

CAMPAIGN OPTIONS

The world of Xcrawl is a fully realized fantasy world that can be home to a myriad of adventure campaigns.

NOTHING BUT CRAWL

Xcrawl is perfect for a “nothing but dungeons” style of campaign. The players have a built in motivation to test themselves with adventure since dungeon crawling is their job! They don’t have to go look for work in a tavern, or find clues, or make extended plans for weeks of overland travel. You start in the green room, the DJ introduces the players and explains the rules, the whistle blows and its mayhem time. The treasure, gold and reward become flavor text and the only prizes that matter are magic items that enhance the party’s combat effectiveness.

Xcrawl is an excellent pick-up style game that you can use for occasional get together or breaks in your normal campaign. You could have a professional dungeon crawl going for nights when too many regular players can’t be there, or other sessions that might jar the normal flow of your game. For a quickie pick up game experience its hard to beat a one night game with wall to wall surreal dungeon action.

If this is the style of Xcrawl you play, consider making up several groups of pre-generated characters that you can hand out at a moments notice. If your normal campaign needs a break, you can whip out the pre-generated characters and have a great night of killing bad guys and piling up gold.

Xcrawl is also a great game for conventions as it absolutely lends itself to tournament style play. The game within a game aspect assures that you can have a built in scoring system that comes from and is relevant to the overall story.

FULL XCRAWL CAMPAIGN

The full Xcrawl Campaign can include any and all of the following elements:

- An Xcrawl team that begins as a brand new Division III squad that works its way up the ranks.
- An emphasis on Fame and celebrity. The quest for popularity and riches parallels the PC team’s going after championship crawls.
- Side adventures that derive from The Games. For example, the players might win prize vacation packages that turn out to be monster infested nightmares, or get hired on to help wrangle creatures for the games. The team might get hired as security for various high risk ventures, or get embroiled in the Machiavellian power plays of the American aristocracy. They could become elite Special Forces and fight the enemies of the Empire, or part of the underground movement to dethrone the Emperor.
- The ultimate goal of superstardom. Successful teams should become major celebrities and formidable forces in the dangerous world of Xcrawl. Alternately, there could be other goals such as outshining rival Xcrawl teams or battling a nemesis DJ to some career climax.

XWORLD ADVENTURE

You might enjoy the blend of fantasy, imperialism, and low-tech modernity that is the Xcrawl scenario and still not be into playing out the game within the game that is Xcrawl. So be it!





You have nearly infinite options for a campaign set in the world of Xcrawl that have nothing to do with the Games themselves. Private investigators, military special forces strike force, anti-imperial anarchists, freelance monster hunters, organized crime mobsters, Zura'ah'zurah renegades, native American tribesmen – the possibilities are endless.

Imagine our world with all its conflicts and strife. Now add to that eldritch forces, an underground world full of monsters, an totalitarian state and all the other challenging aspects of the world of Xcrawl. You can see that with a little imagination you can run endless and varied adventures in the world of Xcrawl.

DIVISION IV

Think it would be fun to run around and participate in non-lethal events? Go for it! The players create 1st level professional adventurers, fresh out of high school (or even actual high school students!) and ready to begin their careers at the very bottom run of Xcrawl. The characters should begin as a college or semi-pro Division IV team with 100 gp of equipment. Since their Xcrawl career is not self-supporting yet the characters will normally be either full-time students or have a full time job out side of the games.

Division IV events abound – there is a full collegiate circuit, private events held in every city all throughout the year and even Division IV charity events. Since the crawls themselves will be non-lethal, the GM will have to be extremely creative to keep a sense of fun and adventure in a game since there will be a minimum of actual danger in The Games themselves. Eventually, all Division IV teams should advance to Division III and start lethal play.

ILLEGAL CRAWL CIRCUIT

The illegal Xcrawl circuit grows every day. Your players could become crime team superstars, playing for huge stakes in underground events around the world, all the while avoiding the law, forced into secret and often dangerous modes of travels and associating with dangerous gamblers, powerful crime syndicates and ruthless players who will stop at nothing to win – oh, and did we mention monsters and traps that don't have to get past the censors?

The players should create characters who are tough, ruthless and very comfortable with breaking the law. They could be from normal Xcrawl backgrounds, or learned their skills in the army or one of our nations fine correctional institutions. They might even be secret documentary filmmakers, hoping to expose the seedy underworld of underground Xcrawl while taking a few scalps for themselves. Messengers might be specifically told by their Patron Deity to skip the legal Xcrawl circuit and get dirty with the down crowd!

The Illegal Crawl campaign could be an adjunct or supplementary part of your Xcrawl game, or it could be the last resort for your crawlers once they have made one too many mistakes and had their Adventurer's Guild status revoked. And who knows – maybe your little desperados might see the light and go mainstream, perhaps keeping their dangerous criminal sensibilities with them? There's a box office draw if ever there was one!

If you are designing Illegal Crawl Circuit dungeons you should go completely insane. Guns, bombs, chainsaws, acid, dragons, demons – the gloves are completely off. That goes for your players as well – they should bring every piece of low down, despicable equipment they can get their larcenous hands on.

Fame may be tricky to play in the illegal campaign. The best solution may be to give your player two Fame scores – one for the legitimate world of Xcrawl (if they participate in the legal crawls at all!), and one for their masked illegal crawl persona that only effects encounters with gamblers. You may choose not to use the Fame scores at all, but if you do the players should still gain Fame Feats at the appropriate levels – the effects will only work in the world of Illegal Xcrawl, of course.

MILITARY

The players are part of the NAE Imperial Legions, the fighting men and women who sacrifice for the glory, honor and national security of America. The characters could be either members of the rank and file Legion, the rank and file that makes up the majority of America's fighting forces, or a Special Operations unit sent only on the most sensitive and dangerous missions. They could even be Military Intelligence, secretly spying on the enemies of the Empire or taking out select, difficult targets.

The NAE is always at war someplace – the Empire is aggressively expansive in an age where it is considered a great honor to invade and annex smaller nations. Internal threats are also a problem – especially when one considers that America lies entirely over the Zura'ah'zurah, the underground empire that attempted to invade and conquer her during the War of Subterranean Aggression. You could base an entire campaign around the players dealing with the Alfar and their monstrous ally's attempts to bring down the Empire.

An all-military campaign will probably not include the optional Fame Rules.



CAMPAIGN VARIANTS

You may want to consider some of these possible campaign variants while creating your own Xcrawl campaign.

YOUR GAMING WORLD!

If you have an established campaign world that you enjoy you can simply use a modernized version of that campaign as your Xcrawl world. The old fantasy world that the players knew and loved grew up, discovered TV, and decided to put death sports on the air for fun and profit.

This variant could work either with your homemade campaign world, or your published campaign worlds. Either way your players will enjoy revisiting the sites that they are familiar with, exploring how the world's culture has changed in the time that it took to develop into the Media Age.

REAL WORLD FLAVOR

To add a quirky level of interest, you might consider making the world of Xcrawl more like the real world in your campaign. The PC's could interact with RPG versions of all the real celebrity athletes, corporations, media personalities and reality shows. You can enhance the real world flavor by having your players sponsored by and doing endorsements for RPG versions of your favorite products such as energy drinks, sporting equipment and lines of clothing.

In the most extreme version of this campaign, you could create some system of having they players play themselves as up and coming Xcrawl stars. You will have to decide whether to take your players at their words as far as the translations of their real world skills, abilities, talents and resources to the simplified versions of themselves as characters, or create some system that allows them to still roll randomly or choose their abilities. Be warned: an attempt at this kind of campaign with less than the most mature and well-adjusted role players could lead to real world hurt feelings and strained relationships – proceed with caution!

If you choose this campaign option, consider making the technology level of your world equivalent to that in the real world. This will allow your players to have access to that most indispensable part of the modern media experience, the internet. Give the players fame bonuses for well-designed (read: expensive) web sites and fan sites, or just go for it and create real world websites for your Xcrawl PC team (and for the love of Apollo send us the links: www.goodman-games.com/forum.htm).

ANCIENT XCRAWL

In a far-off world of fantasy, the evil sorcerer kings rise up, take power and then decide to create public spectacle death

sports based on the legends of the land. Groups of roving adventurers come from miles around for a chance to participate in this amazing challenge and the opportunity for glory and gold.

An ancient version of Xcrawl could make for a very interesting campaign. Some incredibly powerful forces set The Games in motion, creating spectator dungeons and loading them with prizes and rewards. You could still use slightly altered versions of many of the components of Xcrawl, including NonCom badges, AVS monitors and break rooms. Remember that an ancient version of Xcrawl will likely have less reliable security and therefore more “haywire” style encounters. Obviously you will have to change the formalized rules and the permissible equipment. An ancient Xcrawl world would be extremely easy to integrate with a standard dungeoneering campaign making it an extremely well supported campaign option overall.



DEATH PROOF!

In this campaign option the PC's are virtual immortals. Before each crawl, each player is given a special Panic Badge. Similar to the NonCom badges used by noncombatant crawl participants like referees and cameramen, this badge whisks the player off to the hospital when he either loses all of his hit points or calls out a special safe word. It will be quite a challenge to make a campaign with this greatly reduced level of lethality interesting. You might consider making the ultimate focus of the game the fame and fortune, with dying being only a rare occurrence that only ever happens to the

unluckiest of participants. Players who get “defeated” should lose an appropriate amount of fame (say -10 temporary Fame Points) to represent loss of face and advertising revenue.

This campaign variant has a clear advantage – it saves the time and heartache of losing beloved characters and rolling up new ones. Of course Xcrawl without the death sport aspect loses much of its original campaign flavor. But ultimately the goal is to have a fun evening with friends, and if a Death Proof campaign is the best option for you and your group than go for it. Another consideration is whether or not the monsters actually die, or if they have

Panic Badges as well. If not then you can play up long term relationships between your crawlers and the creatures they fight, a unique role-playing opportunity.

To be fair in this campaign variant, PC's who do actually die in the game should still remain dead. Oh the extremely well-guarded, barely-in-danger-at-all-really humanity! Also you have to change the slogan from “And if you die – you die!” to something a bit more accurate. “Victory and fame or defeat and everyone laughs at you during the play by play.”

RESURRECTION IN XCRAWL

While there are Olympian Templers whom the Gods have granted power over life and death but this magic is not freely shared with others. It's one of the stranger points of society in the NAE – since magic can conquer death, why not raise all who die in The Games? Why let anyone die at all?

Even non-corrupt, genuinely pious Olympic clerics are leery about returning the dead to life. Not all life deserves to be preserved – some should certainly go on to face whatever final judgment Pluto deems fit. Traditionally, the temple is only moved to return the dead to life under the following circumstances:

- A VIP dies an unnatural or untimely death.
- A heroic individual dies a self-sacrificing death at a young age
- An important temple figure dies an unnatural death.

In the modern NAE, resurrection is an extremely complicated business. The status quo feel that bringing souls back from the land of the dead is antithetical to its main goal – maintaining the status quo. After all, if death was a simple matter to resolve and reverse, what would the rich and powerful have to hold over the masses?

On the surface, resurrection has been made as complicated and painstaking a process as absolutely possible. Candidates must have friends and supporters willing to create a petition to have the victim returned to life. A council of high-level temple officials convenes to debate the life and death of the deceased. They ask

the hard questions: is this a life worth preserving? What would the benefit to society be if this particular individual was returned to life? What would the costs be? What would Apollo do? They can take weeks to decide a matter of this magnitude.

That is the appearance of the process on the surface. The truth of the matter is there is only one individual who has power over life and death in the NAE: Emperor Ronald I. The debates, the petition and the Temple council is all theater. The Emperor simply gives the thumbs up or the thumbs down, and that's that. As Master of Temple, this is his right and privilege and while others may council him on this decision the matter is entirely in his hands.

Death in Xcrawl is an interesting conundrum for Ronald. He realizes that the mortal impact of The Games is diluted by having fatalities return for another season. However, the occasional act of mercy on his part cements and fortifies the love the common people have for their Emperor. Also, there is no greater thrill than the rush of power one feels after returning a dead man to life – it makes the Emperor feel he is the equal of the gods, an ideal he fully believes himself to deserve. Why shouldn't he, the chosen of Olympus, choose who goes to the underworld and who stays? Besides, returning death to life makes for good theater. The ratings always surge when a player is returned to life.

Resurrection always costs a minimum of 100,000 gp in the NAE. This is a donation to the temple, 20% of which goes directly into the Emperor's coffers. It is usually accompanied with a solemn ceremony, including an invocation to great Pluto, and the sacrificing of seven rams or one great steed.