BAM! #5

BASIC ACTION MAGAZINE

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE EDITION

PLAYING BASH! ONLINE WITH MAPTOOL

To the Rescue! CONTROLLERS!

YOU NEVER KNEW TALKING TO PLANTS COULD BE SO USEFUL!

THIS ISSUE:

LET'S GET GRANULAR!

3 DIFFERENT WAYS TO EXPAND THE STAT RANGE BEYOND 1–5

AND PREVIEW BASH! FANTASY: LEGENDS OF STEEL

CREDITS

CONTENTS

To the Rescue: Controllers

Teams of superheroes are often made up of heroes fulfilling a variety of roles within the group. The Brick, Blaster, Speedster, Mentalist, etc – each bring their own specialty to the group. The specialty of a Controller, however, is versatility. Controllers are the people who can command one of the elements, change the weather, or are lord of the plant or animal kingdom. While they certainly are useful in a fight, where a controller really shines is providing useful abilities outside of combat, and filling a niche in a pinch. The best part of being a controller is how creative it allows you to be when describing the effects of your powers.

Choosing a Theme

Controllers always follow some sort of theme. Your choice of theme is very important because it will impact the powers you take, the way you do power stunts, and your general character concept. While controllers tend to have certain abilities in common, an Earth-themed controller will be very different than a telekinetic.

Broad vs. Narrow Theme: When you choose a theme, you may want to choose something very broad, such as "the weather", "the four elements", or "animals". The benefits of this is that you can get more creative in what you do, especially with powers like *X Mastery* or *Special Attack.* However, the down side is that for *X Mastery* a broad theme counts as an enhancement, increasing the cost of the power by 1pt. Likewise, you can save 1pt by taking a narrow theme, such as "Wind", "Fire", or "Felines". While this will make the power cheaper, it will also restrict your creative choices when using the power.

Common Power Choices

While controllers can have an extremely wide variety of powers, there are certain powers that occur very frequently among them, regardless of theme.

Theme-O-Kinesis

Telekinesis is the best power to represent a lot of combat effects used by controllers. Got a character who has magnetic powers? He has Magneto-Kinesis: Telekinesis [Limit: Only affects Metal]. A character who commands water? That's Hydrokinesis: Telekinesis [Limit: Requires Water]. An Earth controller? Terra-Kinesis: [Limit: Requires Stone]. You get the picture? This can be used for all kinds of effects. A Hydro-Kinetic character might shape the wave of water into a mighty fist that crushes his opponents, or can grab and manipulate objects remotely. Of course, when the subject of your Theme-O-Kinesis is unavailable, the power won't be able to work. Likewise, certain things that you can use Telekinesis for may not make sense for this theme.

X Mastery

X Mastery and Multi-Powers: X Mastery is probably the most common power among Controllers. Because this power works to fit just about any theme, X Mastery only adds +1 point to cost of a multi-power if the other powers in that Multi-Power are also X-Themed, regardless of what category they are. Thus, Fire Mastery 3 + Special Attack 3 (used to make fireballs) = 4pts instead of 5pts. You get a break on the cost, because you are making the powers fit a theme. Furthermore, if all the other powers in the multi-power fit the theme, they also only cost +1 pt, as long as X-Mastery is the highest level (or tied for) power in the multi-power.

How to use X-Mastery: X-Mastery is generally not a combat power, but is instead a utilitarian one, used to make environmental changes mostly. That isn't to say that it is useless, however! If used creatively, and properly, X-Mastery can do quite a lot!

Counter, Weaken, or "Turn Off" another Power: If you hold your panel or interrupt, you can counter, weaken, or turn off a similar (or opposite) power, by rolling a Power Contest with the other person. Powers with ongoing effects are generally weakened a level or two at a time, while powers that are single are completely countered. When weakening on ongoing power, you must beat the user in a power contest. Doing so lowers their power's level by 1. Every 10 you beat them by reduces it by another level, to a minimum of 0, which turns the power off completely. So turning off an ongoing Level 4 power completely in one go will require rolling 30 higher than the opponent. You can also reduce area, range, or other enhancements on a power as if you were reducing levels.

If you reduce an opponent's power, they can spend a panel trying to restore it by rolling their own power contest against you. They do this at their full level in the power, not the reduced level.

Example: Burn Cycle has a large aura of flame around him (Damage Aura 4, Large Burst). Smoke Screen can use Fire Mastery 4 to reduce it. Smokescreen rolls 9x4 = 36 while Burn Cycle rolls 4x4 = 16. Smokescreen's roll exceeds Burn Cycle's by 20, allowing him to reduce Burn Cycle's powers by 3 levels. Smokescreen decides to reduce the level of the Damage Aura by 2 and shrink the area to a Medium Burst. If Burn Cycle wants to restore his Aura to it's original size and damage, he must spend a panel and attempt to beat Smoke Screen in another power contest. Even though his Damage Aura has been reduced to level 2, he gets to roll the power contest using a multiplier of 4, his original level in Damage Aura. The Narrator rolls for Burn Cycle and gets 5x4 =20, while Smokescreen's player rolls 4x4 =16. Burn Cycle spends his panel restoring 1 level to his Damage Aura, so it is now functioning as Damage Aura 3 (Medium Burst).

Power Trick: X Mastery is a natural power to use to fuel power stunts. Instead of performing a full stunt, you can also use X Mastery to fuel a "Power Trick" which has a one time use, instead of being usable for the entire scene. It costs 1 Hero point to do a Power Trick, and the level of the power is equal to your level in X Mastery or less. If the power has an ongoing effect, it will last only 1 page unless you spend an additional Hero point to extend its duration an additional page.

Dampen Damage: You can hold your panel (or spend a Hero Die to interrupt) to dampen damage from X (a source your Mastery could affect) over a large area. You roll times your level in X-Mastery and this is added to the soak of everyone (and everything) in the area against damage done by X. For instance Smokescreen and his team are inside a room that is on fire. While Smokescreen is perfectly safe here (he's got Immunity to fire), his companions and the building are not, and the 40 fire damage they're going to take this round could kill the innocent bystander that is trapped in here with them. Smokescreen rolls his Fire Mastery 4 and gets 11 x4 = 44, adding +44 to the soak of all the people and objects in the room. Thus he completely dampens the fire damage... however, this takes his panel, and he cannot maintain this

level of protection forever. A character with Quick Thinking can use it to interrupt to dampen damage. Dampening damage is especially useful when an ally is taking Continual Damage from X.

Manipulate the Environment: You can use X-Mastery to make changes to the area where you are fighting to give one side an edge over another. Roll X-Mastery vs. whichever enemy stat the Narrator feels is appropriate or whichever difficulty the Narrator assigns based on what you describe. Success indicates a moderate bonus or hindrance. If the Narrator allows it, you can attempt a Major bonus or hindrance, but you must succeed by 10. Note that this isn't the same as the Confuse or Weaken power- if it fills an area, it will affect everyone there, friend or foe.

Defensive Powers

It is also not uncommon for a controller who controls inanimate objects or plants to be able to reflexively move them in the way to block incoming attacks with *Deflect*. A shield of ice hovering nearby, or one of rock jutting up from the ground in the nick of time are both appropriate ideas. Likewise, a character may encase themselves in a protective shell of these objects, counting as *Armor*. In addition, objects may be piled up forming a wall using *Force Field*.

Controllers who favor the animal kingdom may well have *Danger Sense*.

Controllers of some form of energy, or possibly spiny plants or animals, may also protect themselves with *Damage Aura,* cloaking themselves in a painful barrier of shimmering heat, cold, or spikes. .

Common Advantages

Versatile: There will probably be a time when you want to do something you hadn't thought of before. Power stunts are quite common for controllers. A character who is an Earth controller for instance may have decided they want to animate stone statues and make them fight for her- but it's not on her sheet! So she uses Versatile to Power stunt Animation: [Limit: Only Stone].

Quick-Thinking: As you saw above, there are many defensive uses of X-Mastery where quick thinking would be helpful.

CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

Elementalist

(12 Stats, 23 Powers, 35 pts Total)

Earth, fire, wind, and water in all their forms are the Elementalist's to command. The Elementalist is also an excellent example of what a controller can do. Power tricks and stunts can be used to turn into water, surround oneself in a cloak of flames, or burrow through the earth.

B1 A2 M2

Powers:

Boost: Mind 3 when using elemental powers. 3pts.
Earth/Ice/Fire Barrier: Force Field 3 [Enhancement: Variable] 4pts
Ice/Stone Prison: Immobilize 2 (20 Escape, Short Range) 3pts
Wings of the Wind: Flight 3 (15 squares) 3pts
Elemental Multi-Power: 10pts
- X-Mastery 4 (Earth, Fire, Wind, Water) [Enhancement: broad group]
- Elemental Attack: Special Attack 4 [Enhancement: Variable]
    - Lightning Bolt: Medium Line, x3 Hit x6 Dmg
    - Skipping Stone: Short Range, Ricochet x1, x4 Hit x5 Dmg
    - Fireball: Medium Range, Medium Burst, x5 Dmg
    - Ice Blast: Medium Range, Small Burst, x6 Dmg
- Conjuring 4 [Limit: Must be made of stone, ice, etc]
- Animation 4 [Limit: must be made up of an element]
- Terra/Hydro/Aero-Kinesis: Telekinesis 4 [Limit: Requires earth, water, or air]

Advantages: Versatile, Quick-Thinking

Disadvantages: Depending on how the character got powers, Freak or Outsider could be appropriate. Maybe if the character is an elemental being, Outsider would be appropriate. Susceptibility (Mind) would work for effects that weaken the Elementalist's abilities.

Skills: Skill choices may vary, depending on whether the Elementalist's powers came as a result of scientific accident or a magical origin. Either Science or Occultism are appropriate choices.

MYSTICAL NINJA

35 pts (10 Stats, 25 Powers)

Unlike others trained in the ancient arts of Ninjutsu, the Mystical Ninja has honed his or her craft to levels unknown by most of the world. This superhuman shinobi combines the classic weapons and skills of the trade with magical abilities acquired through years of intense personal training. Capable of feats of power which confounds and bewilders mortal foes; few things dare to cross blades with a Mystical Ninja.

Brawn 2 Agility 2 Mind 1

x2 Soak, x4 Defense, x5 Priority

Powers:

Weapon Technique 2: All Hand-to-Hand [Variable] 4pts
Attack Weak Point 2 pts
Danger Sense (x4 Defense) 2pts
Martial Arts Mastery 2 (Fast, Tricky, Grappling styles) 2pts
Paired Weapons 2pts
Skillful 1 (+2 Skill Choices) 1pt
Grappling Hook: Swinging [Limitation: Easily Taken Gadget] 1 pt
Boost 1 (Agility) [When in dark or low-light conditions] 1 pt
Clinging 1 pt
Super Jump (40 Squares) 2pts
Water Waking 1 pt
Shinobi Multi-Power 6 pts:
- Smoke Bombs: Confusion 2 (-4 Dice Penalty, Close Range, Small Burst) [Limitation: Ammo Gadget]
- Smoke Form: Ghost Form 2
- Shadow Form: Invisibility 2

Equipment: Shuriken (Range 6 squares, x1+10 Dmg), Ninja Sword (x2+10 to x4+10 damage, depending on how much Weapon Technique is put into damage)

Advantages: Mentor, Quick-Thinking

Disadvantages: On the Run, Arch Enemy (rival ninja)

Skills: Athletics x3/Acrobatics, Stealth x3/Move Silently, Deception/Disguise

6

LIVING CARTOON

28 pts(10 Stats, 18 Powers)

A zany and silly hero or villain, the living cartoon may have been brought to life by some magical means, or perhaps a living being was transformed to have cartoon-like properties. Regardless, the Living Cartoon is not an archetype to underestimate, as he is nearly indestructible and always seems to have something dangerous (and hilarious) up his four-fingered glove.

Brawn 1 Agility 3 Mind 1

x4 Soak

Powers:

Boost Brawn 3: For Comedic Effect (i.e. he can lift an anvil and drop it on a bad-guy) 3pts

Invulnerability: Armor 3 (x4 Soak) [he'll seem to have a giant lump grow out of his head, or be filled with holes when he gets shot- but next page he'll look fine again]. 3pts

Resilience: Healing 5 [Limitation: Must go "off camera" from enemy] 4pts

Hammer-Space: Conjuration 3 (usually uses to pull big mallets, anvils, etc, out of seemingly nowhere). 3pts

Cartoon Violence Multi-Power 5pts

Special Attack 3 [Variable]

Pie in the Face: Confusion 2 (-4 Dice Penalty, Close Range)

Advantages: Versatile, Quick Thinking, Immortality

Disadvantages: Freak, Social Stigma (cartoons aren't to be trusted), Public ID

Skills: Athletics/Acrobatics, Stealth/Hide, Escapology/Improvise, Deception/Disguise

LET'S GET GRANULAR!

Introduction by Aldo Regalado

"BASH lacks granularity." That's the first complaint my gaming group levied against what has now become my favorite superhero RPG. Indeed, after a few months of play it is the only actual concern that some of my players continue to have about the system. More alarmingly, it is this aspect of the game that caused me to initially dismiss it upon running across its first edition a couple of years ago. Although I am now a convert who genuinely believes that BASH works fine as is, I also see the wisdom of crafting optional rules that might accommodate different styles of play and therefore broaden the appeal of this already fun and versatile system. Toward that end, we're going to present three options for adding more granularity into your game, in order of simplicity.

Option I: New Power: Heightened

By Aldo Regalado

Heightened is a new Intensive Training power that slightly changes the way Stats work. The following article will also briefly consider the pros and cons of introducing **Heightened** into your games.

Before presenting **Heightened**, I should probably give a more detailed explanation of what is meant by "a lack of granularity." In this case granularity has nothing to do with crunchy and nutritious breakfast cereals, sand, or any other mass composed of individual particles. Instead, what my buddies are complaining about is that BASH gives us no way to differentiate degrees of aptitude *within* the multiplier categories that make-up its very broadly defined Stats benchmarks. Brawn 2, for instance, is "pro football player" strength and toughness. This is also the Brawn rating for the Archer and Weapon Master archetypes. While some players are happy with Stats being presented in such broad brushstrokes, others want more gradations within categories. They want to be able to distinguish between the pro football player and the Olympic weightlifter. They also want to be able to differentiate the hum-dinging, patriotic shield-slinger whose physique is at the peak of human perfection from the very well-trained, but not quite as impressive, wise-cracking, purple-clad archer. Such players also have similar issues with Stats at the higher end of the benchmark spectrum. Gods of thunder and radioactively induced monstrosities, they argue, belong in the same Brawn 5 weight-class, but there ought to be a way of giving the edge to the gamma-charged goliath. **Heightened** does just that.

Heightened: 1 pt, Personal

You have trained to improve one of your physical and/or mental abilities. This power gives you a +3 Result Bonus to all rolls with one of your Stats, which you indicate when you take this power. This Result Bonus adds to any check involving the improved Stat, including (but not limited to) Damage, Defense, Mental Defense, Priority and Soak. The result bonus does not affect calculations dependent solely on a straight multiplier, such as movement. Lifting benchmarks are tripled for Heightened Brawn. You can take Heightened up to three times, once for each stat.

Example: After taking the Super Serum, Captain Patriot found that his strength was increased beyond that of even the strongest of human athletes, while not quite as strong as many of the other superheroes of the day who easily lift cars. He has Heightened Brawn, and gets a +3 Result Bonus to all Brawn rolls he makes. While he cannot pick up an object weighing several tons, he can lift an object weighing half a ton.

As an alternative, Heightened can be replaced with a similar power called **Well-Conditioned. Well-Conditioned** is worth 1-3pts, with each point giving a +3 Result bonus that can be spread amongst the three stats however you wish (with a maximum of +3 Result Bonus to any one Stat). In this way, you may introduce even more granularity into your game, although it would require more careful book-keeping, as you now have to worry about +1, +2, and +3 Result Bonuses. Lifting benchmarks are increased by 50% for +1, doubled for +2, and tripled for a +3 Result Bonus to Brawn.

Example: Mike is designing his Golden Age character, the Blue Flame. He assigns the following Stats to his superhero: Brawn 1, Agility 1, Mind 2. Although the Blue Flame is not a professional athlete, Mike envisions

the azure avenger being a bit stronger, tougher, and faster than the average Joe. He also envisions him being especially strong-willed. Mike, therefore, purchases 2 levels of **Well-Conditioned** for the Blue Flame, for a total Result Bonus of +6 to spread among his Stats. Remembering that the maximum he can assign to any one Stat is +3, he distributes the Result Bonus as follows: Brawn 1x+2, Agility 1x+1, Mind 2x+3. Blue Flame's Brawn 1x+2 adds to his personal force field power (Armor 3) for a total Soak of 4x+2. He also has a Flame Bolt power (Special Attack 5, mid range, +1 Hit, +2 Damage). His Agility 1x+1 is used to determine his chance to hit with the Flame Bolt, for a total of 2x+1, while his Mind 2x+3 is used to determine his damage with the attack, for a total of 4x+3. Result Bonuses, however, don't figure into calculating Movement, so the Blue Flame's Run is determined as if he had an Agility 1. Good thing he can fly!

What are the game-play implications of introducing **Heightened** into your BASH game? In many respects, they are remarkably slim. **Heightened** aims at providing more nuanced Stats in BASH without actually changing anything about the system. The most obvious change is mostly cosmetic and relates to the way that Stats are recorded. As noted in the example above, Stats are traditionally represented by a simple number ranging from 1 – 5. But what do you write if a Stat is Heightened? When recording your character's stats, you can simply demarcate a "+" next to the stat to indicate this result bonus as a result of Heightened. For instance, a character with Heightened Agility of 2 would write "Agility: 2+" on the sheet. If using **Well-Conditioned**, you would need to record the exact Result Bonus being added along with the stat multiplier. So you might have "Brawn x2+1" and "Agility x1+2" for instance.

Another obvious implication is complexity. While **Heightened** shouldn't be too cumbersome to implement, it does add another level of calculation that some folks might find tedious or unnecessary. This might be particularly true for new players, who have yet to get used to the difference between Dice Bonuses, Multipliers, and Result Bonuses.

In short, **Heightened** is presented as an option for players and Narrators who might like a little more distinction between characters in their superhero games. It is also an option that might have even more appeal in other genres, where character Stats are more tightly grouped in the lower ranges. If used, it should provide players with interesting character options. Whether **Heightened** is used should be left entirely to the discretion of the Narrator.

Option II: The Whole Half Stat
By Ben Norman

Do you want to add a little more diversity among the three character ability Stats? It is possible to double the number of attribute ranks form the current 5 levels to 11 by simply adding the 'Half-Rank' option to the Stats. It sounds a little odd at first but, given a little thought, the half-ranked attribute makes perfect sense for the BASH game's mechanics. As it currently stands, each stat is worth 2 power points, so a half-rank in a Stat would be worth 1 power point.

This optional rule would be very useful in BASH games which focus upon low- and mid-powered heroes. In Mystery Men and Street Level campaigns where characters are built with fewer character points, purchasing an extra half-rank in a Stat adds a little extra capability to a hero while still leaving character points to by powers with.

To be fair, this optional rule still leans toward the strength of a whole rank in a Stat. This is because any fractional result of a role is rounded down. For example if *The Pulverizer* (with a Brawn of 3.5) hits a villain and rolls a 7 on 2d6; the damage would be 24 points not 24.5. Additionally, Stat benefits such as lifting and movement will be closer to the whole Stat rank below it; not at the exact half-way point between the two.

So how would this look? See the charts on the next page.

At the end of this issue, you'll find a new Dice Roll Chart to use with this system in full color. You'll also find an ink-saving version of this same chart.

9

Table 1-1 BRAWN

Score	Cost	Examples	Lifting
0	0	Feeble	Cannot lift 30 pounds
0.5	1	Weak	Cannot lift 50 pounds
1	2	Normal Man	Lift at least 50 pounds
1.5	3	Rugged	Lift 100 pounds
2	4	Football Player	Lift 400 pounds
2.5	5	Slight Super Str.	Lift about a ton
3	6	Minor Super Str.	Lift several tons
3.5	7	Improved Super Str.	Lift at least 10 tons
4	8	Greater Super Str.	Lift tens of tons
4.5	9	Major Super Str.	Lift at least 70 tons
5	10	World's Strongest	Lift more than a hundred tons
5.5	11	Out of This world!	Lift at least 200 tons

Table 1-2 AGILITY

Score	Cost	Examples	Movement
0	0	Severely Disabled	1 square
0.5	1	Clumsy	2 squares
1	2	Normal Man	3 squares
1.5	3	Somewhat Athletic	4 squares
2	4	Black Belt	6 squares
2.5	5	Olympic Gold	7 squares
3	6	Minor Super Ability	9 squares
3.5	7	Super-humanly Quick	10 squares
4	8	Very Fast	12 squares
4.5	9	Super Fast	13 squares
5	10	Ultra Fast	15 squares
5.5	11	Insanely Super Fast	16 squares

Table 1-3 MIND

Score	Cost	Example
0	0	Severely Impaired Faculties
0.5	1	Somewhat Slow
1	2	Normal Person
1.5	3	Rather Sharp
2	4	PhD.
2.5	5	Approaching Genius
3	6	Genius
3.5	7	Greater Genius
4	8	Super Genius
4.5	9	Among the greatest Minds on the planet
5	10	One of the greatest Minds in history
5.5	11	Beyond Smart as we know it

MORE GRANULARITY CAN MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUR GAME TO MODEL CERTAIN CHARACTERS. HEROES WHO ARE JUST ABOVE MAXIMUM HUMAN POTENTIAL, BUT NOT QUITE SUPER-HUMAN FOR INSTANCE; OR HEROES WHO ARE IN EXCELLENT SHAPE, BUT NOT AS STRONG AS A PRO LINEBACKER.

10
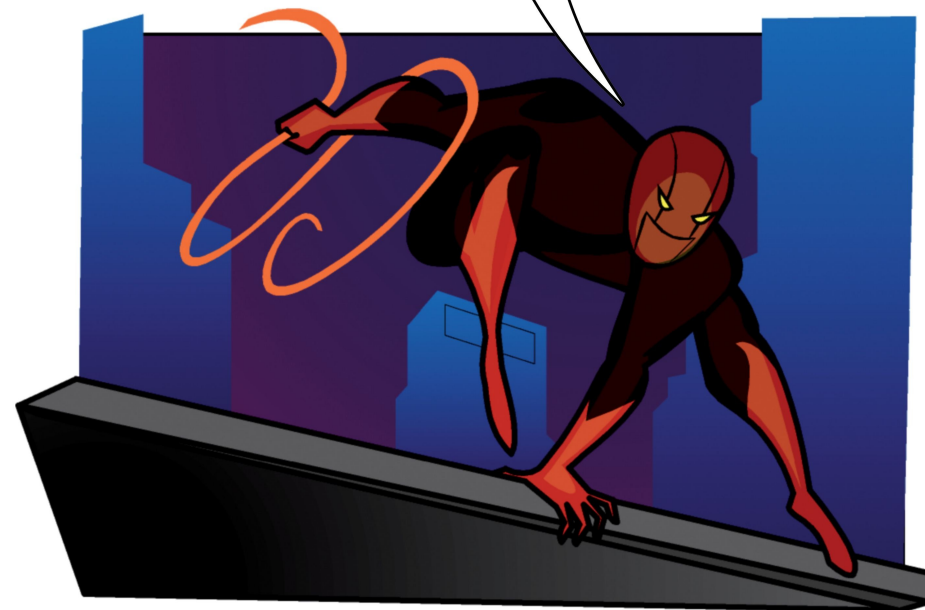
Option III: Using a New Stat System

The most drastic option would be to completely throw out the existing chart for stats and replace it with a more granular one. This chart would have not six, but eleven potential options for Stats. Instead of Stats costing 2pts per level, they cost only 1pt per level, and your Stat and the multiplier for that stat are not the same. The potential difficulty here is that you'd have to record two values on the character sheet – the Stat's roll and its level as two separate values. However, this is nothing new to rpgs. Anyone who's ever played *Dungeons & Dragons* could tell you that an 18 Strength gives you a +4 bonus to your damage rolls, for instance.

BASH! Ultimate Edition Stats using this alternate system have two aspects to how they are rolled – a Multiplier and a Result Bonus. You can see them below:

Score	Roll	Brawn Examples	Agility Examples	Mind Examples	Brawn Lifting	Agility Movement
0	1d6	Weak & Feeble	Severely Disabled	Severely Impaired Faculties	Cannot lift 50 lbs	Run 1 square
1	1d6+3	An adolescent	Slowpoke	Not so Bright	Barely lift 50 lbs	Run 1 square
2	x1	Normal Man	Normal Man	Normal Person	Lift at least 50 lbs	Run 3 squares
3	x1+3	In Good Shape	Athletic	Studious	Lift 150 lbs	Run 3 squares
4	x2	Pro Football Player	Black Belt	PhD.	Lift 400 lbs	Run 6 squares
5	x2+3	Beyond Human	Beyond Human Agility	Exceptionally Smart	Lift 1200 lbs	Run 6 squares
6	x3	Minor Super Strength	Superhuman Agility	Genius	Lift several tons	Run 9 squares
7	x3+3	Good Super Strength	Fast	Brilliant	Lift 10 tons	Run 9 squares
8	x4	Greater Super Strength	Very Fast	Super Genius	Lift tens of tons	Run 12 squares
9	x4+3	Extreme Super Strength	Extreme Agility	One of the greatest Minds alive	Lift 100 tons	Run 12 squares
10	x5	World's Strongest	Ultra Fast	One of the greatest Minds in history	Lift hundreds of tons	Run 15 squares

NEW STUFF

Limitations

Vulnerability: Vulnerability is a new type of Gadget Limitation. This gadget takes triple damage from a certain source. Otherwise, it is just as strong as any other gadget. Essentially it is as if this gadget had its own weakness. For example, a crystal wand might be vulnerable to sonic damage, while a wooden staff might be vulnerable to fire.

Advantages

Blaze of Glory: When reduced to 30 or less Hits, you get a +2 Dice Bonus to all rolls. You may also take an additional panel as soon as you fall in combat (they occur simultaneously). This extra panel can include an extra attack even if you have already made one this page.

Fearless: You are completely immune to the effects of fear, including fear-based effects caused by super powers. Any attempt to frighten or intimidate you automatically fails. Whenever you try to intimidate people, you get a +2 Dice Bonus.

Silver Tongue: Fooling other people is what you do best. You get a +2 bonus to your Mind stat whenever you are trying to lie, trick, fast-talk, or in any way deceive someone.

Disadvantages

Duty: You owe your allegiance to someone or some organization (you specify what your duty is to). You obey all orders from your superiors within that organization without question. If it means sacrificing your life, so be it. Often, Duty means great inconvenience that requires you to suddenly drop everything to follow your orders.

Physically Challenged: You have some sort of physical disability that impedes you in some way. Perhaps you are blind, deaf, mute, paraplegic, etc. Specify how you are physically challenged when you take this disadvantage. How this challenge affects your character mechanically is between you and the Narrator, but it is suggested that you build the character to reflect the challenge. For instance, a character who is paraplegic might have Agility 0, but has Boost with Agility when using their upper body. A character with poor hearing or vision might have a -2 Dice Penalty when rolling to use that sense.

Note that it is also completely possible that the challenge will affect the character very little mechanically, but it will be inconvenient at times. A blind character with sonar, danger sense, and various super senses for instance would have no mechanical "penalties" for being blind. He would be able to fight, and indeed would be immune to blinding flashes of light that affect others. He might even be able to "read" by running his fingers over printed text – however he would not be able to tell the color of a traffic light or read a street sign from a distance. A character who is mute that communicates using telepathy might have trouble communicating with an android or over the phone. Even a character who is missing a hand and designed a robotic replacement will not be able to rely on it all the time. It's up to you and the Narrator to decide how the physical challenge affects your character.

Unpleasant Quality: You seem to have a quality that makes you less likable. You should define what this quality is. Perhaps you're ugly, dull, or in some way socially inept. Whatever it is, you have a -2 Dice Penalty to any social rolls you make.

ONLINE GAMING WITH BASH UE AND MAPTOOL

By Jim Stoner

The internet helps many gamers enjoy their hobby in new ways or in circumstances where it is difficult to find or arrange a traditional face-to-face game. From asynchronous formats like play-by-email or play-by-post games on forums, to real-time games using text or voice chat, players from around the world come together to play their favorite games despite the barriers of distance, location or time.

One of the best tools for online gamers is the virtual tabletop (or VTT), a computer application that provides one of the key elements used in many face-to-face games: the table around which the players gather, share information, pass notes, and (optionally) use a battle mat. With a VTT, you can do all of these things even if your players are literally continents apart! But virtual tabletops aren't just for online gamers: with the proliferation of smart phones, netbooks, laptops, and HD TVs, many people use these tools to enhance their face-to-face games as well.

What is a Virtual Table Top?

One of the key elements of a virtual tabletop is providing ways for a group to share visual information during a game session. Most VTTs include a "whiteboard" feature, allowing you to draw on a shared screen using freehand drawing tools, as well as the ability to drag-and-drop any image from your computer (or the internet) into the VTT, simultaneously displaying it to all of the players. For groups that prefer to keep their games abstract, you can use the VTT to draw quick sketches, outline a battle plan with simple Xs and Os, pass around handouts, or view pictures of the scene and their opponents just like they do at a face-to-face game.

For those groups that like using battle mats and miniatures, these programs offer a full suite of tools to emulate and even enhance the traditional table top battle mat. With graphical maps and backgrounds, movable tokens (in place of miniatures), grids and measuring tools, you can easily manage your game's battle mat just as you do on your dining room table. In fact, many VTTs provide advanced features that take the battle mat to an entirely new level. For the game master, VTTs allow you to easily incorporate many freely available maps and images from the internet, and many VTTs will include tools for creating custom maps using integrated drawing tools and/or simple drag-and-drop placement

of background images, textures, walls, furnishings and other objects that are available online. At play time, features like vision blocking and automated lighting will hide regions of the map that the player characters cannot currently see, and optional individualized views display to each player only what their character can see. These enhancements to the traditional battle mat make the VTT useful for face-to-face games as well as online.

Of course VTTs don't just provide a whiteboard, image sharing and virtual battle mats. Most include text chat tools and dice rollers, allowing you to play an online game entirely within the VTT (or if you don't like typing, you can use a free voice conferencing application like Skype, Ventrilo or Teamspeak instead). In addition, many VTTs provide additional tools to help manage your game. The player and non-player character tokens might store information about their game stats, from simple notes to full interactive character sheets, while tools like initiative trackers and resource trackers (for damage, healing, powers, etc.) will help keep your game organized and moving quickly.

The number of VTTs has risen dramatically in the last few years, and they all come with different design goals and feature sets. Some VTTs are specifically designed for one game system or a small selection of game systems, providing tools to enhance those games out-of-the-box. Other VTTs are game system neutral, designed to be used with any game system while allowing the user community to develop game-specific tools as needed. And of course some VTTs are free, while others are require a one-time or ongoing subscription fee. It may take some experimentation to find the VTT at provides the best fit for you and your gaming group.

MapTool and the BASH UE Framework

In my case, I've chosen MapTool as my VTT of choice. It is free and open source, with an active community and multiple developers. It provides all of the features mentioned above, and it is game system neutral. While it doesn't come with any system-specific tools pre-installed, it does allow the user community to create "frameworks", or collections of tools for any game, and the community has stepped up to the plate with a wide range of frameworks for dozens of games ranging from Dungeons and Dragons through Risus. And, of course, BASH UE!

The BASH UE framework that I use in MapTool provides a simple character sheet for each PC or NPC token. It allows you to specify your stats, skills, powers, advantages/disadvantages, weaknesses, etc., as well as any character details and notes you wish to include. Stats and skills are clickable, which rolls the relevant ability using the BASH dice roll mechanic and sends the result to the chat window. In addition, you can define your own character-specific rolls and actions, like your character's Priority, Defense, Mental Defense, and custom powers and attacks, and roll any of them simply by clicking on a link in the character sheet. The character sheet tracks your Hits, Hero Points and Dice, and Setbacks, and is integrated into other MapTool features, such as the initiative tracker, so when you roll your Priority it updates the initiative list.

If you've been wanting to play BASH UE but your gaming friends are unable to meet regularly face-to-face, or you haven't been able to find a gaming group in your area, this may be an answer for you.

Resources and More Information

If you are interested in learning more about MapTool and/or the BASH UE framework, the following resources may be useful:

* RPTools.net http://www.rptools.net/ - Home of MapTool and its community of users

* MapTool Video Tutorials http://www.rptoolstutorials.net/ - This site hosts more than a dozen short video tutorials that introduce MapTool, demonstrate its key features, and then walk you through actually using those features. Use the left navigation menu to go to the "MapTool Tutorials" page for a short overview and player quickstart, the "MapTool Step By Step" page for feature-specific tutorials, and the "Beyond The Basics" page for help on putting all the elements together.

* RPTools.net Forums http://forums.rptools.net/ - The user community forums for MapTool is a great resource for answering questions about the application.

* BASH UE framework for MapTool http://www.telluri.com/maptool/BASH_Framework/ - This site includes the downloadable framework for BASH UE, documentation, and links to its official discussion threads on the MapTool forum and BASHTalk forum.

BASH! FANTASY: LEGENDS OF STEEL PREVIEW

For those who remember the original edition of *BASH! Fantasy,* you may be happy to know that it will be getting an update. There will be rules changes bringing it more in line with what you have become used to in *BASH! Ultimate Edition* and *BASH! Sci-Fi*, as well as some things that are completely new.

The first offering featuring these new rules will be *BASH! Fantasy: Legends of Steel.* Unlike the original *BASH! Fantasy*, this product will not be a generic toolkit for use with high fantasy of any genre. Instead, it is a setting specific to a world of Sword & Sorcery. You will not find gnomes running magic item shops or knights in shining armor. Instead you will find a world of grim and gritty adventure where heroes with more sand than sense fight cults of snake men as they seek the treasure of an ancient pyramid amidst the steaming jungle.

Legends of Steel is the name of the campaign setting, which takes place in the world of Erisa. Erisa was inspired by the comic book and cartoon Sword & Sorcery fiction of the 70s and 80s, where heroes could adventure in a world reminiscent of such comics as Marvel's™ *Conan the Barbarian* or *The Warlord* from DC™.

Erisa is a world where decadent empires struggle to hold their frontiers against barbarian hordes; where demon-worshiping priests practice their dark arts in primeval forests, and where sellswords, bravos and mercenaries of every stripe carouse away their fortunes in the crowded taverns and hazy lotus dens of vice-ridden port cities. There are fortunes to be won and lost, epic battles to fight, despots to usurp, and ancient evils to destroy. So grab your sword and a fast horse, there is adventure to be had!

Erisa is the "official" campaign world of the *Legends of Steel* Sword & Sorcery setting, but you can also use the resources in this book to create a Sword & Sorcery world of your very own.

Rules-wise, *BASH! Fantasy: Legends of Steel* works on what we call "Heroic Scale" (as opposed to the "Super Heroic Scale" of BASH! UE). Thus, a 4 in Brawn or Agility represent the peak of human ability, not superhuman ability. Powers consist of Backgrounds, Talents, and Special powers.

Backrounds are abilities and privilidges that have to be bought at character creation. It would include powers like *Keen Senses* or *Rank* (such as being a noble). Talents are learned abilities, representing things such as excellent ability with a sword, training in wearing armor, etc. Most Heroes in *Legends of Steel* will only have Backgrounds and Talents. Special Powers are abilities that go beyond the capabilities of "normal" humans. These include both Magical powers that

15

Risa

RISA IS A WARRIOR WOMAN OF SULANESE ORIGIN. SHE WAS RAISED ON THE GREAT PLAINS OF THE GOBAN. FLEEING AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE, RISA MADE HER WAY SOUTH AND SOON BEGAN EARNING A LIVING AS A MERCENARY ARCHER. AS PART OF A GUARD FORCE TO A VISITING SULANESE MERCHANT, RISA EVENTUALLY CAME TO THE AKKARIAN CONTINENT. SHE HAS SINCE MET AND FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE GLADIATOR ANTEUS OF PYRANI.

BRAWN 2   **AGILITY 4**   **MIND 2**

WOUND THRESHOLD 20   DEFENSE X4   MENTAL DEFENSE X2

COMBAT INFO
PRIORITY X 5
MOVE: 12 SQUARES RUN
SOAK: 10 (LEATHER ARMOR)
ATTACKS
SHORT SWORD (X4 HIT, X4 DMG)
DAGGER (X4 HIT, X3 DMG, RANGE 4)
BOW (X4 HIT, X6 DMG, RANGE 45 [EXPERT MARKSMAN])
DEFENSES

TALENTS
EXPERT MARKSMAN (IGNORE 1PT OF RANGE PENALTIES) 2PTS
BOW TECHNIQUE 2 (+2 DM) 2PTS
RAPID RELOADER (R.O.F. 2/PANEL) 1PT
QUICK DRAW (BOWS, X5 PRIORITY) 1PT
ARMOR FAMILIARITY 1 (LEATHER) 1PT
ATTACK WEAK POINT 2PTS

ADVANTAGES
SPECIAL ORIGIN (GOBAN PLAINS ARCHER), APPEAL, SHORT SLEEP

DISADVANTAGES
PHOBIA (ENCLOSED SPACES), OUTSIDER (SULANESE), TRUE GRIT

SKILLS
OUTDOOR/TRACKING, MILITARY/TACTICS, STEALTH/PROWL/HIDE, RIDE/GALLOP, ATHLETICS/CLIMB

100 HITS   10 ENERGY

BREAKDOWN: 16 STATS, 9 POWERS = 25 PTS   PROVEN

---

would comprise of various spells and magic items, and Physical powers that would represent a creature with tough scales, wings, a venomous bite, etc. For a Hero to have any Special Powers, they must have an Advantage that allows that, such as the "Magic" advantage or the "Birthright" advantage.

In this preview, we're going to let you meet one of the Heroes of Erisa, and also one of the monsters that stalk the land.

Our Hero, Risa is an archer of Sulan, a distant land from Erisa. Most of her Talents revolve around archery in some way. She also has *Attack Weak Point*, a talent normally reserved for assassins, which she has instead developed as a result of her Special Origin, being an archer from the Goban Plains. Of course, being a stranger in a strange land has its disadvantages as well.

Man-Scorpion

One of the most feared creatures of the desert, the giant man-scorpions are said to have been created by a perverse sorcerer-king in order to guard the treasures of his tomb. It is said that they can lie in wait for days, bursting forth from the sand when they detect an intruder approach.

B3 A3 M1

100 Hits/25 Soak   -1x3 Defense

Powers:

Size 1 (+5 Brawn rolls, Damage, Soak; -1 Dice penalty to hit, defend, Agility)

Claws: Natural Weapons 2 (x5+5 Dmg)

Poisonous Sting: Continual Damage 4 (x4 Poison Dmg)

Chitinous Exoskeleton: Toughness 2 (25 Soak)

Paired Weapons (-1 Dice Penalty to Attacks)

Tunneling 3 (3 squares) [Limitation: Only through Sand]

Super Sense 2 [Tremor Sense]

Skills: Athletics/Running, Stealth x4/Hiding, Outdoor/Survival

30 pts

This edition of BAM! was brought to you by:

17

BASIC ACTION SUPER HEROES!

HITS:

SOAK:

DEFENSE:

MENTAL:

BRAWN ○

AGILITY ○

MIND ○

PORTRAIT:

SKILLS:

NAME:

REAL NAME:

MENTAL MALFUNCTION:

NOTES:

POWERS

ADVANTAGES:

DISADVANTAGES:

WEAKNESS:

DICE ROLL CHART									
ROLL	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6	x7	x8	x9	x10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70
8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80
9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110
12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120
13	26	39	52	65	78	91	104	117	130
14	28	42	56	70	84	98	112	126	140
15	30	45	60	75	90	105	120	135	150
16	32	48	64	80	96	112	128	144	160
17	34	51	68	85	102	119	136	153	170
18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
19	38	57	76	95	114	133	152	171	190
20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	200
21	42	63	84	105	126	147	168	189	210
22	44	66	88	110	132	154	176	198	220
23	46	69	92	115	138	161	184	207	230
24	48	72	96	120	144	168	192	216	240
25	50	75	100	125	150	175	200	225	250

DIFFICULTIES	
<10 FAILURE	50 NIGH-IMPOSSIBLE
10 TYPICAL	80 IMPOSSIBLE
20 TOUGH	120 BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE
30 SUPERHUMAN	160 BEYOND BELIEF
40 EPIC	200 BEYOND IMAGINATION

HALF-STAT BASH! - Dice Roll Chart

Roll	x0.5	x1.5	x2	x2.5	x3	x3.5	x4	x4.5	x5	x5.5	x6	x6.5	x7	x7.5	x8	x8.5	x9	x9.5	x10
1	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
2	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3	1	4	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24	25	27	28	30
4	2	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40
5	2	7	10	12	15	17	20	22	25	27	30	32	35	37	40	42.5	45	47	50
6	3	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	51	54	57	60
7	3	10	14	17	21	24	28	31	35	38	42	45	49	52	56	59	63	66	70
8	4	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80
9	4	13	18	22	27	31	36	40	45	49	54	58	63	67	72	76	81	85	90
10	5	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
11	5	16	22	27	33	38	44	49	55	60	66	71	77	82	88	93	99	105	110
12	6	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96	102	108	114	120
13	6	19	26	32	39	45	52	58	65	71	78	84	91	97	104	111	117	124	130
14	7	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84	91	98	105	112	119	126	133	140
15	7	22	30	37	45	52	60	67	75	82	90	97	105	113	120	128	135	143	150
16	8	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96	104	112	120	128	136	144	152	160
17	8	25	34	42	51	59	68	76	85	93	102	111	119	128	136	145	153	162	170
18	9	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108	117	126	135	144	153	162	171	180
19	9	28	38	47	57	66	76	85	95	105	114	124	133	143	152	162	171	181	190
20	10	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200
21	10	31	42	52	63	73	84	94	105	116	126	137	147	158	168	179	189	200	210
22	11	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132	143	154	165	176	187	198	209	220
23	11	34	46	57	69	80	92	104	115	127	138	150	161	173	184	196	207	219	230
24	12	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240
25	12	37	50	62	75	87	100	113	125	138	150	163	175	188	200	213	225	238	250

Legend:
- 10 TYPICAL
- 20 TOUGH
- 30 SUPERHUMAN
- 40 EPIC
- 50 NIGH-IMPOSSIBLE
- 80 IMPOSSIBLE
- 120 BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE
- 160 BEYOND BELIEF
- 200 BEYOND IMAGINATION

FOR USE WITH: BASH! ULTIMATE EDITION

HALF-STAT BASH! - Dice Roll Chart

Roll	x0.5	x1.5	x2	x2.5	x3	x3.5	x4	x4.5	x5	x5.5	x6	x6.5	x7	x7.5	x8	x8.5	x9	x9.5	x10
1	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
2	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3	1	4	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24	25	27	28	30
4	2	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40
5	2	7	10	12	15	17	20	22	25	27	30	32	35	37	40	42	45	47	50
6	3	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	51	54	57	60
7	3	10	14	17	21	24	28	31	35	38	42	45	49	52	56	59	63	66	70
8	4	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80
9	4	13	18	22	27	31	36	40	45	49	54	58	63	67	72	76	81	85	90
10	5	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
11	5	16	22	27	33	38	44	49	55	60	66	71	77	82	88	93	99	105	110
12	6	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96	102	108	114	120
13	6	19	26	32	39	45	52	58	65	71	78	84	91	97	104	111	117	124	130
14	7	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84	91	98	105	112	119	126	133	140
15	7	22	30	37	45	52	60	67	75	82	90	97	105	113	120	128	135	143	150
16	8	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96	104	112	120	128	136	144	152	160
17	8	25	34	42	51	59	68	76	85	93	102	111	119	128	136	145	153	162	170
18	9	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108	117	126	135	144	153	162	171	180
19	9	28	38	47	57	66	76	85	95	105	114	124	133	143	152	162	171	181	190
20	10	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200
21	10	31	42	52	63	73	84	94	105	116	126	137	147	158	168	179	189	200	210
22	11	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132	143	154	165	176	187	198	209	220
23	11	34	46	57	69	80	92	104	115	127	138	150	161	173	184	196	207	219	230
24	12	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240
25	12	37	50	62	75	87	100	113	125	138	150	163	175	188	200	213	225	238	250

10	TYPICAL
20	TOUGH
30	SUPERHUMAN
40	EPIC
50	NIGH-IMPOSSIBLE
80	IMPOSSIBLE
120	BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE
160	BEYOND BELIEF
200	BEYOND IMAGINATION

FOR USE WITH: BASH! ULTIMATE EDITION