

THE FESTIVAL OF CROWS

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In the 74th year of the People's Calendar (PC) the Arcane Sanctum marched en masse through Calanhelm dragging the entire family line of the three nobles accused of assassinating the Regent, ArchMage Artruos, to Traitor's Stand. There in witness of the populace of Calanhelm, the entire line of the three families were put to death through a multitude of Celestial spells, wands, Rituals and other magical items. In total, one hundred and forty two Nobles are killed in one day. It becomes known as Crow's Day, for the bodies that are not hanging in nooses are left in the field nearby, and thousands of crows (and other birds) clutter the ground and skies as they feast.

In PC 94, King Valenta, tiring of petty nobles wasting his time and the courts with minor disagreements, decides to set up a tournament on the same date as Crow's Day. Many nobles take this day to show off their grandeur and poster in front of the King. Merchants begin to bring their wares to the event and Bards start performing. To remind the commoners about the history behind the day, the Arcane Sanctum sets up spell caster duels.

Within a few years it becomes quite the festival and in PC 98 King Valenta renames his tournament "The Festival of Crows" and sets up the tournament for teams representing the nobles to match skills and wits against each other. More events such as Archery, a Hunt and Performances become standard fare.

This article will be focused upon the Team Tournaments.

Each team is allowed six participants who will compete in a variety of tests and challenges. You do not have to be from Calanda in order to be on a team, and in fact, foreign visitors are encouraged to come and participate and compete against the locals. Each team may have one "alternate" for medical substitution.

The teams are awarded points, and each point is worth 6 silver pieces per team. Thus, a team which completed the Tournament with a score of 30 would get 180 silver pieces for the team (or, if you prefer, 30 silver pieces per member). This amount may be given as coin, production, Rituals, Magic Items or any combination of the aforementioned.

In addition, the winning team also may receive extra prizes such as magic items, scrolls, trophies, or other rewards if they are sponsored by a noble.

The Tournament is broken into seven separate events. Each event is worth 5 points to the winning team, 4 to the team in second place, 3 for the team in third place, 2 for the team in fourth place, and 1 for the team in fifth place. If there are more than five teams, then the other teams will receive nothing. It is also possible for a team to receive no points even if there are less than five teams competing. A team which puts no effort or only a half-hearted effort into a competition doesn't really deserve a point simply because they attended.



This point system was devised as a way to balance out the teams as much as possible: A team that is excellent in one or two events but terrible in the others will not do as well as a team which is well-rounded in all of the events. In fact, some Tournaments in the past have been won by teams which never won any of the individual competitions yet placed high in each.

The whole purpose of the Tournament is to stress and teach cooperation and teamwork, for a group that works together will accomplish much more than one which is dominated by a single hero. The most important thing is a good balance: a team of fighters will not do as well as one which includes people of many different skills.

You of course need to devise some sort of name for your team, and you are well advised not to come up with some sort of “joke” name, for this will tell the judge (who is His Majesty Ulric Ellesair Masterson, of course) that you do not take this seriously. You do not want to start off on the wrong foot.

Let us now examine the events and discuss the rules for each and strategies for doing well in each.

Colours

The Tournament usually begins on a Saturday morning with a festive opening ceremony in which each of the teams present themselves to the King. You will begin at one end of the Ceremonial Field and when your team’s name is called, you will march to His Majesty and present yourselves.

Teams are judged on their overall presentation with a specific eye towards matching finery, banners, shields, and other decorations. Some sort of symbol that easily identifies your team is also advisable.

Attitude and bearing can play a key role in the decision-making process. March in sequence if you are marching; make your presentation, and then remember that the competition isn’t over until the decision is made. When you turn around and head back to your starting position, stand proud — don’t lie on the grass waiting for His Majesty to make his decision. As he stands there, looking around at the teams and trying to make his choices, you want him to see you as smart and sharp as when you began!

Teams are allowed to hire extra people (such as drummers or dancers) to help with the presentation; however, it is more important to parade in splendor than to try to overwhelm with numbers. A small group with matching tabards carrying a nice banner is more impressive than a large non-matching, unkempt horde.

When you appear before the King, the team should kneel (of course!) and the leader should then rise and introduce the members of the team. Don’t wait for His Majesty to acknowledge your kneel before rising; he is aware of the procedure for Colors. Upon being introduced, each member can then rise. If the team is an established one, the leader may want to explain the team’s purpose or perhaps list its accomplishments. Pomp and circumstance are not only acceptable in this case but is expected.

Don’t forget to speak up! You want not only His Majesty to hear you, but all onlookers. If your team leader does not have the proper voice for this, perhaps you should hire a herald specifically for this important function.

Some teams like to give a present to the King at this point, but it is not required, and of course, it is better to have no present than a stupid one.



This idea that each member rises upon his or her introduction is but a suggestion — you may think of something more creative — but the important thing is to constantly show the proper respect for His Majesty and his station. This respect should continue onwards throughout the entire Tournament and will apply to His Majesty and those nobles to whom he has assisting him in the Tournament. Remember, you want His Majesty to be impressed with you, and as the brownies say, every point counts.

Combat- Trifecta

For this competition, each team sends **three representatives** to the field to compete against another team of three. The combats are arranged so that every team will compete against every other team. Afterwards, whichever team has won the most competitions will be judged the winner, and so on. Extra battles are often required for tie-breakers, but this just adds to the excitement of this competition.

You are not allowed to change your fighters between battles unless there is a serious injury that requires rest.

Although competitors will inflict real damage, **no killing blows are allowed**.

Competitors may have no protective spells active and cannot cast any during the competition. Magic items and weapons are also not allowed, nor are ritual effects, whether spellcrafted or not. *Arcane Armours* must be breached before battle, and cannot be repaired during battle.

The key to winning this battle is through teamwork. This is not a battle of individual heroes; it is a test of how well your fighters can attack while still protecting each other's backs.

Entertainment

The entertainment competition is usually held after the feast on Saturday night. Each team has approximately five minutes to tell a story, act out a play, dance, sing, juggle, tell jokes, or otherwise entertain the crowd.

It is allowable to use outside help such as musicians but if too much of your entry is based upon the work of non-team members, it will count against you even if the performance was excellent.

Always remember that the top Dignitary is your ultimate audience here. Doing a skit that insults the nobility might go over well with the crowd but not with the one who will decide how many points you receive.

Riddles

The Riddles competition will be held before Entertainment. This is a competition of wits and ingenuity. The ArchMage will have all the answers for this event.

The Race

This is a relay-style race in which four members run a specific route and hand off their team's baton to the next person in line. The route is not very long, so it is definitely a race of speed and not stamina. This is very



exciting for the townsfolk who usually bet heavily on this competition. Please note: This will be run on uneven terrain. **For PC116 and beyond, this will be more than just a sprint, this will be quite the run. Please be careful and courteous to your fellow runners.**

Archery

The archery competition is for one team member only. Each team's archer is allowed three arrows per match. **There are three matches, each from a progressively longer distance.**

The archers must aim for a standard archery target, with points allocated accordingly; **10 points for a bull's-eye, 7 for the next ring, 5 for the next ring, 3 for the next ring, and 1 for the outer ring.** The bow and arrows are provided by His Majesty so that no team has an advantage. If there is a tie, then the competition will continue until the tie is broken.

Being trained in the skill of archery is obviously useful in this competition but it is not a prerequisite. *(Those without the actual Archery skill will have to fire further back than those with the skill. Saar cannot compete as their racial specifically disallows archery.)*

The Hero's Battle

This battle uses the same rules as the Combat competition, except in this confrontation, each team sends but one fighter to the field. Every team's fighter will meet every other team's fighter to narrow down the competition, and tie-breakers may be needed. The same person must participate in all rounds of this competition unless an injury occurs to prevent his or her participation. **Because we want to showcase skill, this will become a "first to 10 hits". Each Champion will have a Game Master track their hits. First to 10 hits wins. On a tie there will be a 5-minute break for water and then they will have a First to 5 hits.**

The Spellcaster's Battle

In this competition, each team will send one spellcaster onto the field to meet the other spellcasters from each of the other teams. No 9th level spells are allowed and (obviously) no necromantic spells. The spellcaster who last remains alive / mobile / awake / conscious at the end of the competition is the winner.

If you are bleeding out from damage, you are automatically eliminated, even if one of the other participants heals you up. (Competitors who are bleeding out will be healed by a Marshal as soon as possible and removed from the field of battle; this is not a competition to the death!) What can make this especially fun to watch is that you can never completely count out casters who are merely held by binding spells (for instance) because the caster who bound them may suddenly fall asleep or unconscious from another spell, thus freeing their bound victims to continue the competition!

Magic items and scrolls are not allowed to be used, but the spellcaster may begin the competition with as many defensive spells as possible, and these defensive spells may be cast by anyone. However, once the competition begins, no one is allowed to cast any new defensive spells on the competitors — they must do it themselves. (They can, of course, cast them on each other if they so desire.)



Note as well that you have to use common sense when fighting against certain races. Throwing a *Sleep* spell at an elf might not be the wisest choice, for instance.

Cloaks and Banes **may be used** during the event, provided they were purchased through High Magic, and racial abilities such as Resists can be.

If a tie happens to occur — and this has happened before, where one caster was bound and the other who had done it was completely out of spells — then either His Majesty can declare a tie or allow the teams to each send in another caster to compete in a tie-breaking competition.

Gryphon's (in Biata form), though citizens, are not allowed to use many of their innate skills in this competition, and citizens who have managed to place themselves within a golem form will not be allowed to participate in this competition. If you have any unusual skills, magic, curses, or powers which may give you an unfair advantage, it is wise to bring this to the attention of His Majesty prior to the competition so that a decision can be made regarding your participation.

The MAXIMUM amount of spells that can be taken is 4-4-4-4-4-3-2-1

The Hunt

The Hunt is basically a scavenger hunt with a twist — before you can find some of the objects; you first have to figure out what the objects are.

Each team is given a list of approximately 30 items to find and return. The list is usually handed out immediately after the Colors Competition, and teams have 12 hours to locate as many of the items as they can. The completion ends after the Entertainment portion of the Festival, usually after dinner.

The team that produces the item first gets 5 points, second gets 4 points, and so on. Therefore, it is to a team's advantage to find as many items as possible even if someone else has beaten them to it. **If we have more than 5 teams, points will be adjusted accordingly.**

Sometimes the items will be hidden in a specific place, and there will be more than one of the item at that place so that every team that finds it can have one. It is against the rules of the Tournament to take all of the items that are hidden there in order to prevent other teams from recovering them. The people who run the Tournament for His Majesty periodically check the hiding places and if the items are missing but not turned in, the item will be struck from the Hunt list and any points awarded for that item will be forfeited.

These rules apply to nonparticipants as well. Many times people not on teams will try to find the items to sell to the teams or to give to the teams they are supporting. This is allowed and encouraged, but these people must also abide by the rules. If items are missing, it does not matter who took them. In other words, if you find an item for the hunt, you best sell it quickly as hoarding it may eliminate the item from the event making it worthless. (This follows the Calanda motto of "*Don't be a dick*")

Teams are allowed to use others who are not on the team to search for these items (after all, there is really no way to stop that) but only team members may produce the items for credit.



FOR PC 116: Any team found to be collecting more than 50% of their items through other PCs will be **DISQUALIFIED** from the Hunt. Unfortunately, in the past, several teams have not been actively searching for items and just relying on other to do so. This goes against the spirit of this event. When presenting an item, you are **REQUIRED** to tell the acceptor if you found the item or purchased/were given etc. from another PC. Lying will result in the team being **DISQUALIFIED** from the **ENTIRE EVENT**. (In other words, Don't be a Dick).

Each team member is allowed to submit on each item only once. In other words, each team is allowed only six “guesses” per item. If you turn in an item thinking it is the solution to one of the puzzles of the Hunt and it is not, you are no longer allowed to submit another item for that particular entry.

It should be noted that there will always be an item on the Hunt List called **“The Most Healing.”** Teams are required to turn in as many healing potions and elixirs at the start of the Hunt, with each level of healing giving one point toward that Hunt item. These potions and elixirs will be used during the Combat, Troll Ball and Spellcasters competitions to heal those hurt in the battle.

Items on the list can be devised into three categories:

Random Items

These may or may not be out there. Some will be planted but most are just waiting to be discovered and the trick is for your team to run and find it first and then return it before another team does. For instance, past Hunt items in this category include a four leaf clover, an hourglass, an apple, a joker from a deck of cards, and a silver dagger.

Puzzled Items

In order to find this object, you must first figure out the puzzle. Puzzled items are usually planted and are prefaced with the word “The” indicating that it is a specific item you are looking for (as opposed to a Random Item which is identified with the word “A”).

Imagination in coming up with an alternative is not part of the puzzle. For instance, if there is a Hunt item called “The Light Rock” then they are looking for a specific item that solves the puzzle, and not merely a rock that you have tried to cast a Light spell onto.

As an example, a common Puzzled Item involves a word search puzzle, although usually you are not told what words you are looking for. One year it was all of the lands in Calandonia, and after you circled them all, you knew which one was missing, thus solving the Hunt item “The Missing Land.” The letters that were not circled spelled out another clue telling you where another Hunt item was hidden. If you see any strange puzzles lying around in the local taverns or posted on the trees during a Tournament weekend, you can be pretty sure it will lead you to a Hunt item.

Another item from a past Hunt was listed only as “OTTFSSSENT.” It took a while, but someone finally figured out that this stood for “One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight Nine Ten” but what was the item? As it turned out, the item was a Count! Fortunately, the appropriate noble was in town that day to be submitted as the item.



There is always at least one anagram on the Hunt list. Unscramble the words “The Adventurer’s Barnacles” and you’ll find the words “Search under tavern tables.” Unscrambling it will always tell you where to look, so they almost always start out with words like “look” or “search” or “seek.” Anagrams don’t always come out that well, so if you see something that doesn’t read quite right, it’s probably an anagram. The item you are looking for is obvious once you find it.

Sometimes the Hunt organizers hire actors from the Royal Academy of Bards in Calanhelm to act out roles during the Hunt that give clues to items, or may have the items on them.

Note that unlike other “planted” items, if your team misses these actors with their clues, you’re out of luck. Their instructions are always to talk to as many people as possible and to make sure that they talk to at least one person on each team before heading out of town.

The opportunity is there, but you have to grab it and realize that the person talking to you might have some connection to the Hunt.

Superlative Items

These are judged at the very end of the Hunt Competition at the very end of the Tournament. Each team produces something for each item and their submissions are compared. The team with the best (or most, or worst) gets first place for that item.

In the past, teams have had to produce the ugliest ring, the funniest limerick about Fangthorn, the best dessert, and the most Nerntwippys. (What’s a nerntwippy? Ah, that item was a Puzzled Item too, wasn’t it?) There is almost always a “Best Top Ten List” on the list, so you can actually start writing your submission now.

Part of the fun of the superlatives is seeing who can come up with the most creative answers. The team that produced a large boot as their entry for “The Longest Tongue” did very well, as did the group that spelled out the word “one” with their bodies for “The Biggest One.”

You never know what may happen or what will be submitted. One time there was an item called “The Biggest Lie” and when it was his turn one team leader rose and indignantly said “I think this is an outrage to have an item like this on the Hunt list! I have never lied and I do not intend to do so now!” He sat back down and there was silence for a few seconds and then a round of applause. Needless to say, he placed first that particular item.

The bottom line for the Superlatives then is to use your imagination and be creative — especially if you have no idea what it is you are supposed to be turning in!

The Rogue’s Gallery

The rogue’s gallery tests the wit and skill of those with the Legerdemain ability. Those with the skill will be sent to a location to put their dexterity and problem solving abilities to the test. There will be a number of tokens within the location. Participants will be given a 30 minute time limit to complete the course, gathering as many tokens as possible **without** setting off the traps. Traps are “live” and will affect the participant as normal. The participant that gets the most tokens in the least time with the least amount of traps going off will win the event.



The traps and amount of tokens will be the same for each team. If there is a tie for amount of tokens, time will be factored in with a penalty for each trap triggered during the event (5 minutes added to overall time). As well, if the participant must exit the gallery, they will be assessed a 5 minute time penalty each time they leave. A team that does not even attempt to disarm the traps will be disqualified from the event and receive no points.

The Grande Melee

This event will pit all teams against each other in mass combat. This event allows all Spells and abilities to be in play (see restrictions below). The only things not allowed is magic weapons with Damage Auras, Race Reavers, Chaos Blades or magic items of any sort other than Arcane Armour. No Protection Auras.

- **A limit of 200 PP worth of Potions**
- **A limit of 200 PP worth of Scrolls**
- Alchemy is limited to 200 PP per team as well.
- Each team **MUST** submit a list of their items before the event. (after the Colours ceremony would be appropriate)

This is a mass battle between all teams at once.

This is a contest of mass teamwork, not “the team with the most toys wins”. Last team member standing gets top points. Points will be awarded in order of last elimination.

Any participant that falls to 0 Body or lower is IMMEDIATELY rifted to the Limited CoP set up by the Earth Weavers and will be healed by them. Participants who are removed in this fashion cannot re-enter the play field, so teammates, get your comrades healed before they drop.

For PC 116 and forward:

- **PCs are restricted to 2 Backstabs or Weapon Profs plus the appropriate skills for either (1 dodge, 2 evade, 2 disarm, assassinate 30 for 2 Backstabs; 2 disarm, Slay 30, 1x parry for 2 Weapon Prof)**
- **Casters are limited to 4-4-4-4-4-3-2-1 Pyramid.**
- **PCs, please make your own battle board for this event with the above restrictions to be verified by the Games Master.**
- **No Magic Items, no Frost Titan Tokens or Racial Tokens allowed.**

Ritualist Competition

For PC 116 and beyond we are adding in the Ritualist Competition. Ritualist will be given a Difficulty 1 Ritual to cast. The Ritual will be the same for each caster (duration will be either 5 or 10 minutes). The caster will have to “put on a show” for the audience. They can use any prop, person or other appropriate (and safe) things for showmanship. Please be aware of your environment. Do not use things that can permanently stain/ruin the grass/ground, or harm any player (fireworks come to mind, so does too much incense.).



The ranking of the ritualist will be determined by how detailed and involved the Ritualist and their team are during the ritual. This is your time to SHINE!

Troll Ball Rules of Play

TEAMS

Teams will consist of 6 players including 2 support members, a coach and/or team doctor

Playing positions are:

“Runners” – there are 3 of them on the field

“Rousers” – there is 1 on the field

The other 3 players are spares, can take the place of any player position when needed “tagging in”

GAME PLAY

Object of the Game:

Get the Troll-head into your barrel to score a point! First team to 5 points or highest score at end of time limit wins!

Teams will start at the opposite end of the pitch from their goal. (Team A starts at Team B’s barrel, and vice versa)

Troll-head starts at the center of the pitch.

The referee will signal the start of the match, both teams race for the troll-head.

Positions:

“Runners” will have a weapon that has the Sleep carrier. They can strike other players to put them to sleep, the call to be made is “1 Sleep”. They can use this to stop players from getting to the troll-head, or stop them if they are carrying the ball. **These weapons are RED and grant you the ability to wield them one handed even if you do not have the proper skill.**

“Rousers” will have a weapon that has the Awaken carrier. They can strike other players to wake them up if they have been put to sleep by a runner, the call to be made is “1 Awaken”. **These weapons are BLUE and grant you the ability to wield them even if you do not have the skill.**

Remember: You take 1 point of body damage each time you are hit (by either the Sleep or Awaken)

Player Substitutions:



When a player is low on body points, or is injured or tired, and wishes to leave the field of play for healing, they can “tag out” with their spare player on the bench. Handing over their weapon to that spare player who will immediately take the field in the position of the player they are relieving.

Moving the Ball (Troll-head):

Troll-head may only be thrown backwards (no kicking or passing).

It must hit the ground before being able to be picked up by a player on the same team as the player that threw it.

Opposing team players may intercept a thrown troll-head in mid-air or grab it off the ground.

Scoring:

Barrel will be in the center of a scoring area, located at each end of the pitch.

A point is scored when the troll-head is dropped into a team’s barrel.

A player must have both feet planted inside the scoring area before they can drop the troll-head into the barrel. (The head cannot be thrown in. It must be placed)

Play is stopped after each goal to allow any players still sleeping to be roused for the next goal attempt.

General Rules:

Only the player actually carrying the troll-head can be affected by Sleep. If the player drops the ball they are still susceptible to the SLEEP carrier for 5 SECONDS (this is to keep the “I hit you!” “No, I dropped the ball” arguments down to a minimum. This includes ANY contact with the ball (passing it backwards etc.)

Match length is 15 minutes or first team to 5 points.

No armor allowed, not even arcane (AA is suppressed by the field)

Game abilities that are not allowed to be used: Slay, Eviscerate, Terminate, Assassinate, Florentine, Two-Weapon, Weapon Proficiency, Critical Attack, Backstab, Back attack, Shatter, Stun Limb, Shield and any racial form of the above.

No multiple hits (once a player is hit and is asleep, there is no need to hit them again)

No killing blows

If referee catches you giving more hits to a sleeping player, the offending team will be penalized 1 point from their score.

If a player is hit repeatedly to death (and somehow it isn’t caught by the ref) the player who did the killing, or the entire team if no one player admits to it, will be charged with assault/murder as per the laws of the realm.



Any and all perceived rules violations, as determined by the referee, has a general penalty of a 1 point deduction from a team's score.

The referee will also have a weapon with the Awaken carrier, to quickly help rouse sleeping players after a goal is scored, to get teams moving onto the next goal attempt more quickly.

The Field has been magically enchanted so that no magic will work save for the weapons of the team. Therefore Magic Armour, Cloaks/Banes will not function and are "suppressed" so that they are not "wasted" during the game. Any spells that are thrown into the area are instantly dispelled.

In conclusion, the Tournament is terrific fun for both participants and observers. It's also a great way to make a name for you and better still earn some money without putting yourself in any danger.

Don't wait until the last minute to organize your team — start early and practice and you're sure to be the winning team one year!



Winners of Past Tournaments:

PC112: THE ALLIANCE

PC113: GOLDEN LEAF

PC114: DUCHESS' DUKES

PC115: DUCHESS' DUKES

PC 116: TBA

