

Alternate Rules for the Doomtown CCG

The Fear Level for a game of DT can be a big factor, not only for some of the card effects, but for some decks as **Random Fear Level**

well - **'Whateleys, Extended Family'** readily springs to mind. From an original value of 3 at its initial release, upto 6 during the final struggle against Knicknevin and finally coming down to 4 with the demon's defeat and the ensuing power struggle during 'Do Unto Others', the starting Fear Level has fluctuated, representing the air of menace pervading the town of Gomorra as the various story arcs unfolded during the course of Doomtown's existence. DUO looks like being the last release for the game, for the foreseeable future at least, and as such the relevant rules for this release are the most recent and applicable. So a starting Fear Level of 4 is perhaps a happy compromise, no matter what decks or cards are being played (so don't bother including **'Schoolhouse'** in your deck). Of course, if players are all playing decks associated with a 'historical' period of Gomorra's evolution, then they may agree to play with a starting Fear Level associated with the relevant release. But what I propose here is that the starting Fear Level for a game of DT should be randomised at the start of the game. This could be accomplished in any number of ways, but the method I would suggest is that following the first round of Lowball, the Winner pulls the top card from their deck and the starting Fear Level for the game is then determined as half the value of the pulled card, rounding any halves up and where picture cards have the values 11, 12, 13 for Jack, Queen, King respectively. This would give a random starting Fear Level of between 1 and 7, which would also allow players to whom it mattered to try and tailor their decks to get an early advantage from the outset by swinging the Fear Level in their favour. The advantage would never be too great - **'Whateleys, Extended Family'** would only get a single Control Point advantage even if they managed to win the first Lowball and pull a King from their deck - but could once again help to make the Fear Level an interesting factor.



Guns 'n' Ammo

When we first started playing DT, the bullet bonus from any weapon was applied as it was indicated on the card, no matter what the bullet type of the dude it was attached to was - ie. A **'Gatling Gun'** would only ever give a +4 Draw bonus no matter who it was placed on. But somewhere along the way, we stopped playing it like this, and a weapon's bullet bonus just became an extension of the dudes bullet rating. So any weapon placed on a Stud dude automatically gave a Stud bonus, but placed on a Draw dude it only gave a draw bonus, unless otherwise stated on the card. Overall, this means that weapons are far more cost effective when placed on a Stud dude than a Draw dude even though they actually cost the same GR. It also means that players are drawing bigger and better hands since it is easier to pump up Stud dudes' bullet ratings to high values. Whilst I don't have anything specifically against this, I see no reason why the cards cannot be played as their bonus indicates. There is no great difficulty in saying that a weapon that shows a brass bullet gives a Draw bullet bonus, and one with a silver bullet, that is not specifically noted as making the wielding dude a Stud, gives a Stud bonus for the weapons bullet rating only. Eg. **'Mr Slate'** (Stud 4), armed with **'Double Barreled Shotgun'** (+2, Brass Bullet bonus) draws 9 cards (5 + 4 Stud) and can change any 2 (2 Draw bullet bonus for the Shotgun) instead of just making him a 6 Stud and allowing him to draw 11 cards straight off.

This will obviously make it more difficult to draw high rank hands during shoot-outs. Whilst this could be seen as a drawback I think it would make the game more interesting, since middle rank hands such as Full-House then have a higher relative worth. It will also mean that the lowly Draw dudes will not be so largely out-classed by their Stud dude counter-parts.

Harrowed Powers and Kung-Fu Powers

When harrowed powers were first released with the Mouth of Hell expansion, I was surprised at the way they were fitted into the game mechanics. Here to me was what appeared to be another set of mystical powers, much like the other different spell types: Huckster's Hexes; Shaman's Spirits and Blessed's Miracles. The same was also true of the Kung-Fu Powers when they were introduced in the Do Unto Others set. But these cards were introduced as actions, not spells. They also have a very clumsy mechanism in play - namely that you state which character gains the power and then the power card is aced and removed from play (sure, most people play with the Power cards remaining under the character as a reminder during play, but this cannot be done if the character is subsequently discarded). So not only do you then have to remember which character has which power, it also means that your deck is depleted by one card, a very



important consideration for a card game where the deck is cycled. Compounding this problem, to my mind, is once a Power is attached, the character always has that power, whether they are discarded or aced and then brought back into play again, by the same or another player. This means that even if you manage to put down a player Harrowed dude with their **'Claws'**, **'Arcane Protection'**, **'Supernatural Speed'**, **'Wither'**, and **'Speaking With the Dead'**, for example, if they manage to bring that dude back into play (or any other player brings that dude into play) then they would still have all their Harrowed Powers intact. To my way of thinking, this just doesn't sit right. Surely a Manitou would suffer some loss of power when they are defeated, even if they rise again. Same goes for a Kung-Fu dude, surely they would be dispirited after a defeat and this would affect their ability. Besides, this just didn't compare with spells, which are similar abilities, (in fact spells are lesser abilities since most require a pull to use whereas the Powers in question always work). Spells are lost completely to Boot Hill when the character they were attached to is aced, even if that character is brought back. And if the character is

discarded then so are the spells, which may then cycle through the deck so they may be reattached, making the game more interesting. My last point against these Powers as Actions was that it made them Clubs. There are already more than enough Club, Action cards in the set, but if these Powers had been brought out as 'spells' instead then they would have been Hearts. This would have given players another option for deck building, instead of using goods or other spells to fill Hearts.

So basically, the suggestion is a simple one. If you play DT and enjoy it, then try playing it where you treat all Fu and Harrowed Power cards as 'Spell' and 'Hearts' cards. Their values will remain the same as whatever they are printed at of course. But they will be attached to dudes and treated in all other ways the same way as spells are, and be discarded and aced in the same way; not aced and removed from the game when attached as previously. This also means they can be targeted as 'Spell' cards. The limit of only one of any one Harrowed or Fu Power per dude (barring specific card exceptions such as **'Chester Nero'**) remains however. Give it a try, I think it will make for a more interesting game, providing a better level of game balance for these cards and making for greater variation in deck construction.