

Savage Barsaive

A Savage Setting based on the Earthdawn RPG

Another Conversion? (Not really)

Lots of other people have already made “Savage Earthdawn” conversions. I’ve consulted several fine ones on the web and stolen some good ideas from them as I worked on this project. I admire the work those folks have done and think they’ve achieved what they set out to do. So I’m undertaking this not because I think there’s anything wrong with what’s already been done, but because I’m trying to do something different.

Those existing conversions seem to me to be attempts to let people play Earthdawn using the Savage Worlds rules. What I want to do is to play Savage Worlds using the Earthdawn setting. Or to put it another way, I’m taking the advice I got online to “convert the setting, not the system” to the limit.

These rules, then, don’t attempt to let you simulate all the stuff in the Earthdawn rules. I’ve made no attempt to translate every Talent and Spell from ED into a SWEX format. Spells here work very much like spells always work in Savage Worlds.

Instead, these rules are intended to let a gamemaster run a SWEX game in the setting of Barsaive. They try to capture the feel of Earthdawn without trying to do all the same things the ED rules do or create the same results as the ED rules would.

I am indebted to the folks who post on both RPGnet and the Pinnacle Forums for ideas and encouragement. In particular, the people who commented on the first draft of this conversion really gave me the motivation and guidance to produce this revised version.

Races

Dwarf

Thermal Vision

Stout: Dwarf bodies are tough and strong. They gain the Brawny Edge.

Educated: Dwarves believe in learning and education, so each Dwarf gets a free d6 Knowledge skill

Short Legs: Dwarves have a default Pace of 5.

Elf

Graceful: Elves start with d6 Agility

Low-Light Vision

Charm: Elves have Charisma (+2)

Frail: Elves are at -1 Toughness.

Human

Talented: a Human starts with one free Edge, but must meet all requirements.

Versatile: Humans can learn a wide range of abilities, and so start with a free skill at d6.

Obsidiman

Powerful: an Obsidiman starts with d8 Strength and can raise it to d12+2 with advances.

Enduring: Obsidimen start with d8 Vigor and again can raise it to d12+2.

Big: Obsidimen are nearly as tall as Trolls and are more massive on average. They have +1 Size and +1 Toughness as a result.

Natural armor: Strong Obsidiman skin provides +2 Armor, but they can only wear “living” armor in addition.

Slow: Obsidimen have a Pace of 3 and roll d4 for running.

Clumsy: An Obsidiman can never raise Agility above d6.

Low Karma: Obsidimen have the Bad Luck Hindrance.

Ork

Low-Light Vision

Strong: Orks start with d6 Strength

Swift: Orks start with the Fleet-Footed Edge

Passionate: Orks have the Gahad Hindrance (minor). Each Ork should pick some broad area that provokes this passion. When Gahad is triggered, the Ork must act out on it or suffer a level of Fatigue until a full day has passed.

Troll

Thermal Vision

Powerful: Trolls start with d6 in Strength and Vigor

Big: Trolls have +1 Size and +1 Toughness as a result

Low Karma: Trolls have the Bad Luck Hindrance.

The Troll Way: Trolls are expected to behave according to a rigid code of showing bravery and strength. They have the Code of Honor Hindrance.

T'skrang

Aquatic: T'skrang are natural in the water. They receive a free d6 in Swimming and can swim at a Pace equal to their Swimming die.

Tail Attack: T'skrang can make a Fighting attack with their tails, doing Str+d6 damage.

Windling

Winged: Windlings can fly at a Pace of 8. (Their walking Pace is 4.) When in flight in an open area, attacks from creatures human-sized or larger against the Windling are made at -2.

Karma: Windlings have the Luck Edge.

Astral Sight

Childlike: The appearance and behavior of Windlings invokes positive feelings in others, giving them +2 Charisma.

Minute: Windlings average only 18" in height, giving them -2 Size and -2 Toughness as a result (minimum Toughness of 2). This does mean that Windlings can use the Giant Killer Edge against Obsidimen and Trolls.

Weak: the small Windling bodies can never have a Strength die higher than d6.

Disciplines

In Savage Barsaive, all Adepts (Wild Cards) practice a Discipline. When making your character, you should pick a Discipline that your character wishes to follow. However, it's mostly up to you to decide what that Discipline implies in terms of the character sheet. You might encounter another Cavalryman who has done it differently, or your Scout might encounter someone who calls their Discipline "Explorer" but has some of the same abilities. As you advance, you may encounter others of your Discipline who are willing to teach you secret techniques (Edges) that allow some special power or ability, but they may first expect you to prove yourself somehow.

The Disciplines most commonly talked about in Barsaive are Air Sailor, Archer, Beastmaster, Cavalryman, Elementalist, Illusionist, Nethermancer, Scout, Sky Raider, Swordmaster, Thief, Troubadour, Warrior, Weaponsmith, and Wizard.

Discipline Suggestions

These are some guidelines for ways to build the familiar Disciplines.

Air Sailor

Boating and Fighting are necessary skills. Add some Combat Edges and maybe Connections to reflect your well traveled background.

Archer

Shooting obviously is important, and the Edges Marksman, Double Shot, and Flame Arrow are a natural fit. Fighting, Throwing, and other Combat Edges will round it out.

Beastmaster

Obviously the Edge named for your Discipline is a must. You'll want Beast Bond and Claw Shape as soon as possible. Combat Edges are important too.

Cavalryman

Start with Natural Rider and high ratings in Riding and Fighting. Add Sure Rider and Spirit Mount when you can.

Elementalist

Get the Elementalist variation of Wizard as soon as you can. Knowledge (elemental magic) may be useful for working with elements in their pure form. Of course Power Edges are always useful.

Illusionist

As with the other spellcasters, you want Power Edges and the Illusionist Professional Edge. Stealth is an important skill for doing sleight of hand. Also, load up on Smarts and

use it to do lots of tricks, specifying the effect as a minor illusion that dismays, distracts, or discombobulates your opponent.

Nethermancer

Again, the Nethermancer variation of Wizard and Power Edges are important choices. The Outsider Hindrance may well be appropriate, given that most people don't really like Nethermancy. Intimidation is a good choice to reflect your ability to cause fear.

Scout

Start with Stealth, Survival, and Tracking skills and the Woodsman Edge. Fighting and Shooting are excellent choices, and many of the Combat Edges can help too. Lockpicking (to disarm traps), Climbing, and even Swimming make good additional choices.

Sky Raider

Fighting and Combat Edges are a good plan, and you'll want Battle Shout and Intimidation. Boating should be obvious too.

Swordmaster

Fighting and Combat Edges are obvious first stops (look especially at First Strike, Florentine, Trademark Weapon). Don't neglect Taunt, and consider Strong Willed as an Edge that can boost your non-combat skills.

Thief

Once you've got the obvious skills and the Professional Edge named after your Discipline, you've made a good start. Shooting and Throwing are a good plan, so that you can Stealth your way into a position to get the Drop on somebody and take advantage from a distance.

Troubadour

Be social: Persuasion, the Troubadour Professional Edge, and anything that boosts Charisma. Follow that up with Investigation, some Knowledge skills, and whatever combat stuff you can afford.

Warrior

Don't overthink it: make yourself a combat monster. Add Intimidation if you have the skill points. Get the best weapon and armor you can.

Weaponsmith

Repair and Forge Blade are the obvious starting points. Remember Investigation for researching those Key Knowledges, and of course you want the best Fighting you can get.

Wizard

Smarts, Power Edges, the Wizard Edge, Investigation, Knowledge skills, and more Power Edges.

Character Creation

Skills

Boating is used for both water vessels and airships. **Piloting** is not used.

Driving is used for maneuvering a vehicle drawn by animals like a wagon or cart.

Note **Investigation**'s importance for researching the Key Knowledges of Magic Items or other Patterns of importance.

Some suggested **Knowledge** specialties: Battle, Lore of a specific race, Magic, creatures of Barsaive, Horrors, any specific region/city/kingdom, pre-Scourge history, weapons.

New Hindrances

Horror-Marked (Major): Somehow a Horror has become aware of you and placed a mystic Mark on you that lets it track you and use its powers on you from a distance. If you manage to destroy it or get the Mark removed, use your next advancement opportunity to buy off this hindrance.

Lost Wings (Major): You are a Windling whose wings have been destroyed or rendered useless. You lose the ability to fly.

Slave Mentality (Minor): You spent years as a Theran slave. Although you have escaped, you still are more inclined to take orders than give them. You have a -2 penalty to Intimidation and Persuasion rolls and may not take Leadership or Social Edges until you reach Seasoned.

Banned Edges

These Edges are not available:

Ace

Arcane Backgrounds not listed below

Champion

Gadgeteer

Holy/Unholy Warrior

McGyver

Mentalist

Mr. Fix It

Rock and Roll!

Background Edges

Arcane Background (Spellcasting)

Arcane Skill: Spellcasting (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 3

Your character follows a Discipline that casts spells. Because magic in Barsaive has been corrupted by the Scourge, you must use something called a “Spell Matrix” to filter the magic and protect yourself. As they are used, these matrices deteriorate and need to recharge. This is what power points simulate. When you take the Power Points Edge, you are getting an additional Spell Matrix.

If you roll a 1 on your Spellcasting die (regardless of the Wild Die), you suffer all the risks of Raw Magic, below.

Raw Magic: Spellcasters can cast spells without using a Spell Matrix. Doing so costs no power points but incurs serious risks of damage and unwanted attention from Horrors. After any raw magic attempt (successful or not), roll a number of d6s equal to the total power point cost of the spell attempted. These dice may ace normally. Take the highest result and compare it to the caster’s base toughness (no armor or spell effects apply) and read it as a damage test.

Next repeat this test with d4s opposed by a Spirit roll of the caster. If the highest d4 result exceeds the Spirit result, a Horror has noted the event and may Mark the caster.

Elementalist

Elementalists command earth, air, fire, water, and wood to do their bidding. Their trappings should all clearly reflect one of the elements being used.

Available Powers: Armor, Barrier, Blast, Bolt, Burrow, Burst, Deflection, Elemental Manipulation, Entangle, Environmental Protection, Fly, Greater Healing, Healing, Light, Smite

Suggested support skill: Repair

Illusionists

The illusionist cleverly mixes a few real magical effects with their mainstay, illusions that fool the senses. Trappings should generally be either very dramatic or quite subtle.

Available Powers: Barrier, Blast, Bolt, Burst, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Entangle, Fear, Invisibility, Light, Obscure, Puppet, Speak Language, Speed, Stun

Suggested support skill: Stealth

Nethermancers

These often feared magicians manipulate the mysterious world of spirits. Trappings should emphasize the spirit world, the undead, or the like.

Available Powers: Armor, Barrier, Beast Friend, Blast, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Deflection, Entangle, Fear, Obscure, Quickness, Smite, Speed, Stun, Zombie

Suggested support skill: Knowledge (netherworld)

Wizards

The most scholarly of the spellcasters, Wizards tend to have a better understanding of how magic works and are able to produce a wide range of effects as a result.

Available Powers: Armor, Barrier, Blast, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Burst, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Entangle, Fly, Invisibility, Light, Quickness, Shape Change, Speak Language, Speed, Stun, Telekinesis, Teleport

Suggested support skill: Knowledge (arcana)

Combat Edges

Battle Shout

Requirements: Novice, Intimidation d8+, Fighting d6+

In combat, you can let out a deafening roar that can frighten multiple enemies. You can apply a single Intimidation roll to a group of up to five non-Wild Card enemies within 5”.

Double Shot

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d8+

You can shoot two arrows at once at a single target at a -2 penalty. If you hit, both arrows hit the target for full damage.

Sure Rider

Requirements: Novice, Riding d8+, Fighting d8+

You get a +2 to your Riding roll to retain your seat when Shaken or wounded.

Power Edges

Soul Drain is referred to by many in Barsaive as either “Blood Magic” or “Life Magic.”

Professional Edges

Forge Blade

Requirements: Repair d8+, Knowledge (weapons) d8+

By working for one week on any professionally made weapon and making a Repair roll, you can give that weapon a permanent +1 to damage. On a critical failure, the weapon is ruined beyond repair. This may be done only once per weapon.

Improved Forge Blade

Requirements: Seasoned, Forge Blade

By working for one week on a weapon already improved with Forge Blade and making a successful Repair roll, you can increase its bonus damage to +2. Again, a critical failure ruins the weapon, and this may be done only once per weapon.

Troubadour

Requirements: Novice, Persuasion d8+, Knowledge (performance) d8+

If you have the opportunity to perform for your target (and make a successful performance roll first), you get a +2 on a single Persuasion attempt. This only works on Name-Givers, not any kind of monster, Horror, or animal.

Wizard

This Edge can be taken by any of the Spellcasting disciplines with an appropriate name change. The Knoweldge (arcana) d8+ requirement should be replaced by the corresponding recommended support skill for that discipline.

Social Edges

Common Bond

This Edge can only be taken when all involved Wild Cards take it at the same time. Note that this implies that a Thread has been woven by each member to the group's True Pattern. (This counts against the limit noted under Wild Card Edges.)

Improved Common Bond

Requirements: Veteran, Common Bond

Bennies can be transferred between the group regardless of distance.

Weird Edges

Claw Shape

Requirements: Wild Card, Beast Master, Fighting d8+, Knowledge (animal lore) d6+

By spending a benny, you can cause your dominant hand to assume a clawed form that does str+d6 damage.

Flame Arrow

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Shooting d10+, Knowledge (archery lore) d6+

By spending a benny when firing an arrow, you cause it to burst into flame, giving +2 damage and a chance to set the target on fire.

Natural Rider

Requirements: Wild Card, Riding d8+, Spirit d6+

Horses and all animals trained to have a rider respond well to you. If you take this game at character creation, you start the game with a riding horse.

Spirit Mount

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Sure Rider, Riding d10+

By making a successful Spirit test and spending a benny, you can conjure a spirit mount to ride. Such a mount usually takes the form of a horse or unicorn, though other shapes have been reported. Only the summoner can ride this mount. Use the stats for a riding horse but reduce strength to d10 and vigor to d6. The mount remains for a number of minutes equal to the 2x the result of the Spirit test.

Wild Card Edges

These Edges allow a Wild Card (Adept) to weave a thread to a person, place, or thing. A character can never have more Threads active at once than half her Spirit rating.

Thread Item

Requirements: Possession of thread item and appropriate key knowledge, Wild Card, Spirit d6+, and either Arcane Background (Spellcaster) or Seasoned

You have woven a Thread connecting your True Pattern to that of your Thread Item, unlocking its first tier of powers. This Edge may be taken more than once but only once per item.

Improved Thread Item

Requirements: Seasoned, Thread Item Edge for this item, appropriate key knowledge
You have strengthened the Thread to your item, unlocking another tier of powers. You may take this Edge more than once (until all powers are unlocked), but only once per item per Rank.

Thread Link

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d6+, appropriate key knowledge

You have woven a Thread linking your True Pattern to some other True Pattern. Pick one Trait to attach the Thread to. You get a +1 to rolls on that Trait when you are using that Trait on/against the linked person, within the linked place, or using the linked item. You may take this Edge more than once, but only once per object of the link.

Improved Thread Link

Requirements: Heroic, Spirit d8+, Thread Link, appropriate key knowledge.
Your bonus on rolls improves by +1 and applies to one additional Trait.

Languages

Each character starts out fluent in a number of language equal to one-half Smarts. One of these languages should be Dwarven and non-Dwarves should almost always choose their race's native language. You may use an Advance to learn another language.

Gear

Starting wealth is 150 silver pieces. All costs are given in silver pieces. Many costs reflect the rarity or demand for items in addition to their functionality. Note that some items may cause strong negative reactions from some groups.

Armor

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Leather	+1	15	20	
Hide Armor	+1	25	50	
Chain Mail	+2	40	180	
Fernweave	+1	15	125	1 bonus pt. armor vs. damaging magical effects
Blood Pebble	+2	--	300	Blood magic rating 4
Living Crystal	+3	--	1100	Grants wearer Arcane Resistance Edge
Plate Mail (full suit)	+3	50	3000	
Shields				
Buckler		5	5	+1 parry
Ferndask	--	5	25	+1 parry; bonus magic armor as Fernweave
Footman's or Rider's	--	10	20	+1 parry, +2 armor vs. ranged attacks that hit
Crystal Viking	--	15	150	+2 parry, bonus as Fernweave
Body	--	15	75	+2 parry, +2 armor to ranged attacks that hit

Hand Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Dagger	Str + d4	1	1	
Dwarf sword	Str + d6	3	10	
Whip	Str + d6	2	10	-2 to hit if dex is lower than d8
Short sword	Str + d6	4	12	
Broadsword	Str + d8	8	25	
Troll sword	Str + d10	10	50	Trolls and Obsidimen only unless modified to be used two-handed
Two-handed sword	Str + d10	12	125	Parry -1, two hands
Hand axe	Str + d6	2	12	
Battle axe	Str + d8	8	35	
Pole axe	Str + d10	15	150	AP 1, Parry -1, two hands
Lance	Str + d8	10	150	AP 2 when charging, reach 2
Pole arm	Str + d8	15	120	Reach 1, two hands
Spear	Str + d6	5	3	Parry +1, reach 1, two hands
Staff	Str + d4	6	5	Parry +1, reach 1, two hands
Spiked mace	Str + d8	8	40	
Flail	Str + d6	8	35	Ignores parry bonus for shields

Ranged Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Range	Notes
Blowgun	1d6	1	2	2/4/8	
Sling	Str + d4	1	3	4/8/16	
Troll sling	Str + d6	3	15	6/12/24	Two hands except for trolls, obsidimen
Windling bow	2d6	1	25	12/24/40	Two hands
Short bow	2d6	3	15	12/24/48	Two hands
Longbow	2d6	5	60	15/30/60	Two hands
Elven warbow	2d8	4	200	15/35/80	Two hands; -1 to hit per die below str d8, dex d10
Crossbow	2d6	8	100	15/30/60	AP 2, 1 action to reload

Thrown Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Range	Notes
Windling Net	--	2	15	2/4/6	
Net	--	5	15	2/4/6	
Throwing dagger	Str + d4	1	2	3/6/12	
Throwing axe	Str + d6	2	25	3/6/12	
Spear	Str + d6	5	3	3/6/12	
Flight dagger	Str + d4	1	25	5/12/30	
Windling spear	Str + d4	1/2	45	5/12/30	
Hawk Hatchet	Str + d6	2	125	12/24/48	AP 1

Blood Charms

Type	Cost	Rating	Notes
Absorb Blow	100	2	Provides one-time armor bonus of +8 to resist single attack
Astral-Sensitive Eye	325	3	Allows user to see astral space
Death Cheat	450	2	+4 on a single incapacitation roll
Desperate Blow	275	4	+4 to single attack or damage roll
Desperate Spell	300	3	+4 to single Spellcasting roll
Targeting Eye	450	3	+1 to hit on Shooting or Throwing

Healing Items

Type	Cost	Weight	Notes
Booster potion	50	2	+4 to one natural healing roll
Healing potion	300	2	Heals one wound and grants +4 to a natural healing roll made within 1 hour
Last Chance salve	600	1	Applied to dead character within 1 hour, allows immediate natural healing roll: character revives if 1+ wound is healed

Rules

Natural Healing

Adepts (Wild Cards) naturally channel magic to accelerate their healing process. They may make one natural healing check after awaking each morning. A Wild Card who spends a benny may make a second healing check in the same day.

Blood Magic

Some magic items are powered by “Blood Magic.” They use a small amount of the user’s life energy to provide their effects. Any item powered by blood magic has a blood magic rating. Note the total of all the blood magic ratings for charms or other items you have on your character sheet.

Any time you use any of your blood charms, you must check for damage. Round up your blood magic rating to the nearest die type: roll this die, which can ace normally.

Compare the result to your base Toughness (armor and spells cannot protect, as the blood charm is already connected to your True Pattern) in a damage test. The charm works fine regardless of the result. If you are Shaken, you might not be able to make use of the charm’s effect, but it always works.

Once you have checked for damage using a particular charm, you do not have to check that charm again until you have gone without using it for half an hour, but if you activate some other charm, you must check again.