

DUNGEON MASTERS GUILD™

ARENA



A TAVERN GAME PLAYED WITH DICE AND CARDS



BY DAVE ZAJAC



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CREDITS

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ARENA: A TAVERN GAME

Arena is a dice and cards game played in taverns throughout Faerûn. The dice and cards are usually custom made for the inn or tavern in which they are used. To help reduce the possibility of cheating, they often bear the establishment's emblem or insignia on the backside.

An arena playing deck contains thirty-six cards. The face of each of these cards has an image on it and a number from 1 to 3. The back of each card contains a decorative pattern. There are twelve cards for each number in the deck. The images used differ greatly between regions and even between establishments within a region. Decks can contain images of local wildlife, monsters, or even area heroes.

The dice used when playing arena are six-sided cubes with a number from 1 to 6 on each side (or an appropriate number of dots). They are normally crafted from bone, wood, or stone.

An arena deck is sold with a set of twenty-seven dice, which is enough to accommodate nine players. Multiple decks can be used for larger groups. A typical deck with dice costs 1 gp.

ARENA RULES

Each player begins play with an agreed upon stack of the same type of four coins. They may be copper, silver, gold, or even platinum, depending on the wealth of the players.

Arena is played in matches. To begin, give each player at the table three dice. Next, shuffle the deck and deal each player four cards face down. Allow the players a minute or two to examine the cards in their hand.

Each player then chooses a card from their hand and places it face down on the table. When all players have placed a card on the table, each player flips over the placed card, revealing the creature they've chosen to send into the arena to fight. Each player then rolls a number of dice equal to the number on the card, leaving their result in the open for all to see.

When all players have rolled their dice, each player announces the total of their roll, and the player with the highest roll is the match winner. If a tie occurs, all players involved in the tie roll their dice again, and the player with the highest result wins.

The winning player selects one other player as the match loser. The match loser must place a coin from his or her stack into the stakes and discard their losing card. All other players return their cards to their hands.

The players then start a new match by placing a card from their hand face down on the table. Play proceeds using the rules described above. The game continues until one player runs out of cards. When this happens, the remaining players total the number value of the cards left in their hand and compare them with one another. The player with the highest total (or strongest hand) is the winner of the game and claims all of the coins in the stakes.

If a tie occurs when ending a game, all players involved in the tie roll a number of dice equal to the highest number card remaining in their hand, rerolling additional ties. The player with the highest result is the winner of the game.

OPTIONAL RULE

The game need not end when one player is eliminated. If all players are in agreement, play can continue until only one player remains. That player is then the game winner and claims all of the coins in the stakes.

ADDING RULES

The rules for arena are designed to be simplistic. Feel free to add as much complexity as you desire. It's easy to change the game's length by varying the number of cards dealt or setting unique winning conditions. You could also add special abilities to the cards or create new cards entirely. (There's a rumor that some decks contain a special dragon card!)

PRINTING THE CARDS

The arena cards included in this PDF are designed for printing on standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper. The last page of this document contains a pattern for the backs of the cards. Simply print nine pages of the pattern and then flip the paper over and print the card faces on the other side. After printing both sides, trim each card using the outermost border as a guide.

For the best results, print the cards on 110 lb. cardstock.

1



Thorn

1



Quickling

1



Formian

1



Krenshar

1



Xill

1



Catfolk

1



Crucian

1



Ibixian

1



Xvart

1



Wood Woad

1



Skum

1



Lizardfolk

2



Frost Salamander

2



Iron Cobra

2



Demon

2



Khumat

2



Dread Guard

2



Spirit

2



Thaskor

2



Gulgar

2



Tomb Guardian

2



Fiend

2



Fire Demon

2



Carnage Demon

3



Demon

3



Earth Elemental

3



Nightwalker

3



Naga

3



Maug

3



H₀₃

Stonechild

3



Skull Lord

3



Lich

3



Angelic Avenger

3



Frost Worm

3



Grey Render

3



Death Giant

