

# Law of the Gun

Skirmish rules for the Wild West 1865-90



Tyneside wargames club

January 2010

Inspired by Six Gun Sound



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## Introduction

These rules are designed to allow recreation of small scale battles in the High period of the American west. These rules are designed for stand alone games rather than Campaign games.

Players represent a single character, and may either play opposed games against other player characters, or solo games against a randomly system run enemy.

## Classifications

There are no differences in this system between professions; the following Character attributes allow individuals to operate in the game in a way representative of their likely performance.

This system is not purely historical – it owes much to Hollywood’s depiction of the Wild West. This is intentional – sorry!

## Character Attributes

### **Initiative (IN)**

This is the ability to make decisions, and lead others

### **Skill (SK)**

This is weapon handling ability primarily.

### **Cool (CL)**

This is Morale, backbone, confidence and coolness under fire.

### **Constitution (CON)**

This is fitness, and the ability to cope with injury.

### **Horsemanship (HO)**

This is the ability to ride and drive horsed vehicles

These are given values of between 1 and 5, 5 being the highest level that can be achieved. Some values can change during the game.

A D6 is rolled against one or more of these scores in the game where directed, and a score of equal or less than the value is required to pass.

### Groups:

Any figures within 10cm and in sight of each other may be a group. The leader will normally be the figure with the highest Initiative, though not always.

Figures may join or leave a group freely without restriction.

### Game sequence:

The game is played using the Alternating movement system (IGOUGO)

- (a) Side A moves and shoots with all its figures (If Initiative allows – see below)
- (b) Side B moves and shoots with all its figures (If Initiative allows – see below)

Sometimes, reactive fire is allowed in the opposing sides turn.

Reaction checks are made as directed below whenever they occur in this game sequence, as directed below.

### Movement:

Basic movement is 15cm for folks on foot. (5cms if crawling prone)  
Horsemen and vehicles move a basic of 25cm.

To move faster, figures need to dice against Constitution.  
Horsed figures need to dice against Horsemanship.

If they pass, foot move up to 25cm, if they fail they move up to 20cm.  
If they pass, Horsemen move up to 50cm, or 40cm if they fail.  
If they pass, Vehicles move up to 40cm, or 30cm if they fail.

Horses and Vehicles may turn 45° per ¼ of their movement, so could halt and turn right round.

They may only use their turn in that quarter of their movement, so you cannot use all your turns at one point in your move.

This means that if you move fast, you have a large turning circle.

Foot figures may turn freely without restriction, but they must move in a straight line for at least the amount of movement extra they move above normal movement if moving fast.

### Action restrictions:

Basically, figures may always continue what they were doing last turn, or halt instead if they wish.

If they wish to change what they are doing, the figure or group must dice against the Initiative of the leader. Other members of the group will follow if their own Initiative (+1) is equal or lower than the groups Initiative roll.

### Examples of Actions could be;

- Moving in a more or less single direction.
- Following a route round a piece of terrain.
- Moving in a general direction using as much cover as possible.
- Move towards a particular point or piece of terrain.

If an Initiative roll fails to activate all the members of a group, the group may all halt instead, or the activated figures may choose to leave the others behind.

If the leader has diced to 'Move Fast' (successfully) as well, the activated group members must move at least their full normal move as a group.

### Effects of terrain on movement:

Terrain should be judged on how difficult it is to cross.

Assign a level of difficulty of between 1 and 5, 5 being almost impassable.

Throw a D6 for each level difficulty the terrain is, and reduces a figures movement by the total of the dice rolls x 1cm.

Horsemen and vehicles use D10 instead.

### Examples of terrain could be;

Crossing a low fence up to 4' high – Level 1

Moving through dense scrub – level 2-3

Fording a stream – Level 3

In addition, if passing through difficult terrain of Level 2 or above, horsemen fall off and vehicles overturn if they fail a Horsemanship test for moving fast.

Vehicles cannot cross fences under normal circumstances.

Shooting:

Weapons table;

Weapon Type	Accurate range	Maximum range	Must Reload for 1 turn?
Repeating Rifle	50cms	150cms	N
Pistol (6-Gun)	30cms	90cms	N
Minie Rifle*	80cms	250cms	Y
Minie Carbine*	70cms	200cms	Y
Buffalo Gun	80cms	250cms	Y/N?
Shotgun	40cms	80cms	N
Scattergun	20cms	40cms**	N
Smoothbore Carbine	20cms	80cms	Y
Derringer	10cms	15cms	N
Bow	50cms	100cms	N
Tomahawk/Knife	10cms	20cms	N

\* Includes the 'Trapdoor types' which do not need a reload turn.

\*\* At this range any figures within 2 cms of the target are hit also.

NB: 'Minie' rifles and carbines are unmodified Springfields etc.

Red ranges indicate High impact hits

Blue ranges indicate Low impact hits.

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Shooting rules;

Any figure may shoot in his own move, (*or if he neither moved nor shot in his own turn, in the opponents turn.*)

There are 2 types of shooting;

Aimed shots

Snap-shots

Figures can only fire aimed shots if they are stationary and pass against their **Skill** and **Cool** on a single die roll. If they fail they fire a snap-shot.

Figures moving may only fire a snap-shot. Figures moving fast may only fire a snap-shot if they pass against their **Skill** and **Cool** on a single die roll. If they fail they do not shoot.

### Hits and Effect:

Throw a D10 for any shooting.

Dice first on the 'To Hit' table to see if the round hits  
Then dice for any hits on the 'Cover /Effect' table.

<b>To Hit table</b> (+1 to score required if target moving fast)	D10 roll
Aimed Accurate range	5+
Snap-shot Accurate range	8+
Aimed Maximum range	7+
Snap-shot Maximum range	0

For each hit on a group, Dice against **Cool** for each member of the group - if they fail they drop a **Cool** level. If figures fail a test at level 1 Cool, they must fall back 25cms immediately towards the nearest cover to their rear. Figures cannot fall below 1 Cool.

### **Cover/Effect table**

Roll D10 against the cover the target is in:

D10 roll	No cover	Left hand round corner	Right hand round corner	Target prone / behind wall etc	Target in window
1	Graze-head	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover
2	Graze-body	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover
3	Graze-arm	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover
4	Graze-leg	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover	Hits cover
5	Wound-body	Graze- left leg	Hits cover	Graze-head	Hits cover
6	Wound-Arm	Graze- left arm	Hits cover	Graze- arm	Graze-head
7	Wound-leg	Wound-right leg	Graze- arm	Wound- arm	Graze-arm
8	Disabled-Body	Disabled-head	Wound-arm	Disabled-Body	Wound-arm
9	Dead-Body	Dead- Body	Disabled-head	Disabled-head	Disabled-Body
0	Dead-Head	Dead- Head	Dead- head	Dead- head	Dead-head

*Dice for arm or leg hits to determine which side hit if not specified.*

High impact weapons count +1 to die result

Low impact weapons -1 to die result except result '0'

Figures behind obscuring cover only (fences etc) add 1 to die result.



### Effects of Injury:

Wounds prevent use of the arm, if a **Constitution** test is failed Loss of an arm prevents use of 2 handed weapons like rifles.

If the gun arm is wounded only snapshots can be fired.

Wounds to the body or head disable if a **Constitution** test is failed.

Each wound to a leg reduces movement by 2cms, or reduces a figures move to 5cms a turn if a **Constitution** test is failed

Disabled simply means out of the fight, the figure will move at 5cm/turn towards the nearest cover, or off table, and stay there.

Dead is just that – a fatal wound.

A mounted figure falls from his horse if wounded or worse if he fails a **Horsemanship** test.

Mounted figures count the Horse as hit on a 5,6 (D6). Injury is calculated as for the rider, but the arm is the front leg!

Horses have a **constitution** of 4

### Special Shooting rules:

Bushwhacking:

Figures in cover firing in reaction at figures may fire aimed shots if this is the first firing in the game, and they pass a **Cool** test.

### Draw!

If figures have not previously fired in the game, and both are in the open, either side may choose to have a Gunfight.

Figures move as normal, but they may only move closer to the enemy and not into cover.

Either side may initiate fire if stationary.

Each involved figure throws a D6 and adds it to his Cool level, this determines which figure fires first. Figures may fire simultaneously. Shooting rules are as normal for Aimed shots etc.

Figures may opt not to fire and offer their opponent a chance to surrender in one on one encounters. The opponent will surrender if he fails a cool test. If he passes he gets shot at!

Ammunition expenditure;

Each figure starts with 3 ammo points for each of his weapons

Each time a '1' is rolled on the 'To Hit' table, figures lose one of their 3 ammo points for that weapon.

When a figure reaches 0 points of ammo, he may no longer shoot with that weapon unless he gets replenishment.

A horse or wagon or pack mule has enough ammo spare for the entire game.

Figures with similar weapons (as in the above table) and supply mules/wagons etc (above) - may give ammo points to another figure within 3cms, but this takes a move neither shooting nor moving fast by both figures.

### Close Combat:

Figures without missile weapons, and other who choose to do so, may attempt to close with their opponents.

Figures wishing to charge in must pass a **Cool** test – then their opponents must do the same or skedaddle (see below).

Figures failing to charge will fall back to cover to their rear.

Figures being charged and charging may shoot a snap-shot at half way through the charge movement if they pass a Skill and Cool test on one D6 roll. All such fire is simultaneous.

When figures enter close combat (Melee) they pair off with any figure they choose to fight, and both sides throw a D6 modified by the following;

Armed with Knife/Axe/Tomahawk +1

Armed with Lance or war club +2

+Current **Cool** level.

Both sides compare totals;

If one side wins by 2 the loser dices against **Cool** – if he fails he Skedaddles.

If one side wins by 3 or more the other side is hit as by a high impact firearm if armed, Low impact if fighting with fists .

In multiple melees against one figure, compare the best roll from the group with the opponent. If the lone fighter wins, all his opponents fall back 2cms.

### Skedaddle:

Figures skedaddling try to move fast directly away from the nearest enemy. They can neither shoot nor fight.

They may rally if they first reach cover or first go out of sight of all enemies, if they pass a **Cool** test – based on their original **Cool** level. Figures that fail this test fail to rally are removed from play.

### Recovering **Cool**:

Figures neither being shot at, or attempting to shoot or move, may recover their **Cool**.

Each turn, they may dice against their original **Cool** level, and if they pass they gain a **Cool** level back. They may never gain **Cool** points if they are already at their original level!

### Visibility:

Figures can be spotted in the open and in clear view at any range.

Figures in cover can be spotted if they fire, or if they are within 50cms and the nearest spotting figure passes a **Skill** test.

It is possible to spot at up to 100cms if the nearest spotting figure passes a **Skill** test, and the nominated 'spottee' fails his **Cool**. (NB: This style test is also useable to become aware of enemy figures within 30cms in buildings – they can be heard, particularly if they are jittery)

### Solo System:

This game can be played as a standard opposed game between players on opposite sides.

If all the players want to fight on one side and fight a randomly run enemy, this system may be used:

Firstly, the enemy force must be split up into groups of 2-4 figures (these may be generated on the NPC chart below) the figure with the Highest **Initiative** being the leader of each group.

These may be replaced by a 50:50 mix of counters and dummy markers if they are to start out of sight (with a small D6 on top to denote their highest **Initiative** figure) and placed randomly in likely positions in their allocated deployment area.

Random actions chart. Each turn solo run groups leaders check on this chart to see what they do that turn. They throw a D6 to test against **Initiative**.

See enemy?	Under fire?	In Cover	<b>Initiative</b> test	Action
Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass	Return fire at most threatening enemy or those causing most damage.
			Fail	Move Fast to outflank nearest enemy trying to keep in cover if possible.
		No	Pass	Move fast towards the nearest cover within 1 move, or go prone and shoot.
			Fail	Fall back to cover further from the enemy, moving fast.
	No	Yes	Pass	Stay in current position, stay hidden until at Effective range of all weapons.
			Fail	Stay in current position, Shoot at the nearest enemy in range.
		No	Pass	Move towards the nearest cover closer to the enemy, fast if needed to reach.
			Fail	Halt, standing and shoot if in range at the nearest enemy.
No	No	Yes	Pass	Move towards the nearest suspected enemy and shoot them if seen.
			Fail	Stay in current position, Shoot at the nearest enemy in range.
		No	Pass	Continue current action. If halted move toward nearest cover.
			Fail	Stay in current position

Mounted figures

See enemy?	Under fire?	In Cover	<b>Initiative</b> test	Action
Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass	Dismount into cover and shoot back if in range.
			Fail	Move toward nearest enemy, move fast and charge if in range.
		No	Pass	Move towards cover to flank of nearest enemy, Charge fast if in range.
			Fail	Move toward nearest enemy, move fast and charge if in range.
	No	Yes	Pass	Dismount into cover and shoot if in effective range.
			Fail	Stay in current position mounted and shoot.
		No	Pass	Move towards cover to flank of nearest enemy, Charge fast if in range.
			Fail	Dismount into nearest cover and shoot if in effective range.
No	No	Yes	Pass	Move toward nearest table side edge and move toward enemy table edge.
			Fail	Move towards the nearest suspected enemy and shoot them if seen.
		No	Pass	Move toward nearest table side edge and move toward enemy table edge.
			Fail	Continue current action, if halted move down centre of table.



NPC chart:

Type	D6 roll	Init	Skill	Cool	Cons	Hors	Notes
Cowboy	1	2	3	2	3	2	Poor quality hands
	2	3	3	3	4	2	Better quality hands
	3	3	3	3	4	3	
	4	4	4	3	4	4	Senior hand
	5	4	5	4	4	4	Team leader
	6	5	4	5	4	5	Old experienced hand
Hired Gun	1	3	3	3	3	2	Greenhorns
	2	3	4	3	4	2	Young or inexperienced men
	3	3	4	4	4	3	Experienced Gunmen
	4	4	4	4	4	3	
	5	4	5	5	5	4	Stone killer
	6	3	4	5	4	4	Bounty hunter
Outlaw	1	2	2	3	2	2	Wannabe bad guy
	2	3	3	3	3	3	Poor quality sidekick
	3	4	3	4	3	3	Average outlaw
	4	3	4	4	3	4	Above average outlaw
	5	4	4	5	4	4	Gang leader
	6	5	5	4	5	4	Wanted 'Dead or Alive'

This is a list of typical pre-generated characters (These are only suggestions)

NPC chart:

Type	D6 roll	Init	Skill	Cool	Cons	Hors	Weapons and Notes
Injun's	1	2	2	3	3	3	Young blood
	2	2	3	3	3	3	Brave
	3	3	3	3	4	4	Brave
	4	3	3	4	4	4	Brave
	5	4	4	4	4	4	Brave
	6	4	4	4	4	5	5
Bandidos	1	2	2	2	3	1	Peon
	2	2	3	2	3	1	Compadre
	3	3	3	3	4	2	Compadre
	4	3	4	4	4	3	Soldado
	5	4	4	4	5	4	Secundo
	6	4	5	5	4	5	Il Grande
Townies	1	2	2	2	2	2	Very young or old civilians
	2	3	2	3	3	2	Gamblers, other professionals
	3	3	2	3	3	2	
	4	3	3	3	3	3	Rowdies
	5	4	3	3	3	3	Deputies
	6	5	4	4	4	4	Sheriff

This is a list of typical pre-generated characters (These are only suggestions)

## Player Character supplement

### Optional rules:

#### Fanning a pistol:

A player's character may choose to fire all the rounds in his 6-gun pistol in rapid succession.

If he is stationary, at accurate range, and passes a '**Cool**' test, he can shoot 5 'Snap shots' at a target group instead of his 'Aimed shot'.

The figure then must spend a turn reloading before shooting again...unless he has another weapon!

#### Rapid fire:

A player's character may opt to shoot 2 snap shots instead of a single 'Aimed shot' in any turn, at any range.

#### Fate:

A player character may opt once during a game, to reduce a hit on himself by D6 +1 levels:

*(EG a 10 score, (a killing head shot) would reduce to 3-8, (a graze or wound)*

-- if he passes a test against '**Skill**'

When this is used, the players character loses a '**Cool**' level automatically.