

REALMS OF ARKONUS

Young Players Options

by Thomas J. Scott



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Young Players Options



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YOUNG PLAYERS OPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

RAS1: Young Players Options is an **OSRIC™** compatible rules supplement. The rules options presented here were originally written for the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**. Use of the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**, published separately by Magique Productions, Ltd, is not required. The rules options presented here can be used for any **OSRIC™** or First Edition compatible fantasy campaign setting.

If you like this supplement, look for other products from Magique Productions, Ltd with the YPO logo on the cover. **REALMS OF ARKONUS** adventure modules designed for younger players are planned for release.

WHAT IS YOUNG PLAYERS OPTIONS?

I am father to 2 young girls ages 9 and 11 who both grew up in a video game world where your characters never die and you can always save the game and try something over if you fail. Both my daughters have also played at least a dozen different MMORPG games in which your character is resurrected at the nearest town, graveyard, life stone, etc. Usually death carries only a small penalty and items and equipment are rarely lost. They are used to having magic-using characters who can always cast spells as long as they have enough mana points, and their health points always regenerate fast enough to put their characters back in the battle without much delay.

Understandably, when I introduced my daughters to the **OSRIC™** rules, they were a little shocked by some of the apparent limitations. That didn't deter me from enforcing all the old school principles as we embarked on our first campaign. However, when my youngest daughter experienced her first character's death at 3rd level, she was pretty distraught over it. Although she looked like she would recover from her period of mourning and forge ahead with an all-new 1st level character, it was clear that she was probably going to have difficulty whenever one of her character's met some unfortunate end.

YOUNG PLAYERS OPTIONS is my solution for the problems I have faced when playing First Edition games with younger players. The rules options presented here aim to alleviate stress from character death and to give younger players a little more heroic capability. This short rules supplement shall describe the various rules options that I propose for use with younger players. You may use some or all of these in your own campaign as you see fit. Or you can ignore all of them. You may even adopt these rules in a campaign for older players if you like. The choice is entirely up to you, the Game Master.

In addition to rules options, this supplement also contains some new magic items that may be useful for campaigns utilizing **Option #6**.

So without further background, let's get down to the various optional rules that you may use when you play with younger players.

OPTION #1: NO PERMANENT DEATH

This is the area of greatest grief for younger players. No sooner have you introduced your young 8 - 10 year-old child to the wondrous and exciting world of fantasy role-playing when her heroic magic-using character dies after falling into a simple pit trap.

When using this option, when a character dies, she dematerializes and re-appears at a location predetermined by the Game Master. This can be the character's home base or some type of bind point. I suggest that a character is tied to their home town and should be allowed to change this choice periodically as the character progresses.

A character death should not be without penalty. Below are some optional penalties that you can enforce. Choose the one that best suits your campaign and your players' ability to deal with the consequences.

Penalty #1: Complete level loss. The character drops to the lowest experience point value for the previous level. All abilities, spells, and hit points gained for that level are also lost.

Penalty #2: The character loses 10% experience. You may opt to lower the percentage if the penalty would result in a level loss. If you choose to enforce a level loss, the character will also lose all abilities, spells, and hit points gained for that level.

Penalty #3: One or more of the character's items are permanently lost. Either choose the items or roll randomly.

OPTION #2: HIT POINT REGENERATION

Your young player has created a magic-user character and rolls a maximum of 4 hit points. She enters the dungeon and gets struck by a skeleton for 3 points of damage. She was extremely fortunate to even have survived the attack at all, but now is virtually useless for 3 days while she returns home to heal. Even if the group had a cleric with **cure light wounds**, there may be other members of the group in need of healing or the spell may have already been cast.

With this option, all player characters and monsters heal automatically at a rate of 1 hit point per round when resting. No healing takes place while the character is engaged in combat or other strenuous activities.

Monsters and all other NPCs also heal at the same rate in order to maintain a balance.

Monsters and NPCs that already have natural or magical regeneration will be allowed to regenerate at those rates even during combat. When resting, they will have cumulative regeneration effects. For example, a creature that regenerates at a rate of 2 hp/round will now regenerate at 2 hp/round during combat and 3 hp/round when resting.

The fact that there are some creatures with the ability to regenerate hit points at extraordinary rates is what makes this rule plausible in any campaign. The hit point regeneration for all creatures can simply be explained as a magical effect that permeates the entire **REALMS OF ARKONUS**. This rationale may also allow you to turn off hit point regeneration in certain areas of the game world to increase the danger factor.

OPTION #3: STARTING HIT POINTS

A first level character with 2 hit points isn't likely to do anything heroic anytime soon. You might as well just order up the coffin and send flowers now, because she is starting out the game with one foot already in the grave.

This option gives all first level characters their maximum base hit points + any constitution bonus. A cleric would start the game with 8 hit points, a thief with 6, etc. A fighter with an 18 constitution would start the game with 14 hit points.

OPTION #4: MAGIC-USER HIT DICE

Even with maximum starting hit points using **Option #3**, a magic-user or illusionist character is still going to be coming into the game with only 4 hit points. Combine that with the fact that they have no armor and your young player's character is not likely to survive long.

This option allows magic-user and illusionist characters to use d6 instead of d4 for their hit dice. Admittedly, this isn't a significant upgrade, so for a bigger boost, see **Option #5** below.

OPTION #5: STARTING HIT DICE

Some character classes start with very poor hit dice. The exception is the Ranger class which gains two 8-sided dice to start with.

With this option, every character gains 2 hit dice to begin the game and advances with a single hit die every level thereafter. So magic-users would get 2d4, clerics would get 2d8, fighters would get 2d10, etc.

You may use this option in conjunction with **Option #4** and thus grant magic-users and illusionists 2d6 at first level and 1d6 each level thereafter.

OPTION #6: MANA FOR CASTING SPELLS

Your young player has created a 1st level magic-user and she has 4 spells in her spell book. She is very excited to start exploring dungeons and using the magical prowess that she has trained so long to acquire. Imagine her surprise when she finds out she can only memorize one of those spells at a time and that once it is cast, she must rest for 4 hours to memorize another.

This option establishes a spell casting system that uses mana points, which are regenerated on a regular basis.

Magic-user and illusionist characters gain 2d10 + INT mana points per level. Cleric and druid characters gain 2d10 + WIS mana points per level. A dual-class character such as a cleric/magic-user will have two sets of mana points that are used for casting spells.

Spells require 10 points of mana per level of the spell to cast (i.e. 10 points for a 1st level spell, 20 points for a 2nd level spell, 30 points for a 3rd level spell, etc.).

A spell that is interrupted in the process of being cast is lost and so are the mana points required to cast it.

Mana points are regenerated at a rate of 1/round during combat or strenuous activity and 2/round when resting.

Spells do not need to be memorized using this option. Once a character knows a spell, she may cast it at any time as long as she has the required mana points.

Mana Points can be abbreviated as mp in stat blocks.

OPTION #7: LEVEL LIMITS

As your young player starts to advance in her career as a competent half-elf magic-user, she begins to question what level her character can achieve. When you tell her she can only reach 6th level with 16 Intelligence, she is understandably upset and wants to immediately roll up another character.

YOUNG PLAYERS OPTIONS

This option permits unlimited levels for all allowed racial options.

You may choose to limit multi-class characters to the stated level limits.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Potion of Lesser Mana

Drinking this potion restores 20 points of mana. Mana is never restored beyond the original maximum.

G.P. Value: 200
Experience Point Value: 100

Potion of Greater Mana

Drinking this potion restores 50 points of mana. Mana is never restored beyond the original maximum.

G.P. Value: 500
Experience Point Value: 250

Belt of Mana Boost

Wearing this belt increases the character's maximum mana by 50 points. If the belt is removed, the 50 points are immediately lost. This will never cause mana to drop below zero points.

G.P. Value: 15,000
Experience Point Value: 1,000

NPC MANA TABLE

To facilitate on-the-fly conversion of standard **OSRIC™** modules, use the following table to determine how many mana points an NPC would possess.

<u>NPC Level</u>	<u>Mana Points</u>
1	25
2	50
3	75
4	100
5	125
6	150
7	175
8	200
9	225
10	250
11	275
12	300

Add 25 points for every level beyond 12th.

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