

Ready/Bolt/Flow

Chase Mechanic - Beta Version 0.9

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Preface

This is a work-in-progress chase mechanic for general use. It's designed around street chases, but is meant to be general enough for broad use in vehicle chases, player escapes, players pursuits, PVP action, unarmed, ranged, etc. This was designed for use in the Fully Automated! Solarpunk RPG, which is reflected in example text.

This chase mechanic is designed as a flexible open-source toolkit to be used as described or heavily hacked. The instructions as written are provided as a starting point, and GMs are encouraged to read them through this lens.

If you're interested in providing feedback or collaborating on this document please connect over any of the social media links on the Fully Automated website:

<https://fullyautomatedrpg.com>.

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Chase Instructions for Players

Within the Ready/Bolt/Flow chase mechanic you will attempt to navigate an environment faster than your adversaries by selecting one of five possible actions at the start of each round. The environment is represented by a track that includes features which hinder the characters. Each player must choose the action that will help them advance while keeping aware of the ways their choices may impact future choices or be impacted by other characters' actions.

Playable Actions

Players select their action at the start of each round from the following five options:

Move	Distance	Special Effect	Defense Effect
Ready	2	Roll for additional sprint tokens	Advantaged
Run	3	None	Neutral
Flow	Variable	Roll to attempt a challenge	Disadvantaged
Bolt	3 or 4	Spend Sprint Tokens to move 4 spaces (If you're the rearmost player playing the most Sprint Tokens)	Automatic Success
Strike	2	Roll to restrain or attack another character	Automatic Failure

Rolls

Some actions require players to roll two six sided Fudge dice to determine the outcome of an attempt. If any of these actions are Disadvantaged, players roll one die and the other is set to [-]. If an action is Advantaged, a player rolls one die and the other is set to [+].

Sprint Tokens

Sprint tokens are used to play the **Bolt** action and to advantage rolls (or remove a Disadvantage) when performing **Flow** or **Strike** actions or defending against a **Strike**.

Players start a chase with a number of sprint tokens determined by their character's speed:

Speed	Starting Sprint Tokens
16 or less	0
17 - 20	1
21 - 24	2
25 - 28	3
29 or more	4

Players can also accrue Sprint Tokens by playing the **Ready** action or by rolling a critical success when playing a **Flow** action.

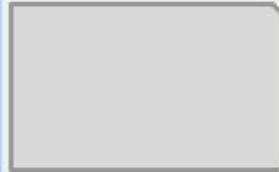
Run

Move 3 spaces.

If attacked, roll for defense normally (with 2dF).

Run

Move 3



Defensive Effect:

Neutral (roll normally)

Flow

Play Flow to move 3 spaces and attempt to take the shorter route when passing through a challenge. Roll 2DF to determine success.

- [+][+]: take the (+) path and also gain a Sprint Token
- [+]: Take the (+) path
- [o]: Take the default path
- [-]: Take the (-) path OR take the hazard damage
- [-][-]: Take the (-) path AND take the hazard damage

If attacked while playing Flow, roll defense with disadvantage.

Flow

Variable

Roll to attempt challenge

++	+ Path, +1 S.T.
+	+ Path
o	Default path
-	- path OR damage
--	- path AND damage

Defensive Effect:

Disadvantages Defense

Ready

The Ready action lets players move 2 spaces instead of the standard 3 in exchange for the chance to earn additional sprint tokens. After playing the Ready action, roll a single fudge die.

- If you roll a [-]: You get nothing
- If you roll a [o]: You get one additional Sprint Token
- If you roll a [+]: You get two additional Sprint Tokens

Playing a Sprint Token guarantees the outcome of replacing it with two Sprint Tokens.

If attacked while playing Sprint, roll defense with advantage.

Ready

Move 2

Roll for additional Sprint Tokens

+	+2 Sprint Token
o	+1 Sprint Token
-	nada

Defensive Effect:

Advantages Defense

Bolt

Wager a Sprint Token to advance a fourth space, so long as no one behind you plays Bolt as well.

You can also commit a second Sprint Token to the action by playing the card upside-down in order to outbid a player in the same position or further back. Players of equal position and bid are jointly successful.

Bolt

Move 3 (or 4)

Rear-most player to play Bolt who wagered the most ST can move 4 spaces

Play upright to bid 1 ST;
play inverted to bid 2 ST

Defensive Effect:

Automatic Success!

Playing Bolt provides an automatic success on defense (regardless of whether you're the rear-most player with the highest bid).

Strike

Strike lets a player attempt to stun another character within range. The range for an unarmed attack is 1 space, meaning the same space as the attacker or an adjacent one. If your encounter allows for ranged attacks, the range will be set by the GM.

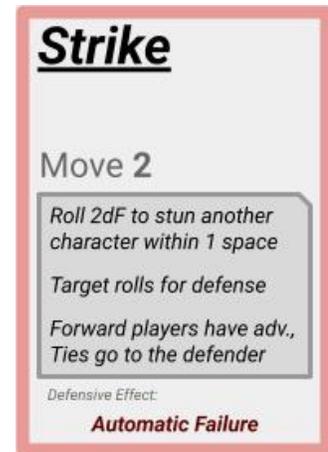
Upon playing the Strike action, a player declares their target. Then they and their target each roll fudge dice against each other. If either the attacker or target is in front of the other, that player has advantage.

If the attacker rolls higher, the target is stunned, and cannot move on the next round. Players can also play the Strike action against a stunned character to restrain them, after which they cannot move unless an ally plays Strike to release them.

The target's defense is set by the action they played:

Bolt:	Defense is an automatic success. Attack fails.
Ready:	Target defends with advantage.
Run:	Target rolls for 2dF for defense neutrally.
Flow:	Target rolls for defense with disadvantage.
Strike:	Defense automatically fails.

You still play your Strike action normally, and if attacking a player who has attacked you, their defense fails as well, and both of you are stunned.



Mode of Play

Play consists of rounds. All players (including the GM) reveal their action simultaneously, then resolve them. Strike actions are resolved first, then action is resolved from front position to back, seating position, or whatever works best for the table.

The win conditions of any encounter are set by the GM based on the story context.

Ready/Bolt/Flow

Summary Description for GMs

Within a chase, all players select an action and reveal it at the start of each round in order to try and catch up to or get away from their opponents.

This system is primarily intended for running simple pursuit encounters, however it has been designed with the intention that it be flexible enough for variations on this concept, such as races or vehicle pursuits. For now, though, these instructions will describe how to play out simple street chases.

Within a chase, players act as either **Pursuers** or **Evaders**. Evaders seek to escape by maintaining or increasing the separation distance until they fulfill an escape condition. Typically this means reaching an **Exit**, however encounters can be designed in which the escape condition is remaining uncaught a certain number of rounds or even restraining their pursuers.

Pursuers seek to capture the Evaders by reaching them and **Restraining** them. However encounters may establish other objectives, such as remaining within a specific distance for a certain number of rounds.

Playable Actions

Players select their action at the start of each round from the following five options:

Move	Distance	Special Effect	Defense Effect
Ready	2	Roll for additional sprint tokens	Advantaged
Run	3	None	Neutral
Flow	Variable	Roll to attempt a challenge	Disadvantaged
Bolt	4 or 3	Spend Sprint Tokens to move 4 spaces (If no one behind you played equal or more Sprint Tokens)	Automatic Success
Strike	2	Roll to restrain or attack another character	Automatic Failure

These actions are designed to make choices in a chase fast and intuitive. Each offers benefits and trade-offs, and their utility varies based on the choices of other adversaries.

Ultimately, the best way to catch or escape capture is to correctly intuit the actions of your opponent and play accordingly.

Ready

The Ready action lets players move 2 spaces instead of the standard 3 in exchange for the chance to earn additional sprint tokens. After playing the Ready action, roll a single fudge die.

- If you roll a [-]: You get nothing
- If you roll a [o]: You get one additional Sprint Token
- If you roll a [+]: You get two additional Sprint Tokens



Run

Run is the standard action. Playing Run lets you move 3 spaces. It provides no additional effects. It allows players to roll for defense neutrally.

Flow

The Flow action allows a player to roll to attempt a challenge. See the section on Challenges for details

- [+] [+]: take the (+) path and also gain a Sprint Token
- [+] : Take the (+) path
- [o] : Take the default path
- [-] : Take the (-) path OR take the hazard damage
- [-] [-] : Take the (-) path AND take the hazard damage

If attacked while playing, the player rolls defense with disadvantage.



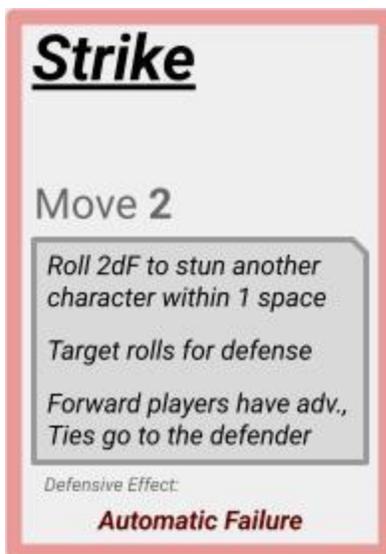
Bolt

The Bolt action allows one player to spend one or more Sprint Tokens to advance an additional space, but only if no other player in front of them plays Bolt or wagers more Sprint Tokens.

Players must commit to spending one or two Sprint Tokens when they play Bolt. Playing the card upright indicates the player is wagering a single Sprint Token; playing it inverted indicates that they're spending two. In online play or verbal play, players can declare that they are playing "Bolt-1" or "Bolt-2" to indicate the number of Sprint Tokens they're wagering. Players must commit at least one Sprint Token to play Bolt.



A player who plays bolt receives an automatic success on their defense, regardless of whether they are the rear-most player who wagered the most Sprint tokens.



Strike

Strike allows a player to attempt to stun another character within range. The range for an unarmed attack is 1 space, meaning the same space as the attacker or an adjacent one. If your encounter allows for ranged attacks, the range will be set by the GM, but is typically 2 spaces.

Upon playing the Strike action, a player declares their target, then they and their target each roll against each other.

The target's roll for defense may be advantaged or disadvantaged based on the action they played.

If they attempt to play **Bolt** (even if they are not the player who plays Bolt successfully) their defense is an automatic success and the attack against them fails.

If a target has played **Ready**, they roll their defense with advantage.

If a target has played **Run**, they roll their defense normally.

If a target has played **Flow**, they apply disadvantage to their defense.

And if a target has played **Strike** as well, their defense automatically fails. They can still play their Strike action against a target – including the player who has attacked them – but the attack against them is successful by default.

Sprint Tokens

Sprint tokens are the currency of effort and skill that players can spend to perform the Bolt action and to advantage rolls when performing Flow or Strike actions.

Players start a chase with a number of sprint tokens determined by their character's speed:

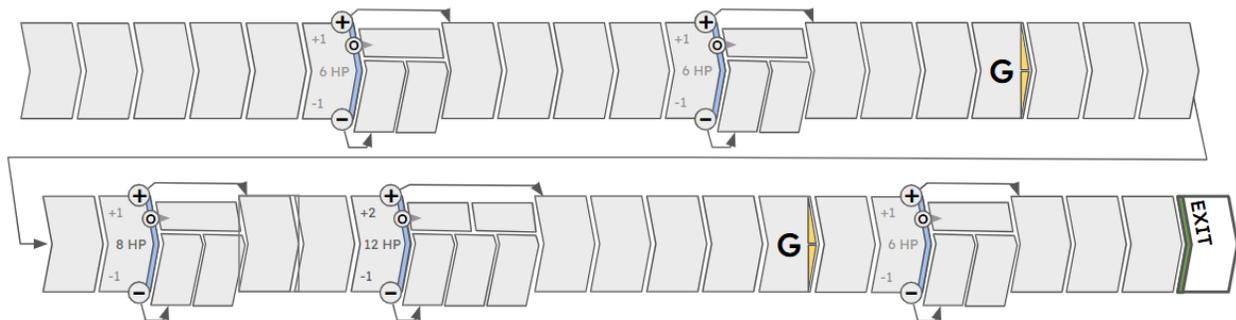
Speed	Starting Sprint Tokens
16 or less	0
17 - 20	1
21 - 24	2
25 - 28	3
29 or more	4

Players can also accrue Sprint Tokens by playing the Ready action or by rolling a critical success on a Flow maneuver.

The Environment

Chases are run on a track which lays out the locations of environmental features. Features which challenge a character's movement are **Obstacles**. The two most common obstacles are **Challenges** and **Gates**. A space which lets evaders complete their escape (typically found at the end of the chase track) is an **Exit**.

- **Challenges** are hazards along the path that offer players a choice between taking a path of known length & safety or attempting to bypass the obstacle to take a shorter path at the risk of possibly taking a route that is longer, taking damage, or both.
- **Gates** are spaces on which a player cannot continue through without stopping. Players must end their turn on gates, after which they can resume moving on the next round.
- **Exits** are the termination points of a chase track. When evaders reach the Exit, they have escaped.



Challenges

A Challenge is an obstacle that offers players the option of skipping spaces by performing a Flow action. Each challenge has the following components:

The default path is the path a player takes through a challenge if they play the Run action instead of the Flow action.

The bypass path is the path a player takes if they roll successfully to perform the Flow action, bypassing the default path. In the figure above, the space before the challenge lists the number of spaces bypassed by the bypass path next to a plus symbol.

The longer path is the path a player must take if they fail their roll to attempt the Flow action. In the figure above, its length relative to the default path is written in the space preceding the challenge next to the minus symbol.

The damage penalty is the amount of damage a player takes if they incur damage for failing their roll when attempting to play the Flow action.

If the player declines the challenge (by playing Run), they move through the challenge along the default path. If they attempt the challenge (by playing Flow) then they roll for the outcome of the attempt.

[+][+] - Critical Success: The player bypasses the default path and gains a Sprint Token.

[+] - Success: The player bypasses the default path.

[o] - Neutral: The player takes the default path.

[-] - Failure: The player must choose to take the longer path or the damage penalty.

[-][-] - Critical Failure: The player must take the longer path and the damage penalty.

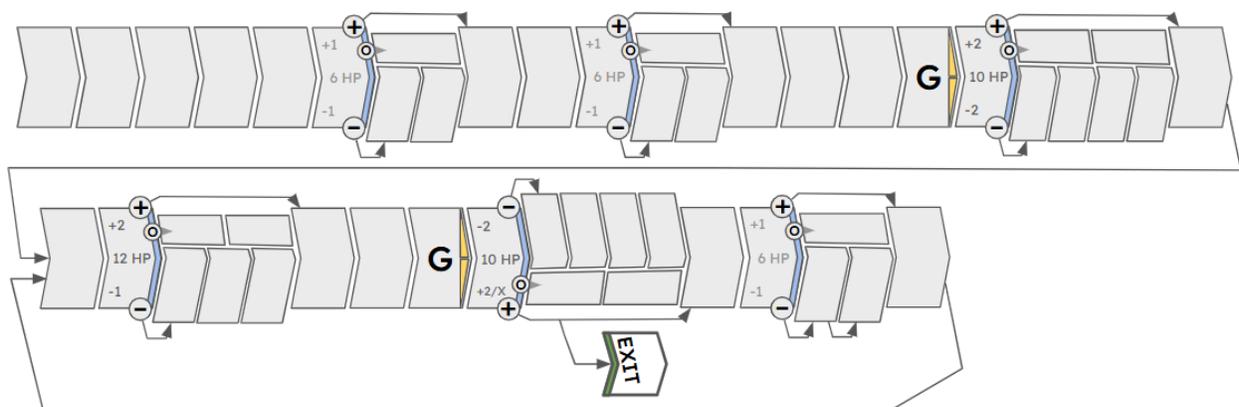
Gates

Gate spaces force players to stop when they reach them. Players can continue normally on the next round, but regardless of what action they've played, they must end their movement when they reach a Gate space.

By forcing players to halt, gates strongly incentivize players to play a ready action if a gate is 2 spaces away (since they won't be able to move three spaces anyway) or play a Bolt action if a gate is four spaces away (so that they won't begin their next turn one space away from the gate). Gates impose a speed control and a complication that can help an evader breakaway from their pursuers or help pursuers catch up to evaders depending on how well players manage their movements.

Exits

Exits are termination points at which a character exits the chase track.



Setup

These setup instructions assume that a GM already has the encounter written out. For instructions on developing encounters, see the section on [Designing Encounters](#).

Materials

You'll need:

- Fudge Dice
- A chase track
- Tokens for all the characters in a chase
- Hit point trackers
- A way to track their sprint tokens

In Roll20, hit points and sprint tokens can be tracked on a character token using the character stat bubbles given to each character token in Roll20. HP and tokens can also be tracked in person using physical tokens, counters or by using a spreadsheet or notepad.

Placing Tokens

Place tokens as described in the encounter.

Mode of Play

Declaring Actions

Announce the beginning of a round and instruct players to select their first action. Once players have had a few opportunities to do so, GMs are encouraged to give players a 10 second window to select their action and then instruct players to reveal their action. Inform players that if they fail to make a decision by this time their action defaults to Run.

Resolving Actions

After actions have been revealed for the round, resolve any Strike actions first. After that, resolve the other actions. It is recommended to resolve actions from the forward-most player backward, but this can also be resolved by seating order or whatever else makes sense for the table.

Narration

Refer to the descriptions of features in an encounter to translate the outcomes of player choices and dice rolls into story beats. See the following for examples.

Challenges

Crowds

A Mime, Magician, or Dancer; a food truck; a shepherd and their flock; a class of children

<i>"Ahead, a dense crowd is captivated by a juggler throwing whatever the crowd hands her high into the air."</i>		
Safe Path	Successful Attempt	Failed Attempt
<p><i>"Moss takes a wide path around the back of the crowd"</i></p> <p><i>"Fern slows down as they approach and then curtly shoves and swims their way through the mass of bodies."</i></p>	<p><i>"Root heads straight through the narrow gap between the audience and performer, threading between flying hand tools by inches"</i></p> <p><i>"The juggler has set up a slack line for their act, and Xyla sprints across it as though running on air"</i></p>	<p><i>"Trunk tries to find a gap that isn't really there. As their shoulder clips someone heavy they go into a spin and wipe out in the dirt."</i></p> <p><i>"Canopy tries to follow on the slack line, but their footing is off. They splay out and tumble haphazardly into a small table covered in fruit and beanbags."</i></p>

Vehicles & Large Items

A delivery truck; a cargo octopod; a freight mech;

<i>"Across your path is a massive hottub, about to be hoisted with a small crane into an apartment above."</i>		
Safe Path	Successful Attempt	Failed Attempt
<p><i>"Moss runs to the side of it, working their way past the appliance and the confused people getting ready to hoist it."</i></p> <p><i>"Fern runs up and squeezes carefully between the hot tub and the minicrane."</i></p>	<p><i>"Root runs right at the hot tub, and vaults the front side, then swings on one of the suspension ropes over the other side with no loss of speed at all."</i></p> <p><i>"Xyla runs at it, and at the last moment goes into a twist, rolling their body over the front side and continuing the roll all the way until they flip back over the back side onto their feet."</i></p>	<p><i>"Trunk tries to jump over the front but doesn't clear it. Their foot catches, and they trip painfully into a face plant in the hot tub.."</i></p> <p><i>"Canopy rolls their body over the front of the hot tub, but mistimes their exit, landing on their hip instead of their feet."</i></p>

Traffic

A steady stream of bikes, skateboarders, small vehicles, etc.

<i>"You reach a boulevard filled with light vehicles moving swiftly along."</i>		
Safe Path	Successful Attempt	Failed Attempt
<p><i>"Moss waits for a crossing signal to activate, then hurries across."</i></p> <p><i>"Fern jogs up a ramp to a foot bridge and then back down to street level on the other side."</i></p>	<p><i>"Root sees an opening in the traffic and manages to dash through unhit."</i></p> <p><i>"With a gesture Xyla summons a massive AR "Stop!" sign in the road, compelling enough people to slow or stop to cross successfully."</i></p>	<p><i>"Trunk makes a break for an opening, but a passing speed skater heads for the same space and both go down."</i></p> <p><i>"Canopy summons a virtual stop sign and tries to run across, but at least one pedicab doesn't see it and knocks her over."</i></p>

Infrastructure

Fence; Bridge; Drainage ditch; Railing; Benches or other outdoor furniture; Hedge

<i>"Between you and the next rooftop is a recessed greenhouse 2m across and 1 m high."</i>		
Safe Path	Successful Attempt	Failed Attempt
<p><i>"Moss carefully crosses a narrow catwalk that runs over the greenhouse."</i></p> <p><i>"Fern takes a slightly longer path to the wide walkway around the greenhouse to the left."</i></p>	<p><i>"Root sprints nimbly across the narrow catwalk without breaking their stride."</i></p> <p><i>"Xyla smoothly leaps through an open window hatch, then back out another one onto the next roof."</i></p>	<p><i>"Trunk tries to cross the catwalk without slowing and missteps, falling through the safety glass."</i></p> <p><i>"Canopy slips into the open window, but aims poorly diving out, and collides with the narrow frame."</i></p>

Atmospheric & Environmental

Smoke; Rough Terrain; Waves; Slippery rocks; Darkness; Bright light; Heat

<i>"The alley behind the bazaar is filled with smoke from the kitchen fire inside."</i>		
Safe Path	Successful Attempt	Failed Attempt
<p><i>"Moss crouches below the height of the windows venting smoke and proceeds to the far end."</i></p> <p><i>"Fern pauses to don a respirator before continuing through the smoke."</i></p>	<p><i>"Root kicks off one wall and then the other in the narrow alley, moving swiftly above the dark smoke."</i></p> <p><i>"Xyla takes a deep breath and then closes their eyes and moves on by dead reckoning."</i></p>	<p><i>"Trunk tries to kick wall-to-wall to get above the smoke, but isn't fast enough, and on their next breath falls down coughing."</i></p> <p><i>"Canopy closes their eyes and tries to push through, but collides painfully with a fire escape ladder along one wall."</i></p>

Successful maneuvers

As the GM, you can preplan specific maneuvers and parkour moves for players to attempt to circumvent a challenge, or just describe something that impedes the players path and let them describe the technique by which they hope to overcome the impediment. Below are some example maneuvers. These can be used to plan chase encounters or provided to players to help them improvise during play.

- Leaping over something
- Wall jumping over something
- Wall running
- Hand-over-handing along an overhead cable
- Running along a railing or other side barrier
- Dodging through a crowd or other cluster of obstacles
- Rolling under something
- Using a grapnel or piece of infrastructure to swing over or around something
- Calling out or signaling in cyberspace to compel people to clear a path

Gates

Doors and Gates

“There’s a gate at the end of the alley. It’s unlocked, but made of heavy steel.”

“There’s a turn style door at the entrance to the plaza”

Sharp corners

“The sidewalk switches back to head up a hillside, requiring you to stop and reverse direction.”

Exits

Descriptions for an exit can include a change of mobility, such as jumping on a departing train or into an awaiting aircar. They can include passing into a restricted area, such as going through a locked door into an apartment building or office building. They can also include passing through a place where following paths becomes infeasible, such as an elevator that doesn’t report its destination.

“MissMe runs through the doors into the complex. Without credentials, you can’t follow.”

“Brie hops into the van and it speeds away before the door is even closed.”

“The elevator doors close. By the time they reopen, Viv will have disappeared into the undercity.”

A Sample Encounter

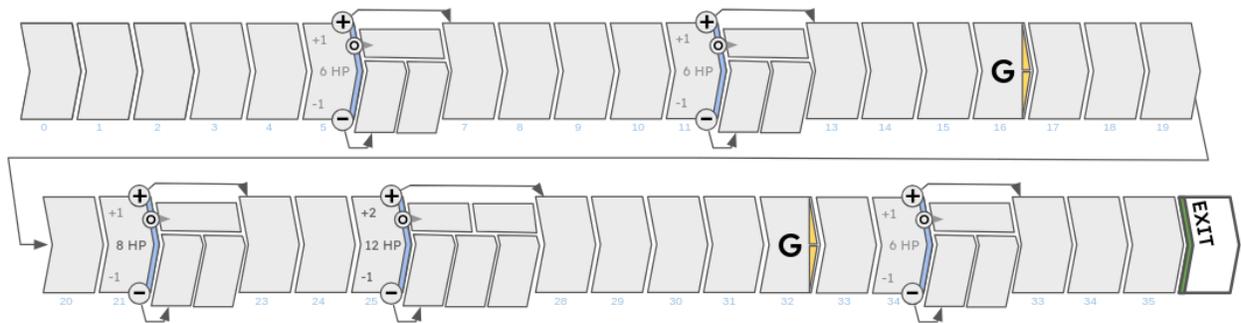
Insert the relevant info for a chase. Four players are trying to catch two evaders in an arcology.

Footchase through the Tenderloin Tenderloin District

Character	Speed	Sprint Tokens	HP	Starting Positions	Attacks
Adversary 1	19	1	20	1	👊 Punch
Adversary 2	22	2	20	2	👊 Punch
Adversary 3	25	3	20	3	👊 Punch

Setup

This encounter uses the Tenderloin map, with players on space 0 and the adversaries on space 4.



Descriptions

Starting

'They take off running down the elevated promenade.'

Challenge 1

'A work crew is touching up the ground mural you're running on. The foot traffic is compressed as folks walk around their work space.'

[+1 Path] : Run through the work area without tripping or disturbing anything

[Default Path] : Hurry around the work area

[-1 Path] : Try to run through and trip, crashing into a table of paints and brushes

Challenge 2

'At a junction, a group of people are walking several long tandem bikes around the turn. As you arrive, they're still in the process of clearing the intersection.'

[+1 Path] : Jump over the bike in the middle of the intersection.

[Default Path] : Hastily run around a bike and past the person walking the bike behind it

[-1 Path] : Try to jump and fail to clear it, knocking over the bike and crashing to the ground

Gate 1

'They run towards an active construction zone. To enter, everyone has to virtually confirm receipt of the warning notice before the entry gate opens for them.'

Challenge 3

'They're heading from the third story level down to the second. You can take a ladder or a firepole.'

[+1 Path] : Slide down the fire pole

[Default Path] : Descend the ladder

[-1 Path] : Attempt the firepole but land badly

Challenge 4

'They're descending from the second story down to the ground level. You can take a ladder or attempt the jump.'

[+1 Path] : Jump and roll

[Default Path] : Descend the ladder

[-1 Path] : Jump and land badly

Gate 2

'They run for a heavy traffic-control gate that leads out of the construction site and into a plaza.'

Challenge 5

'They head for an escalator down into the BART station'

[+1 Path] : Slide down the strip between two escalators

[Default Path] : Run down an escalator

[-1 Path] : Attempt to slide the strip but collide with a backpack and fall off, onto an escalator

Exit

'They get through the doors of a departing train just as they close.'

Designing Encounters

Designing a chase encounter can be broken down into a set of parameters and their narrative descriptions. Many of the initial design parameters will be set by the story in which a chase is playing out. For instance, whether players are acting as pursuers or evaders is likely set by a story which necessitated a chase encounter. However if you are designing a chase encounter with a blank slate, this is the first parameter that must be decided: are players chasing or being chased?

This leads into the second parameter, which is the number of adversaries that players are chasing or being chased by. This too may be set by the story, or entirely unconstrained.

Below are several more of the conceptual goals one might be looking to explore and design options available to fulfill these.

Track

To design a track, lay out features at a regular spacing of around 5 or 6 spaces. Assign challenges their difficulty stats and damage level.

Be aware that the first two or three challenges are where the average character might be expected to have excess Sprint Tokens, and by the fourth most average characters will be out, and the challenges will more heavily favor athletic characters.

Tempo

Consider adding one or more gates. Gates serve several purposes.

- 1) Gates force a pause on evaders to prevent them from simply maintaining an easy lead.
- 2) Gates complicate choices leading up to them, including encouraging players to use the Ready action.

Difficulty

GMs should determine the consequences of various outcomes. The most obvious are a condition of total success and a condition of complete failure. It's important that the outcome of a chase that ends in complete failure doesn't break the story.

Once these possible outcomes have been decided, the difficulty of a pursuit can be adjusted based on the starting distance between the pursuers and evaders and the difference in their starting number of sprint tokens. Each sprint token that one character has over another holds a similar effect to one space of additional starting distance between them, however the sprint tokens benefit is on a time delay and is more subject to the player choice than the starting distance. Overall, a GM can use these features to tune the probability of a pursuer getting a chance to strike an evader. Based on the probability of

that attack succeeding, it's not too difficult to tune the overall probability of a pursuer catching a target.

	If both roll neutrally	If A is advantaged	If both are advantaged (or disadvantaged)	If A is advantaged and B is disadvantaged
A wins	38%	63%	33%	87%
Draws	23%	21%	33%	13%
B wins	38%	16%	33%	0%

If A is attacking and B is defending:

	If both roll neutrally	If A is advantaged	If both are advantaged (or disadvantaged)	If A is advantaged and B is disadvantaged
A (Attacker) wins	38%	63%	33%	87%
B (Defender) wins	61%	37%	66%	13%

If A is defending and B is attacking:

	If both roll neutrally	If A is advantaged	If both are advantaged (or disadvantaged)	If A is advantaged and B is disadvantaged
A (Defender) wins	61%	84%	66%	100%
B (Attacker) wins	38%	16%	33%	0%

Conclusion

We hope you've enjoyed this work-in-progress preview of our chase system! If you have feedback, please contact the Fully Automated developer group and/or share your thoughts on social media. We look forward to incorporating this feedback and further testing into future improvements!