Microlite20 Tactical System

by Corvus

I have thought a long time about a system for tactical movement, that doesn't need any miniatures or tile maps nor is too simplistic to be of no tactical importance. Thus is came up with my own system. To make the things clear beforehand, this is not truly in the spirit of M20, as it adds rules to the game that aren't absolutely essential but may be exactly that what enables M20 to be the base for a more sophisticated game (or serve as a base for a Microlite 4E).

What is needed (ruleswise):
-A "speed" rating, that corresponds to the real movement rate of a combatant and that is on same scale as other abilities that are used to make checks in this system. For M20 this is something along the lines of a +2 to +6 bonus to a check.
-A distinction between movement-related and non-movement-related actions. To put it into D&D terms: Standard and Movement actions. Every combatant is entitled to one of each during his combat turn.
-A way to determine how many pieces of cover and higher ground are available. Usually this is set by the Game Master.
-A distinction between melee and ranged weapons.

What gaming materials are needed?
While I have been trying to reduce the amount of materials needed, it is feasible to use some tokens for
-cover and higher ground (just to know how many of each are available)
-combat advantages (explained later)
-(only if you like) for the players and the enemies (e.g. chess pieces)

What is the basic idea behind it?
The basic idea behind making the tactical movement abstract is that there are only few positions in combat that make a difference for the combatant from a tactical point of view. Thus this system only looks at potentially interesting positions in combat, while the rest is simply ignored. Furthermore, it is assumed that all combatants are constantly moving around, while the general distance between them stays roughly the same. As it stands now, the price for this abstraction is that it becomes hard to explain why a combatant can move across the whole battlefield in one turn.

What are those "tactically important positions"?
This movement system distinguishes between four "tactically important positions": *engaged* in melee, *disengaged*, behind *cover* and on *higher ground*. Everything else is of no further interest. The following table gives a short summary of the advantages of each position.

Position	Advantage(s)
engaged:	able to (be) attack(ed by) enemies with melee weapons; Line of Sight only to other combatants in the same combat.
disengaged:	able to (be) attack(ed by) enemies with ranged weapons; Line of Sight to all other combatants not behind cover.

cover:	+4 AC, Line of Sight only to allies
higher ground:	+4 AC vs ranged attacks, +4 on ranged attacks, Line of Sight to everyone not behind cover (and vice versa)

How does it work?

Combat time is divided into rounds, each round representing 6 seconds of time passing in the game world. During each combat round, every combatant gets one turn, during that he can take one *movement* and one *standard* action. When all combatants have taken their turns, a new round begins.

Some movement actions require a speed check. The DC for this check is given in the figure "DC".

Unless determined otherwise by the DM, all combatants begin the combat *disengaged*.

Movement Actions:

Move:

You move around the battlefield, trying to reach your destination as fast as possible.

~~+4 bonus on your next speed check.~~ You receive 2 movement tokens.

Engage:

DC: 10 + the speed of enemy you are trying to engage

You charge into battle, facing your foe in bloody hand-to-hand combat.

Success: you are now engaged in melee combat with the target. This enables you to make attacks against the target with melee weapons.

Failure: you become *disengaged* and receive one movement token.

Disengage:

DC: 10 + the speed of enemy with the lowest speed score you are in combat with + 1 for every enemy after the first

You retreat from combat, getting some distance between you and the enemy's weapons.

Success: you are now disengaged. If there is any unoccupied cover or higher ground, you may move to that location. You lose all combat advantage tokens.

Failure: you stay in the combat and up to three enemies in the same combat get to make a free attack against you. You get one movement token.

Tactical Movement:

DC: 10 + the speed of enemy with the lowest speed score you are in combat with + 1 for every enemy after the first or see text

You try to get into a position that grants you an advantage over your enemy.

Success: you gain one *combat advantage token* if you are in combat. If you are not in combat, you may move behind cover (DC 12) or onto higher ground (DC 15).

Failure: you lose one *combat advantage token*. If you were trying to move behind cover or onto higher ground you ~~stay in current position~~ become *disengaged*.

Special Movement:

You mount or dismount a animal or vehicle or ascend/descend to/from aerial combat

Standard Actions:

Attack:

Special rules:
Cover: if a combatant behind cover is engaged, he gets to make a free attack against the attacker (but only once during that round). After that turn, that combat is considered a normal combat and provides no cover bonuses to anyone, until that location has been left. A combatant can get line of sight to all other combatants not behind full cover (and vice versa) by not fully using the cover (*half cover*). At the beginning of a turn or when getting behind cover initially, the combatant has to announce in which way he uses the cover. While using only *half cover* the AC bonus is reduced to +2.
Combat Advantage Tokens: a combatant can spend a combat advantage token before he makes an attack roll in order to get a +2 bonus on that roll. A token can also be spent before an enemy makes an attack roll in order to receive a +2 AC bonus against that attack.
Movement Tokens: when making a speed check for a movement action, a combatant receives a +2 bonus to that check for every movement token he has. If the check is successful, that combatant loses all movement tokens.
Mounted Combatants: Mounted combatants use the speed of their mount for all movement. Mount and rider always move at the same time, as long as they are unseparated. A mount is treated as a normal combatant in all other respects.
Airborne Combatants: as long as an airborne combatant is in the air, he is considered to be on higher ground and can only be engaged by other flying combatants. An airborne combatant engaging an enemy on the ground automatically disengages at the beginning of his next turn.

Table: Line of Sight

Position	Can see	Can be seen by
engaged	enemies not on higher ground or behind full/half cover; allies behind full cover	enemies not behind full cover; allies behind full cover.
disengaged or *behind half cover*	enemies not behind full cover; allies behind full cover.	enemies not behind full cover; allies behind full cover.
behind full cover	allies only	allies only
on higher ground	enemies not behind full cover; allies behind full cover.	everybody, except enemies behind full cover.

Class Combat Advantages:
Every class gets a unique way to spend a combat advantage token.

Fighters: after a successful attack roll you may spend a combat advantage token to receive a +4 bonus to the damage roll.

Rogues: before making a speed check, you may spend a combat advantage token to receive a +4 bonus to that check.

Magi: you can spend any amount of combat advantage tokens as a standard action in order to deal 2 points of damage per token spent to a combatant that you have line of sight to.

Clerics: you can spend any amoutn of combat advantage tokens as a standard action in order to heal a combatant you have line of sight to for 2 points per token spent. You cannot use this ability on yourself.