

Queensland Wargamer

Issue 53

December 2001

The 2001
university of
queensland
class
challenge

ISSN 0159-0383

Queensl and Wargamer

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The 2001
university of
queensland
chess
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The Queensland Wargamer is the journal of the
Queensland University Games Society

Also available on-line at <http://www.qugs.org.au>



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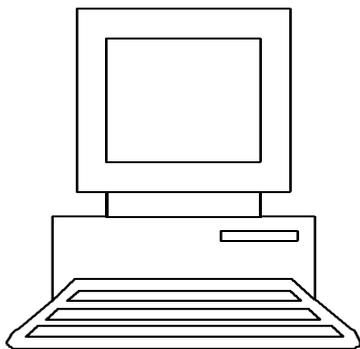
Results of the 2000 QUGS Diplomacy
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Submission Guidelines

Format

Text submissions: Please send text submissions to the Editor via email as a Rich Text Format (RTF) attachment (first preference), in any major word processor format, or plain ASCII text if formatting is not necessary. If you do not have e-mail, send text submissions on a 3.5" IBM-compatible floppy disk (disks will be returned at our expense). If you do not have a computer, send typed or legible hand-written manuscripts, preferably double-spaced.

Artwork: Please send a quality scan at a minimum of 300 dpi in GIF, JPEG, PNG, or MS-Windows bitmap format (please send bitmaps as a zip file!) to the Editor via email or disk. We also accept good quality photocopies (please don't send us originals!). Black and white inked works please – no pencils. A4 size is preferred



The last two issues of the Queensland Wargamer are currently available on the QUGS website (<http://www.qugs.org.au>), and so is the index of every article ever published. Individual articles from earlier issues are also available on request if the original author can be contacted to give their consent. Log on and take a look!

Content

What we want: The Queensland Wargamer is a forum for people to express their views and ideas about gaming. Any contributions that are in some way related to any form of gaming will be considered: reviews, rules clarifications or changes, fiction, discussions about games or gaming, articles on history, mythology and the like, artwork, etc.

Standards: Your submission will be reviewed before publication by the Editor, who may request changes to its content or style. All contributions must meet the standards set by the University of Queensland Union and enforced by Clubs and Societies: sexist, racist or homophobic material is unacceptable, and will not pass the mandatory inspection. Non-inclusive language (i.e. the generic "he") comes under this prohibition. We recommend that you either avoid sentence structures that require the generic first person (for example, recasting your sentence in the plural, using proper nouns), consistently alternate between "she" and "he", or consistently use "they" in your submission.

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The 2001 UQ Chess Challenge

James Cooper (s363876@student.uq.edu.au)

The inaugural UQ Chess Challenge was held on the weekend of 21 and 22 April 2001. It was an Australian Grand Prix Category 3 Event, with seven rounds of play (60 minutes each way for all moves) and a prize list of \$2670 distributed across six categories. Ian Murray acted as Director of Play for the 59 participants.

Registration

The two days of the Chess Challenge began with some problems – we had completely forgotten board numbers and recording sheets, consequently Ian did a roaring trade in scorebooks. During a busy registration we also managed to misplace an entry form, leaving a seed out of the first round draw. By the time a new draw was up and Dave had printed 400 recording sheets we were an hour late starting. However under Director of Play (DOP) Ian Murray's watchful gaze the rounds progressed smoothly and although the breaks were short, we caught up to finish the day on time.

Registration was a rush, with many players arriving towards the end of registration, as is human nature. There was a large ten dollar discount for early entry but many players preferred not to part with their funds beforehand, instead arriving and paying cash on the day and this was a significant proportion of the entry fees received.

The Holt Room

The Holt Room was an ideal venue for the Challenge: several people said they enjoyed the friendly, relaxed atmosphere of the tournament. Surely the comfortable chairs in the 'lounge' area where competitors chatted between rounds was a strong factor in this. The tournament matches were being played at the opposite end of the same room though and I

was concerned the noise may distract players but the carpet in the lounge area, the sound-damping ceilings and open windows meant the far end of the room remained quiet for playing chess.



Review Tables

The lounge area had been intended as the place where players would review their games but many chose to sit at tournament tables for review. Often they used the tables furthest from players but several (often Juniors) used tables closer to the play while they discussed their game. Perhaps next year we should have a few tables set up near the lounge area and away from the play so people can review their games there. Maybe also have some dividers to prevent the sound carrying.

The Draw

The draw used was a 7 round Swiss which is the recommended

format for a tournament like this. I was a little disappointed that our top two seeds had to play in the 5th round instead of the 6th or 7th. It virtually sealed their final placings from then on. As well, in the seven rounds we did not resolve the final placings and were left with many players on tied points. This meant several prizes were combined and shared which seemed a little messy. The DOP recommends next year we anticipate ties and try to improve the prize schedule, perhaps with minor groupings determined after the first round and a prize awarded in this group.

Another point, the first round random nature of a Swiss draw means an unrated player could be playing an International Master which seems a bit unfair to both, but I guess the IM has much knowledge to share. We might investigate some other draw options but will probably remain with the Swiss draw for next year as the recommended CAQ/ACF format.

Prizes

As mentioned, several of the prizes were shared and combined with other prizes due to ties. This included the Open Fifth Prize which was combined with the Under 2000 and Unrated Prizes and shared amongst five players. The prize value depreciates significantly for a player when shared but the draw has weaknesses resolving the ties so what shall we do? The prizes were the largest single item of the

budget and one of the strongest selling points for the top players who attended. Several competitors were very impressed with the strength of the field and the high quality of chess being played.

Presentations

Dave mentioned we should invite a dignitary like the Vice-Chancellor to present the prizes next year. It espouses excellence of achievement and would also help raise the profile of the Challenge within the University.

Increased Local Revenue

At Registration competitors were each given a voucher for 50c off one coffee at Tanja's café. Although one person wrote on their survey they would have preferred an urn and BYO coffee instead of the 50c coffee discount, I was pleased that Tanja's could see the extra customers were there because of the Chess Challenge. The weekend before uni resumes after Easter is probably a traditionally quiet time for Tanja's

and also for the Pizza Caffé. Both businesses had good weekend trading with the Chess Challenge there. By the end of the Saturday lunchtime rush, Tanja's had sold out its prepared items and by about 2pm on Sunday Tanja's had to close their kitchen and were left with only drinks and cakes to sell. Revenues arising directly from the Challenge are good cause for sponsorship and we should follow up on these avenues quickly.

Recommendations for Next Year

- An hour break after first or second round to catch up;
- 9am start;
- more than 2-3 people setting/packing up;
- all windows, balcony doors wide open early to prevent stuffiness (overcast day could have been a factor);
- 'carpeted' room dividers (that is, stand alone notice board type dividers);

- budget for 50-60 players but set a target of 82;
- encourage more inexperienced players to enter by offering low entry fees for unrated/beginner players;
- offer a 3 hour workshop before the Chess Challenge for beginners – "How to Play Tournament Chess" – \$10pp;
- Plan early;
- Get sponsors early!

Finally

For its first year the Challenge has been a (qualified) success. Whether we hold another next year may hinge much on sponsorship and we should try to approach companies early before they finalise their sponsorship budgets. Whether corporate sponsors can identify the benefits for them from the Challenge we will see. Identifying benefits to local businesses and securing these as sponsors can only improve our chances further afield.



Players at the simultaneous exhibition on Saturday night in action

Results of the 2001 UQ Chess Challenge

Place	Name	Rating	Score
1	SMERDON, David	2327 J	6.5
2	SOLOMON, Stephen	2418	6
3-4	EDWARDS, Jacob	1883	5.5
	DAVIDOVICI, Michael	1759 J	5.5
5-9	THOMAS, Brian	1667	5
	MYERS, John	2001	5
	YU, Peter		5
	OLM-MILLIGAN, Kieran	1610 J	5
	ABYLKASSOV, Khalimzhan		5
10-16	SCOTT, Ronald	2169	4.5
	LITTLEBOY, Bruce	1868	4.5
	SUMMERS, Paul	1769	4.5
	WONGWICHIT, Phachara	1546 J	4.5
	WELLER, Tony	1815	4.5
	MCPHEE, Ben	1527 J	4.5
	FLYNN, Chris	1524	4.5
17-26	ELKINGTON, Derek	1600	4
	TOOLSIE, Alex	1763	4
	YU, Chris	J	4
	CAREY, Mitchell	1367 J	4
	BEAN, Richard	1519	4
	STEWART, Craig	1558	4
	KIMURA, Toshi	1449 J	4
	KARITA, Sean	1374 J	4
	GOODWIN, Bob	1436	4
	LAM, Anthony	1434 J	4
27-34	SAMPSON, Dion	1473 J	3.5
	ANH LE, Tuan		3.5
	BUCIU, Aurel-John	1458	3.5
	LAZARUS, Ben	1304 J	3.5
	SONTER, Matthew	1710 J	3.5
	FRASER, Wayne	1499	3.5
	BURRAGE, Matthew	1238 J	3.5
	DISTELDORF, Jessica	1391 J	3.5
35-43	MCDONALD, Jerry		3
	WEE, Sylvester	1524	3
	WAGNER, Luke	113 J	3
	MILLS, Ross	1150	3
	AMERON, Stuart		3
	COWLAND-COOPER, David	1470	3
	MOORE, Nickolas		3
	GLENNIE-INFIELD, Edward	1196	3
	DEUBLE, Mark	1005 J	3



David Smerdon – the winner!

Place	Name	Rating	Score
44-48	CHELEBICHANIN, Nenad		2.5
	EVANS, Amy	990 JF	2.5
	EASTMAN, Dean	J	2.5
	LYONS, Kieran	1008 JF	2.5
	WU-SIN-CHIEH, Jason		2.5
49-53	YEE, Richard	J	2
	BRAKE, Kevin		2
	KANDIAH, Kumaran	J	2
	BROUGH, Thomas		2
	HILL, Gary	J	2
54-55	BENNETT, Brendan	J	1.5
	MCKENZIE, Ailsa	JF	1.5
56-57	MORGAN-PERTUS, Thais	F	1
	KINDER, Stephen	J	1
58-59	MAK, Frankie	J	0
	ANDERSON, Nathan	1455	0

A Question of Character

David Astley (pryllin@yahoo.com.au)

With a final clattering of dice and scribbling of pencil, you complete your character. Abilities have been generated, skills chosen and equipment acquired. You're completely ready to explore a new world of excitement and adventure. To your surprise you discover that your first challenge is when someone asks out of the blue, "So, what's your character like?"

In this day and age of cathartic roleplaying more and more games are focussing less and less on the game system. By and large I consider this to be a good thing as many games shift their emphasis to the setting. But this still ignores the most important aspect of roleplaying – the characters. Until your character acquires a personality and background it is still just some notes on a piece of paper.

And therein lies the challenge of roleplaying – to bring that character to life and portray an original and unique personality. This is not done, however, by describing your character as a thief.

People are complex and multifaceted creatures and there is no reason why your character should be any different. People

have friends, family, history, achievements, loves, desires, hates, opinions, beliefs, successes, failures and much more. So too your character has all these things.

Below are over 50 questions about your character. Some are simple and others hard but all of them are relevant. As you answer them your character will take shape and form and grow before your very eyes and hopefully you will be left with not just some scribbling on a piece of paper, but a fully formed character, ready to explore the world.

An entire article could be written on each question and how it affects your character, but let's just start with an overview for now.

If you have problems writing character stories and backgrounds, or you just seem to have a mental

block, try working your way through these questions and you will be amazed at how quickly the character comes together in your mind. You can answer these questions in any order you wish and you will often find that the answer to one question will give you ideas on how to answer other questions. There are, of course, hundreds more questions you can ask about a character. The more detailed your character background becomes, the richer your character will be. And the clearer you see your character's personality, the easier you will find it to show that personality to others. If a person really is the sum of their experiences then a solid background and history will add up to a great character.

1. What is your name?

Many people leave a character's name until last. There's nothing wrong with this and often it's easier to name a character once you know more about them. This is because names often reflect the people they belong to. Names also reflect the society that the character grew up in, and names may even reflect on the persons who named your character, who may or may not be the character's parents as that society dictates. Characters may be named after

relatives, friends of family, heroes of old or events that happened in their childhood. They may have one name or many. They may be known by different names to different people or in different cultures. They may have family names, nicknames, true names and aliases and their name may have changed over the course of their life. Many names mean something: Smith, Johnson, Brown. When naming your character, keep in mind who named them and why.

2. What is your height?

Beyond short or tall, very few people worry about their character's height. But even height affects personality. Does the character have a complex about their height? Have they ever been made fun of for their height? Do they wish they were taller or shorter and do they take any action to appear so?

3. How much do you weigh?

Similarly to height, weight can also affect personality. Is the character trying to gain or lose weight? If so how successfully? Has this affected their self esteem? Are they proud of their body? Is their weight due to them being rich, or poor, or athletic, or studious? And if your character's weight doesn't fall within societal norms is that because of genetics or upbringing?

4. What do you look like?

How much of your character's appearance is due to their heritage and how much is their own making? Clothes are the most obvious way for people to express their personality through their appearance, but people also express themselves through hair, tattoos, piercing and scars among other things. If your character is conservative or rebellious, this will almost certainly come through in the clothes they wear. Are they trying to draw attention, show off or make a statement? A practical character may have short hair, a proud character long hair. What are the societal norms and how do they affect your character's appearance? And how does your character's personality affect their appearance? Laugh lines around the eyes? Edges of the mouth turned downwards? Not a hair out of place? A character's appearance is so much more than what they carry and what they wear.

5. How old are you?

Does your character possess the wisdom of the ages? Have they seen it all before? Or have they yet to discover what the world is really like? Older is often wiser, often more cynical, but youth can still have street smarts. Has your character come of age? What is

your character's reaction to their age? What is the society's reaction to your character's age? And what is your character's reaction to that reaction? How old does your character look? And how old do they feel?

6. When were you born?

Sometimes this question seems foolish after the previous one, but if the character comes from a different time or has stopped aging, this question can be particularly important. Additionally, there are popular beliefs about the effect on your personality of the date, or year, of your birth. Almost everyone knows what sign of the zodiac they belong to, whether they believe in it or not. And many people claim it wouldn't be surprising if the time of your birth did have some impact on your personality. After all, look at how different we are from people who were our current age 10 years ago. Imagine how different people will be from us when in 10 years time, they reach our present age.

7. Where were you born?

Like time of birth, place of birth also has lasting repercussions on a person. One expects a child born in a private hospital to turn out differently from a child born on a remote farm. Again society will strongly impact on the character. Desert nomads and Eskimos won't always see eye to eye. Does your character live near their birthplace still? Are they widely travelled? Did they move a lot as a child or have they had the stability (or boredom) of the same house their whole life?

8. Will you ever go back there?

What does your character think of their birthplace and where is your character now? Are they glad to be away exploring the wide world or are they on a desperate quest to

return to their own time and place. Whatever your character thinks of their birthplace, why do they think this?

9. How were you educated?

On the streets, apprenticed, with a guild or at a school? Or something else? In addition to what they learn, the learning environment will also affect your character. Do they expect harsh punishments for failure? Did they develop a dislike for authority figures? Did your character learn social skills, including how to interact with the opposite sex, or were their studies purely information based? And how much of your character's learning was practical or theoretical?

10. What have you learnt since then?

This question is a good opportunity to think over life experiences that have already happened to your character. Why do they always sit with their back to the corner? How do they harness their talents and abilities? Where did they learn to speak that obscure language so fluently? How confident is your character in what they know and does this come across to others?

11. What were you doing a year ago?

What was the character's life like before they started adventuring? How were their hopes and dreams different from their current goals? Were they living the peaceful life of an ordinary citizen, or were they performing an earlier quest, and already fated for greatness? What challenges did they face back then, and how were these resolved (if they were)?

12. What were you doing a month ago?

What major changes have happened recently in the game world and how have these affected your character? Were there clues that the character's adventuring life was about to start? Did your character make any preparations and if so, what? How will, or how did adventuring affect the character's life, and what do they think of all this?

13. Do you work?

Is your character an honest citizen trying to make a living or a con man trying to make a quick buck? Do they have an income and where does it come from? Does your character take pride in a hard day's work or do they avoid it like the plague? Or do they get others to do their work for them?

14. What do you do?

If your character works, what job (or jobs) do they perform? Are they at the top or the bottom of the ladder and where do they want to be? If they don't work, how do they present themselves to others? What does the character think of those that do and don't work?

15. How do you like to spend your spare time?

Is your character someone who is always on the go, someone who is never happy unless they are in the thick of things? Or do they prefer sleeping in and afternoon naps? Are they a socialite or a workaholic, and how do they prioritise their duties and leisure? Do they get enough spare time, and if not, what would they do if they did?

16. What do you enjoy most?

A person's likes speak volumes about that person. The personality of someone who most enjoys a game of cards is likely to be

completely different from a person who most enjoys helping the sick, though as always, anything is possible. Ideally when answering this question, you should have in mind at least a couple of things your character enjoys. After all, people try to make time for their enjoyments, be it exploring abandoned mines, or growing vegetable gardens.

17. What do you like least?

What your character doesn't like is often harder to answer than what they do like, but this question is no less important. Also important is why your character has this dislike, whether it's something simple, such as they don't like the taste of coconut, or whether it runs deeper, such as coconut reminds them of an awful medicine they had to take as a child. (They were sick? Was it serious? How did they cope? How do they treat the sick now? And so on.)

18. What makes you angry?

Why? How does it affect your character's judgement? Might your character risk themselves and others if suitably enraged? Has this happened before? If so, how your character will react the next time they are angered?

19. What makes you happy?

Short term, medium term and long term happiness are all important to people. These are excellent motivators for your character and can reveal how far your character plans ahead and what sacrifices they may be prepared to make for their own happiness.

20. What makes you laugh?

Is your character quick to laugh, or above such open displays? Like anyone else, they will possess a sense of the ridiculous and the ludicrous. And like anyone else, they will have their own unique way of expressing themselves.

21. What experience has made the strongest mark on you?

It has been said many times that a person is the sum of their experiences. Your character already has their lifetime of experience. Here is your chance to explain one of those many experiences and how it has shaped your character's life. The experience need not be important in the grand scheme of things, just to your character. Something small and seemingly trivial can be just as meaningful to a person as a massive event of some kind.

22. What person has made the strongest mark on you?

One of the main things that will affect a person's personality is other people. Friends, lovers, family, acquaintances and strangers all play parts in a person's life, some more so than others. Pick someone who has impacted strongly on your character, be it a stranger with idle words of wisdom or a true love who held the meaning to life. Explain how they affected your character.

23. What have you done that you are most proud of?

Not only what has the character done, but where does their pride lay? Two people can be proud of the same event but for different reasons. For example, one could be proud of slaying the monster while the other is proud of rescuing the prisoner and yet their tasks may have been identical. And again, the event need not be important in the grand scheme of things. The character's greatest pride could be a badly carved piece of wood. As always, telling why will reveal more of the character's personality.

24. What have you done that you are most ashamed of?

Everyone makes mistakes. What has your character done and why? What have they learned from this event? As before, tell why the character is ashamed of what they've done. It will reveal as much, if not more, of their personality as the actual event itself.

25. Do you have a philosophy of life?

A simple person may have a simple philosophy. Again, the type of answer may tell more about the character than the answer itself. You should also think about a character's priorities, morality and ideals. Peoples' philosophical discourses on life vary from single sentences that could be found in fortune cookies, to entire volumes of endless books.

26. Do you have a religion?

In a world where the gods did exist, it would be a rare and foolish person who ignored them. This question, like many others, may require collaboration with your GM if you're not sure how your character's world works. Wherever your game is set, the inhabitants will most certainly have beliefs regarding greater powers. It's up to you to decide where your character stands with those beliefs.

27. How strongly do you believe in your religion?

Whether or not greater powers may or may not exist doesn't necessarily mean that your character cares. If gods are known to exist an apathetic character will do the minimum to appease them a get on with their life. The character may even resent them. Or your character could be a member of a faith, practising or non-practising, moderate or fanatical or

somewhere in between. Even among atheists there are those who tolerate beliefs held by others and those who will try and destroy those beliefs whenever they encounter them.

28. Why are you out adventuring?

A sense of adventure and curiosity are rarely enough to get someone to leave their stable job and head for the wild blue yonder and into life threatening danger. Even in games where the characters are different from normal people (vampires, mutants, gods, etc) there are still non-player characters who don't travel round in a group facing constant challenges. Why has your character chosen not to be one of these? The character themselves may not even realise. They may wish to be a hero to fulfill an unrecognised need for acceptance. As always, this is up to you.

29. How do you feel about money?

Is your character greedy or foolish where money is concerned? What are their spending habits like? Are they generous or stingy? When and why? Are they rich or poor and how does their degree of wealth affect them? And what would they do to get more money?

30. How do you feel about knowledge?

Does your character regard knowledge as just another commodity, like money? Or does your character consider knowledge innate and unchangeable? Do they respect it, flaunt it or distrust it? How much do they believe that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing?

31. How do you feel about power?

Power is central to many roleplaying games. Who has it?

Who doesn't? What do they do with it? Why? And so on. Many games allow you to advance your character giving you more experience, skill, ability and power. This is fine. It's fun. It's part of the game. But what does your character think? While they challenge the power of others, how much of that power do they want for themselves? And what do they think as they do gain power and abilities through their adventures? This isn't so important when starting out, but as the character acquires power they will have to decide what to do with it. Have they thought this far ahead?

32. How does fighting make you feel?

If the game you are in has a lot of fighting in it, making your character a pacifist is probably a bad idea. But even in the midst of a fight there are plenty of opportunities for your character's personality to be expressed. Does your character move in cautiously or charge recklessly? Are they slow and methodical because they are thorough, or do they actually enjoy the fight?

33. How does killing make you feel?

Killing is a big thing. Really big. Today it is almost universally condemned as wrong. In the past it has been seen as everything from a capital offence to a rite of passage. If your character has never killed before you should consider under what circumstances they might and how this reflects on them. If your character has killed before, how do they treat it? Killing often traumatises the perpetrator, but in a harsh and deadly world it can become a way of life for the few. How does your character's view of killing fit in with their society's view of killing?

34. Name something naughty that you did when you were about 12 years old that you got away with?

Does your character now think they can habitually get away with things? Or have they decided that it is best after all to follow the straight and narrow? What was your character like as a child? Were there any signs, even then, that they would one day be someone special? What was their life like as a child? How have their hopes and dreams changed since then?

35. What is your favourite colour?

This question is often used as the standard question to see if a character is more than just a bunch of numbers on paper. Most people have a favourite colour and few advantages are gained from this behaviour. Many studies have linked colour with behaviour and people have expectations that a person's favourite colour will somehow reflect that person. Often a person will tend to dress in that colour or colours. Give your character a favourite colour that you feel reflects their personality. And when asking why a character likes that colour, remember that aesthetics doesn't have to be the sole reason.

36. What are your favourite hobbies?

Most people have a favourite team, sport, game or past time. So should your character. Things your character is good at they may well participate in. Things they're not so good at, they may just watch. Whether they have time for their hobbies or not is another story. Few people feel as if they have time for their hobbies. Varying the degree of fanaticism a character has for a hobby can make for a very memorable character though.

37. Do you have any scars or handicaps?

And what events led to their acquisition? Many children hurt themselves when playing, adolescents often take risks and an adventurer may have already faced countless dangers. The character themselves may not even be responsible. Some marks are distinctive, others more subtle, some are natural, others not. Scars and handicaps are as many and varied as the people that possess them, from Harry Potter to Indiana Jones.

38. Do you have any work experience?

Not just what does your character do (which was covered earlier) but what has your character done? In the past people were generally trained in a single profession, but they still possessed many other skills from cooking and sewing to farming and hunting. Today people are expecting to change careers multiple times and many people are re-educating themselves constantly. Consider all the things your character can do, and has done over their life.

39. Who is your best friend?

Before your character started adventuring, they had a best friend. Who were they? What did they do? Why were they your best friend and what happened to them? A good GM will use this information, sometimes to your detriment, often to your advantage. In the unlikely event your character never had a best friend, why? And who would they like as a best friend?

40. Do you have any other friends?

So often overlooked in character creation, friends are not just non-player characters, but roleplaying opportunities, resources and plot devices all rolled into one. Friends

know and say more about your character's personality than virtually anything else. We are invariably drawn to people like ourselves, and a character's friends, while each being unique individuals, will share many similar qualities with your player character. Your character's friends may even include past or potential love interests.

41. Do you have any enemies?

Enemies don't necessarily want to kill your character, and could easily include rivals or just people that don't like your character. Obviously enemies have some impact on your character or they'd just leave them alone and wouldn't be enemies. In a civilised society they may just spread lies and attempt to undermine your character's plans. There would have to be a powerful reason for an enemy to actually want to kill your character. Why are they your character's enemy? What sort of things have they done to your character? And what sort of things has your character done to them?

42. What about your parents and family?

Far too many characters have lost their family. Like friends, family are an important resource that clever characters can tap into. Unlike friends, your character didn't get to choose their family. But the player does, and this is yet another opportunity to bring your character to life. Escaping parental authority, searching for lost siblings, striving for acceptance, proving one's worth or running from destiny. Nothing impacts on a person's life like family. Even as adults, parents and family continue to exert themselves on our lives, whether we want them to or not. Why should things be different for your character? As most characters were raised by their parents, those parents should feature strongly in

any background. After all, those parents are the ones who have tried hardest to shape your character's personality.

43. Do you have any present problems?

Here you can feel free to throw in character hooks, ideas, where you're character is in their life and where they want to go. Is your character's peaceful life about to be shattered or has trouble been brewing for months? If you create some problems for your character, it immediately gives them some short term goals to strive towards. These problems can be as trivial as trying to get a letter home, to as large as trying to throw a powerful artifact into a volcano. Best to check with your GM first. They may have some problems for your character already.

44. How could this get worse?

This question looks at your character's foresight and gives the GM some fun ideas to play with. You can also use it as a vehicle to suggest which directions you'd like to develop your character in. Remember that worse for you and worse for your character may be two completely different things.

45. What are your strongest and weakest character traits?

Look past your character's ability scores and look at their personality. Few systems have numbers for things like kindness, greed, honesty and loyalty. Remember that flaws are a part of every personality. Even the noblest hero can have a weakness for money and even the lowest scoundrel may stick by their lover.

46. How do you see yourself?

Rarely do people see themselves as they are. Many people instead see themselves as they would like to be. Your character may only

recognise some of their faults and virtues, or even mistake one for the other. They may have a definite self image, or they may still be searching for themselves. Just how much insight does your character possess?

47. How do others see you?

Again, your character may answer this question incompletely, or even be just plain wrong. Few tyrants consider themselves as such and many would be genuinely surprised to find out they were unpopular. How much does your character listen to the opinions of others? How much does your character care about the opinions of others? Again, how the question is answered can reveal as much about the character as the answer itself.

48. Do you have a sense of humour?

Cruel, kind, slapstick, sarcastic, sardonic, ironic? Would your character prefer Monty Python or Jerry Seinfeld? Do they have a favourite joke and what might it be? In character jokes, while harder than out of character jokes, are certainly much more satisfying.

49. What is your basic nature?

A brief summary of your character's personality will help to stay focussed. As long as your character stays consistently within their basic nature, no-one is going to complain that you aren't pulling off an award winning performance. The aim after all is to have fun.

50. Do you have any ambitions?

Your character may have many ambitions both simple and complex. Ambitions are very useful motivators, both to the character and the GM. By using the character's ambitions they can be led through an exciting and

entertaining story with a hopefully satisfying conclusion. However when the character reaches those goals things don't have to stop. Like the character's personality some of those ambitions will change over time. And even if the character does fulfil all their ambitions, there's nothing wrong with retiring them. After all, they probably deserve the peace.

51. What kind of art, music and reading material do you prefer?

One of the best ways to find out about someone is to go through their book collection. It contains a treasure trove of their likes, their tastes and their interests. The same is true of art and music. Your character will like art, music and literature that will express themselves, or allows themselves to be expressed. Even simple choices, like do they prefer modern or classical, will allow assumptions (maybe incorrect) to be made about your character's personality.

52. What does your home look like?

People surround themselves with what is important to them. Your character will have favourite possessions, clothes and items around them. Do they live in an apartment, a hut or a mansion? How important are the creature comforts to them? Are they living alone or with friends? Are they still living at home even? What have they done to personalise their space? Are they messy, neat, chaotic, Spartan or a hoarder? Do they own their own abode? Do they care for it or have others to do so? After all, a person's home is their castle, and if they are going to show their true personality anywhere, it will be at home.

Complete List of 52 Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your height?
3. How much do you weigh?
4. What do you look like?
5. How old are you?
6. When were you born?
7. Where were you born?
8. Will you ever go back there?
9. How were you educated?
10. What have you learnt since then?
11. What were you doing a year ago?
12. What were you doing a month ago?
13. Do you work?
14. What do you do?
15. How do you like to spend your spare time?
16. What do you enjoy most?
17. What do you like least?
18. What makes you angry?
19. What makes you happy?
20. What makes you laugh?
21. What experience has made the strongest mark on you?
22. What person has made the strongest mark on you?
23. What have you done that you are most proud of?
24. What have you done that you are most ashamed of?
25. Do you have a philosophy of life?
26. Do you have a religion?
27. How strongly do you believe in your religion?
28. Why are you out adventuring?
29. How do you feel about money?
30. How do you feel about knowledge?
31. How do you feel about power?
32. How does fighting make you feel?
33. How does killing make you feel?
34. Name something naughty that you did when you were about 12 years old that you got away with?
35. What is your favourite colour?
36. What are your favourite hobbies?
37. Do you have any scars or handicaps?
38. Do you have any work experience?
39. Who is your best friend?
40. Do you have any other friends?
41. Do you have any enemies?
42. What about your parents and family?
43. Do you have any present problems?
44. How could this get worse?
45. What are your strongest and weakest character traits?
46. How do you see yourself?
47. How do others see you?
48. Do you have a sense of humour?
49. What is your basic nature?
50. Do you have any ambitions?
51. What kind of art, music and reading material do you prefer?
52. What does your home look like?

Fists of Fury

An amended monk class for D&D3E

Gary Johnson (garyjohnson@uq.net.au)

I was getting ready to start playing in my first 3rd Edition Dungeons and Dragons game (it will have started by the time you're reading this), so I sat down and carefully read through the for the first time. It's given me a much better feel for how the eleven classes are constructed and balanced against one another. That said, it seems to me that there are things that could be done differently that would enhance the game system. This article contains my thoughts and suggestions about one of these issues: the monk class.

When I look at the monk class, I see a very restrictive and linear model for advancing in unarmed combat. Because the only way you can improve your unarmed fighting skills is by gaining special abilities with each level advance, every monk of the same level has the same monk abilities. This makes it seem to me that there's only one school of martial arts in the standard D&D setting, which isn't what I would want in my own setting.

Also, characters of other classes, even fighters, who take feats that duplicate monk special abilities do not gain the same advantages from those feats. In particular, note Stunning Fist (page 83 of the *Player's Handbook*): not only is there a Base attack bonus (BAB) requirement, there's also two characteristic minimums. Monks do not have to meet any of these requirements to have Stunning Fist as a class feature at 1st level. In addition, characters who are not monks may use Stunning Fist fewer times a day! It's easier to take a level of monk than to acquire Stunning Fist as a feat.

What this means is that the game system directs characters who want to be good at punching people into being monks, with all the additional supernatural powers that entails. Personally, I don't

want a mandatory link between learning to punch someone and belonging to an esoteric tradition of secret learning and superhuman powers. It's obvious from the real world that the two aren't necessarily related: making them related in a fantasy setting affects my suspension of disbelief too much. In other words, I think being a monk should involve having unarmed martial skills, but that having unarmed martial skills shouldn't mean you have to be a monk.

I see monks more as a variant fighter class (like the paladin and the ranger), but one where the feats you sacrifice to be a monk (all three armour proficiencies, shield proficiency, and all martial weapons) are balanced out by the supernatural abilities and the benefits of specialising in one sort of combat (the increased unarmed strike damage, rate of attack, flurry of blows, and so on). I also see other classes being able to take feats and skills to do things that are, in the standard rules, solely the preserve of monks: effective unarmed combat if you're a fighter and slowing your fall if you're a rogue both come to mind.

What I'm after, then, is a more flexible model for designing characters who fight with their fists. So, what have I done? The special abilities monks get have

been divided up into new feats (some of which are available to all characters or to characters of other classes) or retained as special abilities. The exception is Tongue of the Sun and Moon, which doesn't jell with my impression of the source material at all and seems to be a hangover from 1st Edition AD&D – it got left on the cutting-room floor.

Unarmed combat has also been restructured so that being good at it requires feats, rather than being an inherent element of the monk class. Any character can take the unarmed combat feats, but monks start out with several as class features and thus have a big advantage on characters of other classes. Monks gain bonus feats like fighters do, and must take these feats from the same (expanded) list: there are some special feats that only monks can take, and they can use their bonus feats for this purpose too.

Characters using this amended monk class won't have exactly the same abilities as they would using the standard class at every level. However, you can get a fairly similar set of abilities: close enough that I believe it will not detract from being a monk. As always, I look forward to your feedback, particularly from those of you who have more "hands-on" experience with D&D3E.

Amendments to Table 3-10: The Monk

Base Attack Bonus and all three Saves are unmodified, as are Unarmed Attack Bonus and AC Bonus. Unarmed Damage now increases as you take specific feats (namely Iron Fist, Improved Iron Fist, *Ki* Strike, Improved *Ki* Strike, and Supreme *Ki* Strike), while you must take the Fast Movement feat to have increased speed.

Special abilities are obtained according to the following table.

Level	Special Abilities
1	Flurry of Blows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist, Stunning Fist, evasion, sixth sense, bonus feat
2	Bonus feat
3	Still mind
4	Bonus feat
5	Purity of body
6	Bonus feat
7	Wholeness of body
8	Bonus feat
9	Diamond body
10	Bonus feat
11	Diamond soul
12	Bonus feat
13	Abundant step
14	Bonus feat
15	Timeless body
16	Bonus feat
17	Empty body
18	Bonus feat
19	Perfect self
20	Bonus feat

Amended Class Features

Weapon and Armour

Proficiency: special list of simple weapons as described on page 39 of the *Player's Handbook*, not proficient with any armour or with shields.

Sixth Sense: as described on page 39 of the *Player's Handbook* under Weapons and Armour Proficiency. To summarise, monks add their Wisdom bonus to AC, and gain +1 AC every five monk levels (that is, +1 AC at 5th level, +2 AC at 10th level, and so on).

Unarmed Strike: monks automatically gain the Flurry of Blows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist and Stunning Fist feats at 1st level, plus a bonus feat.

Evasion: as described on pages 39 and 40 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Bonus Feats: as described on page 37 of the *Player's Handbook*, but the following feats should be added to the list available to both fighters and monks. Flurry of Blows, Improved Iron Fist, Improved *Ki* Strike, Iron Fist, *Ki* Strike, Supreme *Ki* Strike. Monks may also use bonus feats to acquire any of the specific feats listed below.

Specific Feats: monks may take Fast Movement (also available to Barbarians as a class ability), Improved Evasion and Slow Fall (also available to Rogues), and Quivering Palm (only available to monks).

New and Amended Feats

Deflect Arrows [General]

Prerequisites: as described on page 81 of the *Player's Handbook* or 2 monk levels.

Fast Movement [Special]

You move more quickly than a typical member of your race.

Prerequisites: Barbarian or Monk class.

Benefit: The character has additional speed when wearing no armour or light or medium armour (if they have the appropriate armour proficiency feat), if they are not carrying a heavy load. A Medium size character gains +10 feet on acquiring the feat, +10 feet for every three monk levels (that is, +10 at 1st level, +20 at 3rd level, +30 at 6th level, and so on), while a dwarf or Small character gains +5 feet instead. Barbarians have this feat as a class ability. This supercedes the descriptions on pages 25 and 40 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Flurry of Blows [General]

You may strike more often when unarmed, but at the cost of accuracy.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: as described on page 39 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Improved Evasion [Special]

Prerequisites: Reflexes Save +6, Evasion, Monk or Rogue class.

Benefit: The monk or rogue takes half damage on a failed Reflexes save. This supercedes the descriptions on pages 40 and 48 of the *Player's Handbook*.



Improved Iron Fist [General]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +3, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist.

Benefit: Your unarmed strike damage is 1d8 if Medium size and 1d6 if Small size.

Improved Jump [General]

Prerequisites: 10 ranks in Jump.

Benefit: as described on page 40 of the *Player's Handbook* under Leap of the Clouds.

Improved Ki Strike [General]

As for *Ki Strike* (see below).

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +9, Improved Iron Fist, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist, *Ki Strike*.

Benefit: Your unarmed strike damage is 1d12 if Medium size and 1d10 if Small size, and you can deal damage to a creature with damage reduction as if you were using a weapon with a +2 enhancement bonus. This is a supernatural ability.

Improved Trip [General]

Prerequisites: as described on page 83 of the *Player's Handbook* or 6 monk levels.

Improved Unarmed Strike [General]

Benefit: as described on page 83 of the *Player's Handbook*, except that you may also divide your Base attack bonus by 3 instead of 5 when determining the number of unarmed strikes per round and your BAB for those attacks.

Iron Fist [General]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: Your unarmed strike damage is 1d6 if Medium size and 1d4 if Small size, and you may choose to do normal damage

instead of subdual damage before attempting to hit your target.

Ki Strike [General]

Your unarmed attack is empowered with *ki*.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +7, Improved Iron Fist, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist.

Benefit: Your unarmed strike damage is 1d10 if Medium size and 1d8 if Small size, and can deal damage to a creature with damage reduction as if you were using a weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus. This is a supernatural ability. This supercedes the description on page 40 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Quivering Palm [Special]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +11, Improved Iron Fist, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist, Stunning Fist, Monk class.

Benefit: as described on page 40 of the *Player's Handbook* under Quivering Palm, except that only monk levels contribute towards the Fortitude save required to survive the attack. This is a supernatural ability.

Slow Fall [Special]

You can reduce the effective distance you fall if you are within arm's reach of a wall.

Prerequisites: Reflexes Save +4, 5 ranks in Jump, Monk or Rogue class.

Benefit: as described on page 40 of the *Player's Handbook*, except that the amount by which the effective distance of a fall can be reduced increases by 5 feet for every monk or rogue level.

Stunning Fist [General]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: as described on page 83 of the *Player's Handbook*, except that the character may attempt a stunning attack once per day per level.

Supreme Ki Strike [General]

As for *Ki Strike* (see above).

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +11, Improved Iron Fist, Improved *Ki Strike*, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Fist, *Ki Strike*.

Benefit: Your unarmed strike damage is 1d20 if Medium size and 1d12 if Small size, and can deal damage to a creature with damage reduction as if you were using a weapon with a +3 enhancement bonus. This is a supernatural ability. This supercedes the description on page 40 of the *Player's Handbook*.



Brave New World

Roleplaying Game Review

Cameron Twine (cjtwine50@hotmail.com)

Okay, let me set this straight before the review goes ahead. I am not much of an actual role player. I get into games for the feel and the ability to create interesting characters or “ain’t it cool” sort of ideas instead of actually have them beaten to a pulp each week by the DM’s macabre and miserable sense of mirth.

If that first paragraph hasn’t got you offside, let me try and get rid of you again. This review is about super heroes. That’s right, guys in tights, sort of like a nuclear soaked ballet. “Not so bad,” most of you might be thinking, “I can still do Superman in a Tutu.” Ahh, nope. The powers in Brave New World are more like the Golden Age of comics where everyone was a one-trick pony and, while powerful in their own right, were not the be-all and end-all in superheroes.

Still here? Okay, lets give it a shot then. Brave New World (BNW) is simply one of the most atmospheric, well written, intelligently set super hero role playing games I’ve come across. I say this after having looked at or owned about half of the super hero games that have come out. This game, as warned, does not offer Superman or Thor, so power players might not be happy. However, if the ego can be nullified to actually read the background and get involved in the setting, you fell like your reading a damn good comic.

Setting

Want the background story? Its a pretty normal universe, much like say Marvel comics (of X-Men fame) where there were superheroes sprouting up during WWII and people got used to guys in tights flying and brawling. Heroes who can fly, walk through walls etc are called Deltas, and their much stronger counterparts - Superman equivalents who are called Alphas - are accepted as part of life. (“Huh? Didn’t you say there were no superman types?” [WHACK] “Silence, all will be explained.”) Then in the 60’s, disaster strikes. Armoured goons try to kill JFK. They get Jackie, and nearly get Kennedy himself. Kennedy recovers, puts through a Delta registration bill, declares the country under martial law. “Fair enough, it’ll only be for a short time,” everyone thinks.

Ten years later, during a massive brawl that involves nearly every super powered being in the States, the Devastator – a notorious bad guy – uses a bomb that obliterates Chicago. And every Alpha on earth. All of them.

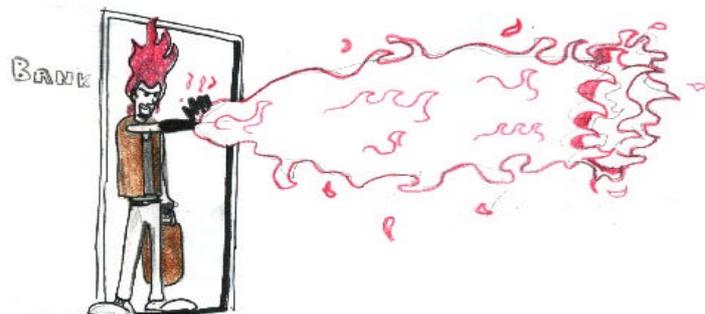
Cut to the present. Martial Law is still in place. Chicago has been rebuilt as Crescent City. The Alphas are still gone. And JFK is still in charge. Any delta must sign up to work for the government or be hunted down and thrown in jail. You have to either register or go underground.

Rules and Game Mechanics

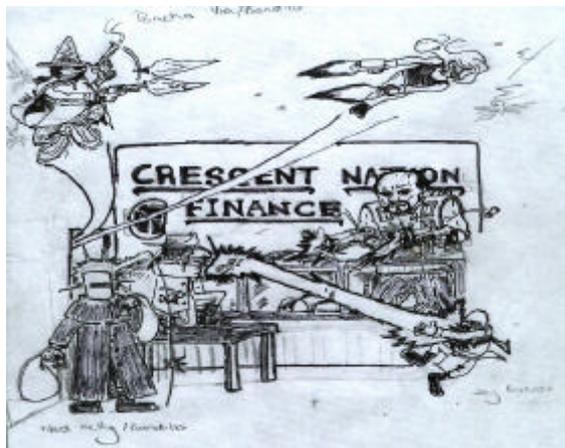
Not bad for a super tights style setting huh? Okay, as I said, I haven’t actually played the game yet, but from internet discussion groups, the experienced players seem to like the mechanics. The rules seem to be pretty straight forward and bear a resemblance or so I am told to Deadlands. The game mainly uses a six sided dice system, reminiscent of the old Star Wars RPG. The game focus on combat tends to make battles fast and furious, though I must admit after scanning the rules, they do seem a little heavy on the number crunching – lets just say I’m not a big one for figuring out percentiles on actions or performing calculus level arithmetic just to say, “Okay, my character successfully peels an onion.”

Getting Started

Character generation takes half an hour at the most due to what maybe the most off putting aspect. You don’t get to choose your powers. Now before you throw



this magazine away, spitting in its general direction, this doesn't mean that your always going to get handed out the fish bowl guy who can breathe underwater and talk to mackerel. Powers are passed out in packages. These packages are a lot like D&D characters: your "class", if you will, can do certain things that others can't. However, you can't swap classes as you can in D&D. That means if you choose to be the strong guy of the group, you're always going to be the strong guy.



See what I meant when referring to the old days? Characters here are one trick ponies. BUT they are generally ONE HELLUVA good trick. Want to be daredevil? No problems. Iron man? Can do. Batman? Yep. But there are no multi-powered super goofs with a power ring or kryptonian power rods in this game.

Now having just waffled on about the characters I should tell you about some of them – these are the basic character classes in the main rules book. Each new supplement comes out with a collection of official packages, plus heaps of background material.

Gadgeteer – Have power armour, will travel. For the Iron Man/Steel wannabe's. Good at tinkering, building impossible physics defying gadgets that

produce non frothy beer and a personal nose trimmer that doesn't bring tears to the eyes. Oh and blasters and dimensional portals to alternate realities.

Bargainer – Sell your soul to become a hero. Mystics who are in contact with demons, then bind them to objects to create certain effects. More like Dr Fate of DC than Dr Strange of Marvel – why do most mystical heroes think they need to be a doctor? – these guys are the master of showmanship. Think of David Copperfield with a

rod of fireballs and you kinda have the idea. Scary image, but the right idea.

Blaster – Shoot blasts of energy out of your hands! Impress your friends as you vaporise garbage! Makes picking your nose a whole new adventure! Standard superhero blast-the-hell-out-

of-something-and-then-blast-some-more type character. Think Havok from the X-men and you wouldn't be far wrong.

Bouncer – A combat daredevil. Bounds around the room and smacks little children with terrifying speed. Fast, strong and some neat tricks. Spidey without the danger sense basically.

Flyer – To me this one is kinda cool because I always loved that old Disney movie the *Boy that Could Fly*. All right, I'm a wuss, but it's my review so you all can go [ahem]...oh right the review, sorry oh editorial one. Fly through the air and get a nice armour bonus to boot. Add the fact that your hero could be armed with a couple of Uzi's and its strafing time!



Goliath – The aforementioned strong guy. Hulk, Thing – you think of the resident brick on a team and you've got your goliath. Able to bench press large amounts of metal over ones head and twist street signs into amusing party pieces. Tough as hell as well. One thing though – if you're in a covert campaign forget about taking this guy. In a setting where most characters don't want people to know what they are, what are your chances of blending in when your as tall as Shaq, as muscled up as a WWF wrestler and as pretty as the backside of a really, really old bulldog?

Gunner – Okay this one *sounds* pretty stupid. A character who can shoot guns. Whoopee. The fact that the bonuses mean that nine times out of ten, they ain't going to miss; the fact that their power is pretty much undetectable; the fact that guns are legal and most people go around armed anyway – nope, nothing. Great for the covert player and for those who liked the Punisher



comics.

Healer – The cleric of the group. No offence, just defence. In my opinion, this is the fish bowl guy. Of course, this character is essential when your character is about to cough up a lung, but as exciting to play as watching *good medicine* doctors rip up a gall bladder.

Scrapper – Attention! Attention! All Wolverine wannabes – now is the time to buy your hair grease and find a dodgy yellow spandex leotard and start practising your “I’m the best there is at what I do, bub”. Natural brawlers for those fond of the up close and personal style of combat.

Strong, natural armour and a nice little healing bonus.

Speedster – Finally, we come to the really, really fast guy. Hard to hit, moves quick, not very original, but still – what would a comic book setting be without the requisite “faster than a speeding bullet and about as smart sometimes” character?

Conclusion

And here endeth the review. For those of you having a read through of the package choices, and not seeing a personal comic book favourite, cease thy worry. There are a ton of them in the supplements and on the internet. And for those of the Champions

and Heroes Unlimited cheer squads going, “where’s the customisation, my points values, my ability to create uberman” – the ultimate in genetic rodent disposal – don’t get too upset. Like I said, you may come for the superheroes but you stay for the atmosphere Besides, any game that has Ronald Reagan as the head of the SS style police force made up of super powered goons can’t be that bad!

Brave New World retails for about \$45 to \$50. Nice hardbound cover, flash internal graphics. Napoleon’s Military Bookshop has a copy or two and is generally able to get in all the supplements as well.

Results of the 2000 QUGS Diplomacy Tournament

Compiled by Tournament Director Andrew Goff

The 2000 Queensland Diplomacy Championships were hosted by the Auran BIG Weekend convention on 29-30 April 2000 at Griffith University (Mount Gravatt campus), Brisbane. Four rounds were played over two days with players counting their best three rounds. The scoring system used was *Cricket*.

Player’s scores that counted towards their final placing are in bold.

Overall Results				Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4	
Rank	Name	State	Score	Played	Pts	Played	Pts	Played	Pts	Played	Pts
1	Jimmy Millington	WEL	42	Russia	4	Germany	16	France	9	Turkey	17
2	Will Black	AUK	39	Italy	6	Russia	9	England	15	France	15
3	Sean Colman	NSW	34	England	15	Germany	14	Turkey	1.25	Austria	5
4	Kazel Law	AUK	33	Austria	1.5	Turkey	14	France	10	Germany	9
5	Jason Zagami	QLD	32.25	England	20	Austria	0.5	Turkey	11	Russia	1.25
6	Daniel Edwards	QLD	26	Turkey	15	England	7	Italy	4		
7	Gary Johnson	QLD	22	France	10	Austria	1	Russia	11		
8	Rob Schone	WEL	20.75	Italy	1.75	France	12	Russia	7	England	1.25
9	David Astley	QLD	16	Russia	10			Italy	6		
10	Wayne Doust	QLD	12	Turkey	11	Russia	1				
11	Michael Mason	QLD	12	Germany	4	Turkey	8				
12	Mark Hodgkinson	QLD	10					Austria	10		
13	Mitchell Bailey	QLD	5.75	Germany	0.75	France	1			Italy	4
14	Darryl Greensill	QLD	5.50	Austria	1.5	England	4				
15	Seth Wagoner	QLD	5	France	5						
16	Martin Osvik	QLD	1			England	1				
17	Kevin Reid	QLD	0.75					Italy	0.75		
17	Mark Rogerson	QLD	0.75					Germany	0.75		
GM	Andrew Goff	ACT	GM			Italy	13	Austria	7		
GM	Andrew Goff	ACT	GM					Germany	13		