**Overview**

My set of guidelines for running a solo miniatures skirmish game in the context of solo narrative role playing games.

In other words: the set of procedures to follow when I want to take the story I have been telling myself and play it physically out on a wargame table with models.

My starting point is the assumption that any skirmish wargame set of procedures (rules) is more or less as good as any other, differing only in detail. The procedures described here do not cover the minutiae of how far a figure can move and what dice to roll to see if they score a hit. This is all covered in the chosen core set. At this time these core rules may be D&D B/X (Labyrinth Lord), though I might consider Savage Worlds, Traveller, or 5 Parsecs from Home.

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**Pregame set up**

1. Chose the core set of rules to administer the detail of the tabletop action (for example D&D)
2. Chose the narrative resolution tool (for example 5d12) to provide some greater story depth
3. Choose random event generator (for example Pathfinder Plot Twist cards)
4. Chose scenario (for example those contained in Rangers of Shadow Deep)
5. Choose the tactical doctrine for the enemy. This may be indicated in the scenario, or you can randomly decide using the Tactical Doctrine table
6. Set up the game table with terrain as per scenario
7. Set up miniatures

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**Turn sequence**

- Hero activates
- Enemy activates
- Companions activate
- Draw and apply random event

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**Actions**

**Hero**

The hero can perform two (2) Actions on their activation. Generally, this will be along the lines of the following variations:

- Move, Fight/Shoot
- Move, some other activity such as change weapon
- Move, move (run)
- Pause in place, shoot (aimed shot) derive bonus
- Pause in place, some other activity (investigate) use 5d12 table
- Pause in place, move (sneak) derive bonus
- Wait till enemies have taken their actions, then perform a single action

The two actions can be performed in any order.

In addition, any companions that are within your designated ‘short’ distance to your hero can move with him.
### Enemy

The enemy forces (men, monsters, environmental catastrophes or a combination of all) can perform two actions in exactly the same way as the hero. They however are guided in their behaviour by their tactical doctrine.

Enemies are activated in descending order of threat. The most ‘dangerous’ foe acts first, then the next, and so on. This can be based on Challenge Rating (CR) if you are using D&D, or whatever other system you choose such as hit points.

### Companions

Each companion can perform two actions in the same way as the hero, under your direction.

If companions close to your hero moved with him, they only get one action to spend now.

### Random event

At the end of the turn generate a random event. This can be from a card turn referencing a table (such as Tarot cards), actual cards with events printed on them (such as the Pathfinder Plot Twists, or Whimsy cards), or a dice roll referencing a table. There are many such commercially available generators available.

This important step injects unexpected events that affect play. It is your choice how you apply them, either for your hero, against the enemies, to introduce new monsters or characters, or for some other reason. You must apply the card immediately. If it implies a combat bonus or penalty, that effect will occur on the very next round. It is your job to make up the story to explain the event.

### Core tabletop rules

Choose your favourite set of skirmish tabletop rules.

D&D started as a wargame and then morphed into single figure skirmish and then into role playing. As such all the rules you will ever need can be found as the assumption is that you will be playing out the moment by moment action with miniatures.

Personally, I favour OSR B/X Labyrinth Lord, but that’s because I’m an old fart. Any set that you are familiar with is the right set.

Savage Worlds was built from the ground up to be a skirmish wargame and an RPG. It too has everything you could need.

There are others that can work straight out of the box, or could be easily modified. If you are reading this there is every chance you already have your target set in mind; I’m not going to invent yet another movement system (that happens to be 6”) and a fancy way to roll dice just to get to the same place every other set of rules has already arrived at.
Narrative resolution tool

There are many tools available to generate more than simple success/failure result. Mythic is the obvious starting place, but others have approached this as well.

You need to generate complex results to allow new information to be injected into the story. If your tests go no further than ‘did the hero hit the monster or not’ then a game will effectively play itself. Instead you need to insert unexpected results that require you to create new story material.

My tool uses 5d12. I did this because I like the d12, but also because it allows me a greater spread of results while allowing the extreme outliers a chance to be expressed.

Decide on the difficulty of the task or the question being asked. Is it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Target number on 5d12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost impossible</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure thing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of successes (results that are equal to or greater than the target number) gives the effect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Successes</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Alternative interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes, and</td>
<td>Critical success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes, but</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No, but</td>
<td>Partial failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No, and</td>
<td>Critical failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Random event generator

This can be any mechanism to insert completely novel material into the story. It is different from the narrative tool because you are not seeking the answer to a specific question, instead you are being forced to incorporate something fresh and unexpected.

One of my favourites is to use Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, an old eclectic ‘dictionary’ that lists a whole bunch of random stuff that was interesting to the editors. There is an online version, but I like a physical copy, rolling 3d100 to find the page, then a d10 or d20 (depending on the number of entries on the page) to find the specific entry. Then, whatever it is, I have to make it fit the current story.

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### Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable

Brewer’s is typically more useful for generating ‘big picture’ material than it is down-and-dirty tactical ideas that you can apply to a wargame. So, I more often than not use some form of card system.

The Pathfinder Plot Twist Cards give tactically specific information (for a d20 system) such as dice bonus for doing something. It also gives a headline concept such as, ‘Something Found’. Finally, it gives four further short phrases that could also be riffed upon. For example, ‘You find the passage out’, ‘You find an item thought lost’, ‘You stumble upon something hidden’, ‘You discover the key for the cipher’. Any of these could be useful.

Almost every RPG has a set of randomisation tools for generating adventures, scenarios and plot hooks. Any of these would do.

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### Scenario

Volumes have been written about this and it’s unlikely that I’ll have anything new to add. Except to say that role playing games are by definition scenario driven. And even though you are playing out a scene with miniatures, if you do no more than line up your figures and have them attack each other like some Dark Age slog then you are depriving yourself of the real fun.

Your game table must have lots of terrain to interact with, and objective markers spread around to encourage movement.

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### Tactical Doctrine

Or put another way: what is the simple set of Artificial Intelligence rules we will apply to the enemy forces?

Here are eight AI rules you can apply. I’ve printed these and glued them to spare playing cards. You could make a table and roll a d8 to the same effect.

Decide on the enemies’ tactical doctrine. When it is their activation, use the guidelines to decide how to move the figures and to find out what they will do.
|Ambush| • Remain hidden  
|      | • Strike only when at advantage  
|      | • Target the strongest (hero) to weaken the party.  
|      | • Alternatively (depending on the enemy) target the weakest (companion) for a meal  
|      | • Flee if outmatched |

|Attack| • Use flanking forces  
|      | • Use fast movement  
|      | • Close with the target quickly and overwhelm  
|      | • Fall back if casualties exceed 50% |

|Capture| • Pick on the most exposed enemy (hero or companion)  
|       | • Attack to subdue, not to kill  
|       | • Flee when capture is successful  
|       | • Flee if confronted |

|Defend| • Use terrain to remain hidden  
|      | • Keep in cover  
|      | • Use missiles  
|      | • Use traps and poisons  
|      | • Target magic users  
|      | • Use area effect magic  
|      | • Flee if defended position is penetrated  
|      | • Use traps to cover retreat |

|Filch| • Remain undetected  
|     | • If detected, flee  
|     | • Remove object then flee, or  
|     | • Plant object on hero or companions then flee |

|Guard| • Maintain proximity to guarded location  
|     | • Raise alarm when hero and companions are detected  
|     | • Protect object/area/person  
|     | • Scare intruders, or  
|     | • Destroy intruders, or  
|     | • Delay so that reinforcements can come |

|Harass| • Remain out of close combat and shoot  
<p>|      | • Retire out of range if a casualty is taken |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patrol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Keep moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advance towards disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take time to observe hero and companions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Send runners back to report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Divide the hero from his companions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target magic users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capture one of the companions (or hero) and retire if possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>