

Dungeon Squad! + Coin Op

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If you play this, let me know!
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INTRODUCTION

DS! (“Dungeon Squad!”) + CO (“Coin-Op”) is a mod of my friend Jason’s game Dungeon Squad! It is inspired by his work and by an arcade game I played years ago that helped create my love for sword and sorcery action. The premise of this game is fantasy action. The players will make characters that have a need to rid the world of evil creatures that attack innocent people. There are weapons, magic, danger and action to be found. Don’t feel that this game should force a story to occur. If it does, great! Otherwise, relax and enjoy the action!

BASIC RULES, PART I

This system is based heavily on the rules of Dungeon Squad! Here are my interpretations of those rules.

Setup: One player in your group will take a different role than the rest of the players. That player will get to do a lot of describing and will be making decisions for all of the monsters in the game. See “The Special Role” below for details on how to do this. Everyone else will make decisions for up to two heroes that will fight the monsters in the game. Everyone at the table will need a set of polyhedral dice consisting of a d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12. Character sheets, pencils, and some pennies (about 10 per player) will also be needed. If you want more of an arcade feel, you can use quarters – but I never have that many quarters lying around.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

The Normal Role: The Hero Guide

Most players will play Hero Guides. The role of a Hero Guide is to describe the actions of two Heroes as they struggle to defeat the evil Monsters which plague the world.

Character Creation

A Hero is easy to create. Each Hero has three Abilities. The Hero Guide will assign a d12, a d8 or a d4 to each of them.

Example:

Abilities	Die
Explorer	d8
Mage	d12
Warrior	d4

By assigning a D12 to one of these, you will be making that Ability the one that the Hero is best at for the game. These won’t change, so make sure you choose what you want that character to be best at. A D8 would be second best, and a D4 would be third best.

Abilities: So what do these Abilities mean? Whenever it is a player’s turn, they can make a decision for a Hero. For instance, if a Hero attacks a creature with a sword, the player would roll the Hero’s Warrior die to see if the Hero successfully inflicts damage.

Abilities	Tasks
Explorer	Athletic Tasks, Traps, Discover Secrets & Loot
Mage	Spell casting in and out of combat
Warrior	Physical Combat

Basically, all weapon based combat is under the Warrior Ability. All magical actions are up to the Mage Ability. Everything else is up to the Explorer Ability.

Difficulty Numbers: When an Ability is being rolled, it is compared to a Difficulty Number. Unless otherwise stated, the Difficulty Number is 4. This means that an Ability set to D4 only

Example

I want to make a wizardly thief type character, so I choose Mage D12, Explorer D8, and Warrior D4. Let’s hope I have someone along to keep me out of harm’s way in a fight!

has about a 25% chance of success! A D8 is about 50% likely to be successful, and a D12 is about 66% likely.

Stuff: After assigning your Abilities, the player should pick two things that the character will equip to do battle with evil. These can be both physical (e.g. weapons and armor) and immaterial (e.g. spells). One item should be assigned to D4 and the other to D6.

It is suggested to take one offensive and one defensive item at the beginning. More can be acquired throughout the game, and the ones you possess can be improved. New Stuff will start D4 unless otherwise stated.

Hit Points: Unless otherwise stated, all Heroes have 15 Hit Points. These get reduced when they are attacked and can be increased with healing spells and healing potions. When a Hero is reduced to zero Hit Points, they are out of the game!

The Special Role: The Gamemaster
This player (“Gamemaster” or “GM”) can do as little or as much preparation for a game as they desire. At most, the GM will have to decide on the setting and denizens of a stage at a time.

Stage: The GM will divide the game into stages. Each stage should have a distinctive Setting (“burning village”, “caves of frost”, “besieged airship”), Normal Denizens (monsters, non-combat characters, traps), and a Special Denizen: Boss (big monster, large monster group, complicated trap).

Denizens

Monsters: Monsters may appear on the surface to be much like Heroes, but in the end they have four pertinent

characteristics: Monster Ability die, Hit Points, Loot Type, and Cost. They are there to provide adversity. If there is ever any question as to what the Monsters do, it should be to the detriment of the characters.

Ability Die: Monsters have one die to roll no matter what they are doing, whether it be sneaking, attacking, or casting a spell.

Hit Points: Monsters have far fewer hit points than Heroes.

Loot Type: When Monsters are defeated, they can be potentially looted. This will tell you what’s up for grabs.

Cost: This is the Cost for the Gamemaster to bring this Monster into play.

Example:

Monster	Goblin
Ability Die:	d4
Hit Points:	2
Loot type:	1 E or 1 W
Cost:	1 Penny

Non-combat Characters: These can be villagers, Bosses talking from a safe distance, or even slightly educated Monsters. The point is, they are not in the stage to act as an adversary. They can be there to provide exposition on the background story, give information on the stage or on special items to be found, or to simply deliver a choice that will let the players decide which Stage to go to next. Feel free to mix up who says what.

Traps: Traps provide much the same role as Monsters do. Monsters often spring traps, but a Hero could set a trap with a successful Explorer check and some pennies. A Trap consists of an Ability Die and a Cost. Note: The Cost of a Trap is equal to the amount of targets (aka Heroes) it will attempt to affect. Heroes must make a successful Explorer check to avoid taking the damage of the Trap's Ability Die.

Example:

Trap	Crushing Boulders Trap
Ability Die:	d4
Cost:	1 penney per target

Bosses: A Boss is a term that refers to the final encounter of a Stage and should wrap up the Stage both in a climax sense and in a thematic sense. That isn't to say you can't reuse a theme in a later Stage, but if you introduced any mystery into your Stage, then it should be resolved by defeating the Boss. Bosses have the same characteristics as Monsters, and may even be powerful versions of some Monsters. They can also have Stuff. If they have Stuff, then it will override their Loot Type.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

So, the basic ideas should be evident at this point. Let's run through creating a couple of characters and having them face some Goblins and Boulder Trap from above.

Example: I want to make a wizardly thief type character, so I choose Mage D12, Explorer D8, and Warrior D4. This character will be named "Faf of the Blue Steel". I need two pieces of Stuff for her. I think for a bit and choose

Lightning Arc (a spell) and a pair of Chitin Bracers (armor). Then I set the levels of the Stuff. I set the Bracers to D6 and Lightning Arc to D4. My spell may not be powerful but I will have a chance to improve it as time goes on.

I also want a warrior type with a magical background. I choose Warrior D12, Mage D8, and Explorer D4. This character will be named "Urd the Indomitable". He will take the sword Goblinbane (a weapon) and Magical Tattoos of Defense (armor). Goblinbane is set to D6 and the Tattoos are D4.

I note that both Heroes have 15 Hit Points and I'm ready to go!

So, the Gamemaster has set the stage up for me. I'm overlooking a valley from a mountain pass, and will soon descend after a long journey. But, it looks like we aren't going to get away with a leisurely hike in the wilderness! Four Goblins rush us from cave mouths unseen and attack!

We get to go first. Faf blasts out with Lightning Arc! I roll a D12 to see if I can hit the Goblin, and easily strike with an 8. I roll my Lightning Arc die (D4) and deal 2 damage with the spell - enough to drop the first Goblin! Next is Urd's turn. I rush up to the next Goblin and take a swing. I roll the D12 again, and barely hit - I rolled a 4! Still, that's enough. I now roll a D6 for Goblinbane and fell my foe with a mighty 6 damage. Only two Goblins left!

Now it's the Goblins' turns. The Goblins both rush Urd, fearing magic more than blade. The Gamemaster rolls the Goblin's Ability D4s. One misses, but another hits! The Gamemaster rolls the D4 again and deals 3 damage! But, I remember that Urd has his Magical Tattoos. Another D4 roll later, and the Goblin only dealt 1 point of damage. Which I will return in kind on the next round.

Fast forward. Faf and Urd defeated the Goblins two rounds later (some bad dice tonight!). Both have suffered some damage and are ready to move on into the valley. However, the Goblins left a Trap! Crushing Boulders slide down from the mountain face and attempt to crush both the Heroes. They quickly dodge out of the way. I roll a D8 for Faf and a D4 for Urd. Faf is beaten on by the rockslide with a 2 but Urd manages to get away unscathed with a 4. Oh, the irony. The Gamemaster rolls the Trap's Ability D4 and Faf gets even weaker as she loses 2 more Hit Points.

BASIC RULES, PART II

You could possibly play by the rules stated above without anything further. Even with a list of Sample Monsters, Sample Equipment, Sample Spells, etc., you'd still have a bare-bones game. Guess what, that game is called Dungeon Squad! (in case you missed that earlier) and it can be a simple and fun experience. This part expands on Dungeon Squad! and helps create a Pacing and Reward system that mirrors the encounters that the Gamemaster sets forth for the Hero Guide(s). This is called Coin-Op.

COIN-OP RULES EXPANSION

When the Hero Guides and the Gamemaster are ready to play, the Hero Guides should take a quarter (or a quarter's worth) each out of the pile of coins in the middle of the table. This is the Gamemaster's Pacing and Reward Pool. It will act not only to reward the players for the creatures the Heroes overcome but also as a way of determining when a Stage is over.

The Gamemaster should describe out the first stage that the Heroes encounter. This can be the beginning of a brand new adventure or the continuation of an adventure previously played. Once the scene has been set, the Gamemaster should set aside some of the coins visibly to denote the Stage's Value. All of the coins in the Stage's Value will be up for grabs by the Hero Guides on that Stage. Finally, the Gamemaster should indicate, at minimum, the name or description of the Boss for that Stage.

>>Untested<< It is recommended that the Gamemaster set aside 5 cents per Hero Guide and 10 cents for the Boss.

Whenever the Gamemaster has a Monster attack a Hero or spring a Trap to harm the Heroes, the Gamemaster should push forward the cost of the Monster or Trap from the Stage's Value. These coins will sit on the table waiting for a Hero to defeat the Monster or Trap.

Defeating Monsters and Traps

Monsters have Hit Points, like Heroes do. Most often, a Monster is defeated when a Hero does enough damage to meet or exceed the Monster's Hit Points. There is one exception to this rule:

Sometimes it will be more interesting for Monsters to run away. If the Monsters can succeed at a Monster Ability roll, they can exit the scene. If the Heroes wish to pursue, the Gamemaster should set the scene to do so when the current scene is over. The Monsters should be considered to have recovered fully. If the Hero Guides have not indicated that the Heroes wish to pursue by the time the next scene is already started, they have lost the opportunity to do so. The coins should then return to the Stage's Value.

Collecting Coins

Whenever a Hero defeats a Monster or Trap, they should receive the Coin Cost of that Monster or Trap. This is the monetary portion of the Loot of the Monster.

Loot

As stated above, when a Hero defeats a Monster or Trap, the Hero collects the Coins that the Monster or Trap cost for the Gamemaster. The Hero also collects the physical Loot, but only from Monsters. Each Monster should have a Loot type. Let's look at the example Monster again:

Monster	Goblin
Ability Die:	d4
Hit Points:	2
Loot type:	1 E or 1 W
Cost:	1 Penny

So, if Faf of the Blue Steel defeats a Goblin. Faf will collect 1 Penny (the Cost) and has a chance to discover Loot. In this case, either 1 E or 1 W. Loot Types

Loot	Description
1E	Add +1 to any Explorer Ability Roll
1M	Add +1 to any Mage Ability Roll
1W	Add +1 to any Warrior Ability Roll
1HP	Add +1 to any Hero's current Hit Points
1C	Add +1 damage roll to any Monster already damaged

Should you be able to buy Loot?

At the end of a combat scene, every Hero can attempt to discover Loot. Simply roll each Hero's Explorer Ability die. If successful, the Gamemaster will inform the Hero Guides which Loot Types are available by looking at the Monsters that were defeated. In addition to any Loot a Boss might have, any Stuff it had is automatically available and the Hero Guides will divide the Loot as they see fit.

Back to the example. Faf's Hero Guide successfully rolls Faf's Explorer Ability die at the end of the combat scene with the Goblin. Thus, Faf will take something from the Monster. The Gamemaster declares that the Goblins can award either 1 E or 1 W. Faf's Hero Guide states that Faf has collected 1 W. This will greatly increase the chances that Faf can perform a Warrior action when Faf needs it most.

Loot Description

The Hero Guide will always end up describing what the Loot actually is or how the bonus came to be. Note, this is one of the most powerful ways that a Hero Guide can bring color to the game. This color can reflect on the Hero and on the world. The Hero Guide can describe what the Loot is when they collect it, when they use it, or any time in between.

Following the example, Faf's Guide can now describe a multitude of different things that they can use later to give Faf a bonus later on, e.g. a magical amulet collected from the body of the Goblin, poison culled from the Goblin's blood, a sense of outrage from the Goblin's actions previous to the fight, and so on.

Loot can be added together to create a greater Bonus. This doesn't have to be decided until the Hero Guide wishes to use it. Bonuses are spent after the roll, that is, the Hero Guide does not have to declare that the Hero is using the Loot unless the Guide sees that the roll has failed and wishes to make it successful. The only requirement is that the Hero Guide describe how the Loot is helping the Hero out when it is used. A Hero Guide is not limited to spending Loot on the Hero that collected it. However, the Guide is required to describe how the Hero that owns the Loot is helping out the Hero that needs the Loot.

Loot can be transferred between Hero Guides and between Heroes in any way the Hero Guides see fit.

Example:

Faf and Urd descended into the Dark Forest of the Dragon King. The Dragon King's border was guarded by four corrupted Goblins that seemed to be more spider than goblin. The Gamemaster didn't change the Goblin's information, feeling that simply describing things differently would distinguish them enough. Faf and Urd, now many Stages past their original encounter with the Goblins of the mountain are more powerful and easily defeat the Monsters. Faf collects 1 Penny

and Urd collects 3 Pennies. The Hero Guide then rolls Faf's and Urd's Explorer Ability dice and only Faf succeeds. Lucky Faf! The Gamemaster informs the Hero Guide that the Goblins have either 1 E or 1 W available. The Hero Guide gives 1 E to Faf. The Gamemaster asks why, since Faf is great at Explorer Ability rolls and since Faf has such a hard time with Warrior Ability rolls. The Hero Guide smiles and announces that Faf starts to show Urd how to collect slick ichor from the corrupted Goblins, useful in all sorts of Explorer applications. The Hero Guide transfers the 1 E to Urd. The Hero Guide then describes how thankful Urd is and that Urd is giving Faf some silver coins to thank her. The Hero Guide then transfers one Penny from Urd to Faf.

How to Spend Coins

As the game moves along, the Hero Guides will collect more and more Coins. What can they use those Coins for is a vital part of the game. The Coins can be used for Improving Stuff and Paying for Special Abilities.

Improving Stuff

Improving Stuff is inherently simple. For the cost of 5 Pennies, a Guide can upgrade anything a Hero possesses by one level. That is, a D4 Dagger can become a D6 Dagger for 5 cents. D6 becomes D8 for another 5 cents, and so on. Stuff can become as powerful as a D12, but no higher. Remember, since Stuff starts at D4, you don't have to spend anything to make it be a D4. The Hero Guide can also choose to describe why the Stuff has improved, just like when the Hero gets Loot. This description can be anything the Guide

wants, whether it be training, magic, or the revelation of new potential. Improving Stuff can be done at any time.

Special Abilities

So far, Coin-Op has been a simple retooling of Dungeon Squad! with some extra features which have all tested successfully. With these rules, however, it makes a major change to the system. It is currently untested, and needs to be paid special attention.

Every Hero will have one Special Ability. This Special Ability sets them apart from other Heroes even more so than the Abilities and Stuff that they possess. It is chosen when the Hero is created. Every Special Ability is based on the simple progression below:

Level	Special Ability
+5	
+4	
+3	
+2	
+1	

Depending on which Special Ability your Hero possesses, the +# might refer to targets or damage or actions. No matter which Special Ability your Hero has, the following will remain true:

- * You always start at +1 for free.
- * It costs 5 Pennies to go from any level to another level.
- * It costs 1 Penny to activate the Special Ability.

Descriptions

Level	Arcane Vigor
+5	Your spell can hit 5 additional Monsters
+4	Your spell can hit 4 additional Monsters
+3	Your spell can hit 3 additional Monsters
+2	Your spell can hit 2 additional Monsters
+1	Your spell can hit 1 additional Monsters

Level	Divine Insight
+5	Your spell can help 5 additional Heroes
+4	Your spell can help 4 additional Heroes
+3	Your spell can help 3 additional Heroes
+2	Your spell can help 2 additional Heroes
+1	Your spell can help 1 additional Heroes

Level	Deadly Strike
+5	Deal 5 additional damage
+4	Deal 4 additional damage
+3	Deal 3 additional damage
+2	Deal 2 additional damage
+1	Deal 1 additional damage

Level	Hardy Resilience
+5	Ignore 5 damage when hit by a Monster
+4	Ignore 4 damage when hit by a Monster
+3	Ignore 3 damage when hit by a Monster
+2	Ignore 2 damage when hit by a Monster
+1	Ignore 1 damage when hit by a Monster

What to do with Coins that are spent on other Heroes? Set up another way of getting rewarded with those coins? Possibly have Non-Combat Denizens reward them for heroic actions?

Level	Blurring Speed
+5	Make 5 additional physical attacks
+4	Make 4 additional physical attacks
+3	Make 3 additional physical attacks
+2	Make 2 additional physical attacks
+1	Make 1 additional physical attacks

Level	Inhuman Alacrity
+5	Cast 5 additional spells
+4	Cast 4 additional spells
+3	Cast 3 additional spells
+2	Cast 2 additional spells
+1	Cast 1 additional spells

Spells

This is a small list of spells that have either been used successfully in-game or need playtesting. These should also serve as a guide for you to create your own spells. When the “Spell’s Rating” is referred to, that is shorthand for the current die it is at (D4, D6, etc.)

Spell	Description
Heal	Recovers spell rating Hit Points for Target
Bless	Allows Target to reroll one Ability roll with spell rating Fireball
Fireball	Deals spell rating in damage to Target
Haste	???
Invisibility	Target can’t be physically attacked for spell rating Rounds
Mirror Image	Target is surrounded by spell rating in illusions with 1 HP each
Summon	Target summons companion with one Ability equal to spell rating for Scene
Shield	Target receives Armor equal to spell rating for Scene

Coin Economy

When the Stage starts, the Gamemaster will lay out all of the Coins that will be used to populate the Stage with Denizens. However, this isn’t the only time that the Coins will come into play. As we’ve seen, the Coins transfer to the Hero Guides. The Hero Guides can spend the Coins on upgrading a Hero’s Stuff and the Hero’s Special Ability. But, what happens when those Coins are spent? Two things can happen.

I can help myself ...

The Hero Guide can spend the Coins on the Hero that garnered them. If that happens, the Coins are given back to the Stage’s Value and the Stage becomes that much tougher. Not a problem, the Heroes are well equipped now to handle it.

... or I can help you!

The Hero Guide can pay for something for another Hero. This act of teamwork and altruism means that the Coins do not go back to the Stage’s Value making it that much easier to win.