



The DCC Tournament: Rules and Guidelines

The Modules

At the time of this writing, there are four DCC tournament modules, listed below:

DCC #13: Crypt of the Devil-Lich, for six 15th level characters.

DCC #30: Vault of the Dragon Kings, for four 10th level characters

DCC #49: Palace in the Wastes, for four 6th level characters

DCC #52: Chronicle of the Fiend, for four characters, covering 0-level, 8th level, and 10th level

In this document, they are referred to as *Crypt*, *Vault*, *Palace*, and *Chronicle*. Similarly, the GMs who run the tournament tables are referred to as Judges.

Standard Tournament Rules

These rules apply to all DCC tournaments unless specifically mentioned otherwise.

1. Each tournament has three rounds, and each round lasts four hours. A game that starts late due to player delay is allowed a 10-minute grace period. If there are less than three players after that time, that team forfeits and an alternate team will advance. If there are three or more characters after that time, each minute lost is counted against the time limit.

For example, a game is scheduled to start at 12:00. Assuming it starts by 12:10, that game can go to 4:10 and the team is not penalized. If player delay kept the game from starting until 12:25, that game's time limit is over at 4:10 (four hours past the expiration of the grace period at 12:10).

After 10 minutes of waiting for a missing player, a judge may declare him or her a no-show and start the game without him (assuming there are three or more players present). That character is considered to have gone home, and **is removed from the tournament**.

When time is expired, the round ends immediately. Only effects that have already been determined but not yet applied can still affect the tournament. These effects must be instantaneous and already determined.

For example, if a participant rolls damage for a successful hit but time is called before the Judge applies the damage to the foe, that needs to be resolved (possibly scoring points for the team). If that participant had declared was casting *fireball* but had not yet rolled and added up the damage (or he had and the monster had not yet made its Reflex save), the fireball would not be "determined" and therefore would not be applied.

Finally, if a Judge has to pause the tournament for some reason, that time does not count against the team's four-hour allotment; they get to play their full four hours.

2. Teams can quit their adventure at any time, ending their round. If they quit as a trap is triggered, that trap completely resolves before the round ends. Similarly, if the team quits during a battle, tournament play continues for one full round before ending. For example, if the party declares they wish to quit on initiative count 12 of the second round of combat, tournament play would end on initiative count 12 of the third round of combat.

In the case of a magical trap that summons monsters, the party would have to fight one full round of combat before they could end their round.

3. Most tournament modules are written for 4-PC teams, the membership of which is drawn from the pool of 6 provided pregenerated characters. *Crypt*, the exception, is written for a 6-PC team using all the pregens.

Once the team has decided which characters to select and who is playing whom, these decisions are set for the duration. For example, if Jack decides to play Ulfsek of the Purifying Flame during *Palace*, he must play that character during the entire tournament.

Similarly, once a team's roster is determined, it is set for the duration. If Jack is on the team during round one, he cannot be replaced by Blaine for round 2.

4. Pregelated characters begin each round as-is, meaning tournament participants cannot alter their PC's classes, race, feats, skills, items, preselected spells, etc. Party members can swap items amongst themselves once the round begins (and time is being kept), but cannot introduce new elements from outside the tournament.
5. During tournament play, any PC who is dead at the end of a particular round is raised at the end of the round, so that PC can partake in the next round if the team advances. A PC raised from the dead mid-game gains one negative level each time they are raised for the remainder of the round (reconstructing the PC to reflect actual level loss would take too much time from the tournament).
6. During tournament play, items listed on character sheets or referenced as shared equipment will replenish, refill, or otherwise be able to be re-used for each round of the tournament.

For *Palace*, Judges will have to track items the team acquires during each round, as they carry over. The Judge's Pack for *Palace* contains checklists for this purpose.
7. During tournament play, the party cannot rest. The in-game rationale for this changes each year, but the end result is the same. Similarly, the party cannot leave the dungeon.
8. One of the keywords of the DCC tournament is "transparency." To that end, all Judges must make their die rolls in the open, visible to participants.

Running the Tournament

Below are a few guidelines and suggestions for running a DCC tournament in a formal setting, such as a store.

1. Points are the only criteria for advancement in these four tournament modules. If one team was slaughtered by the Big Bad Guy, but scored better than another team who killed the BBG, the first team advances.

In case two or more teams have identical point totals, the following stats are consulted for a tie-breaker: total PCs killed, then PCs reduced to 0 or fewer hp, then areas explored. Finally, if all three tie-breaker stats are tied, the teams dice off: highest roll on a d20 determines precedence.

2. Because of the unforgiving (but fair) rules on round duration and start times, we've found it useful to post two alternate teams for rounds two and three in case one team fails to show up on time. The alternates have always been the highest-scoring teams that didn't make the cut.

3. We supply the Judges with a copy of the module at minimum three weeks prior to the event. They are expected to extensively familiarize themselves with the adventure and, if possible, run through it with a group not participating in the tournament.

At the same time they are given the module, the Judges typically receive the Judge's Pack, which contains the scoring and any special instructions or notations. Again, they are expected to understand how items are scored in the tournament.

4. The tournament participants should be given the Player's Pack in advance of the event. This grants them time to familiarize themselves with the pregenerated characters, review the rules, and make team selections (if necessary).
5. Ideally, tables will be placed far enough apart so that teams won't be able to overhear read-aloud descriptions, tactics, or any other stray info from their competitors.
6. We supply teams with an oversize d20 die to use during the event. This prevents participants from using dice that Judges may find difficult to read, and keeps others from "scooping" their die before the Judge could visually verify it.
7. Judges are not required to map for the party; that is the team's responsibility.
8. The tournament modules predetermine many otherwise-random dice rolls to minimize the impact "hot" or "cold" Judge dice have on the tournament. Predetermined results include damage from weapons and spells, random effects such as from a *confusion* spell, and sequences in which things may occur, and some opposed skill checks (usually Hide checks). Predetermined results are never used for attack rolls or saving throws.

If a given encounter is missing predetermined results, assume all dice rolled average, rounded up (and sorry!).

Scoring Guidelines

Each of the tournament modules has unique scoring, but they share a few elements in common. Specific points are discussed below:

1. All tournaments grant bonus points for "exploring an area." This can be interpreted differently by different Judges, but the benchmark is that the party must have interacted meaningfully with an area to earn points for exploring it. A party that looks in a room and then moves on by has not interacted meaningfully, while a party that attempts to solve a puzzle (regardless of success or failure) has.

2. The scoring sheets refer to “characters killed (<-9 hit points).” This penalty applies to characters slain by any means (such as failing the save from the Death domain’s granted power, being reduced to 0 Constitution, etc.), not merely those slain through hp loss.
3. The scoring sheets refer to penalties levied against teams that use consumable resources, such as potions, charges, or scrolls. This penalty **only applies to starting equipment**; if a PC finds a scroll of *dispel magic* in the dungeon and uses it, they are not penalized.
4. The penalty for setting off a trap applies each time the trap is triggered; some of the magical traps in the dungeons reset themselves instantly and automatically, meaning a team could set them off multiple times.
5. For *Palace* and *Chronicle*, there is a penalty for “taking 20.” Teams in those tournaments who state they are “taking 20” should be reminded of this penalty and offered a chance to change their minds before points are deducted.

Two Golden Rules

First: “everyone on the same page.” The Judges should be in agreement on how the rules are implemented. No one is allowed to be a soft touch and grant extra time for cigarette breaks and bathroom runs. Similarly, although the module writers try to plan for every contingency, sometimes a grey area comes up. The Judges should be in agreement on how to resolve any tricky or unusual circumstances.

Second: “The Judge is always right.” This is a competitive tournament, and conflicts may arise. If one develops, the ruling made by the Judge at the table is the one that stands; there is no appeal process, and arguing about a situation eats up tournament time.

As an addendum to the second golden rule, a Judge is free to disqualify a team he or she feels is disruptive, threatening, or disrespectful.

Tournament at Home

While the tournament modules can be a lot of fun, they’re also quite difficult by design, drawing from the best writers Goodman Games has to offer. They may be unsuitable for a home game if run “tournament style” as outlined in this document. In that case the home GM should feel free to make any changes to the module as they see fit.

On the other hand, running a group of friends through the tournament, with the full-on rules, and comparing the results with those posted on our website (<http://www.goodman-games.com>) could be time well spent.

Final Word

The authors, Judges, artists, cartographers, and staff at Goodman Games are pleased with our tournament modules. We sincerely hope you find them just as challenging and fun as the participants in our annual tournament at Gen Con Indy.

If you have any questions about the modules or running a tournament, would like to share tournament stories, or would like to comment on any of our products, navigate your browser to <http://www.goodman-games.com/forums/> and drop us a line.