A FREE CREATURE KEEPER · LONG ISLAND DUNGEON MASTER

Goblins in the Hedge

A free goblin pack for fifth edition: a band that holds hedge country, four stat blocks from CR 1/4 to CR 2, and flat tables that build a goblin in a few rolls.

Four goblins, CR 1/4 to 2 · levels 1 to 3 · seven flat tables · fifth edition (SRD 5.1)

Hedge country is small fields, each boxed in by a living hedge of thorn taller than a man and five feet thick, and joined to the next field by an open gap at the corner where a cart goes through. A goblin band that has lived in it a few seasons has cut runs through the foot of the hedges, a foot and a half high, and loopholes through the middle at bow height. Nothing the size of a man gets through a run. Everything the size of a goblin does.

A party crossing that country by the lanes and the gaps is walking through a row of boxes, and the band is in the walls.

In 30+ years of running games, the goblins my tables remember are the ones that had somewhere to stand.

♦

Building a goblin

Take a row from whichever of the tables below you need, in any order, and stop when you have enough. Each table answers one question about one goblin. They work for any goblin in any game, hedge or no hedge.

d20: Names

D20	NAMES
1	**Wudge Two-Spoons.**
2	**Nettlegrub.**
3	**Skerrit the Less.**
4	**Mabble.**
5	**Pockface.**
6	**Grizzle Halfboot.**
7	**Tib.**
8	**Old Snerch.**
9	**Ruddock.**
10	**Fennish.**
11	**Gutterwhit.**
12	**Blae.**
13	**Crabbit.**
14	**Sloe-Eye.**
15	**Nim Nobody.**
16	**Wartle.**
17	**Drabbin.**
18	**Sprag.**
19	**Hedgepig.**
20	**Little Mother.**

d12: War paint

D12	WAR PAINT
1	**Mud,** slapped on wet and left to crack, so the face looks like a dry field.
2	**Blackberry juice** in two stripes from the eyes down to the jaw.
3	**A chalk hand-print** across the mouth.
4	**Soot** over the whole head, with a clean ring left round each eye.
5	**Red ochre** on the left side of the face only, cut straight down the nose.
6	**Yellow lichen paste** in dots, in rows across the forehead.
7	**Crushed nettle,** green, with a raised rash coming up under it.
8	**A blue raddle mark** on the forehead, rubbed off the block a shepherd marks his ewes with.
9	**Ash and goose grease** worked into the hair until it stands up stiff.
10	**Nothing on the face.** The teeth are painted red.
11	**Rust-water stripes** down both arms from the shoulder to the fingertips.
12	**Lime-wash,** white all over, gone grey where it has been sweated through.

d12: Tribe names

Swap the words between any two of them: the Ditch Biters, the Nettle Kings, the Muck Mothers.

D12	TRIBE NAMES
1	**The Nettle Biters.**
2	**The Ditch Kings.**
3	**The Gate Burners.**
4	**The Thorn Mothers.**
5	**The Turnip Thieves.**
6	**The Crow Scarers.**
7	**The Muck Boots.**
8	**The Sloe Tongues.**
9	**The Hay Splitters.**
10	**The Stile Breakers.**
11	**The Hedge Ears.**
12	**The Plough Robbers.**

d20: Physical features

D20	PHYSICAL FEATURES
1	**One ear cropped square,** the way a farmer marks a pig.
2	**A split lip** that whistles on every S.
3	**Six fingers on the left hand,** the extra one stiff and without a nail.
4	**Teeth filed to points,** all but the two at the front.
5	**A round burn scar** on the scalp, where somebody once set a hot pot down on it.
6	**Eyes of two colours,** one yellow and one milk-blue and blind.
7	**No eyebrows,** singed off and never grown back.
8	**A brass ring through the nose,** gone green where it touches skin.
9	**Bow legs** so bent a cat could run between them.
10	**A stump of tail** an inch long that never stops twitching.
11	**Warts** in a line down the neck, like buttons.
12	**A cart wheel tattooed on the cheek,** badly.
13	**A head taller than the rest,** and stooped to hide it.
14	**One arm half the length of the other,** with a full-sized hand on the end.
15	**Hair grown long** and plaited with straw.
16	**The tip of the nose bitten off** and healed flat.
17	**A goitre** the size of a hen's egg.
18	**Grey skin** instead of green, and freckled.
19	**A smell of sheep dip** that arrives before it does.
20	**Both little toes missing,** so it walks a little on its heels.

d20: In its pockets

D20	IN ITS POCKETS
1	**Three hen's eggs,** one cracked, wrapped in a dock leaf.
2	**A horseshoe nail** bent into a ring.
3	**A wooden spoon** with a hole burnt through the bowl.
4	**Eleven copper pieces** and a lead slug the size of a twelfth.
5	**A twist of salt** in a scrap of sacking.
6	**A child's leather shoe,** the left one.
7	**A clay pipe stem** with no bowl, chewed flat at the end.
8	**A mole-catcher's wire trap,** sprung.
9	**A scarecrow's glove** stuffed with straw.
10	**A turnip** with one bite out of it.
11	**A shepherd's tally stick** notched to ninety-one.
12	**Half a honeycomb** in a tin, with ants in it.
13	**A brass thimble** full of sloes.
14	**A ball of sheep's wool,** dyed blue.
15	**A whetstone** worn hollow in the middle.
16	**A folded letter,** soaked and dried, the ink run past reading.
17	**A silver piece** with a hole drilled through it, on a string.
18	**A yard of red ribbon,** frayed at both ends.
19	**A wooden whistle** carved like a fish.
20	**A handful of haws** and three arrowheads sized for a goblin's bow.

d12: Something it says

D12	Something it says
1	**"Not that way. That way's ours."**
2	**"Who sold you that hat?"**
3	**"Boss says take a toll. I say run."**
4	**"My brother's in that hedge. Say sorry to him."**
5	**"Give us the boots and we'll say we never saw you."**
6	**"That's a farmer's horse. Where's the farmer?"**
7	**"We don't eat people. Mostly we don't."**
8	**"Count us. Go on. Count us."**
9	**"This field's been ours since the barley came in."**
10	**"You're standing on the bit where the arrows land."**
11	**"If I tell you where the boss sleeps, do I get the shiny thing?"**
12	**"Hush. Listen. That's all of us."**

d12: Something it does

D12	Something it does
1	**Licks a finger** and holds it up for the wind before every shot.
2	**Puts its ear to the ground** and grins.
3	**Stops to eat a blackberry** in the middle of the fight.
4	**Shouts every move** before it makes it, in Goblin.
5	**Spits on its arrows.**
6	**Throws a clod of earth** instead of an arrow, and laughs at its own shot.
7	**Pulls a spent arrow** out of a fence post and shoots it again.
8	**Hums the same three notes** over and over.
9	**Takes its boots off,** ties them round its neck, and runs.
10	**Bangs two pot lids together** to sound like more of them.
11	**Surrenders** the moment it is cornered, and points to where the others are.
12	**Goes for the nearest pack** while everybody else is busy.

How to run the band

1. Put the field on the table before the first arrow. The hedge on every side, the gap at the corner, the lane outside. The runs and the loopholes are not hidden: anybody who looks at a hedge sees them.

2. Open from the hedge. The band shoots through the loopholes from behind cover and does not show itself in the field.

3. Move them through the runs. A goblin that is hurt or seen goes back through the hedge and comes out somewhere else. The Hedge-Boss's Holler moves the whole band at once.

4. Hold the gap. The Billhook stands in the gap the party wants and stays there.

5. Lob the pots over. The Pot-Lobber does not see the party. It hears them, and it throws over the hedge at the noise.

6. Break them with the boss. When the Hedge-Boss drops, every goblin of its band leaves through the runs on its next turn and does not come back that day.

The hedge

Three rules, each stated once. Each field has a gap ten feet wide at one or two of its corners, and the gap is the only way in or out for anything bigger than a goblin.

The hedge. A hedge is living thorn, taller than any Medium creature and five feet thick. It blocks sight and gives total cover. A Medium or larger creature cannot move into it or through it, and cannot climb it. A Medium creature with an axe, a sword or a billhook cuts a five-foot gap through it in 1 minute.

The runs. A run is a tunnel through the foot of the hedge, a foot and a half high. A Small or Tiny creature moves through one as difficult terrain, so crossing a five-foot hedge costs it 10 feet of movement. A Medium creature does not fit, squeezing or not.

The loopholes. A loophole is a hole through the hedge at a goblin's eye height, big enough for an arrow. A creature shooting through a loophole has three-quarters cover against attacks from the far side, and nothing longer than an arrow goes through it.

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The Roster

Hedge-Runner

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil. The line of the band: a bow, a knife, and every run in the hedge by heart. Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

AC 13 (leather armor)	HP 13 (3d6+3)	Speed 30 ft.
STR 8 (-1) DEX 14 (+2) CON 12 (+1)	INT 10 (+0) WIS 8 (-1) CHA 8 (-1)	Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9.

SKILLS

Stealth +6.

LANGUAGES

Common, Goblin.

HEDGE-BORN

The goblin knows every run and loophole in the hedges its band holds, and moves through a run as difficult terrain.

NIMBLE ESCAPE

The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

SHORTBOW

Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

KNIFE

Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

TACTICS

It shoots through a loophole and Hides behind the hedge as a bonus action. Seen or hit, it goes back through the nearest run on its next turn and shoots from another loophole. It runs at 6 hit points.

Billhook

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil. A hedger's hook on a pole twice its height, and the gap it stands in. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

AC 13 (hide armor)	HP 22 (5d6+5)	Speed 30 ft.
STR 14 (+2) DEX 12 (+1) CON 12 (+1)	INT 9 (-1) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 8 (-1)	Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10.

SKILLS

Athletics +4.

LANGUAGES

Common, Goblin.

HEDGE-BORN

The goblin knows every run and loophole in the hedges its band holds, and moves through a run as difficult terrain.

BILLHOOK

Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage. A Medium or smaller target makes a DC 12 Strength saving throw or is pulled up to 5 feet toward the goblin. A creature pulled against a hedge stops there.

TACTICS

It stands in a gap and does not leave it. It hooks whatever comes within ten feet and pulls it into the gap, where the loopholes on both sides can see it. It runs at 11 hit points, through the nearest run.

Pot-Lobber

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil. Keeps hornets in clay pots stopped with moss, and throws them over hedges it has never looked over. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

AC 12	HP 22 (5d6+5)	Speed 30 ft.
STR 10 (+0) DEX 14 (+2) CON 12 (+1)	INT 10 (+0) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 8 (-1)	Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10.

SKILLS

Stealth +4.

LANGUAGES

Common, Goblin.

HEDGE-BORN

The goblin knows every run and loophole in the hedges its band holds, and moves through a run as difficult terrain.

SLING

Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

HORNET POT (RECHARGE 5-6)

The goblin lobs a clay pot of live hornets at a point within 60 feet. It does not need to see the point, only to hear something there, and the pot goes over a hedge. Each creature within 10 feet of the point makes a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failure or half as much on a success. The hornets are gone at the end of the turn.

TACTICS

It stays behind the hedge for the whole fight and throws at the noise, wherever the most voices are. Between pots it slings through a loophole. It runs at 11 hit points.

Hedge-Boss

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil. The biggest goblin in the hedges, and the only one the others listen to. Challenge 2 (450 XP).

AC 14 (chain shirt)	HP 45 (10d6+10)	Speed 30 ft.
STR 16 (+3) DEX 12 (+1) CON 12 (+1)	INT 11 (+0) WIS 12 (+1) CHA 13 (+1)	Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11.

SKILLS

Intimidation +3, Stealth +3.

LANGUAGES

Common, Goblin.

HEDGE-BORN

The goblin knows every run and loophole in the hedges its band holds, and moves through a run as difficult terrain.

MULTIATTACK

The goblin makes two Hedging Axe attacks.

HEDGING AXE

Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

HOLLER (BONUS ACTION)

Each other goblin of the band that can hear the Hedge-Boss can use its reaction to move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks. Half of a goblin's speed is 15 feet, which is a run and five feet beyond it.

TACTICS

It stays behind the hedge and Hollers every turn until a character in the field is down or alone, then comes through a run and axes that one. It does not run. When it drops to 0 hit points, the band leaves.

Fielding the Band

Every figure below was run at the encounter calculator for four characters. In each one, every goblin is in the hedge from the first round and none arrives later, so the tier is the whole fight.

The lane, four 1st-level characters. Two Hedge-Runners, one behind each hedge of a lane: 100 raw XP at the two-monster multiplier of 1.5, so 150 adjusted against thresholds of 100, 200, 300 and 400. **Easy.**

The field, four 2nd-level characters. Four Hedge-Runners at the loopholes and a Billhook in the gap: 300 raw at the multiplier of 2, so 600 adjusted against 200, 400, 600 and 800. **Hard.**

The gap, four 3rd-level characters. The Hedge-Boss, two Hedge-Runners, a Billhook and a Pot-Lobber: 750 raw at the multiplier of 2, so 1,500 adjusted against 300, 600, 900 and 1,600. **Hard.**

The calculator does not count the hedge. Total cover and a band that steps through walls play harder than the printed tier. In an open field with no hedges the tier holds.

What the Party Reaches For

The standard kit against a band in the hedges, and the ruling on each.

Light. A lantern lights the field and nothing behind the hedge. The hedge is total cover by day and by night, and the goblins see in the dark.

Fire. A living hedge is green wood and does not catch. Oil and a torch, or a *fire bolt*, scorch the leaves on one five-foot section and go out within the round.

Sleep. The spell does not reach through a hedge, so its point is in the field or the gap. At 1st level it puts 22 hit points to sleep on average, which is one Hedge-Runner at 13 and not two at 26. It does not reach the Hedge-Boss at 45.

***Thunderwave* and every other area spell.** The area stops at the hedge, and a goblin on the far side is outside it. A goblin in a gap or in the field is inside it, and one pushed against a hedge stops there.

A mounted charge. A horse does not go through a hedge or over it. A charge comes through a gap or not at all, and the Billhook stands in the gap with ten feet of reach.

A gate. There are none. The band burned the field gates for firewood its first week in the hedges.

Simply leaving. The party walks back out the gap it came in by. The band shoots at whoever is last through and does not follow out of the hedges.

Cutting through. One minute for a five-foot gap, which is ten rounds standing beside a loophole.

Going over. It is thorn to the top, taller than anyone in the party, and it bends under weight. Nobody goes over.

A halfling or a gnome in a run. It goes through a run exactly as a goblin does, at the same cost, and comes out on the far side alone.

A familiar, or anything flying. Anything above the hedge sees both sides of it, and the hedge gives no cover against anything above it. The band shoots at that first.

Talking. The band talks, and lies. Nothing it promises across a hedge is kept, and only the Hedge-Boss can call the band off.

The monsters are mine. 30+ years of real tables.

LONG ISLAND DUNGEON MASTER

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