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# THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

**Berserker:  
StarWeb's  
Creampuff**

**MICROFILM MADNESS: ADVENTURE  
APPROVED FOR CHAMPIONS  
STARLEADER: ASSAULT! REVIEWED**

**WINNING THE D&D WAR  
ECONOMICS IN TET  
AND 8 PAGES OF REVIEWS**



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## IN THIS ISSUE

We have a pretty straightforward issue for you in March: our usual mix of reviews, articles, scenario, and departments.

A featured review of Metagaming's *Starleader: Assault!* leads off the issue. (*Starleader: Warship* is due later this spring, so watch for a review in coming months). Our centerpiece is a scenario of urban madness for *Champions*, written by George Mac Donald, the game's co-designer. Articles on role-playing in general, economics in *TFT*, Berserkers in *StarWeb*, and more appear throughout, and our pages are rounded out with lots of capsules and our usual columns and features.

But I'm not sure I should be telling you this. Why? Because I've learned that I'm the only person of the TSG readership who looks at the "In This Issue" box. No one in the office does. No one I've spoken to at conventions does. The typesetters read it but don't keep it in memory. (Sniffle.) Can anybody hear me?

—Aaron Allston

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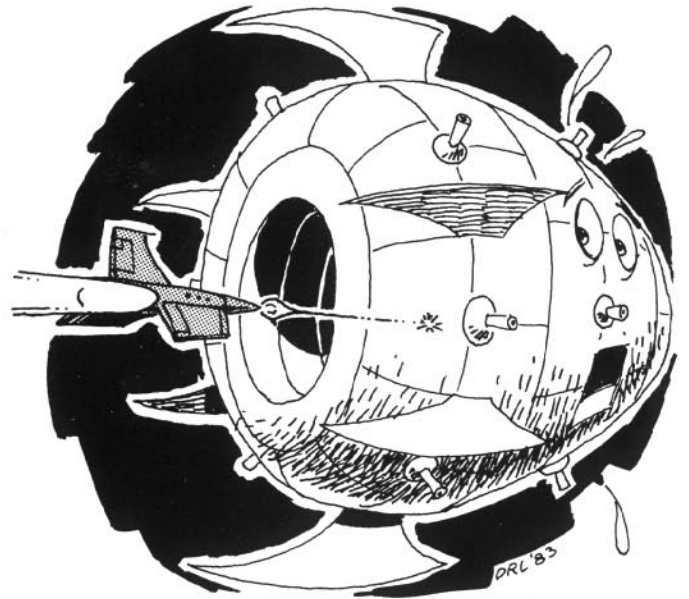
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# Berserker: The Web's Creampuff!



## Or, How to Beat the Bersks by A.D. Young

Well do I recall those halcyon days of SW84, when all was new and *StarWeb*'s many mysteries surrounded us. I played a Collector in that game, and early on met an Empire Builder who became a close ally. It was an alliance for mutual protection more than anything, for we were both threatened by that scourge of the Web, that fearsome tinthing, the Berserker.

Please understand that it was not that this particular Berserker had attacked us, or even looked like it might. As a matter of fact, he did not appear to be doing much of anything, but we were ready nonetheless. Apart from the usual opening pleasantries between players, my ally and I wrote long epistles on tactics, and were determined to meet this threat with all the force at our joint command. We swore eternal loyalty and mutual assistance and girded our loins, and never were the bios so prepared. The first sign, the very first sign of a Robot, and in we would go, boots and all, with no quarter given.

It is difficult to express the concern we felt over this dread fiend. I cannot now recall what convinced us of his cybernetic quality. In reality, he turned out to be a quite inoffensive little EB, who soon dropped.

I relate this anecdote, not only because it is true, but because the attitude exhibited is very common against inexperienced *StarWeb* players, if perhaps verging on idiocy in the case above. A casual reading of the rules tends to confirm the impression that Bersks are a bad lot. What chance for friendship, let alone rapport, can you have with a machine whose sole reason for being is to wipe you out? Talk about clutching a viper to the bosom. This scaly cad has the whip hand at 4:1 odds if your people fight its robots, and twice that when its ships are converted to

them. Who may stand against such odds?

Relax, you're getting perspiration all over the page. It's really not that bad. On the contrary, Berserkers are pushovers, militarily weak, vulnerable to the *n*th degree and no great threat at all. You don't believe me? Let us consider the facts.

The average winning *StarWeb* score is 7500 VPs and it is achieved, again on the average, at Turn 22. The standard deviation is about 1600 VPs, so that a final figure to aim at must be 8000 VPs at the very least. A figure of 9000 VPs would be wiser, but let us leave it at 8000, since this is a conservative estimate. A Berserker can score in the following ways:

- 2 points for each population killed,
- 5 points per turn for each world owned that is populated by robots,
- 2 points per ship destroyed, if the entire fleet is destroyed,
- 200 points for dropping a PBB,
- 5 points per turn for possessing each Titanium or Sword artifact,
- 15 points per turn for possessing the Titanium Sword,
- In addition, there are the other gains and losses associated with artifacts.

This article is about how to beat Berserkers in *StarWeb*. Let us concentrate on the two factors which are the most important for our discussion and which need to be clearly distinguished. These are (1) to be militarily successful, and (2) to achieve the highest possible game rating. There is a good deal of confusion between these aims, since (2) will often require (1). They are, however, quite distinct; as witness, the fact that many a player who has achieved military success has wound up with a lousy rating, and many winners have hardly fired a shot in anger, or even suffered military defeat.

# WHERE WE'RE GOING

I can't believe it. We actually got all the new game material to the printers . . . almost on deadline . . . and nobody (quite) died. It was pretty weird around here for a while, though. One of these days we may learn that it's hazardous to our health to put out five new releases at once. I got to spend a lot of midnight hours on the pasteup table, and Pat Mueller got to fly to Kansas City on two days' notice to supervise the printing of the new labels, and David Ladyman and Jim Gould got to stay up all night working out a new crash/collision system for *Truck Stop* — which was so long that it didn't get used after all . . . So it goes.

But it's all under control now. The only real "glitch" in the whole batch is that *Truck Stop* has one component that's not listed on the back label . . . because at the last minute, rather than cut the rules to fit, we decided to put in a separate folder for record sheets, to leave room in the rulebook for everything else. It makes it a better game; it's just irritating

that we didn't decide to do it sooner.

That makes it time to start planning spring and Origins releases. This isn't final yet, but it looks like we'll have two or three new *Car Wars* releases (probably including a referee screen) in spring. There will be a new batch of *Cardboard Heroes* for either spring or Origins. Game releases at Origins will definitely include expansion sets for both *Ogre/G.E.V.* and *Battlesuit*, plus some new games (which ones, we don't know; there are still lots of possibilities).

And work continues (slowly) on our new RPG. Don't look for it any time real soon, but don't write it off.

## Panic in the Mailroom

We had a little problem around here in the last months of 1982. The details are too disgusting to reveal (translation: I'm not going to raise my blood pressure by thinking about them long enough to type them out). But the *results* were that a large

number of direct-mail orders and subscription forms got filed as "entered" when they hadn't been. Fortunately, they were not *marked* as entered; the situation was salvageable.

Anyway . . . we think it's all fixed. But some of you folks out there are entirely too patient. So if it has been longer than, say, six weeks since you placed an order, and you haven't gotten it, please write us *now*, including a copy of your cancelled check, and we'll get right on it. I hate to have a situation like this come up, but it has, and the only thing to do is to be up-front about it.

## ADQ Arrives

Now for some good news. The first issue of our new *Car Wars* magazine, *Autoduel Quarterly*, will be out by the time you read this. It's edited by David Ladyman; you may remember him as the author of *Kimberani's Tomb* in TSG last year, and Southwestern gamers know him as an experienced convention and tournament organizer. ADQ is a good-looking little magazine. Those of you who are into *Car Wars* will like it. Those of you who are *not* into *Car Wars* shouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. Fair enough?

Steve Jackson



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