

Blades in the Dark: Deep Cuts ♦ Cheat sheet

This cheat sheet will help you remember key aspects of the new system mechanics introduced by John Harper in Blades in the Dark: Deep Cuts.

Threat roll

When you face a negative consequence from a dangerous opponent or challenging situation, make a Threat Roll to see if you can avoid it.

- ♦ The GM must clearly state the threat before the roll
- ♦ The failure of an action is also a Threat

Standard roll

The default check is risky, and the effect is standard.

Make an **Action roll** or an **Attribute roll**:

- ♦ **6 6 Triumph**: You avoid the threat
 - And gain Edge
- ♦ **6 Success**: You avoid the threat
- ♦ **4/5 Peril**: suffer a reduced consequence
 - Or push yourself to prevent the effects entirely
- ♦ **1-3 Threat**: You suffer the consequence
 - Or push yourself to reduce the consequence

Controlled position

- ♦ No roll needed.
- ♦ If you want to achieve more—ask for Devil's Bargain.

Desperate position

- ♦ **6: Success**: You avoid the threat.
- ♦ **1-5 Threat**: You suffer the consequence.
 - Or push yourself to reduce the consequence
- ♦ Mark XP

Additional Threats:

The GM can add additional threats depending on the situation:

- ♦ Add +1d for every additional Threat
- ♦ Assign roll result for every Threat

Push yourself

When you suffer a consequence, you can choose to push yourself to avoid or reduce it

- ♦ Make a roll using the related **Attribute** to
 - improve result of Threat roll
 - increase effect of the action you take
 - activate certain abilities
- ♦ **Mark stress** according to the result of the roll:
 - **6 6**: 0 stress
 - **6**: 1 stress
 - **4/5**: 2 stresses
 - **1-3**: 3 stresses

Edge

Edge can be gained on a Threat Roll when you roll more than one 6.

- ♦ Edge can be:
 - Spent immediately to increase the effect of an action.
 - Carry forward to add +1d to future roll.
- ♦ While assisting teammate you can spend an Edge on their roll.
- ♦ Edges can be accumulated.
- ♦ Any remaining Edge you have is lost when Downtime begins.

Effects & Consequences

- ♦ Effects and Consequences are categorized by levels of impact:
 - Limited 1 (ticks, heat, harm, etc.)
 - Standard 2 (ticks, heat, harm, etc.)
 - Great 3 (ticks, heat, harm, etc.)
 - Extreme 4 (ticks, heat, harm, etc.)

Devil's Bargain

The way to achieve something for a **cost** or **facing the threat**.

- ♦ **Pay the cost** (from minor to major)
 - Mark stress (or ask to push)
 - Tick a clock
 - Spend coin
 - Suffer harm
 - Lose item
 - Take heat
 - Lose rep
 - Lose faction status
- ♦ **Face the threat**
 - Or to try a different approach
 - If is **already facing a threat** and making a roll, player can ask for a Devil's Bargain to add **+1d** and an **additional threat**

Teamwork

For a teamwork characters need to be in fictional position to do so or take Devil's Bargain to get into position.

Assist

- ♦ **Benefits** when help or protect teammate, or set up they action:
 - Add +1d to roll
 - Reduce the severity of a consequence
 - Improve effect or position
 - More details or questions when they gather info
- ♦ While Assisting teammate you can spend an Edge on their roll

Cover

- ♦ An action you take so your teammate doesn't have to face a particular threat. GM tells you what need to be done:
 - You just accomplish it
 - You need to do to get into position first
 - You need to take a Devil's Bargain to do it

Coordinate

When the team coordinates, designate a leader – they can push themselves on behalf of any other character who's acting with the team (in addition to the Scoundrel pushing themselves).

- ♦ **Group action**
 - Everyone faces the same threat
 - Each player rolls individually
 - A benefit from a group action can be an increase in scale
- ♦ **Divide & Conquer**
 - Team faces a variety of threats
 - Each tackles a threat with their own action

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Harm

Harm levels

If you suffer Harm at a level that has all instances filled, the Harm advances to the next highest level of severity.

- ♦ **1. Temporary Condition** (unlimited number)
 - Temporary negative conditions that can impede your character
 - If you suffer the same condition twice, bump it up to level 2 but no further if all 2 level instances are filled
 - Go away with time and doesn't require treatment for recovery
 - Some conditions might require an action to remove
 - Some conditions are removed when it makes sense in the fiction, or invoked couple of times
 - Remove all conditions when **Downtime** starts
- ♦ **2. Lasting Harm** (2 slots)
 - Serious injuries, ailments, or impairments
- ♦ **3. Severe Harm** (1 slot)
 - Major wounds which can incapacitate a character
 - Wound what may become fatal if not treated
- ♦ **4. Fatal Harm**
 - A mortal wound or instant death, depending on the situation
 - If not instantly lethal, you may survive if someone can treat the wound and stabilize you within a few minutes
 - Remains and must be dealt with during a **recovery** activity
 - Record a **Scar**: a permanent injury, it may be invoked like Harm

Invoking Harm

The GM may invoke harm to impede the character, creating a problem or limitation for them

- ♦ Invoke Harm to
 - Introduce a **bad outcome** or **new problem** for the character
 - Reduce an **Action** and/or **Attribute rating** for a roll
 - Reduce the character's **position** or **effect**
- ♦ **Mark XP** when Harm is invoked
- ♦ **Tough it Out**
 - take **1 Stress per level of the Harm** and draw a line through it.

Trauma

When you need to mark Stress, but all your boxes are marked, gain a Trauma condition for your character

- ♦ Mark one of your Trauma boxes
- ♦ Remove all your Stress
- ♦ Describe your character's Trauma reaction

Invoking Trauma

Each of your characters Trauma conditions can be invoked once per session to create a problem or complication for them

- ♦ **Mark XP** when Trauma is invoked
- ♦ This replaces the end-of-session xp award for trauma
- ♦ Only the player may invoke their character's trauma

Retirement & Recovery

- ♦ When you mark your fourth Trauma box, your character retires
- ♦ Before that, you may be able to recover from Trauma
 - Work with the GM to create a long-term project

Load

Before the score choose your character's load style:

- ♦ **Conspicuous**
 - 6 item boxes
 - Choose and **mark heavy items before** the score
- ♦ **Discreet**
 - 6 item boxes
 - You may not bring any heavy items

If you pick something up during a score, count it as a marked load box

- ♦ if you mark a **5th box**, your character becomes conspicuous
- ♦ If you mark a **7th box**, your character becomes encumbered
 - can no longer climb, run, or swim unless they drop enough
- ♦ You can't carry more than **9 boxes** worth of load

Gathering information

- ♦ Tell obvious information, including
 - what they know
 - what they intuit
 - what they suspect might be true
- ♦ Base information on the appropriate aspect of a character
 - playbook
 - background
 - heritage
 - special items
 - special abilities

If there's more to discover, ask them what they do to find out.

Based on their action choose one:

- ♦ Offer a **Devil's Bargain**
 - a cost: Coin, Heat, Stress, or ticking a clock
 - a threat
- ♦ Give them a **lead**
 - They know person, place or thing what gives them opportunity to get the information
- ♦ Ask to start a **long-term project** to investigate the information

Advancement Clocks

Draw four 6-segment advancement clocks for character playbook and crew playbook. Whenever you would mark xp, tick a clock instead.

- ♦ If all clocks filled, extra xp isn't lost. Just make an additional clock

Cost of advancement in clocks:

- ♦ 2 New special ability from your playbook or crew sheet
- ♦ 3 Veteran special ability
- ♦ 1 Crew Upgrade (per box)
 - If using Downtime module only Cohorts cost XP advances
- ♦ 1-4 Action or Attribute dot
 - Depends on filled dots in Attribute or Skill rating

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Downtime: Crew phase

- ♦ First, each **cohort** heals one level of Harm.
- ♦ Then resolve
 - Fallout
 - Payoff
 - Entanglements
 - Development
 - Heat & Hold.

Fallout

The GM assesses the fallout from the score in the form of faction Status changes and the amount of Heat gained.

- ♦ Adjust the crew's Status with factions affected by the score
 - **+1** if the score significantly helped the faction.
 - **+2** if the score was a major boon for the faction.
 - **-1** if the score hurt the faction.
 - **-2** if the score was a major problem for the faction.
 - **-3** Set Status to -3 if the crew initiated war with a faction.
- ♦ Assess base Heat, plus any additional Heat from the score
 - **Base 0** for a smooth, low exposure operation.
 - **Base 2** for a standard criminal operation.
 - **+1** Heat per crew Tier.
 - **+2** for a high profile or well-connected target.
 - **+2** for open combat, destruction, or mayhem.
 - **+2** if you're at war with another faction.
 - **+4** if death occurred in connection to the score.
 - **+2** if there are witnesses that can be questioned
 - **+4** if specific crew members were identified.

Payoff

Determine the payoff from the score, rep gained, and any additional Coin from seized assets.

- ♦ **Payoff**
 - 1 Coin per PC, plus Coin equal to the target's Tier x3
- ♦ **Rep**
 - 1 Rep for every 2 Heat generated by the score.
 - +1 Rep per Tier of the target above the crew's Tier
- ♦ **Seized Assets**
 - Take +4 Coin if you seize a load of cash.
 - Very valuable stolen items can be fenced for 2-8 Coin (but you take 1 Heat for every 4 Coin of value).
- ♦ **Tithe**
 - If you're Tier 2 or lower, pay a tithe to your ward boss
 - **Tithe:** 1 Coin for every 4 Coin you earned from the score
 - As GM to go for debt, favor or trouble instead

Vaults and Banks

- ♦ In addition to the crew's vaults and the Scoundrel's stashes, you may deposit Coin in a bank. When your crew has wanted levels, you lose access to all funds in the bank until you remove all your wanted levels (or devise a way to gain illicit access). Some legitimate business transactions (like a legal purchase of a property deed) may require funds in a bank to complete

Entanglements

- ♦ Play entanglement if Heat is 6+ or when the fiction demands
 - When gains a Wanted level, **mark crew xp** and pick **Bluecoats**
- ♦ **Bluecoats:** assail crew with a severity of your Wanted Level (adjusted down by your positive faction Status with the Bluecoats).
 - **4:** Lethal force, arrests, loss of lair and all assets.
 - **3:** Severe Beatings (Harm 3), an arrest, destruction of assets.
 - **2:** Serious Beatings (Harm 2), interrogation, seizure of assets.
 - **1:** Beatings (Harm 1), demands, observation/tailing.
 - **0:** Questioning, harassment, threats, observation/tailing.
 - They can be bought off for Coin equal to your Wanted level +4.
- ♦ **Devilry:** A spirit or other supernatural entity is drawn to the crew
- ♦ **Favor:** A +2 or +3 Status faction asks you to do a job for them.
 - Agree to do it or lose 1 Status with them
- ♦ **Flipped:** one of contacts switch allegiances
 - Remove them as an ally until you get that worked out.
- ♦ **Rascals:** A cohort or contact causes problems for the crew.
 - Make amends or lose Status with aggrieved faction
- ♦ **Show of Force:** A negative Status faction moves against you.
 - Make them an offer (Coin or a Claim) to back off or go to war.
- ♦ **Under Their Thumb:** An authority forces you to do their dirty work
 - Or Bluecoats entanglement, as if your Wanted Level 1 higher
- ♦ **The Usual Suspects:** The Bluecoats questions your connections.
 - Make a Fortune Roll based on their resilience and loyalty
 - The crew suffers 3 Heat minus the highest die.

Development

These crew upgrades cost Coin instead of crew advances:

- ♦ **6 coins**
 - Camouflage, Rigging, or Underground Maps & Passkeys.
- ♦ **8 coins**
 - Composed, Hardened, Ordained, or Steady (per box)
 - Ironhook Contacts, Ritual Sanctum.
- ♦ **10 coins**
 - Barge, Lair Upgrade, Quality, or Training
 - Mastery (per box)
 - Upgrade a Cohort to Elite quality.

Heat & Hold

- ♦ **Reduce Heat**
 - For each +2 Status with a Tier 3+ faction, reduce Heat by 1.
 - Reduce Heat by 1 for each Coin or Rep they expend
 - Ask the GM if there's anything else you can do to reduce Heat
- ♦ **Assess Hold**
 - Hold on their Tier is measured by your number of turf claims
 - **Strong hold:** number of turf claims greater or equal your Tier
 - **Weak hold:** number of turf claims is lower than your Tier

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Downtime: Scoundrel phase

- ♦ Restore your **Armor** and **Special Armor**
- ♦ Remove all level 1 **Harm**.
- ♦ Add 1 tick to your **Healing clock** if you have a safe place to rest.
- ♦ The rest of the downtime consists of **Vice** and **Activities**.
 - Each player can do these in any order
 - Each pursuit includes a question or two to prompt roleplaying and future game play possibilities.

Vice

When indulging vice, spend **1 Coin** and clear all of your Stress

- ♦ If your stress level was 6 or more, you **overindulge**:
 - **1 Get Wild**: Damage property; terrify citizens. Take **-1 Status** with the appropriate faction or citizenry
 - **2 Big Spender**: You indulge lavishly; spend +1 Coin
 - **3 Brag** about your exploits: +1 Heat
 - **4 Attract Trouble**: Face entanglement
 - **5 Tapped**: Your purveyor cuts you off. Find a new one
 - **6 Wasted**: Your Vice costs a downtime activity
- ♦ Instead of overindulgence, you can choose to be **lost to your vice**. Play a different character until this one returns.

Debt

You may go into debt with a provider if they agree.

- ♦ Note the initial Coin you owe
- ♦ Make a 4-segmented clock and tick it every Downtime
- ♦ If the clock fills, the provider takes steps to get their money back
- ♦ To remove a tick:
 - pay Coin equal to **half the initial amount** (round up)
 - or do a favor
- ♦ Resolve your debt: pay the initial amount and have no ticks

Supply Clocks

Clock to track acquired supplies or other acquisitions:

- ♦ Example applications:
 - Product stockpiles
 - Blackmail secrets
 - Promised favors
 - Provision in the deathlands
- ♦ For a significant expenditure, tick the clock multiple times.

Activities

Each Scoundrel may pursue **two free activities** during downtime.

- ♦ Additional activities cost 1 Coin or 1 Rep each.
- ♦ If you have level 3 Harm or survived a mortal wound, you must use at least one of your downtime activities to Recover.

Acquire

Gain temporary items, services, vehicles, or cohorts for the crew.

- ♦ Make a 4-segmented supply clock for the acquisition
 - tick each time it's used in a consequential way
- ♦ **Pay 1 Coin** for every level of Quality higher than the crew's Tier.
- ♦ **Pay +1 Coin** for a special feature
- ♦ If the acquisition is very rare, restricted, or prohibited, ask the GM:
 - how much extra Coin and/or Heat is required to get it
 - or if you'll need to acquire it with a score
- ♦ **Acquire a personal item** in the same manner, comparing its Quality to your Lifestyle rating.

Recover

- ♦ When you **recover in a safe location**:
 - gain ticks on your healing clock equal to your crew's Tier+1.
- ♦ When your **healing clock fills**
 - reduce each instance of Harm you have by one level.
 - when you remove all Harm, clear your healing clock.
- ♦ **With services of a Physicker**:
 - remove an instance of Harm with a level equal to or less than their Quality
 - Physickers on the playbooks (like Sawtooth) are Quality 2
 - For each Coin you pay, increase the Physicker's Quality by one
- ♦ **Stay in a private hospital**:
 - remove all of your **Harm**
 - then choose: Take **1 Heat** and pay **2 Coin** -or- **pay 3 Coin**
 - there are no public hospitals in Doskvol

Train

Use this activity to spend **xp** to get an advance for your character. (You don't advance instantly as in standard *Blades*)

- ♦ **Acquire an instructor** if you don't already have one
- ♦ **Act as an instructor** in an area of your expertise
 - When you're an instructor, you may spend **xp** to advance.

Work

- ♦ Accomplish a **simple project**
- ♦ Quick **side job**
 - earn 1 Coin
 - ask the GM if you can charge more for your work
- ♦ Work on **long term project**
 - make an **8-segment clock**
 - When you spend an activity working on it, mark a number of ticks equal to your Action rating
 - Add +1 tick if you have a workshop or special advantages
 - Elaborate projects require multiple clocks to complete.