Cinema Tactics

“Bravery never goes out of fashion.”
-William Thackeray

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Introduction

*Cinema Tactics* is a game of sword fighting, bow shooting, and spell casting in party level fantasy engagements. It can be played with two dice, a deck of playing cards, and a piece of paper. Players lead heroes against forces marshaled by the Overlord or bands of heroes may be pitted against each other.
The Playing Field

*Cinema Tactics* is played on a board made up of zones which may or may not be irregularly shaped and sized.

Each adventure will utilize a different set of boards.
Heroes in *Cinema Tactics* are one of four classes: brawny Fighters, determined Archers, dastardly Rogues, or chaos-taming Wizards.
Every Hero has an accompanying Hero Card that defines his or her adventuring capabilities.

**Sir Lowrance**

Fighter

15 Health Points

*Shield Bash*
Hero Cards

A Hero Card contains four pieces of information.

1) The Hero’s name
2) The Hero’s class
3) The Hero’s starting health
4) Any Heroic Abilities the Hero may have

Sir Lowrance
Fighter
15 Health Points

Shield Bash
Equipment

Heroes bring a wide variety of equipment to an encounter: torches, rope, swords, crossbows, shields, chainmail, etc. In the Basic Game we’ll focus on weapons and armor, mostly. Any relevant item the Hero is carrying will have an accompanying Equipment Card.
Equipment Cards

- Sword
  - Bleed +1

- Stout Shield

- Heavy Armor +2
If a piece of equipment has offensive capability it is represented by a sword icon, like the Sword on the right. “Bleed” and “+ 1” are modifiers that will become important in combat.

If a piece of equipment has defensive capability it is represented by one or two squares on its Equipment Card. More squares means more defensive potential.
Fighters

Sir Lowrance is a Fighter, one of the four classes of Heroes in *Cinema Tactics*.

Fighters are able to perform Power Attacks more easily than other Heroes.
Archers

Archers are able to perform Power Shots more easily than other Heroes.

Power Shot (and Power Attack) are Actions available to the Hero in the course of a game turn.
Rogues

Rogues roll an extra die to determine how many Action points they receive each turn.
Wizards can cast spells through channeling equipment like wands and staffs. They may attempt to Overcharge these spells, but run the risk of disaster.
Heroic Abilities

Most Heroes have one or more Heroic Abilities listed on their Hero Card. These abilities vary widely—rules for using them will be included on the Hero Card.
The Game Turn

Note: the rules are written with the assumption that one or more players are controlling a party of Heroes against an army of monsters controlled by one player Overlord.

The game turn is divided into two impulses: the Hero Impulse and the Monster Impulse. After the Monster Impulse is complete one complete game turn has passed.

The Heroes always get the first impulse. Each Hero, one after the other, determines his Action Point allowance and takes as many Actions as he or she can afford.

After all of the Heroes have taken their actions the Hero Impulse is complete. In the Monster Impulse the Overlord player moves his monsters in the same fashion.
The Hero Impulse

Over the course of a complete impulse the players controlling the Heroes will activate each Hero once and only once, one after the other, with no movement considered simultaneous.

When a Hero is activated the controlling player rolls one die (two for Rogues) and takes the result as the Hero’s Action Point allowance.

The Hero may then take Actions up to the cost of his initial Action Point total. Action points can not be saved or transferred.

When a Hero has spent his Action Points the controlling players activate a new Hero, continuing this process until all Heroes have been activated. The Monster Impulse follows.
Actions

There are a number of Actions available. Heroes may take Actions in any order over the course of an activation.
## Action Table

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<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Cast</td>
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<td>Notch Arrow</td>
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<td>Switch Weapon</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td>Move 1 zone through difficult terrain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power Attack</td>
<td>2 (1 for Fighters)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drink Potion</td>
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</tbody>
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Movement

It costs 1 Action Point to move a Hero from one zone to a zone adjacent at a walk, run, or crawl, as long as the destination zone is not Difficult Terrain.

Entering a Difficult Terrain zone costs 2 Action Points.

Heroes can generally move through zones containing Heroes and monsters at no additional cost. Some circumstances and some monsters prevent this, however.
A Hero may spend 1 Action Point to make a melee attack against a monster in the Hero’s zone.

To make an attack, the attacker first declares which weapon she is using, and lays the according equipment card in front of her. She then declares one suit—Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, or Clubs—and flips the top card from a face-down deck of playing cards. If she has correctly guessed the suit of the top card then the attack hits its mark, doing damage equal to the value of the card (2 – 14, ace high) plus any modifiers on the weapon. A Sword, for example, has a +1 damage modifier.

If she has guessed incorrectly, the attack misses and the defender takes no damage.
In response to a successful hit the defender can block with one piece of defensive equipment. The blocking method is very similar to the attacking method.

The defender places her chosen equipment card in front of her. If the equipment has one square, then she calls a suit and flips the top card. If she has guessed the correct suit, the block is successful. The value of the card is added to any modifiers on the equipment. The resulting sum is then subtracted from the attacker’s total. This final number is the amount of damage the defender takes, if any. This is subtracted from the defender’s Health Points. When a Hero or monster loses its last Health Point it is removed from the game.

If the defender’s total is equal to or greater than the attacker’s total, the defender takes no damage.

Even if the defender misses the suit call, the defensive equipment’s modifier, if it is positive, is subtracted from the attacker’s total. Note that this is not true for the attacking equipment’s modifier—the attacker must call the correct suit in order to deal any damage.

If the defender’s equipment has two squares, she may guess a color instead of a suit when pulling the top card from the deck.
Power Attacks

For 2 Action Points a Hero may make a Power Attack instead of a normal attack. A Power Attack is conducted exactly as previously described, but the Hero calls a color instead of a suit to determine if the attack is successful. Fighter class Heroes may make Power Attacks for only 1 Action Point.
Damage

If a normal or Power Attack is successful and the defender does not block the damage entirely, the suit of the card determines what kind of wound the defender takes.

A Heart causes a bleeding wound. Note this on the Hero Card or on the game board. This will inflict persistent damage until the Hero or monster takes a Patch Up action.

A Club causes the defender to stagger. The defender must move one zone directly away from the attacker. If this move is not possible (usually due to walls) the defender falls down.

Diamonds and Spades are wild cards. If the attacker’s card is a Diamond or Spade then refer to the weapon’s equipment card to determine the type of damage dealt. A Sword, for example, causes a bleeding wound on Diamonds and Spades in addition to Hearts.

When a character is reduced to zero Health Points it is removed from the game.
Shooting

If a Hero or Monster has a weapon with a range value then they may use that weapon to make attacks up to the range indicated on the equipment card. Shooting attacks require a line of sight to the target. With a ruler or length of string draw a straight line between the shooter and the target. The shooter may be moved to any spot in her zone in order to make the shot, but the target must stay in place.

Note that this can lead to some positioning that happens outside the context of the “Move 1 zone” action. This is legal, but the only time a Hero or Monster may change her position within a zone is while she is activated.

If the line of sight is clear, the attack proceeds identically to a melee attack. The attacker calls a suit (or a color, if it is a Power Shot) and applies damage if successful. The defender uses defensive equipment and card calls to block successful attacks. Types of damage go according to suit and weapon as described previously.

Archer class Heroes may make Power Shots for only 1 Action Point.
Cover

Terrain and the presence of Heroes and monsters may obstruct a clear line of sight.

If the straight line between shooter and target is obstructed but not blocked entirely, the shooter must make a card call for every point at which the line is obstructed.

For a normal shot the shooter must correctly call a suit at each obstructed point. An incorrect call at any point will cause the projectile to hit the terrain (or adventurer!) in the way.

Damage for an errant shot is applied in the usual way, with the unhappy adventurer choosing a piece of defensive equipment and making a card call.
Spellcasting

Wizards are masters (or beginners) of the art of spellcasting. The spells a Wizard knows are indicated on her Hero Card.

Spells are channeled through channeling equipment, which is indicated by a Φ symbol on the equipment card. These pieces of equipment have ranges and damage modifiers that are applied to every successful cast.
Spellcasting, cont’d.

Spells can have a variety of effects, fully detailed on the relevant Hero Cards. Many spell effects result in damage or manipulation of a target. In these cases the spellcasts are resolved as ranged attacks, with the defender using defensive equipment in the normal fashion.

A Power Cast will allow a player to call a color instead of a suit.
Overcharging

Wizards can attempt to Overcharge their spells for 1 Action Point.

To do so the player calls a suit. If the call is correct then the player sets the card with their equipment cards. A Power Charge will allow the player to call a color instead of a suit.

The player may enhance any subsequent spellcast by adding the value of the card kept from the Overcharge to the value of a successfully called attack card.

The player must declare that she is attempting to overcharge a spell before she pulls the attack card. If the attack misses the overcharge is lost.
Fizzling and Backfiring

If the initial Overcharge call is unsuccessful, the card is discarded with no further effect. This is called Fizzling.

Wizards can try to Overcharge more than once. If a Wizard accumulates multiple Overcharge cards they can be used all at once or in smaller portions.

If a Wizard attempts multiple Overcharges and fails an Overcharge call, the charge backfires. The wizard must take damage equal to the value of the missed card plus the *number* of stockpiled Overcharge cards. This damage cannot be blocked.
Notch Arrow

Before firing a bow or crossbow, a Hero must spend 1 Action Point to notch an arrow. Once notched, the arrow will stay notched as long as the Hero is not attacked. Even an unsuccessful attack will un-notch an arrow.
Switch Weapon

A Hero usually only has two hands. It costs 1 Action Point to change what equipment is considered to be in the Hero’s hands.
Stand Up

Over the course of an engagement Heroes and monsters may end up on the ground. Standing up costs 2 Action Points.

As long as a Hero or monster is on the ground all of their defensive equipment is reduced by one square. A two square piece of armor is considered to be one square. A one square piece of armor is considered to be no squares. Note that modifiers are retained.

Heroes and monsters cannot stand up in a zone occupied by an enemy.
Drag

For 2 Action Points a Hero or Monster may drag a comrade or enemy who is knocked down in the same zone as the active character.

The active character moves to an adjacent zone normally, bringing the dragged character along. The dragged character stays on the ground.

Characters may be dragged into Difficult Terrain for 3 Action Points.
The Patch Up action allows a character to wrap bleeding wounds or fix sundered armor.

When a character is bleeding she will suffer 1 unblockable damage at the end of every impulse in which she would be active—Heroes bleed at the end of the Hero Impulse and monsters bleed at the end of the Monster Impulse.

For 2 Action Points the character can take a Patch Up action, which will heal one bleeding wound immediately. If the character has multiple bleeding wounds then they will require multiple Patch Up Actions.
Sundered Armor

Some weapons have the ability to split the armor they encounter. If a piece of defensive equipment is sundered as the result of an attack, it cannot be used until the character uses a Patch Up action to repair the damage.
Drinking Potions

Potions can be carried by characters or found over the course of an engagement. It costs a character 2 Action Points to drink a potion. The effects of potions can be found on their equipment cards.
The Monster Impulse

The Monster Impulse proceeds in the same fashion as the Hero Impulse. The Actions available to Heroes are available to monsters as well. Note that most monsters do not have a specified class and get no class bonus. Boss monsters, however, usually have a class. After the Monster Impulse the Hero Impulse begins again.