

Gnolls (Hyena Men)

Introduction

These statistics represent my interpretation of the Gnolls (Hyena Men) as described in the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons rules from the nineteen-eighties. I have taken some liberties in adapting them, playing up their chaotic, bestial nature. Although they are a fantasy race, it is not intended they be used as player characters since their base mental processes and motivations are around eating, mating, and staying alive. The basic gnoll is a -46 point humanoid.

Description



Gnolls are hyena-headed humanoids, standing around 7 feet tall and weighing between 170 and 270 lbs. Their tough, greenish-grey skin is covered with thick, bristly hair, which is generally brick-red or dull yellow. They sport a mane that extends from the back of their heads to their hips. A gnoll's arms are longer than its legs and it walks and runs with a stooping gait.

They are noisy, constantly growling and whining, even when alone. Furthermore, they emit a strong smell, which forms as much a part

of their communication as the noises they make. There is no common gnoll language as such, since each clan has its own dialect. However, there is a common set of scents, body-language, and noises that allow different clans of gnolls to converse with each other on a very basic level. Furthermore, they are able to leave scent markings that can convey certain concepts, such as a warning, an instruction to follow, or a call for help.

Using the core set of language mentioned above, gnolls are also able to speak with hyenas, although the degree of information exchange is limited by the hyena's lower intelligence.

Because communication depends on a complex interaction of smells, noises, and visual cues, it is almost impossible for a human to learn any dialect of gnollish without magic. However, gnolls are capable of gaining a basic understand the languages of other sentient races, especially if captured as cubs and trained. Gnolls can even learn to speak a few words, albeit through rough, growly voices.

Even though different clans of gnolls can communicate with each other, they seldom cooperate, trade, or swap gossip. If two large clans meet, they invariably face each other down until one is driven off. Occasionally, they will fight but usually rely on intimidation. If a small group of gnolls meet a larger clan, they might flee or they might try to join that clan.

Although not inherently evil, their minds are bestial, lacking concepts such as empathy, compassion, or kinship (at least beyond immediate circumstances). They have no sense of being cruel; it amuses them to play with captives in the way a cat plays with a mouse. They are skilled at making tools, such as flint-tipped spears or stone knives. However, they have no sense of ownership and discard them once they are no longer needed. Wild gnolls do not wear clothes. They have no deities, religion, or social traditions. Although Gnolls have below human average intelligence, they are by no means stupid. It is, perhaps, this strange dichotomy between their possession of a reasoning mind with their bestial lack of empathy that makes them disturbing to other sentient creatures.

Gnolls associate closely with hyenas. Very closely in fact; all gnolls are male. Any union between a gnoll and a hyena will produce a litter of male gnolls. In any clan, each gnoll will have a harem of female hyenas, which are fiercely defended from other gnolls or male hyenas. Gnolls will not willingly mate with any other humanoids. However, if they do impregnate a human female, the offspring are always physically and mentally retarded sterile males. Couplings with other humanoids will not produce offspring.

When out hunting, gnolls will usually run with a pack of hyenas. The gnolls cannot run as fast as their four-legged associates but make up for this by being able to hurl primitive spears. When attacking humans, a gnoll will typically hurl a spear before closing to do an all-out brawling attack. They will always use their bite-hold technique (see the racial skills section below). Note that a wounded gnoll will generally retreat; roll against will to continue fighting after any wound.

It is possible to capture gnoll cubs and rear them in a civilised society. The process is much akin to training a dog, albeit one that can learn to speak brokenly in its master's tongue. They make strong, intimidating guards and can be taught to wear armour and fight with weapons such as polearms. However, their skill levels at such combat arts will never exceed more than 2 pts above Dx; they simply learn by rote. Any such gnoll that is abandoned will gradually revert to the feral state over a year or so. It will discard its armour, weapons, and clothes and run wild.

Statistics

Racial Advantages

- Increased strength +1 (10 pts). An average gnoll is stronger than an average man.
- Increased health +1 (10 pts). An average gnoll is fitter than an average man.
- Extra hit points +5 (10 pts).
- Increased perception +1 (5 pts). Gnolls are more observant than their intelligence would suggest.
- Acute Hearing +2 (4 pts). Gnolls have large, well developed ears that impart excellent hearing.
- Ultra hearing (5 pts). Like hyenas, gnolls can hear much higher pitches than humans.
- Acute Taste/Smell +2 (4pts).
- Damage Resistance 1 (5 pts). Gnolls have thick, fur covered hides that offer some protection.
- Discriminatory Smell (15 pts). Gnolls have superb smell, imparting a +4 to tracking rolls.
- Infravision (10 pts). Gnolls eyes allow them to switch between normal vision and infravision, allowing them to see well at night. This imparts +3 to their tracking skill.
- Speak with hyenas (5 pts). Gnolls can communicate with hyenas, not that the conversation is particularly riveting.
- Sharp Teeth (1 pt). Like hyenas, gnolls have frighteningly large teeth, designed for hanging onto prey and cracking open bones. They can bite for 1d-1 cutting damage (at ST 11). However, as gnolls usually are skilled at brawling, the -1 is eliminated, giving them 1d cutting damage.
- Perks: Fur (1 pt).

Racial Disadvantages

- Reduced Dexterity -1 (-20 pts). Gnolls are clumsy compared to a human.

- Reduced IQ -2 (-40 pts). Gnolls are not great thinkers.
- Reduced will -3 (-15 pts). Gnolls are impulsive, bestial, and easily intimidated by a stronger creature.
- Bestial (-10 pts). Gnolls are concerned with eating, mating, and being at the top of the social hierarchy of their clan. They have no concept of ownership, material possessions, or wealth. They make tools to fill an immediate need, then discard them once the job is done.
- Completely colour blind (-10). The gnoll's excellent night vision means it cannot see any colours.
- Extra sleep 4 (-8 pts). Gnolls require twelve hours of sleep per day.
- Frightens animals, other than hyenas (-10 pts). The smell, bestial nature, and fierce appearance of gnolls frightens or threatens all other animals.
- Noisy 2 (-4 pts). Gnolls are constantly whining and growling, giving a +4 to detection rolls.
- Short life span (-10 pts). Gnolls mature at nine years and start to age at twenty-five.

Racial Skills

- Tracking 17 (2 pts). Infravision and acute smell give an accumulated bonus of +7 to a gnoll's tracking skill.
 - Brawling 11 (4 pts).
- Technique (Ave): Bite-hold. Defaults to Brawling. Once a successful bit has been made, they will hang on with their very powerful jaws. To prize the gnoll's jaws apart requires two hands and a contest of strength, with the gnoll have a +2 bonus. Alternatively, the victim can attempt to pull away at a straight contest of strength but, regardless of success, the gnoll inflicts bite damage in the process. Meanwhile, the gnoll is free to punch, kick, and grapple. The gnoll may instead opt to re-bite its victim at +2 to hit. If it misses, its bite-hold is lost.
- Thrown weapon (spear) 9 (1pt).

Racial Quirks

- Will not swim, even in pursuit.

Hit Locations

Use the standard human hit locations except that the face is only -3 to hit from the front because of the gnoll's big muzzle. Their big ears only carry a -4 penalty to hit.

Example Gnolls

This is an average , -46 point gnoll. Against non-combatants, they are quite dangerous but any trained soldier should have little difficulty dispatching them using step-and-wait manoeuvres.

Name:	Average feral gnoll		Reaction +/-:	0	Point Total:	-46	
Appearance:	7'3" tall, 240 lbs, hyena headed male humanoid, with brick-red hair and a long mane of darker hair.		Advantages, Disadvantages, Quirks:	Extra HP, extra per., acute hearing +2, acute taste/smell +2, dam. resist. 1, discriminatory smell, infravision, speak with hyenas, sharp teeth, ultra-hearing, fur, bestial, colourblind, extra sleep 4, frightens animals, noisy 2, short lifespan, will not swim.			
11 ST	HP:	16	Skills:				Tracking 17, Brawling 11, Thrown weapon (spear) 9
9 DX	Basic Damage						
8 IQ	Thrust:	1d-1					
11 HT	Swing:	1d+1					
	FP:	11					
Will 5	Per	10					
Basic Speed:	5	Move:	5				
Encumbrance:	0		Weapon Statistics:				Bite 1d6 cut + bite-hold. Punch 1d6 cr. Kick 1d6+1 cr.
Dodge: 8	Parry: 9	Block: 0	Spear 1d+2 imp, Acc 2, Range 11/15, Wt 4, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Stone-tipped with armour divisor of 0.5				
Shield DB 0	Size Modifier	+1					
	Head	Torso	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet	
DR	1	1	1	1	1	1	

This is a slightly above average , -26 point gnoll. It has above average strength and a high pain threshold, which makes it more likely to continue attacking once it has been wounded. (its will is effectively 8 rather than 5 for the purpose of this check).

Name:	Average feral gnoll		Reaction +/-:	0	Point Total:	-26	
Appearance:	7'5" tall, 260 lbs, hyena headed male humanoid, with brick-red hair and a long mane of darker hair.		Advantages, Disadvantages, Quirks:	Extra HP, extra per., acute hearing +2, acute taste/smell +2, dam. resist. 1, discriminatory smell, infravision, speak with hyenas, sharp teeth, ultrahearing, fur, bestial, colourblind, extra sleep 4, frightens animals, noisy 2, short lifespan, will not swim, high pain threshold.			
12 ST	HP:	17	Skills:				Tracking 17, Brawling 11, Thrown weapon (spear) 9
9 DX	Basic Damage						
8 IQ	Thrust:	1d-1					
11 HT	Swing:	1d+2					
	FP:	11					
Will 5(+3)	Per	10					
Basic Speed:	5	Move:	5				
Encumbrance:	0		Weapon Statistics:				Bite 1d6 cut + bite-hold. Punch 1d6 cr. Kick 1d6+1 cr.
Dodge: 8	Parry: 9	Block: 0	Spear 1d+2 imp, Acc 2, Range 11/15, Wt 4, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Stone-tipped with armour divisor of 0.5				
Shield DB 0	Size Modifier	+1					
	Head	Torso	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet	
DR	1	1	1	1	1	1	

This is an average, domesticated gnoll. Its tracking skill is reduced, it lacks the “speak with hyenas” advantage, it speaks the language of its owner to broken level, and its thrown weapon skill is replaced with mace. Unlike feral gnolls, this one is trained to fight on even if wounded.

It will attack with its mace rather than using its natural bite attack. Should it be disarmed, it will revert to its innate biting attack.

While this beast will seldom hit its target, it does a fair amount of damage. Furthermore, high hit points combined with armour make it difficult to kill.

Name: Average domestic gnoll Reaction +/-: 0 Point Total: -55
 Appearance: 7'3" tall, 240 lbs, hyena headed male humanoid, with brick-red hair and a long mane of darker hair. Advantages, Disadvantages, Quirks: Extra HP, extra per., acute hearing +2, acute taste/smell +2, dam. resist. 1, discriminatory smell, infravision, sharp teeth, ultrahearing, fur, bestial, colour-blind, extra sleep 4, frightens animals, noisy 2, short lifespan, will not swim, keeps fighting when wounded

11 ST HP: 16
9 DX Basic Damage
8 IQ Thrust: 1d-1
11 HT Swing: 1d+1
 FP: 11
 Will 5 Per 10
 Basic Speed: 5 Move: 5
 Encumbrance: 0
 Dodge: 8 Parry: 8 Block: 0
 Shield DB 0 Size Modifier +1

Skills: Tracking 15, Brawling 11, Mace 9, Broken level in language of owner.

Weapon Statistics: Bite 1d6 cut + bite-hold. Punch 1d6 cr. Kick 1d6+1 cr.
Small Mace: 1d+3 Cr, Reach 1, Parry 0U, wt 3

Wears pot helm (5 lbs), boots (3 lbs), leather armour on torso (10), heavy leather sleeves (2 lbs), studded leather skirt DR 3 or 2 against crushing attacks (4 lbs). Lightly encumbered.

	Head	Torso	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet
DR	5	3	3	1	4/2	3

This is an above average, domesticated gnoll. Its tracking skill is reduced, it lacks the “speak with hyenas” advantage, it speaks the language of its owner to broken level, its strength and dexterity are higher than usual, and its thrown weapon skill is replaced with mace. Unlike feral gnolls, this one is trained to fight on even if wounded. It has the “high pain threshold” advantage.

It will attack with its mace rather than using its natural bite attack. Should it be disarmed, it will revert to its innate biting attack.

This beast is much more dangerous than the previous gnolls.

Name: Above average domestic gnoll Reaction +/-: 0 Point Total: -5
 Appearance: 7'4" tall, 240 lbs, hyena headed male humanoid, with tan hair and a long mane of red. Advantages, Disadvantages, Quirks: Extra HP, extra per., acute hearing +2, acute taste/smell +2, dam. resist. 1, discriminatory smell, infravision, sharp teeth, ultrahearing, fur, bestial, colour-blind, extra sleep 4, frightens animals, noisy 2, short lifespan, will not swim, keeps fighting when wounded, high pain threshold.

13 ST HP: 18
10 DX Basic Damage
8 IQ Thrust: 1d
11 HT Swing: 2d-1
 FP: 11
 Will 5 Per 10
 Basic Speed: 5.25 Move: 5
 Encumbrance: 0
 Dodge: 8 Parry: 8 Block: 0
 Shield DB 0 Size Modifier +1

Skills: Tracking 15, Brawling 12, Mace 10, Broken level in language of owner.

Weapon Statistics: Bite 1d6+1 cut + bite-hold. Punch 1d6+1 cr. Kick 1d6+2 cr.
Small Mace: 2d+1 Cr, Reach 1, Parry 0U, wt 3

Wears pot helm (5 lbs), boots (3 lbs), leather armour on torso (10), heavy leather sleeves (2 lbs), studded leather skirt DR 3 or 2 against crushing attacks (4 lbs). Lightly encumbered.

	Head	Torso	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet
DR	5	3	3	1	4/2	3

Credits

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