

GAMBA ROBO!

Chain fists, drill arms and tomahawks made of lightning were a regular feature of the 1970's giant robot shows. The robots had names like Daitarn, Voltes V and Mazinger Z. They had personality and charisma of their own. Those towering heroes were shunned by the next generations in favor of more "realistic" mecha that emphasized the vehicular nature of the machines. Blazing swords were replaced by machine guns and guided missiles. We were no longer watching super heroes. We were watching wars. As fabulous and sophisticated as the new mecha shows are, some of us will always long for the super robots of days gone by. Nothing thrills like a huge, laser-edged disk hurling from a giant arm to cut right through the shoulder of some immense monstrosity because our hero screamed, "SPINNN... SAUCER!"

Get out your dice and character sheets team! We're going to return to the days of old when heroes were shot through impossibly complex networks of tunnels and trap doors to be deposited in the cockpits of massive warriors that enabled them to take on menaces that could wipe out skyscrapers with the sweep of an arm. Let's work together to become a hero greater than ourselves. Let's get out there and show those bastards the might of an ATOMIC PILEDRIVER!



WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

- A **narrator** to organize the game, describe the events and play the roles of the villains, friends, mad scientists and helpless citizens that surround our heroes.
- At least one **hero** (player) who is willing to slide down a 300 foot chute, land in a chair that will be sped by conveyer belt through a lava filled tunnel and locked into the body of an enormous robot that will most likely take a few 10-story falls before it's all over.
- 11 d10s (10-sided dice).
- Some Paper (for character sheets).
- Some pencils.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each player makes up a hero character. If there are several players, they must decide how many super robots there will be. Each hero can control a robot of their own, they can all pilot parts of one robot or they can come up with a combination with multiple robots that combine to make one or several different forms. This game is designed to be loose and flexible.

Once all the heroes are ready, the narrator, who has prepared the events and characters, in advance, will guide the heroes through a story that mimics the style of a single cartoon episode. When it is time for the heroes to act, the players will explain what their hero does and possibly role dice to see if they succeed.

HOW DO I MAKE A HERO AND ROBOT?

Let's fill out the character sheet together.

Player: This is where you write your name.

Hero: This is where you put the name of the character you want to play.

Skills: This is where you will consult with the Narrator to come up with a few specialties for your hero. You do not need to add robot piloting here because 1970's robot shows always depicted that skill as something that comes naturally to heroes. These skills will rarely translate to the robot (which has its own powers) so pick things you want to do when you're in "small and squishy" mode. The narrator should help you divide 10 dice between these skills. The number of dice you give to a skill is the number MORE than one you will roll when attempting to use the skill.

Robo: This where you'll put the awesome name of the super robot you control.

Energy Source: This where you will describe the method your robot uses to gain energy (dice) each round. Talk to the Narrator about what seems fair. Most robots have some sort of battery (solar, cosmic rays, top secret mystery liquid) that provides a steady output of 1 die per round. Some use a different system like the "Anger Drive" which provides several dice at a time whenever the narrator feels the pilot is sufficiently angry. All robots have a reservoir that will allow them to perform 1 die actions each round. The dice gained by these methods will be IN ADDITION to that.

Robo's Abilities: This is the best part. Here you will list 5 special moves or mega weapons your robot can use. Consult your Narrator while coming up with these because they will have to decide what is fair and what rules will apply. Start with the robot's Grand Finisher. This can be a weapon or just a super-cool move that requires a lot of energy and does a lot of potential damage. The Grand Finisher and all the other abilities will have unique names that you will be required to speak (robustly!) in order to use them. I like to use two part names like Hurricane Fist, Burning Falcon or Cosmo Beam! The Grand Finisher should use 8 to 10 dice. That way it will take a while to build up to and probably do plenty of damage when it hits. The other four abilities can be less powerful weapons 2-5 dice or some other

advantage like shields that provide extra CN dice (see below) or speed that helps the robot always move first. Now all you have to do is draw a picture of your robot (you can always get another person to do it or just write down a description if you don't like to draw).

MECHANICS

The skills and abilities in this game are geared toward action. The only reason the heroes should have to deal with dice is when they are truly challenged or when they are in combat. As in many other games, there are two different types of situation that call for a roll of the dice. If a hero is trying to do something tricky, they can perform a **Skill Test**. If the hero is trying to do something to another character in the story, they can perform a **Strike Test**.



SKILL TEST

A skill test is meant to add a little drama to the story. It should only be used when the stakes are high. Look to see if the hero has any applicable skills. If they do, choose a number of 10-sided dice equal to their skill level. If they don't, they can only roll one die for their hero. The narrator decides if the task is really hard, extremely hard or nearly impossible and chooses 1, 2 or 3 dice accordingly. The hero and the narrator roll their dice and compare the results. The narrator chooses the die showing the highest number. This is the **challenge number** (CN). The hero counts any dice that are higher than the challenge number as successes with "ten" counting as 2 successes and "one" subtracting a success. If the final tally yields at least one success for the hero, they have accomplished their task. If none of their dice are higher than the challenge number or if all the dice that were higher were eliminated by ones, they fail. If there are more ones than successes and the result is a negative success, the hero really blew it and the narrator should make sure the consequences are dire. Even in a tie, tens are always successes.

STRIKE TEST

Strike tests work the same way as skill tests. The main difference is that the defender rolls the CN and the attacker rolls to see how many successes or "hits" they get. Circumstances or a special skill can allow the defender to roll more than one die for the CN but usually only 1 is rolled. The narrator has the right to be creative and to alter these rolls in any way they see fit.

COMBAT

Combat is conducted through a series of strike tests and die allowances. All combat can be broken up into rounds. Rather than trying to imagine rounds as an arbitrary time, think of a round as an opportunity to make a move. Unless the situation calls for a different approach, whichever robot has the longest ranged weapon that is ready to fire may go first. If no robot has a special speed skill or other advantage, villains go first. The narrator can roll a die to determine the order if they want to but just choosing is fine too. Before each round the narrator should check the method by which each participant gains power. Each robot that increases power that turn gets a number of dice according to the rules for that robot.

Each robot can use it's turn to take any action including any special abilities they have the dice to use. One die actions are always free but every time your robot uses a special ability they must "spend" the required dice. They will have to wait to regain power before doing a major attack again. The narrator may allow particularly inventive moves to cause more damage than others but should reserve such "extra dice" rolls for special occasions. Each robot has a number of points for the different parts of their bodies. A typical robot will have a head, body, right arm, left arm, right leg and left leg. Of course creating a robot with a powerful set of tank treads instead of legs or some other altered body form is perfectly acceptable. In general a robot has 10 points for the body and 5 for each other part. It's up to the narrator to choose where the hits land or if the hero can choose to spread them out or not. Called shots can alter the number of dice rolled for the CN if the narrator feels it would be harder to hit. Each success rolled in a strike test during combat is a "hit" and is subtracted from the robot's points. When a robot runs out of points in the head or body, it is destroyed.



REWARDS

At the end of each episode, the narrator can award the players in one of several ways. The robots can gain 1 point to add to the robot's body, the narrator can give a player a "die credit" which can be accumulated over several games and then applied to a new power (not more than 10 dice please) or the narrator can increase the heroes skills by giving them an extra die for one or making up a new skill.

WHY DO THE PILOTS SHOUT THE NAMES OF THE WEAPONS AND SPECIAL MOVES?



All the weapons and special maneuvers available to a super robot are extremely powerful and tend to use up energy. For that reason, the brilliant (if a bit off-center) minds who created them have worked to design a system that would prevent them from misfiring. The best method they came up with was a two-part control system for each special-ability. The pilots must simultaneously hit the control AND loudly speak the activation words to launch the system.

This way, the pilot can be slammed into the controls without activating them and they can discuss strategy with their team without setting them off by voice control.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NARRATOR

Gamba Robo! is intended to be lively, dramatic and colorful. Don't let the heroes get too technical. Keep the action and story moving. Make it clear to the heroes that they are really expected to shout out the names of their robotic weapons in order to use them.

HOW DO I RUN A GAME?

You can run a game any way you like, of course, but here are some general suggestions for putting together a **series** (campaign) for Gamba Robo!

- ◇ Ask your players what they imagine their heroes doing in the game.
- ◇ Treat each game like an episode of a super robot show. Keep the games short, sweet and action packed. You can string together games to make an entire series. plan a beginning, middle, and end to each episode AND the series as a whole. Don't be afraid to end the series. If the players liked it there can always be a second one. In fact, you might even use the opportunity to change things that didn't go well in the first series or have a new character and a different narrator in the new series. Super robot shows are being "re-imagined" all the time.
- ◇ Practice the combat system a few times before you play and try to build your villains so that they have specific weaknesses that the heroes can discover and utilize. The system can be a brutal one so give the players a lot of chances to come up with ways to get extra dice during play. Give the players something to work with. describe their surroundings so they know there are power lines to push the enemy robot into (3 dice), smokestacks that can be turned into baseball bats (2 dice each round until the smokestack shatters) or billboards that could provide just a little protection from an oncoming missile (1 extra defensive die). Once the players understand the system better and you have given them some great rewards for saving the day a few times, start throwing additional challenges at them. What will happen if they are in the middle of a big fight and an airplane full of people is trying to make an emergency landing right where the enemy is standing?