

PLAYER'S NOTES

IN THE ARENA OF DEATH

by Philip Marchal

Arena of Death is a game of gladiatorial combat in the fantasy world of *Dragon-Quest*. The players represent individual combatants in the Arena, competing against terrifying creatures and each other for fame and great wealth. The purpose of these Players Notes is to guide the players and to provide background and useful information for their engagements in the deadly Arena.

Attributes

The Attributes a player has represent his physical strength, his manual dexterity, his agility, etc. Each character is assigned certain values for all of his particular Attributes. Most players are also assigned a number of Unassigned Attribute Points (UAP). These points may be distributed among any Attributes except Popularity and Action Point Allowance, as long as no one Attribute is assigned more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of unassigned points. Among a player's Attributes, five are particularly important. They are Agility, Manual Dexterity, Physical Strength, and Endurance and Fatigue Points.

Agility. Probably the most important Attribute with the possible exception of Fatigue and Endurance Points, Agility is used in a great many game functions. A player's Agility modifies the Strike Chance in Ranged, Melee, and Close Combat. The player with the greatest Agility implements his actions first in each pulse. In addition, Agility can modify a player's attempt to break out of Close Combat.

Players should always increase their Agility by the maximum amount possible, $\frac{1}{4}$ of their total unassigned Attribute Points. Players should do this because of the many important modifications that Agility provides and because a player must compensate for lost Agility due to wearing armor. Since the average Agility of a foe is 16, a player with an Agility of 16 or greater will have increased Strike Chances. If a player increases his Agility by $\frac{1}{4}$ of his total UAP, his Agility should be about 16. Although Agility and Physical Strength will be equally useful in breaking out of Close Combat, the modifications higher Agility affords will more than outweigh the benefits of a bigger weapon that greater Physical Strength provides.

Physical Strength. Physical Strength dictates which weapons a player can effectively wield. Differences in Physical Strength between opposing players modifies a given player's Strike Chance in Close Combat and his ability to break out of Close Combat.

In general, players should try to get their Physical Strength up to 16 points. This level lets a player wield 21 of the 29 weapons, including the best weapon for use in Close Combat. This level also gives a positive modification in determining the Close Combat Strike Chance.

However, some players will want to wield the very large weapons which does require greater strength. If so, they should raise their Physical Strength to 18 points which allows a player to wield three more of the most powerful weapons. Although these bigger weapons are deadly, players must remember that they are for Ranged and Melee Combat only. Since most foes are strongest in Close Combat, they will engage players in Close Combat. A player will find it difficult to disengage a foe in Close Combat due to the Physical Strength of the foe which on the average is 26. Therefore, more powerful weapons in Ranged and Melee Combat will probably not be that useful.

Manual Dexterity. Manual Dexterity restricts a player in choosing which weapons he can use and modifies Strike Chances in Ranged, Melee, and Close Combat.

Players should try to raise their Manual Dexterity to 17. This level gives a positive modification in all three types of combat and enables a player to use 27 of the total 29 weapons and 20 of the 21 weapons that a 16 Physical Strength allows. However, players must remember that shields reduce their Manual Dexterity. Therefore, a player will probably have to expend $\frac{1}{4}$ of his total UAP to attain a Manual Dexterity of 17. Even if a player wants to use the larger weapons requiring a Physical Strength of 18, he will not have to raise his Manual Dexterity above 17 to wield all of them.

Endurance and Fatigue Points. Endurance and Fatigue Points are a player's life's blood. Once a player has lost them, he is dead.

Players should assign $\frac{1}{4}$ of their total UAP on Endurance Points and the remainder, after Physical Strength, Agility, and Manual Dexterity, on Fatigue Points. Endurance Points are more valuable than Fatigue points because a player can lose more Fatigue Points than he ever had. This is so because a player cannot lose both Fatigue and Endurance Points in the same attack. For example, a player with one Fatigue Point left takes 9 points of damage. He can lose only 1 point since the remaining 8 points of damage cannot be taken from Endurance.

Weapons

A player must carefully choose weapons for all uses. When choosing weapons, a player must examine all the features of each one and must always be sure he has the Physical Strength and Manual Dexterity to use it effectively. Players must be sure they have at least one weapon suitable for all three types of combat: Ranged, Melee and Close.

Foes and Combat Technique

Foes are always most effective in Close Combat. Players should always expect Close Combat immediately from foes. Once engaged in Close Combat, it is unlikely a player will be able to disengage because the foe will almost always have superior strength.

In general, players should always execute some Ranged Combat before closing in on a foe. Players should always try to stay in Melee Combat as long as possible, because in Melee Combat players will always have a great many advantages over their foes. Even if a player feels he can kill a foe in Close Combat, he should still try to stay in Melee Combat as long as possible because of his advantages.

Experience Points

Experience Points are gained by players for killing foes and each other. Experience Points can be traded in for increases in the value of Attributes.

Base Chance is the best Attribute to raise. It costs only 200 Experience Points and it will increase a given weapon's Base Chance by 3. Increasing the Damage Modifier of a given weapon and Endurance and Fatigue values are also very useful but more expensive. Increasing the values of the other Attributes is useful but not as useful as increasing Base Chance, Damage Modifier, and Endurance and Fatigue Values.

Players should raise their Base Chance twice for each raise in Damage Modifier, and Endurance and Fatigue Values. The Damage Modifier for Close Combat weapons is most important because foes are most likely to fight players in Close Combat.

Therefore, players should raise the Base Chance for their Close Combat weapons first. The Base Chance for any one weapon should never be raised above 80%, because 80% is close enough to a sure hit and because, at that point, it is more important to raise the values of other Attributes. Lastly, all the raises in Base Chance, Damage Modifier, and Endurance and Fatigue Values should be made simultaneously. ■ ■