

CHAMPIONS

DESIGNER'S NOTES

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Those of you who read the other *Champions* article in this issue may become a bit confused by references to "revised *Champions* rules." "Revised *Champions* rules? What revisions?" (If the question you asked was, "What's *Champions*?", you may be reading the wrong article.) Many of you may not be aware that *Champions* has been reissued in a boxed set, and some rules have been revised. This article presents the major changes in the rules.

The most apparent change is a physical one; the rules have been rewritten, expanded, and reformatted for maximum clarity. The rules booklet is now 80 pages instead of 64, and new artwork has been added (as well as some of the old artwork being replaced). The combat rules are essentially unchanged, though there have been some minor additions. The major changes are in the description of Powers and Skills.

Multipower: The change is quite simple, but it's probably the most important change in the rules. The amount of active points in a Multipower slot may never exceed the amount of points in the point reserve. Any Power Limitation applied to the entire Multipower decreases the cost of the point reserve and the cost of each slot (Focus Limitation, for example). If a Power Limitation applies only to a particular slot (such as Limited Uses), then the cost of the affected slot is reduced. Thus, if one slot in your 60 point Multipower only works once a day, the cost of the slot would be reduced to 4 points, but the power of the slot could not be increased.

Also, Multipowers and Elemental Controls don't stack. In other words, a Multipower may not be placed inside a Multipower, or inside an Elemental Control. An Elemental Control may not be placed inside an Elemental Control or inside a Multipower. This relieves eyestrain from trying to read such complicated powers, and also removes most of a balance problem with the rules.

Elemental Control: This has been modified slightly. When you set up an Elemental Control, the first power is bought at normal cost. Each subsequent power in the Elemental Control has the same amount of points in it as the first power, but the cost is halved. Increased individual powers in the Elemental Control may be bought at the normal extra cost, but a slot may never have less points than the first power. The powers in an Elemental Control must be linked by a good rationale; something like Elemental Control Defenses (with Flash Defense, Ego Defense, and Lack of Weakness) is not acceptable unless the player can come up with a brilliant explanation of how those powers connect together with his origin and other powers.

Killing Attack: This change was for those *Champions* players who build *Wolverine* clones. The cost is still the same as before, but now each fifteen points of STR gives you 1D6 extra points damage, with the following proviso: the amount of dice added for extra STR cannot exceed the number of dice in Killing Attack (a variant of Gansmiller's Law: "The modifier to a die roll may never exceed the number rolled on the die itself.") The Killing Attack now costs END to use, in addition to the END used for STR. So,

if your character with a 40 STR puts 15 points into Killing Attack, he can do a 1D6 Killing Attack using a 10 STR (END cost - 5 points), or a 2D6 Killing Attack using a 25 STR (END cost - 8 points). You would have to push your Killing Attack to do more damage, even though you have a 40 STR. Your claws are only so long. If you want to do more damage, buy more Killing Attack. Note: 5 points more than needed for 1D6 of Killing Attack is +1 to the attack. Ten points more than needed for 1D6 adds +½D6 to the attack.

Breaking Things: The section on "Breaking Things" has been revised to conform to the system used in *Escape from Stronghold*. Objects are now given a Defense (which acts as resistant PD and ED) and a BODY value. This leads to several changes in the powers. First, the Tunneling description was altered. Now, every 5 points in Tunneling gives you 1" of movement through materials with a Defense of 1. Thus, 40 points in Tunneling would give you 8" of movement through materials with a Defense of up to 8. The Defense able to be Tunneled through could be increased by +1 for 3 points of Tunneling with no increase in inches of movement. Tunneling only works on inanimate objects; if you want to Tunnel through a person, buy Killing Attack.

Entangle: Entangle was changed not only to conform to the new "Breaking Things", but to make the power more useful. For every 10 points in Entangle, the character gets 1D6 of Entangle (count the BODY) and 1 point of Defense for the Entangle. The END cost is only paid when the Entangle is thrown, not each phase the Entangle is up. The Entangle will last until broken, unless you define the special effects differently. (For instance, *Spiderman's* webbing dissolves in about an hour.) If you want a different type of Entangle, use Force Wall.

Force Wall: The definition has been expanded to make it more useful. Force Wall now gives you 2 points of resistant defense for 5 points in an area of 1/2 hex (3 of the 6 sides). The Force Wall prevents people from passing through, acting like an Entangle with no BODY; merely exceed the particular defense, and the whole Force Wall collapses. Force Wall in this fashion can now be used to block openings, bridge small gaps, etc. This makes the power much more interesting, and much more like the examples in the comics (see *Sue Storm* or *Iceman*).

Characteristic Drain and Transfer: These have been generalized to include powers. They are now called Power Drain and Power Transfer. When you buy Power Drain, you may specify a power that you can drain (such as Energy Blast) or a characteristic (as before). The cost for draining is the same. Power Transfer now means that you can drain one characteristic or power and transfer the points to one of your characteristics or powers. The thing you are draining from and the thing you are transferring to need not be the same. Transferring someone's STR to your END would be acceptable. The power points gained through Power Transfer are lost at the rate of 1 power point per segment. The power points lost through Power Drain and Power Transfer are regained by the target at the same rate. Power Drain and Transfer are more useful in these new forms, and it is now easier to duplicate many comic book characters.

Missile Deflection: This has become a power instead of a skill. The major reason for this change was to differentiate

between those characters that had Missile Deflection with a focus (bracers, billy club, etc.) and those characters that seemed to be able to evade missiles (such as *Spiderman*). We also took the opportunity to split Missile Deflection into three parts. For 10 points, you can deflect thrown objects; for 15 points, you can deflect bullets and thrown objects; and for 20 points you can deflect energy beams, bullets, and thrown objects. Levels in Missile Deflection are now standard 3 point Skill Levels.

Hardened Defenses: The Power Advantage of Armor Piercing had no defensive power, so we have included Hardened Defenses, a +¼ Power Advantage. This Advantage must be applied to each different type of defense separately (Armor, Force Field, your PD, your ED, etc.). Armor Piercing will not halve a hardened defense. I suppose you could buy Armor Piercing twice, so you would need doubly hardened defenses to stop it, if you were crazy. You'd be crazy, because Armor Piercing isn't really cost-effective unless the target has really high defenses.

Spreading Energy Attacks: This is one of the sections that was lost when *Magneto* attacked our diskettes prior to publication. We devised the rules to help correct the imbalance between STR and Energy Blast. The problem lies in the fact that everyone starts with a STR of 10, which gives them a free 2D6 of attack, which is 2D6 of headstart on Energy Blast. Also, each 5 points of STR gives you some figured characteristics as well. Energy Blast is therefore rather inefficient unless given some compensating advantage.

The advantage in this case is the ability to spread the Energy Blast to increase your chance to hit. Each 1D6 that you pay END for, but do not use as damage gives you a +1 OCV. Thus, you could do 10D6 instead of 12D6 (paying the END as if you were doing 12D6), and get +2 to your OCV for that shot. The other ability you have with Energy Blast is spreading your attack for a minor Area Effect. Each 1D6 you pay END for but don't use for damage allows you to fill one hex. A separate Attack Roll is made on each target in the hex. The attack must be in connecting hexes, and can only be 1 hex deep. This is useful for taking out agents (who usually fall into convenient formations). If you have three agents in adjacent hexes, you can spread your Energy Blast by three dice and roll an Attack Roll versus each of them. The Attack Rolls are made just as if you were attacking them normally with your Energy Blast, though the damage will be lessened by 3D6. This technique will remove those pesky agents in no time.

The Character Disadvantages have remained mostly the same. Berserk has been modified only slightly, so that "in combat" is not a part of every Berserk. Susceptibility has been changed to include STUN-only susceptibilities, so that you need not take BODY from your Susceptibility. The Competent Dependent NPC may now be built up on 50 points instead of only 20. These changes will not result in a significant difference in the point totals of the characters, but they will mean that the disadvantages will better reflect circumstances in the comics.

These rules changes are of course explained in more detail in the revised Champions rulebook. Our forthcoming supplement, Champions II, will contain elaborations of certain rules, new powers and skills, vehicle rules, encounter charts, and a lot more. □