

DUEL OF THE FATES

Action movies, in particular the Star Wars films, are filled with moments of high drama and suspense, but none match the intensity of the duel. Duels are always epic and cinematic moments, whether they are a fight between the hero of the story and a Tusken Raider atop a plateau on Tatooine, or the ultimate battle between good and evil aboard the command tower of the Death Star between a character and their evil Sith Lord father. Physical confrontations are not the only duels that we see on film however, with memorable scenes also being drawn from situations such as debates between powerful politicians on the senate floor, or perhaps when two military leaders negotiate a ceasefire in the midst of a conflict. In each of these cases, one on one combat, whether social or physical, can be the pinnacle of an adventure or in some cases, the climax of a campaign.

Role Playing Games can sometimes struggle with the concept of the 'duel'; primarily due to the way they sometimes reflect damage and the ability of targets to absorb damage. Encounters in many game systems are also designed in such a way to not overly extend the scenario for pacing reasons, and so damage is normally balanced by a character or NPCs statistic which represents their ability to withstand damage. Sometimes though, a game master may wish to provide an opportunity for



a one on one duel in order to add a dramatic flair to an encounter they are planning. These rules aim to provide the GM with the tools to include dramatic duels in any Edge of the Empire, Age of Rebellion or Force and Destiny game.

The idea of developing rules for duels was first explored by Chris Witt, host of the Order 66 Podcast, during Episode 32 in response to a listener question which pondered the use of duels using the Narrative Dice System by *Fantasy Flight Games*. As was expressed during the podcast, the Narrative Dice System provides an excellent framework to introduce the notion of duels to the Star Wars Role Playing Game, and it is hoped that this system will provide an elegant method for portraying epic struggles between opponents.

THE DUEL CHALLENGE

The aim of this mechanic is to ensure that the duel can be used with minimal impact or change to the current combat and skill mechanics within the system. A few additions to the rules are required, and it is suggested that the system needs a certain level of “buy in” from the players at the table. The system is intended as a “bolt on” and allows the duel to have an epic feel, and allow GMs to make duels a centrepiece within a conflict, rather than being over in a couple of rounds.

DECLARING A CHALLENGE

A duel can be declared at any time by a player character or a nemesis level foe. The character making the declaration must be at short range or engaged to the target of the duel. The character making the Duelling Challenge does so as an incidental action in their turn.

The opponent of the Duelling Challenge has the option to not participate in the duel, in which case combat (physical or social) continues as normal. Upon acceptance of the Duel

Challenge, both participants cannot be targeted by ranged weapons unless there are no other combatants currently in line of sight. In the case of social combat, other participants may only enter the Duel Challenge if they are assisting or combining their skills with the main Duel Challenge participants. All effects pertaining to the results of the Duel Challenge are applied to the main participants.

A participant may leave a Duel Challenge at any time however the participant who leaves the duel immediately takes strain damage equal to half their current Strain Threshold (rounding up). If a participant’s Strain is reduced to their Strain Threshold at any time, follow the normal process as detailed in **Strain and Wounds** below as if the character reaches their Challenge Point Threshold (see below).

INITIATIVE

Initiative in the Duel Challenge System is treated no differently in this system than normal combat. Participants roll at the beginning of the Duel Challenge, unless they are already engaged in a combat encounter and have an existing initiative roll.

ACTIONS AND MANEUVERS

Actions and maneuvers act differently in a Duel Challenge. Participants in a duel take only one action, as the character is deemed to be moving about the battlefield, and avoiding blows. Characters may take an additional maneuver in order move to a different position, or activate an ability that requires a maneuver. Any maneuvers that are spent in this way cause the character to take 2 Strain, unless the character has the ability to gain a free maneuver.

Examples of this include the expenditure of  or through the use of a racial ability such as characters of the Xexto species. Characters that spend maneuvers in this way, and who

successfully move to a distance greater than short range, also end the Duel Challenge and suffer the effects to their strain as though they had left the Duel Challenge.

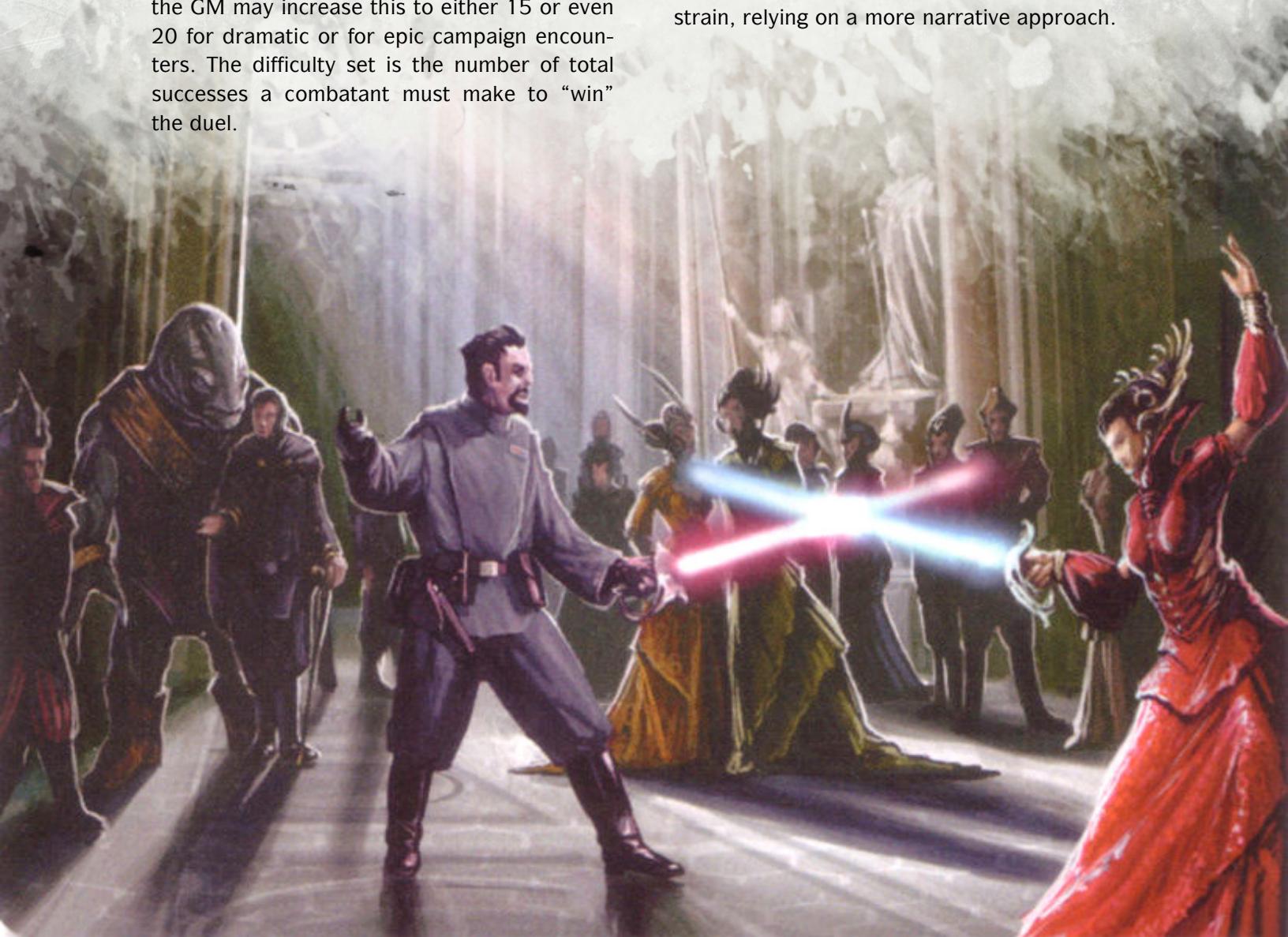
CHALLENGE POINTS, STRAIN, & WOUNDS

Strain and Wounds in a Duelling Challenge are not tracked in the same way as they are in regular combat. Instead, character's use Challenge Points to determine their survivability in the duel.

A character's Challenge Point Threshold is equal to the character's Strain Threshold. The GM can assign additional levels to this, but it should be noted that additional increases will extend the length of the encounter. The recommended average number is 10, however the GM may increase this to either 15 or even 20 for dramatic or for epic campaign encounters. The difficulty set is the number of total successes a combatant must make to "win" the duel.

Players record the total number of \star on successful checks, and their opponent adds that number to their current Challenge Point Threshold. The first character who's Challenge Points equal or exceed their Challenge Point Threshold is struck a killing blow, knocked to the ground at the mercy of the enemy, or out debated on the senate floor, etc. Strain can still be used throughout the duel as normal, but wounds are not suffered unless it is caused through an outside source such as through environment effects.

Strain can be regained and suffered by participants in the duel through the use of \otimes and \otimes , along with any talents or abilities which cause strain. Game Masters are encouraged to add \square to their own checks, or apply \blacksquare or fully upgrade their opponent's next checks instead of applying of \otimes and \otimes , to cause or reduce strain, relying on a more narrative approach.



Should a character's current Challenge Points exceed their Challenge Point Threshold, the character's Strain moves to its Strain Threshold, and its current Wounds increase to one less than the character's Wound Threshold. Additionally, in the case of physical combat, the character also takes a critical wound as if struck by a weapon that the attacker is currently wielding.

SKILLS & TALENTS

The Duel Challenge is designed to use any skill that the character has access to, including those that they have no skill ranks in. The checks used during the Duel Challenge need not be derived from combat skills, and Game Masters should encourage players to think narratively, by using description and flair to explain the actions or the participants and how their skills apply to that situation.

The difficulty of these actions will be dependent on how the skill is used, what check it is, and the situation, but the check will usually be either opposed, or a difficulty set by the game master. Players and game masters are encouraged to be as creative and dramatic as possible, using as many diverse skills as possible such as Coordination to tumble around your foe, Resilience to take a punch, or Knowledge to affect the battlefield. The most direct and obvious skills to use are combat skills. For combat checks, difficulty is determined through normal difficulties based on the target's distance, cover, Defense, talents, etc. If the Game Master or Player is in doubt, a good bench-mark difficulty is ♦♦ or ♦♦♦.

Talents such as Parry and Deflect removes ♦ from a check per rank of the talent the target possesses, however the character must still spend the strain required to use the talent as normal.

EXAMPLE

Arcz, the young noble lost his footing, and fell over a large protruding rock, his vibro-rapier scattering across the ground just out of his reach. The small moon that they had followed the mysterious warrior to was covered in a fine grey dust which the young noble spat from his mouth.

The Barabel warrior advanced towards him, his Gaffi Stick held high, ready to strike down with the weapon to finish Arcz off.

Arcz had a split second to respond, and instinctively grabbed a handful of the fine dirt which covered his palm and threw it towards the Barabel's face. The attack surprised the reptilian humanoid, and temporarily blinded him. This gave the smuggler the pause he needed and he grabbed his weapon preparing to plunge its fine blade into the Barabel's abdomen.

In the previous round Arcz, the swash-buckling noble, had fallen over and lost his weapon thanks to the Barabel rolling an excessively large number of ♦. Combat returned to Arcz's initiative, and in his turn he used a Ranged (Light) attack with ♦♦ dice as determined by range and attacking with a ranged weapon whilst engaged. Arcz's player then rolls, and succeeds with ♦♦ and a ♦. The Barabel's current Duel Challenge Points increases by 2, and Arcz uses the Triumph to fully upgrade his opponent's next check due to being momentarily blinded.

USING THE NARRATIVE DICE

Participants in a Duel Challenge use the results of the dice rolled during the encounter as they would normally, spending ☀, ☃, ☄ and ☇ to affect the outcome of the encounter. This system works best when applying these results to upgrade the difficulty of checks, increasing their own dice rolls, and affecting the environment around them rather than spending threat to affect Strain. Although ☀ can be used to replenish Strain, it cannot be used to replenish Duel Challenge Points.

INTERRUPTING AND JOINING A DUEL CHALLENGE

Other players may wish to join a Duel Challenge. Taking into consideration the narrative aspects of the scenario, the wishes of the main character that either initiated or was the subject of the challenge, and providing it would be appropriate to the story, any character may join a duel challenge. That character must abide by the rules outlined above.