

FantasyCraft



CALL TO ARMS:
SKIRMISHER



CALL TO ARMS: SKIRMISHER

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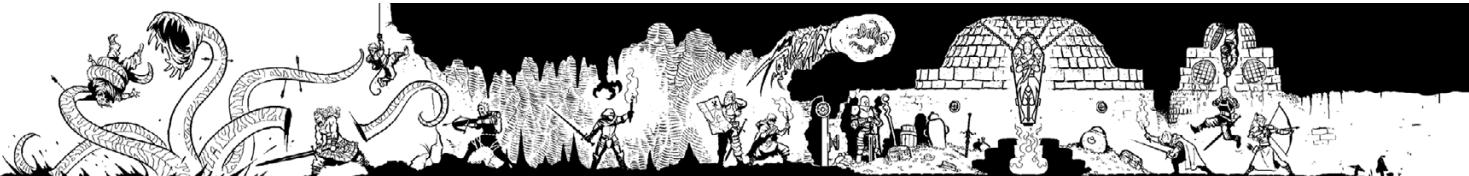
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Call to Arms**, a series of character expansions for Fantasy Craft. In each installment we offer a new class, appropriate for any fantasy setting. Some, like this volume's **Skirmisher**, come with additional character options and other supporting material. For more information on this and many other great products, visit the Crafty Games website at www.craftygames.com, your home for all things Fantasy Craft.

SKIRMISHER (EXPERT)

On the fields of fantasy battle it's the greatest warriors — the knights in shining armor astride massive destriers, the hulking barbarians who've claimed a hundred heads, and the mighty wizards who've devastating whole columns with earth-shattering spells — that own the glory. Yet it's the cagiest warriors — the ones who ambush columns of soldiers, harry and disrupt supply lines, and use terrain itself as a weapon — who win battles before the first arrow is loosed. The Skirmisher is one such cagey warrior, a master of maneuver and ambush whose foresight and sharp wits let him undermine enemies in ways they can never anticipate.

Depending on the campaign, a Skirmisher could be...

- A veteran tactician who's always one step ahead of the enemy
- A wily hunter who uses intimate knowledge of his homeland to outfox invaders
- A nimble scout whose hit-and-run tactics keep foes constantly on their heels
- An aboriginal brave, bound to the spirit-totems of nature, who turns to them for protection and vengeance
- A terrifying warlord whose devastating ambushes strike fear in the hearts of all who encounter him
- An underhanded guerilla willing to use every dirty trick in the book to save the day

Party Role: Specialist/Backer. You turn the battlefield against your enemies and give your party an advantage in nearly every fight.

CLASS FEATURES

Requirements: Tactics 4+, Battlefield Trickery, Mobility Basics

Favored Attributes: Wisdom, Dexterity

Class Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Blend, Notice, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Survival, Tactics

Skill Points: 6 + Int modifier per level

Vitality: 9 + Con modifier per level

CORE ABILITY

Ambusher: You're at your best when fighting dirty. Your base attack bonus is considered equal to your Career Level when attacking a *flanked*, *flat-footed*, or *helpless* character. Also, your attacks against *flanked*, *flat-footed*, and *helpless* characters gain the *keen* 4 weapon quality (see *Fantasy Craft*, page 176).

CLASS ABILITIES

On Deadly Ground: You use every part of the battlefield to your advantage, effortlessly leading enemy troops into traps, chokepoints, and ambushes. At Level 1, select a terrain: aquatic, arctic, caverns/mountains, desert, forest/jungle, indoors/settled, plains, or swamp. Once per combat as a free action while in this terrain, you may choose a single special character or standard mob to fall victim to one of your ploys (e.g. traps prepared before the battle, piles of loose stones you've spied, or another similar preparation). The targeted characters must immediately make a Reflex save (DC 10 + your Class Level) or suffer one of the following effects of your choice (based on the preparation you describe to the GM).

- 2d6 falling or subdual damage
- Begin *bleeding*
- Become *entangled* for 1d6 rounds
- Become *sickened* for 1d6 rounds
- Become *sprawled*

At Levels 3, 5, 7, and 9, select a new terrain in which you may use this ability. Also, you may use this ability an additional time per combat.

Harrier I: You quickly and cleanly exploit an enemy's weakness, then fade into the landscape. At Level 2, you gain the Mobility Mastery feat and your maximum rank in Tactics increases to your Career Level + 5.

Harrier II: At Level 7, you gain the Mobility Supremacy feat and your maximum rank in Tactics increases to your Career Level + 7.

Bonus Feat: At Levels 4 and 8, you gain an additional Covert or Terrain feat.

"It's a Trap!": Your hard-won experience in guerilla warfare keeps your teammates out of danger. At Level 4, as long as you are not *flanked*, *flat-footed*, or *helpless*, all teammates who can see or hear you may not become *flanked*.

"They're All Around Us!": You're quick to seize the initiative, throwing enemies off-guard early in combat. At Level 6, you and your teammates are always considered to have a 2-to-1 advantage during the surprise round and the first 3 rounds of combat (even if you don't actually outnumber the enemy). If both sides of the conflict have this ability, they cancel one another out.

"Run for Your Lives!": Your lightning strikes drive a lance of terror into the hearts of your foes. At Level 8, when you or a

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teammate scores a critical hit during the surprise round or in the first 3 rounds of combat, every standard character mob with line of sight to the target must make an immediate Morale check with a -10 penalty (see *Fantasy Craft*, page 379).

Kill Zone: You turn battlefields into death traps for unsuspecting foes. At Level 10, once per session as a full action, you may designate one contiguous 100-square area, identifying it as the “kill zone.” The kill zone may be any shape you wish (e.g. a 10 × 10 square area, a 4 × 25 square rectangular or L-shaped area, or another area of equal space), so long as every square is connected to at least 2 others without interruption.

All adversaries in the kill zone are considered *flanked*. Also, all attacks targeting adversaries in the kill zone inflict 2 additional dice of sneak attack damage, and the action die cost to activate critical hits against them is reduced by 1 (minimum 0).

The kill zone lasts until the end of the current combat, until you dismiss it, or until you fall unconscious or die. Adversaries may only be affected by one kill zone at a time.

BUILDING THE SKIRMISHER

The most effective Skirmishers rely on alpha strikes, sneak attacks, and ambushes to win most fights, and this is often reflected in their choice of character options. For example, one of the best Species for an aspiring Skirmisher is the Goblin, thanks to the free Ambush Basics feat, Strength and Defense bonuses, Small size (enhancing Sneak ability), and bonus vitality. Other strong candidates include Elves (whose great sensory abilities make them excellent ranged Skirmishers), Orcs (for their excellent attribute bonuses and combat abilities), Giants (for their incredible Speed, which is further enhanced by the class), and of course Humans (for their flexibility).

Human Talents should match the Skirmisher’s focus and plans for the field of battle. Ranged combat is always a strong choice, highlighting Origins that prioritize Dexterity, combat Tricks, and extra vitality or skill points. Cunning hits all three of these, making it a strong contender for best in book. Unpredictable’s free Lightning Reflexes feat can help the Skirmisher win

initiative rolls (a must), and its handy ability to double Ready actions is an excellent choice for defensive fighters. Wily’s improved ranks in Tactics, bonus skill points from Intelligence, improved Defense, and combat tricks make it a very good fit for ambushers, scouts, and saboteurs.

The Skirmisher’s main fighting style relies on maneuverability and ambushes, and so Specialties that support both are preferable. Ranger is one of the nastier choices, as *favored foes* helps the Skirmisher quickly finish off standard foes, *camouflage* makes him even more effective at ambushes in preferred terrain, and the Battlefield Trickery feat combines nicely with bonus Terrain feats. Archer offers a useful bow focus and *camouflage*, which are tremendously useful for a ranged Skirmisher, and mounted Skirmishers can benefit quite a bit from the Cavalier. Urban Skirmishers may want to consider the Highwayman (found in the *Adventure Companion*), which offers a nice little package of gang-fighting tactics (Wolf Pack Basics, *pick on the little guy*, and an increased DC with saves vs. subduing damage).

The Scout class is the most natural point of entry for a Skirmisher thanks to its heavy use of ranged combat, canny exploitation of terrain, and piles of sneak attack damage. Captain is a close second, as *battle planning* combined with *on deadly ground* lets the Skirmisher control both sides of any fight. Urban Skirmishers may also find the Assassin and Burglar classes interesting thanks to their exceptional stealth and misdirection capacities.

Suggested Species: Elf, Giant, Goblin, Human, Orc

Suggested Human Talents: Cunning, Nimble, Ruthless, Unpredictable, Wily

Suggested Specialties: Archer, Cavalier, Highwayman, Ranger

Suggested Entry Classes: Assassin, Burglar, Captain, Scout

PLAYING THE SKIRMISHER

Like his namesake, the Skirmisher is a mobility-based fighter, executing ambushes, hit-and-run attacks, and carefully laid traps to keep enemies on their collective toes. The foundation of these

TABLE 1: THE SKIRMISHER

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Def	Init	Lifestyle	Legend	Abilities
1	+0	+1	+2	+0	+1	+2	+1	+0	<i>Ambusher</i> , on deadly ground 1/combat
2	+1	+2	+3	+0	+1	+3	+2	+1	Harrier I
3	+2	+2	+3	+1	+2	+4	+2	+1	On deadly ground 2/combat
4	+3	+2	+4	+1	+2	+5	+2	+1	Bonus feat, “it’s a trap!”
5	+3	+3	+4	+1	+3	+5	+3	+1	On deadly ground 3/combat
6	+4	+3	+5	+2	+4	+6	+3	+2	“They’re all around us!”
7	+5	+4	+5	+2	+4	+7	+4	+2	Harrier II, on deadly ground 4/combat
8	+6	+4	+6	+2	+5	+8	+4	+2	Bonus feat, “run for your lives!”
9	+6	+4	+6	+3	+5	+9	+4	+2	On deadly ground 5/combat
10	+7	+5	+7	+3	+6	+10	+5	+3	Kill zone





abilities is the class skills, particularly Acrobatics, Athletics, Sneak, Tactics, and Survival. Acrobatics and Athletics are essential for retaining the mobility the Skirmisher needs to “stick and move” while staying out of battles he doesn’t want to fight. Sneak and Tactics are vital for preparing ambushes and traps, and Survival is equally vital for tracking opponents, learning the terrain, and staying alive until the moment to strike. These skills together afford the Skirmisher valuable tactical advantages over his targets, leaving them *flanked* or *flat-footed* and thus vulnerable to many of his key abilities (like *ambusher* and sneak attack damage gained from successful Ambush checks and Covert feats).

One of the Skirmisher’s most unique abilities lets him turn the battlefield into a weapon. This is explained in the narrative as carefully placed traps, use of disadvantageous terrain, masterful feints, and the like, and in some cases — as with *kill zone*, for example — the story behind it can be introduced retroactively. The defining ability in the Skirmisher’s toolbox is *on deadly ground*, which damages, slows, knocks down, or otherwise impairs opponents in preferred terrain. None of these effects are overly powerful (or directly lethal) on their own, but their real power is revealed as they affect and sometimes direct the flow of the battle. For instance, they can knock out a flanking mob of standard characters who might otherwise prevent the party’s escape, or they could entangle a mounted warrior who’s tearing his way through the battle line toward the party’s casters. They can simply leave an enemy *sprawled*, opening the target up to sneak attack damage. Combine one or more of these effects with *kill zone* and the result can be devastating.

The Skirmisher’s other class abilities focus on outmaneuvering and outfoxing his foes. *Harrier* is the most fundamental expression of this, granting Mobility Mastery and Supremacy (and thus increasing the Skirmisher’s Defense on the move, plus his base Speed). It also grants him increased Tactics ranks, which translates to greater success with Ambush and Outmaneuver checks. “*They’re all around us!*” and “*run for your lives!*” radically improve the Skirmisher’s surprise attacks by extending the benefit of numerical advantage (critical for triggering many tactical Terrain feats, particularly the Bushwhack and Horde trees). They also inflict instant Morale checks early in a fight. Finally, “*it’s a trap!*” helps to prevent the Skirmisher’s party from getting boxed in by a numerically superior force.

As a tactical class, some of the Skirmisher’s best feat choices are found in the Covert and Terrain trees. Ambush Basics is practically a must-have as it provides both a die of sneak attack damage and speeds up his Ambush checks (which inflict even *more* sneak attack damage). Right behind this are Bushwhack feats, which extend the effects of Ambush checks and further dictate enemy movement, along with the Misdirection feats which provide valuable benefits against special characters caught in the Skirmisher’s traps. Pathfinder Basics aligns well with *on deadly ground* and can be combined with the new Predatory feats (see

page 6) to make the Skirmisher more dominant in a chosen terrain than any other character in the game.

Beyond these core feats, the Skirmisher should look for anything that grants bonus sneak attack damage or further augments his ability to dictate and direct the pace and flow of combat. One example is Master of the Battlefield (see page 5).

The Skirmisher benefits most from light weapons that keep him out of long melee combats. Bows are a good fit, as are hurled weapons and melee arms with the *reach* and/or *hurl* qualities (e.g. spears). Armor should likewise be light and avoid Speed, Defense, and Armor Check Penalties at all costs.

The balance of the Skirmisher’s gear should accommodate his rough-living lifestyle, or complement his ambushing abilities. Traps are particularly useful in that they can inflict damage and restrict enemy movement around the battlefield, but so are supplies that make stealth more effective, like body paint.

Suggested Feats: Ambush Basics, Bushwhack Basics, Master of the Battlefield (see page 5), Misdirection Basics, Pathfinder Basics, Predatory Basics (see page 6), Wolf Pack Basics

Suggested Adventuring Equipment (250s): Longbow + 60 standard arrows and 20 barbed arrows, throwing spear, buckler, moderate leather armor, jaw trap, 2 snare traps, 2 net traps, body paint, 50 ft. hemp rope, 7 days’ rations

TERRAIN FEATS

For more on Terrain feats, see Fantasy Craft page 108.

MASTER OF THE BATTLEFIELD

You shall not pass. Nor shall your friends.

Benefit: The action die cost to activate errors with attacks made by adjacent opponents, or to Tumble through your square or any adjacent squares, is reduced by 1 (minimum 0). Also, you also gain a stance.

You Shall Not Pass! (Stance): All squares within 10 ft. count as adjacent to you if they are also within your Reach. You may not take any Movement Action other than a 5 ft. step while in this stance.

PREDATORY BASICS

You know your home terrain like the back of your hand.

Requirements: Pathfinder Basics (any)

Benefit: While in a terrain covered by any of your Pathfinder Basics feats, you and your teammates’ cover improves by 1 grade (e.g. from 1/4 to 1/2), to a maximum of full. Also, while in a terrain covered by any of your Pathfinder Basics feats, your targets’ cover and the cover of your teammates’ targets worsens by 1 grade (e.g. from 1/2 to 1/4), to a minimum of none.





PREDATORY MASTERY

Your foes are like sheep to the slaughter...

Requirements: Predatory Basics

Benefit: You and your teammates gain a +2 insight bonus to damage against targets in a terrain covered by any of your Pathfinder Basics feats. Also, you gain a trick.

Babe in the Woods (Anticipate Trick): You exploit the weaknesses of those wandering into your territory. If this action is successful, the opponent loses all cover, morale, and circumstance bonuses to Defense until your next Initiative Count. You may use this trick once per round.

PREDATORY SUPREMACY

You're the apex predator of your chosen home.

Requirements: Predatory Mastery

Benefit: Each time you kill an opponent in a terrain covered by any of your Pathfinder Basics feats, you gain 1 Edge. Also, each time you hit a target in a terrain covered by any of your Pathfinder Basics feats, you may spend 1 Edge to cause them to become *slowed* for 1 round.

NEW CLASS ABILITY NPC QUALITIES

The following Skirmisher abilities are available to NPCs using the *class ability* NPC quality (see *Fantasy Craft*, page 231).

Class Ability	XP Value
"It's a trap!"	4
Kill zone	10
"Run for your lives!"	2
"They're all around us!"	5



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