

Packing a Punch (or Kick, or Headbutt, or Body Slam)

Review of Fantasy Class: The Martialist

by Rachael Kvapil and Ekon

The introduction of [Fantasy Class: The Martialist](#) emphasizes that the Martialist "is no monk." Hmm. You could have fooled us. The Fantasy Cartographic's supplement class for Dungeons and Dragons 4.0 system is one that "fights with his hands and feet, his elbows and head. He carries no blade and wears only the lightest armor."

Didn't the monk class, which disappeared in 4.0, do the same thing? The Martialist's class features bring up images of the monk: powerful unarmed strikes, grappling, bonuses to AC simply because of its class, and an uncanny ability to dish out high damage.

Still the Martialist is NOT the monk. At the core of the character is a major distinction: "His abilities come not from a religion or the study of an ancient philosophy. His abilities come from the bone of his knuckle, the sinew of his arms, the knowledge of the measure of his own body."

There is no alignment restriction, and since religion isn't a factor a Martialist can adhere to any deity. Though he is as powerful as the monk, the Martialist's strength is offense rather than defense. The monk might be able to outrun his opponents, never get hit, and could fall from incredible heights, but the Martialist possesses many more ways to daze, slow and blind his opponents. He is the classic WWE wrestlers who may have a few flashy grapple throws, but uses a lot on straight out punches and body slams. He relies less on classic martial arts and more on a street fighting style. 3.5 gamers who loved the monk's multiple attack per turn (a.k.a Flurry of Blows) will cry "noooooo!" when they find it missing from the Martialist's class features.

The Martialist is a powerful class. If you use the right combination of feats you can do more damage than just about any other class. As you reach paragon levels, paths such as Battlefield Sprinter allow more movement than a 3.5 monk. Some paths, such as Dwarven Hammerhead, allow you to focus more on damage output. The Martialist's strict prerequisites for these paragon paths are worth it, as his feats are some of the deadliest around.

Fantasy Class: The Martialist is a supplement book worth owning. One downside is all the extra narrative stuck between each level's Exploits. Likewise, you should be careful not to flaunt your character's damage output in front of your DM. It is an easy class to power-game. Your DM might say as ours: "You are not allowed to play that character again."

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