STARCLUSTER 2

GUIDE

TO THE

BY CLASH BOWLEY

MARTIAL ARTS

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FOR MAKING THIS A FAR BETTER PRODUCT

There are at least as many different Martial Arts as there are cultures. Every culture either creates its own or modifies one from somewhere else and calls the result its own. There are many shades and schools and styles of martial arts, some of them for sport, some of them for spiritual cleansing and perfection, and others for beating the heck out of your opponents.

The default StarCluster system martial art is bland - purposefully so, as it is supposed to represent abstractly thousands of different martial arts. This book allows you to replace that bland, abstract style with more flavorful options, in any game using the StarCluster System.

CREATING NEW MARTIAL ART STYLES

There are five components to new martial arts. The Description, the Style, the Governing Attribute, Damage Determination, and Special Moves. To design a new martial art, work out these components, stepping through in this order.

The Description

This is a general picture of the martial art you are trying to create. Describe its general flow and look, and describe the type of attack made when using a typical strike. Example: "Karate is a contained, powerful art, based on body balance and torque. Strikes are both kicks and punches, the explosive punches being generated from the hips, the fist twisting 180 degrees in it's flight." The description has to give the feel of the art in one paragraph. Note the important things about this art, how it differs from other arts, and capture the essence as best you can.

The Style

Style is either Hard or Soft. Hard styles are offensive in nature, though they may be used defensively. They depend on strikes and penetration of defenses to work. Hard Styles do not depend on the opponent setting the pace. Soft styles are defensive in nature. They depend on throws and holds to turn the defensive position into offense.

Soft Style Special Moves - as opposed to Strikes - must be executed at the same time as the opponent's attack, and thus the character must speed up or slow down her initiative to match that of the opponent, taking appropriate bonuses or penalties as needed to make the match. Thus, the player declares that he will **Match the Initiative** of the opponent, whatever it is, before the GM rolls for the opponent.

Example: Gordon rolls a 55 for initiative, while his opponent rolls a 32. Gordon must speed up his initiative to a 32 by taking a 23 point penalty to chance of success, quality of success, or both.

The Soft Style character goes just before the opponent in the same initiative in such cases, and if his move is successful, the opponent's attack never is launched.

Defensive Modifier

The Defensive Modifier is a number from 0 to -20 which is applied to the chance of success of the opponent. The softer the style, the lower the number. A cumulative modifier of -5 is added for each consecutive round the opponent uses the same attack. This modifier is reset to the original number as soon as the opponent uses a different attack.

The Governing Attribute

The Governing Attribute has to match the Description you made. Read through your description and decide what is the most important physical attribute used in this art. Use the key words below to help decide.

STR: Strength is muscle power - smashing, lifting, crushing.

COOR: Coordination is precision - placement, timing, hand speed.

AGY: Agility is whole body movement - spinning, leaping, dancing.

END: Endurance is the ability to keep going - strenuous, grueling, exhausting

Strike Damage Determination

Strike Damage Determination is always percentile dice - %d - plus the character's Skill Level multiplied by a number. This multiplier should be in the range 1 - 5, and based on the difficulty of learning the art. The more difficult the art is to learn, the higher the multiplier.

For Hard Styles, additional damage is added in the form of Attribute Modifiers - this is the modifier you would apply to a skill check if that attribute was the Governing Attribute for the skill - 5 points for every 2 attribute points over 7 - e.g. 5 points for an attribute of 9, 10 points for an attribute of 11, 15 points for an attribute of 13, etc. Hard Styles generally do much more strike damage than Soft Styles. You may add as many Attribute Modifiers as you think will best describe the force of the particular martial art's Strikes, up to a limit of three.

Special Moves

Each martial art has three Special Moves. These moves should, taken together, define the art and illustrate its principles. Choose the moves carefully. A Special Move should never be a Strike in disguise - Special Moves are *different* from a standard Strike for this art.

Difficult moves should be taken at a penalty, with the more difficult moves having higher penalties, but should be rewarded with appropriately higher damage and/or with tactical advantages, such as Knockbacks, Knockouts, or Takedowns. Easier moves don't require penalties, but the rewards should be more modest. Perhaps a knockback with half normal Strike damage, or a different damage determination from Strike damage entirely.

Knockbacks push the opponent from Point Blank to Short range. They may also do damage to the opponent, depending on the art. Knocked back opponents have to get back in range before attacking - thus losing an attack - or use a longer range attack.

Knockouts are given as a chance of knockout. If successful, the opponent will be automatically and immediately stunned and helpless.

Takedowns bring the opponent immediately - and sometimes painfully, depending on the art - to a prone position. The opponent taken down must use his next attack to get up, or suffer the following penalty: attacks from a prone position have a -20 to chance of success, and do only half normal damage.

Damage from Special Moves does not necessarily have a random component. You can set damage to - say - 3 X AGY + AGY Modifier, which, if the character's AGY was 11, would always be 33+10, or 43 points. Do what you think appropriate to the particular move and art, using the examples of real world martial arts as a guide.

ALIENS AND HUMANOIDS IN THE STARCLUSTER UNIVERSE

Aliens

Aliens do not have the same bodily structures as a human. Any Special Moves which depend on joints, nerve centers, choke holds, and the like will not work. The GM must make a ruling for each alien encountered, and for each Special Move in question, based on these guidelines.

Humanoids

Humanoids are derived from human stock, but have different anatomies. Most Special Moves will work on most Humanoids, but foot and ankle attacks work differently on Sastras, and the tails of Sastras and Vantors present a puzzle to most human Martial Artists. The GM should take the differences in physiology between humans and Humanoids into account.

Distribution of Martial Arts

National Martial Arts such as La Savate should be associated primarily with people of the appropriate culture. People from Filipino cultures would usually practice Escrima. People from English cultures, such as Glorianna, would usually box or wrestle.

THE INTERCLUSTER MARTIAL ARTS CIRCUIT AND TOURNEY.

The IMAC is a loose association of elite Martial Arts schools throughout the Cluster. Each school in the circuit has a champion, and the top ten schools - as determined by the tourney - hold a marker. By challenging and defeating the school's backup champion, independent martial artists can gain the school's marker. Challenging and defeating a marker holder will also earn an independent the marker. In fact, since just possession of the marker is sufficient, theft or robbery can also gain the marker. The school champions and the current holders of the ten markers meet once every ten years at the Intercluster Martial Arts Tourney, held in the Thieve's World habitat of Kali in the Quad Belt. There are no rules, though PSI and non-PSI divisions are made, and deaths are known to occur in the Tourney. The two winners of the double-elimination tournament are considered champions of the Cluster

MARTIAL ARTS IN THE COLD SPACE/FTL NOW UNIVERSE

National Martial Arts should be associated primarily with people of the appropriate culture. People from French cultures would usually practice La Savate. People from American or CCA cultures would usually box or wrestle.

MARTIAL ARTS IN THE BLOOD GAMES UNIVERSE

Martial Arts distribution would be as it is in the real world.

MARTIAL ART: BRAWL   STYLE: HARD

The natural, untrained martial art. This is the only Martial Art that can be taken at zero level (untrained.) The Brawl skill refers to informal bashing with fists and feet. All moves in this skill are strength based - hammer blows, jabs, roundhouses, smashes, etc.

Governing Attribute: STR   **Defensive Modifier: 0**

Strike Damage Determination: 1 X Skill Level + STR Modifier

Special Move 1: Charge

This move allows double damage and a Takedown of the enemy if successful, but if unsuccessful the character suffers a takedown herself.

Special Move 2: Found Weapon

This move allows the character to use any object he can lift as a defensive or offensive weapon. The GM must adjudicate the damage for a successful strike, but should never be less than the character' normal Brawl damage. Found Weapons *may* be able to penetrate some types of armor.

Special Move 3: Roundhouse

This move enables a single, devastating blow at double damage, but if unsuccessful, gives the opponent a +30 bonus to Chance of Success for the next attack.

MARTIAL ART: KARATE   STYLE: HARD

Karate is a contained, powerful art, based on body balance and torque. Strikes are both kicks and punches, the explosive punches being generated from the hips, the fist twisting 180 degrees in it's flight.

Governing Attribute: AGY   **Defensive Modifier: -5**

Strike damage determination: % d + 5 X Skill level + AGY Modifier + COOR Modifier

Special Move 1: Side Kick

A short, powerful piston kick to the side. Damage is %d + 5 X Skill Level + AGY X 3

Special Move 2: Flying Kick

A difficult and dangerous move, but potentially devastating. The attack is launched at a -30 to chance of success, the character launching herself in a leap at the opponent. If the attack fails, the character must make an AGY X 3 check or suffer an automatic Takedown. Damage on a successful hit is 3 X Strike damage

Special Move 3: Split Attack

The character may use this move to attack two opponents simultaneously in a single attack, if both opponents are within 2 meters of each other. Each attack is made separately, at a -20 to chance of success, with normal Strike damage.

MARTIAL ART: UNARMED   STYLE: HARD

A minimalist utilitarian combat skill designed to be easily taught and quickly learned. It focuses sharply on situational control using fast, precise attacks and momentum-exploiting defences to gain advantage quickly and decisively.

Governing Attribute: STR   **Defensive Modifier: -5**

Strike damage determination: 3 X Skill Level + STR Modifier + COOR Modifier

Special Move 1: Takedown

This move allows the character to takedown the opponent, which makes the opponent miss his next attack. It also causes half damage to the opponent.

Special Move 2: Prone Attack

This move allows the character to make a successful attack from the prone position, such as after a takedown.

Special Move 3: Disarm

This move allows the character to attempt to disarm the opponent. On a successful Disarm, the opponent must make a successful 2X Strength roll to hang on to the weapon, otherwise the weapon flies away in a random direction.

MARTIAL ART: JUJUTSU   STYLE: SOFT

Jujutsu is an ancient suite of self-defence techniques which rely on control of the opponent's momentum, using the opponent's own strength against him, and joint locks which prevent attack by the opponent. Strikes are primarily used to set up throws and locks rather than to damage the opponent.

Governing Attribute: AGY   **Defensive Modifier: -20**

Strike Damage Determination: %d + 5 X Skill Level

Special Move 1: Throw

A successful Throw allows the character to transfer the opponent's attack back upon the attacker by using the body as a pivot. It causes 2 X the opponent's AGY + the opponent's STR modifier in damage, and results in a Takedown or a Knockback to Short Range.

Special Move 2: Joint Lock Immobilization

A successful Immobilization causes no damage, but renders the opponent unable to attack. If the opponent decides to resist, he must make an AGY X 2 check or an appropriate martial arts move as judged by the GM. If the resistance fails, the opponent takes %d + 2 X his own STR in damage, and the Immobilization holds.

Special Move 3: Break Fall

The character take no damage from any takedown or throw, though the character is still taken down.

MARTIAL ART: CAPOEIRA   STYLE: HARD

An incredibly vigorous, fast, dance-like martial art, with moves looking more like breakdancing than anything else. Strikes are almost always kicks. Capoeira is extraordinarily showy.

Governing Attribute: AGY   **Defensive Modifier:** -5

Strike damage determination: %d + 3 X Skill Level + AGY Modifier + END Modifier

Special Move 1: Cartwheel Kick

The character begins a cartwheel maneuver, but launches a kick from the handstand. The kick is launched at a -30 to chance of success, but does double damage if it succeeds.

Special Move 2: Backflip Kick

The Backflip kick allows the character to launch an attack at Short range. The Backflip Kick is executed at a -10 to chance of success

Special Move 3: Backspin Kick

The Backspin Kick is executed from a prone position, such as after a takedown, and does half Strike damage

MARTIAL ART: BOXING   STYLE: HARD

Governing Attribute: COOR   **Defensive Modifier:** -5

Strike damage determination: %d + 4 X Skill Level + COOR Modifier + STR Modifier

Boxing is a martial arts style where all strikes are with the fists. Boxing punches are explosive - sharp, fast, and extraordinarily precise - and thrown with a shifting of the body's center of gravity to generate great power.

Special Move 1: Combination

A Combination is a pre-planned sequence of 4-5 rapid, varied blows. Combinations are difficult to accomplish, requiring a -30 penalty to chance of success. If successful, it is devastating, delivering %d + 10X Skill Level + 2 X COOR Modifier damage.

Special Move 2: Cross

A Cross is a knockout blow, delivered across the body to the opponent's jaw. If successful, the opponent has to make a 2 X AGY roll to avoid it. If the opponent doesn't avoid it, the punch does normal Strike damage, plus a Skill Level X 10 chance of a knockout.

Special Move 3: Flurry

The Flurry is an extremely fast and furious series of punches designed to overwhelm an opponent. Due to the lack of proper set up, flurry punches do half damage, but if the first punch of a flurry connects, the character can continue hitting with a cumulative -10 penalty on each succeeding punch until a punch misses.

MARTIAL ART: LA SAVATE   STYLE: HARD

La Savate is a strenuous, kick-based martial art. kicks are executed with the leg held high, to disguise the target of the kick. Any kick can be executed to the face, body or legs.

Governing Attribute: AGY   **Defensive Modifier:** -5

Strike damage determination: %d + 4 X Skill Level + AGY Modifier + END Modifier

Special Move 1: Piston Kick

A successful Piston Kick will result in a knockback, pushing the opponent back to short range, losing his next attack, and inflicting 2 X AGY + AGY Modifier damage.

Special Move 2: Reverse Spin Kick

A difficult kick, executed at -30 chance of success, the Reverse Spin Kick does double Strike damage if landed.

Special Move 3: Circular Motion Kick

Another difficult kick, the Circular Motion Kick does standard Strike damage if it hits, plus a percentile chance of Knockout equal to any voluntary chance of success penalty the character takes.

MARTIAL ART: WRESTLING   STYLE: SOFT

Wrestling is a ground level martial art. Wrestlers prefer the prone position, and suffer no penalties from it. Wrestling emphasizes holds, flips - where you spin the opponent around, and lifts - where you lift the opponent bodily into the air.

Governing Attribute: STR   **Defensive Modifier:** -15

Strike damage determination: %d + 3 X Skill Level

Special Move 1: Takedown

This move allows the character to perform a takedown on an opponent. A successful takedown makes the opponent miss his next attack. It also causes half damage to the opponent.

Special Move 2: Joint Lock Immobilization

A successful Immobilization causes no damage, but renders the opponent unable to attack. If the opponent decides to resist, he must make an AGY X 2 check or an appropriate Martial Arts move as judged by the GM. If the resistance fails, the opponent takes %d + 2 X his own STR in damage, and the Immobilization holds.

Special Move 3: Choke hold

This move, undertaken at -30 to chance of success, allows the character to gain a solid hold across the opponent's windpipe. The opponent has to make an AGY X 3 roll - or appropriate martial arts move as judged by the GM - or the hold is maintained. Each round, the AGY multiplier is dropped by one - e.g. AGY X 2, AGY X 1. If the hold is maintained until AGY multiplier drops to zero, the opponent falls unconscious.

MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS

Burrowken are shuriken made of active plasteel. The plasteel is programmed to burrow into whatever it hits, but it needs to hit dead on for best effects. The base damage is the same as for Electric Stars, at +15. If the quality of success on a hit is over 75, damage is +30. If over 100, damage is +60. If the quality of success is over 125, damage is +120. Burrowken are extremely illegal everywhere in the Cluster due to their brutality.

Name	Max Dam	Skills Req	Hit Table	Range	TL
Burrowken	+120	Melee+4	Cut	Short	10

Ammo	Mode	Ammo Cost	Price	Conceal-ability	Accuracy
None	Throw-away	0	115cr	95%	+0

Power Chucks are motorized nunchaku, power spinning and giving repeated blows. Power Chucks are used only by masters, and are very dangerous to any unskilled person attempting to use them. They look impressive, though, and do some major hurt.

Name	Max Dam	Skills Req	Hit Table	Range	TL
Power Chucks	+20	Melee+5	Bash	Point Blank	8

Ammo	Mode	Ammo Cost	Price	Conceal-ability	Accuracy
Battery 8	Full Automatic	2cr	7.5cr	20%	+0

PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS

2COOL

The character feels little pain and no fear. Initiative rolls are made better by 10 (due to lack of fear). Each damage roll done to the character is reduced by 10 points DURING the fight--but keep track. It all comes back later.

RAGE

Damage done is increased by +15. You have to make a check against half IQ to stop hurting someone. The effect is pretty much permanant if you use this smart-steroid enough.

b-Gen

A regenrative and blood-doping drug. You reduce damage of each strike done to you by 15 *unless* it is over 80, at which point the instant regen won't help.