Project Swim Class

A Dice Pool RPG rules with "learn by doing" ability progression

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<illustration, clashing armies of dice>

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This book is a work of fiction and fantasy, unsuited for persons unable to distinguish such from reality.

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This Book #0001

Is Presented To
Peter laRouge

Grand Admiral of the Fighting Dice

To Play you will Need ⚀⚁⚂⚃⚄⚅✎▭

Paper and pencil for recording **Skill** ranks and equipment. You will want many D6, at least 8 in each of 4 colors.

Create your Character

Pick 2 skills. You start those skills at 2 rank above the default. You have 100GP to buy implements.

Basic Game

Everything is a **Skill**. Whether swinging a sword, shooting a bow, or jumping a chasm. The Skill rank tells how many dice you may roll in an attempt using that skill.

A task is given in how many dice (Progress) must role above a given Difficulty (N>=T). Some tasks (defeating an enemy, climbing a wall …) may take more than one round to complete. Progress adds each round until successful or you are forced to discontinue. Other tasks (jumping a chasm) are all or nothing.

A natural roll of 1 is a **Critical** if the task did not succeed. First critical is ignored. Additional criticals in a skill roll bring increasingly adverse results, commonly injury to yourself. A critical failure may include hitting yourself with an attack, or tripping over your own feet when running.

Except as defined otherwise Skills start with a rank of 1. Exotic Skills like magic are unavailable except as a starting skill, with sufficient rank in a related Skill (see Synergy), or use of an Artifact. Some advanced skills may not be used or developed until you develop a related skill to a certain point.

A task may be **opposed**, in which case a second roll on behalf of an opposing character defines what dice are needed for success. Each opposition die may oppose a single die of lesser or equal value. A target may choose not to oppose an action. (see also combat). When defense has a lower rank than attack, assume implicit rolls of 1 to match attack.

A **Skill Advance**s when you succeed in a task with all Skill dice, and all dice roll >= 4. A Task roll must have a chance of failure to merit skill advancement. A difficulty of 1 is usually taken as an automatic success. You may wish to log the Epic successes on which you advance.

Synergy

If 2 skills have a synergy of Nth degree, when one improves, the other may automatically improve if needed to remain within N skill points. A skill with a default of 0 may benefit from synergy to gain the initial skill point. Synergy is both ways.

Specialization

Most basic skills may be specialized, gaining a bonus on specialized sub-skills. Specialized skills always start at rank 0, and have a synergy to the basic skill.

Combining Skills

To combine skills, add the skill dice from the combined skills, and subtract 1 for each skill added to the first. Out of combat total skill dice may not more than double the base skill (in the example jumping). In combat, combining N skills this way takes N rounds. A critical failure breaks the build up.

Example, a running jump. If there is sufficient room for a run up to a long jump, the Walk/Run Skill may be added to your Jump skill to cover greater distance.

Convergence / Aid Another

Multiple characters may combine skills as in Combining Skills. Skills so combined may be all the same skill, or a combination that reasonably works together. For example, one character may use a Throw skill to assist another in Jumping across a chasm.

Windup

A character may **Windup** for a bigger effect on Skills that may be applied over multiple rounds. Use as combining a skill with itself.

Straining a Skill

In a desperate situation you may roll a skill of rank 2 or higher at double rank once. As consequence of this strain the skill is reduced by a rank.

Splitting an Action

Two skills may be used inside a single round at half power each, rounded down.

The dice for an action, or half action, may be split between multiple parts. When splitting half actions this way you may play the parts in mixed order.

Pushing / Focusing a Skill

A skill with difficulty <= 3 may be **Pushed**, gaining *N progress for *N difficulty. For an opposed skill the opposing dice are doubled. Similarly, difficulty may be reduced by 1 by halving progress, or by 2 for 1/4 progress. Declare before using.

Combat

Combat uses opposed rolls. The Attacker rolls for a chosen attack Skill. These dice may be divided between targets before rolling. Dice not successfully opposed inflict a hit.

The Defender rolls dice for Defense skill or a skill matching or countering the attack. Dice greater than an attack die dodge or deflect a hit. Some labeled skills are not usable for defense.

The roll may be modified by the implement and circumstances. Each class of weapons has its own attack skill.

Hit Point (HP) pools before taking damage are the rank of the matching Defense Skill. In addition you have a pool from **Composure** you may use to to soak damage. HP are recovered rolling, once per hour of rest, a Defense Skill difficulty = 6 recovering one HP per success. Don't count critical failures for this. Composure points are recovered after a brief rest, rolling dice as a skill check for advancement. A character reduced to 0 HP is down. <0 HP, a character rolls defense vs damage>0 to stabilize, or takes further damage on critical failure. Critical failures to stabilize exceeding defense means death.

You may, instead of acting, hold a named skill in **reserve** to add to your defense or as a prepared action should something happen before your next turn.

For Initiative Roll Agility, highest single die going first, second die resolving ties.

Target ranges and areas

Melee   Targets any of the eight adjacent squares, or the square occupied by actor, or an occupant of such a square.

Ranged   Targets any square, with a specified range dependent defense bonus to target.

Near Area   Targets all squares and entities (excluding acting character) in a square area including the actor. Defense bonus typically 1 for every square across the area.

Line   A straight line issuing from the actor's square. Defense bonus typically 1/1.5 squares length.

Implements

An **Implement** is any piece of equipment a character has available. It may grant a bonus to a matching skill:

- (+N), granting a modifier of +N to dice.
- (N-crit), canceling up to N critical failures.
- (ND), N dice in addition to the normal pool.
  An implement granting this bonus is an **Artifact**, and will allow you to use the skill even if you may not otherwise.

Rank the value of an implement by sum of

- bonus modifier,
- criticals canceled,
- 4 points for a bonus die.

Implements with more than 3 points value should be very expensive and rare.

Artifacts

When using an **Artifact** use dice of a different color for the bonus. The roll on the artifact bonus dice does not impact skill improvement. An Exception is if you don't already have the skill, then treat the bonus dice as your pool for skill advancement.

Definitions

Range (of action)   distance in squares.

Square   an area 5 ft(1.5m) square, or the distance across that area.

The Skills

General rules:

Difficulty 1 is a skill so easy or common that pretty much anyone with the skill may do it under normal circumstances.

Difficulty 6 for a challenge that while not quite impossible is madness for all but the most skilled.

A task may often be accomplished with more than one Skill. More specialized skills have easier success on an applicable task.

Basic Skills

Basic Melee

Opposed. Specialize by weapon type, synergy 2, N+1 to success.

Synergy, 2nd degree ——╫	Assists ——→
Synergy, 3rd degree ——╫╫	Opposes ——✗
Trait Synergy ╫O	

Major Relationships between Skills

Basic Ranged

Opposed. Fire a ranged weapon. Defender gets a +1 for every range increment, dependent on weapon or ammunition. Consumes ammunition.

Specialize by weapon type, synergy 2, N+1 to success. Not a defense skill.

Grapple

Melee, Opposed by Brawn. On hit adjacent target is immobilized. On additional 2 hits you and target may move together 1 square. Synergy 2 to Brawn.

Physical Defense

Each die >= a hit die counters one physical damage.

Mental Defense

Counters Sneak or any other attempts to fool or deceive..

Social Defense

Counters efforts to persuade. Bonus for friends present.

Walk / Run

>=1, 1 square/round on easy terrain. Automatic success on easy terrain unless pushed.

Swim

>=1, calm water

>=6, heavy storm/waves.

first success to tread water, additional success for 1 square/round in calm water. (modified for natural swimmer species.)

Climb

>=1, 1 square/round on a decent ladder.

>=6, 1 square on a natural vertical cliff.

Jump

>=1 cross a gap of 2 feet.

Throw

>=1 deliver a small object 3 squares, or a heavy object (about your weight) a couple feet. Not a defense skill.

Ranged, Opposed. Throw a small item as an attack. Defender gets +1 for every square separation.

Synergy 2 to Basic Ranged.

Brawn

>= 1 Carry 20 lbs. without difficulty. If you are carrying more than this you are encumbered, roll Brawn preceding each movement action.

>= 1 Lift 30 lbs, or shove with equal force.

Synergy 2 to Throw, 3 to Basic Melee.

Finesse

Pick Lock

Default rank 0.

Spot

>= 1 spot / hear 1 unhidden item.

>= 6 spot a well hidden item.

May be rolled by game master on player's behalf. Synergy 2 to mental defense.

Stealth

move silently, hide

Opposed by Spot.

Tracking

Synergy 2 to Spot.

Craft

Difficulty and progress required varies. General crafting of implement's requires (implement rank)^2*2.5 materials cost and (implement rank)^2 successes at difficulty 4.

Critical failure means ruin of part of the material used.

Specialize by materials, synergy 1, N+1 to success.

You may also craft a limited use item at 1 less difficulty, and 1/10 cost, said item having a 1/6 chance of falling apart after each use.

Got an action not covered by the above skills? New skills can be added.

Some common implements

Implement	Bonus	Cost	Weight (lb)
Great Sword	+2 to hit, +1 defense	25GP	10
Common Bow	+1 to hit, Ranged attack	5GP	5
Masterpiece Bow	+2to hit, Ranged attack	45GP	7
Arrow ⤢	Ammo, range increment 2 squares.	1SP	0.2
Knife 🗡	+1 to hit, melee or thrown	5GP	1
Quarterstaff	+1 to defense	1GP	3
Medium Shield 🛡	+2 to defense	20GP	15
Rope	Use to Craft for bonus to assorted skills	1SP/10ft.	0.2/10ft
Piton	2-crit for climb or holding to a solid surface at point where this is anchored.	5GP	1
Hammer 🔨	+2 to inserting Piton, or other similar operation	20GP	2

Sample Rounds

An orc swings a club at Harro (Melee 2, +2 weapon bonus) rolls 2d6 (5,1), adds 2 to get (7,3)

Harro parries with his great sword (Melee 3 +1 defense) rolls 3d6 (5,4,3) adds 1 for (6,5,4)

7 attack roll is higher than any defense, gets through.

6 defense blocks the other attack die.

The club slips past the sword to hit Harro for one damage.

Harro strikes back (Melee 3 +2) rolls 3d6 (5,2,1) netting (7,4,3)

Orc rolls (Defense 3) 3d6 (6,2,1),

7 attack beats any defense. 6 blocks the 4. No remaining defense blocks the 3. Orc is hit for 2 damage in return.

◆●◆

An angry wind spirit blows at Cephas (Wind magic 3) rolls 3d6 (5,4,1)

Cephas raises a Earth barrier (Earth magic 4, opposing Wind) rolls 4d6 (5,5,2,2) in time to block the wind.

◆●◆

Aerolis the archer takes aim at his target, a rampaging beast (Ranged 3, +1 common bow) rolls 3d6 (5,4,4), netting (6,5,5).

The beast attempts to dodge (Defense 3) rolls 3d6 (2,2,2), netting (3,3,3) with range, but is too slow and is hit for 3 damage. In addition, Aerolis is so greatly successful he gains a rank in his skill.

The beast runs (Walk 2, pushing *2 for speed) rolls 2d6 (6,5) and streaks through the street to place 4 squares behind it.

Aerolis again takes aim, rolls 4d6 (6,3,3,2), nets (7,4,4,3). With 6 squares separating him from his target the beast enjoys a +3 to defense.

The beast again attempts to dodge, rolls defense (5,3,2) and an implicit 1, netting (8,6,5,4), dodging the attack.

◆●◆

Combating an ogre from a narrow corridor, Underhill the midget waits for the ogre to advance.
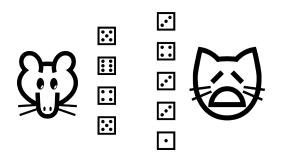
The ogre attempts to advance through the narrow corridor, but faces rough terrain 2. Walk 3, rolls (5,5,2), he advances 2 squares, closing the distance.

Underhill pokes at the ogre with his dagger with a half action, and retreats. Walk 5, half action, gets 2 dice for advancement, pushed *2, rolls (5,2) and retreats 4 squares.

◆●◆

Karlo dashes down a corridor, fails to see a pit in his path, and falls 2 squares, 2*difficulty 3. Applying his Agility 3 skill (6,2,2) he makes an iffy landing at the bottom, taking one damage.

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High Fantasy

Racial Skills

Racial Skills are innate abilities of your kind.

These work like other Skills, except you can not obtain a start by synergy from Basic Skills.. You must instead take a rank of a skill for your Kind at character creation. You can advance these traits by synergy.

Dark Vision

Enhanced vision/spot (+1) in low light. Synergy 2 to spot

Far vision

(+1) visual spot for distance. Synergy 2 to spot

Flight

Difficulty (2), opposed by wind. You hover. Each additional success makes controlled movement 1 square. On failure you fall.

Traits

Traits work as a bonus / penalty on a pair of skills, applied to however many ranks you have in those skills. These traits have no cost, but come from your Kind. Degree of bonus is set at character creation time. For example an amphibian may have Fins for +2 on Swim -2 on walk.

Fins

Bonus to Swim, penalty to walk/run.

Large

Bonus to Brawn, penalty to Physical Defense. Tight space becomes rough terrain.

Small

Bonus to Physical Defense, penalty to Brawn, penalty to crossing open rough terrain.

Magic

Each magic power / spell a character knows is a skill. Combat powers function as a standard combat roll, but may have different success difficulty, and generally a different effect instead of or in addition to the standard hit. Each form of magic on the wheel at right has a synergy 2nd degree to the forms adjacent to it on the wheel.

Any attack by magic may be opposed by magic of the same or opposing type.

Fire

Blaze

    As an attack: Line, Opposed.

Light

    >= 1 lights range of 2 squares for each success.

Wind

Blow

    Near Area or Line, Opposed by (walk|climb|situation fitting skill). Shift target 1 square for each success.

Flight

    Difficulty (3+target size), or opposed by wind or generic defense with +2 defense for each square range. Target hovers. Each additional success makes controlled movement 1 square. On failure target falls.

Earth

Quake

    Near Area. Shakes an area, knock down target, opposed by (walk|climb|...). Create rough terrain (Roll – Area Size) one round for each success.

Shift Earth

    Difficulty(2, soft soil | 6 hard rock) shift 1 cubic foot worth of natural Earth or stone / success.

Water

Spray of water on target.

    Near Area or Line, Opposed by agility. Area gains resistance to Fire, (Roll – (Area Size or length)) for one round / die.

Breath Water

    Difficulty 3, range touch, breath water for one target / success this round.

Life

Healing

> (>=Range+3) one damage / success.
> in combat 1/round.
> out of combat 1/hour.
> does damage to undead.
> stabilize a defeated character, vs. damage beyond 0 HP.

Death

Attack as basic melee or ranged.

Stun

> opposed by Defense or Life + 1/square separation. Success stuns target until attacker's next turn.

Raise Undead

> Difficulty 4 to raise a corpse to act on your behalf. Undead creatures may act in your place, with rank 1 of Basic Skills, successes of basic defense, and your rank – 1 of Death magic.

Sample Artifacts

Artifacts are rare, and generally available only from a quest. Price listed is typical sale price.

Flawless crystal of the Ancients ⬚	+1D to Earth magic	90GP	1
Bottomless Amphora ⬚	+1D to Water magic, endless supply of clean water, 1cup/round.	120GP	2
Amulet of Life ☥	+1D to Life magic, light for 1 square	100GP	0.5
Stave of Hermes ⚕	+1D to Wind	90GP	4
Eternal Torch	+1D to Fire magic	90GP	2
Skull of a Litch ⬚	+1D to Death magic	90GP	1

<insert illustration>

Character Sheet

Composure	0123456789⑩	123456789⑩	Scratches
⬚ Physical Defense	0123456789⑩	123456789⑩	Wounds
⬚ Mental Defense	0123456789⑩	123456789⑩	Wounds
⬚ Social Defense	0123456789⑩	123456789⑩	Wounds
⚔ Basic Melee	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
➹ Basic Ranged	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
Throw	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Brawn	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Walk / Run	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Swim	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Climb	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Jump	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⚒ Craft	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Spot	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
♣ Stealth	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
⬚ Tracking	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
Finesse	0123456789⑩		123456789⑩
	123456789⑩		123456789⑩
	123456789⑩		123456789⑩
	123456789⑩		123456789⑩
	123456789⑩		123456789⑩
	123456789⑩		123456789⑩
Life ☦	123456789⑩	♈ Air	123456789⑩
Water ≋	0123456789⑩	♨ Fire	123456789⑩
Earth ð	0123456789⑩	☠ Death	123456789⑩

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Name:

Describe Yourself

Item	count	Wt/ea	Wt/net	bonus
Gold ⊙		0.1		————

Permission granted to reproduce this character sheet for personal use.

Project Swim Class

A Dice Pool RPG rules with "learn by doing" ability progression

- Near instant character building

- Flexible and occasionally Epic Action

- Action extensible to a wide range of genre, just add skills and connections