



THE KNUCKLE BONE PIT



A DYNAMIC
TAVERN BRAWL EXPERIENCE

BY ZACH FREDERICK

The Knuckle Bone Pit

Introduction

The Knuckle Bone Pit module includes a tavern brawl designed to develop in different ways each time it's played. The brawl is intended for three to six players at level 3-4. The module uses Dungeons and Dragons 5th edition rules. It can be played as a one-shot, or be integrated into an existing campaign.

The players will enter a brawling competition in order to win gold, items, and feats. They must compete with other brawlers in challenges of not just brawn, but also wit. It'll take the gruffest individuals to come out on top and win the grand prize, as the Knuckle Bone Pit demands a bloodbath, as well as a show.

This module allows the players to experience battles that tutors to their abilities. In a 3 or 4 tier tournament, the brawl matches contenders based on personal skill. The brawl represents an actual tavern fight with the players having to use their environment to its full potential in order to win.

Setting

Down a crass, iron staircase, through an ironclad door, and under a heavy rock that looks like a nose, lies the Knuckle Bone Pit Arena. Taken place under the Frothing Mug Inn resides a grand arena, a stadium if you will, where memorable brawlers buck and rumble to determine the bearish brute of them all.

Depending on whether you implement this brawl into your own campaign or play it as a one-shot, the outside setting can vary. For a one-shot, this competition is located in the town of Ferryguard, a port city known for its various ale commodities and a robust militia body. The players will enter the Frothing Mug Inn, enter the secret entrance downstairs, and start their fun at the Knuckle Bone Pit Arena.

If you wish to incorporate this competition into your own adventure, the town can be of one you created, as the Arena can be placed under any tavern or building. To better immerse the players into the ambience, set this event where the population is rugged, brash, or dirty. The competition holds some crude individuals, and thus, it would make sense the area represents that. Maybe

information for a campaign's villain is one of the rewards for the competition, or a familiar face is the brawl's competition leader or facilitator.

The Players

While the contest resembles the vibe of a tavern brawl, it has been structured over the years to accommodate contenders of different skill sets; a fighter or barbarian character carries the same weight in the competition as a wizard or ranger. Therefore, the players may choose any class they want to bring to the table and still feel accomplished in their contribution.

How to Play

Read the following script to place them into the Pit:

"The Frothing Mug Inn greets you and your friends into their tavern. Cups are overflowing with foam, the bard sings cheerfully on top a table, and there's not a vacant spot at the bar. But you step forth to the bar anyways, wanting a different environment than this one. You quickly catch the attention of the bartender. 'The dog beckons a naked moon,' you tell him. His smile turns sly, and gestures to the assistant barkeep to cover the rounds for a second. He ties his wash cloth around his waist and motions you to follow him to the back kitchen. Seasoned meats permeate the small corridor while you are ushered to an alcove off to the side. You are lead down a crass, iron staircase, through an ironclad door seeming to weigh a ton, and under a heavy rock that looks like a nose. Below the trapdoor plants you into a different world entirely - not quite literally, but the dank, musty smell of beer and wood is jarring to say the least. A large chamber opens itself to you. You could call it a tavern, but it looks to be a subterranean chasm that turned to a bar. The denizens resemble the rugged races and individuals of a smoky alley or a rocky slum. They displayed scars, missing teeth, and threadbare clothing. Beer runners and servants make their way table to table fulfilling orders. The chasm itself reaches high, presenting stalactites from the ceiling. The ground is smooth enough to easily walk over, but it isn't perfect. And towards the center of the chasm, the floor caves in, creating a makeshift amphitheater, if you will. And residing in the center is a sand pit, an arena that resembles a tavern scene, but dug 10 feet below, and grounded with soft sand. Welcome to the Knuckle Bone Pit Arena."

There are two parts of the game guide: A Player Sheet, and a Brawler Sheet. The Player Sheet presents the battlefield map, universal rules, and special bonus actions they can take during the competition, such as flipping over a table or searching for an improvised weapon. The brawler sheet lists the brawlers that the players will fight against, as well as their statistics. It also displays their designated tiers in which the players will battle against.

A party that consists of three to four players will play 3 tiers of the competition, and five to six players will compete in a 4-tiered competition. The players can learn about the different rules of each stage before the tournament so that they can plan their desired tier to contend.

The GM will roll a d4 each to determine three brawlers based on the one-paged Brawler Sheet for each stage of the competition tier (besides tier 4 – see Brawler Sheet). Omit any repeated brawlers until there are the correct number of contenders.

Winning the Brawl

Players must survive all tiers in order to win the grand prize. If they lose a tier, they are removed from the competition and another team of brawlers are allowed to take their spot and compete. They may return the following night to try again.

The reward for winning the competition is the following: 1000 gold for the team, and free drinks from the Frothing Mug Inn. Upon victory, the players may choose to receive one of the following feats: *Tavern Brawler* or *War Caster* from the official Player's Handbook. If they already have one of the feats, the GM may assign another appropriate feat.

Pit Rules

These are rules to be followed at all times during the brawling tournament. The rules should help players strategize their competing lineup in each tier. Repercussions of infringed rules can be enacted based on the GM's discretion. **Note: The final tier only adheres to the universal rules (no limits on weapons, number of contenders, and magic usage).**

Smuggling a magical item, poison, or other prohibited objects will require a DC 16 Stealth check to successfully conceal the endeavor as the players are examined by bouncers before each tier. The check can be administered multiple times during the competition or when the item(s) is used.

Universal Rules

1. **An entry fee of one (1) gold per contender is required to enter the competition.**
2. **No killing blows during the tournament - only aim to knock unconscious.**
3. **Magical items are prohibited and will be confiscated until after the match.**
4. **Use of poison is prohibited and results in immediate loss of the tier.**
5. **One Basic Healing Potion for each contender is supplied between stages.**
6. **Each tier is won by knocking the opposing side unconscious.**
7. **Tip the bartender.**

Tier 1 Rules

1. **Outside armor, weapons, and shields are not allowed.**
2. **Use of arcane abilities is prohibited.**
3. **Three contenders maximum are allowed for each side.**

Tier 2 Rules

1. **Outside armor, weapons, and shields are not allowed.**
2. **Three contenders maximum are allowed for each side.**

Tier 3 Rules (for five or six players)

1. **Use of arcane abilities is prohibited.**
2. **Three contenders maximum are allowed for each side.**

Tavern Brawler Feat

Accustomed to rough-and-tumble fighting using whatever weapons happen to be at hand, you gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You are proficient with improvised weapons and unarmed strikes.
- Your unarmed strike uses a d4 for damage.
- When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike or an improvised weapon on your turn, you can use a bonus action to attempt to grapple the target.

War Caster Feat

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

You have practiced casting spells in the midst of combat, learning techniques that grant you the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Constitution saving throws that you make to maintain your concentration on a spell when you take damage.
- You can perform the somatic components of spells even when you have weapons or a shield in one or both hands.
- When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from you, you can use your reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Knuckle Bone Pit NPCs

The staff in the Knuckle Bone Pit consists of barmaids, servers, and a few managerial employees. It's easy to find a runner that'll serve a beer to a table in the Pit, just as easy as starting a fight. These are the few individuals that help regulate the otherwise chaotic tavern:

Sullen, the Barkeep

"A bitter, bald man stands across the bar, mindlessly cleaning glasses and liquor rings on the surface left by previous customers. Still fitting a hearty build, this warm, older man gives a weary smile to anyone that walks up to the bar. His wrinkles and age spots reside on his low-hanging jowls, in addition to his forehead, above his gray, bushy eyebrows."

A man of wisdom and patience. This bartender has been much exposed to strife in his days, so much that his physical experience displays a bitter prose that reflects his harsh life. Though looking like he ages 70 years, he only lives to be in his late 50s. Sullen has found his bartender past time pleasant and can't help to present a sincere demeanor to the otherwise rugged customers. After working for the Pit since it has started years ago, he's grown to be a venerable man that may still have a few punches in his spirit.

Lionel, the Facilitator

"A half-elven man weaves through the crowd in the Pit, caught in multiple conversations at one time. Brazen and sharp with words in nature, the half-elf fends off nagging patrons, like a woman would with eager men following her. He seems to take on the role of the facilitator and conductor for the events that take place in the Pit, whether that'd be the brawling competition, or an occasional arm-wrestling challenge."

Lionel possesses a keen communication skill that aids him in his line of work as a facilitator in the Pit. Because he's a rather new addition to the job, he takes a lot of slack from older, revered patrons that think they know how to do his job better. Although he's about 130 years old, he keeps a younger stature due to his elven descent, concurrently making him an easier target to heckle, as well. He competently keeps up with the bitter audience as he conducts the ongoing competitions.

Ravvi, the Gambling Manager

"A small, green body makes its way from table to table distributing coin and paper to individuals. A goblin, in fact, mingles with patrons in discourse pertaining to gambling and other wagers. He seems to act as a manager for all gambling that takes place in the Pit."

Acting as the presiding gambling manager, Ravvi writes wagers on parchment for the current brawling competition. This addition to the Pit created more stability and less arguments after the competition concluded. Because of Ravvi's nimble gait and an astute mind, he's easily the most viable member for the job.

The Pit Champions

"A body of large, formidable individuals nest in the corner of an alcove just on the outskirts of the brawling tavern pit. The eyes of a boorish half-ogre, a sinister gnome, a furrowed ape, and two barbaric goliaths scan their potential competitors, their glances menacing and deliberate. They sit and oversee everything happening, like a still pack of wolves. No matter where you look around the Pit, their gloomy presence always remains, a looming visage that can't be disregarded."

The Knuckle Bone Pit's king brawlers consist of a half-ogre, a gnome, an ape, and two goliaths. Although Pit champions change often due to the popularity of the competition, this group of fighters have been on top for several months. Their confidence resides over their propriety sometimes, but no one seems to want to challenge their brawn in a kerfuffle with them.

Patrons

Some attendees of the Knuckle Bone Pit come for the entertainment, while others come to win money. The house gets a cut of all bets with the addition of a gambling manager, but gambling is still common and widely accepted (almost required to watch). There are older patrons who have been around since the start, and there are newer ones who enjoy the ambiance of the place. Most of them are not afraid to heckle contenders, especially newer additions to the Pit, and will even throw their steins at competing brawlers during the matches (see Arena Action on the Player's Sheet).

Knuckle Bone Pit Arena Battle Map



The Pit Arena sinks about 20 feet in the rocky terrain. Sand makes up the floor along with shards of old beer mugs and tavern furniture. The bar rests firmly into the northern area, but the chairs, barrels, and tables can be easily moved and transposed to create cover for the contenders (see Player Sheet bonus actions). It accurately depicts a bar scene to immerse brawlers in their natural environment. (Yes, those are chairs next to the tables – drawing isn't my expertise, obviously.) Each box on the grid is a 5-foot cube.

The following two pages include the Player Sheet, which can be supplied to each of the players for their reference, and a Brawler Sheet for the GM to manage the brawlers and tiers. If this module was purchased on dmsguild.com, there are separate documents of each sheet for convenience purposes. Enjoy the Brawl!

The Knuckle Bone Pit

Player Sheet

Universal Brawling Rules

1. An entry fee of one gold per contender is required to enter the competition.

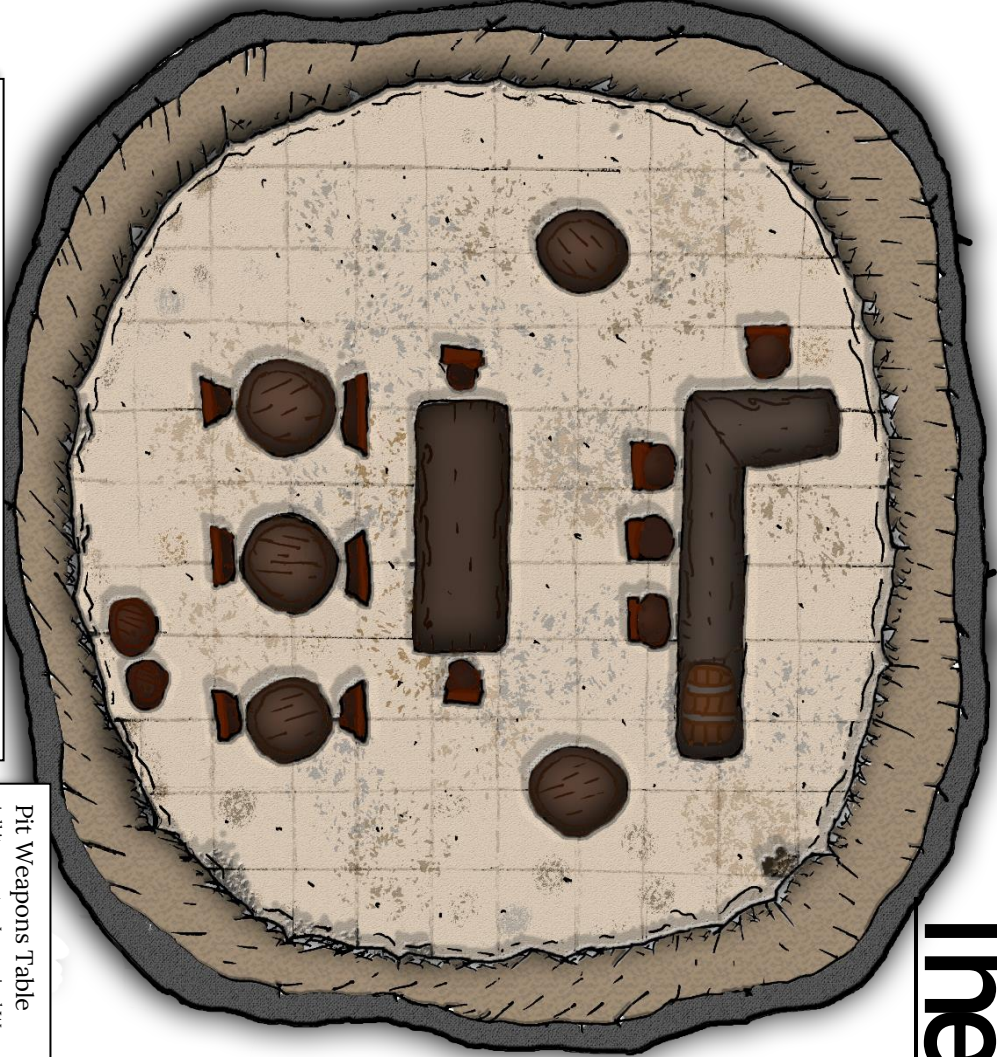
2. No killing blows during the tournament - only aim to knock unconscious.

3. Magical items are prohibited and will be confiscated until after the match.
4. Use of poison is prohibited and results in immediate loss of the tier.

5. One Basic Healing Potion for each contender is supplied between stages.

6. Each tier is won by knocking the opposing side unconscious.

7. Tip the bartender.



Initiative Count

- 20+.
20.
19.
18.
17.
16.
15.
14.
13.
12.
11.
10.
9.
8.
7.
6.
5.
4.
3.
2.
1.
0. Arena Action

Special Player Bonus Actions

- Search tables/bars/barrels for a usable weapon. Roll once on the Pit Weapons Table to pick up an item.
- Attempt to charm the audience on your side of the brawl. Make a DC 15 Charisma check to reverse the arena action and redirect the Arena Action to the opposing brawlers for one round.
- Flip a table over for half-cover to anyone behind it.

Arena Action.

After each round at 0 initiative, each player must make a DC 10 Dexterity Saving Throw. On a failed save, the player takes 1d4 +1 bludgeon damage from thrown steins from the audience.

Pit Weapons Table

*all items act as *Improvised Weapons* unless stated otherwise, and items are taken and replaced after each tier

d10	Items	d10	Items
1	Chair Leg. 50% on hit to break.	6	Spilt Handaxe. Handaxe. 1d6 slashing damage. Light. Thrown (range 20 / 60). 25% on hit to break.
2	Nuts and Nails Use a bonus action to toss nails in a 5-foot cube, making the ground become difficult terrain.	7	Rusty Knife. Dagger. 1d4 piercing damage. Finesse. Light. Thrown (range 20 / 60). 25% on hit to break.
3	Porcelain Plate. 75% on hit to break.	8	Brew of the Brawn. Use a bonus action to drink the brew. The affected creature deals +1d4 damage output until the end of its next turn.
4	Empty Stein. 25% on hit to break.	9	Oaken Greatclub. Greatclub. 1d8 bludgeoning damage. Two-handed.
5	Pouch of Sand. Use a bonus action to target one creature within 10 feet. It must make a DC 12 Constitution Saving Throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn. This is a one-time use.	10	Firewater Fiddle. Use a bonus action to inspire an ally with a d6 Bardic Inspiration die. Within 10 minutes, that ally can add a d6 to one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw it makes. A creature can only have one Bardic Inspiration die at a time. The Fiddle has 3 changes.

Roll a d4 each tier until there are three brawlers

123 (choose both)4

The Knuckle Bone Pit

Brawler Sheet

Brawler Features

Drunken Strength Use a bonus action to increase any damage output and AC by +1 for 1 minute.

Leadership For 1 minute, the brawler can utter a special command whenever a teammate within 30 feet makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The teammate can add a d4 to its roll. Only one Leadership die can benefit the teammate at a time.

Selfless Whenever a teammate is attacked within 5 feet of the brawler, he may use a reaction to become the target instead.

Charger When the brawler uses an action to Dash, he can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon or punch attack or to shove the target. If he moves at least 10 feet in a straight line immediately before taking this bonus action, he either gain a +5 bonus to the attack's damage roll (if you chose to make a melee attack and hit) or push the target up to 10 feet away from you (if you chose to shove and you succeed).

Mage Slayer When a creature within 5 feet of the brawler casts a spell, he can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature. When he damages a creature that is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration. The brawler has advantage on saving throws against spells cast by creatures within 5 feet of him.

Multitask The brawler makes two attacks.
Rage Use a bonus action to gain the following benefits: Advantage on Strength checks and saving throws; +2 all damage output; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Reckless Attack On the first melee attack of the brawler's turn, he may give the attack advantage, in turn of giving attack against you advantage, as well.

Cunning Action On each turn, the brawler can use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

Sneak Attack Once per turn, the brawler deals an additional 2d6 damage when he it hits a target and has advantage on the attack, or when the target is within 5 feet of the brawler's teammate that isn't incapacitated.

Death Burst When the mephit dies, each medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of the creature's turn.

Mud Breath Recharge 5-6 One medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect prematurely on a success.

Charm 1/Day Target a creature the brawler can see with 30 feet, making them make a DC Wisdom throw. On a failure, the target becomes Charmed.

Benign Transposition 2/Day Use an action to teleport the brawler up to 30 feet away he can see. Alternatively, he can choose a willing target within range and swap positions (teammates are willing).

Spellcaster 1 (+Int Mod or +Wis Mod to hit)

Can'tips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, magic missile

1st Level (2 slots): mage armor, magic missile

Spellcaster 2 (+Int Mod or +Wis Mod to hit)

Can'tips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, vicious mockery

1st Level (4 slots): burning hands, grease, shield

2nd Level (2 slots): blur, shimmer

Spellcaster 3 (+Int Mod or +Wis Mod to hit)

Can'tips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, vicious mockery

1st Level (4 slots): burning hands, grease, shield

2nd Level (3 slots): cloud of daggers, crown of madness, invisibility, mirror image

Trexaxx (human)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 19

Speed 30

Str: +2 Dex: -1 Con: +3

Int: -1 Wis: 0 Cha: +1

Drunken Strength

Punch: +3 hit. 1d4 +1 dmg.

Mug Toss: +3 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4+1 dmg.

Slovic (human)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 19

Speed 30

Str: +2 Dex: +2 Con: +3

Int: -2 Wis: +1 Cha: 0

Charger

Punch: +3 hit. 1d4 +2 dmg.

Barrack (halfing)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 17

Speed 30

Str: +2 Dex: +2 Con: +2

Int: -2 Wis: +1 Cha: -2

Leadership

Punch: +3 hit. 1d4 +2 dmg.

Mug Toss: +3 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4+2 dmg.

Shield (duvar)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 20

Speed 25

Str: +2 Dex: +1 Con: +2

Int: 0 Wis: +1 Cha: +1

Selfless

Punch: +3 hit. 1d4 +2 dmg.

Jaeger (duvar)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 18

Speed 25

Str: +2 Dex: -2 Con: +2

Int: 0 Wis: +1 Cha: -1

Drunken Strength

Punch: +4 hit. 1d4 +2 dmg.

Mug Toss: +5 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4+3 dmg.

Frisic (halfing)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 17

Speed 25

Str: 0 Dex: +3 Con: +1

Int: +3 Wis: +2 Cha: +2

Spellcaster 1 (DC 13)

Punch: +0 hit. 1d4 dmg.

Ney'siv (half-elf)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 16

Speed 30

Str: 0 Dex: +3 Con: +1

Int: +3 Wis: +4 Cha: +3

Spellcaster 1 (DC 13)

Charm

Punch: +0 hit. 1d4 dmg.

Skud (gnome)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 17

Speed 25

Str: -1 Dex: +3 Con: 0

Int: +3 Wis: +1 Cha: +2

Spellcaster 1 (DC 13)

Cunning Action

Punch: +0 hit. 1d4 dmg.

Kud (mud mephit)

AC 11

HP 27

Speed 20, fly 20

Str: -1 Dex: +1 Con: +1

Int: -1 Wis: 0 Cha: -2

Death Burst

Cunning Action

Punch: +3 hit. 1d6 +1 dmg.

Slimejack (halfing)

AC 14 (natural armor)

HP 25

Speed 25

Str: 0 Dex: +3 Con: +2

Int: +3 Wis: 0 Cha: +3

Spellcaster 2 (DC 14)

Drunken Strength

Mage Slayer

Punch: +4 hit. 1d4 dmg.

Kabo (human)

AC 15 (natural armor)

HP 21

Speed 30

Str: +3 Dex: +2 Con: +1

Int: +2 Wis: +2 Cha: 0

Spellcaster 1 (DC 12)

Cunning Action

Multitask

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4 +3 dmg

Virk'ala (dragonborn)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 25

Speed 30

Str: +3 Dex: 0 Con: +2

Int: +3 Wis: +1 Cha: +2

Spellcaster 2 (DC 13)

Leadership

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4 +3 dmg

Chipnet (robot)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 20

Speed 30

Str: -2 Dex: +3 Con: -1

Int: -1 Wis: 0 Cha: 0

Spellcaster 1 (DC 10)

Benign Transposition

Punch: +0 hit. 1d4 dmg.

Mng Toss: +3 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4 dmg.

Fennis (human)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 23

Speed 30

Str: +1 Dex: +2 Con: +1

Int: +3 Wis: +1 Cha: +3

Spellcaster 2 (DC 14)

Charm

Punch: +1 hit. 1d4 +1 dmg.

Mng Toss: +5 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4+1 dmg.

(skip to Tier 4

if playing with

3 to 4 players)

Axe (half-orc)

AC 16 (heavy armor)

HP 25

Speed 30

Str: +3 Dex: +1 Con: +3

Int: +1 Wis: 0 Cha: +1

Tier 3

(5 to 6

players)

Reckless Attack

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4 +3 dmg.

Greataxe: +5 hit. 1d12+3

dmg.

Mir (kenku)

AC 15 (light armor)

HP 20

Speed 30

Str: +1 Dex: +3 Con: 0

Int: +1 Wis: +2 Cha: +2

Sneak Attack

Multitask

Punch: +2 hit. 1d4 +1 dmg.

Dagger: +5 hit. Range 20 ft.

1d4 +3 dmg

Violet (elen tuins)

AC 15 (medium armor)

HP 21

Speed 30, climb 10

Str: +1 Dex: +3 Con: 0

Int: +1 Wis: +3 Cha: +2

Sneak Attack

Cunning Action

Multitask

Dagger: +5 hit. Range 20 ft.

1d4 +3 dmg.

Olive (elen tuins)

AC 15 (medium armor)

HP 22

Speed 30, climb 10

Str: +1 Dex: +3 Con: 0

Int: +1 Wis: +3 Cha: +2

Cunning Action

Multitask

Shorbow: +5 hit. Range 80

ft. 1d4 +3 dmg

Ironbeard (duvar)

AC 16 (heavy armor)

HP 26

Speed 25

Str: +3 Dex: +3 Con: +3

Int: 0 Wis: 0 Cha: 0

Drunken Strength

Multitask

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4 +3 dmg.

Handaxe: +5 hit. Range 20 ft.

1d6+3 dmg.

Hugmug (half-orc)

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 34

Speed 30

Str: +4 Dex: 0 Con: +4

Int: -2 Wis: 0 Cha: 0

Tier 4

Charger

Multitask

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4+4 dmg

Rusky Fish Hook: +5 hit.

Range 10 ft. 2d6 +5 dmg

Jax (gnome)

AC 15 (light armor)

HP 24

Speed 25

Str: 0 Dex: +4 Con: +1

Int: +3 Wis: +2 Cha: +2

Spellcaster 3 (DC 13)

Benign Transposition

Dice Ball: +5 hit. 1d8+2 dmg

Confused Arcane Deck: +5

hit. Range 30ft. 2d6+3

Drag (goliath)

AC 15 (natural armor)

HP 27

Speed 30

Str: +4 Dex: +2 Con: +4

Int: 0 Wis: +2 Cha: +2

Drunken Strength

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4+4 dmg

Crossbow: +4 hit. Range 100

ft. 1d10 + 2 dmg

Sugar (ape)

AC 12 (natural armor)

HP 25

Speed 30, climb 30

Str: +3 Dex: +2 Con: +2

Int: -2 Wis: +1 Cha: -2

Multitask

Punch: +5 hit. 1d6 +3 dmg.

Mug Toss: +5 hit. Range 20

ft. 1d4+3 dmg.

Nalak (goliath)

AC 16 (medium armor)

HP 29

Speed 35

Str: +4 Dex: +2 Con: +4

Int: -1 Wis: +1 Cha: 0

Rage

Reckless Attack

Multitask

Punch: +5 hit. 1d4 +4 dmg.