

Fate's Edge GM Toolkit: Complication Point Management & Campaign Pacing Guide

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1 Complication Point Management

1.1 CP Spending Templates

The following templates help GMs spend Complication Points effectively while maintaining narrative consistency and appropriate tension.

1.1.1 Social Scene CP Template

CP Cost	Effect Type	Narrative Impact
1 CP	Minor social pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding or awkward moment • Temporary loss of face • Minor rumor spreads
2 CP	Moderate social setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship strain • Public embarrassment • Loss of minor favor or privilege
3 CP	Serious social complication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betrayal or broken trust • Minor scandal • Temporary loss of influence
4+ CP	Major social upheaval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete loss of reputation • Exile or ostracization • Destruction of alliance or relationship

1.1.2 Combat Scene CP Template

CP Cost	Effect Type	Narrative Impact
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1 CP	Minor tactical disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position shift (Controlled → Risky) • Minor gear malfunction • Temporary fatigue
2 CP	Moderate combat setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harm level increase • Key ally takes Exposure • Environmental hazard appears
3 CP	Serious tactical complication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcements arrive (enemy) • Major gear failure • Significant ally injury
4+ CP	Major combat turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trap activation • Authority intervention • Scene transformation

1.2 High-CP Sinks for World-Changing Effects

CP Range	Effect Scope	Examples
3-4 CP	Regional impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faction relationship damaged • Major asset compromised • Public scandal emerges
5-6 CP	Multi-regional impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic position lost • Major ally turned against PCs • Economic disruption across trade routes

7-8 CP	National impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy change • Major military defeat • Religious schism
9+ CP	Paradigm shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental world assumption challenged • New age begins or ends • Reality-altering phenomenon

1.3 Deck of Consequences Interpretation Guide

1.3.1 Hearts (Emotional/Social Fallout)

Rank	Severity	Examples
Ace-3	Minor inconvenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awkward moment • Minor offense • Temporary embarrassment
4-6	Moderate setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship strain • Public embarrassment • Loss of minor trust
7-9	Significant consequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betrayal • Scandal • Loss of significant trust
10-King	Major fallout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heartbreak • Exile • Shattered alliance

1.3.2 Spades (Harm/Escalation)

Rank	Severity	Examples
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Ace-3	Minor harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruise or scrape• Minor fatigue• Temporary discomfort
4-6	Moderate harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wound requiring treatment• Gear damage• Positional disadvantage
7-9	Significant harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe injury• Ally incapacitation• Structural collapse
10-King	Major harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death• Permanent disability• Total asset loss

2 Campaign Pacing Guide

2.1 Session Structure Templates

2.1.1 Standard Session (3-4 hours)

Time Block	Activities	Goals
0:00-0:30	Session opening, recap, XP awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set scene • Review previous session • Distribute XP
0:30-1:30	Main scene 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance primary plot • Generate 2-3 CP • Award 1-2 Boons
1:30-2:00	Interlude/character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social interactions • Asset management • Relationship building
2:00-3:00	Main scene 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climactic encounter • Major decision point • Campaign clock advancement
3:00-3:30	Session wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award XP for session • Update campaign clocks • Set hooks for next session

2.1.2 Extended Session (6+ hours)

Time Block	Activities	Goals
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0:00-0:30	Session opening, recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive recap • Milestone XP awards • Set ambitious session goals
0:30-2:00	Extended main scene 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-part encounter • 4-6 CP generation • Significant character development
2:00-2:30	Break/Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset updates • Follower maintenance • Downtime activities
2:30-4:30	Extended main scene 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climactic resolution • Campaign arc advancement • Major consequence handling
4:30-5:00	Interlude/Social time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character interactions • World-building discussions • Player-driven scenes
5:00-6:00	Final scene/Campaign updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-up loose ends • Update all campaign elements • Set major next session hooks

2.2 XP Award Modes and Pacing

Mode	XP/session	Progression Speed	Best For
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Gritty	4-6 XP	Slow character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fantasy campaigns • Emphasis on resource management • Long-term strategic play
Standard	6-10 XP	Balanced growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most campaign types • Mixed character advancement • Moderate pacing
Heroic	10-14 XP	Fast character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epic fantasy campaigns • High-action games • Shorter campaigns

2.3 Detailed Session Awards

Award Type	XP Range	Criteria
Table Attendance	+2 XP	Simply showing up to the table
Major Objective Reached	+2-4 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing primary mission • Resolving major conflict • Achieving campaign goal

Discovery or Lore Unlocked	+1-2 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New world knowledge • Ancient secrets revealed • Cultural understanding gained
Hard Choice Embraced	+1-2 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral dilemmas faced • Sacrificial decisions • Character-defining moments
Complication Spotlight	+1-3 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing negative consequences • Driving narrative tension • Creating interesting problems
Bond/Flag Driven Play	+1-2 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following character motivations • Engaging personal storylines • Developing relationships
GM Curveball Award	+0-3 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing unexpected challenges • Creative problem solving • Going above and beyond

2.4 Campaign Clock Advancement Triggers

2.4.1 Mandate Advancement

Positive Actions	Mandate Increase
Public victory in battle or debate	+1 segment

Successful resolution of major crisis	+1 segment
Recognition by powerful faction or ruler	+1 segment
Completion of significant community service	+1 segment
Major asset acquisition that benefits region	+1 segment

2.4.2 Crisis Advancement

Negative Events	Crisis Increase
Rival faction gains influence or territory	+1 segment
Asset neglect or betrayal	+1 segment
Scandal or public loss of trust	+1 segment
Major defeat or loss of key personnel	+1 segment
Economic collapse or resource shortage	+1 segment

2.5 Balancing Guidelines for Mixed-Tier Parties

2.5.1 Structural Advantages Management

Advantage Type	Management Strategy
Active Buff/Tag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit to one per character • Duration-based rather than permanent • Counter with appropriate complications
Favorable Venue/Pennant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotate advantages between players • Environmental costs for benefits • Make advantages situationally specific
Follower Initiative Unused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage expenditure through scene hooks • Create opportunities where initiative helps • Balance with follower risk mechanics

On-Screen Asset Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require 1 Boon expenditure • Limit to once per scene per asset • Create narrative justification requirements
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2.5.2 Over-Stack Rule Implementation

When party enters scene with 2+ structural advantages:

- Option 1: Start one named rail at +1 segment
- Option 2: GM banks +1 CP for first Deck Twist
- Recommendation: Let players choose, but explain consequences

2.6 Tier Progression Guidelines

Tier	XP Range	Character Capabilities	World Impact
I - Rookie	0-40 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local reputation • Basic skills • Limited assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood level • Personal consequences • Local recognition
II - Seasoned	41-90 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional notice • Advanced skills • Moderate assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional influence • Faction attention • Notable achievements
III - Veteran	91-150 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National influence • Expert skills • Significant assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National recognition • Political influence • Strategic importance

IV - Paragon	151-220 XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legendary skills • Extensive assets • Multiple followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental impact • Historical significance • Kingdom-level influence
V - Mythic	221+ XP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near-supernatural abilities • Empire-shaping assets • Legendary followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World-changing actions • Age-defining moments • Immortal legacy

2.7 Campaign Pacing by Tier

2.7.1 Tier I-II Campaigns (0-90 XP)

Element	Recommendations	Focus
Session Length	3-4 hours standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character development • Local exploration • Personal conflicts
XP Awards	Gritty to Standard mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize learning experiences • Reward creative problem-solving • Build slowly over time
Complication Scope	Personal to local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family matters • Community issues • Regional politics

Campaign Clocks	Simple advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 major clocks • Clear cause-effect relationships • Manageable consequences
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2.7.2 Tier III-IV Campaigns (91-220 XP)

Element	Recommendations	Focus
Session Length	4-6 hours standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended scenes • Multiple locations • Complex negotiations
XP Awards	Standard to Heroic mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward significant achievements • Balance growth with challenge • Milestone recognition
Complication Scope	Regional to national	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingdom politics • Economic disruption • Military conflicts
Campaign Clocks	Multiple interconnected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 major clocks • Branching consequences • Faction interactions

2.7.3 Tier V Campaigns (221+ XP)

Element	Recommendations	Focus
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Session Length	6+ hours or multiple sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epic scope scenes • World-spanning events • Legacy-defining moments
XP Awards	Heroic mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mythic achievements only • Transformative growth • Historical impact
Complication Scope	Continental to global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World-changing events • Reality-altering phenomena • Cosmic-level threats
Campaign Clocks	Complex multi-layered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5+ major clocks • Interdimensional consequences • Age-ending/age-beginning events

2.8 Quick Reference Charts

2.8.1 CP Spending Quick Reference

CP Cost	Effect Scope	Typical Use
1 CP	Minor	Scene texture, small complications
2 CP	Moderate	Tension building, meaningful setbacks
3 CP	Serious	Plot advancement, character impact
4+ CP	Major	Story, campaign direction change

2.8.2 Session Pacing Checklist

Session Phase	Minimum CP	Target Boons
Opening	0	0
Main Scene 1	2	1
Interlude	0	1
Main Scene 2	2	1
Wrap-up	0	0
Total	4-6 CP	3 Boons

2.9 GM Preparation Templates

2.9.1 Pre-Session Checklist

1. Review active campaign clocks and planned advancements
2. Prepare 2-3 Deck of Consequences draws for likely complications
3. Update faction relationship tracker
4. Prepare XP awards based on previous session events
5. Identify potential structural advantages for player characters
6. Plan 1-2 major scene hooks that generate CP naturally

2.9.2 Post-Session Follow-up

1. Award XP based on session events and player engagement
2. Update campaign clocks based on character actions
3. Note any new faction relationships or changes
4. Record interesting player choices for future complications
5. Plan next session hooks based on unresolved tensions
6. Update asset and follower condition tracks