

**DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS  
SIXTH ANNUAL OPEN TOURNAMENT**

**RETURN TO THE STARLESS SEA**

**Gen Con 2022**



**PLAYER PACK**



## INTRODUCTION

Returning for 2022: The DCC team tournament! For many years our tournaments were the stuff of legends, and now they're back under DCC RPG rules! *Return to the Starless Sea* is the fourth official Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Open Tournament, now being run for the first time in person at Gen Con 2022.

*The earth shudders as a vortex of purple clouds swirls above the screaming keep. Short-lived towers of stone burst toward the sky and then melt back down while spectral faces howl in the lightning. You and a hundred peasant allies prepare to storm the nightmarish castle. Centuries ago, your gongfarmer ancestors stormed this castle, and now you Return to the Starless Sea!*

*Return to the Starless Sea* is a competitive, scored, two-round tournament. Teams of five players throw their 0-level parties against the horrors of the keep, and the highest-scoring teams advance to round 2. The winning team claims a plaque of immortality on the Gong of Doom and bragging rights for the rest of their natural and unnatural born lives!

Tournament dungeon crawls are different from normal DCC RPG modules in that they follow the tournament play structure. Rounds are timed, teams are awarded points based on their accomplishments in the adventure, and top-scoring teams advance to the next round. This player pack will familiarize you with the basic concepts of tournament play.

Don't worry if you don't have a team; we'll assign you one, and no prior experience with DCC RPG is required! Get your dice ready and start making sacrifices to the Luck Gods. You're going to need all the help you can get!

### CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS YEAR'S TOURNAMENTS

A number of changes from previous tournaments have been made to accommodate this year's setting, which are highlighted below. See specific sections detailed later in the Player Pack for more information on the changes:

- Two rounds instead of three (p. 3).
- Five flights in Round 1 (p. 3).
- The top team from each flight advance to finals (p. 3).
- No pre-gens included in the Player Pack; players will be given character sheets at the start of their Round 1 game (p. 4).

## SCHEDULE

This year's elimination-style tournament will take place over two rounds with the Round 1 games scheduled for Thursday and Friday, and the finals on Saturday afternoon. This year the teams will be composed of five players, and Round 1 will feature up to 78 games over 5 flights! As a change from previous years, only the **top scoring team from each first round flight** will advance to the final round held on Saturday. In the case where the first place team cannot make the finals, or does not have the required minimum number of players, the next highest scoring team will advance instead. All games will take place in person on the floor of the Lucas Oil Stadium at Gen Con 2022.

The tournament will officially kick off the first day of the convention on Thursday at 9:00 AM Eastern with the start of the first round one games. See the schedule below for times of all the flights and links to the Gen Con registration for the events.

Finally, the closing ceremonies will be held on Sunday at 2:00 PM Eastern in the Lucas Oil Stadium - where the winners of the tournament will be announced!

	Time EST	Where	Advancing Teams
<b>Thursday, Aug 4<sup>th</sup></b>			
<a href="#">Round 1, Flight 1</a>	9 AM - 1 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	1 (+1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate)
<a href="#">Round 1, Flight 2</a>	2 - 6 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	1 (+1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate)
<b>Friday, Aug 5<sup>th</sup></b>			
<a href="#">Round 1, Flight 3</a>	9 AM - 1 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	1 (+1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate)
<a href="#">Round 1, Flight 4</a>	2 - 6 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	1 (+1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate)
<a href="#">Round 1, Flight 5</a>	7 - 11 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	1 (+1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate)
<b>Saturday, Aug 6<sup>th</sup></b>			
Finals	2 - 6 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	-
<b>Sunday, Aug 7<sup>th</sup></b>			
Closing Ceremonies	2 PM	Lucas Oil Stadium	Tournament Winners Announced!

## PLAYER GUIDELINES

**Scoring system:** This is a points-based tournament. Advancement from one round to the next is determined by the teams that have the most points, and they do not carry over from round to round. Additionally, a team that quits early will not advance regardless of points scored.

**Earning points:** In the course of your adventure, your team will earn points by exploring locations and progressing through the levels of the tournament. The scoring system awards efficiency in solving the encounters within the adventure. You will lose points for unleashing traps or dangers that could have been avoided, and for PC deaths.

**If a team advances between rounds:** All their slain PCs are miraculously recovered and all PCs begin the next round at full hit points. Disapproval resets between rounds; however, any disapproval effects are retained for the duration of the tournament. However, used equipment, burned stats, and lost spells are not regained between rounds. **To reiterate, burned stats are not recovered between rounds.**

**Rolling for others:** Players are not allowed to roll dice for other players. If a player is absent and they are required to make a roll, the party can opt to wait (wasting time) or skip, but no "team rolling."

**Time is of the essence:** The adventure is a dangerous, challenging place. Each room is a mystery unto itself. Most tournament groups will not complete all of level one before the four-hour time limit is up. The same goes for later levels. Therefore, time is of the essence. The more you explore before the time limit expires, the more points you have the opportunity to score, and the greater your chances of advancement. Groups that advance to the next round automatically start at the beginning of the next level of the adventure.

**Starting gong:** All games will start after a 10-minute grace period. The tournament gong will be used to keep official time. Rounds start and end when the tournament gong goes off.

**Starting without a player:** After the 10-minute grace period, teams may opt to continue waiting or to begin their session. If they wish to continue waiting, this time counts toward the four-hour limit. Otherwise, the absentee player is declared a no-show and that player's character is removed from play for that and subsequent rounds.

**Trading items:** Your team can trade items between themselves as they see fit, but only once the round (and clock) has started. Armor is fitted to the physique of a specific character, and cannot be traded.

**Don't quit early:** At any point during the round, a player may quit, but it doesn't 'take effect' immediately. If you are in combat, one complete round of combat (from initiative X to initiative X) is fought. If you quit as a trap is sprung, any effects of that trap are fully resolved. If you quit during a save or check, you are considered to have failed it. Characters of players that quit early are treated as having been slain, with the associated point penalty. If an entire team quits early, the team is automatically eliminated and does not advance.

**Minimum team size:** Teams must have at least three players to play. Teams that qualify to advance must have a minimum of three players available to play in subsequent rounds. If an advancing team does not have the minimum number of players, the next qualifying alternate team will be selected to advance in their place.

**Words to the wise:**

- If you are on a team with people you met at the tournament, it is a very good idea to get their contact information in case you advance; this has cost teams in the past!

## RULES FOR FUNNEL SETTING

The 2022 tournament includes the following rules for the funnel setting:

**PCs and pre-generated characters:** Unlike in previous years, teams will not be issued characters in advance. Each player will be assigned four random 0-level characters at the start of the round.

**PC death:** For the funnel, there is no bleeding out or recovering the body. A PC whose hit points are reduced to zero or less is irrevocably dead.

**Replacing lost PCs:** During the funnel, there will be opportunities for teams to replace PCs in the event of multiple deaths or even a TPK. There are two ways for a party to get replacement PCs: **from the encounter** or **between encounters**. As replacement PCs may have an impact to scoring, the judge will note when a replacement PC incurs a scoring penalty or not.

- **Encounter-specific replacement PCs:** Some encounters have peasants that can be rescued as replacement PCs. They are not always obvious; some are hidden and some require going off the beaten path. However, all have some risk associated with gaining them; the risk varies by encounter, but can be quite high. The number of PCs lost in the rescue could equal, or exceed, the number rescued. If a party recovers an encounter-specific PC by overcoming the risks, **they may have that PC with no scoring penalty** even if it exceeds a party size of 20, which means a player may have more than four PCs if the extras are recovered in this way.
- **Replacement PCs from the peasant horde:** Between encounters, players can opt to refill their ranks from the invading peasants streaming through the halls and grounds. A player may only choose this option if they have less than four PCs; once they have four, this option is not available. **Replenishing PCs between encounters incurs a scoring penalty.** Since there is a scoring penalty for replacing PCs in between encounters, players may decline the opportunity to refill their ranks to four PCs. This is fine, albeit risky, and might be a good strategy in some cases.
- **TPKs and replacement PCs:** If the party TPKs in an encounter, the judge will distribute four new PCs to each player and start the party just beyond the encounter's exit. The encounter is considered finished and looting of dead PCs is prohibited. For scoring purposes, this counts as replenishing PCs between encounters as noted above. Teams should note that there is a "TPK" scoring penalty in addition to that applied to refilling their ranks.
- **Running out of PCs:** Finally, every table has a finite number of 0-level character sheets. An especially unlucky group of players could use up all of them. In this case, the party may no longer replace PCs.

**Initiative per player (cohort):** To accelerate play in the tournament, initiative is determined via one roll per player's cohort rather than once per PC. The player uses the largest Agility modifier of their PCs. For the funnel, rolling d16 initiative for a PC with a 2h-weapon is ignored.

## THE TOURNAMENT IN DCC RPG

**Gen Con 2022** is the sixth time that the DCC open tournament format is being run using DCC RPG rules. The judges have discussed the rules and module extensively prior to “going live” at the convention. In the interests of consistency and fair play, we are disclosing in advance how certain game elements will be handled.

Fair warning - these rules will be run as stated here during the tournament, regardless of official errata, customer service opinion, or what’s in the rulebooks.

**Dice chain:** The tournament uses the official dice chain rules from the DCC RPG core book as follows. In addition, the maximum die for dice chain bonuses is a d30:

d3 – d4 – d5 – d6 – d7 – d8 – d10 – d12 – d14 – d16 – d20 – d24 – d30

**Judges do not reveal DC, AC, etc.:** For tournament play, judges are instructed not to reveal the numerical target for rolls. Players are welcome to deduce targets, but they cannot know ahead of time what they are. They need to spend resources such as Luck without knowing how much to spend. And, Luck must be spent before knowing whether the numerical target was achieved. Once a player spends Luck, they can no longer modify the roll.

**Monster damage, fumbles and crits:** To level the playing field, some rolls (like monster damage) have predetermined results. If a monster fumbles, it does not roll on the fumble table. Instead, it receives a -2 penalty to its next attack. Similarly, when a monster inflicts a crit, a standard crit result is applied rather than rolling on the specific monster crit table.

**Mighty deeds:** Players can describe the mighty deed however they like, but the judge will always apply within a specific set of parameters that best fits the description and the desired result. Results always last only until the end of the following round.

**Divine aid:** The forces of gods are either indifferent or are weakened over the vast distances of the multiverse where the PCs now find themselves. A cleric must succeed on a DC 15 spell check, and his disapproval range automatically increases by 10 whether the casting was successful or not.

The gods are unable to answer specific requests – and can only hope that their aid serves their devotees. So that teams compete fairly, the results of casting are static. Each time the cleric successfully invokes divine aid they must choose one of the following:

- The caster receives the blessing of their god. The cleric, or any one PC the caster designates, receives +3d to a single roll. The bonus may be held until needed, but does not carry over between rounds;
- OR the caster, or a PC they designate, may re-attempt a roll that failed the previous round (for instance, a failed recover the body or spell check).

**Disapproval:** Disapproval results are standardized to reduce the variation between teams.

**Sacrifices:** Due to the limited divine influence, a cleric may not make sacrifices to their deity in order to regain favor.

**Lay on hands:** If a cleric’s lay on hands effect has more HD than the PC, all HD are rolled with the best result(s) being taken.



**Invoke patron:** Your experience tells you that patrons are loathe to directly intervene in the affairs of men under such conditions that are present in the tournament, limiting what aid they will provide. On successful casting:

- The caster receives +2d to a single roll of their choice. This cannot be given to another PC.
- OR the caster regains one lost spell.

**Manifestations:** Manifestations are not used for wizards or elves.

**Mercurial magic:** Mercurial magic effects are not used for wizards or elves.

**Spell checks:** Even if not normally allowed, wizards and elves may choose lesser manifestations of a spell by burning a point of Luck.

**Corruptions:** Are used but have no mechanical benefits or penalties.

**Healing and recuperation:** The frantic push of the peasant horde into the keep prevents the party's ability to rest and recuperate. You will not be able to sleep or recuperate in the tournament or during rounds to heal or regain spells.

**Death and dying:** A bleeding-out character can be saved from death by either applying a magical means or by staunching their wounds. Both these life-saving methods require an action by an ally working to save the dying character. If a magical means is applied, the PC regains the normal number of hit points (starting from zero) and is pulled back from the precipice of death. They awaken and may act normally on the following round.

A bleeding-out character saved by another staunching their wounds remains incapacitated and is considered to be at zero hit points and unconscious. They cannot take any action and are at the mercy of their enemies. An unconscious PC with zero hit points is utterly defenseless and can be killed by an enemy administering a coup de grâce.

Remember that a PC who is saved from bleeding out loses 1 point of Stamina. A PC who has died is eligible for recovering the body, unless eaten, utterly disintegrated, or otherwise mentioned in the adventure text. The PC must succeed on a Luck check. If successful, they are restored to 1 hp, lose 1 point of Strength, Agility, or Stamina (determined randomly), **and** suffer a -4 penalty to all rolls for the rest of the tournament round.

**Ability loss:** Whenever a character suffers a loss to an ability score such as through a critical hit, being reduced to 0 hp, or spellburn, the new ability modifier applies to all future actions and saving throws that are based on that ability. However, character traits such as max hit points, known spells, and languages that were determined by the original ability modifier are not retroactively impacted. For tournament play, ability scores of 3 or less are considered to have a -3 ability modifier.

**A character who has an ability score reduced to 0, by whatever cause, is considered slain and irrecoverable.** This includes players who voluntarily expend ability points through spellburn or by burning Luck. In those cases, the character is considered to have expended themselves to perform whatever last action the ability loss was directed into (e.g., casting a spell or burning Luck to add to a die roll).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I didn't get in a game! Will you add more slots?**

Possibly. We are currently limiting the games to the round one tickets listed in the Gen Con event listing. However, check the event listing to see if additional tickets have been added or come by the Goodman Games HQ in the Lucas Oil Stadium to see if there are open spots.

In addition, individual teams may have no-shows in the first round. If teams are able to add players, we will fill them on a first-come, first served basis. Events will be updated as close to game time as possible to allow for late drops and registrations. Filling no-show seats is not permitted in the second round.

### **How do I advance in the tournament?**

Advancement is based on points scored in the round. The highest-ranked team from each flight will advance. Teams that quit early are eliminated regardless of points.

### **How do I score points?**

Points are scored for exploring the levels, solving puzzles, defeating monsters, avoiding obstacles, acquiring items, and learning the secrets of the adventure.

### **When is an area "explored"?**

Your judge determines this, but in general it means you interacted meaningfully with the encounter of that area. Poking in your nose and leaving does not count as having "explored" the area.

### **Do I need to preregister for later rounds?**

No. Round 2 appears in preregistration strictly for scheduling purposes. Advancing teams do not need to preregister.

### **Do I need a generic event ticket for later rounds?**

No. Advancement automatically qualifies the participants for the following round.

### **What if I have a time conflict with the Round 2 slot?**

This is a team tournament, and advancement occur as a team. The minimum number of players for a team to advance is three, otherwise that team forfeits its slot. The slot is filled by the next-highest scoring team from the same flight.

### **Can someone take my place on the team?**

No substitutions are allowed. Sorry.

### **What happens to my character(s), then?**

If you're absent, your character is considered lost in the adventure forever. You lose points for his or her death, and the character is out of the game.

### **What if I'm late?**

After the official round start time, the game either starts with whichever players are present or is forfeited and passed on to the alternate team if insufficient players are present.

### **How do I know if my team is an alternate team?**

We will announce alternate teams with the advancement information.

### **When do results get announced?**

Advancement will be posted at the Goodman Games convention HQ and website. As advancement is flight-specific, Round 1 advancement will be announced after each flight, usually within an hour of the end of the flight.

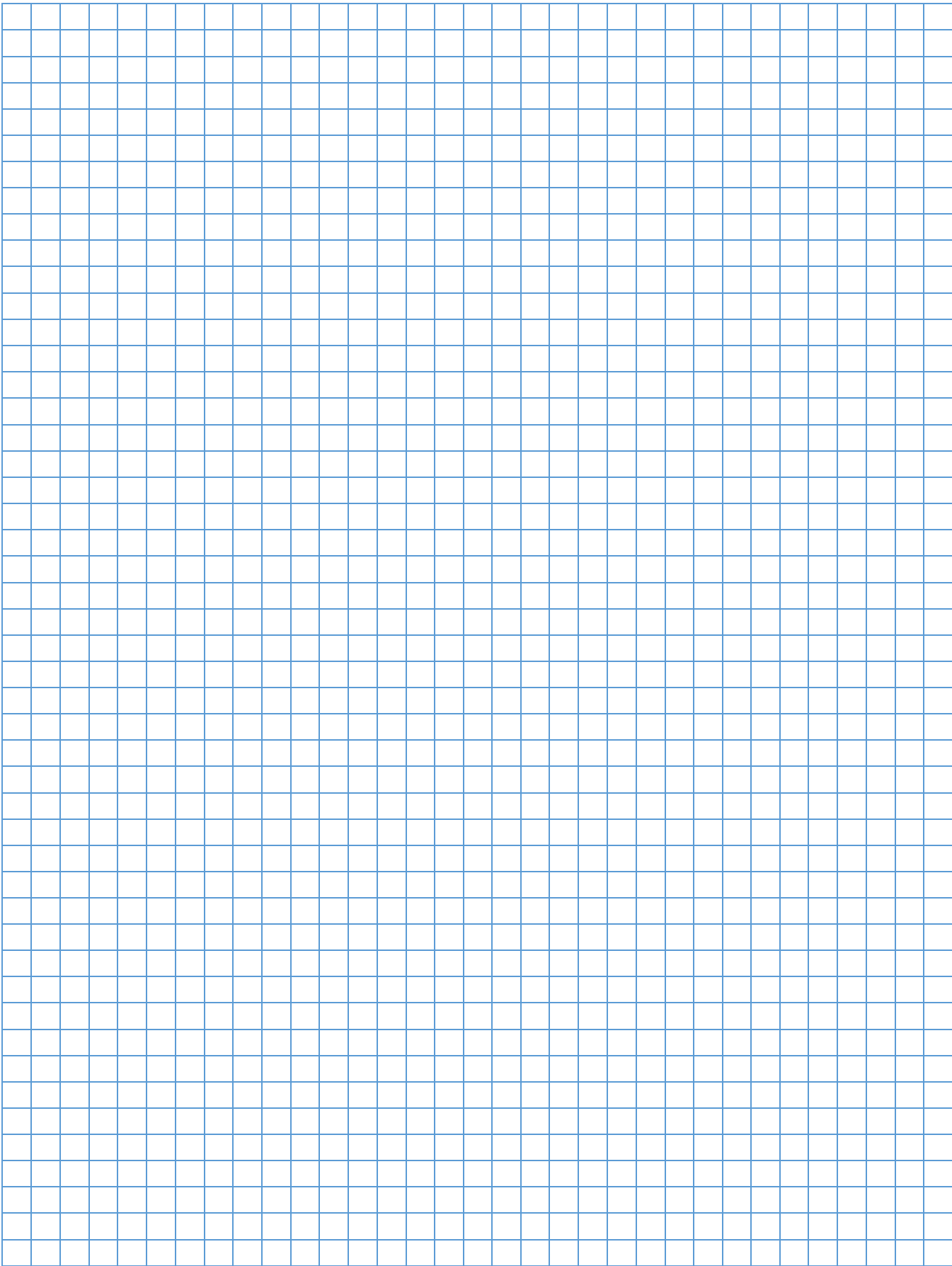
### **What if I spot an error on the character sheet?**

Any errors are unintentional, but the pre-generated characters are played as they are.

### **What if I disagree with my judge?**

Judges have the final say and the full support of the Tournament Organizers. If you disagree with your judge, accept his or her ruling. Afterward, feel free to bring it to the attention of the tournament organizer. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. The judge reserves the right to disqualify a team or individual that gets out of hand. That said, we've never had to disqualify a team, which says much about the caliber of sportsmanship the tournament teams display.





## NOTES