Game Playing AI for Simulated DnD Encounters

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Abstract

DnD simulator with game-playing agents for automatic play testing. It currently implements creatures with basic stats such as HP, AC, and speed. Creatures also have actions available to them, which currently is limited to the attack action. Two general game playing agents are implemented, along with one rule based and random agent. Currently the Shyne agent, which simulates random games and eliminates poor preforming actions, is able to out-preform both the rule based agent while being faster then the JinJerry agent.

1 Simulation

This is a prototype version of a DnD encounter simulator (see 1). It currently allows creatures to complete one movement and one action (in that order) per turn. The movement available is determined by a speed, which determine how many spaces a creature can move in a turn. The way I implemented it, a space is worth 10 ft, but it would be easy to make this larger or smaller. The only action available current is attack, where the attacking creature rolls (with a bonus) to beat their opponents AC. The game runs until all of one party is dead (at 0 hp) or a turn limit is reached. The turn limit was determined by the thrown food theory, which is the estimated amount of time it would take for a party to be feed up with an encounter and decide to throw food at the GM.

1.1 Grid

A grid (or map) is defined by a width and a height. Pieces can be added to the grid, as long as they have a position attribute. The grid class allows you to do things such as find the distance between two points, get the pieces that are in a range of position, or get the enemy closest to a creature.

1.2 Creature

There are 4 main attributes of a creature:

- HP: The max amount of health that the creature can have and what health it has when it takes a long rest. This can be a discrete value or a dice string that is rolled.
- AC: This is the armor class of the creature, which signifies how difficult it is to damage the creature.
- Speed: This is how many tiles a creature can move in a turn. This is loosely related to 10ft in 5e.
- Actions: This is a list of actions available to a creature. They can choose from these actions and the NullAction (does nothing) when deciding on a action per turn.

Every implementation of a creature must also have a turn method that decides what movement and action a creature makes given a game state. I talk below about what agents are implemented in this demo.



Figure 1: An example of what an DnD encounter might look like. This uses a grid based system with physical miniatures to represent creatures

1.3 Action

A action is something a creature can do on it's turn. It must have a avail actions method that gives every combination of action and movement possible given a creature. Actions are given as new instances of a action object.

1.3.1 Attack

An attack has 3 main properties.

- Modifier: How much is added to a 1d20 hit roll. This value must beat the target's AC to inflict damage
- Damage Dice: This is a string in the form of "2d8 + 6" that tells how much and what value of dice should be rolled to deal damage. This will be rolled each time damage is done.
- Distance: This is how far from the creature the attack can reach. There is also an optional parameter for min distance which tells the smallest distance a creature can be from creature for attack to work.

Side-effects (such as a target being knocked prone) is not implemented in this simulation. Additionally

2 Monster Manual

A very small subset is implemented in this simulation. The monsters were chosen based on what would be most easily represented in this simulation, along with having a range of challenge ratings and abilities.

The Monster Manual file includes the following monsters along with a function to create a new creature given a monster template (dictionary) and a creature class.

2.1 Attacks (From least to most Powerful)

• Spear: range 0-6, damage: "1d6", hit: +2

• Bite: range 0-1, damage: "1d4 + 2", hit + 4

• scimitar: range 0-1, damage: 1d6 + 1

• shortsword: range: 1, damage: 1d6 + 2, hit +4

• shortbow: range: 8-32, damage: 1d6+2, hit +4

- ram: hit + 5, damage: 1d6 +3, range 0-1
- javelin: hit: +5, damage: 1d6 + 3, distance: 3-12
- crossbow: hit: +3, 1d8 + 1, range: 0-1
- longbow: hit: +3, damage: 1d8 +1, range: 15-60
- claws: hit: +4, damage: 2d4 + 2, range: 0-1
- midbite: hit + 2, damage: 2d6 + 2, range: 0-1
- great ax: hit + 5, damage: 1d12 + 3, range: 0-1
- bigbite: hit +5, damage: 2d6 + 3, range: 0-1

2.2 Creatures

Below I describe what creatures are implemented from the monster manual, listed in order of challenge rating. Note not all features of all creatures are fully actualized in this prototype.

2.2.1 1/8 Challenge Rating

- Bandit: close and wide range weapons. HP of 11, and a AC of 12. Average speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/bandit/ (see 2).
- Merfolk: moderate range weapon. HP of 11 and a AC of 11. Slow speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/merfolk/ (see 7)

2.2.2 1/4 Challenge Rating

- Elk: close range attack. AC of 10 and a HP of 15. High speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/elk/ (see 4).
- Skeleton: short and very long range attack. AC of 13 and HP of 13. Average speed. https:// 5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/skeleton/(see 9).

2.2.3 1/2 Challenge Rating

- Orc: close and wide range weapons. AC of 13 and HP of 15. Average speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/orc/(see 6).
- Gnoll: close mid and wide range attacks, AC of 15, HP of 22. Average speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/gnoll/ (see 8).

2.2.4 1 Challenge Rating

- Dire Wolf: close range attack. AC of 14, HP of 37. High speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/dire_wolf/ (see 3).
- Ghoul: Close attacks. HP of 22 and AC of 12. Average speed. https://5thsrd.org/gamemaster_rules/monsters/ghoul/ (see 5).

3 Agents

There are five agents implemented in this example. Two, random and aggressive, are used as baselines to test the general game playing AI. JinJerry and Shyne are general game playing AI that are the main focus of this project. There is also an implementation of a human agent, that isn't much explored here.

3.1 Human

The human implementation of creature allows a human player to choose actions for a a creature. The user will be presented the current game state, along with all available movement and action combinations to choose from. However the current implementation of this makes it almost unusable. That being said is it a useful agent for testing purposes.

3.2 Random

As the name implies, the random agent randomly selects a movement and action from the available turn choices.

3.3 Aggressive

The aggressive agent is a rule based agent that is a useful base line for testing other agents. It keeps a rank of it's available actions from most to least powerful (determined by expected damage). Non-attack actions (for example NullAction) are set to 0. The aggressive agent will chose the action with the highest damage that it can complete on it's turn. It will decide on movement based on which movement within range of this action is closest to the closest enemy on the map. Like the name implies, this is an estimate of an aggressive player, most likely a tank of some sort.

3.4 JinJerry

JinJerry is an algorithm made for the 2014 general video game playing competition [1], where it won second place. JinJerry is a very lightweight version of a Monte Carlo search algorithm. It simulates games to a particular depth for each available action and evaluates them. The JinJerry algorithm works as follows.

- 1: for Every action a in available action do
- 2: Create a copy of the game
- 3: Implement action on copy
- 4: Starting value = evaluate new game state
- Forward model to depth D
- 6: New value = evaluate game state again
- 7: Set value of action a to max(starting value, new value)
- 8: Return action a with highest value

The static evaluator I created to implement JinJerry works off the assumption that a party wants to maximize their own health and minimize their opposing parties health. Therefore the static evaluation is set at the HP ratio (current hp total divided by max hp total) for the creatures team minus the opposing teams HP ratio.

As shown the result section below, this algorithm works against random agents, but is not successful against the aggressive agent. Additionally the large amount of available actions per turn (on the order of 40-50), means that this algorithm is significantly slower than aggressive.

3.5 Shyne

I created the Shyne agent to counteract the downfalls of JinJerry, while still being faster than a Monte Carlo game search algorithm. I predicted the single forward modeling, along with the amount of randomness in DnD, was part of the lack of success of JinJerry. However, the large amount of actions available, meant that all actions couldn't be completely explored realistically. Therefore I created the Shyne agent to explore actions initially at shallow depths to eliminate enviable actions early. It works as follows:

- 1: Set value of every action to 0
- 2: for Every depth d in depths do
- 3: **for** Every action a in available action **do**
- 4: Create a copy of the game
- 5: Implement action on copy

- 6: Forward model to depth D
- 7: New value = evaluate game state again
- 8: Set value of action a to average(current value, new value)
- 9: Sort all actions
- 10: Eliminate the bottom half of all actions
- 11: Return action a with highest value

The Shyne agent used the game static evaluation as JinJerry.

This algorithm takes in a list of depths that can effect it's behavior. The list explored in this project was [0, 10, 20, 30, 40], so that more time is spent on actions with high predicted values. However, other depth models could be explored. For example something like [10, 10, 10, 10] would produce a result more similar to Monte Carlo Game Search (except for the elimination of poor preforming actions).

Initial tests showed that this algorithm was not significantly slower than JinJerry and it has been able to outperform both JinJerry and the Aggressive agent.

4 Tournament

The tournament was designed to test the performance of different decision algorithms against each other. It plays a specified number of games, each time randomizing the parties. The parties are creating by first randomly selecting a party size, p (by default is between 2 and 5 players). Then it randomly selects p creatures from the Monster Manual described above. For every game identical creatures sets are used for both parties, so that differences are due to agent ability and not power difference. Once creatures are decided, creatures are creating using the given creature class for each team. Creatures are placed in starting positions so that teams are on opposite sides of the grid. After a game is played, the winner is recorded and the parties are randomized again.

5 Results

It should be noted that it took up to several minutes to play a single game in this prototype, so trial sizes are fairly small. However, in the instances where more games were played I found similar results as with the smaller trial sizes demonstrating the validity of even these small trials. The goal of this project was to create an agent that is able to beat both a random and a rule based agent, without any explicit knowledge of the game (except for success metrics such as HP ratios).

5.1 JinJerry

5.1.1 Against Random

JinJerry successful out-preforms Random agents. Out of 10 trials (and a depth of 40), it won 5 and 5 timed out. While this shows the superiority of JinJerry, the amount of times it timed out (exceeded the turn limit) is concerning regarding it's success.

5.1.2 Against Aggressive

Even with a depth set to 40, JinJerry is unable out-preform Aggressive. Turing a trial of ten games, JinJerry won three times, Aggressive also one three times, and 4 times the turn limit was exceeded. At any lower depth level JinJerry consistently loses to Aggressive. Setting a depth beyond 40 is unrealistic, as even with a party size of 4 this would simulate 10 turns (half of maximum turns). It is also important to note that JinJerry runs on several scales of magnitude slower then aggressive. The lack of success from JinJerry shows that the additional computation costs are not worth it for this algorithm.

5.2 Shyne

5.2.1 Against Random

Shyne, similar to JinJerry, out preforms Random but with a signicant amount of ties. From 10 games, Shyne won 5 times and tied 5 times. It is likely the random agent's lack of strategy makes games last longer and be more likely to time out.

5.2.2 Against JinJerry

The Shyne agent is competitive with the JinJerry agent. With depths set to [0, 10, 20, 30, 40] and a JinJerry depth of 20, Shyne won 5 games out of 9, where JinJerry won only 1 (3 games timed out). However, with JinJerry at depth 40 Shyne tied with JinJerry with 2 wins, with the vast majority (6) games ending with ties. That being said, Shyne has similar time cost with JinJerry at depth 20 but faster times than JinJerry at depth 40. I'm confident with the speed-up and competitiveness of Shyne against JinJerry, that it is more effective algorithm for this purpose. Further experimentation can be done for choosing depths to increase the success of the Shyne agent.

5.2.3 Against Aggressive

Shyne preforms very well against the aggressive agent. Over 9 trials it won 6 times, Aggressive won once and the game tied twice. To validate the success of Shyne, I ran a trial of 50 games over night. In this trial Shyne won 70% of it's games, where Aggressive only won once, and the games tied for 28% of the time.

6 Conclusion

This prototype has been able to demonstrate the viably of general game playing agents for games like DnD. It is clear a challenge of any general game playing agent is the large amount of actions available per turn, which will only increase as the simulation approaches a full DnD encounter. This project demonstrated that using a simulations with shallow depths to eliminate actions can produce behavior complex enough to outperform rule based behavior. My hope is that similar approaches can be used on more elaborate simulation environments, and work on a variety of character types while still be relatively fast.

Appendices

A Game Logs

A.1 JinJerry Against Random

```
Game 0 of 10
Party Size 2
Monsters:
skeleton
elk
Time: 6.5160
Winner: JinJerry
Game 1 of 10
Party Size 2
```



Figure 2: Stat block for bandit



Figure 3: Stat block for Dire Wolf



Figure 4: Stat block for elk



Figure 5: Stat block for Ghoul



Figure 6: Stat block for Orc



Figure 7: Stat block for Merfolk



Figure 8: Stat block for Gnoll

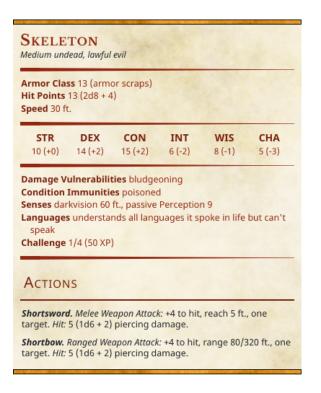


Figure 9: Stat block for Skeleton

Monsters:

orc

merfolk

Time: 1.7018
Winner: Tie

Game 2 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: direwolf ghoul

Players: direwolf1 ghoul1

Time: 15.7640
Winner:Tie

Game 3 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: bandit gnoll skeleton

Time: 125.5409
Winner: Tie

Game 4 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: orc ghoul

Time: 28.1922
Winner: Tie

Game 5 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters:

elk ghoul merfolf

Time: 20.0030 Winner: JinJerry

Game 6 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: skeleton bandit

Time: 61.7809 Winner: Tie

Game 7 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: gnoll ghoul

Time: 111.7872
Winner: Tie

Game 8 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: orc skeleton ghoul gnoll

Time: 166.1774 Winner: JinJerry

Game 9 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: orc elk

Time: 89.9569 Winner: JinJerry

Total results:
 JinJerry: 5
 Random: 0
 Tie: 5

A.2 JinJerry Against Aggressive

JinJerry with Depth 40

Game 0 of 10

Party Size 3 Monsters: orc elk gnoll

Time: 15.2008 Winner: Aggressive

Game 1 of 10:

Party Size 3
Monsters:
bandit
skeleton
bandit1
Time: 21.3690

Winner: Aggressive

Game 2 of 10:
Party Size 2
Monsters:
bandit

orc

Time: 23.7866
Winner: Aggressive

Game 2 of 10:
Party Size 4
Monsters:
skeleton
skeleton1
ghoul
ghoul1

Time: 104.3177 Winner: JinJerry

Game 4 of 10:
Party Size 2

Monsters: merfolf skeleton

Time: 50.7113
Winner: JinJerry

Game 5 of 10:
Party Size 2
Monsters:
bandit
bandit1

Time: 141.2515 Winner: Tie

Game 6 of 10:
Party Size 2
Monsters:
direwolf
gnoll

Time: 148.0730 Winner: Tie

Game 7 of 10:
Party Size 4
Monsters:
merfolf
skeleton
gnoll
skeleton1
Time: 192.6523

Time: 192.6523
Winner: JinJerry

Game 8 of 10: Party Size 2 Monsters: merfolk ghoul

Winner: Tie

Game 9 of 10:
Party Size 2
Monsters:
gnoll
merfolk

Time: 113.3696
Winner: Tie

Total results:
 JinJerry: 3
 Aggressive: 3

Tie: 4

A.3 Shyne Vs. Random

Shyne depths: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40

Game 0 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: skeleton skeleton1

Time: 3.3341 Winner: Shyne

Game 1 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: bandit gnoll bandit1

Time: 13.2854 Winner: Shyne

Game 2 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: bandit merfolf direwolf elk

Time: 74.1670 Winner: Tie

Game 3 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: elk elk1

Time: 76.1934 Winner: Tie

Game 4 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: gnoll merfolf direwolf merfolf1

Time: 75.0979 Winner: Shyne

Game 5 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: ghoul merfolf

Time: 7.7625
Winner: Tie

Game 6 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: skeleton direwolf ghoul

Time: 133.8187 Winner: Shyne

Game 7 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: merfolf elk direwolf

Time: 128.0853 Winner: Tie

```
Game 8 of 10
Party Size 3
```

Monsters: merfolf skeleton elk

Time: 116.7384 Winner: Shyne

Game 9 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: merfolf merfolf1 merfolf2

merfolf5 Time: 29.8677 Winner: Tie

Total:

Shyne: 5
Random: 0
Tie: 5

A.4 Shyne Vs. Aggressive

Shyne depths: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40

Game 0 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: bandit bandit1 gnol1 ghou1

Time: 13.4276 Winner: Aggressive

Game 1 of 10 Party Size 3

 ${\tt Monsters:}$

ghoul
orc
gnoll

Time: 13.9778 Winner: Shyne

Game 2 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: elk skeleton ghoul bandit

Time: 58.3937 Winner: Shyne

Game 3 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: bandit bandit1 merfolf

Time: 38.9060 Winner: Shyne

Game 4 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: direwolf ghoul bandit

Time: 112.9775
Winner: Tie

Game 5 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: bandit

gnoll
direwolf
bandit1

Time: 228.9976 Winner: Shyne

Game 6 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: merfolf ghoul gnoll ghoul1

Time: 131.4392 Winner: Shyne

Game 7 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: gnoll ghoul

Time: 58.8480 Winner: Shyne

Game 8 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: ghoul ghoul1

Time: 85.4963 Winner: Tie

Total:
Shyne: 6
Aggressive: 1

Tie: 1

A.5 Shyne Against JinJerry

JinJerry depth: 20

Shyne dpeths: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40

Game 0 of 10
Party Size 3

Monsters: skeleton orc merfolf

Time: 18.5165 Winner: Shyne

Game 1 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: merfolf bandit merfolf1

Time: 25.6595 Winner: JinJerry

Game 2 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: elk ghoul

Time: 46.1431 Winner: Tie

Game 3 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: direwolf bandit gnoll merfolf

Time: 240.8033 Winner: Shyne

Game 4 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: gnoll ghoul bandit bandit1

Time: 223.6957 Winner: Shyne

Game 5 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: skeleton gnoll

Time: 348.8444
Winner: Shyne

Game 6 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: merfolf direwolf merfolf1 direwolf1

Time: 237.9871 Winner: Tie

Game 7 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: merfolf elk orc orc1

Time: 238.1835
Winner: Tie

Game 8 of 10 Party Size 3 Monsters: gnoll skeleton merfolf Time: 845.6690 Winner: Shyne Total wins: Shyne: 5 JinJerry: 1 Tie: 3 A.6 Shyne Vs JinJerry at Depth 40 Shyne depths: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40 JinJerry depth: 40 Game 0 of 10 Party Size 2 Monsters: orc gnoll Time: 14.3981 Winner: JinJerry Game 1 of 10 Party Size 2 Monsters: ghoul bandit Time: 14.9786 Winner: Shyne Game 2 of 10

Party Size 4
Monsters:
direwolf
ghoul
merfolf

bandit

Time: 111.6615 Winner: Tie

Game 3 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: skeleton orc skeleton1

Time: 203.4215 Winner: Tie

Game 4 of 10 Party Size 3

Monsters: elk orc bandit

Time: 156.3658 Winner: Tie

Game 5 of 10 Party Size 4

Monsters: bandit merfolf bandit1 bandit2

Time: 73.9914 Winner: Shyne

Game 6 of 10 Party Size 2

Monsters: ghoul ghoul1

Time: 69.9796 Winner: Tie

```
Game 7 of 10
Party Size 4
Monsters:
merfolf
ghoul
gnoll
skeleton
Time: 475.8891
Winner: Tie
Game 8 of 10
Party Size 3
Monsters:
skeleton
gnoll
elk
Time: 313.8598
Winner: JinJerry
Game 9 of 10
Party Size 4
Monsters:
ghoul
gnoll
orc
merfolf
Time: 472.1891
Winner: Tie
Total:
    Shyne: 2
    JinJerry: 2
    Tie: 6
```

References

[1] Diego Perez-Liebana et al. "The 2014 general video game playing competition". In: *IEEE Transactions on Computational Intelligence and AI in Games* 8.3 (2015), pp. 229–243.