

HERALD COMBAT TRACKER

User Guide

Version 0.27.1

Contents

Contents	2
1. Welcome	4
What you get at a glance	4
2. Installing and First Launch	5
Installing	5
The first-run Windows Firewall prompt	6
Where your data lives	6
3. The Main Window, at a Glance	7
The top bar	7
The three tabs	7
4. Parties, Characters, and the Compendium	8
Creating a party	8
Character Name vs. Player Name — read this before you type anything	8
Adding and editing a character	8
Portraits	9
Rests	10
Spending spell slots outside combat	11
The Compendium tab	12
5. Running an Encounter	14
5.1 — Setting up (Prep phase)	14
5.2 — Turn order: Delay and Ready	14
5.3 — Damage, healing, and HP	15
5.4 — Conditions	16
5.5 — Spellcasting: slots and innate casting	16
5.6 — Saving a fight for later: Prepared Encounters	17
5.7 — If the app closes unexpectedly: Resume	18
5.8 — The turn timer	18
5.9 — Ending the encounter	18
6. Player Displays and Remote Devices	19
The player display (second screen)	19
3D dice	19
Adding phones and tablets	20
7. Display Settings	21
8. Skins	23

9. Backup and Restore	24
10. Two Systems at a Glance	26
11. Troubleshooting.....	26

1. Welcome

Herald Combat Tracker is a combat and initiative manager for tabletop D&D 5.5E (2024) and Pathfinder 2e Remaster games. One computer runs the tracker; a second screen or players' own phones and tablets show a live, DM-controlled view of the fight; initiative order, whose turn it is, HP and conditions for the party, and 3D dice rolls — without ever revealing what the DM keeps hidden.

This guide covers the tracker end to end: setting up parties and characters, browsing and customizing the monster compendium, running a full encounter from initiative to the last hit point, and every setting that shapes what your players see.



Tip

If you only read one chapter, make it Chapter 5 (Running an Encounter) — it covers the workflow you'll use every session.

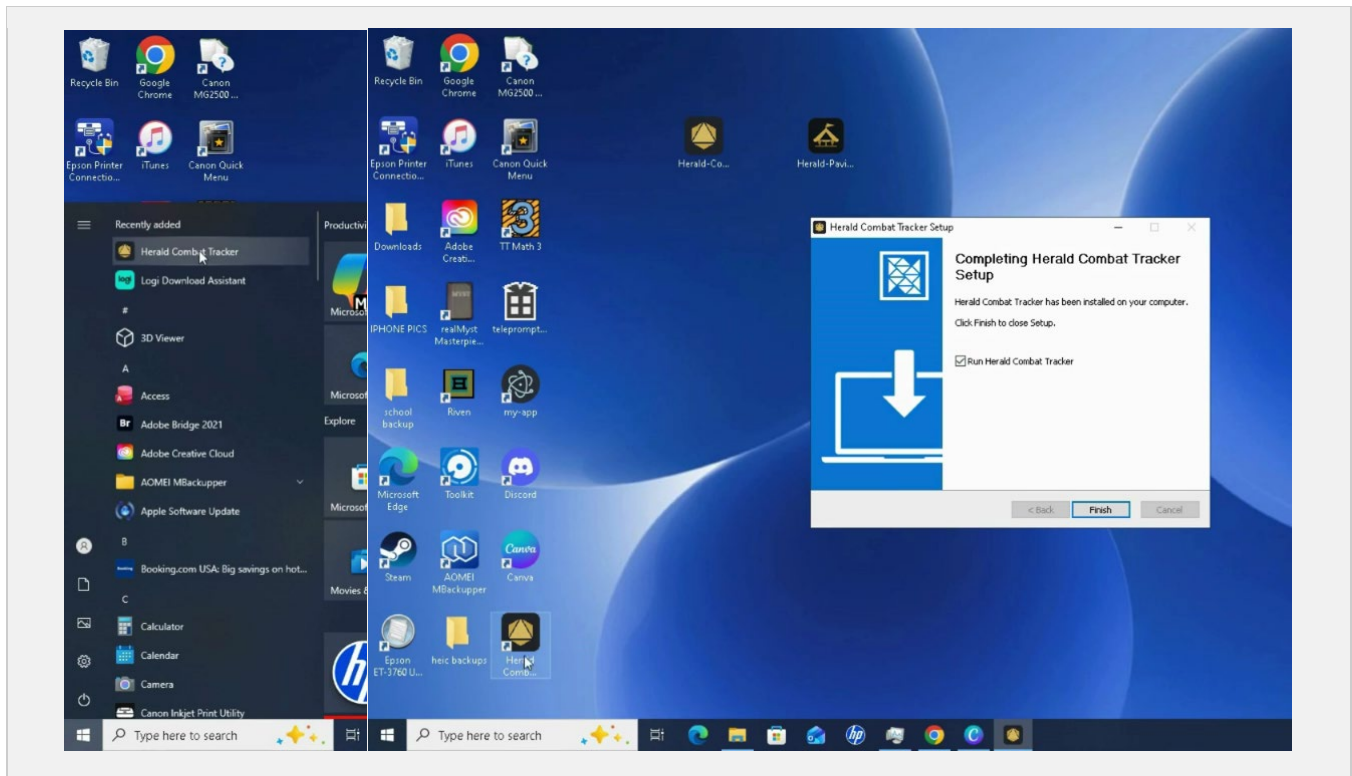
What you get at a glance

- Two full rules systems, D&D 5.5E (2024) and PF2e Remaster; each with its own damage math, conditions, and rests — built in from the ground up, not bolted on.
- Three bundled bestiaries with full combat stats: containing 310 creatures for D&D 2024, 318 for D&D 2014, and 160 for PF2e Remaster — plus your own custom monsters and JSON import.
- Live HP, conditions, resistances, and a party status board your players can see — with every monster kept secret staying on your screen alone.
- Physically simulated 3D dice, spell slot and per-day innate casting tracking, portraits, prepared encounters you can build ahead of a session, crash-safe resume, undo, and a visual turn timer.
- A LAN server so phones and tablets join as displays with a QR code — no apps to install on their end.

2. Installing and First Launch

Installing

1. Run the Herald Combat Tracker installer (.exe) you were given.
2. Follow the prompts. The installer does not require administrator rights.
3. Launch Herald Combat Tracker from the Start menu or desktop shortcut.

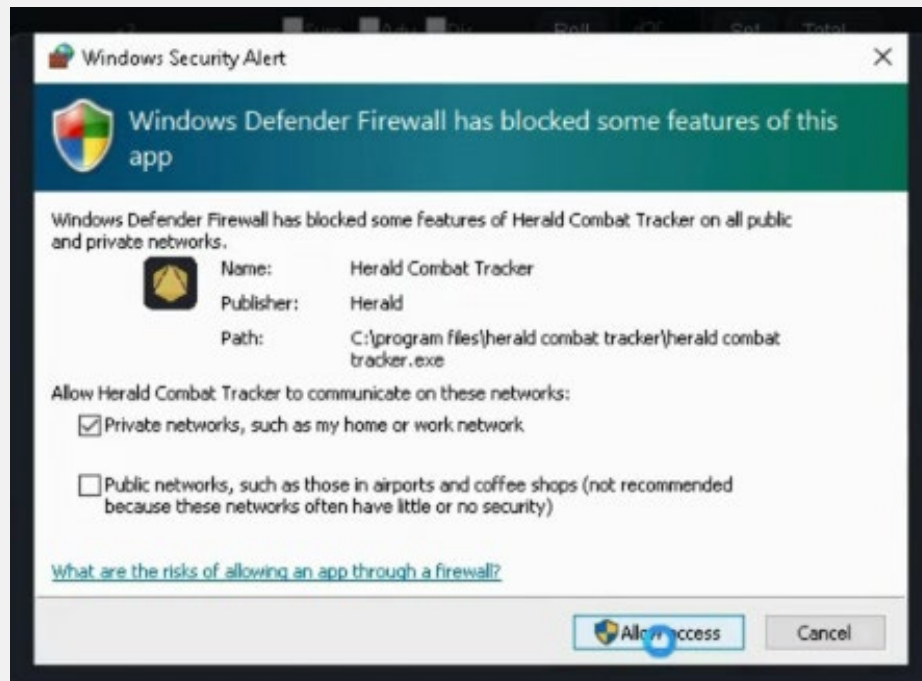


The first-run Windows Firewall prompt

The first time you turn on remote displays (Chapter 6), Windows will ask whether to allow Herald Combat Tracker network access.

⚠ Important

Choose "Allow access" for Private networks. If you block this prompt, phones and tablets will never be able to find the tracker on your Wi-Fi.



Where your data lives

Everything you create — parties, characters, custom monsters, settings, and skins — is stored outside the app folder, in %APPDATA%\Herald Initiative Tracker\. This matters for two big reasons:

i Note

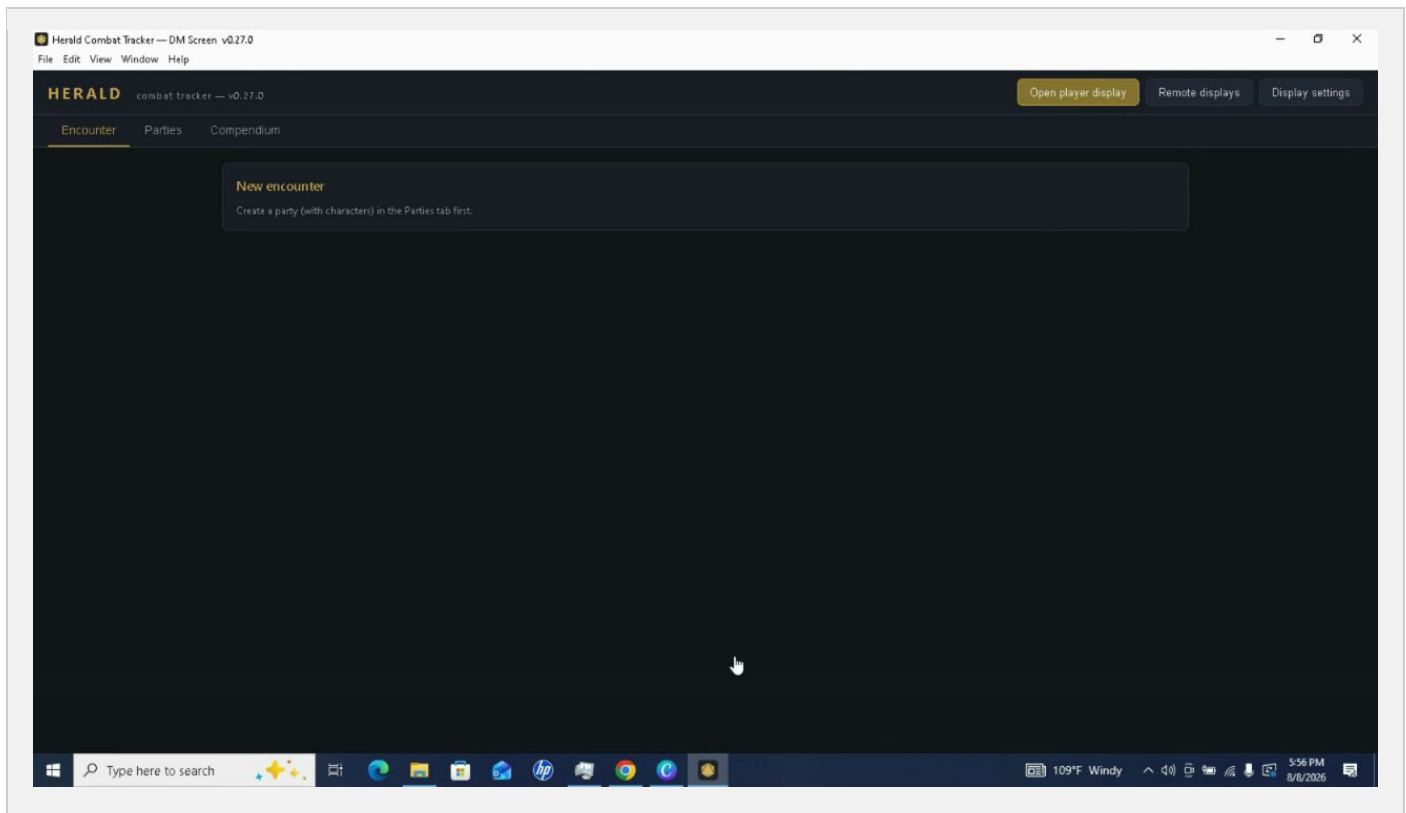
Installing an update never touches your data. You do not need to uninstall the old version first, and you will never lose a party or a saved encounter by updating.

i Note

The data folder keeps its original name from when the app was called Herald Initiative Tracker. That is deliberate — it is what lets every update find your existing parties and characters instead of starting fresh.

3. The Main Window, at a Glance

Herald Combat Tracker's main window is the DM screen. Everything you do as the DM happens here; your players never see this window.



The top bar

- **Open player display** — opens the full-screen window your TV or second monitor shows. See Chapter 6.
- **Remote displays** — turns on the QR code / session code so phones and tablets can join. See Chapter 6.
- **Display settings** — every setting that controls what players see and how the app behaves. See Chapter 7.

The three tabs

- **Encounter** — where you build and run fights. This is where you'll spend most of your time; see Chapter 5.
- **Parties** — create parties and manage each character's stats, HP, defenses, and portrait. See Chapter 4.
- **Compendium** — browse the built-in monster bestiaries, and add your own custom monsters or import a JSON file. See Chapter 4.

4. Parties, Characters, and the Compendium

Creating a party

Open the Parties tab. A party belongs to one rules system — D&D or PF2e — chosen when you create it.

1. Click the new-party row at the top of the Parties tab.
2. Name the party (e.g. "Tuesday Night Crew").
3. Choose the rules system: D&D 5.5E (2024) / D&D 5E (2014), or Pathfinder 2e Remaster.
4. If you chose D&D, also pick the edition — 2024 or 2014 — right there at creation.

i Note

D&D 2014 and 2024 differ in a few specific rules the tracker tracks: surprise (2024 gives disadvantage on initiative; 2014 skips the surprised creature's first turn) and long-rest hit dice (2024 returns all; 2014 returns half). Damage math is identical in both editions. See the quick-reference table in Chapter 10.

Character Name vs. Player Name — read this before you type anything

⚠ Important

The Name field is the CHARACTER's name (e.g. "Aria"). Player Name is the human at the table (e.g. "Mike"). Every display setting that shows names picks one of these two stored values — it cannot fix data typed into the wrong field. If your name settings seem to "not work," check that Name and Player Name weren't swapped when the character was created.

Adding and editing a character

1. With a party selected, click Add Character.
2. Fill in Name, Player Name, and the fields your system uses (Dexterity, Proficiency Bonus, Max HP, Level, Con Modifier, Hit Die for 5e, etc.).

- Optional: set Armor Class, Resistances/Immunities/Vulnerabilities (and mark any as "situational" — see below), and a Portrait Image.
- Save.

Add character (D&D 5.5E (2024))

Name: Alizar

Kind: Player character

Player name: John

DEX score: 14 (+2)

Proficiency bonus: 2

Max HP: 24 (current HP starts at max)

AC: 12

Level: 4

Con modifier: 2 (added to each hit die on a short rest)

Hit die: d8

Dice color: [purple bar]

Portrait: save the character first, then add a portrait

Defenses (resistances, immunities, vulnerability)

Resistance: fire (situational)

all acid bludgeoning cold fire force lightning necrotic piercing poison psychic radiant slashing thunder

+ Add defense

Spellcasting (leave blank for non-casters — nothing will show anywhere)

Spell save DC: 15

Spell attack: +5

Slots per level:

L1	3	L2	2	L3	2	L4	0	L5	0	L6	0
L7	0	L8	0	L9	0						

Check "situational" for defenses that only apply sometimes — barbarian rage, Uncanny Dodge, evasion. They appear as switches on the combat row, OFF by default, and only count while switched on.

Initiative-affecting abilities

+ Add ability

Cancel Save

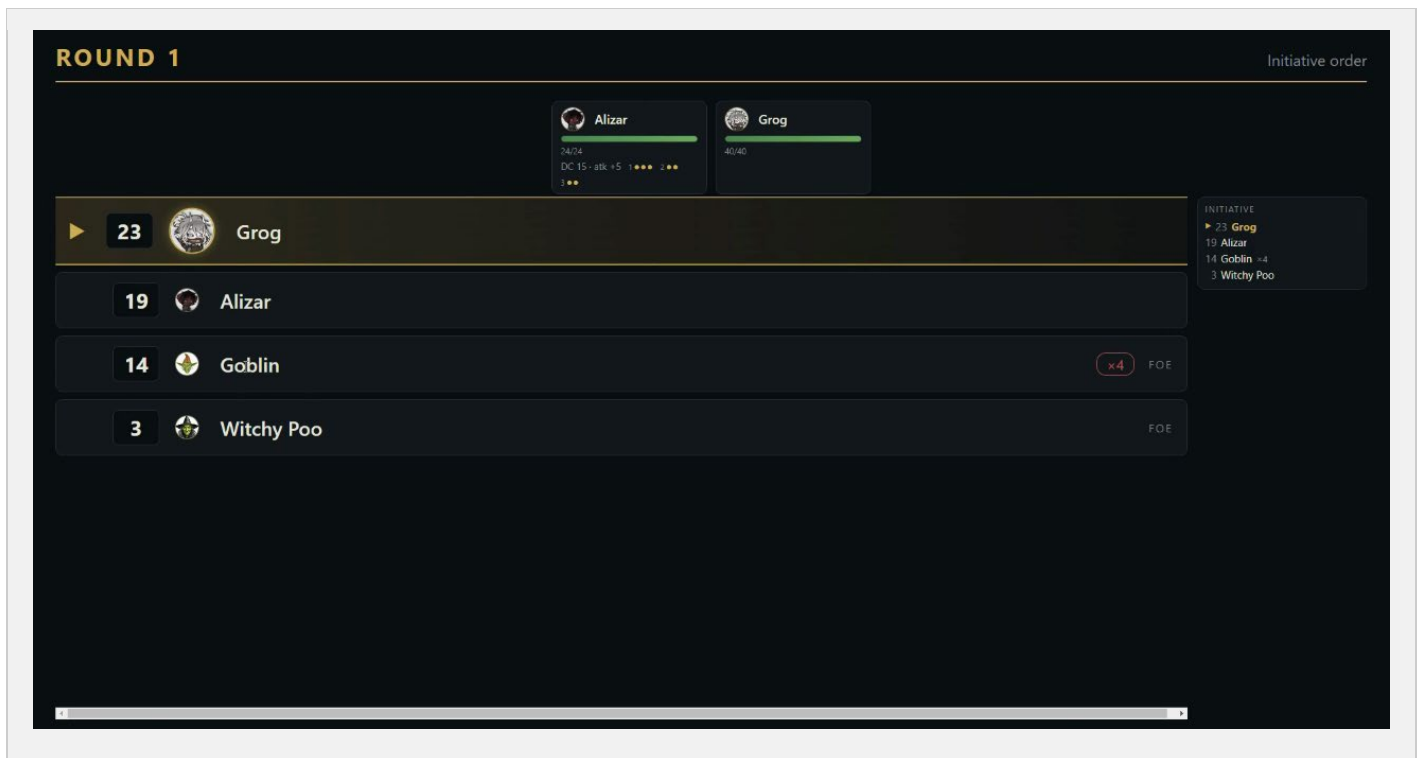
Situational defenses

A resistance or immunity that isn't always on (e.g. barbarian's Rage, Uncanny Dodge) can be marked situational. It then appears two ways during combat, matching how it's actually used at the table:

- Persistent (Rage):** a switch on the character's combat row — flip it on, and it auto-applies to every hit while it's on.
- Per-hit reaction (Uncanny Dodge):** leave the switch off; it appears as a tap-to-apply chip in the Damage dialog only when the incoming damage type matches, and applying it affects that one hit only.

Portraits

Edit a character, open Portrait, and choose an image (PNG, JPEG, or WebP — Herald resizes it automatically). The portrait then appears on your encounter row, the players' initiative list, the party status board, and — largest — as a turn banner when it becomes that character's turn.



Monster portraits work the same way from the Compendium — see below.

Herald ships with no bundled art; every portrait is an image you provide.

Note

Players only ever see a monster's portrait when they'd also see its real name — reveal the monster, or turn off hidden names, and the portrait appears with it. The DM always sees every portrait.

Rests

From the Parties tab, each character (or the whole party) can rest. Rests speak each system's own language:

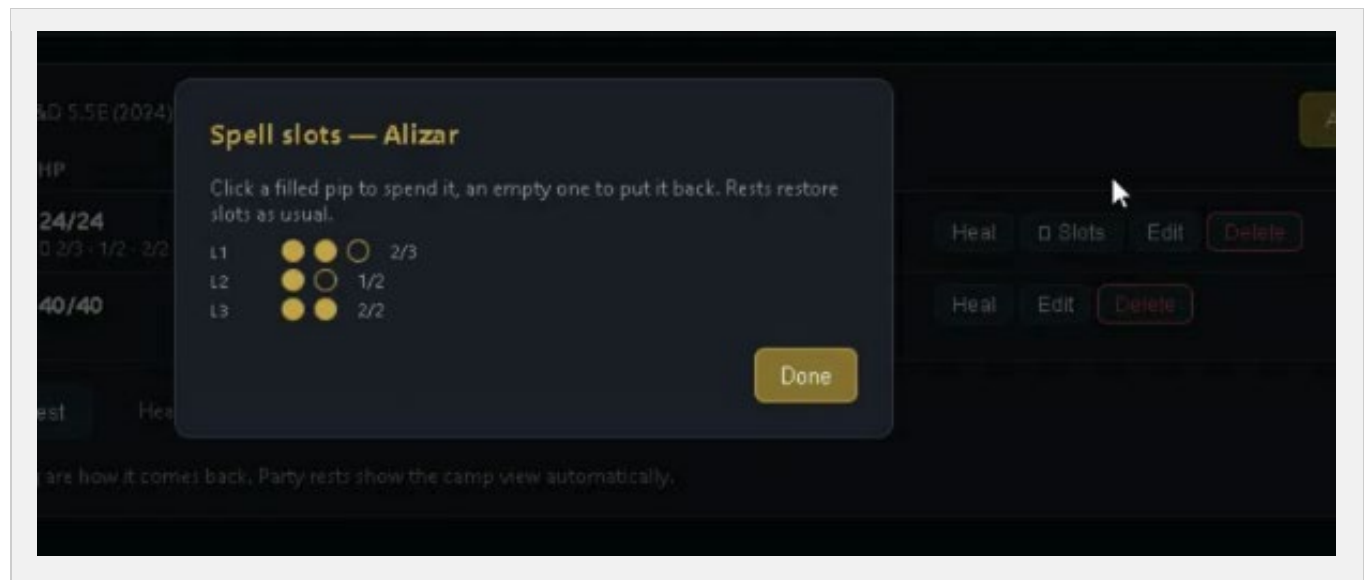
System	Short rest / equivalent	Long rest / equivalent
D&D 5.5E / 5E	Auto-spends hit dice toward max HP (each die + Con modifier); every die rolled is reported.	Full HP restored, temp HP cleared, half of total hit dice returned (2014) or all hit dice returned (2024).
PF2e Remaster	No short rest — PF2e doesn't have one, so the tracker doesn't pretend it does. Use Treat Wounds instead (pick the Medicine Check's tier and whether it crit; the app rolls the healing).	Overnight Rest heals Con modifier × level (minimum 1 per level).

Spending spell slots outside combat

Casters do not only cast in fights. They cast during roleplay, on the road, and — most often — healing everyone up after a battle. Those slots need to come off the sheet too, and the Encounter tab is not open at the time.

On the Parties tab, any character who has spell slots gets a ✨ Slots button on their row, next to Heal. It opens the same pip panel you use in combat:

- Click a **filled pip** to spend that slot.
- Click an **empty pip** to put it back — that is also how you undo a misclick.
- Each level shows its remaining count beside the pips, e.g. 2/4.



i Note

This is the same running tally combat uses. A slot you spend here is already gone when the next encounter starts, and if a fight is in progress the combatant row updates straight away. Rests restore slots exactly as they always have.

💡 Tip

Your players see nothing when you do this — there is no player-facing display for it. They already know what they cast.

The Compendium tab

Browse the built-in bestiaries — with full AC, HP, resistances, immunities, and vulnerabilities already filled in. A D&D party set to 2024 sees 2024-edition stat blocks automatically; a 2014 party sees 2014 stats.

Bestiary	Creatures	Source
D&D 5.5E (2024)	310	SRD 5.2 (297) and SRD 5.1 (13), both CC BY 4.0
D&D 5E (2014)	318	SRD 5.1, CC BY 4.0
PF2e Remaster	160	ORC License

Monster compendium (790 entries)

Import monsters...

All systems

NAME	SYSTEM	SIZE / TYPE	CR / LVL	AC	HP	DEX	PER.	SOURCE
Witchy Poo	D&D (both)	Medium Humanoid	2	14	36	12 (+1)	—	Custom
Edit ×								

Import accepts Herald compendium files, Open5e monster JSON, and 5e-bits API JSON — AC, HP, and resistances import too (v0.10). Imported files are copied into your compendium folder and load automatically from then on.

Bundled D&D monster stats include material from the System Reference Documents 5.1 and 5.2 by Wizards of the Coast LLC ([wizards.com/dnd](#)), licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). Pathfinder 2e content is used under the ORC License. Herald is not affiliated with or endorsed by Wizards of the Coast or Paizo. Content from non-SRD sourcebooks is not included.

Add a custom monster

D&D 5.5E (2024)

Both editions

DEX 10

CR 1/2

Medium

Type (e.g. Fiend)

Extra init bonus 0

Perception PF2e

AC —

HP —

Resistances

all acid bludgeoning cold fire force lightning necrotic piercing poison psychic radiant slashing thunder

Immunities

all acid bludgeoning cold fire force lightning necrotic piercing poison psychic radiant slashing thunder

Vulnerabilities / weaknesses

all acid bludgeoning cold fire force lightning necrotic piercing poison psychic radiant slashing thunder

Spell DC

Spell atk

Slot casting (2014 / PF2e): 4, 3, 2

Innate casting (2024): 2/day: fireball, fly; 1/day: cloudkill

Add

Saved to custom.json in your compendium folder. AC, HP, and defenses are optional — you can always Set HP on a combatant mid-encounter. The buttons cover the plain damage types (multi-select; all = every type); conditionals like *nonmagical bludgeoning* or PF2e values like *fire 5* are typed into the field and kept as-is.

Note

Every bundled creature comes from an open-licensed System Reference Document, and the attribution appears at the bottom of the Compendium tab. Creatures that exist only in the purchasable Monster Manual are deliberately not included.

Adding a Custom Monster

Click Add a Custom Monster and fill in the same fields as a bundled monster — AC, HP, defenses, Spell Casting Abilities and (for 2024-style creatures) innate per-day spells if it casts any.

Importing monsters

Click Import monsters and choose a JSON file in Herald, Open5e, or 5e-bits format. You'll be asked whether to skip, overwrite, or keep both for anything that conflicts with what's already there. If there are changes to the OGL that allows us to send more monsters, we will.

i Note

Custom monsters and imports are stored separately from the bundled bestiary and are never touched by an app update, even when that update ships new official monster data.

5. Running an Encounter

This is the heart of the tracker. An encounter moves through three phases: Prep (build the fight), Running (play it out), and Over (the recap).

5.1 — Setting up (Prep phase)

1. Go to the Encounter tab and click New Encounter.
2. Choose the Party for this fight.
3. Add monsters from the Compendium — pick a monster and a quantity; choose whether multiple copies act as a single Group (one initiative roll, shared turn) or roll individually.
4. Set the Hold mode default (Delay or Ready — you can change this per-combatant later) and leave Track Spell Slots on unless this fight has no casters (it's on by default).
5. Roll initiative for everyone, or use Quick-roll all monsters to roll every monster at once and enter PC rolls as players call them out.

Encounter setup — rolling initiative (D&D 5.5E (2024))

Delay mode: Delay (permanent move)

COMBATANT	HP	INIT BONUS	CONDITIONS	ROLL	INITIATIVE
Alizar (PC)	24/24 Set	+2	☐ Surp. ☐ Adv. ☐ Dis	Roll d20 Set Total...	—
Grog (PC)	34/40 Set	+3	☐ Surp. ☐ Adv. ☐ Dis	Roll d20 Set Total...	—
Witchy Poo (MONSTER)	36/36 Set	+1	☐ Surp. ☐ Adv. ☐ Dis	Roll d20 Set Total...	—
Goblin (GROUP x4)	per member Set	+2	☐ Surp. ☐ Adv. ☐ Dis	Roll d20 Set Total...	—

Add monsters

Monster name... Count: ☐ Group: one shared roll & spot

Start unlocks once every combatant has an initiative value.

Tip

If you know you'll run this same fight again later — or you're prepping several encounters ahead of a session — click Save as prepared... at this point instead of starting the combat now. See Chapter 5.6.

5.2 — Turn Order: Delay and Ready

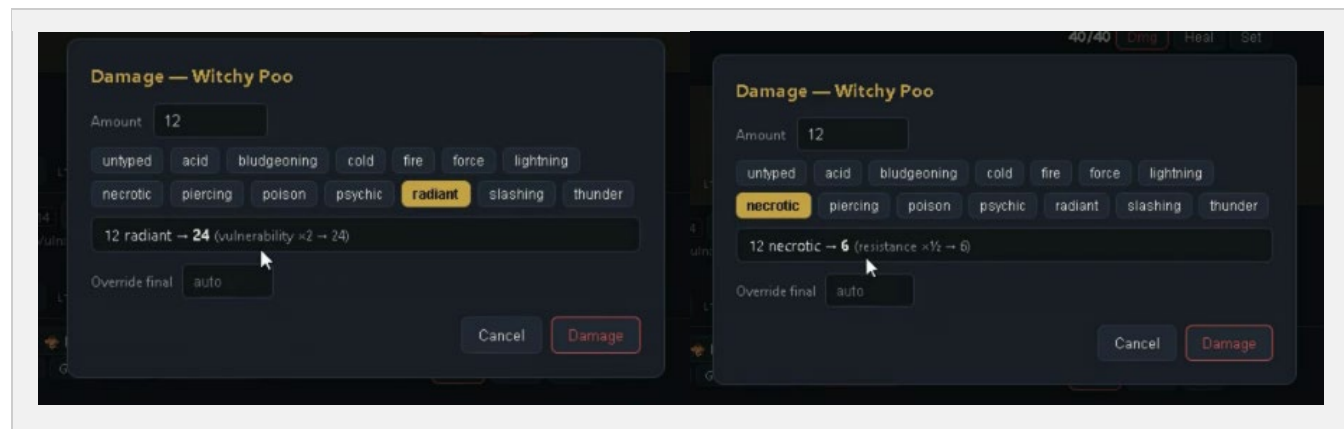
Any combatant can Hold their turn instead of acting immediately:

- **Delay:** steps out of the current order; you choose when to reinsert them later in the round.
- **Ready:** holds an action to trigger on a stated condition, then acts immediately when you say the trigger fires.

5.3 — Damage, Healing, and HP

Every combatant row has Damage, Heal, and Set HP. Set HP is for direct corrections (pre-damaged monsters at prep, a DM fiat) and is the one action that undo does not cover — everything else it does.

1. Click Damage on a row.
2. Enter the amount and, if it matters, pick a damage type.
3. With a type chosen, Herald shows a live preview of the final number before anything commits — including any resistance or vulnerability math.
4. Confirm.



How resistance math works, per system

System	Immunity	Resistance	Vulnerability / Weakness
D&D 5.5E / 5E	× 0	× 0.5 (round down)	× 2
PF2e Remaster	× 0	subtract N (minimum 0)	weakness N ADDS N (there is no PF2e "vulnerability")

i Note

Unconditional defenses (e.g. plain "resistance to fire") apply automatically. Conditional ones (e.g. "resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning") show as a tap-to-apply chip — the tracker never decides on its own whether a weapon was magical. The Override field always lets you type the final number directly, logged as a deliberate DM override.

Undoing a Mis-Click

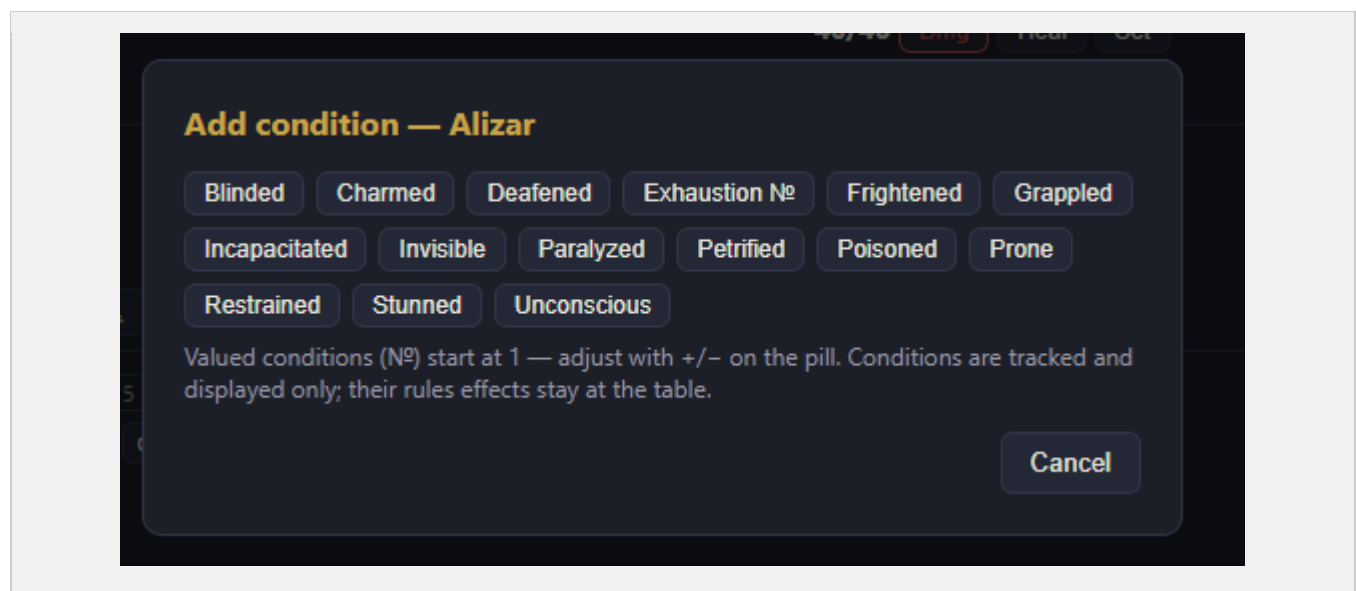
The ↶ Undo button in the running header reverses the last damage or healing entry — restoring HP, temp HP, and any defeated status exactly as they were, as if the click never happened. It holds the last 10 entries and its tooltip always names what it will undo next.

⚠ Important

Direct Set HP edits are a deliberate correction, not a misclick — they are not recorded by Undo. Everything through Damage and Heal is.

5.4 — Conditions

Every row has a + Condition button with the full condition list for that party's system — the standard D&D set (plus exhaustion 1–6) or PF2e's larger set, where many conditions carry a number (frightened 2, clumsy 1, and so on).



Conditions are tracked and displayed only — Herald does not automate their rules effects. A paralyzed monster still takes its turn unless you decide otherwise.

5.5 — Spellcasting: Slots and Innate Casting

Track Spell Slots defaults ON for every new encounter (you can turn it off in setup, or flip it mid-fight — see below.) Two styles are tracked, and a single fight can use both at once:

- **Slot casting** (2014-style PCs, and any 2014 statblocks) — the familiar Level 1–9 slot grid, with a pip panel per caster: tap a filled pip to spend it, an empty one to restore it.

- **Innate / per-day casting** (2024-style monsters) — named pools like "2/day: fireball" and "1/day: fly," each spell its own pool, matching the 2024 statblock format.

i Note

At-will spells, legendary actions, and lair actions are deliberately not tracked — there is nothing to count for at-will, and the other two are DM-side calls with no HP or resource attached.

i Note

To spend slots when no fight is running — roleplay, travel, or healing the party afterwards — use the Slots button on the Parties tab (Chapter 4.) It is the same tally, so the two always agree.

Toggling tracking mid-fight

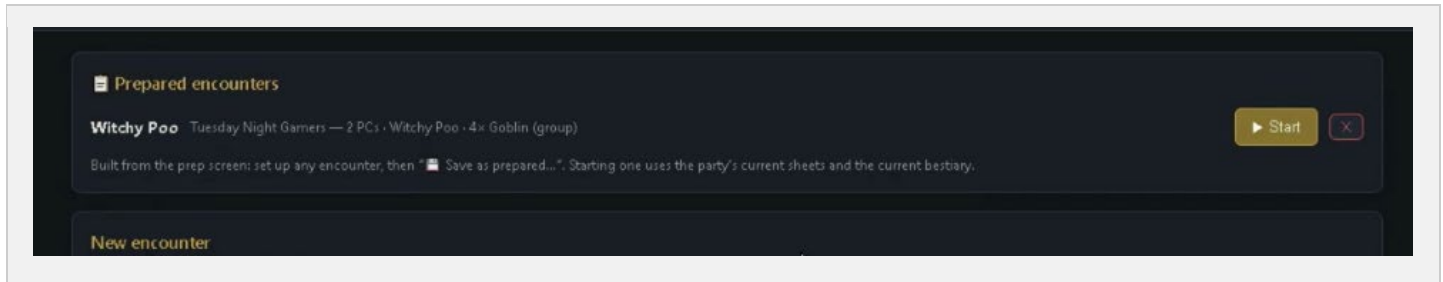
The Slots button in both the prep bar and the running header turns spell tracking on or off for that encounter, any time. Nothing is lost by toggling — the underlying tallies keep counting either way; the button only decides whether anyone sees them.

5.6 — Saving a fight for later: Prepared Encounters

Build an encounter as far as Prep — party, monsters, groups — then click Save as Prepared... and name it. It appears on the Encounter tab's Prepared Encounters list any time nothing is currently running.

1. Prep the fight as normal (Section 5.1).

2. Click  Save as Prepared..., name it, and cancel out of Prep (or just leave the screen — nothing is lost.)
3. On game night, find it in  Prepared Encounters and click ► Start — everything reappears in Prep, ready to roll initiative.

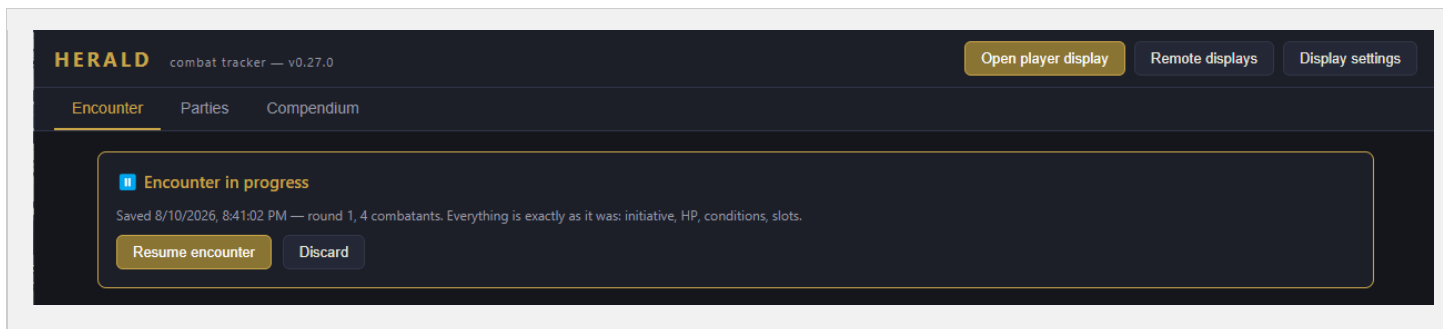


Note

A saved roster resolves against your CURRENT character sheets and CURRENT bestiary — so a PC who leveled up, or a monster you've since edited, starts correctly. If you set a custom HP on a monster before saving, that custom HP is preserved exactly. A retired character or a deleted custom monster is skipped with a note when you start the fight, rather than silently vanishing.

5.7 — If the app closes unexpectedly: Resume

A running fight is saved to disk continuously. If Herald Combat Tracker (or Windows) closes mid-combat, relaunching it offers a gold " II Encounter in progress" card — Resume puts you back exactly where you left off, turn order, HP, conditions, and all.



5.8 — The turn timer

An optional, purely visual countdown (Display settings → Turn timer) that restarts on every turn change and pulses red for its last ten seconds. It enforces nothing — no turn is ever skipped — it's pacing pressure, not a rule. Off by default.

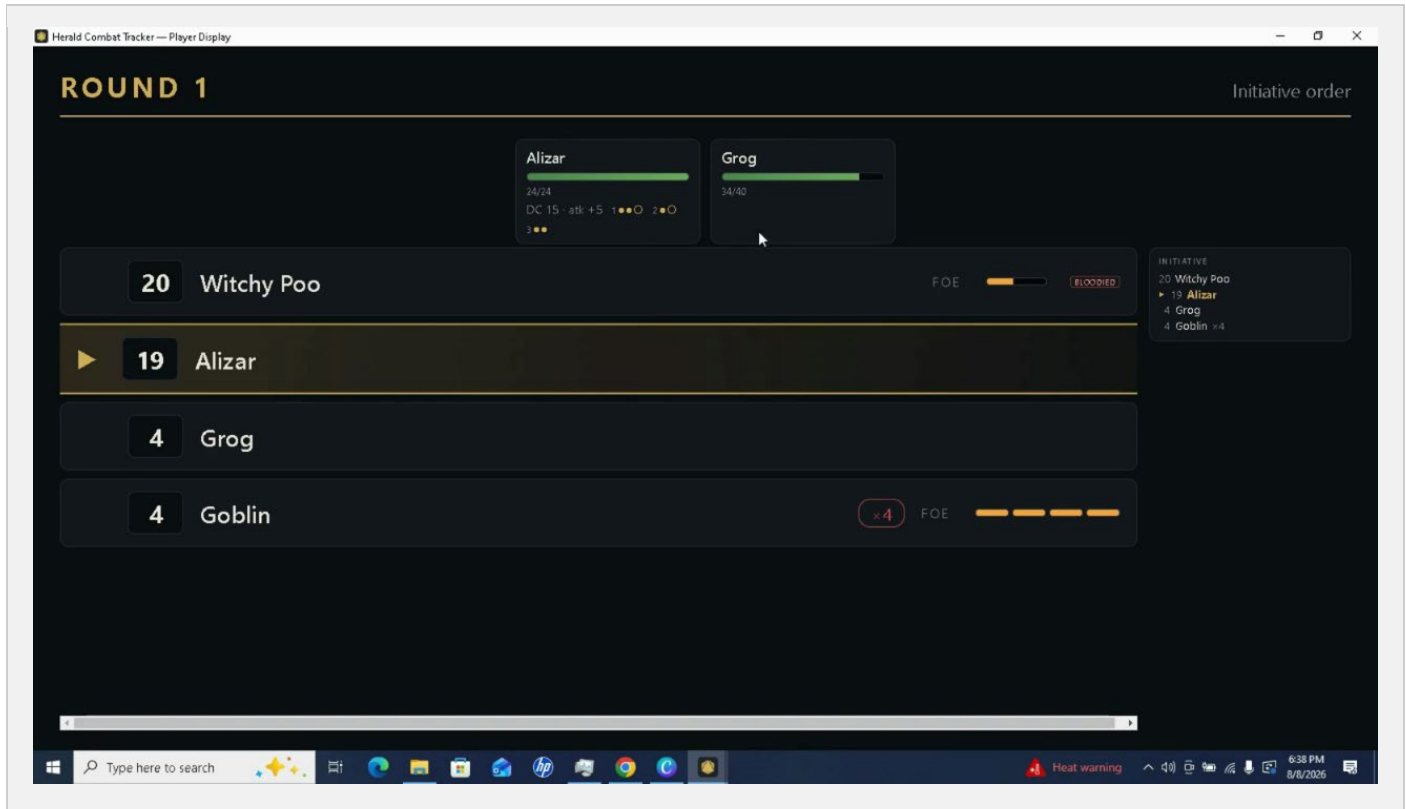
5.9 — Ending the encounter

End Encounter closes out the fight and shows the round-by-round session log. The player display returns to its idle screen.

6. Player Displays and Remote Devices

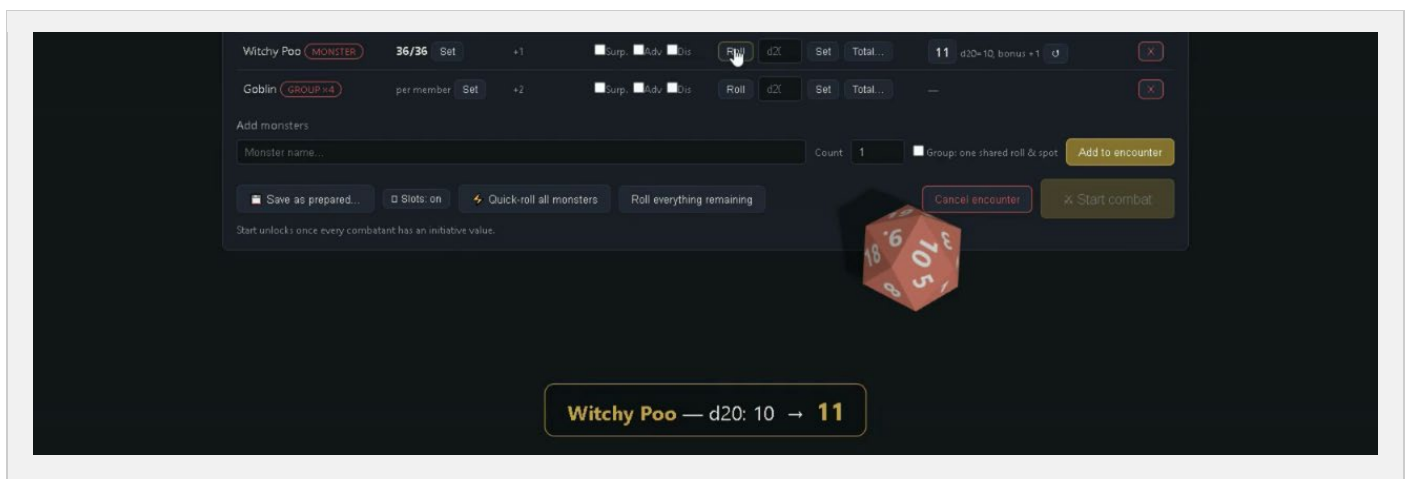
The player display (second screen)

Click Open Player Display in the top bar to open the full-screen window to your second monitor.



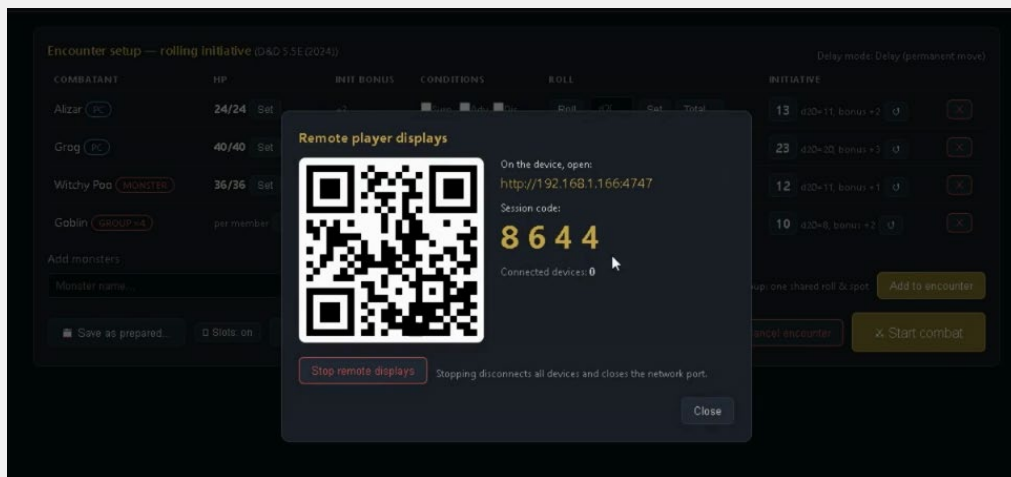
3D dice

Physically simulated dice roll on the player display (and, if the setting allows, the DM screen) — the result you see is always the true roll; there's no post-hoc reveal trick.



Adding phones and tablets

1. Click Remote Displays in the top bar.
2. A QR code and a 4-digit session code appear.
3. On each phone or tablet (same Wi-Fi network as the PC) scan the QR code — or open a browser to the address shown and type the code.
4. The device now shows a modified live view as the player display.

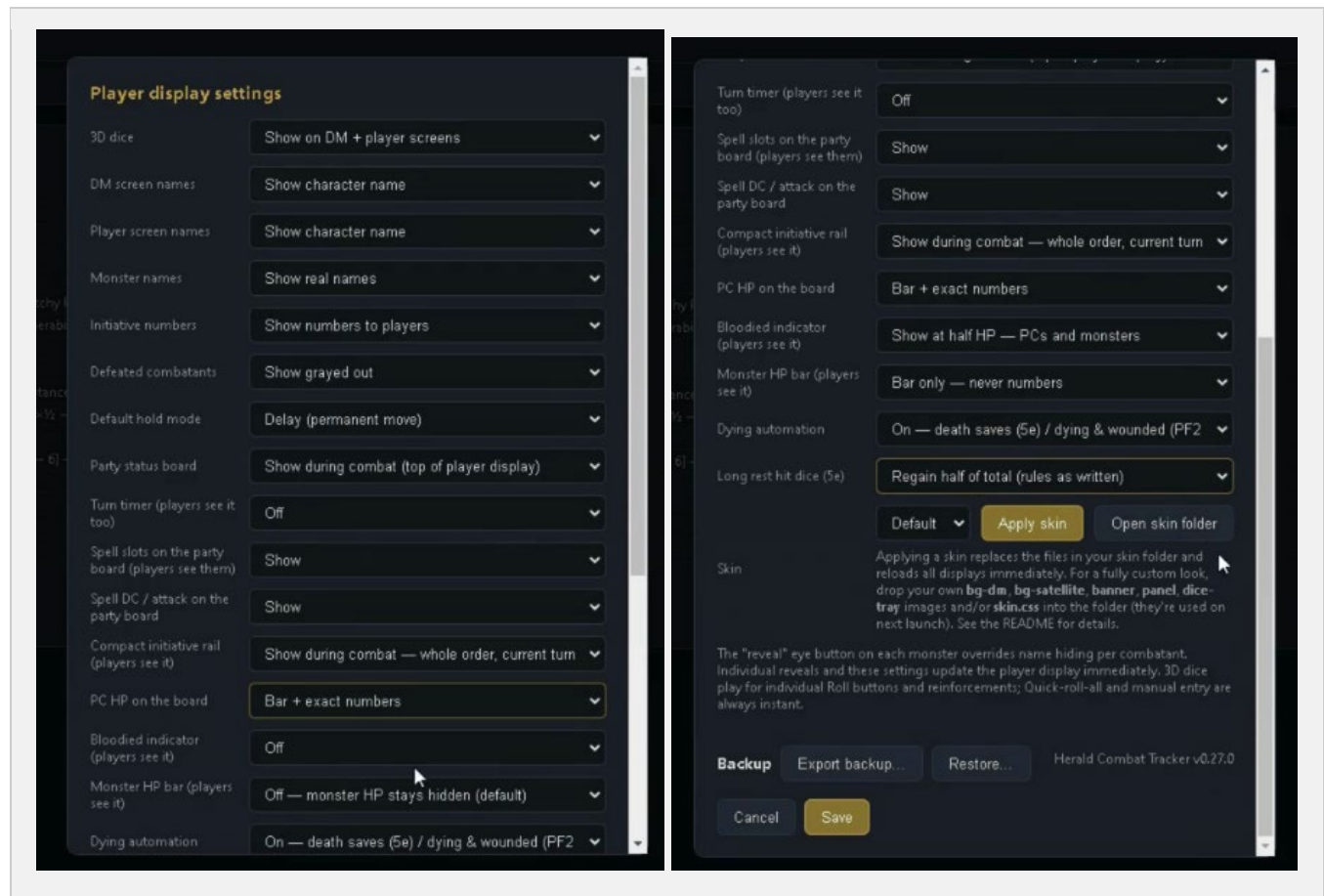


i Note

Devices must be on the same Wi-Fi network as the PC running Herald. The session code is new every time the server restarts, so a device that loses connection needs to rejoin.

7. Display Settings

Display Settings (top bar) controls everything about what players see and how a few behaviors work. Every setting below lives in this one dialog.



Setting	What it does
3D dice	Where physical dice appears off, DM only, players only, or both.
DM screen names / Player screen names	Character name, player name, or an alias — chosen independently for your screen and theirs.
Monster names	Hidden, aliased ("Small Creature") or fully shown ("Goblin")
Initiative numbers	Whether players see the actual initiative totals or just the turn order.
Defeated combatants	Whether defeated foes stay visible (struck through) or drop from the player-facing list.
Default hold mode	Whether a new combatant's Hold defaults to Delay or Ready.
Party status board	Show or hide the players' HP/condition board entirely during combat.
Turn timer	Off, or a length from 30 seconds to 5 minutes (Section 5.8).

Setting	What it does
Spell slots / DC & attack on the party board	Whether players see slot pips and caster stats on their board.
Compact initiative rail	A condensed side-rail layout for the player-facing initiative list.
PC HP on the board	Exact numbers, or bar-only for tables that prefer less number-talk.
Bloodied indicator	Whether a "bloodied" tag appears at half HP or less (players see it.)
Monster HP bar	OFF by default — keeps monster HP absolutely hidden. If on, shows only a fraction-based bar, never a number.
Dying automation	Automates death saves (5e) or the dying/wounded track (PF2e) at 0 HP; OFF restores plain DM resolution.
Long rest hit dice (5e)	Half of total (rules as written) or all (house rule).
Skin	The visual theme for both DM and player screens — see Chapter 8.

8. Skins

A skin restyles the background art and banner on both the DM and player screens. Herald ships with "Dungeon Skins" pre-applied. More sets are available as the separate Herald Skins Pack installer.

1. Open Display settings and find the Skin section.
2. Pick a set from the list and click Apply — every open display (DM, player, and any connected phones) reloads instantly with the new look.

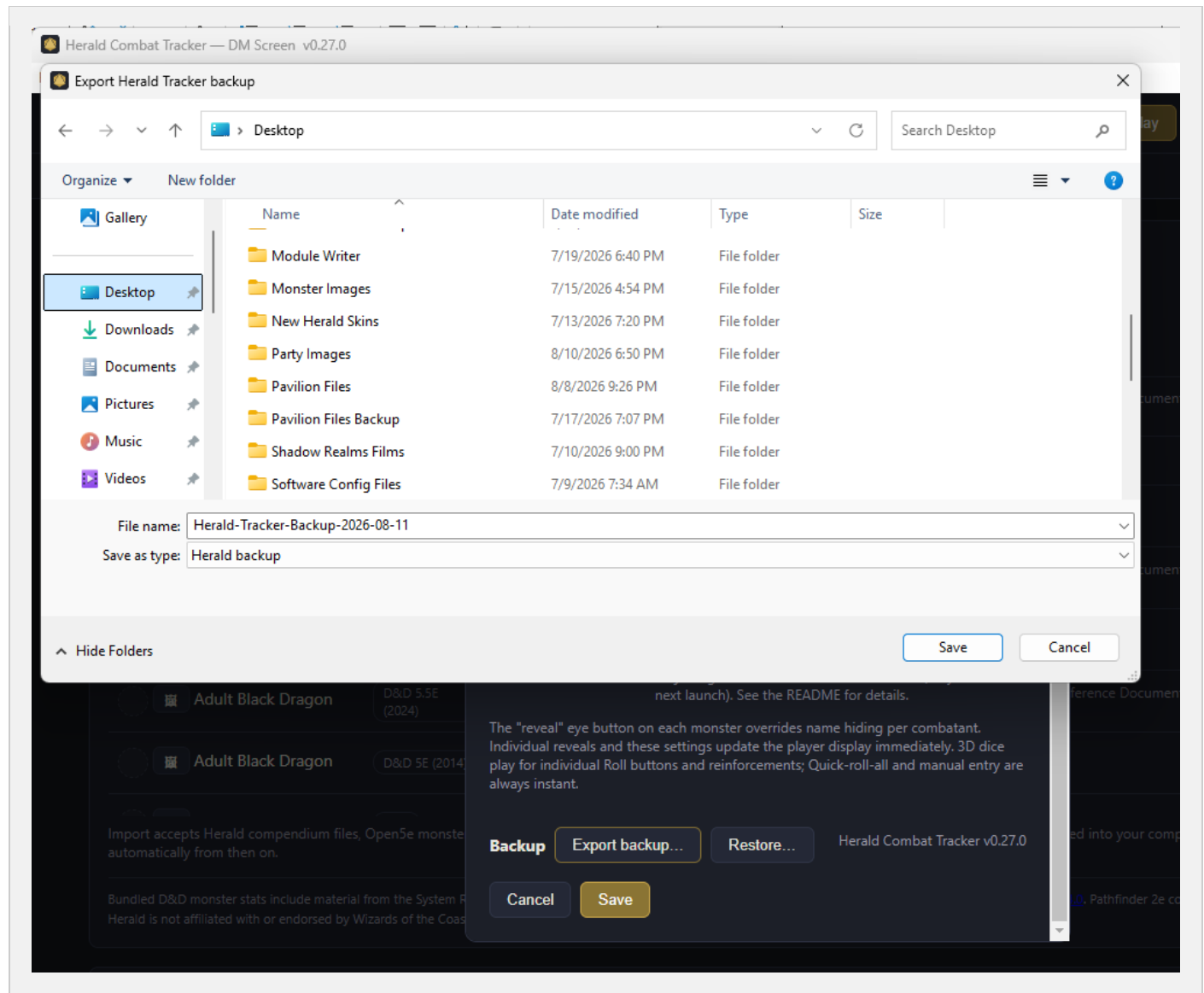
Important

Applying a skin overwrites the skin folder's managed files (background, banner, dice tray art, etc.). If you've added your own custom artwork, back it up from the skins folder first — The Open Skin Folder button is right there in the same section.

9. Backup and Restore

Display settings → Backup lets you export everything — parties, characters, custom monsters, settings — into one dated zip file, and restore from one later.

1. Export backup... — choose where to save the zip.
2. Restore... — pick a backup zip; Herald shows you its date and file count before you confirm anything.
3. Confirm... — the app restarts with the restored data in place.



Note

Your previous data is never simply overwritten — Restore keeps what it replaced in a safety folder beside your data, timestamped, in case you want it back.

Coming from the Demo

The Demo and the full version keep their data in separate folders, so parties and characters do not carry across on their own. Moving them takes a moment:

1. In the **Demo**, open Display settings → Backup → **Export backup...** and save the zip.
2. Install the full version.
3. Open Display settings → Backup → **Restore...** and choose that zip.

Do this **before uninstalling the Demo** — it is easiest while both are still to hand. If you have already uninstalled it, your data has not been deleted; it is still on your PC and can be recovered.

10. Two Systems at a Glance

A quick reference for the handful of places D&D 5.5E/5E and PF2e Remaster genuinely diverge in what the tracker tracks.

Topic	D&D 5.5E (2024) / 5E (2014)	PF2e Remaster
Damage Math	Multipliers: immune $\times 0$, resistant $\times 0.5$, vulnerable $\times 2$	Flat values: immune 0, resistance N subtracts, weakness N adds
Conditions	Standard list; exhaustion is the one leveled (1–6) condition	Larger set; many conditions carry a number (frightened 2, clumsy 1, etc.)
At 0 HP	Death saves (automatable) or plain DM resolution	Dying/wounded track (automatable) or plain DM resolution
Short Rest	Spends hit dice toward max HP	Does not exist — use Treat Wounds instead
Initiative	Perception-based; 2024 gives disadvantage when surprised	Can be rolled on an alternate skill per encounter (Stealth, Deception, etc.)

11. Troubleshooting

Symptom	Likely cause and fix
A name setting seems to do nothing.	Check whether Name and Player Name were swapped when the character was created (Chapter 4) — settings choose between the two stored values; they can't fix which field held what.
Phones can't find the tracker.	Confirm they're on the same Wi-Fi network, and that the Windows Firewall prompt (Chapter 2) was Allowed.
I updated and I'm worried about losing my data.	You won't — everything lives outside the app folder and is never touched by an update.
A custom skin file disappeared.	Applying a bundled skin overwrites the skin folder's managed files. Back up custom art before switching skins (Chapter 8).
A monster I expected isn't in the compendium.	The bundled bestiaries carry only open-licensed SRD creatures. Anything exclusive to the purchasable Monster Manual isn't included — add it as a custom monster (Chapter 4).