

Dungeonmaster's Guide to Running a Tunnels & Trolls Campaign



By Keith Charnley

Understanding Core Rules

1. Character Creation:

- Understand the prime attributes:
- Strength
- Constitution
- Dexterity
- Speed
- Intelligence
- Wizardry
- Luck
- Charisma
- Familiarize yourself with the different character types: Warriors, Wizards, Rogues, and Specialists.

2. Saving Rolls:

- These are crucial for determining the success of actions.
- If the result on two dice is doubles, roll again and add the new result to the total. Continue rolling until you don't get doubles.

3. **Combat:**

- Learn the rules for melee and ranged combat, including the calculation of combat adds (based on Strength, Dexterity, Luck, and Speed).
- Understand how armour and weapons function.

4. **Magic:**

- Know the basics of spell-casting, including the Wizardry attribute and the cost reduction for spells as wizards level up.
- Be aware of the restrictions and benefits for different character types in using magic.

Pre-Game Planning

1. **Adventure Design:**

- Create or adapt adventures, ensuring a mix of combat, problem-solving, and role-playing opportunities.
- Design encounters that are challenging but fair. Include opportunities for players to use their skills and attributes creatively.

2. **Balancing Challenges:**

- Ensure that encounters are neither too deadly nor too easy. Use the Monster Ratings and attribute multipliers to gauge difficulty.
- Include a mix of foes and obstacles that require different approaches to overcome.

3. **Narrative Development:**

- Develop a compelling storyline with clear goals and motivations for the players.
- Incorporate character backstories and personal quests to enhance player engagement.

Handling the Unexpected

1. **Improvisation:**

- Be prepared to adapt the story based on player actions. Flexibility is key to maintaining the flow of the game.
- Use random encounters or side quests to fill gaps or redirect players when necessary.

2. **Inventiveness:**

- Encourage creative solutions from players. Reward inventive ideas that contribute to the story or solve problems in unexpected ways.

Monster Characterization

1. **Characterized Monsters:**

- Give important monsters personalities, motivations, and backstories. This makes encounters more engaging and memorable.
- Use dialogue and unique tactics to differentiate significant foes from generic ones.

Resources and Equipment

1. Free Online Resources:

- **Flying Buffalo:** <http://www.flyingbuffalo.com>
- **Liz Danforth's Website:** <http://www.lizdanforth.com>
- **Trollhalla:** <http://www.trollhalla.com>

2. Helpful Files and Equipment:

- **Deluxe Tunnels & Trolls Rulebook:** This comprehensive rulebook covers everything from character creation to advanced magic.
- **Character Sheets:** Printable or digital character sheets for tracking attributes, equipment, and progression.
- **Miniatures and Maps:** Useful for visualizing combat and exploration. Can be purchased or made using online tools.
- **Dice:** A good set of six-sided dice is essential. Multiple dice sets can speed up gameplay. Try using 3 pairs of different coloured dice for saving rolls to cope with doubles – Green is 1st **2D6**; Orange is 2nd **2D6** and Red are the third **2D6** (the 2nd pair are only needed if doubles are rolled with the 1st dice, and so on...).

General Campaign and Dungeon Design

1. Campaign Planning:

- Develop an overarching plot with key milestones and potential branching paths based on player decisions.
- Include a mix of different adventure types (dungeons, wilderness, urban settings) to keep the campaign varied and exciting.

2. Dungeon Design:

- Create detailed maps with interesting layouts, including traps, secret passages, and varied environments.
- Populate dungeons with a balanced mix of combat encounters, puzzles, and narrative elements.

3. Game Balance:

- Monitor player progress and adjust difficulty as needed. Provide opportunities for rest and recovery to avoid player fatigue.
- Use a variety of enemy types and challenges to keep players on their toes without overwhelming them.

Conclusion

Running a successful Tunnels & Trolls campaign requires a good grasp of the rules, thoughtful planning, and the ability to adapt to player actions. Characterized monsters and balanced encounters enhance the gameplay experience, making the adventures memorable and engaging. Utilizing available resources and being inventive in both narrative and mechanics will ensure a dynamic and enjoyable campaign.

A Tunnels & Trolls Glossary

A

- **Adventure Points (AP):** Points awarded to characters for successful actions, overcoming challenges, and role-playing, used to improve attributes and skills.
- **Attribute:** One of the eight prime characteristics (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Speed, Intelligence, Wizardry, Luck, Charisma) that define a character's abilities.

B

- **Basic Game:** The core rules and mechanics necessary to play Tunnels & Trolls, including character creation, combat, and spell-casting.

C

- **Combat Adds:** Bonuses added to combat rolls, derived from high prime attributes (STR, DEX, LK, SPD).
- **Constitution (CON):** A prime attribute representing a character's health, stamina, and ability to withstand damage.

D

- **Dexterity (DEX):** A prime attribute representing a character's agility, coordination, and skill in using their hands and body.

E

- **Elaborations:** Optional rules and expansions that provide additional depth, variety, and flexibility to the game.

F

- **Fairy:** One of the playable non-human kindreds, characterized by small size and magical abilities.

G

- **Game Master (GM):** The player responsible for creating and narrating the game world, controlling non-player characters (NPCs), and guiding the adventure.

H

- **Human:** The default kindred in Tunnels & Trolls, used as the baseline for all attributes and abilities.

I

- **Intelligence (IQ):** A prime attribute representing a character's ability to reason, learn, and solve problems.

K

- **Kindred:** The different races or species a character can belong to, each with unique attributes and abilities (e.g., Humans, Dwarves, Elves, Fairies).

L

- **Luck (LK):** A prime attribute representing a character's fortune, chance, and ability to avoid harm.

M

- **Monster Rating (MR):** A simplified way to determine a monster's strength and combat effectiveness, used to calculate its combat dice and adds.

P

- **Prime Attributes:** The eight fundamental characteristics (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Speed, Intelligence, Wizardry, Luck, Charisma) used to define a character's abilities.

R

- **Rogue:** A character type that can use both weapons and magic, but lacks the specialized training of Warriors or Wizards.

S

- **Saving Roll (SR):** A roll made to determine the success of an action based on a character's attributes and the difficulty level of the task.
- **Specialist:** A character with an extraordinary ability in one prime attribute, resulting from rolling triples during character creation.
- **Speed (SPD):** A prime attribute representing a character's reflexes, reaction time, and overall quickness.
- **Strength (STR):** A prime attribute representing a character's physical power and ability to exert force.

T

- **TARO (Triples Add and Roll Over):** A rule allowing players to roll additional dice when they roll triples on a prime attribute during character creation, potentially resulting in exceptionally high attribute values.

W

- **Warrior:** A character type focused on combat skills and physical prowess, unable to use magic.
- **Wizard:** A character type that specializes in using magic, with spells powered by their Wizardry attribute.
- **Wizardry (WIZ):** A prime attribute representing a character's magical power and ability to cast spells.

This glossary provides an overview of key terms and concepts in Tunnels & Trolls, helping new players understand the unique language and mechanics of the game.

- Happy Gaming -