

(GM Article)



"BigE's Big 6 for 1st Time GMs"

By Big E

So you have decided that you will try your hand at running a Hacktastic D/20 Fantasy game session. Here are a few tips to help you out for your first session behind the screen.



1.) Keep it Short: A nice short 2-4 hour playsession is more than enough to get your feet wet. Don't make some in-depth multi-adventure campaign (at least until you know you like GMing).

2.) Keep it Simple: I suggest a simple adventure like a dungeon crawl or a small wilderness adventure. If you opt for a Dungeon

Crawl something with 6-8 rooms, 2-4 different type of creatures and 1 or 2 traps. If you opt for a wilderness adventure, one big fight (bandit camp?), 2 small encounters (animals or perhaps a couple of hunting goblins or orcs), Overnight campsite (use one of your small encounters for this) and an environment encounter (foul weather, crossing a rain swelled stream is good).

3.) Start Fresh: I suggest your players make brand new PCs to play in your brand new game. This keeps abilities and magic items a bit easier to manage and you also don't have to deal with somebody's leftovers. Also if they make their PC prior to the session you can plan a session that focuses on the parties strengths and lets them all shine in some way. It also helps avoid traps, locks or skill test that none of the PCs have, but you put in the adventure.

4.) Control Your Table: Remember you are the boss. It is up to you to make sure everyone is playing by the rules, that the adventure is well paced and that everyone is involved in the action. Many first time GM's kowtow to more experienced players who will try and get one over on you or try and bully you into something. Trust me it happens all the time. Don't let them, remember you are the last rule on anything that happens at your table. You don't need to lord over your players, but they need to know when you rule on something that is how it is going to be.

5.) Be Prepared: Make sure you have everything you need to run your playsession before you sit down to play, such as miniatures for your monsters, the adventure (complete with all creature and NPC stats) maps or pens and a battlemat, rulers and any handouts for your players. Also it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with any rules that are in your adventure (such as climbing rules, certain spells your NPCs cast or what mage-craft items do that are in your adventure).

6.) HAVE FUN!: Above all make sure you and your players have fun. This is not always easy but worth it. In time you will find what type of adventures your players like, until then just try and make sure that there is something for everyone to do in the playsession. This can be as simple as making sure that there is a lock to pick for a PC who has spent a lot of points being able to open locks. If your party has lots of spellcasting ability give them encounters that need those abilities. If it is not fun, then why run or play the game.

Until Next Month Remember, When all else fails: Roll Some Dice and make some Crap Up!

Big E