Deadlands Campaign Players Guide

Version 1.1 – October 25, 2020

Base Rules & Sources

This campaign setting uses the below sources as the official rules. This document summarizes some information from these sources as well as detailing any additions, changes, or clarifications.

- *Savage Worlds Adventure Edition* (abbreviated hereafter as SWADE)
- *Deadlands: The Weird West* (abbreviated hereafter as DLWW)
- *Deadlands: Weird West Companion* (abbreviated hereafter as DLWC)

Please Note: For your own enjoyment you should be cautious reading the *"No Man's Land"* sections and altogether avoid reading the *"Marshal's Rules"* sections of the books.

Campaign Information

IF YOU ONLY READ ONE THING IN THIS DOCUMENT – READ THIS!!!

- Unlike the recent fantasy campaign, this will be run using the Savage Worlds and Deadlands rules as written (RAW) for nearly everything – no skill specializations, no additional Edges, Joker's Wild (SWADE 89), no carryover Bennies, readying weapons as detailed in SWADE (105), etc. Any differences from RAW are noted in this document in **red**.

- Deadlands is, in part, a horror campaign and character retirement or death (or worse) is a possibility. I'd suggest that everyone have at least two character concepts in mind should this unfortunate event come to pass, even if the backup character isn't fully created.

- I encourage you to discuss your character ideas with the rest of the group to come up with a posse that will be as cohesive and effective as possible.

    o Your characters will all know and (mostly) trust each other at the outset and should be able to work together. I'm not saying a character cannot have secrets or a personal goal that the rest don't know about, in fact this is encouraged (within reason) as it makes the characters more human and realistic. The Weird West is dangerous enough without the posse members actively working against each other. The characters are the heroes of the story (albeit potentially flawed – sometimes deeply flawed) and should generally conduct themselves as such.

    o I'm also not saying that there can only be one of each character archetype in the group. Play what you find interesting and will have fun playing!

- I strongly encourage everyone to review the rules for Skills (SWADE 29-36), Tests (SWADE 108) and Support (SWADE 106) as well as the Social Edges (SWADE 50, DLWW 22) and Professional Edges (SWADE 47, DLWW 20).

    o **There are laws in the Weird West**, and you cannot simply start blazing away at every obstacle encountered. Conflicts and challenges can often be resolved with clever role-playing and skill use, which is much less likely to end up with someone dangling from the end of a rope.

- The posse will be part of a cattle drive in the first part of the campaign so having the Riding skill would be useful, as would having Athletics at a reasonable level to cover other physical activities. However, NEITHER ARE REQUIRED – there are other jobs available on the drive (such as camp cook) that don't require proficiency in Riding.

- The remainder of the campaign will be based in and around a county in Wyoming, which contains several settlements as well as open frontier. This will include a lot of interaction with the locals, as well as a variety of opportunities and encounters that should allow the posse to pursue their individual goals.

- If you have any questions – ask! Share any suggestions! I want everyone to be engaged and enjoying themselves out of the gate, and feedback from the group (both public and private) is appreciated.

Makin' Heroes Summary

The method described on DLWW 11-14 is used as written and is summarized here, with additions in **red**:

1. All heroes are human and begin play with one Novice Edge whose requirements they meet.
2. Characters may take up to 4 points of Hindrances from any of the official sources. These points may later be spent to increase Attributes and Skills, gain Edges, or increase starting money.
   a. Additional Hindrances can be found on DLWW 15-17.
3. Characters begin with a d4 in each Attribute and has five points to increase them at a cost of 1 point per die type.2 Hindrance points may be spent to increase an Attribute one die type. No Attribute may be raised above d12.
4. Characters begin with a d4 in the five Core Skills: *Athletics*, *Common Knowledge*, *Notice*, *Persuasion*, and *Stealth*. Characters have 12 points to buy and improve skills – adding a new skill at d4 or raising an existing skill one die type costs 1 point up to the die type of its linked Attribute, and raising a skill higher than its linked Attribute costs 2 points. Skills can't be raised above d12. Characters may spend Hindrance points for additional skill points 1 for 1.
   a. ***Unavailable Skills:*** *Electronics* and *Hacking* are not used in this setting.
   b. ***New Skill:*** *Trade (Smarts)* applies to a specific proficiency with day-to-day tasks needed to run a business (blacksmith, saloon owner, miner, etc.), and lets the character raise funds as described for *Performance* (SWADE 32). Indicate the specific trade in parenthesis with the skill, i.e. Trade (Law) or Trade (Restaurant).
   c. ***Language Skill:*** English is the most common language in the Weird West. Characters with the Outsider Hindrance know a different native language and must drop a few points into Language (English) to make themselves understood. (SWADE 31-32)
5. Derived Statistics
   a. Pace is equal to 6 and may be modified by Edges or Hindrances.
   b. Parry is equal to 2 plus half your Fighting die (rounded down). If you haven't taken the Fighting skill, it's 2.
   c. Toughness is equal to 2 plus half your Vigor die (rounded down).
6. Humans begin with one Novice Edge whose requirements they meet. Additional Edges may be gained for 2 Hindrance points each.
   a. ***Unavailable Edges:*** *Arcane Background (any)* and *Soul Drain* are not used in this setting.
   b. Additional Edges can be found on DLWW 17-23 and DLWC 6-24.
7. Each character starts with **$250** to purchase gear, which is detailed on DLWW 24-37 (including rules on El Cheapo Gear). Characters may start with an additional $500 for 1 Hindrance point.
8. Flesh out the characters background including how they ended up in Texas and part of a cattle drive.
   a. Additionally, define at least one **Goal** the character is motivated to accomplish (short and/or long-term). Characters may also choose **Defining Interests** equal to half their Smarts die type to reflect other interests and hobbies, which could modify Common Knowledge rolls in the appropriate circumstances.
9. What is the hero afraid of, and why? Think about what kind of dream wakes them up in a cold sweat and write down the character's **Worst Nightmare**. Purely for informational purposes, of course…

Setting Rules

Adventure Cards

The Adventure Deck will be used for this campaign with the Deadlands cards added in when available. This means that the following Edge is available if anyone would like to take it:

Destiny's Child (Background)
Requirements: Novice
The hero is favored by destiny and may draw and play an additional Adventure Card each game session.

Conviction

Conviction is a special award granted when a character experiences a great victory or catastrophic misfortune. Conviction can be spent to add a d6 to a final Trait or damage total. This die can Ace, and its result is added to the final total. Conviction tokens are not Bennies and can't be used as such. They are kept between sessions, but a player can never have more than one at a time. (SWADE 136)

Guns

Single-action revolvers (SA) require the user to cock the hammer before he can pull the trigger and fire. This means a gunhand can use the Fan the Hammer Edge with these guns (but not the Double Tap Edge).

Double-action revolvers (DA) are faster and more reliable. The weapon's action cocks the hammer for him, allowing a gunslinger to point and shoot. These revolvers fire single shots quickly, allowing use of the Double Tap Edge (but not the Fan the Hammer Edge). (DLWW 47)

Downtime & Player Turns

Player Turns are off-screen activities, tasks and events that the characters do during their "downtime," which allows the party to focus more on specific scenes that involve the entire group when they get together. Between sessions where the group is not in the middle of an active scenario there will be an opportunity for characters to participate in Player Turns.

Duelin'

Rules for duels can be found on DLWW 47-48.

Extended Trait Checks

Sometimes situations arise when events that will take place over a period of time require more structure than a Dramatic Tasks (SWADE 122) can handle. Extended Trait Checks (abbreviated ETC) provide the mechanics to smoothly resolve these tasks and determine a result when the amount of time that passes matters.

Hangin'

If a character is first dropped a few feet (usually from horseback or a gallows), he makes a Vigor roll (-4). Failure means his neck snaps and he's dead! A Critical Failure causes decapitation. Assuming the victim survives long enough to start worrying about little things like breathing, make a Vigor roll (at -6) each minute or suffer a level of Fatigue. (DLWW 49)

Minions (a.k.a. Wild Extras)

Certain NPCs are somewhere between an Extra and a Wild Card. Tough Minions take wounds like a Wild Card, but don't get a wild die on their rolls. Competent Minions get a wild die on their rolls but take wounds like a normal Extra.

Nomination Bennies

It can be very hectic and difficult for a GM to keep up with every moment and every action during a game. This often means missing opportunities to hand out Bennies for great lines, excellent roleplaying, and heroic actions in game.

Each player will get a nomination token at the beginning of each session, and whenever a player decides that another player's actions are "Benny-worthy," they can turn their token in and award that player a Benny.

Stampedes

Anyone caught in a stampede must Evade as an action on their turn or take 2d6 damage (more from certain critters, as listed in their description). Add a bonus d6 if the unfortunate soul Critically Fails to Evade.

It usually takes three successful Evasions to escape the tide of a typical herd, but shorter sprints to solid obstacles like rocks or buildings might also carry one away from danger. You don't have to make all three Evasion rolls in a row – just three total. (DLWW 49)

Wound Cap

Characters can never suffer more than four Wounds in a single hit and therefore never have to Soak more than four wounds either.

Large Creatures: The Wound Cap applies even to creatures with more than three Wounds (due to their Scale or the Resilient and Very Resilient Special Abilities). A Huge creature that can take five Wounds, for example, can't take more than four from a single attack, so it can't normally be killed with a single attack. The GM can always overrule this in specific and obvious situations, of course, such as massive blasts, falling from towering cliffs or mountains, etc. (SWADE 141)

Cattle Drive Rules

Breaking a Horse

To break a horse to the saddle a rider first must mount and stay on the animal long enough for it to get accustomed to the idea. Doing this requires making a Riding roll opposed by the horse's Spirit each round, winning with at least a success gives the horse a level of Fatigue. If the cowpoke manages to win enough rolls to make the horse Exhausted, the animal is saddle-broken.

Should the rider lose a roll the horse bucks her from its back, make a Vigor roll to avoid taking a Fatigue level from Bumps and Bruises. The cowpoke is free to get back in the saddle and continue trying to break the horse.

The horse fully recovers its Fatigue with a day of rest. Any Fatigue the rider suffers from getting tossed on her backside recovers normally at the rate of one step per day.

Controlling Cattle

Texas Longhorns are known for being headstrong beasts. It's more than likely the adventurers find themselves having to cajole, coerce, or otherwise convince a group of the ornery beasts to do something they are otherwise not disposed to do. Or maybe the erstwhile trail hands have to calm a passel of nervous cows to avert a stampede.

Handling a herd of cows boils down to a Riding roll. A tinhorn with no Riding skill or a cowpoke on foot who finds himself trying to control cattle instead substitutes a Smarts roll (-2) or another related Knowledge skill.

Apply the following modifiers to the roll:

No experience with cattle:	-2
Obvious threat nearby:	-4
Cattle stampeding:	-6

Wrangling Cattle

Searching for lost cattle requires a Survival (-2) roll for a day's activities, with a success one errant cow or steer is found that day and each raise on the roll finds another animal. (apply modifiers as needed)

Roping a steer requires a successful Athletics roll (adjusted for range).

Even armed with his trusty lariat, a cowboy is grossly over-matched in a tug-of-war by a longhorn (averaging three-quarters of a ton), so man-handling those doggies isn't the best option. Luckily, when it comes to taking charge of a bullheaded longhorn, a cowboy's best friend is his mount. A canny ranch hand can use the lasso in conjunction with his saddle to bring his horse's strength and weight to bear against a roped steer.

Make an opposed roll of the cowpoke's Riding versus the animal's Strength, on a success the animal is wrangled under control and can lead it with the rope; with a raise, he pulls the longhorn off its feet. On a failure, the beast continues to put up a fight, but doesn't break free. If the player is unlucky enough to roll a 1 on his Riding die (regardless of the Wild Die) the animal breaks free, pulling the unlucky sod off his saddle with a Critical Failure.

House Rules

These are general rulings, clarifications, or tweaks to specific rules. This section will be updated as needed.

Selective Power Modifier

(SWADE 152) The caster can choose to not affect one target or object of their choice for +1 PP or multiple targets or objects of their choice for +2 PP.

Additional Rules

Extended Trait Checks

Sometimes situations arise when events that will take place over a period of time require more structure than a **Dramatic Tasks** (SWADE 122) can handle. Extended Trait Checks (abbreviated ETC) provide the mechanics to smoothly resolve these tasks and determine a result when the amount of time that passes matters. An ETC is composed of three numerical values: Difficulty Modifier, Number of Successes Required (aka Depth) , and the Duration of each check interval. These values are presented as *Trait (Difficulty, Depth, Duration)*, specifying the trait needed to accumulate successes.

The **Difficulty** should account for all pertinent variables involved (environmental, tools at hand, etc.) and stack with any other modifiers the character may have (unskilled penalty, Wounds, Hindrances, etc.). The **Depth** should reflect the complexity of the task (crack a safe, disarm a bomb, repair an airplane engine in-flight, etc.) The **Duration** is the time represented by a skill roll and will vary based upon the circumstances.

When resolving an ETC each participant decides if they will directly contribute to the task using the specified trait (if possible), or if they will Support those directly contributing. Support is used as written in the core rules (SWADE 106). Once all Support is resolved, each participant directly contributing makes a Trait roll. Each success and raise adds to the required total defined by Depth. A Critical Failure indicates bad consequences of some sort, such as removing successes (some or all), an unexpected encounter, etc.

DIFFICULTY	
Simple	+2
Easy	+1
Basic	+0
Tricky	-1
Hard	-2
Very Hard	-3
Impossible	-4

DEPTH	
Standard	4
Challenging	5
Difficult	6
Complex	7

DURATION
1 round
5 rounds
1 minute
10 minutes
1 hour
12 hours
1 day
1 week
1 month
6 months

Example:

*A group of heroes are searching for a lost temple in the jungle and know they're in the right area. However, finding it is going to be tricky and dangerous native warriors are also in the area searching for the group. The GM decides to use **Notice (-2/5/1 hour)** for the group's guide to locate the temple, and that after each five-hour interval the natives will catch up to the party.*

Christopher Royle (Notice d8), intrepid British soldier and explorer, leads the group and makes his roll at -2 for the first hour. He rolls a Critical Failure, and stumbles right into the group of native warriors. A deadly combat ensues!

After dealing with the natives, Royle picks up the trail again and sets out. He needs to get five successes in four hours (since the first hour was spent on the Critical Failure) or the native warriors will catch up to them. Hour 1: he achieves one success. Hour 2: a failure, no progress is made. Hour 3: he gets two successes. Hour 4: with support from his stalwart companions he achieves the final two successes and the lost temple is finally located just before the warriors arrive!

These rules were derived from the Extended Trait Checks published in various Reality Blurs products

Downtime & Player Turns

Player Turns are off-screen activities, tasks and events that the characters do during their "downtime," which allows the party to focus more on specific scenes that involve the entire group when the players get together. Between sessions where the group is not in the midst of an active scenario there will be a number of Player Turns available to everyone as determined by the GM.

Steps

1. **Select Activity**
   o Select one activity that the character would like to spend a player turn doing and let the GM know what, why and how the character is going about it – coordinating and supporting activities with other players is encouraged
   o Player turns can be private, but anyone is encouraged to discuss and share the information they learned with the rest of the party
   o Player turns can be variable lengths of time, usually based on the average PC rank. (the GM has final say)
      ▪ Example: Novice (5 game days), Seasoned (10 game days), Veteran (15 game days), Heroic (20 game days), Legendary (25-30 game days)
      ▪ As turns last longer durations, the GM might allow for automatically healing 1 wound per player turn

2. **Set Difficulty**
   o Based on the task the GM will set a difficulty Target Number (TN)
   o Modifiers may be applied to represent positive or negative circumstances that affect the task
   o Certain longer-term tasks might require multiple successes over a period of time (GM's call)

3. **Card Draw**
   o A card is drawn from the deck to reflect the effects of fate on the task
   o The suit and value of the card will determine any modifiers or outside influences as well as any additional Plot Hooks that may occur as a result

4. **Trait Test**
   o The relevant trait check is made, applying all modifiers to come up with the Result

5. **Determine Outcome**
   o Based on the Result, the outcome of the task and additional relevant information will be given to the player
   o The GM will typically allow the players to take some narrative control on certain aspects of the outcome, enabling them to collaboratively build part of the story, develop the plot line and provide additional opportunities for the character

Activities

Characters can do pretty much whatever they want based on time constraints, but most activities will fall into one of the below examples:

- ***Acquire:*** search for a hard-to-find item or work on acquiring one at a reduced cost
- ***Assist:*** help another character with their player turn activity
- ***Carouse:*** enjoy life, celebrate victories, and (sometimes) seek out information among the revelers in taverns, saloons and other places of enjoyment.
- ***Court:*** pursue a romantic relationship with another character or NPC
- ***Craft:*** a long-term task to construct something
- ***Explore:*** travel around and understand the surroundings, learning all they can about an area. This could be Exploring the local setting the characters are based out of, or it could represent ranging a bit of distance to look into a nearby area
- ***Gamble:*** similar to Carouse, but there are specific stakes on the line
- ***Interrogate:*** spend time extracting information from a prisoner
- ***Investigate:*** gain information a group, plot, legend, etc. by pouring over documents or hitting the streets
- ***Manage:*** actively coordinate resources or perform required duties
- ***Negotiate:*** use skills to acquire information or gain an advantage
- ***Patrol:*** actively roam an area looking for problems to solve and trouble to handle
- ***Reminisce:*** describe a narrative using the Savage Worlds Interlude rules
- ***Rest:*** remove fatigue and accelerate natural healing

Socialize: spend time with others to satisfy obligations, curry favor or meet new people

DOCUMENT CHANGE TRACKING

VERSION	DATE	CHANGES
1.0	10-19-2020	Original
1.1	10-25-2020	Added Cattle Drive Rules (Breaking a Horse, Controlling Cattle, Wrangling Cattle)