

SCRUD

Simple Combat Resolution Using Dice

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These rules are intended to be used as a fast and simple method of resolving combats that take place within the larger framework of a game. Whether quickly resolving a boarding action in a naval game or a multi-brigade combat, SCRUD is suitable. Those battles are for the vital elements of the wargame that must be resolved *quickly*, preventing the game grinding to a halt. The essential element is that it allows *quality vs quantity* in a very simple way.

The Basic Rule: The basic rule is: 1 x 6-Sided Die = 1 x Combat Unit.

The size of that combat unit will, of course, vary from game to game. In a boarding action or skirmish game it could be an individual man; in a map game, it could be as much as a Battalion or even an entire Brigade.

Quality vs Quantity: The *quality* of a combat unit is represented by additions or deductions to the basic die roll; the *quantity* is represented by the number of dice (so each die should represent a similar sized body of troops or formation). The “standard” representation for quality is below, with Black the highest quality troops and Red the lowest:

Die Colour	Modifier
Black	+3
Blue	+2
Green	+1
White	No modifier
Yellow	-1
Red	-2

The Method: The dice for each opposing side are rolled. If normal six-sided dice are used, the table above shows modifiers to be applied for each colour. *They are then lined up opposite each other, from the highest score to the lowest score on each side, with the highest die on each side opposite each other.* If one side has more dice than the other, any additional dice that score equal or less than the lowest dice of the side with the fewer dice, are ignored.

The Result: Each die represents a Combat Unit, and the scores on the dice represent how well they did in that phase of the engagement. Compare the two dice that are paired off: The higher scoring die beats the lower scoring die after modifying according to colour as above.

You should note that, despite any + or - factors, *a “6” is the maximum any unit can score and a “1” is the minimum.* This allows you to keep score more easily if you are not using specialist SCRUD dice, as you can turn the dice over after throwing them, to reflect the modifiers used. It also means that two Elite units, perhaps with +3 modifiers, are likely to have inconclusive combats (the same dice score) when fighting each other, at least 50% of the time.

Equal scores are ignored (this represents an inconclusive result). Each defeated die represents a push-back, or write-down in large combats, or a death in smaller combats. In addition, for every three defeats, eliminate one of the opponent’s Combat Units (the lowest value one).

Defeated dice are normally “demoted” (replaced by a lower quality die), so a defeated Black (+3) die would be replaced by a Blue (+2) die for the next phase of combat. Red dice that are defeated are eliminated.

Any additional dice (i.e. dice which do not have an enemy die opposite) that score *more* than the lowest enemy die are included in the number of defeats to the enemy, so the lowest scoring enemy die would suffer additional demotions.

Variations: There is strength in this system in the number of variations you can build into a very simple mechanism.

Matrix Arguments could be used to promote or demote the die used by certain units. Arguments for fortified positions, the state of supply, fatigue, morale, etc., can all be factored in with simple promotions or demotions to the die used.

Specialist SCRUD Dice.

The dice used in the example below are specialist SCRUD dice to avoid the fuss and bother of rolling normal dice and having to turn them over, based on their modifiers. The specialist SCRUD dice have the modifiers already applied (so the Black dice are scored: 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 4 and the Red dice are scored 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4).

Examples of SCRUD Combat (using specialist SCRUD dice).

As an example, we will take part of the battle of Tannenberg during the First World War. The German 20th Corps, under Scholtz, is attacked by elements of the Russian 2nd Army, under Samsonov. The Germans have 4 brigades, the Russians 8. The Russians are poorly trained/equipped and tired after advancing for days over sandy soil. Each Russian Unit = -1. The Germans are well trained and have ample supplies but are not in a defensive position. Each German Unit = +1.

So: 8 Yellow (-1) dice for the 8 Russian brigades, 4 Green (+1) for the Germans



The first dice roll is:



The dice are lined up.



The German obviously surprised the Russians and succeeded in battering all 4 of the units they faced. After the initial engagement, the results are as follows: All four engaged Russian units are demoted, and the lowest scoring one is destroyed as there were 3 defeats. This leaves the Russians with three Red dice and four Yellow dice. The Germans still have 4 Green dice.



The second phase of the engagement's dice roll is:



When the dice are lined up, we can see that the Russians did a lot better in this phase holding off the Germans this time (mostly).



The Germans only defeated one Russian unit, demoting it. This leaves the Russians with three Yellow dice and four Red dice. The Germans still have 4 Green dice.



In the third and final phase of the engagement, the dice roll is:



When the dice are lined up, we can see that the Russian superior numbers are finally beginning to tell.



The result of first day of the battle:



The Germans have managed to hold off the Russian attacks well, destroying one unit and damaging (demoting) 5 units. In return one of the German units has suffered some losses. The Russian forces are in a bad position for the second day as the majority of their units are fragile and easily destroyed. The Russian commander elects to withdraw.

The actual run-through and results were generated in far less time than it took you to read this description of the system...

Number of rounds of dice rolls in a Turn.

Unless you are playing a “sudden death” skirmish game, I prefer to play 3 rounds of dice rolls in a “turn”. This generates more of a narrative about the battle and gives the losing side a chance to retreat or commit their reserves.

Use of long-range Artillery and Airstrikes.

If you wanted to factor in long-range artillery or airstrikes separately (because you were using the dice for lower-level combat where the use of these was not aggregated in the unit dice rolls), you can add additional dice of the appropriate colour for artillery or air support. These dice, however, should be rolled separately and noted (usually by fitting them into the lineup of the dice, but set back a little, because they will not be demoted if they fail to defeat the enemy unit they are matched against).

If the target has air defence, this should be represented by an additional dice of an appropriate colour. This dice is rolled against the airstrike dice, and if it wins the air asset is demoted (or shot down), or if it matches the value the airstrike is driven off without engaging.

If one side has counter-battery radar and wants to engage in a strike against an artillery unit, then this should be declared first before ground combat. The artillery on both sides should roll, with the counter-battery dice demoting the target artillery if it scores higher or merely prevent it firing this phase of combat if the result is a draw. Again, it should not be demoted unless the enemy can respond in kind.

A Note on the Special SCRUD dice.

A “standard” set is 60 dice, with 10 dice of each colour. The dice are moulded 16mm dice so they could be mistaken for standard 6 dice if you accidentally pick them up, thinking they were normal dice. In the middle of a game that could be unfortunate... As you can see the SCRUD dice are each marked with S.C.R.U.D lettering on the “4” face (every dice regardless of colour has a “4” face) to help you avoid such a problem. 😊

Doing it your way.

Please don’t feel that you must use SCRUD in exactly the way I have laid out the “rules” above. They are really intended as a bit of guidance based on my experience. If you think the results lead to very decisive games with a lot of casualties,

and one side getting annihilated, then feel free to modify them. You could ignore the “remove a unit for every 3rd defeat” rule and perhaps only have one or two rounds of combat each turn.

You can even ignore the “lining up the dice, highest to lowest” and merely roll the dice individually against each other – but that will take a *lot* longer and goes against the speed of the rules as they stand.

Advice.

If you have large engagements, keeping the dice from the two sides apart (so they do not get mixed up) can sometimes be a little tricky. I like to use one of the WestonBoxes Slim Plastic Storage Boxes. Roll one side in the lid and the opponent on the bottom of the box:



They can then be lined up easily:

