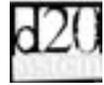




# Heroes of High Favor: DWARVES



A d20 Supplement  
by Benjamin R. Durbin

## Sample Pages

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## Battle-Rager

Though tales do tell of the occasional “lost tribe” of primitive, barbaric dwarves, by and large when one thinks of dwarven “barbarians,” the image that leaps immediately to mind is that of the fearsome *battle-rager*.

Although widely known and easily recognized, battle-ragers are nevertheless a

rare occurrence. These wild fighter-barbarians are known for their unstoppable fury in battle and an unsettling disregard for their own safety. They waded into battle without armor, their bare arms and chests covered in countless scars and graven tattoos, frothing at the mouth and hewing mercilessly into the enemy with huge, rune-covered axes.



## Role in Dwarven Society

What turns a dwarf into a battle-rager? It could be the sudden, burning passion caused by the death of a close relative, or the rage could simply come upon an aged, battle-weary dwarf like a pot coming to a slow boil.

In any case, battle-ragers are valued and respected among dwarves, who universally agree that the battle-rager's path is a divine calling. That the calling is rare, and that they tend to go out quickly in a blaze of glory, only serves to make battle-ragers more unique and precious among dwarven society.

Those few battle-ragers who survive to become great heroes are a resource treasured more than gold or mithral. Such heroes move from battle to battle, lending their expertise where the fighting is thickest. Although there are other dwarven heroes, such as the slayers, who are more suited to vanquishing a single mighty foe, the battle-rager is unparalleled at shattering the lines of lesser foes such as goblins. Against a battle-rager, even the hardiest legions of goblins will falter and break.

## Role within the Adventuring Party

Although ill-suited to polite company, a battle-rager is a boon to any fledgling adventuring party. Combining dwarven resilience, barbaric fury, and a hatred of all things goblinoid, the battle-rager serves as the hard-hitting core of many adventuring groups. Despite their coarse nature, they can yet be of use in civilized areas, where they can often protect the party by reputation (and intimidation) alone.

## Fighter-Barbarian

You may play a battle-rager by simply multiclassing a few levels of fighter with barbarian. Most prefer starting as a barbarian for the increased hit die and skill points, adding a level of fighter as soon as possible for the bonus feat. Better still, if you are using the optional apprentice-level multiclassing rules, a fighter-barbarian begins play with a bonus feat, fast movement, and the rage ability. Remember that although a single classed barbarian cannot read, a multiclassed barbarian automatically gains the ability as soon as a literate class is attained.

Of all the attributes, it is worth considering Dexterity as perhaps the most important. The fighter-barbarian can increase his Strength and Constitution through raging, but his limitation to medium or light armor means that his AC suffers at higher levels. A decent Dexterity bonus to AC, coupled with lighter armor for maximum mobility, can help offset this vulnerability. The barbarian's access to *uncanny dodge* guarantees that the character will be able to make the most of his Dexterity bonus.

Bonus fighter feats are best spent perfecting the "two hander" path: Power Attack, Cleave, and Great Cleave. Because of their high movement rate, fighter-barbarians tend to be first into the fray, separated from their allies, and unable to take advantage of a full attack action. By concentrating on weapons and feats that maximize the damage potential of a single strike, such as with an Improved Charge + Power Attack, the character can drop lesser foes and still enjoy the luxury of multiple attacks through the Cleave feats.

## Battle-Rager

More than merely fighter-barbarians, the path of the true dwarven battle-rager is even more brutal. Few receive the divine calling, and fewer still possess the determination to heed that call.

*Hit Die:* d12

### Requirements

*Base Attack Bonus:* +5

*Alignment:* any non-Lawful

*Feats:* Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

*Special:* rage, frenzy, or similar class ability

### Class Skills

The battle-rager's class skills (and the key attribute for each skill) are: Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Chr), Jump (Str), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex).

*Skill Points at Each Level:* 2 + Int modifier

### Class Features

#### WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The battle-rager is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. Although they retain any proficiency with armor and shields that they receive from prior classes, they gain no new proficiency. Battle-ragers who wear armor or use a shield lose the favor of the dwarven gods. All special battle-rager class abilities are lost until the character receives an *atonement* from a dwarven cleric.

#### AGAINST THE ODDS (Ex)

The battle-rager is at his best when the odds are against him. For every melee opponent who threatens the space occupied by the battle-rager, the battle-rager receives a +1 morale bonus to AC (see below).

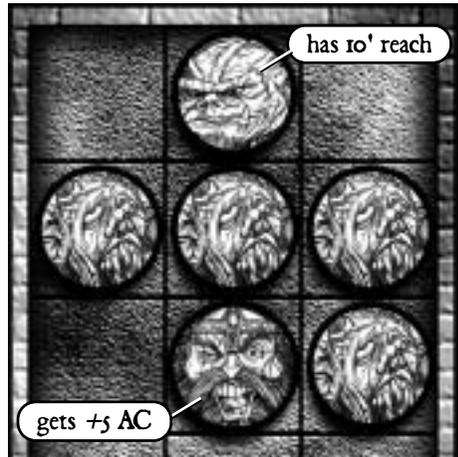


Figure 1: Against the Odds

#### BONUS FEAT

At 2nd level and every four levels thereafter, the battle-rager can choose a bonus feat from the list of Fighter bonus feats.

#### FEARSOME VISAGE

Battle-ragers have many scars and tattoos, and this obvious testament to their battle prowess is awe-inspiring indeed. Beginning at 2nd level, the battle-rager adds his class level to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks. This bonus only applies if the battle-rager's scars are visible-- if invisible, disguised, etc. he loses this bonus.

Table 1: Battle-Rager

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Abilities Gained
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Against the odds
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Bonus feat, fearsome visage
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Frenzied charge, additional rage
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Damage reduction 1/-
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Indomitable will
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Bonus feat, additional rage
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Improved rage
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Damage reduction 2/-
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Additional rage
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat, improved rage

**FRENZIED CHARGE**

So fierce is the onslaught of the battle-rager, it is almost impossible to strike back. The battle-rager does not apply a -2 penalty to his AC when he performs a charge.

**ADDITIONAL RAGE**

The battle-rager may enter into a rage an additional time each day. Add any additional rage from the battle-rager class to any other class rage ability.

**DAMAGE REDUCTION**

The battle-rager is able ignore some of the damage from every attack. Beginning at 4th level he gains damage reduction of DR1. Subtract 1 from the damage the battle-rager takes each time he is dealt damage. At 8th level this damage reduction rises to DR2. This stacks with any damage reduction the battle-rager may receive from barbarian or other class levels.

**INDOMITABLE WILL**

Slowly but surely, the battle-rager's mind is given over to the single-minded destruction of his enemies. For the most part his mind knows only rage, while other desires are sheltered deep within his psyche. If the battle-rager successfully saves against a spell that normally allows a Will: half or Will: partial saving throw, he suffers no effect.

**IMPROVED RAGE**

Beginning at 7th level, the battle-rager's ability to rage is significantly improved. His bonus to Str and Con rise to +6 each, his Will save increases to +3, and his AC penalty remains constant at -2.

At 10th level, the battle-rager no longer suffers any ill-effects from fatigue at the end of his rage. (Normally a character receives -2 to Strength, -2 to Dexterity, and cannot run or charge.)

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