

Etherscope Rules Variants

Introduction

In the three years that Etherscope has been in print we have received a lot of feedback from players, referees, fans and other publishers about the game. Likewise, we ourselves have had play and design experience that has impacted upon how we look at Etherscope. While firmly believing the game is strong as it stands, we have developed a number of rules variants, in relation to feedback and experience, that we feel enhance the Etherscope system and capture our design goals better. Further we believe these variants allow players to more fully explore and enjoy the themes and experiences of the Etherscope world. These rule variants are presented below. Note the use of any or all these rules is optional, it's your world and group that count but these changes will be included in the new rules and character classes in this and future support.

Alternative Skill Rules

One common complaint amongst **Etherscope** players is that you just don't get enough skill points to create your characters. Some of this is probably due to the D20 System legacy the game comes from. Since the writing of **Etherscope**, other OGL publishers have done more radical things with the skill system, so we think we can afford to make some changes to maximise your characters' skill potential.

ADDITIONAL SKILL POINTS

All classes gain an additional 4 skill points at 1st level and receive 1 skill point extra at each level.

CONSOLIDATED SKILLS

The listed pairs of skills have been consolidated into the following single skills. These new skills enable the character to use the applications of both previous skills through the new one. Likewise, the new skill is used for any ability, class feature or requirement, fighting technique or talent that required the previous skill(s).

Acrobatics: Balance and Tumble

Athletics: Climb and Jump

Deception: Bluff and Disguise

Notice: Listen and Spot

Stealth: Hide and Move Silently

In addition the Creative Art skill is removed and its applications are usable through Knowledge (art).

FEAT ADJUSTMENTS

The following feats have changed game mechanics as a result of the skill consolidations listed above.

Acrobat: provides a +2 bonus to all acrobatics and athletics skill checks.

Alertness: provides a +2 bonus to all notice and sense motive skill checks.

Deceptive: provides a +2 bonus to all deception and forgery skill checks.

Stealthy: provides a +2 bonus to all stealth and sleight of hand skill checks

Errata

Following feedback and further playtesting we have found the following rules that need changing:

Degrade Programme Talent: The degrade programme application of the Scope Use (immersed) skill (see CRB p.78) takes 1 full action per complexity level of the programme being degraded. Note, the Scoundrel's Immersed Hacking talent still allows the degrade programme application to be used as a single full round action (see CRB p.47).

Cybernaughtics: Aesthetic grade cybernaughtics no longer reduce the minimum Con requirement for the app by -2. Likewise, Street grade cybernaughtics no longer increase the minimum Con requirement for the app by +2.

Massive Damage Saving Throw: The massive damage saving throw (see CRB p.171) is set at DC 5 + half the damage inflicted. All other rules relating to massive damage remain the same.

Social Templates: The following social templates (CRB p. 27) are changed as follows;

Adventurer: for Cross Template Influences choose three from Academic, High Society, Occult and Traveller.

Disenfranchised: for Cross Template Influences choose one from Crime and Traveller.

Professional: for Template influence choose any one except Traveller.

New Rules and Character Options

This next section covers some new rules options, feats and fighting techniques now available to **Etherscope** characters.

CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMME BUILDING

Characters who possess at least 5 ranks in either Scope Use (immersed) or Scope Use (remote) can use an aid another action to assist another character in increasing the maximum complexity level of the programme they are creating. This action is used instead of using the standard aiding another action to add a bonus to the other character's skill check (see CRB p.55). Note acting characters can receive both types of aid to their programming task but each type must come from separate sources. In order to grant the +1 complexity level bonus the character must make a DC 20 Scope Use (immersed) or Scope Use (remote) skill check, as appropriate and must be the same skill as the acting character is using, which takes the same amount of time to perform as it takes the acting character to create the programme. The programmes maximum complexity can be increased beyond the acting character's normal maximum by an amount equal acting character's normal maximum programme complexity minus two. In order to aid characters using Immersed Programme Crafting talent to create a programme as a single full round action (see CRB p.43) the aiding character must also possess this talent.

NEW FEAT: SHAMAN

Traveller cultures and primitive peoples are far more in tune with the natural world, including the world of the ether beyond this one. Of your entire cultural group you are particularly adept at entering the other world and manipulating it for the good of your people.

Prerequisites: Influence: Traveller 5 ranks, with an appropriate group, 1 rank in any Occult Skill.

Benefit: You gain Dreamwalk as a permanent class skill. Dreamwalk is based on Wisdom, but otherwise functions exactly like Scope Use (immersed). Through the use of the Dreamwalk skill you may place yourself in a meditative trance (DC 15). Entering this trance typically takes an hour and requires the use of a sacred space, ritual

movements, and possibly even ingesting special substances; however, in functions similarly to dropping a Scope Tab. Once in the trance you enter into a special Scope Point known as the Dreamworld. The Dreamworld, a Class B environment, is a unique place in etherspace created by the collective will of your ancestors for centuries of human existence or the beliefs of your cultural group. In many ways it resembles the Prime Reality you are familiar with, but is inhabited by strange creatures including talking animals, the etheric echoes of your ancestors' spirits, and other denizens of the 'scope. Your culture believes that by interacting with this environment you can gain special knowledge, prevent harm, cure illness, and many other miraculous effects. As some afflictions are caused by small etheric parasites, not to mention more hostile etheric entities and enemy shaman that are capable of affecting the Prime Reality, this is likely true. Civilization's understanding of this world is extremely limited, and your culture's explanation of it is wrapped in superstition and ritualistic language. If knowledge of the two cultures could be combined, the impact on man's understanding of etherspace would be immense.

Special: You are capable of using Scope Awareness and Scope Resilience in the Dreamscape as normal. This feat does not, however, make those skills class skill nor does it provide you any bonus to their use. Dreamwalk can allow a character to operate in the 'scope as if it was Scope Use (immersed), but doing imposes a -3 circumstance penalty to Dreamwalk skill checks. Scope Use checks also suffer a -3 circumstance penalty in the Dreamscape. The subjective distance between the Dreamscape and other Scope Points is great, but theoretically they are connected and a user of one could access the other.

New Fighting Technique:

ATAC (ADVANCED TACTICAL AUTO PISTOL COMBAT)

Developed by scope combatants to combine the utility of the auto pistol with the unique actions an immersed scope user can perform. ATAC has become an increasingly popular among those who see their fair share of combat in Etherspace, especially among Scope Warriors and Soldiers who appreciate its' effectiveness, the devastating power it grants to the use of auto pistols, a popular weapon among scope using groups for reasons of concealability, availability and ease of programming, when compared to longarms and heavy weapons, and the fact it builds upon the tactical knowledge and experience these individuals already possess. The style teaches uses to use

ATAC FEAT AND MANOEUVRE TABLES

| Fighting Technique Skill Ranks | Stance Feat |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | Precise Shot |
| 8 | Elusive Target |
| 13 | Combat Reflexes |
| 18 | Skip Shot |
| 23 | Improved Initiative |

| Fighting technique Check DC | Manoeuvre |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 20 | Ballistic Plotting |
| 25 | Close Combat |
| 30 | Counter Fire |
| 35 | Death Blossom |

the flow of currents in the scope to assess their opponents' actions and movements and then apply the optimum response in their own response. These responses come from a knowledge and study of multiple gun battles and the rote leaning of firing and defensive positions until they become instinctual. Despite the styles complexity and the in-depth level of knowledge necessary to perform the most advanced techniques the style offers; even the use of upload tabs requires the user to be a skilled uploader to gain the levels in the skill to truly utilize it effectively. In combat ATAC is truly unique to see as the practitioner uses minimal adjustments of body movement and position to avoid enemy fire while pivoting the hips and positioning their arms to launch optimised attacks and counter-attacks against opponents. Most in the scope community know that a master of the ATAC style is an adversary who should never be underestimated.

Primary Ability: Intelligence.

Entry Feats: Military Scientist, Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Weapon Restriction: Single or paired aut pistols.

Skill Synergy: Knowledge (tactics).

Stance: Body is held straight and rigid with arms forward straight down and slightly away from the torso, legs are straight. The fighter once engaged constantly adjusts their firing position but uses minimum amounts of movement.

Special: This combat style cannot be used outside of Etherspace due to its integration of an immersed scope user's unconscious attunement to the currents of Etherspace. Whilst you can develop ranks in the skill as normal, you can only the stance and manoeuvres with your scope avatar.

BALLISTIC PLOTTING

The core teaching of the entire style this technique teaches the practitioner to sense, anticipate and react to their opponents' attacks and avoid being hit by simply not being where the attack will hit.

DC: 20

Use: When you enter your stance make a fighting technique skill check.

Effect: If unsuccessful you a +1 defensive bonus against ranged attacks that can be applied to a number of opponents equal to your Int modifier. You may change which opponents you apply the bonus to as a free action at the beginning of each of your turns.

CLOSE COMBAT

The focus and dedication ATAC requires that few of its practitioners study advanced unarmed combat techniques and usually have guns in their hands anyway. Indeed some ATAC masters are actively dismissive of the value of unarmed techniques. This can be somewhat understood as ATAC fighters learn to fire their weapons without danger to themselves in even the closest of quarters

DC: 25

Use: Make a fighting technique skill check when making a ranged attack when threatened by an opponent or opponents.

Effect: If unsuccessful the attack is resolved as a normal. If successful you do not create an attack for opportunity for the opponent or opponents.

COUNTER FIRE

The techniques of a skilled ATAC practitioner not only allow them to avoid attacks but also to take advantage of the weaknesses in their defences opponents create when attempting to hit him

DC: 30

Use: When an opponent's ranged attack misses you by an amount equal to or less than your Int modifier make a fighting technique check.

Effect: If successful you gain an immediate attack of opportunity against that opponent. This counts against the character's normal limit of attacks of opportunity in a round

DEATH BLOSSOM

Spectacular to behold, devastating in effect and extremely difficult to master the Death Blossom is the ultimate expression of the ATAC masters art. The master enters a momentary almost trance like state and delivers a barrage of almost instantaneous attacks against multiple enemies within range.

DC: 35

Use: The character uses a full round action to make a fighting technique check.

Effect: If successful you make a single attack roll at your highest attack bonus against all opponents within two range increments and a 180 degree line of sight firing arc. If using two weapons two such arcs are creatable and these may overlap or cover separate areas, note your highest two weapon fighting penalties applies to your attack roll. If unsuccessful you merely resolve an attack against one randomly determined opponent in the firing arc however an amount of ammunition equalling the original number of potential targets is still expended.

Credits

Designed by Nigel McClelland, Ben Redmond and Scott Carter

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