



JUST,

CHASES,

FREE PREVIEW

**USING THE FIVE-STAGE CHASE STRUCTURE TO
BRING DRAMA AND EXCITEMENT TO YOUR GAME**



System for your favorite Table
Agnostic Top Role-Playing Game

Designed for use with
ShadowDark RPG

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
The Five-Stage Chase.....	6
The Five Stages.....	8
Chase Example.....	10
Chases.....	11
The Chase Engine.....	12
The GM's Dice Pool.....	14
Obstacles.....	15
Example of Play: Chase.....	16
GM Advice.....	23
Basic Chase Tables.....	24
Obstacle Tables.....	26
Much, Much More!.....	27

Just Chases is the free preview for Races, Chases, and Standoffs.

Coming Soon to Crowdfunding

Follow the campaign at:

If the campaign is over, you can find *Races, Chases, and Standoffs* at:

Available on the Dragon-Sol.com store soon after

Email:

newsletter@dragon-sol.com

for updates and information

Join the Dragon-Sol Horde.

You Tube

Patreon

JUST

CHASES,

~~AND STANDOFFS~~

**USING THE FIVE-STAGE CHASE STRUCTURE TO
BRING DRAMA AND EXCITEMENT TO YOUR GAME**

Writing, Design, Layout

Chris Adams

Art

Avery Adams

Legal Information

Copyright © 2026 Dragon Sol Studios

TBD

This book is a Work-in-Progress, not for distribution or resale.

Visit youtube.com/dragonsol for more discussion on Races, Chases, and Standoffs (RC&S).

DRAGON SOL

INTRODUCTION

CHASES! They are a pain point in most Table Top Role-Playing Games (TTRPG). Many game systems have a rule set for running a chase, and most tables run them. Chases are a core element in any action-oriented adventure after all, yet these chases lack the *excitement*...the *intensity*...the *fun* a chase should deliver.

There is a better way!

A chase is not an encounter, it's not an event, it really isn't even a chase. A chase is a cinematic element used to build tension and drive the story forward. The **Five Stage Chase** distills the essence of those heart-pounding, pulse-racing, cinematic chase scenes we all love into a simple framework. It then adds some simple steps for running the chase that excites the players and gets their adrenaline pumping.

Quick decision making and opposing dice pools create the tension in the game play. Players do not need to know any mechanics ahead of time. You can plan it out or the chase can develop organically in the middle of the game, as you can run it on the fly without a problem.

With all that adrenaline, you and your players will be rowdy, excited, and loud.

RACES, CHASES, AND STANDOFFS

Race. A race sets the party against time. Even if the party is racing against competition, it's about reaching the end before they do. Races include:

- Escaping from a trapped tomb
- Running across a collapsing bridge
- Cutting the fuse before it lights the explosives
- Beating an opponent to the finish line

Chase. A chase sets the party against an opponent. The difference between a race and a chase is that the two groups do not start at the same time. The prey starts first and the chaser goes after them. There is a reason why one group is running from the other. If the chaser catches up then that reason occurs. Chases include:

- Running from the city watch
- Chasing down a pickpocket
- Escaping from a massacre
- Tracking party members taken captive by orcs

Standoff. A standoff puts two parties in direct confrontation where they are both trying to move the status quo,

but the only way to do that is to move the other group backwards. Standoffs include:

- Playing tug of war
- Bracing a door shut
- Holding a position while awaiting reinforcements
- Restraining a monster by its chains

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Races and chases should be quick, engaging, exciting, and brimming with pressure. Players need to make quick decisions and know what they need to do or where they need to go. They also need to know what happens if they don't make it, and how close they are to failing.

They should be rewarded for creative and beneficial actions, allowed to take risks for advantage, and punished when those risks fail. They should not, however, be allowed to **breath**. They can catch their breath once it is over, or they're dead, but only if death ends the chase.

Oddly, for a good chase, movement doesn't matter. It's not about realistically recreating a physical activity. It's about transposing the excitement, tension, and anxiety of a cinematic spectacle.

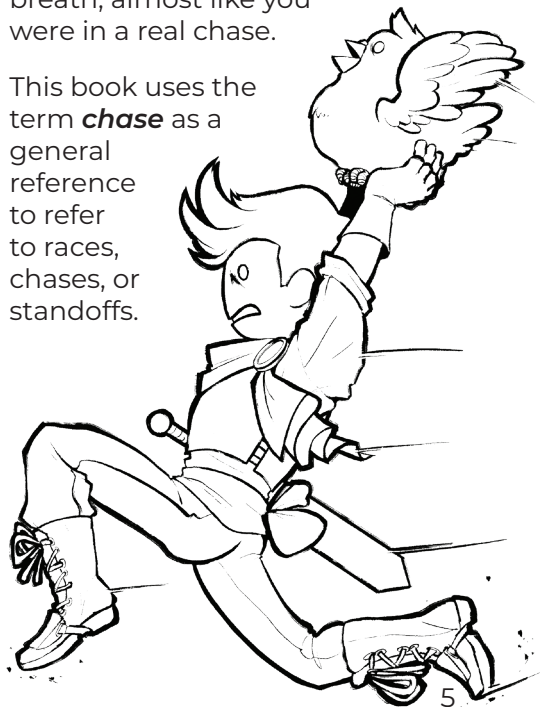
The only thing that really matters is **Action!**

Everyone involved wants to: be valuable, be free to act on their whims, and roll some dice. Rolling one die after another is boring, guarantees mediocrity, and is more likely to lead to failure. Rolling a lot of dice at once is awesome!

You can plan out your chase scene ahead of time or you can run one on the fly. A few random tables can help with this. No matter how chaotic or unplanned, you can be confident in running a marvelous chase at any opportunity.

You don't even have to worry about creating the tension, the structure builds it for you. It's a raucous good-time that will leave everyone gasping for breath, almost like you were in a real chase.

This book uses the term **chase** as a general reference to refer to races, chases, or standoffs.



THE FIVE-STAGE CHASE

If you were to break down chases from your favorite action movies, you'd most likely find that they are made up of five stages:

1. Initiating Event/Start
2. Trap/Puzzle/Terrain
3. Impasse/Role Play Challenge
4. Battle/Conflict/Climax
5. Last Gasp or Last Grasp/Twist

This framework can be found in all of the great chases and races across cinema and literature. Don't believe me? Imagine the escape scene from the cinematic masterpiece:

DAKOTA JOHNSON AND THE MISPLACED TRUNK

Stage 1. To start, Dr. Dakota Johnson has found the golden pasta bowl in the forgotten ruins. Knowing it is trapped if he removes it, he fills up a baggie with oatmeal to approximate the weight and does a quick swap. A moment after, he sees his plan failed as the trap has been triggered. The ruins begin to collapse around him.

Stage 2. Dakota moves through a hallway that is trapped with poisoned toothpicks. They fly at him as he runs past a trap he had previously avoided.

Stage 3. After that, there is a large pit in the hallway that he has to swing over. Except his companion has already done so, and holds the whip on the other side. Failing at negotiations for the whip, Dakota loses both the golden pasta bowl and the whip while a stone slab descends over the entrance.

Stage 4. As a brave and crafty adventurer, Dakota manages to make it past the impasse and recover the golden pasta bowl, only to trigger another conflict as a huge meatball starts rolling down the passageway intent on crushing him into tomato sauce.

Stage 5. After narrowly avoiding the giant meatball, in what he assumed to be the climax of his escape, he finds himself under threat of life and must, once again, forfeit the golden pasta bowl. He takes advantage of a momentary distraction to make a run for it, finally reaching safety after a risky maneuver onto a moving airplane.



Want some more examples from classic chases?

THE JIMMY HATCHED PERSONA

Stage 1. Jimmy, the amnesiac assassin, spots police casing his vehicle. He quickly ascertains the capabilities of his vehicle, scans a map to know possible routes, buckles up (safety first), and hits the accelerator.

Stage 2. He drives down streets with heavy traffic, and sometimes going the wrong way into oncoming traffic, before facing oncoming police that cause him to change his path.

Stage 3. Next, he drives down some incredibly steep stairs that no car should ever descend.

Stage 4. Then, he battles some pursuing police motorcycles and cars through more traffic.

Stage 5. Losing the last pursuer, he makes a quick turn into a parking deck to ditch the car and proceed on foot.

THE VENETIAN OPERATION

Stage 1. After blowing the floor to drop the safe, the boat heads out to the canals to create a distraction while the rest of the crew cracks the safe. It'll only work if the boat crew isn't caught, so they must escape.

Stage 2. The boat crew navigates some tight canals, with low foot bridges, at high speed.

Stage 4. (switched with 3). Next up is conflict as they are shot at and some boat bashing occurs.

Stage 3. (switched with 4). They are impeded in their chase by a gondola crossing the canal. Risking a direct approach, they break through the gondola and continue on their way.

Stage 5. As their pursuers close in, they arrive at their escape point, requiring coordination with the trash boats ready to block the opposition's path once they pass.

The **Five Stage Chase** model provides a good framework to create the space you need for an exciting scene in your adventure. It distills the goodness of this story telling technique into one that is easily adaptable and, probably more importantly, quick to build using random tables.

For a TTRPG, being able to build a chase on the fly from a few rolls on some random tables allows you to pull off unexpected chases as if you were a true **Master of the Game**.

THE FIVE STAGES

STAGE 1, START/INITIATING EVENT

You need a reason to begin, a motivation to move, an impetus for action.

Sometimes a chase just starts. For a **start**, it is usually because one side spots the other and both sides are now aware that a chase is on. In a race, it's usually something like: "Ready, Set, Go!"

In a standoff, it's when both parties bump into each other at the standoff spot. It doesn't have to be complicated, the important part is to get the action moving.

An **initiating event** has a little more to it; a trigger that starts the action. That opening scene helps define the consequences, driving the narrative through the actions of the chase and setting up the tension.

With an initiating event there might be a way to take advantage of what is occurring or sabotage the opponents to gain a bonus. And, if the event is not correctly assessed, the action taken may not be beneficial or could even be detrimental.

With a start, it is usually just all 'go'. With an initiating event, however, there is intent to the action.

STAGE 2, TRAP/PUZZLE/TERRAIN

A **trap** or **puzzle** forces the party to take an action other than 'run'. If the trap or puzzle isn't solved then the player is negatively impacted.

This may cause a penalty d6 or it may cause a complication they have to deal with in the subsequent stages, making success more difficult.

It may make more sense, based on the area the chase is occurring in, that the **terrain** acts as the trap/puzzle to solve. This can be difficult terrain that you don't want to be slowed in, or dangerous and hazardous terrain, like a mudslide or thin, cracking ice.

STAGE 3, IMPASSE/ ROLE-PLAY CHALLENGE

An **impasse** is a game world element that blocks progress. Physically, it could be a wall or a waterfall. Mentally, it could be your greatest fear. Strategically, it could be not having the key or access card. Whatever it is, there is a way past it, it's just not easy.

A **role-play challenge** is an impasse in a PC to NPC way. Not having the proper credentials or an invite to the ball, bumping into the gang you had a tavern

brawl with the night before, facing a group of rival crawlers who are bent on keeping you from moving forward, etc.

It's not as simple as talking your way past the bouncer. These NPCs are on guard and not affected by simple persuasion. They may even be actively working against you.

STAGE 4, BATTLE/ CONFLICT/CLIMAX

A **battle** is coming to blows with NPCs or creatures. They don't need to be the other party in the chase. They may be working with the opposition or just working against you, or even a random third-party with their own agenda.

Conflict is some type of non-battle consternation. It could be environmental, dealing with bystanders, issues with your vehicle/animal, or going against your code, alignment, oath, etc.

It could also be a secondary objective that causes the players to make a choice. Do they take an action to further their chase, or do they go for the secondary objective and not add to their dice pool.

A **climax** is something that seems like it is the end of the chase. And it might be the end of the chase, up to this point, setting up a last grasp or a twist.

Escaping the collapsing building you get a brief respite, only to find that the scaffolding you are on is going to fall as well.

STAGE 5, LAST GRASP/ GRASP OR TWIST

The **last grasp** is when the party is facing a chasm that they normally could not overcome, but throw themselves into their action with such vigor that they make it...barely...by their finger tips...as long as something doesn't break...!

They are out of breath, out of resources, and out of their mind, but they are also out of danger...probably.

The **last grasp** is when whatever the party is intent to escape with or keep safe is pulled from their possession by the opposition just as they thought they were free. The party is safe, not in danger of life, liberty or further pursuit, but they lose something important.

A **twist** is when whatever they thought they were doing, or why they thought they were doing it, is changed. The rug is pulled out from under them metaphorically, or literally if that works.

The end of **Stage 5** should lead into the next part of the game/narrative. Ending a chase is not about winning, it's about surviving long enough to figure out what to do next.

CHASE EXAMPLE

CANOE CHASE EXAMPLE

Stage 1, Initiating Event. The party has sneaked through the woods to the river bank. Seeing some canoes, they break from cover only to be spotted by their pursuers, the *Spiked Knuckles Gang*.

Stage 2, Trap. Paddling down the river, a small tree begins to fall. It looks like it will hit the canoe, with the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* paddling hard behind you.

Stage 3, Impasse. Further down the river you spot a beaver dam crossing from shore to shore. If you can't get past it, the gang will have you.

Stage 4, Battle. On the other side of the dam, you spot a giant beaver paddling towards you with its tail. You know giant beavers are viciously territorial and you can't turn back as the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* is in close pursuit.

Stage 5, Last Gasp. The current has grown strong as the roar of a waterfall replaces the roar of adrenaline-fueled, rushing blood echoing in your ears.



CHASES

A chase sets the party against an opponent. The difference between a race and a chase is that the two groups do not start at the same time. The prey starts first and the chaser goes after them.

There is a reason why one group is running from the other. If the chaser catches up then that reason occurs.

If the party is the prey, they react to the Initiating Event and Stage 1 is run without the GM's dice pool. The result represents the head start they've achieved.

If the party is the chaser the GM rolls the base dice pool to establish the prey's head start. The chase then continues with the party and the prey reacting to Stage 1.

The difference between the two tallies represents the separation between the party and the opposition.

If the chaser's tally ever equals or exceeds the prey's tally then the prey is caught, the chase ends, and the conflict is resolved per the game system.

If the prey's tally exceeds the chaser's tally at the end of Stage 5 they escape, no matter how close the chaser, and the chase is over.



THE CHASE ENGINE

THE CHASE AT A GLANCE

Show the Base GM Dice Pool → Set the Stage →
1 Minute Action Response → Resolve Character Actions →
Award Dice → Roll Dice Pools → Tally Up Totals →
Move on to the Next Stage

The mechanical engine for the chase are two dice pools, one for the party and one for the Game Master (GM). Dice are awarded based on the character's actions and how successful they are. The players might be awarded bonus dice for their dice pool, or receive penalty dice which are added to the GM's dice pool. *Always add dice, never remove them.*

At the end of each stage, one player and the GM each roll their big handful of dice, total them up, add that to a running tally, and use the disparity between the two to determine their relative positions and influence the narrative.

The following steps are performed for each stage:

Show the Base GM Dice Pool.

Go ahead and layout the dice pool the GM will roll. This will show the party what they are up against and keep the tension on them. Add 1d6 for every player involved in the chase. Determine if the opposition should have any bonus d6s added to their dice pool.

Set the Stage. Describe the element of the stage such that the party knows what they need to do or have to overcome.

You can take this time to answer questions if the players need more information, but you want to keep it short so they don't have a lot of time to think.

Cut off the question period as soon as they have enough information to act, keeping in mind that they don't need complete information. In fact, it is probably better if their information has holes. It is a chase after all.

1 Minute Action Response.

Give the players one minute of real time to rattle off the actions they will perform to solve this stage of the chase. They only get one action each.

If you do not have all of the responses when one minute is up, feel free to give them more time. Just drop 1d6 into the GM dice pool every 30 seconds or so. This will really ratchet up the tension and keep the adrenaline pumping.

It is beneficial to have a visual time reference for this, like a 1-minute sand timer or a countdown clock.

This helps apply the tension as the players frantically search their brains for an action as time disappears.

Resolve Actions. Go around the table and resolve each character action as it would normally be resolved for the game system you are using.

If the system doesn't have something that works well for an action, use a 1d20 roll against a Difficulty Class (DC). Meeting or beating the DC is a success.

- **Easy, DC 9**
- **Normal, DC 12**
- **Hard, DC 15**
- **Extreme, DC 18**

Press Your Luck. Optionally, you can offer up to your players the chance to press their luck, making risky moves for potentially greater advantage.

Before the DC roll is made, the GM sets the point and asks if the player wants to press their luck.

The point is a value over or under the DC. If they beat the DC by the point they get a bonus 1d6 to their dice pool. However, if they roll the point under the DC, then 1d6 is added to the GM's dice pool.

Award Dice. For each character action, determine if:

- The action is not helpful to solving the stage or the resolution fails
- No dice added to the player's dice pool
- If the action is detrimental to the party, it is helpful to the opposition, or the resolution is atrocious
- Consider if a bonus d6 should be added to the GM's dice pool
- The action solves the stage or is helpful to the party and the resolution is successful
- 1d6 is added to the player's dice pool
- The resolution is outrageously successful, consumes a significant resource, hampers the opposition, is cool or ingenious, or is otherwise worthy
- Consider awarding 1 or more bonus d6s to the player's dice pool

Roll Dice Pools. Roll each dice pool and add the values on all the dice in each pool together.

Tally Up Totals. Add the sum of each dice pool to a running tally. The difference between the player's tally and the GM's tally/target represents the relative position of the party to the opposing group or the finish line.

Move on to the Next Stage.

Rinse and repeat with the next stage. At the end of Stage 5 the chase is resolved, if it was not already.

THE GM'S DICE POOL

BUILDING THE GM'S DICE POOL

The base GM dice pool is 1d6 for every PC involved in the chase.

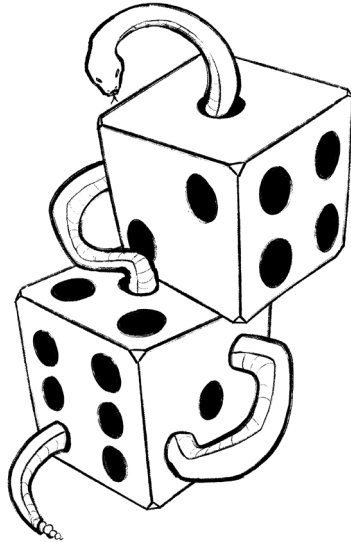
If the PCs carry any burden during the chase that imposes a penalty, like having to carry out an injured NPC before the building collapses, set that penalty at the beginning of the chase and place it into the GM dice pool.

Keep in mind that if the players decide to no longer embrace that burden, then that penalty goes away.

If there is opposition, award the opposition's bonus dice to the GM's dice pool. You can set this based on what seems appropriate or use a random roll. If you use a random roll, it is good to explain what you are doing to the players and roll in the open.

Do this for each stage. Always add the dice to the GM's dice pool at the beginning of the stage. Keeping it in front of the players adds tension.

See **GM Advice** section for tips.



To randomly determine bonus dice for the GM's dice pool, roll a die closest to the number of players, always moving up by 1 if an odd number. Divide the result by 2, rounding down. So for a party of 7 or 8, you would roll a 1d8 and the results are shown in the table below.

RANDOM BONUS DICE	
d*	GM Bonus
1	+0
2	+1
3	+1
4	+2
5	+2
6	+3
7	+3
8	+4

OBSTACLES

Obstacles are extra problems to throw into a chase. You can use them for whatever you want, but they are designed to re-balance the chase.

If one side is getting out of reach, throw an obstacle in their way.

Obstacles occur between stages and they only impacts one side.

If the obstacle impedes the party, they have a chance to move past it without penalty. If a player solves it and succeeds on their action, then there is no penalty. If the player doesn't solve it or fails on their action, a penalty die is awarded to the GM's dice pool.

If the obstacle impedes the opposition, the GM should narrate what occurs and award dice to the player's dice pool as appropriate.

Any penalty dice awarded are added to the next stage's dice pool.

You can set the number of penalty dice as needed to re-balance the chase.

It's important to the excitement of the chase that the results are not a forgone conclusion. Make the obstacle seem like a natural part of the chase and not GM intervention, even though it is.

Once the players know they are going to win or lose there is no tension. Obstacles can add the tension back in, but they can take the fun out of the chase if used heavy handedly.

To that end, it is best to only use obstacles once per chase and have a good explanation why it only impacts one side.

If it is a permanent obstacle, then the first side to encounter it makes the other aware of it so they can avoid it. If it is a temporary obstacle, then the first to encounter it scatters it or destroys it so it doesn't impact the other side.

If the obstacle is going to impact the chasing side, not the lead side, then show how the side in the lead narrowly avoids it or just catches a bit of it as it enters the path from elsewhere. Alternatively, allow one side to turn a mundane element into the obstacle for the other side.

Obstacles can be unique or random elements that occur in the chase environment. Traps, puzzles, and conflicts can also serve as obstacles, and oddities that serve as a moment of comedic release can work particularly well.

See **GM Advice** section for tips.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY: CHASE

In this example of a **chase**, a group of adventurers are attempting to escape down a river in a canoe, the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* in pursuit.

The players are playing **Annor** (halfling ranger), **Graydell** (human wizard), **Shalena** (elf thief), and **Bob** (dwarf fighter).

Visit [youtube.com/dragonsol](https://www.youtube.com/dragonsol) for more discussion on RC&S.

GM: Having stolen...sorry, recovered, the sacred idol, you've been sneaking through the woods, deftly avoiding the *Spiked Knuckles Gang*. But now you see the river bank is close. You spot a couple of canoes pulled up on the bank.

PC (Annor): Can we reach the canoes?

GM: You will have to leave the cover of the trees to do it.

PC (Graydell): I say we make a run for it. All agree? (All nod in agreement.) We bolt from cover.

The GM rolls a perception check for the Spiked Knuckles Gang.

GM: You are spotted, one of the gang members yelling out to the others. You hear them crashing through the trees heading towards your position.

GM: *A chase has begun!*

PC (Shalena): Ooh, is this like that race we had? That was fun.

GM: It is very similar, except this time, instead of trying to beat a win score, you'll be rolling against the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* every round.

GM: You are running toward the river bank. Two very large canoes are pulled up on the bank. They are too large for just two of you to operate. It will take at least three of you. You have one minute. What do you do?

The GM turns over a one minute sand timer.

PC (Bob): Can we push the second canoe into the water?

GM: They are heavy canoes. If you took the time to push the second canoe into the water as well you might get caught. You would definitely be within bow range.

PC (Bob): Ok then, I take a hack at the boat with my axe as I run by trying to cause a leak.

PC (Annor): I'm going to throw their oars in the water as I run to our canoe.

PC (Graydell): I'm going to go straight to the canoe and start pushing it into the water.

PC (Shalena): If there's a sturdy tree branch I can pick up I'm going to use it to get some leverage on the boat to try to get it in the water faster.

GM: Good thoughts, good thoughts. Ok, Bob give me a strength check.

PC (Bob): 14.

GM: You caused a small crack in the canoe. It will take on a bit of water every round. In (rolls 1d4) 4 rounds the water will start to cause a penalty. Add 1d6 to your dice tray.

GM: Annor, it will take the gang a moment to collect the oars. Add 1d6 to your dice tray and add a bonus 1d6 for the oars. Graydell, add 1d6 to your dice tray.

GM: And finally Shalena, that's a good idea. Let's see if there is a branch around. Give me a luck roll, a flat d20.

PC (Shalena): 9, sigh.

GM: Unfortunately there are no branches sturdy enough to give you any leverage. Go ahead and roll the dice pool.

PC (Shalena): Someone else do it. I'm not rolling well today.

PC (Annor): I've got it. 4, 3, 2, 4, and 5. 18, not bad.

The GM writes down, where all can see, 'Party' and 'SK Gang' and then puts 18 under Party.

PC (Bob): I thought we were rolling against the *Spiked Knuckles Gang*?

GM: You are, but since this is a chase they start out behind you. This is your head start. If their tally ever equals yours within 5 round, then they catch up to your PCs. That wouldn't be good right now. If you are still ahead at the end of 5 rounds you escape.

GM: You paddle down the river, the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* some distance behind you, paddling ferociously to catch up. They get 1d6 for every PC so I'll add four to my dice tray. I will also roll randomly to see if they get any bonus dice. I'm going to roll a 1d4, divide by 2 and round down. *Rolls 1d4.* That's a 1, so no bonus dice this round.

GM: As you paddle hard down the river you hear a sharp '**CRACK**'. Looking around, you see a tall but thin tree, only about 8 inches in diameter, falling across the river. It looks like it will hit your canoe as you go by. What do you do?

The GM turns over a one minute sand timer.

PC (Bob): I'm going to attempt to catch the tree on my shield and push it off of us.

PC (Annor): I'm going to see if I can figure out what caused the tree to fall and if any others are going to do that.

PC (Shalna): I'm going to squat so I'm the same height as Bob and get behind him to help him heave the tree off with his shield.

PC (Graydell): Oh, I'm not good at this. I don't see how I can help with the tree so I'm going to concentrate on paddling. Maybe we can squeak by before the tree hits us.

GM: Alright. Annor, you spot a couple of beavers having gnawed the bottom of the tree and pushed it over.

PC (Annor): Do I know these types of beavers?

GM: Roll me a nature check.

PC (Annor): That's a 15.

GM: They are silver-backed beavers, common to the Frigid Ridge Back Mountains. You know their details fairly well. Add 1d6 to the dice tray. Graydell, add 1d6 to the dice tray as well. Your emphasis on paddling has kept the canoe moving while Bob and Shalna brace with the shield. Speaking of Bob and Shalna I'll let you both roll a strength check with advantage and we'll use the highest roll.

PC (Bob): 22 and 13.

PC (Shalna): Nat 1 and 7. Good thing Bob is sturdy.

GM: The tree indeed is going to hit the canoe. But you catch

it on your shield and are able to shuffle to the back of the canoe and throw it off without losing much speed. Both of you add 1d6 to the dice tray and add a bonus d6 as well for the cooperation. And with that, let's roll. The *Spiked Knuckles Gang* get a 5, 2, 1, and 4 for 12.

PC (Bob): And we get a 6, 3, 5, 4 and 1 for 19.

The GM writes down 12 under SK Gang and 19 under Party, sub totaling their tally to 37.

GM: You've extended your lead some, the tree causing the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* a bit of a problem. But this round they (rolls 1d4) they get 2 bonus dice for a total of 6d6. Their canoe has taken on a little water but it is not slowing them down yet.

GM: You turn your attention down river as you paddle and you see a beaver dam crossing from shore to shore. Annor, knowing all about these beavers, what do you know about their dams.

The GM adds 4d6 for the base and 2d6 for the bonus to the GM's dice tray for a total of 6d6.

PC (Annor): Their dams are pretty strong, but they like to build them shallow so we might be able to pop the canoe over it.

GM: I'll allow it (with a smile). What do you do?

The GM turns over a one minute sand timer.

PC (Annor): Using my knowledge of these beavers and my keen ranger senses I'm going to scan the dam to find the lowest point and steer the canoe towards that.

PC (Shalena): I'm going to move to the back and tell Bob to get his armored butt in the back as well so that the front of the canoe will pop up out of the water.

PC (Bob): I'll head to the back as well and since it's a beaver dam I'm assuming there's a lot of floating branches. If there is a long one I'll grab it so we can use it to push off the bottom of the river over the dam.

PC (Graydell): I'm going to cast shape water to cause a dome of water right where the canoe is heading to help us get over the dam.

GM: Excellent. Annor, you spot a low point, good job, and steer the canoe towards it. Add 1d6 to the dice tray. Shalena, that was a good idea. The front of the canoe pops up out of the water a little. Add 1d6 to the dice tray. And Bob, roll a luck check.

PC (Bob): 13.

GM: There is a branch that will work add 1d6 and a bonus 1d6

to the dice tray. Graydell, that's a really cool use of a spell so you get a bonus as well. Go ahead and put 2d6 total in the dice tray. And we roll.

GM: The *Spiked Knuckles Gang* get 6, 2, 5, 4, 5, and 1. Ow, they're catching up. That's 23 for a total of 35.

PC (Graydell): 6, 4, 2, 4, 3, and 1 for 20.

The GM writes down 23 under SK Gang, sub total of 35, and 20 under Party, sub totaling their tally to 57.

GM: "The PCs still have a big head start. Maybe I should throw in an obstacle to increase the tension. Let me roll on the random table. A 2, so 'Small animals fleeing in the same direction become a trip hazard'."

GM: The water dome seems to have flooded the beaver dam, as you top it and slide down a few feet to the lower water on the other side. Dozens of beavers fill the water escaping the flooded dam, making it difficult for you to propel the canoe further down the river. What do you do?

The GM turns over a one minute sand timer.

PC (Annor): Uhm, uhm, uhm...I lean over the front and start pushing the beavers to the side trusting to my animal handling to not get bitten.

PC (Bob): I'm just going to paddle through them.

PC (Graydell): I'm going to use my staff to try to help Annor.

PC (Shalena): I'm going to paddle with Bob.

GM: Ok. Paddling is very difficult and gets you nowhere until the beavers disperse. But Annor's and Graydell's efforts help a little so you may not get full penalties. (*Rolls 1d4*) You only get 2 penalties.

The GM adds 2d6 to the GM's dice tray.

GM: Ok, next round. The *Spiked Knuckles Gang* (rolls 1d4) gets 1 bonus die.

The GM adds 4d6 for the base and 1d6 for the bonus to the GM's dice tray for a total of 7d6.

GM: Having cleared the fleeing beavers you spot a giant beaver paddling towards you with its tail. You know giant beavers are viciously territorial. What do you do?

The GM turns over a 1-minute timer.

PC (Graydell): I've got this. I'm going to pull out the big guns and cast confusion on it.

PC (Bob): I'm going to put my back into it and try to get is near the edge of the river, without

running aground, to keep our distance as we speed by it.

PC (Annor): I want to aid Graydell by telling him what giant beavers respond too.

PC (Shalena): Remember that bottled air elemental we got. Can I stick it in the water and use it as some jet propulsion?

GM: Sure. Ok then. Graydell that's a big spell, and with Annor's help, I'm not even going to make you roll. The giant beaver is confused and ignores you long enough for you to get around it.

GM: The bottle thing really works and helps speed you along. You all can add 1d6 to the dice tray and get a bonus d6 for the air elemental. Lets roll.

GM: The *Spiked Knuckles Gang* gets 4, 5, 3, 3, 2, 3, and 4 for 24 and a total of 59.

PC (Shalena): We get a 6, 2, 3, 6, and 1 for 18. That's a total of 75.

The GM writes down 24 under SK Gang, sub total of 59, and 18 under Party, sub totaling their tally to 75.

GM: You guys still have a good lead but the Gang is catching up. They get (rolls 1d4) 2 bonus dice for this final round.

The GM places 4d6 for the base and 2d6 for the bonus into the GM's dice tray for a total of 6d6.

GM: The current has grown strong as the roar of a waterfall replaces the roar of adrenaline-fueled, rushing blood echoing in your ears. What do you do?

The GM turns over a 1-minute timer.

PC (Shalena): How high is the waterfall? Can we just go over it?

GM: You can't see past the drop off. It is very loud so it's probably really tall.

PC (Graydell): Well I can cast fly.

PC (Bob): That doesn't help us much.

GM: 30 seconds.

PC (Annor): What if I shoot an arrow with a rope to a tree as we go by. We can all hold on to it as the canoe goes over the edge. Hopefully the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* will think we went over it with the canoe.

PC (Bob): I don't think a single arrow would hold all four of us.

PC (Graydell): The three of you. Fly, remember.

The GM drops 1d6 into the GM's dice tray.

GM: Take your time. I don't mind.

PC (Shalena): Ok. Annor does the arrow thing. Graydell casts fly. I'll use my grappling hook. I'll

tie the end of the rope around Bob and I'll hold onto it. It may not hold our weight outright but it should hold while we are swinging and we can grab onto some tree branches.

The GM holds 1d6 over the GM's dice tray prepared to drop it.

PC (Bob): Agreed.

PC (Graydell): Lets do it.

PC (Annor): Rock and roll.

GM: Alright then. Annor give me a ranged attack with disadvantage because of the rope. Shalena give me a grappling hook throw check. Graydell, fly away.

PC (Annor): 19 and 4. That's an 8.

PC (Shalena): 2. That's a 2.

GM: Graydell, add 1d6 to the dice tray. You see the ropes going astray and are able to gather them and get them wrapped around a tree before the canoe goes over. The rest of you are in the water, pulling yourself to shore through the heavy current right above the waterfall. One slip and you know you're done for.

GM: Graydell, roll your dice pool...or single die, if you will.

PC (Graydell): A 6!

The GM writes down 6 under Party, totaling their tally to 81.

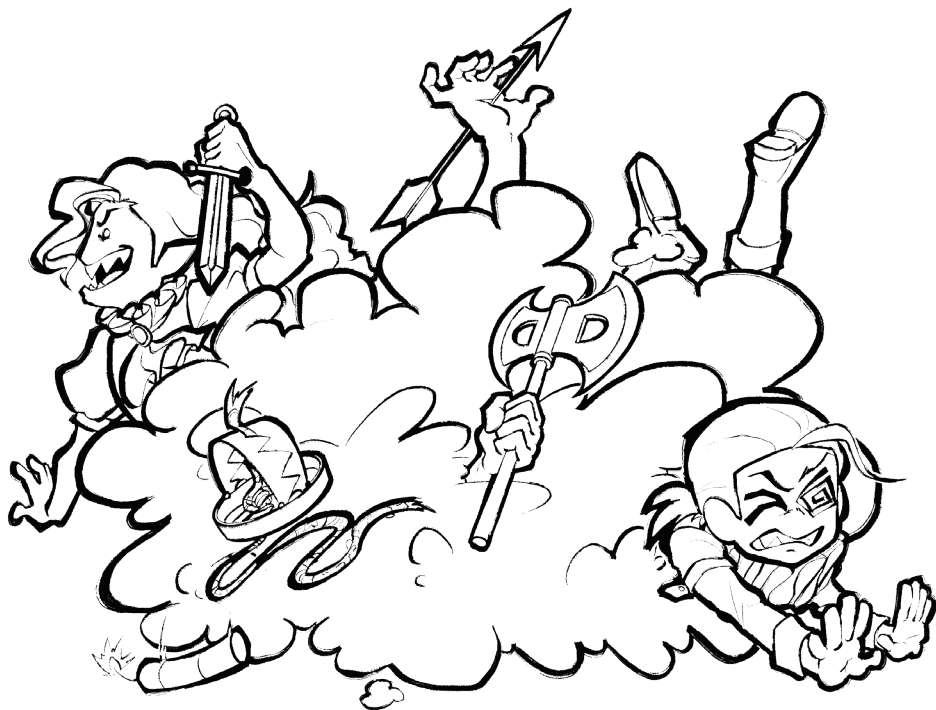
GM: The *Gang* gets 2, 4, 3, 1, 6, 1 and 1 for 18 and a total of 77.

The GM writes down 18 under SK Gang, sub total of 77.

GM: You scramble to the bank gasping for breath. You see the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* frantically paddling to the other bank, grasping some low hanging branches to keep them from falling over the edge of the waterfall.

But what if a *Last Grasp* would be better than a *Last Gasp*? The scores are close so the party would still be safe and escape the clutches of the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* but...

GM: Bob, you are the last one in the water, weighed down by your armor as you are. Pulling yourself through the water you look up to see the leader of the *Skull Knuckled Gang*, a giant of a man, wading through the water, a thick rope around his waist as the rest of the gang stands on the other shore holding the rope tight. He closes in on you reaching for you. You feel yourself yanked towards the bank by the rope around your waist out of his reach. Wiping the water from your eyes you see he has reached the other shore. He waves a small, golden figurine at you. "Thanks for the treasure, buck-os." You realize the *Spiked Knuckles Gang* now has the sacred idol.



GM ADVICE

Here is some assorted advice for running chases.

More advice, tips, and tricks for running races, chases, and standoffs can be found in the full version.

Principles. The most important principle to keep in mind is forcing quick decisions. Normally, players get plenty of time to decide what to do. Make them uncomfortable, but keep it fun. This will keep them on the edge of their seat.

The next most important principle is to show the tallies and the GM's dice pool. The players need to see what they are up against in order for them to be worried.

Principle three; keep the tallies close. By adjusting certain dials, you can keep the tension ratcheted up. For this chase mechanic, that means keeping the tallies close, at least for the first half.

Winning by the skin of your teeth is more enjoyable than utter domination of your foes. Though, if asked, players will often think and say the opposite. They don't always know what's good for them.

A chase is not a game of chess, it is a cinematic element. If the players get a huge head start

or have a couple of rounds of great roles, they may feel they can coast. If they fall far behind they may give up. Use bonus and penalty dice liberally in the first three stages to keep the competition close so that the tension stays high. You can tighten that up in Stage 4 and 5 so that player actions bear more of the weight.

Scale. Chases can be run at a small time and distance scale, lasting minutes and covering just a few city blocks. They could be grand in scale, lasting days and covering miles and miles. Since physical distance and time is already abstracted, as tracking movement rates get in the way of a good chase, the scale can be anything.

Sailing the sea, trying to escape both pirates and a hungry kraken, is a chase that could take days. Racing across the desert sands to reach the safety of the caves before the sun rises could take all night. Holding out in a city during a siege until the army returns could take weeks.

Each action may take hours or days of game time and cover leagues. It can still be handled in the 1-minute action. It doesn't matter the time or distance. What matters is the action and the tension.

BASIC CHASE TABLES

STAGE 1 - START/INITIATING EVENT

d6	Event
1	A pack of wolves start growling
2	The ground starts shaking and the roof begins caving in
3	A flash flood is surging towards you
4	A group of bounty hunters have found you
5	An explosion is imminent
6	A fire is starting to spread

STAGE 2 - TRAP/PUZZLE/TERRAIN

d6	Event
1	Hidden pit trap
2	Match the four elements puzzle (earth, air, fire, water)
3	Quicksand
4	Net-cocoon trap sweeps you up
5	5 levers control water pumps, either flood or dry out room
6	Knee-deep mud

STAGE 3 - IMPASSE/ROLE-PLAY CHALLENGE

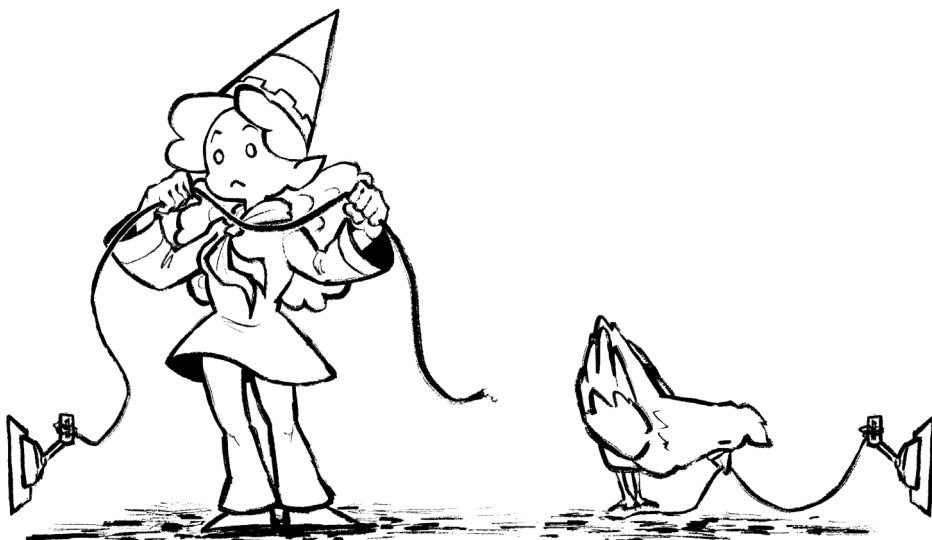
d6	Event
1	Locked gate
2	An official demands to see your permit
3	A parade and onlookers fill the street
4	A pushy salesperson insists you try their wares
5	Livestock. 1d4: 1. sheep, 2. cattle, 3. chickens, 4. goats
6	The town guard deny you passage

STAGE 4 - BATTLE/CONFLICT/CLIMAX

d6	Event
1	2d4 guards bar your path
2	You escape to a bridge that is about to collapse
3	An unattended lock-box holds valuables
4	A jungle cat pounces from above as you come by
5	Losing your pursuers, their boss greets you with backup
6	A peasant is trapped underneath a wagon

STAGE 5 - LAST GASP OR LAST GRASP/TWIST

d6	Event
1	A large gap, with safety on the other side
2	Pursuers take something of value as you slip out of reach
3	An ally is actually a spy
4	An escape vehicle is already in motion
5	An object of value is dropped or washed away by terrain
6	You were unknowingly working for the BBEG



OBSTACLE TABLES

RANDOM OBSTACLES

d6	Obstacle
1	Dangerous terrain. 1d6: 1. quicksand, 2-3. mud, 4-5. fire, 6. white water
2	Fleeing small animals become a trip hazard. 1d6: 1. snakes, 2-3. rodents, 4-5. birds, 6. dogs
3	Obscuring vision. 1d6: 1. cloud prismatic water droplets, 2-3. mist/fog, 4-5. exploding bag of flour/dust, 6. smoke
4	Hangings. 1d6: 1. curtains, 2-3. low bar/portcullis, 4-5. wind chimes, 6. bodies
5	Difficult terrain. 1d6: 1. undergrowth, 2-3. steep incline, 4-5. loose rock, 6. slippery surface
6	Impact to senses. 1d6: 1. revolting odor, 2-3. blinding light, 4-5. blaring sound, 6. vertigo

ODD OBSTACLES

d6	Obstacle
1	An empty bucket that gets stuck on your foot
2	Small beads or a spot of oil causes a slippery lane
3	Revolving platform/ladder returns you back to your start
4	Hangings. 1d6: 1. clothes, 2-3. wet fish, 4-5. meats, 6. wigs
5	A flock of chickens are disturbed and flutter about
6	Movers are carrying a large pane of glass across your path



MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Check out the full version of ***Races, Chases, and Standoffs*** for more, including:

- Races, setting a target value to simulate time-based events
- Standoffs, direct confrontation between two opposing parties
- Examples of play for races and standoffs
- Much more GM advice, tips, and tricks for exciting, cinematic events
- More random tables
 - Basic Race
 - Basic Standoff
 - Obstacles
 - Absolute Mayhem
 - Absolute Mirth
- Reference Tables
 - Standoff End Conditions
 - Race Target Values
 - Bonus Dice
 - Bonuses and Penalties

Follow us on **Kickstarter** for the crowdfunding launch.

[LINK](#)

If crowdfunding is over, you can find Races, Chases, and Standoffs and supplementary chase tables at shop.dragonsol.com.

[Youtube](#)

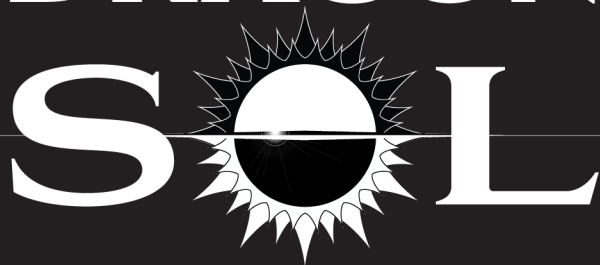
[Join the horde](#)

[Website](#)

[Patreon](#)

[Discord](#)

DRAGON



SOL