



RUNE FIXES 2



NO MATTER HOW MUCH PLAYTESTING IS DONE, sometimes rules need revision or clarification, or even a different approach to explanation.

The rules for RUNEQUEST: ROLEPLAYING IN GLORANTHA are no exception. Sometimes, too, circumstances at one table arise that were never encountered during development or playtesting and were never anticipated as problems.

RUNE FIXES examines these issues and attempts to bring clarity where there was befuddlement.

EXTENSION

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood or abused Rune spell is Extension (RUNEQUEST, page 328), particularly when it interacts with certain other spells. The intent of the spell is straightforward: to prolong the duration of another temporal Rune spell beyond its normal 15-minute duration.

Some concerned gamemasters have pointed out that the spell, when cast in tandem with a combat-oriented spell such as Arrow Trance, Axe Trance, Berserker, Sword Trance, etc., is ripe for abuse, turning any adventurer (or foe!) into an eternal murder machine, with enhanced attack chances and the ability to shrug off blows, ignore fear, etc.

Taken to extremes, for 1 additional Rune point spent on Extension, an adventurer might keep one of these powerful spells active for hours, days, weeks, months, or even seasons!

However, an adventurer under the influence of these spells is focused entirely on the action modified by the spell.

An adventurer with Arrow Trance is utterly concentrating on loosing arrows at potential foes. Given that a bow takes two hands to operate, the entranced adventurer cannot cast most spells, eat, drink, sleep, open doors, or do anything that requires putting the bow down. They are likely unable to hold any sort of conversation that is not entirely concerned with putting arrows into enemies.

Similarly, an adventure using either Axe or Sword Trance, or another equivalent spell, is entirely given to the purpose of the spell—killing foes with their weapon.

So, if this is the case, then when does the spell end?

Here, the intent of the spell should be judged through the lens of the god that granted it. A Rune spell is a gift of the god's attention and power, channeled through the Runes. What does the god want that follower to be doing?

Does Humakt want his attention diverted while his followers are eating meals, performing First Aid, looking for traps, bargaining, sleeping, refilling their water flasks, performing toiletries, etc.? No, Humakt's blessing of the Sword Trance should only remain in effect while the adventurer is doing things relating to killing foes with swords. Once the time of the blade has passed, the spell should expire.

If an adventurer insists on casting Berserker along with Extension, then the gamemaster should remind them that they will remain in that state for as long as they are acting in a berserk fashion. Doing so for anything beyond the normal spell's duration should be cause to determine whether the adventurer becomes dehydrated or even starves, as described on page 161 of the RUNEQUEST core rules.

Furthermore, also, being in such a state prohibits participating in Worship ceremonies, which means that the adventurer is unable to regain any Rune points spent.

The same is true for any of these sorts of interactions in a way that is not true for many of the other types of temporal Rune spells. If the subject of a spell continues to act in the fashion the spell is intended to, then Extension should last until it otherwise expires. If they no longer are acting according to the spell's function, then the gamemaster should announce that the spell's effect ends.

This is explicitly subject to the gamemaster's interpretation. A list of conditions under which a spell may

or may not be operating outside its intent is far beyond the purview of any set of game rules, no matter how complete.

Following is the revised version of Extension from the RED BOOK OF MAGIC, forthcoming:

EXTENSION

R

1 Point

Range (as per spell), Temporal, Stackable up to 5 points

This common Rune spell extends the duration of any temporal Rune spell that has a normal duration of 15 minutes. The Extension spell and the spell to be extended must be cast by the same person in the same melee round, and for all game functions are cast simultaneously. This spell and the Illusion spells are the only exceptions to the rule that just one Rune spell can be cast per melee round by the same character.

Extension affects a spell's duration as follows:

EXTENSION DURATION

EXTENSION	SPELL DURATION
1	1 hour
2	1 day
3	1 week
4	1 season
5	1 year

Rune points stacked in Extension and the affected spell cannot be regained until the spell expires.

BERSERKER

A common question about the Berserker Rune spell (RUNEQUEST, pages 319–320) is what happens, exactly, when the spell ends. The text states that the Berserker is “completely incapacitated when the spell expires.”

This means that the adventurer is unconscious or insensate as if they have fallen deep asleep or are in a similar state of fatigue. They can be roused with a successful use of First Aid, or they can simply sleep it off.

If the adventurer wishes to act before they have had some rest, the player should attempt a Constitution check (CON×5) as described on page 141 of the RUNEQUEST core rules.

Success means the adventurer can act normally without penalty, while failure means that all skills are at half normal chance until the adventurer has had adequate rest.

The definition of ‘adequate rest’ is up to the gamemaster, based on circumstances, the individual adventurer’s CON, their current hit points, and any other relevant factors.

AIMED BLOWS

This rule should have been in the core rules, but somehow got missed.

Adventurers (or foes) can inflict aimed blows on an enemy, using more care and deliberate action to deliver a well-placed blow upon a specific hit location versus determining it randomly. This can have the obvious effect of shortening a combat dramatically, if the blow is to an incapacitating or less-armored hit location.

- Anyone who wishes to strike a particular location in melee or ranged combat—not with spells—must state that exact location before rolling.
- The attacker then waits until strike rank 12, attacking with ½ their normal skill, after all modifiers are applied.
- If the roll is successful, the blow strikes the desired hit location and does damage normally, with special success, critical, etc. determined based on the lowered chance.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

Two-weapon fighting (dual wielding) is another of those issues that seems clear enough on paper to the designers and yet confounds many players and gamemasters are the rules for two-weapon fighting (RUNEQUEST, pages 224–225).

Can you fight with a weapon in each hand?

Yes, assuming all the following are true:

- Each weapon is a one-handed weapon.
- The adventurer is trained in its off-hand use. (Adventurers are assumed right-handed but can favor either hand, at the player’s discretion.)
- The adventurer has adequate strike ranks for both attacks (add the strike ranks of each together).
- The adventurer meets the STR/DEX requirements for each weapon. Pay attention to the note about the secondary weapon’s required DEX being 1.5 times (round up) what is normally needed (RUNEQUEST, page 225).

Do I keep track of off-hand skills separately?

Indeed! That’s what those blank lines on the adventurer sheet are for (among other things). The off-hand chance begins at either half its normal chance (if the adventurer has that skill) or the weapon’s base chance plus the skill category modifier.

What if my adventurer uses their off-handed weapon in their primary hand?

The chance is either the default skill with the weapon in their primary hand, or half the off-handed skill, rounded up.

What if my adventurer has more than 100% in a skill and wants to make multiple attacks with multiples of the same weapons?

There is nothing preventing an adventurer from doing so, assuming all the following are true:

- The adventurer is armed in each hand with the same weapon (two daggers, two short swords, etc.).
- The weapon (primary and/or off-hand) is 100+%.
- The STR/DEX requirements are met (see above for DEX in the off hand).
- There are enough strike ranks for multiple attacks.

Should these all be true, the adventurer can attack at full skill chance for each weapon, once on the weapon's normal strike rank and again on the off-hand weapon's strike rank.

Or the adventurer can split attacks even further: perhaps making two attacks with a divided skill and the other at full; or even splitting each skill to make four separate attacks at the divided skill rating. The only real limit to this is strike ranks, as each attack requires its own strike ranks.

What if my adventurer wants to use a melee weapon in one hand and a missile weapon in the other, or two missile weapons?

If the missile weapon is one-handed (none of the bows or crossbows are, so this will inevitably be a thrown weapon), then figure the strike ranks and rate of fire accordingly (one at SIZ+DEX and the missile at DEX) and act as guided above. Keep in mind the higher DEX requirement for the off hand and the requirement for a separate skill.

If trying to throw two weapons in the same round, one held in each hand, use the rate of fire rules. The adventurer can always try to draw and throw another weapon in this time, if the strike ranks and rate of fire permit.

Isn't this too much of an advantage?

Far from it! Unless the second weapon is a shield, the adventurer is forsaking the chance to parry missile weapons and must instead Dodge them. Not great against arrows!

The increased number of attacks in a round also increases the chance of a fumble or a result that ends in damaging or breaking one of the two-weapon user's weapons with a

devastating parry. As weapons are generally more fragile than shields, they will thus break with more regularity.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...

As publishers of RUNEQUEST: ROLEPLAYING IN GLORANTHA, it's important for us to stress some things that shape our approach to game development in general and Glorantha in particular.

System Crash

First and foremost, it cannot be stressed enough that rules are guidelines for the gamemaster and must occasionally need to be interpreted when a question arises. These rules aren't computer code, throwing an error and causing a system crash. No set of rules can accommodate every permutation and interaction between the various sub-systems, nor should they.

When there's a potential conflict or unclear area, it is the gamemaster's job to adjudicate, revising later if necessary. When in doubt, make a decision and move on.

The play is the thing, not getting it "right".

Whose Glorantha is It Anyway?

On a second and related note, the phrase "Your Glorantha May Vary" comes up a lot, along with its variation, "Your Glorantha Will Vary." These phrases emerged as a response to the players who had the fear of getting it wrong, of somehow misrepresenting Glorantha in a way that wasn't "accurate", the way that its creator, Greg Stafford, and later authors intended.

After 40 years of content development, there's a **lot** of Glorantha, far more than anyone should have to try to keep in mind in order to run a game. This wall of content and sometimes complex rules can be daunting. There's always a danger that big, detailed settings become monolithic, unchangeable, every printed word being treated as holy writ.

So "Your Glorantha **May** Vary" is both an acceptance and an assertion, as is "Your Glorantha **Will** Vary." This freedom to make Glorantha one's own is so important to us that it's emphasized on page 10 of the core rules.

The upshot is that no matter what a gamemaster or player wants to do, it is perfectly all right and well within the realm of another important principle to remember, that of **Maximum Game Fun**, which is also so important to us that it's presented even earlier in the core rulebook on page 6.

Let's examine two phrases around for the moment in the mind and approach the issue from another angle.

We would like to propose that "your" Glorantha—the game being enjoyed by the players and gamemasters across the world—neither **may** or **will** vary, because for all intents and purposes, **your Glorantha is the real Glorantha**, and it's everyone else's Glorantha that varies.

Once you start playing games in Glorantha, or even imagining it, it becomes yours to dream about, a playground of thought and myth and adventure that you can shape, alter, and evoke however you'd like.

Your Glorantha is more real than anything you're going to read about, even in print.

Take what you want, change what you'd like, and make it your own. We at Chaosium and our wonderful JONSTOWN COMPENDIUM contributors can make suggestions about how we think things are in Glorantha, but ultimately your Glorantha takes precedence over anything we have to say.