Welcome to **Cthulhu live**.

These rules are based on Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition. A game published by skirmisher press and written by Robert McLaughlin and the Skirmisher Game development group.

Cthulhu live is a game inspired by the writings of H.P.Lovecraft and a bunch of other creepy guys. It allows players to use wits, skills and teamwork (sic) to combat dark alien forces from the stars and outside our known concepts of reality. These ancient horrors wait just beyond the perception of our science and our senses, waiting to reclaim what was once theirs. The horror of the game does not limit itself to solely the Lovecraft Mythos. The game system includes rules for psychic powers, insane killers, vampires, werewolves, living dead, demons, ghosts and other terrors.

‘**Keeper**’ is the term used for the person or people running the game. Other games refer to them as Game Masters (GMs) or Storytellers (STs).

**Character creation:**

Your character’s mental and physical statistics are defined by the following 3 stats. You have 40 character points to distribute between them. A score of 20 is the maximum starting for a human. Average human ability scores are between 8 and 12.

**Education (EDU)**: Knowledge and learning capacity. EDU is a factor in determining the success of a great many skills in the game.

**Constitution (CON)**: Physical health strength and toughness. CON establishes wound points. CON is important when determining the effect of poisons, electrical shock, radiation exposure etc. Not that any of those things will ever happen to your character. CON is also used when making a strength check.

**Power (POW):** Willpower, psychic strength and spiritual awareness. POW is used when performing magical or psychic feats. POW is used when judging the effect of mind reading, spell casting, psychic combat, resisting possession and other times when your character relies on innate psychic and magical talent.

These 3 stats define the secondary stats of wound points, magic points and luck. Stats also determine the number and quality of your skills.

Secondary statistics:

**Magic points (MP**) at the start of the game, MP = POW. Magic points are expended when attempting psychic or magical actions. Magic points are regained through rest and meditation. Some magic items and totally friendly rituals may boost your magic points to unnatural levels.

**Wound points (WP)** at the start of the game CON = WP. A rating of how many wounds you can sustain before falling unconscious or dying. If reduced to 0, you fall unconscious to the floor and require medical attention.

**Luck Points (LP)** POW/4 dropping any fractions. Luck can be used in any skill test allowing you to test at one level higher than your actual rating. This allows you to conduct a skill test at level 6 or higher. Luck points are regained between games.

**Sanity:** Your mental stability and guideline for how you react when confronted with arcane horror. There are 6 levels of Sanity, providing a guide for role-playing your character’s state of mind. Most characters start off as ‘solid’. Some disturbed characters may start lower. Events and horrific revelations may rattle your sanity and lower your level. The lower you go, the more erratic, frightened and irrational you should play your character.

**Sanity levels:**

Solid

Shaken

Spooked

Scared

Screaming

Stark. Raving. Mad!

A higher POW allows you to cope better with fear. Consult the chart below and note the indicated ‘Shade of Terror.’ On your character sheet.

**POW** **Shade of terror**

18-20 Red

15-17 Orange

12-14 Yellow

9-11 Blue

1-8 Green

During the game, you may experience many unsettling things. Watch for one or more coloured ribbons or coloured pieces of paper inside or near the object or coloured cards held up by the keeper.

If confronted by your ‘shade of terror’, you are temporarily overcome with fear! You flee from the scene, freeze in terror, withdraw into a foetal position, wildly attack the object of your fear; whatever seems appropriate for your character and the situation they are in which the loss of control occurs. After several minutes, you typically regain some measure of self-control – however, you drop one level of sanity.

Each ‘shade of terror’ builds on the one below it. A **yellow** also panics **blue** and **green** players.

Your character also drops one level of sanity for every 3 times they encounter something frightening, but successfully retain their self-control. Even the boldest adventurers suffer the gnawing effect of fear and stress.

**Advantages and disadvantages**

Before purchasing skills, consider taking advantages or disadvantages for your character. The points concerned affect your initial 40 character stat points. You may take a maximum of 5 points of advantages and 5 points of disadvantages. You must consistently role-play any disadvantages you take. Taking an advantage costs points from your character stat points total. Taking a disadvantage adds to your stat points total.

**Advantages:**

Artistic: 1 point. You are creative and imaginative. You may test one level higher than your fine arts skill would normally permit. It allows a skill test at level one in a field you do not normally possess.

Blessed: 3 points. You or an ancestor has done something that met with approval from some benevolent or supernatural intelligence. You may detail the background history, but the keeper determines any special effect (if any) during the game. It usually takes the form of a miraculous twist of fate that saves the character on one single occasion.

Clearance: 1 point. You have been granted high security clearance as a result of your job and a favourable background investigation. Clearance can be granted to military or government employees, politicians and various technical and scientific workers working for a government agency. Clearance does **not** grant unrestricted access to all classified material. Clearances can be frozen or revoked!

Connected: 2 points. You might be related to a politician, mafia boss or once have saved the life of a federal agent. You have a powerful connection with the law, government or criminal underworld and you may be able to draw on this connection to aid you in times of need. This is a personal connection. This connection is not a magic bullet. You must be able to communicate with your connection in order to request assistance.

Daredevil. 2 points. With a flair for the dramatic and a risk taking, devil-may-care attitude, you are not hampered by the doubt or hesitation experienced by most people. You perform test resolutions at one skill level higher than your actual level, provided they are recklessly dangerous or take place during dramatic scenes when you have an audience. Your character always seems to perform better when in dire peril! Examples include: Repairing a getaway car while under machine gun fire, landing a damaged plane on a jungle airstrip in a rainstorm, disarming a bomb when only seconds remain etc.

Fame: 1 or 2 points. You are well known in your chosen profession (1point) or to the general public (2 points) Your name and face are recognised and many average people feel honoured to make your acquaintance.

Gifted: 2 points. You have a natural affinity for the invisible world and have 5 extra magic points than your POW would normally allow.

Gift with languages: 2 points. When buying and increasing skill levels, you pay only one point per skill level in language skills. You must still spend one extra point to purchase a linguistic specialization.

High tolerance: 2 points. You have a very hardy constitution. All tests vs. poisons, drugs and similar are made at +5 to your CON score.

Keen senses: 2 Points. Your character makes skill tests benefiting from highly acute senses at one skill level higher. Keepers will rule on what tests can or cannot use this advantage.

Lucky: 3 points. You are naturally lucky and receive an extra 5 luck points in addition to the base allocation.

Nerves of steel: 3 points. Your character is a rock, a model of discipline and self-control. You can make sanity tests at one ‘Shade of terror’ higher than what would normally be permitted by your POW. If your POW already places you in the highest level for a sanity test, you are allowed to ignore the first failed sanity test of the game. Additionally, if your character’s POW exceeds your CON you may use POW for wound points for combat. BUT you may collapse and even die when the danger has passed if lost wounds exceed your natural CON.

Owed a favour: 1 point. Someone owes you a favour. This is someone of the Keeper’s choosing. Typically an NPC, although it might be another player. At some point during the game, you can ask for help within their means.

Psychic talent: 3points. Your character possesses rare and unusual potential. This ability is the basic potential of using psychic powers. Your keeper will give you further details AFTER you purchase this ability.

Robust: 2 points. You have always enjoyed robust health and resistance to injury. +5 to you wound point total. Wounds regenerate normally.

Stinking rich: 3 Points. You have the benefit of a fat bank account and a nearly endless supply of wealth. Details of your wealth to be negotiated with the keeper.

Strong: 2 points. Your character is stronger than expected for their size. + 5 to CON score on any test measuring physical strength.

Well-travelled: 1 or 2 points. You have been around the world and back again! As a result, you may call on regional knowledge gathered in your travels. 1 point = travelled is limited to a single continent. (determined at the beginning of the game) With 2 points, you have travelled the world. During the game you can ask one of the keepers a basic question about objects, names and locations. It will be up to the keeper to decide if you know anything related to your question. Generally, it will be just cursory information.

**Disadvantages**.

Abused: 2 points. You suffer from the effects of past physical, mental or sexual abuse. Certain actions, words or sights may trigger outbursts.

Amnesia: 2 points. Your long term memory is gone and only functional memories like abilities, skills and basic social competencies remain. The keeper picks one additional disadvantage, for NO additional points, and keeps it secret until this unknown disadvantage manifests itself in play.

Bad Eyesight: 1 point. You need correctional lenses to have functional eyesight. You perform vision related skill tests such as translations etc. at one skill level lower unless you are able to be very close to the object. You are practically helpless if you lose your glasses.

Blind: 3 points. You are totally blind.

Code of honour: 1 or 2 points. You live by the tenets of a strict code of conduct, morality and personal honour. You will never willingly act contrary to this code, even if it means injury, imprisonment or death. If accidentally tricked into betraying this code, you suffer an immediate loss of one sanity level and perform all skill tests at one level lower until the transgression is righted. The keepers decide the points value.

Dark Past: 2 Points. Sometime in the past, you committed an awful transgression. A dark crime, a terrible betrayal or perhaps an affront to humanity itself. You must always be alert, for one day, your past is likely to catch up with you.

Habitual liar: 1 point. You are a pathological liar, habitually telling a lie instead of the truth whenever it seems practical, makes you feel good helps you look important or provides an immediate and easy way to get out of a negative situation.

Illiterate: 3 points. Regardless of how many languages your character knows, he cannot read or write any of them. You cannot pass level2 of any academic or trade skill without consultation with a keeper.

Intolerant: 1 point. Your character thinks everybody else is wrong. Their opinions, behaviour, backgrounds are all wrong. You vocally disapprove of people of the wrong sex, colour, race, religion, age, economic status or profession. You will need to select a primary focus of your intolerance.

Obsession: 1 point. Some goal, person or object is a compelling fixation that drives many of your actions. This could be sex, money, an unnatural fetish, love, power, possession of something etc. You must make at least one serious attempt to pursue this during the game.

Odious habit: 1 point. Your character has a particularly annoying habit that is likely to rub others the wrong way. You are expected to role-play this odious habit throughout the game.

Owe a favour: 1 point. You owe someone a favour – typically an NPC

Persecuted: 1, 2 or 3 points. Your character belongs to a persecuted minority that is generally hated by society as a whole. The point’s value of this disadvantage varies to the location and setting of the game, how obvious a member of the minority you are and to what degree this persecution may actually affect you during the game.

Phobia: 1, 2 or 3 points. You have an unreasonable fear of something. As a 1 point disadvantage, you make skill tests at one level lower while in the presence of whatever you fear. As a 2 point disadvantage, you suffer the above and you immediately drop one sanity level. As a 3 point disadvantage, you drop 2 levels of sanity and must flee the area or risk going catatonic.

Physically handicapped: 1, 2 or 3 points. Your character is Physically handicapped to a degree that affects your movement and motor coordination. The keeper decides the exact points value based on the obstacles the player may face with such a handicap.

Psychosis: 2 points. Suffering from a condition of mental illness, your character begins the game with acute paranoia, manic-depression, multiple personality disorder or another psychosis.. You also lose one maximum level of sanity and may never rise to the “solid” level on the sanity chart. This is an ever present part of who you are and how you interact with others.

Sickly: 2 points. Physically weak or sick, you begin play with -5 wound points less than your CON.

Unlucky: 2 points. You have no luck points to spend at the game.

Wanted: 2 points. You are a known felon or somehow wanted by the authorities and they are looking for you.

**Skills:**

Specialised fields of knowledge for your character.

Skill points = (EDU + POW) X 2

Skills are divided into five levels of knowledge. Each additional level you raise a skill increases your chance of success, speeds the time a task can be accomplished and may even provide specialized areas of expertise within the skill category.

Some skills may be purchased at will; others have a prerequisite before they can be learned. On rare occasions, there is a minimum stat score.

**Skill levels**

1 – Novice. A basic knowledge, equivalent to what one might learn about a subject at grade school, a hobby level interest or rudimentary training in the field.

2 – Apprentice. A solid grounding in an area of knowledge.

3 – Journeyman. The skill is something the character could do professionally.

4 – Expert. A recognised expert in their field.

5 – Master. The character is among the top individuals in that area of knowledge.

Skill levels cost the level of the skill. A level 1 skill costs 1 point. A level 2 skill costs an additional 2 points. To buy level 4 in history would cost 10 points: 1+2+3+4= 10

Skill levels are used as base multipliers when attempting a skill test. E.g. The keeper may ask for your EDU X locksmith skill when picking a lock. You would apply your EDU X History when trying to find out more about the knights Templar.

**Test resolution**

Difficulty Success score

1 – No sweat 5

2 – Simple 11

3 – Easy 18

4 – Routine 26

5 - Average 35

6 – Challenging 45

7 – Difficult 56

8 – Extreme 68

9 – Superhuman 81

10 – Impossible 95

A difference of 50 points between the success score and the players skill test, results in a ‘critical failure’.

Team effort: Player with the highest skill is team leader. They can manage up to one additional person per skill level the team leader has. Leader’s skill level and stat are multiplied as normal. Team members with the correct skill contribute half the supporting stat to the leader’s score.

**Skill specializations**

Nearly all skills have a list of suggested specializations. They represent individual areas of interest and personal focus or a professional area of expertise. Players may purchase one specialization at level 3 and one additional specialization at each level thereafter. Cost is one skill point.

Any skill tests that fall within this area of expertise will be taken at one level higher. E.g. A player with History 3 and a specialization in Mediterranean History conducts a skill test at EDU X 4 when trying to identify an Etruscan artefact. This allows a player to skill test at level 6 if the test falls within their area of specialization.

Below is a list of skills. Most are self-explanatory, but for further detail, discuss with your keeper. There are some suggested specializations, but if you have a new idea, discuss it with a keeper.

Accounting. Requirements: Mathematics -2 Example specialities: Tax shelters, embezzlement, spot fraud.

Anthropology. Example specialities: African, Chinese or Polynesian Culture

Archaeology. Requirements: History – 2, Anthropology – 2 Example specialities: Imperial Rome, Ancient Mesopotamia, Burial Sites.

Astronomy. Requirements: Mathematics – 2 Example specialities: Mars, Black Holes, Comets.

Biology. Example specialities: Mammals, Reptiles.

Botanist. Requirements: Biology – 2 Example specialities: Orchids, Fungi, Succulents.

Brewing. Example specialities: Beer, Wine, Whiskey.

Chemistry. Example specialities: Acids, Drugs, petrochemicals.

Civil Engineering. Requirements: Mathematics – 2 Physics - 2 Example specialities: Subterranean Architecture, Bridges, urban planning.

Communications. Requirements: Electrical engineering

Conspiracy Theory: Requirements: History – 2 Example specialities: Secret Societies, Assassinations, Secret Histories.

Cryptography: Requirements: Mathematics – 2 Example specialities: Medieval Cyphers

Cryptozoology: Requirements: Biology – 2 Example specialities: Yeti, Lake Monsters, Extinct species.

Demolitions: Example specialities: Improvised explosives, Disarm, Structural Demolition.

Electrical Engineering:

Espionage: Example specialities: Military Intelligence, Surveillance.

Fine Arts: Example specialities: Painting - Impressionism, Sculpture – bronze, Beat Poets.

First Aid: Example specialities: Burns, lacerations, Gunshot Wounds.

Forensics: Requirements: Police Procedures – 2 Example specialities: Ballistics, Fingerprints.

Forgery: Requirements: Fine Arts (Usually Engraving or Painting) – 3 Example specialities: Art Forgery, Currency, Identity Papers.

Gambling: Example specialities: Roulette, Black Jack, Poker

Geology: Example specialities: Fossils, Dating Stratum

Gunsmith: Requirements: Mechanical Engineering – 2 Example specialities: Ammunition, Gun Repair.

History: Example specialities: American Civil War, Medieval etc.

Hypnosis: Requirements: Psychology – 2 Example specialities: Repressed Memories, Suggestion, Trauma Therapy.

Jury-Rig: Requirements: Mechanical Engineering – 1 Electrical Engineering – 1 Example specialities: Motors

Law: Requirements: Library Use – 2 Example specialities: Business, Criminal.

Library Use: Example specialities: Rare Books, Periodicals, Specific Libraries.

Linguistics: (Level 3 = reasonable fluency) Example specialities: Medieval German, Old English, Cajun French.

Locksmith: Example specialities: Padlocks, safes

Mathematics: Example specialities: Statistics, Geometry, calculus

Mechanical Engineering: Example specialities: Hydraulics, Clockworks

Medicine: Requirements: Biology -2, First Aid -2, Chemistry -2 Example specialities: Surgery, Radiology, Orthopaedics.

Military Science: Example specialities: Artillery.

Mysticism: Requirements: Occult -3 Example specialities: Body Control, Divining

Navigation: Example specialities: Cartography, Naval or land navigation.

Networking: Requirements: Psychology – 2 Example specialities: Politics, media, business

Occult: Example specialities: Voodoo, Alchemy, Hermeticism.

Palaeontology: Requirements: Biology -2, Geology -2 Example specialities: Cretaceous Era, Jurassic Era

Para physics: Requirements: Mathematics -2, Physics -2. Example specialities: Psychic Powers, Spirit manifestations

Photography: Example specialities: Trick photography, low light.

Physics: Requirements: Mathematics -2

Pilot Aircraft: Example specialities: Stunt Flying, Night Flying, Dog Fighting.

Pilot Boat:

Police Procedures: Example specialities: Vice, Homicide, Narcotics

Professional Skills:

Psychiatry: Requirements: Psychology -3. Example specialities: Phobias, Sexual disorders, Multiple personalities.

Psychology: Example specialities: Profiling, Lie detection, detect motivation

Sports:

Streetwise: Example specialities: Russian or Italian Mob, Drugs.

Survival: Example specialities: Desert, Arctic, tropical

Theology: Example specialities: Catholicism, Sunni Islam, Greek Orthodox.

Torture: Example specialities: Forced Confession, Drugs

Track: Example specialities: Big Game, Human, Predators

Weird Science: Requirements: At least 3 levels in two of the following skills – biology, chemistry, geology, maths, medicine or physics. Example specialities: Time Travel, Inter-dimensional Vortex, Artificial Life.

Zoology: Requirements: Biology -2 Example specialities: Marine Animals, Simians, Arachnids.

**Combat skills:**

These grant you the ability to use the weapons. Your character may pick one for free. Each other skill costs 1 skill point.

Without the skill – role-play not being able to use the weapon properly. In the case of firearms, you can use them, but miss 3 out of 4 times. Heavy guns, you cannot use.

Fist fighting/brawling

Knives and small melee weapons

Swords and large melee weapons

Exotic weapon. (specific)

Pistols

Rifles (including shotguns)

Machine guns.

Heavy guns (Belt fed machine guns etc.)

**Combat**

Standard ‘live-action’ larp melee. Melee weapons do 3 points of damage.

Brawling is a quick ‘paper, scissors, rock’ to see who lands a punch. No skill means you lose a ‘draw’. Punch does 1 damage.

Grappling: place your hand on your opponents shoulder and call grapple. It is a CON vs. CON test with the highest CON winning. Attacker wins; you have your opponent grappled and ‘Held’. Victim wins, they are not grappled.

Gunfights. Those involved use replicas, preferably ones that create a noise to help simulate gunfire. The attacker ‘calls’ the opponent as they fire. If the weapon is pointed at you as it goes off, it is considered to have hit and done damage. You may ‘dodge’ one attack per night. This could be a single shot or a burst from a machine gun.

Guns do 5 points of damage, with the exception of a shotgun which does 8 points of damage.

If Wound Points are reduced to 0, you fall unconscious to the floor and require medical attention. If you do not receive First Aid within 5 minutes, you will die. Wound points are restored from a first aider at the rate of 1 WP + the level of first aid. You need to role-play any wounds you have until recovered. You can receive help from a First Aider once per combat encounter.

A gun placed to the head and fired would count as an automatic ‘kill’.

If you are incapacitated or knocked out, anyone can kill you by drawing a weapon *across your torso* and calling “Finishing Blow!” This can only be done once you are lying down.