creature that had their Focus on you, they lose Focus. If the roll fails, you take the full damage, fall prone, and provoke opportunity attacks from creatures other than the initial attacker. If all spots within 10 feet are occupied, you fall prone, don't move, and don't provoke opportunity attacks.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Evasive Stance: You can use your Action to focus on dodging attacks. You can use the Dodge Reaction (see above) and Dodge & Roll Reaction (see above) a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Parrying

Idea

Parrying isn't really a thing. The few places it does appear do not sell the flavor of a parry. Let's change that.

Rules

Parrying Bonus: Your Parrying Bonus is equal to:

5 + the attack bonus of the weapon you are using to parry

Parry: If you are wielding a weapon, you can use your Reaction to parry a melee attack that you can see and that targets you. Make an ability check and add your Parrying Bonus. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you successfully parry, reducing the attacks damage by the maximum damage roll of your parrying weapon, including the damage modifier. If the roll fails, you take the full damage.

You can take this reaction after the attack roll was announced, but only before the effects of the attack are applied.

Parrying Stance: You can use your Action to focus on parrying attacks. You can use the Parry Reaction (see above) a

number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

Rule Adjustments

Battle Master – Parry: When using the Parry Reaction, you can expend one superiority die. You add the superiority die to the parry check. If the parry succeeds, you increase the reduced damage by the maximum roll of your superiority die.

This replaces the original Parry option of the Battle Master.

Monster Parries: If a statblock of a creature features a parry reaction, it is replaced by the Parry Reaction above. Assume that the creature uses its strongest wielded weapon to parry, if possible.

Surge Dice

Idea

Temporary spendable resources, I want some.

Rules

Surge Dice: A Surge Die is 1d6 that can be used for various effects that are described below. You can use one or more Surge Dice as part of an Action, Bonus Action, Free Action, Reaction, or Free Reaction. You can use more than one surge die at once for the same effect. All unspent Surge Dice expire at the start of your next turn and at the end of combat.

Tenacity: You gain temporary hit points equal to the roll until the start of your next turn.

Speed: You gain 10ft. of movement speed.

Skill: Add the roll to any one roll you make.

Force: Add the roll to the DC of one saving throw you require one creature to make.

Obtaining Surge Dice

Dying Struggle: If you drop below 25% of your maximum Hit Points, you gain an amount of Surge Dice equal to your proficiency bonus at the start of your next turn.

Kill Rush: If you kill an enemy, you gain an amount of Surge Dice equal to your proficiency bonus immediately.

Elation: If you land a critical hit, you gain an amount of Surge Dice equal to your proficiency bonus after applying the effects of that attack.