

Jedi Counseling 108

Readied Actions and Jedi Spirits

Gary M. Sarli

Welcome to the 108th installment of "Jedi Counseling," our regular column in which we answer your rules questions about the **Star Wars Miniatures Game** and the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game**. If you have a question, send it in through the link at the end of this column, and check back here for the official answer.

Star Wars Roleplaying Game Saga Edition

Q: Can you make an attack (standard action) and then ready a move action in the same turn? I can't find any rule that says you can't, but older versions of the game wouldn't allow this.

A: No, it's not allowed. Readying an action is itself a standard action regardless of the type of action readied (standard, move, or swift). This is apparently missing from the text, so it will be added to the errata.

Q: If you ready an action that, when executed, makes it impossible for another character to finish its action, what happens? Is the action lost, or does that character get to change actions? For example, if I ready a withdraw to be triggered when an enemy makes a melee attack, would that enemy lose its action?

A: If something occurs that renders an action impossible or moot, that action is lost and can't be replaced by another action. This occurs in any such circumstance, such as a readied withdraw as you describe, an attack of opportunity that renders an opponent unable to finish a move or attack, a readied move to get behind total cover in response to a ranged attack, a talent or feat used as a reaction that nullifies an attack, and so forth.

Q: Isn't that unfair? In the case of a melee opponent, I could keep that opponent from ever attacking by simply using a readied withdraw over and over again.

A: On its surface, sure, it might seem unfair or even a little wonky, but careful consideration of what the rules represent can put this into perspective.

First, consider that time isn't broken up into neat little rounds in real life (or on screen). Really, the game uses a turn-based system just to keep the flow of time manageable and orderly during a chaotic fight. Your character's action, then, isn't occurring instantaneously once every six seconds -- it's evolving continuously over the round even though it is only resolved on your turn. Given this, when a character takes an action (for example, a melee attack), there has probably been some build-up to enable that action. The lead time might be as little as a fraction of a second (such as with some swift actions, for example), but others might take several seconds to unfold (such as with many standard and full-round actions).



The Rebels aboard the *Tantive IV* ready themselves for company.

Logically, if something stops you from completing your action, you wouldn't have time to go back and start a completely different action. In the case of a melee attack, the attacker has probably been thrusting, parrying, and slashing at his target for at least a second or two as he tries to find (or create) an opening. This rather long action is resolved as a single attack roll, and if it's "spoiled," you don't have time to set up something else.

Even a more discrete attack -- such as that at the end of a charge -- has its own problems if the target backs up or sidesteps out of harm's way. Once you begin that final swing, stab, or thrust, you're throwing all your weight into the blow. You can't "unswing" and conserve all the momentum you've been building to make the attack somewhere else. (If you've ever played baseball, consider how hard it is to "check" a swing when you realize a pitch is no good. Now, imagine trying to check a swing and then swing *again* a split second later!)

Second, it might seem unfair that a melee character can never make an attack, but remember that a defender who repeatedly uses readied withdraws *also* can't attack. His standard action is already committed to the readied action. Therefore, there is no net gain for the readied withdraw, or for any number of actions that can "spoil" another character's action.

Third, the end result is perfectly balanced in that it doesn't alter the outcome of the encounter in any way. After all, if you want to avoid a melee fighter, you usually can run away just as easily (using the run action or two move actions to keep your distance), so nothing is actually changing other than your initiative count.

Q: Okay, but even with this explanation, it still seems wasteful and annoying to spend a round doing nothing because your opponent readied an action instead of running away. Is there any way around this?

A: Yes, there is. As described above, actions aren't instantaneous -- they evolve over the course of the round, and this applies to readied actions as well. For example, if you ready an action to attack a target with your blaster pistol, you'll be aiming at that target, finger on the trigger, from the moment you ready the action. Likewise, a readied melee attack would have your weapon primed for a quick strike (again, think of a baseball player prepared for a pitch), a readied action to draw a blaster would have your fingers twitching right next to your holster (think of the classic showdown at the climax of a western), and a readied withdraw would have you bouncing on the balls of your feet, prepared to leap out of harm's way.

However, the description of the ready action doesn't say anything about your action being hidden or unknown to others around you. Thus, other characters can almost always tell that you've readied an action and even what action you've readied (though they won't know the condition that will trigger it, of course). There might be some exceptions for actions that have no obvious visible component, such as certain talents or uses of the Force, but these should be adjudicated by the Gamemaster on a case-by-case basis.

Given this, it's not very easy to "spoil" an action in the way you describe. If you ready a withdraw to avoid a melee fighter, the fighter can tell that you've readied a withdraw, and he'll probably conclude that you're trying to lure

him in only to scamper out of range. Therefore, rather than approach you, he'll probably choose a different action. In fact, he might ready a charge that triggers the next time you take any action at all, turning the tables on you!

Star Wars Miniatures Questions

In this installment of "Jedi Counseling", we'll address some of the stickier interactions of the Light Spirit ability (found on Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit, from the *Alliance and Empire* set).

Q: Even though Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit, is supposed to be a "ghost," the rules don't say anything about other characters being able to move through him, not counting him as the nearest enemy, or not counting him as adjacent. Does this mean that he can block a narrow hallway, get close to enemies to prevent them from attacking allies with cover, or even get adjacent to an enemy to force her to move before she can attack someone else?

A: No, none of those situations can happen because the Light Spirit ability received a fair amount of [errata](#) shortly after *Alliance and Empire* was released. For the sake of clarity, the errata is quoted here in its entirety:

Light Spirit

This character can move through enemy characters, and enemy characters can move through it, as long as no character ends its move in the same space as another character. This character does not count as the nearest enemy, and does not count as adjacent to other characters. This character is not affected by commander effects.



Thus, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit can't block or otherwise restrict the movement of enemies or allies because they can move through him without any trouble, though they must still end in a legal square (and not the same square Obi-Wan is in). Similarly, he won't interfere with the targeting and attacks of enemies because he never counts as the nearest enemy or as adjacent.

Q: What if I have a Savage character close enough to reach Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit? Would it have to move next to him even though it won't be able to attack him?

A: No. To explain why, look at the specific wording of the Savage ability: "It must end its move adjacent to an enemy if it can (if it can't reach an enemy, it moves normally)." Now, recall the Light Spirit errata mentioned above: "This character . . . does not count as adjacent to other characters." So, it's impossible for the Savage character to end its move adjacent to Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit. Thus, the Savage character ignores the Light Spirit character when determining how to move.

Q: The Light Spirit ability lets you give Force Renewal 1 to an ally. What happens if the chosen ally already has Force Renewal? Do the two stack? For example, if Yoda of Dagobah (Force Renewal 2) is the chosen ally, would he have Force Renewal 3?

A: No, they do not stack. As described under "stacking" in the rulebook glossary, two instances of the same ability never stack.

Q: Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit ignores all terrain. Does that mean he can end his movement in a pit square?

A: Yes. A Light Spirit character ignores terrain in every way with the exception of not being able to end its movement inside a wall or other solid object (that is, a square enclosed on all sides by walls). Thus, Obi-Wan can move through walls and closed doors, pays no increased movement cost for low objects and difficult terrain, and can move through and even end his turn in pit squares without restriction.



Q: Since Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit ignores terrain, can he move off the battle grid?

A: No. The battle grid is not a form of terrain.

Q: When counting range to a character with Light Spirit (such as when an enemy wants to defeat it by spending a Force Point), do you ignore terrain? For example, could you count range through a wall instead of counting range around it?

A: No. Only the Light Spirit character can ignore terrain. Other characters have to count range to the Light Spirit character normally.

Q: Can Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit be played in a squad without a Unique allied character with a Force Rating?

A: No. Even if he could, there doesn't seem to be any reason to do so given that he can't score victory points or satisfy victory conditions for occupying a designated area, and Obi-Wan doesn't have any way to affect an enemy directly.

Q: Is Obi-Wan Kenobi, Jedi Spirit considered to be a Living character? I can't find anything that says he's not, even though he's a "ghost."

A: Yes, for game purposes, he counts as a Living character. Note, however, that very few abilities will meet the other requirements to affect him given that he can't be targeted, he is never adjacent, and so forth.

When you think about it, the Living designation is really meant to distinguish between organic and mechanical characters. A Light Spirit is clearly much more like an organic character than a mechanical one, and it seems awkward to define a new category ("spirit"?) for such a rare character type. Besides, you could argue that being one with the Force is just another form of life, particularly given the way that the Force and life are so interrelated.

About the Author

Gary M. Sarli is a freelance designer, developer, and editor whose credits include the Saga Edition rulebook and *Ultimate Adversaries* (for the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game**) and *Power of Faerûn* and *Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells* (for **Dungeons & Dragons**). He also moderates on the Wizards.COMmunity message boards as WizO the Hutt, cheerfully feeding Code of Conduct violators to the Sarlacc. Gary recently opened

GMSarli Games, an online retailer specializing in making non-random miniatures packs designed for the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game**.

*Do you have a rules question about the **Star Wars Miniatures Game** or the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game**? Send it to the [Jedi Counselor](#), and then check back here for the latest batch of answers!*

©1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.