

CRYPT OF THE DEVIL LICH
DESIGNER DIARIES

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WHY I LOVE KILLER DUNGEONS

BY RICK MAFFEI

People who know me know of my long love affair with TSR's original *Tomb of Horrors*. I'm not a "killer DM," but for many reasons—some obscure and some more practical—I've come to love that original killer dungeon.

I fondly recall seeing the cover of *Crypt of the Devil Lich* for the first time. Goodman Games had first caught my eye when I saw a few of the 3E-era Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures in my friendly local game store—caught me enough, in fact, that I soon went on to write for GG, and I'm still at it 15 years later!

But when I saw *Crypt of the Devil Lich*, well, I saw that cover and knew that Joseph Goodman was looking to give the Tomb a run for its money! I wasted no time getting my hands on a copy.

Sadly, I climbed aboard the Goodman Games train too late to participate as a *Crypt of the Devil Lich* contributor, but it has all the food groups that I'd personally include. High-level action? Check. Devious encounters? Check. Extra-puzzling puzzles? Yep. Opportunities for gruesome death? Need you ask?

Crypt is not only a fun tournament adventure, but it's a fun adventure period and a worthy challenge to those long-in-the-tooth (and perhaps overconfident) players who think they've seen it all.

The so-called killer dungeons get a bad rap. They're like spicy food—not great as your steady diet, but so much fun to sample now and again. Moreover, there's a delightful purity in very difficult dungeons because they get everyone laser-focused on the task at hand, players and DM alike. It's a great way to forget your real-life troubles and truly lose yourself in the game.

If your character survives a killer dungeon, well, that's just the gravy. If they don't, they just might *become* the gravy!

Have fun stormin' the Crypt! Be sure to give Chalychia my regards! And you don't need to wait until the final encounter because she is always watching...



Everybody's favorite killer dungeon



The cover of the first printing of DCC #13: *Crypt of the Devil Lich*

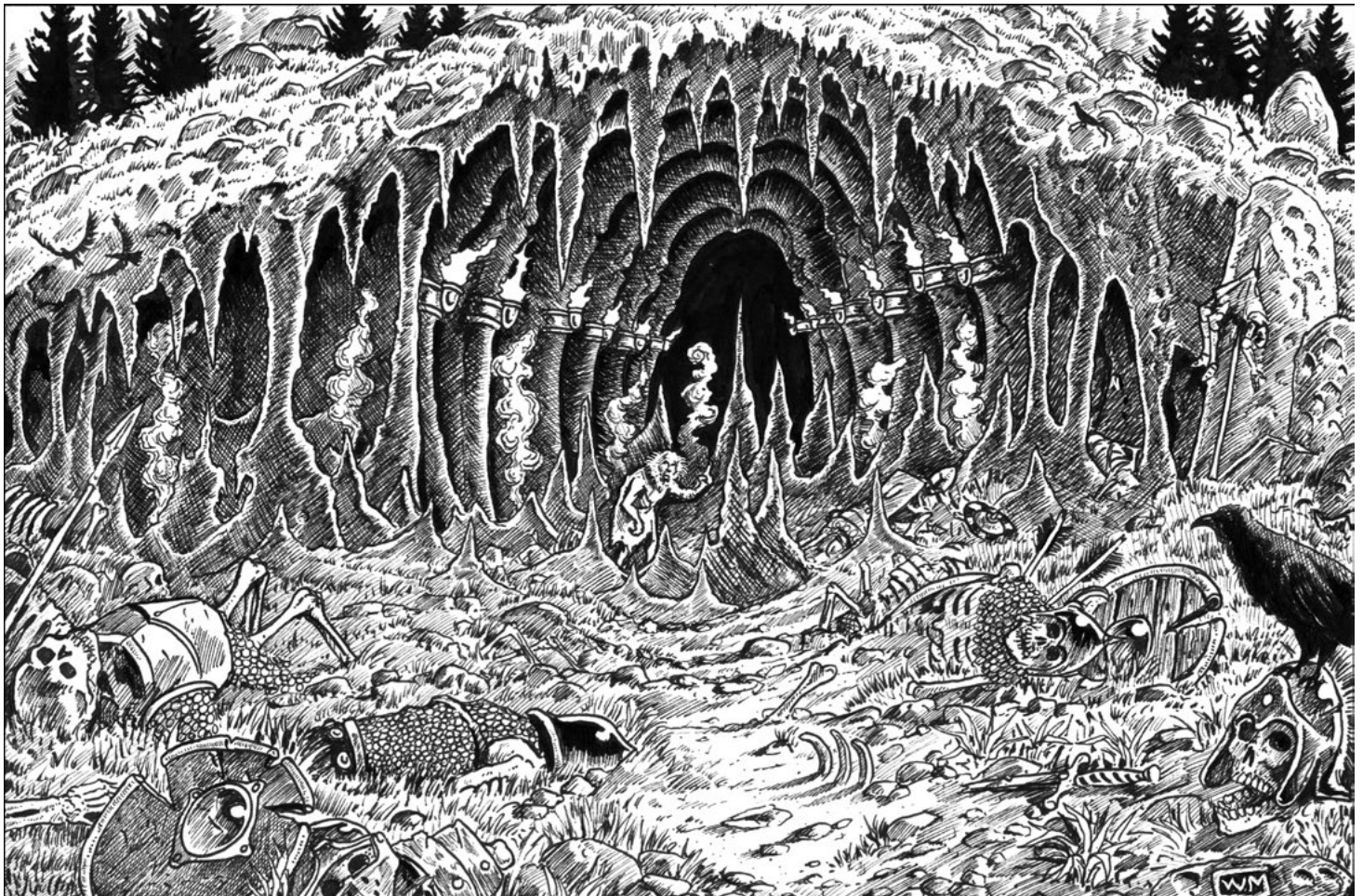
ENCOUNTER DESIGN AND COMPLEXITY IN 5TH EDITION

BY CHRIS DOYLE

There are not many encounters in *Crypt of the Devil Lich*, 26 to be precise. This was by design, as each of the three levels comprised one round of the tournament. Each tournament round was four hours long. If you ignore four encounters that are simply hallways (with some unique features to put the players on edge and maybe even get them to waste resources), that leaves 22 developed encounter locations. But most of these encounters have several parts or challenges that need to be overcome. I would say an average encounter has three different components, so the Crypt has more like 60-plus encounters.

Here is an example: the entrance to the Crypt, *The Maw*. You know the stakes are high when it's a challenge just to get into the death-trap dungeon! This encounter area had the following parts:

- A trapped entrance
- A vampire monk NPC (and minions)
- Necromantic braziers
- A trapped false door to the Crypt
- The hidden real door (also trapped)



What the cave entrance looked like in the original publication's handout

The entrance was trapped with a *spike stone* spell in the 3.5 Edition, which needed to be fully developed for the 5E conversion. The trap presents a new spell right at the start. The trap itself is only a nuisance, but it foreshadows other traps and presents an environmental quandary.

The main challenge of this encounter is a vampire monk, an unwitting pawn of the Devil Lich. Brother Mikolas slaughtered his kin at the monastery guarding the Crypt and now seeks to reunite with his mistress. But he doesn't know the way. Since one of the pre-generated PCs is a monk of the Dawning Sun, this presents a roleplaying challenge to the heroes, especially since it's difficult to discern his undead nature at first. If the player ignores this obvious connection, it is suggested the monk PC get disadvantage on all attacks against his brother! Of course, Brother Mikolas has lost all shreds of his sanity and eventually attacks. But he is a font of cryptic knowledge (pun intended). In addition to scrawling messages in blood on the walls, he babbles valuable clues too. If the PCs defeat him too quickly, they might not glean much information.

For the 5E conversion, we added two vampire spawn to increase the challenge of the combat and gave Brother Mikolas a few key magic items.

The necromantic braziers provide a puzzle for the players. While all four are burning, any undead here are immune to Channel Divinity attempts to turn them. The braziers can be snuffed out a few ways, but simply tipping them over causes necrotic energy flares and damage. Adding holy water safely puts these out and removes the effect.

The end of the hall is a massive door with a bas-relief skull and serpent motif. The famed Portal of the Damned presents another puzzle: how to open it? Skill checks are handy here, but if rolls are not high enough, results can be misleading, and PCs risk triggering a magical trap.

The final part of the entrance is a hidden secret door to the actual crypt. Of course, this door is trapped too! The PCs should be expecting this by now, but the area of effect might catch them unawares.



The illustration of the Portal of the Damned from the original 3.5E publication

MONSTER DESIGN IN THE DEVIL LICH'S CRYPT

BY CHRIS DOYLE

When designing a team tournament, monster design is a crucial step. When the classic A series was being developed as a D&D Open Tourney back in the late '70s, one of their tournament design philosophies was to have a new monster presented in each round. It was a real test for the players to overcome a foe they had never encountered before (or read the stat box in the *Monster Manual*).

We embraced that same design philosophy in *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. Partly this was to create new, evocative monsters to challenge the players. But it was also out of necessity in an effort to create encounters deadly enough to challenge six 15th-level PCs.

Today, we present an example: a unique flesh golem with choker arms and spider legs, originally developed by Andrew Hind.

We started with a basic flesh golem. Dubbed the “three-toed Frankensloth” by the original 3.5-Edition playtesters, this construct was a true horror to behold. The flesh golem was constructed from a mishmash of body parts, including the elongated, clawed arms of a choker and four hairy, spiderlike legs—a pair where one would expect and a pair fused to its back. For folks not familiar with the choker, it was a nasty beastie from 3.0/3.5 editions that had elastic-like arms ending in suckered “fingers” (pictured). A choker would hang out on the ceiling (or just out of reach) and use its ranged arms to attack and grapple.

Great! Now how do we get our flesh golem on the ceiling to give it a tactical advantage?

Part of its construction and animation rituals involved imbuing it with the powers of a *cloak of the arachnida*, granting it the abilities of that magic item—not only a climbing speed, but more importantly Spider Climb, so it can hang from the ceiling. The ability to cast a *web* spell, with double the area of effect, is perfect for pulling a target up to the ceiling for pummeling. *Web* can also



effectively stall any aid from arriving. The ability to freely move in the webs and immunity to poison are additional boons.

The 5E playtest revealed a few more shortcomings that needed to be addressed to challenge the 15th-level PCs. The construct needed a higher AC, so I added armor plates to its body. It needed more hit points, so its hit dice were increased to 18, and its Constitution was increased to 20. Likewise, I increased its Strength and its base slam damage. The final touch: an NPC in the encounter that possesses a *wand of lightning bolts* to take full advantage of the flesh golem's Lightning Absorption trait. The NPC in question is not necessarily a threat, but using the wand gives the PCs one more thing to worry about during the fight.

The final design is a unique challenge. And while certainly not powerful enough to kill any of the PCs, the imagery and some of the creature's unique traits should make for a memorable encounter. Below are presented the final 5E statistics.

FLESH GOLEM WITH CHOKER ARMS AND SPIDER LEGS

Large construct, neutral

AC: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 189 (18d10 + 90)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills: Stealth +5

Damage Immunities: lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Condition Immunities: charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Understands Common and Undercommon but can't speak

Challenge: 9 (5,000 XP)

Arachnida Traits: During creation, a *cloak of arachnida* was sewn into the golem's body, granting the following traits:

- The golem has resistance to poison damage.
- The golem has a climbing speed equal to its walking speed
- The golem can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving its hands free.
- The golem can't be caught in webs of any sort and can move through webs as if they were difficult terrain.
- The golem can use an action to innately cast the *web* spell once per day (save DC 13). The web created by the spell fills twice its normal area (40-foot cube).

Armor Plating: The golem has armor plates affixed onto parts of its body granting it a natural AC of 14.

Aversion of Fire: If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Berserk: Whenever the golem starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the

nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

Constructed Nature: The golem doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Immutable Form: The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Lightning Absorption: Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Magic Resistance: The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons: The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turn. The golem can grapple two targets at once.

HOW I DESIGNED MYSELF INTO A TPK

BY LISA DOYLE

Back in 2003, my husband told me about a new product concept he was working on for the 1st Annual Dungeon Crawl Classics Team Tournament at Gen Con 2004. The module would be a death-trap dungeon, designed to test the players' ability to outthink, outwit, and outperform a truly high-level, intelligent, and creative villain: the Devil Lich. He mentioned that the module would be a compilation of rooms from several different authors to "get the best designs from each" and end up with tremendous variety in regard to challenges. When I saw all the hand-drawn maps laid out on the floor as they were "assembled" into a dungeon, I was intrigued and asked to design one of the rooms.

I wanted to create a room that would frustrate me as a player. I felt that the original lair of the Devil Lich should have a room devoted to scrying, like the space Sauron had for his *palantír* and the Evil Queen for her magic mirror.

When the Devil Lich repurposed the room to make the PCs work toward her goals, I wanted her to populate it with obstacles and traps that wouldn't require maintenance over time. The reward of the room is obvious: the crystal ball sitting in plain view in front of four equally obvious flesh-golem guards. Flesh golems aren't known to be fast, so I expected the PCs would run into the room, grab the crystal ball, and run out, shutting the door behind them. That's when the real fun of the room begins, as the PCs discover that the golems aren't what they appear to be, and hidden traps in the room are designed to keep the PCs within reach of the real threats.

The final design of the room was as effective as I'd hoped, and playtesting has shown this room to be both challenging and frustrating.

I have this habit of forgetting adventures once I play them, so 16 years later, my dear husband invited me to playtest the 5E conversion of *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. By this time, I had not only forgotten the details of the original module, but I had forgotten that I designed one of the rooms!

Room	Author	Type	Content/Notes
x1 First Chamber	C Doyle	C	Devil Lich/summoned creatures
x2 Port. 1 Room	C Doyle	C	Mummy Dragon / Port. 1
x3 Pillar crossing	C Doyle	C/T/P	Overweight surfs / acid trap
x4 Hill of 1000 gulbs	J. Goodman	P	Riddle - huge room
x5 Walled Isl. Rts	J. Goodman	T/C	Elder Black Pudding / P/T H. Hany
x6 Library	A. Hink	T/C	High Altitude / choker room
x7 Rev. Party Run	A. Smith	P/C/T	Devil Lich C/T
x8 Gold Room	M. Ferguson	C/P	Coin Golem
x9 Chapel	M. Ferguson	C/T	Elf vampire sorc
x10 Firetrap Hill	J. Little	C/T	Black stone Golem
x11 Elderich Library	J. Little	P	Snake, 2nd choker
x12 Large Altar	A. Rimmer	C/P	Fire Elements / Elderich
x13 Lower Ruin	A. Rimmer	T	
x14 Trollfist / Hatch	A. Rimmer	C	Trollfist (Hatch the Lord)
x15 Entrance of Doom	J. Quinn	C/T	Dire Snake Cribles
x16 Meat Grinder	J. Quinn	T	
x17 Searing Room	L. Doyle	C	Hellfire swarms
x18 Sanguine Shrine	W. Swider	P	Arch. fct shrine (end of wonder)
x19 Entrance Chamber	J. Little	C/T	Vampire Monk here
x20 Room of 8 arrows	J. Little	T/C	2 Adv. Allips
x21 Hallway of Horrible Death	A. Hink	T	
x22 Obstacle trap	A. Smith	T/C	Gil cube (4)

Level 1 8 rooms #19, #21, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33
Level 2 7 rooms #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40
Level 3 7 rooms #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46, #47
Note: Each level should have a plain (unmapped) corridor!

The original notebook list of encounters for Crypt of the Devil Lich

I can honestly say that this 5E conversion continues to be a killer dungeon that challenges players using high-level PCs, and I both love it as a writer and hate it as a player. Our party was thrilled every time we survived a room, even if we took significant damage in the process. But the rooms kept coming, and by the end, we had exhausted most of our resources—just in time for the final encounter with the Chalychia herself.

Needless to say, we did not survive that encounter. TPK!

All of the room designers have come up with creative ways to deal with high-powered PCs. Although the details are not obvious to the players, a GM reading the module is

treated to a very detailed story with well thought-out, evocative encounter designs, all of which have reasons for being set up the way they are. Chalychia is an intelligent and creative adversary who makes effective use of her allies, the features of her deadly crypt, and her opponents' weaknesses.

If you're looking for a good read, new ideas for your own campaign, or a fun romp to reduce the confidence and arrogance of your own players, this module is what you're looking for.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO KOBOLDKIN AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE DEVIL LICH

BY CHRIS DOYLE

When somebody goes through the trouble of organizing an RPG tourney, there is a great deal of preparation that goes into it. Design the challenging module, create balanced pre-generated PCs, playtest it, create the scoring system, and playtest it some more. All of this occurs before the actual tournament event.

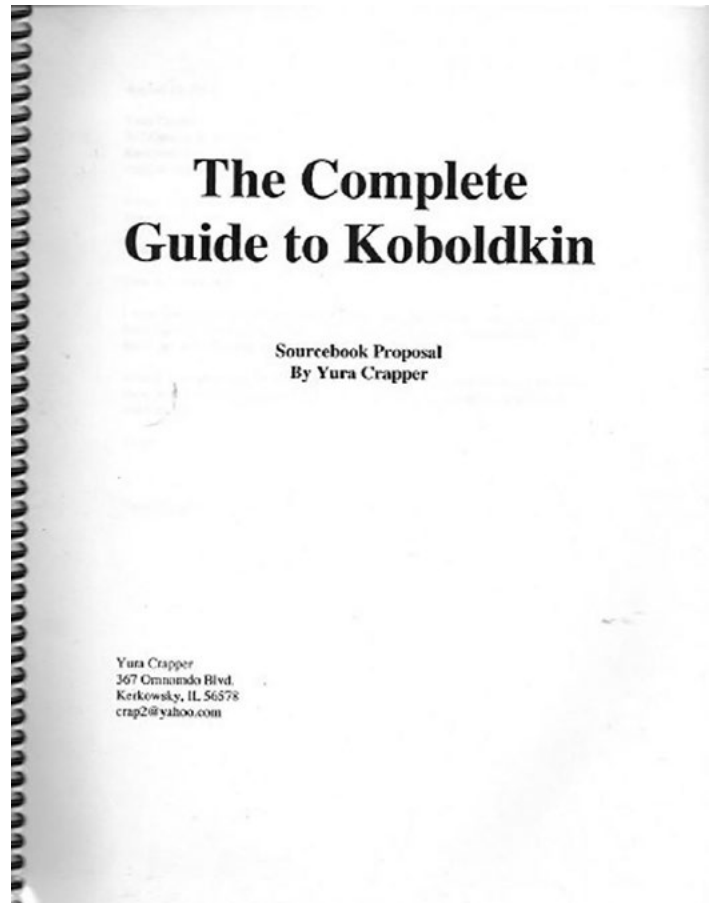
One of our concerns at Goodman Games was keeping the playing field level for all teams. The DMs were instructed to not deviate from the encounters as written. All damage inflicted by adversaries was averaged and presented in the text of the module. All dice rolls by the players *and* the DM were to be made out in the open. In later years, we even provided tournament d20s to eliminate the chance anyone could use loaded dice to gain an unfair advantage.

To keep things fair, we tried a lot of things. Some were simple, like making sure Round 1 tables were not run near other Round 1 tables. This would prevent one table from overhearing the winning tactics devised by another table. I recall moving tables to opposite ends of the room in real time and even needing to sweet-talk Gen Con hall monitors and other game tables to achieve this goal.

Was all this too much? Probably. But we were obsessed with putting on a great event—a tradition that continues today, though now we have an entire hall!

Here is an interesting tidbit most tourney participants were not aware of. Actually, we organizers forgot we did this until a recent reminder. Because we were worried that a copy of the tournament module might fall into the wrong hands, we provided the adventure to DMs in printed form only, never electronically, in order to minimize the chance of it being shared online. We printed only enough copies for the DMs plus a few spares just in case. Maybe 20 in total.

And in a move similar to *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, which shot under the codename *Blue Harvest* (I'm a Star Wars geek—look it up!), we crafted a fictitious cover to



The decoy cover for Crypt of the Devil Lich

the tournament module so that if a DM lost a copy or a player spied one at the booth, they would be unaware as to its true nature. Thus, I present to you *The Complete Guide to Koboldkin*.

At the time, Goodman Games had a popular line of books called the *Complete Guide* series. It had everything from vampires to beholders to drow, you name it. Entertaining a proposal for a guide on kobolds makes sense. (But does it? Really?) Of course, on closer examination, we can see that it was submitted by Yura Crapper, not exactly a legendary game designer. As far as I can tell, the

address is bogus, as there is no such town by that name in Illinois, and the ZIP code is for Rochert, Minnesota!

If I recall correctly, the first page was also fake and included an outline for a kobold guide. But the other 100-plus pages were actually the tourney module, score sheets, pre-gens, maps, and all. It was spiral bound with a fancy plastic report cover. (Thanks, Staples! That was easy!)

These days, there are collectors for everything. This obscure piece of gaming ephemera and Goodman Games tournament history is for sale at a popular online game store specializing in collectables. For just under \$400 (yikes!), you can own one of the rare 20 or so copies of this.

Darn, why did I recycle mine once I got back from Gen Con that year?

Publisher's note: I'm the one who actually made the fake cover and had these bound at a local copy shop. I still have my copy in the garage. After 15-plus years of running tournaments, we have never had a leak, so these safety precautions must be paying off!

A TOURNAMENT SURVIVOR'S MEMORIES OF THE DEVIL LICH, 16 YEARS LATER

BY DAN ADAMS, ORIGINAL CRYPT DELVER

I first heard about Dungeon Crawl Classics in 2004. Our gaming group (and extended convention players) were fond of playing D&D tournaments at conventions. When I was browsing the events for Gen Con, the first DCC tournament, *Crypt of the Devil Lich*, caught my attention. Everything that I read about Dungeon Crawl Classics resonated. They were an homage to the old AD&D modules, complete with artwork that harkened back to the adventures of old. It rekindled a deep nostalgia.

So in 2004, we participated in our first DCC tournament, *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. Replete with compelling and unique encounters, puzzles, and a genuine sense of excitement and danger in every room, *Crypt of the Devil Lich* didn't disappoint. We fought flesh golems that, when damaged, unleashed some otherworldly murder hornets. We encountered polluted air elementals in a spinning room with whirling blades of death! We did all of this while scouring the Crypt for shards of a broken sword to aid us in our quest to defeat the Devil Lich.

It isn't just the unique creatures that you're worried about. Each room is its own environment. The team will need to work together to reach the end, and as we quickly discovered, the Crypt is punishing to groups who can't work together. Hands down, the DCC tournaments were the most finely crafted and splendidly run dungeon-crawl adventures we've ever played in.

After 2004, we made the DCC tournament a mainstay of our convention schedules. It became *the* event that we had to get into. I took off from work the day that event registration opened so that I could submit our events as soon as it opened because the DCC tournaments filled up within minutes. Our Gen Con schedule *revolved* around the DCC tournament. We would cancel other plans just to spend time together at the RAM discussing the events of the previous round.



*Dan Adams (fourth from the left) and Clan Yeoman at a Final Round Table of the 1st Annual Dungeon Crawl Classics Team Tournament at Gen Con 2004 in Indianapolis—with Chris Doyle, wearing the classic *Crypt of the Devil Lich* T-shirt, serving as Judge*

It is the mark of a good adventure that, when it is finished, you continue to talk about it later—even more than 16 years later.

NEW CRUNCHY BITS FOR 5TH EDITION PLAYERS

BY CHRIS DOYLE

Without a doubt, when converting a classic adventure to a new edition of the game, there will be spells, magic items, and even cleric domains that do not have a 5E equivalent or are not considered open content. Sometimes, it's OK to find something similar and just plug it in. For example, in 5E there is no *rod of smiting*. But there is a *mace of smiting*, and they are very similar in design and function. Substituting the mace for the rod just makes sense.

But many times, there is not an easy solution. In this case, it's better to design a 5E version of what is needed. I admit, this is one of the best and most rewarding parts of doing a 5E conversion project, especially when the target "item" occurred in a previous edition.

For the 5E version of *Crypt of the Devil Lich*, we included an entire appendix of new stuff converted to 5E. These include spells, magic items, a cleric domain, and even a 5E take on the Blackguard. Below are a few new spells and magic items we created for *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. Enjoy a preview of these designs!

RAY OF EXHAUSTION

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A beam of sickly green energy streaks toward a creature in range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target suffers one level of exhaustion. At the end of each of its turns the target must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target suffers an additional level of exhaustion. On a success, the target's level of exhaustion decreases by one. If this occurs when the target is suffering level 1 exhaustion, the spell ends. Otherwise, the effects continue for 1 minute (10 rounds).

SPIKE STONES

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 150 feet

Components: V, S, M (seven pieces of flint, sharpened to a point)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A stone floor, rocky terrain, or a similar surface transforms into razor-sharp stone points that blend into the natural background. The area of effect is four 10-foot squares. Any creature that can't see the area of effect at the time the spell is cast must make a successful Wisdom (Perception) check against your spell save DC to notice the dangerous terrain before entering.

Entering the area is considered difficult terrain, and the target takes 10 (4d4) piercing damage per 5 feet traveled.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the damage increases by 5 (2d4) piercing damage or the area of effect increases by one additional 10-foot square for each slot level above 4th.

FLAMING SLING

Weapon (sling), rare (requires attunement)

This sling is made of scorched, blackened leather. A bullet launched from this magic weapon transforms into a flaming magical ranged weapon, with a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls. The flaming projectile causes 3 (1d6) fire damage in addition to regular weapon damage. A bullet launched from a flaming sling has a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 90 feet.

POTION OF ULTIMATE HEALING

Potion, legendary

This bright crimson liquid shimmers in a kaleidoscope of colors when agitated. The imbiber of this potion is healed 70 hit points, and any blindness, deafness, and diseases affecting them are ended (as a *heal* spell).

THE LAIR OF THE MUMMY DRAGON

BY CHRIS DOYLE

NOTE: SPOILERS AHEAD! *If you plan on playing Crypt of the Devil Lich, don't read this update! But if you're a judge who would like to see a deadly encounter, read on.*

The Kickstarter main text teases that the original module has a mummy dragon. As it turns out, Chalychia had a dragon ally, but it fell in battle against the elves on the surface. She had the body of the slain dragon brought back to her crypt and animated it as a mummy so it could continue to serve her in undeath. When its lair is discovered, this is what the players see:

The door pulls opens to reveal an immense natural cavern, at least 80 feet wide and 120 feet long, bathed in a hellish crimson glow. Immediately in front of the door is a 3-foot-deep pile of bleached bones, extending from wall to wall for at least 50 feet in front of you, spilling into a huge open pit. Thousands must have died to create such a morbid pile, and the stench of death intermingled with sulfur seeps into the hallway.

The pit is 40 feet wide and 50 feet across. To the southeast, situated on a ledge about 10 feet above the floor, is the source of a small lava stream. The lava tumbles off the ledge like a sluggish waterfall, before exiting into a sinkhole in the floor. The lava throws off a dim reddish glow in the chamber that reveals the shadowy form of a doorway in the southern wall.

Allow the players a chance to take this all in before reading this final passage:

A huge draconic head breaches the lip of the pit. Its eyes glow with sickly green radiance, and its head is enshrouded with wrappings torn in places to reveal a rotting scaly hide underneath. The pungent stench of spices is apparent as the massive creature lifts its body above the pit's threshold, its tattered funeral wrappings loosely clinging to a muscled hide.

This is another complicated encounter location containing five elements. There is the bone field, the mummy dragon itself, the pit it crawls out of, and the lava waterfall. The fifth element is currently out of view: a metallic gatelike structure.

A fight with six 15th-level PCs against one adversary, even a legendary one such as a mummy dragon, needs to have some interesting terrain to complicate the environment. The bone field serves that purpose as difficult terrain. It also can provide a nuisance amount of damage. But hidden in the pile is also a new creature called a grave swarm. This is an animated pile of bones with swarm traits. Coupled with the massive size of the chamber, these features are designed to inhibit movement in the chamber and delay the heroes from getting into melee with the dragon. A *freedom of movement* or *fly* spell does wonders here.

The mummy dragon itself has an array of abilities to bring to bear against our heroes. It not only possesses the dreadful glare of a mummy and a bone shard breath weapon, but also Legendary Actions, including a new option to snatch and potentially throw a creature, as well as Lair Actions. These Lair Actions include having the lava waterfall belch a magma ball at a target, animating a part of the bone field to restrain targets, or releasing a desiccating wave of energy that inflicts necrotic damage while also healing the dragon.

These actions are designed to make this a more even fight against multiple targets and to highlight some innovative 5E mechanics nicely. The mummy dragon has innate spellcasting (of course!), and its bite and claw attacks inflict the mummy's terrible curse. This curse should not be underestimated, as PCs can't regain hit points while cursed. This can have a potentially devastating effect on the final confrontation with Chalychia. Just ask my playtesters!

The lava comes from a *well of many worlds* linked to the Elemental Plane of Fire and spills into a sinkhole. There are two important reasons for the well's presence, which I'll tease but not reveal here. Let's just say the lava plays a crucial part in the final encounter with the Devil Lich. In addition, remember I mentioned the mummy dragon can snatch a creature and possibly toss them? Guess where he tosses them? Yup, the lava-filled sinkhole, probably earn-



ing an instant kill. Even if the attack roll is a miss, the players' realization of this dreadful attack is priceless.

The pit that the mummy dragon crawls out of is huge but only 20 feet deep. It serves as the mummy dragon's resting place and also contains its massive treasure hoard. Intermixed in the hoard are six powerful magic items, but the heroes would be wise to leave these alone. Just like most of the features of the Crypt, these are all cursed. Many of these cursed items are classics from previous editions that were converted to 5E rules.

The final feature of the lair is a strange black, metallic gatelike structure, its edges covered with arcane runes. This is indeed a teleportation portal, a possible route for the heroes to escape the Crypt. But this is also a potential way for Chalychia to escape, should the heroes free her from imprisonment. If the heroes don't destroy the gate, it might turn into a race to prevent the Devil Lich from using the gate herself! Of course, using powerful magic, she can also use the gate to taunt the heroes!

Just another "typical" encounter in *Crypt of the Devil Lich* and one the players will likely talk about for years after facing its challenges!

Original painting of the Mummy Dragon from the first printing of Crypt of the Devil Lich

DCC MONSTER DESIGN IN THE DEVIL LICH'S CRYPT

BY BOB BRINKMAN

As Chris mentioned in his design diary entry, monster design is an important part of team tournaments. Where things get really interesting is when converting a monster from one system to another and one design philosophy to another.

A core concept in 5E design is that most everything must play by the same set of rules. Magical effects are explained by the specific spells and powers used to manifest them, and non-standard monsters often have ingrained, rule-oriented explanations. In short, one should be able to understand the workings of a variant monster in the framework of the rules. How is this creature different from others of its kind, and why?

A core concept in DCC RPG is this:

You can make monsters more special by referring to them as “the” monster (minotaur, unicorn, chimera, etc.) rather than “a” monster.

With this approach, while a monster’s powers still need to work within the general rule mechanics, they are not required to fit into preexisting powers, spells, and abilities. So, when modifying a creature, there is no need to provide an explanation within the mechanics of how it became different, just that it is different.

As such, while DCC does provide stats for some of the better-known RPG monsters, there are many that simply do not exist, while others have a rough equivalent. Such is the case with golems. In DCC, there are no golems in the traditional sense. The game does provide information for “living statues,” which are slightly analogous, but there are not enough similarities to say that they are one and the same. Further, there is not a living statue made of flesh.

That brings us to the 5E “Flesh Golem with Choker Arms and Spider Legs,” described by Chris back in update #7. When converting this creature to DCC, there

are immediately a number of key differences between the systems. First, there are no *golems* or *chokers* in the core DCC rules (though judges are free to create their own). Neither is there a *cloak of arachnida*. Since none of these three things exist, there are no set rules in how things must be done, only the design guidelines of what should be in place.

Since golems don’t already exist in DCC but feature in a number of places in the adventure, the first step was creating base golem attributes. Something that is often found in DCC monster stat blocks is “X” or “X traits,” whether that be undead, swarm, demon, etc. That provides a base set of powers or abilities that are found in all creatures of that type. So all golems have the following traits:

- *False Appearance:* Stationary golems are impossible to differentiate from mundane items of the same appearance.
- *Immunities:* Golems are immune to charm, fear, paralysis, petrification, poison, sleep.
- *Immutable:* Golems are immune to magic that would change their form or size.
- *Magic attack:* Attacks made by golems are considered +3 for purposes of attack immunity.
- *Resistant:* Golems receive +5 to any saving throws made against spells.

This gives a baseline to work from when creating any sort of golem, while still allowing them to be individuals.

Next up, though, is the name. While the 5E name of the creature is certainly descriptive of what it is in game terms, it is unlikely that a group of adventurers or villagers stumbling upon it would refer to it in such a way. Hence, the Flesh Golem with Choker Arms and Spider Legs is renamed the Nightmare Golem.



NIGHTMARE GOLEM

The nightmare golem is a fleshy amalgam torn from the mind of a mad wizard. It has a massive body covered in thick chitinous plates, with long clawed arms and four hairy, spiderlike legs (a pair where one would expect and another pair fused to its back).

Nightmare Golem: Init +1; Atk slam +9 melee attack (2d8 + 5 [14], plus grapple); AC 15; HD 18d10; hp 99 each; MV 30', climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP golem, infravision 60', berserk, crush, web, fire vulnerability (+1d to damage); SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N; Crit M/d24

Berserk: Whenever the golem is reduced below 60 hp, it goes berserk, attacking the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks a nearby object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed.

Crush: While grappled, victims suffer 1d8 + 5 [9] damage at the start of each round. Breaking free requires a Strength check vs. DC 15. The nightmare golem can grapple two targets at once.

Web: As an action, the golem can spin webbing (as per *spider web* spellcheck 14-15). It can move freely through any webbing.

If one compares this creature to its 5E counterpart, you'll see many of the same things are in place. Immutable Form, condition immunities, magic resistance, and magic weapons are all covered in the base golem traits. While DCC does not have a disadvantage system, the nightmare golem is vulnerable to fire damage. This increases the die used for rolling damage +1d up the die chain (d4 becomes d6, d10 becomes d12, d12 becomes d14, etc.). So that weakness still exists; it is just that it is fitted for DCC.

The armor plating, which must be factored into the 5E stat block to explain the creature's armor class, is merely a cosmetic note on the nightmare golem. There isn't a need to justify every point of the creature's AC, only to provide it and relay any physical clues on how tough this thing might be to injure.

So only three things get added as true special powers. Berserk carries over fairly well and is simply moved over with only a small edit. Crush, part of the 5E attack listing, is added so that the mechanics are available to the judge. Finally, Web is added in a fashion that is easy for the judge to use and reference. Both the 5E and DCC listings for the Web ability reference existing spells, and the DCC listing is given a spell result so that a judge knows exactly what the webbing can do.

Now, this may leave some folks asking, "What about the lightning absorption?" That's a fair question, as the nightmare golem doesn't have that ability. The reasons for that are twofold (at least as we work through honing the conversion in playtest). First, the encounter-related reason for that ability is not a standard item in DCC, and secondly, regeneration of that type is also not really found in DCC.

Lastly, in the scheme of the entire encounter, the nightmare golem really doesn't need to be able to regenerate to be incredibly dangerous. Keeping in mind that 7th-level DCC characters are close to on par with their (much higher-level) 5E counterparts, the hit points of those characters is still much closer to those of a 6th- or 7th-level 5E character (DCC has a lower stat bonus curve), and so this creature is still *very* dangerous.

CRAFTING A DEVIL LICH, PART I: 3.5E MECHANICS

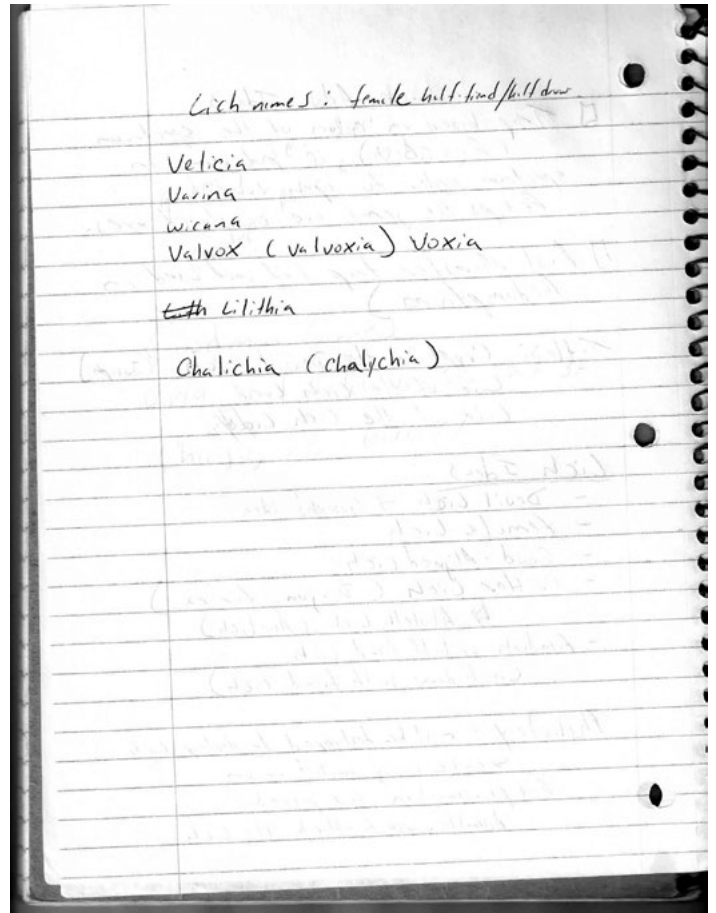
BY CHRIS DOYLE

One of the advantages to being the project lead on *Crypt of the Devil Lich* is I got to design the final encounter and the titular BBEG.

As a game designer, I maintain a few notebooks to scribble notes, concepts, thoughts, names, etc. I also use these notebooks during the actual design process to outline and develop encounters, story arcs, and complicated monster stats. As a scientist, I never throw out these notebooks in case they ever need to be referenced. For example, when tasked with writing an essay on designing the ultimate villain for a death-trap dungeon 17 years later, I still had my original notes!

This particular essay will discuss the original 3.5 Edition of Chalychia, and the next update will cover the 5E adaptation.

These three pages from one of my old notebooks detail my rough notes from when designing the original 3.5 Edition of Chalychia. The first page has several concept names. A cool villain needs a cool name. Early on, I decided the Devil Lich would be part drow, which pointed me in the direction of a female lead for our module (as the drow are matriarchal). I have no idea what the inspiration of Velicia was, aside from that it sounded cool. Varina was based off one of my wife's player characters (Lady Varin), who ended up being one of the pre-generated PCs. In the end, Varina didn't sound evil enough. Wicana was clearly inspired by witchcraft. My early concepts had the Devil Lich being very witchlike. Valvox, Valvoxia, and Voxia were all based on a green algae genus called *Volvox*. As you can see, I really tried to make this work as well as my obsession with using the letter V. Lilithia was also inspired by one of my wife's First-Edition player characters, but the root "Lilith" wasn't original enough in my opinion. Then we get to Chalichia, which sounded evil and rolled off the tongue nicely. A bit more fiddling, and I ended up with Chalychia (pronounced KAH-LICK-ee-a). Finally, I had



Chris's original notes on Devil Lich design, page 1 of 3

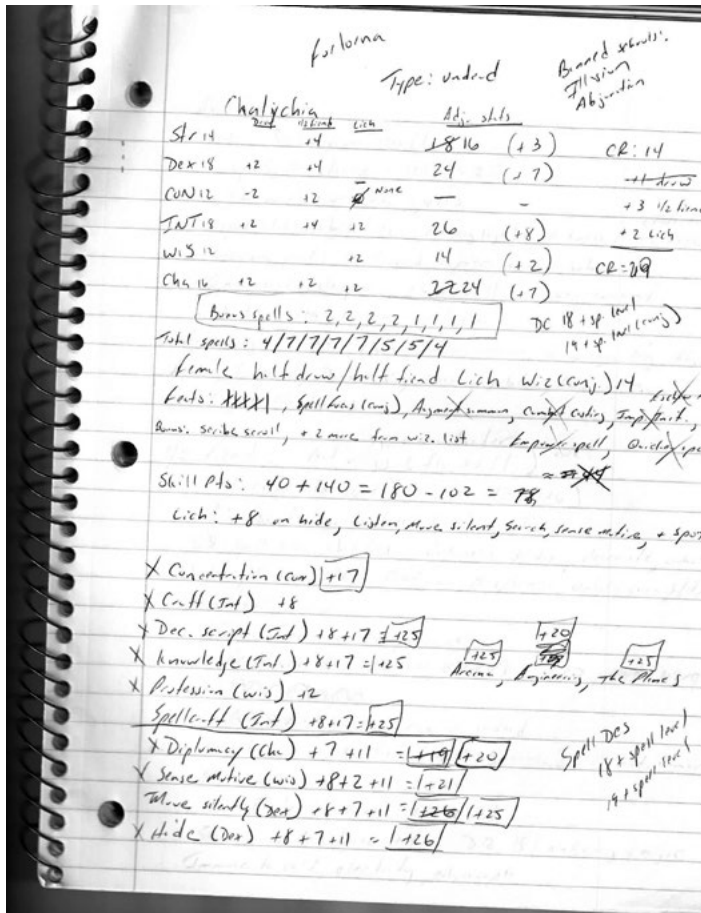
the name. Next, the 3.5 Edition stats.

The second page outlines Chalychia's base attributes, CR calculation, total spells (and bonus spells from her high Int), skill points calculation, feats, and skill list with modifiers. Here are several details that jump out to me:

Chalychia ended up being "Female half-drow/half-fiend lich 14th level Wizard (Conjurer)." Her CR was calculated as 14 (base) +1 (drow) +3 (fiend) +2 (lich) for a final CR 20! After taking her base attributes and modifying for drow, half fiend, and lich, her Dex was 24 (+7), her Int was 26 (+8), and her Charisma was 24 (+7). Her 26 Int

granted her 12 bonus spells (two each of 1st through 4th level and one of each 5th through 8th level). She could cast 42 spells per day! Her spell save DC was 18 (19 for conjuration spells).

Chalychia had 180 skill points! She ended up with 10 skills, most of them higher than +20, thanks in part to being a lich, granting a +8 bonus on several skills. She had 7 feats plus scribe scroll.



Chris's original notes on Devil Lich design, page 2 of 3

On the third page, we see some of the calculations to derive her statistics, mostly for combat. The top of the page details her various attack bonuses. Then come her saving throw modifiers, including Reflex +17 and Willpower +17! Her armor class ended up being 33, thanks to stackable bonuses from Dex, natural armor, her bracers and ring, plus a luck bonus from her staff. Her Initiative was calculated at +11, and she had 122 hit points from 14d12 Hit Dice. Finally, we have a list of her magic items.

And here is the official 3.5 Edition stat box, coming in just under 700 words! In our next update, we'll discuss the 5E version of her.

CHALYCHIA, THE DEVIL LICH

Female Half-Drow/Half-Fiend Lich Wiz (Conj) 14:
CR 20; Medium undead;

HD 14d12; **hp** 122;

Init +11;

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average);

AC 33, touch 22, flat-footed 26;

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10; **Atk** claw +10 melee (1d4 + 4 (6)) or touch +10 melee (1d8 + 5 (10) plus paralysis) or staff of power +12 melee (1d6 + 5 (9)); **Full Atk** 2 claws +10 melee (1d4 + 4 (6)) and bite +5 melee (1d6 + 1 (9)), or staff of power +12/+7 melee (1d6 + 5 (9)) and bite +5 melee (1d6 + 1 (9)), or staff of power +12/+7 melee (1d6 + 5 (9)) and touch +5 melee (1d8 + 5 (10) plus paralysis); **SA** Fear aura (Will save DC 24), paralyzing touch (Fort save DC 24), smite good 1/day (+14 damage), spell-like abilities; **SQ** Darkvision 120 ft., **SR** 25, light blindness, immunities (sleep, poison, cold, electricity, polymorph), resistances 10 (acid, fire), turn resistance (+4), DR 15/bludgeoning and magic, drow traits, undead traits; **AL** LE; **SV** Fort +10, Ref +17, Will +17; Str 16, Dex 24, Con —, Int 26, Wis 14, Cha 24.

Languages Spoken: Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Draconic, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Gnome, Infernal, Undercommon.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17, Decipher Script +25, Diplomacy +20, Hide +26, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (engineering) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Move Silently +25, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +25; Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration).

SA — Fear Aura (Su): Creatures with less than 5 HD within a 60-foot radius must succeed on a DC 24 Will save or become affected by a fear spell.

SA — Paralyzing Touch (Su): Any living creature struck by a touch attack must succeed on a DC 24 Fort save or become permanently paralyzed.

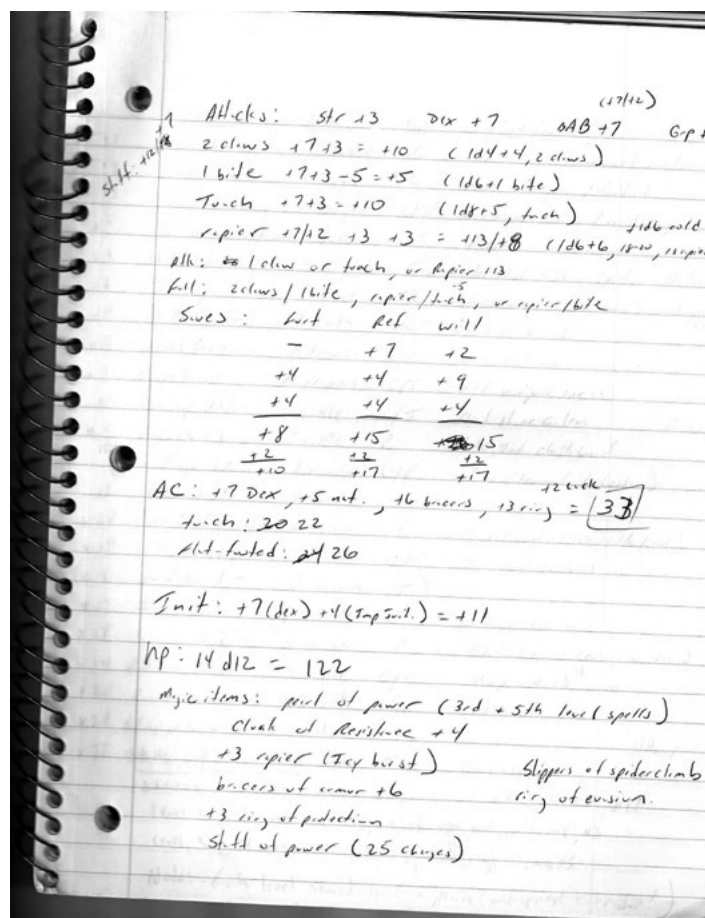
SA — Spell-like Abilities (Sp) (as a 14th-level caster): 1/day—dancing lights, faerie fire, desecrate, unholy blight (22 hp damage, sickened for 2 rounds), contagion, blasphemy, unhallow; 3/day—poison (5 Con/5 Con, Fort DC 19), unholy aura; 4/day—darkness.

Arcane Spells Prepared (as 15th-level caster with ioun stone) (4/7/7/7/7/6/5/4/3, save DC = 18 + spell level, or 19 + spell level for conjurations; banned schools: abjuration and illusion; * indicates spell has already been cast if she had time to prepare for PCs): 0—*detect magic*, *flare* (×2), *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *magic missile* (4 hp × 5), *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (8 Str) (×2); 2nd—*bear's endurance**, *cat's grace*, *see invisibility*, *spectral hand** (×2), *touch of idiocy* (3 Int, Cha, Wis), *web*; 3rd—*haste**, *magic missile* [empowered] (5 hp × 5), *sleet storm*, *stinking cloud*, *suggestion*, *vampiric touch* (30) (×2); 4th—*acid arrow* [empowered] (5 initial plus 5 per round for 5 rounds), *bestow curse* (×2), *crushing despair*, *enervation* (2 negative levels for living creatures; undead gain 12 hp) (×3); 5th—*baleful polymorph*, *feeblemind*, *lightning bolt* [empowered] (52M), *summon monster V*, *telekinesis*, *transmute rock to mud*; 6th—*disintegrate* (105M), *flesh to stone*, *ice storm* [empowered] (16 bludgeoning + 11 cold), *summon monster VI**, *wall of iron*; 7th—*finger of death* (26 on successful save), *lightning bolt* [quickened] (35), *limited wish*, *summon monster VII**; 8th—*horrid wilting* (53M), *maze*, *power word stun*.

Possessions: orange prism *ioun stone* (+1 caster level), +6 *bracers of armor*, +4 *cloak of resistance*, *pearl of power* (3rd- and 5th-level spells), +3 *ring of protection*, *ring of evasion*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *staff of power* (25 charges), *scroll of summon monster VIII*, key to trapdoor on roof.

Description: Chalychia has long white hair and dried, rotting ebony skin. She sports a pair of black leathery wings and a small pair of black horns. She has wicked fangs and long, curved talons at the ends of her delicate fingers. She wears an open black cloak, which reveals a powerfully muscled, curvaceous form over a skin-tight, revealing bodysuit.


Note: The above statistics do not include the benefits of Chalychia's *haste* spell. The *haste* spell has a duration of 14 rounds. Chalychia casts it two rounds before the PCs arrive, meaning it has 12 rounds left once the battle begins. When under the effect of *haste*, Chalychia gains +1 attack, +1 AC, +1 to Reflex saves, +30 ft. to her movement speed, and one additional attack in each full-round action.



Chris's original notes on Devil Lich design, page 3 of 3

CRAFTING A DEVIL LICH, PART 2: 5E MECHANICS

BY CHRIS DOYLE

his is a follow-up to the previous update regarding designing the ultimate villain for a D&D adventure. Much as how designing the Devil Lich for 3.5E was a thrilling challenge, converting her to 5E was just as delicious. It took a few hours, if I recall, and I probably had a headache when all was said and done. The result is a stat box nearly 1,000 words long, sprawling over two pages!

NOTE: SPOILERS AHEAD! *If you plan on playing Crypt of the Devil Lich, don't read this update! But if you're a judge who would like to see the Devil Lich's full complement of prepared spells, read on.*

For this discussion, I want to focus on Chalychia's spell list. Below is the Devil Lich's spellcasting feature and her spell list. The numbers after the spells are the average damage amounts for tournament play. Also note that if she uses a 1st-level slot for *magic missile* or a 2nd-level slot for *acid arrow*, her Spell Mastery feature lets her use them without spending a spell slot. Also note *planar ally* is typically a cleric spell, but I added it to her spell list due to her fiendish heritage.

Spellcasting: Chalychia is an 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following wizard spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *firebolt* (22 (4d10) fire damage), *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray* (26 (4d12) poison damage)
- 1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *magic missile* (3 darts, 3 (1d4 + 1) force damage each; 1 additional dart per higher spell slot)
- 2nd Level (3 slots): *acid arrow* (10 (4d4) acid damage plus 5 (2d4) acid damage), *blur*, *hold person*, *ray of enfeeblement*

- 3rd Level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *haste*, *stinking cloud*, *suggestion*, *vampiric touch* (10 (3d6) necrotic damage, and Chalychia gains 5 hit points)
- 4th Level (3 slots): *arcane eye*, *polymorph*
- 5th Level (3 slots): *conjure elemental*, *telekinesis*, *wall of dispel magic*
- 6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate* (75 (10d6 + 40) force damage), *flesh to stone*, *planar ally*
- 7th level (1 slot): *finger of death* (61 (7d8 + 30) necrotic damage), *limited wish* (see appendix X)
- 8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*, *power word stun*
- 9th level (1 slot): *prismatic wall* (35 (10d6) damage for each layer)

As I mentioned before, the original Devil Lich was a 14th-level spellcaster. In 5E, a standard lich is an 18th-level spellcaster. Since a lich in its lair is a CR 22 encounter, that is a suitable challenge for six 15th-level PCs, especially if you add in a few allies (Chalychia is a conjurer, after all). So I kept her at 18th level.

But there is an interesting change going from a 14th-level to an 18th-level spellcaster: 9th-level spells! Unless you are veteran of high-level play, most folks are not familiar with the 9th-level spell lists for wizards. Do yourself a favor sometime and read up on those spells. Many are truly ultimate power!

The challenge was to select a 9th-level spell that fits the Devil Lich's personality, while taking into the account she was imprisoned. *Astral projection*, *gate*, and *imprisonment* were eliminated because she was already imprisoned. *Foresight*, *shapechange*, and *weird* just didn't fit her personality, although I strongly contemplated the last one. *True polymorph* was eliminated because it required concentration to maintain. The list was dwindling!

So it came down to *meteor swarm*, *power word kill*, *prismatic wall*, *time stop*, and *wish*. It's important to keep in mind that Chalychia needs the heroes to physically get to her to end her imprisonment. She can't kill them too quickly! I eliminated *wish* right off the bat. Although it's a fun spell, it's difficult to adjudicate, especially when not cast by the players. Besides, she has *limited wish*, so this also felt redundant. *Time stop* was eliminated quickly too. It's just no fun for the encounter. If the heroes free Chalychia (by mistake), she casts *time stop* and gets away via regular movement. Boring end to what should be a classic final confrontation! *Power word kill* is basically an "insta-kill" but for only one hero. Tempting, but I felt I could do better.

OK, this was actually going to be easy: *meteor swarm* it is!

Then I read the spell description: four 40-foot-radius spheres each explode for 20d6 fire *and* 20d6 bludgeoning damage. Do the math. That is a huge area of effect, even though you take the damage from only one globe. Calculating the average damage, that's 70 fire and 70 bludgeoning damage on a failed DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. Even a successful save inflicts 70 total damage from two different sources. Maybe if the heroes were at full hit points and full resources, they could survive this onslaught. But after a grueling crawl through numerous other deadly encounters, it's not looking good for our heroes!

So I ended up with *prismatic wall* for several reasons. First, it lasts 10 minutes and doesn't require concentration. That way the Devil Lich could cast other spells. Second, it's a dynamic environmental feature that enhances the (already) interesting location where the final confrontation occurs. Sure, she could have created it in a semicircular globe around the entrance to the chamber, forcing the heroes to go through all 7 layers. But recall, she needs the heroes to physically reach her to end the imprisonment. Shaping the spell like a standard wall creates another obstacle the characters must get around (or, more likely, over).

And don't discount the fact that the characters can't see the rest of the chamber when they encounter the wall—and that Chalychia and her allies can see them. Since she can see them, she can target them with spells. The fact that her allies are immune to the wall and can step through it plays nicely with traits and actions that can pull targets through the wall.

Finally, there are spells that can dispel the layers of the wall. Here is another opportunity for tournament points and rewarding outstanding play. Since the pre-generated wizard has *prismatic spray* on her spell list, it's not a stretch to rule she would know how to destroy the various layers of the wall if the player asks! I just needed to make sure the spells required were on spell lists or available somewhere in the Crypt. A few adjustments to some previous encounters solved that part.

I think *prismatic wall* makes for the most compelling 9th-level spell for the final confrontation with the Devil Lich. Sure, I could have used *power word kill*, *weird*, or even *wish*. When you run this adventure for your players, maybe that's just what you will do!

NEW COVER ART OPTION BY DOUG KOVACS

BY JOE GOODMAN

Well, this Kickstarter has certainly had its twists and turns, hasn't it? Once more we have news on cover art. Doug Kovacs has agreed to paint a cover for *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. We are optimistic it will be completed before the Kickstarter ends, so you will have a number of cover options to select from. The plan is to offer Doug's cover in both a standard and virgin cover art edition. This will be a traditional hand-painted cover.

Right now the cover is only in the earliest stages, so we will present you with the rough sketch. I'm sure many of you are already familiar with the artistic process, but for those who are not, please be reminded that this is a very early sketch. The final painting will evolve considerably from this, and many details may change. The art will be "tightened up," so to speak, even before paint and color are applied. We're showing this so you can appreciate the artistic process. As Doug completes other stages of the work, we may have additional in-progress updates to share with you.

Without further ado, we present Chalychia, the Devil Lich, as rough-sketches by Doug Kovacs!



COVER ART UPDATE, PART 2

BY JOE GOODMAN

Doug is making great progress on the cover. In the spirit of Kickstarter's mission to provide insight and access to the creative process, we're going to share some in-progress shots of the painting. We will start with a reminder on the sketch, similar to yesterday's update, then cover the "color rough" and the current state of the painting.

What is a color rough? It's a mock-up showing general placement of paint, used to guide the artist's placement once he's into the details. It is not final and is just a general guide the artist creates to show where he's heading.

The current state of the painting just shows what layers of paint have been applied so far. Doug often paints with an undercoat. If you paint straight onto a white canvas, the colors will have a lighter tone (due to the white tone underneath) than if you apply a different undertone. In this case, you can see Doug has applied a yellow undertone. The colors that get applied in subsequent layers above this yellow will have a slightly more spooky, cryptic feel since they'll have that slight tint of yellow showing through them. Once the yellow dries, the next layer of paint can be applied.

None of these images should be taken as final! They are in-progress shots. You're getting a peek inside the studio, and we'll keep you in the loop as the painting evolves.

First, the sketch, as originally shown yesterday:

Second, the color rough. (This isn't digital art, folks; Doug is actually mixing paint to get these colors!)

Finally, the in-progress painting as it sits now, with the undercoat of yellow applied:



COVER ART UPDATE, PART 3

BY JOE GOODMAN

Doug just sent in the images below, showing yesterday's progress on the new cover design. These build on the sketches and color roughs presented in yesterday's update. As a reminder, this is a physical painting, completed with actual paint and physical media. That means the layers of paint have to dry in between applications. Doug can't just whip this out overnight in Photoshop! We are optimistic that the final cover will be completed before the Kickstarter ends, and we'll keep you in the loop along the way.

As Doug mentioned, he's working mostly with yellows/oranges/reds now and hasn't applied blues or greens yet.



Latest draft of the new cover art (not yet complete; this is an in-progress shot!)



In-progress painting with reference cat (please note: cat not included in any pledge level)

TEAM SCORING FOR A TOURNAMENT DUNGEON

BY CHRIS DOYLE

When we decided to run a team tourney at Gen Con in 2004, we needed to develop a scoring system. Luckily, we had several precedents in classic TSR modules, and that was where we went for our inspiration.

Below are PDF scans of two such classic systems, from *Dungeon Module A1: Slave Pits of the Undercity* and *C1: The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*. First, let's take a look at the A1 scoring system:

TOURNAMENT SCORING									
For this tournament, the highest scores will be awarded for completing the most room encounters before time runs out. Scoring also takes into consideration the number of characters surviving.									
Number of Characters Surviving	ROOMS ENCOUNTERED								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	5	50	95	140	185	230	275	320	365
2.	10	55	100	145	190	235	280	325	370
3.	15	60	105	150	195	240	285	330	375
4.	20	65	110	155	200	245	290	335	380
5.	25	70	115	160	205	250	295	340	385
6.	30	75	120	165	210	255	300	345	390
7.	35	80	125	170	215	260	305	350	395
8.	40	85	130	175	220	265	310	355	400
9.	45	90	135	180	225	270	315	360	405

SCORING ADJUSTMENTS									
Start	+ 7 for casting <i>invisibility</i> on halfling								
Rm. 1	+ 4 for attempting to find trap								
Rm. 2	No adjustments								
Rm. 3	-4 for sending one character in alone -4 for attempting to use <i>sleep</i> spell + 4 for attempting to turn undead ✓								
Rm. 4	-4 for attempting to cross on charred section + 4 for using <i>spider climb</i> , <i>levitate</i> or climb walls								
Rms. 5a, b	-4 for destroying barrels + 8 for using vinegar in barrels on sundew + 4 for using missile fire/avoiding direct contact								
Rm. 12	+ 8 for checking manacles + 8 for not charging down the hall -8 for casting <i>fireball</i>								
Rm. 15	+ 4 for <i>levitate</i> , <i>spider climb</i> or climb walls + 4 for making raft out of door -4 for attempting to swim in metal armor								
Rm. 16	+ 4 for casting <i>slow</i> spell + 4 for casting <i>wall of fog</i> + 8 for casting <i>paralyzation</i>								
Rm. 17	+ 4 for attempting to find trap + 8 for casting <i>dispel magic</i>								
Rm. 18	+ 4 for casting <i>blindness</i> on cleric + 4 for casting <i>silence</i> on cleric + 8 for casting <i>dispel magic</i> or avoiding silenced area								

Scoring system from *Dungeon Module A1: Slave Pits of the Undercity*

This one seemed straightforward, but I like things complicated. The chart on the top awarded points based on a matrix of number of rooms encountered cross-referenced by the number of PCs that survived. (And folks label *CotDL* as a death-trap dungeon!) So, if four PCs survived five rooms, 200 points were awarded. But if all nine PCs survived and got through all nine encounters, 385 points were awarded. Underneath were the scoring adjustments. Many of these were for timely or efficient use of spells or excellent tactics based on the environment. Most adjustments were +4 or +8, but you could lose points too. It's quick and simple, but I craved more.

OK, onto the C1 scoring system:

TOURNAMENT SCORING									
The scoring system which follows is fairly straightforward. The easiest way to keep score without entering overhead with the play of the tournament is to have the referee simply make a mark next to each action on the chart that the party takes. These scores can be added up later, and the final score can be determined after the tournament session. Keeping a running total is time-consuming and can be inaccurate.									
ROOM	ACTION	POINTS	ROOM	ACTION	POINTS	ROOM	ACTION	POINTS	
1.	Cast <i>strength</i> spell of 1st or 2nd level	+7	22.	Waiting monks	-3	43.	Dispel <i>charm</i>	-3	
2.	Cast <i>slow</i> spell of 1st or 2nd level	+7	23.	Getting past block	-3	44.	Touching or walking to other (per person)	-3	
3.	Mapping dungeon in detail	+2	24.	Escaping in 2 rounds	-5	45.	Escaping up chimney	-3	
4.	Armeding yourselves (each)	-2	25.	Escaping in more than 2 rounds	-2	46.	Not experimenting with areas of room	-3	
5.	Cast <i>neutralize poison</i> to counter gas	+3	26.	Choosing without disturbing bees	+2	47.	Entering spell area of room, except hall	-1	
6.	Avoiding trap	+3	27.	Deflecting missiles	+1	48.	Getting trapped in Wild Plains	-3	
7.	Leaving crib undisturbed	+1	28.	Jumping out of path safely	-2	49.	Escaping gloomier mummy	-3	
8.	Abandoning crib	-1	29.	Feeding gas score as beholder	-2	50.	Using <i>purify food and water</i> to stay	-2	
9.	Scoring with crib	+1	30.	Recognizing gas score	-1	51.	Water wells	-3	
10.	Getting through door from r3	+2	31.	Opening capstone	-2	52.	Attempting to "turn" centaur mummy	-2	
11.	Using <i>seeds</i> water to wash away pit	+2	32.	Attaching ball	-2	53.	Healing jade well as false wall	-1	
12.	Opening secret door	+1	33.	Opening secret door in col face	-2	54.	Healing jade well as false wall	-1	
13.	Incorporating hand with time	-1	34.	Being suspicious of weepgourd statue	-2	55.	Opening hatch to wind tunnel	-2	
14.	Trying to dig out stoneway	-1	35.	Being surprised by weepgourd	-2	56.	Crossing wind tunnel once activated	-2	
15.	Being <i>sleep</i> by gift	-1	36.	Decussing and destroying heart	-2	57.	Going through secret door	-3	
16.	Opening lands	-1	37.	Entering colosseum stone secret door	-2	58.	Going through secret door into temple	-3	
17.	Putting vampire back to sleep	-3	38.	Being required back to great hall	-2	59.	Entering pit (per person)	-1	
18.	Searching room	-3	39.	Entering this room	-2	60.	Chopping portraits	+1	
19.	Working time and effort on algae	-1	40.	Continuing past warning	-2	61.	Trapping portraits	+1	
20.	Not believing algae to be green slime	-2	41.	Disbelieving traps	-2	62.	Unhooking portraits	+2	
21.	Opening secret door	-2	42.	Disbelieving shortfalls	-2	63.	Using <i>stone to flesh</i> on self	-2	
22.	Phasing floor	-2	43.	Searching shortfalls as a challenge	-2	64.	Falling in pit (per person)	-1	
23.	Taking precautions before opening door	-2	44.	Attaching slowness with the	-2				
24.	Obtaining shield	-2	45.	Getting through room	+1				
25.	Using shield to command need	-2	46.	Choosing if	-2				
26.	Disbelieving warty figures	-2	47.	Trying to climb del wall	-1				
27.	Believing warty figures	-1	48.	Watching floor and finding	+2				
28.	Being trapped in end of grand hall	-2	49.	Using <i>stone to flesh</i> on companions	-2				
29.	Opening secret door on far by	-2	50.	Attaching stone dragon	-1				
30.	Getting ring from mouth of eagle	-1	51.	Feeding "gold" as trap	+1				
31.	Being caught by bee	-2	52.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
32.	Disabling zombies without taking damage	-3	53.	Feeding "gold" as trap	+1				
33.	Entering trapped dead end	-5	54.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
34.	Escaping trap	-3	55.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
35.	Feeding "Mistake"	-1	56.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
36.	Locating self behind area of once	-1	57.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
37.	Beating open can	-2	58.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
38.	Disturbing the night	-2	59.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
39.	Feeding just stone	-2	60.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				
40.	Taking shortcut beyond stone	-5	61.	Feeding stone dragon without attacking	-2				

Score each team on performance after all play is completed. In order to avoid negative scores, 100 points should be added to each team's total (awarded for participating in the tournament).									
15	9	8	5	4	3	2	1	0	

Scoring system from *Dungeon Module C1: The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*

This system was much meatier. Most of it came from the fact that there was just more to do in the encounters. Designing the encounters with the scoring system in mind became a priority for us. Often, we tweaked encounters and added parts to create scoring opportunities. A few interesting notes here. In the upper paragraph, there was a subjective point award the DM could award for outstanding play not covered in the score system. In our

Here is the first page (to limit spoilers) of the original score sheet for *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. This is not the version that was published in the book, but the actual scoring sheet that judges marked on as they ran the tournament at Gen Con. (You can find this edition in “The Complete Guide to Koboldkin” referenced in a previous update.)

[illegible]

The top part is the very end of the individual encounter scoring. As you can see, the points are higher (+100 or -200). These ranged from 25 (for multiple smaller goals) to 400 (major plot achievements). In short, you were awarded points for defeating creatures, avoiding/disabling traps, solving puzzles, employing great tactics (such as a bard using countersong against harpies or using

The 5E conversion includes a very similar scoring system. It has been tweaked, as the encounters themselves have been tweaked for the updated version of the rules. But it remains true to the original scoring system. How well did your 5E group do? When the adventure comes out, post your score on the Goodman Games forums or via social media!

INDIVIDUAL PLAYER SCORING FOR A TOURNAMENT DUNGEON

BY CHRIS DOYLE



s detailed in a previous update, we actually had three scoring systems for the 1st Annual Dungeon Crawl Classics Team Tournament. One for the team, one for individual players, and one for the DM. That was probably two systems too many, but lessons were learned that first year.

One of the systems we had was individual scoring. This was based on the scoring system used by the Role Playing Game Association (RPGA). Below are scans of the instructions and an actual score sheet pulled from *Dungeon Module C6: The Official RPGA™ Tournament Handbook*. In retrospect, this is an overly complicated system, as can

be seen with the first page detailing the instructions. The meat of the individual scoring was ranking the players 1 through 6, both by the players and the DM. Coming in 1st place garnered 4 points, and then 3 points for 2nd place, 2 points for 3rd place, and finally 1 point for 4th place. The DM's vote counted double (so 8, 6, 4, and 2 points, respectively). Our wrinkle: if you play more rounds, you will obviously get a higher individual score. Our top two scorers came from the final round tables.

Ultimately, we at Goodman Games felt that the two scoring systems were fighting against each other. We really liked the team play aspect of the tournament, so we dropped the individual scoring to focus on presenting a solid team tournament. Since the Goodman Games Team Tournament has persisted for so many years (now as the DCC RPG Team Tournament), we feel it was a wise choice.

How to Score a Tournament

Once a tournament is completed, it must be scored to determine who won. In RPGA™ Network Tournaments, an individual winner is chosen from each team, so that there are as many first place winners as there are final-round teams. Awards are given for first, second, and third place. In addition, there is competition among the judges to determine who was the best overall judge.

In RPGA Tournaments, everyone who participated in an adventure helps decide the winners. This is accomplished by completing summaries to rate the performances of the players and judges. Player and Judge Summary sheets are included in this module (on pages 32-34).

Filling Out a Summary

Summaries should be kept secret from other players so as not to influence their summaries. Once summaries are completed, they are collected by the judge and turned in to the Tournament Coordinator for final evaluation and scoring.

Each summary is divided into four sections:

1. Identification: The first section is provided to aid record keeping.

2. Adventure Comments: A tournament may be played at several conventions. Thus it is always a good idea to listen to the opinions of the players on how you might improve this tournament or future tournaments of your own design.

3. Judge and Player Evaluation: The players have the opportunity to judge their referee's performance, while the judge comments on the overall performance of his players as a team. A five-point award scale is used to rate the judge and team in six different categories. Average performance is considered to be a "3," merely adequate performance is a "1," and outstanding performance rates a "5."

4. Player Review: This last section is used to identify the top players in a variety of categories. First, each person is asked to write the name of the best player for each of six different categories. The player should consider his own performance, as well as those of the other players. Different players show different strengths in a tournament. Then, each person is asked to rank the top four overall players in order.

Completing a Scoring Worksheet

Once the summary sheets have been collected, a Tournament Worksheet must be filled out for each team using the information on the summaries.

1. Fill out the identification section.

2. Fill in the judge's and players' names.

Place the judge's name at the top of the left-

most column. Place each player's name in the left-most column next to the number of the character he played this round.

3. Score the Players' Performances: Look at the Judge's Summary. Award points to the players the judge picked as the first, second, third, and fourth place overall players (these points go in the appropriate players' boxes beneath the column marked "Judge"). The point values for each place are given below. Thus, for the first-place player, a score of "4" is recorded in the "Judge" column box next to the name of the player.

Each player's choices for the best players are recorded under the column that corresponds to the player's character number. The points awarded for the player choices are given below.

Placement 1st 2nd 3rd 4th
Judge Points 8 6 4 2
Player Points 4 3 2 1

Once all scores are recorded, each row is totaled. The player with the highest point total wins first place, the next highest wins second place, etc. If there is a tie, then the person with the most Special Mentions scores higher. If this also results in a tie, both players are declared tied for that place (and no one is given the next lower place).

4. Record the Special Mentions: While recording whom each person picked as first, second, and so on, also record whom that person picked as the best in each of the six special categories. Do this by recording a slash in the appropriate box after the chosen player's name.

To win a Special Mention, a majority of these judging must choose one person for a category. With a six-person team and one judge, this means four or more people. If someone is picked by a majority for one category, circle that box after the player's name to indicate he won that category. It is possible that no one receives a majority of votes for a category. Then there is no winner for that category.

5. Record Judge's Ratings: As placement and Special Mentions are recorded for each player's summary sheet, add together the points that judge awarded the judge in all six categories. Record the total in the box next to the judge's name and beneath the player's character number (these are the boxes directly beneath the "Judge and Player Rankings by Player" heading). Add all these totals together in the box labeled "TOTALS" alongside the judge's name. This is the judge's rating. The ratings achieved by the judges are then compared and the highest score wins first place and so on. See the section on scoring multiple-round events below.

6. Team Scores: The points awarded by a judge for each category are recorded in the appropriate boxes and totaled with the number of the last encounter the team reached mi-

nus the number of the final encounter for the round. Team scores are used by the RPGA Network as bonus points added to each player's score but serve little purpose in selecting placement.

Multiple-Round Advancement

When playing a multiple-round event, each team is scored separately each round. Then the top three players of each team advance to the next round. The fourth-place player is used as an alternate to fill out a team if the number is uneven or one of the top three players cannot play a later round for some reason. Alternates are chosen in order of highest score. Tournament winners are those who win the final round.

RPGA Tournaments usually consist of six-person teams. In later rounds, it is a good idea to mix the teams so that players get to play with new people.

Picking Winners

In a multiple-round tournament, winning players are picked in the same method as for a single-round event. Picking a winning judge is a different matter, since there are fewer judges to run each round and fewer judges have a chance to play. Therefore the following scoring method is used to select the top judges in a multi-round tournament.

Winner points are awarded to the top judges each round. These points diminish with each subsequent round so that judges who only ran the first round still have a chance to place among the top four judges. The winners are selected from those who have the highest total winner point scores at the end of the tournament. If there is a tie for a place, the points for that place and the next lower place are added together and divided among the tying judges. Points awarded for each place are as follows:

Place 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th
1st Round 8 7 6 5 4 3
2nd Round 6 5 4 3 2 0
3rd Round 4 3 2 1 0 0

In order to judge a later round, a judge must have run the previous rounds and gained an average rating of at least 90.

TOURNAMENT WORKSHEET									
Convention:		Date:		Tournament Type:		Tournament Size: _____ Rds.			
Event Title:		Game System:		Round Number:		Team Bonus			
Team Number: _____ out of _____		Time: _____		If not, what was the last encounter they reached?		Team Bonus			
Team Score: _____		Last Encounter Finished		Final Encounter Number		Team Bonus			
Judge and Player Rankings by Player									
Judge:	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	TOTALS	PLACEMENTS
P1:									
P2:									
P3:									
P4:									
P5:									
P6:									
P7:									
P8:									
P9:									
P10:									
P11:									
P12:									
P13:									
P14:									
P15:									
P16:									
P17:									
P18:									
P19:									
P20:									

Scan of RPGA's worksheet to tabulate tournament scores

Scan of RPGA's "How to Score a Tournament"

PLAYER'S SUMMARY

Real Name: _____ RPGA# _____
 (Last) (First)

Adventure _____
 Character: _____ Character #: _____

Convention _____ Date: _____ Scenario _____ Time: _____
 Round #: _____

Adventure Comments:
 A. Did you enjoy this adventure? _____
 B. What did you like most? _____
 C. What did you like least? _____
 D. Any comments for improvements? (Please write on the back of sheet)

Judge name: _____
 Circle the number which best defines your judge's performance.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Great	Super
1. How well did he organize the play?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How well did he know the adventure?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How well did he handle the unexpected?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How well did he role play?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How well did he know the game rules?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How would you rate your judge overall?	1	2	3	4	5

E. Name one way your judge could improve. _____

Player Review
 Name one player for each category; you may name a player several times.

A. Who knew the rules the best? _____
 B. Who showed the most innovation? _____
 C. Who showed the best strategic play? _____
 D. Who showed the best leadership? _____
 E. Who did the best role playing? _____
 F. Who showed the best team support? _____

Now vote for the four players who displayed the best overall performances — including teamwork, role playing, good strategic sense, and knowledge of the rules. Consider yourself as well as other players.

1. Best: _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

33

Scan of RPGA's "Player's Summary" for scoring a tournament

At Gen Con 2004, first-place individual scorer Dan Adams won the tournament Grand Prize: the original art of a character portrait by Erol Otus.

Here is his character Chalakasen and how Dan described him:

"Being the GM for my group (for the past 10 years), I had to select an NPC instead of a PC. Here is Chalakasen, easily the most memorable NPC from my campaign. One of the characters had been captured by goblins, who then sold her to a slave trader headed for an Underdark city called Jeruport. Unbeknownst to me, this city would be so well-liked that it became the center of that campaign. There was an imp bartender at an inn named Chalakasen, who was a great source of information for the group...at a price. This imp was always incredibly cordial—unlike the other inhabitants of Jeruport. Whenever he spoke, he had a broad smile plastered on his face. Chalakasen would smile, even when it was inopportune or while he was discussing some morbid topic."

JUDGE'S SUMMARY

Real Name: _____ RPGA# _____
 (Last) (First)

Convention _____ Scenario _____
 Round #: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Adventure Comments:
 A. Did you enjoy this adventure? _____
 B. What did you like most? _____
 C. What did you like least? _____
 D. Any comments for improvements? (Please write on the back of sheet)

Team Play
 0. Did your team complete the adventure? _____
 If not, how far did they get? _____
 Rank your team's performance in the following categories.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Great	Super
1. Knowledge of rules?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Strategic and organization ability?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Role-Playing ability?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Innovative Thinking/Problem Solving?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cooperation and Teamwork?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Overall performance toward stated goal?	1	2	3	4	5

Player Review
 Name one player for each category; you may name a player several times.

A. Who knew the rules the best? _____
 B. Who showed the most innovation? _____
 C. Who showed the best strategic play? _____
 D. Who showed the best leadership? _____
 E. Who did the best role playing? _____
 F. Who showed the best team support? _____

Now vote for the four players who displayed the best overall performances — including teamwork, role playing, good strategic sense, and knowledge of the rules.

1. Best: _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

34

Scan of RPGA's "Judge's Summary" for scoring a tournament



PLAYTESTING CRYPT OF THE DEVIL LICH FOR THE DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS RPG

BY JAMES SPAHN



There's a reason traditional tabletop roleplaying games have continued to flourish and grow in spite of a world dominated more and more by video games capable of providing increasingly immersive experiences and other forms of shared digital media. Roleplaying games provide two things that not even the most advanced video game is capable of recreating: unpredictability and agency.

Anything can happen in an RPG, and you can react any way you want. Granted, there are a few caveats built into every game, but for the most part, the limits of a character's actions are bound only by the player taking up that role, and the limits of the world are bound only by the imagination of the judge. In short, every time you sit down to play an RPG, you never know what could happen. It doesn't matter whether this is your first time playing or you're a veteran of the hobby with 40 years of rolling dice under your belt.

This makes playtesting an extraordinarily strange experience. When you playtest, you're trying to get a sense of what's *likely* to happen based on the encounters of the product being playtested. But in roleplaying games, as mentioned above, anything can happen—and that is especially true of Dungeon Crawl Classics. A few points of spellburn, a couple of points of well-spent luck, and a good-old natural 20, and all of the sudden, the entire dynamic is different from what it was five seconds ago.

That was certainly my experience playtesting *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. An intrepid party of six pre-generated characters approached that unhallowed hall of apocalyptic terror with all the swagger and confidence you'd expect from a party of 7th-level DCC characters. Even an experienced Road Crew Judge like myself, who'd read over the material several times, was a little nervous at this powerhouse of a party about to storm the proverbial castle.

As I read the first line of descriptive text, I made sure that everyone involved in the playtest knew they were playtesting a “killer dungeon.” Players needed to know what they were going into, at least in a general sense. That was only fair, in my opinion. So, as the first encounter began, they were cautious, and they were calculating. Dare I say they were even a tad bit nervous?

But when the dice hit the table and the battle cry of “Roll for initiative!” echoed in everyone's ears, the floodgates opened. I won't spoil encounter specifics here because there are so many fun surprises inside the pages of this adventure, but I will say this: embrace the madness. Having read the first encounter, I thought it was *brutal*. I was worried about a TPK in location one. But that didn't happen.

They absolutely walked the dog on everything in location one with all the glorious aplomb that comes with a warrior's Mighty Deeds and a wizard willing to spellburn at the drop of a hat. Honestly, I was left a bit shocked at how easily things went for them. But in that first encounter, their dice were hot, and the NPCs' dice were not. They were riding high on being reavers bent on gold and glory.

Then everything changed.

Suddenly, they were going through chambers with the meticulousness of a funnel character terrified that death was waiting in every 10-foot square. It was laughable how cautious they suddenly became. But I let them do that. Their choices, no matter what they were, had meaning.

Now, given this adventure is also designed to be run as a tournament, it was important to get a sense of what was likely to happen and keep my judging consistent. But man, players can make that really hard. With each encounter, the characters seemed to leap from hypercapable heroes able to dispatch armies with the wave of

a sword to cowering hirelings waiting for the inevitable, cold embrace of death.

As the night continued and we played through the adventure, each encounter was a surprise to both the players and me as the judge. The players made it that way with their choices, in spite of the consistency required when running a tournament. It was absolute madness, and it was *a blast*.

Whether it was epic spell checks meant to destroy foes with an arcane word having no effect or unbeatable monsters turned to dust after some clever decisions and well-rolled dice, *Crypt of the Devil Lich* proved to be a truly unpredictable experience.

I think this is important. There's a bit of a misnomer that the DCC incarnation of *Crypt of the Devil Lich* is nothing more than a conversion of a conversion, having gone from 3rd Edition OGL to 5th Edition OGL to DCC. Nothing could be further from the truth. The over-the-top nature and opportunity for epic chaos is just as present here as it is in *Sailors on the Starless Sea*, *Peril on the Purple Planet*, or *Jewels of the Carnifex*. That means in addition to its use as both a tournament module and a campaign adventure (as well as original content importable into an existing campaign), it's got replayability for those who are foolish enough to brave the Crypt more than once.

Just make sure they know what they're getting into. Because it's gonna be a heckuva ride that's 100% pure Dungeon Crawl Classics goodness.

WHY IMPERFECT PRE-GENS ARE PERFECT FOR TOURNAMENTS

BY CHRIS DOYLE



nyone can create and play a min-maxed character. Where is the challenge in that?

When we created the pre-generated characters for the 1st Annual Dungeon Crawl Classics Team Tournament, one of our goals was to create imperfect character builds. And based on the feedback we received from the original tournament players, we succeeded. Boy, did we succeed! Part of the challenge of the tournament was to overcome the challenges of the Crypt using these characters with non-optimal spell selections.

Converting these characters to 5E presented its own set of challenges. Although there are similarities between the two editions, there are many subtle rule changes that needed adjustments. These adjustments were required to bring the characters in line with 5E, but we also needed to pay keen attention to how these characters would interact with the tournament encounters. At the bottom of this update, we present one of the 5E-converted pre-generated characters: Jyncks, the “firebug” wizard. Here are a few notes regarding the 5E conversion.

First, you will notice the skill selection. Acrobatics? Medicine? These are an artifact of the pre-generated character build being based on an old 2E character, originally created by my wife. These were called non-weapon proficiencies in that edition. She wanted a mobile character that could dodge around the battlefield, hence tumbling (as it was called). Thus, we have Acrobatics for 5E. Back in the 2E days, it was also common for wizard characters to help the wounded and fallen in battle, administering potions of healing and stabilizing wounds. Therefore, Medicine was added for the 5E build. Making her a variant human (which also fits her quirky appearance) assigned an extra skill and feat. Selecting the Elemental Adept (Fire) feat rounded out the 5E character nicely.

Next, in 5E a character can have only three attuned magic items at one time. Oh boy, the original 3E version of Jyncks had nine magic items that would require attunement in 5E! So we got this number down to three (the cloak, the ring, and the boots). This required some tweaks to the scroll and potion lists she now carries as well as dropping several items.

The repertoire of spells able to be cast in a day is very different from 3E to 5E, and this was a challenge to balance for the tournament encounters. A 15th-level wizard can easily outshine the fighter, cleric, and nearly every other character class with its powerful spells. This was somewhat easier to control in 3E, picking individual spells per level and no ability to upcast. But in 5E, wizards use spell slots and can use any spell in a slot of its level or higher. We wanted to keep the spell lists as close as possible. But I'll be honest with you, spells like *fly* and *telekinesis* can circumvent entire encounters (and the original 3E version allotted only one of each). We could have removed these two spells from her list. Instead, we tweaked the actual encounters to compensate for the additional spell-use options. We believe this is a better test of the player's skill as opposed to just swapping out these spells. After all, just because you can cast *fly*, it doesn't mean you should. It can get you in trouble quickly, especially in a death-trap dungeon!

One more comment: we engaged with the playtesters regarding Jyncks' overabundance of fire-damage dealing spells. Could they have been too much? At the end, we collaboratively decided no. But we did add the *spell scroll* of *cone of cold* to give a one shot (per tournament round) non-fire option, though that does carry a roleplaying conundrum as well as carry an extra point penalty for tournament scoring purposes, if used.

JYNCKS

Female human wizard 15, chaotic good

AC: 15 (*cloak of protection*, *ring of protection*) (18 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points: 77 (15d6 + 15)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws: Str +1, Dex +5, Con +3, Int +12, Wis +7, Cha +3

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics +8, Arcana +10, History +10, Investigation +10, Medicine +5

Tool Proficiencies: —

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

Special Equipment: *cloak of protection* (included in AC and saving throws), *ring of protection* (included in AC and saving throws), +2 *dagger*, *wand of magic missiles*, *wand of magic detection*, *boots of striding and springing*, *spell scroll* (*mage armor*), *spell scroll* (*knock*), *spell scroll* (*cone of cold*) (6th level), *spell scroll* (*wall of stone*), *potions of fire breath* (2), *potion of greater healing*

Equipment: silvered daggers (3), spellbooks, component pouch, arcane focus (charred orb), backpack, tinderbox, pouches (6), silk rope (50 ft.), rods with *continual flame* (2), scroll tubes (4), ink / quills / parchment, alchemist's fire (8 flasks)

HUMAN TRAITS

Variant Human:

- Jyncks has proficiency in the Acrobatics skill.
- Fire Elemental Adept:** Spells Jyncks casts ignore resistance to fire damage. In addition, when she rolls damage for a spell she casts that deals fire damage, she can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2. The saving throw DC is 17.

WIZARD FEATURES

Spellcasting: Jyncks is a 15th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Jyncks has the following wizard spells prepared:



William McAusland's new player character portrait for Jyncks

- Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *dancing lights*,^E *fire bolt*,^E *shocking grasp*,^E *true strike*
- 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*,^E *feather fall*, *identify*, *shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *knock*, *scorching ray*,^E *see invisibility*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fireball*,^E *fly*
- 4th level (3 slots): *fire shield*,^E *resilient sphere*,^E *wall of fire*^E
- 5th level (2 slots): *hold monster*, *telekinesis*
- 6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*
- 7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball*,^E *prismatic spray*^E
- 8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud*

^E Evocation spell

Arcane Recovery (1/Day): When she finishes a short rest, Jyncks can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level up to 6.

Arcane Tradition: Jyncks is specialized in evocation magic.

Evocation Savant: The gold and time Jyncks must spend to copy an evocation spell into her spellbook is halved.

Sculpt Spells: When Jyncks casts an evocation spell that affects other creatures that she can see, she can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

Potent Cantrip: When a creature succeeds on a saving throw against Jyncks's cantrip, the creature takes half the cantrip's damage (if any) but suffers no additional effect from the cantrip.

Empowered Evocation: Jyncks can add +5 to the damage roll of any wizard evocation spell she casts.

Overchannel: When Jyncks casts a wizard spell of 1st through 5th level that deals damage, she can deal maximum damage with that spell.

The first time she does so, she suffers no adverse effect. If she uses this feature again before she finishes a long rest, she takes 13 (2d12) necrotic damage for each level of the spell, immediately after she casts it. Each time she uses this feature again before finishing a long rest, the necrotic damage per spell level increases by 6 (1d12). This damage ignores resistance and immunity.

ACTIONS

+2 Dagger: *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Silvered Dagger: *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Alchemist's Fire: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target catches fire. It takes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Description: Jyncks is 28 years old. She stands 5'4" tall and weighs 105 pounds. She has short blonde hair and dazzling amber eyes.

Weight with Gear: 145 lb.

Background: Sage

Ideal: Knowledge is a fire that can illuminate even the deepest darkness.

Bond: I have a fire in my eyes. But all I want to do is play with it!

Quote: "Build a foe a fire and it will be warm for a bit. Light a foe on fire, and it will be warm until it dies."

Personality: Jyncks is a spirited, wily, optimistic, and happy-go-lucky individual. She is extroverted and loves to hear herself talk. She enjoys speaking in rhyme, even when it frustrates her allies. She has been given many nicknames—firebug, sister of the flame, and pyro—but her favorite is the nickname she gave herself, Jyncks. She's been using it so long she's forgotten her real name.

Jyncks has a fiery temper and strong emotions, and she is prone to impetuous judgment. She can hold a grudge and often reminds those around her when misjudged, sometimes even going to long lengths to get the last laugh. Although she is remarkably intelligent, she often lacks common sense, especially when tossing fiery spells about. As a result, she has lost several familiars to hasty spellcasting (they were all cremated). She loved them all and has decided to make do without a familiar rather than risk losing another one.

Years ago, she found a powerful *spell scroll* with a spell that can unleash a bitter cone of cold. She just can't come around to wielding magic that deals cold damage!

DESIGNER'S DIARY: INTRODUCING CLASSIC MONSTERS TO DCC RPG

BY BOB BRIKMAN

While many monsters in the adventure have DCC counterparts, there are others who do not. In some of those cases, the monsters are classic RPG foes missing from the DCC core rules. I'm a horror fan, and there are just some monsters that any horror fan wants to see in a game. Thus, it has been a particular treat to work on bringing these creatures over, especially the vampire.

Vampires are wholly absent from DCC's *Cyclopedia of Creatures Monstrous and Mundane* (seriously, go check the core book; I'll wait), so I have been given the opportunity to breathe undead into vampires. This has meant more than just altering a few stats and listing a few powers; it has meant creating the monster entry, including subtypes.

Within the New Monsters section of the adventure are rules for good, old-fashioned, shapeshifting, mesmerizing bloodsuckers. I'm talking vampire spawn, full vampires, and even vampire lords—each more dangerous than the last.

DCC players will find a whole new reason to fear the dark.

Oh yeah...and then there is the lich.



THANK YOU FOR FUNDING CRYPT OF THE DEVIL LICH!

Thank you to each and every one of the 2,216 (!!) backers of the campaign. What a wild ride this has been the past 30 days. At times it was hard to keep up with the 1,000-plus comments. We read every one of them! The engagement we had during this campaign is what makes Kickstarter great. And again, thanks to the superbackers who stepped in and answered other folks' questions before we did. I know we lost a few backers along the way due to the artwork situation, but extra thanks to those who stuck with us, despite the bumps. We think you are getting an outstanding product!

We are already hard at work creating the 12 new pre-generated characters and the Lost Level encounters. A few words about the handout booklet: the original module featured 22 handouts. During the campaign, we unlocked 20 more handouts! These handouts will now be in a separate booklet *and* in full color! Let that sink in for a moment. I did a final count of the handouts I'd like to have following the 5E conversion, and the final count of handouts will be 47. So you wonderful backers are getting five more pieces of full-color art!

I'd like to thank the whole *Crypt of the Devil Lich* team. Tim on editing and Matt on layout (plus those numerous mock-ups during the Kickstarter). Special kudos go

to Bob heading up the DCC conversion and vigorously playtesting the past few weeks. I'd like to thank my 5E playtesters: Lisa, Alec, Mark, Eric, Elliot, and John. Plus my playtest group at Spawn of Cyclops Con and my group of 5E freelancers yesterday at Gary Con. Thanks to all of the artists and especially to Doug for coming through with an amazing cover featuring Chalychia in all of her malevolence. And thanks to everyone who participated in our Devil Lich on Twitch livestreams the past few weeks. I hope you guys all enjoyed the deep history this module has for us at Goodman Games and the opportunity to share in the passion we have for this project.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank Joe Goodman for publishing these deluxe versions of *Crypt of the Devil Lich* (again!). We honestly had no idea how well this module would be received by the fans of both 5E and DCC. After all, tournament modules are a bit of a niche item, and this one is 17 years old and from two editions ago. Clearly, we underestimated the interest! Needless to say, we are honored and proud to bring this death-trap dungeon to another generation of gamers!

Thank you!

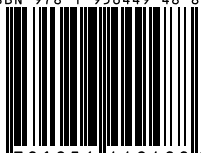
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