

Interstellar Athletes

A TRAVELLER® game variant career

by Michael Brown

Competitive sports are a way of life on many worlds in the inhabited galaxy of the future, and athletics are usually an integral part of many societies. But what of the participants of such activities? How do athletes fit into the larger life of interstellar travelers? This unofficial character career may help gamers answer that question. One would suppose that athletes often retire rich and famous in galactic empires, just as they do on Earth, A.D. 1984; at the very least, they may end their careers in very good shape.

The athlete class is detailed here, with a few sports commonly played within the Imperium described afterwards. Character generation and progression is performed as per the usual TRAVELLER game rules, using the tables below.

Athlete Prior Service Tables

The prior service of an athlete character is determined in exactly the same manner as is any other TRAVELLER® game career, as outlined in Book 1, *Characters and Combat*, with the substitution of the following tables. Athletes begin their careers at age 18, and advance in four-year terms like regular characters.

Enlistment: 5+

DM of +1 if STR 8+

DM of +2 if DEX 10+

Survival: 3+ (see below, however)

DM of +1 if INT 9+

Re-enlist: 5+

Aging: Athletes may ignore the aging roll for the fourth term of enlistment. They gain a DM (die modifier) of +2 for the fifth-term roll and a DM of +1 for the sixth term, but make all subsequent rolls normally.

Skills

Athletes gain an automatic skill of Sport-1 when first enlisting in this career.

Thereafter, they may roll two skills on the Acquired Skills Table for their first term of enlistment, and one skill for each term served afterwards.

New Skill: *Sport*. Sport is a general term for any type of known sporting event. The referee and player should confer as to what type of sport was formerly played by the athlete, according to the character's ability scores and the player's whim. The athlete may or may not have DMs in activities related to his or her particular sport. A rating of Sport-3, or Sport-2 and Instruction-1, is sufficient to be able to coach teams in that sporting event. The exact benefits gained from a Sport skill should be determined by the DM, but the possibilities of fame, increased chances of winning sporting events, and in winning money should not be overlooked.

Mustering Out

Once an athlete fails to make a reenlistment roll or decides to leave his career (which can be done at the conclusion of any four-year term), he musters out by

rolling once on either the Material Benefits or the Cash Benefits Tables below. A +1 DM is applied to the Material Benefits roll if the character's SOC is A+; A +1 DM is given on the Cash Benefits roll if the character has any gambling skill. The Cash table can only be consulted three times at most.

Sports of the Future

Z-G (Zero-Gee) Ball: An anti-grav sport played on worlds of tech level B+. It consists of two four-man teams in light plastic armor, a four-kilogram steel ball, and an enclosed null-grav court. Gravball players must have a dexterity of 10+. Gravball skill allows a DM of +1 for every two skill levels of the sport when engaging in zero-G combat.

Slaughtersphere: A more violent form of Z-G ball which uses a ten-kilogram steel ball. Slaughtersphere is illegal in most areas, and private enterprises are often the only sponsors of such teams. Slaughtersphere players have the same requirements as gravball players, except for a strength requirement of 8+. They gain the same zero-G combat benefits as Z-G ball players. The survival roll is 5+.

Lightracquet: A racquetball-like sport played on worlds of tech level D+. The ball is replaced by a holographic image and light trail. The racquet is a light sensor/refractor that sends the hologram ball off in the desired direction. The walls perform the same functions as the racquet.

Table One: Acquired Skills

Die	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education	Advanced Education (+8 EDU only)
1	+2 STR	brawling	streetwise	medical
2	+2 DEX	blade cbt	bribery	electronic
3	+2 END	sport	jack-o-T	sport
4	carousing	vehicle	gambling	+1 INT
5	+1 INT	sport	sport	instructor
6	+1 SOC	sport	mechanical	computer

Table Two: Benefits

Die	Material	Cash
1	low psg	2,000
2	mid psg	5,000
3	vehicle	10,000
4	weapon	25,000
5	+1 STR	50,000
6	+1 INT	70,000
7	Travellers'	100,000

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Gladiatorials: Highly illegal on some worlds, gladiatorial combat is a way of life on others, particularly on low-tech worlds. High-tech worlds that allow gladiatorials sometimes pit men not only against other men or animals but also against robots. Robot-versus-robot combat is also popular on many worlds, the contestants remotely controlled by the players. A skill level in a gladiatorial sport is equivalent to a weapons combat skill, either brawling or a specified gun or blade weapon. The survival roll for this "sport" is 6+.

Magnaball: Magnaball consists of an enclosed, magnetic-flux court (some varieties allow for the use of an outdoor court), padded uniforms for the players, and a two-kilogram steel sphere. Gauntlets are provided which can control magnetic fluxes sufficiently to attract or

repel the ball, and the court can generate random magnetic "bottles" to alter its flight. Magnaball is played on worlds of tech level 9+. Players must have a dexterity of 8+ and an endurance of 9+.

Hyperball: A variant of magnaball played on worlds of tech level D+. Hyperball equipment differs from that used in magnaball; a set of plastic body armor with reflex-enhancing bionic relays, effectively doubling one's speed as though they were taking slow drug, is worn by all players. Hyperball players must have an endurance of A+ and a strength of 8+.

Other sports can easily be used or created, such as existing games, futuristic versions of these games, or even hybrid games. A couple of interesting suggestions would be futuristic versions of football, skeet shooting, and racing.

Games seen on TV, in the movies, or in books could be adapted and used (notably FASA's GRAV-BALL™ game, or the famed "Rollerball" sport created by William Harrison).

The guide to what sport the character played (or plays) should be the personal statistics of that character. For instance, a character with a UPP of B59259 could possibly have been a heavy-weight boxer, a wrestler, a gladiator, or anything else which calls for great strength and endurance. If a character seems tall, thin, and nimble, he could have been a basketball or Z-G ball player, and so on.

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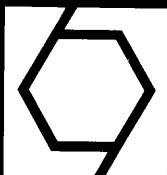
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