Burning Rubber: Alternate Chase Rules for Savage Worlds by Butch Curry

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Savage Worlds presents a great set of abstract chase rules. But there are times when they're a bit *too* abstract. While they do model distance, they don't model position (who's in the lead, who's in second, etc). For dogfights, spaceship battles, and the like, this works out fine, but there are times when being first matters.

With that in mind, here are some tweaks you can make to make the *SW* chase rules model a traditional car chase perhaps a bit more closely.

Setup

Before the chase begins, you'll need an easy way to track position visually.

I've found that the easiest way is to take all the cards, Ace to Deuce, of a single suit from an extra deck of cards. When you're ready to begin the chase, lay these out in order; you'll place your markers on these cards to track your position.

If you don't have an extra deck, you can use anything: pieces of paper, 3x5 cards, squares drawn on a battlemat, whatever's handy. Cards are the best way to go, as you'll see in a moment.

Initiative

For the first round of initiative, determine if there's a lead car at the outset of the chase. If your players are cops chasing an escaping felon, then the felon should start out in front. However, if you're running a drag race, then everyone starts on an equal footing.

If you have a lead car, this is where the extra

cards you're going to be using for position come in handy. Seperate out the Ace and face cards into one stack, Deuce through Ten in the other. The lead car or cars will draw from the high cards, while all the other cars draw from the Deuce to Ten stack.

If you don't want to worry about this, there's an equally easy way: have all the drivers EXCEPT the leader draw for initiative/position. When everyone else in position, assign the leader any card higher than the highest chaser.

Example: Ponch and Jon are chasing Grifty McGrift, a bank robber. Ponch and Jon draw, getting a Nine and Seven. The GM decides that they're hot on Grfity's heels, so he places the thief on the Ten. If he decided that Grifty has a moderate lead, he could place him on the Queen, and with a sizable lead Grifty could start on the King or Ace.

Attacks

Attacks are handled normally, with one change. Cars that Skid, Spin, or Slip on the Out of Control table move back in the pack, towards the Deuce.

Skid	Move back 1 card
Slip	Move back 1d6 cards
Spin	Move back to the Deuce



Based on the situation, any of these could also take the car completely out of the chase as well. For example, if there's a steep embankment on either side of the road, a Slip could send the car into the ditch.

Obviously, the furthest back you can be placed is the Deuce. If you're on the Deuce and Skid, Slip, or Spin, you're removed from the chase.



Maneuvers

Now it's time to start the action!

Being in the lead has it's advantages: the lead car determines whether the chase continues straight up Main Street or careening off-road, for example.

With that in mind, after the first round, *do not draw for Initiative.* If you want to move up to a better position, you'll have to use the Change Position or Trail maneuver to do so. The lead car will stay in the lead until you're able to catch him. If two cars are on the same card, have the drivers make an opposed Driving roll. Winner goes first.

Change Positon and Trail

Since you're not drawing cards for position every round, Change Position and Trail become the key maneuvers in the chase, particularly if you're running a race of some kind. Other than their increased importance, though, there are no changes in how they're handled.

Force

Position is important for another reason: if you want to Force an opponent, you must be on the same card as them or ahead of them.

Flee, Shake a Tail, and Steady

These maneuvers are all handled normally.

Obstacles

If you're running a car race, obstacles typically represent 'the pack': a cluster of cars you'll have to avoid in order to get out in front.

For chases, the obstacles represent other cars, pedestrians, road signs, hot dog carts... virtually anything you can imagine. Lead cars have an advantage in being able to avoid obstacles better than those following them (think of the speeder chase in *Return of the Jedi* for example). If you're forced back in the pack by a Force or a roll on the Out of Control table, you'll have to check to avoid obstacles on your next turn.

Obstacle Alternative

Here's another way to handle Obstacles. It's fast and easy, and has a more organic feel than the standard version.

The GM rolls a d6 at the beginning of each round. On a 1, he draws a card. Everyone acting on or after that card must make a Driving roll to avoid the obstacle that round.

You can vary the density of obstacles by increasing or decreasing the target number of the roll. On a 3 or less, you're driving in heavy traffic, offroad through a forest, etc. On a 5 or less, you're driving somewhere you really shouldn't be, like into oncoming traffic! (Check out the 'Drive Into Traffic' stunt for more on this one.)

1	Light traffic/obstacles
3 or less	Heavy traffice/obstacles
5 or less	Treacherous!

Stunts

Stunts are the driving equivalent of Tricks; they're wild, cinematic moves you can pull in order to gain an advantage in a chase. In many cases you can use the Trick rules as is, but in others they simply don't make sense. Here are a few examples.

Catching Air

One of the classics. Rather than avoiding an obstacle, you drive onto it in order to launch your vehicle in the air! ("Look at them Duke boys fly!") This move requires a Driving roll at -4. Success means you automatically move up 1d4 positions. If you Flee as your next action, you get a +2 to your Driving roll. If you fail the roll, roll a d6. On a 1-3, you crash into the obstacle for normal damage. On a 4-6, you launch in the air and move ahead 1 position, but you must roll on the Out of Control table when you land.

Playing Chicken

Another classic move. In this one, you whip your car around and drive directly at another car behind you.

You must be ahead of the defending car in order to play Chicken. When you do, immediately move your vehicle into the same position as the defender, and the drivers make an opposed Guts roll. The loser veers out of the way and is removed from the chase. The winner moves to the Deuce. On a tied roll, neither driver flinches, and the two cars collide. Either driver can choose to pull away *before* making their Guts roll.

Drive Into Traffic

One of the most dangerous of all moves, this one is a pure desperation move. With this stunt, you try to shake your pursuers by driving into oncoming traffic. Upon entering the wrong side of the road, you can make no maneuvers except dodging oncoming cars or leaving the wrong lane. You, and every car that chooses to pursue you, must make two rolls every round: a Driving roll at -2 to avoid collision, and a Guts check. If anyone chooses not to follow, they're removed from the chase. Anyone failing the Guts roll will have to leave the chase. Anyone failing the Driving roll crashes into an oncoming car at high speed. This continues until you've either removed everyone else from the chase (after which you wisely return to the right side of the road!) or you return to the right side of the road.

Slam on the Brakes

You brake hard in order to move back. Make a Driving roll; with a success, you can move up to 2 positions back, +1 position for each raise on the roll. If you fail the roll, you risk going Out of Control.



Driving Edges

Here are a few new driving-related Edges; most are applicable to Burning Rubber, while others are used for tactical driving. Edges which modify your Driving rolls stack with those granted by the Ace Professional Edge.

Defensive Driver

Requirements: Novice, Driving d6+ You're good at getting out of the way. Whenever you're on the receiving end of an opposed Driving roll, you get a +2 to your roll.

Fancy Driving

Requirements: Seasoned, Driving d10+ You're a master behind the wheel. You can make two different driving maneuvers in a single round with no multi-action penalty. (Note that that's two different maneuvers; you can't Change Position twice in one round, though you could Change Position and then try to Catch Air.)

Getaway Driver

Requirements: Seasoned, Driving d8+ After a heist, you're the guy they all want behind the wheel. You get a +2 to all your Flee and Shake a Tail rolls.

Grease Monkey

Requirements: Novice, Repair d6+ You're a wizard with a wrench. You get a +2 to all your Repair rolls.

Offensive Driver

Requirements: Novice, Driving d6+ That's not 'offensive' as in 'you smell bad' (although maybe you do...). Rather, you're good at making other people get out of the way. You get a +2 to all your Force rolls.

Quick Off the Line

Requirements: Novice, Driving d6+ You're particularly skilled at getting a head start in a chase or race. In the first round of the chase, draw three cards for Initiative and use the best one. For any subsequent draws you draw only a single card.

Redline

Requirements: Seasoned, Driving d8+ You can push your car to the limit, squeezing more performance out of it than other drivers could ever dream of. When driving a car or motorcycle, the Top Speed of your vehicle is increased by 10.

Sharp Turn

Requirements: Seasoned, Driving d8+ Rather than using the Turn Template, you can make up to a 90 degree turn without making a Driving roll.

Tune-Up

Requirements: Novice, Grease Monkey, Repair d8+

You can improve a car's performance. When you tune up a car (make a Repair roll at -2; takes 4 hours, -1 hour for each raise on your roll), the driver gets a +1 on all their driving rolls for their next chase. After each chase, the car must be retuned to retain the bonus.

Edge Alternates

If you want to keep the number of new Edges you introduce to a minimum, try using some of these Edges as Maneuver modifiers or the like instead:

Drive Defensively: Until your next turn, you get a +2 on all opposed Driving rolls where you are the defender. The only maneuver you can perform while doing so is Change Position.

Drive Offensively: Until your next turn, you get a +2 on all Force Driving rolls, but you take a -2 on all your rolls to avoid going Out of Control.

Tune-up: Make a repair roll at -4. If you succeed, you can improve a vehicles performance until the end of it's next Chase. You can either increase the top speed of the vehicle by 10 (this doesn't stack with the Redline Edge) or improve its handling, giving the driver a +1 to all Driving rolls.