NEON BEASTS TTRPG - GM PACKET (v0.1)

Core combat procedure

This system lives or dies on pacing. If you run it like a slow tactical sim, the tone collapses. Your job is to keep turns snappy, keep the grid readable, and keep Hype moving.

Round structure

Each Ranger turn: 2 Actions total. Typical: **Move** + **Action**, or spend Actions for bigger effects.

- **Move (1 Action):** move on the board, up to your full Move score.

- **Sprint (2 Action):** use both actions on your turn to move up to your max Move score x2.

- **Attack (1 Action):** basic attack / setup move / utility.
- **All-Out (2 Actions):** named attacks, weapon finishers, big wrestling moves.

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Double basic attack rule: you may attack twice, but your second basic is downgraded one step
(Crit→Hit,Hit→Graze, Graze→Miss) and cannot Crit. This can be multi-targeted.
```

Shot-clock (the 20-second rule)

If a player cannot decide within ~20 seconds:

- Default their turn to a **Basic Attack** or **Full Move to cover** (your pick).
- They lose **1 Personal Hype** (or if they are at 0, they become **Shaken**).

Cover, Ready, and Prone

- **Half Cover:** downgrade incoming ranged attacks by 1 step (Crit unaffected).
- **Full Cover:** cannot be targeted by ranged attacks unless repositioned/indirect/GM-approved angle.
- **Ready:** spend 1 Action to set a trigger ("If X happens, I do Y"). Fires later in the round when triggered (along with attack dice being rolled then).
- **Prone:** attacks against the target upgrade by 1 step for both melee and ranged. Some wrestling moves require Prone.

Hype Economy (v0.1)

Pools

- **Personal Hype (PH):** each Ranger max **2**
- **Team Hype (TH):** shared max = **5 + party size** (6 players → 11)

Spending priority

- A move specifies **PH**, **TH**, or **Either**.
- If a move is "Either," spend **PH first** unless the player explicitly chooses TH.

Hard anti-loop rule

You can gain at most:

- **+1 Personal Hype per Ranger per round**, and
- **+2 Team Hype per round total** (party-wide cap).

This single cap prevents runaway "Hype factories" while still rewarding good play.

Hype Gain Table

Personal Hype (PH) gain

A Ranger gains **+1 PH** when they do any of the following (max +1 PH per Ranger per round):

1. **Named Hit:** You land a **Named move** on **Hit or Crit**.

   - (Graze does not count. Miss does not count.)

2. **Setup Conversion:** You create a **Tag Window** and an ally spends it to land a **Named move** before your next turn.

   - (You get +1 PH; the ally still gets their own PH from Named Hit.)

3. **Clutch Save:** You prevent a teammate's Hit/Crit from landing via a defensive tool (e.g., Black intercept downgrade, Pink PR Spin, Shield Token spend) **and** the downgraded result becomes **Graze or Miss**.

   - (This rewards "support" without needing damage.)

Notes:

- A Ranger may only claim **one** of these PH gains per round (the per-Ranger cap).

Team Hype (TH) gain

The team gains **+1 TH** when any of the following happens (party cap: +2 TH per round total):

1. **Style Chain:** The team lands **two different Named moves** in the same round (by any Rangers).

   - Only counts once per round.

2. **Mook Sweep:** The team Downs **3+ mooks** in a single round.

   - Only counts once per round.

3. **Objective Win:** The team completes an encounter objective step (disarm device, rescue civilian, stop ritual progress, etc.).

   - GM awards this. Max once per round.

Optional (if you want more TH early):

- **First Blood:** +1 TH the first time in a fight that the team Cracks Armor on a Lieutenant/Boss. (Once per fight.)

Pink's Sponsored Shield refund

Sponsored Shield refund: If the Shield Token is spent before Pink's next turn, gain **+1 TH**, but this **cannot** cause the party to exceed the **+2 TH per round** gain cap.

What is Hype mechanically

- **PH** is for "my moment" (named consistency, personal tricks, reactions).
- **TH** is for "our moment" (Tag moves, big team finishers, protection plays).

This keeps the team cooperating without forcing uniform builds.

Status Design Map

```
Core rule: each move should do ONE of these jobs
```

1. **Damage**
2. **Setup (create Tag Window / apply Prone/Grabbed/Staggered)**
3. **Control (hard lock, only after armor cracks)**
4. **Support (Hype/shields/upgrade steps)**
5. **Positioning (push/pull/launch, cover denial)**

```
Avoid moves that do 3+ jobs at once.
```

Prone

```
bread-and-butter setup
```

Who should apply it often: Yellow, Green, Monster-class lieutenants
Best delivery: 1 Action setup or 2 Action finisher
Why: Prone upgrades attacks (melee+ranged) and fuels wrestling sequences.

```
Good on:
Leg sweep / trip
throws that end with slam
AOE shockwave with "knockdown on crit only"
```

Grabbed

```
enables Tag moves and specific wrestling
```

Who should apply it reliably: Black, Red; some Monster-class
Best delivery: 1 Action setup (low damage)
Why: It creates "hold them still" moments and forces enemies to spend Actions.

```
Good on:
Clincher grab, net toss, chain yank
```

Staggered

```
tempo disruption; keep rarer
```

Who should apply it: Red, a few lieutenants
Best delivery: 1 Action setup with modest damage OR as a rider on a 2 Action named (not both)
Rule: should not be common, or it becomes the best status.

Exposed

```
accuracy/crit fishing enabler
```

Who should apply it: Blue, Princess-class, some Pink/Green tools
Best delivery: Ranged mark, elegant villain strike
Why: supports "set up then cash in" without hard control.

Shaken

`soft control; common`

Who should apply it: Many enemies; some Ranger support tools
Best delivery: AOE chip, intimidation moves
Why: reduces enemy spike without removing agency.

Launch

`hard reposition; the "wow" move`

Who should apply it: Red/Black via big wrestling; Princess on signature; Monster on AOE sometimes
Best delivery: 2 Action named or Tag move
Important: On bosses, only after at least 1 Armor Token cracked.

Pin

`hard control; rarest`

Who should apply it: Black (signature), some Tag moves
Best delivery: 2 Action named; requires target Grabbed or Prone
Important: On bosses, only after armor crack. Keep it scarce.

Move templates

Solo wrestling templates

1. **Setup Grapple (1 Action):** small damage (`1d4+stat`) + Grabbed + Tag Window

2. **Trip (1 Action):** small damage + Prone + Tag Window

3. **Slam (2 Action named):** medium damage (`2d4+stat`) + Launch/Prone

4. **Submission (2 Action named):** medium damage + Pin (requires Grabbed/Prone)

Tag wrestling templates

1. **Hot Tag Strike (TH 2):** medium damage + Crack Armor on Hit

2. **Alley-Oop (TH 2):** Launch + Prone (positioning payoff)

3. **Combo Pose (TH 1):** upgrade next ally attack by 1 step + generate TH (careful with caps)

Weapon templates

Weapons should mostly differentiate by:

```
damage die profile (2d4 vs 1d8)
range (melee vs ranged)
one signature status rider
```

Examples:

- Sword (Red): Exposed or Crack Armor on crit

- Tonfa (Yellow): Prone rider

- Blaster (Blue): Exposed rider

- Chain/Whip (Green): Pull + Tag Window
- Gauntlets (Black): Grabbed rider
- Staff (Pink): TH generation / setup

Stand templates (Level 3 path)

Stands should be "mode shifts," not extra turns.

Give each Stand:

- 1 passive
- 1 basic attack
- 1 named (2 actions)
- 1 utility (mark, shield, reposition, etc.)

`Keep it symmetrical so they're easy to run.`

Defense Profiles and expected damage

All attacks resolve with a single d20 roll that produces a result step: **Miss, Graze, Hit, Crit**. The defender's Defense Profile defines which d20 ranges map to each step.

Result steps

- **Miss:** 0 damage, no on-hit effects.
- **Graze:** half damage (round down) and no rider effects unless explicitly allowed.
- **Hit:** full damage plus normal riders.
- **Crit:** full damage plus +1 damage die (or +50% for very small dice pools) plus crit riders.

Defense Profiles

Profile	Miss	Graze	Hit	Crit	Use for
Easy	1	2–4	5–19	20	Mooks you want deleted fast
Standard	1–4	5–7	8–19	20	Most Rangers, most Elites
Agile	1–5	6–8	9–19	20	Fast Rangers, slippery elites
Tough	1–3	4–7	8–19	20	Tank Rangers, armored enemies
Boss	1–7	8–11	12–19	20	Bosses before Armor breaks

Tuning knobs

- If fights are too slow: reduce enemy HP (first), then reduce Armor Tokens (second), then widen Hit bands (third).
- If fights are too swingy: increase Graze bands and reduce Crit riders.
- If mooks feel toothless: increase positioning riders (Shove, Shaken, Pin attempts) rather than raw

damage.

Enemy tiers

Enemies are built from tier templates. Pick a tier, pick a role, write 1–2 named moves, and you are done.

Tier summary

Tier	HP	Defense	Basic Damage	Move	Notes
Mook	6–10	Easy	1d4 + 1	4–5	1-hit KO from big hits; dies to Tag splash
Elite Mook	12–16	Standard/Agile	1d6 + 1	5–6	Has 1 simple named move; can guard
Lieutenant (Princess)	28–36	Standard	1d6 + 3	6	Duelist; 2–3 named moves
Lieutenant (Monster)	30–40	Tough	1d6 + 2	5	Summons/boosts mooks; AOE
Boss/BBEG	60–90	Boss to Standard	2d6 + 3	5	Armor Tokens 3–5; phases

Armor Tokens (Lieutenant/Boss only)

Armor Tokens create a visible "breakthrough" moment and prevent round-1 stun-lock. They do two things: a **Hard Control Gate** at full armor and **Damage Mitigation** that tapers as armor breaks.

Hard Control Gate

- *Full Armor only:* while the enemy is at *full* Armor Tokens (e.g., 3/3 or 2/2), it ignores hard control: *Pinned, Stagger, Launch*. Soft control (push/pull, hazards, Shaken/Exposed, Tag Windows) still works.
- *Once armor is cracked:* after the enemy has lost at least 1 token (e.g., 2/3 or 1/2), hard control can apply normally.

Damage Mitigation (damage only)

Armor mitigation reduces **damage only**. The attack result still counts for riders and setups.

Armor State	Damage Mitigation
2+ tokens remaining	Crit damage counts as Hit damage; Hit damage counts as Graze damage; Graze damage becomes 0.
1 token remaining	Crit damage counts as Hit damage. (Hit/Graze unchanged.)
0 tokens	No mitigation.

Armor Reaction (token spend)

Once per round, when the villain would suffer Grabbed/Pin/Stagger/Launch, it may spend 1 token to choose ONE:

- **Shake It Off:** downgrade the effect (Launch→Shove 2; Stagger→Shaken; Pin→cannot move 2; Grab→ends end of villain's next turn).
- **Counter-Pose:** immediately take a 1-Action Beat (move 2, shove 1, summon 1 mook, etc.).

```
Boss-only pacing option: a boss cannot lose more than 1 Armor Token per round.
```

Mooks (role templates + quick stat blocks)

Mooks should be fast to run and should create movement puzzles. Give each encounter 2–3 mook roles at most.

Standard mook block

Name	—
Tier	Mook or Elite Mook
HP	
Defense	Easy / Standard / Agile
Move	squares
Basic Attack	1 Action. Hit: tier damage. Crit: +1 die.
Role Ability	One sentence. Runnable in 2 seconds.
Named Move	Optional. 2 Actions, or 1 Action + a strong rider.

Mook roles

Role	Hook	Ability (simple)	Named Move (optional)
Striker	Runs at squishies	If adjacent to an ally, upgrade its next attack by 1 step.	DOGPILE: 2A, 2 mooks adjacent → 2d4 damage.
Guard	Protects lieutenants	If adjacent to VIP, downgrade first incoming attack against VIP by 1 step (once/round).	SHIELD LINE: 1A, grant Half Cover to adjacent ally.
Shooter	Chip from cover	Ignores Half Cover on Crit.	VOLLEY: 2A, line 6, 1d6 damage; Graze on Miss.
Controller	Moves you around	On Hit+: shove 1 square.	TRIPWIRE: 1A, place hazard; first to enter is Prone.

Role	Hook	Ability (simple)	Named Move (optional)
Support	Keeps mooks alive	Once/round, remove Shaken from a mook within 3.	BANNER POSE: 1A, grant Shield Token to a mook (max 1).
Boomer Tech	Unsafe gadgets	When reduced to 0 HP, explode for 1d4 to adjacent.	PROTOTYPE LASER: 2A, 2d6; on Miss self becomes Shaken.

```
Surrender rule:
When the lieutenant is defeated, surviving mooks surrender and flee. They drop a context
item (badge, part, keycard, weird loot) that tees up the next scene.
```

Lieutenants (Princess-class and Monster-class)

Lieutenants are episode villains. Each lieutenant gets 2–3 named moves and 1 objective that changes the fight.

Princess-class (Duelist) template

Fantasy: a singularly dangerous opponent. Self-focused kit. She wants to win the scene by humiliating the Rangers on camera.

Stat Block	HP 28–36 - Defense Standard - Move 6 - Armor Tokens 1–2 - Basic Damage 1d6+3
Objective	Score 2 'Signature Moments': land a named hit on Red or crack a Ranger's Shield Token. Each success gives +1 step on her next attack (max 2).
Passive	ANTI-NEON AURA: Rangers within 2 squares lose 1 Team Hype when they Miss (once/round total).
Named 1	SMOG DASH: 2 Actions. Move 6 ignoring engagement. Attack 2d4+3. On Hit+: target becomes Shaken.
Named 2	DISMISSIVE BACKHAND: 1 Action. 1d6+3. On Hit+: shove 2 and remove Tag Window.
Named 3	CENSOR STAMP: 2 Actions. 2d6+3. Req: target Exposed. On Hit+: Crack Armor (Lieutenant/Boss) OR remove Shield Token (Ranger).

Monster-class (Summoner/Controller) template

Fantasy: a big creature with tools. It boosts mooks, controls space, and forces the Rangers to split attention.

Stat Block	HP 30–40 - Defense Tough - Move 5 - Armor Tokens 1–2 - Basic Damage 1d6+2
Objective	Maintain a 'Pack' of 3+ mooks on the board. While the Pack exists, the monster gains +1 step on basic attacks.

Stat Block	HP 30–40 - Defense Tough - Move 5 - Armor Tokens 1–2 - Basic Damage 1d6+2
Passive	OLD-SCHOOL BENEFITS: once per round, heal a mook for 4 HP.
Named 1	CALL THE CREW: 1 Action. Summon 2 mooks in open squares within 3 (max 2 uses/fight).
Named 2	AREA SWING: 2 Actions. 2d4+2 in a 3x3. On Hit+: Prone.
Named 3	MONSTER SYNERGY: 1 Action. Choose a mook; it immediately takes a basic attack (out of turn).

```
Lieutenant defeat payoff:
when the lieutenant drops, mooks surrender and the Rangers recover a scene-appropriate
reward.
```

Example Princess Class Lieutenants

Princess Class 1: SMOG PRINCESS

Type: Duelist / Assassin

Lieutenant Defense: (Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20)

Vibe: glamorous villain in a soot-black cape with neon-killing haze; sincere, dramatic, and weirdly polite.
Objective (pick one):

- **Steal the Core:** end a turn adjacent to the objective and spend 1 Action to "secure it," then escape next round.
- **Blackout the Broadcast:** reach 2 "camera nodes" and spend 1 Action at each (2 total successes).

Failure consequence (if she succeeds): next session starts with **Team Hype −2** (PR hit) or **one Sponsor Perk locked** for that mission.

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 6 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
```

Attacks

1) Soot Fang (Basic Attack, 1 Action, melee)
Damage: `1d6 + 2`
On Hit+: target becomes **Exposed** *(neon haze "marks" them)*

2) Haze Step (Mobility, 1 Action)
Move up to **4 squares** ignoring engagement/adjacency constraints (she can slip past).
If she ends adjacent to a target, she may make a **Soot Fang** as part of this action, but that attack is
downgraded 1 step (keeps it fair).

3) CHOKE THE NEON (Signature, 2 Actions, All-Out)

Callout (she says it, of course): "CHOKE THE NEON!"

Make a melee attack against one target.

Damage on Hit+: `2d4 + 2`

On Hit+: target becomes **Shaken** *(next attack downgraded 1 step)*

On Crit: +1 die and the target is also **Prone**.

Reaction (once per round)

Smog Veil (Reaction)

Trigger: she is Hit or Crit by a Ranger attack.

Effect: Spend her **Armor Token** to downgrade that result by **1 step**.

If that reduces it to Miss, she may move **1 square** after the attack resolves.

AI script

- If she can score objective progress safely: do it (she's an assassin, not a slugger).

- If a Ranger is isolated: **Haze Step → CHOKE THE NEON**.

- Otherwise: Basic attack + reposition to threaten the backline.

Defeat / retreat / drop

On defeat: she drops a smoke bomb, bows, and retreats ("Another day for the neon to breathe.").
Morale Break: all mooks under her command surrender or scatter.

Drop (Episode Loot Card): "SMOG CANISTER" (one-use)

- **1 Action:** create a 3×3 cloud zone within 6 squares until end of round.

    - Enemies inside are **Shaken**.

    - Rangers inside gain **Half Cover** from ranged attacks.

- Compliance gag: you must announce "AIR QUALITY EVENT!" to deploy it.

Princess Class 2: STATIC PRINCESS

Vibe: crackling anti-neon interference; moves look like "signal tearing."
Objective (pick 1):

- **Cut the Feed:** spend 1 Action at **2 relay nodes** (two successes).

- **Steal the Callout:** tag 3 Rangers with Static (see move) then retreat.

Failure consequence: next fight starts with **Team Hype cap −2 for that mission** (signal interference).

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 6 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
```

Kit

1) Arc Slash (Basic, 1 Action, melee)
Damage `1d6+2`
On Hit+: target becomes **Shaken**.

2) Signal Tag (1 Action, range 6)
No damage. On Hit+: apply **Static Mark** (a simple tag):

- The next time that Ranger uses a Named move, it is downgraded 1 step **unless** they spend +1 Personal Hype.

3) DEAD AIR (Signature, 2 Actions, All-Out)
Pick up to **2 targets** within 2 squares of each other (melee or close range).
Attack both (one roll, apply results to both):

- On Hit+: each takes `1d4+2` and becomes **Exposed**.

- On Crit: +1 die to one target and that target is **Prone**.

Reaction (once/round)

Flicker Step
Trigger: hit/crit against her. Spend Armor Token to downgrade by 1 step; she teleports **2 squares**.

Drop

"SIGNAL SCRAMBLER" (one-use)
1 Action: Choose a target within 6. Until end of round, that target's next attack is downgraded by 1 step (Crit unaffected).

Princess Class 3: RUST PRINCESS

Vibe: corroded elegance; everything she touches "grinds."
Objective (pick 1):

- **Corrode the Asset:** spend 1 Action adjacent to the objective for **2 rounds total**.

- **Break the Formation:** apply Prone/Grabbed to 2 Rangers in one fight (via moves).

Failure consequence: next mission, the team begins with **one random Ranger Shaken** (systems "grind" at start).

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 5 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
```

Kit

1) Corrosion Cut (Basic, 1 Action, melee)
Damage `1d6+2`
On Hit+: target loses **1 Personal Hype** (if at 0, they become **Shaken**).

2) Grind Hook (1 Action, melee)

Damage `1d4+2`

On Hit+: **Grabbed**.

3) OXIDE EXECUTION (Signature, 2 Actions, All-Out)

Attack one Grabbed or Prone target:

Damage `2d4+2`

On Hit+: target becomes **Prone** (if not already) and **Exposed**.

Reaction (once/round)

Rust Armor

Spend Armor Token to downgrade one incoming Hit/Crit by 1 step. If reduced to Graze/Miss, she gains **+1 movement** next turn (Move 6 for a round).

Drop

"ANTI-CORROSION COATING" (one-use)

Reaction: When you would lose Personal Hype or become Shaken, ignore it and gain 1 Shield Token instead.

Example Monster Class Lieutenants

Monster Class 1: CANNON BEAR

Type: Mook Manager / Area Pressure
Vibe: big armored bear with a shoulder cannon; enthusiastic, dumb, and proud of his "crew."
Objective (pick one):

- **Quota Run:** spawn **6 mooks** during the fight (doesn't require them to survive).
- **Hold the Ground:** keep at least 1 of his mooks on a capture point for **3 rounds**.

Failure consequence (if he succeeds): next session begins with **+2 mooks** in the opening fight (the world remembers his "deployment success").

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 5 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
Payroll cap: max 6 mooks
```

Rules: Payroll Cap

- Cannon Bear can have **at most 6 "on payroll" mooks** active at once.
- If he would spawn more, he instead upgrades 2 Fresh mooks to **Elite Mooks** (first Hit+ only Shakens them, second Hit+ downs them).

Attacks

1) Maul Swipe (Basic Attack, 1 Action, melee)

Damage: `1d6 + 2`

2) CREW DEPLOYMENT (Summon, 1 Action)
Spawn **2 mooks** in empty squares within 2 squares of Cannon Bear.
(Use your default mook statline; these are "his crew.")

3) CANNON SALUTE (Area, 2 Actions, All-Out, ranged cone/line)
Pick either:

- a **3-square line** in sight, or

- a **2×2 blast** within 6 squares.
  Targets in the area take `1d4 + 1` on Hit+ and become **Shaken**.
  On Crit: +1 die (only to one target of your choice).

Reaction (once per round)

Meat Shield (Reaction)
Trigger: Cannon Bear is Hit or Crit by a Ranger attack and has a mook adjacent.
Effect: Redirect the attack to the adjacent mook.

- If it was a Hit/Crit, the mook goes **Down** (or **Shaken** if Elite).

- The attack does not affect Cannon Bear.

Aura (always on)

Pack Spirit
Mooks within 2 squares of Cannon Bear deal **+1 damage** on Hit+.
(That's it. No stacking math.)

AI script (run fast)

- Early: **Crew Deployment** until he's at 4–6 mooks.

- If Rangers cluster: **Cannon Salute**.

- If threatened: stay near mooks to enable **Meat Shield** and **Pack Spirit**.

Defeat / retreat / drop

On defeat: Cannon Bear howls, grabs his cannon core, and bolts into a tunnel/hatch.
Morale Break: all his mooks surrender immediately.

Drop (Episode Loot Card): "CANNON CORE" (one-use)

- **1 Action, ranged 6:** make an attack that **ignores Half Cover**.

  - On Hit+: deal `2d4` and **Crack Armor** (remove 1 token).

  - On Crit: +1 die.

Monster Class 2: HAMMER CROCODILE

Vibe: big jaw + oversized hammer tail; loves knocking things down.
Objective (pick 1):

- **Hold the Waterline:** keep 2+ mooks adjacent to a marked zone for 3 rounds.

- **Break Their Legs:** make 3 targets Prone (via moves) in one fight.

Failure consequence: next mission, terrain starts with **2 hazard tiles** already active.

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 5 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
Payroll cap: max 6 mooks
```

Kit

1) Tail Hammer (Basic, 1 Action, melee)
Damage `1d6+2`
On Hit+: **Prone** (lieutenants can do this; bosses only after armor cracks as usual).

2) Muck Call (1 Action)
Spawn 2 mooks within 2 squares (respect payroll cap).

3) SWAMP SLAM (Signature, 2 Actions, All-Out)
2×2 blast within 4 squares:
On Hit+: `1d4+1` and **Shaken**.
On Crit: +1 die to one target and that target is **Prone**.

Reaction (once/round)

Snap Counter
Trigger: a Ranger ends movement adjacent to him.
Effect: make a basic attack against that Ranger (no All-Out).
(Once/round; this is how he punishes reckless dives.)

Drop

"HAMMER TAIL MODULE" (one-use)
1 Action, melee: On Hit+ deal `2d4` and force **Prone**.

Monster Class 3: DRILL BOAR

Vibe: digs lanes, creates hazards, summons workers.
Objective (pick 1):

- **Tunnel Network:** create 3 Drill Tiles (see move) in one fight.
- **Escort the Payload:** a drill cart must reach an exit edge.

Failure consequence: next mission begins with **reduced cover** (arena "wrecked").

Stats

```
HP: 35 | Armor Tokens: 1 | Move: 5 | Defense: Miss 1–3 / Graze 4–6 / Hit 7–18 / Crit 19–20
Payroll cap: max 6 mooks
```

Kit

1) Gore Charge (Basic, 1 Action)
Move 3 squares in a line, then attack:
Damage `1d6+2`
On Hit+: push 2 squares.

2) Drill Tile (1 Action)
Place a **Drill Tile** within 4 squares (max 3 tiles active).
Any character entering a Drill Tile becomes **Shaken** (once per turn).

3) BORER BURST (Signature, 2 Actions, All-Out)
Line 3 squares within 6:
On Hit+: `1d4+1`, **push 2**, and if pushed into a Drill Tile/wall they become **Prone**.

Reaction (once/round)

Dig In
Spend Armor Token to downgrade a Hit/Crit by 1 step. If downgraded, immediately place a Drill Tile adjacent to self.

Drop

"BORER CHARGE" (one-use)
1 Action: Move 3 in a straight line without provoking; then make a basic attack that ignores Half Cover.

Encounter building

Use Threat Points (TP) to budget quickly. These numbers assume 4–5 Rangers. For 6 Rangers, add +15% TP.

TP budgets

Fight Type	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Notes
Trash (2–5 min)	6–8	8–10	10–12	Mostly mooks; 1 elite max
Mini-boss (8–12 min)	10–12	12–14	14–16	1 lieutenant OR elite swarm
Set-piece (15–20 min)	14–16	16–18	18–22	Lieutenants + mooks + objective

TP costs

Unit	TP	Notes
Mook	1	HP 6–10, Easy defense
Shooter/Controller Mook	1.5	If it has a strong shove/Prone tool
Elite Mook	2	HP 12–16; 1 named move
Princess Lieutenant	8	Duelist; 1–2 Armor Tokens
Monster Lieutenant	8	Summons/boosts; 1–2 Armor Tokens

Unit	TP	Notes
Boss/BBEG	14+	Use phases; Armor Tokens 3–5

Objective templates

Pick an objective that forces movement and prevents a pure damage race:

- **Protect the sponsor van:** mooks try to tag the van 3 times.

- **Shut the vents:** 3 vents; interact (1 Action) to shut; each shut removes a hazard.

- **Capture the case:** monster carries a case; if it exits the map, Rangers lose the drop.

- **Hold the pose zone:** Rangers must control a marked tile for 2 rounds to complete the episode beat.

Example encounters (Level 1–3)

Level 1 – Trash sweep (6–8 TP)

Setup: 6 mooks (Striker + Shooter) in a small map with 2 Half Cover lanes.
Beat: Rangers clear quickly, build Team Hype, and end with a Tag finisher pose. **GM note:** if it ends too fast, add 2 reinforcement mooks on round 2.

Level 2 – Princess duel (12–14 TP)

Setup: 1 Princess Lieutenant + 4 mooks. Armor Tokens: 2.
Objective: shut 2 vents. While vents are active, the first Ranger Miss each round costs -1 Team Hype. **Beat:** Princess tries to isolate a squishy target; Rangers must crack 1 token before hard control works.

Level 3 – Big set-piece (18–22 TP)

Setup: Princess Lieutenant + Monster Lieutenant + 4 mooks. Tokens: Princess 2, Monster 2.
Objective: protect a sponsor kiosk for 2 rounds OR defeat either lieutenant.
Beat: Monster maintains a Pack; Princess hunts Red/Blue; Rangers coordinate Tag windows and armor cracks.
Resolution rule: When the first lieutenant drops, mooks surrender and the remaining lieutenant retreats unless you want a two-phase fight.

Big Level 3 Episode Fight Example

Encounter: "Air Quality Incident"

Enemies: Smog Princess + Cannon Bear + mooks
Goal: feels like a finale without being a 3-phase boss.

Why this works

- Princess forces precision decisions (protect backline/objective).

- Monster creates board pressure (mooks + aura + meat shields).

- Mooks provide pacing and spectacle.

- You can end it cleanly with Morale Break and retreats.

Setup (6 PCs at Level 3)

Map

Medium map (roughly 12×12 squares). Include:

- 2–3 cover objects
- 1 raised platform or "broadcast tower"
- 1 "objective zone" in the middle (the Air Monitor / Core / Camera)

Starting positions

- Cannon Bear starts center-left with 2 mooks.
- Smog Princess starts far-right in partial cover.
- 4 additional mooks start spread.

Enemy counts (default)

- **Smog Princess** (35 HP, 1 Armor)
- **Cannon Bear** (35 HP, 1 Armor)
- **6 mooks total on board at start**
  Cannon Bear can summon up to 6 on payroll; in this combined fight, reduce his payroll cap to **4** (important for speed).

Encounter Objective (for both sides)

Villain objective

They win if they complete either:

- **Smog Princess** spends 1 Action at the objective for **2 total successes**, OR
- **Cannon Bear** spawns **4 mooks** during the fight (quota) and keeps 2 mooks alive at the end of round 4.

(These are achievable but stoppable.)

Ranger win conditions

- Defeat either lieutenant. When one goes down, **all their mooks surrender**.
- Defeat both for a "perfect episode" result.

Special Episode Rule: Smog Zone (simple and on theme)

At the **end of each round**, place a 2×2 Smog patch on a random edge or pre-marked vent tile.

- Any character entering Smog becomes **Shaken** (once per turn).
- Smog disappears at end of the next round.

It pressures movement without adding math.

AI script (keeps it under 20 minutes)

Round 1

- Cannon Bear: Crew Deployment (if under cap), then reposition near mooks.
- Smog Princess: Haze Step into a threatening lane; basic attack to Expose.

Round 2–3

- If Rangers cluster: Cannon Salute.
- If a backliner is exposed or isolated: Smog Princess uses signature.

Round 4+

- If villains are behind: both pivot to objectives (force the "stop them now" moment).
- If villains are ahead: Princess retreats as soon as she hits objective success; Bear tries to preserve mooks.

Difficulty knobs (use during play)

If the party is crushing:

- Give Smog Princess a **second** use of Haze Step per round **but** only as movement (no attack).
- Add 2 more mooks from vents at round end (once).

If the party is struggling:

- Reduce Cannon Bear's payroll cap from 4 to **3**.
- Remove the Smog Zone end-of-round rule.
- Have Princess prioritize objective over damage (less lethal).

Rewards (Drops)

If they beat both lieutenants:

- They get **both Drops** (Smog Canister + Cannon Core)
  If they beat only one:
- They get that Drop; the other retreats with "their property."

Also: grant **+2 Team Hype at the start of next mission** as the "episode win" bonus.

Boss framework and printable templates

When you introduce a true BBEG, keep the same rules but add scripted beats so it feels like a finale without turning into a slog.

Boss phases

- **Phase 1 (Armor up):** Defense Boss, Armor Tokens 3–5. Control gated until 1 token breaks.
- **Phase 2 (Armor cracked):** Defense Standard. Boss gains 1 nasty named move. Hard control now works.
- **Phase 3 (Desperation):** At 25% HP, boss gains +1 step on its first attack each round; Rangers gain +1 Team Hype per round (cap still applies).

Scripting rule: never give a boss more than 3 named moves in a fight. Swap the list when a phase changes.

Printable blank stat block

NAME / THEME	_____
Tier	Mook / Elite / Princess Lt / Monster Lt / Boss
HP	_
Defense Profile	Easy / Standard / Agile / Tough / Boss
Move	_
Armor Tokens	_
Basic Attack	Damage dice: __ Rider: __
Named Move A	Cost: _ **Effect:** _____
Named Move B	Cost: _ **Effect:** _____
Named Move C	Cost: _ **Effect:** _____
Objective / Win Condition	_____
Loot / Drop	_____

Turn Order Modes

Turn Order Mode A: Side Initiative (Episode Spotlight)

When to use: you want the fastest combats and the cleanest teamwork sequencing.

Start of each round

1. One Ranger rolls **1d20 + Heart** (or just **1d20** if you want zero stat influence).
2. GM rolls **1d20** for the villains.
3. Higher roll gets **Spotlight** (acts first). Ties go to Rangers (more heroic pacing).

Acting

- The Spotlight side activates **all units** in **any order**.
- Then the other side activates **all units** in **any order**.
- End of round: resolve hazards, end-of-round statuses, and any "end of round" Hype changes.

Enemy grouping

- **Mooks activate in squads** (2–3 squads max). Each squad takes one group turn.
- **Lieutenants** act as one unit (2 Actions).
- **Bosses** act as one unit (2 Actions) + a Lair Action (below).

Villain Beats

Each lieutenant/boss gets **1 Beat per round** (mooks don't).
A Beat is a **single 1-Action effect** used outside their normal activation, triggered by an obvious "episode moment."

Recommended triggers:

- After the first Ranger Crit of the round
- Immediately after a Tag Move resolves
- When a mook dies within 2 squares of the lieutenant
- When the lieutenant loses an Armor Token

Example Beats:

- **Reposition 2** (push/pull self or target)
- **Guard Pose** (downgrade the next incoming attack vs them by 1 step)
- **Summon 1 mook** (if Monster-class)
- **Taunt** (force a nearby Ranger to lose 1 Personal Hype on a Miss next turn)

Boss Lair Action

At **end of the round**, a boss can do one "environment move":

- Spawn 2 mooks
- Place a hazard tile
- Force a shove/pull 2 from a marked tile
- Remove one Tag Window on them

This adds tension without adding a second boss turn.

Turn Order Mode B: Speed Slots (XCOM Tempo)

When to use: you want speedsters to *always* matter and you want a consistent combat rhythm.

Everyone has a Speed Tier

- **Fast:** Yellow, Green
- **Normal:** Red, Pink
- **Slow:** Blue, Black
  (Enemies also have Fast/Normal/Slow.)

Round order

1. *Fast Rangers*
2. **Fast Enemies**
3. *Normal Rangers*
4. **Normal Enemies**
5. *Slow Rangers*
6. **Slow Enemies**
7. ***End of round cleanup***

Acting inside a slot

Within each slot, that side chooses activation order freely.

Enemy grouping

- Mooks are still 2–3 squads.
- Lieutenants are single units.
- Bosses are single units + optional Lair Action.

Why this doesn't slow teamwork

Because order within each slot is free, you can still do:

- "Green sets Tag Window → Yellow capitalizes"
  as long as they're both Fast (or you plan across slots).

Shared rule for both modes: Ready/Hold

Ready (1 Action): declare a trigger and an action.

- Trigger resolves later in the round when it happens.
- You must still have valid range/LoS when it triggers.
- If the trigger never happens, the action is lost (keeps it from being strictly optimal play).

This is the "bridge" mechanic that makes both A and B support tag-team timing.

"No Perfect Lock" rule for bosses

Bosses and lieutenants cannot lose more than **1 Armor Token per round** (unless it's a finale or you explicitly want a melt).

- This prevents optimized teams from deleting the set-piece before it becomes cinematic.

Below is a **generic Stand template kit** that turns your three archetypes (Sentinel / Artillery / Choreographer) into **reusable design patterns**. The intent is: you can invent a new Stand in 10 minutes, it will be balanced "enough" for v0.1, and it will still feel like a proto-Zord without adding turns.

Stand Template Rules

Stand = Mode, not a creature

- A Stand never adds an extra turn or unit.
- While manifested, the Ranger uses normal actions as usual.

Manifest

Cost: 1 Action
Hype: 1 Personal
Duration: until end of fight (or dismiss out of combat as flavor)
Limit: 1 Stand specialization per Ranger.

Baseline Dice

- **Stand Basic:** `1d6 + (Tech or Heart or Power)`
- **Setup Named:** `2d4 + Stat` (reliable, lower spike)
- **Payoff Named:** `2d6 + Stat` (big moment)
- **Crit:** add **+1 die** to the damage roll.

Boss control lock

Launch/Pin/Stagger effects only apply after ≥1 Armor Token is cracked.

Design constraint

A Stand should have exactly:

- **Passive (once/round max)**
- **Basic (1 Action)**
- **Utility (1 Action)**
- **Named Setup (2 Actions)**
- **Named Payoff (2 Actions)**

Stand Creation Worksheet

Pick the Stand's Role

`(choose ONE primary)`

- **Tank/Guard/Control** (Sentinel pattern)
- **Ranged/Mark/Armor Crack** (Artillery pattern)
- **Control/Reposition/Hype Engine** (Choreographer pattern)

Then pick ONE secondary theme:

- mobility
- debuffing
- shields
- multi-target
- anti-cover
- anti-mook
- duelist etc.

Choose the Stand's Stat Axis

Pick one primary stat for most moves:

- **Power** (melee pressure / grapples / slam)
- **Tech** (ranged / gadgets / precision)
- **Heart** (support / staging / hype)

You can reference a second stat on exactly **one** move at most.

Define the Stand's Passive

`(once per round)`

Passives should do one of these:

- Generate **1 Personal Hype** (rare) OR **+1 Team Hype** (gated by cap) OR
- Enable a small positional move (step 1, shove/pull 1) OR
- Add a single "rider" when a specific condition happens.

Hard rule: passive triggers **once per round** and never adds more than

- +1 PH, or
- +1 TH, or
- 1 small movement, or
- 1 minor status like Shaken/Exposed **only on a named hit**.

Define Basic

`(1 Action)`

Basic should be your "always okay" move:

- **Damage:** `1d6 + Stat`
- Optional rider on Hit+:
  - **push/pull 1**, or
  - apply **Shaken** OR **Exposed** (not both), or
  - ignore Half Cover under a condition (e.g., "if you didn't move").

Hard rule: Basic should not Crack Armor and should not grant Tag Window by itself unless it's very conditional.

Define Utility

`(1 Action)`

Utility must do **one** job, clearly:

- grant an ally Half Cover / Shield Token (cap 1)
- apply Exposed / Tag Window at range (costly)
- reposition someone 1–2 squares
- remove Shaken from an ally
- create a hazard tile / spotlight zone

Hype gating:

- If Utility gives defense to allies (Shield Token), it should cost **1 Team Hype**.
- If Utility creates Tag Window at range, it should cost **1 Personal Hype** (or 1 Team Hype if it's very strong).

Named Setup

`(2 Actions)`

Setup Named is the "I'm creating the episode beat."

- **Damage:** `2d4 + Stat`
- On Hit+ apply **one major setup**:
  - Tag Window, OR
  - Prone, OR
  - Grabbed (if allowed by armor state), OR
  - Shaken + Exposed (counts as one package for Artillery-style)
- Often includes a reposition effect (pull 2, shove 2).

Hard rule: Setup Named should not Crack Armor unless it's the Stand's entire identity and the payoff does something else.

Named Payoff

`(2 Actions)`

Payoff is the "finisher moment."

- **Damage:** `2d6 + Stat`
- On Hit+ does **one** of:
    - Launch (push 3) + Prone, OR
    - Crack Armor, OR
    - AOE hit (small area), OR
    - Big single-target + forced move

Hard rule: Payoff should have a **requirement** (so it's not spam):

- target is Grabbed or Prone, OR
- target is Exposed, OR
- target has Tag Window, OR
- you did not move this turn, etc.

The Three Archetype Templates

Template A: SENTINEL Pattern

`Tank / Guard / Control`

- **Passive (1/round):** reward defense play (Shield Token spent, successful downgrade, ally protected). Gain +1 PH or a free step.
- **Basic:** `1d6 + Power`, on Hit+ push 1.
- **Utility:** defensive support (Half Cover + Shield Token cap 1) costing **1 Team Hype**.
- **Named Setup:** `2d4 + Power`, on Hit+ Grabbed + Tag Window (or Pin if armor cracked).
- **Named Payoff:** `2d6 + Power`, requires Grabbed/Prone; on Hit+ Launch + Prone; on Crit optionally Crack Armor.

Balance flags to avoid:

- Don't give free Shield Tokens with no Team Hype cost.
- Don't allow Grabbed before armor crack unless you explicitly want "anti-boss" tech.

Template B: ARTILLERY Pattern

`Ranged / Mark / Armor Crack`

- **Passive (1/round):** reward applying Exposed/marking. +1 Team Hype if cap allows.
- **Basic:** `1d6 + Tech`, conditional Half Cover ignore if you didn't move.
- **Utility:** Lock-on mark: on Hit+ apply Exposed + Tag Window, costing **1 Personal Hype**.
- **Named Setup:** `2d4 + Tech`, on Hit+ Shaken + Exposed (the "set them up").
- **Named Payoff:** `2d6 + Tech`, costs 2 Team Hype; on Hit+ Crack Armor (and maybe Prone on Crit).

Balance flags to avoid:

- Don't let basic attacks Crack Armor.
- Keep Crack Armor mostly on the Payoff named.

Template C: CHOREOGRAPHER Pattern

`Control / Reposition / Hype Engine`

- **Passive (1/round):** when an ally lands a Named Hit, you get a free 1-step reposition; optionally gain +1 PH if you "get into position."
- **Basic:** `1d6 + Heart`, on Hit+ optional pull 1.
- **Utility:** "Cue" an ally (upgrade next attack by 1 step OR grant Shield Token), costing **1 Team Hype**.
- **Named Setup:** `2d4 + Heart`, on Hit+ pull 2 + Prone + Tag Window.
- **Named Payoff:** `2d6 + Heart`, requires Tag Window; on Hit+ choose Launch+Prone OR Crack Armor.

Balance flags to avoid:

- Don't make the Utility both an upgrade and a shield at once.
- Don't give free team-wide upgrades without Team Hype.

Quick Stand Balance Checklist (v0.1)

Before approving a new Stand, check:

1. Does it **add no extra turns**? (must be yes)
2. Does it have **exactly one** Crack Armor source (usually the Payoff named)?
3. Does it have **a requirement** on the Payoff named?
4. Does it avoid giving **free Shield Tokens** (should cost Team Hype)?
5. Does it generate no more than **+1 Hype/round** from passive?
6. Can it do **setup + payoff** in a single turn? (should generally be **no** unless it's spending big Team Hype and positioning was pre-done)

Example Blank Stand Sheet

Use this to create a new Stand in one page:

Stand Name: ___
Fantasy: ___
Best for: ___
Stat Axis: Power / Tech / Heart

Manifest: 1 Action, 1 Personal Hype, lasts fight

Passive (1/round): ___
Basic (1A): Damage `1d6 + ___` | On Hit+: ___
Utility (1A): Range _ **| Cost:** _ Hype | Effect: ___
Named Setup (2A): Damage `2d4 + ___` | On Hit+: ___
Named Payoff (2A): Req: ___ | Cost: _ **Hype | Damage** `2d6 + ___` **| On Hit+:** _ | On Crit: ___