

David O. Miller's

Melee & Wizard

Bringing TFT into the 3rd Dimension

Three Dimensional TFT for Advanced Melee and Wizards



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I've toyed with three dimensional terrain for Melee/Wizards for many years but I found the dimensional hexes very time consuming to make. I was therefore happy to see Hasbro come out with Heroscape. I'd already been working on this set of rules for a few years and it was interesting to see how Heroscape handled the same problems that I had encountered and how they had come to some of the same conclusions. (There is a lot of similarities between TFT and Heroscape. One of my gaming friends calls Heroscape "Melee Light - looks great, less fulfilling".) Recently I decided to finally flesh out and finish these rules to post on my web site. Here are the results.

--David O. Miller

Heroscape Tiles - Bringing Melee into the 3rd Dimension

The Milton Bradley game "Heroscape" comes complete with a large supply of 3 dimensional, interlocking hex tiles that are perfect to play TFT with. By combining these tiles in different ways you can create endlessly variable terrain. Unfortunately, bringing Melee into the 3rd dimension presents problems that the original rules did not cover or even anticipate. This is my attempt at a set of "house rules" that captures both the simplicity and the playability of the original TFT rules while allowing one to enjoy the tactical situations that the added dimension of height brings. At first glance they may appear complicated but after you understand them they are very easy to play.

Height:

All figures have a Height (H) number. Height is how tall the miniature figure is compared to the height of a stack of Heroscape "hex tiles". The numbers on the chart (see next page) were arrived at by simply comparing the height of my 28mm miniatures that I use to play TFT with against the height of the Heroscape "hex tiles". You can see some examples of my figures against my flocked tiles below. Feel free to adapt these numbers to match your own miniature figures in your collection. You can of course also have individual figures that are taller or shorter than the average. "Shorty" the barbarian or "Stretch" the dwarf readily come to mind.

H represents two things: A.) The number of hex tile sides that a figure can reach up and still be able to effectively attack with a weapon and B.) the number of hex tile sides that a figure can climb up at one time during movement. Each hex tile "side" counts as one movement point when climbing up. You also count the top of the hex you land on as one. Thus it would cost the Dwarf in the picture below a total of 3 MA to reach the ledge above him (2 for the sides and 1 for the top). When you jump down (or fall down) you don't count the hex tile sides (except to determine falling damage).



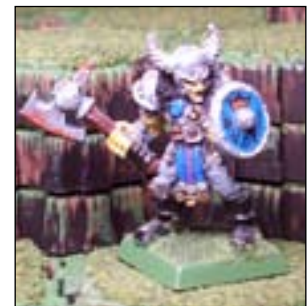
Hobbit - Height 1



Dwarf - Height 2



Goblin - Height 2



Human - Height 3

Height Chart:

	H	1D6 Falling Damage	2D6 Falling Damage	3D6 Falling Damage
Hobbits	1	2 tile heights	3 tile heights	4 tile heights
Dwarves and Goblins	2	3 - 4 tile heights	5 - 6 tile heights	7 - 8 tile heights
Humans and Orcs	3	4 - 6 tile heights	7 - 9 tile heights	10 - 12 tile heights
Elves	3 (+1)*	5 - 8 tile heights	9 - 12 tile heights	13 - 16 tile heights

* *Elves are nimble so they get a +1 to their Height when determining what height they can climb.*

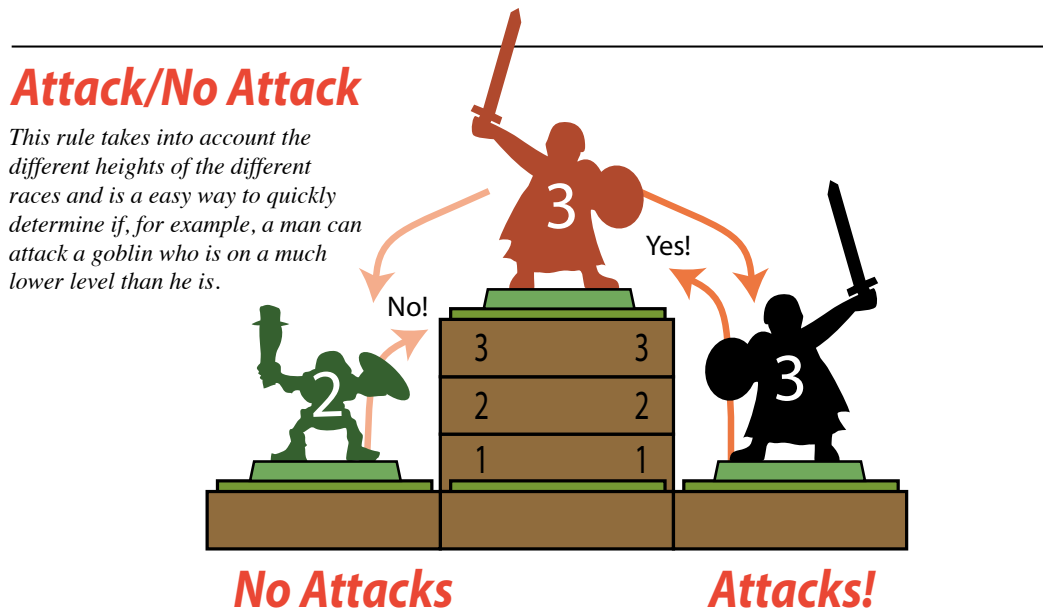
2 Hex Horseman 4 (-2)** 3 - 4 tile heights 5 - 6 tile heights 7 - 8 tile heights
 ** *Horsemen get a -2 to their Height when determining what height they can climb. Damage from a fall applies to both the horse and the rider.*

The H (height) of larger hex figures should be determined by your actual miniature figure. The below numbers are only guidelines.

3 or 4 Hex Figure	4 (+)	5 - 8 tile heights	9 - 12 tile heights	13 - 16 tile heights
7 Hex Figure	5 (+)	6 - 10 tile heights	11 - 15 tile heights	16 - 20 tile heights

Determining who can Attack who:

A figure's Height is the number of hex tile sides that a figure can reach up and still be able to effectively attack with a weapon. If a higher figure's base is on a level higher than the Height of the lower figure they can not attack each other. In the example the boxes represent hex tiles as seen from the side. (Note that if a lower figure can hit you then you can always hit the lower figure.)



Prone Figures:

All prone figures have a H of 1 for determining who can attack the prone figure and also for movement purposes. Since a prone figure has a MA of 2 he could crawl up one level and end his turn in an adjacent, one tile higher hex. He could not climb up 2 levels.

Height Advantage (Disadvantage):

Figures get a plus 1 (or minus 1) to their adj. DX depending on the number of levels higher (or lower) they are compared to their opponent. Example: A Dwarf two hex tiles higher than a Human would get a +2 to his adj. DX while the Human would get a -2 to his adj. DX. This makes holding the high ground strategically important.



Engagement:

Engagement is the physical action of not allowing an opponent to simply move away from you. By moving and feinting you keep your opponent from dodging backwards away from you. This works great on level ground, however, being higher (or lower) than your opponent makes it difficult to keep him from easily stepping away. Engagement also has to take into consideration the size of the figures facing each other. A taller figure like a giant can hold at bay a smaller, human size figure even if the human is standing on much higher ground.

To determine if a front hex falls under a figures control (and thus engages another figure) you simply count the number of hexes the figure occupies. This number is the number of tile hex sides up or down that the figure controls. Therefore, if you are a one hex figure, you only engage figures on the same level, one level higher, or one level lower than you. At two levels or more engagement rules do not apply to one hex figures, the intervening terrain height allows them to move away from each other easily. However note that if the figures Heights allow it they can still attack each other, they are just not engaged to each other.

Here's another example: A three hex giant will engage any one hex figure that is one, two or three hex tile sides higher (or lower) than the giant. Of course the giant is not engaged by a single, one hex figure but he would also not be engaged by 2, one hex human figures if the 2 figures were next to him but standing on a two hex tile high hill. The humans only engage figures one tile hex higher (or lower), not two. In this case they would be engaged to the giant but the giant would not be engaged to them.

Disengage:

The same holds true for disengaging. A figure that disengages can move backwards staying on the same level or step up a number of levels equal to the number of hexes it occupies. It can, of course, step down as many levels as it wants but the Jumping or Falling rules described below take effect. Thus a one hex Human fighter can disengage backwards and up one level but not two. He could also step off an edge 20 hex tiles high and hope to survive the fall if he really felt compelled to do so.

Jumping or Falling Down:

Any figure can jump down a number of hex tiles equal to or less than its Height number with no penalty. The movement cost is only 1 since you move forward into another, lower hex.

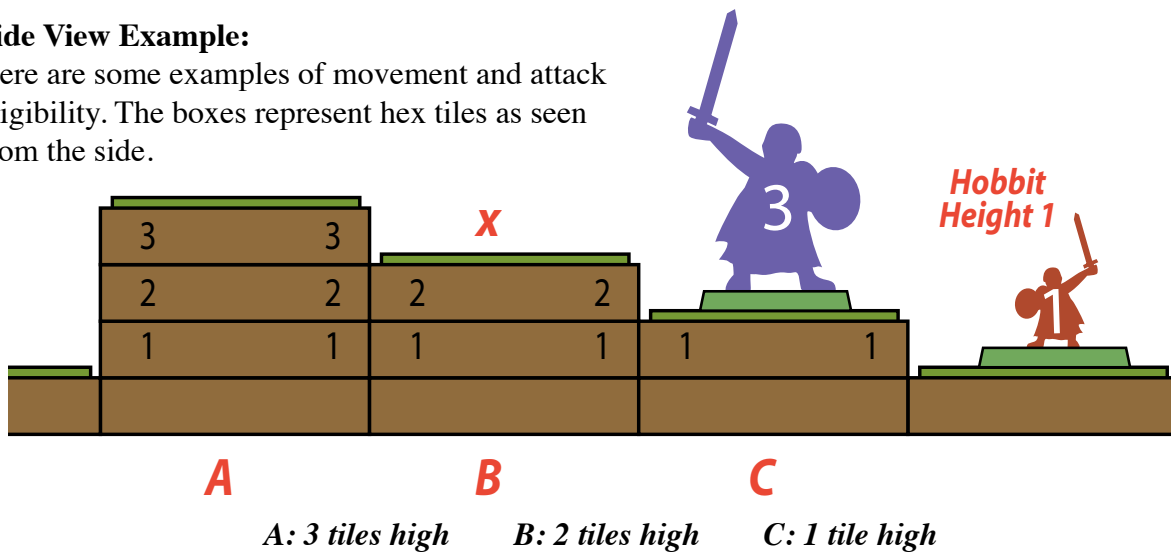
If you jump, fall or are knocked down more than your Height (up to and including double your Height) then you must roll 3D6 vs adj. DX to see if you were able to prepare yourself for the drop. If you make your roll then you jump down successfully and can take away one of the D6's you must roll for damage (in this case the only D6 you must roll). You end up standing in the lower hex. If you miss the roll then you fall prone in the bottom hex and take 1D6 damage. Armor, regardless of type, will only stop a maximum of 2 points of this damage.

If you jump, fall or are knocked down more than twice your Height (up to and including three times your Height) then you must roll 3D6 vs DX to see if you were able to prepare yourself for the drop. If you make your roll then you jump down successfully and can take away one of the D6's you must roll for damage (in this case you would therefore roll D6). You end up standing in the lower hex. If you miss the roll then you fall prone in the bottom hex and take 2D6 damage. Armor, regardless of type, will only stop a maximum of 2 points of this damage.

Up to three times your height you would take 3D6 damage and so on.

Side View Example:

Here are some examples of movement and attack eligibility. The boxes represent hex tiles as seen from the side.



The hobbit pictured to the right has a H (Height) score of 1. He could attack a figure (if he was in position to do so) standing on top of hex column C but not hex columns A and B. These hexes are too high and out of his reach. A human figure (H 3) standing on hex column A or B could not attack the hobbit simply because the hobbit is too short for him to reach (see Optional Swipe Attack).

If the hobbit moved on to hex column C from the position he is in it would cost him two points of movement (one for the hex tile side and one to move onto the top of the hex). He could continue then up on to hex column B at an additional two points of movement and if he had enough MA left over he could go two more and end his movement on top of hex column A. This would be a total move of 6.

If, however, he was standing next to hex column A or B he could not move up onto them since his H is only 1. He can only climb up 1 hex tile side at a time due to his small size.

If he was on top of hex column A at the start of his turn he could move down to the right and end up in the position indicated by the “X” at a cost of 1 movement point. It doesn’t cost any movement points to move down one tile hex side for hobbits since their Height is a 1. However, if he jumped down from hex column A he would have to roll his adj. DX on 3D6 or risk taking 2D6 points of damage from a fall.

Force Retreats:

A force retreat is the physical action of pushing an opponent backwards after a successful attack. Terrain, however, can interfere with being able to do so. A much higher opponent has the advantage of height and becomes difficult or impossible to push back from below.

You can force retreat an opponent if:

- A - Both of you are on the same level.
- B - Your opponent is lower.
- C - If a higher opponent is standing on a number of higher tiles equal to or less than your base size.

You can only move the force retreated figure backwards:

- A - Keeping him on the same level
- B - Moving him up one level only
- C - Moving him down as many levels as available (see the stumble rule below)

Stumble Rule:

When you force retreat a figure backwards and down there exists the chance that the figure might loose his balance and stumble, possibly falling down. Any figure pushed back and down a number of levels less than or equal to his H must roll 3D6 vs. adj. DX to avoid tripping and falling prone in the hex he is force retreated into. Use the falling rules if he is pushed back off of a drop more than his H.



Climbing:

You can always climb up a number of hex tile sides equal to you H at one time during regular movement.

To climb up (or down) more than your Height requires time. First you must have your hands free so all weapons and shields must be put away. Second it takes a full round to scale a number of tiles equal to your Height. The number of hex sides you can climb at one time is referred to as a “set”.

To climb up (or down) you must start the turn adjacent to the wall you wish to climb. You get the first “set” of tiles (equal to your H) for free, no roll needed. Then, on the same turn, you must roll 4D6 vs DX (3D6 with the climb talent) to see if you were able to climb the next “set”. If you are successful and there are no more hex tile sides to climb you may stand on the top most hex, otherwise you must continue to climb the next “set” of hex tiles on the next turn. If you miss any of your rolls then you fall prone in the bottom hex and take damage appropriate to the number of hex tiles you fell counting from the top most hex of the current set of tiles you are attempting to climb. Armor, regardless of type, will stop only 2 points of this damage.

For example: Bob the Barbarian (H 3, DX 16, chain) wants to climb a wall that’s 10 hex tiles high. He starts the turn adjacent to the wall and his hands free. The first turn he climbs 3 tiles for free and then attempts to climb the next set of 3, rolls 4D6 and gets a 15. He goes up and clings to the wall. The second turn he climbs 3 more tiles and rolls 11. Still good. He only has one more hex tile side to go. On the third turn he’s not so lucky and rolls a 21. Bob falls.



Bob has to count the top most tile of the set he was currently climbing when he fell so he falls 10 tile heights. He must roll 3D6 vs DX to see if he was able to prepare himself for the drop. He rolls a 12. Success! Since he was falling more than three times his Height he normally would take 3D6 damage but since he made his saving roll he only rolls 2D6 damage and lands prone in the bottom hex. His chain only stops 2 points of this damage.

Multi Hex Figures and Hex Tiles:

It’s a simply fact of table top gaming that multi hex figures start becoming difficult to physically maneuver and place on a 3 dimensional terrain board. Whereas a real figure could twist and turn to match the landscape, ridged metal miniatures do not. I have found that 2 and 3 hex figures work pretty well with Heroscape’s hex tiles. The secret with the 3 hex miniatures is to not make the bases too large. That way you can place them a little easier into the terrain. I have found that the large monster size bases made by Games Workshop make pretty good bases for 3 hex figures and fit the scale and size of the Heroscape hexes. They can, however, make it look like the attacking figures



are a little far away from the 3 hex figure. The real problem is with the 4 and 7 hex creatures. Again I try to make the bases for these figures smaller so they can be fit into the terrain. By the way, the dragon that comes with the basic Heroscape set makes a pretty good 4 hex dragon.

A 2 hex horseman must keep both of it's hexes either on the same level or one level higher or lower. (It can never overhang one of its hexes over a drop off. If it does so it will fall.) Always use the

front hex of the rider/horse to determine which hex to measure Height from.

A 3 hex figure can actually squeeze through some pretty tight areas. Always lead with the front hex ignoring the rear two hexes while moving (it's assumed it squeezes through narrow areas). A 3 hex figure must, however, always end his movement with 2 of his hexes on the same level. The third hex can overhang any size drop off or be one hex higher. However, while he is thus off balance, the figure is at a - 2 DX. Measure Height from the level, main two hexes of the 3 hex figure to what ever hex you are targeting.

A 4 hex figure must always end his movement with 3 of it's hexes on the same level. The fourth hex can overhang any size drop off or be one hex higher. However, while he is thus off balance, he is at a - 2 DX. As with the 3 hex figure, lead with a single hex while moving or use common sense when determining whether the creature could fit.

A 7 hex figure must always end his movement with 4 of it's hexes on the same level. The other 3 hexes can overhang any size drop off or be one hex higher. However, while he is thus off balance, he is at a - 2 DX. As with the 3 hex figure, lead with a single hex while moving or use common sense when determining whether the creature could fit.

Optional Rule: Another solution (which I'm not fond of but works) is to make your 3 hex miniatures fit onto one hex but give them all of the properties and abilities of a 3 hex figure. Again, the Games Workshop large monster size bases fit a single Heroscape hex pretty well and it's easy to tell at a glance that the base is definitely bigger and thus a 3 hex type of figure. This solves a lot of the problems with movement. In the same regard a 4 hex figure could be represented by a 2 hex figure and a 7 hex by a 4 hex. Again, not the greatest solution but one that could be worked out.

Sweeping Blows:

You can only attempt a sweeping blow to foes on the same level or one level higher or one level lower than you. Foes can be on different levels however. Example: Grundar the Stout attempts a

sweeping blow at three foes in his front 3 hexes. The first one is one level lower, the second is on the same level and the third is again one level lower. If the middle foe was two levels lower then Grundar would only sweep the first and the third figures.

If there is a tile wall two levels or higher in the path of the sweeping blow then you must roll to miss it. If you miss this roll you hit the side of the tile wall and it stops your sweep.

(Optional Rule) Swipe Attack:

If a lower figure can hit you then you can always hit the lower figure. But if you are higher than the lower figures Height then you are too high up. The only way the higher figure can attack is to attempt a swipe attack. To do this attack the higher figure stands still or moves up to 1/2 his MA and kneels in the hex above his opponent. He then leans out and down to take a “swipe” at the lower foe. This necessitates having one free hand to hang on with, therefore it can only be attempted if you are not holding a shield and only while using a one handed weapon. To figure out if the upper figure can attack you simply negate the top most hex sides equal to the attacking figures H. If, by doing so, the lower figure could conceivably hit the higher figure then the higher figure can hit as well and the attack is possible. The kneeling figure is at a -4 DX to attack but also gets any height advantage. The lower figure can attack normally. Remember not to factor in the negated hex sides when determining either figures height advantage or disadvantage.

Also, since the higher figure is kneeling he is at a +4 to be hit by any figures standing next to him on the same level or a +5 (4 +1 due to height advantage) if any attacking figures are one level higher. Any figures higher than one level could not hit him unless they kneel as well (remember a prone figure has a H of 1).

Missile Fire:

I gave up Mega Hexes a long time ago. Since a Mega Hex is 3 hexes across I simply measure missile weapon range in increments of 6 hexes. Therefore the first 6 hexes are no minus, the next 6 hexes are a -1 DX, the next 6 a -2 DX and so on. However, because of the added third dimension, a better way had to be devised to not only determine the



range but also the line of sight. This is where a “Range String” comes into play. A length of string is marked with tick marks the same width as 6 Heroscape hexes. Then you simply place one tick mark (near the end of the string) next to the head of the miniature shooting the missile and hold the other end next to the chest of your target. This immediately gives you the range to the target as well as show you which figures you need to roll to miss, which figures the arrow would pass over head, or even if the shot is possible due to obstacles in the way.

Missile Fire and Concealment:

See page 21 Advanced Melee. These can complicate matters even more and usually requires a judgement call on, for example, whose is half-hidden and who is not. Use them if you like.

Jumping Gaps:

Reference “Actions During Movement - Jumping, Etc.” on page 5 of Advanced Melee for more information. Basically it comes down to this:

1 hex - 2D6 vs ST + DX

2 hex - 5D6 vs ST + DX

3 hex - 8D6 vs ST + DX

Missed roll gets a 3D6 vs. DX to grab the far side. To pull yourself up next turn requires a 4D6 roll vs. ST, miss the roll take 1 hit from exhaustion.

Broken Ground Rules:

Heroscape comes with three different types of painted terrain hex: grass, dirt and rock. Feel free to apply the broken ground rules on page 18 of Advanced Melee to the dirt and/or rock hex tiles.

Water Rules:

Heroscape also comes with water hex tiles. Using the water rules on page 19 of Advanced Melee I assign depths to the tiles. In most cases a tile next to the bank is ankle height. A water tile one tile away from the bank is up to one’s knees and a water tile two tiles away is about neck high. Of course this can be altered so a player that steps into a water hex may find himself up to his neck in trouble

Closing Thoughts:

I hope you find these rules of some use. The use of 3d terrain adds another dimension (tactically, dimensionally and visually) to an already great game. Se ya on the battlefield!

--David

