



DESIGNERS' COMMENTARY

Since the announcement of Warhammer 40,000, some of you have been in touch with questions about the rules. Here you will find some of the most frequently asked of these questions, chosen by our group of expert and experienced playtesters, along with the answers and some guiding examples and commentary.

Q: If a rule modifies a model's Strength characteristic, and that model is equipped with a melee weapon that also has a modifier (e.g. 'x2'), could you explain the order in which the modifiers are applied to the characteristics and the weapon's Strength?

A: First you must determine the model's current Strength characteristic. To do so apply all modifiers to it that multiply or divide the value, then apply any that add or subtract to it. Having done this, you then modify this value as described by the weapon's Strength characteristic.

For example, let's imagine a model with a basic Strength characteristic of 3 is under the effects of two psychic powers: a friendly one that doubles their Strength characteristic, and an enemy one that subtracts 1 from their Strength characteristic. That model's current Strength is therefore 5. If this model then fights with a weapon like a power fist, which has a Strength characteristic of 'x2', that attack will therefore be resolved at Strength 10.

Q: Are modifiers to dice rolls cumulative in the same way that modifiers to characteristics are?

A: Yes.

For example, if a model has the benefit of cover (+1 to its saving throw) and is wounded by a plasma pistol (AP -3, so -3 to its saving throw), the total modifier to the model's saving throw will be -2.

Q: Can a dice roll ever be modified above 6?

A: Yes.

Note that in some cases, a roll will only be successful on rolls of 7+. Poxwalkers, for example, have a Save characteristic of 7+, meaning that without at least a +1 modifier to their saving throw (such as that gained from cover) they will not be able to pass the roll.

Q: Can a dice roll ever be modified to less than 1?

A: No. If, after all modifiers have been applied, a dice roll would be less than 1, count that result as a 1.

Q: If a rule or ability grants a re-roll on, for example, 'hit rolls of 1' (such as a Space Marine Captain's Rites of Battle ability) does that effect trigger before or after applying modifiers to the hit rolls?

A: Re-rolls always happen before modifiers, so the re-roll ability is triggered before applying modifiers.

For example, let's imagine a Space Marine (Ballistic Skill 3+) moves and fires a heavy bolter (a Heavy 3 weapon) whilst within range of a Space Marine Captain's Rites of Battle ability (allowing you to re-roll hit rolls of 1).

The hit dice are rolled and result in a 1, 2 and 5.

Re-rolls are applied before modifiers. In this example a single dice is re-rolled because of the Captain's ability, this time resulting in a 3.

Modifiers are applied after re-rolls. In this example there is a -1 modifier to the hit rolls for moving and firing a Heavy weapon. That means that the post-re-roll scores of 2, 3 and 5 are modified to 1, 2 and 4. Comparing the final results to the model's Ballistic Skill, only one shot hits the target.

Q: When making a hit roll with a supercharged plasma weapon, do you determine whether a '1' was rolled before or after applying re-rolls and modifiers?

A: You apply all re-rolls and modifiers first.

For example, if, after re-rolls and modifiers, the final result is then a 1 (or counts as a 1, as explained above), then the supercharged plasma weapon injures or kills the firer.

Q: If a rule states that an ability triggers on, for example, 'hit rolls of 6+', does this refer to the result of the dice rolls before or after modifiers are applied?

A: It refers to the final result, after re-rolls and modifiers (if any) have been applied.

The only exception to this would be abilities that specifically state, for example, 'unmodified hit rolls of 6', or 'hit rolls of 6 before modifiers are applied.'

Q: Can I use the Command Re-roll Stratagem to re-roll a dice roll made by my opponent?

A: No.

Note that the rules assume that a player always rolls their own dice (instead of asking their opponent, for example, to roll hit rolls, saving throws, etc. on their behalf). That being the case, you can only use the above-mentioned Stratagem to affect dice rolls you make, and not those made by your opponent.

Q: What happens if a unit that has become split up during battle cannot re-establish unit coherency the next time it moves?

A: In this case the unit cannot move.

Note that the rules concerning unit coherency apply any time that a unit is moved, including charging, piling in, consolidating, etc. Again, if a unit cannot end such a move in unit coherency, it cannot make the move.

Q: Can CHARACTERS only perform a Heroic Intervention against enemy units that charged this turn, or can they do so against any enemy unit?

A: They can do so against any enemy unit.

Note that they can only do so if they end up closer to the nearest enemy model, whether it charged this turn or not.

Q: Some CHARACTER units can include non-CHARACTER models – the Genestealer Cults Patriarch and its Familiar ‘upgrade’, for example. Can such a unit be shot at even if it isn’t the closest visible enemy unit?

A: No. The restrictions on targeting CHARACTERS applies to a unit whilst any model in the unit has the CHARACTER keyword (and none have 10 or more wounds).

For example, if a Patriarch takes a Familiar as an upgrade, the Patriarch is a CHARACTER, but the Familiar is not. Neither has 10 or more Wounds. Enemies can therefore only target the pair if they are the closest visible enemy models. If the Patriarch is slain and the Familiar is not, enemy units could then target the Familiar freely.

Q: If a model cannot shoot at the closest visible enemy unit for some reason (e.g. it is within 1" of one of your units) but the next closest visible enemy unit is a CHARACTER, can that model then target the character?

A: No.

Q: When rolling for abilities such as ‘Disgustingly Resilient’ or ‘Tenacious Survivor’ against attacks which inflict multiple wounds, do you roll to ignore each individual wound inflicted by the attack, or do you roll only once to ignore all the wounds inflicted by the attack?

A: Roll to avoid each wound lost separately.

For example, if a model with Disgustingly Resilient fails its saving throw against an attack made by a thunder hammer

(Damage 3), you would roll three dice and for each result of 5+ you would ignore a single wound.

Q: When determining whether a model benefits from cover, does the model’s entire unit need to be fully on or within terrain, or just the model making a particular saving throw?

A: All of the models in a unit need to be at least partially on or within terrain if any of the models are to receive the +1 bonus to their saving throw.

Note, however, that it is possible for a unit to gain the benefit of cover as it suffers casualties during the Shooting phase by removing those models that are not on, or within terrain. As soon as the last model that was not on or within terrain is slain, the rest of the unit immediately starts to receive the benefit of cover.

Q: What happens when a model fires a weapon that can shoot at targets that are not visible to it (such as a mortar) at a target it cannot see, if the target unit is within range of a piece of terrain that grants it the benefits of cover only when it is obscured by a certain amount from the point of view of the firer (such as a unit within 3" of Imperial Statuary)?

A: The unit receives the benefit of cover.

Q: Is a unit’s charge roll the same thing as its charge distance?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you declare charges against units that are not visible to the charging unit?

A: Yes.

Note however that the unit being charged still obeys the normal rules for targeting when it fires Overwatch, and so, if a model cannot see the charging unit, it will not be able to fire Overwatch.

Q: If any of your units are eligible to fight in the Fight phase, can you choose for them not to fight this turn? Also, if any of your units charged in the Charge phase, do they have to fight first in the Fight phase, or can you choose for them to wait until later in the phase?

A: All eligible units must fight in the Fight phase; they cannot ‘pass’ and wait for another phase. Additionally, a unit must fight when it is its time to do so; it cannot ‘hold’ in order to fight later in the phase. So if a unit charged in the preceding Charge phase, it must fight before any non-charging models in the Fight phase (barring any related abilities).

Note that when a model fights, it must do all of its close combat attacks if it can do so – you cannot choose for it not to do so (though you can still choose which weapon it uses for each close combat attack).

Q: If a unit starts the Fight phase within 1" of an enemy unit but, due to casualties suffered and models removed, it is no longer within 1" of any enemy units later in the phase, can it still be chosen to fight?

A: No, unless the unit in question charged this turn it cannot be chosen to fight if there are no longer enemy units within 1". Note that it is possible – if heavy enough casualties have been incurred – that even a unit that did charge may not be close enough, even after a pile-in move, to make close combat attacks. It can still, of course, consolidate.

Q: If a unit starts the Fight phase with no enemy units within 1", but then enemy units that have been chosen to fight move to within 1" of it as a result of their pile-in or consolidation moves, can that unit then be chosen to fight when it is your turn to choose a unit?

A: Yes.

Note, however, that units can only be chosen to fight once per phase.

Q: When piling in and consolidating, does a model have to move as close as possible towards the nearest enemy model, or do they just need to move closer to it?

A: If a model moves at all when piling in or consolidating, it only has to end its move closer to the nearest enemy model than where it started. It is not necessary to move as close as possible (i.e. base-to-base contact).

Note that if a model is in base-to-base contact, it cannot possibly end a move closer to the enemy, and so cannot move when its unit piles in or consolidates.

Q: If a unit piles in or consolidates into a unit it didn't declare a charge against in the preceding Charge phase, does that unit get to fire Overwatch?

A: No.

Remember though that units that charged can only make close combat attacks against units that they declared the charge against, even if pile-in moves, etc. bring them within 1" of a different unit.

Q: When is a unit considered to be 'completely destroyed' or 'wiped out'?

A: These two terms are used synonymously. A unit is considered to be completely destroyed when the last model in that unit is destroyed (also referred to as slain) or flees.

Q: Which player rolls the D6 to see if a vehicle explodes, or if a monster has death throes, etc. when it is destroyed?

A: The player whose model has been destroyed rolls the D6.

Q: In missions where players alternate deploying units, do units that are set up somewhere other than the battlefield still count as a player's deployment choice?

What about units that begin the battle embarked within a transport?

A: Units with abilities on their datasheets that allow them to be set up somewhere other than the battlefield must still be 'set up' in that locale, and so still count as a deployment choice. When you choose to set up a transport, declare what units (if any) are embarked inside – these are not separate deployment choices.

For example, two players are deploying their armies for the Only War mission. The mission instructs them to alternate deploying their units. Player A starts by setting up a unit of Ork Boyz on the battlefield. Player B then sets up a unit of Intercessors on the battlefield. Player A then sets up a Battlewagon on the battlefield – as it is a transport, Player A declares it will start the battle with a Warboss and a unit of Tankbustas embarked inside. Player B then sets up a unit of Terminators, but uses their Teleport Strike ability to set them up in a teleportarium chamber instead of on the battlefield. Player A then sets up their next unit, and so on.

Q: Can a Battle-forged army ever have fewer than 0 Command Points?

A: No.

Regardless of how many Auxiliary Support Detachments you take, you can never start a battle with fewer than 0 Command Points.

Q: What is the difference between a unit's Power Rating and its points value? Can I play a matched play game using my army's Power Level instead of its points total? Can I play a narrative play mission using a points total?

A: A unit's Power Rating is a measure of its efficacy on the battlefield. The higher the Power Rating, the more powerful the unit. An army's Power Level is calculated by adding up the Power Ratings of all the units in the army, so an army with a high Power Level is more powerful than one with a low Power Level.

Power Ratings are designed to give players, at a glance, an idea of how mighty a unit is on the battlefield, irrespective of the weapons and wargear it can take (they are actually based on a calculation of the unit's average value, after considering all possible combinations of weapons and wargear the unit can have). They can therefore be used as a quick guide to establish the comparative might of each army, and are intended primarily for open and narrative play games.

Points values are similar, but are designed specifically with matched play in mind because they offer more granularity. Whilst it takes a little longer to work out each unit's points value, doing so enables you to differentiate between two similar squads equipped with different weapon options, as the points values listed in our books reflect the fact that some weapons are more powerful than others.

There is a relationship between the two – a unit with a high Power Rating will also have a high points value. As a result, it is perfectly legitimate to play a matched play game using Power Ratings instead of points values. Likewise, if you wish to use points values in a narrative or open play game, you can. We recommend both players use the same method as each other, but as long as you both agree, you can decide which method you prefer to use.

Q: If I can choose a keyword for a unit, such as <REGIMENT> for Astra Militarum, could I choose that keyword to be, for example ‘BLOOD ANGELS’ or ‘DEATH GUARD’?

A: No.

In the example above, ‘Blood Angels’ is a Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes and ‘Death Guard’ is a Legion of the Heretic Astartes – neither of which are Regiments of the Astra Militarum.

Q: If I create an Astra Militarum Regiment of my own and name them, for example, the ‘Emperor’s Finest’, and I then also create an Adeptus Astartes Chapter of my own choosing, and also call them the ‘Emperor’s Finest’, do the abilities that work on the <REGIMENT> and/or <CHAPTER> keywords now work on both the Astra Militarum and Adeptus Astartes units?

A: No.

The intent of naming Regiments, Chapters, etc. of your own creation is to personalise your collections and not to enable players to circumvent the restrictions on what abilities affect what units. It is also not intended to circumvent the restrictions on which units are able to be included in the same Detachment.

Q: When a model does not have a base, as is the case with many vehicles, what exactly is the ‘hull’ of the model?

A: The hull of these models refers to the main body of the model. It does not include things such as turrets, sponsons, aerals, banners, spikes etc. If there is still doubt, we recommend both players agree about what constitutes the hull of such models before the battle begins.

Q: What is the difference between a keyword and a Faction keyword?

A: The only real difference is that Faction keywords are used when building an army; when Battle-forging an army, for instance, you will often only be able to include units in the same detachment if they share the same Faction keyword. Also, if you are playing a matched play game, you will need to have an Army Faction – this is a Faction keyword that is shared by all of the units in your entire army (with the exception of those that are Unaligned). Once the battle has begun, there is no functional difference between a keyword and a Faction keyword.

For example, when creating a Battle-forged army for matched play, I take two Patrol Detachments; the first contains only

*units with the **HERETIC ASTARTES** Faction keyword, and the second contains only units with the **DAEMON** Faction keyword. My Army Faction is ‘**CHAOS**’ because this is a Faction keyword every unit in the entire army shares.*

*Once the battle has begun, the distinction between keywords and Faction keywords no longer has any effect – both are used to interact with abilities identically. Imagine, then, that the **HERETIC ASTARTES** Detachment contains a unit of Possessed (which does not have the **DAEMON** Faction keyword, but does have the **DAEMON** keyword), and I choose for them to replace their <**MARK OF CHAOS**> keyword with **KHORNE**. If the **DAEMON** Detachment contained a Herald of Khorne, his ability to ‘add 1 to the Strength characteristic of all **KHORNE DAEMONS**’ would also apply to the unit of Possessed, as they have both the **KHORNE** and **DAEMON** keywords.*

Q: Several missions refer to different types of victory – minor victory, major victory, heroic victory, etc. Do the different types of victory mean anything?

A: Only for determining bragging rights post-battle.