

# The Ironwake Ear Derby



*Dungeon Master's edition*

A seven-day bounty derby for four level-5 characters. 3-4 hours at the table. Tracking, hard travel, rival companies and a prize worth coming home for.

## OPENING READ-ALoud

A hammer strikes the bounty board. Steam from a stew cart curls between wet canvas roofs, and three companies stop arguing long enough to listen. Behind a barred window hangs a bow carved with a running fox. The woman holding the hammer points at fourteen empty boxes. "Seven days. Same rules for everyone. Bring me proof before the last bell, and bring your people back." A clerk dips his pen. "Company name?"

## Credits

Original adventure and setting prepared for bandolek. Ironwake, the Rimeplain, the derby, cast, factions, local layouts, encounters, prose and treasure designs were created for this edition. Illustrations were generated with OpenAI image tools; maps are authored diagrams. This independent publication is not affiliated with or endorsed by any other publisher.

This work includes material from the System Reference Document 5.1 by Wizards of the Coast LLC, available at <https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document>. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>. Rules baseline is 2014-style fifth edition; custom creatures, fatigue, scoring and items are identified above. Designed and reviewed, not human-playtested. Review party capabilities before play.

## At the Table

DM truth: 2 | Clock: 6 | Rivals: 9 | Scenes: 9 | Hunts: 11 | Kiln: 14 | Statistics: 15 | NPCs: 17 | Prizes: 19 | Endings: 19 | Handouts: 20

## Overview

A competitive wilderness one-shot for four level-5 characters using 2014-style fifth-edition rules. Seven days pass in the fiction; allow 3-4 hours at the table. Start with rested characters and ordinary adventuring equipment. The derby clock, fatigue, creatures and prizes below are original homebrew. Use the supplied statistics rather than substituting a different edition's creatures.

Ironwake is an independent trade city at the edge of the Rimeplain, a cold expanse of marsh and quarry roads. Ore wagons enter through its northern fortress wall; outside it, a mercenary quarter has grown around supply sheds and communal kitchens. The city pays registered companies to clear four raiding camps before the next convoy leaves. Its people, local geography and seven-day derby form an original setting that can stand alone or fit into an existing campaign.

Tone: cold mud, hot food, competitive boasting and hard-earned pay. Severed-ear collection happens offscreen; use sealed proof bags at the table. The warrants cover four identified armed raiding groups, not every member of a people. Captured raiders earn equal credit through the surrender procedure. The hunt is straightforward; the main question is how much risk the company accepts before heading home.

## DM Introduction

Quartermaster Mara Durn has money to clear four raiding groups from the approaches to Ironwake. The mercenary settlement outside its fortifications turns her seven-day contract into an unofficial sporting event, the Ear Derby. Each verified right ear is worth one tally and 5 gp. The largest tally wins an additional 200 gp and Foxwake, a magical hunting bow. A charter, public board and fixed deadline put the opportunity in front of the party immediately.

The four hunting sites hold twenty-eight eligible raiders altogether. Finding them takes time; each site must be searched and then confronted. Fourteen daylight watches are available, and an ordinary circuit that clears every site takes fifteen. The company must push into a night, buy a located quarry, surrender some potential earnings, or use a character ability to beat that limit. An overnight rest restores resources normally; a night hunt leaves too little time for one. Nobody secretly refills a cleared site.

Two rival teams supply pressure. Tessa Venn's Slate Kites are capable and fair, finishing with eighteen tallies if left alone. Orven Pike's Copper Talons finish with twenty-one, including four old, ineligible proofs slipped into their later deposits. This fraud can be exposed through a brief roadside encounter and the public deposit ledger, but solving it is optional: twenty-two legitimate tallies beat both teams outright before any trades or shared-hunt changes. Their schedules never rise merely because the players do well.

Play opens with registration and route planning, moves through a player-chosen sequence of hunts and camps, and ends with a last return to Ironwake and a public count. Rivals can bargain, obstruct or cooperate; they do not demand a duel. The party can win, place, retire with its earned bounty, capture rather than kill, or rescue a rival and share credit. If nobody accepts the warrants, the four bands keep raiding local roads; no hidden world-ending plot replaces the competition.

## At a Glance

| REFERENCE         | USE                                                                                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Party             | Four level-5 characters; adjust enemy numbers under Difficulty                                 |
| Clock             | Day 1 morning to Day 7 dusk; two daylight watches per day                                      |
| Scoring           | One eligible right ear or verified captive = one tally = 5 gp                                  |
| Main prize        | Highest tally: 200 gp plus Foxwake; ties split as written                                      |
| Quarry            | A: 6; B: 8; C: 6; D: 8. Maximum 28 party tallies                                               |
| Rival targets     | Slate Kites 18; Copper Talons 21, reduced to 17 if fraud is proved                             |
| Resource pressure | Search, travel and confrontation each cost a watch; night push forfeits that night's long rest |
| Safe bed          | Ironwake or Hearthspring; secured hunt sites are safe too                                      |
| Deadline          | Proof delivered to G1 by the end of Day 7's afternoon watch                                    |

Preparation: give the party the charter and route map; put fourteen daylight boxes and seven night boxes on the table. Keep a separate quarry ledger, a rival ledger and each character's ordinary HP, spells and Hit Dice. Read Clock and Rest and Encounters 2, 3, 4 and 6 before play. The route map is a travel network; only the kiln map measures combat squares.

Table budget: opening and rules 20 minutes; route planning and tracking 25; four hunts 100-120; camps and rival meeting 20; last return and count 15. Resolve empty travel watches in one sentence. Never add wandering fights to fill a travel roll. For a three-hour table, use Quick Hunts for A and B and play C and D tactically; for a longer tactical session, roll initiative at all four sites.

## Hook

The party arrives at Ironwake's mercenary quarter when Durn announces seven days of enhanced bounty payments. A company needs a name, four signatures or marks, and a willingness to return before the count. There is no entry fee. Each registrant receives seven days of ordinary rations and a numbered proof satchel; Durn posts the rival totals where everyone can see them. Foxwake hangs behind her desk under guard.

Ask the players to name their company and choose a motive: prize bow, money, a guild introduction, rivalry with Tessa, or a reputation worth future contracts. A character can know Tessa from earlier work; she remembers competence rather than an invented betrayal. Anyone may decline or withdraw. Accepted bounties still pay even if the party abandons the race.

## Stakes

The public prize is fixed, but each expedition risks HP, spell slots, Hit Dice, time and the proof already carried. Tell the party the current watch, known route costs and public rival scores before it commits. Crossing the last edge home on Day 7 afternoon is on time; arriving after a night push is late. Ordinary 5 gp bounties remain payable on Day 8, but late proof cannot win the derby.

A fallen adventurer uses normal death saves. Rivals prefer surrender to murder, but the raiders are dangerous combatants. A defeated company can retreat, bargain away some unbanked proof, or ask for help. Earned banked credit cannot be stolen. No item has a surprise curse and no patron repudiates an honest contract.

## Factions

The Ironwake Warrant Office wants four roads made safe and reliable proof. Mara Durn can pay warrants, certify prisoners and settle ownership disputes. Her sanction is disqualification for intentional fraud or attacks on registered hunters, not confiscation of honest wages. Clerks log sealed bags immediately, even if the full audit happens later.

The Slate Kites are Tessa Venn and three steady hunters. They want the purse, but will lose a watch to save someone. At their roadside meeting, they offer information for an equal share of a jointly cleared site. Helping them protects their schedule; abandoning them to a danger the party created can cost the party their future support.

The Copper Talons are Orven Pike and three aggressive hunters. They want first place without taking the kiln's risk. Orven carries four old proofs from a prior contract and later adds them to his deposits. He will offer a trade, challenge a claim or lie to a clerk. He will not arrange an invisible offscreen theft, teleport across the map, or ambush sleeping characters because the score is inconvenient.

## THE IRONWAKE MERCENARY QUARTER

# FORTRESS WALL

G4 NORTH WICKET



Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

# THE RIMEPLAIN CIRCUIT

Player route map | Ironwake local hunting district | Diagram not to scale

The diagram illustrates a circular route through the Rimeplain Circuit. The route starts at G IRONWAKE, proceeds to S HEARTSPRING, then to A SPLITSTONE, C CINDER FORD, D ASHPIT KILN, B SEDGE HOLLOW, and finally returns to G IRONWAKE. Each segment is labeled with the distance and the number of watches required. There are also labels for '6 warranted raiders' near several locations.

Printed links are routes, not straight-line distances. One cross-country shortcut attempt is allowed.  
Two daylight watches per day. Return to G before Day 7 dusk. No unprinted link is automatically safe.

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## Locations

### Location: The Mercenary Quarter

Ironwake's mercenary quarter sits outside the northern fortress wall. Five minutes on foot connects any two keyed buildings. Registration, basic buying and the final count happen outside the expedition clock; a return during the week can deposit proof as part of its travel watch. Shopping beyond the listed kit or lengthy urban investigations cost the next daylight watch.

G1 Bounty board and counting window: Durn, posted charter, daily scores, and prize bow. G2 The Crooked Ladle: a communal eating hall where Tessa and Orven begin Day 1. G3 Rope and Resin: supplies and guide Jori. G4 North wicket: path into the hunting district, watched at all hours. G5 Stable court: secure party camp and prisoner reception. G6 Infirmary tent: ordinary treatment and healing draughts for sale. A cot costs 1 gp per person per night; the stable court is free and grants the same rest.

At G3, 5 gp buys a party rope-and-stakes kit, 5 gp a party waterproof camp sheet, 2 gp a marked route sketch, and 1 gp one extra person's daily rations. Each company receives the route handout freely; the purchasable sketch grants its mechanical benefit below. There are four healing draughts for sale at 50 gp each. No free resurrection service is assumed.

### Location: The Rimeplain Circuit

Every printed route edge is six rough miles and costs one six-hour watch on foot, including scouting and ordinary obstacles. Nodes have enough firm ground for a camp. Do not infer shortcuts from the drawing's spacing. The network has exactly these edges: G-S, S-A, A-C, C-D, D-B, B-S. G is Ironwake, S Hearthspring, A Splitstone, B Sedge Hollow, C Cinder Ford, D Ashpit Kiln. No other route is automatically safe or charted.

One cross-country shortcut may be attempted per company per week between any two nonadjacent wilderness nodes other than G. Spend one watch and make DC 15 Wisdom (Survival), with advantage if Jori's route lesson was earned. On success arrive at the chosen node; on failure end at the starting node, with the next attempt barred for this contest. Flight that can carry the whole group and baggage for twelve miles during that watch crosses up to two connected edges without a check; brief combat flight alone does not establish that range. A real teleport to a known destination is instantaneous and costs no watch. Honor abilities; do not invent a storm to cancel them.

Hearthspring S has a fenced spring, a firepit and an honest caretaker, Jori's brother Davi. No fee, no surprise ambush, no hunting score. Davi records where companies said they were going; he knows no hidden quarry positions. He can tell the party which route each rival claimed to take, never the exact state of their HP. Camps at cleared sites are safe for the rest of the derby. At an uncleared node the party may camp one mile back along its arrival trail without another travel watch. It cannot rest inside the occupied

encounter area. A field camp needs DC 12 Survival, with advantage from the waterproof camp sheet. Success gives normal rest; failure means wet bedding: after normal recovery each camper spends one Hit Die without healing, or loses 4 HP if it has no Hit Die, never dropping below 1 HP. This is a single homebrew exposure cost, not another encounter. A rope-and-stakes kit prevents that cost for two campers. A cleared site, S, G or suitable magical shelter avoids this check.

## Clock and Rest

This is the authoritative expedition procedure. Each day has Morning (06:00-12:00), Afternoon (12:00-18:00), and Night (18:00-06:00). A daylight watch is six hours. The night normally contains an eight-hour long rest and four hours of meals, watches and camp chores. Begin Day 1 at G with both daylight watches available. At the end of Day 7 afternoon, the contest closes.

1. Declare one company action: Travel one edge, Search the current hunt site, Confront a located quarry, Recover, or Wait. Mark one daylight box and resolve it. Everyone normally shares the action. Splitting the company creates separate positions and encounters; unused characters do not add party actions at the same location.

2. Travel arrives before that watch ends. Deposit at G immediately without another action. Search identifies the quarry as described below. Confront includes approach, combat or negotiation, proof collection and making the cleared site safe. A surrendered group is a cleared site. Recovery is a short rest with ordinary Hit Dice, plus repair and food; it grants no automatic full healing. Waiting spends time without recovery unless the party also meets rest requirements.

3. At night choose Rest or Push. Rest at G, S, a cleared site, a field camp or a secure magical refuge grants a normal eight-hour long rest, at most once per 24 hours, with the usual HP, spell and Hit Dice recovery. Each character consumes one ration and needs water; springs exist at G and S, streams at B and C, and carried water suffices elsewhere. A rest without food or water does not reduce Derby Fatigue. Apply normal rules for prolonged deprivation, not a new overnight starvation penalty.

4. Push grants one extra six-hour action from 18:00 to midnight, followed by only six hours before dawn. Each participant gains one Derby Fatigue and gets at most a short rest that night. No HP or spell slots reset as a long rest. A character can instead complete a long rest into the next morning, but then spends that entire Morning watch on it. It may still benefit only once per 24 hours.

5. Derby Fatigue is a module condition: subtract its level from attack rolls, saving throws and ability checks, never damage or AC. Maximum 3; a character at 3 cannot voluntarily Push again. One fed, watered long rest removes one level. This replaces forced-march checks for the printed routes and pushes; do not also impose exhaustion for those same actions. Other sources of exhaustion still use their normal rules. Lesser restoration does not remove this

expedition condition; greater restoration removes one level.

6. At dawn record the previous day's ending rival totals; on Day 7 update again at the final dusk count. At dusk narrate one visible sign: a worsening boot seam, a dwindling healing supply, smoke from a known camp. These have no unlisted mechanical tax. State position, next watch and held proof. Ask for the next action.

Short rests inside an active encounter follow ordinary timing if the situation permits; otherwise Recover owns the daylight cost. Searching already takes a working watch, so it does not also grant a short rest. Elven trance or a feature that explicitly shortens a long rest may fit into the six hours after a Push; honor it for that character, while the others remain unrested. It also removes one fatigue if fed and watered. Secure magical shelter solves exposure and safety, not the time limit.

Proof is weight-light ordinary baggage in the provided satchel; track its count, not gore. A slain eligible creature provides one right ear; another ear from it scores nothing. A surrender witness voucher has identical value. Captives disarm, give their names or marks, and wait under parole at the cleared camp for Durn's patrol; escort is available, not required. Durn's scouts verify them after the count. The party must not promise an execution or cut a living captive. A false voucher is fraud. The four printed groups are warrant-eligible; innocents, wandering travelers, rival hunters and creatures outside these warrants score zero.

If a raid goes badly, withdrawal spends the current watch but does not erase earlier trophies. Surviving raiders keep their current HP and spent resources until they receive an undisturbed night; they then heal fully. Slain or captured raiders never respawn. A site becomes cleared only when every listed opponent is killed, captured or has permanently left under a negotiated surrender. Fugitives still at large provide no tally. Note individually taken proof so returning later cannot duplicate it.

## Search and Preparation

On the first Search at A, B, C or D, a lead tracker makes DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation). Someone proficient in a relevant skill may Help. Good descriptions can choose the skill, but no mandatory special build is needed. Success locates the quarry and gives one Edge for that site: bypass its printed hazard, choose the party's entry on its tactical plan, or give all PCs advantage on initiative there. Write the chosen Edge down. Failure still locates the quarry, but grants no Edge; the site's lookout has noticed fresh signs and neither side is surprised in a confrontation that day. No player loses the hunt because of one tracking roll.

A second Search at that site automatically grants one Edge; it replaces, never stacks with, an existing one. A mapped location can be shared with rivals, and purchased quarry information substitutes for Search as specified by an encounter. Normal stealth checks can establish surprise after a successful Search or purchased location, except a failed Search has already alerted the occupants for that day;

an Edge alone does not make enemies surprised. Fresh tracks, smoke, stolen cargo marks and captive testimony distinguish the warranted groups from other travelers.

## Quick Hunts

For A and B only, the group may replace tactical combat with this openly declared abstraction. They must first locate the quarry. Spend one Confront watch. Choose two different PCs for two different checks: DC 13 Survival to surround, Stealth to approach, Athletics to block escape, or Intimidation to force a surrender after demonstrating a credible advantage. Each chosen PC rolls once; advantage from a relevant spell applies normally. An unused Search Edge gives one roll advantage instead of its tactical benefit. At least one success clears the site and grants all its available tallies. Both failures yield half its still-available tallies, rounded down (untouched A gives 3, B gives 4); the remaining raiders scatter and cannot be hunted again this week. Either result clears the camp and leaves its listed salvage behind; only the tally count changes.

After the rolls, every PC chooses either to spend one available Hit Die without healing, or lose 6 HP that cannot reduce it below 1 HP. One success or fewer also costs the company a second such payment from two different PCs. Two successes avoid that extra payment. These are exertion costs, not attack damage; resistance does not halve them. Before choosing a Quick Hunt, each participant must be able to pay twice: at least two Hit Dice, one Hit Die and at least 7 HP, or at least 13 HP. Otherwise resolve the confrontation tactically or retreat. A single payment needs one Hit Die or at least 7 current HP; the check above reserves enough for either outcome. The abstraction cannot kill someone, and it cannot be used on C, D or rival hunters. It preserves the risk of losing score while making a four-hunt session fit one evening.

## Tracks before trophies. Player-safe wilderness illustration.



Tracks before trophies

A worked winning route: Day 1 G-S, S-A; Day 2 Search A, Confront A; Day 3 A-C, Search C; Day 4 Confront C, C-D, then Push Search D; Day 5 Confront D, D-B; Day 6 Search B, Confront B; Day 7 B-S, S-G. This uses all fourteen daylight watches plus one Push. Nights after Days 1 and 5 use field camps, with the exposure procedure; the other resting nights are at cleared sites. Day 4 is short and leaves fatigue for the kiln until the next fed long rest. The party has 28 tallies if each confrontation succeeds. It can instead spend its one shortcut attempt from C to B to change the circuit, buy a located site from Orven, negotiate surrender quickly within Confront, or accept fewer tallies and rest. Surrender does not itself refund a watch.

## Rival Ledger

These are banked cumulative totals at the end of each day, with Day 7 counted at dusk. Rivals hunt beyond the four player sites; they never quietly remove the party's quarry. Public clerks or Davi relay the most recent posted total whenever the party reaches G or S. Away from those nodes, it knows only the last report. The DM uses the fixed totals regardless of that uncertainty.

| DAY | SLATE KITES | COPPER TALONS | COPPER TALONS FRAUD INCLUDED |
|-----|-------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1   | 0           | 2             | 0                            |
| 2   | 3           | 5             | 0                            |
| 3   | 6           | 9             | 0                            |
| 4   | 8           | 12            | 0                            |
| 5   | 12          | 15            | 2                            |
| 6   | 15          | 18            | 4                            |
| 7   | 18          | 21            | 4                            |

Modifiers are additive and must be recorded when earned. Tessa's shared hunt removes 4 from her future baseline total, never below her already banked amount; add her actual shared tallies separately. Orven's verified fraud subtracts only the four old proofs from his final 21, leaving 17 honest tallies for wages and disqualifying the Copper Talons from the champion prize. If he withdraws after a fight, freeze his current banked genuine score and delete future additions; retain submitted false proofs until the audit rejects them. Do not apply an invented score swing for insults or a failed persuasion roll. If rival members die or are incapacitated, freeze that company's future additions; the schedule assumes all four members remain able to hunt.

Proof already banked belongs to the named company. Joint hunts divide newly secured tallies by agreement before play; absent a different agreement, split evenly, with an odd one going to the party. Tessa pays nothing for a split she never agreed to. Each actual tally can be credited once, so combined ownership cannot exceed the site's printed population.

## Scenes

### Scene 1: Names on the Board

**Runtime:** 20 minutes. **Objective:** register and choose a route. **Stakes:** know the clock and prize before risking resources.

#### READ-ALoud

Inside the counting shed, brass clips hold numbered bags above a ledger. A grey-cloaked woman marks a route with a blunt knife. Across from her, a man in red gloves drops three coins onto the counter, one at a time. The quartermaster slides you a blank charter. "You can argue over whose route is cleverest after you have read the deadline."

Run Encounter 1. Explain all core clock rules and give both player handouts before the first departure. Let the party buy supplies and hear each rival's opening line. Nobody spends a watch for asking basic questions here. Success: the party leaves with a chosen first target and complete scoring rules. Failure or refusal: it can take ordinary bounties without registering; use the same hunts but no champion prize. Next: Scene 2 at the first Search, with camps and rival meetings inserted when triggered.

### Scene 2: A Week Written in Tracks

**Runtime:** 70-100 minutes across the week. **Objective:** find and clear selected A, B and C hunts. **Stakes:** finite quarry versus available watches.

#### READ-ALoud

Beyond the wicket, the paving ends under brown water. A split stone carries six old knife marks. One trail climbs toward low cairns; another follows reeds bent across the mud. There are bootprints in both, and a broken wagon peg lies beside the stone.

This opener is for the first departure; use each hunt's sensory cue on later arrivals. Ask the players to mark travel and Search before resolving Encounters 2-4. After every confrontation, count held proof and confirm whether the site is now safe. A clue at any cleared hunt points to D's lime-whitened tracks; it identifies the route, not its exact quarry, so D still needs Search. Success: secure tallies and information. Failure: retain located sites, spent time and partial proof; retreat or try another target. Next: Scene 3 at the first eligible rival meeting, or Scene 4 if the party chooses D directly.

### Scene 3: Other People's Miles

**Runtime:** 15-20 minutes. **Objective:** bargain with rivals or keep moving. **Stakes:** shared information, divided credit and evidence of cheating.

#### READ-ALoud

At Hearthspring, a grey cloak hangs over a limping hunter's shoulders. Red gloves turn a small waxed packet near the fire. The man wearing them closes his hand as you approach. "Fine weather for a friendly arrangement," he says. Beside the spring, the woman in grey looks up. "Friendly arrangements usually begin with the price."

Trigger this meeting the first time the party enters S on Days 3-6; all four members of each rival team are stopping briefly. If it never visits then, leave the meeting unused. No meeting means no packet witness; the final ledger audit remains available. Run Encounter 5; the conversation is part of that travel watch. The limping hunter is sore, not incapacitated; Tessa's schedule continues unless modified. Success: a bargain, useful proof or a clean refusal. Failure: rivalry hardens, but there is no required clue here. Next: another hunt, rest, or the last return; Scene 4 remains optional.

Scene 4: The Biggest Bag

**Runtime:** 35-45 minutes. **Objective:** deal with Ashpit Kiln's eight raiders. **Stakes:** enough score to change the lead, against a coordinated force.

READ-ALoud

White dust coats an abandoned kiln below a broken loading platform. A cart blocks the west gap in its yard. Someone has hung stolen cooking pots from a wire above it, and a low voice counts sacks behind the wall. On the upper path, a sentry shakes grit from a boot.

Use Encounter 6 after D is searched. If the party has already cleared three sites, say plainly that its available score here can beat the posted rivals; do not promise safety. The site can be captured, bypassed, raided in stages or left alone. Success: secure its remaining eligible tallies and salvage. Failure: surviving enemies keep their state and the party may withdraw. Next: plan a route home, with Scene 5 beginning upon final arrival.

Scene 5: The Last Bell

**Runtime:** 15 minutes. **Objective:** submit proof and settle the contest. **Stakes:** deadline, honest count and one public winner.

READ-ALoud

Lamps hang above the counting window. Every new bag makes the waiting crowd lean forward. Durn spreads a clean cloth across the desk and places a brass bell beside the ledger. The prize bow rests within reach. "Put your company name on what you brought. Complaints come with evidence. The bell decides when we stop."

If arriving after dusk, replace the last sentence with "The bell has rung. I can pay tomorrow's ordinary bounty." Run Encounter 7. Sum actual banked and timely delivered tallies, then apply documented rival modifiers. Success: pay the earned result; failure or late arrival: pay ordinary bounties and honor rescues without a derby prize. Next: Resolution Paths and the company's next contract. Do not add a final boss after the competition resolves.

Encounter Matrix

| ENCOUNTER               | TYPE AND TIME                      | DECISION                                  | CONSEQUENCE                           |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Charter and breakfast | Social; before clock               | Kit, route and guide                      | Preparation advantage or saved coin   |
| 2 Splitstone A          | Tracking; Search + Confront        | Quick hunt, flank or surrender            | Up to 6 tallies; secured camp         |
| 3 Sedge Hollow B        | Tracking/hazard; Search + Confront | Bypass snare lane or drive trappers out   | Up to 8 tallies; supply recovery      |
| 4 Cinder Ford C         | Tactical; Search + Confront        | Divide formation, parley or frontal fight | Up to 6 tallies; rope bridge shortcut |
| 5 Hearthspring rivals   | Social; within travel              | Share, buy, challenge or refuse           | Rival modifier or fraud evidence      |
| 6 Ashpit Kiln D         | Tactical; Search + Confront        | Entry, alarm, elevation and morale        | Up to 8 tallies; magic salvage        |
| 7 Final audit           | Social; at deadline                | Evidence, splits and claims               | Exact pay, prize and renown           |

Encounters

Encounter 1: Charter and Breakfast

Setup: G1 and G2 before Day 1 morning. Durn explains all printed rules without a check. Jori offers a ten-minute route lesson in exchange for 5 gp or help mending his cart. DC 12 Athletics, carpenter's tools or Persuasion with an offer to escort his next wagon earns it free; failure leaves the 5 gp option. The lesson grants advantage on the week's single shortcut check. The 2 gp route sketch instead gives advantage on one Search, then remains an ordinary map. They are separate purchases.

Tessa offers, "Nobody applauds a full night's sleep. Take it anyway." Orven points at D: "Eight in one yard. My advice is free; the rescue won't be." Both statements are true enough. Orven will also sell one quarry location now for 15 gp, on the accurate-information terms in Encounter 5; paying before departure can save the Search watch needed for a full sweep. An Insight check DC 12 notices Orven studies the other teams' bags more than the routes; it is suspicion, not proof of fraud. Threatening the officials ends special favors but does not hide the rules.

Escalation: none; registration is a fair starting line. Success: supplies and a route advantage if earned. Failure: depart with the free charter, map and rations. Transition: G-S is the first travel watch. Tessa and Orven leave on their own routes; they are not follower NPCs.

## Encounter 2: Splitstone

Setup: A, a low rubble ridge with a stolen trader's yellow pennant. Six warranted goblin raiders use three breast-high cairns. Tracks show dragging heels and a six-person cooking fire. Search reveals these facts and the two approaches, a shallow gully or open crest. Sensory cue: a tin pan clanks against a cairn in the wind.

Opposition: six Goblin Raiders, 9 HP each. On an open 60-by-40-foot field, cairns at (15,15), (30,25) and (45,15) are five-foot squares providing half cover. Place two goblins beside each. PCs enter along x=0 or, with the entry Edge, x=60. The gully along y=0 grants half cover while prone; standing costs normal movement. No hidden pit or reinforcements.

Tactics: goblins shoot from cover and use Nimble Escape to withdraw when engaged. At three defeated, the survivors offer surrender if permitted a chance to speak. They identify D's stolen cargo and the C-D trail. A displayed escape blockade and DC 13 Intimidation can cause this surrender before combat; failure means they demand a safe exit without credit. The party can accept that no-score dispersal and still clear the site, or fight. Surrender credit requires the parole voucher. Quick Hunt is available.

Success: up to six tallies, 12 gp in abandoned trade tokens that the charter awards as salvage, and a safe camp. Failure: partial proof and a known ridge; fleeing goblins take no party trophies. Transition: A-C or A-S, or rest here if cleared. No additional encounter occurs merely because a hunt ended early.

## Encounter 3: Sedge Hollow

Setup: B, a 60-by-60-foot reed flat surrounding a 20-foot dry island. Eight Goblin Raiders keep stolen flour there. Two visible rope loops cross the west approach. Search finds the loops even on failure; an Edge can bypass them. Sensory cue: flour has spilled into a puddle and dried into a pale crust.

A 10-foot-wide firm strip runs from west edge (0,30) to island center (30,30); all other reeds are difficult terrain, knee-deep rather than swimmable. A creature that first crosses x=15 on the strip triggers a snare: DC 13 Dexterity save or restrained, with its foot lifted five feet. Action DC 12 Athletics or cutting AC 10, 5 HP rope frees it. The one trap then stays spent. Cutting a noticed loop from safety automatically disables it; the goblins see an obvious approach and are not surprised. There is no unavoidable trap damage.

Opposition: eight Goblin Raiders, four on the island, two at (45,15), two at (45,45). PCs enter west; entry Edge may choose the north or south edge. They use bows and withdraw through reeds, but the first credible offer of parole after three fall prompts surrender. Before combat, burning a small visible patch of unoccupied reeds or demonstrating control of both exits earns DC 13 Intimidation to surrender; do not ignite a whole marsh automatically. Quick Hunt is available and includes the snare pressure in its costs.

Escalation: on round 3, two goblins try to carry the flour east; they need two rounds to reach the boundary. Leaving the map lets them escape, for no tally. Stopping them is optional. Success: up to eight tallies, two healing draughts and 20 gp authorized salvage. Failure: keep defeated targets' proof; the island remains occupied. Transition: B-D or B-S. Captured trappers say the kiln's alarm wire is attached to pots, granting knowledge of the visible alarm but not an extra Search Edge.

## Encounter 4: Cinder Ford

Setup: C, six Hobgoblin Roadguards extorting traders. A 10-foot-wide, knee-deep stream crosses x=25-35 on a 70-by-50-foot area. It is difficult terrain, with no swept-away save. A wagon at (45,25), ten by ten feet, grants half cover. PCs enter x=0; three roadguards stand at x=20, y=10/25/40, and three at x=45, y=10/25/40. Entry Edge permits north or south entry, never automatic capture of all opponents.

Sensory cue: six shields lean on spear points in perfect pairs; a trader's mule waits behind the wagon. Search reveals paired formation and a loose rope stretched along the stream. An action at either bank can cut it; it is a hauling rope, not a lethal trap. Two creatures can spend actions together to pull the wagon ten feet into the stream, creating cover between ranks. No check if both have Strength 10 or higher; otherwise one DC 12 Athletics check by a puller.

Tactics: roadguards pair up to use Formation Strike, focus on armed threats and accept surrender at two or fewer standing. A surrender negotiation before combat needs a credible offer of safe treatment plus DC 15 Persuasion, or showing that their other supply camps A and B are cleared, which succeeds without a roll. They do not surrender simply because their species is named in a warrant. Failure leaves an offer: pay 10 gp and pass without fighting or scoring. They then remain an uncleared site. Liberating the mule is incidental; it has no combat objective timer.

Success: up to six tallies, 30 gp salvage and their trail note. The note allows one C-S journey in a single watch, once this week, without the shortcut roll and without consuming that separate attempt. Mark its use. This is an unprinted footbridge route disclosed by actual discovery. Failure: retreat west, preserving taken proof. Transition: C-D, C-A or the discovered C-S shortcut. This fight is the first test of the party's remaining healing; state available rest locations before it commits.

## Encounter 5: The Shared Fire

Setup: S on the first eligible Days 3-6 arrival. Tessa offers to help on one future C or D confrontation: she contributes two Hunter statistics, representing herself and a companion. Split that site's actual tallies equally and remove 4 from her future baseline as described in Rival Ledger. She moves with the party from S until that one hunt resolves, then departs. Her allies use the same rest and fatigue rules as PCs, and cannot donate infinite healing or gear. She refuses a suicide attack when either ally is below half HP until rested. The party can refuse with no score penalty.

Orven offers the location of any one unsearched site for 15 gp or two held tallies, transferred to his company. Buying the location skips that site's Search but grants no Edge; record a source note so the DM does not later demand a roll. His information is accurate. Threats do not make it free. Buying the location saves one watch and can increase his score.

Evidence: anyone watching his waxed packet may make DC 13 Perception; success sees four already clipped, blue-cured right ears. Jori's free charter explanation says this week's fresh proofs get a round notch only when banked; last month's contract used a triangular clip and blue curing salt. On a failed look, an offered 5 gp wager that Orven cannot show a fresh proof gets him to expose one of the old clips while boasting; if no one tries, no clue is forced. Tessa will testify to what she actually saw. A packet sketch plus a named witness is sufficient to request Durn inspect his later numbered deposits; the physical packet need not be stolen.

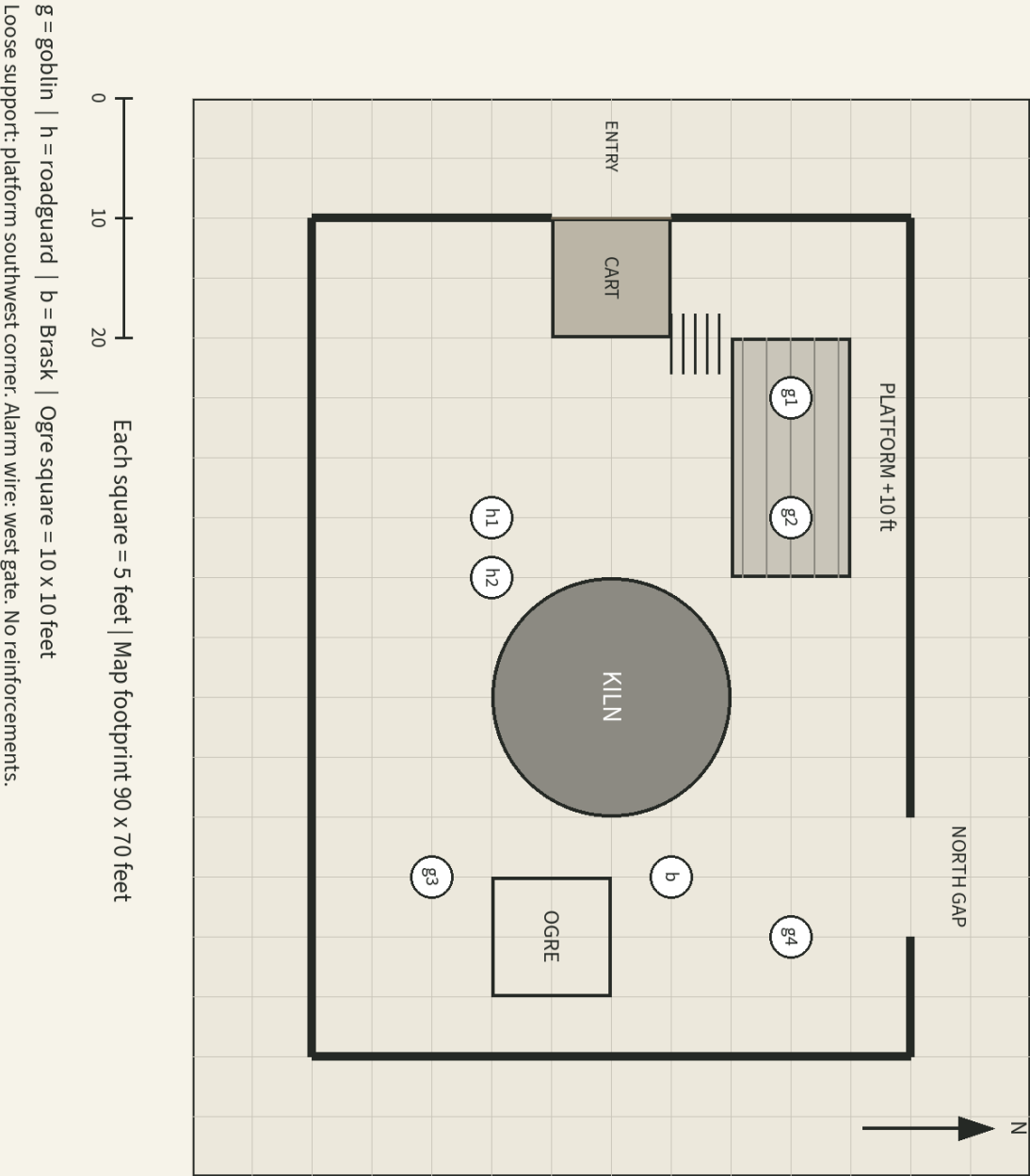
If challenged, Orven says, "Old? You can smell a calendar now?" DC 14 Persuasion with the observed clip persuades his nervous companion Senn to confirm the packet is from last month's job. Failure leaves the original witness evidence valid. Orven can leave, deny or offer 20 gp for silence. He does not erase a witnessed fact. Accepting that bribe bars using Senn's testimony, not a clerk's independent records; Durn condemns bribery but still pays honest bounties.

A fight involves four Hunters on each rival side, but the Slate Kites defend themselves or separate combatants, never automatically join the party's attack. Use Orven and three Hunters for the Copper Talons. Each side surrenders when its leader reaches half HP or two members fall. Attacking them without immediate self-defense disqualifies the aggressor's company from the champion prize. Keep this a social contest unless players choose otherwise. Success: clear bargain or evidence. Failure: information remains purchasable and raw scoring still wins. Transition: resume chosen route with no extra travel watch for this conversation.

# Ashpit Kiln DM deployment

## ASHPIT KILN

DM deployment plan



Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

## Encounter 6: Ashpit Kiln

Setup: D. Eight eligible opponents: four Goblin Raiders, two Hobgoblin Roadguards, one Bugbear Enforcer and one Ogre Yardboss. Complete statistics appear below. Search reveals all types and approximate numbers. It also spots the pot alarm, the low north entry and a loose platform support; do not require a second perception roll to receive these facts.

The tactical map is 90 feet east-west by 70 north-south, every square five feet. Southwest is (0,0). A five-foot-high yard wall follows x=10-80, y=10-60, with a ten-foot west gate at y=30-40 and a ten-foot north gap at x=60-70. Climbing it costs ten extra feet, no check. The roofless kiln is a solid circular obstacle centered (50,35), radius 10 feet, granting total cover through its footprint. The platform occupies x=20-40, y=45-55 at ten feet high; stairs rise from (20,40). It grants half cover at its low railing. A laden cart fills x=10-20, y=30-40; it blocks walking through the gate until pushed ten feet by an action and DC 12 Athletics, or climbed using ten extra feet. The party can go around the wall instead.

Start two goblins on the platform at (25,50) and (35,50), two at (65,20) and (70,50). Roadguards stand (35,25) and (40,25), bugbear (65,40), ogre (70,30). PCs begin west outside x=10 or with entry Edge north of the north gap. All listed spaces fit the creatures; the ogre occupies a ten-foot square centered near its marked point. White dots and letters on the DM map are initial positions, not automatic player knowledge.

Alarm: a visible wire across the west gate rattles pots. An adjacent action with a blade cuts it without a roll; crossing without cutting alerts everyone and prevents surprise. That is all it does: no extra monsters spawn. North entry avoids it. If Search failed, the sentries are alert regardless. A group Stealth check against the highest observer passive Perception (13 for Brask, 10 if he is not observing that entry) can surprise the raiders after a successful Search or purchased location and an approach without the alarm. A failed Search alerts them for that day; waiting until another day allows another approach, not automatic surprise.

On round 1, the ogre throws a sack at the nearest armed intruder and shouts for the cart to be held. Hobgoblins pair up; goblins shoot from cover. Bugbear moves to anyone threatening the platform or prisoners. There are no civilian hostages. On round 2, the ogre advances into melee, opening room around the kiln for flanking routes. At four opponents defeated or the ogre down, remaining goblins offer surrender; the bugbear and roadguards withdraw through the north gap unless offered parole. Escaping creatures provide no score.

Platform trick: an action by someone adjacent to (20,45) can pull the visibly loose support with DC 12 Athletics, or strike it AC 12, 10 HP. On success the platform drops ten feet. Occupants make DC 12 Dexterity saves, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage and falling prone on failure, half damage without prone on success. Once collapsed it is difficult terrain at ground level. Nobody under the platform at collapse is hit because its underside is filled with old

stone, as shown on the map.

Parley: the bugbear, Brask, wants a route out of the derby. Present proof that A and C are cleared plus a lawful parole offer and he persuades all eight to surrender without a check. With only one of those sites cleared, DC 15 Persuasion earns surrender; failure earns a counteroffer to abandon the kiln without submitting proofs. Accepting clears the site but yields zero tallies. With neither site cleared, they demand 40 gp for safe passage instead; that neither clears the camp nor buys bounties. They prefer a safe surrender to dying for stolen cargo.

Retreat is possible through either opening or over the low wall. Raiders pursue only to the map edge, then return to defend cargo. If the company drops all held unbanked proof, they stop pursuing sooner; that proof remains recoverable in the kiln unless a later retreat leaves it again. Do not remove banked score. Defeat uses normal death saves; a conscious surrender lets survivors stabilize allies and accept captivity until Durn's post-derby patrol on Day 8, losing the champion opportunity but not already banked wages. A total party death is possible if no one survives to surrender.

Success: up to eight tallies, 40 gp salvage and the Surestep Brooch in the ogre's unlocked cash box. The box can be stolen even without clearing the site using ordinary stealth and access; that grants no automatic tallies. Failure: spend the watch, retain escaped survivors and any carried proof. Transition: choose the last route to G. Day 7's deadline does not move.

## Encounter 7: Count What Came Home

Durn adds timely banked proof and accepted parole vouchers, then checks the printed rival totals and recorded changes. Honest deposits require no Persuasion roll. A bag arriving during the final watch qualifies even if inspection finishes after the bell. A courier may carry it for the company; the party need not all return, but absent prisoners cannot sign a fabricated surrender. A familiar may carry light proof normally if its carrying capacity and instructions permit.

Fraud audit: anyone with the observed old clip and a witness, Senn's statement, or a prior-contract receipt can request inspection. The public deposit ledger itself shows Orven's last-month packet number reused on Days 5 and 6; ten minutes of looking finds it without a roll. This fallback is available only at the final count, so it cannot become a free early clue. Durn opens the corresponding bags and rejects exactly four old proofs. No charisma contest overturns physical evidence. Without a request, she pays the ordinary cursory count and the Copper Talons keep 21 for the derby. If investigated after prizes were awarded, she corrects wages but does not seize a prize already handed to an honest winner; use a later restitution claim against Orven if he won by fraud.

Disputed site ownership is settled by the pre-hunt agreement, numbered voucher or witness, not by an improvised roll to steal another team's earned score. If facts genuinely remain unresolved, disputed tallies do not enter

either score before the deadline, and their 5 gp wages are held for later settlement. This never affects undisputed proof.

Success: settle the champion, ordinary bounty and renown. Failure: late or disputed proof still leads to a later honest payment. Transition: read the fitting ending, record the final ledger and end the one-shot.

## Creatures and Rival Statistics

All listed creatures are original streamlined fifth-edition combatants. No tested challenge rating is claimed. Use normal initiative, actions, cover, opportunity attacks and death saves for PCs. Raiders reaching 0 HP die unless reduced by a nonlethal melee attack or the DM uses ordinary unconsciousness; captured unconscious raiders can receive vouchers after stabilization. Monster morale applies when their next turn begins. They understand Common and their own community language.

### Monster: Goblin Raider

Small humanoid; AC 14; HP 9; speed 30 feet. STR 8 (-1), DEX 14 (+2), CON 10 (+0), INT 10 (+0), WIS 10 (+0), CHA 8 (-1). Proficiency +2; Stealth +4; passive Perception 10; darkvision 60 feet; no special saves, resistances or immunities. Scimitar: action, melee +4, reach 5 feet, one target, 1d6+2 slashing. Shortbow: action, ranged +4, range 80/320 feet, one target, 1d6+2 piercing. Nimble Escape: bonus action Disengage or Hide. One attack per action; mundane weapons. Carries enough arrows for its printed encounter.

### Monster: Hobgoblin Roadguard

Medium humanoid; AC 16; HP 16; speed 30 feet. STR 14 (+2), DEX 12 (+1), CON 12 (+1), INT 10 (+0), WIS 10 (+0), CHA 10 (+0). Proficiency +2; passive Perception 10; darkvision 60 feet; no special saves, skills, resistances or immunities. Spear: action, +4 melee reach 5 feet or ranged 20/60, one target, 1d8+2 piercing. Formation Strike: once on its own turn, add 1d6 damage on a hit if an ally is within 5 feet of the target and not incapacitated. One attack per action; shield is included in AC, and the listed spear die is an explicit custom statistic.

### Monster: Bugbear Enforcer

Medium humanoid; AC 15; HP 38; speed 30 feet. STR 16 (+3), DEX 12 (+1), CON 14 (+2), INT 10 (+0), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 10 (+0). Proficiency +2; Stealth +3, Perception +3, passive Perception 13; darkvision 60 feet. No special saves, resistances or immunities. Heavy club: action, melee +5, reach 10 feet, one target, 2d8+3 bludgeoning. Thrown club: action, ranged +5, 20/60 feet, one target, 1d6+3 bludgeoning. Has two thrown clubs. One attack per action; no surprise damage bonus. Brask uses these statistics.

### Monster: Ogre Yardboss

Large giant; AC 12; HP 68; speed 30 feet. STR 18 (+4), DEX 8 (-1), CON 16 (+3), INT 7 (-2), WIS 10 (+0), CHA 8 (-1). Proficiency +2; passive Perception 10; darkvision 60 feet; no special saves, skills, resistances or immunities. Maul: action, melee +6, reach 5 feet, one target, 2d8+4 bludgeoning. Hurlled sack: action, ranged +6, 30/90 feet, one target, 2d6+4 bludgeoning; two sacks available. One attack per action. It occupies a 10-foot square and cannot walk through the kiln obstacle or cart.

### Monster: Hunter

Medium humanoid; AC 15; HP 32; speed 30 feet. STR 12 (+1), DEX 16 (+3), CON 12 (+1), INT 10 (+0), WIS 14 (+2), CHA 10 (+0). Proficiency +2; Survival +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5, passive Perception 14; ordinary vision; no special saves, resistances or immunities. Multiattack: two shortsword or shortbow attacks. Shortsword: melee +5, reach 5 feet, 1d6+3 piercing. Shortbow: ranged +5, 80/320 feet, 1d6+3 piercing. Bonus action once per encounter: move half speed without provoking opportunity attacks. Each carries one healing draught, usable as an action; no other spellcasting. Tessa, Orven, Senn and their companions use these statistics; allies track HP, arrows reasonably and spent draughts normally.

## Difficulty and Capability

For three level-5 characters, halve the number of goblins at A and B and remove one roadguard from C. At D remove two goblins and reduce ogre HP to 50. Keep printed score totals by awarding the missing creatures as already surrendered captives at each cleared site; no extra attacks come from them. For five level-5 characters, increase roadguard HP to 22 and ogre HP to 85, and add one non-scoring trained mastiff at C and D: AC 12, HP 11, speed 40, bite +3 for 1d6+1 piercing, no other feature; STR/DEX/CON 12, mental scores 3/12/7, passive Perception 13, Perception +3, no saves or resistances. Do not change rival schedules or the cap of 28 eligible tallies.

These are starting adjustments, not playtest results. Against four fresh level-5 PCs, each raid is intended to be manageable; D becomes dangerous when healing is depleted or the party pushes without a long rest. Goblin numbers punish exposed concentration, while paired roadguards reward splitting formations. An area spell, flight, summoned help, rope trick, tiny hut or a strong surrender plan may make a site easy. Let it. Standard spell components, concentration, durations and action economy still apply. A spell does not grant additional proof or reset a cleared site.

## NPCs

**Durn, Tessa and Orven: character sketches for the counting window and rival camp.**



Durn, Tessa, and Orven

### Handout Reveal Guide

- **The Seven-Day Charter:** Give before registration; all contest and tie rules are public.
- **Company Expedition Ledger:** Give at registration; keep it beside the route map throughout play.
- **The Hunting Circuit:** Give at registration; printed quarry counts and routes are public information.
- **Kiln Player Plan:** Reveal as the party scouts D; no opponent markers or hidden outcomes appear here.

## Cast and Dialogue

### NPC: Mara Durn

Human woman, cropped grey hair, heavy counting spectacles and a hammer on her belt. Wants safe roads and a ledger she can defend. Fears paying for murdered bystanders or duplicate proofs. Knows all charter terms and old clip conventions, but not Orven's fraud before evidence arrives. Offers fair interpretation, not secret bonuses. Voice: short clauses, concrete numbers.

Opening: "One creature, one tally. Read that twice." About the prize: "It is behind me. The money is in escrow. You need not trust a rumor." About captives: "Get their surrender witnessed. My patrol collects them. Keep the ears attached." Under pressure: "Volume does not change a date." Help: authentic testimony earns her full attention. Betrayal: intentional fraud disqualifies the company and triggers an ordinary inquiry, not instant execution. At victory: "Your company brought back what it promised. That will be remembered."

Noncombat profile: AC 12, HP 18, speed 30; all ability modifiers +0 except INT +2 and WIS +2; Insight +4, Investigation +4, passive Perception 12. No special saves. Club +2, 1d4 bludgeoning; she calls four Hunters serving as watch guards instead of dueling adventurers. Their deaths do not become scoring opportunities.

### NPC: Tessa Venn

Human woman with a weathered grey cloak, dark curls and a small brass kite pin. Wants first place without losing her company. Fears Orven will make honest competition look foolish. Knows the route network and the current public score. Her useful leverage is two real combatants and willingness to witness facts. Voice: calm questions that expose a plan's missing rest.

Opening: "Which night are you planning to sleep?" Asked to share: "Half the work, half the count. Say it before the first arrow." If rescued or treated fairly: "I owe you a road, not my whole life." Asked about Orven: "I have seen him win. I have also seen him count twice." If betrayed: "Keep the coin. I will keep the names." She refuses terms changing after the hunt, but gives honest testimony even if the party beats her. Uses Hunter statistics.

### NPC: Orven Pike

Human man with neatly clipped beard, red leather gloves and an immaculate proof satchel. Wants the champion purse and the reputation of never taking a bad bet. Fears public inspection of his later deposits. Knows accurate quarry locations and exactly which four proofs are old. He offers useful bargains while concealing fraud; do not make every sentence a lie. Voice: generous terms followed by a small exception.

Opening: "I can save you a day. What is a day worth?" Asked about the kiln: "The big fellow stays behind his wall. That is why it is still there." Accused without evidence: "Bring Durn

a fact. She charges nothing to listen." Shown evidence: "Four scraps do not erase a week's work." Offered a fair withdrawal: he keeps his honest bounties and abandons the prize, freezing his score. Threatened: he leaves the camp unless cornered; if attacked he follows Hunter morale. Senn, his nervous companion, wants wages without jail and can corroborate the packet. Both use Hunter statistics.

### NPC: Jori Fen

Halfling guide with an oilskin cap, mud to the knees and a cart that always needs one repair. Wants customers who return alive. Fears someone will draw a straight line across a bog and call it a road. Knows routes, safe camps, old proof clips and the camp caretaker Davi. His free warning is accurate; his lesson improves the shortcut roll. Voice: distances measured in bad boots.

Opening: "Six miles on paper. Six hours in those boots." About shortcuts: "You get one clever crossing before the bog learns your name." About old trophies: "Blue salt, triangular clip. Last month's contract. Durn's round notch comes after you hand this week's bag in." Asked to join: "No. Davi owes me supper, not a funeral." AC 12, HP 12, speed 25; STR -1, DEX +2, CON +0, INT +1, WIS +3, CHA +0; Survival +5, Perception +5, passive Perception 15, no special saves or resistances; knife +4, 1d4+2 piercing. Davi uses the same ordinary profile, without the guide's skills (all skills use ability modifiers).

## Items

**Foxwake, the Surestep Brooch and numbered proof satchels. Equipment sketch plate.**



Foxwake and expedition equipment

### Item: Proof Satchel

Ordinary numbered waterproof bag provided free at registration. Holds all 28 possible proofs. Not magical, not theft-proof; knots, carried location and ordinary checks matter. Depositing locks the credited count in Durn's custody. Lost empty bags can be replaced free; losing a full unbanked bag loses its physical evidence until recovered. Witness vouchers can be recopied at G from actual witnesses, costing one Recover/administration watch during the week, or without a derby impact afterward.

## Equipment Reference

### Item: Foxwake

Rare magical longbow, requires attunement; ordinary longbow proficiency and ammunition rules. While attuned, +1 to attack and damage rolls; its attacks are magical. As a bonus action once per long rest, mark one creature you can see within 120 feet for one hour. While it remains on the same plane, you have advantage on Survival checks to follow its physical tracks. This does not reveal its location, let you see invisibility, pass barriers or add damage. Once during the mark, after missing that creature with the bow, reroll that attack; use the new result. The bow is carved with a running fox, with no additional hidden powers. Without attunement it is a mundane longbow. Ownership transfers only through the champion award or tie procedure.

### Item: Surestep Brooch

Uncommon wondrous item, requires attunement. A silver boot over a green stone; no charges. Once per long rest, when you would gain one level of Derby Fatigue or exhaustion from forced travel, use your reaction to prevent that one level. It does not prevent lost sleep, restore a long rest or protect companions. Other exhaustion sources are unaffected. A character can attune during a normal short rest, including a Recover watch. Original homebrew treasure in D; it cannot erase fatigue gained before attunement.

### Item: Healing Draught

Common consumable. An action to drink or administer to a willing or unconscious creature within reach restores 2d4+2 HP. Consumed on use. Two are recoverable at B; four are available at G for 50 gp each. Rivals own their own limited bottles, not party inventory unless freely given or lawfully obtained.

## Resolution Paths

**Champion:** highest eligible timely score wins 200 gp and Foxwake. With unmodified rivals, 22 or more wins outright; 21 ties the Copper Talons; after proving fraud, 19 or more wins outright, 18 ties the Slate Kites. Use actual changed scores after shared hunts or transfers rather than those examples. Read: "Durn rings the bell once. Your company name goes above the line, and the bow comes down from its hooks. Outside, someone begins arguing about next year's race."

**Tie:** split the 200 gp equally between tied companies. Durn rolls a visible d20 for each tied company; highest receives the bow, rerolling tied highest rolls. This rule is announced on the charter, never invented at the end. Tied companies may jointly replace the roll with a voluntary bow sale or other unanimous agreement; use 400 gp as Durn's standing buyout, split equally, if all agree. A sole winner may also sell it to Durn for 400 gp instead of receiving it. Cash sale

replaces the bow, never adds both.

**Honorable finish:** every honest tally earns its 5 gp, whether first or last. Clearing all four sites earns the Ironwake charter title Chartered Trailwardens and introductions to three future employers, even if the party shared enough credit to lose. Saving or accepting the surrender of a rival earns that team as a willing contact; specify the actual favor, one accurate route briefing on a later expedition. Returning no proof carries no fine. A total retreat can still leave valuable maps and allies.

**Late return:** Day 8 wages pay honest proof at 5 gp each, with no derby ranking change. A wounded group can finish without winning. **Cheating:** disqualify intentional fraud from prizes, remove only fraudulent wages and resolve any assault through ordinary city justice. Honest company members keep earned wages unless they knowingly supplied false proof. Do not turn an ear-count dispute into an unannounced death sentence.

## Rewards and Accounting

All sums are party totals. A 28-tally sweep pays 140 gp bounty. Site salvage is  $A\ 12 + B\ 20 + C\ 30 + D\ 40 = 102$  gp; the charter transfers these specific unclaimed funds to the clearing company, even if it uses parole. Maximum fixed cash before purchases is 442 gp for a sole champion retaining the bow:  $140 + 102 + 200$ . Selling the bow instead makes it 842 gp, with no bow retained. Surestep Brooch and two B draughts are separate recoverable items. No extra prize exists for killing instead of capturing.

Shared hunts divide both tallies and that site's cash evenly unless agreed otherwise; items require an explicit agreement before the confrontation, or stay in Durn's custody until resolved. Capturing foes qualifies for salvage; accepting an uncredited dispersal clears a site but its opponents carry away the listed cash and items unless the party takes them by another supported action. The party cannot score surrendered people twice by later killing them. Purchased tallies reduce one company's held count and increase the other's; they do not duplicate bounty money already paid. Orven accepts only unbanked tallies for his information.

Registration rations, free camping and the ordinary bag are provisions, not saleable bonus rewards. Site enemies carry ordinary battered weapons worth no additional guaranteed treasure here; a campaign that prices them separately should record that separately from these totals. Use milestone advancement according to the ongoing campaign; this module assigns no untested XP budget.

## Handout: The Seven-Day Charter

### The Seven-Day Charter

PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

#### IRONWAKE BOUNTY OFFICE - SEVEN-DAY COMPANY CHARTER

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Members:

\_\_\_\_\_

Deadline: end of Day 7 afternoon. Each verified right ear from the four posted raiding bands, or witnessed surrender voucher, counts as one tally and pays 5 gp. No bounty for bystanders, rival hunters or unrelated travelers. A creature counts once. Paroled captives keep their ears and wait for the collection patrol.

Most timely tallies wins 200 gp and Foxwake. Tied companies divide the cash and roll openly for the bow, or unanimously accept Durn's 400 gp bow buyout to divide instead. Intentional fraud or attacks on other registered hunters disqualify a company from the prize. Honest ordinary wages remain due. Late proof pays on Day 8 but cannot win.

Banked tallies cannot be stolen. Agree on shares before a joint hunt. This week's fresh proofs receive a round notch after submission. Last month's proofs bear a triangular clip and blue salt and are ineligible.

Quarry ceilings: Splitstone 6; Sedge Hollow 8; Cinder Ford 6; Ashpit Kiln 8. Specific site funds are lawful salvage under this charter. Your free kit contains one proof satchel and seven days of rations per member.

PLAYER NOTES

FOR: \_\_\_\_\_ SESSION: \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER COPY - SAFE TO DETACH OR SHARE

## Handout: Company Expedition Ledger

### PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

Two daylight watches each day. Travel one printed edge, Search, Confront or Recover costs one watch. Night Rest gives a normal long rest at a safe camp. Night Push buys one action, adds one Derby Fatigue and leaves only a short rest unless your abilities or next morning provide enough time. Each fatigue level subtracts 1 from d20 rolls; a fed, watered long rest removes one. At level 3 you cannot Push again.

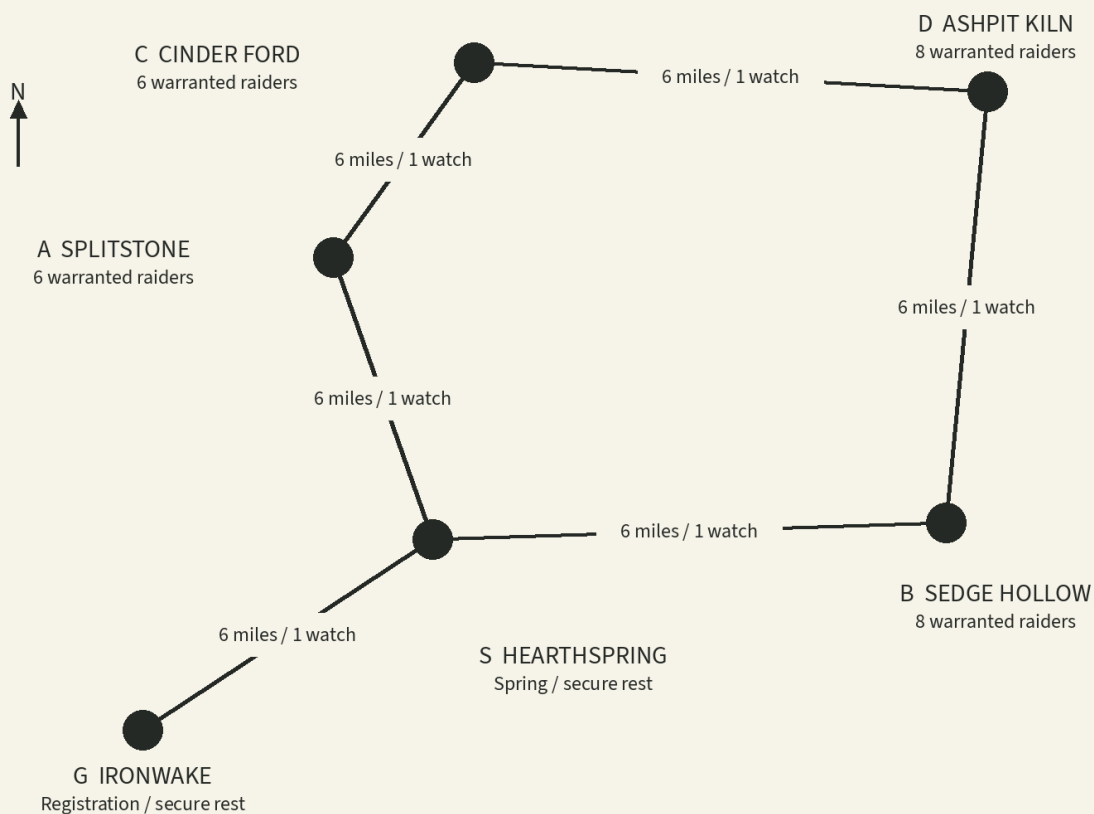
| DAY | MORNING: ACTION AND PLACE | AFTERNOON: ACTION AND PLACE | NIGHT: REST/PUSH | HELD / BANKED PROOF |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 2   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 3   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 4   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 5   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 6   | _____                     | _____                       | _____            | _____               |
| 7   | _____                     | _____                       | Contest closed   | _____               |

Write individual HP, spell slots, Hit Dice and fatigue on your character sheet. Safe camps: Ironwake, Hearthspring, cleared sites or a suitable magical refuge. Field camps at uncleared nodes are possible a mile back along the trail: DC 12 Survival (advantage with a camp sheet); failure costs one Hit Die after recovery, or 4 HP if none remains, minimum 1 HP. Rope-and-stakes protects two campers. Search failure still locates quarry. One cross-country shortcut attempt per week: DC 15 Survival; success reaches a nonadjacent wilderness node, failure spends the watch in place. Ironwake cannot be a shortcut endpoint.

## Handout: The Hunting Circuit

### THE RIMEPLAIN CIRCUIT

Player route map | Ironwake local hunting district | Diagram not to scale



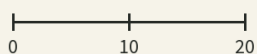
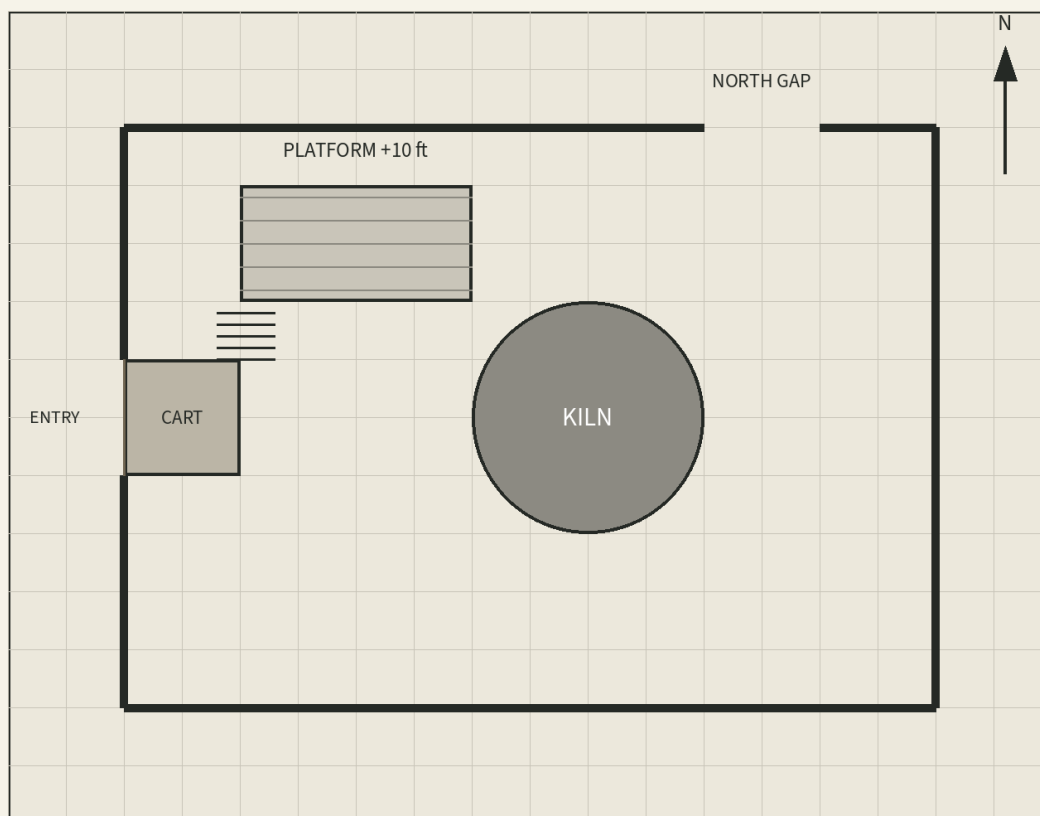
Printed links are routes, not straight-line distances. One cross-country shortcut attempt is allowed.  
Two daylight watches per day. Return to G before Day 7 dusk. No unprinted link is automatically safe.

Player copy. Each printed edge costs one watch.

## Handout: Kiln Player Plan

### ASHPIT KILN

Player tactical plan - reveal as scouted



Each square = 5 feet | Map footprint 90 x 70 feet

Heavy lines: five-foot wall. Kiln: solid, total cover. Cart: blocks walking. Railing: half cover.

Platform underside is packed with stone. Stairs rise at its southwest corner.

Player copy. Each square is 5 feet; reveal as scouted.

## Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

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