Chaos Core - Tactical Roguelite GDD

1. Game Overview

Chaos Core is a tactical roguelite set entirely within a massive, procedurally generated dungeon — the Chaos Core — a portal to the chaotic realm of Tartaraxis, ruled by Aphygor. Players control Aeriss and her Company of Quills as they descend through the dungeon's floors, fighting tactical battles, capturing key rooms, and upgrading their base camp to survive deeper runs. The goal is to reach the Core Room and defeat Aphygor's emissary before chaos engulfs the world.

Genre & Inspiration: Tactical RPG + Roguelite, inspired by Final Fantasy Tactics Advance, Into the Breach, and deck-building systems from games like Slay the Spire.

Unique Selling Points: Strategic turn-based combat with small, intense maps; procedural run structure; persistent base camp within the dungeon; deck-building integrated into unit skills; free movement exploration with light enemies.

2. Core Loop

Base Camp Phase: Interact with NPCs, upgrade facilities, craft, recruit units, manage decks and equipment.

Floor Navigation Phase: Explore connected rooms in free movement mode, defeat light enemies, find resources, locate battles.

Battle Phase: Tactical grid-based combat with deck/hand system, strain management, cover, and deployable defenses.

Post-Battle Phase: Gain loot/resources, choose and upgrade key rooms, decide whether to defend rooms under attack.

3. Exploration & Light Enemies

Exploration takes place in free movement mode between battles. Light enemies roam some rooms and can be dispatched in 1–2 hits using the player's attack button. These encounters provide resources or small bonuses without triggering a full tactical battle.

4. Tactical Battles

Grid Sizes: Skirmishes (≤4 units per side) on 4x3 grids, Field Battles (>4 units per side) on 8x6 grids.

Unit Cap: Player brings 10 units max per run and then uses 1–8 units per battle depending on map size. Once units die they can't be revived during a run.

Actions: Attack, Skill, Move, Item.

Deck/Hand System: Each unit draws 5 cards per turn from their personal deck (class, equipment, modules, core, gambits).

Strain System: Playing cards generates strain. Over strain threshold = reduced accuracy, restricted core cards.

Cover & Destructible Terrain: Units can hide behind destructible cover for protection.

Deployable Defenses: Before certain battles, players can place limited traps, barricades, or turrets on the map.

Recon Reports: Certain controlled key rooms allow players to preview upcoming maps and enemies.

5. Dungeon Control

Key rooms are captured through tactical battles. After capture, the player chooses its type: Supply Depot, Medical Ward, Armory, Command Center, or Mine. Each type grants passive benefits and generates resources between battles.

Key rooms can randomly come under enemy attack during a run. The player may choose to defend them to retain their benefits.

6. Base Camp

Physical hub connected to each floor's entry via a cargo elevator. Contains NPCs, shops, upgrade stations, and recruitment areas.

Upgradable facilities grant new pre-battle deployment options, better equipment, and more powerful recruits.

7. Classes

Players can change the classes of their units (including Aeriss) at any time in the hub (not in battle) from the "Party" tab of the inventory screen.
 Classes determine which weapons the unit can equip, their role in combat, and their starting pool of skill cards.
 Each base class branches into secondary, advanced, and alternate classes.

Squire

- Primary Weapon: Swords
- Role: Balanced frontline unit, adaptable in various situations.

Branch Paths:

- Sentry — Uses swords, greatswords.
- Paladin — Uses swords, greatswords. Defensive focus with protection abilities.
- Watch Guard — Uses swords, bows. Hybrid of melee and ranged tactics.

Ranger

- Primary Weapon: Bows
- Role: Long-range attacker, excels in mobility and ranged damage.

Branch Paths:

- Hunter — Uses bows, guns. Precision ranged combat and critical hit focus.
- Bowmaster — Uses bows, greatbows. Specializes in high-power, high-accuracy long shots.
- Trapper — Uses bows, guns. Focuses on setting traps and controlling enemy movement.

Magician

- Primary Weapon: Staves
- Role: Magic-focused unit, capable of dealing damage and utility casting.

Branch Paths:

- Cleric — Uses staves. Specializes in healing and buffs.
- Wizard — Uses staves, greatstaves. Offensive magic damage specialist.
- Chaosmancer — Uses staves, swords. Offensive chaos magic, blending melee with magic.

Thief

- Primary Weapon: Shortswords
- Role: High mobility, stealth, debuffs, and critical strikes.

Branch Paths:

- Scout — Uses bows. High mobility ranged unit with recon abilities.
- Shadow — Uses shortswords, bows. Specializes in assassination and evasion.
- Trickster — Uses swords. Utility role with debuffs and disorienting skills.

Academic

- Primary Weapon: Bows, Shortswords

- Role: Tactical support, gathers enemy intel, boosts team performance.
- Very low attack power; focused on providing tactical information on enemies.

(No branches — unique class that remains utility-focused.)

Freelancer

- Primary Weapon: Any weapon type (with stat penalty for off-class weapons)
- Role: Jack-of-all-trades unit, can adapt to any role but without specialization bonuses.

8. Equipment & Modules

Five equip slots: Weapon, Chestpiece, Helmet, two Accessories.

Weapons class-restricted; other gear is universal.

Modules: Found/crafted/bought upgrades that add new equipment cards to unit decks.

9. Procedural Generation

Dungeon floors generated from a pool of pre-designed tactical maps and exploration rooms, arranged procedurally.

Key room locations, enemy types, and resource caches randomized each run.

10. UI ("Tactical Terminal" / ScrollLink OS v.2.3)

Core UI Style (90% Terminal)

1. **Look:** Chunky 90s white-on-black CRT aesthetics with slight scanlines, rounded corners, and UI "bezel" elements that feel like they're inside a handheld PDA.

2. **Animations:** Boot-up flicker, text typing in, loading bars (hashtag progress bar), blinking cursors.

3. **Navigation:** Grid-based menus, keyboard click sounds, old-school UI chimes.

Justification in-universe:
Aeriss' **Solarix Scrollpad** is a surviving Old Earth PDA that's still functional due to its AI core (half-believed to be a sprite). Most dungeon navigation, comms, maps, and reports are handled through it.

Parchment/Physical Moments (10% Special UI)

7. **AutoMap Printouts:** Player can "print" maps from the Scrollpad onto thermal-style parchment paper. UI transition = terminal command > printer animation > parchment map UI pops up. This allows the player to see specific room layouts and plan ahead of time.

8. **Battle Result Summaries:** Instead of just a "Victory" screen, show a faux-paper military report, with typed text, creases, stamps, and signatures.

9. **Card Deck Editing:** Styled as slotting "punch cards" into a machine. Each card animates sliding into place with a mechanical click.

10. **Dispatch Node / Fairhaven Mail:** Packages and letters arrive via the cargo elevator from Fairhaven. Open with physical letter animations or box unpacking mini-interactions.

11. **Aeriss' Sketchbook:** Accessible via the Scrollpad's "Lore & Bestiary" menu, but rendered as scanned pages from her sketchbook with her handwriting and doodles in the margins.

Extra Flavour

1. Dungeon control system could appear as a grid-based tactical map in the terminal, but printing the map gives you a parchment version with your marks and annotations.

10. Art, Audio, and Presentation

Visuals: Hand-drawn art and animation

Character sprite size: 32x32 px.

Audio: Exciting orchestral score with atmospheric dungeon ambience.