

ROLL FOUR / TELL STORIES

4d4

EXPANDED RULES



CHARACTERS / TACTICS / VEHICLES

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PLAYTEST EDITION 0.3

BEFORE YOU USE THIS BOOK

This book adds modular procedures to the 4d4 Quick Start 0.6. It does not replace that book. Use the Quick Start for the core roll, Axes, Turns and Rounds, Clusters and Stragglers, reactions, harm, statuses, Agents, and scene clocks.

The procedures here have been made internally consistent with that core. Their balance is not proven. No one has enough table evidence yet to promise that every reserve, scene size, vehicle, or tactical option lands where it should.

PLAYTEST STATUS: UNPROVEN

Begin with the printed defaults. Record what happened. If something drags or overwhelms the table, change one variable and try a comparable scene again. That is how this becomes a game instead of a pile of guesses.

The starting limits are intentionally conservative: Axes from 2 to 4, Pool 12, **COMBO** 1, **POWER** 1, and normally no more than one applicable **Armor Die**. Higher values are experiments.

Do not change die timing, death, or a scene's main numbers while that scene is in progress. Finish the scene, write down the problem, then revise.

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WHERE THIS BOOK FITS

4d4 is being organized as a line of usable books rather than one enormous manuscript.

QUICK START

The complete basic game: all dice types, the core roll, Turns and Rounds, Skills and Powers in play, 4Caster scene procedures, three ready-to-play characters, and an adventure.

EXPANDED RULES

This book: character creation, directional special-die options, recovery, 4Caster construction tools, square and hex tactics, scale, vehicles, groups, and the Space Miners 4Cast **Get That Scrap!**

SKILLS AND POWERS

The separate **4d4 Skills & Powers 0.5** book contains Skill Categories, Active and Passive Powers, typed P Patterns, construction reviews, status construction, prebuilt libraries, and explicit risk flags. This book supplies a small curated list so new characters can be played without that larger catalog.

SETTINGS AND 4CASTS

Setting packets can provide their own Axis skins, abilities, NPCs, maps, and adventures. A 4Cast is a compact playable package built on the common rules.

A 4CASTER BOOK

The separate **4Caster's Toolbox** expands the workshop here with reusable scenarios, Agents, organizations, lairs, items, and prepared 3/4 effects. The procedures in this book remain the baseline those tools use.

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WHAT THIS BOOK ASSUMES

You have the 4d4 Quick Start 0.6 at the table. Whenever this book does not replace a named procedure, the Quick Start rule remains in force.

Words in capitals such as APPLY, TRIGGER, FADE, SPEND, and REGARDLESS retain their Quick Start meanings. A Rule marked OPTIONAL may be added or omitted. A Rule marked REPLACEMENT tells you exactly which core procedure it replaces.

Every module should be chosen before a scene begins and announced to the table. Players should never discover a hidden movement, scale, or Armor rule after dice have been committed.

1. USING MODULES

Expanded rules work best as switches. Choose only the switches that answer a need at the table.

If this book and the Quick Start appear to conflict, Quick Start 0.6 controls unless the Expanded section is explicitly labeled OPTIONAL REPLACEMENT.

CORE CONTRACT

These rules do not change unless a module explicitly says so:

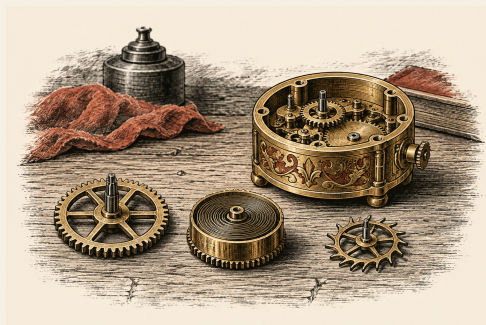
- An Axis caps committed Ready **Normal Dice**.
- **Normal Dice** fill the fixed Pool and refresh at the start of a Turn.
- Spent **Combo Dice** return Ready each Round; Spent **Power Dice** return Ready each Turn.
- Ready **Power Dice** may be voluntarily rolled on any action or reaction. An Active Power requires its printed typed P Pattern unless a labeled replacement exception uses a legal RESERVED **Power Die**.
- Damage and Armor cancel matching Normal or Power results.
- Patterns are checked after cancellation and before contest division.
- Every character and Agent gets one action opportunity per Round; acting, helping, interfering, or passing uses it.
- A direct defense does not use that opportunity, normally requires at least one Ready **Normal Die**, and does not create a nested reaction window. A printed ZERO-NORMAL REACTION with a typed Power Pattern may replace that minimum.
- Reactions contribute Clusters but never ordinary Margin harm; only a printed reaction Effect deals harm.
- Every scene Agent owns a separate, nonfungible Pool and uses only its own Axis cap, Armor, Damage, Statuses, reserves, actions, and reactions.

DECLARE THE LOADOUT

Before play, write the active modules on one card. A useful first campaign might say:

Character Creation / Directional Dice / Fast Tactical Grid / Scale 0-1 / Quick Start Encounter Rating

If a module causes confusion, remove it between scenes. Do not quietly invent a second version while people are using the first.



BUILD A CHARACTER

Use this procedure for a new campaign character.

1. Write a one-sentence concept, a current goal, and a trouble that creates decisions.
2. Decide what North, South, East, and West look like for this character.
3. Assign 12 Axis points. Each cardinal Axis begins from 2 to 4.
4. Add the four Axes for Pool and calculate composites by floor average.
5. Record **COMBO** 1, **POWER** 1, **ARMOR** 0, and **DAMAGE** 0.
6. Choose two Starter Skills and one Starter Power from this book or approved Quick Start abilities. Record each Skill's Category and Training.
7. Choose ordinary gear. A weapon permits its described harm; it does not add automatic Damage. Ordinary starting gear grants no **Armor Die** unless the campaign explicitly grants a Seasoned Edge or 4Cast option.
8. Review the character with the table. Everyone should understand what the character can attempt and what remains a fictional permission.

The recommended arrays are 4/3/3/2 and 3/3/3/3. Both make Pool 12. The first creates a clear strength and weakness; the second stays flexible.

When a Skill Category clearly applies, commit **Normal Dice** up to the honest Axis normally. Without a relevant Skill, a plausible specialized action is **UNTRAINED**: use half the chosen Axis commitment cap, round down, minimum 1. Apply Untrained before one strongest temporary cap boon and one strongest temporary cap penalty; the final cap may become 0. Combo and **Power Dice** remain outside that cap. Tools, access, time, and fictional permission may still be required.



RECOMMENDED CHASSIS: 4 / 3 / 3 / 2 - EACH AXIS 2 TO 4

Procedure is ready to test. Balance is not certified.

CONCEPT AND AXIS MEANINGS

A concept is useful when it tells the table what the character does, what they want, and what gets in the way.

EXAMPLE: A disgraced surveyor wants to map the flooded undercity, but every official checkpoint still has their face on file.

The four default Axes remain:

NORTH - power, command, courage, breaking, carrying, direct force.

SOUTH - agility, precision, stealth, balance, aim, physical timing.

EAST - knowledge, judgment, perception, planning, craft.

WEST - empathy, connection, persuasion, deception, care.

SKIN, DO NOT SCRAMBLE

A setting may rename the Axes while preserving their relationships. A starship can call North Weapons, South Engines, East Sensors, and West Shields. The values still oppose and combine by the core rules.

Write one short phrase beside each Axis. These phrases explain the character; they do not grant extra dice.

N: old dockworker strength

S: careful footing

E: salvage mathematics

W: knows every crew boss

The 4Caster may ask for a different Axis when the described method changes. The player controls the intent and approach; the rules keep the shared language honest.



CHOOSE THE AXES

The Standard, Even, and Point Assignment methods follow character-creation steps 3 and 4. Either rolled method replaces those two steps.

STANDARD ARRAY - RECOMMENDED

Assign 4, 3, 3, and 2 among N, S, E, and W. This is the cleanest baseline for comparing characters and scenes.

EVEN ARRAY

Assign 3 to every Axis. Use this when no direction should dominate at the start.

POINT ASSIGNMENT

Spend 12 points, with each Axis from 2 to 4. This produces the same capacity but allows arrays such as 4/4/2/2.

SHARED 4D4 - SWINGY OPTION

Roll four d4 once for the whole table. Every player assigns those same four results in their own order. Reroll the shared array if its total is below 10 or above 14. All characters keep the same Pool total, but a rolled 1 or several 4s will make the campaign sharper than the default.

INDIVIDUAL 4D4 - DELIBERATELY UNEVEN

Each player rolls and assigns their own four d4. Use only when the group wants unequal starting capacity. Scene Pool total scaling can account for the party total, but allocation among Agents cannot guarantee equal spotlight inside the party.

Do not award extra abilities to compensate until the table has seen the characters in play.

AXES ON THE TABLE

The compass is not a personality test. It is a statement about the method being used now.

An Axis 4 is reliable because four d4 make at least one Cluster about 90.6% of the time before cancellation. Axis 3 is uncertain at 62.5%. Axis 2 is a real weakness at 25%.

Those numbers explain why the creation limits matter. One point is not a small bonus. Moving from two committed dice to three changes the chance of any Cluster by 37.5 percentage points.

COMPOSITES

$$NE = \text{floor}((N + E) / 2)$$

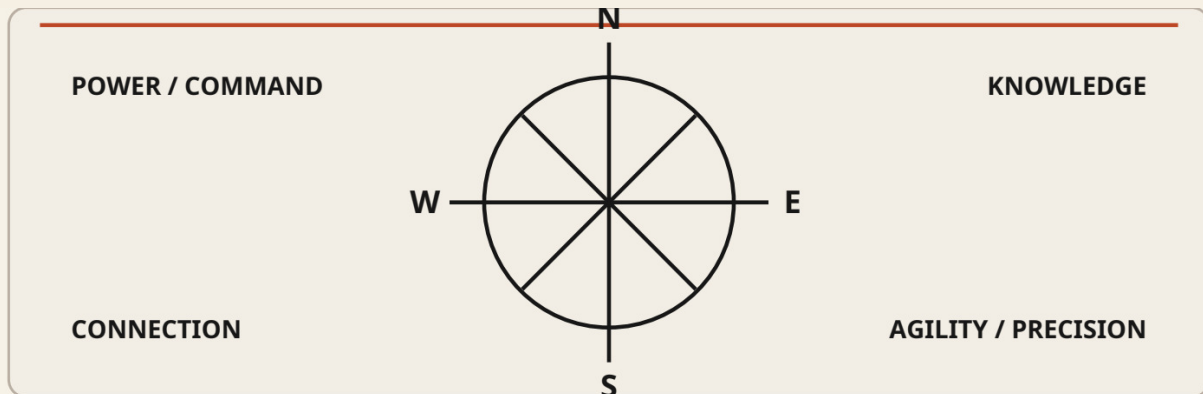
$$SE = \text{floor}((S + E) / 2)$$

$$SW = \text{floor}((S + W) / 2)$$

$$NW = \text{floor}((N + W) / 2)$$

Composites are derived. Do not buy them separately. When a cardinal Axis changes, recalculate its two neighboring composites.

EXAMPLE: N 4 and E 3 make NE 3. Raising E to 4 makes NE 4 and SE may also change.



POOL AND DAMAGE TRACK

Add N + S + E + W for the fixed Dice Pool. A standard new character has Pool 12.

Draw one Damage box for every die in the fixed Pool.

[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

This example is N4, S3, E3, W2: twelve boxes. When harm converts a **Normal Die**, mark one open box N, S, E, or W. The mark determines when that **Damage Die** rolls; Axis ratings do not create separate Damage capacities.

At Damage equal to Pool, the character dies or is defeated as the Quick Start states. A scenario may remove an Agent at a lower threshold without calling that removal death.

Raising a cardinal Axis adds one healthy **Normal Die** to the Pool and one open Damage box. Lowering an Axis cannot erase existing Damage; resolve the reduction with the 4Caster before play continues.



STARTING SPECIAL DICE

A standard new character begins with the following chassis. A rolled option uses its rolled Axes and their sum for Pool instead.

STANDARD: N 2-4 | S 2-4 | E 2-4 | W 2-4 | POOL 12

COMBO 1 | POWER 1 | ARMOR 0 | DAMAGE 0

PLAYTEST LIMITS

- Begin with **COMBO 1** and **POWER 1**. **COMBO 2** and **POWER 2** are the experimental ceilings below unless a tested 4Cast explicitly replaces them.
- Use no more than one applicable **Armor Die** at character creation.
- Do not begin with **Damage Dice**.
- Do not advance permanent reserves until the group has tested the baseline for several sessions.

COMBO 2, POWER 2, and two applicable Armor Dice are experimental ceilings, not promised advancement tracks. A Power Die changes a contest as well as an ability Pattern. Armor repeats against every applicable incoming action. They are more valuable than their small ratings look.

SEASONED EDGE

If the campaign starts above novice level, grant every character one shared category of edge:

- Raise one Axis by 1, maximum 5; or
- gain one directional **Armor Die** from a named source.

Use the same category for everyone during the first test. Mixed edges make the evidence harder to read.

CHOOSE ABILITIES

Choose two Starter Skills and one Starter Power from the next pages. A Skill's Category establishes training; its signature move is the printed exception. An ability may be renamed and reskinned without changing its Category, Training, Mode, Axis, Pattern, Cost, Timing, or Effect.

EXAMPLE: Forceful Blow can be a war hammer, cutting insult, hydraulic ram, or command that breaks a wavering line. Its fictional reach changes; its printed mechanics do not.

RELIABLE STARTING HANDLE

Every starting loadout should include at least one ability usable without a rare Pattern, several setup actions, or a narrow **Status Gate**: an Any Pair Skill with Combo support, a common Passive, a priced single-N or true-Straggler ability, or a low-symbol typed Power whose underlying action remains useful. Pair that reliable handle with one situational signature and one ambitious high-impact ability.

This is loadout construction, not pity protection. Misses never lower a Pattern, grant free pips, or auto-activate an ability.

APPROVAL CHECK

Before play, answer these questions:

- What does the ability look like?
- What targets can it plausibly affect?
- Does it deal Damage or Strain?
- What equipment or position does it require?
- Which printed rule is unchanged beneath the new name?

Do not improvise point costs in this book. If an idea cannot be represented by a Starter ability or a Quick Start ability, write a narrow custom exception together and label it EXPERIMENTAL.

One character declares at most one active Skill or Active Power per action or reaction. Active Powers require their typed P Pattern unless a supplement prints a scoped replacement exception and reserve procedure; they are ACTION ONLY unless they explicitly permit REACTION. Passive abilities follow their printed Trigger. A Ready **Power Die** may also be rolled voluntarily on an ordinary action, reaction, or Skill without activating a Power.

STARTER SKILLS

Choose two. Decide the Damage or Strain type where an effect permits either.

FORCEFUL BLOW [SKILL]

Category: Force. **Training:** breaking, lifting, close violence, and direct physical pressure.

Axis: N. **Pattern:** Any pair. SPEND.

Timing: On success.

Effect: +1 Damage or Strain, declared before rolling.

SLIP PAST [SKILL]

Category: Stealth. **Training:** concealment, infiltration, watched movement, and pursuit.

Axis: S. **Pattern:** 1,1. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Gain Unseen (1). On success, also cross one watched position or leave engagement.

READ THE FIELD [SKILL]

Category: Investigation. **Training:** danger, routes, mechanisms, and practical plans.

Axis: E. **Pattern:** Any triple. TRIGGER.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Ask one direct question about a nearby danger, route, mechanism, or plan. The 4Caster answers honestly.

WIN THEM OVER [SKILL]

Category: Influence. **Training:** persuasion, deception, negotiation, and social leverage.

Axis: W. **Pattern:** Any pair. SPEND.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Apply Hesitant (1), or learn one thing the target needs before it will cooperate. The player chooses before rolling.

Any-pair Patterns are common. Their effects here are intentionally small and require success.



MORE STARTER SKILLS

FIELD CARE [SKILL]

Category: Medicine. **Training:** diagnosis, stabilization, treatment, and recovery under pressure.

Axis: E or W. **Pattern:** 1,4. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless of the contest.

Effect: With appropriate access and tools, convert one of the target's **Damage Dice** into a Spent **Normal Die**. A target can benefit from Field Care only once per Turn.

SET THE OPENING [SKILL]

Category: Coordination. **Training:** timing, setup, teamwork, and creating usable openings.

Axis: Any cardinal chosen when learned. **Pattern:** 1,2. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Create one held 2 for an ally who can perceive and use the opening. It expires at the end of the current Round.

HOLD FAST [SKILL]

Category: Endurance. **Training:** bracing, carrying, securing, and resisting forced movement.

Axis: N or W reaction. **Pattern:** Any pair. SPEND.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Prevent forced movement or keep hold of one carried, operated, or towed object.

QUICK STUDY [SKILL]

Category: Assessment. **Training:** reading visible opponents, systems, reserves, and defenses.

Axis: E. **Pattern:** 4,4. TRIGGER.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Name one visible Agent. Learn its highest cardinal Axis and one listed reserve, Armor source, or ability.

These are play-ready templates. Use **4d4 Skills & Powers 0.5** for the larger construction system and libraries; its risk bands remain playtest guidance rather than proof of balance.

STARTER POWERS

Choose one. Each is an Active Power. Declare it before rolling, add the required Ready **Power Die**, and satisfy its typed P result after Damage and Armor cancellation.

GUARDIAN INTERCEPT [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. **REACTION:** direct defense.

Axis: N or W reaction. **Pattern:** P1 + 1. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless. Resolve after harm is calculated.

Effect: Prevent 2 Damage or Strain to the user or a nearby ally.

VECTOR BURST [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. ACTION ONLY.

Axis: S. **Pattern:** P4 + 4. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Move through one dangerous position without stopping, or move two spaces after the exchange in tactical play. This movement cannot pass through a solid barrier.

HIDDEN CACHE [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. ACTION ONLY.

Axis: E or W. **Pattern:** P4 + 4. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Reveal one small, previously prepared item, contact, access code, or escape route plausible for the current location.

SECOND WIND [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. ACTION ONLY.

Axis: N or W. **Pattern:** P1 + 1,1; P2 + 2,2; P3 + 3,3; or P4 + 4,4. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless.

Effect: Return up to two Strained **Normal Dice** to Ready.

Powers are strong exceptions. Do not add a second effect because a name sounds dramatic.

GEAR

Gear begins as permission, protection, or a problem-solving tool. It does not need a price table to matter.

WEAPONS

A weapon states its reach and whether it can plausibly deal Damage. An ordinary weapon does not add flat harm. Margin and abilities determine harm.

TOOLS

A kit permits work that bare hands cannot reasonably perform: surgery, lock work, vehicle repair, surveying, ritual work, or forgery. The 4Caster may require the kit, but should not add a die bonus merely for owning it.

PROTECTION

Protective gear granted by a Seasoned Edge, ability, advancement, or 4Cast may provide Armor 1 in one direction when its fictional coverage applies. Ordinary baseline starting gear does not grant Armor automatically. Record the source, direction, and what it can protect against.

EXAMPLE: Reinforced coat - Armor N 1 against physical Damage from direct force.

CARRYING

Carry what the table finds reasonable. If a load becomes a meaningful obstacle, make it part of the declared risk or use a scene clock. This book does not introduce an encumbrance economy without tested procedures to support it.

Named relics, constructed items, and priced equipment belong with Skills & Powers or a setting 4Cast.



2. DIRECTIONAL SPECIAL DICE

Damage and Armor are always directional. This book also offers an **OPTIONAL** way to bind Combo and **Power Dice** to a direction.

Mark a directional die N, S, E, or W. A Ready Bound **Combo Die** may be spent only when the declared ability's Axis contains its direction. A Ready Bound **Power Die** may be voluntarily rolled only when the action or reaction Axis contains its direction; an Active Power satisfies its typed P Pattern unless a labeled replacement exception moves a Bound-legal die to RESERVED. Damage and Armor remain automatic and follow their Quick Start timing.

EXAMPLE: Combo E may join E, NE, or SE. It cannot join N, S, W, NW, or SW.

OPEN AND BOUND

An unmarked Combo or **Power Die** is **Open** and follows the Quick Start rule. A marked die is **Bound**.

Binding is a restriction and a statement about the character or object. It does not currently grant an extra die, cheaper advancement, a changed face, or a larger effect. Open and Bound are therefore not equal free choices.

A reserve is Open by default. A setting, item, faction technique, drawback, or explicit ability may grant it as Bound instead. The granting source makes that decision and should use the restriction deliberately. Do not change the mark between rolls. A full refit, retraining period, or explicit ability may change it between sessions.

Directional dice are useful for starship systems, magical schools, injuries, faction techniques, and setting-specific resources.



SPECIAL DICE LOADOUT

The five dice jobs remain distinct.

NORMAL - Pool, action economy, Patterns, Clusters, and Stragglers.

COMBO - extra untyped Pattern face only; refreshes each Round.

POWER - voluntary extra action die, typed Active Power result, Pattern die, contest die, and Straggler; refreshes each Turn.

DAMAGE - persistent directional cancellation caused by harm.

ARMOR - persistent directional cancellation against incoming actions.

FIRST PLAYTEST DEFAULT

COMBO 1 | POWER 1 | ARMOR 0 | DAMAGE 0

A character may later gain Armor 1 from gear or a setting. Roll every applicable **Armor Die**. For baseline design, arrange sources so normally only one applies to an incoming action; two applicable **Armor Dice** is the experimental ceiling.

A declared Skill or Active Power may add Ready **Combo Dice** up to **COMBO**. Any action or reaction may voluntarily add Ready **Power Die** up to **POWER**, even when no Power is declared. An Active Power must include the Ready **Power Die** required by its typed P Pattern unless a supplement prints a scoped replacement exception and reserve procedure. **Combo Dice** never enter the contest. Damage and Armor never enter Patterns or the contest.

The Quick Start timing order remains: roll action and Damage, cancel; roll Armor, cancel; check Pattern; SPEND or TRIGGER; divide contest dice. A later ability may print a PRE-PATTERN reaction before or after Armor; that uses the same exchange's reaction sequence and replaces that participant's ordinary reaction to the exchange. Record the Pattern at its check and resolve the Effect only at its printed Timing. There are no separate interrupts.

ONE CORE ROLL - FIVE DIFFERENT JOBS



NORMAL

POOL

TURN



COMBO

PATTERN

ROUND



POWER

FULL DIE

TURN



DAMAGE

CANCEL

PERSIST



ARMOR

CANCEL

PERSIST

Combo never enters the contest. Damage and Armor only cancel.

DIRECTIONAL COMBO AND POWER

BOUND COMBO

A Ready Bound **Combo Die** may be spent on a declared Skill or Power whose Axis contains its direction. Spent Bound **Combo Dice** return Ready at Round start. A Bound **Combo Die** can fill a missing Pattern result exactly like an Open **Combo Die**. It never enters the contest.

BOUND POWER

A Ready Bound **Power Die** may be voluntarily spent on any action or reaction whose Axis contains its direction. Spent Bound **Power Dice** return Ready at Turn start. It may satisfy untyped Patterns, form Clusters and Stragglers, and contribute every die to tie value. When used for an Active Power, it may satisfy typed P or enter RESERVED for a labeled replacement exception only if the Power's Axis also contains its bound direction.

COMPOSITES

A composite may use Bound dice from either component within the user's **COMBO** and **POWER** rating limits.

SCENES AND ITEMS

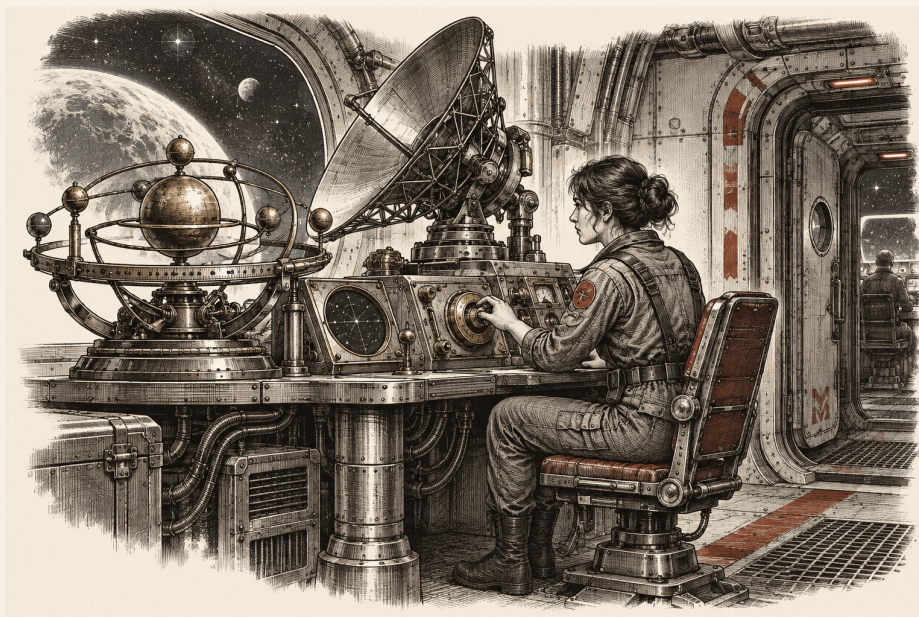
List Bound reserves beside the Agent or station that owns them.

Captain Roake - Combo W 1

Survey Array - Power E 1

Ramming Engine - Power N 1

Removing that Agent or disabling that station removes access to its reserve. Do not place all scene reserves in one anonymous bucket when their direction is supposed to matter.



DIRECTIONAL DAMAGE

When Damage is inflicted, each new **Damage Die** occupies one open Pool-wide Damage box. Mark it N, S, E, or W.

- Cardinal harmful action: use its Axis.
- Composite action: attacker chooses one component.
- Ability: use its listed direction if it names one.
- Directionless hazard: 4Caster chooses from the fiction; target chooses if the fiction is truly equal.

Whenever the owner rolls an Axis containing that direction, every matching **Damage Die** rolls and cancels matching Normal or Power results.

NO DIRECTIONAL CAP

Any number of **Damage Dice** may share one direction. Total Damage is limited only by the fixed Pool. Never redirect Damage because its direction contains more marks than its Axis rating.

Healing normally lets the target choose which Damage direction returns to Normal. An ability may name a direction. A damaged direction still functions; its cancellation dice are already the impairment.

DIRECTIONAL ARMOR

Every Armor source states four things:

- Direction and rating.
- The physical, social, magical, or technical source.
- Whether it can stop Damage, Strain, or both.
- The fictional coverage that makes it applicable.

EXAMPLE: Blast coat - Armor N 1 against physical Damage from N, NE, or NW attacks while worn.

For a composite incoming action, Armor from either component may apply. Roll every applicable **Armor Die**, including worn protection and cover.

CONSERVATIVE CAP

Arrange baseline characters and scenes so one **Armor Die** normally applies. Two applicable dice is the experimental ceiling from all sources combined; this is design guidance, not a resolution override.

One **Armor Die** matches at least one of four action dice about 68.4% of the time. Because it repeats on every eligible attack, Armor 1 is a major feature rather than a decorative bonus.

Damage cancellation happens before Armor cancellation. Neither can cancel Combo. If an effect targets several characters, each target applies its own Armor to a separate copy of the acting results.



RECOVERY AND DOWNTIME

Refresh is not healing.

ROUND START - **Combo Dice** refresh.

TURN START - Spent and Strained **Normal Dice** return Ready; **Power Dice** refresh.

SAFE FULL REST - convert one **Damage Die** into a **Normal Die**.

FIELD CARE - may convert one **Damage Die** during a Turn as its ability states.

FULL REST

A full rest requires safety, time, food, and whatever treatment the fiction demands. The restored **Normal Die** begins Ready if the next Turn has not started; otherwise it begins Spent.

EXTENDED RECOVERY

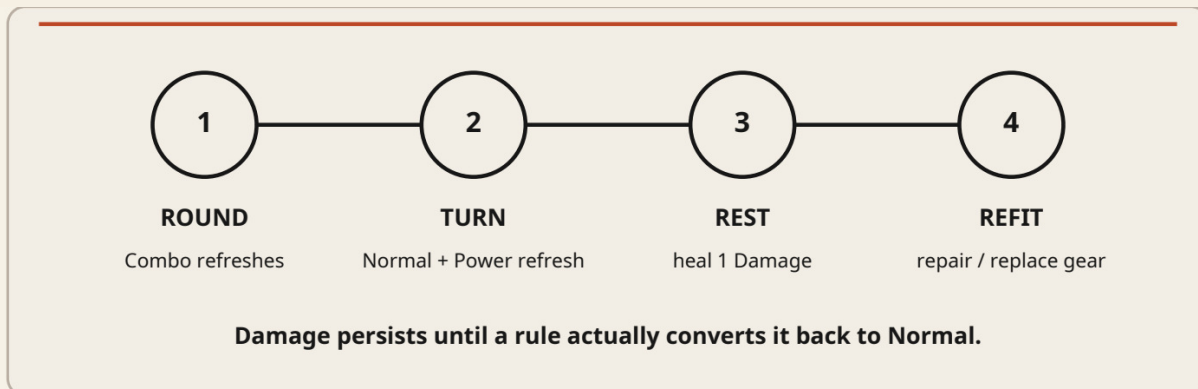
After several safe days, the 4Caster may restore all Damage when that matches the campaign. A harsher setting can require a treatment clock, parts, or shelter. State the recovery rule before players choose a dangerous plan.

REPAIR

Machines, vehicles, and constructs heal through repair. An E action with tools may convert one **Damage Die** once per target per Turn. The action still creates Stragglers and may be opposed by pressure, poor access, or an active hazard.

DOWNTIME

Use downtime to end statuses whose FADE conditions are met, repair gear, pursue contacts, and spend XP. Do not make players roll for every quiet hour.



WRITE A STATUS

Every status needs APPLY, TRIGGER, and FADE. If one is missing, the table cannot know when the status matters or ends.

SAFE FIRST SHAPES

PRESSURE (X)

Apply: On a listed success, add X pips; repeated applications add.

Trigger: Before the affected Agent acts, inflict Strain equal to pips.

Fade: After triggering, reduce by 1.

POSITION (X)

Apply: Set to X or keep the higher value.

Trigger: Add X Help Clusters to the first action that uses the position.

Fade: Remove after triggering or when the fiction removes the position.

EXPOSURE (X)

Apply: Add X pips when the scene says.

Trigger: A named Straggler or clock movement increases by X.

Fade: Reduce after a specific corrective action.

CAPS FOR TESTING

Avoid more than 1 automatic Damage per Trigger, more than three Triggers, or an effect with no visible counterplay. State whether repeated applications add, replace, or keep the higher value.

Statuses change procedures. They are not permission to control another player's choices without an agreed fictional cause.



ADVANCEMENT

Use the Quick Start advancement until campaign evidence supports more.

AXIS ADVANCEMENT

After a session, spend 10 XP to raise one cardinal Axis by 1, maximum 5. Add one healthy **Normal Die** and one open Damage box to the fixed Pool, then recalculate neighboring composites.

CURATED ABILITIES - PROVISIONAL

A campaign may charge 10 XP to learn one approved Starter ability or one approved ability from its 4Cast. This price is a test value. Record who buys it and whether it changes spotlight or scene length.

DO NOT PRICE YET

Do not improvise costs for:

- Additional Combo or Power reserves.
- Permanent Armor.
- Multiple targets or area effects.
- Extra actions or reaction windows.
- Damage multipliers.
- Open-ended item construction.

Those are exactly the features **4d4 Skills & Powers 0.5** marks for evidence-driven testing rather than automatic campaign approval.

CAMPAIGN CEILING

Pause advancement when an Axis reaches 5, a character gains a second die in a permanent Combo or Power reserve, or two **Armor Dice** can apply to one action. Review the campaign before raising the ceiling.



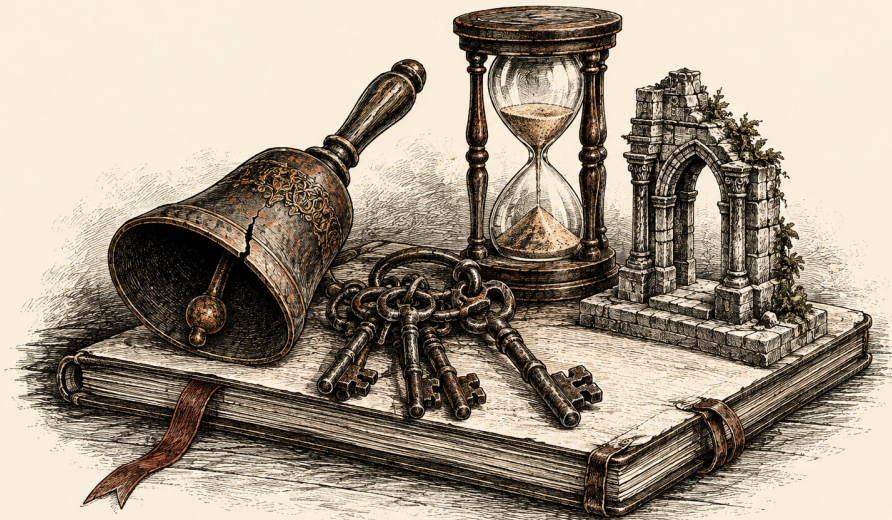
3. THE 4CASTER WORKSHOP

The 4Caster turns a place, pressure, and opposition into a scene the players can change.

BUILD IN THIS ORDER

1. State the scene goal and at least one valid ending.
2. State the immediate risk.
3. Add every participating character's fixed Pool to find Party Total.
4. Choose the Scene Pool total: about 75%, 100%, or 125% of Party Total for Easier, Even, or Harder.
5. List the starting Agents, each with four Axes and one action opportunity.
6. Allocate every die in the Scene Pool total among those Agents however the 4Caster wants. Record each Agent's fixed Pool before play; dice cannot be lent or borrowed.
7. Add the active Agents' ratings into Encounter Axes.
8. List each Agent's reserves, Armor, abilities, Statuses, and any early break condition.
9. Choose ATTRITION or an explicitly printed PRESSURE TRANSFER X package.
10. Define leftover 3/4 effects and clocks; tell the players what they can perceive.

Do not increase a Pool because the players found a strong plan or decrease it because the opposition rolled well. Play the recorded scene honestly and end it when a printed or fictional ending is reached.



AGENTS AND ENCOUNTER AXES

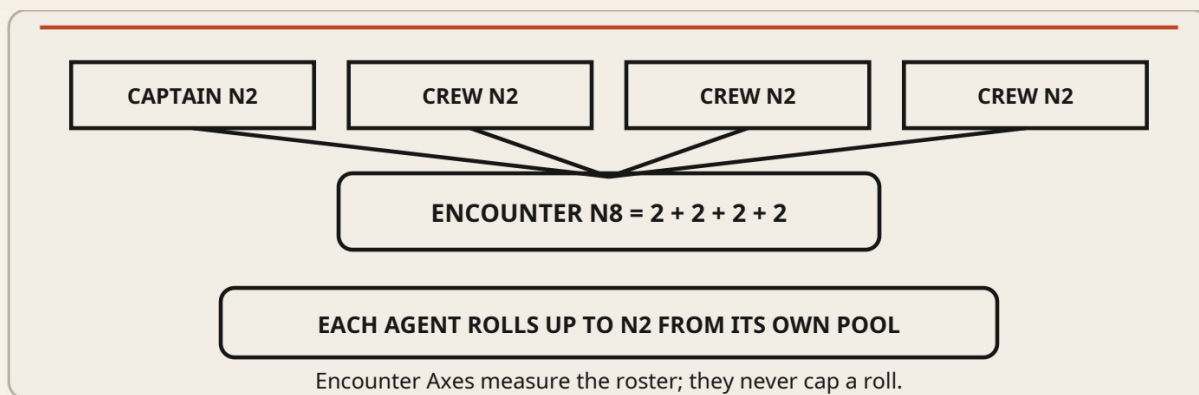
An Agent can be a guard, bridge, storm front, locked door, vehicle station, troop, or monster facet. Each Agent owns N, S, E, W, a fixed Pool, Damage, Strain, Armor, reserves, Statuses, one action opportunity per Round, and its own ordinary direct reactions.

An Agent's action or reaction is capped by its own Axis and paid only from its own Pool. The targeted Agent directly reacts to an incoming action and may directly react again to later actions while dice remain. A non-target Agent may support or interfere by spending its own unused action opportunity; it then cannot act proactively that Round.

Encounter Axes are sums used to rate the roster. They never cap a roll or merge dice.

EXAMPLE: A captain and three crew each have N 2. Encounter N is 8. Each Agent still caps North at 2 and uses only its own Pool.

Recalculate Encounter Axes when an Agent enters or leaves. An Agent entering mid-Round receives its first action opportunity next Round; one removed before its opportunity loses it.



SCENE TOTAL AND AGENT POOLS

The Scene Pool total is a preparation budget. Calculate it from actual Party Total, then allocate it among the starting Agents in any proportions. Equal division is a convenient default, not a requirement. Put more dice on a lead obstacle for a durable focal threat; spread them for several thinner responders.

Each allocation becomes that Agent's fixed Pool and ordinary Damage threshold. Damage converts that Agent's **Normal Dice**. Strain sets aside that Agent's Ready **Normal Dice**. No Agent borrows another Agent's Normal, Damage, Armor, Status, Combo, or **Power Dice**.

The targeted Agent rolls applicable Armor against every incoming attack before Pattern payment and division, even when it cannot or declines to react.

SCENE ENDINGS

A scene may end when:

- all required Agents are defeated;
- cumulative Scene Damage reaches the printed Scene Pool total; or
- the objective, clock, or fiction reaches a stated ending.

Damage on a defeated Agent still counts toward an aggregate threshold. Healing lowers aggregate Damage only when it removes current Damage.

REMOVAL MODE

ATTRITION is default. Remove a defeated Agent and every remaining die and resource attached to it.

PRESSURE TRANSFER X is optional and must be printed before play with one starting source, one named receiver, X, a RECEIVER CAP, and a SCENE CAP. X may equal but cannot exceed the source's printed starting Pool and never depends on its current Ready dice. When that source is defeated or otherwise removed, attempt to create exactly X Spent **Normal Dice** on the receiver. Stop at both caps and lose excess. Dice actually created Ready no earlier than next Turn refresh, raise the receiver's fixed Pool and Damage threshold, and grant no immediate refill or action. Axes, Armor, Damage, reserves, Statuses, and abilities do not move. A starting source triggers once; transferred, created, summoned, copied, or echo dice cannot source another transfer. If the receiver is absent or illegal, all X dice leave play.

ACTION PRESSURE AND AGENT PROFILES

Agent count controls action pressure. Allocation controls where endurance and direct-reaction capacity sit. Change one lever at a time when testing.

A useful first profile records:

NAME / ROLE

N / S / E / W

FIXED POOL / CURRENT NORMAL /
DAMAGE / STRAIN

COMBO / POWER / ARMOR

ACTION / REACTION / ABILITY

MODE: ATTRITION, or PRESSURE TRANSFER X with receiver and Scene caps

EARLY BREAK or objective condition, if any

Fewer Agents than characters is light action pressure. Equal counts are standard. More Agents than characters is heavy pressure even when Scene Pool total and Rating are Even. Start with one to four meaningful Agents. Additional headcount can become Scale, Cohesion, or scene fiction.

CLOCKS AND CONSEQUENCES

A clock should answer a question that matters to the whole scene.

Before the first roll, write:

- Its starting value and range.
- What leftover 3 does.
- What leftover 4 does.
- Any action or Margin that moves it.
- What changes at intermediate thresholds.
- What happens when it fills or empties.

SHORT PRESSURE - 4 steps.

STANDARD SCENE - 6 steps.

LONG OPERATION - 8 steps.

The clock's end changes the situation; it should not erase play. Lockdown opens a dangerous route. Collapse separates the party. The courier arrives. The faction withdraws. State the next position.

FAILURE MOVES

A failed roll changes time, position, trust, resources, or danger. It does not need to deny every part of the intent. On an unopposed action with no Cluster, use minimal effect or success at a cost as the Quick Start states.

AGENT DEFEAT AND EARLY BREAKS

An Agent is defeated when Damage equals its own fixed Pool. Under ATTRITION, remove its remaining resources. Under a legal PRESSURE TRANSFER X package, create only the recorded Spent transfer dice and apply every safeguard above.

A scene may also print an early BREAK condition such as 2 accumulated Damage for a fragile guard, 3 Strain in ONE EXCHANGE for a wavering crowd, or completion of a lock's objective. A break is flight, surrender, collapse, or lost function; it does not silently redefine the core Damage threshold.

One exchange is the original action plus direct defense, support, interference, Help, comparison, printed Effects, ordinary harm, statuses, and immediate fiction. A later action is a new exchange, even in the same Round.

ENCOUNTER RATING AND XP

Use the Quick Start estimate until a better one has evidence.

1. Add the four current Encounter Axes.
2. Add 1 for every Combo, Power, or **Armor Die** listed for the active opposition. Combo or Power readiness does not change Rating; Armor has no Ready or Spent state.
3. Record the highest Rating actually faced. Reinforcements can raise it; removing Agents never lowers the award already established.

Compare peak Rating with the participating characters' combined fixed Pools.

EASY - 75% or less: 1 XP each.

EVEN - above 75% and below 125%: 2 XP each.

HARD - 125% or more: 3 XP each.

A starting Scene Pool total at 75% or less shifts one category easier. A starting Scene Pool total at 125% or more shifts one category harder. Never shift below Easy or above Hard.

Award once when the scene reaches an ending, whether the characters win, bypass the opposition, escape, or accept a lasting consequence.

WHAT THE RATING MISSES

It does not fully price repeated Armor, Power timing, area effects, terrain, clocks, or Agent action pressure. Record those features beside the estimate. Do not call the label a promise.



NEUTRAL SIDES AND PLAYER CONFLICT

Give each neutral faction its own Scene Pool total and Agent allocations. Do not merge or lend dice between unrelated factions because they happen to threaten the same characters.

Every action has two primary sides: acting side and target side. Other participants may help or interfere with one primary side if the fiction permits and they spend their unused action opportunity for the Round. They choose a side before rolling and cannot switch afterward. A direct defense does not spend its target's opportunity.

FIRM LIMITS

- Reactions never create nested reaction windows.
- Every reaction normally commits at least one Ready **Normal Die**. Only a printed ZERO-NORMAL REACTION with a typed Power Pattern replaces that minimum; Armor remains automatic.
- Only the primary target of a generic one-target action receives automatic Armor. An explicit area or copied-attack procedure grants each target its own Armor copy.
- Supporters do not lend Armor.
- Every roller applies only their own directional Damage.
- Reactions add Clusters but never ordinary Margin harm. Only a printed reaction Effect may deal harm.
- A generic action targets one participant. Multiple targets require explicit ability text.
- When a composite action inflicts Damage, its source chooses one component direction unless an ability names one.
- A clock says whether every faction's 3s and 4s affect it.

Players decide player-versus-player initiative ties as in the Quick Start. If they cannot agree promptly, roll one d4 each and reroll ties. Award no XP for harming another player character.

Rate a neutral threat against the characters who materially face it. If neutral factions mostly fight one another offscreen, use a clock rather than rolling every exchange.

Get That Scrap! later in this book demonstrates players, a neutral Scene, and one shared tactical map.



BALANCE BASELINES

These exact probabilities describe one uncanceled roll before reactions or ability costs.

- 1 DIE - any Cluster 0%.
- 2 DICE - any Cluster 25.0%.
- 3 DICE - any Cluster 62.5%.
- 4 DICE - any Cluster 90.6%.
- 5 DICE - any Cluster 100%.

Equal opposed rolls favor the defender because an exact tie holds. Counting every die inside each chosen retained Cluster for tie value, and assuming each side divides to maximize the ordinary comparison, four dice against four wins about 44.3% before Help or cancellation. Four dice against three wins about 64.2%. Help Clusters add to Cluster count but contribute 0 tie value.

DESIGN FLAGS

- Two-die opposed exchanges are intentionally hard to force through.
- One **Power Die** can turn four contest dice into five, guaranteeing a pre-cancellation Cluster.
- An Any-pair Pattern with one **Combo Die** is guaranteed when four surviving ordinary dice are rolled before cancellation.
- One **Armor Die** matches at least one of four action dice about 68.4% of the time and repeats on every applicable attack.
- Composite actions can expose two directions of the actor's Damage and the target's Armor.

Keep Any-pair effects modest and ON SUCCESS. Avoid high-impact REGARDLESS or TRIGGER pair effects until tested.

ROLL	ANY CLUSTER	USE
2 DICE	25.0%	risky
3 DICE	62.5%	uncertain
4 DICE	90.6%	reliable
5 DICE	100%	before cancel

Any-pair Patterns are common. Keep their effects modest.

PLAYTEST WITHOUT GUESSING

1. RUN THE BASELINE

Record Party Total, Scene Pool total, each Agent allocation and current Pool state, Encounter Axes, removal mode, reserves, Armor, clock, early break conditions, and active modules.

2. RECORD THE RESULT

Note Rounds, Turns, dice spent, successful ability activations, cancellations, harm, removed Agents, clock ending, rules pauses, and total minutes.

3. CHANGE ONE VARIABLE

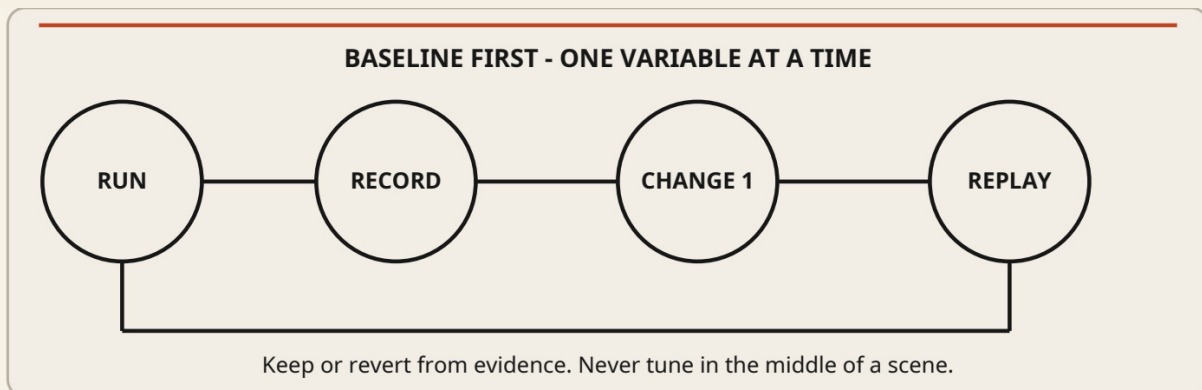
Change only one:

- Agent count by 1.
- Scene Pool total among 75%, 100%, and 125%.
- One reserve or applicable **Armor Die** by 1.
- One Agent Pool allocation or early break threshold by 1.
- One clock threshold by 1.
- One Open die to Bound, or back.
- One optional module on or off.

4. REPLAY SOMETHING COMPARABLE

Keep the party, objective, and remaining values close. Keep the change only if it improves more than one comparable test.

Never tune cancellation order, refresh timing, one action per Round, or the death threshold as if they were encounter difficulty knobs.



PLAYTEST RECORD

Date / table: _____

Quick Start version: _____ Expanded version: _____

Characters and Pools: _____

Optional modules: _____

Scene **goal**: _____

Agent count: _____ Scene Pool total: _____

Agent Pools and current state: _____

Removal mode / transfer caps: _____

Encounter **N / S / E / W**: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Peak Rating and **category**: _____

Clock and removal thresholds: _____

Rounds: _____ Turns: _____ Minutes: _____

Combo activations: _____ **Power Dice** rolled: _____

Damage cancellations: _____ Armor cancellations: _____

Agents removed: _____ Character defeats: _____

Ending reached: _____

What felt too weak: _____

What felt too strong: _____

Where rules paused: _____

Best decision or surprise: _____

ONE change for a comparable test: _____

Keep or revert after retest: _____

The purpose of this sheet is not to grade the group. It is to turn a feeling into a rule the design can answer.

4. TACTICAL PLAY

This OPTIONAL REPLACEMENT module replaces only the Quick Start statement that ordinary movement is part of an action or reaction.

The core Turn, Round, action, reaction, **Normal Dice**, and refresh rules remain. Tactical play adds a map and two Action Points to each action opportunity.

CHOOSE THE MODE

SQUARES - doors, corridors, firing lanes, vehicles, and familiar maps.

HEXES - open terrain, wilderness, naval play, and six equal neighbors.

Use a cell scale appropriate to the scene. At personal scale, one cell is roughly 5 feet or 2 metres. A vehicle chase may treat one cell as a road segment. Space combat may use thousands of kilometres.

The cell scale changes the fiction and range labels. It does not change Axes, Pools, or Cluster math.

DECLARE BEFORE PLAY

Write Square or Hex, cell scale, blocking terrain, difficult terrain, active cover, and any map edge rule. Tell the table before initiative.

Facing is omitted from the first generic playtest. A 4Cast may add it as a named rule after the basic position loop works.



TACTICAL GRID

Use tokens whose occupied cells are clear. Agree which edges block movement and line of sight.

A CELL CAN BE

CLEAR - normal movement and visibility.

DIFFICULT - costs two spaces of movement allowance.

BLOCKING - cannot be entered and blocks line of sight.

HAZARDOUS - can be entered, but states an immediate risk or effect.

COVER - may protect a target from actions crossing a named edge.

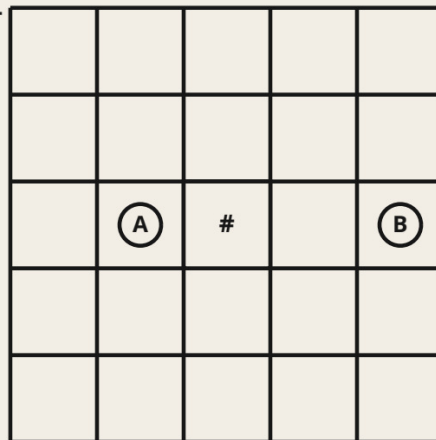
One cell normally holds one person-scale participant. Allies may pass through one another if they do not end in the same cell. Hostile cells and solid objects cannot be crossed without a rule that permits it.

MAP TRUTH

If a token, line, or edge is ambiguous, resolve it before a roll. Mark the ruling on the map. Do not move terrain after the dice reveal whether the ruling was useful.

The 4Caster may use zones instead of exact cells for a fast scene. If exact cover, line of sight, towing, or collision matters, use cells consistently until the scene ends.

ORTHOGONAL MOVEMENT



CENTER-TO-CENTER LOS

A cannot target B through the blocking square.

SQUARES AND HEXES

SQUARE GRID

Orthogonal neighbors share an edge. They are adjacent. One orthogonal step uses one space of movement allowance.

A diagonal step uses two spaces in the conservative default and cannot cross the corner of two blocking cells. A table may make every diagonal one space, but should not change that choice during a scene.

Count range by the shortest legal sequence of orthogonal steps unless an ability says otherwise.

HEX GRID

Every hex has six adjacent neighbors. Each step to a neighboring hex uses one space. Count range by the shortest legal hex path.

EDGES AND CORNERS

A wall drawn on an edge blocks movement and line of sight across that edge. A door states whether it is open, closed, locked, or broken.

On squares, touching only at a corner does not create engagement in the conservative default. On hexes, sharing an edge always does.

LARGE TOKENS

A larger creature or vehicle may occupy several cells. Choose one anchor cell and mark its footprint. If any occupied cell would collide or enter forbidden terrain, the whole move is illegal unless a scenario says otherwise.

ACTION POINTS

At the start of each character or Agent action opportunity, it receives 2 AP. Unspent AP disappears when that opportunity ends.

MOVE - 1 AP: move up to the actor's S in spaces.

ACT - 1 AP: use the one action opportunity to make one substantial action or roll.

INTERACT - 1 AP: use a simple nearby object with no meaningful uncertainty.

MOVE AGAIN - 1 AP: move again, but then no AP remains to Act.

An actor may Move before or after Act. It may spend both AP on movement. It may Act and Interact when already in position. It may never buy a second rolled action.

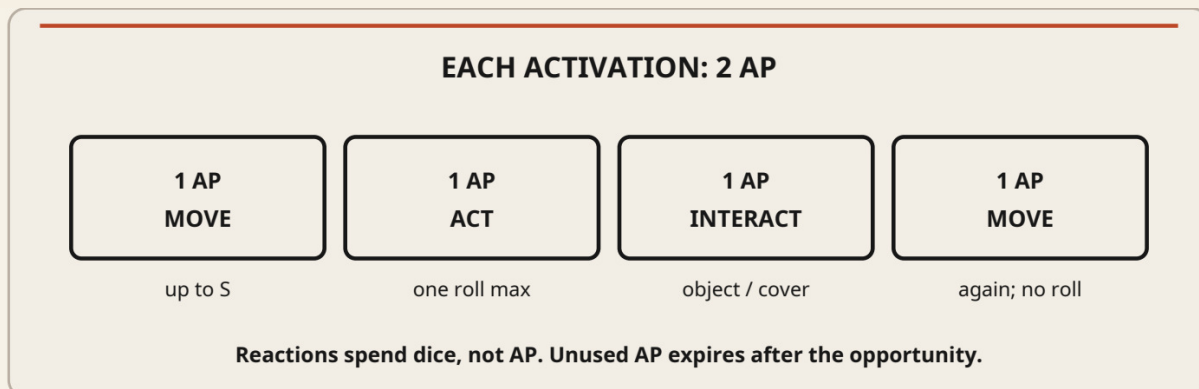
Direct defenses spend Ready **Normal Dice**, not AP, and do not consume the defender's action opportunity. Helping or interfering for another spends the participant's unused action opportunity for the Round but grants no AP. A reaction receives no movement unless a printed Effect grants an exact movement amount.

An actor with no Ready **Normal Dice** still receives AP and may Move or make a routine Interact. It cannot make an ordinary roll or reaction because those require at least one Ready **Normal Die**. A printed ZERO-NORMAL REACTION with a typed Power Pattern may still occur; applicable Armor remains automatic.

After every participant and Agent uses its opportunity, end the Round. Begin another only if someone has Ready **Normal Dice** it is able and willing to commit to a meaningful action in the current situation. Otherwise move every remaining Ready **Normal Die** to Spent and end the Turn. A scenario may replace this rule with a fixed number of Rounds per Turn.

REPLACED RULE

While this module is active, ordinary movement is not automatically included in every action. It is paid through MOVE. Small descriptive shifts inside one cell remain free.



MOVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

MOVE covers up to S spaces. Each difficult space consumes two from that allowance. Stop before entering a solid, hostile, or illegally occupied cell.

ENGAGED

Participants in adjacent cells are Engaged. A voluntary Move that leaves all cells adjacent to one or more able hostile participants costs one additional AP total, not one per hostile. Moving while still adjacent does not pay this cost until the mover actually leaves engagement. This makes a careful withdrawal consume both AP: Move plus Disengage. Forced movement pays no AP.

An ability such as Slip Past or Vector Burst may replace that cost when its text fits. Forced movement does not pay AP.

SPRINT

Spend both AP and the action opportunity. Roll N or S with no target. Move up to S spaces before rolling, then two additional legal spaces per retained Cluster, maximum four extra. Resolve Stragglers after movement.

At 0 Clusters, the initial move still happens, but the 4Caster applies the declared risk or cost.

FORCED MOVEMENT

State a direction and distance. The moved participant stops at the first illegal cell. A collision, fall, or hazard uses its printed consequence. Forced movement never grants an automatic extra attack.

PRONE

Drop prone for free. Standing uses Interact. Prone can grant cover behind a low obstacle but may prevent a Sprint or other movement the fiction does not allow.



RANGE, SIGHT, AND COVER

Use an ability's explicit range first. Otherwise use these starting bands.

REACH - adjacent.

NEAR - 2 to 4 cells.

FAR - 5 to 8 cells.

DISTANT - 9 to 12 cells and suitable equipment.

LINE OF SIGHT

Trace from the center of the acting cell to the center of the target cell or footprint. A blocking cell or edge breaks direct line of sight. The blocking object itself may be targeted.

PARTIAL COVER

If a feature physically protects part of the target, it provides one temporary **Armor Die** against that action. Mark it with the action's cardinal Axis; against a composite, the target chooses either component. Roll it with every other applicable **Armor Die**, then remove it.

FULL COVER

A target completely behind blocking terrain cannot be directly targeted through it. Reposition, destroy the cover, use an indirect ability, or change the goal.

Cover is not a reaction and does not spend dice. Its Armor follows the ordinary cancellation timing and the applicable Armor cap.

State whether a disputed line gives partial or full cover before the acting dice are committed.



TERRAIN AND OBJECTS

Terrain matters when it creates a decision, permission, or consequence.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Each difficult cell consumes two spaces from one Move allowance. If the actor has only one space remaining, it stops before entering.

HAZARDS

A hazard entry states when it acts: on entry, on exit, at Round end, or as a scene Agent. It also states Axis, Pool or effect, Damage direction, and any clock.

SIMPLE OBJECTS

Opening an unlocked door, drawing a tool, attaching a rope, or collecting an unsecured object uses Interact. If someone can stop it or quality matters, use Act and the core roll.

BREAKABLE COVER

Treat meaningful cover as an Agent or clock. When it reaches its removal threshold, erase the blocking edge or reduce full cover to partial cover.

FALLS AND COLLISIONS

State the threatened harm before movement. A person-scale hard collision normally inflicts 1 Strain; a dangerous fall or vehicle collision may inflict Damage, Scale effects, or a scene-specific value.

Do not add a universal opportunity-attack system. The existing reaction economy already lets participants help, interfere, and directly defend when fictionally able; helping or interfering still spends an unused action opportunity.



5. SCALE, VEHICLES, AND GROUPS

SCALE

Scale describes physical magnitude, not importance.

SCALE 0 - person, door, motorcycle.

SCALE 1 - large creature, squad, car, light walker.

SCALE 2 - formation, heavy vehicle, building section.

SCALE 3 - ship, fortress, army, colossal creature.

Scale never adds dice, raises an Axis cap, multiplies Clusters, refreshes reserves, or changes a social, mental, or informational action. Structural Damage means physical Damage to a body, object, vehicle, or structure. Scale modifies only structural Damage and physical collision Strain.

ONE STEP APART

A larger source adds +1 final structural Damage or collision Strain against the smaller target. A smaller source needs a suitable tool or vulnerability to deal structural Damage and reduces that final Damage by 1, minimum 0. Apply Scale after Margin and printed ability harm are totaled, then convert the final Damage.

TWO OR MORE STEPS APART

Ordinary direct harm cannot inflict structural Damage upward. Find equal-scale equipment, disable a vulnerable sub-Agent, create a Weak Point, or pursue a scene objective. A larger source adds +2 final structural Damage or collision Strain downward, not a multiplier. Apply this final modifier after Margin and printed ability harm.

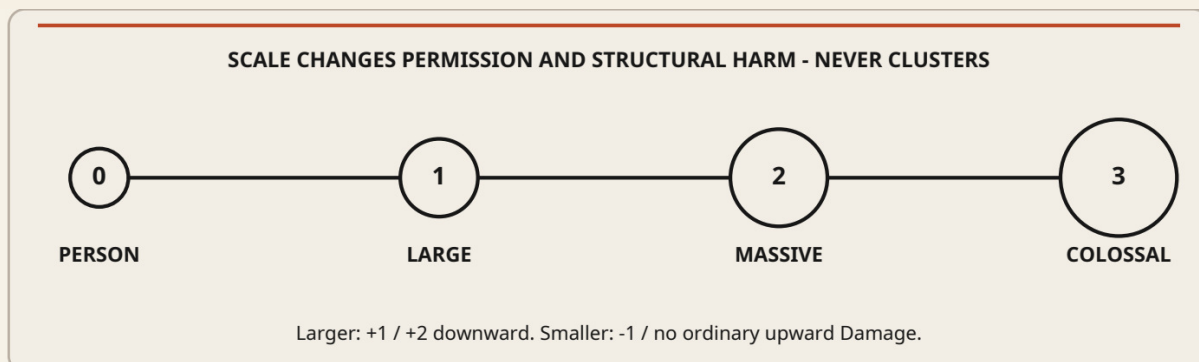
WEAK POINT (1)

Apply: A successful action identifies or creates a specific vulnerability.

Trigger: The next suitable harmful action may deal structural Damage upward regardless of the Scale gap and ignores the smaller source's adverse Scale reduction. Armor and every other ordinary defense still apply.

Fade: Remove after it triggers or at scene end.

Begin playtests with Scale gaps of zero or one. Large gaps work best as adventures and clocks.



VEHICLES

A vehicle is a character-like asset with its own Scale, N/S/E/W, fixed Pool, directional Damage, Armor, and listed reserves. Unless a 4Cast prints a different Pool, add its four Axes to find that fixed Pool.

N - weapons, thrust, ramming, and direct force.

S - engines, handling, evasion, and precision movement.

E - sensors, targeting, navigation, and engineering.

W - shields, countermeasures, communication, and crew control.

This is a setting skin of the core Axes. Oppositions and composites remain unchanged.

VEHICLE STAT LINE

Scale | N | S | E | W | Pool

Combo | Power | directional Armor | Damage

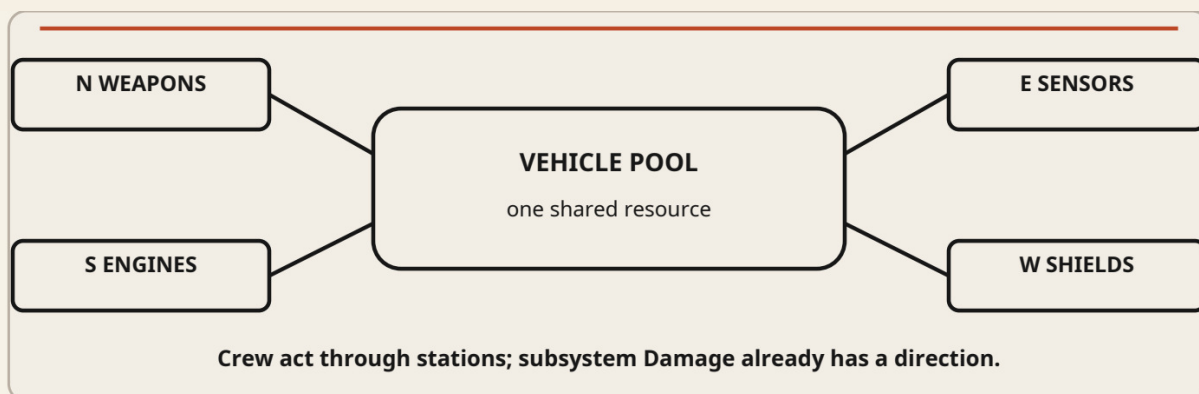
Stations with rating | footprint | tags | weapons | cargo

EXAMPLE: Helm S3 | Weapons N3 | Engineering E2 | Command W2.

A solo Drone or mount acts as one participant. Its controller uses the vehicle sheet for actions made through it.

A multi-crew vehicle has stations. A crew member must occupy a station and spend their own action opportunity to operate it. The crew member acts at their own initiative using their own rating in the dominant Axis; the vehicle receives no separate initiative or free action. A solo vehicle acts at its controller's initiative.

Vehicle gear determines permission and range. Ordinary mounted weapons do not add automatic harm unless their entry or Scale says so.



VEHICLE STATIONS AND DAMAGE

Recommended stations are Helm, Weapons, Engineering, and Command. Each station lists its permitted cardinal Axis or composite and a station rating. A light vehicle normally permits at most two station actions per Round; a heavy vehicle permits three.

STATION ROLL

The occupying crew member spends their action opportunity and uses the vehicle's Ready **Normal Dice**. The **Normal Dice** commitment cap is the lowest of the operator's matching cardinal or derived composite, the vehicle's matching cardinal or derived composite, and the station rating. A station cannot use an Axis or composite it does not list. Use vehicle Damage, Armor, Combo, and Power. Ready vehicle **Power Dice** may be voluntarily rolled on any legal station action; an Active vehicle Power requires its typed P Pattern unless a labeled replacement exception moves a station-legal die to RESERVED. Do not add the operator's personal special dice unless an ability permits it.

A vehicle is one Agent and all of its stations use that vehicle Agent's Pool. Stations are not separate Agents and cannot lend this Pool to another vehicle or Scene Agent. One person operates at most one station per Round. Under Tactical Play, an operator receives their normal 2 AP but may make only one station Act. Leaving a station uses ordinary movement; another station cannot be operated until occupied.

For a direct defense, choose one occupied station that can answer. Its operator uses the same lower rating cap and commits at least one Ready **Normal Die** from this vehicle Agent's Pool. This costs no AP and does not use the operator's action opportunity. The vehicle may directly react to each later incoming action while its own dice remain. Applicable vehicle Armor rolls against every matching incoming attack even when no Ready **Normal Die** remains.

TACTICAL MOVEMENT

Only an occupied Helm may move a multi-crew vehicle. Its operator spends 1 AP to Move up to the vehicle's S, and the vehicle may make only one such Move per Round. The operator may use the other AP to Act or Interact. A solo vehicle uses AP normally. Other stations may Act or Interact but cannot multiply vehicle movement.

DAMAGE AS SUBSYSTEMS

N Damage disrupts weapons and force.

S Damage disrupts engines and handling.

E Damage disrupts sensors and engineering.

W Damage disrupts shields and command.

The cancellation rule already makes damaged systems unreliable. Use statuses for fires, breaches, disabled stations, or lost cargo. Do not add a second hit-point system.

An E repair action with tools may heal one vehicle Damage, maximum once per target per Turn.

GROUPS

Use ordinary Agents for two to six individuals whose separate positions matter. Use a Cohesion Group for a larger formation.

COHESION GROUP

1. Choose one Base Agent profile.
2. Give the group 2 to 4 Cohesion units.
3. Treat each active Cohesion unit as an Agent with the Base Axes, one action opportunity, and its own allocated Pool.
4. Multiply each Base Axis by active Cohesion only to find Encounter Axes.
5. Allocate the prepared Scene Pool total among the units before play. Units cannot lend or borrow.

Never grant more than four group actions per Round. Additional headcount raises Scale or changes the fiction.

EXAMPLE: A militia base profile has N3, S2, E2, W3 and Cohesion 3. Encounter Axes are N9, S6, E6, W9. Each unit acts at the Base Axes and spends only its own Pool.

LOSING COHESION

A unit is defeated when Damage equals its own fixed Pool. A scenario may print an early BREAK 3 Damage accumulated or BREAK 3 Strain in one exchange to scatter a unit sooner. Under ATTRITION, remove that unit's remaining resources, one action, and one copy of the Base Axes. Under a legal PRESSURE TRANSFER package, follow the recorded transfer instead. Another unit's Pool and Damage do not change.

FACETS AND GRAND ASSETS

A large singular threat can use Agents as facets: a dragon's Head, Wings, Claws, and Burning Lair; a fortress's Gate, Guns, Garrison, and Command Tower.

Each active facet:

- Has its own four Axes.
- Grants one scene action per Round.
- May own an ability, reserve, Armor source, or removal condition.
- Owns an allocated, nonfungible Pool.

Removing a facet reduces later actions and current Encounter Axes. ATTRITION removes its remaining Pool; PRESSURE TRANSFER works only when printed for that facet. Removal may also change the map or disable a listed ability.

GRAND ASSETS

A base, ship, war machine, gang, or magical institution can be one vehicle Agent, several Cohesion-unit Agents, or several facet Agents depending on what matters now. Allocate the one prepared Scene Pool total among whichever Agents the chosen camera uses. Never represent the same capacity in two Agents at once.

CHOOSE THE CAMERA

If individual rooms matter, use facets. If the whole fortress exchanges fire with an army, use one large-scale Agent. If the characters infiltrate it, return to person-scale characters and scene Agents.

The same fiction can use different sheets at different camera distances. End the current scene, refresh as required, and state the new scale before switching.

TACTICAL QUICK REFERENCE

OPPORTUNITY

Receive 2 AP. Spend each on Move, Act, or Interact. At most one rolled action. Direct defenses use dice, not AP; helping or interfering spends the unused action opportunity and grants no AP.

MOVE

Move up to S spaces for 1 AP. Difficult cells cost two spaces. Leaving engagement costs one additional AP. Square diagonals cost two spaces; hex neighbors cost one.

ACT

Use the normal Axis roll, Pattern, cancellation, division, reactions, Help, comparison, and Margin procedure.

SIGHT AND COVER

Trace center to center. Partial cover gives one temporary directional **Armor Die**; roll it with every other applicable **Armor Die**. Full cover blocks direct targeting.

SCALE

One step: larger +1 final structural Damage or collision Strain; smaller needs a suitable tool and suffers -1 final structural Damage. Two or more: no ordinary structural Damage upward unless equal-scale equipment, a facet, or Weak Point permits it; larger +2 downward.

VEHICLES

One vehicle Agent owns one Pool. An occupying crew member spends their own opportunity. Station cap is the lowest of operator Axis, vehicle Axis, and station rating. Only Helm moves the vehicle once per Round.

GROUPS

Each active unit or facet is an Agent with one action and its own allocated Pool. No lending or borrowing.

6. SPACE MINERS: GET THAT SCRAP!

A FIRST-PLAYTEST 4CAST

The Drift is a lawless square of salvage space where automated pirates, rival miners, and fresh wreckage turn every clean route into a temporary idea.

Each player pilots a Drone Scout. Tow loose Scrap to your own Home Zone and bank it before four Turns end. Rival Drones may interfere. Pirate Scrapjets hunt haulers and scoring leaders.

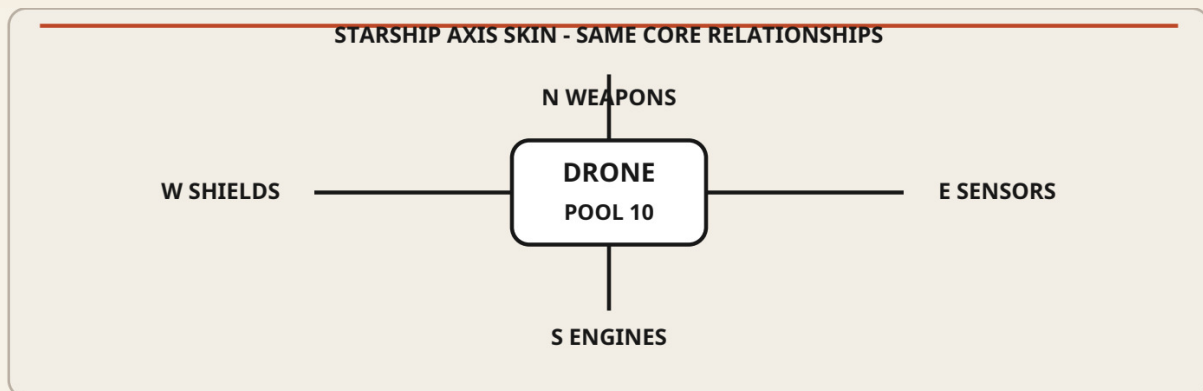
Only banked Scrap scores. Highest score wins even if that Drone is later eliminated.

This 4Cast demonstrates:

- The tactical square module.
- Vehicle Axis meanings.
- Directional Damage and Armor.
- Combo and Power abilities.
- Player conflict with a neutral Scene whose Agents own separate Pool allotments.
- Stragglers that physically change the map.
- Scene-specific early break conditions below full Agent-Pool defeat.

For 2 to 4 Drone players and one 4Caster. Allow 60 to 90 minutes for the first test.

The printed numbers are conservative starting guesses. Run the default before using optional modules.



GET THAT SCRAP!

YOU WILL NEED

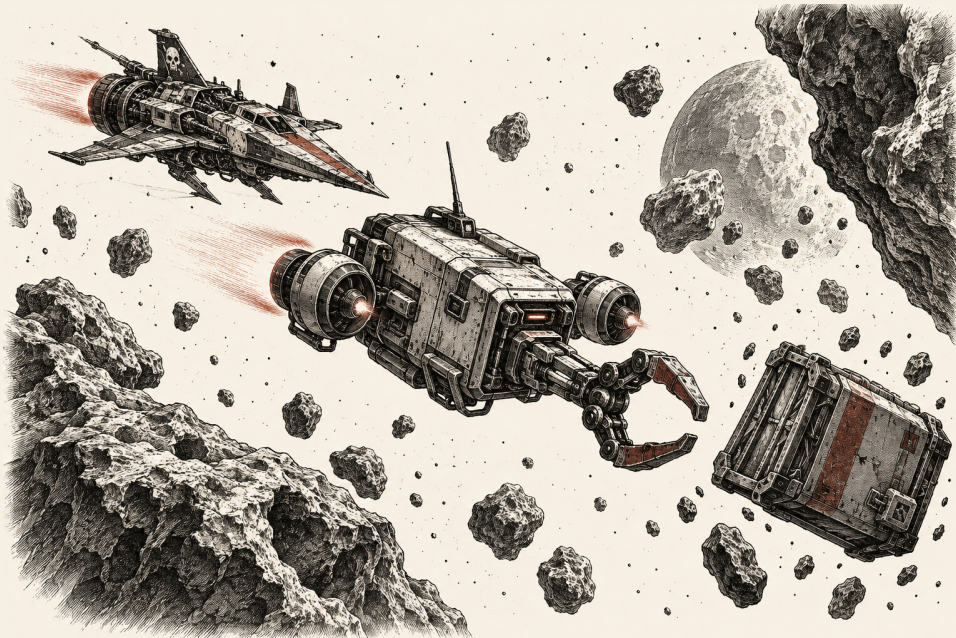
- The 4d4 Quick Start 0.6 and the Expanded tactical rules.
- One 11 by 11 square grid.
- One Drone token per player, one default Scrapjet token, and up to two more for options or replacements.
- Sixteen Scrap tokens and fourteen loose Asteroid tokens. The map prints four fixed Asteroids.
- Three Life markers per player, score marks, one Lead marker, and one Turn marker.
- For each player: ten Normal d4, one Combo d4, one Power d4, and one Armor d4. Mark converted **Damage Dice** N, S, E, or W.
- For the Scene: five Normal d4 per player, plus one Combo d4 and one Armor d4 for each active Scrapjet.

Coins, paper, or different-coloured dice work as tokens. The printable page near the end provides a starting set.

LENGTH

Play four complete Turns. This 4Cast uses exactly two Rounds per Turn, replacing the Quick Start's pool-exhaustion timing. After Round 2, move every remaining Ready **Normal Die** to Spent and end the Turn. Spent **Combo Dice** return Ready each Round. Normal and **Power Dice** return Ready each Turn. Damage and Armor persist until a rule changes them.

For a shorter first test, end after Turn 3. Do not also change Frame, Lives, or Scrap supply.



SETUP

Label columns A through K from left to right and rows 1 through 11 from top to bottom. Row 1 is north.

HOME ZONES

NORTH - E1 through G2; start F2.

EAST - J5 through K7; start J6.

SOUTH - E10 through G11; start F10.

WEST - A5 through B7; start B6.

For two players, use North and South. For four, use all four. For three, roll a d4 to choose the unused Home Zone and assign the rest randomly.

FIXED OBJECTS

Asteroids: D4, H4, D8, H8.

Scrap: F4, D6, H6, F8, E5, G5, E7, G7.

SCRAPJETS

All player counts: one at F6.

Every Drone begins at its start cell with 3 Lives, 0 banked Scrap, ten Ready **Normal Dice**, its Combo and **Power Dice** Ready, Armor N 1, and no Damage.

Choose a Lead player randomly. Put the Turn marker on 1. Put remaining Scrap and Asteroid tokens beside the map as placement supplies.

THE DRIFT MAP

The printed setup uses the four possible starting cells, four fixed Asteroids, eight starting Scrap tokens, and one central Scrapjet cell.

Use only the starts and Scrapjets required for the player count. Fixed Asteroids and starting Scrap remain.

The Placement Zone is D4 through H8.
Straggler-created Scrap and Asteroids must enter that zone and pass the placement rules.

N / E / S / W - Drone starting cell.

X - fixed Asteroid.

S - starting Scrap.

P - Scrapjet starting cell.

Home Zones extend beyond the marked start cells as listed on the Setup page. Mark their borders when drawing the map by hand.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1											
2						N					
3											
4				X		S		X			
5					S		S				
6		W		S		X		S		E	
7					S		S				
8				X		S		X			
9											
10						S					
11											

N/E/S/W start | X asteroid | S scrap | P Scrapjet

MATCH SEQUENCE

START OF TURN

1. Advance the Turn marker after the first Turn.
2. Respawn eligible destroyed Drones.
3. Each Drone and Scrapjet returns its own eligible Spent and Strained **Normal Dice** and Spent **Power Dice** to Ready. Damage remains on that Agent.
4. Spawn a replacement Scrapjet only while an unused offstage Scrapjet allotment remains and the active module permits it. Activate that allotment as the new Agent Pool; never borrow from an active Agent.
5. Resolve start-of-Turn status Triggers. For each ship, resolve Gravity-bound before Drift, then any other simultaneous Triggers chosen by its controller.
6. Use South as the dominant Axis for initiative.

Every Drone Scout and Scrapjet has S 3. Tied Drone players act clockwise from the Lead marker. Players win mixed ties against Scrapjets, so tied Scrapjets act after players. The 4Caster orders tied Scrapjets.

ROUND

1. Return every Spent **Combo Die** to Ready.
2. Every active Drone and Scrapjet receives one action opportunity and 2 AP.
3. Resolve reactions, Stragglers, removal, and banking as they occur.
4. At Round end, resolve statuses and discard held 1 and 2 Stragglers.
5. After Round 1, begin Round 2 unless an ending condition occurred. After Round 2, move every remaining Ready **Normal Die** to Spent, pass the Lead marker one player clockwise, and end the Turn.

TURN END

Each Turn ends after Round 2, even if every pool emptied earlier. When Turn 4 ends, score.

GRID BASICS AND HOME ZONES

Movement is orthogonal. Diagonal cells are adjacent only for EXPLOSION! and effects that say so. Facing is ignored. A ship may act along any cardinal direction.

A ship cannot voluntarily enter or pass through an Asteroid, another ship, a rival Home Zone, or another ship's towed Scrap.

Loose Scrap does not block movement or line of sight. A ship may share a cell with loose Scrap. Asteroids and ships block line of sight beyond their cells. Scrap and Home Zone borders do not.

Loose Scrap is not a Simple Object for the generic Interact rule. Only a successful TRACTOR HAUL attaches it; entering Home while towing banks it automatically.

HOME ZONE SAFETY

Only a Home Zone's owner may enter it. Scrapjets cannot enter one.

A Drone inside its Home Zone cannot target or be targeted by anything outside it. It cannot help, interfere, lock, or attack across the border. It may leave normally.

This is a safe dock, not a firing bunker.

When a towing Drone enters its own Home Zone, immediately remove the towed Scrap from the grid and add 1 to that player's banked score.

RANGE

PEW and SCRAP RAKE have range 4. TARGET LOCK has range 6. A target must share a row or column with no ship or Asteroid between.

MOVEMENT, COLLISIONS, AND TOWING

MOVE

Spend 1 AP to move up to S spaces, which is 3 for every default ship. A towing Drone moves at most 2 spaces per Move. Spend both AP to Move twice, but then no AP remains to Act.

COLLISIONS

Voluntary movement stops before an illegal cell.

If Drift or Gravity forces a ship into an Asteroid, off the board, or into a rival Home Zone, it stays in place and takes 1 S Damage. If forced into another ship, neither moves and both take 1 Strain. If forced into towed Scrap, the forced ship stays in place, the tow breaks, and the Scrap becomes loose in its cell. These are final scenario values; do not add Scale again.

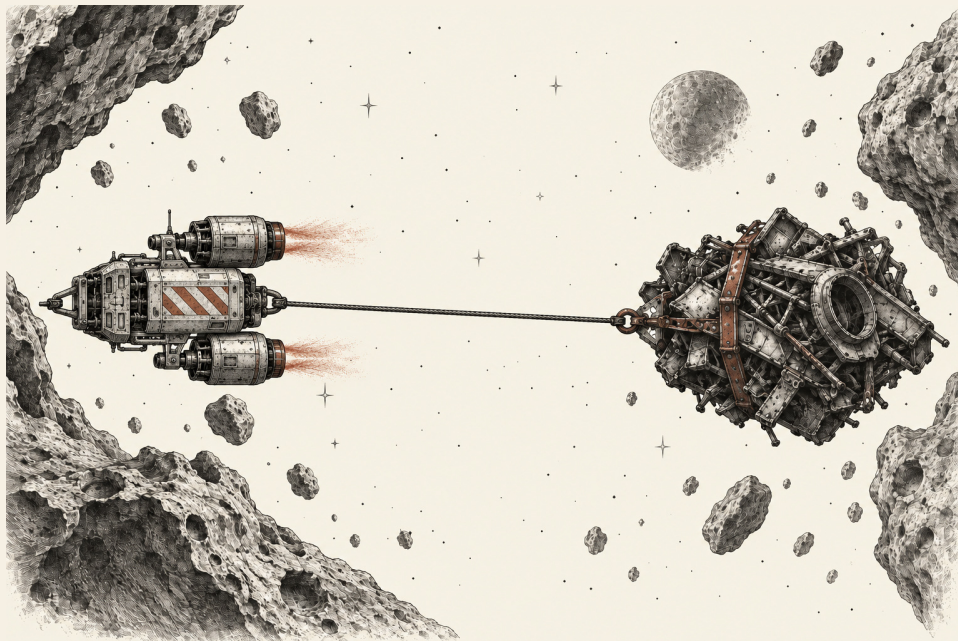
Asteroids are Scale 2 and immune to ordinary Scale 1 Drone Damage.

TOWING

A Drone tows at most one Scrap. When first attached, the token remains in its current cell. On the Drone's first and every later movement space, move the Scrap into the cell the Drone just vacated.

Another ship cannot enter a cell occupied by towed Scrap. Any Damage inflicted on the towing Drone breaks the tow after the action resolves. The Scrap remains where it is. Destruction also breaks the tow; Strain does not.

Scrapjets do not tow Scrap in the default 4Cast.



SCENE STRAGGLERS

Use ordinary 1 and 2 Straggler rules.

For every action or reaction roll in this 4Cast:

STRAGGLER 3 - the roller places one Asteroid.

STRAGGLER 4 - the roller places one loose Scrap.

Resolve every 3 before every 4 from the same roll. The 4Caster places tokens caused by Scrapjet rolls.

LEGAL PLACEMENT

A new token must occupy an empty cell from D4 through H8. It cannot contain a ship, Scrap, Asteroid, towed Scrap, or Gravity Well. It may be adjacent to a ship.

An Asteroid placement must leave every active Drone an orthogonal path through non-Asteroid cells to its own Home Zone. Ignore ships and Scrap for this check. A waiting-to-respawn Drone must retain a path from its start cell into the Placement Zone.

If no legal cell or token remains, ignore that placement. Banked Scrap stays on the score card and never returns to the placement supply.

Placement is immediate. A later reaction in the same exchange uses the changed map.



SALVAGE DRONES

Every player uses the same Drone Scout chassis for the first test.

Scale 1

N 3 | S 3 | E 2 | W 2 | POOL 10

NE 2 | SE 2 | SW 2 | NW 2

COMBO 1 | POWER 1 | ARMOR N 1 | DAMAGE 0

LIVES 3 | FRAME 5

North is weapons and direct force. South is engines and evasion. East is sensors and targeting. West is shields and countermeasures.

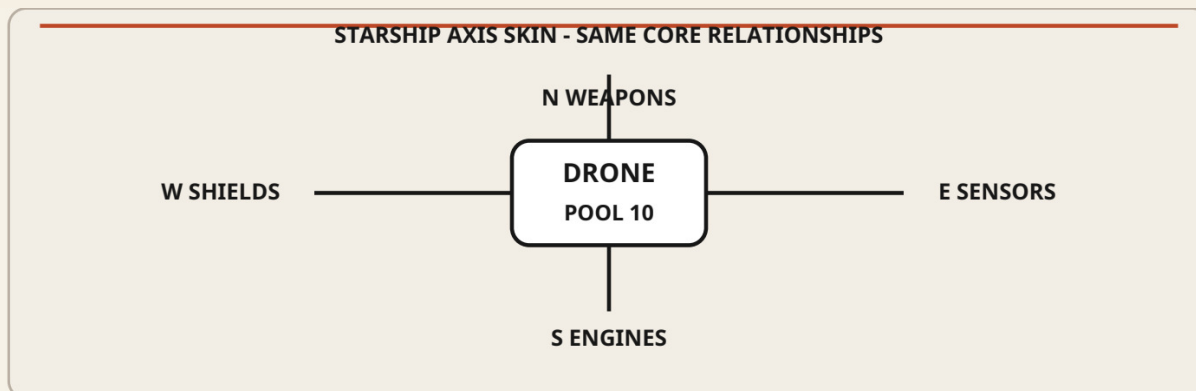
Armor N 1 represents shielding against incoming North weapon actions. FRAME 5 is a scenario removal threshold: at five **Damage Dice**, destroy the Drone even though its full Pool is ten.

This is an arcade vehicle rule, not a new universal death threshold.

ACTIONS

Spend 1 AP to Act. A Drone may make one substantial action during its opportunity: PEW, TRACTOR HAUL, TARGET LOCK, EXPLOSION!, or another plausible action using the core rules.

It may also Move or Interact with its other AP.



DRONE SYSTEMS

PEW [SKILL]

Category: Drone Gunnery. **Training:** mounted weapons, firing lines, and weapon assessment.

Axis: N. Range 4 with orthogonal line of sight.

Pattern: Any pair. TRIGGER.

Timing: On success.

Effect: +1 Damage. If the target tows Scrap and takes any Damage, its tow breaks after resolution.

TRACTOR HAUL [SKILL]

Category: Drone Handling. **Training:** tractor systems, towing, salvage approach, and cargo control.

Axis: S. **Target:** Loose Scrap in the Drone's cell or one orthogonally adjacent cell.

Pattern: Any single surviving Normal or Power result. SPEND.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Attach the Scrap. It begins following when the Drone next moves.

Unsecured Scrap does not react. The action happens at minimal effect with 0 Clusters only if its Pattern activated; otherwise the tractor fails to acquire a hold.

TARGET LOCK [SKILL]

Category: Drone Sensors. **Training:** target acquisition, tracking, and sensor assessment.

Axis: E. Range 6 with orthogonal line of sight.

Pattern: Any pair. TRIGGER.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Apply Locked by You (1) to the target.

LOCKED BY YOU (1)

Apply: Set to 1; the same Drone's repeated locks do not stack.

Trigger: After reactions on the locking Drone's next PEW against this target, add one Help Cluster to the PEW side.

Fade: Remove after it triggers, when either ship is destroyed, or at the end of the next shared Turn.

DRONE POWERS AND LIVES

SHIELD PULSE [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. **REACTION:** direct defense only.

Axis: W direct defense against a harmful N action or EXPLOSION!

Pattern: P1 + 1; P2 + 2; P3 + 3; or P4 + 4. SPEND.

Timing: Regardless of whether the reaction wins.

Effect: Prevent 1 Damage from the original effect after all other resolution. This Power permits W to replace the usual S defense.

EXPLOSION! [POWER]

Mode: ACTIVE. ACTION ONLY.

Axis: N. **Pattern:** P x1. SPEND.

Timing: REGARDLESS after Pattern payment.

Spend 1 AP to Act, commit at least one Ready **Normal Die** through N, and add the Drone's Ready **Power Die**. Roll and apply the Drone's N Damage normally; there is no target Armor on this activation roll. P x1 requires one surviving **Power Die** of any face, which is Spent. Divide surviving **Normal Dice** and resolve their Stragglers normally. If Damage cancellation removes the Power result, EXPLOSION! does not activate.

When it activates, every other ship in the eight surrounding cells makes an unopposed S direct defense. A target may declare SHIELD PULSE and use W instead. Each target must commit at least one Ready **Normal Die** or retain 0 Clusters; Armor alone cannot create this defense.

0 retained Clusters - take 2 N Damage.

1 retained Cluster - take 1 N Damage.

2+ retained Clusters - take none.

Armor does not apply to the target reactions. No third party helps or interferes. Destroy the exploding Drone after all targets resolve. The activation roll and target reactions may create Stragglers.

DESTRUCTION AND RESPAWN

At FRAME 5 or after EXPLOSION!, remove the Drone and one Life. Drop towed Scrap. It takes no more actions or reactions that Turn.

With at least one Life left, respawn at next Turn start. Clear Damage and statuses; return all ten **Normal Dice** Ready and refresh Power. Place at the start cell or nearest empty cell in its Home Zone. At 0 Lives, the Drone is eliminated but keeps banked Scrap.

PIRATE SCRAPJETS

Scrapjets are Scene Agents with individual Pools, Axes, Combo, and Armor. The Pirate Scene total is a finite budget divided into printed allotments, including offstage replacement allotments. No Scrapjet borrows another allotment.

SCRAPJET AGENT

N 3 | S 3 | E 2 | W 2

POOL 5 | COMBO 1 | POWER 0 | ARMOR N 1

EARLY BREAK: 3 accumulated Damage or 3 Strain in one exchange

MODE: ATTRITION

Default Pirate **Scene total:** five **Normal Dice** per Drone player. Divide it into five-die allotments before play; the last may be smaller. Each entering Scrapjet receives one unused allotment as its fixed Pool. Offstage allotments cannot act, react, refresh, or take harm. An allotment leaves the budget forever when its Scrapjet leaves play.

ALL PLAYER COUNTS, ONE ACTIVE SCRAPJET

Encounter N3, S3, E2, W2. Axis Total 10. Rating 12. Scene total 10, 15, or 20; active Pool 5; remaining allotments offstage.

SCRAP RAKE [SKILL]

Category: Pirate Gunnery. **Training:** firing lines, tow disruption, and mounted weapon use.

Axis: N. Range 4 with orthogonal line of sight.

Pattern: 1,4. TRIGGER.

Timing: On success.

Effect: +1 Damage. Any Damage breaks a target's tow.

Each Scrapjet's Combo refreshes each Round. Its Armor rolls against every applicable attack. Its own directional Damage rolls only when that Scrapjet acts or reacts.

SCRAPJET PRIORITY

On Round 1 of Turn 1, the Scrapjet holds fire. It may make one Move toward the first eligible target below but may not Act; it may still make a direct defense if attacked. After that, choose one eligible target for each Scrapjet action in this order:

1. Nearest visible Drone towing Scrap.
2. Nearest Drone towing Scrap.
3. Drone with the most banked Scrap.
4. Nearest active Drone.

Ignore docked Drones. Break every tie in the priority list by Lead order.

If a legal one-AP Move creates a SCRAP RAKE line without increasing distance, spend 1 AP to Move and 1 to Act. If a shot is already available, Act first; use the remaining AP for a legal Move without breaking a useful line. An Act commits at least one and up to 3 Ready **Normal Dice** from that Scrapjet's own Pool and may add its Ready **Combo Die**.

Respect engagement and Disengage costs. If the acting Scrapjet has no Ready **Normal Die**, target, shot, or complete path, spend legal AP to move as far as possible toward the next eligible target. If every Drone is docked, move toward the nearest loose Scrap and stop adjacent. If no legal move exists, pass.

When targeted, a Scrapjet uses its own opposite Axis for a direct defense, committing at least one and up to that rating from its own Pool. This does not spend its action opportunity, and it may directly react again to later attacks while its dice remain. The Pirate Scene makes no non-target support or interference reactions in the default 4Cast. Armor N 1 rolls automatically against every incoming N attack even when that Scrapjet has no Ready **Normal Die**.

The 4Caster chooses quickly between equal paths.

REMOVING AND REPLACING PIRATES

At Damage equal to its fixed Pool, a Scrapjet is defeated. Its printed early break also removes it at 3 accumulated Damage or 3 Strain in one exchange. In either case, use **ATTRITION**: remove its remaining dice and reserves, subtract its Axes, and remove its Combo and Armor from later Rating calculations. Peak Rating already faced does not decrease.

Take one Scrap from the placement supply and place it in the removed Scrapjet's cell if a token and legal cell remain.

At Turn start, if active Scrapjets are below the module's cap and an unused offstage allotment remains, spawn one replacement per open slot. Each replacement claims one unused allotment as its own fixed Pool. Use F6 if legal, then the nearest legal empty Placement Zone cell. A used or removed allotment never returns; replacements do not create dice beyond the printed Scene total.

NEUTRAL ACTIONS

Scrapjets never tow or bank Scrap. Rival Drones may support or interfere in a pirate exchange if line of sight and fiction permit, but doing so spends that Drone's unused action opportunity. Direct defense remains with the targeted Scrapjet and uses only its Pool.

Defeating every current Scrapjet does not end the match while an unused allotment can later enter.

ENDING, SCORING, AND XP

End after the current Round when any condition occurs:

- Turn 4 ends.

- Fewer than two Drones have any Lives remaining.

Only banked Scrap scores. Loose and towed Scrap score nothing. Eliminated Drones keep their banked score and may win.

Highest banked Scrap wins. Break a tie by most Lives, then fewest current **Damage Dice**. Remaining tied players roll four d4: most Clusters, then retained face value. Reroll an exact tie. Showdown dice create no Stragglers or abilities.

EXPERIENCE

The default Pirate Scene is Easy at each supported player count. Every Drone player who completes the 4Cast gains 1 XP. Rival Drones are not opposition for Encounter Rating and never award XP.

The winner gains this one-use Power for a later 4Cast.

AVAST THERE! [**POWER**]

Mode: ACTIVE. ACTION ONLY.

Axis: W. **Pattern:** P1 + 1; P2 + 2; P3 + 3; or P4 + 4. TRIGGER.

Timing: On success against a target able to understand.

Effect: The target chooses to surrender one unsecured carried item or take 2 Strain. Erase this Power after its effect resolves.

OPTIONAL: DRIFT AND PUSH

Add only one optional module after a default run.

DRIFTING (DIRECTION)

Apply: After a Drone uses both AP on Move, travels its full allowance in one straight direction, and does not collide, record that direction. Reapplying replaces it.

Trigger: At the start of the next shared Turn, move that ship one cell in the recorded direction before its first action opportunity. Cargo follows. Gravity triggers before Drift. Use forced collision rules.

Fade: Remove after the forced move or collision. Destruction removes it.

PUSH ASTEROIDS

Every ship gains this Skill. Asteroids remain immune to Damage.

PUSH SHOT [SKILL]

Category: Drone Gunnery. **Training:** controlled impacts and asteroid redirection.

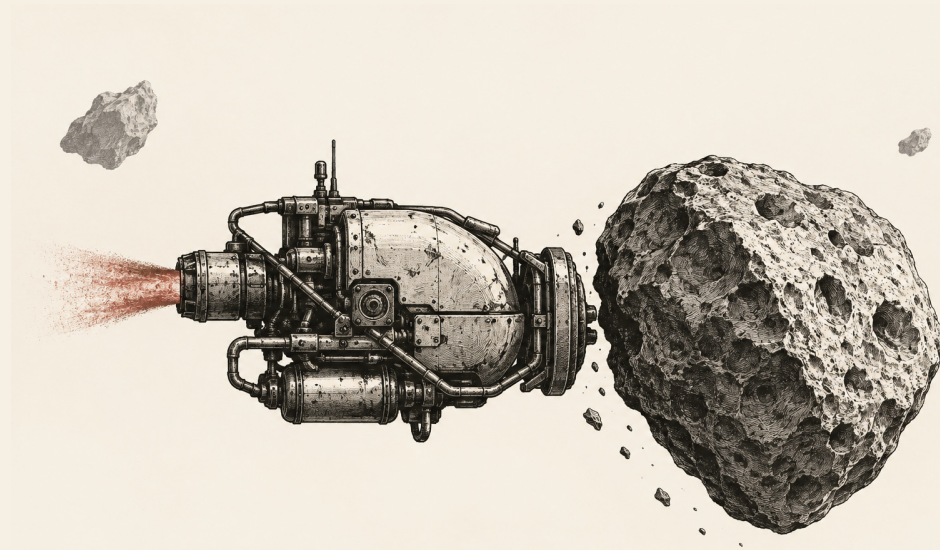
Axis: N. Range 3 with orthogonal line of sight.

Pattern: Any pair. SPEND.

Timing: On success.

Effect: Instead of harm, move the first Asteroid in the line one cell directly away. The destination must be an empty Placement Zone cell and pass the Home-path test. Otherwise it does not move.

Drift increases collision pressure. Push changes placement permanence. Record which one caused any rules pause.



OPTIONAL: MOMENTUM AND GRAVITY

MOMENTUM SWING (1)

Apply: When the Drone's own action destroys a rival or removes a Scrapjet, set Momentum Swing to 1. It does not stack.

Trigger: After that Drone's next Move before the end of the next shared Turn, move one additional legal orthogonal cell. Cargo follows.

Fade: Remove after the extra cell, if no legal cell exists, or at the end of the next shared Turn.

GRAVITY WELLS

Replace fixed Asteroids D4 and H8 with face-up Gravity Wells. They do not block movement or line of sight.

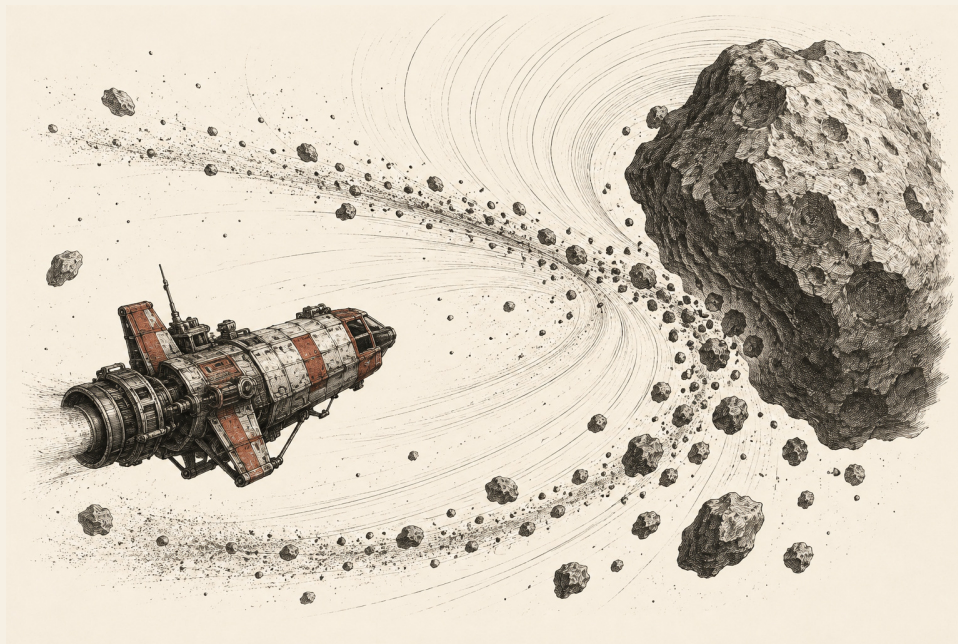
GRAVITY-BOUND

Apply: When a ship ends movement on a Gravity Well, mark it Gravity-bound.

Trigger: At the start of the next shared Turn, before Drift and before that ship's first action opportunity, find the nearest other ship or Asteroid by Manhattan distance. Pull the ship one orthogonal cell that reduces that distance. The 4Caster chooses equal targets and directions. Cargo follows. Use forced collision rules.

Fade: Remove after the pull or collision. Apply again after ending on a Well later.

Momentum is a reward loop. Gravity is a board-state loop. Test them separately first.



WORKED ROUND

Turn 2, Round 1 begins. North Drone is at F2, loose Scrap lies at F4, and the central Scrapjet is at F6.

NORTH DRONE

It spends 1 AP to Move two cells to F4. It spends 1 AP on TRACTOR HAUL and commits three S **Normal Dice**. The roll is 1,3,4.

The surviving 1 pays the Skill's single-result Pattern and is removed from the roll by SPEND. The haul succeeds and attaches the Scrap. The 3 and 4 remain Stragglers. North places one legal Asteroid, then one legal loose Scrap inside the Placement Zone.

SCRAPJET

The Scrapjet at F6 can see North at F4. It Acts with SCRAP RAKE, committing three Ready **Normal Dice** from its own Scrapjet Pool and its Ready **Combo Die**. It rolls Normal 2,2,4 and Combo 1. North's Armor N 1 rolls 1, so nothing cancels.

The Combo 1 and Normal 4 satisfy the 1,4 TRIGGER Pattern, so the 4 remains. Divide the two Normal 2s as one Cluster; the 4 becomes a Straggler and places Scrap. The Combo never enters the contest.

North directly reacts with S and rolls 3,3,1. The 3s make one Cluster. Its retained face value is 6 against the pirate's 4, so North's defense holds. The 1 remains held for North's next eligible roll. No Damage is dealt and the tow remains.

The map now contains every placed token before the next action begins.



SCALING THE DRIFT

Change one knob after a default test.

QUIET DRIFT - remove all Scrapjets and every unused Pirate allotment. No neutral XP; winner still gains Avast There!.

HOT DRIFT - set the active Scrapjet cap to two for two or three players and three for four players. Add Scrapjets at F5 and then F7 as needed; reverse that order when F7 is farther from the Lead player's Home. Use nearest legal cells if occupied. Set the Pirate Scene total to eight **Normal Dice** per player and divide it into five-die allotments, with a smaller final allotment if needed. Neutral opposition is Even and awards 2 XP.

SHORT TABLE - end after Turn 3.

LONG TABLE - end after Turn 5.

LOWER CONTACT - on Turn 1, PEW may target Scrapjets but not rival Drones.

FRAGILE FRAMES - Frame 4.

DURABLE FRAMES - Frame 6.

MORE SALVAGE - add Scrap at E4, G4, E8, and G8.

Do not change Frame and Lives together. Do not add optional board rules while also increasing Scrapjets.

The first useful signals are simple: every player should have a plausible route to bank at least one Scrap; starting dock should not decide the winner; pirates should create pressure without taking over the match; and the game should end near the intended time.

FIRST-PLAYTEST CHECKLIST

Players: _____ Total minutes: _____ Ending condition: _____

Ready **Normal Dice** moved to Spent after Turns 1 / 2 / 3 / 4: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

North final Scrap / Lives / **Damage**: _____ / _____ / _____

East final Scrap / Lives / **Damage**: _____ / _____ / _____

South final Scrap / Lives / **Damage**: _____ / _____ / _____

West final Scrap / Lives / **Damage**: _____ / _____ / _____

PEW attempts / hits: _____ / _____

Average Damage per hit: _____

Drone destructions / respawns: _____ / _____

Scrapjet actions / hits / removals: _____ / _____ / _____

Asteroids placed: _____ Scrap placed: _____

Rejected placements: _____ Legality-check pauses: _____

Tow breaks before banking: _____

Most reread rule: _____

Dock or Lead advantage observed: _____

Optional module used: _____

Single next change: _____

Do not call the 4Cast balanced from one table. Look for repeated outcomes across comparable runs.

GET THAT SCRAP REFERENCE

DRONE OPPORTUNITY

2 AP: Move up to S for 1; Act for 1; Move twice for 2. Towing Move maximum 2. Orthogonal only.

ABILITIES

PEW - N, range 4, Any pair TRIGGER, on success +1 Damage.

TRACTOR - S, same-cell or adjacent Scrap, any surviving die SPEND, on success attach.

LOCK - E, range 6, Any pair TRIGGER, Help next PEW.

SHIELD - W direct-reaction Active Power, typed same-face P pair SPEND, prevent 1 Damage.

EXPLOSION - N Active Power, commit Normal plus P x1 SPEND; surrounding ships make S direct defenses; then self-destruct.

STRAGGLERS

1 help self. 2 help another. 3 place Asteroid. 4 place Scrap. Place only in empty cells D4-H8; adjacency to ships is allowed. Asteroids must preserve every Drone's Home path.

TOWING AND BANKING

One Scrap. Token trails one cell. Any Damage breaks tow. Enter own Home Zone to bank 1 point.

PIRATES

Turn 1 Round 1: hold fire and Move once toward the first target. Then target visible hauler, any hauler, most banked Scrap, nearest active Drone; Lead order breaks ties. Move and fire if legal. Commit up to 3 Ready dice from the acting Scrapjet Pool plus its Ready Combo. Remove at Pool defeat or its printed early break. At Turn start, replace up to the active cap only while an unused offstage allotment remains.

END

Two Rounds per Turn. End after Round 2 of Turn 4, or after the current Round when fewer than two Drones retain Lives. Highest banked Scrap wins.

PRINTABLE TOKENS

Cut the circles or use them as a key for coins and spare dice.

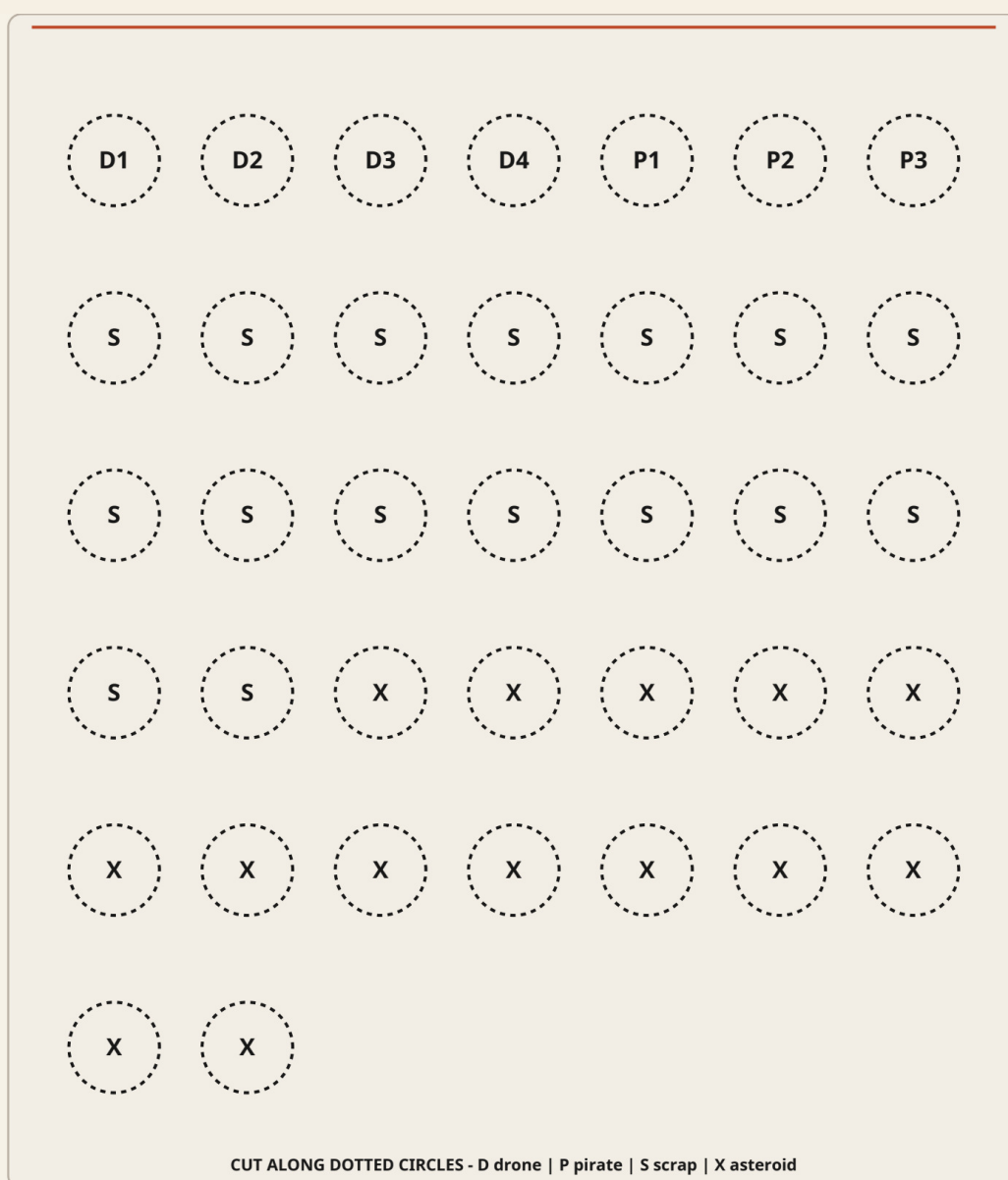
D1-D4 - player Drones.

P1-P3 - Pirate Scrapjets.

S - loose or towed Scrap.

X - placed Asteroids.

The fixed Asteroids are already printed on the Drift map. The sheet provides fourteen additional Asteroids and sixteen Scrap tokens, including the eight starting Scrap.



OMEN READING: FRAMING THE CORE ROLL

A PLAY AND NARRATION PROCEDURE, NOT A NEW RULE

The standard 4d4 roll already has a divinatory rhythm: declare what you seek, choose the Axis energy brought to it, name at most one active ability, cast the dice, and discover whether that Pattern survives and what the remaining dice make possible. Calling this rhythm **Omen Reading** changes no timing, costs, Pattern rules, reaction rules, or resolution mechanics.

DECLARE, CAST, AND READ

1. Frame the attempt. State the broad action and stakes: what are you trying to change, prevent, learn, reach, or survive? Name the acting character or Scene Agent and choose the Axis. The fiction and Axis establish which targets, abilities, **Damage Dice**, and defenses can be legal.

2. Declare at most one active ability. If attempting an active Skill ability or Power, name it before rolling as required by the core procedure. Its Axis, Pattern, target, range, equipment, Status, timing, and every other printed requirement bind the attempt. Passive effects apply normally.

3. Commit and cast. Commit Ready **Normal Dice** up to the chosen Axis cap, plus any allowed Power or **Combo Dice**. Roll applicable **Damage Dice**. All committed dice follow their normal spent or used cadence.

4. Cancel self-Damage and read. Apply the acting side's Damage cancellation first. Leave the surviving faces public. If the declared Pattern survives, it may be paid and activated. If it does not, the roll still describes the ordinary action, opening, partial result, or complication created within the declared intent and Axis.

5. Describe the manifestation. Narrate how that Axis energy becomes the declared action. Clusters show control and effectiveness; Stragglers suggest help, openings, motion, costs, and complications. The roll reveals the form of the attempt, not a replacement intent.

6. Read the response. The defender chooses a legal defense Axis, declares at most one reaction-legal active ability before its roll, commits and rolls, applies Armor, and reads how that defense manifests.

7. Resolve normally. Pay declared Patterns, form remaining Clusters and Stragglers, compare results, and apply the outcome. Omen Reading grants no extra permission to reroll, conceal, rearrange, refund, or replace dice.

STANDARD OMEN EXAMPLE

Iria declares that she is hacking a sealed door to open the crew's escape route, chooses **NE**, and names a hacking ability with a **1** Pattern before rolling. She casts **1,1,1**. If the ability's requirements remain legal, she spends one **1** to activate it. The remaining **1,1** form one Cluster with a tie value of **2**. The ability describes the special form of the hack; the Cluster shows how strongly Iria controls the action. If the needed face had not survived, the door hack would still resolve as an ordinary NE action.

For a Scene, the 4Caster follows the same **procedure**: choose the acting Agent, broad action, Axis, and any one active ability before rolling. Public results make reactions understandable and turn each roll into a shared reading.

OPTIONAL VARIANT: OPEN OMEN

Open Omen moves the action declaration until after the acting roll. Before rolling, name only the acting character or Scene Agent and choose the cardinal or composite **Axis energy** being brought into the moment. Do **not** declare a task, target, ordinary action, active Skill ability, or Power. Commit **Normal Dice** up to that Axis cap, add any Ready **Power Dice**, and cast. Open Omen also permits Ready **Combo Dice** up to **COMBO** to be committed before an ability is chosen; they may support only the one active ability chosen from this omen and remain spent if none is chosen. Roll the applicable directional **Damage Dice** and apply self-Damage cancellation.

READ WHAT BECAME POSSIBLE

1. Resolve roll-driven passives. Apply every Passive whose printed condition is now true. If several share a Timing, the roller orders them normally. Recheck the roll, resources, Statuses, and legal options after each Passive. Each Passive triggers at most once from this omen unless its text says otherwise.

2. Declare what happens. Using the final visible faces and post-Passive state, choose the exact ordinary action, target, and at most one active Skill ability or Power. A protected single-face or Straggler profile is eligible here only if it is the ONE OPEN PROFILE or belongs to the recorded OMEN ARRAY. An ordinary [OPEN] move is selected during this declaration step; its Pattern is still checked and paid at the usual after-Armor checkpoint unless its Timing says otherwise. The character may perform the ordinary action and activate that one ability while every legal Passive continues to apply. All printed Axis, Pattern, range, equipment, Status, target, cost, and timing requirements must now be true.

3. Invite the response. Once the declaration is spoken, it is fixed. The target chooses a legal defense Axis and reacts. If Open Omen applies to reactions, the defender likewise chooses only the defense Axis before rolling, resolves roll-driven Passives, and then declares the exact defensive method and at most one reaction-legal active ability.

4. Resolve normally. Apply Armor cancellation, pay the chosen Pattern, divide surviving contest dice, compare the sides, and resolve the declared fiction. Open Omen changes declaration timing; it does not grant another action or remove the one-active-ability limit.

EXAMPLE: THE ENERGY BECOMES A HACK

Iria says only, "I bring **NE**," and casts **1,1,1**. She has not declared the door, a hack, or an ability. Suppose a

roll-driven Passive on her sheet now grants **ACCESS**; that new Status makes a **1**-cost hacking ability legal. Iria reads the omen and declares that she hacks the sealed door with that ability. It **SPENDS** one **1**. The remaining **1,1** form one Cluster with tie value **2**. Only now does she ask the security Agent, "What is your reaction?" With a different Passive, Pattern, position, or target, the same NE omen could have become a different legal action.

OPEN OMEN GUARDRAILS

- Keep every omen public. The opposition responds with full knowledge of what the acting roll can support.
- Choices that alter the Axis, cap, dice committed, bindings, or directional Damage remain pre-roll choices. A Passive applies before the roll only when its printed Timing says so.
- The final action must plausibly express the chosen Axis. The Axis is the commitment; the action is the reading.
- If the chosen action is Untrained, apply its half-cap after declaration. Excess committed **Normal Dice** are spent and ignored.
- Committed Normal, Power, and **Combo Dice** remain spent even when the omen offers nothing useful, the actor takes an ordinary action, or the actor passes.
- A Scene names the acting Agent and Axis before rolling. That Agent rolls only its own committed dice; another Agent's Pool is never available after the result.
- Once the acting declaration is spoken, nothing may be swapped after the response begins.
- Use Open Omen symmetrically unless the campaign deliberately gives one side prophetic play.

Open Omen is substantially stronger and stranger than the core procedure. It lets the roll and its Passive chain determine what action enters the fiction, rewards broad ability libraries and Power- or Combo-heavy builds, and may slow play while options are scanned. A protected single-face or current-roll Straggler profile not in ONE OPEN PROFILE or the recorded OMEN ARRAY cannot be chosen on an Open Omen roll; use ordinary play or Omen Reading and declare it before rolling instead. All-four-face arrays, any-face profiles, and any-Straggler profiles are prohibited. A replacement Power exception moves its **Power Die** to **RESERVED** before the roll. Treat it as experimental and record both what the omen made possible and how long the reading took.

BLANK 4D4 CHARACTER SHEET

Print or copy this page. Record permanent ratings in ink and Ready / Spent resources in pencil, tokens, or spare dice. Composite ratings equal their two cardinal Axes; the Pool is the sum of N, E, S, and W before persistent Damage or Strain changes it.

NAME _____		CONCEPT / PRONOUNS _____	
4CAST / SETTING _____		PLAYER _____	
N 	E 	S 	W
COMPOSITES		NE __ SE __ SW __ NW __	
SPECIAL DICE		POOL _____	
		COMBO _____	POWER _____
		DAMAGE _____	ARMOR _____
DIRECTION / BINDINGS / SOURCE _____			
SKILLS category / specialty / Axis / tier / moves			
POWERS mode / Axis / Pattern / timing / effect			
STATUSES, ITEMS, ARMOR, AND NOTES pips / direction / fade / charges			
Ready / Spent resources can be marked directly in the boxes above.			

THE REST OF THE LINE

This Expanded Rules playtest has one job: make the useful "more" playable without burying the core.

Use **4d4 Skills & Powers 0.5** for Skill Categories, typed Active Powers, Pattern and construction tools, status construction, prebuilt libraries, and ability-bearing items. Its risk bands are explicit playtest estimates and should change only after comparable table evidence.

Use **The 4Caster's Toolbox** for reusable scenarios, Agents, organizations, lairs, items, subcharts, and prepared 3/4 effects. Settings and 4Casts can supply their own Axis skins, curated abilities, gear, NPCs, maps, and adventures while preserving the shared core.

CREDITS

Written and designed by Aron Pence.

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roll4d4.com

For my parents, and for the nerds and gamers I grew up with.

This edition is free to share in its published form. Keep version numbers attached so playtest reports identify the rules that were used.

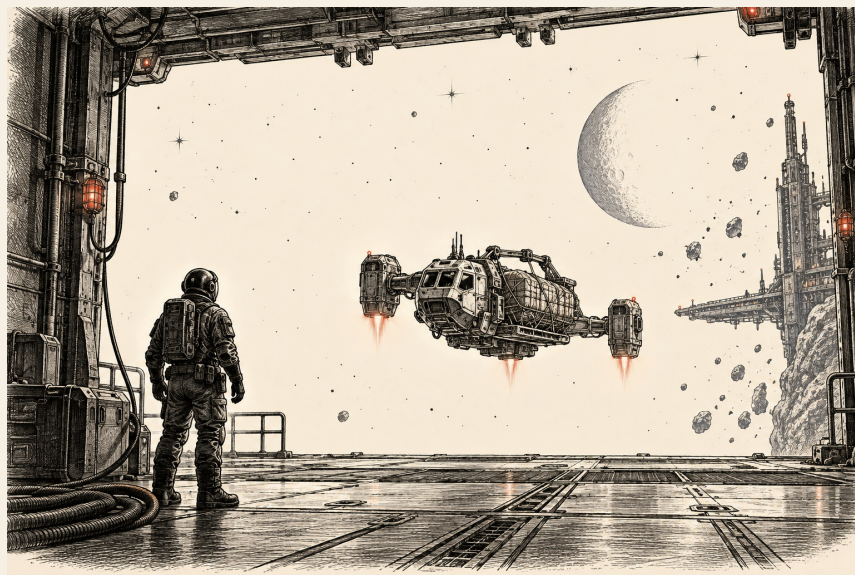


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