GUIDE TO DUELLING

DUELLING

FOR THE STARCLUSTER 2 SYSTEM

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BLADE DUELLING FOR THE STARCLUSTER 2 SYSTEM

Blade Duelling can be either Formal or Informal. Formal duelling is set up in advance, with certain ritual described in a Code Duello peculiar to the culture. Informal duelling can happen any time when two people meet in combat, so long as one initiates the duel - i.e. when a PC and NPC meet in the course of a battle, either the Player or the GM can initiate the duel by calling "Duel." In formal duelling, only those moves on the Formal Blade Duelling table are permitted, while in an informal duel, those on the Informal Blade Duelling table are permitted as well.

Duelling in either case proceeds with alternating offensive and defensive moves by each character, with the character initiating the duel taking offense first. The initiating character starts by making an offensive move, which the other character attempts to Counter by making a defensive move. The character on offense then switches to defense, and the character on defense switches to offense. The alternation continues until the victory condition is achieved. In formal duels, the particular Code Duello establishes the permissible options in regard to victory conditions. In Informal duels, victory conditions are always either yielding or death for the opponent.

Each offense/defense move pair takes one second of time.

OPTIONS

1. At the GM's option, or player's if the GM doesn't care, "Death" can be changed to a 'Coup de Grace' hit which puts the losing character one point below Seriously Wounded level. This gives an option of the player character possibly being saved from death if the bleeding is staunched in time.

HOW BLADE DUELLING WORKS

1. Both characters write down their current STR, COOR, AGY, END, and CHAR attribute numbers, divides them by two, then rounds up. These are the character's Attribute Pools.

OFFENSE

2. The character on offense attempts to perform an offensive move. The character performs a skill check for the weapon, with the penalty given in the Diff column - and any bonus from Set Up - applied to the target number of the skill check.

3. If the skill check succeeds, the primary Effect listed will happen unless the defending character Prevents it with a defensive move. If there is a secondary Effect listed, that Effect will take place whether or not the primary Effect was Prevented.

4. If the skill check fails, the character can still push the first Effect through by using a point from the appropriate Attribute Pool OR by using 5 points of Advantage. The secondary Effect will not happen in any case.

5. If the offensive move succeeds either way, it will Set Up the next defensive move with a +20 bonus to any of the moves listed under Set Up if attempted in the next move.

6. If the character has no points in the appropriate Attribute Pool and not enough Advantage, the offensive move fails, and the character on defense is permitted a free offensive move.

DEFENSE

7. The character on defense attempts to *Prevent* the primary Effect by performing one of the defensive moves listed in the appropriate row under Counter. The character performs a skill check for the weapon, with the penalty given in the Diff column applied to the target number of the skill check.

8. If the skill check succeeds, the primary Effect listed will happen. If there is a secondary Effect listed, that Effect will also take place.

9. If the skill check fails, the character can still push the primary Effect through by using a point from the appropriate Attribute Pool OR by using 5 points of Advantage. The secondary Effect will not happen in any case.

10. If the defensive move succeeds either way, it will Set Up the next offensive move with a +20 bonus to any of the moves listed under Set Up if attempted in the next move.

11. If the character has no points in the appropriate Attribute Pool and not enough Advantage, the defensive move fails, and the offensive move is not *Prevented*.

12. An Effect of *Hit* which is not *Prevented* gives the defensive character a choice of either Yielding or Death in an Informal duel. In Formal duels, and in practice, the victory conditions are set in advance, and may not be to the death.

13. The winner in a duel may choose to disarm rather than kill the loser.

14. Either character may Yield at any time before this point.

15. Points deducted from Attribute Pools are restored by resting - that is performing no actions - for one minute after the duel.

16. **NOTE:** Characters get one reroll for each level of mastery for the weapon. Thus a character with Blade+6 would get a second chance to make any skill check. The culture's Code Duello may give characters the right to refuse a challenge without loss of honor if the challenger is of a different Level of Mastery in the weapon.

17. **NOTE:** Characters with multiple attacks due to the Burst of Speed augmentation (from the "Guide to Biotechnology" book) have extra attacks while their augmentation is in Effect. Defences against these attacks cannot be made with skill checks, only Attribute Pool or Advantage points can be used to defend against these extra Burst of Speed attacks.

- *Characters with this augmentation if challenged to a formal duel should inform the challenger of the augmentation, and the challenger may have the right to withdraw the challenge without loss of honor if they wish, depending on the Code Duello of the culture. Characters with this augmentation may also have the right to refuse a challenge from those not so augmented if they wish, if their code Duello so states.*

Table 1: Formal Blade Duelling

MOVE	DIFF	EFFECT	SET UP	COUNTER	ATTRIB
Offense					
Lunge	-20	Primary: Hit Secondary: ADV+2	Parry, Lock, Refuse	Refuse, Side-Step	AGY
Thrust/ Riposte	-0	Primary: Hit	Deflect, Parry, Off-Hand	Off-Hand, Riposte, Deflect	STR
Advance	-0	Primary: Hit Secondary: ADV+1	Lock, Contact, Refuse	Refuse, Lock	END
Insult	-0	Primary: ADV+1	Topper	Undercut, Stoicism	CHAR
Feint	-10	Primary: ADV+1 Secondary: ADV+1	Off-Hand, Deflect	Refuse	COOR
Cut	-0	Primary: Hit	Contact, Side-Step	Parry, Off-Hand	COOR
Quip	-10	Primary: ADV+1 Secondary: ADV+1	Undercut	Topper, Stoicism	CHAR
Defense					
Deflect/ Riposte	-0	Primary: Prevent	Thrust, Lunge		COOR
Parry	-0	Primary: Prevent	Cut, Thrust		STR
Riposte	-20				
Contact	-20	Prevent, ADV+2	Feint		COOR
Lock	-0	Primary: Prevent	Advance, Punch		STR
Off-Hand	-0	Primary: Prevent	Thrust, Lunge		END
Side-Step	-0	Primary: Prevent	Cut, Advance		AGY
Topper	-20	Primary: Prevent Secondary: ADV+2	Insult		CHAR
Undercut	-10	Primary: Prevent Secondary: ADV+1	Quip		CHAR
Refuse	-10	Primary: Prevent Secondary: ADV+1	Thrust, Lunge		END
Stoicism	-0	Primary: Prevent	Insult, Quip		

Table 2: Informal Blade Duelling

MOVE	DIFF	EFFECT		SET UP	COUNTER	ATTRIB
Offense						
Punch	-0	Primary: ADV+1		Insult, Advance	Off-Hand, Side-Step	STR
Object	-10	Primary: ADV+1	Secondary: ADV +1	Thrust, Lunge	Side-Step, Off-Hand, Deflect	COOR
Defense						
Trip	-20	Primary: Prevent,	Secondary: ADV+2	Insult, Thrust		AGY
Barrier	-0	Primary: Prevent		Cut, Quip, Insult		AGY

Table 3: Move Definitions

Offense	
Lunge	Fast, deadly thrust with full body extension
Thrust	Standard thrust
Advance	Move forward towards opponent
Insult	Derogatory comment made about opponent
Feint	Fake attack to pull opponent out of position
Cut	Move to the side with a sweep of the blade at the opponent
Quip	Amusing comment made about situation
Punch	Blow with off-hand to opponent's body
Object	Object thrown with off hand at opponent's face
Defense	
Deflect	Light contact parry letting opponent's blade slide along your blade away from you
Parry	Strong parry using the forte (part of blade near hilt) to block opponent's blade
Riposte	Slight deflection with counterthrust at opponent in one move. Use Deflect and Thrust rows for Set-Up and Counter.
Contact	Maintain contact with your blade on opponent's blade in bravura show of skill & elan
Lock	Hold opponent's blade forte to forte very close to opponent's body.
Off-Hand	Slight deflection using gloved off hand rather than blade
Side-Step	Lateral move to either side of opponent's blade
Topper	Even more amusing comment built on opponent's own quip
Undercut	Even more derogatory comment made about self in ironic manner
Refuse	Move backwards away from opponent
Stoicism	Just shutting up and taking the insult or witticism without flinching
Trip	Cause opponent to stumble using object or own foot
Barrier	Use large object as a stationary shield

AN EXAMPLE DUEL:

Raymond Bassinson has challenged Sean Golan to a duel to pay for an insult Sean gave while they were drinking. Both are blade masters, and Raymond, as the injured party, chooses rapiers. The slight was small, and the two are not enemies, so they agree that a touch will settle the matter, as their Code Duello allows. Sean has a slight advantage, as he not only is a blade +6, he also has slightly higher stats than Raymond.

RAYMOND:

STR 7, COOR 11, AGY 8, END 7. CHAR 10, Blade+5, 65% to hit.

POOLS:

STR 4, COOR 6, AGY 4, END 4, CHAR 5

SEAN

STR 8, COOR 13, AGY 10, END 6, CHAR 9, Blade+6, 70% to hit.

POOLS:

STR 4, COOR 7, AGY 5, END 3, CHAR 5

The two combatants circle each other for a moment, appraising their opponent, then Raymond opens with a sudden **Lunge**. Sean leaps back in a **Refuse** move, but has trouble and must press his END to avoid the hit. Raymond gains 2 ADV points.

Sean plants his back leg and **Thrusts** back at Raymond, which had been set up by his last move, but he is too far away and must press his STR to force Raymond to counter. Raymond **Sidesteps** to the right to avoid the point of the rapier. He is not quite quick enough, and must press his AGY by leaning away from the point.

Raymond then sweeps his blade to the left in a devastating back-cut set up nicely by his last counter. Caught flat-footed, Sean attempts to grab the blade with his gauntleted **Off-Hand**. He almost misses, and must press his END to keep the back edge from his throat.

Sean, still holding Raymond's blade, **Insults** him with a nasty remark about the disfiguring scar across Raymond's face. Smiling, Raymond **Undercuts** the insult by noting that at least he wasn't born ugly. like some people. Raymond gains one ADV point.

Riding the success of his last counter, Raymond **Quips** that Sean's mother found his face attractive enough last night. Sean cuts a vicious **Topper**, stating that his mother certainly found the rest of Raymond laughable. Raymond gains one ADV point, and Sean gains two ADV points.

Sean spins away and slashes a **Cut** at Raymond's face. In a display of skill and bravado, Raymond's blade maintains **Contact** with Sean's blade throughout the move, preventing the slash from hitting, and gaining Raymond two more ADV points.

Raymond then **Feints** a thrust to Sean's midsection. Sean leaps back in a **Refuse** move, and is caught off balance. Raymond gets one ADV point.

Sean **Lunges** back at Raymond, causing him to **Sidestep**. Raymond trips, and uses five of his ADV points to scramble out of the way. Sean gains two ADV points.

Raymond **Advances** under Sean's Guard, forcing Sean to get into a **Lock**, forte a forte with Raymond. Raymond gains another ADV point.

Sean **Advances** into the lock, pushing Raymond back. Raymond **Refuses**, stepping back. Sean and Raymond each gain an ADV point.

Raymond turns the step back into a **Lunge**. Sean is too far forward to refuse, so he neatly **Sidesteps** to the right, arching his body over the blade. Raymond gains two ADV points.

Sean sweeps his rapier around in a wicked **Cut** at Raymond's throat, and Raymond is force to **Parry** high with his forte, knocking Sean's blade back.

Raymond turns his parry into a **Thrust**, angling down at Sean. Sean flicks Raymond's blade off target and in the same motion thrusts in a **Riposte**. Raymond cannot pull his blade back in time, and must use his gauntleted **Offhand** to grab the blade.

Raymond sweeps his blade around for a **Cut** at Sean's kidneys, which Sean stops with an **Offhand** grab of his own, both men now holding each other's blades away with their off-hands.

Sean leans in and kisses the startled Raymond on the tip of the nose, in a physical **Quip**. Raymond leans forward and **Tops** the kiss with a lick at Sean's face. Raymond gains 2 ADV points, and Sean 1.

Raymond **Insults** Sean, claiming he tastes like lutefisk. Sean attempts to **Undercut** but his words are incoherent, as he cannot contain his anger. He does not push the comment. Raymond gains another ADV point.

Sean, angry now, pulls back his blade and **Thrusts** at Raymond, who skillfully bats the blade away and counterthrusts in an awkward Riposte, which he pushes in anyway, using up ADV points. Sean playfully keeps **Contact** with Raymond's blade, showing off his skill. Sean gains 2 ADV points.

Sean breaks contact, slicing up and back in a **Cut**. He misjudges Raymond's position slightly, and has to push through using a COOR point from his pool. Raymond **Parrys** the cut with his forte, shoving Sean's sword out of line.

Raymond **Thrusts** at the opening Sean left, and Sean slips in a panicky **Refusal** and must push, using five ADV points, catching himself with his off hand as Raymond's rapier flashes above him.

Sean **Thrusts** awkwardly up from under at Raymond, having to press the thrust home by using a STR point. Raymond backs out in **Refusal**.

Raymond plants his back foot and **Lunges** at the scrambling Sean. Sean can't get to his feet in time, and must use his last END point to hurl himself back in **Refusal** from the point of Raymond's Rapier. Raymond gains two ADV points.

Sean, tiring rapidly now, goes all out with a **Thrust** at the extended form of Raymond. Raymond easily deflects the thrust, and **Ripostes** with a counterthrust. Sean, exhausted, fails to get far enough away in an aborted **Refusal**, and the tip of Raymond's rapier slices through his shirt, drawing a bead of blood from his chest. The duel is over, Raymond winning. The two discuss the match over a beer later.

Verbal Duelling for the StarCluster 2 System.

Occasionally, you may want to stage a verbal duel. You can simply use only Insults, Quips, Toppers, Undercuts and Stoicism from Blade duelling, or you can use the whole system, with all the maneuvers being verbal rather than physical. If you choose the latter, base all pushes on CHAR, and adjust the multiplier for the length of verbal duel you want, as the more points the characters have, the longer the duel will last.

Gun Duelling for the StarCluster 2 System.

Gun Duelling is a special case in StarCluster 2. Gun Duels are always formal, and always performed with special pistols. These are large calibre, smooth bore, single shot, flintlock pistols. These guns misfire 15% of the time, and they are notoriously inaccurate, with a -20 to hit. The two combatants pace off 10 paces from each other and turn. The Judge of the match gives the go ahead if all is fair, and the challenged party fires first, then the challenger. If the gun does not misfire, the combatant rolls a to-hit. If successful, damage is rolled. Damage modifier for the pistol is +20, plus 10 times the gun skill of the combatant. Below 80 points is a graze, with negligible damage. From 80 to 130 points, the shot is solid, and damage is counted normally. Above 130 points, the shot is instantly lethal.

Honor is satisfied with the single shot. The combatants have proven their mettle, and neither must apologize for his actions. Sometimes, a combatant will purposefully miss, shooting the round into the air away from the opponent, as shooting the opponent only proves you are a good shot. Being willing to take the risk of the opponent shooting you is what proves your bravery, and thus redeems your honor.