

THE IFGS GAME MASTER'S HANDBOOK

2nd Edition

Copyright 1987, 1999

International Fantasy Gaming Society, Inc.

1st edition

Written by: Neil Beaty
Editors: Becky Bullock
Margo Toth
Illustrations: Doug Shuler
Typesetting: Scott van Kirk

2nd edition

Editor: Karen Murphy
Layout: Karen Murphy
John Brewer

To Contact the IFGS:

IFGS
P.O. Box 3577
Boulder CO
80307-3577 USA
<http://www.ifgs.org>
e-mail: ifgs@aol.com

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. GENERAL POINTERS ON THE JOB	4
3. PEOPLE TO KNOW	6
4. BEFORE THE GAME	7
4.1 Pre-Game Preparation	7
4.2 The Night Before	11
4.3 The Game Day	13
5. THE GAME	15
5.1 Team Formation	15
5.2 The Art of Invisibility	16
5.3 Player Questions	17
5.4 PC/NPC Disputes	18
5.5 Traffic Problems	19
5.6 What to do with NPCs after the encounter	20
5.7 Death	20
5.8 Missile Weapons	21
5.9 Problem Spells and Abilities	22
a. General Problems	22
b. Class Specific Problems	24
5.10 Damage	30
5.11 Locks	31
5.12 Scorekeeping	32
5.13 Using the Radios	34
5.14 GD Syndrome	35
5.15 Photographers	35
6. AFTER THE GAME	36
6.1 Paperwork	36
6.2 Cleanup	36
6.3 Protests	36
7. The Care and Feeding of GM's, A Guide for Players	38

Chapter 1: Introduction

The International Fantasy Gaming Society (IFGS) has been producing live fantasy roleplaying games since our first adventure, “THE TRUING”, in 1981. The game and the organization have evolved considerably since that time. The fantasy rules are now in the third revision of their 6th edition, several hundred games have been played, and there are now IFGS chapters throughout the country. The vision given to us by Larry Niven & Steven Barnes in *Dreampark*© comes closer to becoming a reality with each game. This can in no small way be attributed to work of the Game Writers (GWs), the Game Producers (GPs), and the Game Masters (GMs).

Being a Game Master is a vital part of IFGS games, and a GM can greatly influence how much the players enjoy a game and how well a game is produced. You have probably picked up this manual either because you are a new GM or because you want to brush up on your GM skills. In either case, you are providing the IFGS a service of great value. Your support is appreciated.

If you are not already familiar with the IFGS and how the games are played, it is recommended that you first read a copy of the IFGS Fantasy Rules, and familiarize yourself with any rules clarifications to have been published in the IFGS Newsletter, The Chainmail, since the last publication of the rulebook.

This manual has been written as a collection of opinions and suggestions on the art of GMing. This book is not intended to be regarded as the “Ten Commandments for GM’s”. Rather, it is a guide that will change as players, the IFGS and the games themselves change. Please treat this guide as your own personal GM ‘cookbook’ - feel free to write in the margins, change things, add pages, and color in the pictures!

Substantial contributions to this book have been made by so many people that it would do them a disservice to try to list them all. A special note of thanks is owed to the original writers of this document (listed in the credits), who put much time and effort into it; the IFGS Rules Committee of the time (consisting of John Cade, Jim Corwith, Karl Hiesterman, Mark Matthews-Simmons, Vicky Cade, Paul Hayes, Collin Hightower Sr., Mike McGee and Margo Toth); and the many people who willingly made suggestions and comments on the update. The revision itself consisted more of updating the rules information than changing or adding to the advice given, which was excellent to start with; hopefully those reading this will be as impressed as the editors with the suggestions made.

If you have any questions, need more information on the IFGS national organization or a local chapter, please contact us at the address in the front of this manual.

Chapter 2: General Pointers on the Job

The GM has the same basic job as every other staff member during a game: keep the game running smoothly so that the players and other participants have as much fun as possible. The GM's specific job is blurring the line between "you see what you see" and the realm of fantasy: you build verbally the world the players are imagining. You are the one who takes the pillows and sheets they see in front of them and spin a cloud-fortress. You are also the one who arbitrates the uses of spells, skills, and abilities by players and NPCs alike, allowing them to interact with the fantasy realm and each other in a fair and understandable way.

KNOW THE RULES. This is the single most important requirement for being a GM, and it will be repeated throughout this book. The rules are the framework of the worlds of the IFGS; for you to build the fantasy, the players must have a basis on which to hang your descriptions and the game producer's props. The rules are complicated and far from obvious, though understanding of them improves with each game, so repeated reading is recommended. Also make sure you know any chapter variants the Game Producer is allowing for his game (available from the local Sanctioning Committee), and read up on the Hits and Misses that the Fantasy Rules Committee (FRC) puts out in the 'Chainmail'. A few common pitfalls are:

•**BEING FAMILIAR ONLY WITH THE SPELLS/ABILITIES/SKILLS (SAS) ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER CLASS.**

If you play a Magic User you probably have a good handle on Magic User spells but may not know the Cleric spells. This will almost certainly make you a better GM for the MUs than for anyone else (or you will overcompensate and be worse to the MUs). In either case, this is clearly unfair to everyone.

•**BEING FAMILIAR WITH THE LOWER LEVEL SPELLS ONLY.**

Even though there may not be many players with high level spells in your chapter (and there may be none on your team), the NPCs may use some of the higher level spells, and PCs may have items which make use of them. A few problems to watch out for on high level spells from NPC's and magic items follow:

1. The players may not be familiar with the spells in question, and therefore won't know how to react properly. Be prepared to coach them if necessary (i.e.: knock down, unconscious, pain) and promptly answer any questions.
 2. The NPCs may not be familiar with the spells in question either. They may declare something to be the case that is simply not true (for example "STUN" means paralyze). In general, you should ignore this if it doesn't interfere with the game. If it works, go with it, even if it isn't exactly what the rules say. Bear in mind, however, that this is the basis for most disputes between the players and the NPCs.
- BE PREPARED.**
3. The Game Writer may not have anticipated all of the consequences of using the spell. Read the game in advance and point out situations that you think will cause problems. The game's

Sanctioning Subcommittee will (hopefully) find the problems in games when they are submitted (that is their job), but they don't always catch everything. The better you know the rules and the game, the easier it is for you to keep to the spirit of both.

•NOT KNOWING THE INTENT OF THE RULES

There are a lot of "rules lawyers" who play, and it is important to enforce the rules, not some typographical error that you find in the book. It is pretty easy to figure out the intent of the rules and, in general, they are written to convey that intent. Even so, some people will try to warp the rules to support their own way as much as possible. Legally speaking, **THE RULES ARE WHAT THE GM SAYS, NOT WHAT THE RULEBOOK SAYS.** This is a dangerous statement and you should not push this point very far. There are lots of reasons for this, and for the sake of clarity, some are itemized below:

1. SAFETY. If it is dangerous, don't do it. This may seem obvious, but you may be surprised at the crazy things people do in the spirit of roleplaying. Don't let a player dive off a boulder-strewn embankment because of a knockdown! If you say there is no knockdown, there is no knockdown. Period.
2. GAME DESIGN. Sometimes the GW will put things in the game that are not strictly within the rules. This adds a lot of color to the game and no one really minds, but it is important to be aware of them. Examples are: spells not available to players, unusual magic items, teleportals, and multi-class NPCs.

Always carry a copy of the rules on course with you so that rules disputes can be settled quickly. However, if there is a dispute between what is written and what you see as the intent of the rules, go with the intent. If the player wants to appeal later, then let them. Stand your ground and continue the game.

Chapter 3: People to Know

If at all possible, get to know the players, the individuals who are playing the characters.

Questions you will need to answer for yourself before the game include:

- Who are the athletes? Who has medical problems?
- Who are the “rules lawyers”?
- Who are the roleplayers? Which ones will enjoy having elements of their character histories brought out in game?
- Who are the leaders? (They may not be the Loremasters)
- Who are the best fighters?
- Are there any “whiners”?
- Are the players all friends with each other? Do they even know each other?
- Do they know the rules?
- Who are the experienced players?
- Who are the novices?
- What are the players’ objectives? Do they want to ‘win’ or do they prefer to roleplay?

Attend at least one pre-game meeting with the players. This serves several purposes, and will help you to know not only the people and their characters, but will also help them to know you.

Go over the character histories of every player and make sure to keep a copy for yourself. **READ THE HISTORIES.** If you don’t read them, they won’t do you any good. Aside from their obvious usefulness, they are usually fascinating reading.

Allegedly, the IFGS Registry will provide you with a copy of the character history but this doesn’t always happen. You only have 4 to 8 people to deal with, and they have hundreds. The registry’s job is to keep a history on file, so that they can reconcile magic items, experience and the like. You will make the life of the Registry committee much easier if you don’t depend on them for your information. Instead, give them a copy of any histories you get.

In addition to the players, there are a few other people that it will benefit you to know. Top on the list are the Game Writer (and Game Producer, if they are not one and the same), the other GM’s, the Registry representative, the NPC Coordinator (if the game has one), and your Scorekeepers (SK’s). Explanations of what these people do are included later in Chapters 4 and 5. Also, know the Safety Officer and WatchDog on site. You won’t hear from them very often, but when you do they mean business.

Chapter 4: Before the Game

4.1 Pre-Game Preparation

As with everything, preparation is the key to doing your job as a GM well. If you are prepared, you will be ready for anything. The game will go more smoothly, you will interfere less, and you will be more effective, which means a better time for everyone. Some suggested pre-game activities are listed below. Unpleasant experience has taught us that these chores need to be started several weeks to a month before the game, or as early as the Game Producer will let you.

Meet with the GP, read the game, and decide if you want to GM this game. Don't take this step too lightly. Being a GM is a lot of work. Basically, if you wouldn't enjoy playing the game (you usually can't play anymore because you just read the game), you won't enjoy being a GM.

Read the game, again and again, and talk to the GP about their intentions. If you have concerns about things in the game, discuss them with the GP so that they can tell you what they have in mind. If you want to give any input, feel free to do so—it will be very much appreciated. Important sections of the game to concentrate on are: 1) the encounters (this is the piece that most people consider the game anyway) and 2) the list of magic items. Make sure you understand the encounters as they are written and can find the lore and information the players will need. Ask the GP how they will be physically representing any traps or physical encounters, and make sure you will have a chance to go through the course after the props are set up so that you will know what to expect on game day. If there are any complex encounters, such as timed events, trap gauntlets, or non-standard spell effects from monsters, make sure you understand the encounter and know how the GP wants it described to the players. Take a hard look at the list of magic items because, as the GM, you are the one who will have to deal with the savvies, Foresees, and curses. If you don't fully understand them, there is no way that you can deal well with player questions.

Mark the areas of the script you will need to read or paraphrase to the players, such as encounter descriptions and lores, with a highlighter or red pen. This makes it easier to avoid reading too much or losing the information.

Find out what any potions or other items which require consumption are really made of, so that someone who has dietary restrictions can ask before they imbibe it. Their character may not care, but if the potion sends the player into anaphylactic shock it is likely to interfere with their roleplaying.

Find out who the Lore Masters are from the GP. The game flyers probably aren't out yet and this information might not be available. If it is, get it, and if it isn't, then be the first in line.

Pick up a couple of game flyers when they do come out. People will ask you for them.

Consult with the GP and Game Aides (GA) to see if they want help with NPC selection, props, land search, or anything else. The more you participate, the better the game will be, and the more fun you will have.

Read the lore that will be distributed to the Loremasters and discuss it with the GP and/or the other GMs fairly soon. When you have the first player meeting the players will undoubtedly ask you questions about the lore and you should know what, if anything, you can say. This will also give you a feel for what the players' thought processes are during and prior to the game. You can avoid a lot of surprises that way. If the lore is on videotape or something like that, you should watch it a couple of times. Usually the players only get one shot at it, and they forget things. It's okay for them to forget, but you should always know what's going on. Besides, the lore is usually entertaining.

Select your Scorekeepers (SKs), which is an art in itself. You should try for 1 SK for every 2 or 3 players. Some selection criteria:

1. Don't use novices. They don't know the rules and they don't understand what they are supposed to do. Despite appearances, it isn't obvious how an SK should behave.
2. Don't use the players' boyfriends/girlfriends. They will be distracting to the players and they will tend to watch specific people. They also tend to score with a bias (either positive or negative) towards their friends.
3. Don't use people who can't keep quiet.
4. Use reliable people. There is very little that is more annoying than to have your SKs disappear on the day of the game. It helps to get them to commit early. People generally feel more like they are part of the game if they've been planning on it for months. However, it does help to ride up to the game site with your SKs the day of the game, to insure that they will actually be there.

Determine as soon as possible which team you will have. Contact the loremaster, introduce yourself, and keep them apprised of game information, and get team information from them as soon as it becomes available.

Make sure the team knows if the GP is requiring full physical reps for all items (some will allow one rep for many one shots, for example), and if they need to get the GP an item list for approval.

Make sure you have the final, sanctioned-pending-production copy of the game before game day. Things can change in the script up to game day, and you should be kept apprised of such changes.

As soon as you know who is on your team, find out if they will be using any lore abilities ahead of time, such as at a room game prior to the line course. Contact the

GP to determine what, if anything, they can learn from this.

Determine if your team will be doing any complicated roleplaying or in-character actions prior to starting the game. Make sure the GP knows this, as it can sometimes cause major delays in the game.

Meet with the team. Answer any questions they have, and ask any that you have. Discuss the characters, the lore, whatever they want. Be friendly. A possible agenda for the team meeting follows:

1. Divide the team up and assign SK's at this meeting. Try to divide the people up in a natural way. Many of the players will tend to stick together anyway (at least the smart ones will), and if each group has its own SK, it is a lot easier to make sure that everyone gets scored.
2. Avoid the tendency to take on all the "hard" people yourself because you are the most experienced. You will have a lot to do on course in addition to keeping score. Instead, take the person who is most likely to ask difficult questions (usually the LoreMaster), and the group that is with them.
3. Discuss various interpretations of the rules with the team. Your ideas may be different from their ideas and the ideas of previous GMs they may have had. Discuss how you interpret Mental Signal, Phase Out, Foresee, backstabs, and other SAS's requiring GM intervention. Make sure that you don't give away anything in the game when you tell them that you have some offbeat rulings about Mend not working on blue things....
4. Discuss how you will base your scoring (and do what you say).
5. Find out if anyone has special restrictions that you don't already know about. Special handicaps, dietary restrictions, and other physical problems are easy to deal with if you are aware of them, but can be a real bombshell if you don't find out about them until game time.
6. Let the team know their starting time for the game, and be sure that they understand they should be there one hour before they are scheduled to start, so that they can get checked in and in-character without being rushed.

Call up the Registry and discuss the character histories you have received from the players. Give the Registry a copy of any histories they don't have. Check up on all of the claimed magic items the players have, and ask for an explanation of anything you don't understand. If the Registry representative doesn't have a record of an item, ask the player what game the item came from, and get the information from the GW of that game. (This information should be available from the Registry.) If you are forced to track down a magic item description, write down the results and give them to the Registry. That way, the next person who is GM for that character will have an easier time of it. If there are any discrepancies that the players should know about (e.g., they are missing an item that they claim to have), call the player

and discuss it with them. Usually, this is a bookkeeping error, and they will be able to work it out with the Registry. Give the players the benefit of the doubt.

If Character Applicable Points (CAP), which is earned by staffing and NPCing, can be used by the players in the game, make sure you have their current numbers.

Go on the walk-through of the game course and take as many of your SK's as you can. Take notes, and learn the game course thoroughly. Please note that if you get lost with a team on course, you will be razzed for a minimum of 4 years. On the walkthrough, pay particular attention to the following:

1. Who went, and thus knows the course?
2. What are the physical hazards on the course?
3. Where are the logistical features for the course? Make sure you know where each encounter is, where the campsites are, where the water is and what the emergency exit routes are.
4. Where will the action be at each encounter site? This will enable you, the SK's, and the photographers to know where to stand to get a reasonable view without interfering. If a combat is planned for the site, look around for hazards that may pose a problem. You and the NPCs will get the opportunity to direct the melee to the right place, but you need to know where that right place is.
5. Determine where the physically difficult areas are. You will probably have players who are not in the best of physical condition (unlike yourself, of course), and they may have problems climbing the mountain with a bandit horde chasing them. Be aware of possible problems. If you know the players are going to do something very athletic soon, and they are already starting to wear out, you should suggest a rest stop.

Offer to help the GP again. There is no doubt a crisis going on somewhere, and your help will be greatly appreciated.

4.2 The Night Before By now, you and your team should be prepared for the game. It is likely that your team will have a meeting the night before to discuss strategies, plans, last minute props, and weapon repairs. You should try to find out if this is the case and be available if they call with some panicked questions. You already did all of your homework, so this should be easy. While waiting for the team to call, you can perform several other fun and useful tasks, such as...

1. PACK - See the wonderful list you can copy on the next page!
2. Call your SK's to make sure they will all be there and everyone has a ride. If they haven't read the game yet, make sure they have a copy and get a chance to read it. Better late than never.
3. Call the Loremasters of your team and see if there is a breakfast meeting or something planned. If so, you should attend. Also, find out if there are any last-minute cancellations. Make sure the LM

knows when the team should arrive at the game site, and where they should park.

4. Re-read the character histories.

5. Help the NPCs set up the course. This is usually done the day before or early in the morning on Game Day. As with all other times this has been recommended, your help will be appreciated.

6. Be aware if the game is canceled because of weather, since the players are going to call you for this info. The person you should ask is the Watchdog or Game Producer, who will likely get the information from the Game Safety Officer. Know the rain date.

7. RELAX! The Game Producer, Game Aides and major NPCs are usually in a tizzy by this point. If things start to fall apart, it is going to be up to you and the other GMs to hold them together. This is easier than it sounds, and if you have done the preparation above you will be ready to handle any crisis. If the GM loses her or his cool, everyone you see will pick up on it. This includes all of the players, all of the NPCs and most of the support staff. In effect, everyone. You are in the best position to handle problems. If someone calls you in tears with some problem, try to work it out to a solution. Make a decision and give it to them. That is why the GP chose you to be a GM.

8. SLEEP. If this is an overnigher, you probably won't get much sleep the next night.

GM's Packing List

- ___ Enough (plenty of) food for yourself and your SK's. If the game flyers claim that food will be provided, it will probably be provided for the players, but not for you. This is part of the reason that the PC fee is bigger than the NPC fee. FEED YOURSELF AND YOUR SK's.
- ___ Enough clothes to keep warm, dry and happy even if the weather gets seriously bad and you find yourself wading through a freezing bog in a rainstorm. If you don't already know this, you have no right to be a GM in the first place.
- ___ Enough water to supply not only you but also the people on the team who forgot to bring their own.
- ___ A big, gnarly whistle, to be used to signal emergencies or a game stop.
- ___ Several stopwatches or watches that can be used to time spells and game effects.
- ___ A clip-on tape measure, for arrow and spell ranges, and area of effect figuring.
- ___ A white coat or shirt (or whatever color your chapter has declared "invisible").
- ___ A first aid kit.
- ___ A flashlight or lantern for overnight games.
- ___ Another flashlight for when the other one breaks or you lose it.
- ___ A compass.
- ___ A copy of the rules.
- ___ A copy of the game and extra scoring sheets (preferably waterproof).
- ___ Two clipboards— one for you and another for your SK who forgot.
- ___ Too many pencils.
- ___ A complete, updated set of characters, including any secondary characters they may be bringing and their available CAP.
- ___ A pocketknife.
- ___ A white sheet and a couple of white flags.
- ___ An assortment of colored flags for spells. The players regularly forget these, and everyone will appreciate it if you have spares instead of being hard-nosed about it. (NOTE: In our humble opinion, these flags should only be given out BEFORE the game. If they lose the flags during the game, it's their problem).
- ___ A lockpick, if you have one, for the same reason as the flags.
- ___ Ductape, for the same reason as flags and lockpicks, and because it is too darn useful to not have.
- ___ A fairly large bag or pack. You will be asked to carry an assortment of things, ranging from used beanbags to abandoned weapons. It helps to have a fair amount of excess luggage space, and a declared limit on what you are willing to tote around.
- ___ A tent or tents for yourself and your SKs (if this is an overnighter). Have enough room for another person or two in an emergency, if you can.
- ___ Any spare "gold pieces" (Pente™ stones, Mardi Gras coins, or whatever your chapter's representation is) you found in your box of IFGS equipment you haven't looked at since last game. Give these back to the Registry with a polite apology. Everybody seems to end up with a stash of these, and they are expensive to replace.
- ___ Enough real money for the after-game party if you don't plan to go home first.

4.3 Game Day This is the day when it all happens. Basically speaking, if you aren't fully ready by now, you've missed your chance to shine. In the hours before the game, you should do the following:

1. Call your SKs and get them out of bed.
2. Pack all of your stuff in the car and go to meet the team. Usually, there is a breakfast meeting somewhere and everyone gets halfway into their role and has a good time. Be prepared to answer a bunch of questions at this meeting, but mostly just have a good time.
3. Go to the game site. **GET THERE AT LEAST ONE HOUR EARLY.**
4. Get the following from the Registry Rep: Scoresheets for your team, currency valuation card and a few spare gold pieces.
5. Memorize the currency values.
6. Ask the GP or GA if the game and magic lists are still accurate. If there has been a change, note it on your game copy, and remember to inform your SKs.
7. Ask the GM for the team before you how the schedule is going, and find out who will be starting the teams out.
8. Wait. Don't volunteer to do anything that will require you to leave the PC starting area, as this will almost certainly cause you to miss your starting time.
9. Prepare your SKs with their score sheets and introduce them to the players if they haven't already met. (A typical score sheet may be found at the back of this book.) Make sure you ask each player what magic items they are carrying (they may not be bringing everything they own), and how much gold they will be bringing into the game.
10. Check to see if every player can pass the following tests:
 - For all games:
 - All weapons approved and marked by the Safety Officer.
 - Everyone is properly registered.
 - For all outdoor games: All of the above, plus:
 - Everyone has a whistle.
 - Everyone has water.
 - Everyone has rain gear.
 - Everyone is wearing shoes appropriate to the course.
 - For all overnight games: All of the above, plus:
 - Everyone has adequate shelter.
 - Everyone has enough food for dinner/breakfast.
11. If you have any tagalong people (like a photographer), introduce yourself. In general, it is best to keep these folks to a minimum, but everyone likes to have pictures of their game, so if you can get a photographer, you should. Usually, photographers are novices who want to see a game before they dive in, or they are the boy/girlfriend of someone on the team. In either case, they can usually use some instruction on being unobtrusive. (See section 5.2: The Art of Invisibility.)

12. Start on time, even if some players are missing. The only circumstances in which you may justify starting late are:
 - a) If you are so instructed by the WD, SO or GP.
 - b) If the GM ahead of you has not started yet.
 - c) If there are zero (0) players present.
13. If for some reason you find it necessary to start late (all of the above circumstances have occurred in the past), inform the players that they must wait, and tell them why (if doing so will not compromise the game), and then wait. Keep your spirits up, and under NO circumstances badmouth anyone (like the GP, other GM's, Players, Landowner or Police), even if they did cause the problem. The people involved will be working as fast as they can to repair the problem, and it will only cause new problems later if you add slander to whatever is happening. Remember, you are the one who is supposed to be in control. Don't whine.
14. As you leave, make sure the GM behind you is aware that you have started. Also, count your players, SKs and tagalongs to make sure you have with you exactly who you thought you would have. If anyone is missing, mark them as missing, and tell their SK so they won't search the woods for them.

Chapter 5: The Game

5.1 Team Formation

This is the high profile part of the job, and what most people consider being a GM to be all about. It is also the easiest part, if you have done everything you need to beforehand. If you haven't done the other stuff, being a GM can be almost impossible to do well.

Eliminate all unnecessary people. This includes all “invisible” NPCs, all surplus photographers, the GP, and friends of the players. If they are not there for a reason, they should not be there. Sometimes this can be a little difficult and some real diplomacy may be called for to get rid of these people, but it needs to be done. If for some reason you can't get rid of them completely, keep them behind the last party member by at least ten feet, and instruct them to back up further if there is an encounter in progress. Also instruct the tagalong that they must be absolutely quiet at all times, except for life-threatening injuries. If they don't comply, get rid of them and be rude about it if you have to; unless they are the GP, WD or SO, they will have no legitimate complaint.

Never allow anyone but a PC, GM or SK to walk at the front of the group.

Never have a GM or SK to go first unless they are deliberately leading the players and the players know it.

Make sure that you and the SKs are evenly distributed throughout the party. Each of you are watching different people, and shouldn't be together anyway. When you are walking down a road or trail, assign one SK to lead the group, have one bring up the rear, and you stay with the spellcasters (this is usually in the middle). Be aware of which players are using arrows, and make sure their SK is in the area.

During an encounter, distribute yourself and the SKs the same way. Send one SK after each group that splits off and have the other SKs wait just outside the group of players. There should be a GM or SK in the area of each spell caster who is likely to cast in an encounter. That way you can hear and, if you like, time the incant, as well as announce any effects that the NPC doesn't hear. Make sure not to stand in a position where the PC will trip over you if they choose to turn and run. For example it is usually good to stand near trees because the encounters (especially combat) tend to be in clearings surrounded by trees. The players will automatically avoid you while avoiding the trees.

Never instruct the players on their own formation. It is more difficult for 3 people (GM and 2 SKs) to cover a spread-out team than a compact one, but that is your problem, not theirs. Getting too spread out will generally not be a problem anyway, because spreading a team all over the mountain is usually an unwise move. However, if they do spread out, you will have to run a little more. If they rearrange a lot during the game, you may find it helpful to reassign the SKs for each player. Avoid this reassigning if possible, but it can be useful in some circumstances. In any case, don't complain to the players.

Make sure that all non-participants (GMs, SKs, photographers, and tagalongs) are wearing a white or orange shirt, coat, sheet or referee's striped shirt, depending on your chapter's decision on non-game colors. This makes it clear to everyone who is a player and who is not. This is VERY important.

During night encounters, leave your light ON (GM only). This may annoy your players but it serves several purposes:

1. Anyone who is lost can find their way back, even if everyone is hiding.
2. Anyone who wants to find the GM can do so easily without broadcasting their position by shouting "GM."
3. Any NPC who is in the woods and has been wandering around for half an hour trying to "encounter" the party will be able to identify the general area of the party. (It's hard to imagine how difficult this is until you've tried it yourself.)
4. NPCs will not ambush you by mistake, thus giving away their position to the real players.
5. Night encounters tend to be in campsites where there are usually tent ropes, cooking equipment, and other invisible hazards that can be very dangerous to people moving around in the dark. If there is a light, these things become much easier to see. If there is a particularly offensive tent rope, tie a white flag or reflective tape to the middle so it will be visible at night.
6. If there is a combat scheduled, you will need a fairly bright light (like a lantern). However, use a lantern with caution because the players will immediately be alerted of an impending combat if you suddenly "light up."

5.2 The Art of Invisibility

This is fun to practice, and everyone but the players should do it. The first key is to be QUIET. The photographer should never speak at all, and the SKs should speak only briefly. Don't crack jokes or make non-game-related comments. It is extremely easy to suspend your belief and become a part of the game if there is no outside interference, and the most common interference is GM/SK chatter. Only speak if you have something to say, and say it as briefly and directly as possible. If you only need to speak to one person, go over to them and speak quietly and in person. Don't shout over the party; in combat shouting is useless and in any other situation it is intrusive and jarring.

Teach the SKs not to answer rules questions even if they know the answer. This will force the player to consider their question and ask it to you directly. Similarly, the GM shouldn't answer questions put to the SKs. Always speak quietly and try to have an uninteresting voice. Maintain a monotone, almost bored sort of a tone — it lends a lot to your own invisibility.

Position yourself correctly. It is important that you be in the area of several players at once (all people for whom you SK— the LM and whoever is inclined to ask questions.) If you set things up in advance this is easy; if not, it's pretty hard.

Within those constraints, follow these rules:

1. Don't stand in front of the players.
2. Don't get in their way. If they are walking along and you are in their way, remember that they are trying to pretend you aren't there. It is your responsibility to get out of their path, not theirs to avoid you. Move. It will help a lot.
3. Don't sneak up on them. Unconsciously, they know you are there, of course, but if you surprise them, you will immediately spring into their consciousness.
4. Be available. This may seem incompatible with some of the above rules but it is crucial for you to be able to do your job properly. No one should have to call for the GM more than once before you are either there or on your way as fast as you can arrange it. Don't hide. This is also for the benefit of the NPCs. If they see you and you aren't trying to hide, they won't attack you by mistake.
5. Act invisible. When you come to a resting place, don't sit in the best spot. Don't have players move out of your way, go around them instead. Try not to clomp through the trees if the person you are following is sneaking up on someone. Be considerate. Since they are supposed to ignore you, make it as easy as possible.
6. Hurry, but don't rush. This is a technique borrowed from the folks who change sets at plays. Try to be quick in doing things and moving around, but don't rush so fast that you make errors, or crash through the trees in your enthusiasm.
7. Stay out of the photographs. The photographer is there to take pictures of the PCs and NPCs, not of your "invisible" back.

5.3 Player Questions I. Rules questions

You are responsible for answering rules and policy questions from any of the PCs or NPCs who may ask. In general, the questions are easy and you simply answer them. If you're in doubt, look it up. That is why you have a copy of the rules with you.

1. Know the rules. This has already been said but it bears repeating.
2. Remember what you have already said. Be consistent.
3. Don't argue, and don't allow players and non-players to argue. You are the final word. If they don't like your decision, they can protest after the game. Listen to their argument, look it up if need be, and decide. This is another policy that will annoy certain players, but most will appreciate it because it keeps the game moving. This may also cause players to protest, but don't let them intimidate you. This is why the protest procedure was created in the first place
4. Give no weight to the following arguments:
 - “My interpretation of the rules says ...”
 - “I asked my friend on the rules committee about that and they said ...”;
 - “My last GM said...”

“In the ... edition of the rules it says...

These are better arguments:

“The rule says...” In this case, look up the rule and quote it to them. If they are right, agree and silently kick yourself because you didn’t know the rule. If they are wrong, they will concede.

““That’s dangerous.” If this is true, then don’t worry about the rules.

“That’s inconsistent with a previous ruling made by you”. Don’t do this and they can’t use it against you.

II. Ubiquitous (i.e. Stupid) Questions

1. “Do I see that?” As hard as everyone tries, every GM hears this question at least 5 times every game. Answer as politely as possible and in this case, make sure that EVERYONE hears you, so you don’t get the same question again 5 seconds later from another player who has just noticed the same thing.
2. Continuously running Detect Evil /Good /Magic. These innate abilities last for 30 seconds ONLY and can only be used at 3 minute intervals. Note that Reveal SASs have a longer duration.
3. Memory questions (were there 20 zombies, or only 15?). If the team doesn’t correctly remember what they have seen or what has happened, it is their problem. Don’t answer this type of question. There are two exceptions to this:
 - (a) The Thief class has a Memory ability and they have to inform you at the time of the event that they wish to remember; make a note when they use this.
 - (b) The Magic User class has the Acuity spell that will enable them to remember something that they forgot.
4. Scoring questions. “How many hit points do I have in my left leg?” A player should direct such questions to their SK. Only answer if you are their SK.

5.4 NPC/PC Disputes No matter how hard you try, there is likely to be someone who is going to get upset at someone for something. It is your job to smooth things out and keep the game moving. Again, it’s a little hard to make a set of rules for this because it depends on the particular dispute and what they are fighting about. Here are some general pointers:

If anyone is hurt, stop the game and deal with it immediately.

No matter how irate the PC gets, do NOT hand them a copy of the script to prove to them that the NPC actually has that much armor, that many hitpoints, or anything else. If they can’t take your word for the NPC’s accuracy, they need to leave or they can protest after the game.

If someone wasn’t taking damage (this is a common problem) there are a couple of

ways to handle it. Give the benefit of the doubt to the person who was hit — if they didn't feel it, then there was no hit. They may have something external that would prevent serious damage that they don't want to reveal in an argument (like a huge armor class, a magic item or thousands of hit points). Usually, as soon as someone complains, the problem will solve itself without your interference.

Combat technique is another common complaint. “So-and-so is hitting too hard,” “So-and-so is swinging for my head,” “So-and-so is blocking with their head,” etc. There are a large number of problems of this sort. The basic rules are:

1. Stop the game while you decide.
2. If the person who was hit says it was a head shot, then consider it a head shot. No damage. Inform the attacker to back off. If they don't, remove them from the game.
3. If someone really gets out of hand, pull them out of the melee. If they are way out of hand, remove them from the game.
4. If the person who was hit says a hit was too hard, then it was too hard no matter what the attacker says. Tell the attacker to back off.
5. If an unsafe weapon is involved, remove it from the game. Sometimes weapons break during a game and so they may have been safe when the Safety Officer inspected them, but have since become dangerous. If this happens put the weapon in your pack, allow the person to get another weapon, (if they have one), and continue the combat.
6. Overrule any damage that was done while someone was reeling from a head shot, falling into a hole, breaking their leg, or any other ridiculous circumstance. Straighten out the attacker.
7. If possible, ignore the incident. Quickly get everyone back into a reasonable position, restore whatever damage and spell points people rightly count themselves entitled to and get back to the game. This process shouldn't take more than 30 seconds.
8. If you have consistent problems with a player on this sort of dispute, pull them from the game. If you have a serious problem with an NPC, eliminate them from the game (use your radio if you have one and inform the GP) and, if necessary, cancel the encounter. This is a rash act, but you will have support from more places than you could believe (everyone but the NPC involved and the GP) if you really find it necessary.

5.5 Traffic Problems As with any event that involves more than 5 people, you may run into traffic problems. This can stem from a large variety of sources but the primary sources seem to be a slow team of players, damage to an encounter that requires time to repair, and poor game design. These all result in the same outcome...you wait.

Sometimes the GP will provide you things to do with the players while you wait, and sometimes they won't. If you have to wait, simply tell the players that they have to wait. You may want to back down the trail a little way so the players can't see the team ahead of them do the encounter, but then sit down and WAIT.

Remember the team is still in game time while this is going on, and they should all still be in character. Decide ahead of time if any continuing damage or timed abilities will still be active during the waits, and warn the players. Here are some choices for what to do while they wait. If they can come up with something by themselves without your intervention, so much the better — that way you can stay invisible.

- Eat lunch.
- Discuss the previous encounters and map out future strategy.
- Examine magic and other items that they have found on course.
- Pull something out of a character’s history to allow roleplaying (i.e., if someone is looking for a black unicorn, have them see tracks).
- Wander in the woods (not too far).
- Practice spell-casting or fighting.

If things get way out of hand and you find yourself waiting for hours, you should contact the other GMs (who are probably also waiting), and the GP (who will almost certainly be there), and work something out. One possibility is to rearrange the encounters to allow some of the teams to come back to this same point later after things have cleared up a bit.

If the problem team is yours, there are a few things that can be done.

- Quietly tell the Loremaster that they should try to be faster because there are people waiting.
- Have the NPC force the encounter to its conclusion (i.e., combat, giving up an item, giving directions, etc.)
- Let the other teams wait. Your team paid handsomely to do this, and they have the right to take as long as they want. The next team can take their time too, if they want.

5.6 What to do with NPCs after the encounter...

Dead NPCs *should* stay dead until after the players leave. This means that you shouldn’t let them get up and walk around or talk to each other. Most of all, don’t let them talk to the players or to you. Naturally, if someone finds that they are lying in a cactus they should move, but this does not mean they should start taking down the encounter. If the NPCs are misbehaving, tell them, and they’ll stop. If conditions require moving, put all “moved” NPCs into one area and have other NPCs avoid this area.

(When all the bodies have been searched, you should be polite and move the team a little way down the trail so they can continue whatever they need to do, and let the NPCs pack up. The NPCs have other things to do than lie on the ground while the team casts savvies, heals themselves and otherwise prepares to continue. -Ed.)

5.7 Death

One of the hardest situations to handle during a game is when the player characters die. You usually have become involved with the characters by this time, and the players are even more emotionally attached. Unfortunately, in spite of all efforts to the contrary sometimes they die anyway. A good thing to keep in mind during this

time is that if there is no possibility of death, there is very little spice to the game. Although people may object at the time, experience has shown that they don't really mind "dying." If you ask anyone who has ever lost a character what their favorite game has been, it is almost always the one where their best character 'died'.

Here are a few things to note about a PC's death:

- Don't chicken out! You are the GM and they died. The only one who can enforce this is you. Dead is dead, no matter how much it hurts to tell people this.
- Do everything you can to help them start their secondary character or clone and to get into character. It really is hard to change boats in the middle of the stream. Give them a break on scoring for a while and try to arrange situations that will help them to roleplay (use something out of the character history).
- Have the player stay dead for the rest of the encounter. The other players may attempt a number of things, ranging from resurrection to throwing the body into the swamp. One interesting note: players regularly leave magic items and treasure on the dead body when they leave. These items are then lost from the game.
- Be nice about it. The person who died is not having fun.
- Make a point to remember the circumstances surrounding the death so that, if necessary, you can discuss it during a protest.

5.8 Missile Weapons

The system used for missile fire is one of the most complex in the IFGS rules. Four major areas to watch for are:

- (a) The character has waited the appropriate reload time;
- (b) The character has a valid bow and at least one arrow in their possession;
- (c) The target is within arrow range of the archer (usually 60 feet but this can be more for rangers).
- (d) The target heard the damage called (this is a big problem, especially if the NPCs are wearing masks or are in the middle of combat).

Other things the GM is responsible for include the following.

1. All players who wish to take missile weapons onto the course have several options to determine their accuracy:
 - (a) They can take an archery test. This is a test by a qualified Registry Representative and is explained in the rules book. Players who use this method are required to test once per year. Also, any player who tests is required to use their test scores even if they are worse than the results of the other methods. If a player will be using their test results, check with the Registry Rep that they are up-to-date and accurate, so that the player may retest before the game if necessary.
 - (b) A set of percentages is listed in the Rulebook for calculating the chances to hit based on character type and level. This method is used for all players who, for any reason, elect not to take the test.

(c) Magic items occasionally adjust the hit probabilities of missile fire. This will be in the description of the magic item.

2. Once the accuracy and reload times have been established, the player must determine the amount of damage done. This is spelled out in the rules and most of the players will be pretty good at it. The damage bonus that accompanies higher character levels IS applicable. This can also vary with magic bows, arrows, and other items.
3. Each character may start the game with 20 arrows. Arrows fired are not retrievable (with the exception of certain magic items). Arrows are transferable between players as long as they have not been fired. The only other ways to get more arrows are:
 - (a) If the GP declares a special exception for their game,
 - (b) If there are arrows found as treasure on course, or
 - (c) If the ranger makes some.
4. There are three suggested methods in the rulebook for determining if an arrow is a Hit, Miss, or Critical. Many chapters have their own optional methods as well. Decide with your players and the Game Producer ahead of time which method you will be using for the game and make preparations accordingly.
5. Keep track of the number of arrows/bolts used by the players with the other information you mark during the game.

5.9 Problem Spells and Abilities

5.9a General Problems

Every class has either spells or abilities they can use, and each one of these is basically a “special case”. If you add to these the different things that can be done using various magic items already in the game, you will find that there are more exceptions than there are rules. Making rules to the exceptions is, almost by definition, a pointless task but here is an attempt anyway.

LEARN THE RULES! There is nothing else that will help you to deal with SASs more effectively.

Be fast. When someone uses an SAS that requires GM intervention (for example ‘DETECT MAGIC’), respond immediately.

Be decisive. Don’t be wishy-washy about your answers. Make sure that the applicable people hear what you have to say and say it as briefly and specifically as possible (example, “Knockdown - blue, green, red”).

Be able to make snap decisions regarding incant, duration and range. These rules are important and there are regular errors. This is why you have a stopwatch and tape measure. Don’t stop the game if someone casts a spell or shoots an arrow that is out of range or doesn’t take their full incant time. Instead, announce to both the caster/archer and the target that there was no effect. Do this immediately or don’t do it at all. The caster still used their spell points, the archer still used their arrow, they just missed. It will help to measure your own pace for this. It is surprisingly

easy to do. Go down to the local high school and walk from goal line to goal line of the football field using your normal pace. Divide this by 300 and you have the length of a pace in feet. Measure from heel to heel, not heel to toe or vice versa.

Characters are not required to use the same incant every time they cast a particular spell, but most will do so anyway. This is extremely difficult to check during combat but you may want to see how they are doing on less immediate spells (like SAVVY). If nothing else, it will let them know that you are paying attention and they will try harder to be accurate. This will fit in well with the roleplaying of any spell caster anyway. You should also be on top of the required casting times for the different spells. If they don't use the full casting time required, disallow the spell and deduct the spell points. Remember too, that a spellcaster has to be standing still and be uninterrupted in order to cast. They can't even be walking slowly. They also can't take any damage or have any strikes hit them (even if there is no damage involved) during the incant or the spell doesn't work (the only exception to this is the MU's CONCENTRATION).

All spell casting classes have specific incant times required to cast each spell. 1st and 2nd level spells are all 6 seconds, 3rd and 4th level are 10 seconds, etc. If anyone attempts to cast a spell and they fail to take the required incant time there are two results:

- (a) The spell has no effect, and
- (b) Half the spell points for the spell are deducted from the caster (round up).

There are a few exceptions to the incant times rules. The MU spell AUTOCAST will alter incant times and certain magic items may also have an affect. In these cases, simply play by the rule or the item description, whichever is appropriate. These cases can have the same problems as described under the KILLING ATTACK ability.

Incant times are the grounds for quite a few disputes with players. Use the stopwatch (this is why you brought it). When players get excited 6 seconds seems like forever, so don't hesitate to check on them. Incant audibility is another area of dispute. The PC (or NPC) caster must speak loud enough to be heard by someone standing next to them; they don't have to yell, but they do have to speak, enough so that someone can hear them and see their lips move.

Knights, Monks and Rangers, although not considered spell casters, require the same amount of time in "preparation" for most of their abilities, though their preparations are more somatic and material than verbal (they do not have spoken incants). 1st and 2nd level abilities require 6 seconds, 3rd and 4th level abilities require 10 seconds, and 5th level and above require 15 seconds.

Make sure people are using flags for SAS's that require them. This is necessary so

that everyone knows how to respond to a particular ability or spell. If a thief who is CONCEALED doesn't have a big enough yellow flag for an attacker to see, they aren't concealed. This is particularly true for PHYSICAL PROTECTION and the like (red flags). Make sure that they are visible to anyone who is paying attention (a minimum of 18 inches by 4 inches). You should disallow the SAS if someone has an unreasonable flag - usually there will be another available from a party member. If a PC doesn't have a flag available, you have two choices:

- (a) If you feel like being really tough, you can disallow that character from using the spell or ability that uses that color flag again, or
- (b) if you would rather be nice about it (this is recommended in most cases), you have some spare flags in your pack (remember?)

There is a flip side to this problem as well - sometimes the NPCs don't have the appropriate flag for the spell either. This is a little harder to deal with because you may destroy the game if you disallow certain NPC spells. If the players don't notice, don't point it out to them. If the NPC compensates (the concealed thief announces "Concealment, 9th level" to anyone within hearing distance) you probably won't have a problem. If something serious happens (a player dies from attacking an NPC with 25 points of Physical Protection, but no flag), overrule the spell and the effect. In any case, give the NPC one of your flags so the next team through won't have the same problem.

5.9 b Class Specific Problems

Here are a few spells and abilities that have been known to cause problems for GMs in the past. Remember that creative players are going to give you new and different problems and not just rehash the old ones.

Of particular note for all spells and abilities and for all classes are the rules regarding Level Influential abilities (LI) and casting times. These restrictions are there for good reasons. By the way, level influences and casting times have changed somewhat over various editions of the rules, which may cause the players some confusion. The rule is that ALL SPELLS THAT ARE LI ARE EFFECTIVE ON RECIPIENTS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN THE LEVEL OF THE CASTER. The only SAS's that can change this are the Cleric's INVOKE, several Knight abilities, and the Magic User's LI ENHANCEMENT.

Clerics

Clerics are easier to deal with than Magic Users, but they do have some spells you need to watch out for.

1. DETECT GOOD/EVIL: This spell has a duration, range, and gives a simple yes/no answer...and can be affected by game design in a lot of ways.
2. REPULSE GOOD/EVIL: The range on this is one inch, and the affected person/creature only has to back off 6 feet. This is usually much closer than the Cleric will like or the NPCs expect.
3. REVEAL MAGIC: This has a spell point cost, a larger range than the MU ability, and pinpoints specific magical emanations.
4. E-SPILLS/REVERSE E-SPILLS (ENHANCE/EXHUBERATE/EXHORT/

EXALT): The positive and negative of these are NOT ‘stackable’ (i.e. in effect simultaneously on the same person). (Previous editions of the rules had allowed stacking -Ed.) However, Clerics of high enough level to cast two or more of these spells may use one positive and one negative (e.g. positive Enhance and negative Exhumerate) together.

5. FORESEE: The caster is limited to one question per level of the Cleric per game day, each question requires a new casting, and each casting costs progressively more spell points. If the players start to abuse this spell, it is within your right to reduce the accuracy of the answers. Usually, if you tell them they are pushing it, they will stop.

6. WRATH: The caster MUST announce to the recipient to “Cease in the name of (deity name) ... WRATH.” The caster must specify exactly who is supposed to cease, and must say it loudly enough so the recipient can hear them.

7. GOD’S/GODDESS’ HAMMER: This spell is has an area of effect, and will affect the caster if they are in that area.

8. INVOKE: This does not enable the caster to learn any new, higher level spells.

9. COMMUNE: This is limited to a 15 word question and a 15 word answer, and can only be used once a day. You should check with the GP for suggestions if there is a chance the players will use this ability. See also SPEAK WITH WINDS (Druid).

Druids Druids are another class that has been altered extensively. Some of their problem spells are listed.

1. SPEAK WITH PLANTS/ANIMALS: The plant/animal may choose not to answer, and is not required to tell the truth.

2. CLINGING VINE: The duration is 30 seconds, even if there is vigorous chopping at the plants. The Druid who cast the spell is not affected. This is LI.

3. REVEAL MAGIC: see Clerical spell.

4. ENTHRALL: This spell makes the target look on the Druid favorably; it does not require the target to agree to everything the Druid says or suggests. This is LI.

5. RHINOHIDE: The effect of this spell is not the same as armor - it only works against hand-held weapons.

6. WARP: This spell is very effective in certain circumstances, and the NPCs seem to be unfamiliar with it. If WARP is cast, make sure that the appropriate NPC understands the effect (i.e. no more arrows).

7. DEATH FEINT: This spell is instantaneous (no casting time). It does have a duration of five minutes, whether the Druid or someone attacking the Druid is waiting it out.

8. DISPEL MAGIC: This spell is LI, and only works on magical effects with a duration (e.g. It will not cancel out instantaneous spells like LIGHTENING STRIKE).

Fighters This is the easiest class to score. If you keep accurate records of their damage, the number of uses of their abilities, and their magic items there will be very little problem with them.

1. BLADESHARP is usable on any NON-MAGIC weapon, even a weapon that belongs to someone else, including thrown and missile weapons.

2. **FIGHTER'S RECOVERY:** This ability cannot be used in combat, which means that if a Fighter leaves combat to use it, all SAS's with a one-combat duration will go down for them. The Fighter must also rest at least one full minute for their healing to take place. If they are under fourth level, they lose the use of this ability if they go unconscious at any point during the game day.

Knights Knights have a lot of damage and armor enhancing abilities, and not a lot of points; this can cause problems with damage and armor counting in game.

They are also bound by a set of strictures. Keep track of the strictures and any situations where they might be tested. It is your responsibility to call them on any laxes in behavior.

Magic Users The Magic User class is one of the toughest to score because of all the spells that people abuse, misuse or simply misinterpret.

1. **DETECT MAGIC:** This only lasts for 30 seconds, can only be used every 3 minutes and is a directional ability. If there is a magic item behind the item the MU is testing (like a ring on the finger of the person holding the item), then the test will be positive. Area of effect is 3 feet wide by 10 feet long. This is shorter than most people think. Use a hand signal for the MU to let them know if the item is magical or not. Do this so you won't be talking as much and so that other players won't know what the answer is (the MU might not want them to know; determine this with the MU ahead of time).

2. **ENTHRALL:** This spell is used quite a bit. This spell is NOT a control, but instead causes the recipient to treat the caster as a friend. Those enthralled will not give away their favorite magic item.. They will not leap to their deaths, betray their other friends, or perform similar extreme actions. See also the Druid spell.

3. **REVERSE LOCK:** This is a surprisingly important spell because it is the only way to get past a lock after the thief gets their hands burned off trying to pick it. Read the lock system in the player handbook and make sure you understand the difference in Lock Type and Lock Difficulty; Lock Type is the aspect affecting MUs.

4. **SAVVY:** This spell tells them one property, and if there are any more magical properties. It can only give information on curses by game design, and the Sanctioning Handbook gives the proper form for Savvies.

5. **CRASH TIME:** This is one of the most used (and abused) spells in the game. The area of effect is a 10 foot diameter circle and the center of the circle can be no more than 15 feet from the MU. This is distinctly smaller than the typical 30 to 50 foot range for spells, so stay on top of it.

6. **FOG BRAIN:** This spell has been used very effectively by MUs in various acts of thievery. Although this use is still within the rules, there have been some rules changes that now allow a reverse FOG BRAIN to enable a character to remember the events erased from their mind during a FOG BRAIN.

7. **DROPSY:** This is another spell that is regularly misused. If the victim is less than 4th level they cannot hold ANYTHING for 30 seconds (this is a long time); 4th

level and higher victims must drop whatever they are holding for a full 5 seconds. Also, notice this is NOT an LI spell. An MU can DROPSY greater demons if they want (this is not necessarily wise, but it will work, briefly). Also remember this is a 3rd level spell, and therefore has a 10 second casting time.

8. DISPEL MAGIC: See Druid spell above. This has limitations.

9. PHASE OUT: Remember the duration, and that the caster can't fight, cast, or do anything except defend themselves for 2 minutes after the spell ends. A lot of non-magic users have access to this spell through the use of magic items or scrolls, but the stipulations apply to any class. Read the spell carefully - the 'rules lawyers' love this one.

10. SPELL DEFENSE: This spell absorbs 10 points of damage from each spell cast at the user for the duration of the SPELL DEFENSE (which is 5 minutes per level of the MU).

11. MENTAL SIGNAL: Don't let this spell get out of hand. The rule is a signal in case of a SIMPLE event. It helps a lot if you don't allow an event to be stated that contains more than one sentence, or contains the words "and," "or" or other similar conjunctions.

12. STUN: This means knockdown, not paralyse. Read the rule.

13. SPELL ABSORPTION: This does not work against area of effect spells like FIREBALL.

Monks Monks are another fairly easy class to deal with.

1. DEATH FEINT: See Druid spell.

2. PHYSICAL ATTACK: This can only be thrown from ten feet or less, and the Monk must have the use of their hand to deliver it.

3. SPEED: The Monk cannot use this ability to enter combat, and cannot do anything for two seconds after the end of the ability. If a monk is using the SPEED ability, everyone has to ignore them until they stop. This is not usually a problem, but sometimes GPs have given this ability to a variety of characters of other classes other than Monks, and this can make things confusing.

4. KILLING ATTACK: Most NPCs don't understand this ability, and you will have to explain it to them. KILLING ATTACK does immediate damage of 10 points, or one-half of their original points to death at their level, WHICHEVER IS GREATER. This attack is armor-independent. The major errors that have come up in the past are:

- (a) The recipient thinks that this means instant death and will simply die;
- (b) They will take the lesser damage rather than the greater;
- (c) They will deduct their armor value from the damage;
- (d) They will deduct 1/2 of their current life points.

Since the recipient is usually already in a damaged state when the Monk attacks, the Monk is not getting the fair amount of damage from their attack.

In all of the above cases, simply use your better judgement to resolve any problems. In most cases it can be ignored, but occasionally there will be a complaint. Simply

be aware that there may be a lot of problems when a KILLING ATTACK is used.

5. Knockdowns: Some Monks don't have to take knockdowns from certain attacks and this upsets the caster almost every time. Try to keep the game from stopping while the caster complains that so-and-so didn't take their knockdown. Also, don't explain why the Monk didn't get knocked down. If the caster can't figure it out on their own, it is their problem. All you have to say is that it was legitimate.
6. PRECOGNITION: This is a 10th level Spirit monk ability, and relatively rare among PCs. But a PCs with an item can legitimately use this to get information on the next encounter, by GM discretion, so be prepared for it.

Rangers While not as complicated as spellcasters, Rangers are a more complex class than Fighters, with more abilities and many more innate skills. One of the biggest problems GMs have with Rangers is that, like Thieves, Rangers tend to separate themselves from the party to be sneaky. A good GM needs to keep an eye on them without giving them away to the NPCs, and without losing track of what they are doing. This takes practice, but can add a lot to a game for the Ranger.

1. TRACKING: GPs will generally have information in the script for this, but not always, and you as GM can add a lot to the Ranger's experience by providing actual track information in the form it would be perceived: deeper tracks for heavier loads or armor, uneven tracks for creatures that are injured or tired, blood spots for injured creatures, dropped buttons or torn cloth with seals and symbols, and so on.
2. CHECK FOR POISON: This ability works only on food and water, nothing else.
3. ANIMAL TAMER: This only works on non-magical creatures, and if a GP hasn't thought of it being used, can wreck an encounter. The Ranger should also roleplay this ability.
4. WATHIT - There are sometimes some pretty absurd questions asked using this ability, so be prepared.. Note that the Ranger cannot determine level or class of a creature using this ability.
5. ANIMAL PACT: Make sure you check ahead of time with the Ranger regarding this ability. If they are already PACTED, there may be animals in the game that this will affect; determine how liberal you will be in determining how broadly to interpret the animal types (for instance, does ANIMAL PACT- FALCON cover all birds, just falcons, or all birds of prey?). If there is a chance they could PACT, make sure you remind the Ranger of what that provides them.
6. PITFALL/SNARE: The Ranger must stay within 30 feet of the trap for it to work.

Thieves Thieves can be a problem to keep track of because they tend to split from the party more than any other class (with perhaps the exception of Rangers). Thief abilities are sometimes difficult to keep track of, rely a lot on GM description, and are often misused. Since many of these abilities rely on people being misinformed or confused (DISTRUST, OBSCURE CLASS, and CONCEAL ITEM, for example), anything you as GM can do to keep the PCs and NPCs from having to separate in-game from out-of-game knowledge will be appreciated.

1. **BACKSTAB:** GMs, Players, GPs and NPCs have made a lot of errors when using this ability. Backstabs work unless the victim is actively trying to avoid the thief, and they only work if the recipient is struck ON THE BACK. A Thief can't backstab something without a back, and the Thief should be behind the target. Backstabs don't work on inanimate objects like locks (it's been tried!). The multiplier on the damage is ONLY for the base damage. Any additions from using a magic weapon, ENHANCE, etc. are only added afterward, and NoDefense damage does NOT stack.
2. **HEARING:** If the GP hasn't done so, get creative with this ability. There are generally a lot more places in games for it to be useful than most GWs or GPs take advantage of, and if you have a Thief, you should make sure you spot those places and prepare for it. Like LOCATE TRAPS, this ability can be used to add a lot to a game for a Thief.
3. **KILLDAGGERS:** KILLDAGGERS CANNOT BE USED IN MELEE. It is up to you to decide exactly when melee starts (see the rules for how to determine this), and who is technically in melee. The Thief must carry an object that represents their killdagger, and if they lose it they don't get to use the ability until they replace it. Ask to see their killdagger before the game starts.
4. **LOCATE TRAPS:** As with the Ranger's TRACKING ability, a GM can add a lot to the game by providing a Thief with actual trap information instead of "mechanical and two glyphs". If the GP has gone to the trouble of describing the trap (which they should have), use this to give information to the Thief. Describing sunken ground, lighter colored stone or wood, lack of dust, half-hidden holes in a wall, or the slight glitter of light on a tripwire give the Thief a feeling of actually doing something in a game. It is also worth reminding the Thief that just because they've Located the trap (or BYPASSED it) doesn't mean they've disarmed it.
5. **EVALUATE MAGIC ITEM:** Blue Book values are only available for relatively common items that are traded on the open market (e.g. gems, jewels, coins, etc.). The Thief may not be able to get an accurate estimate for items that are one of a kind, recently created, or otherwise outside the usual.
6. **MEMORY:** This can be difficult to play. Try to remember what you can, or take a small dictaphone if you have one. Usually, there will be section of the game design that relates to what the Thief is remembering. Play this one by ear. It helps to write down exactly when the Memory started and ended and some brief notes about what happened in the meantime. You should already know what is important, so this shouldn't be difficult to remember.
7. **TRACKING:** See the Ranger ability. The same suggestions go for Thieves using this one.
8. **Lockpicks:** Lockpicks are not really related to Thief abilities, but are a special problem pertaining to Thieves. Thieves tend to carry a tool kit for engaging in various activities. These kits will contain a variety of lockpicks and other items. Unfortunately, they may also contain a large selection of anachronisms, ranging from penlights and nail files to wire cutters and surgical tools. If these items get out of hand, it is within your authority to disallow any item you feel is inappropriate. If the PCs and NPCs don't seem to care, don't interfere. If you feel that their toys will

spoil the game for themselves or others, tell the Thief to use something else.

5.10 Damage The damage system is complicated, and a lot of mistakes can result (this is why there are SKs there). The difficulties stem from the fact that there are:

1. different types of damage,
2. different types of armor,
3. different places that damage can be taken, and
4. different ways to heal the wounds.

Learn the Stacking Rules in the Rulebook; they are critical for understanding how damage and armor may be used. Also remember that some damage, such as magical or poison must be called by the PC/NPC to take effect.

Types of damage are:

1. **Physical Damage** This is damage inflicted by non-magical, hand-held weapons. Other examples of damage in this category are from falling, acid, burning oil or thrown weapons such as rocks and throwing stars.
2. **Magical damage** - This is caused by spells, certain traps or magical weapons.
3. **Missile fire** - Damage caused by magical and non-magical arrows and bolts.
4. **Poison - Damage** caused by ingestion or contact with various poisons.

Protections from damage are:

1. **Armor** - This refers to non-magical armor only. Only certain classes are allowed armor. Each type of armor has a certain protective value (chain mail is worth 2 points, for instance). This protective value is subtracted from EVERY SUCCESSFUL STRIKE OF PHYSICAL DAMAGE made against the wearer. Armor offers no protection from poison.
2. **Magical protection** - Magical protection is available from an assortment of magic items and spells. Unless otherwise specified, magical protection works the same way as armor, except that the protection device or spell takes no damage itself.

Protection from spells:

Certain spells protect only against magical attacks. These spells are very specific about the damage they are effective against. A character may have magical protection and armor in addition to spells. Spells cannot be 'stacked' together (i.e. only one ENHANCE per person).

Damage Taken:

A character can lose:

1. limb points
2. life points, and
3. permanent life points (see rules for more details)

Some past disputes have taken place over the following:

1. Physical damage is taken by the limb or torso where the damaging object made contact. When the limb is reduced to zero points, it can't take any more damage. Limbs may be severed only out of combat on an immobilized victim and usually only by game design; severed limbs require twice their points in healing to be reattached and the healing must be done within one game day. Damage to limbs is deducted both from the limb and from the life point total. Damage to the torso is deducted from the life point total only.
2. Magical damage from weapons is delivered in the same way as other weapon damage. Magical damage from spells is deducted from life points only.
3. Damage from missile fire is deducted from life points only. Note, however, that some bow fire can target limbs.
4. Poisons affect life points only. Certain poisons will continue to do damage until a NEUTRALIZE POISON or similar spell is cast.
5. Certain types of damage (such as LEVEL DRAIN) are deducted from permanent life points. This type of damage is treated the same as life points for all purposes, except that permanent life points cannot be restored by normal means.

Healing:

Most healing is done through the use of spells, potions or magic items. In the case of spells, the spell-caster may specify what limb, if any, they wish to heal. All of the healing of that spell will heal both the limb and the life points for the specified amount. If the amount of healing exceeds the amount of damage the limb has sustained, the surplus heals only life points, not another limb.

Magic items that heal are generally either the same as spells or are very specific about the area they will heal (for example, a bracer that heals your sword arm only). Permanent damage can be done to life points or to limb points. If a limb is hit with permanent damage, you will need to check the game design to see if permanent damage is applicable. If the damage is against the life only, the limb takes regular damage and the life point deduction will be permanent.

5.11 Locks Most games contain several locks. The standard method of designing locks is in the rules book and is fairly self-explanatory. Unfortunately, as with all simple things, there are a few points that can cause problems.

- The rules specify that a lockpick should be made of 18-gauge copper wire with a 1/2 inch, non-insulated loop at the end (if you don't know how big this is, ask to see some at a hardware store). These dimensions are regularly overlooked by PCs and this is one of the reasons that you should have an example of a legal pick in your pocket. Check the player's pick and make sure it's the right size.
- Check that the lock the Thief will be picking matches the description (for

Type and Difficulty) in the game script. The lock system is very specific about such things and should be easy to double-check.

- When the Thief announces they want to try to unlock a lock, you will need to be present. Make sure to stay out of the Thief's way when they are doing this (try it, it's hard). Also make sure you keep extraneous people out of the way, too; this is a favorite activity for NPCs to watch, and they can be incredibly distracting.
- Just before the Thief is ready to start, test the electric circuit with their pick to make certain it is working. If the circuit isn't working, it's still possible to do the lock. You will just have to listen and watch very carefully. When the Thief touches the lock, there will be a slight click from the wire, and if the wire is long the tip will move. One thing to watch for on live locks (i.e. ones with batteries) is a Thief insulating the lockpick by placing his finger on the wire loop; this doesn't happen often, and usually pointing it out to him once will prevent it from happening again.
- If the lock is trapped in some way, it is usually activated by the first touch. Directions will be in the game design about what to do in case of a touch. It is common to have the entire team crowded around the thief while they are opening the lock. If this is the case, and you need to announce an effect that is not extremely obvious, be extra careful to speak quietly and directly to the Thief.
- If a Thief fails to open a lock, and there are no other Thieves who would like to attempt it, then the team has three options remaining:
 - (a) An eligible MU can cast an UNLOCK spell.
 - (b) They can attempt to destroy the lock, and possibly destroy the items the lock is attached to.
 - (c) They can leave the lock unopened.

5.12 Scorekeeping

SKs are in one of the best positions of anyone on course to have a good time. They get to see the entire course along with the team, and they don't really have to prepare themselves for the game. For these reasons, you will probably find it very easy to get volunteers to SK for you. Unfortunately, it's a little more difficult to get GOOD SKs. As explained earlier, the best way to do this is to start early and get them before other GMs and NPCs snatch them up. The same people who make great SKs also make great NPCs.

After you have a crew of SKs you will get the inevitable question of "What are we supposed to do?" Here is some background information that will be helpful in answering that question.

The Game Scoring System:

This works out to how the mechanics of the game from the players' points of view are tracked. Games occasionally vary from the standard scoring systems and there will be an explanation in the game design of how that particular game will be scored. The standard method is as follows. The following information needs to be kept for

every player:

1. Damage. Keep track of all limb and life points. It is also important to note any incidents of severed limbs, unconsciousness or death.
2. Spell / Ability points. Certain classes have spell and ability points that are used up by casting or attempting to cast spells or use abilities. Keep track of how many points have been spent.
3. Arrows. All arrows that are fired are lost. The SK should help the players to keep count.
4. Treasure. Keep track of magic items and money that a character starts the game with, and any changes that occur during the game. Sometimes things are lost, traded, used or stolen, and the PC isn't always aware of these things at the time.
5. There are occasionally special game-related items that will need to be recorded. Examples are curses or blessings that may be picked up on course without the player's knowledge.
6. An ongoing score sheet for the character after each encounter.

The Score Sheets:

Score sheets for each game and each player will be provided by the Registry on the day of the game. One sheet will have a stick figure on it and is used to keep track of damage and other information that changes during the game. The second one will relate directly to the scoring of the players during the game (usually on such subjective things as roleplaying and team participation). You should have your SK's quickly check over the first sheet with the players the information on them is accurate. The second sheet and the scoring methods used for players is currently under review by the Society Registry Committee. You should check with your Chapter Registry Chair to determine what methods your chapter is currently using to rate players (if any), and ask the Registry personnel to walk you through the steps so that you can accurately rate your players.

The first sheet will need to have the following beginning balances: character type, level, costume color, life points, limb points, spell / ability points, arrows magic items and armor (magic or mundane). These numbers will be updated throughout the game either when the SK sees an activity that will change one of them, or when they are informed of such activity by a PC or other SK. Although players should be able to remember most of this information, they regularly won't. The reason to have the SK keep it is purely for bookkeeping efficiency. If a PC asks how many arrows (or whatever) they have left, tell them.

At the end of each encounter the SK's should ask each of the PC's they are scoring if they have done anything that will change any of their balances (like cast a spell, for instance). If so, make the appropriate corrections and move on to the next player. This should be done as quickly as possible and should never be allowed to interfere with the flow of the game.

5.13 Using the Radios You may be provided with a radio while you are on course. If so, there are a few rules to know.

Give it back when you are done. These things are extremely expensive and you will probably have to give up an ID to get a radio in the first place.

The main purpose of the radio is safety. If someone is hurt don't hesitate to call the Safety Officer, and be prepared to give the following information:

1. Identify yourself (it's hard to tell over the radio)
2. Give your location.
3. Identify who else is present.
4. Identify who is injured.
5. Explain exactly what happened to cause the injury.
6. Explain exactly what you or anyone else has done since the injury occurred.
7. Tell the SO if you or anyone else present is certified in First Aid, Medicine, Paramedics or are an EMT

The radio should be quiet most of the time other than for emergency and staff use. It is extremely distracting to the players to listen to you talk on the radio, even if your chapter has headsets. If it is necessary to talk to someone during a game, put at least 50 feet between you and the team before you start. If this is too much work, you didn't need to talk in the first place. Similarly, if someone calls you, leave the party as quickly as possible and then have your conversation. The only exception is if the caller is the Safety Officer. In this case, respond immediately to whatever they want.

The radios are sometimes useful for logistical purposes. Examples are to tell the GM behind you there is a possible traffic jam (because you are in line), or to advise the GP of the positions of the first and last teams.

The importance of discreet radio use cannot be overemphasized. Every time you talk on the radio, it broadcasts from the belt of the GM for every team but yours.

DON'T TALK UNLESS IT IS IMPORTANT!

5.14 GP Syndrome By the day of the game, the GP is usually a wreck. This doesn't involve you directly, but you will probably have to deal with it. Putting on a game is a tremendous amount of work, and it is hard to simply stand back and see if it runs like it was written. The people who are in the best position to make it work are the GMs. The GP chose you because they thought you were together enough to run their game, which is quite a compliment. Do your best to make things work the way they had in mind. It must have been a good idea or you wouldn't be a GM at all.

5.15 Photographers ‘Say CHEEEEEESE’

Most teams have a photographer with them. Although sometimes these folks can prove to be a pain, they are usually a great boon since everyone likes to look at pictures of themselves and their friends in game. Consequently, everyone wants the pictures to be as good as possible. Here are a few pointers that will help.

Suggest a team picture before the game starts. This lets everyone get in a position to show off their costumes before the sweat and dirt take over.

Stay out of the pictures. The players want pictures of themselves and the NPCs, not pictures of you. In the spirit of your invisibility this should be fairly natural, but remember the viewer of the pictures won't necessarily understand that you aren't really there.

Develop a set of hand signals with the photographer to let them know when things will be happening. Obviously, this needs to be subtle, and if the players realize you are doing it, you will have to stop immediately.

Provide the photographer with a copy of the game in advance, if at all possible. This will enable them to make the storyline flow better because they know where to take a lot of pictures and where to only take a few. This will also help them to know who the major NPCs are. (Also, it allows for a last minute substitution if nobody shows up to SK.)

If necessary, give the photographer a bit of instruction in invisibility (they may never have tried before). It may make a great picture to have a band of zombies bearing down on the photographer, but it is usually dangerous for the photographer and disruptive to the game.

After the players leave an encounter, the NPCs are usually happy to pose for a few pictures. The photographer may want to hang out in the woods until their team leaves and then quickly take a few pictures with the NPCs.

Chapter 6: After the Game

6.1 Paperwork

After the game is done, the PC's are required to fill out several forms and may have some questions for you. At the same time, you will be asked to fill out some forms yourself. Yours will include a game evaluation sheet and finishing up any scoresheets you have been carrying on course. Let the players see their own score sheets at this time if they want to, and be prepared to discuss them. Doing this can avoid a lot of hard feelings that may arise if the players find out from the Registry two weeks later that you gave them a bad score on something. Meet with the SK's and make sure that they have filled out all forms correctly. They should have been doing this throughout the game, so it should just be a matter of collecting the paper. If the SK's aren't done, they should finish up now.

Be sure to get the game treasure from the players. All players are required to turn in all of their gold and some of the magic items. The game design will list the items that they can keep. Make a note on the player sheets if there have been any permanent changes in the character that the Registry will need to know about (i.e. curses, blessings, permanent life point loss, magic items lost).

Try to review each player's overall performance for a while after the game. What sort of magic did they pick up? What problems did they have? Who did they have interesting encounters with? You may be asked by a future GM or GP to recount something that happened in the game, and it will be much easier to do if you think about it now before you forget. Reviewing will also be helpful if (eek) you have to deal with a protest. It is also helpful to discuss things with the players and NPCs at the After-Game Party.

6.2 Cleanup

After the game is over and you have finished filling out the paperwork, help the NPCs clean up the game site. Most games take place on rented or public land and it is necessary to remove any trace of IFGS presence as quickly as possible. This both encourages the land owner or rangers to let us use the land again and keeps the props from getting destroyed, thus reducing the budgets for future games.

You should also encourage the PCs to help clean up. There are a lot of people on the course who went through a great deal of work so that the players could have a good time, and they shouldn't have the entire burden of cleanup.

If there is a PC camp involved in the game, it is your responsibility to make sure that it is cleaned up. Be helpful and leave things better than they were when you found them.

6.3 Protests

No matter how hard you try, you may still have some player file a protest about one of your decisions during a game. This is not nearly as stressful as you might expect. If the Sanctioning Committee overrules you, accept it; they are not saying that you are a bad person or even a bad GM. Rather, they are indicating that in retrospect they feel that something should be changed. It may have been a good decision at the time, and it is likely that it was the best decision with the available information.

No one will hold it against you.

If you have to deal with a protest, you should do your best to remember what happened to cause the problem in the first place. This probably won't be very hard because the player will have complained about it at the time. This means that you have already thought about the situation once, and now all you have to do is explain your reasoning. If a player comes out of the game unhappy about something, you might want to note that they do have the option to protest and mention that the protest procedure is available in the Sanctioning Committee Handbook; if they feel they have a valid concern, they will most likely do so, which will bring things out in the open and get them taken care of. Otherwise, they have no reason to complain.

Don't ever allow a player to use a protest to threaten you. If they want to protest something, it is their right to do so, but this should never affect your decision. Make the best decisions you can and stick with them. The PCs don't have to agree with you.

Chapter 7: The Care and Feeding of GMs - A Guide for Players

There will no doubt be a few PCs who will read this manual in hopes of gleaning some insight into scoring well in a game. Well, HERE IT IS! Follow these 10 rules for a better score.

1. Know and follow the intent of the rules.
2. Be considerate of other peoples' rights. Sometimes things will not go exactly as you would like, but sometimes they will. Don't be a jerk. Pick up your trash. Help where you can.
3. Don't argue with the GM, even if you know you are right. Explain your point and get on with the game. If necessary, file a protest later, but don't delay the game.
4. Don't complain about trivial things. If you complain about everything, your GMs will train themselves not to listen to you. If all questions are important, the GM will know that you really believe what you are saying, rather than trying to manipulate them and /or the rules in your favor. This really does work better.
5. Be nice when you have to wait. Everyone on the course has been working hard for you to have a good time, and they are working now to get things going again.
6. Come prepared. Bring enough food, water, clothes, flags, duct tape, etc. to fill all of your needs. Try to be the one who gives away a piece of duct tape instead of the one who needs it.
7. Have fun. If you don't like one particular piece of the game don't let it destroy your whole day. The next encounter will certainly be better if you aren't pouting about what happened in the last one.
8. Roleplay. This is what it is all about anyway. If you have to, die gracefully. This will improve everyone else's game as well as your own.
9. Play the game that you are in. For people who have been in many games, it is not uncommon to hear a conversation about a game that occurred two years ago, involving two completely unrelated characters. Aside from the obvious lack of roleplaying involved, this is a tremendous insult to the GM, GP, and all of the other people who are trying to entertain you.
10. Help clean up. This will have no impact on your score but it will help your karma tremendously. It will also increase the likelihood of your being selected for roles like LM, GM, GA, or gak...GP. It is also a great way to make friends.

GOOD GAMING TO YOU!



International Fantasy Gaming Society

Game Master's Handbook

Second Edition