

IFGS: WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT WORK

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The International Fantasy Gaming Society (IFGS) is a volunteer-run organization dedicated to the production of "live-scale" medieval fantasy role-playing games for its members. Our 600 members are found throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries, with local IFGS Chapters in Alabama, California, Colorado, Georgia, New England, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin, Australia, and Greenland.

Now that you know what we are, you're probably wondering how our system works. If you are read on for an explanation of how the fun works.

The recipe for a Game begins with any club member who desires to be a "Game Writer." Our Sanctioning Committee (essentially an editorial board) helps Game Writers in their task of writing and polishing Game Scripts to guide their games' production. Such game scripts are similar to "adventure modules" by referees who run "table-top" role-playing campaigns; the script describes a specific fantasy environment (such as a dungeon, or a medieval weapons tourney), and sets up the situations and encounters (perhaps a kidnapped princess to rescue, or bandits to capture). The difference between "table-top" fantasy role-playing games and IFGS "live-scale" games is that IFGS members actually wear costumes and assume the personas of their fantasy characters. For each game, IFGS members are recruited into three groups: Player Characters (PC's), Non-Player Characters (NPC's), and Production Crew.

The Player Characters (PCs) are IFGS members who have intentionally not read the game script...so as to not ruin their enjoyment of the game's surprises or challenges. PC's are usually organized into small groups (1-10 members) under the leadership of one individual (the team's "Loremaster"). The PCs' task is to go through the game and solve the problem, save the maiden, set wrongs aright, or face the other challenges in the game writer. In order to complete a challenge, the team may have to decipher clues from old scrolls, question a wizard, or fight (or avoid?) "bad guys." Ultimately, however, the actual outcome of the game (good or bad) rests upon the actions of the PC's, and the decisions they make.

The Safety Officer is just as his name says, he is there to make sure the game runs safely. The Bank Representative is responsible for seeing that everyone gets the appropriate points they earn for helping with the game or playing in the game (these people also get treasure for playing). The Treasury Representative is at the game to make sure everyone involved pays the appropriate fees and registration for the game. The Props Coordinator does just that, he coordinates the props needed for the game.

The NPC Coordinator again does as his title says by coordinating the NPCs. The Game Masters lead the PCs (these will be defined later) through the game functioning as an information tool for the PCs. The Watch Dog is responsible for seeing that the game runs the way it was written and that no changes are made without approval by him. Next, are the Non-Player Characters (NPCs). These are people who are recruited to play the parts defined in the game script by the game writer. They are aware of the plot of the game storyline and will play the parts in the game that the PCs will encounter.

Now that you are familiar with the personnel and the jobs that comprise a game you may want to know what kinds of games we have. The we have are divided into four basic types. These types are: 1) Major games (usually line courses); 2) Mini games; 3) Tournament games; and 4) Bar Games.

A Major game is one that has more than 20 participants and usually has a line course with teams of PCs encountering NPCs along a path (thus called a line course) designed by the writer. These games will last more than 4 hours and normally will have a set number of teams comprised of a set number of PCs of a certain level range. The game writer will define what level of PCs may play (we have levels 1 - 10 in our system). For example, a game may have 6 teams with 6 members on each team from levels 1-3.

Mini games are much like Major games but have less than 20 participants. These will normally will last less than 4 hours and will usually have 1 or 2 teams at the most. Writers usually design this type of game for a specific reason such as a character resurrection, recovery of a characters body, etc.

The third type of game, the Tournament game, has an unlimited number of PCs, usually only a few NPCs and normally a short line course (if there is one at all). The Dallas Chapter has an annual weapons tournament and fair. We also have two tournament style games that we run throughout the year. One of these is an archery tournament and the other is a "capture the flag" game. I would encourage you to come to "Conquering Banners" (our "capture the flag" game) scheduled for April 24 (see the flyer elsewhere in this newsletter for more details on the game).

Perhaps the type of game that is least run is the Bar game (also known as a Room game). These games are much like a party. They are often ran to set-up a Major game by distributing lore for the major game; hold a draft for another game or for political intrigue or such. Games of this style are normally indoors while the other styles are usually held outside.

Major and Mini games are written for a certain level of characters. This is to prevent 1st level (new) characters from having to compete against 6th level (old) characters. Games are usually designed for characters in the same level of playing (i.e., 1-3, 4-6, etc.). Tournament games, however, are usually open to any and all levels while Bar games can be limited to certain levels or open to all levels.

Now that you have the information and are familiar with how the systems works it's time to try it out. If you need more information or want to talk to someone we have a Membership Chairman, R. Gordon Griffith, who can be reached at (214) 278-2184. You can also call a board member or committee chairman listed on page 2 of this newsletter. Come to a game, try it and you'll find it IS a LOT of fun. Welcome to IFGS and good luck gaming.