

# Rec Battle Scenarios

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Putting on a recreation battle can be a frustrating affair when you only have a small group to work with. Here are some ideas to use if it falls on your lot to put on a fight with steel when you have only a handful of people to work with. Any of these scenarios can be modified and adapted in many ways depending on circumstances, audience, time and space.

- **Duel or Holmgang**
  - **Practice Gone Bad**
  - **Raid and Counterattack**
  - **Little Battle in a Big War**
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## **Scenario #1: Duel or Holmgang**

(3-5 fighters, plus 1-2 extras) This is a grudge fight between one individual and a small group or two small groups. This particular kind of scenario simulates some of the endemic violence in the Middle Ages. How to set it up: You can start with a formal duel with fighters meeting by prearrangement, or start with one person in a tent (or similarly not ready to meet opponents). The way to do this that makes it entertaining is to set it up so that the fighting is dirty. Have a group of people set on one individual, or stage a back attack launched by an ally once the fight starts. The challenge is to keep the fight going for more than a few seconds and make it look believable. Ways to do this include, grappling on the ground, wounding people and leaving them to rejoin the fight or other dirty tricks. This is the most challenging scenario to do, because it is in essence entirely a special routine.

## **Scenario #2: Practice gone bad**

(5-7 fighters, plus a couple of noncombatant hecklers) This is a battle drill that turns into a bloody fight. It simulates the kinds of training used in the Middle Ages and also gives an impression of how rough and bloody life could be in a lawless world. How to set up: Start by setting up as if to demonstrate shield wall formation drill. You can have people throw spears (in a safe direction!) and act up the instructional part as part of the show. However, while you are drilling, one person who is being trained acts annoying and heckles several of the people being trained. Eventually tired of being heckled, the instructor begins arguing with his tormenter and a general argument turns into an armed brawl. This particular scenario turns a fairly dry practice into an unexpectedly violent battle. All the participants may join in with a battle between two groups dissolving into a disorganized mob grappling and pummeling each other to death. Especially funny if only one person is left alive at the end. This scenario has the advantage of being good for demonstrations where you want to draw the public in with the practice being the lead in to the general brawl. Really get loud and ugly with the arguing before letting it turn violent, or else it will end too soon. This particular scenario is also especially good for new fighters since they can get taken out early if they don't want to get into complicated special routines.

### **Scenario #3: Raid and counterattack**

(7-15 fighters, plus as many extras as you can use) This is a small scale battle with two groups fighting over possession of some form of loot (tents, valuable, women/children). This particular scenario simulates common banditry or a Viking Raid. How to set up: One group is in the village (Tents) doing daily chores with a token guard. A second, well armed group rushes into the village in formation, killing the guard and then breaking up into general rapine and pillage. While still in the process of terrorizing their victims, the local fyrd shows up and surprises the raiders. The fyrd is formed in a tight shield wall and sweeps down upon the now disorganized raiders. A major fight now develops as the bandits and fyrd slug it out. While the raiders are recovering from their surprise the villagers can spring a few surprises of their own adding to the mayhem. This scenario is easy to set up, has loads of little routines incorporated into it, and flows nicely. Its' weakness is that it takes a fairly large number of fighters to organize and is dependent on using props (like tents) to create the village illusion.

### **Scenario #4: Little Battle in a Big War**

(10-20 fighters, plus a couple camp followers and clergy) So how do you simulate a major historical battle with only a few fighters? The answer is to apply a little humor and make believe two lost groups of fighters from opposite sides accidentally encounter each other "off stage" and fight out the battle in miniature. This is battle is pure black humor, a major battle being settled by the dregs of both armies. It simulates a major battle (Bannockburn, Stamford Bridge, Stirling, Crecy, etc...), but on a small scale without insulting the intelligence of the spectators. How to set up: Have an announcer begin addressing the crowd about the famous battle going on just a few miles distant. Then have the first group march on looking disorganized and lost. They mill about and stop, arguing where to go next. Then the other group arrives. They recognize each other and form up their respective sides. Negotiations ensue and then break down as the leaders try to murder each other while negotiating under a flag of truce (this is an old Attlia gag). Both sides then fight a fairly straight forward battle fought in a small scale. While the announcer narrates what is happening on the battlefield a few miles away, the fighters act out the battle in their ones and twos simulating hundreds fighting elsewhere. This scenario is very good for fairs with a strong historical theme (example: Highland Games) where your audience can be expected to know something about what is happening off stage. This event requires an announcer to narrate the events. It also can be difficult to do however since it is a complicated theme to attempt. Trying to do historical battles though is extremely frustrating since we have so few people trying to simulate them. Do this scenario if it is the only way to simulate a large battle with a small group of people.

I hope I've given you some ideas for putting on improptu battles. Remember, Battle Reenactment is part theater, part history and has to be fun for both fighters and audience. Good luck.

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