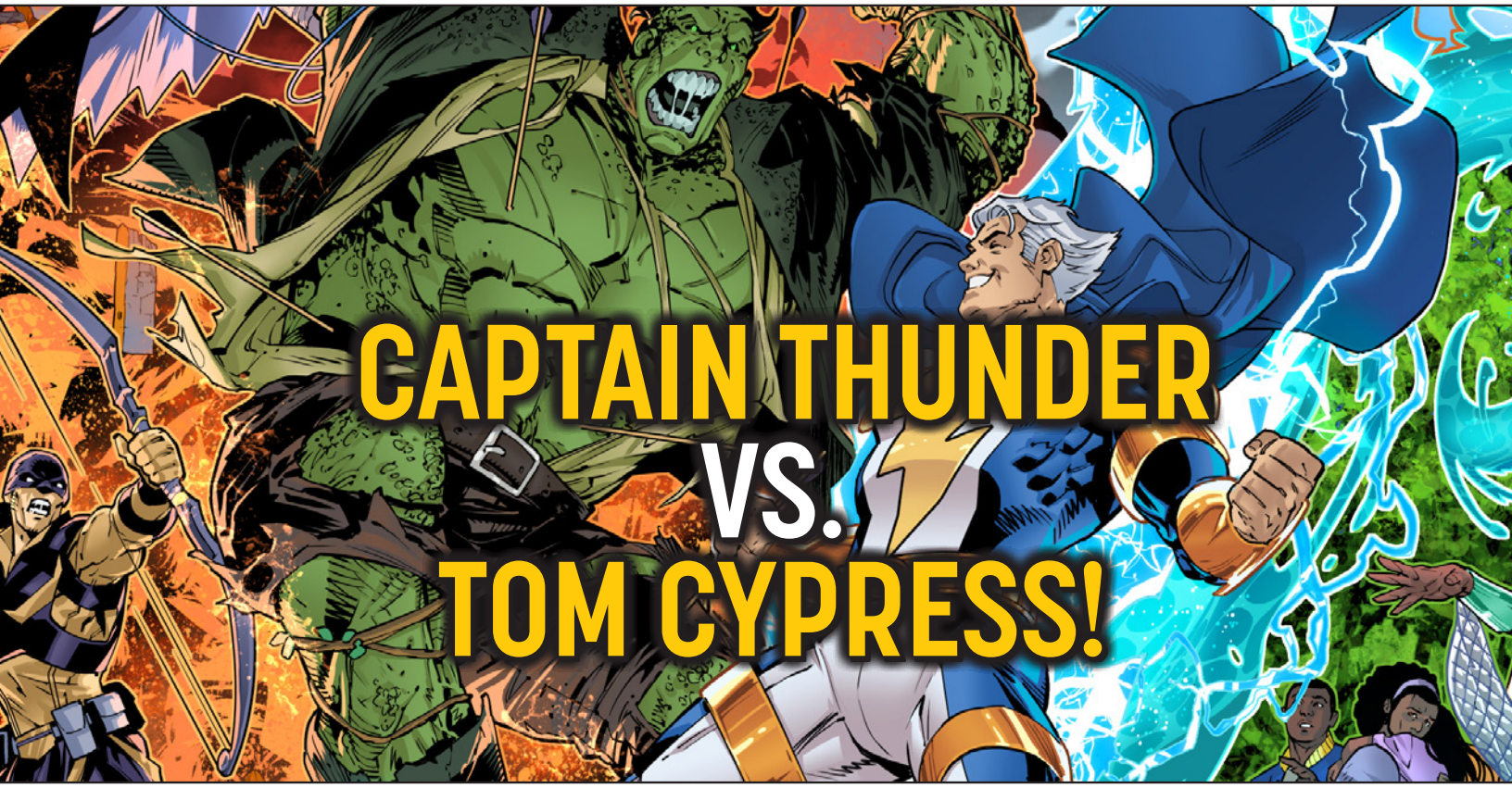

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHERO RPG! MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS FOURTH EDITION

M&M Match-Up is a series of previews for the upcoming **4th Edition** of the **Mutants & Masterminds Superhero Roleplaying Game**. Each one pits an iconic hero against a villain and introduces some elements of the game; collect them all for the final match-up against the villainous menace behind it all! Then check out the crowdfunding campaign for the new edition of **Mutants & Masterminds** on Kickstarter.

To play *M&M Match-Up,* you need a single 20-sided die (d20) or one for each player. One player can take the role of the hero and the other can take the role of the villain, or you can run both characters against each other in solo-play. You might also want some scratch paper to keep track of each character's damage conditions and the hero's Hero Points.

CHECK THIS!

The *Mutants & Masterminds* RPG uses the **check** as its core mechanic: Roll a d20, plus or minus a modifier based on the character's traits, and compare the result against a **DC** or **difficulty class**. So a "Strength check" is a d20 roll plus the character's Strength rank, for example. If you equal or exceed the DC, you succeed. If not, you don't. Every 5 points you are above or below the DC is a **degree** of success or failure.

- **20 AND 1:** If you roll a 20 on the die, add 5 to your final total. If you roll a 1 on the die, subtract 5 from your final total.

HERO POINTS

Heroes have a resource called **Hero Points** they can use for a variety of advantages in the game. The most common one, suitable for this match-up, is for **Luck**:

- **LUCK:** Spend a Hero Point to re-roll a d20 result you just rolled. If the die result on your re-roll is a 1-10, add +10 to the result, so the re-roll is always an 11–20. If you rolled multiple dice on a check due to bonus or penalty dice, choose just one to re-roll.

Each hero starts out with 1 Hero Point to spend.

PLOT COMPLICATIONS

Villains and circumstances can sometimes cause various **plot complications** for the heroes. A suitable one here is Luck as well, but when a villain gets the benefit of Luck, the affected hero *gains* a Hero Point instead.

HERO VS. VILLAIN

On the following pages, you'll find the hero and the villain for this issue's match-up. Some of their game traits and how you use them are explained in the scenario on the last page, others are from the full *Mutants & Masterminds* guidelines, and are just here for reference and a look at what a full character write-up looks like. You can learn more from the *M&M Hero's Handbook*.

CAPTAIN THUNDER

Test-pilot Ray Gardner was struck by a bolt of lighting while flying an experimental new plane. He not only survived the ensuing crash, but emerged energized with the power of thunder and lightning! He adopted the identity of Captain Thunder to use his new powers for good.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH	STAMINA	AGILITY	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	PRESENCE
14	4	2	1	1	4

SKILLS

Current Events Expertise 4 (+5), Insight 6 (+7), Intimidation 8 (+12), Leadership 8 (+12), Perception 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+8), Technology: Electronics 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+6): Pilot 10 (+12), Survival 2 (+3), Test Pilot Expertise 8 (+9)

ACTIONS

ATTACK	DEFENSE	INITIATIVE
+10	+10 (DC 20)	+2

On his turn, Captain Thunder can choose from the following actions:

ELECTRICAL BLAST: Standard. +10 Attack check vs. Defense Class at range. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 22 Toughness check against damage. See **Attacks** on page 4.

ELECTRICAL BURST: Standard. No Attack check, burst fills a hemisphere 30 feet across and 15 feet high at range. Any target in the area rolls a DC 18 Dodge check, followed by a Toughness check against damage: DC 14 if they succeed on the Dodge check, DC 18 if they fail.

LIFT: Simple. Captain Thunder can lift and carry up to 400 tons with his tremendous Strength.

MOVE: Simple. Move up to 30 feet on the ground or up to a mile flying.

SLAM ATTACK: Standard. Cap flies or moves to slam into a target: +8 Attack check vs. Defense Class. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 25 Toughness check against damage, but Captain Thunder has to roll a DC 18 Toughness check against damage himself.

THUNDERBOLT: Standard. +10 Attack check vs. Defense Class at range. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 18 Toughness check against damage, followed by a DC 18 Fortitude check. If they fail the Fortitude check, they are deafened. Target makes a new Fortitude check at the end of each of their turns to recover and remove the Deafened condition.

UNARMED ATTACK: Standard. +10 Attack check vs. Defense Class. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 24 Toughness check against damage *or* Captain Thunder can try to Grab the target: See **Grabs** on page 4.

TRAITS

In addition to the abilities given under **Actions**, Captain Thunder has the following power:

ENERGIZED HEALING: When he has access to an outside source of electricity, Captain Thunder has Regeneration 10, removing his lowest damage condition every round at the start of his turn.

RESISTANCES

DODGE	FORTITUDE	TOUGHNESS	WILL
6	12	14	8

When Captain Thunder rolls a Toughness check against rank 10 or lower damage, roll two dice and use the higher of the two rolls for the check.

TOM CYPRESS

Arising periodically out of the South River Swamp, the mysterious figure known as Tom Cypress has been a menace and urban legend for many years. No matter how often he is defeated, or even destroyed, he always comes back. This time, Tom returns wearing an ancient bronze necklace associated with a looming threat facing Freedom City—see the following issues of ***M&M Match-Up***!

ABILITIES

STRENGTH	STAMINA	AGILITY	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	PRESENCE
15	15	5	-3	0	0

SKILLS

Athletics 3 (+18), Intimidation 11 (+11)

ADVANTAGES

FAVORED ENVIRONMENT – SWAMPS: While in a swamp, Tom has a +2 bonus to either Attack or Defense. He chooses which the bonus applies to at the start of each of his turns.

IMPROVED GRAB: Tom can take the Grab action using just one arm with no penalty. See **Grab** on page 4.

ACTIONS

ATTACK	UNARMED ATTACK	DEFENSE	INITIATIVE
+5	+7	+7 (DC 17)	+5

On his turn, Tom Cypress can choose from the following actions:

MOVE: Simple. Move up to 30 feet on the ground or up to a mile jumping. Tom can walk on the surface of the swamp as if it were solid ground.

SWAMP BAT: Standard. Tom uproots a tree and swings it to hit a target within 30 feet. +5 Attack check vs. Defense Class. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 25 Toughness check against damage.

UNARMED ATTACK: Standard. +7 Attack check vs. Defense Class. **Hit:** Target rolls a DC 25 Toughness check against damage *or* Tom can try to Grab the target: See **Grabs** on page 4.

TRAITS

In addition to the abilities given under **Actions**, Tom Cypress has the following powers:

INHUMAN MIND: Tom Cypress has Immunity to Mental Powers.

PSEUDO LIFE: Immunity to Aging and all Environmental Hazards.

UNKILLABLE: Tom Cypress has Immortality 5, returning to life one day after being killed, and Regeneration 10, recovering from his least severe damage condition every round at the start of his turn, so long as he is in a swamp.

RESISTANCES

DODGE	FORTITUDE	TOUGHNESS	WILL
7	15	15	5

When Tom Cypress rolls a Toughness check against a rank 15 or lower effect, roll two dice and use the higher of the two rolls for the check.

SWAMP SLUGFEST!

Captain Thunder has tracked Tom Cypress to the South River Swamp outside of Freedom City based on recent sightings. Although he calls for the hulking swamp creature to surrender, it only provokes him, and the battle is joined!

1. ROLL INITIATIVE

At the start of a conflict, all characters involve roll **Initiative** to determine who goes in what order. Roll the die and add the character's Initiative modifier. The characters then take action in order from highest Initiative total to lowest, with the cycle starting again at the start of the next round.

2. TAKE ACTION

When a character's turn in the Initiative order comes up, they can take one **standard action** and one **simple action** from the options given on their character sheets. The full range of actions in *M&M* is much more, but we're keeping it fairly straightforward here.

ATTACKS

Damaging attacks, whether with fists, energy blasts, or makeshift weapons are a check of the character's Attack ability against the target's **DC** or **Defense Class**, given in their write-ups.

A successful attack with a Damage effect requires the target to make a **damage resistance check**, usually with their Toughness, with the following results:

D20 + TOUGHNESS RANK VS. DC [10 + DAMAGE RANK]

- **SUCCESS (TWO OR MORE DEGREES):** The target receives no damage conditions, completely shrugging off the damage.
- **SUCCESS (ONE DEGREE):** Hit by the attack, the target receives the **HIT** condition. Each **HIT** condition imposes a –1 penalty to further damage resistance checks.
- **FAILURE (ONE DEGREE):** The target receives the **DAZED** condition, which lasts until the end of their next turn. While **DAZED**, a character can only take a Standard or a Simple action each turn, not both.
- **FAILURE (TWO DEGREES):** The target receives the **STAGGERED** condition, moving at half their normal speed. If a character receives a second **STAGGERED** condition, they are **INCAPACITATED** instead.
- **FAILURE (THREE DEGREES):** The target receives the **INCAPACITATED** condition, meaning they are defeated.

The effects of a damage resistance check are cumulative, so a character who fails their resistance check by two degrees takes the **HIT**, **DAZED**, *and* **STAGGERED** conditions.

GRABS

One particular action both Captain Thunder and Tom Cypress can make use of is a **grab**. It is an attempt to grab and hold on to an opponent.

Make an unarmed attack check against the target's Defense Class. If successful, make an opposed check of your Strength against the target's Dodge or Strength, their choice, and look at your degree of success:

- **SUCCESS (EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THE TARGET'S ROLL + 5):** The target is in a complete hold. They are **DEFENSELESS** (Defense 0) and **IMMOBILE** (Speed 0).
- **SUCCESS (EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THE TARGET'S ROLL):** The target is in a partial hold. They are **HINDERED** (–1 Speed) and **VULNERABLE** (–5 to Defense).
- **FAILURE (LESS THAN THE TARGET'S ROLL):** You grab the target, but they slip out of the hold. No effect.

You can try to improve an existing hold with another Grab action and opposed check on a later turn, no attack check required. The target can resist with their full Dodge rank or Strength. Any degrees of failure by the target are cumulative, but if they win the opposed check, the target escapes, ending the hold.

You are **HINDERED** (–1 speed) and **VULNERABLE** (–5 to your Defense) while grabbing or holding an opponent. You can maintain a grab with a free action on each of your turns.

- **CRUSHING:** As an Attack action on your turn, you can squeeze or crush a target in a hold, requiring them to resist damage equal to your Strength rank, a DC 10 + Strength rank Toughness check. No attack check is required.
- **ESCAPING:** A grabbed target can attempt to escape on their turn, and whenever called to do so: Roll a Strength, Acrobatics, or Dexterity check (target's choice) against a DC of 10 + the grabbing character's Strength. Success ends the grab. An escape attempt doesn't count against the character's actions.
- **IF TOM CYPRESS GRABS CAPTAIN THUNDER:** He tries holding the hero underwater! In addition to the effects of the hold and possible squeeze damage, the hero has to roll a Fortitude check against DC 10 each round, with the DC increasing by +1 per check. A failed check means the hero is Incapacitated and defeated. Fortunately, Captain Thunder's Fortitude of 12 means he initially can only fail the check by rolling a 1 on the die.
- **IF CAPTAIN THUNDER GRABS TOM CYPRESS:** He can try carrying the swamp giant out of the swamp, which will remove his Regeneration effect and even the odds a bit. Both characters roll Strength checks and, if Captain Thunder's is highest, he can carry Cypress out of the swamp with his Flight.

3. RESOLVE EFFECTS

If a character's action is successful, resolve any effects it may have, usually with a **resistance check** on the part of the affected character, as detailed previously and in the write-ups of the character's powers and actions.

4. REPEAT

Once the first character in the Initiative order has gone through steps 2 and 3, move on to the next character, and so on, until everyone has gone. Then go back to the top of the initiative order and continue the process for another round until one side or the other achieves victory, usually by incapacitating their opponents!