

MEATBOT MASSACRE



By Greg Stolze and Daniel Solis

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The Premise

It's the future and everything's perfect.

No, really. Everything's perfect. No war, no crime, no illness, plenty of sugar-free soda with no unpleasant aftertaste. Mankind has solved its problems and is, at last, at peace.

Interestingly (at least from an early 21st century perspective) it turns out that watching really violent sports is an important, nay, *essential* element of a peaceful society. So every Saturday, a large percentage of the population gets together to watch giant bioengineered war machines knock the snot out of each other.

The pilots of these hulks are those rare atavistic throwbacks who still retain an urge to really harm others. While common in the 20th century, the instinct for mayhem has been largely removed from the race. Only one tenth of one percent of the people on Earth has what it takes to deliver a kick to the shins or a slap to the face.

You are in that .1%. You pilot the machines in the gladiator fights. You are an idol to billions.

You are a meatjock.

Stuff You'll Need

Dice: You'll need a bunch of four-sided dice (referred to as d4), six-sided dice (d6), ten-sided dice (d10), and twelve-sided dice (d12) dice.

Hex Map: You can pick these up at any hobby or game store. For your convenience, a printable 8.5"x11" hex map is included in this document. Aside from the hexes, the map is blank so you can draw in your own terrain or modify it however you wish.

Miniatures: Again, you can pick these up at a hobby or game store. Any mini will do as long as the base doesn't occupy more than one hex. It's fun to mix n' match minis from wildly different product lines to emulate the variety of meatbots at your disposal.

Meatbot Data Sheet: Fancy name for some scrap paper to keep track of your meatbot's current stats. Because we're so generous, we've included printable data sheets.

Tokens: If you'd like, you can use tokens to keep track of your meatbot's stats and current condition. Tokens are faster than writing stuff down on your sheet, but they tend to clutter up the gaming table. You can use glass beads, loose change, or the teeth of your enemies.

Core Rules

Here's how "Meatbot Massacre" works. Each player gets a meatbot — a bioengineered battlesuit left over from the Canada Wars of 2203. You may each get a certain number of upgrades (nicknamed "devourables"), which affect the stats of your bot, and you each start with a score in "Massacre." Certain devourables allow the bot carrying them to ignore particular rules.

Meatjock

Your meatjock has one trait, **Massacre**, rated from 2 to 10. Your Massacre rating gauges how well you pilot your meatbot. Every turn, you pick a number of actions you want to do, with a maximum limit equal to your Massacre score. If you have Massacre 2, you can do two things per round, and no more, no matter how souped-up your bot is. If you have Massacre 8, you can do eight things per round, even if you're in a stripped-down, unadorned bot.

Meatbot

Your meatbot has three active traits, **Move**, **Defend** and **Attack**, named after the actions those traits govern. While massacre determines how many actions you can do in a round, these actually are the actions you can perform. These traits' ratings are the maximum number of times you can use them in a single round. With Attack 3, you can't attack more than 3 times in a single turn even if your massacre rating allows further actions.

Your bot also has two passive traits, **Meat** and **Stomachs**, named after two of the most important parts of meatbot anatomy. Meat is your bot's health. Stomachs measures how many additional gadgets you can carry.

Finally, each weapon has a **Damage** trait. Unsurprisingly, it measures how dangerous the weapon is.

Move is the base number of hexes your meatbot can move across per turn. If you have Move 3, you can move three hexes per turn without rolling. You can temporarily increase Move by using an action to roll a d4. You add the result to your Move for that turn. If you roll multiple times, you can add them together. The result is how many hexes your bot can move this turn. You can never roll a number of movement dice higher than your bot's Move score, however.

Example: Red's bot has Move 2. If he wants to move more than two hexes, he has to roll a d4. If he does so and gets a 3, he can move 5 hexes. If he really wants to leg it, he can use two actions to roll 2d4. Getting a 4 and a 1, he can move 7 hexes. However, since his bot's Move is 2, he can never roll more than 2d4 for Move.

Defend is your bot's ability to avoid getting hurt, whether by using passive methods like armor or active methods like dodging. Simply put, the higher your Defend, the harder it is to injure your bot. You can temporarily increase your Defend by using an action to roll a d6. You add the result to your Defend for that turn. If you roll multiple dice, only the highest single result gets added to your Defend. Again, you can never roll more dice for defense than your Defend score permits.

Example: Red's bot has Defend 4. He rolls three Defend actions, getting 1, 3 and 5. He uses the highest result and adds it to his Defend. For this round, he has Defend 9. He can never roll more than four Defend actions.

Attack is pretty self-explanatory. When you choose to attack, roll a d10. If you roll higher than or equal to your opponent's current Defend, the weapon hits and does damage. If you roll less than Defend, you miss. If you decide to do Grandstand maneuvers, they do not count against your limit of attacks per turn.

Damage is how much you injure an opponent from a single attack. If a weapon has Damage 3, it does 3 points of damage every time it hits an opponent. Note that different weapons have different Damage ratings — they don't combine. If you have Gougers with Damage 3 and a Bonespear Flinger with Damage 6, they don't do Damage 8 when you use either — you do 3 if you gouge and 6 if you fling. Weapons have no limits on how many times they can be used in a round — the only limits on them are your Massacre and Attack scores. In other words, just because a weapon has Damage 3, that does not mean you can only use it three times a round.

Meat measures how much punishment your bot can safely withstand. Every time your bot is damaged, it loses Meat at a 1:1 ratio. If your bot receives an attack from a weapon with Damage 4, it loses 4 Meats. Once its Meats hit zero, it collapses. Welcome to the food chain.

Stomachs represent how many Devourables your bot can possess at one time. Many Devourables only take up one Stomach, but the more powerful ones usually fill several at once.

Grandstanding

In addition to normal attacks, meatjocks can also attempt big, flamboyant, excessive (or often just desperate) maneuvers. These moves are called **grandstands**, and the specific grandstand moves available are listed under the weapons you need to perform them.

When you attempt a grandstand, you roll a D12. If it comes up 12, you do the move, *regardless of your opponent's Defend*. If it turns up 1-11, it failed.

Grandstanding is, obviously, a big big risk. But the fans love them, they do cool, *terrible* things to your opponent, and some 'bots get so heavily defended that only insane, over the top stuff can hurt them.

The other advantage to grandstanding is that only your Massacre score limits how many attempts you can make per turn — unlike standard attacks.

Your Basic Meatbot

The lowest-common-denominator meatbot waddles out of the assembly vat with Move 2, Defend 2, Attack 4, 20 Meats and 10 Stomachs. It's armed with basic claws, teeth and a Plib Gun (see below). It comes with no Devourables whatsoever.

Plib Gun

A plib gun fires single, small projectiles. They're about the size of a human thumb, and they're powerful enough to kill a man, but they barely make a scratch on a meatbot.

The only really unique thing about a plib gun is that it's integral to the 'bot. Unlike devourable weapons, it cannot be removed. You always have your plibber.

Range: 10 hexes

Standard Attack: Plib guns do Damage 1 at all ranges.

Grandstand Move: None

Basic Claws and Teeth

Your bot can hit and bite, too. Unless you want to devour something (see page 5) or get fancy, you're really no better off than with a plib gun.

Range: 1 hex

Standard Attack: Biting and clawing does Damage 1.

Grandstand Move: It's possible to trip, shove or body-slam an enemy bot by making a grandstand roll. This does Damage 2 and temporarily reduces the enemy's Move by 2 during the movement phase. Move can never be reduced below zero.

Grandstand Move: Tackling an opponent also works. This does Damage 3 and temporarily reduces both your Move and the enemy's Move by 3 next round. Again, Move can never be reduced below zero.

Order of Action

A meatbot match consists of a series of rounds — like a boxing match, only faster and with more audible thuds on impact. Every time the players roll, a new match starts. The actions taken — defenses, grandstanding, attacks and maneuvering — all resolve in that order. But before any of those actions go off, all players have to pick dice to represent their strategies.

Pick-Your-Action Phase: Each player picks a number of actions equal to his Massacre score. The types of actions are individually limited by the ratings of the governing traits. Once actions are chosen, each player gathers the dice governed by those actions. (Move d4, Defend d6, Attack d10, Grandstand d12). You do not need to announce what you're doing—the dice you pick do that for you. Your enemy realizes what you're doing when your dice hit the table.

Defense: Immediately after rolling, the d6 results rolled (if any) are applied to every bot's base Defend score.

Attacks: After everyone gets their defense up, Attacks are resolved. The higher the result on your attack die, the sooner you go — so all 10 results go first, then all 9s, then all 8s. Ties are simultaneous.

Grandstands are handled during this attack phase. If you succeed at a Grandstand, it gets resolved before any other attack. Yet another reason to reach for that treacherous d12...

Move: Once everyone is done attacking and grandstanding, it's time to jockey for position. The bot with the lowest current Move rating has to go first. (This sometimes lets him reach some goal first, but far more commonly means he has to show his intentions first and let the other jocks respond to his position.) After that, the next slowest moves, and so forth, until the fastest bot cleans up.

If two bots have the same Move, they take turns moving, one hex at a time, until they're settled.

Bots cannot occupy the same hex or pass through hexes that contain other meatbots.

Note: If you rolled a successful attack and couldn't use it because you were out of range, you cannot "save it" until the movement phase. When the turn ends, everyone knows where everyone else starts and where they will make their attacks. Smart players check ranges before deciding how many dice to put into attack and defense.

A Simple Example

Red and Nina are facing off. Each of them has Massacre 2, and each is piloting a standard bot with no enhancements. Therefore, each bot has Move 2, Defend 2, and a pair of Damage 1 weapons. Each can take 20 Damage before collapse. They start out ten hexes apart.

Round 1

Pick Phase: Red decides to roll a d6 and a d10, defending and making a simple attack. Nina decides to roll 2d10, making a couple attacks.

Red gets a 3 on his d6 and an 8 on his d10. Nina gets a 5 and a 9 on her 2d10.

Defense Phase: Red's Defend goes up to 5. Nina's stays at 2.

Attack Phase: Nina goes first with her 9. She plinks Red with her plib gun, reducing him to 19 Meats. He goes next with his 8 and hits her. She goes last with her 5, which equals his Defend and damages him — just barely.

Move Phase: Since their Move rates are tied, they take turns. Nina goes first and takes a step forward, while Red steps back. They repeat this and stay, stalemated, at 10 hexes apart.

Round 2

Pick Phase: Red decides to get close and try to make up his deficit with a Grandstand. He rolls a d6 to protect himself and a d4 to move in. Nina, not knowing that he won't attack, rolls a d10 and a d6.

Defense Phase: Rolling a 6, Red's Defend cranks to a mighty 8. Nina rolls a 5 and rises to a 7, which she'll probably pine for in a later round.

Attack Phase: Nina rolled the only attack and got a 6 — not good enough to harm the wildly dodging Red.

Move Phase: Her Move being a default 2, Nina has to go first. She has no idea what Red is doing, so she takes two steps towards him, figuring he might try to get out of range. Instead, Red (with Move 5) bounds directly at her. They end the round two hexes apart.

Round 3

Pick Phase: Nina's going to try to widen her lead by unloading on Red with 2d10, trusting on luck to keep her ahead or (at worst) even things out. Red needs to close in, so he's pretty much forced to roll a d4, but he rolls a d10 as well, in hopes of keeping the gap from widening too far.

Defense Phase: Both Defend scores stay at 2.

Attack Phase: Nina rolls a 10 and a 9, easily hitting first and second. Red's 8 fires third but is still a solid hit.

Move Phase: Nina's default Move of 2 is used to edge away, widening the gap between them to four, but Red rolled a 3 and raised his Move to 5 again. He gets within clobbering distance.

Round 4

Pick Phase: Nina's been doing just fine with hyper-aggression, so she rolls 2d10 again, hoping for the best. Red rolls 1d12 and 1d10, hoping for the Grandstand tackle that will turn the tide.

Defense Phase: Defend 2 for both.

Attack Phase: With a 9, Red's grandstand fails, but his attack of 9 is a rousing success and hits Nina first. She only rolled a 5 and a 6, but against Red's sad Defend, they both hit.

Move Phase: They both have Move 2, but neither wants to step aside. Red wants to continue trying his Grandstand, while Nina's doing just fine rolling 2d10 and taking his punishment. At this point, Red's bot has 15 Meats left, while Nina's is looking robust with 17 Meats. It's still anyone's fight though.



A Complicated Example

Red, Nina and Jack each have Massacre 5 and are permitted to soup up their bots with four Stomachs' worth of gear but — to make it interesting — no one knows what anyone else has bought.

Red chooses Gougers (1 Stomach), a Lockjaw (1 Stomach) and Hyperheal (2 Stomachs).

Jack chooses two ELMes (1 Stomach each) and an Up Down (2 Stomachs).

Nina cannot resist the siren lure of a Boom Launcher (3 Stomachs) and backs it up with a Twitchy Flinchpump (1 Stomach).

They start out in a triangle, ten hexes from each other.

Round 1

Pick Phase: Red decides to roll 2d6 and 2d4 — the most he can roll for movement and defense with Move 2 and Defend 2. With one die left, he shrugs and rolls a d10. He really wants to get close, lock up and start gouging, but he can plib too.

Jack's bot has Move 3, so he can roll up to 3d4 — and he does. He backs that up with 2d6 of defense.

Nina, always the aggressor, rolls 4d10, the most her Attack score permits, and backs it up with a d12.

Defense Phase: Red rolled a 4 and a 2. Using only the higher, his Defend rises to 6. Jack rolled a 3 and a 6, raising his Defend to 8. Nina's Defend stays at 2.

Attack Phase: With a 3 on her d12, Nina's grandstand failed. But she did manage to roll up a pair of 10s. Red got a 10 as well, so all of them go simultaneously. Nina assigns one 10 to each opponent, using that luscious Boom Launcher. Each of them takes 2 points of damage. Red can only plib, and he plibs Nina in defiance. Nina's 6 attack ties Red's Defend so the Boom goes again, doing him 2 more points of damage. She contemplates booming Jack with her 5 for only one point of damage (since it's less than his Defend) but decides to save her ammo.

Move Phase: Red rolled a 4 and a 2. They both add to his base Move of 2, permitting him to move 8 hexes this round. Jack rolled 3d4 but only got 1,1,2. They all combine with his base Move of 4 to produce Move 8. Nina stays at Move 2 and has to go first.

Nina moves two hexes back. Ideally, she'd like to hang back and pepper them with her ranged weapon, but since she doesn't have anything with range greater than 10, she needs to stay close.

Jack goes next. He closes in on Nina, shortening the distance between them to 5 hexes, but maintains his distance from Red.

Red bounds towards Nina at top speed, shortening the span between them to 4 hexes.

Round 2

Pick Phase: Red continues to move at top speed, rolling 2d4. He also wants to step up his attack, so he rolls 2d10, and he adds a d6 just in case.

Nina doesn't like the charge, so she rolls 2d4 hoping for some mobility too. She also rolls a d6 and 2d10.

Jack rolls 3d10, a d4 and a d6 because he thinks the other two are going to shred each other and he'll get to be kingmaker.

Defense Phase: Red's hyperheal fixes a point of damage, and his rolled 2 raises his Defend to 4. Nina gets a lucky 6 and has Defend 8. Jack's 3 raises his Defend to 5.

Attack Phase: Red rolled highest — with a lowly 7, too weak to hit Nina, but enough to plib Jack. With a 6, Jack could plib him back, but instead he reveals his Up Down — placing a bomb three hexes behind Nina's back on

a straight line with Red. She's safe if she only retreats one hex, but if she goes farther back she'd better move at least five to avoid damage. Jack also has a 5, which lets him further build his bomb-wall between himself and the other two. With her 4, Nina booms Red for two more damage. Red has a 4 as well, but it's beneath everyone's Defend and therefore worthless. So is Nina's puny 1. So is Jack's 3 but, because he's using an Up Down, he can place a third bomb to completely bracket Nina.

Move Phase: Jack got a 2 on his d4, so his Move goes up to 6. Nina got a 2 and a 1, so hers rises to 5. But Red rolled a pair of 4s, so his is 10.

Jack makes a lateral move — he thinks Nina's going to flee Red straight back, bursting all the way through his bomb bracket. He wants to be close enough to keep peppering her.

Sure enough, Nina keeps fleeing. She doesn't know what Red's going to do when he catches her and she doesn't want to find out.

But Nina's too slow. Red can catch her, and he can move just out of the range of Jack's bomb. He starts the next round in a hex adjacent to Nina.

Round 3

Pick Phase: Red picks 4d10 and 1d6. He is eager to bite and gouge.

Nina picks 2d10, 2d6 and 1d4. She wants options — escape, protection or fighting back.

Jack's delighted. He's going to whale on both of them with 4d10 and a d4 to keep him mobile.





Defense Phase: Once again, Red's machine heals a point of damage. Rolling a 5, his Defend rises to 7. Nina also gets a 5, so her Defend is just as high — she'll need it. Jack's Defend stays at 2, and his bombs go off harmlessly.

Attack Phase: Jack gets the highest result with an 8, and he plibs Nina just to make her think. He also has a 7, and comparing the two of them he decides to plib her again. Red rolled 7,6,6 on his 4d10 — only one attack enough to tie Nina's Defend. But he uses it with his Lockjaw to attach himself. Then he plibs Jack three times. Jack also gets a pair of Booms from Nina (she rolled a 6 and a 5) and suddenly he's in lousy shape. With his last two 5s, he puts a pair of Up Down shells between them and his path of retreat.

Move Phase: Red's Move dropped to 0 when he established his Lock, so he's going nowhere. Nina rolled a 2 on her d4, which offsets the Lock's Movement penalty, so she drags Red closer to Jack, adroitly placing him in the explosion range of one of Jack's bombs while remaining in a clear hex. Jack rolled a 1, and he legs 5 hexes away — out of range of the Boom Launcher and the plib gun. He starts the next round hoping that they don't have any secret weapons with greater range.

Round 4

Pick Phase: Red rolls 4d10 and 1d12. He is insane with rage.

Nina rolls 2d6 and 3d10. She is insane with fear.

Jack rolls 4d10 and 1d4. He is insane with glee.

Defense Phase: Red recovers a point of damage which is immediately skinned off, plus one more, when Jack's bomb explodes. Nina rolls a 4 and raises her Defend to 6. Red and Jack stay at 2.

Attack Phase: Red and Jack both roll 9s. Red's 9 is spent gouging Nina for 3, and Red's is spent putting an Up Down bomb right on their hex. (Did either of them spend Move dice? No? Pity, especially since Red's d12 came up a 9.) Both Nina and Red got 7s, so he takes a point of damage and she takes three more. Jack's 6,5 and 5 put three more bombs right where they are; each will take a total of 10 damage next turn when they go off. Red's 5 is insufficient to penetrate Nina's Defend of 6, but her 5 can get him, and so can her 4. He rolled a final 1, which does him no good. He does decide to release his Lock however.

Move Phase: Nina and Red both regain their Move 2 and, after flipping a coin to decide who has to move first, Nina moves directly away from Red, forcing him to either follow into Jack's minefield or disengage. Cursing, he breaks off. Both of them get clear, winding up 2 hexes apart. Jack, with Move 7, snickers and creates even more distance.

Can Nina and Red put aside their differences to clobber Jack? Do they even want to, since he's still the worst hurt? Will Red try to close with Nina again, or run out of range, powering up the Hyperheal and humming "Time Is On My Side"? At this point, it's still anybody's game.

Devourables

Extra weapons or other devices that you can add to your bot are called 'devourables' because the most common way to get one is to eat it off a fallen foe. Meatbots are cannibalistic, you see: Once a bot loses its meat, it lies there helpless and you can have your bot gnaw off its big sharp claws or a layer of its protection or some of its extra muscle. By your next match, your bot has digested and incorporated that improvement. Most matches permit the winner to gnaw one trait off the loser, but some high-stakes matches are "all you can eat."

Devouring in Combat

Anything that comes off in combat is fair game: You eat it, you keep it. To consume a torn-free devourable, you have to be in the same hex as the item. Then you must spend the rest of the turn consuming it. While eating, your bot sits there, unable to even move its base Move, unable to attack, doing nothing but chewing and swallowing.

Even after eating the gadget, your bot can't actually use the abilities until it has had time to digest. In other words, not until the next match. On the bright side, any ripped-off devourable is effectively neutralized for the duration of the fight.

(The exceptions to this rule are bots with Hypersnack. Meatjocks fear them.)

Puking Devourables

On the off-chance that you can't eat a devourable because your stomachs are completely full, you have the option of upchucking or tearing off one or more of your gadgets in combat. You must allocate one d10 you rolled for each device you want to remove (regardless of how many Stomachs it occupies). Devices come off in the Attack phase (since you're effectively attacking your own bot). You cannot use failed Grandstand dice to remove unwanted devices, but those weenie 1 and 2 results on attack rolls can be allocated for stripping and vomiting.

Acid Spray

With this device, your bot can spray acid, either in a wide cloud or in a narrow stream.

Range: See below.

Stomachs: 1

Standard Attack: The cloud is the standard attack. It does Damage 2 in a cone formation.

Grandstand Move: The special attack is a concentrated Acid Stream. Acid Stream does Damage 2 in a ray formation and reduces your affected opponents' Defend by 3 for the rest of the round.

Aggro Pump

'Aggro' is shorthand for 'aggression' (not 'aggravation' or 'agriculture' or anything else). An aggro pump, therefore, is a device that pumps up your bot's aggression.

Since that's clear, here's what it *does*. When you install an aggro pump, you can roll as many d10 Attack dice as you wish: The Attack trait of your bot is no longer relevant.

Stomachs: 1

Area Effect

Some weapons deal their damage in special configurations of area effect, usually in one of the three following patterns. Note well: Some of these configurations do damage *regardless of the target's Defend*. These are the only weapons that can do damage when your attack roll is lower than defense — but the balancing factor is that these weapons are usually quite bulky and sometimes can be avoided simply with movement.

Explosion

Explosive damage deals the full listed weapon damage to one hex. This hex is called "ground zero." Every hex adjacent to ground zero also receives damage, but at one less than the listed weapon damage. Further, even if the attack roll does not beat the target's Defend roll, the weapon still does damage — it just does one point of damage less than it would on a bullseye hit.

Example: Jet has a boom launcher, which does Damage 2 in an explosive pattern. Two rival bots are in adjoining hexes and he wants to hit both. One has Defend 6 and the other has Defend 9. Using an 8 result, he puts the ground zero hex on the bot with the higher Defend. Even though he rolled under that target's Defend, he still does 1 point of damage. The other bot is inside the blast radius, but the damage steps down a point because it's not at ground zero. Because Jet beat that bot's Defend, the weapon does its full damage — in this case, the single point for the wider blast area.

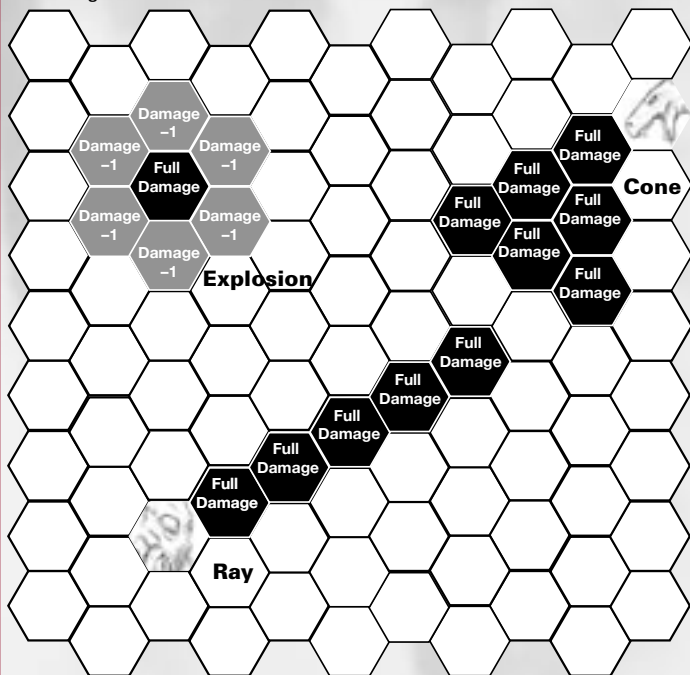
If, instead, Jet had aimed at the bot with the Defend 6, his 8 result would have done full damage because it's higher than the Defend. The poorly-defended bot would take 2 damage. However, the pilot with Defend 9 would take no damage — he's in a Damage 1 zone, but because his Defend beats the Attack, he avoids it.

Ray

Rays deal full damage in a straight line of five hexes from the weapon. Unlike explosives, this weapon only hits those targets' whose Defends are equal to or lower than the attack roll.

Cone

Conical area of effects deal full weapon damage to a triangular formation of six hexes from the weapon. They only hit when the attack meets or beats each target's Defend.



Bonespear Flinger

In the war, this was used to knock down buildings. Big buildings. Far and away the most damaging weapon authorized for arena use, the bonespear flinger has one huge drawback: The magazine holds three bonespears, and after they're fired, it's empty. Of course, that's cold comfort when you've taken a hit from one and the other guy still has one left. Or when you're up against someone who has two flingers with three spears each.

Lost spears cannot be retrieved in any fashion. Once fired, they're useless.

Range: 6 hexes

Stomachs: 5

Standard Attack: When struck, the target takes Damage 6 and is knocked back a hex in the opposite direction from the spear flinger.

Grandstand Move: The special attack is called a "Shotgun Wedding." If you fire a bonespear at someone when there's either a wall or another bot in the hex behind him (meaning, the space he would move into with a standard attack), you might effectively nail your target to the wall, or to the other bot. The primary target takes Damage 6, and the secondary target (if a bot) takes Damage 3. To separate, all bots involved must take another 3 Damage. If two bots are stuck together, they move together with a -2 penalty to base Move each. (See the Lock attack under "Lockjaw" for full rules on how bots move when stuck together.) If the target is pinned to a wall, he can't move in any direction until he takes 3 Damage to rip free.

Boom Launcher

A boom launcher launches rockets that, when they hit, go boom. And the fans go wild.

Like the bonespear flinger, the boom launcher has limited ammo. After ten shots, it's empty. But ten should be plenty, right?

Range: 10 hexes

Stomachs: 3

Standard Attack: Damage 2 in an explosive formation. Remember, even if it misses, the boom launcher does its Damage 1 to a target at ground zero. If the attack roll equals or exceeds the Defend of any bot one hex away from ground zero, it does Damage 1 to those bots too.

Grandstand Move: Skilled jocks can aim their missiles down at exactly the right angle to glance up off the floor and hit their enemy from underneath. This technique is called a Hurl. When done correctly, the Hurl does Damage 3, moves the enemy bot two hexes (heading away from the boom launcher), and reduces his Move by 2 during the Move phase.

Chitin

Each layer of Chitin increases a bot's base Defend by 1.

Stomachs: 3

Crane Whip Arms

Crane Whip Arms extend the reach of your basic claws or your Gougers. When making any attack with those weapons (other than a tackle, from page 2.), those weapons are considered to have a range of 2 hexes. They also let you pick up discarded Devourables from two hexes away, where normally you have to move into the hex.

Stomachs: 1

Endurance Pump

A bot with an Endurance Pump does not get weary nearly as quickly as one without this augmentation. While it does not improve your bot's Move rating, it does let you roll as many Move dice as you wish. Your Move rating is still the basis for your bot's quickness, but it no longer limits how many d4 you can roll to take extra steps.

Stomachs: 2

Explosive Leg Muscle Enhancement

Each ELME graft enhances a bot's Move by 1.

Stomachs: 1

Extra Meat

For each level of Extra Meat you add to your bot, it can take two more points of Damage before it quits. Take ten points of Extra Meat and your bot doesn't stop until it's taken forty points of damage. (Though that option doesn't leave you any room for other Devourables, of course.)

Stomachs: 1

Gougers

Gougers are big thick sharp claws. They let you rip and tear at any opponent you can reach.

Range: 1 hex

Stomachs: 1

Standard Attack: The standard Gouger attack is a simple swipe or stab. It has Damage 3.

Grandstand Move: The special attack with Gougers is called an "Organ Peel." With a successful Organ Peel, you can remove one Devourable from an opponent's bot. The attacker chooses a hex adjacent to the victim. This is where the item lies, waiting to be consumed. Organ Peel does no damage. Organ peels cannot remove an opponent's plib gun, or the basic teeth and claws.

Hyperheal

Bots with Hyperheal regain one Meat during the Defense phase of each turn. Alternately, if her bot has been hit by a round from an onco-cannon (see below), the jock can opt to expel the round instead of healing. If she chooses to reject the onco-round, it gets kicked out before it can interfere with the bot.

Stomachs: 2

Hypersnack

Normally, devouring another bot's lost enhancement takes a full turn and it isn't available until your bot can digest and assimilate it (a process which takes much longer than any arena fight has ever lasted). However, bots with hypersnack can swallow a shed devourable in its square with any standard attack roll — even a 1. (Lost Devourables have Defend 0.) Furthermore, the Devourable is online and ready for use by the Pick phase of the next combat round.

Stomachs: 2

Lockjaw

Enhanced jaw muscles for your bioengineered snack machine. Go get some dinner!

Range: 1 hex

Stomachs: 1

Standard Attack: Damage 2

Standard Attack: Everyone likes to see a Lock. This is when a Lockjawed bot bites an enemy and clamps down. When the Lock is successfully established, the two bots are stuck together. There is nothing anyone can do to get them apart, unless (1) the biter is knocked out of the fight, (2) the biter's meatjock decides to let go, or (3) the bitten bot voluntarily spends an attack die and takes 6 Damage to wrench free. As long as the attachment lasts, both bots have their Move decreased by 2, and when one moves, the other moves. A Lock does Damage 1 on the first turn it's applied. Neither bot can move the other bot without moving itself, though it can move without moving the other bot if it stays in an adjacent hex.

Grandstand Move: None.

Nerve Lace

Nerve Lace makes your actions just a *little, tiny bit* faster. When your meat's on the line, a little tiny bit can be more than enough.

Normally, tied actions are resolved simultaneously. If one bot has a Nerve Lace, its Grandstands, Attacks and Movements are resolved as if they were higher than any bot with the same die result, but no Lace. Thus, two fighters who each roll Grandstands are quite likely to kill each other... unless one has the Nerve Lace to break the tie and kill his opponent before that finishing move goes off.

Similarly, if two bots have tied Move scores, the bot with the Nerve Lace gets to go after the unimproved bot, or he can choose to move simultaneously, as normal.

Stomachs: 1

Onco-Cannon

The feared onco-cannon was the weapon that turned the tide of Canadian aggression and eventually won the war for the forces of peace and justice. It fires tightly coiled rounds that, when they strike bioengineered flesh, start giving it contradictory and unhealthy instructions. Simply put, it makes your bot sick.

Range: 10 hexes

Stomachs: 6

Standard Attack: When an onco-round hits, it does Damage 1. However, it stays in the bot (unless expelled with Hyperheal, as described above). At the beginning of each round after the initial impact, the onco-cannon's controller can choose one of the following effects for the round to have on its target.

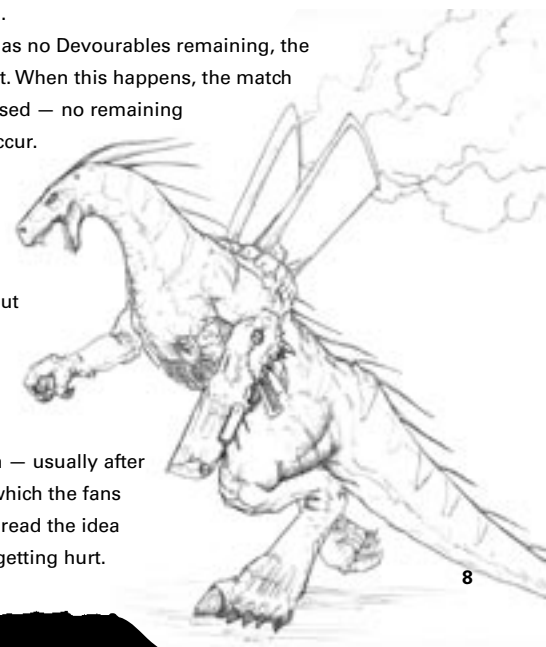
- 1) Damage 1, but that's so boring.
- 2) Reduce base Move by 1. It cannot be reduced below one.
- 3) Reduce base Defend by 1. It cannot be reduced below one.

Note that the reductions last until the end of combat, and they're cumulative. As long as the round remains in the bot, the controller can keep doing damage. If you put four rounds in your opponent, you can affect his bot four times next turn, and so forth. You don't need to make rolls for your round to do its thing.

Grandstand Move: Once a round is in, you can attempt a more sophisticated attack by rolling one or more Grandstand dice. It's called a "Bio-Rejection Protocol" or BiRP. You must have at least one onco-round in an opponent to make a BiRP on him, you can only attempt one BiRP per onco-slug each round, and if you make a BiRP attempt, you can't choose any of the other effects. But if the BiRP succeeds, you can make one of the Devourables on his bot just fall off and lie there on an adjacent hex, useless to him unless he takes the time to swallow it up again.

If the affected bot has no Devourables remaining, the BiRP ejects the pilot. When this happens, the match is immediately paused — no remaining attacks or moves occur.

The pilot is gently escorted to a nearby hospital while his motionless bot is hauled out of the arena. The other bots return to their starting positions and the match begins again — usually after a somber hush in which the fans contemplate with dread the idea of someone really getting hurt.



Twitchy Flinchpump

Okay, the technical name was “Active Response Defense Matrix,” but since that got shortened to ARDM and was pronounced “are dumb” the admittedly-uncool name “Twitchy Flinchpump” entered meatjock jargon. But though they may not broadcast it, many still use of this device, which raises a bot’s awareness of incoming attacks and gives it a limited set of avoidance instincts.

With a Twitchy Flinchpump, you can roll an unlimited number of d6 defense dice. Your bot’s Defend score does not improve, but it no longer serves as a limit on the number of dice you can roll to protect yourself.

Stomachs: 1

Up Down

This is a rocket launcher that propels a grenade very high up in the air. Initially designed for long-distance barrages, it’s somewhat inefficient in the arena. But it looks cool, so the fans like them.

The way an Up Down works is, you fire it on one turn and it comes down and explodes the next turn. By spending any attack die — even those cruddy 1s and 2s — you can place a counter on the board indicating where the Up Down shell is falling. On the next turn, after the Defense phase but before anything else (even Grandstands) it goes off. It is effectively impossible to defend against a Up Down shell if it explodes right by you — see the description of the standard attack for the nuts and bolts of it.

This sounds fabulous, right? In practice, unless the gunner sets off at least four shells, the blast can be completely avoided with Move 2. Nevertheless, it can be quite handy for controlling the movement of your enemies, even if it doesn’t damage them.

Range: For the purposes of arena combat, its range is unlimited

Stomachs: 2

Standard Attack: The Up Down does Damage 3 in an explosive formation.

If a bot is in ground zero, that bot takes Damage 3, no matter how high its Defend. A bot in an adjacent hex takes Damage 2, no matter what.

Grandstand Move: None

Advanced Maneuvers

All of the following are grandstands, meaning you have to roll a natural 12. Most of these require some specific combination of Devourables, listed as “requirements.”

Clusterbang

‘Clusterbanging’ is the art of developing synergies between your weapons, so that two of them fuse their effects into a single attack. There are many different ways to do it — using twin Gougers is very different from combining a boom launcher with an acid spray. Use your imagination.

Range: As the shorter of the two weapons.

Requirements: Two Devourables that list standard attacks, excluding the Up Down.

Effect: The Damage ratings and effects from the standard attacks are combined and simultaneous.

Master Munch

A highly specialized attack that requires highly specialized equipment. This is possibly the only attack that is more feared than a shot from an Onco-Canon.

Range: 1 hex

Requirements: Hypersnack and Lockjaw

Effect: Pick one devourable on your enemy’s bot. He loses it and at the beginning of the next turn, you have it. Mmm. That’s good eatin’.

Lawyer Noise

There are (of course) no lawyers in utopia, and few people have any real concept of what a lawyer was. However, relying on ancient texts they are sure that they were something vile and repulsive. Fitting, then, that this savage maneuver is named after a profession now regarded as a sort of ancient-times boogeyman.

The Lawyer Noise maneuver consists of grabbing an opponent, holding him in front of your flinger, and then launching him — preferably into another opponent.

Range: 1 hex

Requirements: Gougers and Bonespear Flinger

Effect: The primary target takes Damage 8 and moves up to 6 hexes in a direction you choose. He must move in a straight line. If he lands in a hex with another bot, that bot is knocked back a hex and takes Damage 2, plus an extra point of damage for every level of Extra Meat the primary target possesses. The secondary target takes this damage regardless of his Defense level.

Fat City Sumo Ride

A perennial fan favorite, the Fat City Sumo Ride takes advantage of a fast but bulky meatbot by using its body as a battering ram to simply knock down and squash smaller opponents.

Range: 1 hex

Requirements: Explosive Leg Muscle Enhancement and Extra Meat

Effect: Your opponent takes 1 Damage for each level of Extra Meat your bot possesses. Both you and your opponent move two squares in a direction of your choice. Both you and your opponent lose 2 off your Move during the Movement phase.



Setting Up the Match

Obviously, the wide variety of weapons, Massacre scores and ratings for Attack and Defense mean that some bots are pretty wimpy and some are massively buff. It's not much fun to match a jock with Massacre 8 and all 10 Stomachs full against someone playing Massacre 3 with a basic machine. To keep matches fair (and fun), use one of the following approaches.

Twin Measures

The players agree beforehand what the Massacre scores of their jocks are, and how many Stomachs on their bots they're allowed to fill. This provides for a fairly balanced game, at least in theory.

It also permits you to control the complexity of the game. If you're just starting out, it's tempting to get a whole mess of different weapons, crank Massacre up to 10 and go crazy shooting everything off at once. But that's also the most complex way to play, and the very basics of the game — maneuver, timing and dice decision — tend to get obscured by the glut of options.

For your first game, it's better to either go medium Massacre and low Stomachs or low Massacre and medium Stomachs. The first option lets you get a sense of dice tactics as they exist independent of gear. The second lets you familiarize yourself with the basic gear before you try mind-blowing stuff like the onco-cannon. A game with Massacre 5, Stomachs 3 or Massacre 3, Stomachs 5 should be simple and sweet, while still providing plenty of different things to try.

As you get more familiar with the feel of the game, you can raise Massacre and Stomachs together, or just one. A high Massacre/low Stomachs game provides a real test of tactical skill, while a low Massacre/high Stomach game favors the builder who plans a strategy beforehand and sticks to it.

Single Measure

Alternately, you can simply dole out a number of points to each player, who can spend them on a one-for-one basis to either raise Massacre or fill Stomachs. Seven or eight points is good for a beginner: That way you can either have a Massacre 7 jock with loads of killer instinct but no hardware, or a Massacre 2 jock with a fairly tricked-out bot.

Single measure matches are good for players who have different styles. Some people are better at the build phase of the game, designing well-balanced bots with killer combos. Others are better at making dice choices under pressure while the variables are constantly changing. Single measure matches let them compete on a more even field.

The Tournament Scenario

To play a tournament, you need several players who are all willing to stick with the same jock and the same bot through several battles. What you're going to do is simulate a series of fights in which some bots get degraded while others live fat on stolen Devourables.

Begin by setting up the start match or matches. Everyone should begin at the same level, either on a Single or Twin Measure scale. (Hint: Start pretty low.) The difference is, their bots and jocks improve after each fight. Specifically, they get more or less popular with the fans. You measure this by keeping track of **Fan Points**.

You get a Fan Point every time you successfully perform a Grandstand, and every time you reduce another bot to zero Meats. Furthermore, the winner of the match gets a free Fan Point as well. However, you lose a Fan Point every time you get knocked down to zero Meats (though this can't drop you below zero Fan Points).

Between matches, players can spend Fan Points on a one-for-one basis to either raise their Massacre level or to fill their bot's Stomachs.

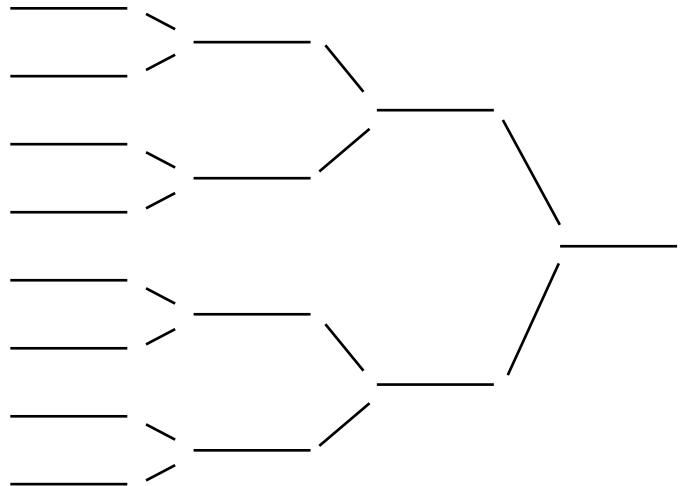
Example: Red starts out the tournament with Massacre 3 and three Devourables — an EMLE, a Twitchy Flinchpump and an Acid Spray. During his first round, he successfully does two grandstands with his Acid Spray, earning him a pair of Fan Points. However, he gets pounded down, losing the match, so he loses one of his Fan Points. Plus, the winner steals his Acid Spray. Before his next battle, he raises his Massacre to 4 by spending his Fan Point.

The next round, Red dominates! He does another grandstand, kills two opponents and wins the round. (He also takes a loser's boom launcher.) This earns him four Fan Points — a grandstand point, two kill points and an extra one for winning. With four Fan points, he could raise his Massacre and buy some good gadgets... but feeling cocky, he decides to bank them and hope that, with five points after his next round, he can buy that awesome Bonespear Flinger.

In the next round he only makes one grandstand before being eliminated (and losing that sweet boom launcher). With no additional Fan Points, he's in danger of whittling away everything he has. He decides to raise his Massacre score by 2 and get Hyperheal (which fills two Stomachs).

Grudge Match

A grudge match tournament sets up a series of bracketed one-on-one fights. Most typically, only the winners advance until the last bot standing takes it all. Pretty simple. If you have eight fighters, the brackets look like this:

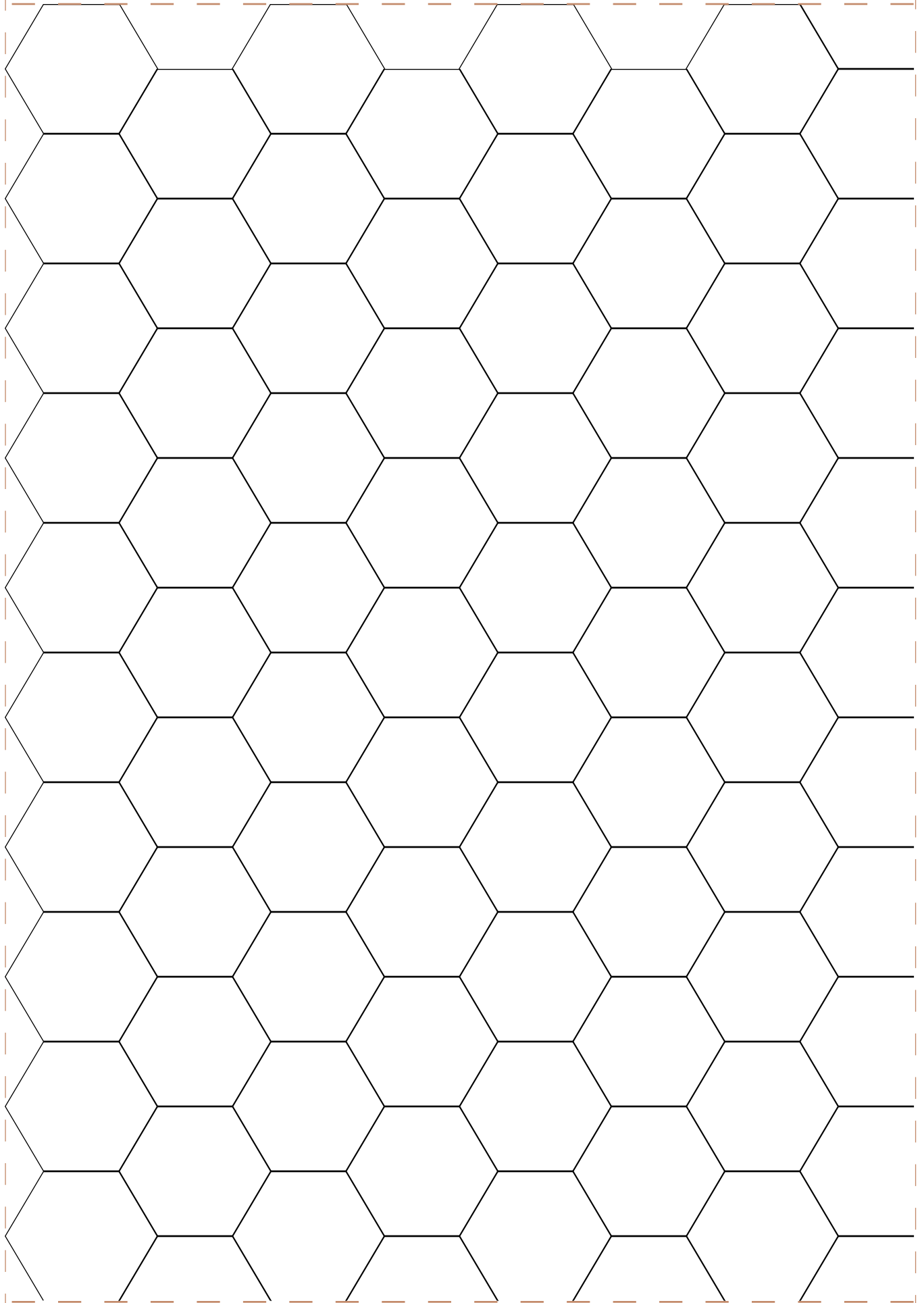


This can be a little tricky if you have an odd number of fighters at a level, but handing out the occasional bye can take care of that pretty easily. It's also possible to do a double elimination tournament, but I'm not going to bother explaining that here.

Battle Royale

Alternately, you can just have a series of escalating gang fights — all comers pack into the arena and the last survivor wins that match. Next fight, everyone's back. Lather, rinse and repeat a number of battles equal to the number of fighters, and a clear winner should arise from the last match.

(At this point you might argue that the Battle Royale setup is a death spiral for whoever does worst in the first fight, while practically guaranteeing that the first winner will be the final winner. After all, the guy who takes the first fight probably has some kills and the win point with which to amp up, right? Which in turn makes him more likely to win the next combat and amp further up, and so on. While true in theory, in practice this rarely happens, because the people he beat on in round one are typically out for blood the succeeding rounds.)





Explosion

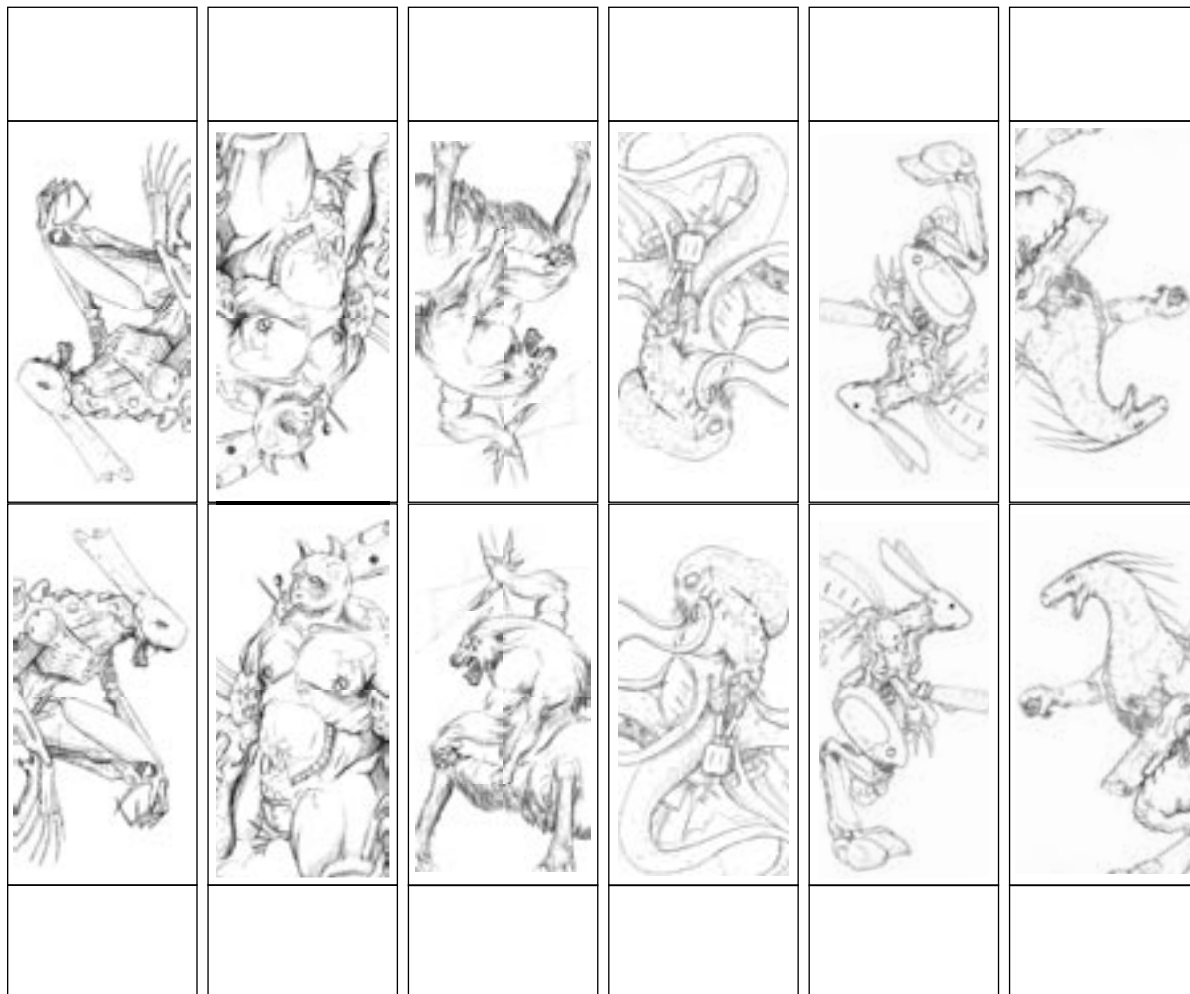


Cone



Ray

For easy reference cut out these area damage markers so you can quickly and easily see who's getting massacred.



If you don't have any miniatures, you can print out, cut out and fold up these paper minis.

Meatbot Data Sheet

Massacre	Move	Defend	Attack
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Meats			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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Stomachs			
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