

# RPG Club Rules

## Protection and enforcement of RPG Club Values

The behavior and actions with the club, during club activities must at all times protect, guarantee, and enforce the RPG Club Values. Members who's behavior or activities fail to protect, guarantee, and enforce the RPG Club Values in connection with the club or during club activities will be given a verbal warning from their game's GM, then will be talked to by a sponsor, then may be removed from future club meetings and activities.

## Zero- Tolerance for Bad RPG Behavior

RPG Club has a zero-tolerance rule for bad RPG Behavior. That means every instance of bad RPG Behavior shown, either by a player or Game Master, must be addressed and talked about (in the game group where it happened). The aim is to make sure the behavior in questions never happens again.

Bad RPG behavior can be summarized as having fun at the expense of others or their fun. Because pen & paper role playing games are anti-competitive and require collaboration and team-work by concept, bad RPG behavior is behavior that betrays or undermines this concept. In other words, it entails, among other things, all forms of competing with other players or trying to "beat" them. For instance bossing other players, cutting them out of the game, damaging or killing other player's characters, or taking control of them or their actions without permission, etc. If it's not fun for others, it's usually bad RPG behavior. Especially if it's competitive by nature. These events will cause the GM or sponsors to stop the game and address the behaviors. If the behaviors persist, the offending party may be asked to leave the club.

Here are some examples for bad RPG behavior:

- **Action Powerplay / Bossing / Lording it over other Players-** "Action Powerplay" or "Bossing" or "Lording it over other Players" usually means deciding what happens in-game without letting other players have a say about it, even if others' characters are involved. This can be simply deciding what the party does in the heat of action with Action Powerplay, without fairly or fully consulting all other players, or it can be ignoring what others say and stating the party does something different. It can be assuming the role of a party "boss" who wants to be the leader or boss and decides what the party does, or has the last word on it. Or it can be more subtle by lording it over other players by creating fait accompli. To camouflage bad RPG behavior, the more subtle form of Action Powerplay is pretended Assumption Powerplay.
- **Assumption Powerplay-** "Assumption Powerplay" can mean assuming that something that was not mentioned or decided upon, or not clearly, has happened, or was – or would have been decided in favor of the one making the assumption. This can be done for things that clearly didn't happen or were not mentioned or discussed, or it can be pretended for things that actually happened, or were mentioned or discussed, but in a different manner. For instance: Player A wants to kill the dragon. Player B wants to

please player A and does everything he says. Player C wants to run. After discussing things thoroughly, player A states: "Ok, after discussing it, we will attack the dragon!". Player C: "Hey! Wait! I never said that! I wanted to run!" Player A: "We discussed this. You agreed." Player C: "No! I didn't agree to attack. I'm running!". Player A: "Ok, sorry, I thought you said you agreed."

- **Cheesing**- "Cheesing" is the twisting of what actually happened in-game retrospectively, at a later point in time, in order to favorably influence current matters and what's currently happening. Cheesing is similar to "Retconning", except that it doesn't "forget" that something happened, but reinterprets it more or less creatively. Since Cheesing is easy to detect and usually not aimed against other characters or motivated by competition, it's certainly one of the more forgivable and minor forms bad RPG behaviors
- **Damage and Kill Powerplay**- "Damage and Kill Powerplay" is when one player has his or her character damage or kill the character of another player (without permission). This can be to intimidate or subdue the other players, to gain another character's possessions, or simply to get rid of another player at the game table. This clearly extremely competitive behavior and one of the most obvious and clear examples of bad RPG behavior. Because Damage and Kill Powerplay so obvious and clear, many competitive players who fear repercussions for bad RPG behavior will choose more subtle means to achieve their selfish goals.
- **Gamemanship**- "Gamesmanship" is the direct opposite of "sportsmanship" and as such probably the worst form of bad RPG behavior. It's a form of concealed "Powerplay" with the intent of aggressive competition with other players in a game that's not meant to be competitive. Wikipedia describes it like this:

*Gamesmanship is the use of dubious (although not technically illegal) methods to win or gain a serious advantage in a game or sport. It has been described as "Pushing the rules to the limit without getting caught, using whatever dubious methods possible to achieve the desired end". It may be inferred that the term derives from the idea of playing for the game (i.e., to win at any cost) as opposed to sportsmanship, which derives from the idea of playing for sport.*

Gamesmanship entails techniques such as:

1. Breaking the flow of an opponent's (another player's) play.
  2. Causing an opponent (another player) to take the game less seriously or to overthink his position.
  3. Intentionally making a "mistake" which gains an advantage over an opponent (another player).
- **God-Moding**- "God-Moding" or "Godmoding" means being in "god mode" in regards to the game and what happens in it. Players in "god mode" assume control of things they don't or shouldn't control. This can be either other characters (Action Powerplay), NPCs, monsters or anything else in-game. In essence, it's assuming the role of the Dungeon- or Game Master. Some bad Dungeon- or Game Masters with a poor understanding of the importance of their role as a referee even encourage God-Moding by trying to share some of their responsibilities as Dungeon- or Game Masters and letting individual

players decide things that happen in-game, even if outside the control of the player's character.

- **Grabbing the Spotlight-** "Grabbing the Spotlight" simply means a player puts his or her character and what he or she does at the center of attention more often than would be the player's fair share. This is usually done by having the character do something before others can react. Grabbing the Spotlight in essence is a competition for attention. It can and often is coupled with other egoistic or bad RPG behaviors.
- **Metagaming-** "Metagaming" is using out-of-character knowledge or information in-game. This can be a character exploring a certain area because his or her player had a glance at the Dungeon- or Game Master's map, or a character reacting to things happening at the game table, for instance, a Dungeon- or Game Master rolling a secret surprise die, etc.
- **Munchkin-** Similar to pac-man who eats everything, a "Munchkin" is a player who wants to have everything for his or her character, beyond their fair share and at the expense of other players and their characters. This can be treasure, weapons, armor, gold, magic items, experience points, or anything else. Wanting powerful items and magic etc. for one's own character is nothing but natural and at mild and normal levels, even a sign of good identification of a player with his or her character. However, at severe levels it can become disruptive and cause irritation among other players.
- **Powergaming (God-Modding)-** "Powergaming" is not the same thing as a "Powerplaying" (and "God-Modding" is not the same thing as "God-Moding" (one "d", mode, not modding)). A Powergamer or God-Modder usually means someone who min-maxes their character and tries to optimize his or her characters and their abilities according to the rules (or even slightly overstepping them), in order to give their character maximum power. The idea can be to simply be a great big hero and be able to survive and beat any challenge thrown at the character by the Dungeon- or Game Master. This is the milder and more forgivable form of Powergaming because it's not intent to be directly competitive towards other players. The more severe and less forgivable form is to try to have a better character than other players and be able to "beat" them and their characters by killing more monsters, getting more experience, and getting more treasure in the process. This form of Powergaming is less forgivable because it's intended to be competitive towards other players
- **Profile Powerplay-** "Profile Powerplay" describes a situation where a player created a character and the character has a profile which, according to his or her player, has certain effects on other characters or NPCs. For instance: "My character is so strong and big that all other characters in the party tremble with fear when they see him." The profile might state that a character is strong and big, but how other characters react to that is not for the player of that character to decide. This is usually not intentionally competitive, but only overboarding enthusiasm for a character and thus easily forgivable.
- **Retconning-** "Retconning" is acting as if an in-game occurrence never happened. Like "Cheesing", it seeks to alter what happened previously in order to favorably influence current matters and what's currently happening. Only it doesn't do so by reinterpreting things creatively, but simply by "forgetting" they ever happened.

- **Sexual Harassment-** "Sexual Harassment" are unwanted and unappreciated sexual advances or even just degrading or other unwanted and unappreciated comments in connection with sex or sexuality. Sexual harassment can happen at the game table between players or between Dungeon- or Game Masters and players, and it can happen in-game, between characters, monsters, NPCs, etc. At least among heterosexuals, it can easily be prevented by not playing in mixed-sex groups or games.
- **Twinking-** "Twinking" in essence means keeping information from other characters / players for personal gain or advantages. It involves deceiving other players and their characters about one's abilities, possessions or achievements in the game. A player engaging in such behavior is known as a "Twink". A common motivation for Twinking is a "Munchkin" who seeks to acquire power, spells, and loot etc. at the expense of other players and their characters.

## RPG Club Values

### Everybody is Equal, Everybody is Valuable

This is the most important value of RPG Club. This means everyone counts exactly the same, and no person is over, above, or below another or has more or less value than any other person. Period.

There are two consequences of this to really put this in practice:

1. There are no hierarchies, no bosses, no "preferred" players or members and nobody is played out against others or anyone else. Not in the club, and not at the game table.
2. Because many people have such a strong, in some people even an uncontrollable instinct to compete with others and measure themselves with others to see who might have a higher social rank, talking about what you or others do in real life, as a job, for a living, for income, etc.. letting others know about it, or letting it on, etc. are strictly prohibited and taboo in RPG Club! Likewise, showing up with a Rolex watch, banker's shoes and parking your Mercedes or Bentley in clear view to show off your social rank is heavily frowned upon. You may be rich and privileged in real life, but you may not deduct that you are worth more or a better person because of it, or try to make others aware of it so they respect you more than others. Nobody in RPG Club is to know what anyone else in RPG Club does in real life! Unavoidable exceptions define the rule. This is important. Where there is no temptation, there is no crime (lacking respect and conflict because of it).

### Everyone is appreciated and treated with respect

Not agreeing with someone on something, not liking someone, or being in conflict with someone is no justification for not appreciating the presence of that person or treating him or her without respect.

### **Freedom of Speech**

Everyone can talk and say what he or she likes, as long as it does not interfere with other RPG Club values and can be considered good, or at least acceptable Culture of Debate.

### **Freedom of Creativity**

Everyone can and should bring in his or her own creativity and ideas. This is what makes a group of people more valuable than a computer game.

### **Appreciation of Contributions**

Any and all (well-meant) contributions are appreciated. As long as it is well-meant and sincere, contribution (of anything) has a tremendous value for everyone involved. This must be reflected with appreciation by everyone involved.

### **Everyone has a Voice**

Everyone has a say. Everyone can talk about, or discuss, or bring up problems or topics that he or she wants to talk about, and everyone must be heard thereby. As long as this is well-meant, sincere and according to the RPG Club Values. This includes, but is not limited to the club and its rules, to rules within games or game systems, or other's behavior, either at the game table or in the club.

### **Sportsmanlike Behavior**

People who don't treat others in a sportsmanlike manner in a game or at the game table are asked to leave the game. People who don't know what sportsmanlike behavior is, or how to treat others in a sportsmanlike manner are asked to leave the club.

### **Collaborative Behavior**

People are expected to collaborate and work together, not compete or work against each other. This applies both to the club and to the game table, and unless otherwise mentioned by a Dungeon- or Game Master, also to character behavior in role playing game worlds. If this is a problem, such as when there is a conflict, people are expected to work hard at trying to do so. Competing or working against each other is frowned upon heavily and can lead to people not working together with others being asked to leave a game or a group, unless a competition is in jest or good humor, and experienced in a positive manner by everyone involved.

### **Culture of Debate**

Everyone must practice a good Culture of Debate at all times. This means conflicts, fights or differences of opinion are carried out between two people (and two people only) with words and arguments in a mature, fair, equal and sportsmanlike manner that does not degrade, humiliate or otherwise damage or disrespect the other or the other's point of view and allows each to keep face. Because this is so important for mature conflict resolution, there's an entire page about it.

### **Leadership**

Leaders or people with special responsibilities or powers, including group leaders and Dungeon- or Game Masters show and practice by example a good leadership-style that follows, enforces and promotes the RPG Club Values given here.

### **PG Club**

Fantasy Role Playing Games stem from worlds where fighting, killing, drinking and debauchery do exist. With that in mind players must always keep things PG. There may be some content such as language, violence, small amounts of fantasy alcohol consumption, but they aren't so intense that more than guidance is suggested.