

DARING TALES
OF THE
SPACE LANES

SPACE PULP RULES





SPACE PULP RULES

FREE SUPPLEMENT

BY PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

EDITING & PROOFREADING: RON BLESSING

GRAPHIC DESIGN & TYPESETTING: ROBIN ELLIOTT

ART: EMPTY ROOM STUDIOS

COVER DESIGN: ROBIN ELLIOTT

**PLAYTESTERS: RON AND VERONICA BLESSING, DON DEHM,
BILL AND CATHERINE DICKERSON**

SPECIAL THANKS: KEVIN ANDERSON



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SETTING RULES

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes is pseudo-pulp in nature. It follows much the same feel as *Star Wars*[™] or *Firefly*[™], in that the heroes are a cut above the average citizen, despite what their traits may say, and has similar technology levels to the former. Although pulp-based, the adventures **aren't** in the same vein as *Flash Gordon*[™], though.

The *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes* adventures aren't set in any particular galaxy or timeframe—they're just space adventures. Likewise, the adventures don't constitute a setting. There is no overarching plot, no timeline, no gear list, no starship catalog, and no definitive list of alien races or factions. Each adventure will add small details, as necessary, to the universe.

As for making your own alien, player character races instead of using the pre-generated heroes we've provided, there are two easy options. First, pick a race from an existing Savage setting and change the name. A half-orc could just as easily be a Garthunkian. Second, treat them as humans, but allow the character to take an attribute instead of a free Edge.

A few special rules apply to our *Daring Tales of the Space Lanes* adventures. They're collected here for your convenience.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

Daring Tales of the Space Lanes has just one Arcane Background open to player characters—Psionics. Even then, we've made some changes. The Available Powers list gives the only powers a psion may learn—if it isn't on the list, you can never take it.

Available Powers: *Beast friend, bolt, boost/lower trait, burst, deflection, entangle* (victims must use Smarts or Spirit to escape the mental web), *environmental protection, fear, healing, puppet, quickness, smite, speak language, speed, stun, telekinesis*.

Special Rules: Unlike other Arcane Backgrounds, psions cannot develop their ability once the game begins. In game terms, a character is stuck with whatever

Psionics die type he buys in character generation. For instance, a hero who buys Psionics d6 can never gain Psionics d8, even by using *boost trait*.

Characters who meet the minimum requirements may take the Mentalist Edge as normal. The hero can still take New Powers, which represents learning to use his mind in new ways, and Power Points, which represents his ability to use his powers more effectively.

BATTERIES (AND THE TABLETOP)

Cruisers and battleships, otherwise known as capital ships, are equipped with huge cannons. They're ideal for blasting away at equally large ships, but too slow to react against smaller, more maneuverable vessels, such as the one the heroes own. Instead of firing individual weapons against small craft, these hulking ships use batteries of cannons to saturate an area of space.

Likewise, they are too large for a small craft to damage, even with lucky shots. As such, we use them as hazards to avoid, not enemy vehicles the players must destroy. Make sure your players are aware of this before they start their attack run!

Attacks by batteries are conducted as Suppressive Fire attacks with a few special changes.

- * Batteries have a single damage and AP rating, as well as a burst template notation.
- * Due to capital ships' huge size and inability to turn quickly, batteries have limited arcs of fire. A ship is divided simply into port and starboard by imaginary lines drawn through the center of the ship. The *center* of a battery's template must be placed on the appropriate side of the vessel. Templates cannot overlap, though they may be placed touching. Just place the appropriate templates and conduct the attack normally.
- * Each battery may fire once per round. There are no Autofire or Unstable Platform penalties.
- * Missed attacks use the deviation rules.
- * The effects of a battery remain in play until its next action card. Any ship which enters the affected area during

this time must roll to avoid being hit.

* Pilots of ships in threatened areas need to make a Piloting roll as a free action to avoid the attack. This replaces the usual Spirit roll.

The damage and template type of individual batteries will be detailed as ships are introduced in adventures. An example of a ship's compliment of batteries is shown below so you can see the format. Small, medium, and large refer to the Burst Template size.

* 2 x small laser battery port (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; AP 4).

BATTERIES (AND CHASES)

These rules are slight adjustments to those above and account for the differences between tabletop combat and the abstract Chase rules. Unless otherwise noted, the above rules apply equally in Chases.

* A battery with a Small Burst Template affects one Range Increment within range, but gives the pilot a +1 bonus to avoid being hit. This is because the lesser number of guns can't cover the entire Range Increment. A Medium Burst Template targets one entire Range Increment, while a Large Burst Template targets two adjacent Range Increments (use the range modifier for the furthest one).

Batteries cannot overlap Range Increments, though they can target adjacent ones. A capital ship may fire into its own Range Increment without hitting itself.

* Only one battery may fire at a given Range Increment marker. A maximum of one-quarter (rounded up) of a ship's batteries may fire in front of it and one-quarter behind it. When firing on its own Range Increment, the position of target ships will determine which battery is used.

BENNIES

Bennies are a hero's best friend. Give each Wild Card player character a benny at the start of every combat or Chase scene. This can't take a character above the number of bennies he began the session with, but it does mean the heroes can freely spend a single benny in every fight, with the certain knowledge they'll get it back before the next encounter kicks off.

Heroes will, thanks to the nature of these setting rules, generally end up with bennies left. The GM should not use the old rule that leftover bennies convert to Experience Points—the heroes get enough breaks.

BLAST WEAPONS

Blaster weapons, the most common form of personal firearm, have two settings—lethal and stun. Switching between them requires an action unless you have the Quick Draw Edge.

The stun setting does the same damage as the lethal one, except it deals nonlethal damage. All nonlethal damage inflicted by a blaster on stun (or any other weapon

I WANT TO PLAY A ROBOT!

Okay, so you've got a player who really, really wants to play a robot. How do you handle that?

Instead of any racial abilities, he gets the Construct special ability. This contains some major perks, so that's all he gets. He's no stronger, smarter, or skilled than a regular human.

But what if he wants thermal vision, or rocket boosters, or built in armor, or a shoulder-mounted blaster cannon. Well, he can't have them, at least not as common gear. If the GM is willing, he can allow the robot hero to take the Weird Science Arcane Background. In place of the Weird Science skill, which the robot won't need, he uses his Smarts. Any ranged powers should use Shooting, while *fly* is a Piloting check.

Only the following powers should be available to a robot: *armor, blast, bolt, boost trait (no lower), burst, deflection, entangle, environmental protection, fly, light, obscure, speak language, speed, and stun.*

Robots aren't generally treated as citizens by most species—they're just tools. The character has the Outsider Hindrance for free—he doesn't earn any points for this, but it doesn't count toward his Hindrance limit, either.

The GM should also seriously consider giving the robot one or more of the following traits to represent his base (and narrow) programming—Clueless, Loyal, and/or Pacifist (Minor or Major).

As for banning certain Hindrances because they're not "robotic," that's left to the individual GM to adjudicate. As far as we're concerned, if a player wants a Bloodthirsty and Obese robot, he can have it—the backstory explaining those flaws should be an interesting read.

Just because the hero is a machine, that doesn't mean any physical defect Hindrances he takes, such as Bad Eyes or Lame, can be repaired. For whatever reason the GM wants to invent, whenever a faulty eye, leg servo, or circuit board is switched, it malfunctions to cause the defect to return.

Note that NPC robots may break all these rules—that's why they're NPCs.

featuring the word "stun" in its name) is removed at the end of the current Act.

CONTACTS

In a movie it's very easy for the writer to insert a much-needed ally and create a backstory of how the hero knows the person. In an RPG, having the GM create such characters takes a lot of creativity away from the players.

Although the Connections Edge could be used to represent such individuals, our pulp rules introduce a new concept just for these sorts of characters—Contacts.

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Contacts, unlike Connections, are a unique individual who exists in a fixed location. Players who want allies with greater resources or who can be contacted anywhere should invest in the Connections Edge.

Limits: Once per adventure, *one* player may invent a Contact. An individual player may invent a new contact for his hero only once per character Rank. Thus, in a typical group of four players, every player gets a chance to create a friend at each Rank. For smaller groups, the GM may alter or waive this rule.

The player should first seek his fellow players' approval, since they might have ideas for a Contact they wish to use as well. He must then come up with a name, a reason the hero knows the Contact, and why the contact is in the area. The GM has final approval and may tweak a few facts to better fit the adventure.

For instance, let's imagine the heroes' ship has taken a few hits. This is unfortunate, as they are late for a meeting. They can't afford to pay for repairs, so a player invents an old friend, Max the Mechanic, who runs an illegal chop shop on a nearby space station.

Usage: As individuals, Contacts are not as resourceful as the Connection Edge. In general, they can provide small items (a few magazines for a gun, digging equipment, or repairs) or aid (information, or healing). What they never supply is an army of Extras—pulp adventures are all about the heroes. The player can ask his Contact for whatever he wants, but the GM makes the final decision on what is available.

Continuing our example, the heroes land on the station and meet Max. He gets his team of engineers working on the repairs. He also knows of a shorter hyperspace route, which allows the characters to reach their destination on time.

In short, Contacts exist to provide a useful piece of gear or information, or to help parties who are struggling to solve clues.

HENCHMEN

Sometimes a Wild Card is too much of a threat and an Extra not threatening enough. In these instances, the GM should use a Henchman. Henchmen have three wound levels just like a Wild Card, but they don't have a Wild Die or get their own bennies.

HEROIC COMBAT

Extras' Damage: Wild Cards are expected to mow down swathes of Extras without pausing for breath. In order to make Extras less of a threat and the heroes more heroic, Extras' damage rolls *never* Ace. That's right, the best a soldier with a laser pistol (2d6) can do is cause 12 damage, which equates to a wound or two at most.

Soaking: Heroic characters are expected to risk life and limb and escape *virtually* unharmed. Whenever a player character Wild Card Soaks *all* the damage from an attack, his benny is instantly returned. While there are no guarantees in life, this rule helps encourage the heroes

to remove single wounds as quickly as possible, before they accumulate into bigger penalties and without worrying too much about benny expenditure.

The GM should work within the framework of the story to describe how these "wounds" were actually near-misses or left a hero's jacket with a new hole or his hair badly singed.

Rapid Recovery: Every Wild Card hero recovers one wound automatically at the start of each new Act. Unconscious heroes wake up with 2 wounds just before the Act begins. No one is ever left out of a new Act or carrying round crippling wound penalties from the beginning of the adventure.

Injuries: While characters still suffer injuries, they are never lasting ones. A hero only ever suffers the effects of rolls on the Injury Table until the wounds are healed, as if he rolled a success on the Incapacitation Table. In short, heroes are never left with injuries for long even if they roll a Failure or Critical Failure on the Incapacitation Table.

HYPERSPACE

For the most part, hyperspace journeys occur at the speed of plot. That is, the heroes arrive when the GM needs them to arrive. If the bad guys have to reach a location first, then hyperspace fluctuations delay the heroes. Essentially, it's just a way of getting from A to B, just like the red line in the *Indiana Jones*™ movies or the fade outs in *Star Wars*, and shouldn't be dwelt upon too much by players or GMs.

In order to enter hyperspace, a starship must be outside a planet's gravity well. During chases, the specific adventure you're playing will list how many Range Increments a starship must move before it can jump to hyperspace. Activating the engines requires a Piloting roll as an action, but can be made by any hero operating a bridge position (such as the copilot or shield pod operator).

NEVER ENDING AMMO

At the end of every Scene, the heroes recover all their spent ammunition and Power Points. This means the heroes are never short of power packs and powers.

NEW EDGE

One new Edge is used in the *Daring Tales of the Space Lane* adventures—Target the Engines

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d8+

When the gunner inflicts a Critical Hit in space combat, he may adjust the Critical Hit roll by one point up or down.

OBSTACLES IN CHASES

Rather than simply listing Obstacles as a category with a fixed modifier and having a collision as the only occurrence, many of our Chase scenes include a table of events. The text will tell you when these rules apply.

SETTING RULES

When a participant draws a Club as his first initiative card, you just check the card value against the table and run the mini-scene. The number in parentheses after the card value is a modifier to the driver's initial Trait roll that round.

Failure can lead to no additional effect beyond not gaining any ground due to the failed roll, cause a hero to lose Range Increments, being Shaken, or taking damage, depending on the nature of the Chase. Success and raises are generally handled as normal, though sometimes there are additional benefits.

This type of expansion to the Chase rules is a recurring part of our adventure lines and is something the GM can easily work into his own tales, regardless of genre.

RECURRING VILLAINS

Villains have a habit of coming back (though rarely more than once). In order to ensure a villain survives, the GM can use a few tricks.

First, all villains the GM wants to return for a sequel are treated as having the Harder to Kill Edge with 100% chance of survival. Even a villain seen to fall into lava may survive and return, albeit with hideous scars and a terrible thirst for revenge.

Second, by spending a benny, the villain may guarantee his escape. He doesn't suddenly vanish into thin air, but he ignores all die rolls and action limits. What he can't do during this time is perform actions he was normally incapable of taking (like running more than his Pace + running die) or make any attacks—it's escape or nothing. For example, an evil psion might sprint his full Pace plus running die maximum, start his rocket-cycle, and blast off into the sky before the heroes can react. Heroes on Hold cannot interrupt this escape.

This second technique is especially useful during the early stages of an adventure, when the villain might make a brief appearance but *must* escape to fight the heroes in the climax.

SHIELD PODS

All starships are fitted with a number of shield pods, special devices used to deflect or absorb damage. Shield pods are activated with the Knowledge (Shields) skill. Each pod can be used in one of three ways, as detailed below. The effects of multiple uses of *armor* or *deflection* are not cumulative—only the highest modifier applies.

Absorption: Shields pods can generate a very intense forcefield in a limited area. As a free action, a shield pod can be used to Soak damage inflicted on the starship. They otherwise function exactly as bennies for this purpose.

Note that Ace can still be used to Soak damage as normal. The Edge represents the pilot's ability to avoid, or at least lessen, damage through his own skill.

Armor: Used in this manner, the pod generates a low intensity forcefield across the whole ship. This functions exactly as the *armor* power, except it cannot be maintained. Activating a shield pod in this manner requires an action, as the forcefield must be carefully calibrated.

Deflection: A pod set to deflector mode uses magnetic and gravitational distortion to shield the craft from incoming attacks. This functions exactly as the *deflection* power, except it cannot be maintained. Activating a shield pod in this manner requires an action to angle the energy shield. Against battery fire, the modifier is applied to the pilot's Piloting skill as a bonus.

Shields pod capacitors recharge at varying rates, but rarely very quickly. Typically, each shield regenerates after the end of the combat. If the shield operator is dealt a Joker, however, immediately recharge one pod.

STARSHIP COMBAT

Starship speeds and weapon ranges have been drastically scaled back to allow for groups who want to use miniatures. We've also removed the Acceleration entry—starships can now move up to their Top Speed without bookkeeping. Don't fret about the actual distances involved—they're not important. Any measurements for space combat or Chases will use the letters "SU," for "Space Unit." Each is the equivalent of "1" on the tabletop.

Collision damage is 1d6 per SU of movement. As all starships have Heavy Armor, their armor rating is added as a flat modifier.

A few small changes to the critical hit table are required as well. Capital ships also use the rules in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook.

Scratch and Dent: This entry destroys a shield pod. Roll randomly to determine which one.

Engine: Indicates a hit to the faster-than-light drive. The first hit gives the pilot a -2 penalty to enter hyperspace (on top of any wound penalties). A second hit disables the hyperdrive completely.

Locomotion: The sublight drive has been hit. Top Speed is halved as normal.

Weapons: A starship with batteries doesn't suffer individual weapon hits. Each Critical Hit of this nature reduces a battery's damage die by one die type (so d8 drops to d6). AP is unchanged. When a battery drops below d4 damage, it is no longer operational.

STARSHIP CREW

Starships commanded solely by NPCs have a new stat block entry—Abilities. This lists the Piloting, Shields, and Shooting skills the GM needs in an adventure, as well as any noteworthy Edges which might apply, like Ace or Level Headed.

For single crew ships, assume any Crew damage Incapacitates the pilot unless he has a unique stat block—it's much quicker than tracking individual damage, especially if there are a lot of small craft in play.

SURRENDERING

To some gamers, surrendering is a form of defeat. In pulp style games, it's often a vital part of the plot and

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leads the story forward. As such, anytime the heroes surrender at the dramatically appropriate moment and go along with the villain's demands (it's usually obvious because of the number of Extras present or the villain is holding a gun to someone's head and shouting, "Drop your weapons!"), they earn a benny.

TRADING RULES

There aren't any. Although the heroes own a freighter, these adventures are about action, not haggling. Unless the plot demands otherwise, the adventurers have just enough money through off-screen trading activities to replenish ammunition and food stores, repair their ship, and purchase small items, like communicators or rope, they may lose during the exploit. Any extra money should be earned through the adventures.

WEAPONS & ARMOR

Once the characters earn some money they'll probably consider upgrading their personal firearms. Just use the regular Savage Worlds weapons (and prices) and tweak the names accordingly. For instance, the default blaster pistol is just a Glock with no AP rating. A Desert Eagle might be called a heavy blaster pistol, an Uzi an auto-blaster, and an M16 a blaster rifle.

Except in certain scenes where armor is required, such as a spacesuit (+2) or infiltrating an enemy base in disguise as a soldier, personal armor provides *no* Armor bonus to player characters. No, it isn't fair, but space pulp heroes really shouldn't be running around in body armor.

WRIST COMPUTERS

Small computers that strap to the wrist, these ubiquitous gizmos come in several forms and can hold a variety of data packages designed to help the wearer.

As well as storing programs (see below), each serves as a diary, data storage device, communicator (5 mile range), and calculator. Program information can be displayed via speech, either through a discrete earpiece or the computer's speaker, or text on a small screen.

Wrist computers' primary purpose is to store small programs. In game terms, these grant the wearer help through a Cooperative roll. The skill die varies with the level of program. Only one program can be used in a given round, no matter how many wrist computers or programs are available. Accessing a program is considered a free action, made as part of the skill roll. Swapping a program chip takes an action. Each program must be purchased separately.

Program chips cannot be used at a lesser level. There is a deliberate manufacturing decision designed to make consumers spend more money. For instance, a Model II computer can store 3 levels of programs, but the user has two Level II programs—Healing and Repair. He can use install just one program—can't install both and use one at a d4 to save memory space.

The following skills are available as programs: Gambling (illegal), Healing, Investigation (encyclopedia), Knowledge (specific skill), Lockpicking (illegal), Persuasion (etiquette program), Repair, Survival, Taunt (insults from numerous races), and Tracking.

WRIST COMPUTERS

Computer	Weight	Cost	Notes
Model I	0.5	100	Can store 2 levels of programs
Model II	0.5	250	Can store 3 levels of programs
Model III	0.1	500	Can store 4 levels of programs
Program	Weight	Cost	Notes
Level I	—	50	d4 skill
Level II	—	150	d6 skill
Level III	—	400	d8 skill
Level IV	—	750	d10 skill
Master	—	x2	See below
Illegal	—	x2	See below

Illegal: Created by criminal gangs and distributed through the blackmarket, illegal programs function as normal but cost twice the price. They can be combined with master programs.

Master: A master program works like a regular program, but also has a d6 Wild Die. Because of the extra code required, the program counts as one level higher. For instance, if you buy a Level II master program, it uses storage space like a Level II program. There are no Level IV master programs. Master programs can be combined with illegal programs.

Example: *Captain Blaze purchases a Model II computer, which can store three levels of programs. She buys an illegal master gambling program. Normally she could buy a Level III program as the maximum, but as a master program the software counts one level higher for storage purposes. Thus, she may take a Level II program only. The software has a d6 skill and a Wild Die, but costs \$600 (150 base, x 2 for being illegal, and x2 for being master quality).*

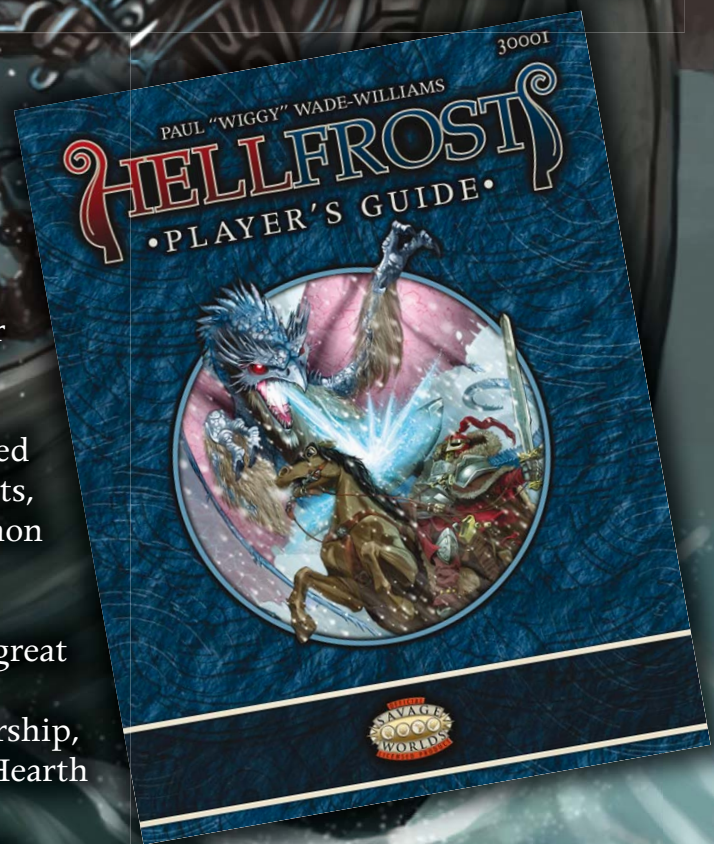
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