



## modern dispatch #108

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## TEAMWORK MECHANICS

BY CHARLES RICE

Teamwork is an important element of fiction. Military, martial arts, crime and superheroic fiction all deal with characters struggling not only against enemies but to cooperate and form a cohesive team whose sum is greater than its parts. This issue of the dispatch introduces a mechanic to handle working together as a team, providing levels of teamwork that rewards players and encourages them to work as a unit. It also provides mechanics for working with someone the characters do *not* trust, providing the means to represent distrust when enemies are forced to become allies.

### BONDING

**Teamwork:** This is the teamwork level. A character might have different teamwork levels with several characters. Usually only a few of these that recur often will be tracked. Since an allegiance is required to gain the first level of teamwork, only three characters/organizations maximum will be possible for teamwork bonuses. Any number of groups with which the character shares a dislike but is forced to cooperate can be eligible for penalties however.

**Bonding DC:** This is the DC required to gain the teamwork level in question. Bonding checks are rolled on d20 plus character level plus Charisma modifier. A character rolls one bonding check as soon as he gains a level.

*Example:* Caladar and Sidera are villagers from rival clans in a *Darwin's World* campaign. The game master sets their initial teamwork level at -1. After their caravan is destroyed by marauders, the two are



forced to put aside their differences and attempt to cross the desert alone to reach a safe haven. During the course of these adventures, they each gain a level and make a bonding check on d20+character level +Charisma modifier to see if they've gone from dislike to merely neutral.

**Skill modifier:** This is the modifier (either a penalty or bonus) to skill checks based on the characters' ability to work together and anticipate each others' strengths and weaknesses. This bonus or penalty stacks with bonuses from aiding another on a skill check.

**Familiarity:** The teamwork modifier (either a penalty or bonus) to attack rolls and saving throws based on the characters' ability to work together and help one another during combat. If a bonus is indicated, this bonus stacks with any bonus granted by the teamwork feat.

At even higher teamwork levels, a bonding bonus can be gained. This is a morale bonus to all saving throws.

**Prerequisite:** The prerequisite for the given level of teamwork. For negative levels, this is either the Nemesis or Enemy disadvantage, from the disadvantages system found in *Blood and Vigilance* or *Modern Character Disadvantages*. Whether or not these rules are being used, the GM may also use his discretion to determine characters that would not work well together.

Before a character can begin to gain positive levels of teamwork, he must take an Allegiance to the character or characters he is bonding with. This could be a group or a single individual.

**Special Maneuvers:** Besides modifiers to skills, attack rolls and saving throws, there are also special maneuvers bonded characters can perform. This column on the table lists the number of special maneuvers the character knows.

## TEAMWORK LEVELS

Teamwork	Bonding DC	Skill modifier	Familiarity	Prerequisite	Special Maneuvers
-2	13	-4	Teamwork -2	Nemesis (or GM's discretion)	
-1	16	-2	Teamwork -1	Enemy (or GM's discretion)	
0	19	+0			
1	22	+0	Teamwork +1	Allegiance	
2	25	+1			1
3	28	+2	Teamwork +2		
4	31	+3			2
5	34	+3	Bonded +1		
6	37	+4			3
7	40	+5	Bonded +2		

## TEAMWORK LEVELS

What follows is a summary of each teamwork level, with all bonuses added together for ease of reference to make the harried game master's life a little easier. An example of each teamwork level is also provided to serve as a guide for determining the teamwork level of NPCs and PCs who have been together for some time at the beginning of a campaign.

**Teamwork -2:** Characters at this level of teamwork *really* do not get along. In fact they're probably only working together because outside circumstances have forced them to. Apply this level of teamwork when enemies simply have to work together.

Characters at this teamwork level suffer a -4 penalty to skill checks and a -2 penalty to attack rolls while actively working together. For obvious reasons they will usually try to work separately but for a common goal.

*Example:* A CIA and KGB agent forced to work together at the height of the Cold War.

**Teamwork -1:** Characters at this level of teamwork don't like each other but it's not quite the burning hatred of Teamwork -2. Apply this level of teamwork when rivals or minor enemies are forced to work together.

Characters at this teamwork level suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks and a -1 penalty to attack rolls while actively working together.

*Example:* Romantic rivals who join forces to rescue their shared romantic interest but who *also* each want all the credit for setting her free.

**Teamwork 0:** Characters at this level are indifferent to one another; they might even be total strangers.

Characters at this teamwork level suffer no penalties to skill or attack rolls.

*Example:* A superhero new to the hero's home city that has come to hunt his arch-nemesis, also newly arrived in town.

**Teamwork 1:** Characters at this level of teamwork have bonded somewhat. They have a true loyalty to one another (represented through the Allegiance they share).

Characters at this teamwork level gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls while actively working together.

*Example:* A group of recruits who have attended boot camp together and been assigned to the same unit.

**Teamwork 2:** Characters at this level of teamwork have heavily bonded. When fighting together they are much more effective when fighting separately.

Characters at this teamwork level gain a +1 bonus to skill checks and attack rolls and have learned one special maneuver.

*Example:* A unit of soldiers who have been in several combats together.

**Teamwork 3:** Characters at this level of teamwork are more than teammates, they are friends. The strength of their bond will surpass most other bonds they forge in their lives, in some cases exceeding those toward family and spouse.

Characters at this teamwork level gain a +2 bonus on skill checks and attack rolls and have learned one special maneuver.

*Example:* A unit of soldiers who have been through a dozen battles or more.

**Teamwork 4:** Characters at this level of teamwork can often predict where teammates will be by instinct alone.

Characters at this teamwork level gain a +3 bonus on skill checks, a +2 bonus on attack rolls and have learned two special maneuvers.

*Example:* A unit that has fought through entire campaigns, such as veterans of the North Africa campaign of WWII preparing to invade Sicily.

**Teamwork 5:** A team this tightly bonded is a frightening thing to face, often acting without words, needing no communication to anticipate the actions of their teammates.

Characters at this level of teamwork gain a +3 bonus on skill checks, a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +1 morale bonus to saving throws when working as a team. They have learned two special maneuvers.

*Example:* A unit that has fought together through multiple campaigns, such as a unit that served in North Africa and in Italy, preparing for the Normandy landings.

**Teamwork 6:** A team this tightly bonded is vastly more powerful working as a group than they are individually.

Characters at this level of teamwork gain a +4

bonus to skill checks, a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +1 morale bonus to saving throws when working as a team. They have learned three special maneuvers.

*Example:* A unit that has fought together through the North African, Italian and Normandy campaigns during the Battle of the Bulge.

**Teamwork 7:** This level of teamwork represents a bond that goes beyond friendship. While this level of teamwork can be achieved by members of a unit through combat, there is usually an even deeper connection.

Characters at this level of teamwork gain a +5 bonus to skill checks, a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 morale bonus to all saving throws. They have learned three special maneuvers.

*Example:* Members of the Theban Sacred Band. A husband and wife team of assassins.

## SPECIAL MANEUVERS

### ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

If one member of your team has the enemy feat toward an individual, your entire team gains the benefits of that feat.

*Example:* After some initial difficulties, the superheroes Power Dude and Iron Hand have joined forces to become an unstoppable duo of crime-fighters and have reached Teamwork Level 3. Suddenly, Power Dude's arch-nemesis, the Bushwhacker reappears. Although Iron Hand has never seen this guy before, he hates him on principle and gains the benefits of Power Dude's Enemy feat.

### ENEMY OF MY ENEMY 2

*prerequisite* Enemy of my enemy

Your teamwork modifier (from the Bonding Table) applies to the Enemy feat as well. In other words, if you have a Teamwork modifier of +2, then you gain a +4 bonus to attack and skill checks against enemies.

### FAST FRIENDS

For whatever reason you are bonding more quickly than usual with your teammates. You immediately gain a level of teamwork when this special ability is selected and gain a +2 bonus on all future bonding checks. You may take this special ability more than once. The bonus to bonding checks stacks but you only gain a free level of teamwork once, the first time you select the ability.

### FRIEND OF MY FRIEND

If a character you have bonded with has bonded with another, you may treat that character as bonded to you at the same level. This includes applications of the Teamwork feat.

*Example:* The members of Alpha Team, an elite special operations force have been through many adventures together and are a tight knit group. After a member of the team is killed, a new member joins the group who attended boot camp with the team's weapon expert (Teamwork Level 1) but is a complete stranger to the rest of the group (Teamwork Level 0). After being vouched for by his old buddy, the newbie can work with the entire team at Teamwork Level 1.

### MAN DOWN

When a member of your team is rendered unconscious or dead by an attack, you gain a +1 morale bonus to attack and melee damage rolls for one minute. This special ability may be taken more than once, its effects stack.

### UNIT COHESION

Your teamwork modifier (from the Bonding Table) applies to initiative as well. This initiative bonus stacks with the initiative bonus granted by the Unified Response feat.



## UNIT COHESION 2

*prerequisite unit cohesion*

When working with your team, all members of the team act on the same initiative roll. For example if Alpha Team's members roll modified initiative checks (including all Dexterity and feat modifiers) of 12, 9 and 17 respectively, every member of the team may choose to act on any of those numbers (most often the 17).

## NEW FEATS

### ANIMAL LOVER

You are especially good at forging friendships with animals.

**Prerequisite:** Handle Animal 4 ranks, Cha 13+

**Effect:** You may make Animal Handling skill checks for bonding with animals.

**Normal:** Normally characters roll a level check plus their Charisma modifier for bonding checks.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic Heroes.

### COORDINATED ATTACK

You have code words and hand signals allowing precisely coordinated attacks in the heat of battle.

**Prerequisites:** Teamwork, BAB 5+

**Effect:** This feat requires both benefiting characters to spend an action point to activate. As a full-round action, you and another character attack a common target with such precision that the target is considered flanked. Unlike normal flanking attacks, you and your partner do not need to be both threatening the target to execute this maneuver, but you must both be able to hit him with an attack.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

### COVER FIRE

You are highly skilled at providing cover fire.

**Prerequisites:** Teamwork

**Effect:** You gain a 50% increase in cover fire bonuses (+3 or Dexterity modifier x1.5 whichever is higher).

**Normal:** Normally when you provide cover fire you grant +2 or your Dexterity modifier as a Dodge Defense bonus, whichever is higher.

**Special:** If using a weapon to provide cover fire, you must be proficient with that weapon.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

### ENEMY- ONE ALLEGIANCE, GROUP, OR INDIVIDUAL

You have one allegiance or group that you detest.

**Effect:** You gain +2 to attack and skill checks when combating your Enemy. When you must deal with your enemy peacefully, or when you deal with groups allied with your Enemy, you take a -2 to all Charisma based skills.

**Special:** You may take this feat more than once. Each time it applies to a different group or Allegiance.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

### NETWORKING

You are exceptionally good at making friends and forging alliances.

**Prerequisite:** Diplomacy 4 ranks, Cha 13+

**Effect:** You may make Diplomacy skill checks for bonding.

**Normal:** Normally characters roll a level check plus their Charisma modifier for bonding checks.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic Heroes.

### TACTICIAN

You are a skilled leader, with a strong grasp of tactics and an ability to make those around you better in combat.

**Prerequisite:** Int 13+, Cha 13+, Knowledge (Tactics) 5 Ranks, Teamwork

**Effect:** Normally, when you roll a tactics skill check, the benefits apply only to you. This feat allows you to grant the bonuses of a successful tactics skill check to up to 2x Charisma modifier allies (characters who have the Teamwork feat for the same team) who are fighting with you.

### TEAMWORK- SPECIFIC GROUP

You have trained extensively with your teammates, and you are more effective within the group than you would be alone.

**Prerequisite:** Allegiance (Specific Group)

**Effect:** Whenever you are in an engagement with someone with the Teamwork feat for the same team, you gain +2 to attack and skill checks. Characters with this feat can use hand signals to communicate simple information, such as "You and Johnson go left and keep your eyes open, I will go right".

**Special:** This bonus stacks with the teamwork modifiers granted by bonding levels.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

### TEAMWORK PLUS

You have spent extra time working out special combat maneuvers with your teammates.

**Prerequisite:** Teamwork

**Effect:** You gain two additional special maneuvers. You must meet the prerequisite for any maneuver selected.

**Special:** This feat may be selected multiple times.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

## UNIFIED RESPONSE

Your team moves like a well-oiled machine, striking with deadly rapidity.

**Prerequisite:** Teamwork

**Effect:** When working with members of your team you gain a +4 bonus to Initiative and a +1 bonus to Reflex saving throws. You can also make a Sense Motive check (DC20) to determine the general position of your teammates.

**Bonus:** This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated Heroes.

## NPCS

Two of the nastiest, deadliest assassins the PCs are ever likely to face, confronting the assassin team of Mr. and Mrs. Doe might be the last thing the PCs ever do. It is not known which came first, their military careers, roles as assassins or their marriage. In fact even their names are unknown to the authorities, thus the rather uncreative names they have been given. The couple currently ranks #9 on the 10 Most Wanted List.

**Mr. Doe (Strong Hero 3/Assault Training 7):** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 7d10+14 plus 7; HP 80; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 25 ft; Defense 21, touch 15, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +4 class, +6 equipment); BAB +10; Grap +13; Atk +14 melee (1d6+5/19-20, Metal Baton), or +11 ranged (2d8+0, Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Mrs. Doe; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +2; AP 5; Rep +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Military (Hide, Move Silently)

**Skills:** Climb +9, Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Jump +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +8, Move Silently +6, Navigate +7, Survival +3, Swim +5

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Combat Martial Arts, MOS Rifleman (Climb, Hide, Survival), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Teamwork (Mrs. Doe), Urban Warfare College (Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge [Tactics]), Weapon Focus (Knife)

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Assault Training):** Tough as Nails, First Wave +1, First Wave +2, Terrain Specialization, Shock Assault 1, Shock Assault 2

**Possessions:** Tactical Vest, Metal Baton, AK-47, Desert Eagle

**Special:** Teamwork Level 7 (Mrs. Doe)

**Mrs. Doe (Fast Hero 3/Recon Training 7):** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 7d8+14; HP 66; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 40 ft; Defense 23, touch 21, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +8 class, +2 equipment); BAB +7; Grap +7; Atk +10 melee (1d4+0, Knife), or +11 ranged (2d12+0, Barrett Light 50); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Mr. Doe; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +2; AP 5; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Occupation:** Military (Pilot, Survival)

**Skills:** Balance +16, Drive +16, Hide +23, Listen +6, Move Silently +23, Pilot +17, Spot +13, Survival +20, Tumble +16

**Feats:** Aircraft Operation (Helicopters), Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Jump School, MOS Rifleman (Climb, Hide, Tumble), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Teamwork (Mr. Doe), Weapon Finesse (Knife), Weapon Focus (Barrett Light 50)

**Talents (Fast Hero):** Evasion, Increased Speed

**Talents (Recon Training):** Camouflage, Long Range Reconnaissance, Fast Mover +5, Ghost, Marksmanship 1, Marksmanship 2, Sharpshooter 1

**Possessions:** Light Undercover Shirt, Knife, Beretta 92F, Barrett Light 50

**Special:** Teamwork Level 7 (Mr. Doe)

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