

Star Heroes Campaign Overview and House Rules

General Description: Earth, mother of humanity, is gone. And good riddance, say many colony worlds who suffered for years under corporate oppression from the Interstellar Commerce Commission. Earth's descendants formed a new government, and allied itself with the Star League: a galactic federation of alien races who allied together for mutual support, trade, and defense. For ten years, the new alliance has helped the remains of Mankind prosper and grow once more.

However, the Star League is now under attack. An entity calling himself the Sargon has invaded the Star League. Star League forces have been decimated by Sargonese forces equipped with strange, giant robotic machines. Nothing can stand in their way of galactic domination. Nothing, except perhaps

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Characters can have any sort of sci fi background they want. They can be rich, poor, famous, infamous, non-descript. They can be highly skilled, or bumpkins. The universe is based on Earth cultures. Earth exists, but has been abandoned for over a decade. Humanity has settled on a new world, Bluefall, in the Aegis system. However, Mankind's new government is threatened by the rival Sargon Empire, founded by a conglomerate from old Earth that seeks ultimate mastery of the universe.

Importance of the PCs: Very Important. Although the PCs will start out as minor figures in a great galactic war, they will be in a position to unlock secrets that will save the Star League from certain destruction.

Campaign Tone:

Morality: 2. Good and Evil is mostly clear cut. There will be some moral quandaries and grittiness.

Realism: 1 and 4. Cinematic, with a Realistic twist. Not all technology will be strictly speaking "possible", but it will have plausible explanations for how it works, and what it can and cannot do.

Outlook: 3. Sometimes the Good Guys lose. It all depends on the players actions. All actions will have logical and plausible repercussions—some positive, some negative.

Seriousness: Mostly lighthearted, with some ironic humor and morality questions.

Continuity: Mostly serial, all adventures will fit into a storyline with a beginning and an end. The story arc is designed to allow for independent plot threads generated by the players interactions with NPCs. In other words, you create much of the story.

Physical World Description: The players will travel between the stars to a number of worlds, mostly human inhabited with some interactions with alien races. The culture is Earth based, and character concepts may be based on real Earth cultures (European, Asian, Hispanic, and so on). Interested players are encouraged to use non-European cultures, but will be expected to play within the boundaries of the culture they select (no stereotypes, please).

Character Building Guidelines:

Starting Points: Beginning characters should be built on 175 points. Base is 100 pts plus 75 pts Disadvantages.

Character Types: Characters should be created according to a pre-defined concept. Characters may either be members of the military, or civilians caught in the crossfire. Each character should be the group's expert in some useful skills, such as weapons, piloting, medical, diplomacy or other such skill. Every character should have one area where all others look up to him. Other characters may also have some knowledge in that skill, but at a lower level.

Not all characters need to be combat monsters. Remember, most stories have some characters that are physically weak, but stronger in other areas. Think of how this character would play in a movie or TV series.

The more the player puts into the character concept, the more attention that character will receive from the GM. I am looking for story ideas from the character writeups. If the players have ideas for story threads, or character development, if they have goals for the characters to achieve, so much the better! It is my objective as GM to make these things a major part of the story arc.

Important Note on Character Types!: Do not buy any mecha related skills for your characters. Mecha does not yet exist for the Star League. Finding and learning to use mecha will be a focal goal of the game, just like for Rick Hunter in Robotech.

Races: All the players are human beings. No alien races or cross-breeds will be allowed.

Characteristics: Less than 75 points should be spent in Characteristics, as a general rule. Players should expect to justify high characteristics. Characteristics must make sense for the type of character being played. Generally speaking most stats should not be above 18 without good reason. While the players are exceptional examples of humanity, they are human in most respects, and their Characteristics should reflect that. Geeky science boy should not have a DEX or STR of 20, for example. END, STUN, and REC may not be bought up without GM approval.

Power Frameworks: Elemental Controls and Multipowers are not allowed. Variable Power Pools may be allowed on a case by case basis, with strict limitations.

Powers: Players may buy Powers to simulate extraordinary abilities. Powers bought this way must be approved by the GM, and have a specific concept driving it. Remember, this universe is science fiction, with a realistic twist. No superpowers are allowed. The players are encouraged to be inventive in their character concepts.

There are no minimum point levels for Powers. Players with an interesting idea may buy Powers at less the minimum level since this is a heroic level game.

Magic is strictly disallowed. No exceptions. Magic does not exist in this universe, everything has a scientific rationale even though some things may appear magical in effect.

Mysticism may be allowed on a case by case basis. Only one character may have mystical abilities. See the GM.

Mentalists do exist, and ONE player may play a mentalist character (called an esper in this universe). All Espers must take the Distinctive Feature: Electric blue eyes, concealable for 10 points. Registered espers must also buy the DF: wears gloves and Psi Corps badge for 10 points. Unregistered espers must either buy Secret ID: Esper, or Hunted: Psi Corps, Mo Pow, 11-. No Power Frameworks of any sort will be allowed for espers. Espers must also pay points for Mental Awareness. Some mental attacks will do killing damage, espers may buy their Mental Defense resistant. Mental Powers should fit the concept of the esper, ie Telekinetics should not be buying Mind Scan. I will be using a table of combat maneuvers for mental combat similar to those in TUM. These maneuvers cost no points. There are additional maneuvers that may be purchased by mentalists for points. See the GM for more informatin.

Martial Artists: Martial Arts are allowed, but the character must buy the usual minimum 3 maneuvers. Any character with a military background may buy martial arts, but only one martial arts driven character will be allowed. That character may buy Powers to simulate Martial arts as described in the Ultimate Martial Artist. This martial artists does not have to be a ninja—any character concept in UMA is acceptable. See the GM.

Other fantastic concepts: See the GM. Unusual or odd concepts will be considered by the GM on a case by case basis. Any idea that has been explored in a science fiction movie or tv series may be explored in this game—see the GM for details. However, the GM is free to interpret the idea as she chooses. Do not expect it to be an exact import.

Talents and Perks: All talents and perks are available, except Find Weakness. Find Weakness is disallowed. Players are encouraged to buy Talents and Perks that are appropriate to their concept. Danger Sense is available, but subject to GM approval. Favors are a waste of points. You may buy them, but I'd buy Contacts instead.

Skills: Players should expect to spend the lion's share of their points in various skills. Skills should include Professional Skills and Knowledge Skills to reflect expertise in the character's specialty area. Professional Skills should also be bought to reflect interests and skills outside of combat. The

players should keep in mind that a good part of this game will occur OUT of combat! Characters should be well rounded, and capable of handling a wide variety of situations. Roleplaying is a must—not all problems can be resolved by rolling dice. Each player gets 1 Professional Skill (hobby) and one Area Knowledge (home) at 11- for free. Everyman Skills are in use, use the Modern Everyman Skills list as the technology level will not be that far above the 21st Century, with some exceptions.

Players may buy up their Skill Rolls to reasonable levels. No Skill Roll may be bought above 16-

Max Disad Category: No limits, but use common sense. There should be a balance of Psc Lims, Hunteds/Watched, and other disads. All characters must take 5 1point Quirks. Quirks (based on GURPS) are things for which the character is known, and are readily visible to others. Examples include “Anxious mother”, “wears fruity perfumes”, “chain smoker” and similar ideas. “Loves mints” is not a good quirk because you can’t see love, while “always eating mints” or “smells of mint” is a good quirk. In addition, all characters must take the Disad Hunted: Current, 8-, As Powerful for 10 points, and Psc Lim Subject to Orders for 15 points.

Normal Characteristic Maxima: NCM is in effect for no points.

Equipment: The characters do not have to pay points for equipment, vehicles, or bases. Equipment lists will be provided by the GM at a later date. The character may be required to pay points for unique weapons or equipment not available to others. Discuss your idea with the GM.

How should I create my character?: Have a good concept before you start spending points. Most of the characters in the group should have decent combat abilities—but there’s nothing wrong with playing the non-combat oriented character in the group if that better fits your concept. This campaign will stress ROLEplaying over ROLLplaying. Combat monsters may find themselves getting bored, and having little to do.

Spend a few points on skills that develop your character as a person. Spend points that accurately define their areas of knowledge and expertise. Feel free to look at favorite characters from TV, the movies, and novels for inspiration. I plan to steal liberally from fictional sources. I am less interested in world building, and more interested in character development—telling good stories about your characters.

The group should be a good mix of abilities and personality types. Some will be physically stronger and physically oriented. Others should be more intelligent, but physically weaker in some way (which is not the same thing as incompetent, tho I like daring players willing to take a chance)

Bear in mind, you are creating beginning characters. Your concepts may have your characters being older (maybe even in their forties or older—they don’t have to be young kids, tho they may be), but everyone’s character still has lots to learn, and the number of points reflect that. They also reflect they’ve got a little more going for them than your typical hero.

Things you could include along with a character sheet include: a completed character background, like those found in Champions sourcebooks, drawings of your character, photos of what you think your character looks like (popular well known figures are perfectly acceptable), short fiction, anything you can come up with to give me and the other players a vivid mental picture of who your character is. You don’t have to include these things, but they are helpful to me. I will provide a “character data sheet” with questions that tell me a little bit about your character. Write your answers in first person—start thinking in character!

When should I have my character completed?: Your character needs to be completed and approved before the start of the first game. I won’t have time to go over characters in depth fifteen minutes before game play begins. In addition, I need to look at characters ahead of time so I can get some ideas on how to create stories around your characters. The purpose of this campaign is to create stories around *your characters*. I need to have your completed characters 1 week before I run so I can go over them. You can email them to me at theala@ultimanet.com. I have both HeroMaker and Creation Workshop, or you type them into a word processor and send them to me that way. I use Word Perfect 8, but can read MS Word, ASCII, or RTF documents.

Gosh, this sounds like a lot of work. It doesn't have to be. Your character concepts don't really have to be all that complicated. The initial campaign is only going to last for ten weeks. If player interest is strong enough, I'll continue the campaign. You can get a lot of mileage out of simple ideas. It's how everyone plays those ideas out during the actual game that will be the most fun. What I want most is for the players to bring in some ideas of their own about what they'd like to see happen in the campaign. The more I'm given, the more the players will get back. You *can* come to the game with just a character sheet if that's all you have time for. I like to give players lots of information ahead of time, so they can start thinking about what they want out of the game.

I have high hopes to run an exciting, fast paced game. I look forward to seeing everyone there!

Specific House Rules

1. Hit Locations are in effect. Players may make called shots, may buy levels to improve OCV/DCV or counter Ranged penalties. 10 point Skill Levels may not be used to improve CV. Only Combat Skill levels may be used.
2. Players who wish to Hold Actions must specifically state what they are holding the action for. Players may not hold actions and decide what to do after watching everyone else. This rule exists to streamline combat.
3. Experience will not be awarded in this game. Players who wish to see their character's abilities improve or change during the game should speak to the GM, who will incorporate the ideas into game play to explain them, and approve points to pay for improvements to the character sheet.
4. I will be using Sean Fannon's Plot Points system during the game. I will be using a modified version not currently available on the web. Players will be awarded Plot Points after each session. Players who wish to re-roll bad rolls, or perform actions beyond the normal scope of their abilities may spend Plot Points towards the desired effect. Players who don't have plot points may accrue Payback Points and still get the benefits of the action. These points will be paid back by rolling on a chart that will determine complications for the character later in the game. These complications can range from the serious to the annoying, and are intended to enhance character development and storytelling. I will explain the system in greater detail when game play begins.
5. I will provide players with a list of equipment available to them, and a table of optional combat maneuvers gleaned from various sourcebooks that will be in use during game play. If a player wishes to use an optional rule not on the list, this will generally be allowed, but the player will be expected to provide the book and page number and have the sourcebook on hand for me to read over if I don't know it off the top of my head.
6. Paramedics is a one TURN action, not one phase. Successful application returns one BODY to the victim.
7. Wounded characters lose 1 STUN for every BODY they lose. This STUN cannot be recovered until the BODY is healed. You must keep track of BODY for each individual wound. Wounds must be healed independantly of one another.
8. When the player rolls a natural three to hit, it is ruled a critical hit. The player may choose hit location and roll damage, or take max damage and roll for hit location. A player who rolls an 18 fumbles, and the GM will determine the result (may be a jammed weapon, something may fall on the player or some other catastrophic result will occur).
9. Instant death: If a character suffers all of his positive starting body in a single attack after reducing the damage by his defenses, he's dead.
10. Dismemberment: divide the hero's BODY by 3 (rounded down) and he suffers a broken limb. 10 Body equals a 3 point arm, so doing 4 points breaks or incapacitates the limb. Doing 7+ severs the limb ($2 \times 3 = 6 + 1 = 7$). The limb cannot take more than 7 body regardless of the attack, i.e., 12 body is still only 7 and no limb.

Character Data Sheet

Name:

Friends/Allies:

Enemies/Rivals:

Rolemodels:

Accomplishments:

Goals/Ambitions:

Burdens/Debts:

Turn-ons:

Turn-offs:

Favorite TV shows/movies:

Favorite Actors:

Favorite Musicians/Performers:

Favorite Books/Authors:

Favorite Foods:

Favorite Places:

Favorite Colors:

Favorite Sports:

Favorite Toys:

Hobbies:

The Best Thing About Being Me Is:

Secret Dream:

Ideal Mate:

Ideal Evening:

Biggest Joy:

Personality Plusses:

Personality Minuses:

Quirks:

Provoked into Action by:

When Feeling unhappy, what do you do to feel better?

Whom in your life have you hurt the most?

Whom have you found hardest to forgive?

What did your childhood playmates tease you about?

What did your childhood playmates call you?

In what clothes do you feel most yourself?

Do you wear any kind of uniform or costuming?

How many beers can you drink before you're tipsy?

Which part of your body pleases you least and why?

What kind of relationship do you have with your parents?

What kind of relationship do you have with your siblings?

What kind of relationship do you have with your children?

Do you currently have a relationship with the opposite sex?

Do you have any pets?

Where do you live and where do you keep your "stuff?"

What method of transportation do you use?

Where are you employed and is it easy to get time off?

What would happen if you went to work injured or tired?

If injured, at what point would you run from a fight?

What happens to you if you don't get paid for the week?

How and where do you acquire your gear and supplies?

What would a typical day in your life be like?

Do you have any current health conditions?

Do you have any other thoughts or comments?

Role Model Grade: