

Campaign Classics

Mindscales of Athas and Beyond

Updates for Both Core and PLAYER'S OPTION™ Rules

by Dale Donovan and Bill Slavicsek

illustrated by Steve Bryant

Since the publication of *The Way of the Psionicist: Psionic Abilities and Powers* (from the *DARK SUN® Expanded and Revised Campaign Setting*) and the AD&D® game's *PLAYER'S OPTION®: Skills and Powers* book, we discovered that a few concepts needed clarification, a few rules needed adjustments, and a few omitted items needed to be included. This article addresses all of these needs, and the updated material presented here should be considered "official" changes to the original *PLAYER'S OPTION* and *DARK SUN* material. In addition, you'll also find new material herein, including a complete character-point PC-generation system for psionic characters. Of course, if you're happy with the system as it is, you needn't add rules that you don't like. Use the rules that appeal to you and work for your game, and freely ignore the rest, for that is the spirit of the *PLAYER'S OPTION* products.

As you read the following pages, you'll notice some new terms that haven't appeared before. The most important of these is the *critical mental hit*, an attack that allows the immediate opening of a closed mind. The *PLAYER'S OPTION* psionics system is designed to work just as physical combat in the AD&D game—a rule

mechanic that everyone who plays the AD&D game knows how to use and understands implicitly.

The same rules apply to psionics, giving psionics and wild talent player-characters MTHACOs (mental attack numbers) and MACs (mental armor classes). In physical combat, if a 3rd-level fighter decides to take on a 10th-level warrior, he had better have some companions to help him, or he's going to lose the battle. The 10th-level warrior has a better THACO, better weapons and armor, and more hit points than his 3rd-level opponent. The same holds true when two psionics enter psionic combat.

Psionic Combat

Psionic combat is used by psionics to "open" closed minds so that other psionic powers can be employed against them. Such combat between psionics should be a rare and momentous occasion, full of danger for both participants. During combat in the physical world, when a warrior of higher level confronts a lower-level fighter, the higher-level warrior has a distinct advantage. The same holds true for battles on the psionic plane (also referred to as the *mindscape*).

When attacking a nonpsionic mind (a character with no PSP pool), one successful attack opens the target's mind.

A psionic mind under attack remains closed until it is reduced to 0 PSPs, unless the attacker achieves a critical mental hit.

Achieving a Critical Mental Hit

To achieve a critical mental hit and immediately open a closed mind, the attacker must meet three conditions:

1. The attacker must roll a natural 18, 19, or 20 when making the MTHACO roll.
2. The roll must exceed the target number by 5 or more.
3. Either the target must fail a saving throw vs. paralyzation *or* the attacker must cause damage equal to or exceeding 25% of the defender's PSP pool maximum total. This means that the attacker must determine damage first, to show whether a saving throw is allowed.

Example: A 3rd-level psionicist with an MTHACO of 18 can achieve a critical mental hit against a target with a MAC 3, since he can roll a 20 and hit that target and exceed the "5 or more" rule. He can't achieve a

critical mental hit against a target with a MAC 2 (or better), however, as he cannot meet that same "5 or more" stipulation.

Example: *Ulcen* achieves a critical mental hit on *Fenka*, rolling a natural 18 or higher and exceeding the target number by 5 or more. *Fenka* has a maximum of 40 PSPs. She must fail her saving throw vs. paralysis or *Ulcen* must inflict enough mental damage to cause *Fenka* to lose 25% of her PSP maximum in a single attack (10 or more PSPs in this case) for *Fenka*'s mind to become opened. *Fenka* can attempt a save if the damage is less than 25% of her PSP maximum (10 PSPs), but not if it's equal to 25% or more.

The Five Psionic Attacks

The following changes have been made to the five psionic attacks.

❖ **Ego Whip** inflicts 2–7 points of psionic damage (1d6+1) for every 4 PSPs the attacker spends. The maximum damage is limited by the attacker's level: a 3rd-level psionist can spend up to 12 PSPs (cost × level = 4 × 3 = 12) for 3d6+3 points of damage.

❖ **Id Insinuation** inflicts 3–10 points of psionic damage (1d8+2) for every 6 PSPs the attacker spends. This is limited by the attacker's level; a 3rd-level psionist can spend up to 18 PSPs (cost × level = 6 × 3 = 18) for 3d8+6 points of damage.

❖ **Mind Thrust** inflicts 1–4 points of psionic damage (1d4) for every 2 PSPs the attacker spends. This is limited by the attacker's level; a 3rd-level psionist can spend up to 6 PSPs (cost × level = 2 × 3 = 6) for 3d4 points of damage.

❖ **Psionic Blast** inflicts 5–16 points of psionic damage (1d12+4) for every 10 PSPs the attacker spends. This is limited by the attacker's level; a 3rd-level psionist can spend up to 30 PSPs (cost × level = 10 × 3 = 30) for 3d12+12 points of damage.

❖ **Psychic Crush** inflicts 4–13 points of psionic damage (1d10+3) for every 8 PSPs the attacker spends. This is limited by the attacker's level; a 3rd-level psionist can spend up to 24 PSPs (cost × level = 8 × 3 = 24) for 3d10+9 points of damage.

Psionic Attack Reminder: It is strongly recommended that every player and DM create a set of psionic combat cards—with the name of each attack and defense written on a separate index card. To secretly indicate how many PSPs you want to spend on an attack, place a die that shows the number you want to mul-



tiply the effect by. For example, if you want to multiply the effect of a mind thrust by 3 (at a cost of 6 PSPs), place a die with a 3 showing.

Psionic Attacks Rules Change: The number of PSPs an attacker puts into a psionic attack must be declared before the attack roll is made. The cost for failing the attack is one-half of the declared PSPs.

Example: *Ulcen* decides to attack with a mind thrust. (His player places a mind thrust card face down in front of him.) He's a 4th-

level psionist, and he wants to put everything he can into the attack. (His player sets 1d6 under the card, hiding the face-up 4, his limit as determined by his level.) The base cost of a mind thrust is 2, so if the attack succeeds, *Ulcen* must pay 8 PSPs (2 × 4 = 8) for 4d4 points of psionic damage. If the attack fails, the cost to *Ulcen* is 4 PSPs (8 ÷ 2 = 4).

The Open Mind

When a mind is voluntarily opened, there is no adverse effect (unless the psionist uses a power that causes one).



When a mind is forced open by psionic attack, however, the target suffers because of it.

An opened mind is vulnerable to psionic powers; the round in which a mind is opened, the attacker can use a psionic power on it.

A mind that has been forced open (such as when suffering from a mental critical hit) is stunned. The victim receives a +2 penalty to his or her initiative in the next round (only), and in that round he or she can spend PSPs to become closed. If the opened mind doesn't have enough PSPs, it remains open for 1d4+1 rounds (see below).

Closing the Open Mind

Closing a non-psionic mind hasn't changed. See page 10 in *The Way of the Psionicist* (WotP) or page 149 in the *Skills & Powers* (S&P) book.

Here are the new rules for closing a psionic mind.

If the mind was opened by a critical mental hit, the target can close its mind in the following round by spending PSPs equal to double the cost of the last defense it used. So, if a mind was opened in the round it used the mental

barrier defense (costs 5 PSPs), it can close its mind in the next round by spending 10 PSPs ($5 \times 2 = 10$).

If the mind opened by a critical mental hit doesn't have enough PSPs remaining or doesn't want to spend them, it remains open for 1d4+1 rounds. After that, a successful Wisdom check with a -3 penalty closes the mind. One check can be made per round.

Rules concerning a mind opened by reducing it to 0 PSPs remain the same (page 11 of *WotP* and page 149 of *S&P*).

Psionic Attacks vs. Psionic Defenses

When a psionic attack clashes with a psionic defense, use the attack tables in either version of the revised psionic rules to find the attacker's modifier. The modifier is applied to the attacker's MTHACO roll.

Example: *Fenka attacks Ulcen with a psychic crush. Ulcen defends with a thought shield. The resulting modifier is -4. This is applied to Fenka's MTHACO roll. She needs a 14 or better. She rolls a 16. $16 - 4 = 12$. Ulcen's defense holds, and Fenka's attack fails.*

Speed of Psionics

Psionic combat literally takes place at the speed of thought. Psionic attacks are made at the point in the combat round determined by the initiative roll for that PC. The psionic defense chosen by the PC remains in effect for the entirety of the combat round, regardless of the PC's initiative result.

Psionic powers require more concentrated effort, in many cases affecting the physical world or even the body of the psionicist herself. Some DMs may feel that psionicists have an unfair advantage over spellcasters in that the psionic powers have no initiative modifiers like the casting times for magical and clerical spells. (On the other hand, spellcasters seldom have to roll dice to determine if their spells work every time they attempt to use them, which all psionicists must do with all their devotions and sciences.)

For those DMs who wish to impose a few "speed bumps" in the paths of psionic PCs, the following initiative modifiers can be applied. Using a psionic devotion adds a +1 penalty to the psionicist's initiative; employing a psionic science incurs a +3 penalty to the initiative result.

For example, if Fenka's player gets a 3 on her d10 initiative roll and Fenka successfully uses the detonate science on a zombie, the effect of the power will not occur until the "6" portion of the round (3 + 3 = 6).

Monsters & Psionics

With the exceptions of the *DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Volume Two* and the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* Annual, Volume Three*, no MTHACO or MAC statistics exist for psionic-using monsters in the AD&D game. The reason for this omission is that the PLAYER'S OPTION psionics system is a strictly optional variant of the one in the *Complete Psionics Handbook*. To help convert creatures from *CPH* rules to the PLAYER'S OPTION rules, here is a quick system for determining the MTHACO of any psionic creature in the game.

Quick MACs for Monsters

To determine a monster's MAC (Mental Armor Class), find its Intelligence on **Table 1**. This provides a range for the monster's base MAC score. Then roll for a MAC modifier on either **Table 2** (for a creature with psionic abilities beyond those of a wild talent) or **Table 3** (for creatures with psionic abilities equivalent to wild talents or nonpsionic beings).

Quick MTHACOs for Monsters

Finding a monster's MTHACO score requires three steps:

1. Determine the Base MTHACO

The base MTHACO (Mental "To hit Armor Class 0") of any psionic creature is based on the creature's level, as found in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM (MC)* or *MONSTROUS MANUAL (MM)* books. For example, a psionic mind flayer (*MM/251*) is a 10th-level monster, so it has the same MTHACO as a 10th-level psionicist. (See *S&P/149* or *WotP/15* to determine psionicists' MTHACO scores). The chart gives the base MTHACO for a 10th-level psionicist of 11. Note that a monster's level is not equivalent to its Hit Dice.

2. Modify MTHACO for Intelligence

Next, this base MTHACO is modified by the creature's Intelligence. Consult **Table 4**. In the case of the psionic mind flayer, the creature's genius-level Intelligence gives a bonus of -2 for a modified MTHACO of 9.

3. Determine Mental Armor Class

Completing the conversion of the psionic mind flayer to the *S&P* psionics system is simple. Determine the individual creature's MAC using the charts above. The number of disciplines, devotions, sciences, psionic attacks, and psionic defenses remain the same for simplicity. The Power Score is replaced with the target's or the psionic power's MAC score, and the number of PSPs is determined as described.

Note that inherently psionic creatures such as the mind flayer being discussed here needn't follow all the rules regarding the arrangement of psionic disciplines, sciences, and devotions that PCs do. Just as some creatures have magical, spell-like abilities (such as the magical mind flayer and most dragons, as two examples) that do not follow the rules of magely or priestly spellcasting, so too do some creatures possess psionic powers that operate in the same "rule-breaking" manner.

Therefore, the *S&P* psionic mind flayer (or at least this particular illithid) from the *Monstrous Manual* is as follows:

Mind Flayer

MTHACO: 11

MAC: 2

Psionic Attacks: Ego Whip, Id Insinuation (as listed in the *MM*; the *S&P* system gives a 10th-level psionicist all five psionic attacks).

Psionic Defenses: All

Psionic Proficiencies: Contact (necessary for all psionicists), plus others if the DM so chooses

Disciplines: 4

Sciences: 5

Devotions: 15 PSPs: 50 + 3d10*

PSYCHOKINESIS

Devotions: control body, levitation

PSYCHOMETABOLISM

Sciences: body equilibrium

PSYCHOPORTATION

Sciences: probability travel, teleport

Devotions: astral projection.

TELEPATHY

Sciences: domination, mindlink.

Devotions: awe, ESP, post-hypnotic suggestion.

* This PSP number differs significantly from the total given in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome. The number was reduced to bring the illithid more in line with *PLAYER'S OPTION* psionicists. While an illithid should be a terrifying opponent, a mind flayer with 300+ PSPs is far too powerful.

Table 1: Base MAC

Intelligence	Base MAC
Non- (0)	5-6
Animal (1-2)	5-6
Semi- (3-4)	7-8
Low (5-7)	8-9
Average (8-10)	8-10
Very (11-12)	8-9
High (13-14)	7-8
Exceptional (15-16)	6-7
Genius (17-18)	5-6
Supra (19-20)	4-5
Godlike (21+)	2-3

Table 2: Quick MACs for High-Psionic Creatures

Roll 1d10	Modifier
1-2	+1 MAC
3-4	No modifier
5-6	-1 MAC
7-8	-2 MAC
9	-3 MAC
10	-4

Table 3: MAC Quick MACs for Low-Psionic Creatures

Roll 1d10	Modifier
1	+2 MAC
2-3	+1 MAC
4-5	No modifier
6-8	-1 MAC
9	-2 MAC
10	-3 MAC

Table 4: MTHACO Modifier

Intelligence	Modifier
< Exceptional	None
Exceptional	-1 bonus
Genius	-2 bonus
Supra-genius	-3 bonus
Godlike	-4 bonus

Additional Notes on Converting Psionics Monsters to S&P Rules

To determine the "new" PSP totals for psionic monsters in the *MM* tome and other published sources, treat the creature as an *S&P* psionicist equal to the creature's given level and calculate the being's PSPs as such [(15 PSPs at 1st level + any Intelligence bonus) + (1d6 + applicable Int bonus)/level]. The chart for determining PSP bonuses appears on *S&P/144*.

For a more detailed treatment of any such psionic creature or a major psionic villain in a campaign, a DM can treat the being fully as a psionicist, following all

the PC-creation and advancement rules for psionics given in the *PLAYER'S OPTION* rules (or those provided below). This puts all psionics, whether human or illithid, PC or NPC, on more even ground.

For other creatures that are not given any psionics statistics, or even those that may not "officially" possess psionics, the guidelines below detail how to determine the creature's MTHACO. (The creature's MAC can be determined as above.)

For Non- to Semi-Intelligent creatures, possessing psionic capabilities is normally impossible. While some few exceptions to this rule exist (such as the brain mole, yellow mold, gray ooze, and the thought eater), these beings evolved to occupy the specific ecological niche of psionic predators. Most Non-Intelligent creatures are considered to be mindless and thus immune to many but not all psionic effects (see below).

Creatures of Low to High Intelligence that are determined to possess psionics use the MTHACO table are limited to wild-talent status are their psionic abilities must follow all pertinent rules. The "level" of such wild talents equals the creature's Hit Dice minus two (HD - 2).

Creatures of Exceptional to Godlike Intelligence use the psionist MTHACO table, with their HD - 2 determining their base level, modified by consulting the MTHACO Modifiers chart given above. These beings may be wild talents or full-fledged psionics as determined by the DM. In either case, these beings still use the psionist MTHACO chart.

Psionics vs. Undead & Mindless Creatures

Questions have been raised over whether psionic powers effect the undead and mindless creatures. These are really two separate—if sometimes overlapping—subjects.

As the existence of the psionic lich (*MC Annual, Vol. One*) demonstrates that a sentient undead mind can still use psionics. It's a logical extension to assume that psionics are totally effective against intelligent (rated above Non-) undead such as liches, vampires, mummies, shadows, and so on. These and all other intelligent undead beings are susceptible to psionics powers and psionic attacks. Against the latter, their minds are considered nonpsionic, closed minds unless the undead possesses some psionic abilities itself. Some DMs may consider the unliving nature of such creatures' minds to be a hindrance to

the efforts of PC psionics users; in this case, granting the undead a -2 MAC bonus is not unreasonable.

Non-Intelligent undead (such as zombies and skeletons) and all other mindless creatures are handled differently. Such beings cannot be attacked psionically, as they have no minds to assault and thus no MAC and no PSPs. They are, however, vulnerable to the physical effects of psionic powers. A skeleton and a violet fungus would both be immune to a psychic crush psionic attack, but both would be vulnerable to the detonate psychokinetic science.

Psionics & Character Points

Many AD&D game players have asked why the revised psionics system in the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* book didn't include a character-point PC generation system like those for the other classes. The answer is that there were several reasons; the first was space. A lot of information was crammed into the *Skills & Powers* book, and there wasn't any more room. Another reason was that the *PLAYER'S OPTION* line was always intended to be modular, allowing players and DMs to use the new rules that they liked without locking them into a lot more rules they might not want to incorporate into their games. And the focus of the new psionics system was the rules, not Character Points. Perhaps the most important reason, though, was that we wanted the two versions of this system (one in *Skills & Powers* and the other in the revised *DARK SUN* boxed set) to be identical. This would keep confusion over the new rules to a minimum. Once we decided the two versions of our new rules had to be identical, that ruled out a character-point generation system since the *DARK SUN* set did not deal with Character Points in any way.

Unfortunately, this left *Skills & Powers* users without a means to create psionist and wild-talent PCs using the Character-Point system. Since this article discusses rules suggestions for the *PLAYER'S OPTION* psionics rules, the information below is presented to fill that gap. Thanks to *DRAGON*[®] Magazine's own Skip "Sage Advice" Williams and reader Emery Wilson for blazing part of this particular trail. It should be noted, though, that the rules below differ significantly from what has been published previously.

The Basics

The PC's ability scores are determined by the DM's choice of generation

methods listed in the *Skills & Powers* book. Similarly, subabilities (if used), backgrounds, and racial abilities are determined per the existing *Skills & Powers* rules.

Class Abilities

A psionist receives 30 Character Points to spend on class abilities. Abilities cost 5-15 points each. Any unspent points (up to five) can be spent later in the character-creation process or retained for use during the game.

All psionists use the saving-throw and MTHACO tables on *S&P/149* and the Experience Levels table on *S&P/144*.

Further, psionist PCs use the THACO chart on the same page, unless they purchase superior combat abilities described below. All psionist PCs also use the Psionic Progression table on *S&P/154*, unless they purchase additional psionic capabilities as described below.

Psionists use six-sided dice to determine their hit points, unless they purchase superior dice below.

Unless stated otherwise, each of the abilities below can be purchased only once and only during the character-creation process.

Armor Use (5/10): For 5 points, the psionist can employ small shields and padded, leather, hide, or studded leather armor. As a 10-point ability, the psionist can use the above plus medium shields and brigandine, chain mail, ring mail, scale mail, or metal lamellar armor. If the psionist does not choose this ability at all, the character can wear no armor and employ no shields whatsoever.

Bonus Psionic Attack (10): The psionist has one more psionic attack (of the player's choice) than his level normally would allow. This does not grant the PC any extra attacks in a combat round, nor does it allow the PC any extra psionic defenses or powers.

For example, a 1st-level psionist with this ability would possess two psionic attacks and one psionic defense rather than one of each. This ability is useless without the "Contact" ability below.

Bonus Psionic Defense (10): The psionist has one additional psionic defense than normal for the character's level. This does not grant the PC any extra psionic attacks or powers. For instance, a 1st-level psionist with this ability would possess one attack and two defenses instead of one attack and one defense. This ability is worthless without the "Contact" ability below.

Combat Bonus (10): The psionist now uses the priest's THACO chart for physical combat.

Contact (5/10): This ability costs five Character Points for psionist PCs and 10 Character Points for wild-talent characters. The character with this ability receives the contact nonweapon proficiency and gains psionic attacks and defenses as in the *Skills & Powers* book. This ability can be purchased at any point in the PC's career when sufficient Character Points are available. Note that wild-talent characters can never possess more than three psionic attacks and three psionic defenses whereas psionists can gain all five of each.

A psionic character without this ability cannot engage in psionic combat as the PC has no means to contact other minds and no way to defend himself from outside psionic attack. Therefore, the character is considered to be a closed, nonpsionic mind for purposes of psionic combat. In other words, a single successful psionic attack roll (i.e., defeating the character's MAC) opens the PC's mind to further invasion by any psionic attacker.

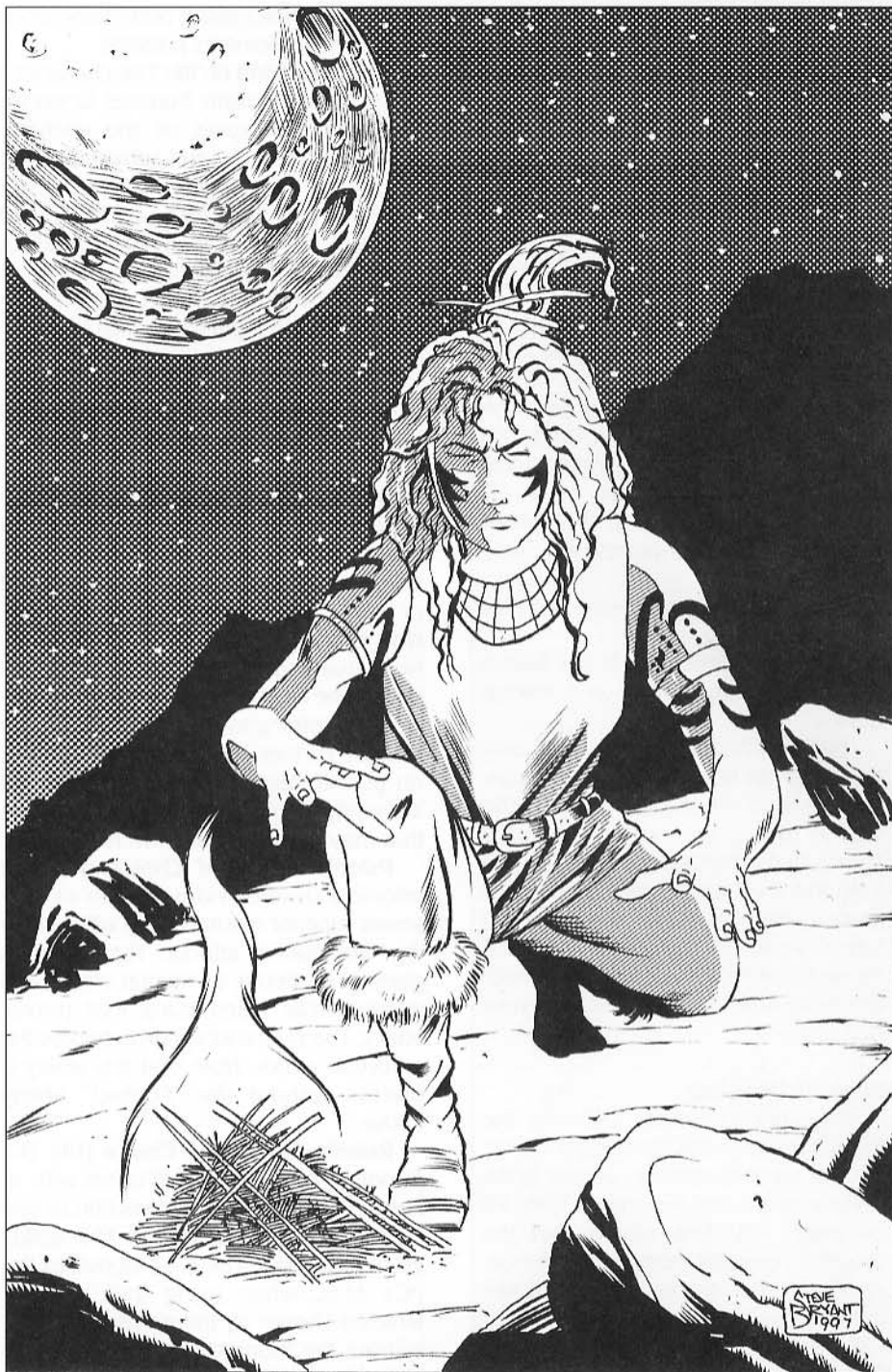
In addition, a psionic character without this ability can use only those psionic powers (devotions and sciences) that affect the character himself or inanimate objects. As the character does not possess the ability to touch another living mind, no psionic power that affects another living being can be used by the character.

Without this ability, the "Psionic attack of choice," "Bonus psionic attack," "Bonus psionic defense," and "Psionic defense of choice" abilities detailed here are useless.

Detect psionics (5/10): This ability costs five points for psionists and 10 points for wild talents. The character can detect psionics in use and/or creatures actively using psionic abilities within 90' and in line-of-sight when the character spends a full round concentrating.

For example, a psionic PC using this ability cannot detect an unconscious intellect devourer but could detect a githyanki using a psionic power or engaging in psionic combat that was within range and visible.

Decreased PSP Costs (5/10): The psionist's mind is very efficient, allowing the PC to use PSPs more economically. For five points, the cost to use or maintain all psionic devotions in the PC's primary discipline is decreased by one. For 10 points, this decrease also extends to



all sciences in the psionist's primary discipline. This ability decreases the PSP cost regardless of success or failure of the power's attempted use, but in no case can the cost for attempting a power be decreased to less than 1 PSP. This ability has no effect on psionic combat.

Followers (5/10): For five points, the psionist becomes a contemplative master at 9th level. At this point, one 1st-level psionist arrives each month, seeking instruction. Students must be fed and boarded, but serve without pay as long as each receives at least 10

hours of training per week. Any students who do not receive the minimum hours leave the PC and spread the word of the master's apathy, forever ending the stream of students to the master. The maximum number of students attracted is equal to one half the maximum number of henchmen that the PC can have according to the PC's Charisma score (or Charisma/Leadership subability). If the psionist builds a meditative sanctuary, the number of students attracted equals the full number of henchmen that the PC could attract. Note that, in either

Psionics-Related Errata from *Skills & Powers*

Collected below are the psionics-related errors that have been corrected with the second printing of the *Skills & Powers* book. Most of the changes are minor, but they should help clear up any confusion.

First Printing

Page 146, col. 1, 2, sentence 2: Change "That mind is now open" to "A mind with 0 PSPs is open."

Page 146, Table 75: The second column heading should be "MTHACO Bonus." All the bonuses should have minus signs, not plus signs.

Page 148, column 1, 3: Cross-index the attack with the defense on Table 76.

Page 148, Table 76: Reverse all plus and minus signs.

Page 155, column 1, 1: The bonus proficiencies are contact and mental armor.

Table 76: Psionic Attacks vs. Psionic Defenses has been causing some confusion too. If you have the first printing of the *PLAYER'S OPTION: SKILLS & POWERS* book, the modifier you obtain from this chart applies to the attacker's mental attack roll, not the MTHACO target number. Your PC's MTHACO doesn't change, simply apply the modifier from Table 76 to the result of your d20 roll.

Second Printing

Page 148, column 1, 3: Delete the last sentence of this paragraph.

The second printing of the book reverses the + and - signs on Table 76 on page 148. This means that the modifier obtained from the table now applies to the attacker's MTHACO target number, not the result of the d20 roll. The effect is the same—Mind Thrust is still the best attack against Mind Blank, for example—only the nomenclature is different.

case, these students fulfill the role of henchmen and should be treated as such NPCs.

For 10 points, the psionist becomes a well-renowned contemplative master and can attract 1st-level psionists as above regardless of the PC's experience level. All other limits above still apply.

If a character doesn't choose this ability, the PC never attracts psionic follow-

ers, although acquiring other henchmen and hirelings remains possible.

Guarded Mind (5/10): The character's inner strength grants bonuses to saving throws vs. all spells of the enchantment/charm school and sphere. For five points, a +1 bonus is granted vs. those spells, be they wizardly or clerical; for 10 points, a +2 bonus is applied to saving throws vs. all such spells.

Hit-Point Bonus (10): Psionists with this ability roll eight-sided dice to determine their hit points instead of the normal six-sided dice. They still receive only 2 hp per level for reaching 10th level and each level beyond.

Penetrating Mind (10): The psionist's strong will enables the character to penetrate physical barriers more easily than other psionists. Two inches of lead or iron, four inches of obsidian, or two feet of rock is required to block the psionist's clairsentient and telepathic powers. Note that most powers require line of sight to be used on a target, and this ability does nothing to negate a blocked line of sight. Further, this ability has no effect on psionic combat and does not grant immunity to magical or psychic barriers that may block psionic powers.

Psionic Attack of Choice (10): The psionist devotes extra time to or possesses superior natural ability with one of the five psionic attacks. The psionist gains a +1 bonus to mental attack and damage rolls when using that psionic attack. The psionist's player chooses the particular attack. Note that this ability is useless without the "Contact" ability above.

Psionic Defense of Choice (10): The psionist has exceptional talent with or has developed a stronger version of one of the five psionic defenses. This ability grants the psionist a +2 bonus to the PC's MAC when using that defense, which is chosen by the player. Note that without the "Contact" ability above, this ability is worthless.

PSP Bonus (10/15): Instead of rolling six-sided dice to determine PSPs, the 10-point ability allows the character to roll eight-sided dice. The 15-point ability notes a truly potent psionic mind and the player rolls 10-sided dice to determine his character's PSPs rather than the normal six-sided dice.

Range Boost (10): The ranges of all powers in the psionist's primary discipline are increased by 25%. All powers with ranges of 0, self, or touch are unaffected by this ability. This ability has no effect on psionic combat.

Unarmed Combat Specialization (5):

This ability is available only to those psionists who choose to take neither of the "Weapon use" abilities detailed below. These psionists may specialize in one of the unarmed combat methods: punching (pummeling in the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics* book), wrestling, or martial arts. This specialization grants a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls when the psionist makes an appropriate unarmed attack.

Note that psionists also must purchase proficiency in the unarmed combat style normally to specialize (see "Proficiencies" below). This five-point ability does not grant the PC a cheap specialization, but only allows the player to spend the CPs on a specialization that would not normally be allowed to the psionist PC.

Warrior Constitution Bonus (10): The psionist gains bonus hit points from high Constitution scores (or the Constitution/Fitness subability) as if the character were a warrior. For example, a psionist with a 18 Constitution (or Constitution/Fitness) would receive +4 hp per level, rather than +2 hp.

Weapon Use (5/10): For five points, the psionist is eligible to use only the following weapons: hand crossbow, dagger, dart, dirk, knife, scourge, sickle, and short sword. For 10 points, the psionist can use the above plus the following: short bow, club, light crossbow, hand/throwing axe, javelin, quarterstaff, sling, spear, and war club. Note that this ability grants no proficiency with these weapons; it merely determines the "pool" of weapons from which the character may choose weapon proficiencies.

If the character does not take this ability at all, the psionist can use no weapons at all with proficiency, relying solely on his body and mind for protection. (See the "Unarmed combat specialization" ability above for an option regarding this.)

Players are allowed to carry over no more than five CPs from this stage of character creation to other parts of the process.

Psionics & Subabilities

If your campaign uses the subabilities from *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers*, Constitution/Fitness, Intelligence/Reason, and Wisdom/Intuition determine a psionist's initial PSP allotment. Wild-talent checks use the same subabilities to determine the probability of psionic powers.



Wisdom/Willpower determines a character's base MAC, and Intelligence/Reason determines the PC's MAC modifier.

Wild Talents

A psionic wild talent can be purchased by any PC (with DM approval) for 15 Character Points. The character need not then roll a wild-talent check but must roll on the chart on *S&P/156* to determine which wild talent he or she gains. If this rule is used in your campaign, it's suggested that any PC whose players wishes the character to have a wild talent meet the Ability Requirements of a psionicist: Constitution 11, Intelligence 12, and Wisdom 15. This guideline prevents wild talents from becoming too common in a campaign. Of course, such PCs remain merely wild talents, not psionicists.

A Character Point also may be used to reroll a normal wild-talent check that fails. As noted above, wild-talents can never possess more than three psionic attacks and three psionic defenses.

From the list of Class abilities above, wild-talents are able to purchase only

the following: Contact, detect psionics, and guarded mind. These abilities can be purchased at any time when the wild-talent PC has the requisite number of Character Points available. In all other ways, wild-talent PCs follow the normal *Skills & Powers* character-generation rules.

Kits & Social Ranks

If your campaign uses the social ranks and/or the PC kits from the *Skills & Powers* book, the following information applies to psionic characters.

Few psionicists develop from a social rank below Upper Middle Class, as such individuals seldom have sufficient time or opportunity to practice the intricate mental exercises required to release psionic potential as they are too busy working to make a good life for themselves or simply striving to stay alive and put food onto the table.

Similarly, some kits are more suitable for psionic characters than others although none are barred to psionic characters. This list includes the most likely kits for psionicist PCs: diplomat, merchant, mystic, noble, scholar, and

spy. There also exists the possibility of creating psionicist kits for particular campaigns.

Wild-talent PCs can come from any social rank and any kit as befits their random nature, race, and class.

Proficiencies

Newly created psionicists receive 8 Character Points for nonweapon proficiencies and 6 CPs for weapon proficiencies, and as a nonwarrior, must pay 3 CPs per weapon proficiency. Note that the contact proficiency is, in this character-generation system, a class ability and cannot be purchased with nonweapon-proficiency Character Points (unless the DM rules otherwise). In any case, the cost for the contact is as above.

Treat a psionicist as a member of the "rogue and priest" group regarding weapon proficiencies as defined on *S&P/113*. A psionicist cannot normally take any weapon or fighting-style specializations as the extensive training for such would detract from the PC's complex meditations. Psionicists can specialize only in one unarmed combat style and only if they never take proficiency

Table 5: Additional Skills & Powers Proficiencies

Generalist Group

Proficiency	Cost	Base Score
Mental Armor	3/5*	N/A

Psionicist Group

Proficiency	Cost	Base Score
Gem Cutting	4	7
Harness Subconscious	3	6
Meditative Focus	3	8
Musical Instrument	2	7
Reading/Writing	2	8
Rejuvenation	3	7
Religion	2	7

* The cost to the left of the slash is the cost for psionic characters (both wild talents and psionics) and the cost to the right of the slash is the cost for all non-psionic characters.

in any weapon (see "Unarmed combat specialization" above).

The costs and base scores for the other nonweapon proficiencies from the *Skills & Powers* psionics section appear in **Table 5**. All proficiency rules from the *Skills & Powers* book still apply.

Players may carry over up to five CPs from this portion of the character-generation process for other purposes.

Traits & Disadvantages

Tucked away within the Nonweapon Proficiencies chapter of the *Skills & Powers* book are two new features to the AD&D game: traits and disadvantages. These personality quirks help flesh out a character, and they can certainly do so for a psionic PC. Below are lists of both traits and disadvantages that are particularly well suited for psionic characters. All nor-

mal rules regarding traits and disadvantages still apply.

Traits: Alertness, animal empathy, artistic ability, empathy, light sleeper, lucky, obscure knowledge (psionic powers are very obscure on many worlds, such as Toril, the home of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting), and precise memory.

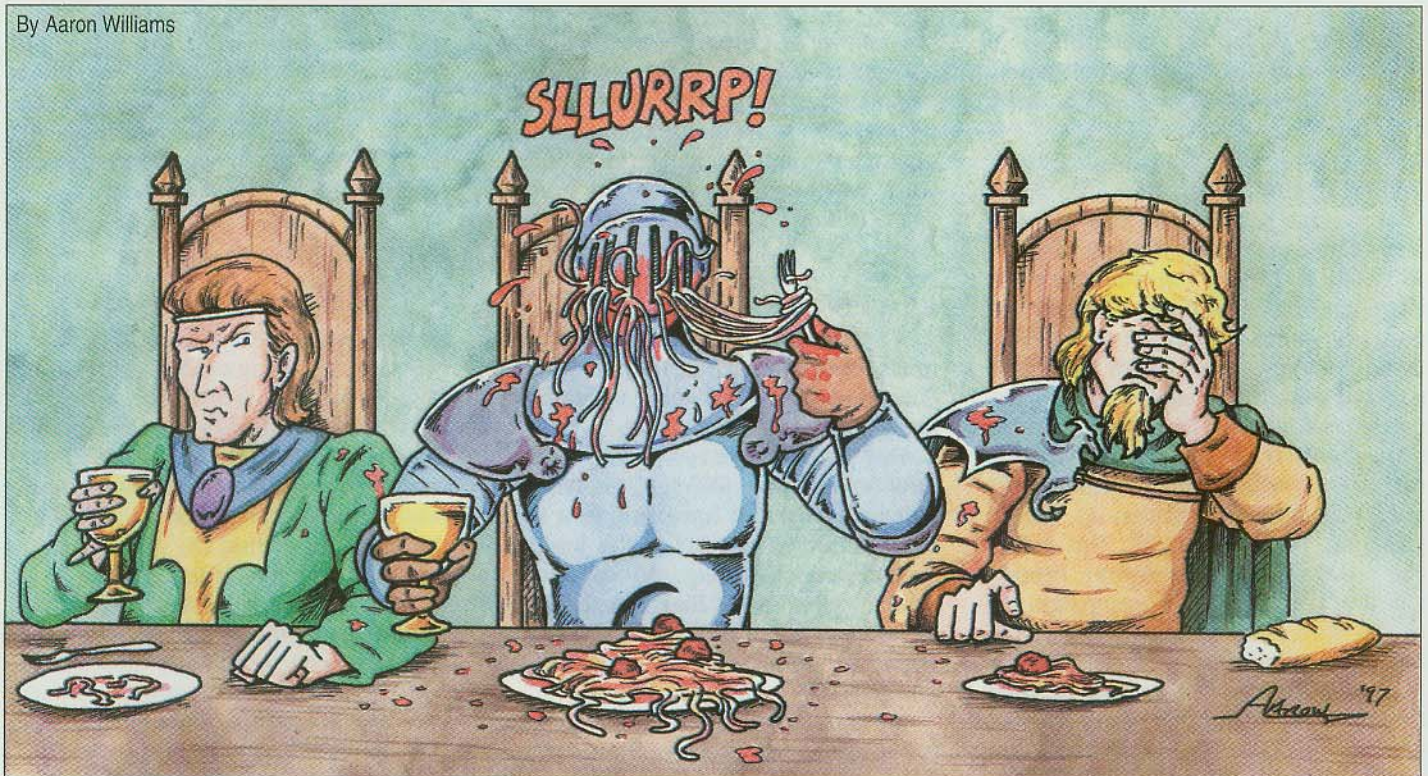
Disadvantages: Bruise easily, compulsive honesty, deep sleeper, fanaticism, phobias (one who engages in mental combat regularly might suffer lasting effects of lost battles in this way), powerful enemy, tongue-tied, and unlucky.

Your psionic PC should now be ready to join her compatriots in the never-ending battle against evil, greed, and cruelty.



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By Aaron Williams



SIR SEDGEWICK'S FIRST TIME EATING SPAGHETTI.
HIS LAST TIME AT THE KING'S TABLE.