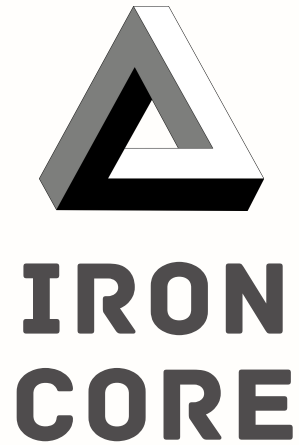# IRON CORE

A RICH DICE CORE MECHANIC

QUALITY | EFFICIENCY | SPEED

@BrubruGeek

IRON
CORE

LICENSING

Iron Core is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0](#) International License.

CREDITS

Shelter photo by Aedrian at https://unsplash.com/photos/FluyNpgKHyw
Axe photo by Jo Rae Lopez at https://unsplash.com/photos/O7t02kqot_I
Cloud photo by Daoudi Aissa at https://unsplash.com/photos/Pe1Ol9oLc4o

All images are free to use under the [Unsplash License.](#)

OpalBreeze
Games

WHAT IS IRON CORE?

It is a core mechanic loosely inspired by the Iron Triangle of Project Management, which is better known through the common saying:

"Good, fast, cheap. Choose two."

Iron Core translates that to a roll of 3D6, then the player picks one result for **Quality**, one for **Efficiency** and one for **Speed**.

The way the numbers are attributed to each 'constraint' guides the narrative.

Here is an example:

Sally wants to build a shelter.
She rolls 3D6 and the results are 5, 4 and 2.

*She promptly picks the **4** for the **Quality** of her shelter, which means its quite comfortable.*
*She had to pick the **5** for the **Speed** because heavy rain was about to fall!*
*Finally, she picks the **2** for her **Efficiency**, which meant that in the hurry she broke the only tools she had.*

- The **Quality** means how favorable the end result was.
- The **Efficiency** determines the severity of the costs involved.
- The **Speed** measures deadlines and overall passing of time.

WAIT, IS THAT IT?

Yes.

It is, after all, a *core*.

Iron Core is meant to provide a solid base for your *implementations*.

It means that you are invited to build upon this core mechanic to make a game that feels yours.

How abilities affect rolls? How does combat work? What if Speed is not really a constraint? Can I use this as an oracle?

I WANT MORE

To showcase Iron Core's flexibility, here are some implementations:

Implementation #001
'THE 4 STEPS STAIRWELL'

The results on the D6 have tiers of successes that guide the narrative.

1: Disastrous. The player has minimal control over the narrative. If the narrator allows the player to succeed, there will be serious repercussions.
2-3: Poor. The player barely succeeds, and there are mild repercussions.
4-5: Good. The player achieves their original intent with no repercussions.
6: Excellent. The player's performance hits and exceeds what was needed. The player is granted great control over the narrative, and they might be awarded unexpected boons.

Implementation #002
'THE PENROSE TRIANGLE'

Just like the common saying, out of the three constraints, you only ever get to be satisfied with two.

If the situation is **under control**, the player picks and assigns all three rolled values.

If the situation is **dire**, the player and the narrator take turns to assign each rolled value. The player assigns the first and last values.

If the situation is **desperate**, the player and the narrator take turns to assign each rolled value. The narrator assigns the first and last values.

Implementation #003
'THE VIRTUOSO FACTOR'

Add Attributes to measure the player's expertise in fields relevant to your story. They can rank from -3 to +3 in each of these Attributes.

The players will treat each Attribute's rank as a pool of (-1) or (+1) to distribute between the results of the 3D6, increasing or decreasing them accordingly until the pool has been depleted.

This means an Attribute ranked at -2 could be split to reduce the Quality and the Speed by one, each.

Implementation #004

During combat situations, the players will still roll 3D6 to determine the result of their actions. The constraints, however, will be renamed to better reflect the physical exchanges taking place.

- **Quality** will equal the player's **Attack**.
- **Efficiency** will equal the player's **Defense**.
- **Speed** will equal the player's **Initiative**.

First, make a list based on the Initiative, with the higher result on the top. Ties should be rerolled until solved. This list is the Turn Order of this combat.

Once the turn order is set, the combatant with the lowest Initiative attributes their 2 remaining numbers to their Attack and Defense.

Follow the turn order until the combatant with the highest Initiative has made their attack. Then, resolve all attacks (and other actions) from the combatant with highest Initiative to the lowest.

Adjust the narrative as appropriate.

Implementations can add complexity, narrative elements and much more to your game.
I'm looking foward to see what you come up with!

I WANT IN!

I wholeheartedly invite you to explore the design questions that Iron Core raises, making great games in the process. If you do, please share your answers with fellow users of Iron Core.

This sentiment is reinforced by Iron Core's open license and in the fact that it's a free product. There are, however, some important things to consider if you want to create games with an *Iron Core Within*:

1) MAKE SURE EVERYONE AT YOUR TABLE FEELS SAFE.

There are many good Safety Tools out there, but I'll refer to the **X-Card** and to **Script Change**, because they are awesome.

The X-Card

The X-Card by John Stavropoulos allows players to edit out any content anyone is uncomfortable with. Learn more about the X-Card at http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg

Script Change RPG Toolbox

Script Change by Brie Beau Sheldon allows everyone much more control, with options to pause, rewind, skip ahead, and more. Learn more about Script Change at http://tinyurl.com/nphed7m

2) IF YOU ARE A HORRIBLE PERSON, DON'T USE IRON CORE.

You are explicitly forbidden to use Iron Core in products that glorify and/or make apology to bigotry, racism, sexism, homophoby and similar abhorrent mentalities. If you are a supremacist of any kind, stay away from Iron Core.

3) BE COOL WHILE USING IRON CORE.

You are forbidden to use the OpalBreeze Games logo or to imply any level of connection with us unless granted written explicit permission. If you want to make a game with an **Iron Core Within**, you have permission to use our logo available at https://opalbreezegames.itch.io/

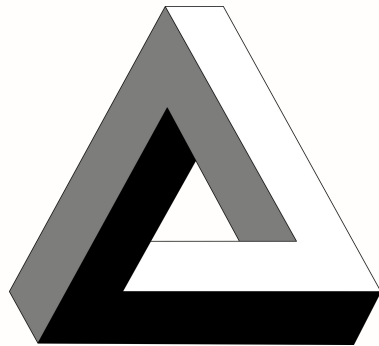We would love to hear about your games with an Iron Core Within! Please come say hi on twitter at @BrubruGeek.

4) Check out these amazing people.

Iron Core didn't come out of nowhere. There are tons of amazing people that either were direct influences to Iron Core or are working within the same design space. Here is a list of people on Twitter you simply can't miss (in no particular order):

- @DrakeandDice, @NaviMusing and @RPDeshaies gave me unending support, guidance and incentive. I would've never become a game designer if it wasn't for them.
- @boymonster is kind and attentive. He retweeted my idea that eventually became Iron Core, giving it an amazing reach. Plus, Cortex Prime was a great source of inspiration.
- @rdonoghue provides numerous insights and he introduced me to the 'Iron Triangle of Project Management', which inspired Iron Core's name. Oh, as a side note, FATE rocks!
- @lumpleygames launched Otherkin Dice in 2005, which is all about rich dice! Also, Apocalypse World richly inspires the tabletop RPG design scenery,
- @__ThoughtPolice are dear mutuals and authors of the Motif Engine, which shares some design ideas with Iron Core!

IRON
CORE