

Sample file

CHAMPIONS III

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Along with the normal Hero Games crowd we received lots of help from outside playtesters and contributors. If we've misplaced any names, please accept our apologies. In any case, we'd like to thank everyone who helped with these new rules, listed or not. You're all true heroes!

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And very special thanks to Steven Maurer, who contributed hours of effort to make sure these new rules were the best they could be.

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If you have any questions or comments, please write to us! Hero Games 92A 21st Ave. San Mateo, CA 94403. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the answers to your questions.

Second Printing September 1984

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
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Character Creation

The Evil That Lurks in the Hearts — <i>Michael A. Stackpole</i>	5
Champions Character Generator — <i>George Mac Donald</i>	8
Old Powers — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Absorption and Power Transfer	22
Drains, Transfers, etc. vs. Defenses	22
Flash	23
Limited Multipower	24
Multiple Powers	24
Old Power Limitations — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Limited Uses in Multipowers	24
Clips of Limited Uses or END Batteries	24
Continuing Charges	25
Partially Limited Power	25
Increased Recovery of END Batteries	26
Old Character Disadvantages — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Berserk	26
Psychological Limitation: Hunting	26
Unusual Looks	26
Vulnerabilities	26
New Powers — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Detect	27
Duplication	27
Damage Reduction	28
Healing	29
Knockback Resistance	29
Mental Paralysis	29
Multiform	30
Neutralization	30
Piercing	31
Power Destruction	31
Shape Shift	32
Transformation Attack	32
New Power Modifiers — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Variable Power Pools	35
New Power Advantages — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Area Effect (Cone)	36
Area Effect (One Hex)	36

Attack Against Limited Defenses	36
Attack With Increased Knockback	36
Attack With No Range Modifier	36
Attack Against a Special Effect	45
Continuous Attack	45
Damage Shield	46
Entangle Advantages	46
Extended Area	46
Extended Range	47
Missile Deflection Against Others	47
Penetration Attack	47
Teleportation Against Others	48
New Power Limitations — <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Activation Time	48
Animate Object	48
Burnout	49
Ego Power Based On CON	50
Entangle Limitations	50
Single Target Flash	50

Combat

— <i>George Mac Donald & friends</i>	
Leaping and Throwing	52
Negative Characteristics	52
Shockwaves	54
Danger Rooms	54
— <i>George Mac Donald</i>	

Campaigning

Mystery Powers and Disadvantages	70
— <i>Aaron Allston</i>	
Campaign Planning	71
— <i>Steve Peterson</i>	

Record Sheets

Character Development Form	37
Danger Room Control Sheet	38
Adventure Report Sheet	39
Agency Action Sheet	40
Agency Record Sheet	41
GM's Character Reference Sheet	42
Overall Character Status Sheet	43
Planning Calendar	44



INTRODUCTION

You may have thought that *Champions II* was the final supplement to *Champions*. Well, we've done it again; welcome to *Champions III*.

The material in *Champions III* is intended to add to your current *Champions* campaign. The material in *Champions III* is optional; you're under no obligation to use any of it. Like all Hero System rules, you should take what you like and leave what you don't like.

We had a long discussion about the title for this book. At first, we wanted to call it *Champions 3-D*, but we couldn't figure out how to put in the little glasses. We tried *Champions III: The Search for Thok*, but somehow it just didn't seem to fit. *Son of Champions* and *Bride of Champions* were considered, but

somehow they didn't feel right. So we're left with *Champions III*. At least we don't have to worry about a title for the next one (not for the next few months, anyway).

There's one more thing. In *Champions II*, Foxbat made a plea for Experience Points. Many villains contributed to his cause, which added to Foxbat's megalomaniacal tendencies. You see, he thought he could actually use those Experience Points himself. Not realizing that the rules don't allow that, Foxbat proceeded with his Master Plan, with results that you'll see...



CHARACTER CREATION





THE EVIL THAT LURKS IN THE HEARTS

Role-playing games are often described as “cooperative storytelling”. The Gamemaster creates the world or setting for the story. The GM provides the atmosphere, revealing facts as needed to challenge the characters. The players, in turn, cause their characters to take actions, to work towards making the story complete. When things all go well, the story that’s told is complete and fun to recount. All too often, however, the story is incomplete.

Why? Where do these joint stories fail? What makes the difference between fight scenes or battle reports and a full fledged story? Why are so many “campaigns” really nothing than “What crook gets pulped tonight?” outings for the characters?

Every author knows what a story needs. A story needs a plot, a setting, pacing and characters. Any Gamemaster, whether a novice or an expert, can provide a setting (a bank perhaps), and a plot (robbing the bank), and some pacing to make the adventure fun (hostage in the bank needs medication within 2 hours or everyone in the bank gets the plague). The one aspect of an adventure that the Gamemaster cannot control is the characters who are going to be involved in the adventure.

Before anyone protests that a GM can always limit the characters going into an adventure, we should clear up a point or two. By “character” I’m not referring to the ungodly pile of points that indicates that your playing piece can lift a car, eat the tires and throw the rest of it a country mile. That sort of action can be done by any hero who decides to take his vitamins in the morning. What I’m speaking about when I refer to a character is the personality that motivates that collection of Powers, gaudy cloth and Disadvantages.

Everyone knows that the Disadvantages built into a *Champions* character are there for more than just the purpose of justifying his powers. Disadvantages force you to define some areas of weakness, of personality for your characters. The Disadvantages are supposed to give you a handle on the nature of your character that will make her different than all the other car-lifting, tire-biting monsters out there.

The key to lively role playing, of true campaigns and character development is contained in the internal motivations of the characters in the campaign. Sure, everyone assumes that all heroes are out to rid the world of evil because they believe in sweetness and niceness. The real question that comes in is

“Why do they like niceness? Why do they go out and risk their lives to stop a bunch of nuts from robbing banks or dominating the world?” “Because they’re heroes!” isn’t enough of an answer.

Face it, being a hero takes lots of dedication. Imagine having worked a really hard week in your secret identity. It’s Friday, and the attractive person from across the hall has invited you over to his/her apartment because your air conditioner is broken, the white wine is on ice and love is in the air. A perfect evening, right? It is until The Lavender Doom and the Chartreuse Death decide to kidnap the mayor. Given the choice of spending a quiet evening sipping wine with someone you like or getting your face battered while you rescue a Mayor who believes all heroes are costumed vigilantes worthy of a cell, what would you choose?

And given the outright hostility of some communities to their heroes, plus the medical bills and the reluctance to accept cash rewards for actions, risking your neck as a hero does require more motivation than the desire to see your picture in the paper. Face it, you can’t use your scrapbook of clippings to get a job. Who’s going to hire a guy that half the evil villains in the world want to trash?

Deciding to become a hero and choosing to pursue that course of action requires a strength of conviction that is, perhaps, what makes heroes different from normal folk. The things that make a character tick are what build personalities. Personalities make characters more than a complicated math problem.

In Tempe, Arizona, we have a campaign world being run by five or six different Gamemasters. Having heroes cross over from one campaign to another is not uncommon, and are often worked towards in the pages of the Tempe *Daily Bugler*, the newsletter of the campaign. I’d like to talk about a specific character in that campaign world to help illustrate the points I was trying to make above.

Revenant is the character I created and play most often. Without going into boring detail, he can be described as a highly trained human who uses devices in his campaign against normal mortal criminals. A mixture of The Batman, Daredevil, and The Shadow, Revenant specializes in criminals who believe themselves beyond the law, in the sense that their crimes have been forgotten. Justice, not law, is his guide to action.

Revenant appears to be your normal hero type.