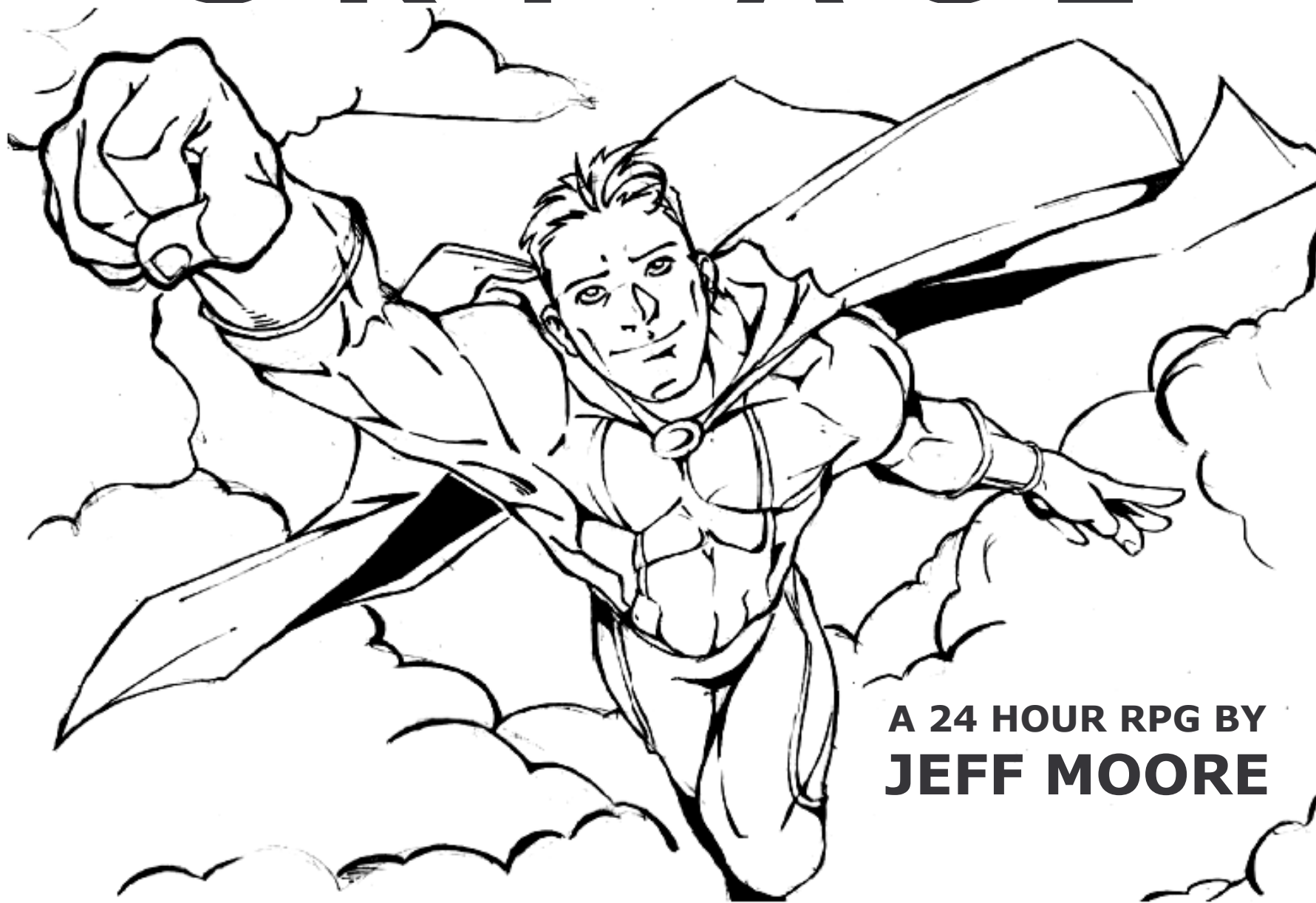


SKY ACE



A 24 HOUR RPG BY
JEFF MOORE

SKY ACE

WHAT IS 24 HOUR RPG?

Quoted from their web site:

"**24 HOUR RPG** is basically the budding and professional game designer's equivalent of a triathlon – You put your body, mind and spirit through some major punishment in a race against time, in this case to develop a full, working, playable role-playing game within a mere 24 hours with other peers. Like a triathlon, there's no "award" for winning; Rather the award is in itself to participate, test yourself, overcome the challenge at hand at your own pace and skill level, and share in the brief glory with your peers."

<http://24hourrpg.com/>

Sky Ace is my attempt to meet the 24 Hour RPG Challenge. Started on: June 22, 2005 at 9:45 PM and completed on: June 23, 2005 at 9:41 PM.

The Sky Ace RPG and the Sky Ace Card Game System
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SKY ACE

Is a game of tactical combat between highflying superheroes using playing cards and miniatures.

I have played a great number of superhero RPG's. Perhaps my favorite experience has been while playing a Superhero RPG that used cards for its resolution mechanic.

However, when I began preparation for my last Superhero campaign, I didn't choose the card-based system. I chose another system. This decision was based upon one thing. The card-based system does not do miniatures well.

The playing of cards added a strategic element to the game that I truly loved. But, I have purchased a large number of small pre-painted plastic superhero miniatures, and I want to use them.

I want cards, and I want miniatures. I want to have my cake and to eat it too. This then, became my doctrine as I sat down to take the 24 Hour RPG Challenge.

- Superheroes
- Playing Cards
- Miniatures

These specific goals prompted every choice made in the creation of the Sky Ace Miniatures Card Game / RPG.

SKY ACE

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WELCOME TO SKY CITY

Sky City, a booming metropolis on the eastern shores of these United States, stuffed to near bursting with the multiplicity of human life. Sky City, so named because its buildings literally reach out to touch the sky. Sky City, a place that has transcended all mundane sense of reality and produced a phenomenon that is unique in this universe. Sky City is the birthplace of Sky Ace, the world's first superhero!

Sky Ace first flew over the towering spires of Sky City almost 25 years ago. It is said that the hero looks even younger today than he did then. The popular theory is that this present day Sky Ace is actually the son of the original. Could it be that Sky Ace really did settle down with the Daily Star's ace reporter Jenny Jeffries who disappeared almost twenty years ago?

Of course, Sky Ace was only the first. Soon came reports of new heroes sighted moving through the rooftops of Sky City's tallest buildings. Twilight, avenging mistress of the night is known to patrol Sky City's darkest corners, and Blue Streak, is sometimes seen, just for a split-second, as he passes in a blur, sweeping the city in his search for evil.

It seems that new heroes appear in Sky City almost every day. Sky City is proud of its legacy, but the city has also had to pay its price. For with each new hero who emerges, it seems that two super powered villains are born, each focused on Sky City's annihilation!

Sky City is a city of heroes. It is a city of villains. It is a city of super powered struggle. Welcome to Sky City.

SKY ACE

WHAT IS SKY ACE?

Sky Ace is the tactical card / board game of super powered battles. What you hold in your hands is a documented set of rules that explains how to create combatants (heroes or villains) for the game and how to play out these battles.

In this respect, Sky Ace is a board game. The cards that you play become an arena of combat upon which to move your miniatures. Each player maneuvers their miniature around on this "board" of cards that is created as you play, and tries to place themselves in the best possible position to eliminate their opponent.

All that is needed for this aspect of the game is a deck of ordinary playing cards (a Poker or Bridge deck), some paper and pencils, and a representation of each player's combatant (a miniature or token that is unique to each player so that it can be easily identified as it is moved around on the board during play.)

The first half of this rules document is dedicated to explaining the game mechanics of Sky Ace, the board game. This content should be enough to give players a few hours' enjoyment should they choose not to pursue the game any further. However, there is more than this to Sky Ace.

The second half of this rules document looks at Sky Ace as a platform for a Superhero RPG campaign. RPG's are special kinds of games where the goal is no longer competition but cooperative play. Where the focus shifts from winning a single conflict to telling an ongoing story. For more information on this aspect of the game, feel free to flip ahead to read about Sky Ace the RPG.

ANATOMY OF A HERO

The first thing that you will need to do in order to play Sky Ace is select a hero. Your hero is the figure or token that you will maneuver on the game board against your opponent. Below, you will see examples of three heroes that were mentioned in the introduction.

Sky Ace Energy = 10

SPADES:	Super Strength	(Close Attack)	... 1
HEARTS:	Invulnerability	(Defense)	... 4
DIAMONDS:	Laser Vision	(Far Attack)	... 2
CLUBS:	Flight	(Movement)	... 3

Origin: His father crashed to earth as an infant and was raised to be a hero by a patriotic fighter pilot. Now, Duke North has taken over the legacy left to him to defend the skies of his father's beloved city as the legendary Sky Ace!

Twilight Energy = 10

SPADES:	Martial Arts	(Close Attack)	... 4
HEARTS:	Acrobatics	(Defense)	... 3
DIAMONDS:	Throwing Stars	(Far Attack)	... 1
CLUBS:	Swinging	(Movement)	... 2

Origin: Ruthless gangsters killed her parents before her eyes. Now millionaire fashion model Rebecca Heart has sworn to fight a never-ending war on organized crime and super villainy as the dark mistress of the night, Twilight!

SKY ACE

Blue Streak

Energy = 10

SPADES:	Lightning Punches	(Close Attack)	... 3
HEARTS:	Super Reflexes	(Defense)	... 2
DIAMONDS:	Sonic Boom	(Far Attack)	... 1
CLUBS:	Super Speed	(Movement)	... 4

Origin: While attempting to apprehend the villainous Madam Magic, uniformed police officer Max Reed is struck by a mysterious mystical lightning bolt. James awakens days later to discover that he possesses the ability to move at hypersonic speed. Using his powers to better protect and serve the people of Sky City, Max Reed becomes the sizzling swift, Blue Streak!



READING THE CARDS

Sky Ace uses a deck of ordinary playing cards. This deck of cards is sometimes referred to as a poker deck. It consists of 4 suits comprised of 13 cards each and 2 Jokers. All together the deck contains 54 cards and all of these are used in play. Each player should have their own deck of cards to play with.

Each card in your deck has a value. This value becomes important when you are playing the game. When reading the cards, each card's value will fall within a range from 1 to 8 (or 10 for Jokers.) To find the value of a card, it is necessary to evaluate both the card's face and its suit.

Suits have value according to their rank and they are ranked in alphabetical order. The suit closest to the front of the alphabet has the lowest value.

Suit Values

CLUBS	♣	1
DIAMONDS	♦	2
HEARTS	♥	3
SPADES	♠	4

This hierarchy is familiar to anyone that plays bridge and related card games, as the suit rankings are the same.

The second aspect that is considered when determining a card's value is its face. A card's face is defined by, either a number of 2-10, or a letter of A-J.

SKY ACE

The number displayed on a numeric card (2-10) is used when the card must be compared with other numeric cards. When playing a numeric card for the purpose of skill resolution however, these cards have a face value of zero.

The Ace, King, Queen and Jack each have face values greater than zero. In the ranking of these face cards, the Ace is high, followed by the King, then the Queen, and finally the Jack.

Face Values

NUMERIC	2-10	0
JACK	J	1
QUEEN	Q	2
KING	K	3
ACE	A	4

The Ace, King, Queen, Jack order used when grading face values is also a traditional ranking method and should be familiar to most card players.

The total value of a card is found by adding the value of its suit to the value of its face. So, for example: a Queen of Hearts would be worth 2 + 3 or 5 points. A Six of Clubs would be worth 0 + 1 or 1 point.

Jokers are a special case. They are not ranked by suit (they don't have one) but are instead ranked by face value alone. Each Joker has a face value of 10!

PLAYING THE GAME

When playing Sky Ace players work together to create the game board out of playing cards as their heroes battle it out to see who can emerge as the most powerful hero in Sky City! The following rules provide a step-by-step guide to resolving these epic contests! For now, just choose one of the example heroes shown on pages 2 and 3 of this rules document and you are ready to play.

STEP ONE: Determine Turn Order

To find out which player goes first, play a quick game of high card. Use a single deck to determine the turn order keeping the suit hierarchy in mind. There will be no ties. Every card has a unique value when compared to another card. A 3 is higher than a 2, a Spade is higher than a Heart. If you draw a Joker, the Joker with the manufacturer's stamp is worth more than the one without.

Write the turn order down on a piece of paper from highest card to lowest card. This is the order in which players will act for the duration of the contest. Shuffle the cards that were drawn back into the appropriate deck. In fact, now is a good time for all players to shuffle their decks.

STEP TWO: Seed the Board

Starting at the top of the turn order, each player draws a card from their deck. If this card is not a numeric card, discard it and draw again. Repeat this until a numeric card is drawn. Place that card down on the table face up and put your miniature on top of it.

SKY ACE

This card represents one of Sky City's mighty skyscrapers, and the number on the card represents the building's elevation. The higher the number on the card, the taller the building is compared to those around it. Your hero is said to either be standing on, or hovering above this building.

Each player in turn places their card and their hero on the board. The following rules apply to placing cards.

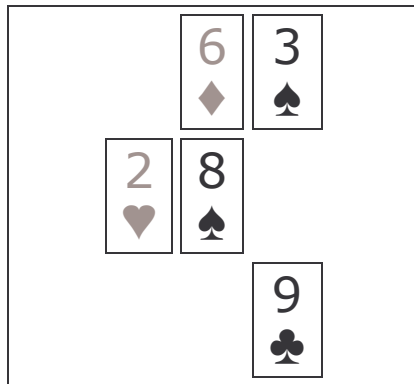
All cards added to the City Map must be numeric cards. All cards are placed face up with the numbers showing.

All cards are placed facing the same direction. Each card placed suggests 8 adjacent spaces around it, like a grid.

Every card (except the first) must be placed in an empty space that is adjacent to a card already on the board.

Cards must be placed in an alternating red / black pattern like a checkerboard.

Example of the correct placement of cards:



After each player has placed their hero on the board, proceed to STEP THREE.



SKY ACE

Beginning again at the top of the turn order, each player will have the opportunity to resolve both a Movement Action and an Attack Action for their heroes.

These actions constitute a sequence of battle that will be repeated until the contest ends and a clear victor is determined.

STEP THREE: Hero Movement

Superhero battles move all over the place. These conflicts stretch from one end of Sky City to the other. To simulate this perpetual tide of motion, players are required to move their heroes every turn. To move your hero, draw a number of cards from your deck equal to your hero's Movement Power.

You may place one of these cards in a space adjacent to your hero and move your hero onto that space. The card placement must follow the same rules that were adhered to when seeding the board in step two. When you place a card into the City Grid your hero must move onto it.

Discard any cards that you do not use.

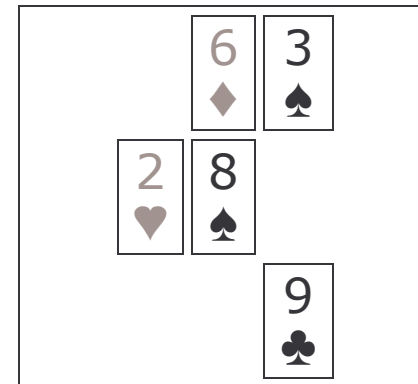
You are not required to play a card to the City Grid. If you are unable to, or do not wish to add a card to the grid, you must still move your hero to an unoccupied card that is adjacent to your current location.

If your hero cannot move at all, because no open cards are available in an adjacent space, and none of the cards that you drew can be legally played, then you must pass your turn to the next player.

If you were able to successfully move your hero, proceed to STEP FOUR.

STEP FOUR: Attack

Your hero can attack any adjacent figure. The power that they use to attack will depend on their placement in relationship to their opponent. Consider the example City Grid below. Assume that your hero stands in the middle of the grid on the 8 of spades.



Any vertical or horizontal attack (to the 6 of diamonds or 2 of hearts) will strike an opponent occupying a card of a different color (in this case red.) These are close combat attacks. Close Attacks require the use of your hero's close attack power.

Any diagonal attack (to the 3 of spades or the 9 of clubs) will strike an opponent occupying a card that is the same color as the one your hero is currently occupying (in this case black.) These are far combat attacks. Far Attacks require the use of the hero's far attack power.

SKY ACE

Once you know which power you will need to use to make your attack, draw a number of cards equal to that attack power.

The difficulty of your attack is found by comparing the elevation of the card that your hero is standing on to that of your opponent's hero. The difference in the elevation between the two cards determines the difficulty of the attack.

Combat Difficulty = the difference between the attacker's elevation and the defender's elevation.

Review the section on READING THE CARDS (page 2).

Look at the cards you have drawn. Numeric cards (2-10) have a face value of zero. Face cards (A-J) have a value according to their rank. Add suit value and face value to find the final value for each card.

Play **ONE FACE CARD** to try and beat the Combat Difficulty.

-or-

Play **TWO NUMERIC CARDS** and add their suit values together to try and beat the Combat Difficulty.

Or, if you've drawn a Joker, play that. Jokers are special face cards. They have no suit. But, they are worth 10 points!

STEP FIVE: Defense Actions and Damage

If an attack is successful, the damage is equal to the difference between the Combat Difficulty and the total value of the card(s) that were played to make the Attack.

Any target of an attack gets to attempt a Defense Action. A defense action works exactly like an attack action.

The target of the attack draws a number of cards equal to their Defense Power and tries to beat the **Combat Difficulty**. (Remember: Combat Difficulty = the difference between the attacker's elevation and the defender's elevation.)

If the Defense is successful, the defending hero "blocks" an amount of damage equal to the difference between the Combat Difficulty and value of the card(s) that were played to make the Defense.

If the total damage done in the Attack is greater than the total damage blocked by the Defense, then the target hero loses an amount of Energy equal to the difference.

STEP SIX: End your turn

After your hero has attacked and your opponent has defended, your turn ends. The next player in the turn order begins their turn at STEP THREE.

SKY ACE

SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS

The suit of the card that your hero stands on can give them a bonus to their Attack or Defense Action.

The four power categories used in Sky Ace correlate to the four card suits as follows:

SPADES: Close Attack Powers
HEARTS: Defense Powers
DIAMONDS: Far Attack Powers
CLUBS: Movement Powers

When using a power with a suit that matches that of the card that your figure is standing on, you get a +2 bonus to your action card total.

Making use of this modifier should be an important part of your strategy as you choose where to move your hero and which cards to play to the City Grid.

ENERGY LOSS

When a hero takes damage they loose energy. This indicates that the hero is running down and about to be defeated. When Energy reaches 0 your hero can no longer fight and you must remove your hero from the contest.



SKY ACE

SKY ACE THE RPG

Up to this point you have looked at a set of rules that allow you to challenge fellow players in a head to head combat using cards and miniatures. This competitive game play is similar to what you might find in many other board or card games.

An RPG (which stands for Role Playing Game) is a different kind of game that allows your heroes to work together in the fight against evil instead of battling against each other.

The battles that your heroes fight in this kind of game will be tied together by a common theme or story. Constructing the foundation for this story is one special player known as the Game Master.

Role-playing is nothing more than a game of "Let's pretend." You try to imagine what your hero's life is like, not only during the furious battles over Sky City, but also during every other part of their life.

The Game Master (or GM for short) will help you. And together you and the other players will tell a story just like the ones in the comic books.

The GM will usually start things off by setting the scene for you. They might say to you, "Your hero has just started their new job as an Ace Reporter at the Daily Star. You are on your way to work right now, but you are running a little behind. In the distance, you hear a cry for help! What do you do?"

You imagine how your hero might react to this situation and you describe their actions to the GM and the other players. Congratulations, you are playing a role-playing game.

The beginning of this game document includes three sample heroes that you can use to reenact battles across the rooftops of Sky City. But these three heroes really don't provide you very much in way of variety.

One of the big appeals of a Role Playing game is the ability to create your own original heroes. Now it's time for you and your friends to populate Sky City with new Superheroes all your own.



SKY ACE

HERO CREATION

First thing to do is decide what kinds of powers and abilities the hero you want to create might have. Think about what the hero looks like and how their powers superpowers manifest.

Example:

Chris wants to make a hero based on his favorite comic book hero. Based upon this, he knows that the hero will be super agile, able to climb walls and swing from webs. The hero will be super strong and have an instinctive sense about danger.

Chris plans to call his hero Arachno-man.

Now Chris decides to define his ideas about Arachno-man in game terms. He knows that every super hero in Sky Ace has 4 powers in the following categories.

SPADES: Close Attack Powers
HEARTS: Defense Powers
DIAMONDS: Far Attack Powers
CLUBS: Movement Powers

Applying this to Archno-man, Chris comes up with.

SPADES: Arachno-strength (Close Attack)
HEARTS: Arachno-sense (Defense)
DIAMONDS: Arachno-webs (Far Attack)
CLUBS: Swinging (Movement)

ABOUT SUPER POWERS

The tactical nature of the Sky Ace means that all super power sets work exactly the same way. It's the player's skill at playing their cards that matters when your heroes are out on the board.

However in a role-playing game, a good understanding of how your hero's powers and abilities look and feel will help to make your hero unique.

A good idea of what your hero's powers look like will help you to assign the number values to the hero's power set.

Effort has been made to make each of the powers that comprise a hero equally useful. Different strengths will encourage different strategies on the board. Learning to play your hero's strengths is part of the fun.

Assign a value to each of your powers as: 1, 2, 3, and 4. So that each power has a different value, where one is the lowest power value, and four is the highest power value.

Now Chris applies a value to each of his hero's powers.

SPADES: Arachno-strength (Close Attack) ... 4
HEARTS: Arachno-sense (Defense) ... 3
DIAMONDS: Arachno-webs (Far Attack) ... 1
CLUBS: Swinging (Movement) ... 2

Lastly, all heroes have an **ENERGY** value that is equal to the sum of all the hero's powers (in this case: 10.)

SKY ACE

For Sky Ace the tactical card / board game, this is all the information that Chris needs about Arachno-man. But for Sky Ace the RPG we are going to need even more information.

SECRET IDENTITY

Superheroes have personal lives. When you are telling the story of your hero, you need more than just the hero's combat stats. You need to know who the hero is.

Occupation

What is your hero's job?

Acquaintances

Who are your hero's work colleges? Their rivals?

Family

Define the members of your hero's family to whom they are close and those to whom you are maybe less than close.

Friends

Who are your hero's friends? What does your hero do for fun?

Love Interests

Who does your hero care about? Love? Desire?

SKILLS

Based on the information you have compiled about your hero what sorts of special skills might they have? Computer Programming? Criminal Investigation? Mechanics?

Choose 4 distinct skills and grade them from 1-4 just like you did with your character's powers.

Skill Tests: Draw a number of cards equal to the value of the skill.

Play ONE FACE CARD and try to beat the GM's draw.

-or-

Play TWO NUMBER CARDS and add their values together and try to beat the GM's draw.

The GM assigns a difficulty to whatever it is your character is trying to do. This difficulty tells the GM how many cards to draw to attempt to oppose your action:

Easy	= 2
Average	= 3
Challenging	= 4
Hard	= 5
Impossible	= 6

The GM will draw a number of cards based upon the tasks difficulty and keep either 2 numbered cards or 1 face card to produce the highest possible opposing value. A player must match or beat this number to succeed.

SKY ACE

ORIGIN

How did the person that you have defined come to get their super powers? Why do they fight the forces of evil?

ADVANCEMENT

Unlike the hero that you played in the Sky Ace tactical card / board game, the hero that you play in the Sky Ace RPG is meant to be played over and over. Your hero should have many, many adventures.

Through the course of these adventures your hero will grow in power. Each time you play, once the game session has ended, the GM will give you some points that you can use to make your hero better.

The GM will usually award only 1 or 2 points in a session.

The cost of improving one of your character's skills is the same as it's current value +3. So to raise a Power with a value of 1 costs 4 experience points. This will increase the power from 1 to 2.

REMEMBER, if a power level increases, your hero's **ENERGY** will also increase.

Skills can be improved for a cost of current value +1. So to improve a skill with a value of 1 costs 2 experience points.

A player can also add new skills to their hero sheet in this way. The cost is current value (0) + 1... so, adding a new skill only costs 1 experience point!



SKY ACE

AFTERWARD

I am out of time and out of steam. I feel like I started out like gangbusters, but towards the end, content gets sloppy and rushed. All of these ideas are original with this effort and completely untested, so I am kind of interested in trying this out and seeing how it plays.

Only 12 real pages of content. 1 page every 2 hours. That's half the volume recommended by the challenge. I suppose that makes this a loss... too bad the 24 Hour RPG Challenge rules don't provide a handicap for really slow typists.

THE
END



SKY ACE

CLOSE ATTACK POWER



CLUBS		1
DIAMONDS		2
HEARTS		3
SPADES		4

DEFENSE POWER



FAR ATTACK POWER



NUMERIC	2-10	0
JACK	J	1
QUEEN	Q	2
KING	K	3
ACE	A	4

MOVEMENT POWER



SECRET ID

Occupation

Acquaintances

Family

Friends

Love Interests

Experience Points

HERO ID

SKILLS

Origin

ENERGY