SystemMech

Why Take a Chance?

Chance-free tabletop roleplay

from

By Geoff Solomon-Sims

Coming Summer 2016:

For use with the SystemMech game system

Secrets of Shandisholm
a sourcebook for
The Woods

by Geoff Solomon-Sims

Oakbound Studio

SystemMech
WHY TAKE A CHANCE?

RULES

SystemMech is Oakbound Studio's narrative roleplay system. The rules for SystemMech are the same whether your games take place in the depths of space, a realm of high fantasy or across a gritty, post-apocalyptic landscape.

The MOST IMPORTANT RULE:

Tell a good story! The purpose of these rules is to provide a framework to do this, but they're there to be adapted, added to and even ignored if the story needs it.

The narrative ALWAYS takes precedent.

As a skirmish-scale tabletop miniatures game, SystemMech is unique in two respects.

Firstly it uses no dice rolls or decks of cards. Any element of chance brought to the game lies purely in the way players' models interact together.

Secondly and more importantly, SystemMech is designed for playing out encounters on the tabletop which are not a simple matter of 'smash and grab' or 'fight to the death'. Combat is certainly an element, but subterfuge, coercion and exploration of the game environment are just as (if not more) important than killing off the opposition.

Myeri Meirge, painted and
photographed by Dave Stafford
mrsaturdaysmumblings.blogspot.co.uk

The following pages will take you through the basics of playing a game of SystemMech, including the Action tables which give examples of the kinds of things your characters can do. Feel free to add to these tables, and if you come up with some really good ideas we'd love to hear them at Oakbound Studio.

SystemMech Core Principles

For players of other tabletop and miniature game systems many of the terms and concepts used in **SystemMech** will be familiar, however for those new to the engrossing hobby of tabletop roleplaying here is a brief glossary of expressions you'll find in these rules. It's worth reading them even if you are a veteran of miniature gaming as not all games use the same terms in the same ways.

Models

One of the joys of tabletop gaming is watching intricately sculpted, lovingly painted models move across the miniature landscape. There is a huge number of miniatures companies around so you have plenty of choice to pick from, including Oakbound's own ranges. These rules are designed to work with 28mm scale miniatures, that is where a human-sized figure measures approximately 28mm from head to foot (25-40mm works fine).

Of course, you can use counters or anything else to represent the characters on the tabletop if you don't have miniatures to hand, but having miniatures makes it easier to judge what can be seen as well as making the game look more exciting!

Evil Space Dorfs, painted and photographed by Jean-Baptiste Garidel LeadPlague.blogspot.com

It's best to have figures equipped to match the character they represent, for instance a model with a shield in one hand and an axe in the other representing a character who has a shield and an axe. You don't have to match equipment in this way, but if you don't you must let the other players know what equipment your character actually has. If you're playing WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) you can keep your character sheets secret and let your opponents weigh up whether they want to risk attacking you or not!

Characters and Models

Generally a 'character' is a personality imagined by one or more of the people playing the game. A 'model' is the physical miniature on the table which represents that character. In these game rules however we use the two terms interchangeably. Sometimes we refer to a character and one or more models in order to distinguish the performer of an Action (the character) and any others affected by that Action (the models).

Board and Tabletop

The playing area (usually, but not always, on a table) is referred to as the board or the table irrespective of where it is and what it's made of.

Players

Assuming you are controlling one or more of the miniatures on the tabletop, you are a player. Unless you're the Games Master!

Games Master (GM)

In order to play games with strong narratives, hidden objectives, characters that aren't controlled by any of the players (NPCs–Non-Player Characters) and other features which take careful planning many gamers will have a dedicated Games Master or GM. It is quite possible to play SystemMech without a GM, but for more complex plots you might find one useful in avoiding differences of opinion. The golden rule is that if you have a GM their decision is final!

Friend or Foe?

When the rules talk about 'Friendly' models they are not describing miniatures which wave at you cheerfully from the tabletop.

A friendly model is a model which is under your control. If you are playing a game where there are several players working together it is up to each player whether or not their models are friendly towards other players' models, the same goes for NPCs controlled by the GM. Models belonging to any player who is playing against you are referred to as 'enemy' models.

Game Structure

A game of **SystemMech** is made up of Game Turns and Activations.

During a Game Turn all models get to Activate and perform Actions. Once all models have performed the Actions they want (and are able) to take the game progresses to the next Game Turn. A Turn represents a short space of time in the narrative of the game, at most a couple of minutes although for the sake of the larger narrative we often exaggerate the passing of time. A scenario usually specifies how many Turns the game lasts.

At the start of the game the player who has the model with the lowest Decisiveness takes the Turn Token. If two or more players are drawn decide which player receives the token. At the start of each Game Turn pass the token to the next player.

In a Game Turn models take it in turns to Activate. The order in which they do this is described below and the way Actions are performed is laid out over the page. This is called the model's Activation and is different to the Game Turn because, unless the model is the first to perform Actions, its Activation will span more than one Game Turn. This is easier to understand once you start playing, but the diagram below gives an idea of the concept.

Each model has a Decisiveness Value, how this is calculated will be explained later. The higher a model's Decisiveness the sooner it decides what to do and the earlier in the Game Turn it Activates. The Turn is divided into Activation Points which mark the start of the next Activation for models with that Decisiveness Value. A model's Activation then lasts until its next Activation Point.

If two or more models have the same Decisiveness then they Activate one at a time. If they are owned by different players the players take it in turns to Activate one model each, beginning with the player with the Turn Token.

Example: In the game below there are six models (it's a small game!).

Model A Decisiveness 10,

Model B Decisiveness 8,

Model C Decisiveness 7,

Models D, E and F Decisiveness 6

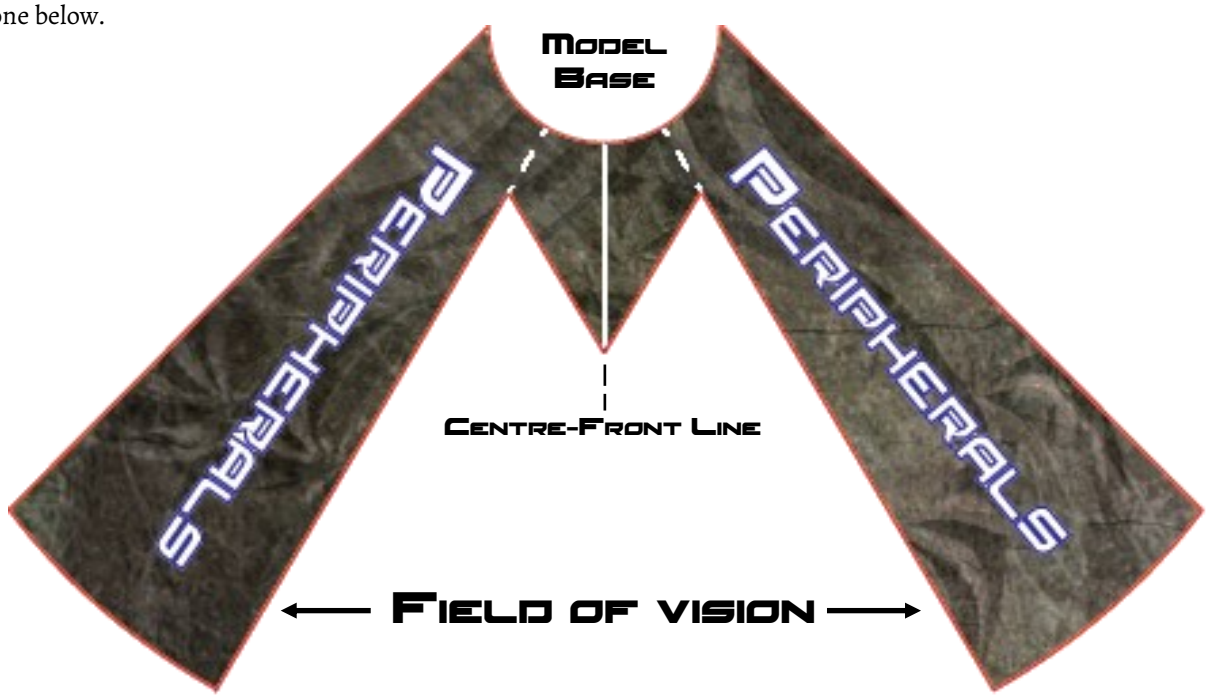
A Game Turn therefore consists of 4 Activation Points– 10, 8, 7 and 6. Once Models D, E and F have performed their Actions at Activation Point 6 the next Game Turn begins at Activation Point 10 and Model A starts its next Activation.

Perception

Deciding what a model can see and hear (or in some cases smell!) is very important. Normally models can only perform Actions based on what they can Perceive around them. Obviously the players have a top-down view of everything, but the scenery from a model's-eye-view is very different!

There are two elements which decide what a model is aware of around them. The first is their Perception Range. This is a distance around the model (measuring from the edge of the base) equal to their Perception statistic and measured in inches. If this means nothing to you just yet don't panic! All will become clear over the next couple of pages. What's important right now is that the model is aware of anything within that area, it can Perceive anything within that zone.

The second element is a model's Field of Vision. For this we will need two things, a 'Centre-Front' line on each model's base and a Field of Vision template. It doesn't matter what point on your models' bases you decide is Centre-Front, but it's usually where the model is looking or gesturing for ease of spotting it on the table. If you don't have a Field of Vision template you can copy and cut out the one below.



Align the template so that the Centre-Front line on the template and your model's base line up. The model 's Field of Vision is between the inner two forks of the template. Anything within this arc can be Perceived by the model as long as from a model's-eye-view (you might need to get low to the table for this) there are no objects concealing it. Model's bases don't count for this purpose, the model itself must be visible to be Perceived. There is no maximum range of Field of Vision, the model can see right to the edge of the board if there are no obstacles in the way.

The Field of Vision template has two sections marked 'Peripherals'. Ignore these until you find a Skill which enables you to use them.

Whether or not a model can Perceive what's going on around it on the board is crucial, so it's very important to watch what direction your models are facing!

Performing Actions

Each model has a Stamina Value, how this is calculated will be explained later. During their Activation each model may spend up to their Stamina in Actions chosen from the Action Tables on the following pages. Stamina refreshes the next time the model Activates.

Once all their Stamina is spent the model is Exhausted and may do nothing further except to Fall Prone.

Actions may be chosen and performed in any order provided:

The model has enough Stamina to complete the Action

The conditions given at the top of the relevant Action table are met

For instance, a model must nominate all its Movement Actions together before performing any of them, it then cannot perform further Movement Actions until it has performed at least one Action from another table.

Where an Action refers to a 'Value' it means the model's statistic treated as a numerical amount.

Where an Action refers to a 'Range' it means the model's statistic measured in inches from the closest edge of the model's base.

Measurements are in inches and can only be made once an Action has been declared. Pre-measuring (measuring a distance before declaring an Action) is strictly not allowed!

Actions must be declared in the order they are to be taken (for example, a model cannot declare it is shooting, measure the range and then decide to aim first).

Special attention should be paid to Speaking Actions. 'Speaking' is a general term for imparting information vocally, this might be as a Talk, Whisper or Shout Action. Under some circumstances it may be enough to declare a character is 'Speaking', in others the player may be required to voice exactly what the model is saying. Remember this is a roleplaying game and players will be expected to enter into the 'roles' of their characters! One Speaking Action generally contains a single statement or question, equivalent to imparting or requesting one piece of information. Players may agree to allow models to say more or less as part of a single Action as the situation merits.

Legends of British Steampunk: Matron

Example:

Model A has a Stamina of 7, this is just above average.

The model begins its turn by making a Walk Action (3 Stamina) towards model B.

Since the condition of Movement Actions is that all movement has to be nominated as a block, model A cannot move again until it has performed another Action. Instead it decides to Shout (3 Stamina) to model B.

This leaves model A with 1 Stamina remaining which it decides to save in case it has to take an Instinctive Reaction before its next Turn.

Model B has a Stamina of 6 and wants to get far away from model A so it chooses to Sprint, spending all its 6 Stamina on movement.

Dice-free gaming?

You don't need any dice to play SystemMech but we find a few 20-sided dice are handy to keep track of Stamina.

Instinctive Reactions

These are Actions which a character may be forced to perform by the Actions of other models. For instance, a model which is shot at has to take an Instinctive Reaction. If a model is forced to take an Instinctive Reaction and has no Stamina remaining it must Fall Prone. This leaves the model in a very vulnerable position so it's best to make sure your models have enough Stamina left to react with!

Character Profiles

All models have a profile which shows their strengths and weaknesses, their fitness level, initiative and other aspects of their character. We record this numerically with the model's statistics. The higher the number the more able the character. Statistics are split into two types, Core Statistics and Secondary Statistics.

CORE STATISTICS determine all other Statistics (except Endurance). They are the essential aspects the character will draw upon to perform Actions.

WISDOM

Is the mental sagacity of the character

PERCEPTION

Is how observant the character is.

COURAGE

Is how well the character performs under pressure.

AGILITY

Is the character's athletic capacity

STRENGTH

Is the character's physical capacity.

SECONDARY STATISTICS are determined by combining Core Statistics. These are the values which mainly affect the ability of a character to perform Actions effectively.

PRESENCE is how inspirational, confident and impressive the character is.

CHARISMA is how well the character handles social situations.

ACCURACY is the ranged skill of the character, for example throwing or using ballistic weapons.

DEXTERITY is the measure of how the character processes information and acts simultaneously.

FINESSE is the prowess of the character combining strength and speed.

STAMINA is the amount of energy a character has. This translates into how much a character can do in a single turn.

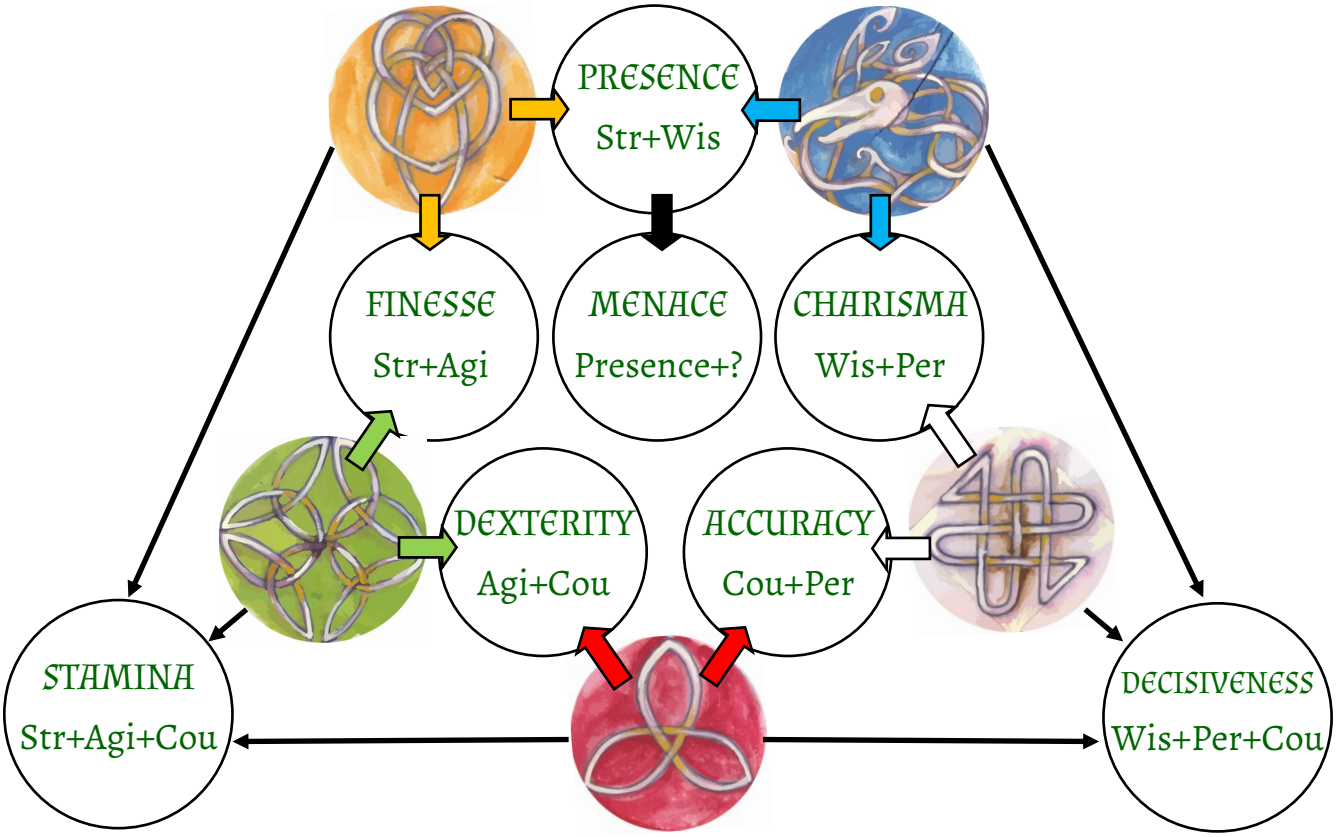
DECISIVENESS is how quickly a character decides what to do. This determines the order in which characters take their turns.

Creating characters:

The abilities of a character are controlled by the values of their statistics. When building characters for your games consider their strengths and weaknesses, the training they have had and the kinds of people (or other creatures) they are.

A 'normal human' character of absolutely average ability has Core Stats of 2 across the board, giving them Secondary Stats of 4, with Stamina and Decisiveness 6. A Core Statistic of 3 represents good natural ability or training. A Core Statistic of 4 indicates exceptional ability about level with an Olympic athlete. Core statistics of 5 and 6 are therefore absolutely incredible and beyond the reach of all but the most legendary humans. Other creatures, of course, may be able to achieve these with ease. Core statistics of 1 indicate particularly weak ability.

The Statistics combine in the following way:



Make up a character sheet like this for each of your models so you can clearly see what each of the values are.
Characters also have a Statistic called Endurance, which is explained over the page. Menace is also explained in the next section.
No Core Statistic can ever rise above 6 or fall below 1.

To create characters for SystemMech first decide how many main characters you're going to have. Generally each player will have one main character which represents them. A human main character has 11 points to split between their 5 Core Statistics. They can have 2s across the board with one 'specialism' or they can increase more than one Stat. If they do this however they must also reduce others since the total value of all Core Stats may not exceed 11.

Players should then equip their main character and choose and equip their 'supporting cast'. Players can pick whatever models they like for their supporting cast, give them basic Core Stats of 2 and equip them with items matching those shown on the model. Alternatively, for a 'balanced' game, you may want to agree a total number of 'points' that each player can spend creating and equipping their characters, splitting the points value among Stats and Items. This allows a player to pick a small, elite and well-equipped force or a mass of untrained, unequipped individuals or anything in between. When deciding on points values remember that a standard human with no equipment costs 10 points (5 Core Statistics of 2).

Menace

Menace is a special statistic, based on Presence but which varies according to the situation.

Menace is calculated in the following way:

Presence + Menace Bonuses from Skills, Traits and Items + Friendly models Perceived by the enemy.

In the example below, red Model Y has Strength 3 and Wisdom 2 giving it a Presence of 5.

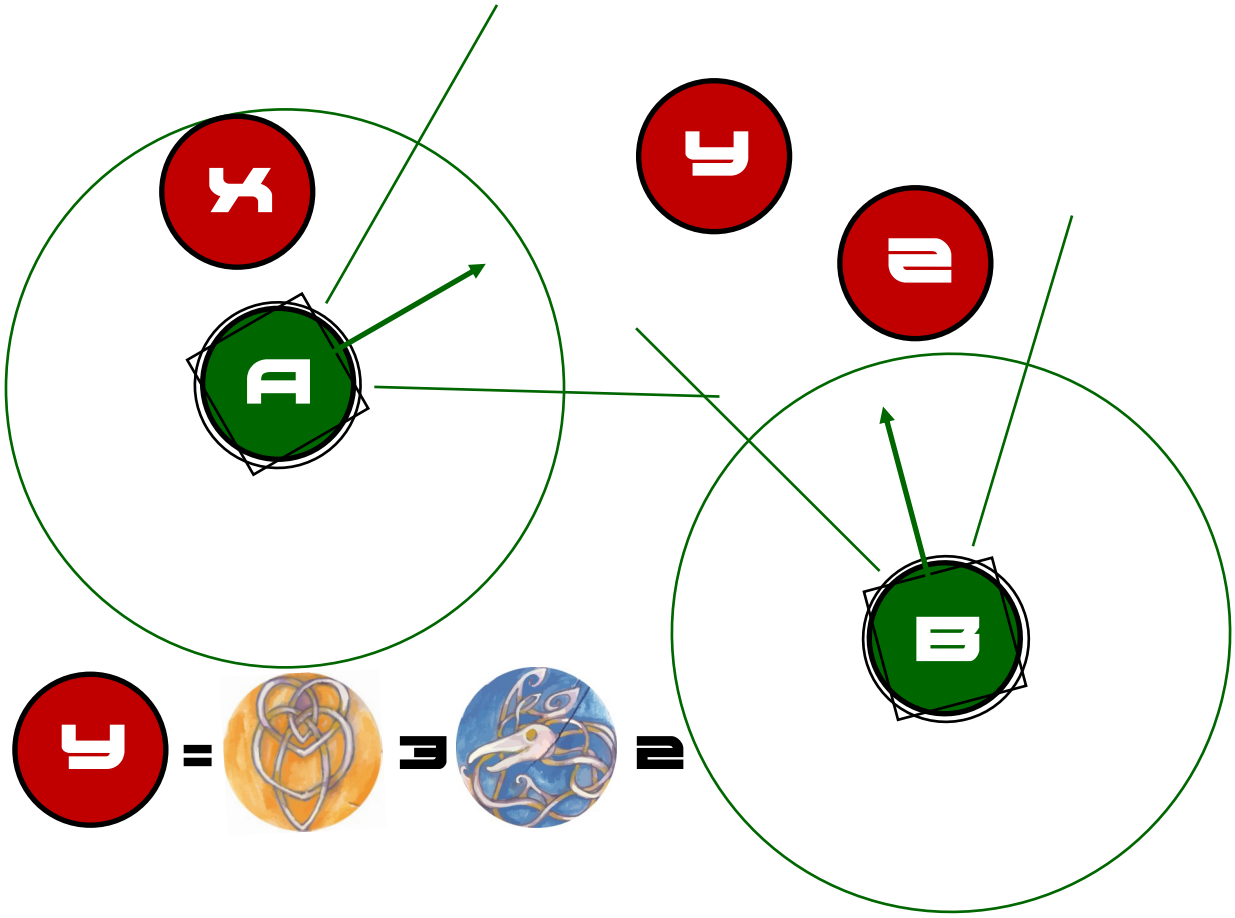
It has no Skills or Items which increase its Menace value.

Green Model A can Perceive three enemy (red) Models, Y and Z in its Field of Vision and X in its Perception Range.

This means that as far as Model A is concerned, Model Y has a Menace Value of 5+2=7 (Presence + Friendly Models the enemy Model can perceive).

Model B, however, cannot Perceive Model X as it is outside Model A's Field of Vision and Perception Range so as far as Model B is concerned Model Y only has a Menace Value of 5+1=6 (Presence + Friendly Models the enemy Model can perceive).

If Model Y had any Skills or Items which increase their Menace this would be added to their own Menace Value but would have no effect on the Menace Value of other nearby Models.



Endurance

Endurance is a measure of how much Damage a character can take, it's 'Lives' if you will.

A model's Endurance is not based on its Core Statistics but on the race or type of model it is. Humans, for example, have an Endurance of 6. A model reduced to Endurance 0 is not dead, but falls unconscious. They should be laid down where they fell or replaced with a token. These models may still be healed but may perform no more Actions until then. A model is only dead if its Endurance is reduced to –6.

Endurance, Stamina and Decisiveness

As a character gets wounded its ability to perform decreases. Every Turn a model loses one or more points of Endurance decrease its Stamina and Decisiveness by 1. This only applies to the character's Endurance, not to any Endurance added by Armour. Note that the amount of Damage sustained in the Turn is irrelevant.

Armour

A model's Endurance cannot be increased in the way that statistics are normally increased (see Skills) but it can be added to by wearing Armour.

Armour has an Endurance Value which is added to the model's basic Endurance. For example, wearing Leather Armour adds +2 to the character's basic Endurance. As Damage is inflicted on the Model this extra Endurance is abraded and when it is gone then the Armour is considered to be useless in future games unless it can be repaired.

Sometimes Cloaks and other Items are considered Armour when they add to a character's Endurance. Normally only one type of Armour may be worn at a time, but this may be supplemented by the effects of another Item where listed. Restrictions on the use of Armour will be given in the Item description.

If wearing multiple types of Armour, Damage must be applied first to one. When that is worn out Damage may be applied to the next.

Example: Model A with Endurance 6 wears Leather Armour (+2 Endurance) and a Cloth Cloak (+1 Endurance). The first hit they receive inflicts 1 Damage. This can either be applied to the Cloak, which would render it useless, or to the Leather Armour. The player allocates the Damage to the Leather Armour. Later in the game the character receives another 1 Damage. This MUST now be applied to the weakened Leather Armour and renders it useless. If the character has a Leatherworker Skill or visits a leatherworker they can get their armour restored to full strength.

Dice-free gaming?

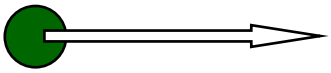
You don't need any dice to play SystemMech, but we find it's helpful to have a few around to keep track of Endurance. A 6-sided die is fine for most characters, but if they have armour you might need an extra die or one with more numbers to track this.

The SystemMech kit from Oakbound contains D6s, D20s, a Field of Vision Template, a Turn Token and the all-important Tape Measure!

Movement Actions

CONDITION: Any number of Movement Actions may be nominated before the model is moved. The model must then follow those Actions until the nominated movement is completed or it is unable to do so (for example, it fails to jump a gap). Any Stamina spent on a failed Movement Action is lost. Once a model completes its nominated move it may not be assigned further Movement Actions until it has completed at least one other type of Action.

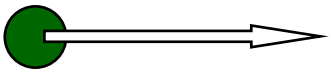
Walk



Stamina Cost 3

The model may move up to its Dexterity Range. At the end of the move it may face any direction.

Creep



Stamina Cost 3

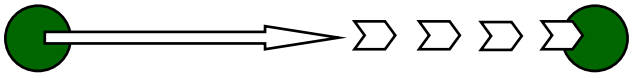
The model moves as a Walk. If it comes within a model's Perception Range it will only be Perceived by that model if it then takes another Action (other than a second Creep). If a model Creeps across another model's Field of Vision with a clear line of sight it will be Perceived and count as Walking. Creeping is Silent.

Sprint

Stamina Cost 6+

A model which Walks more than once consecutively is referred to as Sprinting and may gain extra benefits.

Jump



Stamina Cost 3

After a Walk or Sprint action the model may Jump up to its Dexterity Range, ending up facing in the direction it jumped.

Climb

Stamina Cost 3

The model may climb up or down one level (3" vertically) provided there is an appropriate set of handholds.

Barge Past

Stamina Cost +2

If the moving model's way is blocked by an enemy character it may Barge Past at a cost of 2 additional Stamina provided it has a higher Strength than the enemy. This does not add to the distance moved. Friendly characters will always let moving models through. The moving model must have enough Stamina and Agility to move beyond the enemy far enough to not overlap bases in order to attempt to barge past. If not they may not attempt to barge past this Turn and must stop short of overlapping bases.

Recover

All Stamina

A model which has Fallen Prone may get up again by spending its entire Stamina for that Turn. It may do nothing else and if forced to take an Instinctive Reaction will Fall Prone again.

If there is a friendly model within the model's Courage Range at the start of its Activation a Recover Action only costs 1 Stamina and the model will be able to use any remaining Stamina as normal this turn.

Maximum Values

Brave but slow: The combination of Walk, Creep and Sprint Actions made by a model in a single Activation may not exceed a distance equal to four times their Agility.

For example, a model with an Agility of 2 can perform any combination of Walk, Creep and Sprint Actions but the combined distance covered by these Actions may not exceed 8 (four times its Agility).

Distances covered by Jump and Climb Actions do not count towards this limit.

Movement Obstacles

Some ground is harder to move across than normal, such as swampland, densely tangled roots and undergrowth, sand dunes and areas with a lot of loose rubble. These areas are collectively called "Uneven Ground".

Moving across Uneven Ground takes one point of Stamina more than usual. This includes Climbing and Recover Actions made in areas of Uneven Ground but a Recover Action which takes all a model's Stamina still takes all their Stamina, it is not made impossible by the Uneven Ground. For example, a Walk Action in Uneven Ground costs 4 Stamina. Models m Jumping over Uneven Ground who do not begin the Jump In Uneven Ground do not have to spend extra Stamina.

It is difficult and dangerous to attempt to Sprint or land a Jump in Uneven Ground, even for very agile models. If a Sprint or Jump Action ends in an area of Uneven Ground the model must take an Instinctive Reaction before it can perform any further Actions. This may result in it Falling Prone as it loses its footing on the treacherous terrain.

Areas which constitute Uneven Ground must be decided before the game begins and indicated in some way, so that all players can see where they are.

Low obstacles can be vaulted over .

If an obstacle is less than 1" deep and no higher than the model's waist they can cross it as part of a normal move at a cost of 1". Obstacles deeper than 1" or higher than a model's waist cannot be crossed without climbing.

Fall– FORCED ACTION: 2 Stamina per inch

If a model falls off the edge of a platform or building they are forced to take a Fall Action for every inch of vertical height they fall, reducing their Stamina. If the model is Exhausted they lose 1 Damage for each further inch fallen. The model is placed directly below where they fell from and if Exhausted will Fall Prone.

Relational Actions

CONDITION: Any number of Relational Actions may be taken. The Model or object towards which the Action is directed must be Perceived by the acting character.

Talk

Stamina Cost 2

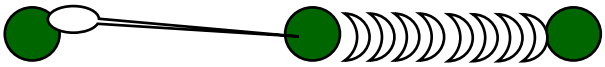
All models within the Presence Range of the speaker can Hear. A model which Hears may take one Instinctive Reaction.

Whisper

Stamina Cost 2

The character may Speak to a Model in base contact. Whispering is Silent.

Shout



Stamina Cost 3

All models within twice the Presence Range of the speaker can Hear. A model which Hears may take one Instinctive Reaction.

Ride

Stamina Cost 2

A character wishing to ride an animal can spend 2 Stamina to climb onto it, and another 2 Stamina to climb off. Every Activation the model spends riding (excluding the turn it mounted) the model must spend 2 Stamina to remain on the animal, otherwise it falls off, see Fall-Forced Action. Once Riding the model may Order or Coerce the animal.

Order

Stamina Cost +1

Added to a Talk, Shout, Whisper or Ride Action, a character may Order a single friendly Model which can Hear to immediately take one Action. If the ordered Model hasn't yet Activated this Game Turn it's Stamina refreshes with the Order.

Coerce

Stamina Cost +3

Added to a Talk, Shout or Whisper Action. Coercion is either Charm or Intimidate:

Charm– If the Coercing character's Charisma Score (Charisma Value plus any bonuses) exceeds the target's Presence then the target becomes controlled by the Coercing model's player for the duration of its next Activation.

Intimidate-If the Coercing character's Menace exceeds the target's Presence then the Coercing character may Order the target to immediately take one Action. The target must have enough Stamina to perform that Action.

Characters may spend Stamina to add to their Charisma Score or Menace for the purpose of Coercion at a rate of 2 Stamina per point.

Lift

Stamina Cost 2

The character may pick up a single object it is in base contact with. Heavy items may require more Stamina to lift.

Drop

Stamina Cost 0

The character may drop an item it is carrying. If a model Falls Prone it automatically drops any object it is carrying.

Interact

Stamina Cost 2

An Interaction is anything the character does to an object it is in base contact with which has an effect, for instance opening a door or pulling a lever. More complex devices may require more Stamina.

Hide

Stamina Cost 2

The character may hide behind any obstacle which comes up to its waist and is at least as wide as its base. It remains Hidden until an enemy model can trace an uninterrupted line of sight within its Field of Vision to the Hidden character. A Hidden character may perform other Actions but will cease to be Hidden if Perceived doing so.

Evaluate — Stamina Cost 1

A character who Evaluates may be faced in any direction, turning on the spot. Evaluating is Silent.

Go on the Alert — Stamina Cost 2

The character may perform no further Actions until it Perceives a change (bullets whistling past etc.). At this point it MUST perform one (and only one) Action in response, which may be to go back on the Alert. This does not count as a new Activation. Before performing this single Action the Action which triggered the Alert should be completed. If an Alert character makes an Instinctive Reaction it is no longer Alert. Going on the Alert is Silent. If an Alert model has to perform an Action but has no Stamina left it does not have to Fall Prone, but nothing else happens.

Snatch — Stamina Cost 3

A character within 1" of a target model which cannot Perceive it may grab one item from it. If the target's Perception is higher than the Snatching character's Agility it may take one Instinctive Reaction. Snatching is Silent.

Maximum Values

Smart but not Savvy: No model can Coerce using a Charisma Value higher than three times its Wisdom Value.

For example, a model with a Wisdom of 2 can only attempt to Coerce with a Charisma Value of 6, even if their Perception Value is 5 (Giving them a Charisma Stat of 7).

This does not affect the model's ability to spend Stamina to add to their Charisma Score. The same model above could still spend 2 Stamina to raise their Charisma Score to 7 or 4 Stamina to raise it to 8.

Airship Goblinks

Shooting Actions

CONDITION: Any number of Shooting Actions may be performed against a single target. Subsequent targets may then have Shooting Actions performed against them but these count as a separate block of Actions and any bonuses accumulated are lost. The shooting model must be able to Perceive the target to perform any of these Actions.

Load — Stamina Cost 2

Before a weapon may be fired it must be loaded. Weapons are assumed to begin the game loaded unless stated/decided otherwise. Some weapons may require more Stamina to Load.

Aim — Stamina Cost 2

Each Aiming Action performed against a single target increases the Shooting Range by 2". You must declare any Aiming Actions before measuring Shooting Range.

Shoot — Stamina Cost 2

The character fires at a single target. Calculate Shooting Range on the chart below to see if it hits.

Shoot Again — Stamina Cost 3

The character may fire again at the last target it shot at. Provided it has done nothing else since it last shot at this target except Aiming which is allowed) it gets a +1" bonus to its Shooting Range. You can Shoot Again at a target even if you missed with the previous shot.

Maximum Values

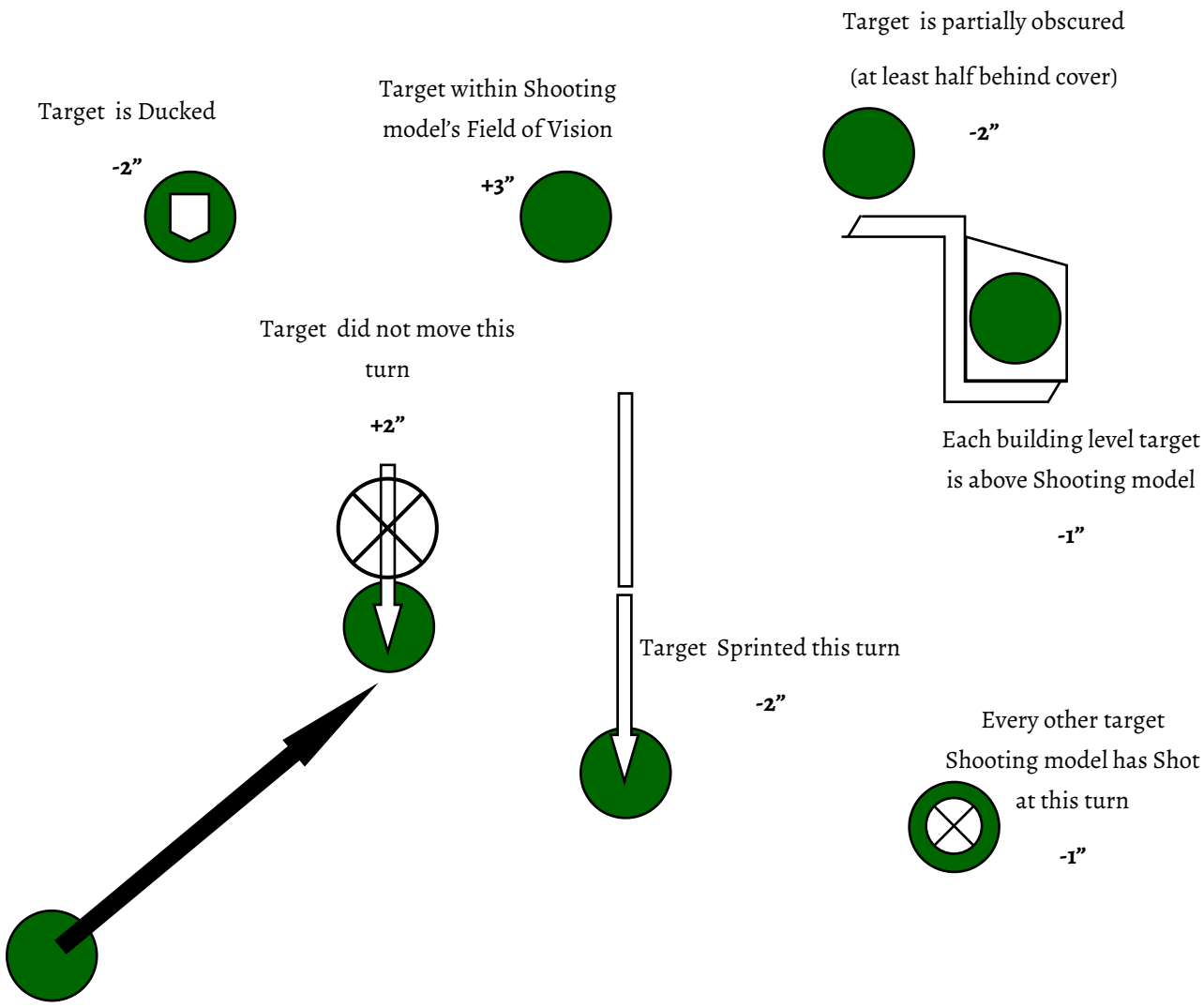
I can't see it clearly: A model cannot fire at a range which exceeds five times its Perception irrespective of its Courage and any other bonuses and adjustments.

For example, a model with a Perception of 2 can hit a target at a maximum range of 10". If their intended target is further away than this the shot automatically misses.

Legends of British Steampunk: Jack Union

Shooting Range Calculator

Accurate shooting range equals the Shooting model's Marksmanship Range +/- the following adjustments:



Shooting Model:

Every Aiming Action performed before Shooting: **+2"**

Shooting model did not move this turn: **+1"**

Shooting model Sprinted this turn: **–2"**

A successful hit inflicts the weapon's Impact Value in Damage on the target and knocks the target 1" away from the Shooting model.

Grappling Actions

NOTE: The chaos of melee is complex and unpredictable. The Grapple rules are appropriately complicated, but once you've followed a few Grapples through you'll get the hang of it!

CONDITION: A Grapple can only be made against a single target in base contact.

If a model is not already Grappling it can initiate a Grapple by making a normal Walk, Sprint or Creep Move Action which puts it in base contact with the target it wishes to Grapple with.

This is a normal Movement Action and subject to the same conditions, Maximum Movement restriction and Stamina cost as any other Movement Action.

If the model initiating the Grapple begins its initiate move from a position which can be Perceived by the target then the target model gets to React (see Grapple Reactions under the Instinctive Reactions table). After measuring, if the movement distance is sufficient to get the model into base contact place the two models with their bases touching and the centre points of their bases touching. If the distance is insufficient move the model as far as it can go. It can then perform further Actions but may not yet Grapple.

If the model initiates with a Creep the target does not get to react and is at a severe disadvantage. Move the model so its base is touching the target's but do not turn the target so that its centre point is touching.

Now the Grapple begins. Each model finds their Grapple Score in the following way:

Finesse Value

+Remaining Stamina

(If a model initiated the Grapple with a Creep their opponent MAY NOT add their unused Stamina to their Grapple Score)

+Stamina spent on an initiating move if the target was not able to react

-3 if Wide Spaced (The model's Centre-Front Line is not touching its opponent's base)

+/- any bonuses or penalties due to items , traits or skills

Maximum Values

Nimble but Weak: A model's Grapple Score cannot exceed five times its Strength irrespective of its Agility and any Bonuses from conditions, Skills and Items. Its inherent weakness means it is easily overcome by stronger opponents.

For example, a model with a Strength of 2 can have a maximum Grapple Score of 10 even if its Agility, bonuses from Skills and Items and Stamina spent raising its Score would normally exceed this.

Resolving a Grapple

The highest scoring model may spend Stamina to perform one of the following Actions which has a value equal to or less than the difference between the two Grapple Scores. If the result is a tie neither model performs any Actions.

Ward — Difference 1

The Model prevents its opponent's blows but inflicts no damage. In the next round they add 1 to their Grapple score. Bonuses gained by Warding are cumulative, so a mode which Wards in 2 consecutive rounds adds 2 to its score in the next round.

Git Shot — Difference 1

The model inflicts 1 Damage on its opponent.

Vault — Difference 2

Move the model 90 degrees around it opponent's base to the left or right (providing there is space to do so). The models remain in base contact but the Vaulting model's opponent will now be Wide Spaced.

Grip — Difference 2

The opposing model may not Break Off or gain any benefits from one weapon (winning player's choice) next round.

Shunt — Difference 3

The opposing model is moved 2" directly backwards (providing there is space to do so). The winning model may choose to remain in base contact or stay where it is.

Strike — Difference 3

The model inflicts 2 Damage (or the Impact value of the weapon used) on its opponent.

Disarm — Difference 4

One of an opponent's weapons (winning player's choice) is rendered useless for the remainder of the game.

Disengage — Difference 4

The model may immediately make a Walk Move Action in any direction. This does not count towards Maximum Movement.

Throw Down — Difference 5

The model inflicts 2 Damage (or the Impact value of the weapon used) on its opponent and its opponent falls Prone.

Some Items and Skills allow a model to perform other Actions if they win a Grapple or prevent their opponent from performing some of the Actions listed here.

Grappling Multiple Opponents

Each Grapple consists of one model against one model. If more than one model are Grappling against a single opponent work out each one separately. If a model initiates against a target already Grappling the target cannot react and is not turned to face the new opponent, meaning they will end up Wide Spaced. If a model initiates a Grapple against a target which has already Grappled in the current Turn the target has no Stamina remaining for the purposes of calculating Grapple Score.

If a model is Grappling two or more opponents at the start of a Turn they may split their Stamina between their opponents (controlling player's choice) and have their full Finesse Value against each opponent.

Models locked in a Grapple with multiple opponents may not resolve either in a way which would take them out of a Grapple not yet resolved. For example, a model in base contact with two opponents can only Vault, Shunt or Disengage the first opponent if it remains in contact with the second. If it survives the first Grapple the resolution of the second may take it out of base contact with the first model it Grappled. A model Grappling multiple opponents MAY, however, choose to Break Off before it has fought all of its Grapples.

Continuing Grapples

Rarely will a Grapple be concluded in the Game Turn it was initiated. In most cases the next Turn will begin with models still locked in combat.

We refer to the calculation of Grapple Scores and any subsequent result as a 'round'. There will only be one round of Grappling in each Turn, if models enter the Grapple at different Activation Points they join in the round already in progress.

If models are Grappling at the beginning of a Turn the round is resolved before any other Actions are taken. Models Grappling don't have the time to think about what to do and all their energy is committed to keeping their opponents at bay. The player holding the Turn Token decides which order to resolve Grapples in. Prone models do not count as Grappling so a model in base contact with only a Prone enemy at the start of the Game Phase acts at their normal Activation Point. Models joining the Grapple later in the Turn will resolve their Grapple when they initiate as normal.

Models Grappling at the beginning of a Turn have their Stamina refreshed as they Activate, adrenaline pumping through their body.

Models already Grappling must either:

Break Off — Stamina Cost 5

A model may opt to Break Off and move up to twice its Dexterity Range away from its opponent instead of carrying on Grappling. If it does so any further Actions must be taken at its usual Activation Point. This does not count towards their Maximum Movement and they may take additional Movement Actions at their next Activation Point.

Change facing — Stamina Cost 2

The model may turn on the spot to align its Centre Line to any one opponent.

Continue to Grapple — Stamina Cost 0

The model may continue to Grapple for no additional Stamina cost.

Models in a Grapple declare simultaneously if they are Breaking Off or Continuing to Grapple. If either model Breaks Off then neither model is considered to be Grappling and the rest of their Actions are resolved at their usual Decision Point.

GRAPPLING INTO THE NEXT TURN: At the start of a new Turn resolve Grapples before all other Actions.

Example: Model A (Decisiveness 7) initiates a Grapple against Model B (Decisiveness 6). After the Grapple is resolved both models are considered to have performed their Actions for this turn. Once all models with lower Decisiveness Values have finished their Actions a new Turn begins.

In the new Turn the first thing which happens is the next round of the Grapple. The Grappling models declare their Actions simultaneously. Model A decides to Continue to Grapple, Model B decides to Break Off as things are going badly for it. After the Break Off Move has been made the Turn continues as normal with the highest Activation Point. When Activation Point 7 is reached Model A may Activate as normal and may well attempt to initiate a Grapple again against Model B. Assuming it doesn't, Model B is free to Act as normal at Activation Point 6 but has already spent 5 Stamina Breaking Off.

Complicated Grapples

Whilst it's pretty simple to keep track of a one-on-one combat in a normal game there may be any number of models running around the table on different errands. Under such circumstances all kinds of complexities can crop up. In most cases common sense and consensus can prevail but here are some principles to apply to the most usual complexities.

Shooting into a Grapple

Firing into the swirling melee of close quarters fighting is a tricky business.

A model may shoot at a target in a Grapple, but if the target is found to lie outside of their unmodified Accuracy Range then the target's Grapple opponent is hit instead. All models (whether hit or not) in a Grapple containing a target who is fired at must take an Instinctive Reaction.

Grappling models which are Riding

Riding models are effectively two models, the rider and the mount. A model initiating a Grapple against a riding model must split their remaining Stamina between rider and mount and resolve the Grapple as normal with multiple opponents. They receive any normal bonuses for their target not reacting. A riding model initiating a Grapple works out the mount and the rider's scores separately. Remember that they may have different Decisiveness values and may not be able to Grapple at the same time.

Mounted models do not have the freedom to manoeuvre that models on foot have, so may not make Vault, Grip, Shunt or Disarm Actions. Also mounts may not Grapple any model which is not on their Centre-Front Line. If a model attacks a mount from the side or rear the mount does not get to use any remaining Stamina in calculating the Grapple Score and if the mount wins the round it may not inflict and Damage on its opponent.

If a mount is reduced to 0 Endurance its rider must take a Fall Action and is then on foot.

Fir Darrig and Horse Sidhe

Instinctive Reactions

CONDITION: Instinctive Reactions may only be chosen when noted in the rules. If an Instinctive Reaction is called for and the character is Exhausted their only option is to Fall Prone. Performing an Instinctive Reaction does not count as Activating.

Fall Prone — Stamina Cost 0

A model which has Fallen Prone may only make Recover Actions and may do nothing else until it has done so. Prone characters have all Stats except Endurance, Decisiveness and Courage reduced to 0.

Duck — Stamina Cost 3

A model which Shoots at a Ducked target is at -2" to its Shooting Range. If a model is able to Duck behind cover which is at least waist high it counts as Hidden and the shot misses.

Cry Out — Stamina Cost 4

A model which Cries Out counts as making a Shout Action. The model may add an Order at the usual +2 Stamina

Evaluate — Stamina Cost 1

A model which Evaluates may be faced in any direction, turning on the spot.

Grappling, Stamina and Instinctive Reactions

In a Grapple all of a model's efforts are dedicated to preventing their opponents from hitting them and trying to incapacitate their enemy. Grappling therefore uses all of a model's Stamina.

This means that if a model Grappling is forced to take an Instinctive Reaction for any reason they count as exhausted and will Fall Prone.

Grapple Reactions

CONDITION: If a Model has a Grapple Initiated against it by a Character it can Perceive then it may make one of the following as a reaction:

Flee — Stamina Cost 3

The target moves their Dexterity Range away from their opponent., ending facing away from their opponent. If this is sufficient to take them far enough away for the initiate move to fail then the Grapple has been averted. This does not count as a Movement Action nor is it counted towards the model's Maximum Movement Value.

Dodge — Stamina Cost 2

The target makes a feint to one side as their opponent charges in. Once the initiating model is moved into base contact the target may immediately make a Vault Action , Wide Spacing their opponent.

Stand Firm — Stamina Cost 0

The target faces its opponent head on. The Grapple begins as normal. The initiating model may not count Stamina spent in its initiating Move Action towards its Grapple Score.

Purchasing Skills, Traits and Equipment

If models manage to achieve their objectives in games they are awarded with Objective Points as listed in the scenario or agreed by the players beforehand.

In between games characters have the opportunity to advance by spending Objective Points on Skills, Traits and Equipment. Objective Points may be saved up for later use.

Players apply Traits to an opponent's character, in between or at the start of games but not during. With the exception of Stat increases and decreases each character may only have each Skill or Trait applied to them once. A character may not have two Hunter skills applied to them for example. As far as possible Skills and Traits applied should be able to be explained by the events of the game just played, or the narrative so far. A character which discovers an ancient secret may justify a Wisdom increase whilst a character who faces down a hideous monster may justify a Courage increase. When increasing or reducing secondary Stats (Charisma, Accuracy, Dexterity, Finesse, Presence) do not adjust the Core Stats either side. Endurance is not a normally increasable stat.

In between games characters may also exchange Objective Points for Rings to spend on Items.

Concentration:

A model which Concentrates spends all Stamina in a single turn on Actions from just one table.
For instance:
Sprint, Jump (only Movement Actions).
Loads, Aims, Shoots (only Shooting Actions).

STAT INCREASES:

Stat Increases are bought as Skills.

Multiple Stat increases may be applied to single characters as an exception to the normal rules for allocating Skills. No Core Stat may ever be raised above 6 and no Secondary Stat above 12. When raising a Core Stat remember to raise the Secondary Stats (including Stamina and Decisiveness) accordingly. However, when taking a Secondary Stat increase do not adjust the Core Stats. A Secondary Stat increase may be used to raise Stamina and Decisiveness.

Core Stat increase: Raising any one core stat by one point costs the current value of that stat to the power of 3.

For instance, raising Strength 2 to Strength 3 costs 8 points (2 x 2 x 2). Raising Strength 3 to Strength 4 costs 27 points (3 x 3 x 3). Where possible, stat increases should represent the events of the scenario just played. Stat increases may be taken as skills more than once per character.

Secondary Stat increase: Raising any one secondary stat by one point costs twice the current value of that stat. For instance, raising Finesse 4 to Finesse 5 costs 8 points. Raising Finesse 5 to Finesse 6 costs 10 points. Where possible, stat increases should represent the events of the scenario just played. Stat increases may be taken as skills more than once per character.

Attentive (15): A character with the Attentive skill who Concentrates on Relational Actions reduces the Stamina cost of all Actions by one.
Eagle Eyes (15): A character with Eagle Eyes can target Actions at models in their Peripherals.
Fleet (15): A character with the Fleet Skill can perform one Action from the Movement Action Table as an Instinctive Reaction provided they have enough Stamina to do so.
Healer (18): Characters with the Healer skill can spend three Stamina to raise the Endurance of a model in base contact by one. This is an Action taken during their turn and may be performed more than once per turn.
Lithe (10): A character with the Lithe Skill rounds any distance fallen down to the nearest inch rather than up to the nearest inch.
Provident (10): A character with the Provident Skill can choose to take Actions from the Instinctive Reactions Table during their turn without being forced to do so.
Tyrant (15): A character with the Tyrant Skill uses their Menace instead of their Presence to perform Actions and resist Coercion.
Vigilance (12): A character with the Vigilance Skill can perform one Action from the Relational Action Table as an Instinctive Reaction provided they have enough Stamina to do so.
Warrior(10): A character with the Warrior Skill can purchase further Skills from the Warrior Skill table.


Chico Dank's Evil Space Dorfs, OldhammerOnABudget.blogspot.com

Warrior Skills

Discipline (10): A character with the Discipline Skill may choose not to use all of their Stamina in a Grapple. Any remaining Stamina may be spent on Break Off or Change Facing Actions or Instinctive Reactions.

Fine Footwork (8): A character with the Fine Footwork Skill can choose which direction around its base models which Vault

Hawksight (8): A character with the Hawksight Skill has a maximum shooting range of 7 times their Perception.

Keen Ears (10): A character with the Keen Ears Skill may react to an opponent initiating a Grapple from outside of its Perception range and Field of Vision so long as it is not already Grappling.

Lookout (10): A character with the lookout Skill who goes On The Alert can take their responsive Action as soon as they Perceive a change, they do not have to wait until the trigger Action has been completed. For instance, if a model moves into the Alert character's Field of Vision the Alert character can choose to Act at any point between then and the end of its movement. It would normally have to wait until the move was complete before Acting.

Precision Blow (15): A character with this Skill doubles any Damage inflicted in a Grapple in a round it initiates with a Creep.

Stat decrease (10): Lower any one core stat by one point. Where possible stat decreases should represent the events of the scenario just played. Stat decreases may be applied as Traits more than once per character.

Arrogance (8): An Arrogant character reduces their Charisma by one.

Clumsiness (8): A Clumsy character reduces their Dexterity by one.

Distracted (10): For the duration of the next game a Distracted character must Concentrate in order to perform any Actions. After this game the character reverts to normal. A Distracted Trait may be applied to a character who has already had it previously.

Highly Strung (15): Any time a Highly Strung character has a missile weapon loaded and is forced to make an Instinctive Reaction they Shoot the weapon directly ahead of them, the shot travels its maximum range and Hits the first object in its path. This Shooting Action costs no Stamina. A Highly Strung Character may choose to Go On The Alert instead of Shooting if they have enough Stamina to do so.

Life Leech (20): At each Activation point of a Character with Life Leech any model which is within 2" of them loses one point of Endurance.

Tremors (10): A character with the Tremors reduces their Accuracy by one.

Ugliness (8): An Ugly character reduces their Presence by one but increases their Menace by one.

Undisciplined (10): An Undisciplined character reduces their Finesse by one.


Woldlouse

Knife- All characters are assumed to carry a knife or similar implement. This is used for all kinds of domestic purposes as well as being a handy weapon in a fight. The Damage inflicted by the knife is taken into account in the basic Grapple rules.

Small hand weapon (4 points)
Melee weapon, Impact value 3.

Large hand weapon (8 points)
Melee weapon, Impact value 4.
Large and cumbersome: Models armed with
A large hand weapon suffer a –1 penalty to their Grapple Score.

Short Bow (8 points)

Ranged Weapon, Impact 2. Begins the game unloaded and can fire one shot per loading. Firing a Bow is Silent. The bow is assumed to come with a quiver of unlimited arrows.

Crossbow (9 points)

Ranged Weapon, Impact 3. Begins the game unloaded and can fire one shot per loading. Loading a crossbow takes 3 Stamina. Firing a Bow is Silent. The bow is assumed to come with a quiver of unlimited arrows.

Revolver (10 points)

Ranged Weapon, Impact 3. Begins the game loaded with a magazine of 6 shots.

Powder Weapon: Whenever a Powder Weapon fires all models on the board may take an Instinctive Reaction.

Rifle (14 points)

Ranged Weapon, Impact 4. Begins the game loaded with a magazine of 5 shots.

Powder Weapon: Whenever a Powder Weapon fires all models on the board may take an Instinctive Reaction.

Leather armour/Flak Jacket (15 points)

Gives the wearer +1 Endurance. The wearer may not any other armour at the same time.

Mail armour/Ceramic armour (30 points)

Gives the wearer +2 Endurance. The wearer may not wear any other armour at the same time.

Medikit (10 points)

A character with a Medikit can Interact with another model to restore up to 3 points of Endurance. This may not take the model above its starting Endurance. One use only.

We find the best boards for games of SystemMech are 4' square with plenty of scenery and levels. Games with 5-8 models per side on this size board usually take 60-90 minutes.

The SystemMech Community

SystemMech is licenced with Creative Commons, meaning it can be adapted and distributed freely for non-commercial purposes.

We love seeing the things people do with the system, how they apply it to their settings, new skills, traits and items they create and the scenarios they come up with. We also love hearing your feedback and suggestions for how to improve SystemMech and, of course, seeing your painted miniatures!

If you have stuff to share please get in touch through our website:

Www.Oakbound.co.uk

Or our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/Oakboundgames

We hope to regularly post updates featuring the brilliant ideas you come up with!

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