This document contains the house rules found useful by yours truly, Judge AMP.

Judge AMP's Shortlist of House Rulings

Description: This is an annotated list detailing how I run Dungeon Crawl Classics. These are the house rulings we currently use, divided into categories of relevance. In some cases I've relegated the logic behind my rulings to the endnotes, which are probably mainly interesting to other Judges and game designers[1]. Also it is worth noting that some parts of the DCC rulebook's content I've expanded or replaced entirely, the results of which can be found elsewhere on KitN.

All page references refer to the DCC rulebook.

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Dice and Rolls:

The Official Unoffical Rule of Crits[2]: When rolling with increased dice on the dice chain, results of 20, 24 and 30 always count as crits.

Crits are good, fumbles are bad: No matter what the roll, a crit has to result in extra benefit, and a fumble has to cause additional hardship.

Attribute rolls: In some situations players are required to roll equal or below one of their stats for something. This is usually used in situations where it's difficult to determine an exact DC for an action, or to save time during narrative or downtime actions. Luck cannot be spent on attribute rolls.

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Character Abilities

Occupational skills: Justifying a dice increase is up to the player to, decreasing dice is up to the Judge, both need to be able to argue their stance[3].

Worshiping deities & serving patrons: Lay-members of cults and churches gain some benefits for their devotion, as according to the relevant deity descriptions (the ones I've so far written up are available here, for each deity the first bonus in the *"Special"* section applies to non-clerics as well). Worshipers of deities and those bonded with a patron accrue debt to their supernatural masters (the rules for this can be found here).

CLERIC[4]

Extra spells for Personality modifier[5]: Upon reaching 1st level, clerics gain bonus 1st level spells according to their Personality modifier, similar to wizards (as indicated on Table 1-1 on pg. 18).

Determining cleric spells: The Judge determines what spells the cleric gains when learning new incantations, although players are allowed to argue for spells that would suit their character[6].

Translating arcane spells: Sometimes clerics may receive versions of arcane spells from their deities. In this case replace the unsuccessful spell check results with *"Failure."* and apply disapproval when needed.

Meditate for answers[7]: A cleric may roll a spell check to meditate for information from their deity. The Judge secretly determines the DC for the roll, and the roll may trigger disapproval like any other spell check by a cleric; any answers gained are entirely up to the deity and the Judge. This ability can be used to determine alignments, or to gain hints on the current situation or environment of the character.

THIEF[8]

No Luck dice to damage: Luck dice cannot be applied to damage. They can be applied to anything else, including crit table rolls[9].

Backstabs: A thief may make a backstab attack if the opponent is unaware of their location, or is surprised in some other way. To chain backstab attacks the thief must be able to do something suitable to justify it: shooting from stealth, running to a new spot and hiding, or running at the opponent, sliding between their legs and stabbing at their groin are both appropriate examples of setting up a backstab, as long as the required checks are successfully passed. As a rule of thumb, a thief must succeed in some skill roll to set up a backstab for their next attack.

Hiding, sneaking and being spotted: Roll for either sneak silently or hide in shadows if possible, require both only for exceptionally difficult situations. An opponent's chance to spot a hidden thief is based on environmental factors: terrain, lighting, proximity and senses. Thief stealth is not magic, and staying hidden may depend on perception checks by opponents or Luck rolls by the thief[10].

Uncanny dodge: When a thief is aware of getting targeted by an attack or a spell while hidden they may roll against the attack or spell roll to avoid it. Uncanny dodge is rolled as a skill check: Action Die + Sneak/Hide (use higher skill bonus when in doubt); if the roll matches or exceeds the attack or spell check, the thief successfully avoids the attack, after which they may move their full movement out of round order and attempt to hide again if situation allows. This action reduces their action dice on their following round by one (i.e. a thief with two action dice can use the ability twice per round)[11].

WARRIOR

Roll the Deed die twice[12]: Warriors roll the Deed die when rolling to hit, and again when rolling for damage.

One Deed per round: No matter how many actions a warrior has, they only have one Deed per round. The Deed may apply to any attack roll made.

Describe your Deed or lose it: If a player does not describe their Deed before rolling, no Deed occurs on that attack.

WIZARD[13]

Rolling for spells: When rolling for spells (on Table 5-8 on pg. 127) use a d30 for 1st level spells, a d24 for 2nd and 3rd level spells, and a d6 for 5th level spells[14]. Duplicates or other impossible results allow the player to choose an appropriate spell.

Spell components: Arcane casters may spend gold for spell components, which increase spell checks by +1. Spell component type and value depends on spell and is up to Judge's discretion (10-50 gp x spell level is a good rule of thumb).

Patron spells: Patron spells are always cast instead of *Invoke patron,* and as such they are treated as an extension of this spell. They have their own mercurial effects, but do not need to follow the usual restrictions for a caster's maximum spell level (i.e. a 1st level wizard may have access to a 3rd level spell through their patron).

Learning and teaching spells: It takes a week to learn a new spell from a spellbook, either to replace an old spell or to fill a new spell slot. Teaching spells to other casters requires access to a fully stocked and geared arcanarium (value of which starts at 1000 gp, not including the premise itself), and requires both characters to spend a week on the project.

Arcane spell fumbles: When casting, roll results equal to the spell's level are counted as results of 1 on the spell table (i.e. a 3rd level spell fumbles on roll results 1-3)[15].

Translating idol magic: When an arcane caster casts a spell originally designed as an idol magic spell (*Detect magic* for example), the spell's level indicates the fumble chance (i.e. these results count as 1s, see above); refer to a spell of similar level for fumble effects and apply the rules for generic spell misfires as needed (Table 5-6 on pg. 120). These spells are always lost if the casting roll fails.

Sense arcana: An arcane caster may roll a spell check to sense the flow of magic around them. The Judge secretly determines the DC for the roll, and any information gained is entirely up to the Judge. A roll of 1 indicates a fumble, roll d6 modified by Luck: (2 or less) patron taint (or major corruption if no patron); (3-4) minor corruption; (5+) generic spell misfire (1st spell level). This

ability may be used to determine whether objects are magical, or to gain information on the character's current environment and situation[16].

Elf

Inherited mithril: Upon reaching 1st level an elven character is finally eligible to claim their family's mithril items. They gain a deed, which allows them to purchase one mithril weapon and one mithril armor at cost, with no modifiers for material. This deed may be used whenever at a suitable location (Judge's discretion)[17].

Rolling for spells: As wizards, see above.

Spell components: As wizards, see above.

Patron spells: As wizards, see above.

Learning and teaching spells: As wizards, see above.

Sense arcana: As wizards, see above.

Dwarf

Dwarven smell: Dwarves have a very keen sense of smell. In addition to being able to discern valuables at a distance, they can also sense other details about the environment with successful perception checks; any information gained is at Judge's discretion.

Roll the Deed die twice: As warriors, see above.

One Deed per round: As warriors, see above.

Describe your Deed or lose it: As warriors, see above.

Halfling

Small arms: Halflings can dual wield small one handed weapons, such as handaxes, shortswords and clubs, but since a longsword is roughly as long as a halfling is tall they're out of the question.

Hiding, sneaking and being spotted: As thieves, see above. Note that halflings do not benefit from the uncanny dodge ability of professional thieves.

Combat

Attack bonus to damage until 5th level[18]: Until 5th level, all characters add the attack bonus derived to from their level to damage as well as to-hit rolls. After reaching 5th level only the to-hit bonus increases, except for martial classes (warriors and dwarves).

Moving and acting: Characters can divide their allotted movement however they please: move, attack, move again is a valid turn.

Held actions: Instead of acting on their round, a character of at least 1st level may delay an action to happen once a pre-determined trigger occurs (i.e. "I'll shoot the orc once he walks into my line of fire."). This does not change their position in the initiative order, but the delayed action is lost if the trigger does not happen before their next action.

DAMAGE, HEALING AND DEATH[19]

Damage to hit points: Hit points may go into the negatives. Once a character's hit points are below 0 they start bleeding out, characters at an even 0 hit points are merely unconscious.

Subdual damage: Subdual damage can only reduce a creature to 0 hit points (i.e. unconscious).

Damage to ability scores: If two ability scores are at 0 simultaneously, the character is irrevocably dead with no chance of recovery (even with a Luck roll).

Bleeding out: When a character's hit points are below 0 they are bleeding out. They have their level in rounds to be brought to 1 or more hit point through some form of healing. Even if such a character is saved one of their stats is reduced by 1 permanently, the stat is decided at random; this indicates their body being scarred by the horrible experiences they've suffered.

First aid: A character with suitable equipment (a field medic's kit, for example) may attempt to save a character who is bleeding out with a skill check. The check DC equals to 20 – the bleeding characters current STA – current HP (i.e. a character with STA 9 and hit points at -12 would have a first aid DC of 23, (20 - 9 - (-12) = 23)). If the check is successful the character is survives and is returned to 1 hit point.

Turning the corpse: If a dead character's corpse can be recovered within 1 hour of their demise, the character may make a Luck roll (rolling for equal or below). If they are successful, they are alive, but not without cost: their stats are reduced by an amount of points equal to how much their HP was in the negatives (i.e. a character with their HP at -8 would lose 8 points from their stats permanently). Which stats are affected is up to the Judge and should reflect the nature of the injury, but the character must survive alive if at all possible.

EQUIPMENT

Armor, sneaking and spells: As a rule of thumb, armor with an armor check penalty of d8 or less does not hinder apply its armor check penalty to thief skills or spell casting, this includes shields that fit this rule; hide armor is an exception, it does not hinder sneaking or spells either. Note that metal armor always hinders casting, and arcane casters require both hands to draw the correct sigils in order to cast spells[20].

1   I've judged DCC for roughly two years, and ran games for about twenty. Before DCC the previous system I preferred was my own, a contraption built out of the bones of other systems and stitched together exactly how I wanted. Because I gamemastered for years using this tool, I've always had immense difficulty in using store-bought systems without customizing them extensively. I was drawn to Dungeon Crawl Classics mostly because it seemed like I could use it with minimal modification to run games that appealed to me, without compromising between rules-as-written and my own idea of how to run the game. "Rulings not rules" has always been my guideline however, and even DCC has ended up getting little tweaks here and there, hence this document.

2   I didn't come up with this, but rather picked it up from a community discussion over on G+, the original credit goes to Jon Wilson. Since G+ is going the way of the dinosaurs soon I won't link to the original conversation, but you should go check out Jon's excellent menagerie of monsters over at the [Appendix M](#) -blog.

3   I'm a big fan of the occupational skill system in DCC, and am generally extremely lenient with skill checks since it most often means that the players are coming up with inventive solution to problems.

4   It should be noted that I've replaced most of the rules for deities with more detailed ones, so far all of which have been published on KitN (and are available [here](#)).

5   Like some of the other rulings here, this is a result of a misreading of the rules back when we first started: I simply assumed that the bonus spells applied to clerics as well as wizards, and realised the issue a year later when starting a new group. So far I've found that the additional spells matter very little especially on the lower levels, and since I'd like to add to the agency of clerics and try to avoid them becoming heal-dispensers, I've let the ruling stand.

6   I usually decide all but one spell for the cleric, and allow the player to suggest the last spell added. If it outright fits they get it, otherwise the last spell is rolled from a limited number of options which include the spell they've suggested.

7   This ability was born out of necessity and habit: when the players are stuck, or some magical effect or thing is present, normal senses won't do: what better way to push the story forward than divine inspiration or arcane instinct. My stance on magic items is that they should stand out from mundane equipment, and spotting that "yes, that gem-encrusted ritual sword is magical" shouldn't be too much of a hassle. For full identification I require the use of *Detect magic* or outside aid (temples or hired arcanists).

8   In my opinion, the thief class is a mess. It stinks of the bad old days, when thieving skills were rolled on percentile dice when everything else used a d20, and the skill division is all over the place. Why do thieves need two separate skills for sneaking and hiding, when halflings get by with just one figure for both? Why is *Pick pocket* the name of the skill when the description states that it includes all sleight of hand? It's also the class with the worst chance of survival at my table, despite being touted as a crowd of streetwise survivors and lucky bastards. Out of all of the classes in the rulebook, the thief is the likeliest one to get a full rewrite for my table.

9   This is just my interpretation of the rules, as the description of Luck die usage is a little ambivalent whether they're intended for action die rolls or just any roll in the game. If Luck dice were applied to damage any thief with middling Luck could one shot almost anything with little to no downside, making combat exceedingly boring for everyone else. Allowing Luck dice to crit tables seems like a decent balancing act: in conjunction with the *Backstab* ability, a thief can do a quite a bit of damage while also having to work for it.

10 Now, this ruling may go against rules-as-intended, but I'm not keen on the mental gymnastics required to disregard terrain or other details. Dungeon corridors are often sparsely decorated, with more or less nothing to hide behind, and human thieves suffer from a lack of infravision, which is often readily available to the monsters hunting them in said corridors. I am aware that this may be the reason for the low survivability of thieves at my table, but it is what it is.

11 This is a clutch ruling, but it's an attempt to increase the thief's chance of survival. It's supposed to represent the heightened state of awareness a sneaking thief presumably has, and give them a chance to save their hide if spotted. It's partially due to the weakness of the attack roll vs. AC structure in the d20

system: there's no real room for dodging or avoidance after getting attacked. This attempts to remedy that, at least situationally.

12 Honestly, I ruled it like this mostly because rolling dice is fun.

13 Wizards are cool in DCC, despite the mess that is spell combat (something I'll eventually re-write), or useless crap like *Ventriloquism* or *Cantrip* (my design thinking is too lean to understand including spells no one will ever use), and the crafting spells (I'm looking at you, *Sword magic*). I usually approach stuff like this on a situational basis until I've enough time to actually figure out what to do with them.

14 Obviously, this usually only happens upon reaching 1ˢᵗ level. After that wizards must work to gain access to new spells (by acquiring tomes or petitioning patrons, for example).

15 This ruling is borrowed from *Liber Arcanum* by *Cognition Pressworks* (available [here](#) for example).

16 See endnote 7 above.

17 My groups tend to be skint-broke after the funnel, struggling to acquire the simplest necessities. The "deed to mithril" allows for a simple and logical way for elves to postpone purchasing mithril equipment to a point when they can afford something reasonably cool and interesting.

18 This is another misread rule that stuck, and I've found that it does not change things too much, but rather makes non-martial classes a bit more combat viable. The only side-effect is that I usually need to max out monster hit points to make combat encounters work, but I usually need to do that anyway to keep things interesting, as I often run modules below or above the suggested character levels, and my players tend to play quite well.

19 There's multiple small changes here, which end up tweaking damage and death quite a bit. I found that dropping characters to 0 wasn't enough challenge, as a slap-happy cleric could just run around pumping bleeding adventurer's up far too easily: bleeding out lacked drama, so I ruled that hit points could dip below 0. I also figured that penalizing STA every time wasn't all that fun: plenty of laughs have been had with people losing INT because of hits to the head, or PER because of horrific scarring, and the narrative value of spreading the damage around is much more fun than slowly crippling foolhardy adventurers. Finally, I felt that the cost for a miraculous survival after recovering the body wasn't quite steep enough, and tweaked that to be a little more harsh. Deducting penalty points from stats also creates a point of no return: sometimes a body has simply taken too much damage to be recovered (I'm reminded of the tale of the Puréed Lizardman, but we'll leave that for another time…).

20 The rulebook is fairly ambivalent on what armor affects thief skills, but studded leather seems like a classic option for thieves and this ruling is mostly built around it. Also, the thought of barbarians with shields and hide armor sneaking into a camp to kill the inhabitants is a cool image, and I want to encourage that sort of action. I've ruled that studded leather does not count as "metal armor", for if it'd contain enough metal to hinder casting, wizards couldn't wear rings or amulets or anything of the sort either.