Cloven Shield Forgotten Realms PBEM

PBEM Campaign run by Bruce Sponagle
findor_tallwillow@yahoo.ca
ClovenShield PBEM FAQ/House Rules v2.0
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Combined FAQ and House Rules Documentation

Please note that there are many important game-related changes between this version (v2.0) and the previous versions of this document (v1.0 and v1.5). I would *strongly* encourage each applicant to reread this document, keeping the changes in mind.

(updated Wednesday, October 29, 2003)

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It Begins...

(As recorded from the diary of Findor Tallwillow, dated Uktar 11, 1355 Dalereckoning. Findor, to the latest reports, is presently missing. This and the remainder of his diary were found on the butchered remains of his horse several weeks ago. His horse's spine appears to have been snapped like a twig...)

I record today a strange discussion I had with one Alaundo of Candlekeep. In passing through, I visited him in order to talk with him regarding the upcoming year, and the portents therein. Here may you find a (short) copy of what he has said:

Friends, you know me not, yet in desperation I beseech you to come to our aid. Dark times approach. The shades of the past have revealed the future. In it, I have seen deeds both great and dastardly laid before me. Myself, and others have seen the signs of the coming darkness – yet these men who call themselves "rulers" choose not to heed our many warnings. Their only hope – perhaps the only hope of us all – is to find the real truth behind these murky visions and act quickly to quell the gathering storm. Zhentil Keep is up to something. What, for sure, I cannot yet tell you. Suffice to say that their mercantile efforts have increased three-fold in as many months. Suspected agents of the Black Network have been aggressively scouting for mercenary and adventuring bands – paying fees which can only be called exorbitant.

Orcs and other goblinoid bands are on the prowl, in numbers not seen for a generation. They are threatening dwarven and elven settlements at a scale unheard of. These vermin are only encountered at a scale such as this for one reason and one reason alone: greed. I think it likely that untold sums of Zhent gold and other treasures have found their way into these foul hands.

Other signs point towards a coming darkness. Several wyrms of varying ages have disappeared. Perhaps they too are being enslaved by Zhent gold or the dark power offered by the Zhentarim. Caravans from the Sword Coast to the Kingdom of Cormyr and the Dalelands have been disappearing – even from routes long known to have been safe from casual banditry or the odd orc raid.

There are rumours: perhaps the Black Network is seeking to expand their influence in the western realms. Surely, with the might of Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate and Silverymoon, they can be stopped! First, however, we must be SURE of what we have seen in our visions. Without the assistance of the rightful rulers of Færûn, we will never know for sure. That, my children, is why I have brought you here before me this night. You are to be my ears, my eyes, and my wrath. The fury and vengeance of this world you will deliver upon theirs...

Cloven Shield PBEM Staff:

Bruce "the dreaded Sponagledragon" Sponagle
- Dungeon Master and Narrator
- Keeper of the FAQs
- gaming persona "Findor Tallwillow"
- website persona "Deneir's Lorekeeper"

Claudia Sponagle
- editor of the FAQs
- Tamer of the Sponagledragon

Nitehawk Jarrett
- Webmaster
- another recipient of the wrath of the Sponagledragon
- gaming persona "Maqlin Ashter"
- website persona "Larrgn Steelehart"

Cloven Shield PBEM Web Presence

Cloven Shield PBEM Website:
http://www.angelfire.com/realms/clovenshield

Cloven Shield PBEM FAQ location:
insertlinkhere

Dungeon Master's Email Address:
findor_tallwillow@yahoo.ca

Active Player's In Character Mailing List (private):
clovenshieldadvguild@yahoogroups.com

Active Players Out of Character Mailing List (private):
pbem_ooc@yahoogroups.com

Lurker's Mailing List (requires authorization, non-players only):
lurkerlist@yahoogroups.com

To subscribe to the Lurker List, send an email to:
lurkerlist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Cloven Shield PBEM & AD&D Discussion List (open to the public):
clovenshield@yahoogroups.com

To subscribe to the Discussion List, send an email to:
clovenshield-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Cloven Shield PBEM DM's Discussion List (private - DM staff only):
clovenshield-dm@yahoogroups.com

Introduction by the Dungeon Master:

Hello! Thank you for your interest in this, my first Advanced Dungeons and Dragons game done by email. Let me take this moment to tell you a little about myself and the game I intend to run.

I am 32 years old and have been playing this game (in one form or another) for over 18 years. I am married, have two kids, and am currently employed as a full-time (nights, mostly) security agent for a private firm and plan to move up into either police work or private investigation. On the side, I also run a small (but growing) consultation firm based upon my previous computer experience.

I enjoy a varied list of fiction literature (including just about all of Shakespeare's tragedies, "Lord of the Rings", "The Belgariad", "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", Sun Tzu's "Art of War", Karl von Clausewitz's "On War", nearly anything written by Tom Clancy and many more). I also like music of almost all kinds, though country music really doesn't "do it" for me. I don't watch TV - I watch quality programs on the History Channel, A&E, The Learning Channel and the odd film on The Movie Network. Movies that I recommend - to get an idea on my gaming style - include: Ben Hur, Spartacus, The 300 Spartans, The Guns of Navarone, Bridge on the River Kwai, and many others.

As a gamer, I've played just about every class in existence at least once, except that of Paladin. Mainly due to my never finding a DM that I felt would make Paladinhood fun, challenging and rewarding for me to play. I tend to prefer playing elves in general, specifically multiclassed mages – with ranger/mage and thief/mage being by far my preference.

As a DM, the thing I *hate* most is when players split up into more than one group. For one, it's a *ton* of work as DM to manage something like that. Second, you end up neglecting one group while dealing with the other. Guaranteed way to get people with a group bored, and boredom leads to the TV or Nintendo (or whatever) taking them away from the game at hand. Needless to say, I've never had that problem with any group I've every played.

Anyhow, you didn't download this document in order for me to go on and on about me, my life, and my experience in gaming. This game, if it is to succeed, is about all of *you* putting your time, effort and experience together with mine to make something that should be lots of fun for us all.

To everyone who has submitted an application, I wish to thank you for your interest in my PBEM. Those of you who have "made the cut" have as much work ahead of them in this venture as I do. This game is your game. Enjoy, and may Tymora's luck be with you!

Cloven Shield PBEM FAQ

Where and When Will the Game be Taking Place?

Well, I am assuming you're asking when on Færûn and when within the timeline that TSR has created. Until the playing group has been finalized, I can only give the approximate starting location, which at this time will be somewhere in the area in the western heartlands known as "The Fields of the Dead", located between the Kingdom of Cormyr in the east and the Sword Coast on the West. Regarding the time in which this game will start, that part is easy. It is 1355 DR (Dalereckoning). For those of you familiar with the Realms, this means that the Time of Troubles (when the Gods walked Færûn) has not happened. Therefore: Cyric, Kelemvor and Midnight (as deities) do not yet exist. Bane, Bhaal, Myrkul and the various other "dead gods" slain during the Time of Troubles are very much active. Keep this in mind…

If you wish to learn more about the Realms, take a moment to pick up the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting (soon to be out of print, with the 3rd edition of the game on the way, but still readily available as of the press time of the FAQ). Alternatively, you may still be able to find various FR stuff still available through mail order RPG companies (even out of print stuff!).

What You Need to Play:

For starters, an imagination! Kidding aside, this is the most crucial requirement. If you lack an active, vibrant imagination, your chances of being accepted are slim, unfortunately. I don't care too much about how *creative* you are (but it helps), so long as you show you have an imagination.

Basically, all you *really* need is the AD&D Player's Handbook. Please note, however, that all of the hardback editions of the "Player's Options" series (including "Combat & Tactics", "Skills and Powers" and "Spells & Magic") as well as elements of the PHBR series of softbacks will be used throughout play. I strongly encourage you to buy or borrow a set. Some knowledge of the Forgotten Realms can't hurt, but is *not* a necessity. I am of two minds: part of me wants you (as players) to have no knowledge so that you don't misuse what you know; the other part wants you to know a little, so that you can have a basic familiarity with this campaign setting. Given a choice, I would choose the latter. Anyway, if you don't have the necessary resources mentioned here, I will summarize the parts you are missing (should I choose to accept your application), but don't expect too much detail (in other words, buy the books you need!).

What about the Upcoming 3rd Edition of AD&D?

Considering the investment I've made in the PBEM FAQ and rules (using the 2nd edition of the game), I'm not likely to switch to the 3rd edi-

tion rules. This is unlikely to change - I have spoken at length with my players and they feel much as I do.

What the Game Is Going to Be:

For one, it'll be fun. This is going to be a chance for everyone to play the hero. It's meant to be escapism, so enjoy it! This is a collaborative effort. It will be as good as you, or I make it to be. However, equally important is what it will not be. It is not going to be a simple "hack and slash" game. If this is all you're looking for, grab some quarters and go to the arcade. If you are looking for a *mature* (well, mostly, anyway) game, where we can all have some fun, and become the stuff of legends, this is for you. If not, you might as well stop reading and trash this file.

How the Turns Will Be Handled:

The game itself tends to be somewhat fast-paced. Originally, I had intended the "turns" to be somewhat static, and running at around 2 or 3 per week at most. However, I've found that with this game, a relatively free-form style (several posts to the IC list per day per member is quite common) works quite well. Unless I find this to be too much for the players, I intend to keep the pace as it now stands.

I'm not following a strict flow of turns, as this game doesn't seem to require it. Time will pass within the game as dictated by the pace that the players are following.

As an example, it took nearly two weeks for the first day of "game time" to finish, as they players took the time to converse in character and get to know each other. The second day of game time took even longer, as the party was involved in a rather nasty combat. That battle alone took several days to "play out", and we have (obviously) moved on from there.

How Do You Submit Your Moves?

Once characters are decided, we will be using email to convey moves and questions regarding moves and actions within the game. The In Character Mailing List is for all "In Character" comments or actions. For any messages bearing activities that the other characters wouldn't likely see, I ask that the email be sent to me directly.

For planning stuff between individual PCs, I ask that either the Out of Character mailing list be used, or - for actions which the other players aren't likely to be seen - that I at least be sent a carbon copy ("CC") of the messages. I ask this, as I'm moderating this game, and I feel that I should be involved one way or another. If you have a problem with this, let me know. Otherwise, this is a *REQUIREMENT*.

How Do You Submit Questions About the Game?

It's easy, really… Send an email to the address above. Just be sure to use "Questions" as the title so my filters put it in the appropriate part of my email "Inbox".

How Many Players Will There Be?

Originally, I had intended to limit the group to 7 or 8 players. I've found that this number is easily handled, and would like to round out the party by adding a few more player characters. In total, I plan for the group to count no more than 10-12 characters. Others are welcome to submit their character applications, and can join the mailing list. Otherwise, feel free to lurk, and perhaps you can play some of the NPCs in the game?

Can I Play a Drow? (or Svirfneblin, or Duergar, or Centaur, etc.)

Sure you can… But remember that not *everyone* in the realms likes non-human or non-humanoid races. Reactions with NPCs may be negative for the party as a whole if you have an unusual character race. That's not to discourage such unique characters, but be aware that you may suffer from prejudice from (non-player) characters within the game. As a warning, I can sometimes play this part to the hilt. Don't expect unusual races to be treated well. The Realms can be a harsh place, but it can also be fun!

What Other Limitations Do You Place on PCs?

No (and I mean it) evil PCs will be allowed within the game. You're *supposed* to play heroes, not the villains. **No** exceptions. Ask me once, I'll repeat this answer. Ask me twice, and you're out. *Period.*

What Do You Expect in the My Character's Bio?

There are two ways you can handle the bio. You can go to the website, click on the "enlist" button and complete the form. As an alternative - or if you want more room to write - please use Appendix One as a guide (the enlist form duplicates it, but doesn't allow tons of room to write).

Don't talk to me in your bio about magic items (or any other items of legend) you want or that your character will have, nor of famous NPCs that you're "buddy-buddy" with. I am not interested in that, and will *not* – in any way, shape or form – grant your requests for such items.

Please avoid "gamespeak". When you're creating your bio, I don't give a fig what your "strength" is, how many "hit points" you have, etc. This bio is like an autobiography of your character. Do you *really* think that they consider themselves in the following light: "Gee, I'm strong, so I must have an 18 Strength"? No, of course not. Also, avoid referring to your character as "stronger than most". This bio is *what* your prospective PC thinks of life at large. What are their fears, their dreams, their wishes? If you need assis-

tance, zoom to the bottom of this document and *read* Appendix One.

I get an average of 5-10 or more mails *per day* just from applicants. This is not including messages from the current players, lurkers and assistant DMs. So, *please* avoid useless filler or "fluff" in your bio. I only have a certain amount of time per day to look at bios. If it takes longer than 10 to 15 minutes (ok, I'll follow a good one for up to an hour) to read it, it's too long.

What Bugs You (and Therefore, I Should Avoid)?

For starters, let's put complaints about why I reject your bio, either in whole or part on the top of this list. This is my game too, and if I don't like what I see, I reserve the right to ask you to resubmit. Again, back to the time thing. This game will take a lot of my time, and if all it gives me is whining, hey, I've got a 5 year old, and I get *lots* of that on a day-to-day basis. Please be mature, and treat me with respect. In return, you'll get lots of that back from me.

Unless I specifically request it, don't send me file attachments. If your application requires more room than the enlist form provides, then send your application as a Rich Text Format (".RTF") file. Sending it in any other format may make it unusable to me.

Anonymous players *really* bug me. If you're so darn serious about playing this game, and I've gone to the trouble to give you my first *and* last name *and* the city I call home, don't you think that I at least deserve your first name?

And lastly, *do not* (let me stress that again - *DO NOT*) submit to me a character with the background of "I have amnesia and don't remember anything about myself." To me, that's lazy, and a waste of my time. Fine, you want a PC with amnesia. That *can* be done, if I choose to allow it for you. But I *still* require the bio, because there *will* be things about your character that you character will not know (or not remember), that others *will* know and *will* use - or abuse. Bottom line is this: no bio, no *chance* of acceptance.

There's No More Room in the Game, What Do I Do Now?

Well, unfortunately, I do have a limit as to what I can handle. However, the game welcomes "lurkers", those who are not actively involved in the game. I welcome input from the lurkers, and they will have the opportunity to replace players who drop out, are booted off, or whose characters die.

Someday, perhaps, we will see a group of lurkers form a "spin-off" game from this one, perhaps with each game somehow linked together so that groups may interact and co-ordinate their work. This would accomplish something that do my knowledge has never been done before - an AD&D campaign with a real "world-wide" feel!

House Rules for the Game

Following are a list of house rules that I use in play. If you have any questions, please email me at the address listed above. These have been adapted through over a decade of playing AD&D (in its many variants), through my own campaigns, some that I have played in, and from some other games posted on the web.

I have divided these house rules into logical sections. As mentioned before, for any necessary clarification, please email me! If it's not clear to you, chances are it isn't clear to someone else too. Also, feel free to offer critical feedback of the content you see here. If something doesn't make sense, don't just tell me, *show* me how it doesn't make sense to you. If I agree with you, I may make a revision to the house rules as they currently stand. You will find as you get to know me that I'm not an absolute stickler for detail on all the rules as printed by TSR. In many cases, I can be found to be quite flexible with regards to interpretation of the rules.

Character Ability Scores:
1. All ability scores are to be rolled by either myself, or by Irony Games die-rolling system. They have a system whereby you can go on their server, generate the appropriate abilities, and have them securely emailed. Your initial stats are to be generated by rolling five six-sided dice (5d6), dropping the highest and lowest die from each set. This may sound odd, but this will force your character into a "bell-curve", and it is intentional. Once your character has adapted to the group, your final ability scores will be determined by me, and passed along to you.
2. I will base all "to hit" modifiers on DEX, rather than STR. Simply use the missile attack adjustment for both melee and missile weapons. The STR benefit will still be used for throwing weapons, and for bows specifically made for high-STR characters.
3. Allow the "fighter only" hit point bonus for CON for all classes, not just for warriors.
4. "Stacked" characters will not be welcomed, and will likely be dealt with by banning the individual who spawned such a character.

Character Races:
1. Elves and halflings do not possess infravision. Neither are subterranean based, and elves seem to have enough abilities as is. I have given them enhanced night-vision instead. They are blind as a bat in total darkness, but suffer fewer penalties when in limited light.
2. There are no race level limits. Humans (only) may dual-class, and advance in both equally (but they must follow the limitations of each class… Therefore, a cleric/mage, can only use the quarterstaff and sling as

weapons). Demihumans pay a straight 10% penalty (plus associated penalties from their race, as per the Complete Book of Elves and the Complete Book of Dwarves) to earned experience if they are single-classed (likely negating any prime requisite bonus). If they are multi-classed, the pay a 10% penalty *per class*. This is to done to ensure balance, as a multiclassed demihuman can sometimes clean up the streets with a single-classed (and higher-level) human.

    3. Demihumans know all racial languages automatically, without paying for them. This reflects on their typically longer lifespan, and the fact that they are largely a minority on this world, and have learned much in terms of languages to compensate.

    4. Dwarves have a base movement of 9, not 6.

    5. All small races (halflings, gnomes and dwarves) receive an AC bonus when attacked by "giant-class" (read the Player's Handbook in the section detailing gnomes and dwarves). I felt that it was unfair for gnomes and dwarves to get the bonus (largely due to the size difference) but not halflings, who are known for their ability to avoid entanglements.

    Character Classes:

    1. Thieves can backstab with ANY weapon, not just the piercing variety. After all, although called "backstab", it merely directed at a weak point.

    2. I've scrapped the idea of Heirophant druids.

    3. Bards can use spells from the school of Song, and may use up to level 9 spells in this school *only*. To see their spell progression, please refer to Table One (which follows this particular segment). Also, Bards are considered to be specialists in the school of Song, and enjoy all the benefits of specialization for it. They receive the standard penalties for *all* other schools of magic, but - due to their myriad nature - do *not* have an opposition school. Their spell selections are haphazard, and their spellbooks will reflect this.

    4. PCs gain a single d6 extra to their initial HP. This roll does *not* include CON bonuses, as this is to reflect their 0-level, pre-adventuring life. This, of course, will also hold true for NPCs.

    5. I will be using several rules from the "Unearthed Arcania", available on the web at: http://the-desk.com/arcania. Specific to this section, I will be using "Making Sense of the Hit Point System", whereby hit points are divided into Base Points and Skill Points. I have attached a copy of this article as Appendix Two.

    6. I have made no great changes to the character classes within the game. What I *have* done, however, is to allow some multiclass combinations not normally granted within the standard AD&D game environment. The enlist form on our website includes a pulldown menu that has the multiclass combations that I am inclined to allow. Ask me for more information if you

wish to play a character that does not somehow fit into the "standard" game rules. This includes character classes from various Dragon magazine articles as well as various Net handbooks. Don't expect me to go for it unless you can point me to the URL where I can look at it.

   7. No psionics will be used in this campaign. Therefore, no psionicists. I've got enough work to do in this campaign as is. If you want to play in a campaign with psionics, join one of the many Dark Sun campaigns available online. I will *not* change my mind on this, so please don't ask.

   8. Wild magic as yet does not exist on the Realms. Therefore, there are no mages specializing in wild magic. If we play this campaign long enough for the Time of Troubles to happen (and if it actually *does* happen), then wild magic may become a factor in the game.

Table One: Expanded Bard Spell Progression

Bard Level	Spell Level								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7*	8*	9*
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
11	3	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
12	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
13	3	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
14	3	3	3	3	1	-	-	-	-
15	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
16	4	3	3	3	2	1	-	-	-
17	4	4	3	3	3	1	-	-	-
18	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-
19	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	1	-
20	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	1

  * School of Song Only (Intelligence score must qualify for higher level spells)

   Weapon and Non Weapon Proficiencies:
   1. I will be using proficiencies *extensively*… That's not to say that if you don't have the skill, you can't use it (though in some cases, that *is* true). I have provided within the rules for a minimal chance of success to use some (not all) proficiencies where the character lacks the appropriate proficiency skill.
   2. Once again, from Unearthed Arcania, refer to the article titled "Fighting Together" (also attached as Appendix Three), I will be using both the Group-

Fighting and Team-Fighting proficiencies. Though no cost is given (by the author) for each skill, I have based each skill as a 2 proficiency slot (4 character points) per skill. There is no associated ability involved, as no proficiency check will be required.

    3. History has shown us that the crossbow was *vastly* easier to learn then the long and shortbows. For that reason, initial proficiency in the long bow and short bow (including composite versions of each) costs 2 proficiency slots (4 character points) rather than 1 slot (2 points). Specialization costs are as per the Player's Option: Combat and Tactics guidelines.

    Character Generation:
    1. Character background is vital. I will be granting an initial XP bonus for *well-thought* and *well-written* character backgrounds. The more useful details you provide, the more I will reward you, and the more I can use your background within the campaign. Obviously, any elements of the background may be changed, and some elements may be added (possibly without your knowledge).
    2. For a guide on the depth of background that I as a DM would like to see, please jump to the bottom of this document, and read Appendix One. If you can answer *each* of these questions, *in detail*, then you're off to a great start already. I may edit components if I see the need to do so, but I may likely not.
    3. Don't be afraid to approach other players for possible links between your character and theirs. Though I don't encourage *everyone* to be somehow linked together this way, I will consider it if it is well-planned and conceived with the interests of superior role playing.
    4. The more XP you have at start, the better equipment you will have, perhaps including some (albeit minor) magic items. This does *not* mean that I want 10000 words of garbage. I will edit out any unnecessary or useless information and base the initial XP reward on what elements I consider to be well-written and well-thought. If you're unsure about what you can use, ask me!
    5. As per the Player's Options hardbacks, we will be using a character point system for proficiencies, etc. This allows players to customize their characters to their own flavour. I also encourage the use of Traits, Advantages and Disadvantages.
    6. See the "Character Ability Scores" in this document (page 10).
    7. Each player will be allowed up to 6 attempts to roll a *complete* stat set (all 6 statistics). They may choose to keep the specific set of rolls that best fit their description and wishes for the character.
    8. If this does not sound suitable, I offer as an option a system where a static number of points are allowed per player, and which may be allocated

to each ability as you see fit. If this is an option you wish to pursue, please notify me by email once your approval has been granted.

Character Money and Equipment:

1. I am using a 64 coins to the pound as a rule. Each coin therefore weighs a quarter ounce, far easier than the .32 ounce in the "official" rules.

2. Armour that is worn is considered to have half the listed value for encumbrance purposes. If it is carried, it uses its full value.

3. The crossbow, though "upgunned" considerably in the Player's Option hardbacks, still lacks historical accuracy. Table Two will summarize the rules for crossbows (as per the Player's Option hardbacks) and will also include custom rules that I use in my campaign.

Table Two: Enhanced Crossbow Rules

As per the Player's Option: Combat & Tactics, crossbows reduce the AC of an armoured opponent by 2 points a medium range. At short range, this AC reduction is 5 points. Pellets crossbows, hand crossbows and cho-ku-no do not receive this penetration bonus. All crossbows cost the standard number of proficiency slots or character points to acquire basic proficiency. All other bows require double the standard for basic proficiency.

Though the Player's Option hardbacks increase the damage done by crossbows, historically the crossbow was FAR deadlier than the game has provided. Therefore, I have further expanded both the damage and knockdown capabilities of crossbows. Also, instead of using the standard range penalties, use the values given below.

Weapon	Damage vs S/M	Damage vs L	Knockdown Roll	M & L Range Penalties
Hand Crossbow	1d6+2	1d4+2	d6	-2 / -5
Light Crossbow	1d12+3	1d10+3	d8	-2 / -4
Heavy Crossbow	2d8+4	1d12+4	d10	-1 / -3

4. PCs will *not* have to buy initial equipment. Players will submit to me a list of equipment that they think would be suitable for their character at their level of experience. I will assess whether or not it is feasible, and approve or deny initial equipment based upon that. However, later equipment must be bought at the standard prices, assuming standard markup for location.

5. If worse comes to worse, and you're in a pinch, try bartering. Everything you possess - even your skills, are your "coin" in trade. Remember that, and you'll be okay.

6. Buyer beware… Not all things for sale are worth their coin. If in doubt, consider consulting someone with the appropriate skills in that area.

7. Incidentally, the Unearthed Arcania has probably *by far* the most expansive list of equipment available for the game that I've ever seen. I'll be using it (page 145) as a basis for what's available at stores within the game.

8. If you have access to *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog* (long out of

print, but worth purchasing if you can find it), then anything listed there that is available unless it is specifically dated after the Time of Troubles or the Tuigan invasion of Færûn.

Character Alignment:
1. Players will not declare their alignment. Through the course of play, their alignment tendency will be recorded. Over time, any actions outside of this tendency will be treated accordingly - particularly damaging to priests or paladins.

2. Preferably, I would like each player to submit a detailed belief system for their PC. I will use this to create the base alignment for the character.

3. I don't use alignment as a straight jacket. For paladins, it can be a curse to be "Lawful Good", and don't expect me to make your life easy. Your alignment will often be your conscience.

4. On the same note, I don't use alignment as a straightjacket for anyone, *including* Paladins. Just like in real life, we all make mistakes, and do stupid things that we *know* are wrong. Depending on the fallout for your actions, your alignment may or may not be affected by it.

5. Anyone can atone for almost anything. But its so much easier to *not* make the mistake in the first place.

Magic Within the PBEM Game
1. I'm using the spellpoint system in "Spells & Magic". If you're going to be playing a spellcaster, read up on it, and discuss any questions you have with me. I will also be using the various new schools of magic as well as the varying spellcaster profiles (except that I will *not* be using defilers or preservers for obvious reasons).

2. I reserve the right (as DM/arbiter of the Gods) to alter the list of spells granted to priests. In most cases, it will be a case of our deity empowering you to face the challenges ahead. However, if you've been less than righteous, your god may withdraw certain spells or spheres until you repent.

3. If you are playing a wizard class, you will be allowed to pick a certain number of spells *per level*, based on your intelligence and level of experience. I reserve the right to arbitrarily decide to refuse access to any particular spell or spells. If you're not sure as to whether or not I'll allow it, ask.

4. I will give the individual player the option as to which spell-point system their PC uses to cast spells. Obviously, it should be something suitable to their individual character. If you aren't sure what system to pick, ask me, and I'll help you with your choice.

5. There are no magic stores. Don't even *think* of asking if this will change. *Some* NPCs may consider trading magic items, but they will benefit *by far* in the deal (and who's to say that you won't get shafted?).

6. I will be allowing spells from the Players Handbook, Tome of Magic,

Complete Wizard's Handbook, Complete Priests' Handbook, Players Option hardback series, Pages from the Mages, Prayers of the Faithful and Forgotten Realms Adventures (OOP Hardback). Otherwise, if you have a spell you'd like included, please submit it to me in the standard format, and I will *consider* including it.

Combat Resolution:

1. The best way for the players to prepare for combat is to take a day to plan their tactics by email, and then to communicate it to me. I would *strongly* suggest that each PC also include a set of 2 or 3 "what if" options, in order to give you a fair chance to react to unplanned NPC activities. I *will* attempt to be fair, within reason. If it appears as though something *totally* unplanned is going to happen, I will likely treat it as a surprise-type scenario. If your character is surprised, well, you're not likely going to be able to "plan" for that, now are you? If you aren't, then I'll give you a chance to modify your move accordingly.

2. Combat will be run as a combination of planned tactics between the players and the creatures they are fighting. Where necessary (and to preserve the free-form feel of the game), I will often arbitrarily decide on the results of individual actions in the combat. If this is a dire combat (with serious repercussions for the player or players), I will use dice to resolve combat rounds as required. In this case, I will use Irony's die-rolling system to generate the players' hit rolls, saving throws or any other required rolls (though I roll damage myself)

3. If a character has been struck down or otherwise rendered unable to continue the turn as plotted, I will communicate to them what has happened. Anyone who has a character immediately close by, and who is not presently involved in melee will be automatically assumed to stand guard over their comrade, bandaging them if necessary, or dragging them to safety if they can.

4. Players may survive to a negative HP total equal to their CON.

5. A character receiving bed rest (to heal injuries), heals 1 HP per day, per level (if multiclassed, only use the lowest). If they aren't receiving full bed rest, they only get 1 HP per day.

6. If a character has negative HP, and is being denied bed rest (perhaps on a cart on the way back to civilization), he must save vs. death magic each day, or lose d4 HP from rough handling. It might be a better idea to set up camp until they have more than 1 HP…

Player Knowledge vs. Character Knowledge:

1. Please be aware that even though *you* might know the stats for most of the creatures within the game, your character will not. They will know some basic information on a variety of common creatures, and a *lot* of incor-

rect information on legendary and other uncommon beasts. I will rarely refer to a creature by its actual name until after you've dealt with it (if it comes to combat), so don't expect me to give information away.

2. If you want to have a bit of an edge on the knowledge your character does possess, you'd best use one or more proficiency slots on the appropriate skill. If there is no skill appropriate to the area you need the information, consult a sage.

3. If you cannot abide by these knowledge requirements, you will be *heavily* penalized in earned experience. I reserve the right to boot you out of the game if you continue to do this. My reasoning is this: the game is supposed to be mysterious. That's the fun of it. If you can't have fun with a little mystery, go back to arcade games.

NPCs Within the Game:

1. Unlike MUDs, NPC are *not* there merely for slaughter. There *is* such a thing as a town guard, you know… While we're on the subject, there *are* laws and there *are* jails within the game. You think prisons are tough now, try living in a true dungeon for a while… (I wouldn't suggest it).

2. I play NPCs with the intelligence appropriate for the character. Villains are *not* mindless (though their minions are another matter), and will dog your *every step*. Be careful who you tick off within the game. They (as in "I") will remember. Conversely, your allies can save your hide.

3. Stuck for information? Hire a sage or some other specialist! Don't ask me, as I'm not giving out freebies.

How to Survive in My Game:

1. Another reference to Unearthed Arcania: I *will* be using the article (included as Appendix Four) "Adding Kinetic Energy to the Falling Damage Equation". I intend to use it. Fighters carrying 200 lbs of equipment (plus their own bulk) should *really* avoid falling down from heights…

2. Not everything that is to be experienced is purely visual… I will use other sensory input, in some cases it will be obvious (it's hard to "hide" the smell of burning flesh, right?), but in others, you'll have to ask… Use your instinct if you're not sure.

3. Never assume… Remember what your Mom said? Assumptions can (and often will) kill… (ie. Just because the monster isn't moving, don't assume it's dead or asleep or ignorant, etc.)

4. Monsters *aren't* by nature stupid. Even orcs (average intelligence) are smart enough to learn tactics and what not. Don't treat every monster as a statistic… Could be a fatal mistake.

5. There is *no* such thing as a random encounter… Everything that happens, and all encounters that I throw at you will have been planned. However, that is not to say that I won't throw the odd red herring at you… You will

have to figure out what encounters are crucial to completion of your current task, and what are not. You have been warned!

6. I do not enjoy killing PCs. If you've been unlucky, I'll be as kind as I can be. If you've been stupid, you'll get whatever you have coming.

7. Dragons are *never* pushovers... Don't expect an easy fight if you decide to tackle one (FYI: the last group I DMed – all average 7th level – were almost annihilated by a Young Adult Dragon). In all fairness, don't expect that I'll be throwing a dragon at the party anytime soon... Unless you consider the dreaded "Sponagledragon"...

8. Not every encounter is a combat encounter, and not every "monster" needs to be fought... Use your brain instead of your sword, and you'll get hurt much less frequently.

9. Don't expect treasure hoards. I don't give them out that often.

10. Same thing with magic. I'm stingy on permanent magic items. Potions, oils, dusts, scrolls and the like will be relatively common. Other stuff... Well, you'll have to see what happens.

11. Don't expect to be able to walk up to the senior NPCs (like Elminster or Khelben, for instance) and be buddy-buddy with them... These great mages rarely have time for young adventurers, unless something should happen that forces them to make time. If you don't believe me, read the IC digest and find out what happened to Findor when he arrived at El's place unannounced. It was *not* pretty...

12. Oh, and by the way, anyone who can translate the runic scripture on the first page of this FAQ will get a little "prize" within the game. If you're not an active player, that can help you get consideration to join the active group.

Well, that's what I have so far... Look it over, ask me questions and offer your input. This is a co-operative game, so please don't be afraid to offer your advice or suggest improvements!

Bruce Sponagle
Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Index of Online Resources

The Unearthed Arcania
http://the-desk.com/arcania

The DM's Netbook
http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Realm/5037/netbook

Appendix One - Twenty Questions to Make a Better PC

Though I do not have the name of the author of this document, it is copied word for word from http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Realm/5037/netbook/articles/quest.html

Players should try to consider the following questions while creating a new character in this or any campaign world. The answers that one comes up with will go a long way into defining the character as a person that is more than the collective sum of his ability statistics.

After all other parts of character generation are completed, sit down and answer the questions one at a time, considering their impact on the way the character will behave and view the world. When you've finished you will have created a true character, ready for play.

1. Who were the character's parents? Did they raise the character? If not, why? If not them, who?

2. Did the character have any childhood friends? Any siblings? Where are they now? Does the character stay in touch with them or have they become separated? If separated, why?

3. What was childhood like for the character? Calm and peaceful or turbulent and traumatic?

4. Does the character have any or did the character have any role models? Describe them.

5. What did the character do before he/she entered the story? Who trained the character to do what she/he does now? What is the character's relationship with his teacher(s)?

6. What are the character's moral, ethical and religious beliefs? What lengths will the character go to defend those beliefs? Who or what taught those beliefs to the character? Remember that a character's moral and ethical beliefs, not necessarily his behaviour, defines his alignment. What is his/her alignment?

7. Does the character have any unusual habits or physical traits? What are they? What do they stem from? How do others tend to react to them?

8. What is the general reaction to the character by other characters? Why, in the character's opinion, do they act that way?

9. Can the character kill? When did he decide (or learn) that he could? Why would the character kill? Does he/she have any enemies at all? Would or could the character kill them?

10. What kind of relationships does the character currently have? Does he/she have any close friends? Bitter enemies? If so, who? What are they like? What is the history of the character and this person's relationship?

11. Does the character have any mental problems? Phobias? If so, what are they? What do they stem from?

12. How does the character generally treat others? Does she/he trust easily? Or not? How does the character relate to people? Is he shy and withdrawn or outgoing and friendly?

13. What does the character look like? Does he/she have any scars or tattoos? If so how did she/he get them? Obviously this includes eye and hair colour, but an unusual gait (walking style) or accent comes into play here as well.

14. What is the character's normal daily routine? How does he/she feel when it's interrupted for whatever reason?

15. Was the character present during any key events in the history of the campaign world? How did that event affect the character?

16. Does the character have a notorious or celebrated ancestor? What did he/she do? What do people assume about the character when his/her ancestry is known? Does the character actively try to live up to the reputation, try dispel it or try to ignore it?

17. Where is the character's homeland? What is its history and what are its people like? Is the character patriotic, or a social outcast? What is his opinion of home?

18. What are the character's dreams? Ambitions? Goals?

19. How does she/he seek to obtain them? How does adventuring fit into this dream, or does it at all?

20. Does the character ever want to have a family of his/her own someday? If so with who or what type of person?

Well done. A character is born! Fill out your notes onto a character sheet and enjoy playing it.

Note from the DM: Once you've finished answering these questions (or as many of them as you can), please email the file to me as plain text, and your application is complete!

Appendix Two: Hit Points Reworked

edited and excerpted from "Unearthed Arcania"
original article written by Brenton Miller <brent@the-desk.com>

The AD&D hit point system has proven to be very confusing over the years. The original concept was that hit points reflect a certain amount of skill a character gains to avoid serious injury. Thus, when that 80 hit point warrior is hit by a sword thrust for 16 points of damage, he was not stabbed through the chest and merely able to shrug off the blow. His AC score, reflected by armour and Dexterity, was insufficient for fully protecting him from an attack. The strike got through his defenses. But, his 80 hit points reflects his skill to avoid serious injury from the successful strike. While the sword blow penetrated his defenses, he was able to roll with the blow, meaning it caused no more than a scratch or a bruise, maybe even no physical damage at all. But his hit points are reduced, because, while he avoided the serious injury a 16-point shot would represent to a lower level character, the physical exertion to avoid the blow cost him, so that after four or five more skilful or "lucky" dodges like that, he won't be so lucky. His skill will have finally failed him, e.g., he's down to 1 hit point and that final sword thrust catches him in the heart.

This is much what E. Gary Gygax himself described in the original *Player's Handbook*, though in quite different words, but this description is very often lost on players because the mechanics of hit points don't reflect this very well, if at all. What is needed is a system that works this concept into the hit point mechanics, while still preserving the basic principles of the AD&D hit point system.

Reinterpreting Hit Points

The first step toward modifying your hit point method is to separate your character's hit points into two categories: Base points and Skill points. The separation is a simple calculation. Twenty-five percent of the character's hit points, rounding up, get applied to Base points, while the remainder go to Skill. There must be a minimum of four points in the base, unless the character has fewer total hit points than this, so this calculation won't even be necessary until a character has more than 16 hit points.

Base points are the character's true life-blood. They represent the character's physical sturdiness, the amount of damage he can sustain before death or serious injury results.

Skill points are a measure of a character's ability to avoid serious damage from attacks that may be devastating to less experienced characters. Skill points reflect the character's experience in rolling with attacks and twisting his body in such a way that a successful breach of his defenses does minimal damage.

It is important to remember the distinction between AC score and Skill level. AC reflects a character's ability to completely avoid an attack, as reflected by the character's Dexterity and armour worn. Skill reflects the character's ability to reduce the seriousness of damage from attacks that win past his AC score. For example, if a character is skilful enough, an attack which might have chopped off the arm of a lower level character will be turned into mild damage, perhaps only a scratch.

When a character rises in level, just roll for the normal hit point increase and recalculate Base and Skill points from the total. In some cases, this means Base points may not rise, while Skill points do, but it is better to do this recalculation, rather than separate each new roll, or you will end up with a character that may have a higher percentage of Base points than 25% due to rounding.

Applying Damage

When an opponent's attack roll is successful, thus breaching the character's defenses (AC), the character must then make a Skill check, which is a roll of percentile dice compared to Skill level. To be successful, the roll must be lower than the character's Skill. The DM can additionally rule that a roll of 100% is an automatic failure. If the roll is successful, the character reduces his Skill points by the number of damage points. If the roll is a failure, the character takes one point of damage from his Base, and the remainder is applied to his Skill. If the character has at least 1 Skill point remaining, then damage done in excess of this is discarded. If the character has a Skill of 0, then all damage is applied to the Base, and no skill check is necessary. In addition, Base points cannot be reduced below 1 until Skill points are also reduced to 0. If you use the optional hovering on death's door rule, described on page 75 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, then Base points will drop to negative values, but Skill points will not drop below 0.

For example, let's say Sasha, our heroic warrior, is attacked. She currently has 6 Base points and 4 Skill points left, and an orc strikes her for 10 points of damage. Sasha fails her Skill check, so 1 point of damage is applied to her Base, reducing it to 5, and the rest are applied to her Skill. There are 9 points left to apply, but Sasha only has 4 Skill points left, so her Skill points are now reduced to 0, and the remaining 5 points of damage are discarded. The next round, Sasha is struck for 3 points of damage. Since she has 0 Skill points left, all damage is applied to her Base points, reducing her base to 2. Since Sasha's Skill points are 0, her luck has run out, so to speak, and she is no longer able to use her vaunted skill to avoid serious injury. The next blow is very likely to kill her.

Hit Point Recovery

Since Skill points in effect represent a character's experience and luck

in avoiding serious injury and are mainly reduced due to physical exertion, such as the character's avoiding several, serious blows, it is logical to assume they would be recovered more quickly than Base points, which represent the character's actual, physical state. However, it is also logical to assume Skill points would be affected by weaker physical states (low Base points), so they would be recovered somewhat in proportion to Base points. To this effect, the following system of recovery is recommended.

Base points are recovered at a rate of 1 point per day of rest, and no more than this. Skill points are recovered at a rate of total Base points times two per day of rest. Calculate the Skill point increase after applying the day's healing to Base points. Thus, if a character has 4 Base points, then rests for a day or night, he will recover 1 Base point, taking him to 5 Base points, then would recover 10 Skill points, multiplying 5 times 2. Rest can mean taking it easy for a day, or it can mean getting a full eight hours of sleep in one night.

Magical healing must also be treated specially, but the calculation is simple. Twenty-five percent of the magical healing is applied to Base points, while the remainder is applied to Skill points. In the case of a priest's *heal* spell, which returns all but one hit point, Skill points are healed to full, and Base points will be healed to full minus one. Use your own judgment for applying healing in other special cases.

Effects of Physical Injury

Here is where the true purpose of this new hit point system is demonstrated. What has been done up to this point is to define a system that makes the intention of the traditional AD&D hit point system apparent in the distribution of damage. Now we need a method of gauging exactly what the effects of hit point loss mean, and this is the role Base points play. If a character with a maximum of 10 Base points is reduced to 1 Base point, it should be obvious he's in dire physical straits. The following table: *Effects of Physical Injury* describes what effects should be applied as a character receives serious physical damage.

Final Notes

The system presented here is intended to provide a more accurate game mechanic for determining a character's level of physical damage, without focusing on too much detail. With this system, Base points can be used to gauge a character's actual physical state, and it provides the DM a simple tool for judging exactly what condition a player is in. A character with 8 out of 10 Base points, but with 0 skill points left, is still in great health, but has run out of both steam and luck, while a character with only 2 out of 10 Base points and 5 Skill points left is hurt quite badly and is going to be in trouble if his next fight comes soon. The DM should use Base points as a tool for

improved roleplaying, not roll-playing, although, if you're so inclined, a precise system of damage could be used to determine which specific body parts have been damaged when Base points are reduced.

Table Three: Effects of Physical Injury

Base Points	Physical Appearance and Penalties
75-100%	The character is at full or nearly full health. He may have visible bruises or minor cuts, but the character is otherwise fully fit.
50-74%	The character has suffered a bit in combat, and has some stronger signs of damage. He may have some deep cuts or bruises, or sore or injured limbs that affect his performance. Both AC and attack rolls receive a 1 point penalty.
25-49%	At this point, the character is showing heavy signs of injury. He may have deep lacerations and severe injury of body parts that greatly affect his mobility. AC, attack rolls, and all physical abilities receive a 1 point penalty. This may mean a reduction in defensive adjustment (thus further reducing AC) when the character's Dexterity is reduced by 1.
Less than 25%	Outward signs of harm are very severe. The character will exhibit terrible wounds, possibly still bleeding, will suffer great physical impairments, perhaps even broken bones, and will have an extremely difficult time with any physical activity. AC, attack rolls, all physical abilities, and saves relying on physical ability are penalized by 2 points. This also means his defensive adjustment must be recalculated (if necessary) when their Dexterity is reduced by 2 points.
1 Base Point Left* (optional)	In addition to the penalties provided above, the character must make a system shock check during each round of physical exertion, such as travel (unless being carried in a litter or other reasonable means of transport), combat, or other demanding tasks. Failing this check means the character collapses into unconsciousness for 1d4 days or until special healing methods - such as magic or herbal poultices - are applied.

* Only apply this rule if the character has at least five Base points when fully healed.

Final notes, continued...

Also, in using this system, you may be tempted to allow certain methods of damage, such as called shots or backstabs, to do extra damage to the Base score. While this would demonstrate a higher level of effectiveness for certain, obviously lethal attacks, such as slitting a character's throat, it dilutes the purpose of Skill as explained herein. Taking the throat-slitting action for example, one may wish to say all damage of this type would be applied to the base points, thus making the attack more severe, or one may say this type of attack would kill the character outright. But, first, this is a fantasy world, and characters should be allowed to perform heroic feats, such as escaping from the precarious predicament of a dagger at the throat. Second, the possibility a character may escape from death in such a situation is reflected by his Skill points, which help him turn at just the right moment to make that throat attack miss the vital areas. Take for example the following scenario with two slightly different explanations for the outcome.

Our heroine Sasha the Swift is grabbed from behind by an evil brute who puts a dagger to her throat and demands she keep still while his friends rough up Sasha's inexperienced companions and loot the place. Sasha, being the heroine she is, decides she can't let this happen, so she makes a bold move to escape her captor's grasp. Feeling her attempts to escape, the captor twists the dagger, trying to open Sasha's throat.

Now, let's assume you (as the DM) allow the captor's attack to automatically succeed (after all, you probably forced him to make an attack roll to grab Sasha by the throat in the first place), and the dagger attack inflicts 3 points of damage. Two possible interpretations can be made to describe Sasha's heroic escape.

First example: Assuming a successful Skill check is made for Sasha, all 3 points of damage will be applied to her Skill score, and none will be applied to her Base. The results could be described something like this:

Sasha attempts her bold escape, and her amazing swiftness allows her to twist just enough in her captor's arms so only the flat of the blade hits her neck. Immobilizing her attacker's arm, she spins completely free and whips around to face him in a fair fight.

Second example: Let's say, instead, Sasha fails her Skill check. One point of damage is removed from her Base score, and the other 2 points reduce her Skill score by 2. The slightly modified scene description would be something like this:

Sasha's attempt to escape her captor's hold is successful, but the tip of the dagger slides across the base of her neck, just missing the vital arteries. Sasha slips away, turning to face her captor, the warm blood dripping down her neck reminding her how precarious her position had been.

This, as this author and DM views it, is how the AD&D hit point system was intended to be viewed, and the system just presented to you can help you reflect that intention within the actual mechanics of your games.

Appendix Three: Team and Group Fighting Proficiencies

edited and excerpted from "Unearthed Arcania"
original article written by Brenton Miller <brent@the-desk.com>

As a DM, have you ever been annoyed because your group of four PCs quickly and easily brought down your group of 20 goblins when the encounter was at least supposed to slow them down? Or as a player, have you been frustrated because that lone monster with the 2,000 hit points was able to focus on just one member of your party of six while the best you could do to prevent your companion from dying was to attempt an ineffective parry?

Well, here are two new nonweapon proficiencies that may help, one called group-fighting and one called team-fighting. Group-fighting should be viewed as a skill in which two or more characters work together to bring down a single foe. Its focus is primarily offense. Team-fighting, in contrast, is where two or more people work as a team to help each other defeat a foe. It emphasizes defense more than offense, since the focus is on keeping your teammates alive while trying to bring down the foe. Following is a description of both proficiencies and the bonuses granted from each.

Group-Fighting

The primary focus of group-fighting is to bring down an opponent quickly and brutally. A group consists generally of from 2 to 8 people. The limit to the number of group members depends essentially on the size of the group's opponent. Small (S) creatures can be attacked by fewer opponents at once than large (L) creatures can. The main idea is that everyone in the group is attacking the opponent at once, hitting him as hard as possible and trying to bring him down quickly. Examples of common groups would be police squads trying to physically subdue a criminal, a group of bullies beating up a victim, or a group of rogues roughing up someone who has failed to repay a debt.

Group-fighting is generally not an honourable or skilful fighting style and is used either as a necessity, such as police bringing down a criminal, or by ruffians who want to make sure a victim is thoroughly punished. Groups learn to spread their attacks over a foe's most vulnerable areas, attacking all at once rather than one at a time, thus bonuses are weighted heavily on the side of attack.

Each member in a fighting group gains a +1 bonus to his attack roll for every other group member who is attacking the same round. Thus, if a group has four people who all have the group-fighting skill, and all four attack the same round, each gets a +3 bonus to his attack roll. If all four were attacking, but only three had the group-fighting skill, each member with the group-fighting skill would gain only a +2 bonus. In addition, when

the group is going for non-lethal damage, mainly just trying to subdue the opponent, the same bonus applies to damage. For lethal combat in which the group is trying to kill the opponent, this damage bonus is only half. Also for non-lethal damage, each successful attack has a 5% chance per group-fighter of knocking the victim unconscious.

Because of the fierceness of this attack form, the victim suffers a -2 penalty to his to-hit rolls, reflecting the fact that he must fight against constant physical bombardment which will throw off his accuracy. See the table below for a list of the bonuses provided by group-fighting.

Team-Fighting

Where the focus in group-fighting is on bringing an opponent down, the primary focus in team-fighting is protecting each member of the team, while trying to safely bring down the opponent. The members of the team work very closely with each other, coming to the rescue of endangered companions. They may even have attack strategies worked out to maximize their fighting skills. These give them an advantage over a single opponent.

Because of this focus on protecting the team members, each team-member with this skill gains a -1 bonus to his AC score for each other member of the team with this skill who is participating in the melee. In addition, each team member with this skill gains a +1 to his attack roll. Note that gaining these benefits requires that two or more members with the team-fighting skill attack together in the same round and attack the same opponent. There is no logical upper limit to the number of people who can fight together as a team, although there are still restrictions on how many can physically attack the same opponent at once. The DM should use his own judgment in determining how many people can work together as a team to gain the defensive bonuses, but the upper limit should probably be no more than 8 or 10.

Another benefit of the team-fighting skill that can be used individually, regardless of whether or not another member of the fighting party possesses the skill, is the ability for the character to interpose himself between an opponent and a target. This is because learning to fight with a team teaches one to gauge the needs of his partners. If one sees a companion being attacked by someone or some creature that seems too powerful for that companion, or if the companion is near death, the character with team-fighting can willingly jump into the line of attack to protect his companion. This does not require an action on the part of the team-fighter, and he can choose to remain the target of attacks for as many rounds as he desires, or until another successfully interposes between him and the opponent.

Table Four: Group Fighting Bonuses

Number in Group*	Attack Bonus	Non-lethal Damage Bonus	Non-lethal Chance of Knock-out**	Lethal Damage Bonus	Foe Attack Penalty
2	1	1	10%	1	-1
3	2	2	15%	1	-1
4	3	3	20%	2	-1
5	4	4	25%	2	-1
6	5	5	30%	3	-1
7	6	6	35%	3	-1
8	7	7	40%	4	-1

* Refers to the number in the group with the group-fighting proficiency
** Each successful, non-lethal attack has this percent chance to knock the
opponent unconscious. This number is not cumulative.

Skill Disadvantages

The primary disadvantage of both the group-fighting and team-fighting skills is that in order to gain their benefits, two or more people must focus on one opponent. To do so means to pay less attention to other possible opponents. Thus, if a group of characters uses either proficiency to focus on a single opponent while other opponents are around, the characters get +2 penalties to their AC scores if another opponent attacks.

Once the fighting group is engaged by additional opponents, they must either break into smaller groups separated among the opponents, or if there are too many opponents, the skills can no longer be used for the remainder of the melee.

Combining Skills

Though the DM should force a party to choose which skill it is going to use (i.e., do they want to focus on protecting themselves in the encounter or on bringing the foe down quickly), the DM may optionally allow a party to use both skills at once. In this case, all bonuses should *not* be cumulative. Instead, give the party the attack and damage bonuses for their group-fighting skill, and give them the defensive bonuses for their team-fighting skill. Again, it is recommended that the DM force the party to choose to use one skill or the other during a specific melee, but combining them in the described way will at least prevent a party from becoming too powerful.

Final Thoughts on Group and Team Fighting

The skills described in this article are meant to provide a logical advantage for fighting groups, primarily NPC groups. PC parties of 10th level and higher can be difficult to control and are apt to disregard even large groups of weaker creatures. Use of the abilities described here give even the weakest groups a fighting chance against powerful PC parties and will make the PCs give grudging respect to such groups.

Also, the DM may decide certain character kits or existing groups naturally pick up the skills of either group-fighting or team-fighting. Soldiers in the king's army, for example, may naturally learn the team-fighting skill as a result of their extensive training together, while a group of rogues belonging to the local thieves' guild may naturally pick up the group-fighting skill since part of their job may include "roughing up" disagreeable clients.

Remember too that these proficiencies should not be overused. When characters are low-level, it will already be a struggle for them to defeat large groups of lower-level opponents, so only certain, key groups should possess these skills. In contrast, higher level characters are tougher to defeat, and they have worked hard to get where they are, so they should be able to feel fairly confident of beating large groups of weaker opponents. Use these skills when you want to give a lower-level group, such as town guards, an advantage over high-level parties without arbitrarily increasing the experience levels of the NPC group members.

Optional Rule: If the DM wishes to allow the PCs to use these abilities, he can withhold the bonuses until the particular party has had some time to work together as a group or team. This would reflect the party's need to spend time fighting with each other in order to learn how to work cohesively. After using the group- or team-fighting skill for an experience level or two, then the bonuses kick in.

Appendix Four: Realistic Falling Damage

edited and excerpted from "Unearthed Arcania"
original article written by Bryan E. Manahan <sidereal@epix.net>

A Dungeon Master faced with the question of falling damage in his or her campaign may wonder which system to use for best and most realistic feel, given the two different, officially published systems in the AD&D game. In the 1st edition Player's Handbook and 2nd edition Dungeon Master's Guide, a simple system is presented which uses 1d6 per 10' fallen. Although this is a simple, easy to use system, it hardly does justice to the factor of kinetic energy upon impact. The other "official" system for falling damage is the geometric progression damage system found in the 1st edition Survival Guides. This attempts to take into account the acceleration of a falling body. However, it is still inadequate. The problem with both systems is that they do not differentiate between the massive "Conan" type of fighter and the scrawny wizard relevant to the kinetic energy of impact. Surely there is a difference in impact energy between a huge and heavy object and a small, light object. I propose a system here which takes into account this neglected factor. As a reader, you do not have to understand the physics behind the system to use it. However, it may help you realize the necessity of a new system of falling damage if you do understand the physics.

It is logical to assume, and can be proven by simple experimentation, the damage inflicted upon a falling body on impact varies according to the total kinetic energy of the body at the point of impact. This kinetic energy is equal to the total potential energy the body had before beginning its descent.

$$Ek = Ep$$

The total potential energy of an object is equal to the product of its mass, the acceleration due to gravitational attraction, and its height above the surface of impact. Thus:

$$Ep = mgh$$

The weight of any given object is the force it exerts upon the surface on which it rests. This is different than the object's mass. Force is equal to the product of mass and acceleration. Since the only acceleration affecting a resting or free falling body is that which is due to gravitational attraction, the weight of an object can be represented as the product of its mass and the acceleration due to gravity, or simply:

$$W = mg$$

With the data correlated together, the following points are determined:
(1) The total potential energy of an object is directly proportional to its

weight, if its height above a surface is constant.

(2) The total potential energy of an object is directly proportional to its height above a surface, if its weight is constant.

Therefore, The total potential energy of any object is equal to the product of the object's weight and its height above a given surface and is equal to the final kinetic energy of impact if that object falls the distance to the surface below. Thus, the damage done to the falling object (or an object it falls upon) will vary proportionally according to these two factors.

TSR standardized the d6 as the falling damage die, and they standardized the system of 1d6 per 10 feet fallen. Because the AD&D game is stated by TSR as being basically humanocentric (see p. 21 of the 1st edition DMG), it was assumed for the purposes of determining this system that these figures roughly correlated with the average human of 150 pounds. 1d6 generates an average of 3.5, assuming the die is perfectly balanced, and thus giving an average of 1 point of damage per 42.857143 pounds that falls 10 feet. This calculates out to be approximately 2.333 points average per 100 pounds per 10 feet. 1d4 gives an average result of 2.5, which is as close as you will get with your polyhedrons (and some of you probably have d4s that average 2.333 anyway), so this is close enough for this purpose. The figure of 100 pounds was chosen for simplicity of computation. Hereby, we have the basic system created which is consistent with the laws of physics and includes the long left out factor of kinetic energy.

1d4 hp of damage per 100 pounds (or fraction thereof) of body weight, equipment, etc. of the falling creature per 10 feet the creature falls.

Now for a bit of refinement

Because TSR standardized the d6 as the falling damage die and because it is unlikely any DM has that many 4-sided dice and because I like the idea of cautious players, I have given slight alteration to the basic calculated system; thus, my officially proposed system which I use for falling damage:

1d6 hp of damage per 100 pounds (or fraction thereof) of body weight, equipment, etc., of the falling creature per 10 feet the creature falls.

Also of note is that there is no maximum number of dice when using this system, and thus it makes it that much more hazardous to fall in a hole or off a cliff (like it is in a world where physics work properly).

Under this system, no longer does the enormous fighter fall 200 feet, scratch his forehead, get up, and walk away while his magic user companion needs to be collected in a bucket after attempting the same feat.

Example of use

Grog the Barbarian is a physically imposing figure at 425 pounds and carries 250 pounds of equipment and treasure. Alyssa is a cleric of a non-violent faith and thus has never needed to develop a huge physique. She is

only 115 pounds and carries only minimal equipment, totalling around 20 extra pounds or so, and no armour. The two of them fall into a 30-foot deep pit. Falling damage is thus:

Grog = 425+250 = 675 pounds total = 7 dice x 3 (for 30 feet) = 21d6 of damage

Alyssa = 115+20 = 135 pounds total = 2 dice x 3 (for 30 feet) = 6d6 of damage

Closing Words

What you have in your hands now is all that you will likely need from me to play and enjoy this game. Those of you who lack the necessary TSR books, if you are chosen to play, I will merely use what I have to create your character with you, and inform you as to what each piece means.

At this time, I have decided to keep this document as one. I have yet to hear many requests to separate the FAQ and house rules and - until I see a definite requirement for such a split - will not likely split them anytime soon. However, please offer your feedback on this document!

In the future, updates will happen on a less-frequent basis. The house rules will likely only be updated for clarity, or to address any playability or spelling and grammar errors that I have somehow missed.

Welcome to the Realms!

Bruce Sponagle
Wednesday, October 29, 2003

PS. Beware the Sponagledragon!

List of Reference Material

Here is the list of Realms-related AD&D stuff I own. In order to make it all fit, I had to omit an entire set (the "FOR" series) - I own them too!

AD&D Players Handbook
AD&D Dungeon Master's Guide
Tome of Magic
Legends & Lore
Book of Artifacts
Encyclopedia Magica, Volumes 1-4
Forgotten Realms Adventures
Player's Option - Skills & Powers
Player's Option - Combat & Tactics
Player's Option - Spells & Magic
Campaign Sourcebook / Catacomb Guide
Arms & Equipment Guide
Monster Mythology
Castle Guide
Sages & Specialists
DM's Option - High Level Campaigns
Complete Fighter's Handbook
Complete Thief's Handbook
Complete Priest's Handbook
Complete Wizard's Handbook
Complete Psionics Handbook
Complete Book of Dwarves
Complete Bard's Handbook
Complete Book of Elves
Complete Book of Gnomes & Halflings
Complete Book of Humanoids
Complete Ranger's Handbook
Complete Barbarian's Handbook
Complete Paladin's Handbook
Complete Druid's Handbook
Complete Ninja's Handbook
Monstrous Compendium Series (All of them)
Monstrous Manual
Monstrous Compendium Annual #1
Monstrous Compendium Annual #2
Monstrous Compendium Mystaran Appendix
Forgotten Realms Campaign (Grey Box)
Forgotten Realms Campaign (2nd Edition)
Elminster's Ecologies
Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 1
Elminster's Ecologies, Appendix 2
The Ruins of Myth Drannor
The Ruins of Zhentil Keep
The Ruins of Undermountain
City System
The Horde Boxed Set
Menzoberranzan Boxed Set

Maztica Boxed Set
Al Qadim Rulebook
The Land of Fate
City of Delights
Caravans
A Dozen and One Adventures
Assassin Mountain
Golden Voyages
The Complete Sha-ir's Handbook
The Forgotten Realms Atlas
Forgotten Realms Book of Lairs
Waterdeep and the North
Moonshae
Empires of the Sands
The Magister
The Savage Frontier
Dreams of the Red Wizards
Hall of Heroes
The Bloodstone Lands
Old Empires
Dwarves Deep
Horde Campaign
Anaurach
The Great Glacier
Gold & Glory
The Shining South
The Dalelands
The Moonsea
City of Waterdeep Trail Map
Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog
Volo's Guide to Waterdeep
Volo's Guide to the North
Volo's Guide to Cormyr
Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast
Volo's Guide to the Dalelands
Volo's Guide to All Things Magical
Player's Guide to the Forgotten Realms
Warriors and Priests of the Realms
Wizards and Rogues of the Realms
Demihumans of the Realms
Faiths & Avatars
Powers & Pantheons
Demihuman Deities
AD&D Core Rules CD ROM v2.0
AD&D Core Rules Expansion CD ROM
Forgotten Realms Atlas CD ROM
Dragon Magazine Archive, Issues 1-250