

Intro

Spheres of Might is a martial system published by Drop Dead Studios. In it, players choose Martial Talents that can be combined and augmented in order to generate unique playstyles and give mechanical backbones to player-made ideas.

Rating System

This guide will use a five-color, five-star rating system, detailed below, to rate options and class features.

Five Stars***:** An option or class with this rating is generally either so far-and-above more powerful than another option or applicable to many more situations than any runners-up that it is the clear first-pick in terms of build options. A class feature (such as hitdie or skills) will generally be superlative (i.e a Sentinel's d12 HD or an Incanter's High-Casting) when compared to others.

Four Stars**:** An option with this rating is generally "good" or "above-average". Taking an option with this rating will almost always improve your build. A class feature with this rating is generally good, but not quite as good as a class feature with a ***** rating, such as a Fighter's d10 HD or a Slayer's 6+INT skillpoints per level.

Three Stars*:** An option with this rating is "average". It can improve your build, or offer a new option, but not to the same extent as a **** option would. A class feature with this rating is often, again, not quite as good as a **** rated class option, such as a Bard's d8 HD or a Barbarian's 4+INT skillpoints per class level.

Two Stars:** An option with this rating is "below-average". There are often better options, but for whatever reason, you may have to select this one because it fits in more with the "fluff" of your build, or it's required for another option you want to take. In terms of Class Features, they're generally the bottom-category, such as a Wizard's d6 HD or a Fighter's 2+INT skillpoints per level

One Star*: An option with this rating is "bad". You really only wanna take it if it's a prerequisite for another option. In terms of class features, only truly detrimental class features, such as a Medium's Influence class feature or the Kineticist's Burn can truly be rated as one-star.

Some class features or options are left with a (-) rating, meaning they either cannot be rated in the context of a guide, are so highly dependent on GM fiat, or are as-written unusable.

The Conscript

Can't decide what you want to do in life? Be a Conscript. The dedicated "build-your-own" class, a Conscript has no role it innately "fills". Instead, with the most talents of any Practitioning class and a good number of bonus feats (which can be used or traded in for class features

HD: Conscript has d10 HD, meaning they aren't going to go down easily.

BAB: Smile, you earned it. The Conscript has a Base Attack Bonus equal to their level. This means you're going to be very accurate, and your saving throw DC for any sphere abilities you have is gonna scale splendidly.

Saving Throws: Good Fortitude and Reflex saves are nothing to sneeze at here, you're gonna be pretty dang tough. Best watch out for any kind of Will saving throw, however, those will get you.

Class Skills: Nothing special here. Perception, Knowledge (Local), and Survival are all useful, though you do have the benefit of *any three skills* as class skills.

Skillpoints Per Level: 4+INT skillpoints per level really isn't anything special *normally*, however with Spheres of Might's base spheres granting skill ranks in skills associated with them, this number can quickly become an "effective" 8+INT skillpoints per level, or even more, depending on how many base spheres you choose

Proficiencies: Technically, all Spheres of Might classes have poor proficiencies. However, because of the implementation of Martial Traditions, you don't actually have to suffer for it, as you can pick *whatever proficiencies you want*.

Class Features

Combat Training***:** Conscripts are Expert practitioners, with the choose of either Intelligence, Charisma, or Wisdom as their Practitioner Modifier. You have twenty base talents by level twenty, which gives you a lot of breathing room to either specialize or branch out. However, these are further augmented by your Bonus Talents

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma? The Conscript is presented this question at level 1. Which practitioner

modifier do they pick? In terms of immediate returns on investment, Intelligence increases skillpoints per level and a handful of important skills, Wisdom increases your Will save (your weak save!) and grants bonuses to Perception and Sense Motive. Charisma... increases your bonus for about 4 skills, and not much else. With a few dips and a handful of feats, however, Charisma can get very competitive.

Bonus Talents**:** In effect, you gain an additional ten Combat Talents over the course of twenty Conscript levels, for a grand total of 30 bonus talents before you even touch your Bonus Feats.

Bonus Feats*:** In addition to Expert progression and having ten extra combat talents, the Conscript *also* gains Bonus Feats at the same rate as a Fighter does, one at first level, then one at 2nd and every 2 levels thereafter, for a total of eleven at level 20. These can be traded out for other class features via **Combat Specializations**

Combat Specializations(* to ***):** An optional class feature, Combat Specializations enable the Conscript to trade out a number of their Bonus Feats in order to gain unique benefits that they normally wouldn't be able to get. You can trade Bonus Feats for Specialization Points as indicated on the table below. Some are worth the point cost, some... aren't. Some are

Specialization Points	Lost Bonus Feats
1	1, 10, 20
2	1, 6, 10, 14, 20
3	1, 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 20
4	1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20
5	All bonus feats lost

The following is a list of Conscript Specializations, their ratings, and their point cost.

Armor Training*:** For the cost of one Specialization Point, you can gain access to a Fighter's Armor Training class feature.

Banner*:** 1-point. The bonuses given are small and situational, but since you count as your own ally, you get the bonuses as well. It's worth the cost of 1 specialization point.

Conscript Weapon Training*/****/*****:** 2-points. This is essentially the Fighter's Weapon Training class feature, albeit delayed by one level. A solid boost to attack and damage rolls. With Advanced Weapon Training options, you're even better off, as you have additional special abilities you can get. Combining this with the Martial Flexibility Specialization enables your Conscript to dip into the territory of an Iron Caster even better than the Fighter can.

Coordinated Combatant*:** 2-points This refunds you a pair of feats in the form of Teamwork Feats, but the main meat of this is the fact that you gain the benefits of the Solo Tactics Inquisitor class feature!

Dual Identity*: 2-points. This class feature is highly situational. In a campaign that requires it, like an intrigue campaign, it's good. In nearly every other one... it's not. However, for the cost of two Specialization points, it's competing with Weapon Training, Martial Flexibility, Solo Tactics, or a Mount. Simply having a second identity doesn't make it worth the point cost.

Evasion*:** 1-point. With a good Reflex save, it's highly likely you'll be succeeding on them. This can reduce the damage you take by a fair margin. At 10th level it even upgrade to Improved Evasion, further reducing the amount of damage you take!

Fast Movement:** 2-points. Moving faster is nice, albeit you don't gain this benefit in heavy armor. Being able to move a fair distance even in a breastplate is acceptable, and it upgrades further and further. Some Athletics sphere talents rely on your base movement speed, and being able to move fast is great for them... but like Dual Identity, this is an ability that competes with Martial Flexibility and Weapon Training.

Favored Enemy:** 2-points. You gain the Ranger's Favored Enemy class feature. It increments more slowly than the Ranger's Favored Enemy feature does, but you can stack it with either Studied Target or Weapon

Training to get even higher bonuses. Works best if you talk with your GM about what you'll be facing later in the campaign.

Favored Terrain:** 1-point. You gain the Ranger's Favored Terrain class feature. Again, a highly situational class feature, but granted that it only costs one point, this can be forgiven. It's definitely not as competitive as Maneuver Training, Gear Training, or Indomitable Will, however.

Finesse Training*:** 2-points. You gain Finesse Fighting as a bonus talent. At 4th level, you can select one weapon you can use with Finesse Fighting, and use your Dexterity rather than your Strength modifier to determine your damage. In effect, it's the Unchained Rogue's Dex-To-Damage class feature. This can help consolidate your ability scores and defenses more effectively.

Gear Training*:** 1-point. You gain proficiency with all martial weapons, medium armor, and shields. At 6th, this upgrades to heavy armor and tower shields. If you aren't willing to spend the martial tradition for proficiency with equipment, and you've already spent 4 specialization points, Gear Training isn't a bad way to go.

Indomitable Will***:** 1-point. Absolutely amazing. A Wisdom-based Conscript with this, Evasion, and Resolve will be nigh-impenetrable when it comes to saving throws. For only 1 Specialization point, you've got all good saving throws.

Inspiration*:** 1-point. Inspiration is good on an Investigator. For an Intelligence-based Conscript, it's fairly good. You don't gain any free uses of it, which is unfortunate. It's not over-costed because of that.

Maneuver Training**:** 1-point. Maneuver Training is normally not a very good class feature... but in Spheres of Might, when a number of spheres demand you make Combat Maneuver checks to use them, and offer much better benefits for performing them, it might just be worth it to pick this up. For only 1 point, though, it's not at all expensive.

Martial Flexibility***:** 2-points. Just exceptional. You gain a slightly-delayed form of the Brawler's Martial Flexibility. Just remember, Extra Combat Training is a Combat Feat, and it grants you one extra Combat Talent

Mount*: 2-points. Mounts are fairly good, especially with Beastmastery sphere enabling the Conscript to get a fair number of new abilities for them. However... it's cheaper to just spend your talents on gaining Beastmastery Sphere, getting an Animal Companion, getting it scaling up to your full character level. Two specialization points are equal to 5 bonus feats/5 combat talents. It's only 3 talents to gain the Beastmastery Sphere, then taking the Animal Companion talent twice to get a fully-scaling Animal Companion/mount.

Resolve**:** 1-point You gain Resolve, lifted directly off of the Samurai's list of class features. Being able to suppress negative conditions, (Determined), reroll saving throws (Resolute), or even just avoid biting the dust (Unstoppable) is pretty valuable and a huge boost to survivability. This one is an absolute steal and can round out other specializations too.

Sneak Attack*:** 2-points. Your Sneak Attack scales at the same rate as a Slayer's. A Conscript can get a fair amount of use out of this via the number of abilities that render an opponent flat-footed or without their Dexterity modifier to AC. It's not directly as synergistic as some other abilities, however.

Sphere Specialization(-): 3-points. You gain a bonus sphere, +1 Base Attack Bonus for determining the effects and abilities of that sphere, and a set of three abilities at 3rd, 8th, and 20th level. If you trade in half the bonus talents you gain from Conscript levels, you can even get another Sphere specialization, albeit you delay the bonus sphere and base attack bonus to 2nd level and the first two abilities to 4th and 9th level.

Studied Target*:** You gain Studied Target, as the Slayer class feature. It scales slower than the Slayer's does, but the bonus it grants also applies to any Saving Throw DC of a sphere talent you use.

Sphere Specializations

Note: In this guide, sphere specializations purchased via Specialization points are called "Primary"

specializations. Specializations purchased via trading in bonus talents are called "Secondary" specializations.

Alchemy

Chemical Specialization*:** This lets you do three things. One, it lets you decide which square an alchemical weapon lands in. Two, it lets you grant more temporary HP to allies. Three, it lets you make antivenoms for any poisons you make. The first is a nice insurance policy for bunched up enemies. The second is a nice ribbon that makes your beneficial alchemical items a fair bit more valuable. Three is a highly situational class feature, but if you accidentally get an ally caught in the area of one of your poisons, you can at least give them a bandaid. This ability is not exceptionally powerful but it isn't completely worthless.

Masterful Chemistry**:** You get twice as much formulae and poisons to play with. Absolutely golden, and lets you spam a bunch of alchemical weapons harder than you ever thought possible.

Master Alchemist:** For a 20th-level "Capstone", you might want to look elsewhere. Apart from the ability to double splash radius for alchemical weapons, being able to apply poison as a free action and having each dose last one additional attack is... really quite underwhelming.

Verdict*:** It's worth the investment, either as a Primary for someone wanting to go all-in on alchemy or as a Secondary if you already picked a Primary.

Athletics

Expert Climber*:** The free Climb speed is a nice ribbon at 3rd or 4th level. What you really want is that "combined movement". This means all your movement speeds are technically "equal" in terms of movement per round. If you can somehow abuse the rules such that you have an obscenely fast land speed, you can translate that land speed to climb speed even if you only move about ten feet before beginning to climb. Get yourself a racial Climb, Fly, or Swim speed and you're golden.

Uncanny Swimmer*: Underwhelming at most. It's essentially Expert Climber but it applies to your Swim speed instead. You may be able to abuse this in some kind of mountain-swamp area if you don't have a fly speed. Otherwise, it's situational as most Swim speeds go.

Athletic Paragon*:** For a 20th-level Capstone... it's okay. Getting +10 movement speed is a paltry ability at 20th level, but the Competence Bonus to saves (rather rare, that!) equal to your Practitioner Modifier is very much appreciated, especially at 20th... though most classes get this kind of bonus much, much earlier. By the time you reach 20th level you're probably already gonna have some way to ignore age penalties... if you ever *accrue* them in the first place.

Verdict:** Despite having a very powerful movement multiplier in Expert Climber, Uncanny Swimmer is a disappointment and Athletic Paragon's status as a capstone is dubious. Athletics is good as a Secondary pick. As a Primary, it's dubious.

Barrage

Always Ready*:** A bonus to Initiative and the first damage roll you make. Initiative is very, very handy to have. The Quick Draw-lite ability is a fancy ribbon, but if you're expecting combat you should have your ranged weapon drawn already.

Startling Barrage*:** Your Barrage can render enemies Flat-footed. However, you get the best value out of this ability if you can render an enemy unaware of your presence.

Barrage Beast**:** This is an obscene damage boost at 20th level, as Barrage Sphere enables you to make a ludicrous number of attacks. Combined with Startling Barrage and the Sneak Attack combat specialization, you end up vomiting damage out of every orifice

Verdict*:** You can comfortably take Barrage as either your Primary or Secondary Specialization. Always Ready and Startling Barrage synergize nicely with the Scout sphere if you're trying to goof off with stealth in combat.

Barroom

Broken Creativity:** You get a decent damage bonus and can use *whatever* damage type you want with an improvised weapon. Ergo, DR/Bludgeoning or DR/Slashing or DR/Piercing is no issue to you. Getting +1/3rd your level to damage is icing on the cake. It isn't a very *big* cake, though.

Lasting Drunkenness**:** Being able to essentially *never* not be drunk in combat is a godsend for your action economy. Take talents that give you benefits while drunk but don't require expending it, and you're good. The nifty bonus to AC and Reflex saves is pleasant, too.

Eternal Drunk***:** Your improvised weapons are now far, far larger for the purpose of dealing damage. You now no longer need to sacrifice a portion of your action economy in order to be considered drunk

Verdict*:** Lasting Drunkenness is too good an ability to delay, and Improvised weapons can suffer from damage type problems. Take Barrom as a primary specialization so you can alleviate these issues.

Beastmastery

Companion Creature**:** You get an animal companion at 3rd or 4th level. Animal companions are even better in Spheres of Might, as the Beastmastery sphere gives a lot of fun goodies for anybody wanting to goof off with their animal buddy.

Nature's Friend*:** It makes animals more friendly, and then gives you a starting bonus of +4 to handy skill checks (scaling up to +10) that you need when taming animals or moving them around.

Beast Master***:** Now all your animal buddies are even MORE badass. This is worthy of being called a 20th-level capstone ability. Pick whichever option fits you better- either the one for a Mount or one for a flank buddy, then go to town.

Verdict* to ****:** As a primary specialization, it's competent. It enables you to do a lot of fun stuff. As a secondary, it's actually even better- delaying your abilities by one level slows you down, but you spend 5 bonus talents in order to receive 1 bonus talent back, the value of 3 beastmastery talents, an ability that is worth at least 1 talent in the Beastmastery sphere, and a monstrously good capstone.

Berserker

Iron Rage**:** Taking an AC penalty in order to gain bonus DR/- is really quite worth it. The extra temporary HP you get can be extended via the DR/- bonus you get, which scales to a pleasant DR 5/- at level 20.

Steel Rage*: Yawn. An extra 1/2 Conscript level to temporary HP? It's not great. Really, it's not, as you don't even have the benefits of the Guardian sphere abilities

Adamantine Rage***:** A ludicrously good capstone. -2 to AC is child's play at level 20. Counting *all creatures* as battered makes your Berserker talents ludicrously good. Stack stuff on from other spheres that relies on hitting Battered enemies and you're golden.

Verdict:** So why am I giving the Berserk specialization such a low rating? Well... Either way you go, you have to deal with the atrociousness that is the Steel Rage ability. Even if Iron Rage grants a hefty amount of DR/- and Adamantine Rage turns you into a combat monster, you have that stinker in the middle. As a Primary, it's decent. As a Secondary (for Guardian sphere, perhaps), you get it cheaper.

Brute

Mighty Flex*:** For what it's worth, this ability has great synergy with the Wrestling sphere. Being able to move a target around initially with a bull rush then grapple them to lock them down is a fairly good ability- and this saves your action economy tenfold.

Never Outmatched***:** One of those abilities that is absolutely *vital*. You now have far better chances when it comes to using combat maneuvers on enemies that are bigger than you.

Giant Physique:** A +4 bonus to CMD/CMB at level 20 isn't all that impressive. The secondary aspect also isn't that great- if you're wanting to land critical hits, you probably already have a Keen weapon. However, the secondary aspect of this ability has no clause that states that it doesn't stack with any similar effect... meaning it may well *stack* with Keen. The chances of this being allowed at a table are slim to none, however: if you try it, you may even get the book thrown at your head.

Verdict*:** With an underwhelming Capstone, Brute specialization ends up better off taken as a secondary specialization to go alongside Wrestling or Open Hand sphere.

Boxing

Raw Knuckled*:** A solid damage boost when you use a counter punch. Nothing exceptional, and while progressing in odd increments with Boxing sphere's natural Counter Punch damage, you do end up with a total of +20 damage at conscript level 20.

Lights Out**:** Concealment isn't something you just *get* in Spheres of Might. Being able to reliably get (Ex) Concealment is a godsend for your durability. It only lasts one round, but considering how short combat can get in Pathfinder, one round can make the difference. At 16th, this effect becomes total concealment, though it loses some luster when opponents may have the feats and abilities necessary to bypass the penalties from Concealment.

Impossible Preparation*:** This feels like an ability more appropriate for the Guardian sphere, honestly. While you have your counter punch readied, you can only be moved if you want to be moved. As well, you roll twice on Will saving throws. Not exceptionally flashy but it does the job.

Verdict*:** Boxing has abilities that are barebones and to the point. Boxing Specialization works as both a Primary and a Secondary specialization, depending on your needs.

Dual Wielding

Perfect Ambidexterity:** One of the main problems with TWFing is the fact you take a penalty in order to make extra attacks. Well, no longer! A 3rd-level Conscript with this ability effectively halves their TWFing penalties (if using a pair of light weapons or a light and one-handed weapon). It gets better when combined with Mercurial Flow- as then your penalties when using light weapons to TWF is reduced to *nothing*, and TWFing with one-handed weapons is done at a -1 penalty instead! It's... there's not much else? Even if those are good abilities, there's nothing much *here*.

Rending Strikes*:** You gain Two-Weapon Rend as a bonus feat, and you gain the additional ability of sickening a target when you roll maximum Rend damage. Best combined with Mercurial Flow- your damage will skyrocket! But that's all you're doing here, lots of damage with a small chance for a debuff.

Eviscerate***:** A crit-fisher's wet dream. Take a weapon with a X4 critical multiplier and use the Perfect Set-up talent- congratulations, have fun deleting *everything*.

Verdict:** Eviscerate being so ridiculously ripe for abuse can't save Dual Wield sphere. Just bite the -1 penalty to attack when TWFing and pass on this one, you can spend your points on Conscript Weapon Training or

Studied Target and get better benefits.

Duelist

Death By A Thousand Cuts***:** An initially underwhelming, but surprisingly potent ability- once you realize that this can affect nearly EVERYTHING you strike. If you can get at least 3 attacks in one round that all deal bleed damage (Open Hand w/ Savage Combatant drawback + Dual Wield sphere, and some way to get an extra attack?) you can be knocking out one enemy a round and forcing countless amounts of saves. Figure out some way to stack Bleed damage up and you can knock enemies out left and right.

Blooded Riposte* to **: Compared to what your Death By A Thousand Cuts ability can do, Blooded Riposte is poor. You can't even make the Disarm attempt *preemptively*, which is the whole point of Parrying and Riposting! Instead you have to take damage in order to get a disarm attempt off on an enemy. At the least, you can combine it with the Finger Cutter Duelist talent so that you can proc Death By A Thousand Cuts more often.

Exsanguinating Strikes***:** Multiply the amount of bleed damage you do by 3.5. In effect, that's the *average* amount of bleed damage you'll be doing, which at level 20 (when you gain this capstone) becomes something like 6d6 extra bleed damage on each attack. You also ignore immunity to bleed... which *should* mean your Death By A Thousand Cuts can now proc on enemies it normally wouldn't be able to.

Verdict**:** Only let down by Blooded Riposte being kind of an underwhelming ability, Death By A Thousand Cuts is a powerful ability that will see use in nearly any campaign. Exsanguinating Strikes is suitable for a capstone power. I'd recommend taking it as a Primary just so you can get Death By A Thousand Cuts earlier. It's *that good*.

Equipment

Well Equipped*: An extremely inoffensive +1 to attack and damage rolls, that then becomes an exceptionally inoffensive +2 to attack and damage rolls. It's boring, and there are bigger bonuses you can get elsewhere.

Guarding Gear**:** Being able to add your Practioner modifier to your CMD is a godsend in Spheres of Might, as many abilities call for CMB rolls, and it even incentivizes boosting your Practioner modifier a whole bunch.

Well Studied***:** 5e-style advantage on critical confirmation rolls, and free Heavy Fortification? Don't mind if I do- you become a powerhouse of damage AND bastion of defense with these abilities in play.

Verdict*:** Being that Well Equipped is an extreme let-down of an ability, you have to wait until nearly 8th level to get your first good defensive ability. It only picks up again at 20th level, when you gain your "Capstone", which is comparable to a Fighter's Armor and Weapon Mastery, at the very least. But even if those two abilities are so good, they can't make up for the sheer *inoffensive mediocrity* of Well Equipped.

Fencing

Subtlety*: Bluff as a class skill (you were already going to take it as one if you wanted to use Fencing) and a bonus to Bluff checks that's outdone by the Skill Focus feat.

Agile Defense*: Objectively, worse than Boxing sphere's Lights Out ability. Even if you can activate this ability at any time, +2 to AC is a pitiful amount even at 8th level.

Shadowed Defense*: OBJECTIVELY WORSE THAN THE BOXING SPHERE'S LIGHTS OUT ABILITY. Holy hell if I had a color worse than red I'd hand it to this one- this is a major, MAJOR stinker.

Verdict*: Fencing sphere itself is extremely good. Fencing specialization is *bad*. You can get skill bonuses

to Bluff elsewhere. Stay FAR away!

Gladiator

Armed Intimidator*:** Intimidate is easy to cheese, but there are few, if any, enhancement bonuses to skills. Adding your weapon's enhancement bonus is aces, if not all that exciting.

Celebrity Combatant* to **:** Personally, I'm not big on Performance Combat. This ability brings those rules kicking and screaming into most normal combats. What it mostly boils down to is: make a special d20 check as a swift action (or free action in some cases), if it's successful, you gain a small bonus, and you can grant yourself either a +1 or +2 on attack rolls, Combat Maneuver checks, ability and skill checks, and saving throws... or do the opposite and enforce a *debuff* on yourself. There *are* some good Performance combat feats, but you have to build towards them, and until you get to 8th level they're going to be dead weight on your build.

Gladiatorial Weapon Master*:** This is a little weaker than the Fighter's Weapon Mastery capstone (no crit multiplier increase, unfortunately), save that instead of a Fighter weapon group, it applies to the "imaginary" weapon group of Performance weapons and weapons from the Gladiator Training talent. If you didn't already, you get the effect of Improved Critical, but by level 20 you should already either have it or the Keen weapon property

Verdict to ****:** Not a particularly exciting specialization, and it drags in a whole new rule set with the 8th level ability. The 20th level "Capstone" is mimicked by feats you can get earlier and items that should be cheap as dirt at that level. Take it as a Secondary specialization if you're really intent on using Performance Combat feats

Guardian

Increased Toughness:** This is Toughness as a bonus feat. At low levels, this ability can be useful, and stack with the actual Toughness feat, but as you go on hitpoints get less and less important.

Increased Defense:** This effect is equivalent to taking the Greater Delayed Damage once. It stacks with that. On its own it's rather poor, but in combination with the Cold Iron Call and Durable talents, you can delay a *lot* of stuff to the end of your turn.

Calculated Resistance**:** Multiplies the amount of time you can delay stuff up to half a minute. For what it's worth, it's strong. With the amount of extraordinary abilities, spells, and other effects flying around at this level, surviving it is paramount.

Verdict:** Not all that great. Combine it with Berserker in order to maximize your durability- but if you don't have the talents or the inclination for it, it's not worth the time.

Lancer

Impaling Adept:** Accuracy is everything. A -2 penalty at level 3 (on top of any other penalties you may take, such as for Power Attack) can hurt. It hurts less with this ability... albeit, it's just a penalty *reduction*, not a new ability, and a -2 penalty isn't much in the grand scheme of things.

Impaling Professional***:** This is what you're here for. Not being able to take a Swift action is an absolute death sentence of some classes (Swashbucklers, Warpriests, Paladins, Maguses, almost all spellcasters). At level 8, it's early enough that you can get lots of good mileage out of it.

Impaling Monster***:** Positively *monstrous*. Impaling on any attack you make in a round (via Dual Wield or Barrage) and preventing your opponent from using their move action *or* swift action *or* talents that involve expenditure of martial focus (hint: a lot) is a straight up killer at this level.

Verdict**:** With an underwhelming 3rd level ability but a monstrously powerful 8th level ability and a murderous Capstone, Lancer is one of the stronger specializations. All you have to do is hold out until 8th or 9th, then

you're golden.

Open Hand

Empty Hand*:** For what it's worth, it's a very nice numerical bonus to your AC and your CMD, and it stacks with Unarmored Training.

Empty Fist:** an ability that increases the die size of your Unarmed Strikes... up to a maximum of Large size. If you're larger, then you just get an extra few bits of bonus damage. No scaling for size categories past Large and a kind of small damage bonus. It *functions*.

Empty Soul*:** Full stop. You gain a +7 circumstance bonus to one of your saving throws. Which you can change as a swift action (not an immediate). It can patch up a weak save you have at level 20 or turn you into a rock solid fortress, easily blowing past the Save DC of many abilities.

Verdict:** Getting a handy AC and damage bonus is nice- especially in combination with other Unarmed/Unarmored spheres. But there isn't much *meat* here. You don't gain any new abilities, only numerical bonuses.

Scoundrel

Easy Mark**:** Most times, you have to give up an attack to make a disarm or steal combat maneuver. This ability helps you keep your damage up, but it can be combined with some talents in order to make multiple steal and dirty trick attempts, each adding the bonus damage- which can be a fair amount, as it adds up.

Brutal Trickster**:** Aaaaand there's this. Assuming the saving throw is ($DC = 10 + 1/2$ Conscript Level + Practitioner modifier) as most other abilities are, then not only are your dirty tricks dealing damage and handing off other effects to the target, they're also *staggered*, meaning they have to choose between taking their Dirty Trick debuff off or moving away. Absolutely brutal.

Master Thief:** Scoundrel sphere only natively has two talents calling for a saving throw (one is a legendary talent). Combined with Brutal Trickster, you will likely have only two abilities from Scoundrel that will benefit from this. But forcing enemies to reroll saves is something the Witch, Shaman, and Oracle have been doing since level 2. As a capstone, it's just underwhelming.

Verdict**:** Both of Scoundrel specialization's first two abilities are good: getting them one level later won't hurt you too much- it's a highly cost-effective pick for a Secondary specialization.

Scout

Analytical Gaze**:** A godsend for Wisdom or Charisma-based Conscripts. Not needing to invest in Knowledge skills and simply being able to use Perception for everything consolidates your skillpoints- and you still gain the benefit of learning something new every time you use the ability! The +1 to AC and Reflex saves is icing on the cake.

Stealth Surge*:** For heaven's sake, this ability is ripe for abuse if you can get reliable, consistent crits or somehow manage to Vital Strike your way through things stealthily. It also gets around monsters having very high Perception bonuses- now you can sneak by them, and benefit from Scout sphere's abilities that enable you to hide during combat!

Hidden Death*: Oof. The Slayer gets this ability at level 10, and for far cheaper investment. Pass.

Verdict**:** Scout Sphere starts off strong, then has major falloffs at level 20. Take it as a Primary so you can get that delicious Analytical Gaze earlier.

Shield

Shielded Adept*:** This ability has a couple functions. One, rejoice, all ye Dex-based shield users- you can TWF with your shield at the lesser -2 penalty! Second, rejoice again, ye Dex-based shield users- you can shield bash with Bucklers, too! And they deal fair damage too, being treated as heavy shields for damage.

Shield Striker***:** This saves you an attack of opportunity each round- which extends how much you can use Active Defense. Not just that- you add your shield bonus to your Reflex saves! If you're Strength-based and trudging around in heavy armor, Reflex saves aren't going to be your strong point- even the good Reflex save you get from Conscript can only go so far.

Shielded Defender**:** Your shield is now nigh-indestructible. And you are, too, because now you have Heavy Fortification for *free* at level 20.

Verdict**:** Become the shield hero. With strong 3rd/8th level abilities, you can comfortably take it on either a Strength-based character or a Dexterity-based one. Shield sphere itself is rock-solid when it comes to defense, as well.

Sniper

Precision Shots:** 1/2 Base Attack Bonus to damage isn't that much, in the grand scheme of things, when someone using Sniper sphere is only going to be making one or two attacks in a round.

Uncanny Accuracy*: Mathematically this ability doesn't check out. For an ability like Sneak Attack or Kinetic Blast, it's still not very good. Changing your rolls of 1 and 2 to 3 is an average increase of around .5 damage per die. When you're only getting maybe 1d6 from your bow then 1d6/4 points of BaB... It's not particularly great.

Perfect Aim:** Ranged weapon attacks don't rely on weapon die damage, especially not at this level.

Verdict*: Yeah no don't take Sniper sphere specialization. Just spend your feats and talents on ranged stuff that makes you better at killing things.

Trap

Surprising Activation*:** Flat-footing an enemy without any save at this level can play nicely when you've got buddies that like getting off a sneak attack or two.

Engineering Genius**:** Doubling the area of your traps means you can absolutely cover the battlefield with traps before it even begins.

Enduring Trapper:** By the time you get this ability, you should have pumped your Craft (Traps) bonus pretty high. Your durations for traps should be pretty long, enabling them to reset again and again. But... then enemies know where your traps *are*, meaning they gain a hefty bonus to AC and Reflex saves made against your traps.

Warleader

Born Leader***:** The big issue with Teamwork feats is taking them with your limited selection of feats, and having your *allies* willing to take them. This alleviates both of them, as you're refunded a good portion of the bonus feats you spend as Teamwork feats, and your allies can benefit from them too, if you're already buffing them with Warleader sphere!

Triumphant Stand:** It's fair to say that you never want to be dropped to 0 HP in Pathfinder. It's also fair to say that any ability that activates when you hit 0 HP is one you're gambling on. Triumphant Stand is one you

don't wanna bet on, as Initiative and your allies' other abilities may play into whether you max out the AC bonus or whether you get nothing. If you're high in initiative and you proc Triumphant Stand at the start of the round, you can bet on your allies spending their immediates keeping you from biting it. But the later you act, the less likely this ability is to work- as your allies will have already used their Immediate actions on many of the other abilities that Spheres of Might has. It can save your ass in a pinch, but don't rely on it.

Concerted Finish:** This one has one too many conditions that I'm not comfortable with. It relies on your allies having their immediate actions free, and once again, it works better the higher up you are on the Initiative totem pole. If your allies haven't acted yet, this can be a great force multiplier. If they already have, and they've eaten up their immediate actions? You're not getting *any* mileage out of it. That is, if you're able to get allies to threaten enemies reliably, and if you don't already kill your target with the critical hit.

Verdict*:** Despite Born Leader being top tier, it can't make up for the 8th and 20th level abilities. Take it perhaps as a Primary ability to get your teamwork feats in early, then focus on another sphere.

Wrestling

Mobile Grappler*:** 5 feet of free movement every round. Being able to move, albeit at a sluggish pace, while grappling? It's fairly good.

Bear Hug:** Fatiguing a grappled opponent isn't really that impressive, especially at 8th level. As a ribbon effect on top of whatever other stuff you're doing to a grappled enemy. Exhausting at 16th also isn't as impressive.

Fatal Clutch*:** Absolutely brutal. 1/4th level in HP is a killer. Combine it with dealing damage with a light or one-handed weapon and you can evaporate an enemy's hitpoints. This one does rely on actually *grappling* someone at level 20, though, where Freedom of Movement and high CMD are king.

Verdict:** Grappling is already an iffy proposition. Nothing Wrestling specialization adds really makes it

Mimicking Other Classes via Conscript Specializations

You may have noticed that some conscript specializations rip class features near-directly from other classes, tacking them onto the rock-solid chassis of the Conscript. By spending all 5 of your Conscript specialization points, you lose all ten of your bonus feats, but you can serviceably mimic another class. The following are the most notable class features you can pick up.

How does replicating a class compare to just taking the Sphere conversion archetype for that same class? Conscript will almost always have a surplus of talents, at least 25 from leveling up even if you trade away all your bonus feats and the bonus talents you gain via Combat specializations. The Conscript has a rock-solid chassis of Full BaB + Good Fortitude/Reflex saves, 4+INT skillpoints, and a decent skill list. As well, you can mix and match class features to make a martial character that fits your playstyle.

The sphere conversion archetype for a class may not have as solid a chassis, or even have as many talents, but they may have more skillpoints, a class feature you CAN'T get from a Combat specialization, or compatibility with an archetype that grants additional features.

Iron Caster Fighter(****):

Armor Training + Conscript Weapon Training + Martial Flexibility

5-points

A combination for those interested in playing the classic Fighter type. Armor and Weapon Training grant access to the Advanced Weapon and Armor Training options released in the Armor/Weapon Master Handbooks. Martial Flexibility lets you pick up those options on the fly. Also, Martial Flexibility lets you snag Combat Talents on the fly! It's pretty dang good.

Classic Fighter(***)

Armor Training + Conscript Weapon Training

3-points

If you're just interested in playing a Classic Fighter type, this retains a fair chunk of your bonus feats, while leaving it open for any other 2-point option you may want to take.

Brawler(**):**

Conscript Weapon Training + Martial Flexibility + Maneuver Training

5-points

If you want to play a knock-off Brawler, here's your ticket. With Maneuver Training and SoM's prioritizing Combat Maneuvers, this may be a fairly good option. Ask your GM

Cavalier 1()**

Banner + Mount + Gear Training + Coordinated Combatant

5-points

Not really much here to play with. You don't get a Tactician-like ability, the Mount you get can be gotten more easily just by spending feats and talents for a Beastmastery animal companion, and the Banner has small but situational bonuses. However, it's fairly close to the default Cavalier... if that's what you're really interested in. Gear Training exists to grant you a hefty amount of proficiencies, enabling you to select a Martial Tradition that fits with your idea.

Cavalier 2(*)**

Coordinated Combatant + Sphere Specialization 1 (Warleader), Sphere Specialization 2

(Beastmastery)

5-points

Bonus Talents gained at 1st, 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th level

Ostensibly superior to the above option. Coordinated Combatant grants you a pair of teamwork feats you can swap out after 8 hours of rest, while Sphere Specialization for Warleader grants you teamwork feats hand-over-fist. Warleader can handle any Tactician-style needs (as Warleader Specialization lets you share teamwork feats with allies under the effects of your tactics and shouts) while Beastmastery sphere nets you a handy-dandy mount. Just spend the rest of your talents on Guardian Sphere Challenge abilities and you're well on your way to becoming a top tier Cavalier imitator

Samurai(*)**

Sphere Specialization 1 (Beastmastery), Sphere Specialization 2 (Guardian), Resolve

4-points

Bonus Talents gained at 1st, 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th level.

Samurai is a bit harder to imitate than Cavalier, but you can make do. Beastmastery sphere to gain a companion with extra benefits, Guardian sphere and Resolve to get the Samurai's trademark toughness.

Ranger()**

Evasion + Favored Enemy + Favored Terrain

4-points

Again, you're mimicking highly situational class features. This time, you're mimicking the Ranger. Evasion helps your defenses, Favored Enemy assists your damage and accuracy if you know what you're fighting, Favored Terrain helps your skills. However, without the best class feature of the Ranger, *Instant Enemy*, Favored Enemy falls flat.

Unchained Rogue(*)**

Finesse Training + Sneak Attack

4-points

Rogue is slightly better off than Ranger, in that the features granted by this specialization are far more universally applicable to more situations. Finesse Training makes you more focused on DEX and your Practitioner modifier, sneak attack helps fix some of your damage.

Slayer(*)**

Studied Target + Sneak Attack

4-points

You don't get slayer talents, but you get the main features of the Slayer- that being Studied Target as an accuracy and DC boost and Sneak Attack as a handy damage boost.

Races

Only races granted Favored Class Bonuses in the Spheres of Might book (and a handful of other choice picks) will be covered here. Almost any race can be a good Conscript, because of their extreme versatility and the fact they can be INT-based, WIS-based, or CHA-based, your choice.

Dwarf**:** Don't mind me, just going to have +2 to CON and WIS, +2 on all saves vs Spell-Like Abilities, and a bevy of proficiencies with a number of exotic weapons.

Elf*:** Elves make good wizards, but they have a number of ARTs that make them more competent martial characters. Free proficiency in a fair number of weapons that cover a number of situations (reach, ranged, melee), a bonus to Perception, and Low-Light vision makes elves competent.

Gnome:** Full disclosure, Gnomes are not my favorite race. Take the Spheres of Might-provided ART that replaces your normal gnome proficiencies with the Gnome Heritage Discipline talent and then try and salvage what's left.

Halfling*:** Take the Spheres of Might trait that grants you extra proficiencies. You're slightly better off than the Gnome, as you have a +DEX bonus and a fair save bonus, but you're small-sized.

Half-Elf**:** An always-solid pick, take Ancestral Arms and pick some good Ex

Half-Orc**:** Great proficiencies (no natural proficiency with a reach weapon, but they ARE proficient with the Orc Hornbow!) and the ability to take the Human FCB, which is the best FCB for the Conscript by far.

Human**:** Bonus feat, bonus skillpoints, bonus combat talents, and a variable +2 to any one score. Humans make good Conscripts.

Aasimar* to *****:** Aasimar have a number of variants. None of them have a penalty to a stat (very good), all of them have some manner of spell-like ability, and they're all generally *very competent* as Conscripts. Take the Pass for Human trait so you can get the Human FCB, then pick whatever variant you want. +DEX Aasimar are better for ranged and finesse builds, while Agathion and Angel-blooded aasimar have a bit more durability and more damage. The only oddball is Peri-blooded and "default" Aasimar, as they have no physical stat bonus. Peri-blooded make better Scholars, anyway.

Dhampir*:** Play either a standard Dhampir, a Jiang-Shi-born (one of only two races that has +STR and +INT!) or a Vetala-born (for +DEX and +INT). If you take Wrestling sphere, swap your SLA for the Fangs ART to deal even more damage.

Goblin*:** I personally hate Pathfinder's goblins, but what they do have is... good.

Hobgoblin*:** Hobgoblins don't have much to their name, but what they do have is fairly potent. They're great users of Scout sphere (+DEX, +4 to Stealth from the Stealthy ability), and the bonus to Constitution means they're durable too. They can trade the bonus to Stealth for a bonus to Intimidate if you're gunning for Gladiator sphere, while if you take Unfit, you can even skimp on a discipline talent from your Martial Tradition. The icing on the cake is Darkvision.

Orc*: In no configuration is the Orc a good Conscript. With Light Sensitivity and a -2 penalty to all Mental ability scores, you end up lagging behind other Conscripts, unless what you *really* enjoy doing is smashing faces hard with a falchion.

Tiefling* to *****:** Like Aasimar, Tieflings have a number of variants that get different ability score bonuses. Pick any heritage that grants a bonus to Strength or Dexterity, then go to town with the mental stat they give a bonus to. The FCB is also nearly as good as that of the Human FCB- +1/2 bonus to any three conscript class skills? Pick the spheres that rely on skill checks (Fencing, Scout, Traps, or Alchemy come to mind!) and laugh because you've got a rare bonus type that scales really well!

Skinwalkers* to *****:** Skinwalkers have a fairly wide variety of ability scores to go on, and the Change Shape ability can grant some *very* nice abilities. Wolf Skinwalkers can get a +2 bonus to all saving throws, Tigers get *see in darkness*, Sharks can breathe underwater, Crocodiles can snag Ferocity, Bears are bears, and they're rad, and Bats can get access to a tiny Bat form and a Fly speed with the investment of a pair of feats.

Feats and Magic Items

Because of just how *variable* a Conscript can be, going through every list of feats and every magic item is going to be an abject nightmare. I'm only going to list a few of the more notable feat chains here that function particularly well in Spheres of Might. Also, remember: if you gain a class feature like Weapon Training from a Combat Specialization, **you count as having that class feature**. Ergo, if you have Weapon Training, you benefit

from Gloves of Dueling, and if you have Sneak Attack, you can take Accomplished Sneak Attacker. So depending on what class features you take, and what classes they come from, you may wish to look at guides for that class to get a grip on what items you want or need.

Power Attack**** and **Furious Focus*******

Power Attack is one of the best damage boosts for its cost in the entirety of Pathfinder. Furious Focus, normally, isn't a very *good* feat. It only eliminates the penalty on one attack normally. However, this is Spheres of Might, where you're going to be making One Big Attack- and if it misses, you're left out to dry. Furious Focus removing the penalty when Power Attacking means you're going to be hitting far harder and far more accurately.

Vital Strike (Improved and Greater)****

Vital Strike is normally passed over unless used with very specific build options. The damage you get from it is often outclassed by simply full attacking... but in Spheres of Might, when you're making One Big Attack (Action)? It can massively increase your damage.

Combat Expertise**, then **Strike True***** or **Bullseye Shot******

Both of these feats have similar effects, just for different applications- spend a move action to gain a +4 bonus on your next melee (Strike True) or ranged (Bullseye Shot) attack roll. If you're not needing to move, and you're comfortable spending a move action, then *go for it*. +4 to any one roll is (on average) better than a reroll. Absolutely devastating with certain spheres that only make one attack per round.

Nature Soul*, **Animal Ally****, **Boon Companion******

This feat chain is the way that any class can gain an animal companion, and one of three ways a Conscript can get an Animal Companion relatively easily (Mount Specialization or Beastmastery sphere Specialization). If you've already used all your specialization points and talents, then this may be one route to go down.

Skill Focus (Linguistics)* then **Orator******* or **Esoteric Linguistics*****

For an Intelligence-based Conscript, you can't get any better than this. It replaces some of the most common uses of three Charisma-based skills with a Linguistics check, and Skill Focus gives you a fairly nice bonus on that check, too! Esoteric Linguistics is better if you're expecting to be goofing off with Scrolls, though.

Skill Focus (Stealth)*** and **Hellcat Stealth******

If you have Scout sphere specialization, you would be remiss not to take Hellcat Stealth as soon as possible.

Skill Focus (varies)* to *** and **the Eldritch Heritage Line***** to ****

This line of feats ranges from being a good pick... to being rather awful. Skill Focus can range from being awful (APPRAISE) or godly (Perception). Eldritch Heritage can also take a long time to come to fruition. However, the options it opens up are extremely varied. Some bloodlines are better for a martial-focused character, of course. Only appropriate for a Charisma-based Conscript, as they're going to be the ones meeting the prerequisites of this feat chain.