

Gattaibushido:FUSION! RPG Playtest Rules vA1.00

| N. Phillip Cole

Introduction: "Collateral Damage"

The dust cleared, and strewn before Team Athena was the flaming wreckage of the Aegis Cargo-Carrier.

As her T-Rex mecha struggled to its feet, Misty could barely focus on her cockpit's viewscreen. "K-Kenjiro? Oh no, please no – Kenjiro, answer me!"

Layali bit her knuckles, her Wombat mecha's cockpit echoing with her labored breathing. "He blocked the missile swarm with the Aegis, Misty. We would be dead otherwise."

Miho shook her head. "What was he thinking? The Aegis isn't armored at all!" Her badger-mecha's claws scratching at the pavement, matching her rising anger.

Nnedi donned her visor, knocked loose from the last explosion. "He was thinking of us, Miho. He always said he wanted to be more of a help to us." Her oversized Panda mech lumbered to a standing position, surveying the ruins of the city.

From within a somber-hued avian mech, Bee's voice cracked over the radio. "But not like THAT! Damn you, Prince Galkar! You and your blasted Metal-Stalker are going to pay for this!"

The pilots' video screens fizzled, and were suddenly filled with the image of that same prince, his humanoid features resplendent in his purple skin, metallic gold mane of leonine hair, and eight spider-like eyes. "What's that Earth saying? 'Speak the devil's name and he shall appear?' Oh, but Team Athena, I'm here already, as your cowardly Kenjiro learned to his cost." The vain prince ran his six-fingered hand through his thick hair, reveling in the rush of his latest kill. "Luckily for you, I had to expend my entire supply of Swarmers to pull that off, but just sit tight and wait a moment, I'll be coming closer to finish you off, up close and oh-so personal. My newest Metal-Stalker is named 'Apex', and it has this lovely new chainsaw-saber, designed especially for you. I simply can't wait to test the blade's edge against your pathetic armor. GLORY TO THE STORM ARMADA! GLORY TO NEO-XERXES! HA HA HA!"

The pilots' viewscreens shifted suddenly to show Evelyn in Mission Control, adjusting her glasses. "I've jammed Galkar's transmission, team, but he'll be upon you in just a few moments. I have good news and... bad news."

Miho's voice was a snarl. "We just saw your fiancee DIE in front of us, and that's all you have to say? YOU HEARTLESS HARPY!"

Evelyn's jaw clenched. "...Yes. Yes I am. And that's the bad news. Kenjiro's dead. Sensors confirm it. He's gone. He's... gone." She looked up, her cold brown eyes churning with a barely restrained rage, and her voice dropped to a cold and almost mechanical monotone. "The good news is that the Neo-Xerxes missile strike has cleared the field. There's nothing stopping you from initiating Prime Fusion, because any civilians that might've been endangered from the Fusion Shockwave have already evacuated, or... didn't." As her gaze flickered across the casualty and collateral damage estimates from Galkar's missile strike, the ice in her voice cracked. "FORM ATHENA PRIME AND MURDER THAT BASTARD. That's an order, pilots!"

Nnedi swallowed loudly. "Omega clearance confirmed, mission control. Athena Prime matrix is initialized. Gold Panda, standing by. We love you, Kenjiro." She yanked back hard on the Fusion Throttle by her side, her clenched fists trembling.

Bee wiped away a tear. "Omega clearance confirmed. Black Phoenix, standing by. We never did get to go to the zoo together, Kenjiro. Damn it all..." Her Fusion Throttle pulled, Bee leaned forward, ready to burst into action.

Layali put her folded photograph, showing Kenjiro cooking at the team's barbeque party, back into her pocket. "Omega clearance confirmed. Red Wombat, standing by. I miss him already." Another Fusion Throttle activated, and the air around the team began to shudder as power built up among the five mecha.

Miho was practically grinding her teeth down to the gums. "Omega clearance confirmed. Blue Badger, standing by, and I'm going to freaking rip out their spines for what they just did to Kenjiro-kun." As her Throttle was pulled back, the whine of rising energy grew louder.

Misty closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "Omega clearance confirmed, Pink T-Rex ready to initiate Fusion Call. Kenjiro, I never got to say I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry." With her team's eyes upon her, Misty looked up, and threw open the last Fusion Throttle with a savage pull. "ATHENA PRIME IS GO! STRIDE FORWARD, PRINCESS OF WAR! FOR KENJIRO!"

As the Fusion began, Prince Galkar's Apex crested the hill above the battlefield, eagerly awaiting its next command, a

sleek blend of cybernetic chrome armor plate and glistening scaled flesh, forever obedient to the steel cockpit embedded in its chest. A malevolent knight of twisted honor, the myriad missile launchers on the Metal-Stalker's back and shoulders still trailed thin wisps of smoke.

Prince Galkar took in the scene from inside his armored cocoon, smiling as he saw the familiar silver-white shockwave burst from where those five mechanical beasts had stood only moments before. "This time will be different, Team Athena. This time, our long war ends at sunset, and I will bury you all with your meddling friend." His fearsome machine drew its gleaming Saw-Saber, and charged down the hill towards its destined enemy. "EN GARDE, ATHENA PRIME! TASTE THE STEEL OF NEO-XERXES!"

The final battle had begun.

Gattaibushido:FUSION! Playtest Rules

By N. Phillip Cole, version Playtest a1.00

Introduction Story by Isaac Sher

In Gattaibushido:FUSION! you play a team of Mecha pilots in space battle school. You deal with conflicts both social, physical, and interpersonal, while also trying to save humanity from giant space monsters, among other threats. One player takes on the GM-like role of "Coach," while the rest are a team of pilots. The pilots must strive to accomplish their goals while maintaining team unity, so that they can ultimately combine their robots into a final form and defeat the Giant Monster of the Week.

What you are reading is a very rough initial playtest prototype of my upcoming new role-playing game, *Gattaibushido:FUSION!* It began its life as a simple "Voltron-inspired" hack of my previous game, *Motobushido*, but quickly evolved into a whole new beast all of its own. This doc is an intentionally bare-bones, simplified, and stripped-down presentation of the core game rules, completely devoid of the intended art and stylings that are planned for the final print draft. Very little of this text will be in that penultimate release, although some of it is already in the process of being themed for the final product.

Needless to say, this document is *very much* a Work in Progress. Your feedback is both requested and highly appreciated! If you have any input, please send it my way, through whichever channel brought this to you in the first place.

This document was written in GitHub2-flavored Markdown, using both [Macdown](#) on OSX and [Smartdown](#) on Windows.

Playtester Questions

Some very specific questions I am wanting answers to, as they come to me:

1. Does the document structure work for you? In this case, I'm referring to the flow of the different sessions - are rules explanations in places where you would expect to find them?
2. Does the "First Contact" scene work? It is derived from the "First Founding" of *Motobushido*, where it serves the same purpose. What works? What doesn't? How can it be improved?
3. Are there any "obvious choices" in the character, power, and Tech options? Are some just genuinely more beneficial than others, to the point of making the others invalid or obsolete?
4. Are the evolutions enough? Too many, too few? Do they need to be made more granular?
5. Is the "random d4" thing too out of place? Too common or uncommon? Need to be more prevalent? Not used enough?

Your Pilots, Your World, Your Story

(details about the open nature of the setting and story, very few elements are concrete at the start)

The setting of this game is intentionally low on details. I want groups to come up with their own world stories, and then tell me about them. Much like *Motobushido* had a loosely-implied post-apocalyptic theme, *Gattaibushido* has a basic "Earth vs the Space Monsters!" theme to it that the players are encouraged to take in whatever direction they choose.

The only constants are: Battle School, Color-Themed Mecha Pilots, Giant Transforming Robots, and Big Giant Monsters. And heck, even those can be defined however you wish. Maybe your "school" is a corporate proving arena, maybe your "pilots" are sleeve-jacked body-hopping trans-human consciousness clones, and maybe your Giant Monsters are a metaphor for corporate war. It's all up to you.

Some Major Game themes:

- "I need to be friends with these other girls, or the rest of humanity will die."
- "I need to be the best I can be, but there's all these life problems getting in the way."

System Basics

Inspirations:

- *Gunbuster & Majestic Prince*: This game is basically a love letter to those two series.
- *Vandread*: ...okay and this one too.
- *Voltron*: Because duh
- *Steven Universe*: I'd be a liar if I said I hadn't already planned out gem-themed team colors...
- *Chroma Squad*: Best (and only?) super sentai game I've played (motorcycle chapter is best chapter)
- *Dai-Guard*: I can't get that theme song out of my head!

The Golden Rules

- **The cards are subordinate to the story.** If you play, draw, discard, or affect a card in any way, you *must* provide suitable in-game narration of such.
- **There are no Take-Backs.** If you put a card down, it's down, regardless of its source and/or facing. Think before you play.
- **Card Ranks beat Card Suits.** King of Clubs beats a Seven of Spades.
- **Card Suits break ties.** King of Spades beats a King of Clubs. Spades > Hearts > Diamonds > Clubs (reverse alphabetical).
- **No Cheese-Train Conflict Sequences.** In other words: one conflict per conflict. If a Gambit, Throwdown, or Rumble fails to fully accomplish what you want from the moment, you cannot immediately start a new one to try it again. You must step back, reassess, and come up with a new approach. If that leads to a nearly identical conflict in a follow-up scene, that's fine, but no cheese trains allowed.
- **Explicit Card-Talk is Prohibited.** Players can not reveal or directly discuss the contents of their hands with each other, unless in-game mechanics (namely Techs) explicitly state otherwise. You must instead talk strategy in-game, as your characters, and not meta-game the conflicts with cheaty card-talk.

Introduction to Play

One player takes on the role of "**Coach**" and leads the proceedings. Coach is responsible for guiding the game along and keeping the team focused on their story goals. Coach is the "game master" position in this game.

The rest of the players take on the roles of the "**Pilots**" and explore the story as presented by Coach. These player characters are responsible for driving the story forward in pursuit of their various agendas, both personal and team-focused. Oftentimes those agendas will clash with one another - since they're young characters in the passion of their youth, this conflict is entirely expected. More often still, they will face direct opposition from space monsters and other dangerous threats, the likes of which they have dedicated their lives to fighting in order to protect the future of humanity.

When this text refers to "players" it includes all at the table who are involved in the game, Coach and Pilots alike. For purposes of clarity, when rules are meant to refer only to Coach or the Pilots, they will use those specific terms. The term "Pilot" is used to reference both the Pilot characters *and* their players.

School Supplies

Make sure you have the basics:

- **Pencils and Paper** are the core tools of every student in Battle School, and you will make heavy use of them here. You kids might think you're clever with those special digi-pad-whatsits, but when they eventually suffer a glitch and the Meta-Skein crashes, you'll be glad you kept the old standbys on hand!
- **Playing Cards** are absolutely necessary for play, and you'll need two decks - one for the players to share between themselves, and one for Coach to use on their own. They're also great for after-hours poker games in the barracks, but don't let Coach find out you've been gambling!
- **Tokens or counters** of different colors will be useful for tracking the fluctuating levels of Harmony and Dissonance your Pilot will experience during play, especially during the tense chaos of Throwdowns.
- (OPTIONAL) A *four-sided gaming die* might be useful for certain random moments, if you'd rather not burn through cards for them. 8-sided, 12-sided, and 20-sided also work, as they are all divisible by 4.
- (**Still In Development**) Pilot Record Sheets allow you to keep detailed ongoing notes of your stats, abilities, skills, and class grades. Be careful now, these are your permanent records!

- **(Still In Development)** The Team Harmony Tracker is required to keep up-to-date stats on your pilots' harmonic frequencies with each other. Put one of these on the table for everyone to see.

The Pilots

The Pilots are the core focus of every game. This is the story of their life and times, their dramas and sorrows, their wins and losses. They must balance the stresses of their schooling and social lives while also pulling together to save the world from invading space monsters.

Pilots have a handful of core game components that you should know about. First are their **Commitments**, this game's version of "attributes." Each Pilot has three core commitments that frequently come into conflict with one another: to the Team, to the Fight, and to the Future. Each Commitment is in turn a dual stat, a balance of two opposing forces. The balance of these six stats determines the base mechanics for every extended game component.

Next, each pilot has a pair of very similar gauges that function in a somewhat similar capacity as "health" in other games. These are called **Harmony** and **Pulse**. A Pilot's Harmony is a 7-point gauge that determines how in sync she is with the spirit of the team. The higher her Harmony, the stronger she is when working with her team, and the more likely she is to be able to combine with them. Pulse is a 7-point gauge that represents a Pilot's actual health and well-being. The lower her Pulse, the closer she is to death. Harmony and Pulse are affected by fluctuating "damage" called **Dissonance** and **Static**, respectively. These are encountered most frequently during big battles, but the Pilots can often bring the damage upon themselves simply by being the self-conflicted people they are.

The Pilots also have three extended empowering tools at their disposal: their **Color**, **Power Weapon**, and **Robo**. A Pilot's Color is both the color of her outfit and the greater role she plays in her team. Functioning similarly to a "character class," Colors provide both special mechanical Techs and extended role-playing inspiration. A Pilot's Power Weapon is that singular awesome tool she is most known for using in combat. Power Weapons start with a basic form and function, but grow mightily over time. A Pilot's Robo is that super awesome bad-ass giant Mecha that she pilots in the field against the invading monsters. Robos each come in different forms, and give their Pilots even more cool powers to use both on their own and when in the cockpit. Oh, and they can also merge together to get even more powerful!

Over time, as the Pilots experience conflict and victory and more, they will learn from their experiences and hone their abilities. By acquiring **Lessons** and subsequently learning from them, they convert those Lessons into **Evolutions** which allow them to increase their existing powers, and learn new ones as well.

The Pilots' Team itself is also a greater unit of play, with its own stats and mechanics. The Team has three **Resources** that the Pilots can draw from, and must manage throughout their adventures: **Fan Club**, **Armory**, and **Pit Crew**. These connect directly to their own core Commitments and extended tools, both empowering and limiting them in turns.

Finally, the team can equip themselves with extended load-outs of **Gear**. These special tools and weapons gives them minor (but sometimes crucial!) boosts in the field. As the team gains more experience and rank, they unlock more equipment options, too!

The Cards

All aspects of mechanical concern are resolved by plays and draws from two decks of playing cards. Coach gets his own deck, while a second deck is shared between all the players. The extended and fully-detailed card Rules are explained in the later *Cards and Conflicts* section of this document, but for now there are a few core concepts behind them that you should know before reading much further.

Order and Ranking

Cards are ranked by value, with suits used to break ties and activate Block actions in Throwdowns. Suit order is Spades (highest), Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs (lowest). Twos are the lowest value, and Aces are the highest.

The unnumbered cards also have hidden numerical values as well, with Jacks at 11, Queens as 12, Kings at 13, and Aces at 14 (and Jokers are special as well - see below). Additionally, Faces and Aces can be discarded during conflicts to activate the Pilots' special techniques. Being valuable as both high cards and Tech-activation tools, Faces and Aces tend to be highly sought-after cards.

Twos and Aces

There is a special relationship between Twos and Aces. Aces are numerically the highest-ranked card in the game, seemingly beating all other cards in the decks. However, when playing through a Throwdown, an already-played Ace can be beaten by playing a Two, starting the process from the bottom again.

Jokers

Each deck includes two Jokers, which serve as a combination Pacing and Escalation mechanic. Jokers are shuffled face-up into their respective decks, and trigger special game events when they reach the top of a deck. The Pilots' Jokers trigger minor "Rally" boons, while Coach's Jokers trigger special **Escalation Path** events when they are revealed, in addition to granting his eventual Big Giant Monster more power.

Coach

Coach is the "game master" role in this game. He sets everything up, manages proceedings, and guides the flow of play. Coach is largely (but not exclusively) responsible for introducing story components and pushing along the narrative and events in a way that make for an exciting session of play. Coach is in charge of introducing all of the other non-Pilot story characters that populate the world. Coach manages the Factions, Threats, and Big Giant Monsters that the players heavily interact with through play.

Coach's role is a lot more complicated than the individual Pilots' roles, but to make it easier he actually has much simpler mechanics to manage. While the Pilots have a tight structure of multi-layered and multi-tiered mechanics and stats, most (but not all) of Coach's mechanics have exactly one solitary stat each, and a simple "stack" of enhancements.

Factions, Threats, and BGMs

The Pilots will interact with many "non-player" characters throughout their missions, but the three types that matter most are the three that specifically have actual game mechanics: **Factions**, **Threats**, and **Big Giant Monsters**.

Factions are any kind of force in the game that has motivation and agency within the scenario's story. Factions are meant to be courted by the Pilots, who can gain favor with them and invest external power in them for later use.

Threats are any force that is a danger to the Pilots and their goals. These can be school bullies, oppressive military regimes, crazed space cults, infectious zombie parasites, raging void storms, dangerous natural environments, and yes even:

Big Giant Monsters! These are Threats that have the power to destroy great numbers of lives and cause trillions of space dollars worth of destruction. These are so powerful that the best (and only?) hope of defeating them is for the Pilots to get over their interpersonal squabbles and join up!

Session Flow

Each session of *Gattaibushido* follows a basic flow:

1. Session Setup
2. Team Salute
3. Briefing
4. Story and Play
5. Debriefing
6. Breakdown

1. Session Setup

Set up the play space for the session. This includes setting out basic supplies (playing card decks, writing utensils, tokens, index cards), passing out sheets (pilots, harmony tracker, etc)

Jokers: Leave the jokers of both decks out for the moment. They'll be shuffled in shortly.

Seating Order: Seating order is important! Your seating order determines your conflict initiative and flow order, as all action flows clockwise from Coach. If you have a few sessions under your wing and wish to strategize the order of your team's actions, establishing a seating order is the way to do it! For the sake of session flow and cohesion, **seating order is**

locked in for the session once everyone completes the Team Salute (see below). However, Coach may allow a new group to change mid-game in the first session or two, as the Pilots learn how their abilities interact.

Starting Harmony

First Scenario Only: At the beginning of a brand new game, each new character first enters with a base starting Harmony of 4 (Green). Coach then draws a card to divine any modification to that baseline. If the card is Red, discard it and leave the Harmony as is. If the card is Black, then a Club means lower Harmony, while a Spade means a higher Harmony. The amount of modification is based on rank: Number card = 1pt, Face card = 2pts, and Ace = 3pts. Thus a Pilot who gets an Ace of Spades starts the game with 7 (Violet) Harmony, while an Ace of Clubs gives her 1 (Red) Harmony! If the Harmony is modified in this manner at all, see also "Each Time," below.

Subsequent Scenarios: At the beginning of each new Scenario, Coach will most likely alter your Harmony ratings from last time. This may be due to specifications written into the scenario itself, or due to events on the Downtime Draw Table (in Coach's Handbook).

Each Time: If your Pilot's Harmony is below Green, you must name one thing that the others have recently done to piss her off (the lower your Harmony, the greater the offense). Conversely, if your Pilot has Harmony above green, you must state one thing that's super awesome in her life, awesome enough that it could make others jealous. Need to breed some juicy intra-team conflicts here!

2. Team Salute

Kicking off the game with a proper teamsalute is a crucial part of every session. The typical teamsalute involves each player first standing up around the gaming table. Coach then puts forth his hand, face-down, and the other players do likewise, stacking their hands atop each other until all are joined up. Then as one, they throw their hands up and yell "Go team!"

Each group is encouraged to customize their own salute, by changing up the motion, adding a different shout, or some other modification, including an entirely different one!

3. Briefing

If this is the first of a new scenario, Coach kicks off the story with a quick Briefing, detailing the current state of affairs with the Pilots' lives, and the status of their overall fight against The Enemy.

If this is another session in an ongoing Scenario, then Coach instead recaps the previous session's events, delegating some or all of the recollection to the other players as he sees fit.

Deal Starting Hands and Shuffle Jokers

During the Briefing, Coach deals out the Pilots' starting Hands of cards. After this is done, shuffle the Jokers into both decks face-up.

4. Story and Play

The majority of actual game play happens during this stage of the session. The Pilots work both separately and together to pursue their agendas in the story, overcoming challenges both personal and grand in scale. This part of the session continues until Coach brings things to a suitable stopping point.

5. Debriefing

Once Coach closes the session's play, it's time to quickly recap the events of the session as a group, so everyone is caught up to the state of the story affairs as they are being left for the time being. All post-session mechanics occur now, including any end-of-session character analyses, alterations, and evolutions.

If this marks the completion of the current scenario as well, then Coach runs the group through an epilogue of the events thus far. This also includes tallying the team's final Score of the adventure, to determine if they have attained any bonus resources and/or evolutions.

6. Breakdown

Once all play and story wrap-up is complete, pack up all the materials and store them handily for next time.

Factions: If this is an ongoing scenario, keep any existing-and-invested Factions as they are currently, using baggies or other such simple storage to keep their current cards invested. This way, the next time you meet you can put them back into play exactly as they were without having to dig cards out of the decks.

Glossary (Work in Progress)

(use hanging indent in final doc, include page refs as well)

Term: definition

Armory: a team resource that gives them cool gear

AvTE: Average Team Evolutions, a gauge of relative team power and experience

Collateral: special damage that is applied to locations

Combo Zone: definition

d4: a random number from 1 to 4, generated either by the suit of a card draw, or by rolling a four-sided die.

Deck: definition

Discard: definition

Dissonance: definition

Escalation Path: a predetermined series of increasingly-dangerous events that unfold as jokers are revealed

Escalation Level: the current place on the Escalation Path that the game has advanced to, through the revelation of jokers

Fan Club: definition

Gambit: definition

Hand: definition

Harmony: definition

Locations: definition

Pile: definition

Pit Crew: definition

Play: definition

Positions: the different locations in the final form where the robos slot in

Pulse: definition

Push: definition

Resource: definition

Round: one of three stages of robot-on-monster action during Robo Rumbles

Rumble: definition

Static: definition

Tech: Short for "Technique," Techs are special powers you can trigger during Throwdowns and some other game situations.

Throwdown: definition

Term: definition

Pilot Creation

Playtest Note: Character Creation rules will likely be the last component added to this document, despite the process being more or less complete on my end. There's a lot of "fluff" text in the process, for one, and I'm keeping this current doc focused on technical specifics. Second, I'm primarily looking to solidify flow, and character creation will be the last thing finalized in order to adapt to whatever end form that flow takes. So until this section gets fleshed out more, a trimmed-down version has been included below.

Pilot creation should be done as a group.

Flow:

1. First Founding
2. Pick Colors

3. Determine Initial Commitments
4. Build Weapons
5. Pick Robos
6. Determine Sacrifices
7. Answer Establishment Questions
8. Choose Starting Evolutions
9. Derive Additional Stats
10. Define Your Salute!
11. Determine Starting Team Resources

First Founding

If this is a brand new campaign with a brand new team of pilots, you should first play through the "First Contact" establishment and tutorial scene. It is extremely useful not just for setting up extended details on your game world and campaign focus, but also for teaching new players the core basics of the rules system. The full details on the First Contact scene are detailed in the "Coach's Handbook" section of this document.

Pick Colors

The Team Colors are the closest thing this game has to Character Classes. They are described in detail a bit further down. Someone *must* pick Red, as the group needs a leader. The rest are optional. Take note of the social power dynamics built into Red, Blue, and Green.

Take note of your Color's associated Triggers and Techs.

Determine Commitments

At creation assign a spread of six points to each separate duality. Valid values are: 6/0, 5/1, 4/2, 3/3, 2/4, 1/5, and 0/6. The Commitments are described in greater detail further below in the "Extended" character section.

Random Option: For a more uncertain experience, use a six-sided gaming die to randomly roll your character. Start with the first Commitment pair, and roll a d6. Assign the result to one of the stats in that pair, and assign the difference (from 6) to the other. Repeat twice more for the following two Commitment pairs.

Build Weapons

First pick a Frame, then add one quality Tech in at "Slot 1" (of four total slots). Take note of these.

Pick Robos

Pick your Robo, take note of the associated Techs.

Playtest Note: The "Special Robo Techs" are still TBD, pending further playtest feedback. Do not use them yet unless you feel like experimenting.

Determine Sacrifices

For each of your three commitments, you have had to make one important sacrifice. You will answer one, while your team will answer the other two for you. Or phrasing it differently, you must now answer three questions: one about yourself, and the other two about two of your companions.

This process can take some time, as the entire group is directly involved. Be sure to give it the attention and discussion it deserves, though!

Commitment to the Team Sacrifice: Betrayal" (Answer this for the Player to your Left) Someone else on the team publicly humiliated her, but she let it or otherwise sucked it up. Describe that humiliation. Why did she not get revenge?

Commitment to the Fight Sacrifice: Blood" (Answer this for the Player to your Right) Name one person she got into a fight with since joining the team. When, where, and why? Who started it? And who won?

Commitment to the Future Sacrifice: Bonds" (Answer this for Yourself) You lost someone, intentionally or unintentionally,

when you joined this team. Who was it? Why did you lose them? And how do you really feel about that loss?

Answer Establishment Questions

(TBD)

There will be a number of questions the team must answer. These are still being decided as we playtest, but some of them are here.

For the Individual Pilots to Answer:

- What is the most despicable thing you've ever done in pursuit of a personal victory?
- What is the most despicable thing you've ever done in response to a major personal loss?
- Why are *you really* fighting this war?

For the Whole Team to Answer

- What weird pre-battle ritual does your team have?
- Which of you is known as Coach's pet? Is it true?
- What is your unit's Motto?
- What do you call your final form? Combo Drive? Ultimate Form Fusion? Meda-Dino? You can answer this now, or wait until the fusion first happens.
- Finally: What is your team name? Ultra Mega Assault Division? Team Triple Triumph? The War Warriors?

Choose Starting Evolutions

(TBD)

Playtest Notes: The Evolutions are still being developed as feedback comes in from my own games and those of outside groups. **For Now,** Give your Pilot +1 to her Max Hand (total 2) and +1 to either of her Buffers (your Choice).

Derive Additional Stats

Note the following derived stats:

- Dissonant Buffer: Base 0 (plus Stars stat)
- Harmonic Buffer: Base 0 (plus Earth stat)
- Max Hand: Base 1 (plus any starting evolutions bonus)

Define Your Salute!

Each team has their own special salute. It could be as simple as all hands in the middle, then Yay! Or it could be something hands-off, and/or more subtle or complex. Define it together, and starting with the next session it will open every time.

During the first session of play, as part of character creation, the Group Salute is defined. It is then used to open each NEW session of play that follows.

Determine Starting Team Resources

You have three Team Resources, described later in this document. They are: Fan Club, Armory, and Pit Crew.

Draw three cards and then lay them out in ranked order. Draw three more cards and lay them out separately in ranked order. Repeat this a third and final time.

Pick the three cards from the middle of each of the three sets. Those are now the three values that the team must choose to assign to the three Resources.

With that, the Team is Complete.

Archetypes (Character Pregens)

(developed in a separate file, will be included in later playtest release version)

Pilot Components, Extended

Commitments (Your Base Stats)

Your Pilot's Commitments determine the basis for all most character mechanics.

Commitment to the Team: Solo/Sync

Stat Mechanic: Determines bonus card *Draws* during conflicts.

Tied To: Team Color

Your relevant stat determines how many bonus cards you draw at the beginning of a Throwdown, based on your approach to that conflict. Use **Solo** if you're pushing your own agenda, or **Sync** if you're putting the Team's needs first.

High-Solo Pilots have a stronger sense of self, and are not as in tune with the team's needs, strengths, and weaknesses. High-Sync Pilots are more heavily driven by the Team's goals, and work harder to put the Team first.

Commitment to the Fight: Glove/Fist

Stat Mechanic: Determines Strike Ranges in conflicts.

Tied To: Personal Power Weapon

Glove sets Strike Range when the fight is brought to you, while **Fist** sets your Strike Range when you are bringing the fight.

High-Glove Pilots are stronger when standing firm against the rigors the universe throws their way, and disfavor direct approaches to complex problems. High-Fist Pilots favor an immediate direct approach to the greatest known foes, so much that they fare poorly against the unexpected challenges that suddenly fall upon them.

Commitment to the Future: Earth/Stars

Stat Mechanic: Determines the pilot's resistance to external forces.

Tied To: Personal Robo

Earth stat sets your Static Buffer, allowing you to resist greater amounts of Static. **Stars** sets your Dissonance Buffer, likewise allowing you to resist greater amounts of Dissonance.

High-Earth Pilots are rooted more firmly in the realities of the past and present, and stand solidly against the direct forces of the universe that would cause them harm. High-Stars Pilots are driven by a commitment to venture to the stars with their team, and take the fight far and away from the people of the Earth - as such, they have a greater resistance against forces that would degrade their team spirit.

Managing Your Commitments

Your stats will always remain in a 6-point balance, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6.

Forced Shifts: Some game effects may force you to make a shift in one direction or another. TO do that, raise the Stat you are shifting toward, and lower the other one. If a shift would ever force you from 6 to 7 in a stat pair, *instead* immediately reduce Harmony by 1 (and if that would reduce Harmony to zero, *instead* immediately reduce Pulse by 1).

Team Colors (Roles)

Sidebar: On the Classic Colors

If you're a fan of the Super Sentai genre, you've probably noticed that some (or all!) of these colors stray pretty widely from classic color tropes of that genre. The main reason for this is that I didn't feel there was enough consistency to give each color a solid, unique identity based solely on that genre's tropes. My goal here is to leave things open for the addition and description of more color roles in the future, and

also allow more open interpretation by the player groups. As such, I took a lot of artistic liberty in describing the strengths and weaknesses of the color roles here. Remember also that the Super Sentai genre is a big inspiration, but not the only one.

Notes on Color Techs

In all the descriptions below, the variable X represents the Pilot's highest-unlocked Color Tier (1 through 4).

Color Template

- **Harmonic Trigger:** Actions in-game that can restore your Harmony, either in or out of conflicts.
- **Lessons Trigger:** In-game events which can earn you lessons at Coach's discretion.
- **Favored Position(s):** This color's favorite positions in the Final Form (TBD)

A short description of what drives the Pilot that chooses this Color as her own.

Color Tech: "Techname" - A description of the Color's unique role Tech, and how it evolves. (**Playtest Note:** I'm still working on a proper final notation for these)

Dissonance Hooks: A section of text giving you tips on how to narrate your actions that fall outside of strike ranges. When (color) takes Dissonance, it's usually because blah...

Schism Tech: A special action or condition that takes effect whenever this Color gets into a Throwdown against her own teammate(s).

Black

BLACK is both the Void and the Explosion that births it, a duality of being, a conflict of natures. She is sometimes silent and passive, then suddenly motivated and violent. Some whisper that she's "lost it," which causes her much self-doubt when she overhears them. And she just may be, or maybe, just maybe she is in truth the Balance Incarnate, the manifestation of the harmonic line between Life and Death.

- **Harmony Trigger:** Black gains Harmony when her actions alone are the crucial deciding factor between success and defeat - either one!
- **Lesson Trigger:** Black suffers most when she sees first-hand the great unexpected misfortune of her best intentions gone awry.
- **Special:** Black works best when seated immediately to Coach's right. Her special Tech requires someone else to have played prior, and that is made more likely with all the other Pilots sitting to her right.

Color Tech: "Wait for it... WAIT FOR IT!" Black works best when she times her actions to the precise moment. This Tech requires some table configuration, and a Throwdown with at least one other ally participating on her side. In order to use this new Main Action, first: she must have one or more cards still in her hand, and second: the player immediately to her right in the Throwdown must have just Pushed. When this happens, she has the option to **PASS** on her turn (and is in fact the only character in the game that can do so!). When she Passes, she can draw up to X cards into her hand, and then must place an equal number of cards back on top of the deck in any order. She can only do this once per Throwdown. (**Playtest Note:** Okay this one is complicated, maybe too much so. I am eager to hear how this works in your games.)

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Blue

BLUE is uncertain - capable, but not yet aware of her strength. She's strong - *really* strong, in fact, but her self-image has yet to realize this. She's always the second string to Red's lead guitar, and yet not always comfortable with that.

- **Harmony Trigger:** Blue gains Harmony when she steps up to tighten the group's slack, and in doing so leads them to victory.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Blue is not fully satisfied with her position as second, but neither is she certain where she really wants to be. Blue suffers most when that discomfort in her place in life causes major discord with the rest of the team.
- **Rank Special:** Blue always starts at number 2, always just behind Red.

Color Tech: "I'm not done yet!" When Blue's hand is empty during a Throwdown, on her turn she has a new Side action. She can take up to X Static to take an equal amount of cards from the *bottom* of the current play pile and put them into her hand.

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Green

GREEN is young and scrappy, eager to prove and yet lacking in the experience to always do so. Green leaps at the opportunity to do awesome things for her team, and chafes at the decidedly-less-exciting things she is usually ordered to do instead. Everyone was "green" once, but Green is Green *now*, and she's dying to show her true worth. If she pushes hard enough, she may even succeed, but at what: proven success, or dying in the process?

- **Harmony Trigger:** Green gains Harmony when she totally kicks the ass of some extremely lame task in a way that turns it into a great success for the team.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Green suffers most when she defies the responsibilities of her duties (great or small), and it damages the team.
- **Rank Special:** Green is the New Girl, the freshest of the pilots, and the lowest on the totem pole. She's likely (but not necessarily) the youngest, and usually out of touch with the team's idioms (or maybe they're really just out of touch with *hers*). Green gets the lamest duties and the least-desired watch rotations, until she proves that she is as tough as the rest of them.

Color Tech: "Didn't See That Coming, Did Ya!" Being the underdog of the team, Green has learned to rise up from the bottom of a fight in unexpected ways, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. This gives her extended card-play options when she Pushes in Throwdowns. At Tier 1 she can beat Aces with Threes. At Tier 2 she can beat Kings with Twos as well. At Tier 3 she can beat Aces with Fours, too. And at Tier 4 she can beat Jacks and Queens with Twos, as well.

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Orange

ORANGE is dedicated, passionate, and a true fan of life. Orange is the Number One Geek, and absorbs herself in the things she loves - and those things are always changing! She is the vibrant lover of new things, the explorer of new hobbies (that she quickly gets bored with)

- **Special:** Orange is always obsessed with something new, be it a person, a hobby, a place, or an annoying catch phrase. Orange's obsession must change with each new scenario - or each new session if she prefers!
- **Harmony Trigger:** Orange gains Harmony when her obsession with something so seemingly inappropriate actually turns out to be exactly the thing the team needed at a crucial moment.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Orange suffers most when she puts her obsessions before the interests of the team, especially when it brings about their harm or failure.

Color Tech: "New Shiny!" Orange has her own special Obsession Faction that changes every scenario (or even session). She can invest cards in it like a Faction, that only she can use. This faction *cannot* be affected by Coach's Waves and Storms, either! Starts with a max agency of 1. With evolutions she can either increase her base obsession agency, or instead diversify, buying a new obsession at Agency 1. But with multiple obsessions, EACH must change its focus every time!

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Pink

PINK is love, hope, cheer, and a head firmly planted high up in the intoxicating clouds of a distant planet yet to be discovered. Pink is often ignored or dismissed for her vibrant excitement at the seemingly silliest of things, but pushes ever-forward with that exuberance to keep her team in the bestest spirits she can manage.

- **Harmony Trigger:** Pink gains harmony when her immense cheer and support is actually appreciated by the team, and directly acknowledged as a crucial role in a victory.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Pink wears her beating, bleeding heart proudly on her sleeve. While she believes this is the greatest weapon she may have, it is also her biggest weakness. Pink suffers most when her willingness to make others happy is taken advantage of, and when her decision to wear her heart as a fashion accessory results in it being broken.

Color Tech: "Best Friends Forever!" Pink excels when she works with someone else. When Pink uses the Strike-Assist action, the recipient gains additional +X to their Range. Similarly, when she is targeted with a Card-Assist, she draws an additional +X cards.

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Purple

PURPLE is silent, secret passion, amazing skill trapped in a shell of doubt. Purple can excel at keeping her team together when she puts herself on the line, but often lets herself be overshadowed by the more willful of her team.

- **Harmony Trigger:** Purple gains Harmony when she brings success to the team without taking credit.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Purple suffers most when the things she wants fall out of reach by simple fact that she didn't speak up, didn't try hard enough, and didn't believe in herself. She must learn from these failures if she wants to be her best.

Color Tech: "Everybody Do Your Best!" When involved in a Throwdown with at least one other ally on her side, Purple has a special new Side Action. She can discard a single card and take 1 Dissonance, and then the other Pilots on her side can draw up to X new cards among them as she chooses. (**Playtest Note:** I suspect this needs tweaking, but it *seems* good to start with for now).

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Red

RED is brash, self-confident, strong-willed, and intentionally heroic. Red strives to be number one, and puts herself out there, pushing her own limits to the max and beyond, often dangerously so.

- **Harmony Trigger:** Red gains Harmony when she takes charge and the others follow her orders with minimal questioning.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Red suffers most when her go-get-'em brashness and drive to be The Hero backfire horribly, disrupting the team and bringing about strife and failure.
- **Rank Special:** Red is the leader, a required role in a new group.

Color Tech: "Hero Power!" Red rushes forward to save the day! As a Side action, take up to X Dissonance to deliver up to X Dissonance and/or Static to your opponent, provided you describe your awesome solo action hero attack.

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Yellow

YELLOW is Poise, grace, and a commitment to do what must be done. Yellow is always willing to sacrifice the needs of self for success of the greater cause, simply because She Must, and that's just how it is. She gains strength from the deep connection she shares with her team, and believes they respect her dedication whether they say so or not. The team thrives *because* of her, and that is a sacred commitment. But what of her own personal happiness? Must she always set aside her deeper self to be one of the pack?

- **Harmony Trigger:** Gain Harmony when you turn down an opportunity for happiness by choosing to put the team first.
- **Lesson Trigger:** Yellow suffers most when she is put on the spot between her deepest personal goals and those of

her team. She earns lessons when her decision to stand with her team makes one of her personal goals indefinitely unattainable.

Color Tech: "Let Me Carry Your Burdens!" Yellow can take on the Dissonance burdens of her allies as a free anytime action, either in a Throwdown or during open role-playing scenes. Whenever any team member would take Dissonance in her presence, she can choose to take 1 point of Dissonance on herself. When she does this, the other Pilot's incoming Dissonance amount is reduced by X. This is a *single-target* effect, meaning that each point that Yellow takes unto herself only shields the Dissonance for a single Pilot. She can only use it once per Pilot per instance of incoming Dissonance, but she *can* use it separately on multiple allies in the same situation, if applicable.

Dissonance Hooks: TBD

Schism Tech: TBD

Power Weapon

In Gattai, you get to build your own custom personal power weapon and fighting style.

Gear Note: Your special personal Power Weapon is a vital extension of your Pilot's core abilities, and as such it is *not* considered Gear in any way. It does not function like Gear, it cannot be Activated or Sacrificed, and does not rely on Gear rules to be used.

Building Your Power Weapon

To build your own custom Power Weapon, first start with a base weapon of your choice. Each weapon has a core base ability giving you either a passive, constant bonus, or instead a "Finisher" tech that activates only when you win a Throwdown with your card on top. Then at the start of a new game, you get to choose one special adjective Quality to add to it, giving it a special new Tech that you can use during Throwdowns as a side action. As your Pilot evolves through extended play, you can add up to three more qualities on top of that, each with its own new associated Tech.

Each Quality (and its Tech) is assigned to one of the four open Tier Slots on your Power Weapon, with each slot connected to a specific face card. At the start of play, you only have the Jack slot (Tier 1) unlocked. As you evolve, you additionally can unlock the Queen, King, and Ace slots (Tiers 2, 3, and 4, respectively). You can assign new Qualities to the newly-unlocked Tiers, or you can even assign the same one to multiple slots, giving you more options with the same power.

Using Core Power Weapon Abilities

Each base Power Weapon frame grants a single core power, in the form of either a constant base bonus or a special "Finisher" move. Weapons that grant a base bonus do not need any activation or adjustments; their bonuses are constant from day one, and do not evolve.

Weapons that grant Finishers, however, instead have an evolving power that automatically activates whenever you win a Throwdown and your card is the final one on top. In these moments, your Finisher kicks in and does its thing, with an output equal to your current highest unlocked

Ultimately the decision is a matter of playstyle choice. Weapons that provide base bonuses are pretty straightforward, and require no additional effort on the Pilot's part to use. The solid bonus is worthwhile and beneficial, but the trade-off is that they lack the deeper specialization of a finisher. Finisher weapons, on the other hand, require special circumstances in order to truly shine, but when they do their effects are exceptionally (and increasingly!) satisfying.

Using Quality Techs

As your Power Weapon acquires more Qualities, it likewise acquires additional Techs to use during Throwdowns. Each Tech is assigned to a Tier Slot, ranked 1 through 4, and each slot is associated with a particular face card (Jack, Queen, King, and Ace in ascending power). A quality's Slot designates both how powerful its effect is, and the minimum required discard in order to utilize it.

For example, if you have the "Nega-" Tech in your Tier 1 (Jack) slot, you can activate it on your turn by discarding a Jack or higher. Doing so allows you to use that Tech at that slot's level of effect. So in this example, you would then be able to

send the single bottom-most card of the Play Pile directly to its Trash. Similarly, if you had that same quality slotted to Tier 3 (King), you would discard a King or higher, and then the Tech allows you to send the bottom *three* cards of the Pile to the Trash.

Note that the Techs are tied to the *exact* power level of their slot. In the above examples, the Tier 1 Nega- Tech could only ever force a single card to Trash, regardless of the card you yourself discarded to empower it. Likewise, using the Tier 3 Nega- ability sends exactly three cards from the Pile to Trash. You can not voluntarily choose to do less than that, unless forced to by the constraints of the moment (in this case, if you used the Tier 3 Tech but there were only two cards in the Pile, it would be a legal play, and send them all to Trash). Nor does playing a higher card boost a lower Tech's power.

List of Power Weapon Bases

Below is a list of available Power Weapon bases you can choose from. In each description, the **X** variable equals the Pilot's current highest-acquired Power Weapon Tier. Thus if a Pilot had evolved up to Tier 2 in their Power Weapon, and the description says "Immediately remove **X** Dissonance," then she would remove 2 Dissonance upon use of that ability.

Axe: A solid warrior's weapon, design to chop through to the heart of a problem with nothing but brute strength. **Finisher:** Gain **+X** Victory Points, but bonus amount cannot exceed base VPs earned through pile count.

Bow: An archer's best friend when traveling through the lawless lands, its far-reaching arrows are ready for the enemy far before normal eyes can see them. **Finisher:** Look at the top **X+1** cards of any Deck, and rearrange them in any order.

Cannon: A fearsome force of destructive devastation, the cannon is feared by all, human and monster alike. **Finisher:** Up to **X** Victory Points spent on Static have times-two effect. You can take up to **X** (i.e. same amount) direct Pulse damage to make it a point blank hit, and increase that effect from times-two to times-four. (**Playtest Note:** possibly change to collateral damage instead)

Daggers: Shadowy and quick, the twin daggers are the ultimate hidden weapon, but users of such tools often accompany them with even darker secrets. **Finisher:** Take up to **X** Dissonance, gain double that amount as Victory Points.

Gauntlet: The powerful gauntlet literally strengthens the hand of its wearer. **Base Bonus:** +1 Max Hand Size

Gun: A powerful weapon that pierces through the strongest of defenses. **Finisher:** Ignore **X** points of Static Buffer when applying Static from Victory.

Hammer: The mighty hammer beats down even the mightiest of foes. **Base Bonus:** The Hammer deals 1 immediate Static to an opponent with every Push.

Lance (or Spear): A long and mighty extension of its wielder's martial will. **Base Bonus:** +1 Base Strike Range.

Scythe: A farmer's tool that can reap the wasted opportunities of the past and give them one more go in the present. **Finisher:** Take up to **X** cards of choice from the Pile and put them directly into your Hand. These cards do not count toward VPs, and you still must discard down if you exceed your max Hand size.

Weapon: Stalwart and unyielding, a sturdy shield is the best constant companion to a Pilot under fire. **Base Bonus:** +2 to Static Buffer.

Sword: The classic bringer of doom, metal forged into a perfect killing tool. **Finisher:** Take up to **X** Static, then pick the same number of cards from the Play Pile and remove them from play for the remainder of the current game scenario. (**Playtest Note:** Considering expanding this, to allow player to not take Static, and instead only remove them for the current session. Needs to be tested)

Whip: The holder of the whip cares not for your back-talk, and clearly has no time for your derision. **Base Bonus:** +2 Dissonant Buffer

List of Power Weapon Qualities

Below is a list of all the included and available Power Weapon Qualities you can choose from. In each description, the **Z** variable equals the Slot rank where it is assigned. Thus a description that says "Immediately apply **Z** Static" would apply 3 Static if it were assigned to the third (King) Tier Slot on your Power Weapon.

(**Playtest Notes:** These are a work in progress. Frankly I need more extended data on the core flow before totally

screwing with it by throwing a bunch of these into the mix. But hey, below are some ideas to try out, let me know what you find is fun, and/or totally broken.)

- Chrono-
- E- - (energy)
- Flux
- Giga-
- Glorious
- Hurricane/Tornado
- Lightning
- Maelstrom
- Old School
- Phase
- Psy- - Look at cards?
- Thunder -
- Turbo-
- Ultra-
- Vibro-
- Vortex

Tech Ideas:

- Increase a Buffer by +Z for this battle
- Increase next strike range by +Z*2
- Increase next Assist Bonus by +Z
- Remove Z Static (or Dissonance)
- Draw Z bonus cards
- Force opponent Discard of Z cards
- Skip forward in time! Immediately skip to player Z spaces to the left, it's now their turn

Hyper-: Accelerated fighting prowess mechanisms add **Z** to your strike ranges for the remainder of the Throwdown. This can be used multiple times across consecutive turns to compound bonuses.

Nega-: A fairly unorthodox battle maneuver indeed, the Nega-tech removes the bottom **Z** cards from the active Play Pile and sends them direct to their relative discards.

Retro-: Retro-tech weapons can literally rewrite the last few seconds of history, forming two concurrent micro-timelines and merging them into tangible action. This allows the user to skip backward down the action flow, and give previous participants additional actions! When used, the current turn focus immediately moves Z spaces to your right around the table. That player now gets to take their turn again, and flow picks up from there. No former actions are negated, mind you, only the turn order gets pushed back a few steps allowing additional actions.

Adjective-: TBD

Personal Robos

Your Personal Robo is that big metal beast that you ride around the galaxy in, kicking monster ass and generally looking awesome. Or maybe it's a physical manifestation of your psychic training, an avatar of your Mind-over-Everything Device that was created to fight the Star Demons. Or who knows, maybe you even *transform* into it on your own!

In play, your Robo primarily provides:

- Narrative Flavor
- an Endurance Stat
- a Core Pilot Tech
- a Special Robo Tech

Narrative Flavor: Truth be told, your Robos are primarily story tools. Sure, they can combine into a bigger, badder final form robot and kick some monster ass, but that is such a small part of the greater story of this game. The vast majority of the time, your Pilots will not be in (or even near!) their robots.

That said, your Robo can be involved in a scene however you see fit. Like any other big effing vehicle in any other RPG, its presence in a scene is largely a matter of situation and circumstance, and what makes sense. Think of having a personal Robo being very similar to having a cutting-edge military tank in a modern setting. Sure, it's super awesome, seemingly-unstoppable, and loaded with combat power, but how often in a day are you actually going to get to use it? There are simply a great many times that it won't make sense to involve your Robos, such as personal scenes in tight spaces.

Your group should take the time to decide how the Robos actually work in your game world. Are they mentally controlled at all times by the minds of the Pilots? Are they great hulking steam contraptions that require being in a hot sweaty cockpit to control them? Are they really just physical manifestations of the Pilots' wills? Or maybe the Pilots themselves actually *physically become* the Robos? The answer to this will greatly shape how they appear in your narrative.

Endurance Stat: *Currently* there is only one definite Robo "Stat" in this game: Endurance. Each Robo has a starting base Endurance equal to 6 plus their current Robo Tier (this means that new characters usually have only 7 Endurance). Additionally there is a branch evolution that can increase that even more; without other boosts from outside sources, a standard fully-evolved (as in all branch evolutions) Tier 4 Robo will have 13 Endurance.

Core Pilot Tech: This basic core Tech is granted to the Pilot simply because of her synergy with the Robo's trionic evolution drive (or whatever your group calls it). Most of these can be used even when the Pilot is away from their Robo, although a few specifically require a present Robo.

Special Robo Tech: (**note:** working title) This greater Tech can only be used while the character is actively piloting their Robo. These can be used during Throwdowns, but are primarily intended to be used alongside the other Robos during the Final Form Rumbles. **Playtest Note:** These are still very much a work in progress. I haven't decided if they will be implemented similar to the Power Weapon techs or instead be something stand-alone. This is an experimental area for now, use with caution.

Playtest Notes: The Special Robo Techs are still undefined, pending testing and finalization of the Robot Rumble rules.

For both Techs, in the Robo descriptions that follow, the variable "X" represents the Pilot's current max Robo Tier (earned through Evolutions).

Robo Name (Template)

(Description)

Core Pilot Tech - "Name": A special Tech that the Pilot of this Robo can use simply by nature of being the assigned Pilot, and regardless of whether or not she is actively piloting it at the time. Usually some kind of passive character bonus.

Special Robo Tech - "Name": A unique tech that can only be used while actively piloting the Robo.

How to Robo: Notes on effective play with this Robo.

Anthro-Guardian

Of mankind's ambition, the first thing that many would say is that it is deeply rooted in its own pride. That's especially true of its history with advanced Mecha tech, as the first, the longest-lived, and the most varied of all humanity's many Mechas is the humanoid-shaped form, the **Anthro-Guardian**.

Core Pilot Tech - "Human Ambition!": The Pilot of the Anthro-Guardian has a deep personal connection to the great interstellar legacy of Humanity, and its drive to succeed against all odds. When you Gambit, after the cards are revealed, you can take one point of Dissonance to flip +X additional cards and use any one of them instead.

Special Robo Tech - "Custom Load-out!": The Anthro-Guardian carries a big damn gun, and that big damn gun can be loaded with all kinds of different types of ammunition. Each type of ammo effectively mimics the Special Robo Tech of any *other* Robo (but, you know, as a bullet). At the beginning of a new Scenario, you are considered to have an empty load-out. Swapping load-outs requires the expenditure of team Resources. While back at home base it only costs 1 point of Pit Crew. While in the field it costs 2 points, or 3 points if in a "hot zone" (Coach's decision).

How to Anthro-Guardian:

Eagle

(Description) Caw, Screech! Big robot eagle of justice!

Core Pilot Tech - "Eagle's Vision!": Eagle sees both predators and prey far before they see her. Up to X times per Scenario, when one of Coach's jokers is revealed, she can choose to either send it back to the deck (which reshuffles Coach's trash into the deck), or let it ride and +d4 to current Team Resources as she sees fit. She can choose to do nothing at all instead, which doesn't use this this Tech.

Special Robo Tech - "Doom Swoop!": TBD

How to Eagle: TBD

Lion

(Description) The mighty lion, a proud classic!

Core Pilot Tech - "Pride Cometh Before... Everything, and Everyone!": At the end of a Throwdown in which Lion took Dissonance in front of her team, she can instead shift up to X points of it to any other present member(s) of her team, without their consent.

Special Robo Tech - "Kitty Pounce!": TBD

How to Lion: TBD

Giant Panda

(Description) PANDA!

Core Pilot Tech - "Panda Belly Shield!: The tremendous size and massive armor of the Giant Panda Robo can protect the Pilot from the deadliest of attacks. When you Static-Shift to the Panda's Endurance, each point of Endurance spent soaks X+1 Static.

Special Robo Tech - "Panda Power Pile Pumme!": (or possibly Panda Love Hug!)

How to Panda: Panda works best matched with other abilities that convert to, soak, shift, or otherwise affect the Pilot's Static and Pulse. A fully tricked-out static-soaking load-out will make your Pilot practically unstoppable!

Rhino

(Description) Not quite the unicorn you were expecting...

Core Pilot Tech - "Thunder Paw!": Whenever the Rhino Pilot would cause Static Damage, increase that damage by +1.

Special Robo Tech - "Thunder Charge!": (WiP) The Rhino puts all of its power into one fearsome final charge. Discard up to X cards, deal equal amount of Static to opponent, they must discard an equal amount of cards, and your next strike range in this Throwdown is lowered by the same amount.

How to Rhino: TBD

Spider

(Description) We love you, Spider!

Core Pilot Tech - "Webs of Fate!": Spider is always working angles, seeing plans unfold far in advance, sometimes to the detriment of her own sanity. Whenever Spider would deal herself Dissonance (such as when acting out of Strike Range), she can look at the top X cards of either deck (choose one). This is *perinstance* of Dissonance accrual, and *not* per point. Note that Spider hates sharing secrets - she is not allowed to share that card knowledge with anyone else unless she first deals herself another X Dissonance.

Special Robo Tech - "name": TBD

How to Spider: TBD

T-Rex

(Description) The mightiest dino friend of them all.

Core Pilot Tech - "King of the Dinosaurs!": T-Rex charges forth and gets what she wants. When you initiate a Throwdown, your first card has +X strike range.

Special Robo Tech - "Chewy Chewy Chomp!": TBD

How to T-Rex: TBD

Wolf

(Description) Dammit Moon-Moon!

Core Pilot Tech - "Power of the Pack!": The Pilot of the Wolf is unusually strengthened by her connection to her team. When you are on the winning side of a Throwdown, remove up to X total combined points of your own Dissonance and/or Static if there was at least one other team Pilot fighting on your side. Do this *before* spending any Victory Points.

Special Robo Tech - "Rallying Howl!": TBD

How to Wolf: TBD

Harmony and Dissonance

Harmony is a 7-point gauge that determines how in sync you are with the Team Spirit. With a high Harmony, you are a great asset to the team, giving greater assists and having an easier time combining your Robo with theirs. With a low Harmony, you are increasingly out of sync, and even detrimental to the team's well-being.

Your location on the Harmony scale determines the following:

- The Strike bonus you bestow when you Assist an ally in combat
- The lowest-ranked card you can play in order to combine with your teammates.

Also, Harmony and Pulse together determine how many bonus cards a Pilot is allowed to *keep* during a Throwdown - that is, the lower value of the two.

Harmony Table:

Harmony	Assist	Combine?
Red (1)	-2	Can't!
Orange (2)	-1	King
Yellow (3)	0	10
Green (4)	1	7
Blue (5)	2	5
Indigo (6)	3	3
Violet (7)	4	No Card needed!

Dissonance

Dissonance is the currency of Stress. As you get more and more stressed out in the field, and you push your limits too far, you take Dissonance. Dissonance builds up and can eventually directly lower your Harmony. The primary source of Dissonance is from acting outside of your Strike Range in Throwdowns, although several other sources apply.

Dissonance builds up and is tracked with tokens. Your Pilot has a special "Dissonant Buffer" defense that helps ward off the effects of Dissonance. Initially linked to your "Commitment to the Future" stats, a Pilot's Dissonant Buffer can be increased through use of some gear, techniques, and applied character evolutions. The Buffer doesn't prevent the

accrual of Dissonance, mind you, it merely wards off the effects. As long as you keep that pile of tokens equal to or less than your Buffer, you will suffer no adverse effects from Dissonance.

However, if the tokens build up higher than your Buffer, you're in trouble. If at any time after a Throwdown or during open play you build up more Dissonance tokens than your Buffer, you must immediately remove the excess and directly decrease your current Harmony by the same amount.

Harmony can never be lower than 1. If your Harmony would ever be lowered below 1, leave it at 1 and instead apply the remainder as Static. This represents your descent into self-destructive behaviours finally taking their toll out on you physically.

Forced Commitment Shifts: Whenever you hit a Red (1) Harmony for the first time in a scenario, you must also make a 1-point shift in one of your Commitments, as decided upon by Coach. This includes if you somehow start a scenario in the Red already.

Restoring Harmony

(**Playtest Note:** Need to balance this out without enough opportunities so that Dissonance is not a total doomsday effect for the character. Special Throwdowns against the Harmonic difference? Fall back to the Color-based Harmonic Triggers?)

Harmony can be restored in the following ways:

- Playing up your Color's Harmony Trigger
- Using your Fan Club
- Using certain Gear
- Using certain Techs
- Winning appropriate Gambits and Throwdowns, or involvement in other narrative activities*

* Note that not all Throwdowns, Gambits, or other activities will be eligible for Harmony restoration. The situation must make sense, and the conflict needs to be directly related to the improvement of Team Spirit and teamwork, a matter which is ultimately Coach's call. Examples include therapy sessions, team spirit-boosting activities, group interventions, etc.

Pulse and Static

Your Pilot's **Pulse** represents her line on life. It is literally how close to physical death she is. Pulse thus functions in a similar fashion to "health" or "hit points" in other games.

Like Harmony, Pulse follows a 1-7 RoyGBiv scale, with 7 (Violet) being absolutely optimal, and 1 (Red) being critically low and close to death.

(**Note:** not including a table here because there's currently no need to, it's a simple 7-point scale)

Pulse and Harmony together determine how many bonus cards a Pilot is allowed to keep during a Throwdown - that is, the lower value of the two.

Static

Static is the "damage" that can potentially lower a Pilot's Pulse. Static represents anything that can diminish a character's well-being, be it physical trauma, mental anguish, or emotional suffering. Static is usually applied as a result of opponent actions during Throwdowns, but other sources exist as well.

Static builds up and is tracked with tokens. Your Pilot has a special "Static Buffer" defense that helps ward off the effects of Static. Initially linked to your "Commitment to the Future" stats, a Pilot's Static Buffer can be increased through use of some gear (such as armor), techniques, and applied character evolutions. The Buffer doesn't prevent the accrual of Static, mind you, it merely wards off the effects. As long as you keep that pile of tokens equal to or less than your Buffer, you will suffer no adverse effects from Static.

However, if the tokens build up higher than your Buffer, you're in trouble. If at any time after a Throwdown or during open play you build up more Dissonance tokens than your Buffer, you must immediately remove the excess and directly

decrease your current Harmony by the same amount.

Forced Commitment Shifts: Whenever you hit a Red (1) or lower Pulse for the first time in a scenario, you must also make a 1-point shift in one of your Commitments, as decided upon by Coach.

Restoring Pulse

(**Playtest Question:** How can Pulse be restored? Conflicts? A Throwdown against the Wound level as a pseudo-threat? Hmmmm..)

Pulse can be restored in the following ways:

- Using certain Gear
- Using certain Techs
- Winning appropriate Gambits and Throwdowns, or involvement in other narrative activities*

* Like with Harmony, these are ultimately Coach's call. Examples include med bay visits, heavy gym time, etc.

Pulse Death

If a character is ever dropped to Zero pulse, they are critically close to Death.

Playtest Considerations:

- Can she be "stabilized" by a Conflict?
- If not Stabilized by that conflict, however, they die. End of Pilot.
- Of course "Heroic Sacrifice" needs to be an option...

Team Setup

In addition to the individual Pilots, the team as a whole is almost a character unto itself. The team has the following components.

- Team Name (descriptor): What is the team called?
- Derogatory Nickname (descriptor): What is the team called by its haters?
- Average Team Evolutions / AvTE (derivative): The average amount of character evolutions earned by the entire team
- Fan Club (stat): The general reputation of the team in the public eye
- Armory (stat): how well-stocked the team's gear reserves are
- Pit Crew (stat): the size and skill level of the team's Mecha support crew

The Names are simple enough. Your group should come up with a team name during the creation session. Likewise, the Derogatory Nickname is what people call them behind their backs - or to their faces even, if their rep is super low! Fail Force Four, The Suck Seven, Lame Kitties, Losertown, etc. The group can come up with their own, or let it emerge during play.

Average Team Evolutions (AvTE) is the average of all the team's total earned Evolutions. It's used to determine their relative field experience, and a few background factors are based off it (such as Threat suggestions, Gear availability, etc). To determine this, total the team's combined evolution count and divide by the number of team members, rounding up. At the very beginning of the game, a new team will have an AvTE of 2, since every new Pilot starts with two free evolutions.

Team Resources

Finally, the Resource stats (detailed below). Each stat is a numerical value from 0 to 15, ranked as follows:

Stat	Description
0	Depleted
1-4	Threatened: basic scraps, minimal team, low rep
5-10	Subsistence: maintenance of standard team ops
11-14	Surplus: lots to spare, high rep, solid support crew
15+	Bountiful! Will be converted to Score at end of Scenario

Each specific stat uses these numbers differently. For the most part, the three middle ranks are mainly there for narrative color, while the lowest and the highest have the most direct mechanical effects.

With a 0 in any of the three team stats, the Pilots are locked out of using one of their core abilities. On the flip side, zero is the absolute lowest a stat can go, and any resource loss below zero is ignored.

Any resource that reaches 15 or higher during a scenario is considered to be in a state of great bountiful surplus. If the team doesn't otherwise make use of this bounty, any points in this range are directly converted into final Score.

Resource Conversions: When in a narratively-suitable position, the Team can convert resources with a 2:1 conversion rate. This can represent donating gear or services to their Fans, recruiting new Pit Crew members from their fanbase, sending their crew on shopping runs, or however else they can describe it.

Fan Club

The **Fan Club** resource represents your team's general reputation out in the civilian world.

The Fan Club can take any form your game wishes, but by default they are considered to be real people active in your game world. You are encouraged to flesh them out with names and stories, and even involve them directly in your games, possibly even as direct plot hooks!

Spending Fan Club: You can spend your Fan Club in two ways. First is intel: you can spend points from the Fan Club to hit up your fan network for insights and data in the field. Provided the situation gives you access to them somehow, you can spend 1 point to gain 1 "clue" into a current mystery, filtered of course through the credibility of random online fans. Use these sparingly, though, because your fans don't like having to do all your work for you!

Second, you can draw on your Fan Club to raise your spirits. If you have an evening or so of downtime available in the game, you can spend time socializing with them, maybe via live net chat or even IRL at a local hangout. Doing so allows you to spend 1 point of Fan Club to do one (and only one) of the following:

- If you currently have any Dissonance at all, that point allows you to remove d4 Dissonance.
- If you do NOT currently have any Dissonance, instead restore 1 Harmony.

But don't do this too long; your fans love hearing from you, but they love seeing you kick ass even more, and too much idle time leads to a loss in fans!

Depleting Fan Club: If the Fan Club is depleted, you cannot restore Harmony at all! You'll need to find a way to restore your credibility somehow before your Harmony can be improved.

Armory

The **Armory** represents your Team's collection of stockpiled goods, including extra weapons and other valuable Gear that they can make use of on their important missions battling against the enemy.

Unlike the other two resources, the Armory is an actual place within the game, and subject to the Locations rules (still in development). This means an unprotected Armory is very much at risk of being hurt by Collateral damage!

Spending Armory: Your Armory points allow you to check gear out for missions. Each point spent equates to one point of Gear rating (aka Gear Tier) checked out. The points are spent immediately, however if the Gear is returned safely the points are restored.

Pilots can generally acquire Armory Gear at any time their character would be considered to have easy access to their base of operations. If Coach allows it, the pilots can requisition gear in the field for an additional cost per item, at his discretion.

Depleting Armory: If the Armory is ever depleted, you cannot make use of your Power Weapons' active Techs!

Pit Crew

The **Pit Crew** represents the Team's support crew, the guys and gals who work on their Robos and keep them in optimal operational condition. Like the Fan Club, the Pit Crew consists of an actual team of additional characters that are there to help the Pilots on the sideline. You are encouraged to give them names, personalities, and back-stories.

Spending Pit Crew: You can spend points of your Pit Crew to repair damaged Robos. It costs 1:1 repairs while you're in your Robo Hangar, 2:1 if you're making repairs in the field, and 3:1 if you're calling on your Pit Crew in what Coach deems to be an "emergency situation."

Depleting Pit Crew: If the Pit Crew is depleted, you cannot use your Robos at all! You can't combine, you can't use their Techs, and you won't stand a chance against the BGM!

Gear

Gear is acquired via the Armory resource. Unused Gear at the end of a Mission can be returned to the Armory for a restoration of points.

Sometimes Coach may let the Pilots find new pieces of Gear out in the field, too. This is entirely up to his discretion.

Gear has four tiers of availability, based on the team's AvTE stat. The team has to meet certain AvTE stats to make new gear available. I'm thinking there are four tiers, ranks are 0, 5, 10, and 15. Keep in mind that a fresh starting team has AvTE 2.

Gear Tier	AvTE Required
1	0
2	5
3	10
4	15

Things Gear needs to note:

- **Activate Effect:** Basic effect when Activated. (default: +1 card draw)
- **Sacrifice effect:** Special effect when Sacrificed (default: +3 card). Sacrificed Gear is destroyed immediately.
- any additional actions?

Possible gear effects (X = gear tier):

- Armor: +X to Static Buffer
- Tools
 - ????: Remove X Dissonance
 - First Aid: Remove X Static
- Weapons
 - Apply +X Static

Using Gear

Mostly, Gear is used in Throwdowns, on Side actions. It is either Activated for a small bonus, or Sacrificed (and destroyed) for a greater bonus.

Pretty much every single piece of Gear in the game can be "Activated" for a single +1 draw bonus in a Throwdown, or "Sacrificed" for a +3 draw instead. This requires both a very cleverly-narrated statement of how you wish to do make use

of the gear, and of course Coach's approval.

Coach may rule that some Gear can be used outside of Throwdowns as well. In such a case, consider every item to have a "once per-scene" activation limit, with Coach being the final arbiter over what qualifies for a "scene."

Remember, can only activate gear once, even if it has multiple actions associated with it! And you can't both activate AND sacrifice the same item in the same Throwdown/scene!

Gear Lists

Tier 1 Gear: Basic Kitting

Some possible Gear selections for the basic team. In these notations and all following, the "A:" means "Activation effect" and the "S:" means "Sacrifice effect." A "Passive" effect is always active.

First Aid Kit: A: remove d4 Static from any Pilot / S: restore 1 Pulse to a Pilot

Happytime Stim: S: Burn 1 Pulse, gain 2 Harmony (no activation effect)

Overdrive Stims: S: Burn 1 Harmony, gain 2 Pulse (no activation effect)

Basic Training Armor: Passive: increase Static Buffer by +1.

Friendship Bangles: Passive: increase Dissonant Buffer by +1.

Pocket Pistol: A: Deal 1 Static to enemy / S: Deal d4 Static to enemy

Patch Kit: S: Restore 1 Endurance to Robo (no activation effect)

Tier 2 Gear: Seasoned Supplies

(TBD)

Tier 3 Gear: Advanced Technology

(TBD)

Tier 4 Gear: Top Secret Experiments

(TBD)

Character Evolution

(still a work in progress, final side-branch choices not decided. The same "3x3 diamonds" style evolution as Motobushido. Debating if I want to try and extend it to *four* branch options instead of the base two...)

- Commitment to the Team
 - Major Tier Evolution: Color Techs
 - Minor Side Evolutions
 1. Base Hand Size
 2. Base Dissonant Buffer
- Commitment to the Fight
 - Major Tier Evolution: Power Weapon Techs
 - Minor Side Evolutions
 1. Base Strike Range
 2. Base Static Output
- Commitment to the Future
 - Major Tier Evolution: Robo Techs
 - Minor Side Evolutions
 1. Base Static Buffer
 2. +1 Robo Endurance

Pilots increase their abilities through **Evolutions** to their character sheet. There are currently three planned Evolution Tracks, each following a "three diamonds" vertical layout. Each track has four core "tier" advances, and in between each tier are two optional "branch" advances. When you advance on a track, you can easily fast-track to the next tiers by skipping one of the side branches, but by doing so you leave those branches (and their evolutions) locked away forever. Basically, you can advance "Down" or "Across," but never Up. See [page two of the Motobushido character sheet](#) to get a visual idea of this three-diamonds layout.

With three separate advancement tracks, each Pilot thus has three separate **Tiers** that quantify their relative experience. A Pilot's current Tier in any one evolution track is the basis for many of that track's associated Techs.

Lessons

Lessons are the currency of evolution, and the core of the character advancement system. As the story plays out, the Pilots can "earn" Lessons from various in-game events.

In every session, Pilots should have multiple opportunity to earn Lessons. For starters, Every Color role has a built-in suggestion for ways in which that character earns Lessons. Additionally, the Schism techs frequently involve them, should the Pilots ever get into fights with each other. Additionally, at the end of every session, Coach will allow players to nominate others for spontaneous lessons, based on events of that session.

Lessons have two phases of life: Earned, and Learned. When a Lesson is earned, the player writes it down on their Pilot record sheet. When a Lessons is voted as having been *learned*, she erases it, and unlocks a new character Evolution.

Not every Lesson will (or should!) be Learned from! This is important! Some Lessons might linger for multiple sessions before the group believes they've been learned from. Others will never be Learned from, and can be crossed off the list. This works best when you think of your Pilots as *people* and not merely as game tools.

The Lessons Vote

At the end of every session, during the "Debriefing" stage of play, Coach will run the Lessons vote. Start with the earned lessons, and then move to nominated lessons.

Going around the table clockwise from Coach, each player takes turns naming one of their earned lessons that they believe they have Learned from. She must pitch her case, and state aloud why she feels that Lessons was earned during tonight's play. If the group majority agrees, then she can erase it and earn an Evolution. Go around the table and repeat until there are none left.

Next, each player (including Coach!) who wishes can *choose* to nominate *one* Pilot other than herself for a whole new previously-unrecorded lesson she might have learned in that session of play.

Buying Evolutions

When a player earns an Evolution, she has three choices of what to do with is:

- Fill in an evolution dot on her "three diamonds" graphs.
- Make up to three points of Commitment shifts on her own
- Fully restore all lost Harmony and Pulse

Note that the last two do not get marked on a player's evolution tracks, and as such they *also* do not count towards the team's Average Team Evolutions (AvTE)

Locations and Base-Building! (WiP)

Playtest Notes: This mechanic is still very much a work in development in a separate development document, and won't see full release until a later playtest stage. In short, I've been building out a plan to allow Base Building as a core component, giving the pilots a home base to build out and add stuff to. This began simply with the Armory resource, and grew into something much deeper than I'm pretty proud of. You can even see the early stages of it taking shape, with a few rules call-outs to Collateral Damage in some of the mechanics.

Additionally, Locations are a core part of every major scene and conflict (and thus possible risks of Collateral Damage).

Stay tuned for more!

Cards and Conflicts

In this main section are all the extended details of how the cards work. Well, almost all of them - the rules for Final Form **Rumbles** are wrapped together in the next main section.

Basics of Cardplay

Card States

During the course of play, the cards will cycle between the following places in the game space:

(TBD: include diagram!)

- the **Deck** (from which you draw, face-down); the Players have a deck that they share, while Coach has a deck all their own.
- the **Pile** (where they are played, face-up); Piles are sent to respective Trash after each conflict concludes.
- the **Trash** (where they are discarded, face-up); each Deck has its own Trash
- your **Stash** (where you hold onto valuable cards during play, to be used later)
- your **Hand** (which you hold during play, facing you).
- one or more **Factions** (as Favor, in a stack with one card face-up on top)
- the Robo Rumble **Combo Zones** (5 on each side; where the cards are played during the three rounds of Rumbles)
- certainly not your Sleeve, because that's cheating.
- and occasionally the Floor, where we all inevitably drop them from time to time.

Deck

There are two **Decks** of 54 playing cards each: one for Coach, and one shared by the Pilot players. These are placed face-down in the middle for everyone to see. Jokers are always shuffled in face-up, however.

Faction

Factions are sources of external power that the Pilots uncover through exploration and role-playing. When a Faction's favor has been acquired by the Pilots, they can invest a card from their hand into that faction, keeping it on the table for later use.

Hand

Your **Hand** is a collection of cards that you keep to yourself, hidden from the rest of the players.

Only Pilot Players actively maintain their card Hands between conflicts. Starting Hand Max size is fairly small, with most new Pilots getting at most 1 or two cards to hold onto. As the characters are evolved through extended play, their Hand Max will grow.

If they would ever have more cards in their Hand than their Max at the end of a conflict, they must discard down to Max. Likewise, if they ever have less than their Max at the end of a conflict, they must draw back up to Max.

Coach *does not* maintain an active Hand of cards between conflicts. Coach only draws hands at the beginning of Throwdowns and Rumbles, and discards/invests any remaining cards when those are completed. Outside of those conflicts, Coach's plays are always "blind."

Pile

During Throwdowns, a **Pile** of cards temporarily exists in the middle of the table. Whenever a participant plays a card, they play it on top of the Pile. Long Throwdowns with many participants can create huge piles indeed.

Trash

Each Deck has an associated **Trash** heap, which is a stack of face-up cards next to it on the table. When a card that

came from that deck is discarded during play, it goes on top of the relevant Trash heap, face-up.

Combo Zone

When the Pilots combine to fight a Big Giant Monster, both sides have five play zones where they assemble their best "spreads" of cards against each other.

Card Terminology

Discard

When the rules call for a card to be **discarded**, you must remove the card in question from its current place in play and place it face-up on top of the relevant Deck's Trash.

Draw

When you are told to **draw** a card, take the top card of your respective deck and put it in your current active hand of cards. Sometimes you may be told to "draw and immediately play" - in this case, that card skips your hand and is played directly to the table. However, most of the time when you draw a card, it goes into your hand before any subsequent actions or plays follow.

Flip

The mechanics sometimes instruct you to **flip** one or more cards. If it's a single card, just flip it in place so that the side that was previously facing the table is now facing up. So if you're told to flip a card that is "face up" on the table, flip it so it is now "face down" in the same place.

If you are told to flip a stack of cards, first straighten up the stack in place, then flip the entire stack as a single unit. Do *not* flip each card individually.

Play

When the rules tell you to **play** a card, you take a card from your Hand and place it on the table in front of you. Unless otherwise stated, all card plays are performed face-up.

Sometimes you may see the sub-terms **Play-up** and **Play-down** in the text. These mean "play a card face up" and "play a card face down," respectively. Similarly, if the rules say that you "play down" a card, or that Coach "plays up" a card, those signify the orientation of the to-be-played card. But to repeat: unless otherwise stated, *all* Plays are performed face-up.

If the rules call for a "**blind**" play, you must play that card directly from the top of the deck. Pull the card and immediately play it. Outside of active Throwdowns, all of Coach's plays are blind.

Random d4

Some effects may call upon you to determine a random number from 1-4, called just called **d4** in the game text. By default this is resolved simply by drawing the top card of your deck, and using the suit order to determine the outcome (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades = 1, 2, 3, and 4). Whenever the rules call for this, you can always *choose* to discard a card from your hand or a faction and use its suit instead.

Alternatively, if your group doesn't wish to burn through the deck that quickly, you can instead use a four-sided gaming die.

Remove

Very occasionally the rules will call for a card to be **Removed from Play**. When this happens, take the card(s) in question and set them aside entirely. These cards do not go to Trash, and do not get reshuffled into their decks. These cards remain out of play for the duration of the current session or scenario, whichever is specified by the effect at the time.

Jokers

The Jokers serve as a special meta-game pacing-and-escalation mechanic. As stated prior, Jokers are always shuffled into their respective decks face-up.

When a Joker is revealed (by reaching the top of its deck), different events may occur based on the Deck from which that Joker was pulled. Before any of it is resolved, however, if it is revealed during an active Conflict of any kind, set the Joker aside and wait until *after* that conflict is complete to resolve the Joker effects.

If the Joker was from the Pilots' deck, the Team gains a quick Rally action. *Each* Pilot can take one of the following actions:

- Purge all current Dissonance or Static
- Add 1 to a single Resource
- Place a Power Token on any one of the Final Form Positions (giving a boost in power when the Final Form is activated later)

If the Joker was from Coach's Deck, it triggers one of Coach's escalation events (see Coach's section for more details on Escalation events).

Once either outcome is resolved, put the Joker into its relevant Trash and then reshuffle that Trash back into the Deck.

Playtest Note on Jokers

These have changed and changed and changed so often I sometimes forget which version of the Joker rules I'm using. The core idea is that they provide an escalation mechanic, but also a minor boon to the players from time to time. A prior version had the escalation path advance on ALL joker reveals, but I just recently changed it to only Coach jokers. Still might need to be tweaked...

Factions

Factions are other groups, parties, individuals, or even esoteric external forces that have narrative agency in a particular scenario - in other words, any non-Pilot force that has power within the story (including the types of characters that would be called "non-player" in other role-playing games). Factions that are uncovered during play can be wooed for Favor, allowing players to invest cards in them for later use. The Faction mechanic is primarily a way for the Pilots to increase their future versatility by externalizing their power.

Anatomy of a Faction

A Faction in play is usually represented by an index card put out in the middle of the table, or possibly a sideboard, for all involved to see. During play, stacks of the Pilots' playing cards may build up on these Factions.

Every Faction has the following core components:

- **Agency Rating:** How much relative story power the Faction has (higher = stronger)
- **Tolerance Rating:** How hard the Faction is to offend (higher = more tolerant)
- **Favor Trigger:** Several ways the Pilots can gain the Faction's favor
- **Disfavor Trigger:** Several ways the Pilots can piss the Faction off

Agency Rating

Every Faction has a primary numerical rating that represents their **Agency** in the story. This number can be as low as 1 for a relatively weak force, or as high as 7 for an extremely powerful and useful force. The Pilots rarely know any given Faction's Agency rating until either that investment limit is discovered, or Coach uses their Agency against them in a Throwdown.

The Faction's Agency does two things. For the Pilots, it limits the maximum number of favor cards that can ever be invested in the Faction at one time. For Coach, it also determines that Faction's relevant **Threat Rating** should it ever turn against the Pilots (see Threat details in the Coach section).

Tolerance Rating

A Faction's **Tolerance** is a numerical representation of exactly how much of the Pilots' shit that Faction is willing to put up

with. This rating is given as a number value from 1-13, setting the target number for Disfavor checks (see below)

Favor Triggers

Favor Triggers are (usually narrative) Faction-specific ways that the Pilots can get on the Faction's good side. When Coach feels that the Pilots have performed one or more of these deeds (among others), he will allow them to invest Favor. Examples of things that might woo a Faction include:

- Giving them money
- Rescuing a missing ally/relative
- Providing them defensive assistance
- Assisting around their Community
- Taking in one of their young as a recruit

Disfavor Triggers

Similarly, **Disfavor Triggers** are Faction-specific ways in which the players can upset that Faction. When this happens, Coach flips a card to check for Disfavor (see below), potentially lowering the Faction's currently-invested Favor cards, or even turning it into an active Threat!

Example Factions

Yoshi the Flower Boy (Agency 1)

- **Agency:** 1
- **Tolerance:** 12 (Queen)
- **Favor Triggers:** Buy his flowers, treat him kindly, invite him out
- **Disfavor Triggers:** Insult his profession, humiliate him, spit on his flowers

That adorable kid from the slums who sells flowers and keeps an ear open to the word on the streets...

Belle Bug Banger's Crew (Agency 3)

- **Agency:** 3
- **Tolerance:** 5
- **Favor Triggers:** give them intel, help them smuggle, give them a good deal
- **Disfavor Triggers:** Sell them out, renege a deal, be too pushy

A team of local smugglers who have an angle on all local goings-on...

The Salient Witch (Agency 5)

- **Agency:** 5
- **Tolerance:** 7
- **Favor Triggers:** Offer them first salvage rights, compliment captain's outfit, get them drunk
- **Disfavor Triggers:** fight them, sell them to authorities, be too goody-goody

A famous space cruiser piloted by a famous space corsair...

The United Galactic Fleet (Agency 7)

- **Agency:** 7
- **Tolerance:** 10
- **Favor Triggers:** Defend earth, respect protocol, assist their crew
- **Disfavor Triggers:** Cause too much destruction, get in their way, suck at your duties

The grand fleet of the Galactic Government, here to enforce the martial will of Earth!

Introducing a New Faction

Coach will have a number of Factions pre-written and ready for use as part of his scenario design prep. Whenever the

Pilots are made aware of a particular Faction's existence, Coach sets that Faction's detail card out on the table for all to see. This doesn't need to be an elaborate ritual, but for the purposes of efficient play it is important for the Pilots to know when they've met or otherwise discovered valuable potential allies.

"Predisposed" Factions

A not-uncommon event in a story is the introduction of a Faction that comes pre-loaded with some amount of Favor. The sudden arrival of a fleet of homeworld allies, the group of kids they rescued five sessions ago, the Official Mecha Pilot Fan Club, and so on. If Coach feels that a newly-introduced Faction is predisposed to favor the Pilots, then he may allow them to immediately invest one or more Favor cards as a group when that Faction is placed out on the table.

Courting a Faction

To gain power from a Faction, the Pilots must first narratively gain that Faction's trust. This can be done however the players see fit, really. It's all role-playing. Once Coach feels the Faction has been sufficiently impressed, he may allow them to invest Favor.

Investing Favor

Pilots who have sufficiently gained the trust of a Faction may be given the opportunity to invest one or more cards into that Faction as **Favor**. To do this, take a card and place it face-up on that Faction. If there are no cards currently on that Faction, you can use any card at your disposal.

However, if there are currently cards invested, your card must *beat* the topmost card already on that Faction. When that happens, flip down the topmost card and place your new one face up on top. In this fashion, the stack of cards grows with the topmost card growing ever higher in rank. However, 2s beat Aces and thus a 2 can be placed on top of an already-invested Ace, starting the count from the bottom again.

When you are given the option to invest a Favor card into a Faction, you can use any card from:

- Your current Hand
- Any other existing and invested Faction that is relevant to the situation

Investment Limits

A Faction can never have more invested Favor than its Agency rating. Players can still invest higher cards into maxed-out Factions, but each card they add over its limit forces the bottom card to be discarded.

Investment Strategy

Since there's no maximum value when investing Favor, it may be tempting to just throw in a high card immediately and bank it for later. However, the higher the card on top, the fewer the options for investments. This text recommends starting with a lower card and building up a nice stack, especially on high-Agency Factions.

Using Favor

Favor cards that are face-up on a Faction represent potential power that that Faction can lend the Pilots during conflicts. Face-up Favor cards can be played by a Pilot in any situation where the rules demand that the Pilot play a card, with the added requirement that she spontaneously narrate aloud how that Faction is assisting her at that moment. This includes Gambits, Throwdowns, and Rumbles.

To play a Favor card, take the topmost card from its Faction and play it in front of you, per the rules of the moment that are demanding your play. If there is a face-down Favor card beneath the card you just took, flip it and leave it on that Faction for later use. No matter how many cards are invested in that Faction, you can only ever play the topmost card on its stack.

The narrative assistance can be direct, such as a member of that Faction taking immediate action in the Pilot's stead. It can instead be indirect, such as someone in the Faction having provided the Pilot intel before this conflict.

Checking for Disfavor

When the Pilots distress, offend, or piss off a Faction according to their Disfavor Triggers, Coach performs a **Disfavor Check** to see just how upset that Faction is. To do this, Coach flips up a card from his deck. If the card's numerical rank is less than or equal to the Faction's Tolerance rating, the Pilots are safe for now. However, if the card's rank is greater than the Faction's Tolerance, they have earned Disfavor.

When Disfavor is earned, one of two things may happen. If there are currently any Favor cards invested into that Faction, discard the topmost Favor card and flip-up the card that was beneath it, if applicable. However, if there are not any Favor cards on the Faction when its Disfavor is earned, that Faction is converted into a Threat instead (see Threats in the Coach chapter).

If the Pilots committed multiple simultaneous offenses against the Faction, Coach may choose to flip multiple cards, one card for each "act" of offense, and resolve them each separately. Usually, however, flipping just one card is fine.

Hurting/Destroying Factions

Factions can be hurt by some Threat Techs, which can either reduce their Agency or outright remove them from play. However, this probably won't be that often in your games. And if it ever gets to the point that the Pilots are trying to take out a Faction, that Faction is probably already a mechanical Threat with its own rules for defeat - and if it isn't, it's time to make it one.

Card Conflicts

(**Design Note:** May get split into separate dedicated chapter, not sure yet)

Conflict Type 00: Just Say What Happens

Not every conflict needs to involve the cards. If there's a conflict at hand and you (any of you) can get away with it, just say what happens and move on. This applies to all players, Pilots and Coach alike. If either side feels that an action taken by the other should be contested, they should say so and bring the cards out, otherwise just keep role-playing and push forward with the scene.

In fact, as a Pilot it's generally a good idea to keep this approach in your mind at all times. Instead of asking Coach if you can do something, just tell him what you're going to do, and even how you want it to go down. If Coach feels that your actions are contested enough to require card play, then he'll tell you as such, otherwise he'll let it slide and you get the results you were seeking. In other words, take the initiative and actively push your agendas, and don't ask permission for every single action you wish to take.

Conflict Type 01: Gambits

The Gambit is the simplest (and probably the most common) card-based conflict in the game, used when the outcome of an event is uncertain, but Coach doesn't feel it necessary to involve the full Throwdown rules. Gambits tend to mostly be uncontested feats of the Pilots' abilities, or otherwise are micro-conflicts where Coach feels that the Pilot's attempt at action may cause interesting and unforeseen story repercussions.

To initiate a Gambit, Coach states some variant of "that action's going to require a Gambit," letting the Pilot know that if she pushes forward with her plan, cards are going to be involved. As an alternate, more tangible method, Coach may simply take a card from the deck and lay it down, indicating to a more experienced player that their action is going to require some minor card-play. The Pilot should consider whether or not she wants to take that risk. At least when Gambits are concerned, the choice is *always* the Pilot's - in other words, Coach can never force a Gambit.

To play the Gambit, Coach plays down a card from his deck, while the Pilot plays down one of her choice from her own hand (or instead she flips one from her Deck, if she's feeling lucky or doesn't want to waste her cards). Both are flipped simultaneously and then compared, with the results as follows:

- **Pilot's card is higher - "Yes, and...":** You succeed, and get some additional boon.
- **Coach's card is higher - "Yes/No, but...":** You get to choose: You fail but get an unexpected boon, or you succeed but suffer an unexpected consequence.

The extended details are below. Once the cards are revealed and outcome determined, discard the cards and move on with play.

"Yes, and..."

With a "Yes, and..." result, the pilot has gone beyond what was needed, and attained unexpected rewards for her gamble with fate. The Pilot's immediate goal is attained, and Coach additionally adds a bonus "consequence" to the action. This should be some kind of helpful or otherwise positive boon to their situation. Positive Consequence examples:

- A positive narrative effect, such as a new clue, a newly-revealed ally, or the discovery of some new avenue to attain a personal.
- Pilot removes a point (or more) of Dissonance or Static
- Pilot can invest a card in a relevant Faction
- blah...
- (these need to be playtested)

"Yes/No, but..."

"Yes, but..." and "No, but..." results represent unexpected consequences to the Pilot's actions. The former indicates that they attained their goal but suffer a negative consequence. The latter indicates that the Pilot has failed at their task, but gained another unexpected positive consequence instead. Similar to the consequences from "Yes, and..." results, in either case the consequences should be "lesser" in nature, not intended to be total game-changers. Negative Consequence examples:

- A negative narrative effect, such as an in-story setback to the Pilot's goals, possessions, or current safety.
- A Threat activates a Wave
- blah...
- (these need to be playtested)

(and see above for Positive Consequences)

Conflict Type 02: Throwdowns

A Throwdown is played out to resolve any in-game conflict that has larger stakes than those a Gambit would cover. Usually this involves active opposition from one or more Threats against the Pilots, but there are other situations where a Throwdown may make more sense than a simple Gambit. Basically any time there are big stakes in play, and you want to get tensions running deeper, play a Throwdown.

Examples of when to Throw Down:

- The Pilots are trying to break into a secure bunker while a team of anthrosaur minions is clawing at them.
- The Pilots are trying to convince an unflinchingly stubborn planetary governor to give them aid.
- The Pilots are trying to cross the Great Spectral Sea unharmed while a void storm rages against them.

TL;DR Version

(Playtest Note: keep revisiting this to make sure it's up to date across revisions)

You wanna rough this jerk up and teach him not to mess with you and your sisters anymore. So you throw down a card and say "Dude, I'm gonna break your face!" And he downs down a card of his own and says "Bring it, bitch! I'm gonna humiliate the shit outta you in front of the whole school" Clearly, blood and bruises are on the line, so you're gonna have to work hard not to take Static.

You both flip cards and yours is higher, but shit, it's like WAY higher than his, outside of your Strike Range and then some, so you take a Dissonance token (this shit had better be worth it). Anyway, you think you got him where you want him, when he throws down a better card and kicks you square in the ribs, so hard you think they're cracking. You then thrown down your own card in response and grab his leg, pulling it down *hard* and snapping a bone. Not just that, though - you threw in your **Gai Kee Gan Flare!** and took it to the limit (delivering painful Static to your foe), almost ripping the asshat's leg right out of the socket! But your card was too high again, and that means another Dissonance token added to the count.

He relents. You have four cards in the final Pile, and put them all toward hitting this jackass with as much Static as you can. He crawls back to his dorm, crying the whole way. Thankfully he was just some pissant bully with no common sense and no real strength to back it up. The Static you took in the process was easy enough to soak, you're a tough gal and this was barely a fight worth remembering. But that Dissonance is gonna hurt your Harmony meter, because you just

know the team is gonna be pissed at you for going off on your own and getting in another fight...

Basic Concepts

Goal

The Goal of a Throwdown: To win a Throwdown, you need to have the highest card on top of the Pile when the last action is played. And if you want to "win big" and get the most results from your effort, you want there to be a lot of cards in that play pile when you do eventually win.

Strike Range

One of the most crucial things to remember is your pilot's Strike Range, which is based on her Fight! Commitment. This sets the maximum "safe" difference in numerical ranks that can exist between the last-played card and your next-played card. For example, if you have a Strike Range of 4, and the last-played card is a 5, then you can safely play any card up to a 9. If the last-played card is a 9 instead, then you can safely play up to a King (13).

Strike Range is a "soff" limit, and you *can* play cards higher than that range, but doing so risks damaging your Harmony with the rest of the team. By playing outside that range, you are pushing your limits and stressing yourself out. In mechanical terms, **each time you play outside of your Strike Range, you take Dissonance.**

Dissonance

Dissonance is the currency of Harmonic corruption. Dissonance builds up through a Throwdown, and if unresolved it can cause Harmonic loss to the participants. Dissonance is best tracked using a pool of colored tokens.

A number of affects in a Throwdown can "Inflict Dissonance" on a character, or cause her to "take" Dissonance. In every case, these effects are cumulative and compounded, and designed to blossom dangerously. The first time you are inflicted with Dissonance, you take a single Dissonance token. The second time, you take two more, then three more on the third, and so on. Dissonance tokens are not *immediately* bad, but if you build up enough of them, they can seriously hurt your pilot once the Throwdown is concluded (see p.SQUARP).

See p. SQUARP for more details on Harmony and Dissonance (**Playtest:** see further above in this document).

Static

Static is the currency of direct personal harm in a Throwdown, and can directly diminish your Pilot's Pulse track. Static is best tracked using a pool of colored tokens, of a different color than those used for Dissonance. Static isn't applied until the end of a Throwdown (usually the losing side takes a base amount equal to the number of cards in the Pile), and risks being potentially converted into direct character Pulse damage (and sometimes even Commitment loss). See p. SQUARP for more details on Pulse and Static (**Playtest:** see further above in this document).

Collateral

Playtest Note: Collateral Damage is a mechanic still in the works. It represents damages to locations (and civilians!) based on some highly destructive weapons and fights. Description pending as that mechanic gets finalized.

Basic Flow

Someone kicks things off by issuing a challenge to action, and then anyone who wants in plays initiative. Once a winner is determined, a quick round of initial card-drawing happens, and then the action starts.

The players go around the table consecutively one-upping each other with grander, zanier, more dramatic, more intense, and more descriptive narration of action. Those narrations are accompanied by special powers and involve playing cards onto a central play pile.

On the one hand, this is definitely a *Process*. On the other hand, it's pretty darn fun, and you really only need to play it once to figure it out. There are probably more words here than are really needed to get it down, but there are a lot of side questions that I chose to answer in the flow of things, to provide clarity into the *why* of things.

Flow Table:

1. Initiate with simultaneous cards
2. Establishment Questions
3. Draw Bonus Cards
4. Take Turns and Actions
5. Determine Outcome

Step X. Initiation

To challenge another player to a Throwdown, the procedure is as follows, with minor differences for pilots and Coach.

Throwing the Gauntlet

Pilots: To initiate a Challenge, play (or even *slam!*) down a card on the table in front of you, adding immediate declaration of Challenge (Bring it, It's on, Come and Get me, Let's do this, etc). Narrate what your pilot is doing to start the action, and set your Stakes (see sidebar).

Coach: To initiate a Challenge, take the top card of the Coach Deck and play it down. Narrate how your Threat is moving against the pilots, and set your Stakes.

Once you've initiated, you are the "challenging player" for the rules that follow.

Accepting the Challenge

With the gauntlet thrown, the others at the table must choose if they're involved. Starting with the player sitting to the challenging player's Left, and proceeding clockwise around the table, each player with an in-scene character (or Threat) must choose if they are going to accept the challenge, join in to assist either side, or sit this one out and watch (or cheer).

Pilots: To accept a challenge, likewise play down a card and add your narrative flair in response (Oh yeah? That the best you got? You want summa this? You don't know what you're messing with! Etc). Narrate your action, and set your own counter-stakes.

Multiple pilots may work together if they wish. The process is the same as accepting. They must set stakes as well, but are allowed to merely parrot other Pilots' stakes if they're working together.

Coach: To accept a player-initiated challenge, play down a card from your Hand, and likewise narrate your Threat's response to (and acceptance of) the challenge.

Refusing the Challenge

If you initiate a challenge and no one steps up to it, then your goals (aka the Stakes you set) are achieved without conflict. This is a fairly simple concept: if someone moves against you, and you relent, then they get exactly what they want. Consider this next time someone challenges you.

Teaming Up

Teaming up is simply done by allies "accepting" the challenge and joining your side. See "Accepting the Challenge," above.

Winning Initiative

To determine the winner of the challenge, flip all the played cards face-up, then stack them stack them face-up in numerical order, with the lowest on the bottom. At this point, the only cards that matter are the one on the top and the one directly beneath it.

If your card is on top, then you are the winning Challenger and also the current leader of the Throwdown (and if no one else plays afterward, you even win!). Compare the value of your card to the one beneath it. If it's within your Strike Range, then you're good. If it's outside your Range, you take Dissonance per normal Strike Range rules.

Initiative Card Strategy

The base strategy when choosing your initiative card is hoping yours will beat all the others, *and* that the next-highest

card will be just within your character's Strike Range. Pilots working together may find it useful to try and play lower cards to give the "leader" of the fight a better chance of padding out their Strike Range. Contrarily, either side may choose to "fake out" their opponent and play as low a card as possible, with the hopes that their opponent played high and will thus suffer from playing outside Strike. Remember that Coach's initiative is totally random, so it can be harder to plan against.

(Stakes Sidebar)

Stakes are a simple statement of what you want to happen when you win the Throwdown. Stakes need to be single-subject, concise, and focused in scope. They should also be feasibly realistic, of course. "I'm going to Kill the Lord Governor, activate the explosive, rescue the captives, escape the planet, and win the game!" is definitely *bad* form. Focus in on the immediate, such as "I'm going to beat up the Lord Governor!" or "I'm going to activate the explosive!" and let the other things emerge in different conflicts, or even freely through narrative play.

They also can't override mechanics. "I'm going to kill this bitch!" isn't valid (although it is nicely emotive), because it likely requires a tangible application of Static, which isn't always guaranteed even when you've won. Something like "I'm doing to beat that bitch down!" is more acceptable.

Step X. Establishment Questions

Identifying the Scope

When and where is this taking place? Is this a heated argument in the Debate Club room? A dangerous battle on the tar plains of Aegilius VII? A stealthy infiltration job in the enemy's server core? A high-NRG round of competitive love-making? This system covers all of these and more. It's just a matter of making sure everyone's on the same page with the who, what, when, and where.

Identifying Motives (Bonus Draws)

Why is each of the Pilots involved? Are they fighting for their team's agendas, or instead for their own individual personal goals? The decision is up to Coach based on the information presented thus far. This is an important variable to identify, because it directly determines how many cards each Pilot gets to draw in the next step.

Who started this fight? (Strike Ranges)

This determines Strike Ranges for the Pilots. If they started the fight, they all use their Fist stat as their base Strike Range. If the fight was started by their opponents, they use their Glove stat instead.

The Strike Ranges for Coach's Threats are determined by their Threat Ratings.

Step X. Draw Bonus Cards

Each side now draws additional bonus cards into their hands from their respective decks.

Pilots: Draw a number of bonus cards based on your relevant **Commitment to the Team** stat: draw Solo if you're pushing a personal agenda, or Synch if you're fighting in the interests of the team (it's Coach's decision). Then you get to *Keep* a number of those cards equal to either your Pilot's current Harmony or her current Pulse, whichever is *lowest*. Add any kept cards directly to your Hand, then discard the rest.

Some Gear or character effects may directly alter your draw/keep amounts, as well.

Coach: Draws one card for each Pilot opposing him, plus additional cards = the Threat Rating of the opponent. If there are multiple Threats combined, he only draws the max TR for the highest-TR Threat present, and one additional card for each assisting. So if he has three Threats combined and the highest-rated one has a TR of 4, he'd draw 6 cards (4+1+1). Coach keeps all drawn cards.

Step X. Turns and Actions

With the challenge victor determined, play now begins with the player to the victor's left. Play moves clockwise around the table, with each participant playing cards and taking one or more actions. Play concludes when the last participant

has the highest card on top and everyone else has folded.

There are two Types of Actions: **Main** actions and **Side** actions. On your turn you can (and must) only take one Main action, but can take any number of Side actions before taking your main action. You can perform multiple Side actions, but **you can't perform the same Side action twice in the same turn**. Once you have chosen and performed a Main Action on your turn, it becomes the turn of the next involved player to your left.

Main Actions:

- **Beat-Back:** Play a same-ranked card as is on top, flipping both over and under
- **Card-Assist:** Discard a card, and give a card to an ally (if present)
- **Fold:** lay hand face-down and concede
- **LET'S RUMBLE!** Combine Robos and fight a Big Giant Monster!
- **Push:** play a higher card, narrate
- **Special:** use an available special Main action, if any
- **Strike-Assist:** Discard a card, and Increase next ally's Strike Range (based on Harmony)

Side Actions:

- **Activate Gear:** Use a piece of Gear and draw a few extra cards
- **Sacrifice Gear:** Destroy a piece of Gear to activate its sacrifice effect
- **Special:** use an available special Side action, if any
- **Static Shift:** shift static tokens to Robo, causing Endurance loss
- **Trigger Wave/Storm:** Coach activates a Wave or Storm of an involved Threat

You may have noticed that there is no basic "pass" or similar option, and this is intentional. If you're going to join a Throwdown, then you're going to **Throw Down** or you have no reason being there.

Activate Gear (Side, Both)

(Note Still in Development) You can **Activate** a piece of carried Gear as a side action. Doing so gives you that Gear's card draw bonus, letting you immediately draw that many cards into your hand. Any single piece of Gear may only be activated once per Throwdown.

Beat-Back (Main, Both)

A **Beat-Back** action happens when you play a card that is of the same rank and an equal or higher suit as the highest card on the Pile. In this case, both cards are flipped face-down and placed on the very bottom of the play pile. The card beneath the last one should now be on top.

Narration of a Beat-Back should involve the clear turning of the tide, albeit temporarily. The enemy has been pushed back down the chain of action, possibly even negating their last narration. Clearly then, it's not really a good idea to play a Beat-Back when one of your allies' cards is the one on top, unless you *really* know what you're doing. Not only is it rude, but it actively works against you and your team.

Why Beat-Back at all? It keeps you in the action if it's all you can play, and it also pushes the top card down to a lower value. This can possibly give your side more play options if all you have left are lower cards. It can also restrict your enemy's play options if they only have *higher* cards, forcing them to risk playing out of Strike Range if they want to keep Pushing.

Card-Assist (Main, Pilots)

The **Card-Assist** action allows you to pass a card to an ally in the Throwdown. To do this, you must first pick a card from your Hand and discard it (which means that it does *not* go into the pile). Then pick a different card from your Hand and pass it directly to one of your allies in the conflict, who then adds that card to their Hand.

Fold (Main, Both)

To **Fold** you take your current Hand and place it on the table in front of you, face-down. This signifies that you are either out of options, or otherwise no longer wish to push the conflict. You are now out of the Throwdown, and if it continues then you are no longer factored into the turn rotation.

Note that if you're out of cards and have no special actions available to you, all you can do is fold.

LET'S RUMBLE! (Main, Both)

The **LET'S RUMBLE!** Main action is a special trigger that stops the current Throwdown in its tracks and escalates the action to a Giant Monster sized scale. When triggered, a number of complicated things happen that are described in greater detail in the "Rumble*" chapter further on.

Any side of a Throwdown can initiate a Rumble, using the rules outlined in the extended Rumbles chapter, further on.

When either side initiates a Rumble, they *must* do so in a dramatic way, calling out their side's custom battle cry or monster name aloud.

Push (Main, Both)

The **Push** is the primary and most common action of a Throwdown. When you Push, you play a card face-up on top of the pile. That card must beat the card currently on top, using the standard core card ranking rules of the game. Even if the last-played card is your ally's, you still *must* beat it, otherwise you can't Push.

When you Push, you must narrate how you are pushing the action. You *must* provide verbal statement of action, counter-action, or other such direct involvement in the moment that changes the course of the action. This narration is up to you, and can involve your own direct action against your opponent, or instead your assisting of an ally in the conflict.

Remember your Strike Ranges! When you Push, you want your card to beat your opponent's by a difference no greater than your Strike Range. You can play any card you like, but if the difference is greater than Strike you will take Dissonance.

Sacrifice Gear (Side, Both)

(Note Still in Development) Instead of Activating a piece of Gear, you can **Sacrifice** it by destroying it in a sufficiently cool and useful way. This grants you the effect of that Gear's sacrifice effect, but also permanently destroys it. You cannot both Activate and then Sacrifice the same piece of Gear in the same Throwdown.

Special (Special)

Depending on your Techs, Gear, or other resources, you may have other unique Main or Side actions available to you on your turn. Keep aware of your character's abilities to make sure you always know if these options are open to you on your turn.

Some special actions require the expenditure of Faces or Aces from your Hand in order to activate. In these cases, the expended cards are always discarded, skipping the Play Pile entirely.

Static Shift (Side, Pilots, Robo-Required)

Pilots who are fighting in or with their personal Robos have access to a special damage-shifting side action. When used, the Pilot can shift any of their currently-accrued Static tokens to their Robo, provided they acquired those tokens during the current Throwdown. Static shifted to the Robo lowers its current Endurance score. This represents the Robo taking the damage instead, by reinforcing or otherwise shielding the pilot from harm.

Strike-Assist (Main, Pilots)

The **Strike-Assist** action allows you to boost your next ally's Strike Range. To do this, you must first pick a card from your Hand and discard it. The ally closest to your left in the flow is now the recipient of an Assist from you, and for their next action their Strike Range is modified by an amount determined by your position on the Harmony meter.

It is even possible to chain assists! If you just received a Strike-Assist from your ally, you can then pass it on again to your *next* ally, should there be more of you in the Throwdown. Likewise, you must also discard a card. Your own Assist score is added to the mix as well, and as such your next ally gets the combined bonuses! An assist-chain like this ends if it makes it back around to the start, however, wasting all the invested actions in a missed opportunity.

Some Pilots may be in the Red with their Harmony, and actually have a negative assist modifier. It rarely makes sense for them to Strike-Assist, but there are some cases where it can happen.

Trigger Wave (Side, Coach)

The **Trigger Wave/Storm** side action allows Coach to use the Waves and/or Storms of any of his involved Threats. Like the Power Weapon Techs of the Pilots, Coach must discard cards from his hand in order to use this action. To Trigger a Wave, Coach must discard any card from his Hand. To Trigger a Storm, Coach must discard a Face or Ace.

Triggering each individual Wave and/or Storm is considered a separate action, meaning Coach can trigger more than one in a turn, but cannot trigger the *same* one twice in the same turn. If it is Coach's turn and he has a hand full of cards but no feasible strategy, it is entirely legal for him to blow his hand triggering Waves and Storms and the immediately Folding.

Step X. Resolution

Play essentially continues until all but one of the participants have Folded. Whoever's card is on top at the end ultimately wins the Throwdown.

When you win, your narrative stakes are achieved. Additionally, you get to apply mechanical effects. Count the cards in the Play Pile - *all* of them, both face-up and face-down.

The victor of a Throwdown gets a number of **victory points** equal to the final size of the pile. VPs can be used for the following:

- **(Playtest Note:** These are initial costs that will very likely be tweaked!)
- Deal Static or Dissonance = 1:1 each
- Remove Static or Dissonance = 1:1 each
- Restore lost Harmony or Pulse = 3:1 each (Special circumstances must apply for this to be an option)
- Add a point to a non-depleted Team Resource = 1:1 each
- Restore a depleted Team Resource to 1 = 3:1 once
- Prevent Pending Collateral Damage = 3:1 each
- Add minor additional narrative statement 1:1 each
- (Coach) Activate Threat Waves 1:1 each
- (Coach) Activate Threat Storms 4:1 each (**Note:** conversion needs playtesting)

In each of the above cases, you *must* be able to narrate how this acquisition is coming into play. Coach is the final arbiter on whether a purchase makes sense in the context of the situation.

Card Play Strategies

Use your Faces and Aces wisely! They are valuable as trumping cards when Pushing, but they are also useful for activating your Pilots' special Techs. Don't play them unless you have to.

Also remember that Twos are the lowest, and Aces are the highest, but conversely Twos beat Aces. Hold onto those Twos until the right moment, as they can be quite valuable!

PVP Throwdowns

Pilots should be able to fight each other using these rules with no required procedural changes. Just make sure to clearly choose sides at the beginning!

Final Form! Rumbles!

How to form up and fight the big giant monster!

So When Do We Get to Form Up, Anyway?

Playtest Note: This whole sub section!

So that's a good question! I had initially wanted to artificially limit it to being based on some combination of Escalation,

Jokers, "unlockable" game events in the story, and so on. But really, that might be game-ifying just a bit too far. I want this to be fun, and I'm already breaking other rules of the genre, why then do I need to stick to classic formula?

Truth is, I don't. So to answer the question: Any time!

The catch is: there's really no reason to until the Big Giant Monster is revealed. At least as of the current alpha alpha alpha draft of the rules, there's literally no mechanical reason to combine other than to beat up a Giant Monster. Since the Robos themselves are primarily narrative tools, the players can have their Robos whenever they like, provided it makes sense. Much like the classics of the genre, the combination is an intense action, and quite destructive. You can easily narrate that it just takes too much power (hence one three rounds of Rumble), we must wait until it's our only option, and so on.

Additionally, there *are* some mechanical limitations. First is Harmony. You gotta be able to throw down a card to combine, and your Harmony limits your options there. If it's too low, you have to sacrifice a higher and higher card, and those may be useful later for other reasons! So you need to spend some time soul-searching in order to get to a point where you can combine easily (if not freely) and hold onto those good cards.

Next is Resources. The battles you get in with your Robos can really put a beating on them. You need a good Pit Crew that'll keep your team's giant steeds in tip-top shape.

The Final Form

The term **Final Form** in this text refers to the ultimate assembled mega-bot that the team creates when they combine their Robos into a greater fusion.

Every group will have their own description of what the union process looks, sounds, feels, smells, and even tastes like, as well as their own description of that actual final assembled form. For the purposes of tension, we encourage new groups to *not* go into any details at first, and instead wait until the first time in play that it actually happens to describe everything. This makes that first union all the more awesome for everyone.

By default, the rules just assume that the Pilots can full or even just partially combine, and even swap positions. If your group doesn't want to do that, they don't have to, the mechanics are identical either way. In either case, the term 'Final Form' is used to describe *any* assembled union of two or more Pilots' Robos.

The Final Form ultimately consists of a set of **Positions** that the Pilots take up as their robots combine with each other. The actual act of assembling only happens at the beginning of Rumbles, and as such that process is described further below, in the Rumble outline.

Final Form Positions

There are X core Positions based on their function within the assembled structure. Each position gives a special Rumble action option, and has suggestions on its incarnation within your form. Each of the Actions can be done once per Round, by discarding a card of a certain value. The value of the card discarded determines the effect of the Tech. The variable "X" is equal to 1 if the card is a number, 2 if the card is a Face, or 3 if the card is an Ace.

For tangible play at the table, we recommend using a set of index cards to represent the Positions, with each Pilot's player actually taking that index card into their play region when they assume that position during the union process.

Currently Unused Tech Ideas:

- Look at X cards in hand or on table

Strategy ("The Head")

- **Suggested Forms:** Head, Brains, Eyes

Action: "On My Mark!:" Each other Pilot in the Final Form may choose to pass you up to X cards from their Hands. You may then choose to keep any of those passed to you, and pass them up to X cards back. The amount they passed you and the amount you pass back do not need to be the same.

Offense ("Right Arm")

- **Suggested Forms:** Right Arm, Chest Laser, Blazing Sword

Action: "(INSERT ATTACK NAME):" Each time you use this, you must shout out a new attack name. You cannot use the same attack name twice in the same Rumble, but you can recycle them across Rumbles. You can then force a random discard of up to X cards from Coach's hand.

Defense ("Left Arm")

- **Suggested Forms:** Left Arm, Shell, Power Shield

Action: "(INSERT MANEUVER NAME):" Each time you use this, you must shout out a new defensive maneuver name. You cannot use the same maneuver name twice in the same Rumble, but you can recycle them across Rumbles. First draw a card into your hand, and then play a card (same or different) face-down in front of an already-played BGM card. When the cards are revealed at the end of the Round, if your card Beats theirs, immediately discard both (it does not score).

Perseverance

- **Suggested Forms:** Heart, Spine

Action: "Rejuvenation!:" Each *other* Pilot in the Final Form draws X more cards into their hand.

Mobility

- **Suggested Forms:** Legs, Tail, Wings

Action: "Action Name:" TBD (Not certain on this one yet, but need a fifth to fit the theme...)

Okay, Let's Rumble!

The final mode of conflict is the Robo Rumble, wherein the Pilots' sync their Robos and join up to build their Final Form, and (hopefully) kick some Big Giant Monster ass!

A Rumble is played out in exactly three Rounds of action. The Pilots join together on one side of the fight, and Coach

Process:

1. Initiate
2. Assemble!
 - Pilot Robo Final Form!
 - The Monster Appears!
3. RUMBLE
 1. Round 1
 - Pilots Draw Up
 - Coach Draws Up
 2. Round 2
 - Coach Draws Up
 3. Round 3
 - Coach Draws Up
4. Determine Outcome

Step 1: Initiating the Rumble

The Rumble is a special final conflict type that pushes the scale WAYWAY up into the sky.

A Rumble can be activated either within an active Throwdown, or outside of one, based on the following rules.

From Within a Throwdown

To activate within a Throwdown...

Pilot: On your turn, use the "Let's Rumble!" Main action. When you do this, you must have a card in your hand equal to or

higher than your Combine Card based on your Harmony. Set that card aside, it's going to get used in a second...

Coach: Once the appropriate escalation stage is reached, Coach can initiate at any time during a Throwdown involving a Threat that has the BGM quality. This also uses the "Let's Rumble!" main action, but requires no card play.

In either case, once the Rumble has been initiated, the Throwdown is officially over. Quickly resolve it with the highest card determining the victor as usual. Then discard the play pile, but **leave existing Hands as they are!** Now begin Step 2.

From Outside a Throwdown

A Rumble can be activated in "open play" mode by either the Pilots or Coach.

Pilot: Simply narrate that you are starting the fusion, and put forth a fusion card, as above.

Coach: Same as if done within a Throwdown.

In either case, I immediately begin Step 2.

Step 2: Assemble!

Now each side assembles at the same time. When both are ready to go, move to Step 3.

Pilots: Building the Final Form

For some, this may be the most exciting part of the game: the team finally gets to assemble into their megaultramagnatron-bot, yeah!

To form the bot, each Pilot who wishes to join the Final Form must put forth a card - chances are one or more already has a card out simply by way of having Initiated the Rumble in the first place. The card a Pilot puts forth must equal or exceed the "Combine Rank" of their current Harmony, otherwise they can't join the Union. You can put forth cards from your Hand or from any of the available Factions.

Next, each Pilot in the union claims one of the available Positions of the Final Form. In larger groups, there may be more Pilots involved than available Positions, but that's fine: once all the core positions are claimed, remaining pilots can "double up" in a claimed Position, effectively claiming it a second time (and also making that Tech available for two uses in a Round!). However, doubling up is not allowed if there are still core positions remaining unclaimed.

when you claim a Position, if there are any Power tokens on that Position, you immediately draw one more card into your hand for each token.

Then, each Pilot in the union contributes to the description of the combination! This can be quite a vivid and spectacular event, so the players are encouraged to go wild, especially on their first union (and Coach, this is a special Pilot moment, so don't butt in unless they need assistance with imaginative ideas or prodding). For best dramatic impact, we advise starting with the "lower" Positions (legs, tail, etc) and working up until you bring in the uppermost Position (usually the Head) last - "...and I'll for the HEAD!" is a classic trope of the genre.

What if I can't Put Forth a Card?

Please Note that sometimes not everyone will be able to assemble. This will most likely be because they have crappy Harmony, but maybe other circumstances apply as well. That's actually to be expected! **Pilots DO NOT have to Assemble in order to Rumble!** That's right: they can totally rumble just fine in their separate Robos, they just don't get to participate in the actual Union process, nor do they get to choose Final Form Positions (and their associated Techs).

That said, if they can't use their Robos, they can't Rumble! When the BGM attacks, you'd better get to those Robos if you can!

Coach: Assembling the Playing Field

While the Pilots are describing their Union, Coach should prepare the playing field. Just clear out a space in the middle for each side to lay out **two rows of up to five cards each**. Don't put any cards there yet (that will happen during the Rounds), just make sure there's space to play. These play spaces are called **Combo Zones**, and each side has five of them.

As for the monster itself, Coach doesn't really have to do anything special to assemble the BGM other than describe how totally sweet it is. The BGM Techs should have been predetermined during the Scenario Design process. Just wait for the Pilots to assemble, encourage them to be super descriptive, and then move on the Step 3.

Step 3: Rumble!

Now you fight! This is a set of three "**Rounds**" of action. Each Round is broken down into ten **Turns** of the sides using Techs or building power combos. It's a back-and-forth flow, with one side taking a turn, then the other, then back, and so on until each side has taken five turns. At the end of a Round, you total a score based on card combos and multipliers, then proceed to the second Round and repeat. Repeat a third time, and it's over. Highest total score wins!

Three Rounds, ten turns in each Round, five turns per side back and forth.

Round One: FIGHT!

At the start of Round 1 Only, the Pilots Draw additional cards equal to their current Robo Tier. Pilots do not need to discard anything at the start.

At the start of *each* Round, Coach Draws up to a total Hand equal to the BGM's Threat Rating plus the current Escalation Round (plus any other bonuses he may have from specific Threat Techs). If Coach somehow already has more than that in his hand, he needs to *randomly* discard down to the max size.

After initial draw, the first turn goes to the side that initiated Rumble Mode. When you bring it, you act first.

Initiator takes a turn, then the opponent, back and forth until each side has taken five turns. If there are multiple players on a side, they can act in any order or quantity they want - meaning if there are five Pilots in a union, they can even just have one player choose and declare all the actions. They only get five turns, but they can do whatever they want with them.

On your Side's turn, you can *either* play a card face-down in one of your side's five Combo Zones, *or* you can instead activate your special Position/BGM Tech.

To play a card in a Combo Zone, take a card from your hand (or a Faction) and place it face-down in an empty one of the five zones for your side of the battle. This will get revealed at the end of the round, and count toward your score combo.

To Use a Tech, Play a card from your hand (or a Faction) *face-up and sideways* on an empty Zone on your side. This activate yours chosen Position/BGM Tech and empowers it with the card: the better the card you play, the more effective the Tech (see Tech descriptions, earlier). Apply the effects immediately. Remember: using a Tech is done *instead* of playing a card, and that directly limits the number of cards your side can play, so do so wisely!

Also, each such Tech can only be used once per side, unless your side has it otherwise duplicated (such as doubled-up Pilots, or BGMs with multi-use Techs).

Finally, once all ten turns are complete, determine the Round 1 scores for each side. **Both sides flip over their played Combo Cards, face-up.** A side's score is equal to the total value of all the *non-sideways* cards in their Combo Zones, times the Combo Multiplier (see the sidebar). You will keep a running total across all three rounds. Remember: sideways cards were used for Position/BGM Techs instead, and do not count toward this play combo.

Whoever has the highest score "Wins" the Round. If there's a tie (unlikely), draw off until someone has a higher (and discard those cards). Discard all cards from the play area, and move to Round 2.

SIDEBAR: Building Combos

Okay, so your real ultimate goal in each Round is to build the best damn hand of up to five cards that you can, using the cards available to your team. While Coach is limited to **ONLY** the cards in his hand, he's got a lot of them, and he redraws every turn. Meanwhile, your team must use all the cards they have between them, and they don't get the same redraw options as Coach. In fact, the only draw-ups you get are at the start of the first Round, and through the applied use of the Heart's Position Tech.

Adding to that, you aren't allowed to actively discuss your hands, either! On the plus side, by the time you've come to this

point, you probably have a lot of good cards out in those Factions, and a few other tricks up your sleeves.

A solid strategy is to make strategic use of both the Heart's draw-up Tech and the Head's pass-over Tech to buff up the "leader's" hand with good combo cards. Then let the Leader handle the actual Combo plays, unless your team has such a good real-world synergy that you can pull off good combos together with minimal communication.

The Combos you play directly multiply your end-of-Round score, so play well!

Combo	Multiplier
High Card	x1
1 Pair	x10
2 Pair, 3-Straight	x100
3-Kind, 4-flush	x1,000
4-Straight	x10,000
5-Flush	x100,000
4-Kind, 4-Straightflush	x1,000,000
Full House	x10,000,000
5-Straightflush	x100,000,000

The combos are not in the same Poker order, this is intentional. Remember, you are potentially giving up valuable actions in order to just go for points, thus the more difficult 5-card combos are more valuable. That said, this definitely needs some testing!

Round Two: YOU CAN DO IT!

Almost exactly like Round 1, but:

Coach draws back up to full Hand (TR + Escalation + Other) at the top, but the Pilots do *not*.

Whoever scored highest in the previous Round gets to choose if they want to play first, or instead force their opponent to play first.

Combos scored at the end of the Round are worth DOUBLE (x2).

Round Three: FINISH IT!

Exactly like Round 2 (Coach draws, Pilots do not, last Round's victor decides who plays first), except that Combos scored at the end of Round 3 are worth TRIPLE (x3).

When Round 3 ends, the Rumble is over!

Step 4: Determine Outcome

At the end of Round three: Whoever has the highest score across all three Rounds wins!

If the Pilots' total is **greater than or equal to** the monster's:

- Basic Success: They Just barely Survived (Final Scenario Score +X)
- Double Score or More: They had a challenging Victory (Final Scenario Score +YY)
- Ten times the enemy's score or more: They Stomped the Shit out of the Monster (Final Scenario Score +ZZZ)

However, if the monster's points were **greater than** the Pilots':

- Basic Loss: The monster forced their retreat (Final Scenario Score -X)
- Double Score or More: The monster wrecked them (Final Scenario Score -YY)
- Ten times the Pilots' score or more: The Monsters obliterated the Pilots, and Humanity is on the brink of destruction...

(Final Scenario Score -ZZZ)

The variables above will come as I finalize play flow and balance the math on the end-of-scenario scoring process.

Extended Considerations

Playtest Notes: This whole sub-section!

Once the Location rules get officially added (again, pending further playtest results from the base package), Collateral Damage rules will get added to the different attacks and actions.

The basic idea is that when an "attack" style action is performed, the actions do extra collateral damage to the Location where the fight occurs. Collateral is bad not just because it destroys locations, but it also lowers public opinion of the team, which can damage their funding, ruin their scenario score, and more. Collateral is intended to be kind of a big deal.

Pilots can avoid collateral from their own actions by sacrificing higher cards in their attacks. So a plain number card would do 1 "damage" effect but 2 collateral, a face would do 1 damage and only 1 collateral, while an Ace would do 2 damage and no collateral at all. Likewise defensive actions would prevent some or all of the BGM's collateral effects.

Collateral also escalates by the round! Unblocked collateral in Round 1 is x1, in Round 2 is x10, and in Round 3 is x100!

This will make more sense when Locations are added. But for now, I want to focus on the core and see how much tuning it needs.

Royal Rumbles: Pilot vs Pilot!

PLAYTEST NOTE: This whole sub section!

While unlikely, it is certainly possible for two or more pilots to square off against two or more other pilots in semi-combinative Rumbles. I've yet to try one out for myself, but I can see it being technically possible, and potentially fun. I don't see much need to alter the process for it, either.

Rumble Final Thoughts

PLAYTEST NOTE: This whole sub section!

One thing I've considered is if personal Techs and such can be used inside Rumbles. It seems like a cool idea, but I've not even really begun toying with those ideas yet. It would certainly require some deeper consideration, and right now I just want to make sure the core idea works on the skeletal level before adding anything extra to it.

Coach's Handbook

This whole section is a big ol' Work in Progress. Essentially the "How to GM" section of the text.

Coaching 101

Storytelling Tips

TBD

Does Everyone Have to be a Faction or Threat?

Easy answer: No, they don't! In Gattaibushido, the only characters that have game mechanics are the Pilots, the Factions, and the Threats. But there are many other characters and creatures in the universe that don't need to fall into these categories. The vast majority of these exist primarily as little more than narrative color, but sometimes you can use them as the components of other game mechanics.

The easiest way to bring in non-mechanics characters is as narrative power behind a Gambit. For example, if a Pilot has

offended the locals of a backwoods colony and they are trying to lynch her, instead of statting them out you can just use them as the crux of a Gambit. Can she talk them out of their furor? Can she run away? Can she call on her friends' help in time? Play out a quick Gambit and find out!

Or instead, you can just "say what happens" and move on. If a Pilot is out on a shopping trip in the Enzirian Bazaar and wants to find something interesting, role-play her interactions with the locals, and describe the fancy new scarf she gets from a pleasant off-world trader. There's no need to bring numbers and mechanics into play unless it's important to the greater story.

Coach's Basic Mechanics

(Still in Development) Most of the in-game rules that Coach uses have already been detailed in their relative sections prior. This section here is meant to serve as a quick collection of page references to those bits and pieces.

Coach's Cards

- Coach's Deck: The Coach deck is separate from the player Deck, and should be visibly different.
- Coach's Hand: Coach doesn't carry a Hand of cards between conflicts. You will only hold a Hand during the turns of an active Throwdown.

Coach and Throwdowns

Initiative: Unlike the Pilots, you *always* initiate your Throwdown Challenges from the top of the Deck. This is quite intentional, to maintain "fair unpredictability" in the challenge mechanic. The intent of the challenge mechanic is not for Coach to beat up on the pilots, but instead for the pilots to rise up to a challenge, no matter how unpredictable that challenge may be. Once you have drawn your actual Hand, you have more freedom in bringing the pain.

Coach's Common Tasks

(this will end up being a master reference list of Coach's common tasks)

How to...

- Build a Big Giant Monster: p. SQUARP
- Check for Faction Disfavor: p. SQUARP
- Create a Threat: p. SQUARP
- Introduce a Faction: p. SQUARP
- Run a First Contact: p. SQUARP
- Run a Gambit: p. SQUARP
- Run a Lessons Vote: p. SQUARP
- Run a Throwdown: p. SQUARP

Recordkeeping

Coach should keep track of:

- Each player's various Triggers (from Color)
- Current Average Team Evolutions (AvTE)
- Current Team Resources
- Threats (and Threats with Pulse/Static)

Running the Game

Most of the rest of this text talks about mechanics and numbers and math and gee whiz, but this section here is about managing the greater flow of play.

If you've made it this far, you've probably figured out that Gattaibushido has a somewhat *different* approach to a lot of the same tasks as other RPGs. As with Motobushido however, the biggest hurdle for new players tends to be figuring out the expected flow of process. Hopefully this section can help you get over those bumps and smooth out your play experience.

Campaign Play

In Campaign play, you are all expecting to play this story for multiple sessions. I've found that 13 sessions or so tends to be a good story arc, and with proper adjudication of Lessons and evolution votes, this can see the original Pilots (provided they live that long) grow into very capable characters.

Session 1

Start with a Blank Slate

This means story *and* rules! Don't pre-write the story details, and likewise don't front-load the rules! Trust in the First Contact scene to kickstart both story and rules knowledge, and you'll be good to go.

Run the First Contact

The First Contact kicks off the game and the grander story. It is both tutorial and world-building session. Every game should begin with one *before* the actual player character Pilots are even discussed at all.

Run Team Creation

After the First Founding, run the Team Creation process.

Session 2 & Beyond

TBD

One-Shot Games

TBD (extended advice on running one-shot sessions and convention games)

The First Contact

The First Contact scene is a crucial part of every extended campaign, and even pretty fun in one-shots, too. It establishes the background of your game world, while also serving as a tutorial to the game rules for new players.

First Contact Flow:

1. Give a real quick explanation
2. Details and Establishment Questions
3. Pass out FC Character Templates
4. Draw Sides & Deal Hands
5. Ask the Question & Set the Stage
6. Play
7. Bring to a Close

The basis of this scene is the question: "Do you stand and fight and defend your loved ones? Or do you run to bring message back to command, so they know that there's a danger?"

The outcome should will the lives of the Pilots later in the game proper. One or more could be descended from the people in that encounter. Are the Pilots living under the shadow of their predecessor's shame? Or are they instead being expected to fill the gigantic shoes of martyr heroes?

Quick Explanation

Read Aloud:

"The following scene takes place during a war some time ago. On an off-world colony, the protagonists of this scene are all members of the special Colonial Defense Force. They all are involved in a crucial moment when The Enemy first reveals itself from space, and attacks the colony. The survivors of this scene will be a legend told by the Mecha pilots for many years to come..."

Establishment Questions

Now ask the group to start establishing aspects of the setting. Try and get each player to contribute at least one fact. Facts include things such as: Steam-powered starships, alien allies, No More Children, Everyone has Green Skin, Still haven;t master Gravity Tech, Planet-Destroying Weapons, and so on. Try and build out cool sci fi elements of your group's game world, and offer suggestions to make things awesome and unique.

During this flow, you need to try and answer the following questions. Some of them may be answered through the players own volunteered ideas, while others you may end up just having to directly ask for:

- How far in the future is this?
- Where is this colony? What is its name
- What is so important about this particular colony?
- What is known about The Enemy?
- What was it about the enemy that made them so unstoppable?

Pass Out the Templates

There are eight basic character templates, each a different archetype of a character that would be present in this scene. Lay them out and let the players choose.

Mention aloud that it *helps* if at least one of the players takes the Commo, and another takes the LT, but it is by no means required.

the LT

(description) The lead officer.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 4 / Sync 2 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 3 /Fist 3 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 2 / Stars 4 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Sarge

(description) The good ol' Sarge.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 1 / Sync 5 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 2 /Fist 4 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 5 / Stars 1 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Conscript

(description) Not the most well-trained, probably a new recruit.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 5 / Sync 1 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 4 /Fist 2 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 4 / Stars 2 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Engineer

(description) All tech and gears and computers and stuff.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 3 / Sync 3 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 2 /Fist 4 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 2 / Stars 4 - (flavor text)

- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Commo

(description) The Communications Specialist

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 2 / Sync 4 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 3 / Fist 3 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 3 / Stars 3 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Gropo

(description) The foot soldier, infantryman, ground-pounder, etc.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 1 / Sync 5 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 0 / Fist 6 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 3 / Stars 3 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Sniper

(description) Lone wolf with a really powerful gun.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 5 / Sync 1 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 2 / Fist 4 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 3 / Stars 3 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** (TBD)
- **Reason to Run:** (TBD)

the Medtech

(description) Medical Tech on the team, dedicated to keeping everyone alive.

- **Commitment to the Team:** Solo 0 / Sync 6 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Fight:** Glove 5 / Fist 1 - (flavor text)
- **Commitment to the Future:** Earth 5 / Stars 1 - (flavor text)
- **Reason to Fight:** We have to do what we can to save these people!
- **Reason to Run:** If we don't take word back, millions more may die!

Draw Sides & Deal Hands

Prepare a special hand of cards as follows: from one deck, draw X red cards, where X = the number of Pilot players, minus one. Then draw X black cards as well. You should then have a hand with an equal number of black and white cards. Shuffle them, then deal one to each player, face-down.

Have each player look at that card secretly, and remember it.

Shuffle the remaining cards into the deck, then deal each player two more cards.

Ask the Question and Set the Stage

Time to finally set the scene and ask The Question. The final printed version of this is still pending playtesting, but the basic flow is:

- By now, everyone knows the colony is being attacked!
- Enemies - from space!
- The enemy has overwhelmed the outer defenses and taken out the communication satellites before any message

could be sent!

- The commander has sent word to your unit (address the Commo here if present): attack it with everything you have! Defend the people!
- Communication with commander was cut off! (If LT or Sarge is present, present the next bit to them)
- Those who received RED cards are in favor of murdering these alien bastards.
- Those who received BLACK cards believe that the unit needs to escape and take word to the homeworld, so they will know of the attack.
- The unit can maybe succeed at one, but only if it acts together!

...and go!

(TBD: add in Faction explanations a la Motobushido First Founding)

Begin Play

Play through the scene, try and introduce a Throwdown between the players, get them used to fighting each other (muh hah hah), etc.

Mainly let them run with it, so they open up and get a hang of role-playing if they're new. Bring in a Throwdown and a Gambit if you can, so they can see how the real basic mechanics work. They don't have any powers or Techs to use, so there aren't many options to confuse them or complicate things. If anyone uses the Strike-Assist action in a conflict, just give a default value of 2 and go with it.

Bring it to a Close

Once it's clear which decision is holding true, draw the scene to a close. There's no need to play through the entire battle to the bitter end. All we're interested in here is establishing what decision was made.

Gather up all the playing cards. The players can keep their template sheets if they like, but they may or may not actually become characters. Next: on the character creation!

Scenario Design and Management

(major development in progress)

Prepare a Faction card for each Faction of the scenario, to be placed on the table when it is discovered by the Pilots. Similarly prepare behind-the-scene Threat stats for any Faction that may potentially be a Threat to the players.

To develop a scenario (unordered):

- Come up with a situation
- Add additional intra-team conflicts
- Develop Factions
- Develop Threats
- Develop Escalation Path
- Develop a Downtime Draw Table (or use the standard)
- Write team buy-in questions

Downtime Draw-Table

(TBD: a draw-table of events that happen between scenarios and potentially alter team Harmony, threats, and more. Should be an equal balance of good and bad things. 13 total options, one for each rank, with each option giving four different outcomes based on suit)

Scenario Threats

The Threats present in your scenario directly affect its design. Every Scenario should have a "Total Threat Rating" which is an "X/Y/Z" number. X = total number of Threats, Y = Average Threat Rating of those Threats, and Z = number of Threats designated as BGMs.

Threat Management

Threats are the vast majority of the opposition in the game. Monsters, bullies, mean teachers, natural obstacles, and even Big Giant Space Monsters.

Threats give Coach a number of game options to use against the Pilots

Threats are by nature very different than Pilots, and as such use different mechanics. For example, whereas Pilots have many numbers, Threats all have only one: their Threat Rating.

Threat Basics

Every Threat has a singular number, called its **Threat Rating** (TR). Threat Rating does the following:

- Determines number of bonus cards Coach draws at start of a Throwdown involving this Threat
- Sets an allowance of Threat Build Points (TBPs), for kitting the Threat out with Qualities.
- Serves as an overall gauge of that enemy's power within the scenario

Threat Rating is an *exponential* gauge, mind you, meaning that rating 2 threats are *significantly* more powerful than rating 1, and so on. There's a color scheme to match this, and at the risk of conflicting with more established color schemes from MMOs, I've chosen instead to keep it in line with the standard "RoyGBiv" color scheme used throughout the rest of the game, so as to keep everything uniform within the scope of the text. Note that the colors here are the reverse of those the Pilots use, and this is intentional. In every one of the game's seven-point color scales, Red is the *worst* for the Pilots, and Violet is the *best*. Thus a Violet Threat is small beans for them, while a Red Threat is earth-shattering doom.

Threat Color	Threat Rating	AvTE*	DC**	Notes
Violet	1	0	1	Weakest, basic enemy, a standard starting challenge
Indigo	2	?	1	TBD
Blue	3	?	1	TBD
Green	4	?	2	TBD
Yellow	5	?	2	TBD
Orange	6	?	2	TBD
Red	7	?	3	World-shaking threat, greatest non-BGM enemy robos.

* Recommended Minimum Average Team Evolutions: The recommended *minimum* total cross-team character Evolutions that should be in play before this Threat is considered a "normal" challenge for the players. This is very much still a work in progress that requires extensive playtesting.

** Defeat Conditions: The number of defeat conditions that must be determined when designing this Threat.

During play, Coach should try and refer to Threats by their colors over their numbers. This keeps the narrative and themes in play.

Threat Design

The Threat design system is intended to be fairly straightforward and modular.

Start with the basic Threat Template, give it a Threat Rating, then assign Threat Qualities.

Basic New Threat Template

Every Threat, regardless of complexity, has the following base rules.

- **Threat Rating:** Every Threat has a numerical rating, minimum 1, maximum 7. Threat Rating determines Threat Build Points (TBP)
- **Default Wave:** Deal 1 *direct* Pulse damage to one Pilot, bypassing buffers

- **Default Storm:** Deal 1 *direct* Pulse damage to all Pilots, bypassing buffers
- **Default Defeat Condition:** A single Narrative statement of how this Threat can be defeated/neutralized. Higher-rating Threats have more required conditions.

When designing a Threat, take into account just how powerful you want this Threat to be.

First start with the template above. Every Threat *must* have a TR, a Wave, a Storm, and a Defeat Condition.

Defeat Conditions

Each Threat *must* have at least one scripted narrative defeat condition. This can be something as simple as "Pull the 'Destroy Bob' level in room 414B of the secret complex" or as involved as complex puzzle solving involving a prophecy, a sunken temple, seven British grandmothers, and the letter Q. No matter how complex or simple, however, there must be one. Something like "Shoot it until it does" is a classic stand-by, but we encourage having some solid unexpected round-about ways for the Pilots to defeat things with a bit of applied creativity and narrative exploration.

At TRs 4 and 7, the minimum number of required defeat conditions increases.

Threat Qualities

Your Threat Rating gives you an equal number of Threat Build Points (TBPs) to spend on additional Qualities.

You can swap out the default Wave and Storm options for others. Sacrificing the defaults gives you +1 TBP each, to spend as you wish, but with one important caveat: your final Threat *must* have at least 1 Wave effect and 1 Storm effect.

Below is a table of all the available Threat qualities, along with their Threat Build Point (TBP) costs and a quick description of what they do. These are all explained in much greater detail further down.

Quality Name	TBP Cost	Notes
Big Giant Monster	1	Designates the Threat as a BGM
Bolster Allies	1	+STORM: increase TR of existing Threats
Debilitating	1	+WAVE: force pilot discards
Tactical	+2	BASE: Uses Strike Range
Heavy-Handed	1*	BASE: Deals +1 Static with each play in a Throwdown.
Mortal	+TR	+DC: Can be destroyed via Static
Reinforcements Summon	X+1	+WAVE: Summon new lesser Threats.
Urgency	1	BASE: Makes Pilot discards Random.

*This can be selected multiple times

Unsorted Other Qualities Ideas:

- Actions
 - 1, Side: Draw 1 Card
- Base Mods
- Wave Actions
- Storm Actions
- Undecided...
 - Cause Collateral Damage
 - Burn d4 from a team resource vs deplete a team resource
 - Discard Top card of a faction vs discard ALL favor
 - reduce Faction agent -1 vs eliminate a Faction

Basic Notes:

- +ACTION: Threat gains a new Action for use on their turn in a Throwdown.

- BASE: A base mechanic is directly modified for that Threat
- +DC: Threat gains a new Defeat Condition
- +STORM: Threat gains a new Storm option
- +WAVE: Threat gains a new Wave option

Big Giant Monster (BGM)

This quality designates the Threat as this scenario's Big Giant Monster (or BGM), subject to all the extended rules of the BGMs. See the next section for BGM rules.

Bolster Allies

- Bolster Allies: 1 TBP; +STORM: Increase TR of any scenario threat by +2, OR Increase TR of any two scenario threats by +1, (see description for special notes)

When designing a Threat with this quality, you should make sure that every planned Threat in your scenario has a predetermined "upgrade path" in place. This will save *you a lot* of time during play, as it lets you quickly decide what new Threat qualities to add to each of your Threats, should they be boosted by this Tech.

Debilitating

1, +WAVE: "Debilitating" Force a discard from each Pilot not in a Throwdown, or 1 Pilot in a Throwdown

Heavy-Handed

Heavy-Handed: 1 TBP; BASE: Deals +1 Static with each play in a Throwdown.

Can be selected multiple times!

Mortal

A "mortal" threat is one that can be destroyed directly, through the application of Static delivered by the pilots in Throwdowns. Mortal Threats have an effective Pulse and Static Buffer both equal to their TR, subject to standard Static rules. When The Threat's effective Pulse is eliminated, the Threat is destroyed.

This quality can make Threats extremely squishy, yes, but to compensate this they effectively double their TR when purchasing Qualities. We definitely do not advise making a Threat both Mortal and BGM, unless you want that BGM to be easily defeatable outside of Rumbles.

Reinforcements

- Reinforcements Summon: X+1; +WAVE: Generate 1 one new Threat-X of predetermined details and add to Scenario. TBP cost of this Quality is based on X = TR of new Threat. When building base Threat, you must predefine the Threat that will be summoned.

Tactical

- Tactical: +2 TBP; BASE: Threat must abide by a Strike Range = TR.

A Tactical Threat is one that over-relies on precise tactics in its actions, often to a fault. They follow patterns and tend to telegraph their actions, making them easier to defeat with well-coordinated teamwork. These Threats are constrained to use of a Strike Range when playing in Throwdowns, just like the Pilots. It's range is equal to its Threat Rating. Unlike pilots, when this Threat plays outside of its Range, it does not suffer Dissonance. Instead, the lowest-Harmony Pilot opposing it gets to immediately gain +1 to their Harmony tracker, as she finds her tactics working against it in ways that bolster her synergy with her team. If multiple are tied for lowest, they must choose who gets the boost.

Urgency

- Urgency: 1 TBP; BASE: When a Pilot would Discard in a Throwdown against this threat, that Pilot's discard is always Random.

Building Custom Qualities

If you want to build custom qualities, here's a loose system for doing so.

Basic 1-point Quality adds a single Wave or Storm effect. Why are Waves and Storms the same cost, despite Storms being way more heinous? Because Waves are more immediate, while Storms are delayed and have setup conditions. Waves are weaker, but they are easier to activate. So while a Storm may be more disastrous for the players, its rarity balances that out.

Threats and Factions

There may likely be some confusion over the difference between Factions and Threats in play, and this is understandable. They both represent external forces within the scenario, and their mechanical scopes have some definite crossover.

Indeed, some Threats are *also* Factions, even. However, not every Threat can (or should) be a Faction. A Threat that takes the form of a Raging Galactic Void Storm, for example, narratively has no actual will or intent, and thus makes no sense as a Faction.

Think of them as completely different realms of mechanical sway. Factions are mechanics for the Pilot players, while Threats are mechanics for Coach.

While not all Threats are Factions, every Faction *does* have the potential to become a Threat if the Pilots invoke its anger. As such, it helps to consider having a "Threat conversion" worked up in advance on each of your scenario Factions. Given how easy it can be for the Pilots to reach a Faction's disfavor, this is a good practice to make common for all your scenario design process.

When Disfavor ends up turning a Faction against the Pilots, that Faction becomes a Threat. Its prior Agency at the time of conversion becomes its new Threat Rating. Like any other Threat, you can then use that TR to assign it Threat Qualities, and then use them against the players.

Threats and Player Awareness

This should be needless to say, but anyway: the pilots and their players *should not* know anything about the Threats' mechanics prior to a scenario (other than *maybe* the overall scenario X/Y/Z rating, and usually only during cons games and demos). This means they have no way of knowing of enemies are weak, powerful, mortal, or otherwise. They must discover this through play!

Playtest Note: Perhaps knowledge of one or more Threat Qualities can be narratively imparted through successful Throwdown goals...

Big Giant Monsters! (BGMs)

The big mega bosses that you're all here to fight!

Mechanically, a BGM is little more than a Threat with the BGM quality, which gives it a few extra Techs to use specifically in the flow of Robo Rumbles.

Since BGMs are technically base threats, you can include them in the main scenario as opposing forces. This is a common trope in the super sentai style of shows, where the end boss doesn't actually grow to full BGM size until the end of the episode. You can also just leave them unrevealed until they show up to destroy the heroes at the end, if you like, it's your call.

The BGM Threat cannot *initiate* full-size Rumble combat until the proper escalation point has been reached. However, if you design your scenario to accommodate such, the Pilots might seek out and encounter the BGM much sooner and go into Rumble on their own. In such a case, your BGM is able to return the favor.

BGM Rumble Techs

Each BGM threat gets a number of special Rumble Techs equal to (you guess it) its Threat Rating. Like the Pilots' Position Techs, most of these require a card activation from Coach's hand, with better cards resulting in stronger powers.

Playtest Notes: These require a lot of extended testing. This is a completely new take on the prior Rumble mechanic, and as such most of these have not even seen lab testing. They don't have cool monster-y names yet, either. Bear with me, it's a work in progress. =)

Base Techs*:

- **Extend Hand:** (Passive) This Tech increases the BGM max hand by +1 card. Can be taken multiple times.
- **Power Up:** (Active) Draw X more cards into your hand this Round.
- **Tech Name:** (Passive/Active) Template...

* Active Techs require a card sacrifice similar to Pilot Position Techs. For each of the techs listed, X is based on the value of the card sacrificed to empower the Tech: Number card = 1, Face Card = 2, Ace = 3.

Escalation Path

The Escalation Path is a pre-scripted series of event triggers that occur as the Jokers are revealed during play. Each step on the path is triggered by a Joker reaching the top of the Coach deck.

The standard path is seven steps, alternating between waves and storms until the BGM finally makes an appearance at the end. It's meant for a standard single-session game, such as a pick-up game or a convention session. If you have new players, you might want to reduce this to 5 or 6 steps, while experienced players who push through decks quickly might warrant extending it to 8, 9, or even 10. Note that the length of the Path is directly related to both the length of the game and the power of the final "boss" monster, so this is an important consideration.

A "Standard" default path is:

Jokers	Event
1	Wave
2	Wave
3	Storm
4	Wave
5	Wave
6	Storm
7	BGM Attacks!

A "Steady and Hard" more difficult path is:

Jokers	Event
1	Wave
2	Wave
3	Storm
4	Storm
5	Storm + Wave
6	Storm + Storm
7	BGM Attacks!

Playtest Note: You can add whatever you want to your Path, really. As more playtest data is received, I hope to be able to codify this, and have a greater formula for overall Scenario difficulty. Until then, play around with these, try different combos, and see what works and what doesn't.

Escalation and the Big Giant Monster

The current Escalation has a direct impact on the power of the Big Giant Monster, whenever it is eventually encountered, because the BGM's hand is directly increased in size by the escalation level.

Additionally, "by the book" the BGM can't attack (as in initiating a Rumble) until that level of the escalation has been reached. You can always push it lower on the path if you like, but that remains to be tested in play.

Waves and Storms

Waves and Storms are Coach's special actions that he can take at predetermined times in order to make the Pilots' lives more complicated and dangerous. Waves tend to have smaller and/or more direct and localized effects. Storms are much more heinous, and frequently broad-reaching.

Waves and Storms come directly from the Threats in any particular scenario. High- and/or Multi-Threat scenarios will likely have multiple options.

When the rules call for a Wave or Storm, you can only trigger *one* of those available to you, unless the rules specifically say "all."

Waves and Storms are triggered by:

- Escalation Path Steps (aka Jokers)
- Throwdown "Trigger" Actions (require discards)
- Some Threat actions

Regardless of the mechanics, every wave and storm *must* have a suitable narrative description. Coach can't just say "Okay, I do a Wave, so Janys takes 1 damage" and move on. You must describe what exactly is happening in the story that is causing this damage. This can be tricky for those unexpectedly triggered by Escalation Path events, but by keeping aware of your Threats and their abilities, you should be able to come up with some ideas.

The **Basic Wave** effect is a 1 Pulse damage effect direct to 1 Pilot. The **Basic Storm** effect is 1 Pulse damage effect direct to *all* Pilots.

To craft new ones, use these basic guidelines. Waves can do a minor effect, while Storms can do a Major effect. A minor effect can do something small to one player. A major effect can do something heavy to one player, or something small to all players. A minor effect can have a lesser narrative effect. A major effect can have a drastic story-changing narrative effect.