by Charles A. Vanelli

An uprated movement system for the STAR FRONTIERS® game

"Jetboots, don't fail me now!"

Player (whose character; a space-station security guard, has unexpectedly discovered an intruder in a storage area): "I back away, drawing my nightstick."

Referee: "Great, because the guy takes off the moment he sees you. He's carrying a box from the storeroom."

Player: "I chase after him! When I catch up, I'll smack him with my nightstick! I move at 30 meters per turn."

Referee: "Being a human, the intruder also runs at 30 meters per turn."
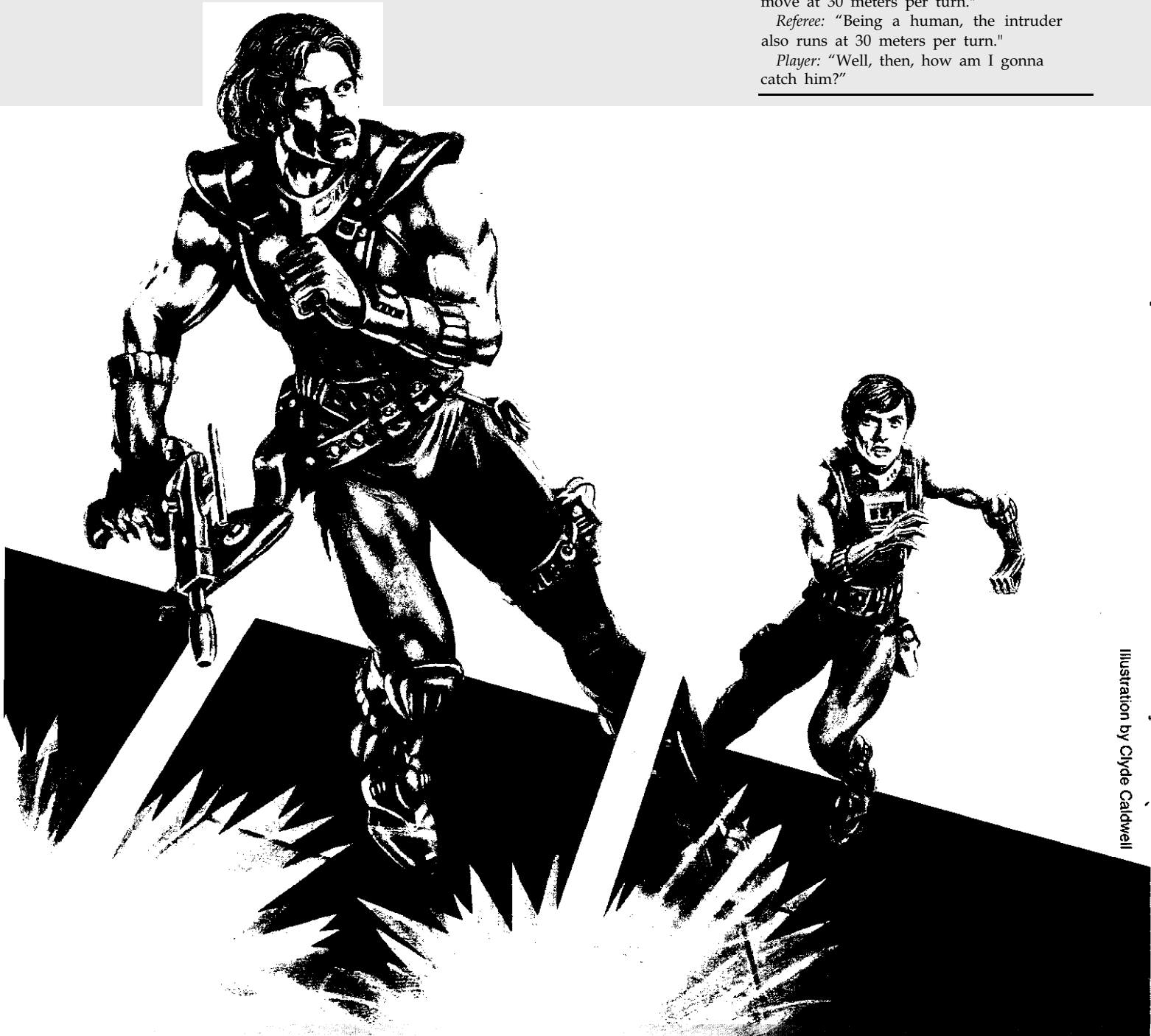
Player: "Well, then, how am I gonna catch him?"

Good question. Unless the intruder happens to slip on a convenient banana peel or other unforeseen obstacle, the poor security guard may never get his man. Here we see evidence of a flaw in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, in that all beings of the same race run at the same rate of speed. The problem, however, is not just limited to running or walking; it also applies to swimming, climbing, and just about every other movement task that a character might attempt.

In the STAR FRONTIERS game, all creatures are given a set of movement rates which are dependent only upon the races of the creatures involved. Thus, every Human in the Frontier runs just as fast as every other Human. The same can be said for Yazirians, Dralasites, and every other known race. Obviously, this just isn't the case. Any decent member of an Olympic track team could beat the socks off the average person on Earth in a foot race, yet the current movement system would not allow this.

Since all characters are *not* created equal in the STAR FRONTIERS game system, all speeds should not be equal. Speed should be based upon the basic attribute scores of a character and the character's race. (Obviously, a Dralasite cannot run as fast as a Vrusk.) This article describes a diversified movement rate system in which only the characters who are physically alike have the same movement rates. In addition, the "standardized" movement rates, such as climbing, jumping, and the rest, are also covered. The main advantage of this system is that it allows each character to be different from his peers. As an added bonus, the system is flexible, permitting a character to improve his speed as he improves his physical fitness.

Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM)

This system requires that each character have a new statistic defined: the Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM). The MRM is simply a number from 1 to 10, indicating how fast a character is — but only as compared to other members of the same race. High MRMs represent fast characters, while low scores represent slow characters. This score is used extensively in generating the movement rates, so it is recommended that this score be recorded on each character sheet near the Initiative Modifier score or the movement rates. To create the MRM, simply take the average of the character's Strength and Reaction Speed scores, then divide by 10, rounding all fractions down. This value is the MRM.

The Strength score is used in the MRM because a character's speed and quickness are based upon the strength of the muscles within that character's limbs. The Reaction Speed score is used because, by definition, it is a measure of a person's quickness. Excessive body weight and equipment encumbrance do not play a part in the creation of the MRM because of their difficulty to implement; game

masters wishing to use these attributes must create their own modifiers for them.

To use the MRM, the player must find his character's Base Movement Value for the type of movement desired. The Base Movement Values are listed in Table 1 herein and are found by cross indexing the character's race with the type of movement needed, such as running or walking. The player then multiplies the number found by his character's MRM to find his character's movement rate using that particular type of movement. Even though encumbrance has no effect on the MRM, it still plays a role in reducing the movement rates of an encumbered character by half

if the character is carrying over half his Strength score in kilograms.

For example: Rufinkel, a Yazirian, has a Strength score of 55 and a Reaction Speed score of 60. His MRM would then be 5 (the average of 55 and 60 is 57.5; dividing by 10 gives 5.75, rounded down to 5). Consulting Table 1, Rufinkel walks at the rate of 12.5 meters per turn, runs at 37.5 meters per turn, and hikes at the rate of 5 kilometers per hour. In addition, the table also gives Rufinkel's "standardized" movement rates. Rufi now climbs at the rate of 2 meters per turn, and he makes running jumps up to 6 meters long and standing jumps up to 3 meters.

Table 1a
Base Movement Values by Race

Race	Walking	Running	Hiking	Climbing	Crawling
Dralasite	1.250	5.000	0.750	0.375	0.500
Human	2.500	7.500	1.250	0.500	0.500
Humma*	2.000	7.000	1.200	0.300	0.200
Ifshnit*	1.000	3.750	0.500	0.250	0.250
Osakar*	5.000	12.000	2.000	0.400	0.600
Vrusk	3.750	8.750	1.500	0.375	0.250
Yazirian	2.500	7.500	1.000	0.500	0.500
Sathar **	2.500	5.000	0.750	0.500	0.500

Table 1b
Base Movement Values by Race

Race	Running leap	Standing leap	Running vertical leap	Standing vertical leap
Dralasite	1.000	0.375	0.375	0.250
Human	1.250	0.500	0.500	0.375
Humma*	10.000	5.000	1.500	1.000
Ifshnit *	0.750	0.250	0.375	0.250
Osakar *	1.200	0.500	0.400	0.300
Vrusk	1.250	0.625	0.375	0.250
Yazirian	1.250	0.500	0.500	0.375
Sathar **	1.000	0.500	0.375	0.250

Table 1c
Base Movement Values by Race

Race	Flying	Swimming per turn	Swimming per hour
Dralasite	–	2.000	0.250
Human	–	2.500	0.250
Humma*	–	1.600	0.200
Osakar *	–	1.000	0.125
Ifshnit *	–	2.400	0.200
Vrusk	–	2.500	0.250
Yazirian	–	2.500	0.250
Sathar **	–	2.500	0.375

* *See* SFAC3 *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* for details on this race.
** Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON® issue #96.

Movement types

Table 1 also gives new movement types that are available to the characters. These are more fully explained below, along with the old movement types from the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules to reduce cross referencing between the book and this article.

Walking: This is the rate at which a character can walk, expressed in meters per turn. This is also the rate at which a character can climb a ladder or staircase.

Running: This is the rate at which a character can run, expressed in meters per turn.

Hiking: This is the rate at which a character can walk (with appropriate rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour. (This is known as "Per Hour" in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules.)

Climbing: This is the rate at which a character can climb a rope, expressed in meters per turn. A character can climb a vertical surface at half this speed, provided there are handholds and footholds.

Crawling: This is the rate at which a character can crawl along the floor or ground in a semiprone position, expressed in meters per turn.

Running Leap: This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally, allowing a straight-line run for 15 meters before leaping.

Standing Leap: This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally from a standing start.

Running Vertical Leap: This is the height in meters that a character can leap, allowing a straight-line run of at least 5 meters before leaping. This height is measured from the ground to the lowest point on the character's body at the highest point of the jump. The sum of this distance and the character's height (with arm extended) used when the character is attempting to reach a high object.

Standing Vertical Leap: This is the height in meters that a character can leap from a standing start.

Flying: This is the rate at which a winged character may fly, expressed in meters per turn. Note the difference between flying and gliding: Gliding is merely coasting through the air on steady wings, but flying is the act of physically propelling oneself through the air by flapping wings.

Swimming per turn: This is the rate at which a character may swim, expressed in meters per turn.

Long-Distance Swimming: This is the rate at which a character may swim (with brief floating rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour.

Expanding Table 1

Expanding the table of Base Movement Values for new races can be accomplished in four easy steps. First, each new race must have a table of average movement rates defined for it; the creation of this table is left to the designer of the race. Second, the new race's average Strength and Reaction Speed scores must be found, using the method in the following section. Third, using the average Strength and Reaction Speed scores, the average MRM is computed, as per the rules in this arti-cle. Finally, new figures for Table 1 are found simply by dividing the average movement rates for the race by the average MRM, rounding results to the third decimal place. The results should be recorded in the appropriate columns on Table 1.

There may be some confusion as to what a race's average ability scores are. Note that when rolling on the Ability Score Table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules (page 4), the most commonly generated base score will be a 45, simply because the table assigns a 20% chance for it to occur. No other base score has as great a chance, though 45 is not the average score. The average score is actually the sum of 45 and the appropriate value from the Ability Modifier Table (Alpha Dawn expanded game rules, page 4). Thus, for a Dralasite, the average Strength score would be 50 (45 and a +5 modifier equals 50), while its average Reaction Speed score would be 40 (45 and a - 5 modifier). This gives Dralasites an average MRM of 4 (the average of 50 and 40, divided by 10 and rounded down). The average MRMs for typical races are given in Table 2.

When the numbers in Table 1 are multiplied by the average MRM score for a race, the results are the regular movement rates for the race in question. This system works on the assumption that the rates given in the Movement Table on page 19 of the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules were created with the average character in mind. The average character's statistics are the same as those of an average NPC, as shown on the table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules on page 59. Ω

Table 2
Average STR, RS, and MRM Scores

Race	Average strength	Average reaction speed	Average MRM
Dralasite	50	40	4
Human	45	45	4
Humma*	55	45	5
Ifshnit *	40	45	4
Osakar *	50	50	5
Vrusk	40	50	4
Yazirian	35	50	4
Sathar * *	**45**	**40**	**4**

* *See* SFAC3 *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* for details on this race.
* * Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON issue #96.

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finding a master entirely apart from their acquaintances or present superiors.

Once the master has been established, the DM can then use the formula in *Oriental Adventures* for detailing what martial-arts abilities the particular master is familiar with. In the case of the monastic classes (monks, shukenja, and sohei) and the ninja and yakuza, even if the character's present master is limited in martial-arts ability, it should not be difficult for the character to locate a more experienced master later — through the process listed. Ω