



STORM KNIGHTS

STREAMLINED

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COORDINATION RULES

JASYN JONES



## STREAMLINED COORDINATION RULES

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## INTRODUCTION

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The coordination rules for both *TORG* classic and *TORG Revised and Expanded* are more than a little involved:

When multiple characters are combining their efforts to accomplish a single task, and when they must either succeed as a group or fail as a group, use the following procedure instead of the Many on One rules:

- A lead character is chosen; this is the character whose skill or attribute value is best suited (i.e., highest) for the task.
- All other characters whose appropriate skill or attribute is within five points of the lead character's skill may add to the. [sic] Each aiding character makes a *Perception* check against the coordination difficulty of the task.

The value of the number of characters who successfully add their effort, count-

ing the lead character, becomes a bonus modifier for the lead character's action total.

(*Revised and Expanded TORG Rulebook*, pg. 108.)

Not only is this involved, it doesn't seem to match real world examples. When five people act together to lift a log, the rule would suggest that one person uses their muscles (*Strength* check) and the other five their ability to notice things (*Perception*), when it would seem like all five would be using their muscles.

In addition, the above rules force the players to break character to gather information- who has the highest skill total, who is within five points of that, and so forth- just to make a single skill check, like a *find* total.

The following rule is simpler, and more realistic.

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## THE RULE

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Any time multiple characters are attempting the same task (such as searching a room) they each make a separate skill (or Attribute) total. The highest total is used as the base value, and anyone else whose total exceeds the coordination Difficulty Number adds a +1 Bonus Modifier to that Total. The coordination Difficulty Number is a 10, or the task's Difficulty Number -1 (as having a coordination Difficulty Number that is higher than the task's Difficulty Number would be pointless).

**Example:** Three Storm Knights are searching a crime scene. They all generate *find* totals: a 14, a 10, and a 9. The final

*find* total for the group is 15. Had the third Storm Knight gotten a 10 instead of a 9, the group's *find* total would have been a 16.

For gamemasters who wish to take other circumstances into account, they can vary the coordination Difficulty Number based on how difficult they think it would be for the characters to assist each other (see guidelines on pg. 109, *TORG Revised and Expanded*). This Difficulty Number can be any value, as long as it is less than the Difficulty Number of the task the characters are attempting to achieve.

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## THE RULE IN PLAY

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To compare the above rules with the default, I'll use the example of the party searching a room, a common task in *TORG* (see the first published module, Act 1, Scene 1).

**Normally:** All characters generate *find* totals. The highest gets some amount of Success Levels, and the GM reads the appropriate line. Everyone else finds nothing.

### Using the Standard Coordination

**Rules:** The players compare skill values, pick a lead character, and that lead character only searches, while no one else does, they "coordinate." If the lead character rolls badly, no one finds anything, no matter how high their *Perception* totals were.

### Using the Streamlined Coordination

**Rule:** All characters search (make *find* totals). Just like in the standard rules, the highest character's total is what really matters. Those who did well searching aided him, because the more people that do well at the task, the better the group did.

### AIDING BY ARGUING

Even if the people aren't trying to coordinate, such as when they are arguing, they can aid each other.

Let's take a common business meeting: five managers in a room, discussing an imminent product rollout. The goal of the group is to make the roll out successful.

In game terms, does a lead character make an *advertising* check, while everyone else coordinates? Of course not. Each person makes their own *advertising* skill check to generate their own ideas for different ad campaigns- because no two people are going to see things the same way- and out of the different ideas a better solution emerges.

Cooperate or compete, as long as two people are engaged in the same task, and one can learn from the other, coordination can happen.

This rule makes coordinating nearly effortless and very quick to play. Most of the time, each player with the skill is going to be making a total anyway, so allowing this same roll to determine if they work together simply speeds up play.

## COORDINATION AND RESEARCH

These rules can even represent coordination and research- the skill totals do not have to take place at the same time. After all, research is little more than a delayed coordination check.

Gamemasters can represent this (if desired) this way: The person writing the book generated a skill total. The researcher generates a skill total and if the book's total exceeds the coordination Difficulty Number, the researcher gains a +1 bonus to their check. This bonus should be restricted to no more than a +3.

This rule also emulates how people work together in the real world better than the original rule did. Usually, "coordinating" doesn't require intensive efforts. People work together by all of them trying to achieve the same task, not by a lead character trying the task, and everyone else trying- but possibly failing- to coordinate. In fact, with most things, there isn't a chance NOT to coordinate, as long as someone is doing the same task and you can communicate with them and the participants each contribute a minimum amount.

## SUMMING MASS EFFORTS

The *Revised and Expanded Torg Rulebook*, pg. 109, presents mechanics to allow the gamemaster to quickly approximate the actions of a large group of characters who are coordinating. A similar system works with the streamlined coordination rules:

- Start with the value of the number of participants
  - Add their average skill value
  - Subtract the Difficulty Number of the skill check
  - Subtract 2
- = This equals the coordination bonus.  
(This has to be less than the value of the number of participants, if it is greater reduce it to match the value.)

**Find:** "You look in the closet, I'll look under the desk."

**Scholar:** "Wasn't that 1545, St. Germaine?"

"No, 1445, I thought."

"Oh, right, just after the Church sold the abbey and the Monseigneur was excommunicated..."

**Mechanic:** "It looks okay to me, I checked the battery and ignition."

"What about the oil?"

"Damn! Give me a sec."

Anyone who can add something valuable can help, and no "coordination check" is needed. All someone has to do to contribute is to make a high enough skill total, which represents them remembering a detail the lead character forgot, pointing out something the lead character overlooked, or looking in a place the lead character didn't.

This rule is quick, flexible, transparent, and doesn't distract players from the game. It allows players to play, rather than compare skill values every time they search a crime scene or track a villain.

- Add the average skill to the coordination bonus
- = This is the total effective skill value for the group.

The gamemaster then rolls a bonus number and adds it to the effective skill value. This is the group skill total. He then compares this total to the Difficulty Number to see if the group succeeded.

The streamlined coordination rules work well for up to ten individuals or so, but produce distorted results for groups larger than that. For such groups, the gamemaster will want to use this procedure.

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Additional Mythos/System Work: Christopher Kubasik, Ray Winninger, Paul Murphy

### **The Revised and Expanded TORG Rulebook, v. 1.5**

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