

GLD11 Champion CR0-20

By Dan Hass



Sometimes a DM wants to present an opponent that is built in the same way a PC is or the DM wants to add an NPC to the party – to strengthen a weaker party or to provide a voice for the DM within the party. Here is a fighter with the champion martial archetype presented from CR0 (yep, a CR0 champion) through CR20.

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Supplement Summary

GLD11 Champion CR0-20 is a 5th Edition supplement designed to help DMs broaden their campaign. It requires the *Basic Rules (BR)* and *DM's Basic Rules (DBR)* (available free [here](#)). It also uses the supplement *Wardrow's Feat Compendium (WFC)*; available free [here](#) and the playtest material *Unearthed Arcana Feats (UAF)*; available free [here](#). The point is for the DM to have a challenge to present to PCs of any level that relies only on free resources.

It references the *Player's Handbook® (PHB)* and *Dungeon Master's Guide® (DMG)*, but these are not required to use this supplement.

As the title suggests, this supplement presents a variant human Champion fighter scaled from a CR0 creature to CR20. It follows the guidelines for modifying a monster as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide® (DMG)* beginning on p.273 (but the *DMG* is not required).

There are notes associated with the champion at some CRs.

Deliberate Variations from DMG

The *DMG* is not required to use this supplement, but it is the primary resource for building custom monsters & NPCs. Building an NPC using the rules for building a PC is an option presented on *DMG* 96, but leads to some direct conflicts with later guidelines for building monsters. It is unclear if these are equal options or if the later guidelines supersede the elements of PC classes.

First, the hit die size is different. In the *DMG*, all medium sized monsters use d8 for hit points. This is confirmed in *Volo's*; for example, the **Abjurer** (a type of wizard) still uses d8s rather than d6s. We are using d10 for the champion's hit points. Similarly, monsters are supposed to take average hit points (4.5 per d8) for hit points, but we are following the way a PC's hit points would progress: 10 + 6 per level after 1st.

Also, monster's proficiency bonus is based on their CR, but we are using the champion's level just as if he were a PC. For example, the Halfling-Descended champion (CR3) is an 8th level fighter with a +3 proficiency bonus rather than a +2 as a CR3 monster.

We are comfortable with this because after all the variations we are applying the table on *DMG* 274.

Using this Supplement

There are 24 stat blocks for the **Champion** with a descriptive moniker added. There are several reasons a DM may want to use one of the listed champions.

The champion is a martial archetype with great utility. It makes an excellent town watch member, or member of a noble's men-at-arms, or mercenaries. It could be argued that it should be the most widely utilized type of NPC encountered. In addition to using champions as opponents for PCs, there are other uses many DMs find for NPCs built using the same process as a PC.

As detailed in the *DMG* 92-93 there are several uses for NPCs (followers, fellow adventurers, contacts, or patrons – in addition to being villains).

Scaling Strategy

The *DMG* has the guidelines spelled out for scaling armor class, hit points, attack bonus, and damage per attack, and we'll follow these to build a champion. We are going to use only free resources. This presents the first problem. While the variant human is in the *Basic Rules* an integral feature of the variant human – a feat – is not. We address this problem by utilizing the free and positively reviewed *Wardrow's Feat Compendium* and the feats provide through *Unearthed Arcana*.

With sources set, we jump into developing the statblocks. Each statblock has notes describing the champion, how the CR is calculated, and additional notes.

We are going to use the 27 point buy method for ability scores (with two +1s for a variant human), but we may redistribute the points to achieve the CR results we are targeting.

We want to build a balanced creature and avoid ever having a build where there is more than two difference between Defensive CR & Offensive CR. We will often toggle the champion's **Second Wind**, shield, and a *ring of protection* to regulate the CR balance.

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CR 0 Dwarf-Descended

We have a 3rd level champion with a dwarven heritage.

To explain his lack of equipment, he could be a retired officer of some sort; or a criminal deprived of his equipment to cover his fine; or the victim of some catastrophe that required him to sell all his equipment (to pay for a loved one's medical care, or ransom for a kidnapping).

CR Calculations

- Defensive CR0: 33 effect hit points (25 hit points + 8 from **Second Wind**) is CR 1/8. AC 11 is two less than 13 reducing the CR to CR0
- Offensive CR0: 1 damage/round is CR 0 (Action surge increases this to 1.33 damage/round which rounds down to 1). +2 to hit is not at least 2 away from +3, so there is no CR adjustment.

Dwarven Descended Champion*Medium humanoid (variant human), any***Armor Class** 11 (fighting style)**Hit Points** 25 (3d10+3)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11(+0)	11(+0)	12(+1)	14(+2)	14(+2)	14(+2)

Saving Throws Str +2, Con +3**Skills** Athletics +2, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +4, Survival +4**Damage Resistances** poison**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14**Languages** Common, Dwarven, and one other**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)**Action Surge (1 per rest).** Per BR 25.**Fighting Style (defensive).** Per BR 25.**Improved Critical.** Per BR 26.**Second Wind (1d10+3).** Per BR 25.**Actions****Punch.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 bludgeoning*A CR0 3rd Level Fighter?*

It seems counter-intuitive that a 3rd level fighter could only be a CR0. However, his ability scores and equipment are skewed to achieve this, and his damage is only one point.

For his variant human starting feat, he is taking Mixed-Bloodline (Dwarf) (*WFC* 17) for poison resistance and darkvision. (Plus, it can be a memorable roleplaying element.) We are taking some liberty with the feat by adding more than one trait, but neither affects CR.

CR 1/8 Impoverished

We still have a 3rd level champion. But his ability scores are more in line with what is expected of a fighter. His gear, though is quite inferior for a working champion. In fact, he doesn't have a true weapon. He clearly is under employed. Maybe deliberately deprived of equipment by a noble or supervisor who doesn't want to give his troops the expected equipment.

CR Calculations

- Defensive CR 1/8: 33 effect hit points (25 hit points + 8 from **Second Wind**) is CR 1/8. AC 14 is within two of 13 so there is no CR adjustment.
- Offensive CR 1/8: 4-5 damage/round (with Action Surge, 4 attacks over three rounds doing a total of 12) is CR 1/4. +1 to hit is 2 less than +3 reducing the CR to 1/8 (one increment).

Impoverished Champion*Medium humanoid (variant human), any***Armor Class** 14 (leather, fighting style)**Hit Points** 25 (3d10+3)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13(+1)	14(+2)	13(+1)	10(+0)	14(+2)	13(+1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3**Skills** Athletics +3, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +3, Survival +4**Damage Resistances** poison**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14**Languages** Common, Dwarven, and one other**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)**Action Surge (1 per rest).** Per BR 25.**Fighting Style (defensive).** Per BR 25.**Improved Critical.** Per BR 26.**Second Wind (1d10+3).** Per BR 25.**Actions****Improvised Weapon.** Melee Weapon Attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning*Offensive CR Gymnastics*

The gimmick is the "improvised weapon". 1d4 (clubs, handaxes, light hammers) yields damage for CR 1/8; 2 per round (+2 to hit if Str is 11) and Action Surge increasing it slightly. However, all are light weapons, and there is no reason the champion would not dual wield putting his DPR at 5+ (too high). Improvised weapons prevent dual wielding (since they aren't light) and the proficiency bonus is not added to the attack. This gives a CR1/8 damage profile.

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CR ¼ Modestly-Equipped

The champion has more equipment, and the CR increase is from his better equipment – leather armor and spears. He now looks like a champion who has steady work – a member of the town guard/watch, or a soldier in a noble's militia. This duplicates the role of the **Guard**, but variety is good.

CR Calculations

- Defensive CR 1/8: 33 effect hit points (25 hit points + 8 from **Second Wind**) is CR 1/8. AC 14 is not two more than 13 so the CR increases to 1/8.
- Offensive CR 1/2: 6-8 damage/round (with Action Surge, 4 attacks over three rounds doing a total of 24) is CR 1/2. +4 to hit is not two more than +3.

Modestly-Equipped Champion*Medium humanoid (variant human), any***Armor Class** 14 (leather, fighting style)**Hit Points** 25 (3d10+3)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	14(+2)	13(+1)	10(+0)	14(+2)	10(+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +3**Skills** Athletics +4, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +2, Survival +4**Damage Resistances** poison**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14**Languages** Common, Dwarven, and one other**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)**Action Surge (1 per rest).** Per BR 25.**Fighting Style (defensive).** Per BR 25.**Improved Critical.** Per BR 26.**Second Wind (1d10+3).** Per BR 25.**Actions**

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing or 6 (1d8+2) when used two-handed.

Equipment Upgrade

We add an actual weapon instead of a random piece of wood that is being used in an ad hoc manner. This rather dramatically increases the champion's offensive effectiveness while still preventing two-weapon fighting.

CR ½ Shield Wielding

Still a 3rd level champion, but now with a shield and a slight upgrade to Constitution (at the expense of Wisdom). This mild upgrade still fills the same roles as the modestly equipped champion.

CR Calculations

- Defensive CR 1/2: 36 effect hit points (28 hit points + 8 from **Second Wind**) is CR 1/4. AC 16 is two more than 13 so the CR increases to 1/2.
- Offensive CR 1/2: 6-8 damage/round (with Action Surge, 4 attacks over three rounds doing a total of 20) is CR 1/2. +4 to hit is not two more than +3.

Shield Wielding Champion*Medium humanoid (variant human), any***Armor Class** 16 (leather, shield, fighting style)**Hit Points** 28 (3d10+6)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	14(+2)	14(+2)	10(+0)	13(+1)	10(+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4**Skills** Athletics +4, Insight +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +2, Survival +3**Damage Resistances** poison**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13**Languages** Common, Dwarven, and one other**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)**Action Surge (1 per rest).** Per BR 25.**Fighting Style (defensive).** Per BR 25.**Improved Critical.** Per BR 26.**Second Wind (1d10+3).** Per BR 25.**Actions**

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing or 6 (1d8+2) when used two-handed.

Damage per Round

1d8+2 is no longer the expected damage because the champion does not have two hands free. (It is when the champion does not have his shield or the **Dueling** fighting style.) Still the 20 damage over three rounds keeps his offensive CR at 1/2.