

U L T I M A T E
WEREWOLF
E X T R E M E

STRATEGY GUIDE



FELIX ADAM

ULTIMATE WEREWOLF STRATEGY GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION BY FELIX ADAM

This book is a tribute to my *Ultimate Werewolf* addiction. At the time of publishing, I have logged twelve years of experience in playing this iconic game. My first encounter with it was during a convention. I walked past a circle of 25 people who were deeply engaged in the game. I stood in place watching intently as the players toggled between passionately yelling at one another and being quiet, attentive, and fully involved in the gameplay. I was captivated by the theatrics and strategies that played out before me. When a wolf was killed, the circle would erupt into applause. I was so curious that throughout the rest of the convention I would stop by and observe the madness and hilarity of the game. The last night of the convention, I finally sat down and played—for eight hours! I was swept up in the game's intricate and challenging nature. Every game was different. Every person's personality created a diverse interaction that built on the complexity of the game. I had one objective following this experience: play more *Ultimate Werewolf*. I had stayed up all night playing the game, yet I still came home energized and ready to play *Ultimate Werewolf* every weekend.

Sadly, that didn't happen. It was a full year before I was able to play again. *Ultimate Werewolf* requires around 10-20 players, and recruiting players to try out a new game can be challenging. I drummed up interest, but not nearly enough to have a proper circle. I gave up after several attempts at organizing a group to play with. I resigned myself to the idea that this was probably going to be a convention only event. I wanted to get more into the game, but I felt like I didn't have any way to facilitate playing in my local area. It was incredibly frustrating, but I resolved that the game did not have a strong enough community to support the level of play I was seeking. This was incredibly ignorant on my part!

After a year, I attended another convention. I arrived eager to play *Ultimate Werewolf*! On the first day of the event I headed directly to the gaming area. After waiting a few hours, other people started arriving and forming circles. Finally *Ultimate Werewolf* was about to start! The rest of the weekend was a blur. I played circle after circle. The only time I stopped was to sleep and bathe. I met dozens of people who loved *Ultimate*

Werewolf! They also felt like conventions were the only time they got to play the game. I came home with two takeaways. The first, and most important, a community of interested players absolutely existed; they just lacked the means to connect with one another between conventions. The second, clearly, a more organized forum was needed to direct players to a time and place to play.

I began to organize events for *Ultimate Werewolf* and never looked back. Over the last eleven years we have seen amazing growth in the Southeastern United States. Our *Ultimate Werewolf* group, Werewolf ATL, now moderates for twelve conventions and has hosted many local events throughout several cities.

I was very excited when Ted Alspach of Bezier Games reached out and asked me to curate this strategy guide with members of the community. Bezier Games is the publisher of *Ultimate Werewolf* and was founded by the designer, Ted Alspach. He is also the mind behind many other game titles most notably: *Suburbia*, *Castles of Mad King Ludwig*, and the *Silver* series. Of course I accepted the opportunity to collaborate with them in developing a guide and resource for new and experienced players alike. Beyond simple play strategies, there is invaluable information in these pages that will help you engage as a player, moderator, and organizer. If you have questions that span beyond what is covered here, I encourage you to remember that the *Ultimate Werewolf* community is very close knit and welcomes people reaching out if they need any guidance, or even just seeking a new group of friends to play *Ultimate Werewolf* with.

ULTIMATE WEREWOLF 4TH EDITION COMPATIBILITY

This guide was written during the development of *Ultimate Werewolf* 4th edition, which was published in the fall of 2021. Roles discussed refer to the ones in that edition, which might be slightly different than roles in the previous editions of *Ultimate Werewolf*. 4th edition expansions include *Ultimate Werewolf Bonus Roles* and *Ultimate Werewolf Pro*.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This book is broken into three main sections: strategies for **PLAYERS**, tips and tricks for **MODERATORS**, and information for organizing **EVENTS**. There is some additional information below on what you will find in each section, so that you can focus on the sections that are the most important to you. Each section is organized in hopes that you will be able to easily reference information again in the future.

Use the Table of Contents feature in your eReader to quickly get to any section.

SECTION 1: STRATEGIES FOR PLAYERS

This section focuses on the various roles in *Ultimate Werewolf* and gives the reader a basic understanding of how different roles interact and the value of each role. It also gives suggestions on how to process any information that is gathered during game play to help your team win. This section is helpful for new players or players simply looking to change up their game.

SECTION 2: TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MODERATORS

Next, the book gives an in-depth overview of how to moderate. This section will give tips and suggestion for deck lists, engaging players, and preventing meta information from leaking into game play as the moderator. This section is largely a toolbox for the moderator, and is interchangeable from event to event.

SECTION 3: ORGANIZING EVENTS

Finally, this book looks at the process of taking on a leadership role. It outlines how to organize a community and strategically plan *Ultimate Werewolf* events. This section examines concepts like social media, etiquette, and the importance of fostering a positive group culture. We do give examples of some of the ways we've been successful in facilitating and organizing events, but understand that each group may have different needs that you will need to discover and work through in an understanding and collaborative way.

Okay, before I yell “Everyone, wake up!!” so that you can get to the good stuff I want to take a moment to share a final thought. It is important to understand that many of the concepts that I and the other writers have taken as our own were adopted by interactions with other Ultimate Werewolf communities. In our adventures we have most certainly picked up versions of game and adopted other players strategies as we have grown. All of this is to say that this guide is more of a collaboration of Ultimate Werewolf than self developed ideas from one person. We are a vast community of amazing and varied people- who happen to take great joy in deceiving each other in the name of fun.

“EVERYONE, WAKE UP!”

(...and by “wake up” I mean “go read the rest of this book which I hope proves useful to you, the reader. Writing it has been a labor of love to a game that has provided me with countless hours of enjoyment, memorable experiences, and many dear friends. It is also important to note that if you don’t like this book, it’s definitely the werewolves fault.)

SECTION I

STRATEGIES FOR PLAYERS

INTRODUCTION TO ULTIMATE WEREWOLF STRATEGY

The most important aspect of developing a solid strategy in any game is to break it down and understand the base mechanics the game is designed around. Think of it this way, each game mechanic is a cog that engages with the other mechanics, and when done correctly, they will work together to create a fun challenge for the player. The most brilliant games have systems of mechanics that flow so flawlessly that the average player doesn't even see them at work. Ultimate Werewolf is one of those expertly designed games. Not only do the mechanics create a truly fun challenge for the players but they flow so naturally together that it also creates an experience. While Ultimate Werewolf deploys several different mechanics they all fall under the broad definition of "social deduction game" which is often also referred to as a "social deception game."

WHAT IS A SOCIAL DEDUCTION GAME?

The most common question I get asked as an organizer for *Ultimate Werewolf* has to be, "What is a social deduction game?" This is a difficult question because the games that fall under the social deduction genre are so wildly varied. There are heavy and complex social deduction games that can take many hours of structured gameplay. That ranges all the way down to lightweight social deduction games with very few formal rules. Social deduction games, regardless of difficulty, are based around players having to uncover each others' hidden role or team allegiance to be successful in game play. During gameplay, players employ logic and deductive reasoning to try to learn other players' roles. Some players can distort this information to keep others from suspecting their true role.

From the outside looking in, *Ultimate Werewolf* and other social deception games in its class may look chaotic and have very little formality, but don't be fooled. Seasoned *Ultimate Werewolf* players would recognize the intricacy in both scope and depth.

Bushnell's Law states, "All the best games are easy to learn and difficult to master..." and *Ultimate Werewolf* more than fits that well known aphorism. The rules are simple, and its hundreds of role variations create a unique gaming experience.

HOW DO I USE DEDUCTION TO WIN?

This is the next question people typically ask me. The answer may seem obvious: you use deduction to win by, well, deducing the correct information. However, nothing in *Ultimate Werewolf* is that straightforward, and identifying correct data requires some finesse. In *Ultimate Werewolf*, the information you receive may or may not be reliable. It may be inferred, partially true, or an outright lie. The deception that occurs in play makes it crucial to learn the difference between objective and subjective information. You must learn to quickly identify and process the two separately and then blend them together in order to make the best informed decision you can with the knowledge that you have. Doing this is a skill that comes naturally for some people but takes practice for most.

HOW DOES THE SOCIAL PART HELP ME WIN?

The social part of *Ultimate Werewolf* is understanding human behavior and using theatrics and psychology to control the narrative of the game. Players utilize the social aspect of the game by taking their knowledge or conclusions and manipulating them in a way that controls the village's perspective. That allows the player to persuade others into believing the facts that they want them to.

ULTIMATE WEREWOLF GAMEPLAY

While this book assumes the reader has a basic understanding of the game, here is quick overview. *Ultimate Werewolf* plays out in two phases: the day phase and the night phase. The game progresses through these two phases as many times as necessary until either the village has eliminated all of the wolves or the number of wolves reach parity.

DAY 1

The village (both the wolf and the village teams) wake up and they discuss who they believe the Werewolves are and decide on the person to eliminate from the village. Voting takes place, and the players simultaneously point at the person they are voting to eliminate from the village. The player who receives the most votes dies and reveals his card to the group. If no player receives more than one vote, then no one dies. The players may legally orchestrate a no-elimination vote during the discussion before the vote occurs.

NIGHT PHASE

At night, the wolves and special villagers wake up (open their eyes) when they are instructed to do so. Those players take their required actions as outlined by their role.

MASTERING SOCIAL DEDUCTION IN ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

So how exactly do players figure out who is who? If you haven't been paying attention, the answer is deduction! The deduction and skills required in a game built around deception is layered. You don't know who to trust when everyone is trying to throw you off their trail or convince you their motives are pure. Deduction in this case becomes less about problem solving and more like dramatized television detective work. Arguably, one of the most important skills that you need to be successful in this game is to understand deductive logic and the difference between objective and subjective information.

OBJECTIVE INFORMATION

Objective information is unbiased and can be tested and proven true or false. It is not influenced by personal feelings or opinions. The most obvious objective information available is the game itself. The rules, mechanics, and player roles are all objective information that the players may draw upon during their decision making. There are also roles in the game that provide individual players with objective information. For example, the Seer role provides the players with objective information about the current game. The Seer has the ability to check a player's card and knows the alignment of that person. Roles like the Seer that provide players with objective information are crucial in

claiming an *Ultimate Werewolf* victory for your team. Truthful, unbiased information can result in a loss for the wolves. Likewise, wolves should attempt to identify the sources of objective information immediately, so they can eliminate that player during the night phase as soon as possible.

SUBJECTIVE INFORMATION

While objective information is most useful to the villagers, subjective information is much more common when playing *Ultimate Werewolf*. Subjective information in this game is generally based on reading the body language and the behavior of the players. For example, a player may observe that someone who is usually loud with strong opinions is instead being quiet. This is a wolf's bread and butter. The wolf team knows the objective truth of who the wolves are, so they can manipulate subjective information to push the village in the wrong direction. Players must listen carefully to all of information that is disclosed during the village discussion. While a small bit of data may yield no conclusions, pairing it with additional subjective or objective information can yield valuable results. It can let a villager suss out who might be presenting intentionally fake information or lead a wolf to identifying a valuable target such as The Seer.

EXAMPLE/SAMPLE GAME

Let's look at a sample game and what information is subjective and objective.

In a normal game, everyone goes to sleep on the first night. During this phase, the moderator will wake up the wolf team. This allows the wolves to have objective information in the game, as they now know the identify of their fellow wolves. The moderator then wakes up any special villagers. Finally, the game moves to the first day phase.

At this point, the village will have very little information of either type until everyone begins to communicate and interact. Only roles that were able to identify each other in the first night possess any objective information. Players' knowledge of their own roles and team affiliations are objective information, but their communication about their team affiliation is subjective information. Wolves can thrive during this time! With the most

objective information, they can manipulate the discussion by exploiting the information they know and watching other players' responses. More data will accumulate the more the village interacts. Players will have time to observe and challenge each other. A very important thing to consider is that in-game actions, like voting, provide objective information. A player's vote for elimination provides objective information, their reason for who they chose to vote for is subjective information. In *Ultimate Werewolf*, objective information is at a premium, so it's a good idea to track who players vote or don't vote for. This will be helpful when you are making your informed decision later. It is highly likely during this stage of the game that a Villager or special villager is eliminated due to limited information.

Day two is when you get to the meat of the game. By then, special roles will have had a chance to act. The wolves will have eliminated a player in addition to the previous day's elimination. Role reveals are invaluable to the village as they prove the eliminated player's team alignment. Even though the eliminated player is no longer an active participant in the game, the role reveal provides a lot of information to a keen observer. The role the player had is now known as objective information. Additionally, there is potential for subjective information as the village can examine any commentary from or about the eliminated players to identify sources of deception. At this point, the village team gets a chance to obtain objective information. Informative roles, the most common of which is the Seer, have a chance to share what they know with the players. If they get a negative hit, the target is on their team, and this provides the Seer with objective information. This fundamentally changes how the Seer now processes information from this person. They will know that, at the very least, the information coming from the player is not intentionally misleading. If the Seer gets a positive hit, they know they have found a wolf! Compared to a negative hit, a Seer who has found a wolf has a unique view behind the veil of the wolf team. They know that this person is misleading the village.

Gameplay will continue through night and day phases until one side is victorious. Note that this example is simplified to highlight the types of information players receive. There are a variety of elements in *Ultimate Werewolf* that can distort information. A classic example would be the Wolf Man role. Wolf Man wakes and hunts with the wolves, but The Seer will always see him as a Villager. Wolf Man was introduced in the 2013

expansion *Ultimate Werewolf: Urban Legends* that included 6 new roles for players to take on.

“THAT’S SO META”

Unlike objective information, subjective information has the unique ability to go beyond a single game. Meta is a term that describes a subject in a way that transcends its original limits. In this case, meta is the transference of subjective information beyond the scope of a game. This generally involves identifying player “tells” and habits.

Example A - Player A leads the charge on a Werewolf. The night phase occurs, and the player does not die. Player B makes a comment that Player A is well known for killing their wolf allies.

Example B - The night phase runs exceptionally long. When everyone wakes up, Player A accuses Player B of being a wolf as they are known for being slow in the night phase.

This is subjective in nature, but is based on previous data that transcends the original limits of the game.

Many times, this will be a valid reason to eliminate a player. Both teams will attempt to manipulate meta information to their advantage. A seasoned wolf player looks for examples that are either partially true or anecdotal in nature that can be defended later. If they can convince someone else to advocate their position, without being in the spotlight, that is often a perfect scenario for a wolf team player.

The one thing to consider about meta information is that it is always subjective in nature and it is constantly changing. People do not like having public tells that identify them as wolf team. For this reason, it should be assumed that meta data is a constantly evolving source of subjective information.

GATHERING OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE INFORMATION

Ultimate Werewolf is very good about controlling objective information. Several roles can affect other role's mechanics, causing some data to be only partially reliable. Just because something is objective doesn't mean it is true, but even distorted objective information still has value. Players should be patient and rely on other sources of information to get a larger view of the game.

Players should watch and track the following:

- ◆ Voting patterns
- ◆ Wolf eliminations
- ◆ Player activity level
- ◆ Eliminated players roles/alignment
- ◆ Discrepancies in information provided by a single player
- ◆ Body Language/Mannerisms
- ◆ Meta information

These key data points will give more weight to your deductive conclusions. How each team handles the information they have obtained throughout the game will often be the difference between the wolf team winning or losing. Obviously, each scenario is different, but in general the village team will try to make incoming information objective, while the wolf team will attempt to manipulate this information to keep it subjective.

CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE

You can gather the most rock solid information that rivals that of any *Ultimate Werewolf* player in all of history! Your information gathering could be so impressive that you inspire legends in which you master the art of obtaining and analyzing information so expertly that you transform into a real life Seer! You can be that good, and you can still lose. Easily.

One of the most fascinating aspects of *Ultimate Werewolf* is how a large circle of people disseminate information. This is the part of the game where the social and deductive elements of social deduction games meet. Many times, a player who has either objective information or strong, logical subjective reads might be unable to sway the

village because of the manipulations of the other team. The control of information, or “the narrative,” is working against them. The passage of communal information is one of the unique and most complex pieces of social deduction games.

The narrative of the village is the lifeblood of any *Ultimate Werewolf* circle. It is the primary weapon for both teams to win the game. For someone on the village team, the narrative is used to identify and hunt neutral players and members of the wolf team. For the wolf team, it is used to manipulate and sow doubt. Identifying what everyone believes and being able to affect those beliefs is vital as the game progresses.

As a villager, it is important to challenge the parts of the narrative that do not make sense. Villagers use the narrative, or rather the manipulation of the narrative, to identify wolves and neutral characters. Then, they must be able to sway other players to their side. The village team must continually watch for the attempted manipulation of the narrative. This includes being acutely aware of players attempting to manipulate or twist known information. Villagers should be engaged and continually ask questions as reference for what is going on in the game. Common questions the village should ask: Are we on the right track? Are we protecting good specials? Has anyone provided information or claims that are not true? It is important to continually check back and ask if information being processed is being done in a pro-village way.

As a wolf, controlling the narrative is the key to winning the game. Careless manipulation of data can cause the village to out them! Wolves know who is on the wolf team. It is important that they affect the narrative in a way that makes themselves look good and, at the same time, causes the village to make mistakes. *Ultimate Werewolf*, at its core, is a play between wolves and the number of mistakes they can cause. Each wolf should try to facilitate as much misdirection as possible. Even a wolf death can deceive a village. A wolf may out themselves to cause chaos or change the village’s perspective on another player. Wolves also can misdirect using their night kills. Many times, the village will examine the night kill extensively to try to determine the source. This a great way to incriminate innocent villagers or generally cause chaos. Wolves’ primary goal is to always manipulate the narrative to prevent as much access to clean

data as possible. The less reliable the village's information, the less reliable their deductive conclusions.

It is important to recognize that in *Ultimate Werewolf* every game is different and unique in scope. Bezier Games has produced hundreds of roles with thousands of possibilities. Every game will have new and different deductive and social challenges, which is part of the fun!

PLAYING A VILLAGER IN ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

You sit down to your circle, and the moderator hands you your card. You take a look, see the blue background, and know you're on team village. You look at the players around you and know you have a job to do. There are allies among your fellow players, but there are also enemies. As a member of team village, it is your job to gather information and eliminate threats to the village. Most commonly this will be the wolf team, but there may be other roles competing for victory. While team village has the advantage of numbers, they start the game out with a major obstacle—a lack of information. The wolf team begins the game knowing each other and will be working against the village to keep as much reliable information out of the hands of team village. You know you are going to need to use tools of deduction to help find wolves, but how you go about it largely depends on your role. In this section, we'll discuss the different types of team village roles and some strategies to help maximize their effectiveness.

TYPES OF VILLAGER TEAM ROLES

Village roles can be divided into four sub-categories:

- ◆ Regular Villager
- ◆ Greater Villager
- ◆ Auxiliary Villager
- ◆ Disincentive Villager

Most games will consist of a mix of roles from each of these categories. It is important to know which roles are in your game and how they interact. This will not only help piece

together data during the game, but it will also help inform you on how best to play your role. Each of the following sections will have mini strategy guides for popular characters. The logic behind the strategies outlined should transfer easily to similar characters.

REGULAR VILLAGER

The Regular Villager is one of the most common roles to appear in an *Ultimate Werewolf* deck. Regular Villagers support their team, but do not have any additional ability beyond standard voting. This category only has one role – the Villager. While the Villager does not have powers, their utility lies in strategy. The primary goal of the village is to eliminate the wolf team, but to get there, some of the village is going to be eliminated as well. As a Villager, you want to work as a screen between the wolf team and the Greater, Auxiliary, and even Disincentive Villager specials in the game. This involves gathering data for the village, disseminating information from specials, and creating distractions for the wolves. If a Villager makes themselves enough of a target to be the night elimination, they have bought their specials another phase of the game. The Seer gets another check. The Witch saves their potion. The Bodyguard lives to protect another teammate. There are a few ways to go about this.

Know when to claim: Wolves are consistently trying to identify villager special roles and will often eliminate from the pool of non-Villager claims. Withholding your claim for a time or even hinting you may be a special role can draw the wolves' attention to you.

Be Engaged: Ask questions. Share suspicions. Put players on defense. This will generate information for the village and draw the attention of the wolf team. Special or not, wolves will eliminate individuals that challenge their ability to control the village narrative.

Cover for other specials: As the game progresses, some players may trust a Villager enough to share objective game information. A Seer may have cleared them, or they might have been saved from a night elimination. Once a Villager has an open channel to a special role, they can communicate to the rest of the village for them. So long as they are discreet, the Villager will be just as much of a target as a special role.

GREATER VILLAGER

Greater Villagers are made up of the special roles with power to give the village team significant advantages over the course of the game. These roles have the ability to obtain vital information or disrupt the wolves' abilities to harm the village. Most Greater Villagers will have a power to use, so their goal will be to remain alive long enough to both use that ability as well as communicate anything pertinent to the village. This can be a challenge to do strategically, as a player will need to both be engaged enough to not draw suspicion and also be reserved enough to not draw attention. Greater Villager players sometimes have a tendency to "lie low" or stay out of discourse so as not to gain the attention of the wolf team. This can be problematic, as wolves will absolutely be looking for possible specials, but they are also looking for the town to eliminate anyone but another wolf team player. This could make you the target of the elimination, too! Being able to balance being engaged and reserved buys you more time to put your abilities to effective use.

Information roles are one of the most frequent Greater Villager types to appear in any game since objective information is vital to the success of the village team. These roles receive data about other players. This is objective information, based on fact and barring other interfering mechanics, is usually assumed to be true. Information roles help piece together the actual truth of a village's narrative and narrow down suspects by either identifying trusted players or likely wolves. To the majority of players, the Seer is likely the most familiar of these roles. Each night, the Seer wakes up and scans a player to determine if they are a member of the wolf team. Positive result or not, the Seer learns something about the village each night—who they can likely trust or who they cannot.

Since the Seer is a consistent source of new information, they are a prime night elimination target. As a Seer, you want to protect yourself as much as possible while selecting targets that will produce helpful information for the village. The longer you can make checks and communicate them to your teammates, the better chance your team has of winning. It is important not to draw attention to yourself before you are able to

make a check or two. Early game objective information evens the playing field with the wolves and makes it harder for them to manipulate the narrative. Reliable data introduced early on makes deception much more difficult since it will have to be manipulated around a set of facts. One of the most detrimental losses to a village is the early elimination of an information role. An easy way to practice the balancing between engaged and unassuming is to simply play a Villager. At the beginning of the game, you do not have any information yet. You are simply another member of the village out to find the wolf team. Listen to the village discussion and participate like you would as any early game Villager. This will also help you start to decide your scan targets. Once a couple of nights have gone by and you have more information to use, then you can decide how best to start moving information around, hopefully with the wolves none the wiser.

A Seer's scan target choices are just as important as the results. Ideally, the Seer not only wants to find a wolf, but also to build a group of players they can trust with their results. A common first view for a Seer is one or both of their immediate neighbors. If there is no wolf hit, clearing neighbors creates a small block of players to pass information. If the results are passed to the village through different, trusted players, the wolves will have a harder time discerning who the Seer is. Another thing to keep in mind when choosing targets is how long the result will be useful. A vocal player aggressively leading the village may be a desirable scan target, but wolves are also looking for standout options for night eliminations. A cleared player is no use if they are not in the game anymore. Check out and resolve wolf suspicions first, but if you do not have a lead, resolve unknowns. Choose targets that seem unlikely to be the night elimination, but still draw your curiosity. Is there a player who seems to be normal but is difficult to read? Is there someone paying attention but sitting out of discussion? These players, if not wolves themselves, are not likely going to be the target for a night elimination. More often, they will be pushed by the village. Checking these types of players will not only resolve their alignment, but it also might give hints about the players pushing for their elimination, possibly leading you to net a wolf with another check.

What happens when a Seer finds a wolf? Do they sit on the information? Do they share it? Sharing information with the wrong person could disclose the Seer's identity to the wolves, so it is important to make sure that data is passed around carefully when possible. Even if the person receiving the information has been cleared by a check, roles like the Wolf Man could fool the Seer into trusting them. Auxiliary wolf roles may return a negative result as well, so the Seer may accidentally out themselves to a Sorceress or Minion. Additionally, roles like the Lycan may create a false hit, so it may not be worth it to expose the first wolf you see until there is more information. The decision on whether to expose yourself largely depends on the state of the game. How many wolves are remaining? How many players have been cleared of suspicion? Are there any roles still in the game that could protect you and buy you another night phase or two? Ultimately, the Seer's goal is to either identify as many wolves as possible or create enough cleared players that the wolves reaching parity before the village resolves uncleared players is mathematically unlikely.

Barring roles that have additional elimination abilities, you can expect two eliminations per each day/night cycle. If the resolution of the unknown players works at a rate slower than the wolves can remove existing clears, team village has a high chance of winning the game. While this is the goal, it is not always the final resolution. Sometimes there are other roles that could benefit from the hit. A Hunter or a Witch would have a solid target. Outing a wolf may unmask other wolves just through deduction, or the Seer might just have too much attention and is likely going to draw the night elimination soon. It is up to you to decide when it is safest to risk the village losing access to Seer checks, but it's vital to not let good information go to waste. Do not sit on a wolf or clear if you do not think you are going to be able to share the information later. Even a small amount of objective data is better than no data at all.

Protection roles are another type of Greater Villager. Working in tandem with information roles, their focus is to interfere with wolves' abilities. Most often, these roles will affect the wolves' night elimination, either negating it completely during a night phase or even redirecting it elsewhere. The Bodyguard, for instance, chooses a target to protect each

night. This is extremely powerful as it has the potential to set the wolf team back an entire night phase. A successful protection means the wolves have lost an elimination, and if there are not any other methods for the night elimination to fail, the Bodyguard knows the player they saved is not one of the wolves. As a Bodyguard, you will want to think like a member of the wolf team. Who is showing most value to team village? Is there anyone acting odd or unusually reserved? Those individuals may be likely wolf targets. Your goal is to anticipate the night elimination to preserve as many of your teammates as possible. Since the Bodyguard cannot protect the same person twice in a row, it is important to carefully consider protection picks. A player who was randomly protected may out their role the next day and not have protection available for tomorrow.

Wolves will also try to work around a Bodyguard and attack a secondary option instead of a primary threat. Depending on the game situation, losing a night elimination may be more costly than eliminating an outed village special or clear. You can choose to anticipate these sorts of off-picks, but it can be a difficult decision and requires both consideration of the targets and the decisions the wolves have made so far. How much of a threat is the primary target to the wolves? Can they risk leaving the role active in the game? What sort of night elimination decisions have the wolves made so far? Are they taking out vocal targets? Are they hunting for specials in the unknown players? Anticipating the night elimination is a balance between gauging the wolves' threat assessment of the village and the value of outed village team players to the village. Even if the wolves choose a different target, ensuring a village special gets another night to use their abilities is usually more beneficial. Choose the protection option that preserves the most utility for the village.

While the Bodyguard only clears targets with a successful save, the Witch is another protection role that has the ability to stop any night elimination, giving them a potential for a clear during a night phase. The Witch sports two potions, a save potion and an elimination potion. Unlike the Bodyguard, the Witch's powers are one-use only, so the role is only capable of a single save or elimination. As a Witch, you will need to consider when best to expend your potions. The role does have a distinct advantage, however.

Until the Witch expends their save potion, they know who the night elimination target will be. Unless there are alternative night elimination roles in the game, the Witch does not have to worry about being eliminated before expending their power while their save potion is available. Worst case scenario, the Witch may need to use the potion to preserve themselves from the night elimination, but then they know they are threatened and can expend their elimination potion before the wolves get another chance to target them.

Like the Bodyguard, the Witch will want their save to preserve team village resources as much as possible. A save potion can buy another night phase for a Greater Villager to get information for the team. Alternatively, a save potion can be used to create a clear. If the Witch outs themselves along with the clear, that is two mostly trusted members of team village. When paired with information roles, this can jumpstart a town's flow of data. Team village may be able to create a trusted block of players faster than wolves can catch up. Be wary though, like the Seer, the Witch does not know the actual role of the night elimination target. They can likely reason that the target is not a wolf, but that does not mean that the night elimination was not an auxiliary wolf team member. Pass information between sources carefully.

The Witch also needs to know when best to use their elimination potion ability. It often makes sense to wait as long as possible in a game to use the ability so long as the Witch knows they're not in danger of being eliminated beforehand. Waiting gives the Witch time to gather data and make an informed decision when using their elimination. Witches can also wait on outed wolf team targets from other information sources. Expending an elimination on a confirmed target allows the village to use the day vote hunting elsewhere.

Outside of information and protection roles, there are Greater Villagers that simply have powerful abilities that can be a huge detriment to the wolf team. If one of these roles is present in the game, expect equally powerful wolf team roles to be present to balance them out. Frankenstein's Monster is a role that serves as a back-up to all other village special roles. Essentially, they take on the role of any eliminated village special. If the

Seer is eliminated, they become the Seer. If the Hunter is eliminated, they become the Hunter, and so on. Powerful roles such as this require combining the different strategies of each role absorbed. Since Frankenstein's Monster eventually becomes multiple roles at once, they can play off each role to generate a large amount of information in a short time. For example, a Frankenstein's Monster who is a Seer and a Witch can create two clears in a single night. They can use an elimination potion to eliminate a wolf they identify with their Seer check. However, since the role is a single source for multiple lines of information, losing the role can be a huge blow to the village. Be wary when sharing information between assumed clears and consider even saving available protections for yourself.

AUXILIARY VILLAGER

Auxiliary Villagers carry powers that help the village gain information and protect its sources. Auxiliary Villagers consist of roles that support the village team but tend to be either less powerful or have some form of trigger or limited use. They may not be able to provide the village with as much data as an information role, but a well-used power can give the village the advantage it needs to get ahead. The Hunter role eliminates another player when they are eliminated. Without good information, sometimes this elimination is a shot in the dark, but a Hunter shot can save the village's resources and hunting. The best Hunter targets are informed eliminations—targets that are known entities and should not proceed to the final phases of the game. This includes outed wolves, such as positive Seer hits or outed auxiliary wolf team members. The village does not have to debate on voting to eliminate a known entity, so any time an additional elimination can save resources, it is good for the village. The Hunter does not always know when they are going to be eliminated, however, so they will need to rely on reads and other information to remove a suspicious player while not accidentally eliminating another special villager.

Masons are another relatively simple auxiliary role. Masons are villagers that know one another. This creates an immediate block of trust between two to three players. This can

be extremely useful later in the game if any of the Mason group are still alive. If the Masons can identify other clears throughout the course of the game, they can develop a powerful voting block and give the village a strong mathematical advantage. Masons should carefully time when to reveal themselves. It can be helpful to preserve a block for as long as it takes to connect with other special villagers, but Masons lose their utility if their allies are eliminated without confirming one another.

The Revealer is a unique role that is a blend of a Seer and eliminating role. They have the optional ability to choose a player each night. If that person is a wolf, they are eliminated. If the target is not a wolf, however, the Revealer is eliminated. This is another role that relies heavily on information being available in the village. Use of this power too early will simply remove another special villager from the game. However, the Revealer can consistently remove outed threats from the game if the information comes available. As a Revealer, you should be actively hunting and preserve your ability until you think you've either found a wolf or you have drawn the attention of the wolves enough to be a possible night elimination. The more data you have to make informed attempts, the more impact your ability will have.

DISINCENTIVE VILLAGER

Disincentive roles are team village roles that can hinder the village in different ways. While their overall effect can be negative, you can still use some strategies to minimize the damage to the village or even sometimes use the obstacle to your advantage. The Lycan role always will read as a wolf to Seer checks. This is a role that blatantly affects objective information. If the Seer gets a positive hit on a Lycan, team village may operate on the assumption that the Lycan is on the wolf team, and rightly so. The wolf team, knowing the Lycan is not one of them, will be happy to let the village remove one of their own special villagers in lieu of a wolf. So, as a Lycan, how do you proceed without wasting village resources? The easiest method is simply to come out and claim before anyone has had a chance to waste resources trying to clear you. Does this absolve a Lycan? No, but if a Lycan knows their role and communicates it with the village, the village saves resources and can deal with the situation in the most efficient

way available. Maybe the Lycan is the vote elimination if there is no better lead at the end of a day phase. Maybe they are the Hunter target later in the game. Claiming early in this scenario can also simply gain the village's trust. If there are no contenders for the claim, the village might just accept the claim as uncontested, leaving the Lycan alone, or even as a pseudo-trust. This turns the situation back onto the wolf team, who must decide if they can afford to leave an outed village team member in the game. In this case, a Lycan turns their role from expending team village's resources to expending the wolf team's. Even if the Lycan does end up as the night elimination, that is a night where Greater Villagers are able to get more data for the village.

Building on the idea of turning disincentives to an advantage, let's have a look at the Mad Destroyer role. When the Mad Destroyer is eliminated at night, they are told they are eliminated the next morning before any other night eliminations are announced, at which time they choose a side. No one may talk until the Mad Destroyer makes their decision. Left or Right refers to the side from the Mad Destroyer's perspective and starts with the first active player next to them on that side. This is an evolution of the original Mad Bomber role that eliminated both neighbors. It is interesting because it now gives information and allows the Mad Destroyer to more directly affect the flow of the game. To team wolf, this is a prime target. Multiple eliminations for one can put the wolf team ahead quickly, and especially if other special villagers are in the mix. This can get tricky. Upon your elimination as the Mad Destroyer, your goal is to minimize damage to the village or possibly produce useful information. This means getting to know your neighbors. Depending on the situation, you might even go ahead and let them know your role. Make sure your communication is discreet. A nearby wolf player may take note and take advantage. Consider the wolf roles in the game before deciding how to proceed with claiming. Auxiliary roles, like the Minion, will have no problem exploding next to you. If your neighbors are team village, they will often attempt to garner you some forms of protection, especially if one of them is a special villager. Alternatively, a neighboring wolf will have to consider leaving you alive to save themselves. The longer you remain in the game, though, the more they risk you gaining another wolf neighbor.

How the wolves approach the Mad Destroyer can tell the village a lot about the wolf team. If the Mad Destroyer dies early, it is possible someone nearby could be responsible for hearing the claim. If the Mad Destroyer remains in the game longer after claiming, they may be dealing with a wolf neighbor. Consider positions and timing when the Mad Destroyer is triggered. The data can help the village make up for losing extra members.

TEAM VILLAGER CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

Now that we have covered some examples of team village roles, let's discuss some concepts that all village roles can employ to help maximize the effectiveness of their gameplay. We have already covered how to gather and analyze information. Village players will also want to disrupt the wolf team from gathering information about them. This means considering your own attitude and mannerisms. Are you tense? Unusually quiet? The wolf team already know the identities of their fellow wolves, so they are looking for other players acting out of the ordinary. It's easy to think that because you aren't on the wolf team you don't have anything to hide, but you do. There are powerful roles that an experienced player on the werewolf team will want to eliminate or convert. If you are one of those roles you want to disguise yourself, and if you are a regular villager, misdirection is your best friend.

Pressure can be an invaluable tool in deduction. Try to hear something from everyone. Ask questions, question the logic behind other's votes as well as their suspicions. Those engaged in the game should have an opinion on the village at a given time. If you are having a hard time getting a read on someone, put them up for a vote. A vote does not always mean you want the person to be eliminated. Sometimes, it provides a clear, quiet floor where you can hear a person's defense and suspicions. Pay attention when you put someone under pressure. This is the point where wolves must actively deceive the town. Pressuring players is how deception can unravel. Instead of a mild lie here and there, a wolf must produce logic to the town to at least show they are hunting or providing some form of value. Any inconsistencies or off reactions can be a

clue to netting a wolf. Reads and suspicions come after you have collected data from your fellow players. When something does not add up, do not be afraid to act on it. If you do not challenge other players and their logic, you will not get any more information about your suspicions until it is too late. You may not always be correct. Deduction is not a perfect science, it takes practice. If somebody manages to deceive you, consider how it was done so you can look out for similar attempts in future games.

As team village, you will likely need to identify your role to a person or the village during some point in the game. Claiming can be a strategic way to gain trust, but it also gives the wolf team data. Remember that wolves are constantly trying to identify valuable targets for the night elimination. Claims narrow the suspect pool for the village, but they also help the wolves narrow down who may or may not have a special villager role. Claims are not necessarily the truth, but as a member of team village, a false claim should have a good reason, otherwise it may confuse the village and cause you to lose trust. False claims are more common for the wolf team, but a village player may claim in order to cover for another special. This should be communicated carefully, however, as it has the potential to inadvertently out a role you were trying to protect. A safer way to detract wolves' attention is to use a soft claim. Instead of outright declaring a role, hint that you may be something other than a villager. Claims paint a picture of the remaining roles in the game. If all roles are accounted for and uncontested, the village has a much narrower window to hunt for wolves. On the other hand, wolves know where to hunt to best target claims and clears. Ensure claims are made with numbers and the remaining roles in mind. If a claim does not give the village more information or give a numbers advantage, it may be better to wait until it goes.

While team village have less reasons to lie about claims, the wolf team has every reason to lie. When it comes time for the village to introduce claiming, wolves will fight back with counterclaims. This is when a wolf team member challenges that they are the same role as you. This creates confusion in the village and creates a problem that draws the narrative focus away from wide scale hunting. It's possible that a wolf team member may claim your role first. If this happens, remember that is not always prudent

to counterclaim right away. Wolf team roles, especially auxiliary wolf team members, are likely to claim to draw out important special villagers. A Minion will happily trade outing themselves if it costs team village their information roles. Wait until you have the information you need before you counter claim. Make sure you keep track of your actions and have reasonings behind each one. Know who you checked or protected and why. False claims must fabricate this information.

Being thorough will likely gain you more trust. While counterclaims can be chaotic, the village can come out of the encounter with a possible wolf if they navigate the situation correctly.

PLAYING A WEREWOLF IN ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

You have gathered a group of friends to play Ultimate Werewolf. You sit down, and the moderator hands you your role. You are a wolf team member, specifically a Werewolf. What is your gut response to this realization? You will have to play against your friends for the next 30-40 minutes, betraying them so you can win in the end. What was your response? Players typically respond strongly one way or the other to this role. Some players are shyer or have strong notions of good vs evil in their head and hate the idea of being intentionally deceptive. Their first response is fear and anxiety, as not everyone likes to have the spotlight on them and have their actions scrutinized. The other common response is joy. Those people react with unabashed enthusiasm. For these people I love to quote the famous line from Skeletor of Eternia "I don't like to feel good, I like to feel evil!" For your first response, I hope you got excited! You are going to give your friends a fun and engaging battle between Good vs. Evil. Wolf team roles typically have objective information, as they know the rest of the wolf team. This allows them to manipulate and control subjective information in the game. Wolf team can be one of the most rewarding teams to work with. The best games of Ultimate Werewolf are the games when there is a truly challenging battle between villagers and wolves all the way through to the final phases.

TYPES OF WOLF TEAM ROLES

Wolf team roles can be categorized into four subcategories

- ◆ Regular Werewolf
- ◆ Greater wolf team member
- ◆ Auxiliary wolf team member
- ◆ Disincentive wolf team member

The Regular Werewolves fill out most of the wolf team composition, while Greater, Auxiliary, and Disincentive flavor your deck. Most of the time, you will find only two of the three wolf team roles from these categories, which will give your game its own unique challenge. Below we will walk you through how to distinguish each *Ultimate Werewolf* evil role into one of these categories.

REGULAR WEREWOLF

Regular Werewolves are the most common evils to show up in an *Ultimate Werewolf* game. The most obvious example is the plain Werewolf, who wakes up every night and eliminates a member of the village. Regular Werewolves all share the same responsibilities once activated—eliminate at nighttime and vote at daytime. As long as you are deceiving during the day and cunning at night, the wolf team can thrive with a conglomerate of Regular Werewolves. The Dream Wolf can also be considered a Regular Werewolf. The Dream Wolf is inactive at the start of the game and does not know the wolves. However, once one active wolf has been eliminated in the game, the Dream Wolf activates and becomes a plain Werewolf and joins the wolves during night phase.

GREATER WOLF TEAM MEMBER

What makes *Ultimate Werewolf* exciting, but also equally terrifying, are the powerful wolves that can roam the village. They are a necessary means to make the game challenging but ultimately rewarding for the winning team. These are our Greater wolf team members. They possess the same goals and responsibilities as Regular Werewolves, while also maintaining increased power that can turn the tide of the game.

Some of these powers can include converting a Villager's alignment, causing multiple eliminations at night, and taking someone out of the game with them when defeated. Even with just one Greater wolf team member in your deck, there is a heightened sense of fright from the village team. As a Greater wolf team member, staying alive can often be the difference between the wolf team winning and losing. You should be protected by the other wolves as you represent significant impact to the game. The longer Greater wolf team members remain in the game, the larger the threat they become. As the village dwindles in size, the more opportunities wolves can gain parity and increases their threat exponentially. There are multiple Greater wolf team members that can alter the entire game path in just a game phase. Please see below for a few examples of our Greater wolf team members.

The Big Bad Wolf can be considered one of the greatest Greater wolf team members. The Big Bad Wolf gives the wolves the ability to eliminate two villagers per night phase. The wolves' threat is doubled, countering most village actions during the night phase. Another example is the Wolf Cub. The Wolf Cub, once eliminated by the village, grants two eliminations for the wolves. Although this power can be considered at a threat level lower than The Big Bad Wolf, the fact they can expedite the wolves' plans a full night phase can turn the tide of a game.

Once a wolf has perished in the game, The Alpha Wolf chooses to convert the target of the next night phase and the player becomes a Werewolf. Upon a villager's conversion, they lose all potential powers granted by their role, as they are now converted to a Regular Werewolf, with the power to eliminate at night and vote during day. An Alpha Wolf can convert a known village team member and turn them against the village. Any information they gathered throughout the game, such as a converted Seer, can begin eliminating all known clears. Even worse, the converted special can claim their special role at a critical time and cause mass hysteria at a final encounter to win the game for evil.

AUXILIARY WOLF TEAM MEMBER

Auxiliary wolf team members are the helpers for the wolf team. While they do not wake with the wolves and eliminate at night, their responsibilities include gathering information and building loyalty. Some roles act as lurkers throughout the night, finding information for the wolf team to be used against the village. Others can hinder a villager's speaking privileges for a day phase. While they do not count towards parity for a wolf team win, their traits grant opportunities for wolves to thrive within the village.

The Minion is one of the most common Auxiliary wolf team members. At the start of the game, The Minion knows the active wolves within the game. The only caveat is the wolves do not know the Minion. While at a disadvantage, the Minion can overcome this by slowly feeding information and giving tells to their wolf team. That way, wolves do not inadvertently eliminate the Minion.

DISINCENTIVE WOLF TEAM MEMBER

Disincentive wolf team members are the most calculated when it comes to the deck building. Disincentive can be described as a factor which discourages players to act on something. This can include eliminating a certain villager during the night phase or voting to remove a villager. Although at a disadvantage, they still work with the wolf team. Most Disincentive roles are still wolves which can eliminate at night and know the wolves. In order to win, the wolf team will have to work around these disadvantages. You would use Disincentive wolf team members when a deck is overly weighted to the wolf team's favor, such as multiple Greater wolf team members.

One Disincentive wolf team member is the Lone Wolf. The rules stated on the card indicate that the Lone Wolf knows the wolves, eliminates with the wolves, and is on the wolf team. However, their personal goal is to be the remaining survivor within the circle. This means all players, including their wolf counterparts, must be eliminated. This is a disadvantage as the wolves do not know who the Lone Wolf is—only the Lone Wolf

does. The Lone Wolf will use the day and night phases to suppress the wolves' plans to ultimately win in the end.

The Wolverine has special sharp metal claws, making him the loudest wolf of the bunch. During the night, they irresponsibly make loud metal screeching sounds when eliminating. This gives the village known information that the closest wolf to the eliminated villager is the Wolverine. This proves a disadvantage for the wolves as their pool of villagers dwindles, and potentially harmful information is shared with the village.

It is a grey area, but we would not categorize The Dream Wolf as a Disincentive wolf team member. In most decks, the Dream Wolf is not placing an immediate disadvantage to the wolf team. Instead, think of it as an advantage if the Dream Wolf lives to its activation because it becomes a regular Werewolf. This role is not like a Wolverine or Fruit Brute that adds disadvantage on a wolf's night phase. In the new edition of *Ultimate Werewolf*, the wolves cannot eliminate the Dream Wolf, so this role is even better!

TEAM WEREWOLF CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

You may have noticed less information on the specific roles on the werewolf team. That is because while the roles are important, strategy is paramount when playing as a werewolf. The following strategies are covered in this section:

- ◆ Fundamentals
- ◆ Join in on the celebrations
- ◆ Participate in the day phase
- ◆ Give "good" information
- ◆ Have ongoing conversations with players
- ◆ Converse with your fellow wolves during the day phase
- ◆ Find a balance in your day phase activity
- ◆ Find a wolf
- ◆ Do not hesitate during elimination voting
- ◆ Agree with village ideologies that do not conflict with your agenda

FUNDAMENTALS

We have been able to classify different levels of wolf team roles within the game of *Ultimate Werewolf*. As there are many roles within the game already, and we plan to see many more in the years to come, these classifications can be changed over time. However, the fundamentals of how we group roles together should stay firm over the years. Now, which roles have you been given? Are you the Greater wolf team member, causing all the havoc? Are you the wicked Sorcerer, sussing out the Seer? Are you a loyal howling Werewolf, helping with eliminations each night? To win as the wolf team, the entire team needs to work as a “village” and disrupt all thought processes the village team is trying to get across.

During your *Ultimate Werewolf* playthrough as a wolf team role, take a moment to review who is on your team. The moderator will give an abundant source of information during the first night phase. For example, they can signify who is which wolf by asking them to raise their hand. Because of this, the wolves can take mental notes on who to protect, and who is alright to get eliminated if suspicion falls on them. Wolves, the first night can formulate a pecking order—determining the best of the worst scenarios in wolf eliminations, if the village starts uncovering wolves.

Protecting all wolf team members that can eliminate players from the game is the utmost priority for the wolf team. When there is a decision between the village eliminating an Auxiliary wolf team member versus a Werewolf, use your best tactics to point the fingers towards the Auxiliary wolf team member. This is important because you need to protect the wolves that will cause the most threat to the village. In a balanced game, there are only a finite amount of Greater wolf team members. This means the entire team is in charge of protecting that Greater wolf team member when the threat of elimination has reached them.

JOIN IN ON THE CELEBRATIONS

“Village team” players love to show their excitement and enthusiasm when uncovering wolves. When the village gets excited, YOU should get excited as well. It raises suspicion when a player does not look excited to see a wolf being removed from the

game. In the business of working with wolves, always think of your relationship with other wolves as “dog eat dog.” Yes, it sucks to lose a member of your team, but you get to live another day. Celebrate in the village’s victory now, and then revel in your victory later. It is important that other people in the game think you are acting normally. Actions that deviate can easily get you eliminated the next day. This also applies to getting angry at losses. When a villager is eliminated, you should act exasperated, show frustration, and impart disappointment, just as you would if you were an actual villager.

You know all your fellow active wolves in the game. So, you will already know that your wolf counterpart is going to be revealed by the moderator upon their elimination. While you can mentally prepare yourself to celebrate in their removal, do not get too excited before the card is revealed! Expert players can see through the fake celebrating. Act “normal.” React in the now. If you prepare the celebration too well, the suspicion on you will increase.

PARTICIPATE IN THE DAY PHASE

As hard as it is to play a wolf team role, inadvertently, you are required to play two roles! These roles are your actual role and your secondary “good villager” role. The best wolf team players are ones who can flip a switch for the day phase as a village team member, then get the job done during the night. In order to do both, you need to be active throughout the entire game. When conversations are happening, do not be afraid to give your opinion. State the facts of what your “village” persona knows based on the trajectory of the game. As long as you are giving good and helpful advice to the village, many villagers will look the other way and vote on someone else.

Make sure not to give away any information that the village would not know already, especially if it was from any of your wolf team members. Accidentally giving away night information, however small, could eradicate any good you have done for the village, and you’ll be gone in an instant. So, be proactive with the village but cautious in your words.

GIVE “GOOD” INFORMATION

Use the day phase to make inroads with as many players as possible. Whenever a player asks for your opinion on what is happening within the game, always give “good” information. I say “good” information, because there are many moments of just “plain” information or “non-helpful” information. Examples like, “I don’t have any suspicions at the moment,” and “I don’t know what is going on,” are not things villagers want to hear, especially halfway through the game. Be cognizant of what is going on around the circle. Who is leading? Who is talking? Who is whispering? Once it is your turn to give an opinion on the game, you can expand upon the actions taken within the circle. If your points are valid and poignant to the circle, they will not vote you from the game. Remember, stay alert—always act the part of a Villager. It is important the village thinks you are giving strong information that is adding to the narrative. At the same time, you want to make sure that you are not helping the village actually identify wolves! A healthy balance of this is often what allows wolves to win late in the game.

HAVE ONGOING CONVERSATIONS WITH PLAYERS

During the day phase, have small conversations with multiple players to engage yourself in the strategy. This is a great way to receive “Good” information. Who are people suspect of? Perhaps someone trusts you and gives insight into who are Greater Villagers or who they fully trust. Conversely, use this time to share your knowledge. Throw suspicion on other players that could ignite more conversations. These conversations will keep you up to date on how the village is responding to the wolf team’s actions and how to work around them. Another very sneaky option is to have a conversation that is not actually hunting. A simple question like, “How is your day going?” can create a dialogue with someone that at a distance looks like you’re hunting, when actually, you are distracting a village team member. Remember, it is important that you appear to be actively participating in the game. Later in the game, everyone will be questioned about who they have talked to, if you can’t do this, it will come off as suspicious. People who don’t talk will almost always have suspicion thrown on them. As

a village team member, they can argue they are not wolves. You don't have that luxury! It is vital that you attempt to control the narrative in a way that benefits your team. This will almost always be through communication with your neighbors. If you can get your neighbors to trust you, that is even better. Often, I will wait for my neighbors to cast suspicion on someone and then will support their idea. Be careful, as this can backfire on you, but applied in the right moderation, it can be a great wolf tool.

CONVERSE WITH YOUR WOLVES DURING THE DAY PHASE

Do not forget about your wolf team counterparts, too! It is important to intentionally have meaningful conversations with your fellow wolves. Pretend you know none of their opinions on the night phase. Engage with your team members on what they thought happened, and who they are suspect of. Players will notice if you are not engaging with certain people, especially if your wolf counterpart sits right next to you. Try not to talk about things outside of the game. If you cannot fake your working relationship during these tiny conversations, players will find out and eliminate the both of you. It is important that you appear to be actively participating and not allow team village to discover that you are talking to a fellow wolf. Also, be aware that if a Seer has received a hit on you, they will be watching your actions very closely.

FIND A BALANCE WITH YOUR DAY PHASE ACTIVITY

When the mechanics of the game have not uncovered an absolute hit on a wolf, the players look towards social clues to choose who gets eliminated. More than likely, players eliminate a chaotic, loud player or a silent, passive player. This advice works best in the beginning portion of the game, when the circle is still large. As there are more players, there is an easier chance to remain undetected by acting "normal." As the game progresses, you have to start proving your worth. Since you do not have a Greater Villager role to claim, you must rely on your relationships and their trust in you to mitigate your threat level.

If you stay too quiet in the day phase, players will look for more input from you. If you continue to not add anything to village discussion, you will get eliminated. If you are too

loud, and you start leading the village, they will start questioning why the wolves have not eliminated you yet. Remember, it's good to remain active, but keep it at a level where no one questions your existence in the game.

FIND A WOLF: Some wolves are smart enough to know when to let one of their wolf buddies go. As the village rejoices in finding a wolf, the one who uncovered the wolf will gain the most trust between players. Their opinion will matter, and they will drive the ongoing narrative for the next couple of day phases. So, as a wolf, why not find another wolf and look like a village team member? It sounds like a great idea to some wolf team players. This tactic is especially good if this helps the wolf team begin leading the charge within the village, deciding who the village eliminates for a few days. This will allow wolves to get a footing within the game, instead of having to constantly defend themselves. So, if this means I, as a wolf, can gain a humongous amount of trust from the village—where they will not go after me for a few days because I turned in my wolf buddy—I will one hundred percent do it.

While this is a viable strategy, it should not be your main strategy, as it can cause multitude repercussions. Everyone wants to play and stay alive in the game. Consistently throwing your teammates under the bus will cause tension between players. Always being eliminated by the hands of their own team members will put a sour taste in some players' mouths. They may not want to play with you anymore, or they may never trust you, even if you end up being on the village team with them. Your actions carry over into future games. Choose wisely when you wish to throw your fellow wolves under the bus for your own gain.

DO NOT HESITATE DURING ELIMINATION VOTING

It is inevitable that your wolf counterparts are going to be up for elimination, but do not waver on your gut instinct as to whether or not to save them during voting. When it is time to vote, make a decision. Take in all the information that you have gathered so far throughout the game. Are they worth saving and putting my neck on the line? Are people really hammering home between your wolf and another target? Voting out your

wolf team member is tough to do, but you cannot show the challenge you are facing on your actual face!

Wolves can out themselves if they waver on their decision to vote. The next day, the village spotlight will be on them, especially if the vote eliminated a fellow wolf teammate. The village will use this tactic to catch you off guard, and you will more often be eliminated the following day.

Be bold and unwavering in your voting decisions. If you were one of few who chose not to vote out a wolf, you can absolutely claim ignorance the next day! By staying true that you “messed up” and “truly believed he was village team” can be believable to the village. The moment you show a wishy-washy state on your voting pattern, the village will pry out your “who do you trust” list.

AGREE WITH IDEOLOGIES THAT DO NOT CONFLICT WITH YOUR AGENDA

The village will respond positively to players who give sound information and advice during the day phase. You can spout out the regular mundane phrases that normal villagers usually say when searching for wolves. If most of your wolf team is vocal, using the phrase, “I want to hear more from this quiet player,” or “More villagers need to speak up,” helps navigate the village to other targets.

Day phases usually start with the village discussing what transpired last night. Giving insightful knowledge about what you think happened last night will have the village agree with your thinking. Most will come to the same conclusion as you just based on the strict mechanics of the current game unfolding. If there was no elimination last night and there is a Witch, you can speak up congratulating the Witch. If there was an elimination, you can explain why a certain player was targeted. There is no harm in having the village try to decode why last night’s actions happened. It eats into the time of the game. The longer they talk, the less your wolf team has to defend themselves.

As long as your information is sound and stays inside the confounds of the current game mechanics, villagers will listen. Like I said before, as long as you are contributing positively to the village, you should not be up for elimination.

PLAYING NEUTRAL IN ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

There aren't many social deduction games that spring to mind when discussing neutral characters. They do exist but are uncommon within the genre. For this reason, seasoned gamers may be drawn to the additional challenge that the neutral roles bring to the game. The roles are indeed fun and unique, but there is no doubt that including neutral characters ups the difficulty level of gameplay. Neutral roles are typically separate from the team, work solo, and have a personal win condition that is separate from the two teams. Adding an additional neutral element to the mix causes players to have to think harder about the data in front of them. Players must be careful with their choices, as some neutral roles will meet their win condition by players performing actions that they may have previously considered inconsequential.

TYPES OF NEUTRAL ROLES

Neutral roles can be categorized into two subcategories:

- ◆ Win share
- ◆ Win steal

To determine a good playing strategy as a neutral role, we need to explain the primary differences between the types of neutral roles. Neutral roles can all be classified as either a win sharing role or a win stealing role. Each of these types will change the way you play the game as that role. If you are a win steal, you need to think about the best way to accomplish your goal before you're identified as a threat. If you are a win share, you might want to build a block of supporters on the team you feel will win to rally support for a shared victory.

WIN SHARE

A win sharing neutral role will end up working some with a specific team to help that team to reach their win condition. It is important to note in this case that just because

one team has reached their win condition, that does not mean they are the only winners. A win sharing neutral role could have met their individual win condition as well. Bloody Mary is one of these possible roles. Bloody Mary desires to be eliminated by any team in the game. Ideally, since the role hunts the team that eliminated them, Bloody Mary wants to be eliminated by the team currently at a disadvantage. If all people on the team that eliminated Bloody Mary are eliminated before the end of the game, Bloody Mary shares the win with the remaining team as they did not anger her by eliminating her. With this in mind, a player probably doesn't want to be eliminated by either team until they can see how each team is faring. If the village team has the advantage, attempting to look like a special villager is appealing to get eliminated by the wolf team during the night phase. If the wolf team seems to be keeping good at bay and has the advantage, acting more suspect or even claiming a known special villager to be voted for elimination would be a good play. Either one of these options would put you closer to your win condition as you, too, should have been learning information about each player in order to figure out who you need to target for elimination.

WIN STEAL

A win stealing neutral role is a role that will either end the game before traditional game end conditions or steals the win out from under the prevailing team at the end of the game. The best example of a role that ends the game early and steals the win is the Tanner. The Tanner wants to be eliminated by any means during the game. This means night eliminations via the wolf team, special villager abilities, or day eliminations. When this role is added to the game, the opposing teams have to slow down and more carefully consider their eliminations. Often, in a two team game, the village team will, at a certain point, attempt to mathematically determine the outcome of the game. This means they have a good number of roles that have been cleared by a viewing role, like the Seer, or they are a special that is still alive and has not been claimed. In these situations, people will eliminate the players that are claiming regular villager to find the wolf roles, thus winning the game. When a Tanner is in the game, it forces players to not always rely on eliminating people that are considered suspect or quiet. Players must

think about people that want to be eliminated versus someone who really is on the wolf team. As the Tanner, take advantage of the fact that important roles are also lying low while also manipulating the suspicion of the village. The goal is to not appear blatantly suspect, or the other players may assume you're the Tanner. It is a fine balance of active participation to be noticed while not giving all the information needed for one team to end up winning before you are eliminated.

NEUTRAL ROLE CONCEPT AND STRATEGIES

Neutral roles are similar to playing a werewolf in that strategy is extraordinarily important for success. There are a variety of strategies, including the game formats in which a neutral role may flourish. The following strategies are covered in this section:

- ◆ Reading the players
- ◆ No reveal games
- ◆ Vocal players
- ◆ Reading people's tells
- ◆ Multiple neutrals in the game
- ◆ Final three

READING THE PLAYERS

When a player receives a neutral role, it is recommended to thoroughly read their abilities to build a game plan on how to win. Most of the neutral roles are generally required to outlive other players in order to reach their win condition. With that in mind, start thinking about who your friends target for elimination. Are the quiet individuals targeted for elimination? Are the individuals that walk around the circle targeted for elimination? Are the whisperers targeted for elimination?

Now that you have thought about what people notice during the day phase, start to think about what draws the attention of the wolf team when they pick their target. Most wolf teams are looking to eliminate observant players that are guiding the village well, or they're looking for special villagers.

How can this information you have learned about others' style of play help you win the game? These are some ideas to think about as each circle will vary depending on the

types of personalities present. If you need to outlive the rest, start to plan the way you are going to act when you are communicating with the other players. You might appear to be looking for wolves during the day phase by letting others take the lead during the conversation, and you agree and reinforce their assessment. This could direct the wolf team to consider that individual over you, as they are the one coming up with the strategy.

Count Dracula is a role that has the possibility of ending the game within a minimum of 3 to 4 full day and night phases. A strong strategy for Count Dracula is attempting to end the game as soon as possible to prevent the number of opportunities in which they can be eliminated. Try for players that don't seem to be special villagers, as they'll be more of a target. Additionally, look for players who don't seem to be drawing much suspicion. These players are typically not targeted during the night phase and are not targeted for elimination during the day phase.

NO REVEAL GAMES

No reveal games are geared towards favoring any role/team that is not on the village team. While this will benefit the wolf team that all know each other first, neutrals will have a bit of an advantage as well, as they will have more options to claim. No reveal games generally fall into one of two categories—either the entire game is played no reveal upon elimination, or anyone that is eliminated in the night phases does not have their roles revealed. Either way, this is a benefit for a neutral player who is good at information gathering. The key is to deduce a player's role, to use their role as a cover or claim, if needed, or to help you figure out the balance of the game. Being strong in deduction or manipulation is the key to gathering the information needed to win.

As a neutral that needs to be eliminated, such as Blood Mary or the Tanner, the less information the other players have, the more favorable it is for you to be targeted for elimination. Neutrals that have powers or win conditions that trigger upon elimination should focus on gathering information to use once their power is triggered (Bloody Mary) and then make themselves stand out as a person that needs to be eliminated. A

no reveal game is more favorable for neutral roles that have abilities or win conditions that trigger upon elimination. In this situation, to be eliminated by team village, acting suspicious is generally enough to get you eliminated during a day phase and acting very pro village is enough to get you eliminated during a night phase. Just remember not to act too eager to be eliminated, as that will tip your hand.

As a neutral that needs to live until the end of the game to win, controlling the flow of information is key to success. In a no reveal game, players cannot use math to figure out all other players' roles and are left with instinct and reasoning. Here, you still need to balance that fine line of being helpful while not being too helpful. As you avoid drawing the attention of the wolf team, you have more options. Being able to claim villager, in an effort to not draw the wolf team's attention, becomes easier as players cannot determine the number of villagers that remain in the game as easily. This allows the neutral player to sit back a bit more, be somewhat helpful, and allow the rest of the village to draw attention towards themselves for elimination.

VOCAL PLAYERS

As *Ultimate Werewolf* players become more comfortable with the game play, they tend to become more vocal in the game. When neutral roles are added to the game, this can be challenging for players that have these roles and tend to stay in the shadows a bit more. When a vocal player is in the game, players with neutral roles need to be more proactive with the conversation, as quiet people often get targeted for elimination. Remember to use the mechanics of the game to your advantage—such as a no reveal game, a full reveal game, or hidden roles that were added and not announced, etc. The goal here is to successfully invalidate some of the information provided by a vocal player to prevent all other players from blindly following their lead and ultimately eliminating you from the game.

When you receive your neutral role card, think about your win condition and how the players have been targeting individuals for elimination in previous games. Using these key details, determine the amount of combating you might want to perform with a vocal

player in order to not let them steamroll you out of the game. Vocal players tend to lead many players in their own direction, whether right or wrong. The louder they are, the more players opt to support them over the course of many games. When you have a neutral role that wins from elimination, be sure to remember the attitudes and tells that people had. This shows what the vocal players went after in previous games in order to draw attention to you for elimination.

If you have a role that needs to survive until a certain point in the game or until the end, remember what drew the attention of the vocal player(s) and start planning ways to avoid similar attention. If possible, vocal people should be eliminated if they pose too much of a threat. As they begin to make mistakes and get village team people eliminated, start spreading information that the vocal people might be on the wolf team and rally support to have them eliminated. Even if they are on team village, most people will not fault your logic for eliminating them if they have not been getting wolf team members eliminated.

READING PEOPLE'S TELLS

Knowing that vocal players are in your game, players need to be more mindful of individual's actions and "tells" for use when they are a neutral character. As we mentioned previously, vocal players target people based on their reads, so know what draws their attention with your knowledge of these tells—avoiding them or using them during your game, based on what the situation dictates. This knowledge will also help you to read tells in order to spot the players that could be contemplating targeting you, allowing you to act accordingly.

As a neutral role, information gathering is key to your success, no matter if you need to survive the game or be eliminated. Unless players are volunteering their information to you, you will need to learn how to read the tells of a player to collect your information. Before you can determine a player's tell, you must consider how they normally behave.

People that cross their arms are generally called out as being defensive, but before this could be considered, context needs to be added. Is the room a bit cold with the player

feeling chilled? Does the chair they are sitting on have armrests or not? Context of someone's actions should be considered as they might be justified and not part of a subconscious response.

Do you have a bias for or against the player? If you already dislike or like someone, that can cause your judgement regarding their tells to be skewed. Being in a game with someone that has paid you compliments, is similar to you, and is attractive might cause you subconsciously to make a judgment on their alignment.

Once you have considered these and other similar items, you can begin looking for a player's tells. Find behaviors that might alert you to whether that individual is lying, a village team member, or a wolf team member. As you gain this insight, you need to evaluate how this information will best work with your ability and win condition.

Knowing the tells of the players in your game is useful in all situations, but most importantly when you are neutral. Players with a neutral role need to balance the line between the wolf team and the village team. They need to give information that keeps their targets from being eliminated or makes them look suspicious.

MULTIPLE NEUTRALS IN THE GAME

If a game is built with multiple neutrals in the game, they could be competing for win conditions. As one of the neutral roles, you must consider the other neutral's ability and win condition. If two win steal neutrals are in the game, the moderator needs to define which win steal neutral will win if both of their win conditions happen to be met at the same time. In the situation where a win steal neutral and a win share neutral are present, the win share needs to figure out how they can prevent the win steal from being successful before the end of the game if they want a chance to win as well. If two win share neutrals are in the game, each player with a neutral role can focus on their own win condition before the end of the game is triggered, or they might even consider locating each other to team up and win together.

FINAL THREE

When the game narrows to a final three, and one wolf team member, one village team member, and one neutral team member are present, this becomes a vital play based on the neutral role you are playing.

A win stealing neutral role, such as the Tanner, still needs to be eliminated to win. In this situation, it is best to convince the remaining wolf player that you are the remaining village player and be eliminated at night. During the day phase, players can say whatever is needed to prove their point, and this will likely bring doubt to your story of being a village team member. In this situation, you need to place suspicion on the other people being the neutral win steal role and entice them to end the day, knowing that no one will get a majority vote. As a win steal neutral in this position, it becomes a coin toss on whether you will be able to win or not.

A win stealing neutral role, such as the Cult Leader or Count Dracula, will find themselves in a different situation. If one of the remaining players are part of the cult or one of Dracula's brides, the goal then becomes convincing that player to eliminate the remaining player, no matter their alignment. This is one of the hardest situations to find yourself. The hope lies in players still not knowing who the neutral player is and who might be linked to that neutral's win.

A win sharing neutral role has the upper hand in a final three. Based on the conditions needed to win, if they are still able to win, they can simply side with one team and eliminate the other one ensuring their victory. One such example is the original Hoodlum. This role needs to eliminate two players from the game and still be alive when the game ends. If the moderator chooses this to be a win share role, they will vote with any team to also win if their two players have already been eliminated.

SECTION II

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MODERATORS

INTRODUCTION TO BEING A MODERATOR

The moderator is the ring leader for the circus that is a game of Ultimate Werewolf. Just like a ringleader, the moderator can enhance the show or cause it to fall flat. There are many different (and equally successful) moderator styles. There are those who lean heavily into role playing and weave in a story of a village that was infested with werewolves, of which they were the first victim. They will tell you that is why they are moderating the game instead of participating. There are also moderators who work in a subdued tone. They blend into the background letting the players take center stage and they are simply there as an impartial third party that moves the game along. Both styles are not without merit. As a matter of fact, knowing that moderators can run the spectrum of role-playing and involvement illustrates that even an inactive player can be immersed and have fun. As the moderator, you are at the helm and have the opportunity to create a truly engaging gaming experience.

THE POWER OF BEING A MODERATOR

The natural evolution for most players is considering a move from being a player to moderating *Ultimate Werewolf*. The universal question is how do you start? Many players will pick up their *Ultimate Werewolf* cards and begin toying with mechanics. This is completely reasonable! For those of you that want more direction, this section is meant to give a roadmap to that process. We will evaluate several different tools you can utilize when you moderate.

First, we will discuss how we suggest you facilitate the game, from the first night to end game. Next, we will review several different lists for small, medium, and large games, specifically looking at new roles to introduce into your game. Also, we give an overview of artifacts and how they can be used to spice up the game. Finally, we will review how you run “Mega Games,” giving tips and tricks on what you can do to help facilitate these games. At the end of this section you should have a variety of tools to consider when moderating.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE A MODERATOR

Moderators are the most important part of *Ultimate Werewolf*. They give the game context, flavor, and are the cultural resonance of the game. A seasoned moderator has their own style, which players will enjoy and appreciate. Many moderators even create their own roles. In fact, *Ultimate Werewolf* sets have blank cards for this very reason. Moderators are the artists and entertainers of our game. It might be surprising to know that finding moderators is the biggest hurdle for organizers of *Ultimate Werewolf*. What is the reason for this?

Many players shy away from moderating, as it can be a complex task, with many steps and a relative high amount of public view. Some may prefer not to pursue moderating simply based on the anxiety of dealing with large crowds. This is completely reasonable, and no one should ever feel obligated to moderate. Others, however, avoid moderating because of the technical complexities involved. For those that face that issue, we are here to help! While moderating can be difficult, we have learned several methods for making it more accessible. This section is meant to serve as a guide for you! We will review how to setup a deck, tips on how to moderate, and the difference between big and small games of *Ultimate Werewolf*. In addition, we will discuss the culture of moderating and advise tips for facilitating thriving mod culture.

YOU WILL MAKE MISTAKES, AND THATS OKAY

Four years into playing *Ultimate Werewolf*, I decided that if I wanted to cultivate a local scene that I would have to moderate the games, at least in the beginning. My roommate and I spent time actively recruiting players. We were successful, and before long, we had around 40-50 people playing at our local game store.

The first night I moderated I was exhilarated. Determined to provide an epic gaming experience, I was animated. Bopping around, I was determined to create a memorable experience for all of the players. There were about 25 players there that night. As the game went on, we hit a point where over half of the players were eliminated. We were left with 10 players, 4 of whom were active werewolves. It was a turning point and the

wolves were able to gain the upper hand and win the game. VICTORY FOR THE WEREWOLF TEAM!!! The group of players erupted into conversation about the wild string of eliminations that led to the werewolf victory—and that’s when one of the players brought the buzzing conversation and excitement to a screeching halt. He stated that the string of eliminations started when I eliminated the wrong person. Everything closed in on me. I was so wrapped up in making a show that I failed to pay close attention and eliminated the wrong person! If this wasn’t mortifying enough, the group conversation immediately altered tone and topic to angrily criticize my moderating. My skin burned red with embarrassment, and I couldn’t bring myself to moderate another game for the rest of that night.

I will never forget the valuable lessons I learned that night. Taking your time as a moderator will always pay dividends. It is your job as a moderator to invest in the game. Understand the mechanics that you are utilizing and take your time to minimize mistakes. When I am moderating, I look at every phase twice and ask: Did I cover everything? I keep notes or a whiteboard to keep track of roles. I double check both the wolf elimination and activated powers of special villagers. Typically, I will say, “If this is the correct target please give me a thumbs up.” I will then walk around the circle a couple times and confirm the target. It is surprising how much spending the additional 5-10 seconds will reduce errors significantly during the night phase. During the day phase, I double check the vote count on a player before revealing their information. Additionally, I try to make sure everyone knows how much time is left in the day. It affects the tempo of the entire game. Normally, I will give out periodic announcements throughout the day and hold up an active timer for everyone to view the last minute of a day.

Are you expected to be perfect? Without question, NO! Every moderator has made plenty of mistakes! The disastrous example I gave above is but one in a string of mistakes I have made in the twelve years I have been moderating. Do not beat yourself up when you make a mistake, just learn from it. I actively suggest every moderator have a system for logging game builds and deck designs. This can be a physical pad of

paper or a simple file saved on your phone or tablet. Normally, when I see a mistake I've made, I will jot it down in my notepad to review later. That way, I have an ongoing point of reference for things that did and did not work in a game. The most important part of making mistakes as a moderator is that you understand why the error occurred and what you could have done differently. By understanding the core of the mistake, you allow yourself to become a better moderator overall.

A MESSAGE TO PLAYERS REGARDING MODERATOR MISTAKES

One of the makings of a great moderator is their treatment by the players in the game. You will find when a moderator's feelings are considered, time is respected and their efforts yield the desired results. This leads to the moderator being motivated to continually improve the experience for their players. On the flip side, unfair criticism and negative players can drain all motivation to even run a game. The nature of *Ultimate Werewolf* lends itself to a lot of conversation both during and after the game. Players should remember that non-constructive, negative feedback towards moderators has a direct correlation to them losing their desire to lead games. Without moderators, there is no game to play, and the reality is that there will always be more players than moderators. Moderating is a difficult process, requiring extensive knowledge of roles, game balance, and the control needed to ensure game flow in order to maximize the experience. These skills are developed over time and through much practice. Complaining rarely works as a strategy to get what you want, and when someone is volunteering their time, it would be good to remember that we all have finite time and energy. We do ourselves and the organization of our game a great disservice if we push moderators away.

It is okay for you to not like a moderator. Everyone's personalities blend together differently, and some people just butt heads or don't like one another through no fault of either party. If this is the case, and you just do not like a moderator, you should simply avoid playing in games they run. Moderators are doing a public service facilitating games to players. They are doing so using their own time and resources. For the most part, people respect and appreciate the work that moderators do. This is just a friendly reminder that when your moderator makes a mistake, don't hold their feet to the fire. Moderators are people, too, and they are probably beating themselves up more than you

know. They are trying to bring you a fun experience, and the last thing they want to do is create the opposite for you or any other player. Finally, as always, if you are that unhappy with the people moderating you are always more than welcome to moderate games yourself.

SETUP & FIRST NIGHT

So, you have a list of cards, and the players are ready to play. It is time for setup and explanation of the rules. The first thing that I suggest in every game is to ask if there are any new players. Your setup explanation will need to be more thorough for players who are not already experienced with the roles and game mechanics. I take some extra time to explain the teams and day/night phase mechanics. Additionally, on day one, regardless of role, I will privately pull each new player aside and describe their role, answer any questions, and give some basic strategy. New players can often be overwhelmed and intimidated by more seasoned players, so it is helpful to give them a little bump as they go into their first game. Don't be afraid to give them ideas and direction on how you would play the role and general meta knowledge of the group. Encourage them to make the role their own. We want them to play and love the game as much as we do! I will also typically announce new players, so the village knows to be accommodating.

After I have addressed new players, I will discuss any variant rules with the entire circle. Make sure to take questions and address each question directly, to the full satisfaction of the player making the inquiry. It is important that they understand how the game will progress under any non-standard rules. Next, give context for how voting will take place. Is it defense or mob mentality? *Ultimate Werewolf* usually employs an accusation system. If two players accuse another, the accused player is put on trial and can defend themselves. Afterward, the village votes. Make sure players also understand that in an accusation/trial, late votes are not accepted. Late votes give that player more information before they vote. An increasingly popular voting methodology is "mob mentality" voting. In this system, the game does not stop for accusations. People vote whenever they want and the limited day ends at the point the majority of the village is

voting on the player. That player is eliminated. When explaining the voting rules, make sure to demonstrate what voting will look like, so each player knows how and when to vote.

Remember, you are the primary facilitator of the game. It is your job to guarantee everyone understands the game and then control the flow of the game. You are the conductor of the game and should always remember the following rule: It is not your job to entertain yourself at the expense of the village. As a moderator, you facilitate the joy of the game.

After explaining initial rules and mechanics, it is time to distribute roles. First, count the number of cards and then the number of players. Make sure these counts match. Having to re-deal roles will get a large number of groans from your circle. I have been blamed more than once for stealing someone's favorite role card by having a misdeal. After you have counted the deck, announce and explain the roles. I will announce each role, walking around the village to make sure everyone can get a visual of the card. Visual cues can reassure players of what a role does. Again, stop and ask for questions, and make sure that you answer to the satisfaction of the circle. I typically will go over the wolf team first. I make sure to announce how they win—typically by parity—and any other special victory conditions they have. I then go over village team special roles using a similar method, explaining the roles and any special win conditions. Again, make sure that players who need visual confirmation get to see the cards. Any neutral roles come last, since neutral roles generate the most questions and require the most explanation. This is because they typically win steal or share between both teams. Make sure to clearly identify what the neutral team's win condition is going to be. After making sure there are no other questions about roles, publicly shuffle the cards and let the first card be chosen face down by the player. This prevents anyone from assuming that the moderator is choosing roles for specific players. Continue around the circle dealing accordingly, making sure each person in the village has a card. After everyone has had a chance to look at their card, it is time to start the first night of the game!

The first night is vital to the progression of the game. You have given out roles, people know what they are, and both you and some members of the circle need information for the game to proceed. As the moderator, it is important to facilitate the early game while not disclosing any meta information to the village. The first thing you need to do as a moderator is make sure everyone is asleep. Typically, a review of the complete circle can be done quickly. It is important to make sure everyone is asleep and prepared to play. Also make sure everyone's cards are secured. More than one seer or wolf have carelessly been eliminated because their card became publicly revealed, and they had to be eliminated by the moderator. Next, it is time to wake up the wolves. Make a simple public proclamation that wolves make eye contact and assist them in finding one another, if needed. The wolves knowing each other is vital to the success of their team and the overall game structure, so make sure not to rush this section. In the new version of *Ultimate Werewolf*, wolves can make someone a mystery Lycan on the first night. Typically, I will count to five and then remind the wolves I need consensus. This keeps the game flowing and prevents significant delays that create meta. Once wolves have found each other and performed any first night selections, put them back to sleep. Go ahead and do a sweep to make sure the team is fully asleep before proceeding. If you wake another role before the previous one has had a chance to close their eyes, the village gets unintended information. Assuming you are using the optional Lycan rule, the Seer will get a first night view. When you wake the Seer or any other role at night, it is important that you not give any context to their location in the village. When they check someone make sure to move around the village, not stopping at the target. You never want to give the village unnecessary data. You want to make sure that you give the Seer time to think about their target, while at the same time making sure that you identify the check correctly and make any personal notes you need to remember the selection later.

After resolving the wolf and Seer roles, take a mental check and think about the roles in the village. Are there any other roles that needs information on the first night? The Minion will need to know wolves. Mason roles will need to identify each other. You may need to know the identity of another role for mechanical reasons. To keep track of this, I

highly suggest that all moderators purchase a whiteboard. You can write all the roles down and then visually go down the list each night. In my experience, this will greatly reduce the overall amount of moderator errors. Also remember to take your time—*Ultimate Werewolf* is exciting! The bustle of a large village can often make a moderator feel like they need to rush to start the game. While you do not want the first night to stretch forever, recognize that you are responsible for several roles and control the tempo of the game at night, so take your time!

Be careful how you move and talk. Generally, I will walk quickly around the village several times even after the wolves, Seer, or other special villagers have made selections. This prevents players from thinking your movement gives them meta data. As you move around the circle, change position from time to time and make your movement come from multiple directions. As players get used to your style, your moderating can actually become part of the narrative. Consistently mixing up your position will keep players from trying to use that information all together. Another tip is to make sure to not speak in the direction of the role or character. A keen wolf or team village might note the direction a moderator is speaking and use that logic to start hunting. By taking your time, you can easily vocalize in random directions and throw off the potential for providing meta. This may sound like overkill, but more than one game has been decided by unintended meta data from the moderator. It is vital that we create a screen of information during night phases that gives the players as little information as possible.

DAY ONE

Day one will almost always be the most chaotic. The village has very little information and nobody has been eliminated yet, meaning the day will likely have the most noise. Generally, I will announce the time in day one and then publicly start the clock. Afterwards, remove yourself from the village. This allows everyone in the circle to see everyone else and begin to engage. You are not a window, and the players should be focusing attention on one another. As you watch the day progress, try not to linger on players, especially if they are wolves or some kind of special role. Although players

should be watching each other, it should be assumed a handful of players are always watching you, if for no other reason that they are curious about the time left in the day.

To keep players consistently informed, make sure you set a cadence for showing how much time is left in the day phase. Being inconsistent with the game timer can create more meta-related game choices. For example, if you haven't shown the time and revealed that there are only a handful of seconds left right before a defense, the defending player may have a better chance of being eliminated due to the surprise lack of time. While this may happen in the natural progression of the game, you want to make sure that it is the village, and not you, inducing the rush to get in a day elimination. Just remember to strictly follow your cadence for announcing time. Another way to avoid this is to stop the timer when someone is on defense. The *Ultimate Werewolf* moderator app has this functionality and specifically gives time for defense. This allows you to regulate time and stay objective.

When someone is on defense, the rest of the village should remain quiet. This can be difficult in a busy circle, and a moderator may feel the need to yell for players to be quiet. This is both frustrating and unnecessary. Simply walk into the middle of the circle and raise your hand. Players will quickly realize the game will not continue until they are quiet. Often players will regulate each other and help get the village quiet. Always remember that as the moderator, you control the tempo of the game, and it is vital that the players recognize you have that control. Once the village is quiet, acknowledge the person that has been accused. Once the village acknowledges the accusations, identify the two people who made the accusation, and allow the person on trial the time necessary to defend themselves. During this time, remove yourself from the circle. Also regulate commentary during a defense. If someone talks without being called on by the accused, politely inform them they are not allowed to talk during someone's defense. If they persist, feel free to stop the trial defense and reiterate the rules until they stop. Generally, people will get the idea and stop talking. Once a defendant's time has run out, re-enter the circle and raise your hand. It is important that no further discussion takes place during this time. Again, if talking persists, firmly remind them that the

defense is now over and ask people to raise their hands in preparation to vote. We have reached the final vote!

Before the vote, remind everyone that late votes will not be counted. Why is this? If late votes are counted, it allows them to vote with additional information other players do not have. If I am a wolf, and I see everyone vote to eliminate, I could vote late to also eliminate. In the same vein, if I vote late, and no one votes to eliminate, I could not vote. In both cases, it effects the narrative of everyone playing the game. After you see everyone's hands up, slowly and steadily begin the count. In an odd-numbered village, a majority of votes is required for elimination. If there are not enough votes for a majority, the day continues. If the time for the day runs out, no elimination occurs, and everyone goes to sleep. If enough vote to eliminate, then notify the village that the person on trial has been eliminated. Pick up their card, but do not immediately reveal. Look at the card and think about the implications of the card. Does anyone else get eliminated as a result? (Cupid's Lovers, for example) Do they have a triggered ability? (Hunter is a great example). Taking a few extra seconds to identify the card's implications will help avoid moderator errors. Once you have confirmed the role, publicly reveal it to the village. Resolve any triggered abilities or effect, then put the village to sleep for the night phase. Important to note: It is very difficult to control the village reaction to the day elimination, especially if it is a wolf. People are going to react, whether feigned or genuine. The eliminated player may also inadvertently react. Try to put the village to sleep as quickly as possible to prevent any unnecessary meta. We've gotten through our first day phase. On to night one!

NIGHT ONE

Night one of the game will have a significant impact on the game. It is important that when you walk around the village, you do not give indication about where the wolves are located. Make sure to make many quick loops around the circle to avoid this meta. Generally, I give the wolves about ten seconds to pick the elimination. If they do not, I say, "I need a consensus." I repeat this commentary roughly every ten seconds. This

verbal indication gives the village information that the wolves are not coming to a consensus, and at the same time giving incentive for the wolves to quickly pick the night elimination. I will also generally confirm the elimination with all wolves, moving around the circle many times. After receiving this confirmation, make sure that all of the wolves are asleep and then begin waking up other special villagers and other teams. Between each waking, remember to continue moving around the circle to prevent meta information. It is also important that you make sure that each role is firmly asleep before you move on to the next role. For all information roles, take your time before giving results! Consider if any secret information, like a mystery Lycan, are present in the game. It is important that you take your time for each interaction. If you have an issue, feel free to put the village back to sleep and wake up roles to get correct information. If someone does not wake up for their role, it is important that you do not give that meta way. Generally, I wake the entire village and ask everyone to look at their role cards. I emphasize that everyone looks at their roles again to prevent meta. If you have an issue at this point the next step is to look at each card to verify roles. It is important that the roles in the game are accurate and every power is correctly being activated.

During the night phase, a notepad can be vital in marking interaction of roles and eliminations. It is important that you are very clear on every activated ability. After you confirm, you can wake everyone up and begin the dawn phase. I normally emphasize that no one speaks during this time. It is also important that you take time and make sure you represent each action. After you have given the information, reveal any needed information, start the next day, and give the player count. We are now into the next day!

MID-GAME

As the game progresses, you will see many bluff and misinformation tactics from both teams in the village. It is important that you not take part in helping prove meta provided by the village. You do this by representing every game mechanic until it becomes public information that that mechanic is no longer present. For example, "Player A claims Witch, and that they saved player B in the previous night." This information will probably

be taken in a high regard by the village. During the following night phase, it is very important that you still ask the Witch if they are using their power. The reason for this is that if you don't announce the Witch, it gives objective information about the claimed role. This turns subjective information into provable information. This can have a very large impact on the village. Always remember that unless objective information has been given, such as the public elimination of the character, you are making sure that the village gains no free information.

Also during the mid-game period, it is very important you manage the number of players and time left in the game. Pay close attention to the clock. If the day ends, it is important that players manage their clock and fear the possibility of a day ending with no elimination. Always make sure that you clearly indicate the amount of time left between rounds and the number of remaining players. As the village constricts in size, I always advise that the players move their chairs closer. This creates a more intimate environment for the game and allows players to clearly hear each other. Any players not in the game should not be discussing the game within ear shot of the game. It is completely okay to pause the game and ask eliminated players to relocate if they are disrupting the game.

Finally, make sure that you validate and communicate the number of votes needed to eliminate each day. This information will be vital, and often a day elimination will be swayed by a very small number of votes. Ensure that you don't count late votes and that you have correctly identified the number of votes. Often I ask the players if they dispute the vote count that I see, this allows a quick way to fix errors. During the night phase, make sure that you are taking time to call every role that is not publicly eliminated. You do not want to give the village any extra information that they have not earned. As the village gets smaller, I typically operate on the outside of the circle, instead of moving inside of it.

LATE GAME

One of the wonderful things in *Ultimate Werewolf* is the late game. Typically, this is a very tense time that usually leads to dramatic revelations. As the moderator, you should set the tone. Normally, I will have the players get close to each other, so the tone of the circle is now a quiet, intimate conversation. Make sure that any spectators are very quiet—we do not want to ruin the game by giving the village additional information! As the players converse, I normally stay entirely outside of the circle, so that the players can see me. Make sure that you clearly indicate the time at every minute mark. In the last minutes, I will give 10 second updates. When the vote happens do not count late votes and make sure the vote count is accurate. After you have finalized the results it is time to announce the winner!

At the end of the game, I usually highlight any interesting or unknown mechanics to the entire village. This is done for several reasons. First, it allows any unanswered player questions to be resolved. Next, it highlights interesting aspects of your game! After that, I like to highlight any particularly interesting or clever play by players I witnessed throughout the game. This is always a win as most players like positive praise, and it allows the village to rejoice in the players' actions. Congratulations, you have a game in the books!

REFINING MODERATOR SKILLS

When you start moderating Ultimate Werewolf, simply managing the various phases might seem like quite the task. Before long it will become second nature, and you will be looking for ways to further fine-tune your skills as a moderator. Every moderator has their own strengths and weaknesses. Your goal should be to amplify your strengths and polish the areas in which you struggle. Remember that your strengths are unique to you. As a moderator, you can bring those strengths to a game and use them to enhance the players experience in Ultimate Werewolf. Mastering the art of moderation can be just as fun and rewarding as perfecting your strategy as a player.

THE VALUE OF TAKING NOTES

Ultimate Werewolf can be a very detailed game at times. It is filled with many different roles that have unique actions. The way that those roles interact with each other are often very complex. This can create a daunting task for moderators as they try to keep the game organized. In most cases, notes are an invaluable way to keep everything organized. Ideally, you will have a system that allows you to keep track of the current game and take notes that will help your future moderator technique.

Below are a couple suggestions that can be used to make your game easier. The most important thing about note-taking is the need to find a system that is comfortable for you, as the moderator. It is important that you pick a process that you can follow. I highly suggest you play around with different styles until you find your comfort zone.

A whiteboard is highly suggested for the purpose of tracking individual short-term game interactions. The use of different colored markers is a great way to keep color-coded notes. This allows you to organize the game in a very colorful way. During the night phase, you can read directly down your list to make sure each role is called. This method allows you to easily communicate to each player in a systematic way.

ENTERTAINING YOUR PLAYERS, NOT YOURSELF: THE POWER OF FEEDBACK

As the moderator, you are a focal point of the game. This is a refreshing feeling. A common mistake for moderators can be the need to be the focus of attention all the time. This can be done by continually interrupting the game or creating surprise effects that draw attention back to the moderator. Examples of this attention are button effects that the moderator uses for artifacts or comparable examples. Effects of this nature can be enjoyable, but it is very important that you always consider your impact on the game. What meta are you creating, and most importantly, are your players enjoying the experience? If your players do not appear to be having fun, it is important to consider what is impacting the game and take it as important feedback. Your primary goal should always be to run a fun game for your players. It is always crucial that you are not the

most important aspect of the game, but that the experience of the players takes the highest priority.

DECK BUILDING

It can be a daunting task to build an *Ultimate Werewolf* deck, especially when it is for a larger group. Typically, the worst fear of most new moderators is that they will get into the middle of the game, and the players will discover a way to somehow break the game. This can be very daunting. How do you build a deck to avoid breaking the game, yet at the same time, make an awesome list that is fun to play? In general, we suggest an overarching goal that every deck should aim at achieving. Strive to make games that will end in a final three. How is this accomplished? Will this always happen? Without question—no, but if a final three occurs, it typically denotes a well balanced game where lots of fun interactions have occurred between both teams.

The most important thing to remember is that we always need the village to have enough regular villagers for the wolves to hide among. A common mistake for new moderators is building a game filled with special villagers and powerful wolves, assuming if the majority of the village is special, the powers of team wolf will outweigh the numerous special villagers. The issue with this logic is that as the village progresses, you begin to have only special villagers left in the game. Once this occurs, the wolves can only counter as other special villagers, making it very easy for the village, as they have now narrowed down the field to one of two people. This will almost always result in a math win for the village. A math win is when the game is no longer subjective based on the elimination of a small pool of people to guarantee victory. In general, we suggest that this is always avoided, as it typically leads to exasperated players. Remember, the goal is to always bring a quality game experience to your players.

So how do we prevent this from happening? This can be slightly ambiguous but in general we suggest a rule of 25% special villagers, 25% bad guys/wolves, and 50% Villagers. This means that the majority of the village will be Villagers, thus allowing

wolves to hide among their ranks. Some variation exists within this formula; this is not an exact rule. Neutral teams are a great example as they drastically change the dichotomy of the village. Other examples would include weak wolves, minions, or team village roles that are bad for the village. In the new edition, the Innocent is a great example. This is a role that does not want to claim, as it could have drastic negative effects for the village. With that said, you should always aim for a percentage similar to this 25/25/50. While it can appear boring, it will generally lead to well structured games that have a strong amount of impact on the games.

INFORMATION ROLES & PROTECTOR ROLES

Information roles should always be handled with care. These are generally considered the most powerful roles in the game. These roles typically give objective information, often about team wolf. Information roles, such as the Seer, are incredibly important team village roles, that naturally, if allowed to stay in the game, will have significant impact on the game. When using these roles, it is very important that you do not use too many. Including too many of these influential roles will typically lead to a quick game for the wolves as the wolves can quickly be identified or non-wolves can quickly be cleared of suspicion. Unique opportunities exist in *Ultimate Werewolf* to limit these roles. In the newest edition of the game, several options are provided for the wolves that severely limit information roles. These dynamic roles are very well designed, and we encourage you to try them out prolifically, as they allow for very diverse and engaging games. Another rule of thumb is limiting the number of active Seer views in a night. Unless you are running a Mega Game, detailed below, it is highly advised that you make sure that only one active Seer is getting views. It is okay to have multiple Seers, but allowing multiple checks—especially in a game that has less than 25 players—is heavily advised against.

Protector roles generally prevent/redirect the night elimination. These roles typically have a significant impact on the game, as they either redirect or prevent the night elimination, often clearing the person who was targeted. This can often be daunting for the wolves, as they have much higher value targets, such as the Seer. At the same

time, they must deal with these roles. It is very important that you are careful when adding multiple of these roles. The ability for them to protect each other can be VERY problematic for the wolf team. In fact, if you have too many of these roles, they can often direct the wolf elimination several days, allowing seer roles to get abundant information. As stated before, when this occurs typically, it is very hard for wolves to overcome this issue. I generally suggest only one of these roles. Also, you should heavily consider if they can protect themselves. In the newest edition of the game, very few roles exist that can protect themselves. The reason for this is that if they can protect themselves, they can generally claim during the day and then protect themselves at night. Either variation is fine to play with, but always consider the implications of protector roles as they can have significant impact in games.

WOLVES, DIRE WOLF, DREAM WOLF, AND AUXILIARY WOLF TEAM

Earlier, it was noted that the village should be a 25/25/50 split, with wolves typically numbering one out of every 4-5 players. This number is more a guideline and can fluctuate based on the power of the other roles in the game. When you are adding wolves, you should always consider which wolves are being added and how much impact they will have in the game. In many cases, you will be on the line of adding another wolf. In several cases, an auxiliary wolf team or weaker wolf is a great option to maintain deck balance. This allows you to optimize the game based on time and player experience and then adjust on small intervals, allowing for a tighter game.

Auxiliary wolf team are wolf team members who cannot win by themselves but still win with the wolf team. Generally, their goal is to create chaos and redirect away from team wolf. Sometimes the aux will know their fellow wolves, such as the Minion. Often, they will not know their wolves and will be tasked with creating chaos in a blind vacuum. Aux are a great way to add flavor to the game. Since they typically disrupt information roles, they can become a great way to fix game balance issues. In addition, aux wolf teams don't mind to counter claim special villagers as they can't win by themselves. Often sacrificing themselves, they are more than willing to be eliminated if it outs a special

villager. Several new aux wolf team roles exist in the new edition game and are truly fantastic to experiment with. In general, aux wolf team roles are trying to get eliminated instead of wolves and regularly create chaos. When you consider adding an additional wolf, it is heavily advised that you consider adding an aux wolf team role instead. These roles are playing against village information but lack the strength of a plain Werewolf. This can be a great way to give a small buffer to team wolf.

What if you need more than an aux wolf team role? Another great option is low powered wolves. Several of the deck lists below will use the Dire Wolf and Dreamwolf. Typically, you will see these when the game is on the line for adding a new wolf, very often in games with an even number of players. In most cases, if you are thinking about adding another wolf, you should consider adding a Dream Wolf or Dire Wolf. These are wolves, but they have significant hinderances that will have less detrimental impact on the game. This helps tune the balance of the game by having an additional wolf that the village must deal with, while also not giving the wolf team too much power that could cause the game to become lopsided.

TO NEUTRAL OR NOT TO NEUTRAL, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Neutral roles should always be considered carefully with all the other roles in the game. They typically have a different line of play that can often disrupt the dichotomy of the game. When adding neutral, it would be ideal to slightly downgrade the wolf team. As an example, if I had one regular wolf and two special wolves, I might downgrade one of the special wolves when adding a neutral. Remember that neutrals generally are playing against the village's win condition, which means they affect the balance between village and wolf. Because their powers are very prevailing, they have a significant impact on the game. When moderating with these roles, you are encouraged to never include them without a well thought out plan regarding the impact they could have on the game. Additionally, it is heavily suggested that you do not have multiple neutral characters in one game. The reasoning for this is very clear—the potential of conflicting win conditions increases significantly. Two neutrals fighting for a win can often create

enough chaos for the wolves to easily swoop in and take victory. This can be entertaining but becomes frustrating for players who felt like there was no allotted path to victory.

REVEAL AND NO REVEAL

The revealing of the day and night eliminations is a fundamentally important part of the *Ultimate Werewolf* game. In many cases, it gives vitally important objective information that is used by the village in all future decisions. With that said, changing this process in slight ways can be a very interesting way to twist the game. I would add a caveat that I personally do not like no reveal in moderate or large games, as I feel the chaotic element is too high without significant adjustments. No reveal in small games can be a fresh and fascinating way to facilitate the game. The reason for this preference is the game only lasts a small amount of time. This allows wolves to false claim roles for 1-2 days after the game has started. This can often lead to very entertaining collisions where people counter or double counter claim roles!

In the new edition, a surprising alternate rule makes it so that no night eliminations are revealed. This is a fantastic option that offers the village some objective information, while at the same time offering the wolves some doubt as there is no reveal of who they eliminated. Even better is if a night role eliminates a wolf they don't reveal! This allows instances where the village thinks more wolves exist than is the case. The biggest advantage of this line of play is it largely eliminates the concept of the math win, as a level of doubt always exists about who was eliminated at night. You should always consider your group before adding this rule. In many cases, for experienced players, it fundamentally changes the games and makes them think about their strategy in new and exciting ways. I would not suggest this rule for new players, as it takes away objective information that they might need to get acclimated to the game.

REVENGE

Revenge is a new mechanic in the Extreme edition of the game. Revenge allows for the wolves to, once per game, before being eliminated, call revenge and eliminate another player. A couple of important notes must be shared. If the wolf team has additional eliminations, they lose them when calling revenge. Examples of this would be the Wolf Cub and Hunter Wolf. Additionally, if the following dawn the village reaches parity and the wolves would win, the village instead steals the win. This is vitally important as it prevents the use of the mechanic in the late game to steal wins. This mechanic is heavily advised for play. It often prevents special villagers from claiming and is often a great equalizer in the game.

When describing this to players, make sure that they clearly understand the loss of additional eliminations and the win steal caveat, as this can lead to misinterpretation. Also remember that a wolf can do this any time before they are eliminated, including being on trial. If a dispute arises regarding a player using this ability on time, I will generally side with the wolf, as it is a mechanic that greatly enhances the game.

TRIAL, MOB MENTALITY, AND TRIBUNAL

Another question for your game is what method for eliminating will be used during the day, and what happens when the day ends? In a traditional game of *Ultimate Werewolf*, the game is conducted via putting people on trial. In this format, any two people can nominate a person to be placed on trial. The accused is typically given a minute defense and then the village votes for elimination. If over half the village votes for elimination, the accused is eliminated and publicly reveals their role. The game would then go to night phase. If the majority of the village votes for remaining in the game, the game timer continues. If the village runs out of time, no elimination occurs and the village goes to sleep. In this example, days normally run 3-5 minutes with 1-minute defenses for those that are put on trial. This leads to very strict timing in day phase that puts pressure on players to take actions each day to find the wolves.

A very popular alternative, invented by David Meredith, is the use of mob mentality and tribunal. In this version, the entire game has a timer. If the timer ever ends, the wolves automatically win. The timer never stops, and players may vote for anyone at any time. The day does not end until the majority of players have voted on one person, voted for no elimination, or voted for tribunal. Tribunal is a method for ending the day. In tribunal, all players stand and raise their hands. A random person is then tasked with starting. This random person picks someone they feel is safe. The picked person is now safe from day elimination, sits, and picks another player. This goes around the village until only one player remains standing. That player is then eliminated, and the game goes into night phase. Of note: The starting player is not safe until they are picked again. This game will have longer initial days but much stricter time in the late game. This can often lead to very dynamic endings where the village only wins with seconds to spare.

Both methods are highly entertaining, and I would suggest that you use both to see which is better for your group and play style. It should be noted that both have significant impact on the flow of the game and how the game progresses. As you build decks, you will want to consider how each role will feed into the timing dynamics of these games.

SMALL CIRCLE ULTIMATE WEREWOLF GAMES 5-13 PLAYERS

These deck lists focus around quick games with fast turnaround. Typically, these games will be no reveal, as the number of players is limited. The game time for these is typically 10-30 minutes. Additionally, in these sets, it is not uncommon for everyone to have a unique role. This will often lead to immediate counter claim wars. It is suggested that you avoid protector roles and roles that give extra eliminations as the games typically only last 1-3 nights. Any decks with a Seer role should be limited, have a Sorceress instead, or use other aux wolf team to counterclaim information. Additionally, these games often are not modded on the first night and the first person to be eliminated starts as the official moderator. As a tip, it is highly advised that the person setting up the deck makes sure everyone knows how the first night will take place

and how each role will react. If first night actions take place, a moderator will be needed to facilitate these actions.

FIVE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Sorceress
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Hunter (Parity only)
- ◆ Villager

The smallest deck list typically advised will be for 5 players. The highlight of this deck is that each player's roles are unique. Which means being a villager is a claimable role. This game will last 2 nights. Typically, this role set is played with no reveal. This allows wolf team roles to claim whoever is eliminated the first night. A Parity Hunter is a hunter that does not get a brutal elimination, but if they are ever in the game with only a wolf they win instead of the wolf team.

An optional rule is to allow both the Sorceress and the Seer to get a view on the first night. This variation is played several times in a row with fast turnover, creating friction and causing the game to progress at a faster pace. This is highly suggested for people who are waiting for a larger game.

SIX PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Sorceress
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Mason
- ◆ Villager

This is a combination of a 5 and 7 player game. This is a no reveal game. This build is very similar to a 5-player game, with the exception that the first day elimination gets to take somebody with them. When the vote finishes, the player who was eliminated has three seconds to choose somebody else to be eliminated with them. Then both players leave the game. This is important as it keeps the number of players odd which is very important for voting in the second day.

SEVEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Devotee (Dream Wolf)
- ◆ Sorceress
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Parity Hunter
- ◆ Mason
- ◆ Villager

This is also a no reveal game. This game has three wolf team members, but only one primary wolf. It is common in this role set that the wolf team will eliminate one of their aux wolf team members. In the original list, one the wolf team roles is a Dream Wolf. With the adjustment to Dream Wolf in the new edition, this could also be a Devotee. The lone Mason is just a claimable village role that is not Villager. This game tends to be about counterclaims. None of the wolf team roles know each other in this game. There is no need for a first night view in this game as the possibility of three wolf team roles makes this a very tight game. This deck can be slightly tricky to call as a moderator, see the example below for the correct order of events.

Typically, the night phase goes as follows: “Dream Wolf wake up, if the Werewolf was eliminated, I will give you a thumbs up and you are now the active wolf. If the Werewolf is still in the game, I will give you a thumbs down and you are not the active wolf. Go to sleep. Active wolf wake up, choose an elimination. Seer wake up, choose somebody to view, you can only view the active wolf. Sorceress wake up and choose somebody to view.”

EIGHT PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 4

Because this is an even player game, we will give the first eliminated player the ability to eliminate someone with them. This is a very challenging game, as the wolves win after only three mistakes by the village. The benefit of this game is that it typically goes very quickly and it is highly engaging. An interesting, optional rule from the new edition is the

ability to give the wolves a first night mystery Lycan, as well as a first night view for the Seer. This typically gives some early gas to the game that is very enjoyable.

NINE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ One-Eyed Seer
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 5

This game last slightly longer at 2-4 nights. In this variation, it is suggested to allow the wolves the opportunity to pick a mystery Lycan the first night. Afterwards, allow the One-Eyed Seer gain a view. Remember that if the One-Eyed Seer picks the Lycan, they get a thumbs up and cannot use their power until this “wolf” has been eliminated. This role set will require a moderator as it has first night actions.

TEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Dream Wolf
- ◆ Vampire
- ◆ Count Dracula
- ◆ Paranormal Investigator
- ◆ Cursed
- ◆ Hunter (brutal only)
- ◆ Sasquatch
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Cult Leader

This is a bananas all special game! To prevent king maker scenarios (where players who know they cannot win but have the ability to make another team win or lose), it is suggested that night eliminations are not revealed. There are four roles opposed to the village: Werewolf and Dream Wolf (on a team but do not know each other), as well as Vampire and Count Dracula (on a team but do not know each other). Each night, the wolves and vampires will both choose someone to eliminate. If both wolves or both vampires choose the same person that person will be eliminated at night. If one werewolf or vampire is eliminated, then they will have full control of the elimination.

Ignore what is on the card for Dream Wolf and Count Dracula; they are both just a second team member of wolf and vampire teams respectively. There are four people on team village at the beginning of the game: Paranormal Investigator, Cursed, Hunter, and Sasquatch. The Paranormal Investigator, once per game, chooses a person in the circle. If either that person or their neighbor is a wolf, then the Paranormal Investigator will get a thumbs up. Vampires are not viewed by the Paranormal Investigator. Cursed will become whoever eliminates them at night. If both teams choose them on the same night, they will become a Vampire. Hunter is brutal only in this game. They do not cause team village to win if they remain with a lone enemy.

The game day has a hard timer of five minutes. At the end of that time, if the village has not chosen an elimination for the day, then the day ends, and Sasquatch becomes a Werewolf. The Assassin, at any point during the day, can point to someone who will be the elimination for the day. Finally, the Cult Leader is a neutral, biding their time and trying to stay in the game. If all players still in the game are in the cult, the Cult Leader wins. This is nowhere near a traditional game, but it can have wild and crazy interactions that most players find generally exciting. Because of the number of teams, in this case, four, math wins rarely happen as only a couple people are working towards the same agenda.

ELEVEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Sorcerer Wolf
- ◆ Illuminati
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 5

This role set introduces the Illuminati. They will know each role. In addition, this set has the Sorcerer Wolf, making it possible for the Illuminati and the Sorcerer Wolf to look similar. Because of the Hunter and the Assassin, this is a high elimination game that generally will not last the full maximum rounds. In this role set, I give the wolves a first night mystery Lycan choice and the Seer a first night view.

TWELVE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Pet Wolf
- ◆ One-Eye Seer
- ◆ Mortician
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 5

This game introduces three wolves. In this game, I generally suggest a first night mystery Lycan and a first night Seer view. It is also important to note that the Mortician's power will trigger on a Lycan. Additionally, on the first night, make sure that the Dire Wolf knows the Pet Wolf's pick before they pick their Dire companion. This will prevent awkward shenanigans where they pick the same person.

THIRTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Mountain Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Witch
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X7

This is closer in line with a normal size *Ultimate Werewolf* game. This game will typically last 5-6 nights. In this game, it is generally suggested to have a first night mystery Lycan and a first night Seer view. In addition, it is suggested that the night eliminations are not revealed. Of note in this set, it is important that the Seer will have to be indicated before the wolves wake up and then again when they make their first night Seer check. During the first part of the night phase, the Seer will wake up or stick a thumb out. Then the wolves will wake up and pick a Lycan. Then the Mountain Wolf will pick two people looking for the Seer. After they have picked two people, the Seer will wake back up and make their first night view.

MEDIUM CIRCLE ULTIMATE WEREWOLF GAMES 14-20 PLAYERS

This is the bread and butter of Ultimate Werewolf. Games that run between 14- 20 players typically have the most dynamic and interesting interactions. These games will normally last 45 minutes to an hour. When building these decks, you have a much larger scope of roles and abilities that you can add to spice up the games. Generally, I do not reveal night eliminations in any game that is over 13 players. This is, of course, optional but, in my experience, it leads to a large number of balanced games. The fundamental deck building rules come into play the most in this area. The decks should always strive to be 25% special villagers, 25% team wolf, and 50% villagers. In addition, you should avoid large amount of special villagers that give objective information.

FOURTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Hunter Wolf
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Vanillacabra
- ◆ Outcast
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Bodyguard
- ◆ Villager X 7

This game will focus on both teams trying to find and eliminate the Vanillacabra. This is a high speed game that will have lots and lots of eliminations at night. In addition, team village has limited roles, with the potential of both being turned off if the Outcast is eliminated. Of important note, if the Outcast is eliminated, the Vanillacabra will still get potential eliminations as they are not team village.

FIFTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf
- ◆ Mama Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ The Cloak
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Mortician
- ◆ Bodyguard

- ◆ Revealers
- ◆ Villager X 8

This game is meant to be a fight between subjective and objective information. The wolf team is stacked with roles that manipulate the Seer and Mortician. Both teams have powerful abilities, but objective information is very limited. It is suggested to not give a first night Lycan and Seer view. It is also important to remember that the Mortician will trigger on a Lycan. In many cases, this will cause them to receive a fake hit.

SIXTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Man
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Huntress
- ◆ Thing
- ◆ Villager X 8 (hidden Cursed)

This set is designed to mess with the Seer in various ways. There are three roles that will potentially give the Seer the wrong alignment: first night Lycan, hidden Cursed, and Wolf Man

The mystery Lycan is great in this setup as it can also be mistaken for the Cursed in the late game. For similar reasons, a hidden Cursed can also be used. For both of these roles, the moderator needs to remember where those cards are since the Lycan will not be a wolf you are looking at, and the Cursed should not be flipped when it is night eliminated. Another option is to not swap the cards and just mark it for yourself and remember to rule the mod accordingly. The Wolf Man is probably one of the biggest ways that moderators can make mistakes. Remembering to give the Seer a thumbs down for a wolf you were just looking at is difficult, so make sure to ALWAYS check your notes when you are giving the Seer their check. It is very important that you take your time when moderating this setup as a lot of misinformation can be present.

SEVENTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Alpha Wolf

- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Oracle Wolf
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Bodyguard
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Revealer
- ◆ Villagers x 9

This setup is a battle between the Bodyguard and Alpha Wolf. The Bodyguard can cancel the Alpha Wolf's power in this set, making the Alpha conversion a bit of a gamble. This game has a very powerful wolf team, with the potential of a 5th wolf. This makes the efforts of Bodyguard even more significant as their blocking of an elimination can be the difference between a win or loss for the village team.

EIGHTEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Mama Wolf
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Cult Leader
- ◆ Leprechaun
- ◆ Mad Destroyer
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Revealer
- ◆ Villagers X 9

This game introduces the Cult Leader. It is important to note that in the new edition of the game, the Cult Leader converts the number of wolves minus one players (W-1) into their cult. In this setup, they will convert three players a night. This will almost certainly get your players' attention! In addition, the Leprechaun is a VERY powerful role that can change the night elimination. This creates a whirlwind of activity as the wolves can no longer guarantee their elimination. A key rule in this set is that wolves can target themselves at night. Also, the Leprechaun cannot save themselves and cannot save the same target twice. This makes the night elimination a bit of a cat and mouse game. Also, make sure you have a mental note of the number of wolves that are still in the game. When the Mad Destroyer is eliminated, it is important that you announce how many wolves are in the game, and the correct number of people are eliminated to the

left or right of the Mad Destroyer. If only one wolf is still in the game, the Mad Destroyer gets no eliminations to their left or right.

NINETEEN PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Big Bad Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Sorceress
- ◆ Frankenstein's Monster
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Witch
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 10

Frankenstein's Monster is a fun role that is great to throw into a moderate to large size game. This game is basically a battle of super powerful roles on both teams: Big Bad and Frankie. Frankie gets all powers of all eliminated special villagers, so in this case Seer, Witch, Hunter. It often behooves the village in these setups to eliminate a Witch who has used their power so that the power can pass to Frankie. Big Bad allows the wolves to eliminate 2 neighbors at night. This will lead to a very tense game where the village is actively trying to hunt the Big Bad over all other wolves.

TWENTY PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Oracle Wolf
- ◆ Kamikaze Wolf
- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ One-Eyed Seer
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Outcast
- ◆ Witch
- ◆ The Thing
- ◆ Villager X 10

This is the first set that has five wolves! This collection of characters will be a very intense fight of village vs wolves. In this batch, we have slightly increased the amount of information team village has at their disposal. We suggest the use of several optional rules in this set. Revenge, no night reveal, and first night Lycan and Seer views will propel this large game forward, moving at a fast pace! It is important to note that if the

Seer checks the Kamikaze Wolf the first night, or if they are the last wolf, they will not implode. Being eliminated on the first night before the game has started is the worst!

LARGE CIRCLE ULTIMATE WEREWOLF GAMES 21-25 PLAYERS

We have now moved into the realm of large size games. These games will typically last 60- 120 minutes. Its heavily advised that you include 5- 6 wolves in these setups. It is additionally reasonable to add neutral teams or another third team, such as red wolves or vampires. It is also okay to have a significant number of information roles. Please remember that if you have more than one Seer, only one should activate during the day. It is also important to remember that you do not create paradoxes between protector roles that can break the game. Given that most neutrals activate on the number of wolves -1, they should have a large impact in every game. (Example: A Cult Leader with 5 wolves converts 4 players a night!) While this seems intense it has been highly tested and usually leads to a very dynamic game. Also, roles that eliminate are highly advisable as they will most certain help manage longer games. In general, a subjective rule is that for every information role I have in a game, I will include 2 roles that have the ability for additional eliminations. As stated earlier, you should generally avoid multiple neutrals, as their power and scope can deeply throw the game into chaos, giving the wolves an easy path to victory.

TWENTY-ONE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Sorcerer Wolf
- ◆ Werewolves X 2
- ◆ Vampires X 2
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Witch
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Villager X 11

This game has 2 teams that eliminate at night. It is important that you decide if roles can see/protect vampires in this setup. Generally, I allow the smaller vampire team to not be viewed by the Seer and do not show their elimination to protector roles such as the Witch. At the same time, I typically allow the wolves to overrule parity. It is vital that you take notes and not rush the night phase or the first nomination, which is when the vampire elimination triggers. Generally, I will order the night with the wolves waking up first, then the Seer and Witch, then wake the vampires. In my experience, this will prevent confusion of the “which team picked who” when the Witch has the option to protect someone.

TWENTY-TWO PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Kamikaze Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Werewolves X2
- ◆ Hoodlum
- ◆ Innocent
- ◆ Leprechaun
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Eye of the Seer
- ◆ Infected
- ◆ Villager X 11

This is a very combative game as it has five wolves, a Hoodlum, and an Infected, who has to be eliminated by the end of the game. In addition, it has the Innocent which can lead to several village eliminations. It is important to note that if the village only has one wolf, the Innocent does not trigger. Also, anytime an elimination occurs during the day, check to see if the Hoodlum win condition has triggered. You will also check win conditions in the morning after the night eliminations are announced. This is important because if the Hoodlum is eliminated during this period, they do not win. Lastly, if the Eye of the Seer is eliminated, all future views will be given a thumbs down. If, however, the Kamikaze Wolf is checked, they will be given a thumbs down and then still explode with the Seer!

TWENTY-THREE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Oracle Wolf
- ◆ Sorcerer Wolf
- ◆ Werewolf X2
- ◆ Den Mother
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Leprechaun
- ◆ Mad Destroyer
- ◆ Virginia Wolf
- ◆ Gemini X 2
- ◆ Villager X 11

This is a standard but powerful game for both sides. This game will have several night actions, so it is very important that you keep notes and make sure that the order of actions is correctly carried out. In this game, I would first wake up wolves and get the elimination. Next, the Sorcerer Wolf should wake up and be given a view for the Seer. Then, I would wake the Den Mother and let them know if the Seer got a hit. After that, I would wake up the Leprechaun and see if they want to move the elimination. Finally, I would check my notes to see if any roles were eliminated that trigger additional elimination, such as Virginia Woolf and Gemini. Don't rush yourself; make sure you are taking time to denote each interaction.

TWENTY-FOUR PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Mountain Wolf
- ◆ Mama Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Dire Wolf
- ◆ Werewolf X 2
- ◆ Seer
- ◆ Witch
- ◆ Bodyguard
- ◆ Hunter X 2
- ◆ Influencer
- ◆ Villager X 12

This set has SIX wolves! It is important to note that this game also has two protector roles, which can have a significant impact on the wolves. This power should be balanced out by the large number of wolves and the fact that two Hunters are in the mix. This game is fairly easy to run, as the three wolf abilities take place on the first night,

and then all abilities after the start of the game are village roles. It is also advised that you thoroughly explain the role of the Influencer, as this role can have dramatic significance on the game.

TWENTY-FIVE PLAYER GAME

- ◆ Exploding Wolf
- ◆ Hunter Wolf
- ◆ Wolf Cub
- ◆ Werewolf X 3
- ◆ Reactive Seer
- ◆ Aura Seer
- ◆ Apprentice Seer
- ◆ Assassin
- ◆ Mad Destroyer
- ◆ Mortician
- ◆ Villager X 13

The last list on our line up is also a powerful wolf team. In this example, all of the special wolves give extra eliminations. It is very important that on the first night you identify all special wolves so that you can have their abilities trigger. Additionally, this game has two Seers and an Apprentice Seer. Normally, we would have the Apprentice take the place of the first Seer to be eliminated. Also, remember that generally we will avoid multiple Seers triggering in the same night. In this setup, I would have the Reactive Seer by the primary Seer and the Aura Seer come next.

ULTIMATE WEREWOLF ARTIFACTS

Ultimate Werewolf Artifacts is a mega-expansion to Ultimate Werewolf that changes up the game by introducing powerful artifact items. Each player gets, in addition to their Ultimate Werewolf role card, their own artifact card. Just like their role, they secretly look at that card, which has an artifact with some special power on it. At any time during the game, the player can choose to reveal the artifact card and use its special power. Artifacts were introduced to add a new layer to the Ultimate Werewolf roles and gameplay. Players must consider their roles as well as their artifacts in order to deduce those that are on their team versus those that are not. An artifact can give a neutral role more opportunities to meet their win condition, change a player's alignment, protect players, or many other possibilities. They add a new level of game play to the game.

HOW DO YOU USE ARTIFACTS?

Artifacts are intended to be flavor added on top of a player's role. The moderator picks an equal number of artifacts to the players in the game and passes them out randomly. Much like the roles when they are picked, the types of artifacts used should be balanced in power. Many of the artifacts have the same ability as roles.

This allows moderators to add those abilities to the game without adding those roles. Other artifacts add new abilities that are not available with roles alone.

Artifacts are generally the only card that can and should be revealed during the game in order to activate their abilities unless the card mentions being used in secret or disclosed secretly. Much like a character with an ability, the player must decide when they want that power to be used to help them or their team win the game. By adding new abilities to the game mechanics, a Villager is no longer just a Villager. This could increase participation from players that receive the Villager role card and do not put much effort into how to play that role. Artifacts are a more advanced play style, so using them in a game that contains new players might not be advised.

When using an artifact, a player needs to announce to the room that they are choosing to use their artifact. This allows the moderator to take notice and resolve the ability of

the artifact in relation to the game. The results of the artifact could trigger other abilities that need to be resolved as well. Players may lie about the artifact card they have and its ability but should never reveal the card until they are ready to trigger its power.

Artifact cards are either a once per game ability that is marked by a “1” on the card or a permanent ability that is marked by an infinity symbol on the card. Once revealed, all knowledge about the card is public knowledge. This card should be kept publicly available for other players to read. Gem cards are also something that should be set to a limited ratio when building the artifacts deck to keep game play from just shuffling the cards around.

While the original intent of the artifact expansion was to provide artifacts to all players, there are many alternative ways to use the artifact to heighten the play style of the game. Moderators can choose to secretly distribute roles to a select number of players, not announce the use of artifacts, or maybe use additional distribution ways that trigger throughout the game. This could add a more dynamic interactive experience as players are attempting to gain access to the artifacts quickly or figure out who has one.

WHY ADD ARTIFACTS?

As players become more familiar with *Ultimate Werewolf's* main game with role cards, moderators should consider adding artifacts to the game to change up the play style of their players. Artifacts should not be introduced with newer players. Players need to have a firm understanding of the role cards initially in order to understand how the artifacts work in the game. Adding too many new mechanics at once for players still learning the game will cause more confusion.

Once players are comfortable with the game and understand the interactions of the role cards, artifacts will change the flow and focus of many players. Players will begin stretching their strategic way of thinking as they now need to consider powers in addition to a player's ability.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTIFACTS

The artifacts can be broken down into information gathering, character role limiting, character role affecting, protecting, and attacking. Many of these powers have similarities to role cards and should be familiar to players. There may be slight variances to game play as artifacts are typically played in public during the day. New powers have also been added to the game through artifacts that are not based on role cards. These powers allow the game to be more strategic and less mathematical. When you play a traditional round of *Ultimate Werewolf*, the game could get to a point where players can claim roles and math out a path to victory. With the addition of artifacts, these mathematical paths could be altered as players use their artifacts. By playing an artifact that removes abilities or changes one player's role, the math changes and this keeps players guessing which way is the right path to victory.

The gem artifacts are designed to swap, steal, reveal, and trade other artifacts in the game. The Citrine of Fortune allows the player to exchange that artifact back into the box for a new artifact that must then be revealed and used. This is a wild card artifact as you do not know what you are going to get when you play this card. The Emerald of Jealousy allows a player to steal an unrevealed artifact card from another player and play it. This eliminated power from one player could help your team, if you managed to steal an artifact from a player on an opposing team. Other gems allow taking different types of artifacts from cards, eliminating them from the game or sharing the powers of the card.

The role artifacts are powers that are similar or emulate powers that are available on the *Ultimate Werewolf* role cards. There are many of these artifacts that are marked with that infinity symbol. This means that when the player chooses to activate this power, the power will be continuous until the player is eliminated. The Shield of the Bodyguard is similar to the Bodyguard role card. It allows a player that has revealed this card to continuously attempt to prevent an elimination by protecting someone for the following night. The Mask of Spellcasting is like the Spellcaster role. This artifact will allow a player to silence a player during that day's deliberation. If that player is found talking,

they would be eliminated. The Shroud of Shame, The Cudgel of the Old Hag, and The Heart of Indifference are additional continuous artifacts that emulate other role cards. All these artifacts with continuous effects are marked as “Each day at dawn...” This means that the player with this card active will need to have their artifact power triggered before the beginning of a new game day. For the moderators, this means the game does not continue until their artifact powers have been resolved.

Other artifacts with continuous abilities stay in play during the game or are triggered at the time that they are played. The Mirror of the Doppelgänger is very similar to the role card Doppelgänger. Instead of starting off the game with the knowledge of an individual you picked and will become once they are eliminated, you can choose when to play the artifact, once you have discovered more details about the players. When you choose to use the artifact, you will secretly look at a player's *Ultimate Werewolf* role card instead of just picking a player. This secretive ability means you are the only one allowed to look at the role and know the information. There are other artifacts with the “secretly” language in the card. The downside to this artifact is that once you reveal the artifact and activate its power, everyone now knows you potentially have two abilities. This artifact mirrors the other role's powers instead of waiting for that player to be eliminated. If the player's *Ultimate Werewolf* card viewed is a wolf, the player activating the artifact will now be a wolf in addition to their current role. The moderator will want to only reveal their *Ultimate Werewolf* role card and ability, if they are revealing roles, and never reveal the ability they copied from the other player. Giving this information up will ruin the game for players.

Other artifacts with continuous powers similar to role cards can affect someone's voting abilities, protect them from day eliminations like the prince, or publicly mark them as cursed and potentially a wolf target. These are powers that are constantly in play while the player is in the game, but do not require additional time spent during the dawn to complete their abilities.

There are other artifacts that are similar to *Ultimate Werewolf* roles. These are once per game powers that activate when you announce and reveal them. Some of these roles include the ability to label someone as diseased to prevent the wolves from eliminating players after they eliminate the diseased player. This would be a public labeling along with the other once per game powers. Others include a power to instantly eliminate a player much like the Hunter's ability, secretly view one player's *Ultimate Werewolf* role card as if you were the Seer, know if your neighbors woke up the previous night, get a letter from a previously eliminated player that might lead people closer to a wolf, or even force two people to be eliminated during the day the artifact is activated.

All these artifacts can be used in place of the role card to limit the power and bring more balance to the game or in addition to the role to cause more chaos. If the wolf team gains access to a power that is typically found on a special villager role, it could help lead their side to victory and potentially be used to eliminate suspicion of them in order to extend the game down to final three.

UNIQUE POWERED ARTIFACTS

These artifacts are unique and add a new dynamic to the game. They are all very powerful artifacts that can swing the outcome of the game at any moment. These artifacts were designed to add a new level of dynamic to the game play. From secretly learning details about another player to giving yourself a second life in game after being eliminated, these new powers mix things up. There are two artifacts that keep a player in the game after elimination. One of these artifacts allows the moderator to add a fun detail to the player that is reborn like changing their role card out or even changing their team. The Flask of Dreams allows a player to eliminate the role abilities of another player for two days. This could change the flow of the game and force players to make a pivot quickly to bring their team to victory.

These new powers add moving pieces to the game. Players have to react to a multitude of situations, such as swapping role cards, limiting the wolves target for elimination, and

encountering powers that require the truth out of people. There is even a way to end the game quickly if a player correctly deduces who the wolves are during the game. All these roles are meant to change up the mathematical way of winning a game and move closer to deduction and instinct.

The last of these artifacts are ones that change someone's ability or team: The Brand of the Villager and The Claw of the Werewolf. The Brand of the Villager forces a player to lose their special role power, if they have one. In the case of any wolf using this artifact or having it used on them, the player would not wake with the wolves any more nor would their special wolf powers be active. This same effect would apply when using The Flask of Dreams, but for two days instead of the entire game. If this were applied to a special villager role, they would essentially become a Villager in the game. If this were used on someone that was a wolf, they would not wake again when the wolves are called. This would mean if they were the last wolf, that no night eliminations would occur the remainder of the game. The moderator would still need to call the role and ask for their target to prevent information from being given to the players.

SECRET ARTIFACT GAME

Moderators can come up with unique ways to include artifacts in the game that bring even more interesting dynamics to how the circle interacts with each player. Moderators often revise the flow of the game by adding new mechanics to stir up creativity and challenge the players that have gotten to know each other. When players get to know the tells and styles of each other, adding new mechanics invigorates a group and brings energy into people's game play.

One such game could be introducing artifacts secretly to the players. This build would not include gem artifacts that steal and move other artifacts. When you secretly introduce artifacts into the game, players covertly reveal their desire to activate the artifact's power. This can even be done during the night phase. In this instance, not all players are given an artifact so as to prevent the knowledge that they are in play. The Villagers all stick out their thumb during the night and the moderator randomly

distributes the artifacts selected to some or all the Villagers. Take note of each player that has been given an artifact and instruct them silently to hide it. When they wish to use the artifact, they need to get the moderator's attention discreetly during the day or at night. As the artifacts are used, the power would be publicly announced and resolved in the order in which they are used. Any continuous effects should be placed openly in front of the player's role card.

This style of play allows the Villagers to have a chance of receiving abilities that are different than a role card. Do not tell players that only Villagers have been given artifacts. This would inform the village that any time a power is used, the player is on the village team. If you are concerned about the village catching on, you can always randomize the artifact recipients instead.

ARTIFACTS DISTRIBUTED BY A BUTTON

Ultimate Werewolf added new mechanics as the game grew. In the Legacy version of the game, items like the castle, key and sandwich were added and provided new ways to keep players engaged. When a moderator gets creative and finds new ways that artifacts can be introduced, players get excited to see the outcome and work hard to get a leg up over the opposing team. One such way is the introduction of a button to distribute the artifacts.

The moderator should plan out when the button will be placed into play and how they are going to resolve who has pressed the button first. Adding an actual button for players to press makes it fun for players to race to it first and collect it for proof. When a player hits the button, an artifact is given to the player to use when they wish.

This introduces entertaining subjective information to the circle, as someone's enthusiasm to get to a button could indicate their team affiliation.

In a game with buttons, know which artifact that is going to be distributed with each button press. They should be a mix of role affecting powers and information gathering

powers with the possibility of some attacking powers. The gems are not needed in this game as artifacts will not start off in the hands of all players.

As a player pressed the button, the artifact assigned to that button should be given out. The game could consist of multiple buttons per day to allow for artifacts that complement each other, but make sure that is decided at the start of the game. Players should only gain access to one artifact at a time.

This game style encourages players to get up and move around. Players will interact more with each other and keep the game energized.

SAMPLE ARTIFACT DECKS

As you explore the artifacts in more detail with your players, remove the ones that people do not find most enjoyable before building your decks. Here are some sample decks you can use to start off with to add artifacts to your game and get more familiar with them all.

5 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Amulet of Protection
- ◆ The Diamond of Denial
- ◆ The Diary of the Insomniac
- ◆ The Pendant of Pride
- ◆ The Shroud of Shame

The Diamond of Denial is an artifact that is perfect for eliminating continuous power artifacts from the game like The Amulet of Protection. The Pendant of Pride is one of the only ways that a player's *Ultimate Werewolf* card can be shown to another player, so players need to make sure they choose the right person when trying to build their block of trust. The Diary of the Insomniac works like the role card but is only used once per game.

With these artifacts, the roles should not include any protection or viewing/information gathering roles. Those powers are substituted into the artifacts deck.

7 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Amulet of Protection
- ◆ The Sapphire of Fate
- ◆ The Mask of Spellcasting
- ◆ The Blood of the Diseased
- ◆ The Spear of Fury
- ◆ The Vote from Beyond
- ◆ The Claw of the Werewolf

The Sapphire of Fate here is used when more artifacts are possibly in play. It allows the player to view an unrevealed artifact and take advantage of the power once it is played. This, along with The Blood of the Diseased, could help the village win, but if it interacts with The Claw of the Werewolf, it could help the wolves win. With these possible role changing powers, the introduction of an offensive role, such as The Spear of Fury, would balance out the village's chances to eliminate a newly created wolf in addition to any day eliminations. The Vote from Beyond is also used as a balancing power to allow one team member to still be able to vote even after being eliminated. The player would continue to be silent as if they were eliminated and close their eye during the night phase as if they were not eliminated. The Mask of Spellcasting is used as a mechanics power that can be used to add chaos or help the player's team win by preventing people not on their team from talking.

9 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Onyx of Destruction
- ◆ The Shield of the Bodyguard
- ◆ The Bow of Hunting
- ◆ The Scepter of Rebirth
- ◆ The Cauldron of Sorcery
- ◆ The Stone of Alteration
- ◆ The Coin of Youth
- ◆ The Brand of the Villager
- ◆ The Claw of the Werewolf

As the number of players continues to grow, the possibilities and interactions between powers become more exciting. The need to prevent certain role cards is also reduced as the powers have a higher likelihood of ending up with a wolf. The Shield of the Bodyguard works similarly to the Bodyguard role card and is a continuous protection

power, and The Bow of Hunting is a fun elimination power that forces the player to pick someone else to do the eliminating. As players find someone they trust, this could be used to reduce the number of suspects and bring them closer to victory.

The Stone of Alteration, The Claw of the Werewolf, and The Brand of the Villager are all artifacts with power that affect a player's role card. The Stone of Alteration allows a player to replace their role card with a new one from the game. The moderator should have this already picked out, as it should not be a role that moves a wolf from their team on to another team because that meta information would be unfair to the wolf team. Moving a village team member to a third-party team or just another village team role are viable options. If a wolf plays this card, make sure to have another wolf team role available for them. The Brand of the Villager is an artifact that eliminates a role ability and makes the player a basic version of the team they are on. This means a wolf no longer wakes with the wolves, and any additional powers are eliminated. A village team role is turned into the same thing as a Villager. Third party teams just lose their ability and must survive until the end to win.

The Scepter of Rebirth allows a player to return to life and remain in the game when they play it at the time they are eliminated. The Coin of Youth and The Cauldron of Sorcery are the information gathering roles. The coin forces the player to say the name of their role each day in a manner that the moderator can hear, and the cauldron allows a player to learn if someone else is anything more than a plain Villager. The Onyx of Destruction is a powerful artifact that can be used to remove another unrevealed artifact from play. This could prevent a rebirth, stop information from coming out, halt a day hunting elimination, or stop someone from changing their role or team.

11 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Amulet of Protection
- ◆ The Emerald of Jealousy
- ◆ The Citrine of Fortune
- ◆ The Heart of Indifference
- ◆ The Mirror of the Doppelgänger
- ◆ The Mark of the Mayor
- ◆ The Staff of the Seer

- ◆ The Breath of Old Man
- ◆ The Flask of Dreams
- ◆ The Orb of Speculation
- ◆ The Vote from Beyond

With this deck, there is a protection power, two gems artifacts that steal from another player or allow them to get another artifact, artifacts that affect players' ability to vote, role changing artifacts, elimination artifacts, information gathering artifacts, and others. The Amulet of Protection is back in play as a protection power along with The Vote from Beyond to keep an eliminated player in game to work for their team. The Heart of Indifference can be used to slowly remove people's ability to vote or just used to prevent one person from voting that day based on how the moderator wishes to run their game. Included in this pack is The Mark of the Mayor, which allows a player to have two votes just like the Mayor role card. The Staff of the Seer allows a player to learn about someone's exact role and not just if they are a wolf or not, while The Mirror of the Doppelgänger allows a player to add additional role abilities to their current abilities.

The Breath of Old Man does doom a player to elimination, but if used correctly, would allow the player's team to get closer to a victory. The Flask of Dreams eliminates a player's role abilities which would also eliminate the Doppelgänger dual abilities. When this artifact is played on a wolf, that targeted player does not wake when the wolves are called during the two days and nights the artifact is in effect. It also stops any role abilities from triggering in case they would upon elimination.

The Orb of Speculation introduces the possibility of the game ending early if that player learns each person's role cards. This will encourage the wolves to hide more amongst the special villagers or convince players to not reveal their roles as the more this information comes out, the closer players could get to an early victory.

13 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Void of Nothingness
- ◆ The Amethyst of Knowledge
- ◆ The Ruby of Kismet
- ◆ The Mist of Aura

- ◆ The Heart of Indifference
- ◆ The Shroud of Shame
- ◆ The Cloak of the Prince
- ◆ The Blood of the Diseased
- ◆ The Talisman of Trouble
- ◆ The Rod of Reincarnation
- ◆ The Eye of the Beholder
- ◆ The Prism of Power
- ◆ The Vote from Beyond

A few of these artifacts have been mentioned previously and do provide balance in types with the others. The Void of Nothingness is a fake artifact that can be used to trick others of a player's importance much like a villager acts in the main game. The amethyst and ruby are both cards that allow a player to find out about others' artifacts and determine when they should be played. The Mist of Aura, The Cloak of the Prince, The Eye of the Beholder, and The Talisman of Trouble all act similarly to their role counterpart. The Rod of Reincarnation and The Prism of Power are interesting mechanics that would cause some fun for the moderator.

The Rod of Reincarnation works similarly to a rebirth and is generally activated at the time the player is eliminated. When this artifact is used, the moderator will provide a new role card to the player in secret. Just like other artifacts that could change the players' roles, the moderator should not move someone from the wolf team to any other team. Moving a player from village to wolf or a third-party team is an option. Two possible options should be prepared ahead of time by the moderator.

The Prism of Power would allow the player to control the choices of elimination for the wolves for the following night. If a village team player uses this artifact, it could prevent any players that have been revealed as a special villager from being eliminated the following night. This would allow more players with abilities or unused/useful artifacts to remain in the game and help their team.

15 PLAYER DECK

- ◆ The Shield of the Bodyguard
- ◆ The Void of Nothingness
- ◆ The Diamond of Denial
- ◆ The Amber of Dawn

- ◆ The Ruby of Kismet
- ◆ The Mask of Spellcasting
- ◆ The Mirror of the Doppelgänger
- ◆ The Breath of Old Man
- ◆ The Scepter of Rebirth
- ◆ The Bow of Hunting
- ◆ The Ring of Truth
- ◆ The Coin of Youth
- ◆ The Cap of Idiocy
- ◆ The Brand of the Villager
- ◆ The Claw of the Werewolf

As your players adjust to games with the artifacts, mix them up and try out new combinations. Be sure to find a balance between powers that gather information, affect other powers, protect, are offensive, bring back to life, and affect voting or teams. It is important to not have too many of one power, just like when you build the role deck, so the game is not broken or easily won by a team.

ULTIMATE WEREWOLF MEGA GAME

Ultimate Werewolf is not only found in the comfort of one's living room. Ultimate Werewolf is played everywhere, through an online presence and in physical game halls. You might find yourself in a room filled with people all sitting in one giant circle, with one moderator holding a large deck of roles, asking you to take a seat. There are a lot of new faces in the circle, including people outside of your friend circle. There are going to be many roles and rules to go through. This is the largest circle you have ever modded. What type of game is this? Is this even possible? Am I going to have a good time? Let me tell you, you are going to have a blast! Mega Games are where shenanigans of the game take place. One of the unique aspects of Ultimate Werewolf is that it can play well with over 50+ players. This allows the scope of the game to accommodate as many players as the moderator feels comfortable hosting.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MEGA GAME

It is important to understand the overall depth of a game of this size. These Mega Games are typically 25-50 players, sometimes even more! All the original rules of *Ultimate Werewolf* still apply, where there are eliminations during the day and actions at night, however, the number of eliminations can vary wildly. Many times, it is not uncommon to have 4, 5, 6, or more eliminations in a night. Additionally, with a larger pool of players comes larger teams too. In these games, there can be up to 8-10 wolf team members fighting against the village. There can even be an introduction of multiple teams, such as vampires and cults. It is important that during this process you determine who wins in parity and what each team has for a win condition. In the end game, you do not want to have confusion about who has won the game. You will also want to take time to understand how the night phase will play out. I usually advise writing out in notes how and when each team will wake up. During the night phase, this will help immensely and reduce moderator error.

Also recognize that the duration of the game can take much longer. It is not uncommon for Mega Games to take 2-3 hours. Make sure your players understand the time the game will take and are ready to battle for the duration. With this being said, Mega Games also take much longer to moderate. Because there are so many players, it will

take many more day and night phases to have a resolution for the game. If you feel overwhelmed, don't be afraid to add another moderator for support. Since these games have complex roles and interactions, taking extensive notes is important. Make sure you clearly identify the roles and that the players understand how they interact. It can be very frustrating for players to lose a game because they do not understand how a role interaction occurs. Additionally, have a plan for the pace of the game. Know how long each day will last and how long you want the overall game time to be. This is why moderators sometimes like to slip in multiple eliminating teams or large combustible roles that drop the player base much faster. Keeping the game going is important for two reasons. First, you never want the game to become stale or boring. The goal should be for each round to be dynamic and engaging. You want the players to be entertained between rounds. Second, you want the turn-around between games to be well-paced so that players waiting to play aren't spending an excessive amount of time. A fair argument to this may be that this size game does not allow for quick turnaround but often keeping track of time and pacing leads to several additional games by the end of the night.

Mega Games are commonly found in large conventions that host social deception gaming. *Ultimate Werewolf* has a huge following at these events. Due to convention space given and the number of players congregating at one time, circles are bound to get large; thus, Mega Games are widely common. Mega Games are also breeding grounds for new rules and roles to be introduced into the *Ultimate Werewolf* community. Moderators use Mega Games to throw lavish custom games, where every single role is a unique role outside of *Ultimate Werewolf*. These are very popular at conventions, where signup lists turn into wait lists. Due to the potential complexity of these games, it is vital to make sure all your players are on the same page when explaining the game. One of the most common and easily avoidable mistakes is having a player, who thought the game worked one way, lose when they discover that their initial understanding was incorrect. If you are running a variant from the base rules make sure that you take time and clearly discuss how the flow of the game will work.

Playing or moderating a Mega Game can be a challenge, especially if you are only used to smaller games of *Ultimate Werewolf*. Beyond that challenge comes enormous victories. Some of the best final three scenarios come from the games that were a long haul. So how do we overcome playing this large of a game? This section will guide you through some helpful tips and tricks on how to throw yourself into the challenge, as both a player and a moderator.

HOW TO MODERATE A MEGA GAME AND CONTROL THE CIRCLE

During Mega Games, the players you interact with can be a blur. It can often be difficult to remember all of these players. This can make conducting as the moderator challenging. In my experience as a moderator of large games of *Ultimate Werewolf*, there are plenty of times where it was difficult to formally introduce myself to each individual player. If a player's name is escaping the moderator's mind, and they need to write down vital moderator information, having physical objects to note players can be very beneficial. These objects are used as a reference to a seat, rather than a person. The moderator only has to jot down a quick reference to each role revealed during the first night phase—a simple number, color, shape, etc. We highly suggest plastic agility cones. They can be found cheaply online, are very colorful, can be marked with numbers, and are easy to pack and move around between events. Typically, I will number these in sets of 50. That way you can use them for one game or separate them out in groups of 25. When I take notes, I jot down the color of the cone and the number to make sure I have the correct information. Additionally, I ask players to place their cards under the cones. This prevents players from accidentally revealing roles, damaging cards, and allows you access to the card if you need additional information without giving away meta.

When the game is played in a physical space, moderators can use a multitude of resources to help differentiate seats. These are not only limited to field cones. Some other options include: paper with different letters of the alphabet, numbers, or even colored pieces of paper. Place these references on the ground either in front or

behind the seats in the circle. Use these physical objects to label players on your moderator cheat sheet. For example, #2 is a Big Bad Wolf and #3 is a Seer. If the Seer checked #2, you can easily recognize they are a wolf. The biggest goal of this is that you have a methodology for processing the information that allows you to stay organized. Many moderators have different methods for keeping track of their game. Find the option that is right for you.

This tracking method is not restricted to only in-person *Ultimate Werewolf* games. This can also be used in online virtual formats of *Ultimate Werewolf*. You can request each player to add a number to themselves in their username. Alternatively, players can change their camera background to a custom background. If the on-screen windows do not change order, moderators can also number based on the order on their desktop screen.

These references become crucial when there are strict rules within the game. One example of this is differentiating the Wolf Man from regular wolves. By specifying on your cheat sheet who the Wolf Man is among the wolves, like circling which number the player is, you should never make an accidental moderator mistake. Be sure that once you develop your note keeping method, you take the time to make clear and consistent notes. You never want to find yourself in a situation where you cannot understand what your note says and accidentally give information the circle should not know.

DOCUMENT ALL ROLES AND SPECIAL MECHANICS REVIEW

With a large circle, there is bound to be a lot of diversity in the *Ultimate Werewolf* roles handed out. While balancing all the teams within the game, take the time to legibly copy down the roles that will be in the next game. How many wolf team members are there? How many wolves, specifically? How many teams overall? A rectangular portable whiteboard or even a piece of paper can be used to document these answers. Provide this list to the active circle as a physical or online reference. Use this as a guide when explaining each role and mechanic before the game starts.

Having a visible list for the entire circle will help the players understand what they are up against and combat against the opposite team. The village can use this list to understand when it is the right time to claim certain roles and count how many special villagers versus Villagers there are remaining. Wolf team roles can use this list to false claim roles known to the village. Some players will even help the moderator by crossing out or erasing roles that have been eliminated.

Any special mechanics that have been added to this game should also be added to the list. Emphasizing what differs from the original *Ultimate Werewolf* mechanics will reduce any risk of misunderstandings from players that play in the circle. Having the mechanics and roles documented will also enforce healthy conversations about the game. Players will want to discuss the mechanics during every day phase. Keeping a current list of active mechanics will keep your players' day phase conversations productive and goal oriented. This list is equally as important to the moderator. Moderators should use this physical list to accurately perform eliminations and night phases. Some moderators will even order the roles and mechanics in their night phase order to expedite the night phase mechanics.

MULTIPLE MODERATORS IN A GAME

Never be afraid to ask for help and suggestions. Most moderators are more than willing to discuss gaming theory and how they would conduct a circle. There can be a lot of rules and actions that a moderator needs to perform in order to appease a 50-person circle. There is no shame in asking a second, even a third, person to help moderate the circle. Plan to separate the actions between the moderators before the game starts. For instance, decide who follows up on night eliminations, who is tracking cult conversions, or who is controlling artifacts. By separating the actions, this could make night phases much easier. Often, this will make for an overall better experience for players by making the night and day phase smoother and more accurate.

It is encouraged to still have one main moderator and an assistant moderator that runs the game. Have the main moderator be the vocal one that the circle addresses for their

questions and concerns. The assistant moderator can help in validating votes and keeping notes on the game. This way, the game still has the same flow as games that have only one moderator. Having multiple moderators is just helpful in tracking many night actions. Before the day begins, all moderators will collaborate and make sure they are all on the same page. Once everything has been resolved in the night phase, then the day can start. Multiple moderators are also helpful in tracking majority voting during the day phase. It is like having a few referees for a sports game that can look out for actions the players take. You may not have to resort to seeking additional moderators for a 25 person circle unless the mechanics are very complex. If you do seek additional support in moderating, we suggest it be for around a 35 to 50 person game. Again, this is totally up to your comfort level.

ADDITIONAL FLAIR

If a moderator has surpassed the comfort level in moderating a standard Mega Game deck, they are encouraged to add a little flair to the mix. This can either come from a role not usually used within *Ultimate Werewolf* or a completely custom role created by the community. Adding custom roles and mechanics will make the game more compelling for players to join. Additionally, it will add more conversations to your day phases. Players love to talk about what is happening within the game, dissecting players' actions, and theorizing about what scenarios could unfold.

Here is an example. Let's say in a large 40-person game of a regular *Ultimate Werewolf* game, there is an artifact that grants protection for the next night phase. However, the protection can only be given to the player once per game. At the beginning of the day, the player holding the artifact must grant it to another player before conversations happen. This simple protection mechanic forces players to talk about who they trust within the large circle, and it adds a new layer of complexity to the social dynamics of the game. When is it time to grant certain special villagers safety from elimination? Could the wolf team use this mechanic to their advantage and pretend they are protecting village roles? Leave this up to the 40-person circle as they navigate this unique mechanic.

Adding minor flairs of new mechanics like this excites the player fanbase! No matter when they were eliminated from the game, they will remember this unique mechanic. Adding one mechanic to a regular game of *Ultimate Werewolf* should not be taxing onto a veteran or average moderator. Experiment with different mechanics so your Mega Games are different every hour.

Experienced moderators love to have their own roles. It is a lot of fun to see new roles and how they interact in a game of *Ultimate Werewolf*. With this said, it is highly suggested that unless you have a significant amount of moderating experience or have play tested a role extensively, you should avoid making significant changes to roles as written in large circles. I have witnessed many beginner moderators get overwhelmed by the number of roles that need to be added to a Mega Game for it to be balanced. This can be further compounded by a drastically changed game. When beginning your adventure into moderating, especially at conventions and large circles, it is important to heavily consider the cards as written. There are a lot of roles within the *Ultimate Werewolf* deck. The play testers of *Ultimate Werewolf* have spent a significant amount of time researching and rehearsing the mechanics within the ruleset. There are enough roles to fill out a Mega Game, and utilizing them as written allows you to easily consider how the game will play out.

Now that I have added this warning, I know many of you will disregard it! With that in mind, here are a couple of helpful suggestions. Think about a mechanic and how you want to change it. Start by considering the moderator variations presented in the new edition of *Ultimate Werewolf*. Start with making only slight changes to the game. For example, perhaps a Wolf Cub only gives an elimination if they are eliminated during the day. Maybe throw in one greater wolf, like a Big Bad Wolf that gets an extra elimination when a wolf is eliminated. Depending on how many elimination roles you have in the game, add in double the number of plain villagers to fill out the deck and consider adding secret roles to the Villager role. After you watch the variation play out, ask yourself how the interaction went. Did it work as you intended? If it did work, did the players seem to enjoy the interaction? If they did not work, can the mechanic be adjusted to be more balanced? As you tweak and change your roles, you will see many

things that work and many things that do not. That is part of the process of cultivating your own mechanics.

Again, note that we are not discouraging creating your own mechanics, but simply making sure that you take time to test the mechanics and integrate them slowly into your set. This is especially relevant when considering the complexity of Mega Games. Any role introduced into this environment should have a significant number of play repetitions before being tried in a large game. Of note: The new edition of *Ultimate Werewolf* comes with number indicators on each role card to help manage the balance of the deck. It is highly advised that you consider these directions as you build a deck. When in doubt, make sure you are adding an ample number of Villagers. Most other aspects of the game can be adjusted to make a balanced deck.

MULTIPLE ELIMINATIONS IN ONE NIGHT

Ultimate Werewolf can have a great deal of variation during the night phase. When applied to Mega Games, this can lead to chaotic, but fun, shenanigans. There is bound to be a time where multiple eliminations happen due to a single action. This isn't always going to happen, but when it does, it will be fast and chaotic. It is important that as a moderator you control the game and make sure you are handling how each role resolves.

Let's give an extreme example, the game has the following roles

- ◆ Wolf Team with a Big Bad Wolf
- ◆ Cupid
- ◆ Hunter
- ◆ Mad Destroyer
- ◆ Frankenstein's Monster

The wolves eliminate players A & B. One of those eliminations was a Villager, who was a lover to the Mad Destroyer, who blows up the Hunter, who shoots Frankenstein's Monster, who then explodes as the Mad Destroyer, and uses his Hunter elimination. That is nine eliminations just from the wolf action! Now, throw in another team that eliminates as well, and a 50-person game could immediately drop

one-fifth in size. Handling multiple eliminations can be a tricky and sometimes daunting task. Here are a few tips on how to handle multiple eliminations.

As a moderator, determine the order of night actions before the game starts. Start with your non-village teams, jotting down all targets they want to eliminate. If there are any targets that are unique, such as the Big Bad Wolf or an Alpha Wolf conversion, note with a unique signature, so they are handled correctly. Follow through each role that contains a night action, and then relook at your list. Take a moment and review what could transpire in the next day if all of these eliminations go through. Is there a Mad Destroyer in your game? Is there a Hunter or a Tough Guy? If these alter any players that would be eliminated, change the notes to reflect that. Then, prepare to reveal during the day phase.

Determining the order of elimination should be based on a player's impact with their reveal upon elimination. Meaning, attempt to reveal players first that do trigger any effects upon reveal. For example, it is unwise to reveal a Hunter or Mad Destroyer before all other eliminated players have been removed from the game. If you reveal the Hunter too early, you run the risk of having the Hunter target a player that is already going to be eliminated. If you do run into this situation, it is alright to say, "Choose another target," to give the Hunter a second opportunity.

Moderators should inform the circle to not read into the order of elimination. Players should not expect that the first to be eliminated was the wolf team's elimination target.

CUSTOM THEMED GAMES

While you are at a convention, you may have come across a circle of *Ultimate Werewolf* that did not use any original roles. Every role in the game is inspired by TV personalities, Norse Mythology, or a Movie franchise. The game is unique and might be the only time it is ever performed by the moderator. These are custom themed games that use *Ultimate Werewolf* rules as a baseline. Mega Games are a great outlet for moderators to show off their artistic sensibility.

To build a custom game, first determine your inspiration source. Take your favorite TV show, movie, or book. Then, define the theme of the game. Is it just a regular good versus evil game? Is this about revenge? Is it a murder mystery? If you are pulling from a known story source, pull out all the characters/entities who are considered evil or good and begin building the teams.

You can take inspiration from all the roles and mechanics in *Ultimate Werewolf*. If the Wolf Cub works for one of your custom roles, make use of the double elimination rule. The Bodyguard or Seer is a good choice as well, since they are staples to the good team. Besides, this will also make it easier for players to understand and follow the custom rules with some references to the original rules.

It is advised to make the “Villager” role known to the entire circle. Otherwise, Villagers will use this to their advantage and find all the evils and specials in the game, since they do not know the Villager role card. Even better, show the “Villager” card to all players so there is no meta-gaming on the card’s appearance.

Executing on themed games can be tedious since almost everything is custom. Moderators must spend ample amounts of time thinking about every scenario that could happen between role mechanics and checking that each role is balanced against another. Players are looking for a well-balanced game. Take a considerable amount of time working on the mechanics to ensure both good and evil teams have a blast playing your unique game. Who knows? Your custom build may become an *Ultimate Werewolf* staple at conventions!

PARITY WITH MULTIPLE TEAMS

Playing with a large circle gives moderators the opportunity to try chaotic builds. Some of these builds include multiple teams working against each other. Resolving the good team's win condition is simple. Once they eliminate all threats, they win! However, what happens if there are multiple evil teams? What is their win condition? It is the same as the other evil team's condition - parity. The team will need to find themselves as the majority within the village. But what happens when there are multiple teams that reach parity? How does a moderator resolve the win condition? That is up to the moderator's discretion. Below are a few ways moderators can resolve this end-game scenario.

A fast and easy way to resolve joint parity is to just allow both teams to win. Let the Cult, Vampires, or Werewolves share their victory with the other team in question. This will allow many players to join in on the celebration.

However, if a moderator does not want multiple teams to win, there are a few options to determine parity resolution. A good way to resolve multiple team parity is to set a level of threat hierarchy. Before the game starts, decide on which team takes precedence over another in terms of threat. For example, set villagers at the lowest level, vampires in second, and wolves as the top threat. If the wolves and vampires reach parity at the exact same time, the moderator can rule the wolves win automatically. The players are told this upfront, so they are aware of who wins in the end.

Moderators can also resolve a multiple parity win by calculating a score derived from all roles left in the game. Each role can be given a threat number. If the wolf team has an accumulation of threat greater than vampires, then the wolves take the victory. A great example of this is with a Big Bad Wolf versus a Werewolf. Big Bad can grant two points, while a regular Werewolf and Vampire grant only one point. With parity, both teams should have the same number of players on each team, so in a total sum of threat, wolves take the victory. Using this strategy does have a disadvantage since it still opens the door for a sum to be the same number for both teams.

Moderators could also take a stern route and declare no team won. This is determined because no teams can resolve parity while they are in a deadlock. Declare this decision at the start of the game, so teams understand and work to not find themselves in this predicament.

SECTION III ORGANIZING EVENTS

ORGANIZING ENGAGING *ULTIMATE WEREWOLF* EVENTS

Events are an ideal place to introduce new players to the game. Just the animated theatrics of Ultimate Werewolf will lure new players in. This section serves as a guide to planning and implementing events from the local arena to large conventions.

INTRODUCTION TO EVENT ORGANIZING

My first experience with *Ultimate Werewolf* was in the hallways of convention centers during large conventions. I would hunt these circles down in the late-night hours, knowing that I would always find a circle if I looked hard enough. Conventions are the natural setting for *Ultimate Werewolf*. You'll find lots of like-minded people and free time to play games. Each year, this combination leads to the natural formation of *Ultimate Werewolf* convention communities. As I became more fixated on *Ultimate Werewolf*, I noticed that these circles would exponentially grow into hundreds of people by the end of the convention. Many people, like myself, would play long bursts of the game, often without breaks. This almost manic type of play was due to the unavailability of circles outside of the convention environment. Players would try to squeeze as much game time as possible within the limited window of the convention, knowing they could not find the experience anywhere else. This frustration was the reason I began organizing my own events. At first, I tried recruiting anyone who would listen. I played several other games and often would bring *Ultimate Werewolf* into the conversation. Word of mouth had some success, but I quickly realized that I would need to be much more organized if I was going to be successful. I had to determine the best way to engage the players, the community, local businesses, and convention culture in order to keep the game growing. Over my eleven years organizing *Ultimate Werewolf*, I have countless successes and failures that have been invaluable to the growth of the community. These many encounters, both the good and the bad, were essential to the evolution of our

growing werewolf society. This section is a strategic road map on how the Atlanta and Knoxville communities were grown. The hope is that this section provides players insight on how to engage the outside world in facilitating *Ultimate Werewolf*.

It is important to note that being an organizer can take a great deal of effort, but it is extremely rewarding to see people have a communal joy of your favorite nerd hobby. It is a role for those who have a love for the game as well as the organizational skills to bring others together. As an organizer, your goal is to provide detailed instruction for how/where/when players can meet to play *Ultimate Werewolf*. While that sounds simple, it can be tough to get new faces to play this game. These were questions that constantly plagued me as I jumped headfirst into organizing. I stressed about answering these questions. My hope is that I can alleviate and uplift you as you work to build your own communities.

In discussing the growth of a community, we review many elements to the development of a community. Specifically, we review the engagement with gaming conventions, local gaming stores, and local venues (bars, coffee shops etc). Second, we review the use of social media, its importance, and a methodology for keeping players engaged. From here, we review engagement with game designers and the use of play to win and prize support. Specifically, we review the potential for a symbiotic relationship and the net value it has to the overall community. Additionally, we review how you develop branding, websites, and community identifiers that will attract players. Finally, we review how to develop a positive culture and the potential problems of toxic interactions. It is important to note that this information is not to be taken as absolute. Instead, it should be considered a toolbox of ideas that can be considered when building a community. Some of them will work, some will not, yet our goal is to introduce how we developed our community and to give potential context for issues that you might face as an organizer.

FINDING SPACE

The biggest hurdle any new organizer will face is where everyone is going to play. Often, communities will start at someone's house. While this is completely reasonable to

start, it is almost always a temporary solution, as a house rarely suits an ever-growing group either due to location or space constraints. Finding a central space that is enjoyable to your player base is vital in the development of the community.

It is important that you always have several pieces of information when petitioning for space. First, you need to have a general estimate of how many players will be in attendance. This should be a range to make sure the space has enough flexibility to facilitate your group. Also, be ready to discuss how long you will be playing to make sure the venue is not running into other events. Next, you should be able to give a basic structure of how the event will be run. This will be slightly more complex in a convention environment, as volunteering typically has an official process. Regardless, when you present yourself as an organizer, it is important that you have these details together. This will give local businesses a stronger sense of security about giving you space. It is also important that you continually look for feedback about the space you are hosting. The player base should be encouraged to actively engage with you about the venue to make sure it is still meeting your needs. Additionally, consulting the players to find locations can be very helpful in finding the perfect spot. Often, you will have players who have a detailed knowledge of the area and know great spots for play. Their feedback and consideration should always be paramount in considering a venue.

ORGANIZING AT YOUR LOCAL GAMING STORE

The most reasonable place to look for *Ultimate Werewolf* space is a local gaming store. This space is a watering hole for potentially like-minded gamers who might be interested in trying out the game. Additionally, it has a potential net benefit for both the store and the players. The players have a place to play, and the local gaming store has new, large number of prospective customers. When I am considering a store to host *Ultimate Werewolf*, I do some initial research. First, I look over online reviews. Does it have any red flags to consider? I look mostly for commentary on cleanliness or rude or offensive behavior since both of these are large factors in having a welcoming space to grow a community. I also look at the pictures of the business online. Areas need to have 15-21 chairs to accommodate a circle, exhibit general organization, and be clean. The

idea is to get a feel if it will be a good location for people to congregate. Next, I will look at the physical location of the store to make sure it is either centrally located or at least a reasonable drive from most parts of your town or city. If you have a small group of players already communicating, it is worthwhile to present the prospective store and get feedback about the commute of your players.

After some initial research, I will go to the store in person. Normally I walk through the area to make sure the space and general cleanliness line up with my research. A vital thing to review is the bathrooms. If a store does not have operational or relatively clean bathrooms, it will almost always become a problem, since *Ultimate Werewolf* events usually last several hours. Additionally, I look for how crowded the location is and if there are any issues with noise. Many gaming stores are fantastic for RPGs, comics, card games, and other nerd hobbies, but not as suitable for *Ultimate Werewolf*. *Ultimate Werewolf* circles generate a lot of noise. A location that cannot accommodate that can lead to friction with other players. After I have determined the place is a good potential location, I will approach the employee at the counter. I introduce myself and explain *Ultimate Werewolf* and my objective to potentially organize events at the location. I will always clearly explain the game. Typically, I will ask for a meeting with the manager or owner of the store as a next step. This introduction is meant to give two pieces of information. First, it is meant to prevent any confusion of what game we are playing. Many times, I have seen *Ultimate Werewolf* confused with World of Darkness games or other RPG's. Next, it allows me to gauge if any other social deception gamers are in the area. If they recognize *Ultimate Werewolf*, it is highly likely you have other like-minded gamers that are nearby. I have recruited players to our community just by approaching a store.

When you meet with the manager, it is important that you are organized with the core data of attendance, length of play, and structure. I try to have a three month projection for events, usually with one event a month. This allows the store to compare schedules and find the best way to engage. When discussing the events with the store, I usually suggest a trial run of three months to see if it is beneficial for the store. Stores tend to be more agreeable when it is a temporary arrangement. I have never seen a store

cancel the event after three months, but it allows them to witness the players and get comfortable with the event. It is very important that you are flexible and do your best to accommodate the store. Events held by gaming stores usually generate much higher revenue. A classic example is Magic the Gathering. These will always have a higher priority due to their importance to the local gaming store's operations. Being flexible allows you to avoid issues conflicting with these events.

While preparing for the event, I will call the game store a couple days before to confirm. This serves two functions. First, it allows you to remind the local gaming store that you are coming. Second, if they have unforeseen conflicts or scheduling issues, it gives you time to pivot and adjust. I recommend you always do this, since it will help avoid any unpleasant surprises for your players. The day of the event, I try to be on site at least an hour early to claim the space, set up chairs, and ensure that I have all my supplies on hand—white board, notepad, *Ultimate Werewolf* cards etc. Additionally, I take a picture of the area before we move any tables or chairs. This helps you accurately return the space to the same as it was before the event. You will also want to encourage your players to help maintain the area during the event. Leaving an area trashed is a great way to not get asked back. Also, it is highly suggested you encourage players to buy drinks and other wares from the store. This is important because supporting the business of your venue is an exceptional way to build a positive relationship with the store. At the conclusion of the event, I always approach whoever is working at the store and thank them for hosting. This is done primarily to build a positive relationship, but more importantly, to address any issues and concerns. If the store has issues, they typically vocalize them during this discussion. That allows you to deal with issues immediately before waiting until the next month.

After the event, I ask for feedback from the players. This is important as it will highlight any issues that might need to be addressed. It also gives buy-in from the community on where *Ultimate Werewolf* is taking place. It is important to remember that the community's opinion is much more important than your singular view as the organizer.

ORGANIZING AT YOUR LOCAL RESTAURANT

Another great option is to organize at a local business. Many times this will be a local restaurant. It is important to understand that these venues typically have a much different business model than gaming stores. You will want to engage them in a slightly different manner to be successful. The primary difference between gaming stores and other local businesses is that gaming stores want people to be there for long periods of time. Restaurants and other venues, on the other hand, typically assume people will leave after a couple hours. Each seat in a restaurant has an associated dollar value that needs to be generated for the restaurant to be successful. This can often come into conflict with an event that takes several hours. With all of that said, it is very possible and even beneficial to run *Ultimate Werewolf* in this forum. Werewolf ATL has been running their monthly event at a restaurant for several years, and it has worked out wonderfully. The biggest benefit is the introduction of quality food and alcohol. This can be a very enticing way to get players to stay.

When considering a restaurant to host *Ultimate Werewolf*, I again start by doing online research. First, I will look at reviews and pictures of the location. When looking at reviews, I am looking for commentary on the quality of the food, customer service issues, and cleanliness. Additionally, I will review the menu to get a feel for pricing in relation to players. Reviewing pictures, I am looking for good spots to form a circle. Private rooms or areas outside of the main dining room are always at a premium. Next, I will look at both parking and how centrally located it is in relation to the area. Again, player feedback is always invaluable. Finally, it is also important that you consider any age restrictions and adverse environmental conditions. While hosting at a bar might sound awesome, it will immediately alienate players under 21. Locations that allow smoking will most certainly alienate those that don't smoke. It is important that you consider a location and who won't come based on that environment.

Once I have decided on a location, I will visit for a meal. I do not necessarily announce my intention to host anything but am instead getting a feel for the environment. Asking your server if the restaurant hosts events can give you a good idea of the culture. Many

restaurants heavily advocate for local meetups, others will not. Regardless, I will typically not contact the manager at this visit. The reality is that a manager is very busy. I want to engage them on their schedule. This can be done via a phone call a couple days later. When you do, it is very important you have accurate information. Knowing the number of players and the time you will need makes it significantly more likely you will be successful in getting space at the venue. In this first interaction, I request a four hour slot for the players. This is enough time to draw players but not enough to hamper business at the restaurant. I would also advise you schedule this time after lunch since it is a slower time for restaurants. Like the gaming store scenario, I will typically suggest a three month trial. This allows both parties to get comfortable in the location and make sure it is the best fit. Like the local gaming store, it is vitally important that you are flexible. For restaurants, many events are significant revenue generators. Sporting events often have significant impact and hold a priority. Work with the location to find a good time for the meetup.

Much like the previous example, I will call a couple days before the event to ensure that everyone is still on the same page. The day of the event, I will get there a couple hours early. I will eat at the location and make sure the management on shift is aware of our event. Additionally, I will ask about their policy on setup and putting things back together. This is important because I want to make sure that we leave the area in the same condition we found it. The biggest rule for hosting events at a restaurant is no outside food and drink. Before I started organizing, I would have assumed that this was a given, but I have encountered this several times. It is one of the fastest ways to not be asked back to a restaurant. The restaurant's primary motivation is to sell food and drink. If your attendees are not doing that, they are taking up space that could be used by other paying customers. Will everyone buy food? Without question no, but it is important that a portion of the group is purchasing food and drink from the restaurant. Additionally, as the organizer, advocate for tipping. Promoting both of these activities will help maintain a positive relationship with the restaurant and its employees, making them more willing to have you on location for a more significant period of time in the future.

When the event is done, I ask for two levels of feedback. Similar to the gaming store, I will ask the players if they enjoyed the restaurant. In my experience, this feedback only exists in extremes. People who liked the experience will be vocally positive and people who did not will be vicious in critiquing the experience. This very direct feedback is invaluable. I will also seek commentary from the restaurant. It is important that any issues are addressed in an organized and timely manner. Additionally, this lets you gauge whether the restaurant thinks you are a good fit. You do not want to find this out a couple of days before the next event, suddenly discovering that you do not have a location. Normally, this will be a fast and easy process, but it is still important as it gives you an idea about the security you have in space.

ORGANIZING AT CONVENTIONS

Organizing at a convention is a completely different beast. Unlike the local level, it requires integrating with the processes of the convention itself. You have significantly less control over how the event will be organized. Often, this will require lots of engagement with the convention organizers and paperwork. The most important question is how you engage with a convention and facilitate them in allowing you to host an event. The process starts out similarly to local organizing—with research. First, I identify primary contacts on the convention's website. I typically find a couple strong candidates for contact. This is done in case a contact is no longer with the convention or is not responding to email. Next, I search social media for any already existing groups. This allows you to directly engage with a community and determine if an organizer is already hosting events. After that, I will attempt to get a scope of player interest. If it is a local convention, you can touch base with your players. If it is not a local convention, attend to get an idea of interest and scope. *Ultimate Werewolf* is sometimes a casual hallway game, making it difficult to track. Other times it is like a wildfire, consuming huge areas of the gaming area. Regardless, you will quickly get an idea of scope based on either reaching out to your local community or going in person to survey. Finally, I become well acquainted with any volunteer benefits. Examples would be free badges,

hotel rooms, or swag. Understanding the benefits of being a volunteer will allow you to gauge what you ask for regarding volunteers.

Assuming you want to organize the convention, the next step is to contact the convention and request assistance hosting the event. This will normally fall back on the principles discussed above. Organization, being informed, and having a plan for how you will host the event are paramount in your success. First, make a soft schedule of needed volunteers and any additional needs you have. This schedule should also include hours of operation and setup/ breakdown times. Once you are prepared, the next step is finding the primary contact for gaming. Often this will be whoever is organizing board games. When you email the convention, make sure your email is professional and does not have significant grammatical errors. This email should clearly indicate the *Ultimate Werewolf* event you want to host, what you think the scale of the event should be, and why you think it is relevant to that specific convention. If you do not hear back after a couple days, feel free to follow up again or use the next email on the list. It is not uncommon for it to take some pushing to facilitate contact. The response to this email will usually ask for more information about the event you want to host or be an official decline of your proposal. If you get declined, no worries! Many of the conventions that Werewolf ATL host now initially received declines to host. As you get more convention experience and your "resume" of experience grows, this will become less and less.

When running your first convention event, it is vitally important that you are organized. Make sure you understand the convention's process for volunteers. This allows you to understand what you can offer your volunteers and what is expected of them during the convention. I generally will submit a draft schedule to the convention so that they have an idea of growth and what resources I will need. Both parties should have a transparent idea of how you will host the event. Once you have this information you can begin looking for volunteers. In general, you want to recruit veteran moderators for these events. The convention ecosphere can be both chaotic and hectic for a new moderator. I generally will ask for volunteers to give me preferred schedules and then

times they cannot work. I highly advise you never promise volunteers times slots as this is rarely viable in every case. Once you have this information, it is time to put together a schedule. I recommend using a spreadsheet as they are easy to manipulate and follow. This should be submitted to the volunteers for review before you submit it to the convention. I generally try to have this completed sixty days before the event. You do not want to scramble last minute to find volunteers. Even if you lost volunteers last minute it is much easier to replace a couple of people than it is getting an entire group to run an event. When organizing *Ultimate Werewolf*, I have two roles for volunteers: Moderators and HQ/Support. Moderators run the games and generally maintain a set amount of space/room. HQ serves as the backbone of the event. They monitor issues, registration, and keep a count of attendees. Additionally, it is advised to establish a group of people who are recognized as a leadership team. This serves two purposes. First, if you experience an emergency, you have others that can run the event. Next, it spreads the burden of running the event across multiple people, allowing you to have a break to enjoy the convention.

Before a convention event launches, I typically do two things. First, I will schedule a volunteer meeting. This will usually be a couple of hours before the event starts on the first day. This meeting allows you to engage with all your volunteers and answer any last-minute questions to make sure everyone is aligned and on the same page. I go over the standard operating procedure of the event, notating key convention information. I normally ask volunteers to get onsite thirty minutes before their shift. While this may sound extreme, it has prevented lots of issues with tardiness. The volunteer meeting also allows your volunteers to meet one another. This will almost always lead to more fluid volunteer interactions as they know who they can ask for assistance. I normally make this meeting mandatory, with anyone missing the event being requested to touch base with me directly. It is important that your volunteers feel supported and that they have a point of contact if they have questions or concerns.

The next important thing to do before the events starts is look at the space the convention has given you to operate within. This might sound unnecessary, but it often will be the deciding point of a successful event. *Ultimate Werewolf* takes up a lot of

space. If it is not put in the correct area, it can lead to a lot of potential issues. Once a convention has started, it is very difficult to alter space. Many times, arriving at the event a couple hours early has prevented mass chaos. Once, we were accidentally given a 20x20 room with 120 people signed up to play that evening. If this happens to you, do not lose your cool. Everyone makes mistakes and often a pleasant demeanor will go a long way to getting what you need. In almost all my experiences, we were able to compromise and at least get some improvement.

Once the event has started, I plan for a volunteer or myself to make rounds approximately every half hour to check in on every moderator and make sure no significant issues are present. I would highly suggest that you buy water for your moderators and offer it to them at every check in. Bottled water is very cheap and can easily be delivered to any event. Your moderators will be continuously using their voice to run games and cannot always get a break between games for water. Additionally, I periodically pause the game to make the request that players throw away trash. This might sound extreme, but it is very effective and prevents you from having to clean up trash late at night after the event wraps up. I have done this more than once, and it is not advisable. Finally, I carefully watch for any issues my volunteers are having. It is important to support those reporting to you and make sure that they are not distressed. If you are not sure, feel free to pull them aside and ask. Normally, if a serious issue exists, they will voice it.

Additionally, every hour I take a count of all player and moderators. In the convention setting, this is probably the most important activity you can do to help get more space and resources from the convention. Having hourly metrics gives objective evidence that attendees are enjoying the event and are spending their time playing *Ultimate Werewolf*. When the event is over, these numbers will be used to justify both better space and more dedicated resources, like volunteer badges for the next event. It is important that these are tracked every hour, without exception. I would suggest a google drive or drop box to facilitate gathering this data.

After the event is done, I generate two reports. The first goes to the convention and shows the hourly numbers, with brief commentary about the flow of the event. Generally, I will give any concerns or issues and any positive commentary and ask for feedback. This is important, as it allows transparent and continual contact with the convention and is invaluable for year to year interactions. The next report I put together is for the community of players. Generally, this will be posted on social media groups. In this report, I will show the hourly count and ask for feedback. Your player base will be the most vocal about the good and the bad. Your number one commitment should be to this group, so make sure you carefully read comments. I also highly suggest you give an email for feedback. This gives an outlet for voicing concerns to those who do not want to publicly comment.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF WEREWOLVES

As more gamers are introduced to the many facets of *Ultimate Werewolf*—from building their strategy for playing, designing decks that entertain their players, and adding expansion elements such as the Artifacts—information on how to grow your games and community becomes more prevalent. New players that are introduced to the game and grow with your initial group will provide new personalities to improve everyone's game and strategy all around. This also allows for larger games and new possibilities to introduce alternative roles and mechanics.

A community grows when interested players have a place to socialize and meet like-minded individuals, either locally or online. The community should be a place where members can organize games, find volunteers to support specialized events, invite new people and introduce friends, and most importantly be a place that is safe and welcome for all gamers. A community can only grow so long as it has fair leadership that listens to feedback and keeps the group's best interests in mind. Leaders should put into place a code of conduct that oversees all social media interactions as well as interactions between players. Any member using the community to organize events should keep to the same code of conduct.

BUILDING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Leaders need to be present to provide support and balance to a growing community. No one person will be able to fulfill all the duties required. You will need leaders with various skillsets, but they can be divided into two categories—organizers and support. Support leaders are generally proficient with technology or design and maintain the group's branding and online presence. Organizers focus on setting up and running events.

As your numbers grow and players begin to find you, do not be afraid to find out who has skills that will enhance your overall success to future growth. The community is only as strong as its members. Your community members have a passion for the game as well and many of them have ways they can contribute. They can do everything from moderating games, designing logos, or even just introducing more people to your group.

Branding and imagery are important to make your online presence stand out from the rest. Logos and banners are needed for your website and social media groups and should be created when feasible. If you have graphic design experience among your community, this is an excellent way for them to contribute. If you have some money that you want to invest, using websites with stock art to incorporate into your designs is a low-cost way to start out. If you need to find a graphic designer or artist, places like Deviant Art are a good way to find someone within your budget.

PHYSICAL BRANDING (ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY)

Depending on the medium you wish to create and where you want to use the artwork you are getting, you will either need a graphic designer or a digital artist. This is not to say that a graphic designer is not an artist. Graphic designer and digital artist both require creativity and excellent artist skills. They also both generally create their art on a computer, so they both will be required to be familiar with different computer programs and design software. Graphic designers generally create media that is used in print materials, advertisements, social media, and websites. A digital artist creates imagery that can be found as background for signage and other digital media. A combination of the two will often produce the most images for multiple projects. Graphic designers are

used to get pieces of art that can be combined to make multiple banners, signage, or advertisement pieces, while a digital artist creates focal pieces of art used as a whole or with a few pieces of art from a graphic designer to make an even more impressive marketing or advertising piece.

By searching the internet for freelance digital artists or freelance graphic designers, you can find many different people that advertise their skill set, choice of software for creation, and price points for hiring. Many digital artists also post already created pieces on stock imagery sites for purchase or even advertise and sell artwork on Deviant Art. As you find samples of art that fall in line with your community's vision and needs, make sure to negotiate price based on the amount of work you need completed. Many artists will work with your budget in order to help you create your vision. Make sure to go into any situation with your pricing laid out to find the right person without overspending. A digital artist will typically be more expensive than a graphic designer, so plan for that when thinking about your budget and if you are going to use stock imagery.

GAME ADDITIONS

One of the best aspects of *Ultimate Werewolf* is the creativity players have for enhancing the game. These can be additional props that allow for new mechanics, scripts for stories, and even new roles. The fact the newer versions of the game are released with new roles show that players have drastically impacted the game with their creative thinking. When you come up with an unofficial new role, you might want to get it printed on a card for use during the game. There are many options for designing and printing the roles yourself. When you are attempting to do it on a budget, look for royalty-free images or designs you have made yourself and card stock paper for printing. Your home printer is the cheapest option, while taking it to a print vendor like Office Depot or FedEx is the next level up.

As you find more designers that can create art for your group, they might help out/ create custom role artwork for your local cards. This could allow you to cut cost on hiring a freelance artist and invest more in printing. One site that is good for game piece

creation, including new cards, is The Game Crafter. The benefit of a site like this is they specialize in creating game pieces for individual projects as well as entire elements used in game design. Should your community create additional items used in your game, vendors such as these can provide the printing and distribution of those items to your players.

Some moderators have incorporated props into their game play and mechanics. Just like the addition of the tower, sandwich, and other props Bézier Games has added to its *Ultimate Werewolf* Legacy version, moderators have added items like player-triggered buttons. These buttons can be pre-recorded with messages to say what happens when they are pressed and added as pre-scheduled mechanics of the game.

RECRUITING PEOPLE TO PLAY

Ultimate Werewolf is a game that is often best at 10-20 players. This requires organizing many players and recruiting to grow your *Ultimate Werewolf* circles. Attracting people to your group isn't always a natural talent, so recruitment can be a daunting task. The first thing to remember about recruiting new players is understanding that new players are not automatically going to share the same level of passion for the game as you and your existing group. This one is hard for me personally! With that said, some people will not be interested in the game at all, some will like it casually, and some will be incredibly enthusiastic. The goal here is to engage the players. Give them room to get to know the game and try playing a few times to see if they are interested. This is done by having a game plan for how you approach new players and interact with them at events.

Understand that recruiting new players takes practice, and it may take some time to figure out the methods that work best for you and your group. Since recruitment is a vital part of growing your community, it's an absolutely necessary skill to learn.

Typically, recruitment happens on two levels—in person and via social media interaction. Social media is invaluable to recruitment because it allows you to reach out to a large number of people. While the format may seem impersonal, it is important to still take the time to get to know new people that show interest in your group. When a

new person is added to one of our groups, I'll have a look through their profile. This allows me to recognize a person's face so when they do join us in person, I can welcome them and introduce myself. We use social media several times monthly to reach out to the community to hallmark holidays, special events, and new topics related to social deception. Even if you don't recognize a new player, it's important to engage new players when they show up to live events. During these introductions, I introduce myself and ask if they have any questions. I also offer to get them settled into the next game. It is not uncommon for players to initially decline and ask to watch. This is completely okay! *Ultimate Werewolf* can be intimidating at times, and you should give people the opportunity to ease into the game at their own pace. Typically, we will have a dedicated volunteer who engages any new players, especially those observing. They are available to answer questions about the group or how to play. Additionally, the moderator has a dedicated person they can check in with to identify the new players and make sure they are comfortable in the game.

This is even more important in the convention setting since many new *Ultimate Werewolf* players will be drawn in by the noise and general excitement of the game. Having a volunteer that can engage new players helps give a fluid method of getting them settled in to play. It is important that your HQ volunteers are able to answer any questions about the game and direct players to circles that are either close to ending or are actively looking for players. Social media can also be vital during recruitment for a convention. Typically, we post the events on the convention's website and other social media outlets. It is also not uncommon to have Bézier Games post the event on their social media to draw an even larger pool of players.

You should have a good idea of how many players are being added to social media groups and in person events each month. I usually do this via spreadsheet. I track any online and in person events and any new members to social media. This data gives you trends for successful events and periods of growth. For example, in Atlanta, the largest growth every year is seen during the summer. This is primarily because the Atlanta group runs games at several conventions during this time. Tracking this allows you to monitor and tweak your recruitment efforts. Additionally, it is important to investigate

other comparable groups that are in your area. This will give you scope of how many players you can recruit. As an example, I look at board game groups and heavily recruit in that area. Set a goal for recruitment and actively work towards that goal. Generally, Werewolf ATL's goal is 20% year-to-year growth. If you do not hit your goal, it isn't the end of the world. This is a hobby, and most certainly not work. At the same time, the feedback you receive from this information is invaluable to how you continue to engage your surrounding players.

GROUP CULTURE

Group culture is the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. In *Ultimate Werewolf*, this is especially important as the game requires many players. In addition, *Ultimate Werewolf* culture is a constantly shifting concept. The meta and narrative changes from game to game and year to year as new players join and people change their games to stay competitive. This is fantastic because it keeps the game fresh. As an organizer, your job is to monitor the group culture and make sure that the natural evolution is positive and that players are being given opportunity to engage. In general, when players feel they are part of a community, it has a direct correlation to increased fun and attendance at events.

The cultivation of group culture is a constant effort. Our recommendation is that you actively promote and interact with players on social media and in person. From a social media perspective, this can often be done by tagging people in photos and giving public commentary to specific players. A great example would be highlighting an awesome line of play on social media. This is positive, inclusive behavior that shares a fun memory and makes players feel unique. Another use of social media is actively gathering feedback from the community. This almost always leads to a prolific opinion that lets the community help shape your ongoing plans for events. When gathering in person, your guidance of group culture should be both positive and inclusive. For instance, you can compliment players at the conclusion of the game. This directly influences others to also share positive commentary with one another so your players highlight each other's successes and address any criticism in a much more positive light.

Your goal in developing group culture is to make everyone feel awesome and positive. Encourage people to play and make them feel welcome as a part of the overarching community. *Ultimate Werewolf* can carry a competitive edge that can sometimes lead to conflict. Keeping a positive, inclusive environment helps your players keep the games as an activity between friends. Be sure to remind your community that this is just a game. Your members feeling safe and having a good time will always be the primary goal. This directly leads to the need for a strong code of conduct.

ETIQUETTE OF ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

A byproduct of successfully organizing events is that many different personalities are going to come together. This is one of the most interesting parts of social deception games as it creates diverse and dynamic gameplay. That being said, the nature of social deception games can encourage both aggressive and direct confrontation. This can cause conflict as a byproduct. Conflict is an interesting factor in *Ultimate Werewolf*. When it occurs in a positive manner it can be wonderful, creating dramatic and memorable interactions. This is a core part of the game and can be awesome! However, this can also lead to negative interactions that are not fun for players. Negative conflict is dangerous for your group. It can sour players to the game and as a result drive members away from your community. This is certainly not isolated to *Ultimate Werewolf*. Almost all organized games and events run into this issue at some point and manage to organize an acceptable level of play. To mitigate this and keep your community positive, your group should develop and enforce a guideline of ethics. Having this code of conduct can often prevent conflict before it starts. Additionally, as an organizer you will often be thrust into the middle of issues when they arise. Having an established process for dealing with unacceptable behavior helps you be both fair and consistent when conflicts happen. This can be an intimidating process, but it can be the line of perdition between success and failure of a group. Your job as an organizer is to run successful events. Keeping a standard of ethics will help mitigate issues that prevent that success.

The first thing your group should define is what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Generally, the guidelines for this exercise should focus what makes the game

fun vs not fun. Things that ruin the game for large numbers of the populace should be considered a top priority to address in your guidelines. Remember, this is both a community and a game, and your job as an organizer is to make sure that everyone is having fun. After you have a set of guidelines, you should put it in an official document to present to your players. Have the document available digitally in an area like your website or social media groups so that it can always be accessed for review. Next, make a public announcement to notify players of the new etiquette. This allows the players get familiar with the new rules and give feedback to let you address any concerns. Often, a code of conduct will be universally supported since these guidelines promote fun and expel rude behavior. When introducing group etiquette, encourage your moderators to make public commentary before they start their games in person. This allows people who have not seen the announcements to catch up on the new guidelines so they're not surprised during the game. To others who have seen the rules, this reinforces the guidelines and lets them know your group is serious about enforcing them. Do not be afraid to address questions and take some extra time in explaining the new rules. It is important that people understand the specifics and why they are being enforced at your events.

A code of conduct should be enforced with a gentle, but firm hand. You want to enforce the rules, but also avoid more accusatory or inflammatory confrontations. When mitigating a rule infringement, your first approach should be to simply stop the game and remind people of the rules of the community. In most cases, this will immediately stop the behavior. Most people do not break the rules out of disrespect. Usually, it's a simple error or the passion of the moment. You also want to ensure that your organizers and moderators adhere to these rules. If you are not following the community guidelines your members are unlikely to take them seriously. Everyone should be held accountable to the same ethical standards. Always remember that no one is perfect, but consistency in correcting unacceptable behavior will have a huge impact on preventing toxicity in your group. If you have someone that is consistently breaking the rules, it is important that you engage the player directly. Generally, it is advised that you pull the player aside and discuss the issue. Sometimes a simple discussion to let the player know their

actions aren't acceptable can mitigate the problem. Always make sure that you are even-tempered. Do not let frustration or irritation guide your interactions. If a player continues to break rules, recommend they take an event-long break. In my experience, this will resolve a majority of etiquette infractions.

In general, etiquette violations should be categorized as minor and major. Minor incidents are breaches that affect the fun of the game but are done by accident and have a minimal impact on the other players. These can be mitigated by briefly stopping the game and making a comment. Minor issues can come up often but are easy to supervise. Major violations are behaviors that are deeply disturbing or negatively impact to the community. These actions are unacceptable and should be addressed immediately because they will almost always have a significant impact on the community. As an organizer, you want to protect your community from these interactions. If something of this level occurs, it is almost always acceptable to pause a game to pull individuals or even end a game over these violations.

An example of a minor violation would be aggressive critiquing during or after a game. These comments are usually made in ignorance, but they have an impact on other players. Negative commentary like dumb, bad, and worthless are almost universally non-constructive and will not promote a fun experience for any player. No one likes being criticized, especially not in an aggressive manner. Promoting the reminder that these words are unacceptable will often prevent further escalation. *Ultimate Werewolf* can be an extremely competitive game. Competition can often lead to escalation as people get close to winning. It is important that players remember that this is just a game and that certain behaviors are unacceptable, no matter the circumstances. Minding commentary is equally important post-game. As discussed previously, it is common for lots of discussion to take place after a game ends. It is especially important as an organizer that you watch this interaction very closely. Any infringement of the rules should be addressed with a firm yet easy hand as players comment on how the game played out. These types of violations rarely will have significant impact in a

singular instance, but can eventually be detrimental to the community if allowed to aggregate.

Examples of major violations are bigoted commentary during a game. Sexist, racist, and homophobic comments will always promote a strong response from the circle and are incredibly toxic. These incidents, if left unmitigated, will almost certainly have lasting and intense impact on your community. If you hear these comments or the issue is brought to your attention, they should be investigated. Generally, I will go directly to the moderator and discuss what occurred. Make sure you have the full context of what happened if you were not present. Once you have collected all of the facts, and believe there is an infraction to be addressed, take the offending player aside and discuss. Hear their side of the incident to make sure you understand the full context. If there was some kind of misunderstanding, you can inform the player their comments were seen as offensive. This will almost always take care of the issue. If you feel as though the intent the commentary was bigoted, it is important that you tell the player this behavior is unacceptable. Additionally, if you witness these comments during gameplay it is completely reasonable to stop a game. In this case, I would stop the game to discuss the issue with the moderator to decide how best to proceed, whether it be a warning, removing a player, or even ending the game entirely. Major violations supersede the continuity of the game and are highly likely to have a significant impact on the community.

When organizing a convention event for *Ultimate Werewolf*, the level of engagement is mostly similar, but has a few notable differences. Before the event, you can post a code of conduct on social media and the convention webpage. Normally, the convention will have their own code of conduct that you can reference. In addition, you can instruct volunteers to go over the code of conduct before each circle launches. Compared to local events, it is even more important to make sure that all your players are aware of rules and that they are firmly enforced. The biggest difference is the level of escalation. Alcohol and a much more diverse set of players can often lead to fast escalations. Before the event starts, make sure you have familiarized yourself with convention security protocols, and that you and your volunteers know where and how to contact

convention security. I usually see if they have a contact number and save it in my phone. Also, it is not unreasonable to ask players to leave for the night if they are too intoxicated to play or conduct themselves in a respectful manner. If you feel that someone is acting unsafe or being aggressive, always contact convention security as the safety of players should be held at the highest standard. If you see habitual breaking of the rules, it is highly recommended that you communicate with the convention. A one day event ban can mitigate a large amount of issues from players who refuse to adhere to the code of conduct.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We are in the age of technology and virtual engagement. The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are a significant way to grow your local werewolf community and guide players to local events. Most people are highly involved on at least one form of social media, providing a direct connection for local events. You may have people that would love to engage with other players but don't know how or where. You may have a great gaming community in your local area just waiting to be formed. Using social media to organize and announce gatherings and games could be very beneficial for your gaming group. This is how I used social media to take our local group to the next level and make us the recognizable brand that we are today. This section explores the benefit and methodology taken by the Atlanta Werewolf community as we developed our social media presence.

Many options are available for how to connect with players. In this section, we discuss the value of each and how Werewolf ATL has used these to grow. The most prolifically used platform for organizing and managing groups is Facebook. The ability to have a page for the group allows you to engage people in different ways. A Facebook page is used mainly for creating public events, updates, and announcements. This is your externally facing stage, where people can discover your events. Posts made to this forum might not notify every member but will often connect people with comparable interests. Facebook groups are used for the internal communications. They are useful from an organizer's perspective as they will notify every member in the group when events or announcements are posted. This allows you to not only post things for your gaming group, but your players can also interact with one another. Our gaming group also has Instagram and Twitter accounts, and all of these are linked to one another. This helps to keep a flow and connection between platforms. Keeping your social

media accounts linked will help you during events where posting can be repetitive and time consuming.

WEREWOLF ATL (SOCIAL MEDIA)

When I was first introduced to the werewolf scene in Atlanta, it was hard to find out about events unless you knew someone already in the group. They had a small Facebook group, but any gaming event invites were created from someone's personal account, and the invitations were limited to people on that person's friend list. This presented a problem for event invites as either the person creating invites had to add everybody to their personal Facebook list or people would miss out on events. The invite could not reach everyone. We knew the group wanted to grow, and we saw a need to utilize all that social media had to offer. After some research, we found that, at that time, Facebook pages could create invites for public events, so we decided to create a page to send out invites to public, open events. Our hope was to help increase the exposure of the invites without anyone having to give up privacy by adding people to their personal page. After some discussion, I thought it would be great to give the group an official name. We settled on Werewolf ATL, something short, to the point, and catchy. It became our group's brand. We changed our name on the Facebook group, then added a Facebook page, an Instagram account, and a Twitter account with our new name. We started creating invites for events on the page so that it would be public, but we shared the invite to the Facebook group so that all the members of the group would receive a notification. The byproduct of these was an immediate increase in all event attendance. We quickly realized one of our most effective tools was a reliable communication source for events and engagement. Social media very quickly became a core part of our strategy for growth.

WEBSITE USAGE

Starting your own gaming community is no effortless task, and your to-do list will continue to expand with your group's needs. That said, the effort you put in will directly contribute to your success. Beginning with your website, it is vital to position yourself

online with a strong, professional destination. This lets potential players see you as a serious, motivated community. People use search engines in order to locate fun activities or like-minded people. Players looking for a place to game will want to make sure your community has what they are looking for. Pictures of people playing their favorite games, schedules that show coming events, and accessible contact information are all keys to making your website attractive to new players.

To start building your web presence, think of a URL that is favorable with search engines and describes what your community entails. The goal is to take advantage of basic search functions by having a URL that is both catchy and easily searched. Many web development applications contain basic search engine optimization, or “SEO” capabilities that can be used to increase frequency your site appears in searches. Some research would be useful to locate key words and phrases to add to your site’s SEO fields. Using *Ultimate Werewolf*, common gameplay terms, or even the roles themselves would allow the website to show up when those words or phrases are used during someone’s search.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

One of the strengths of Werewolf ATL is its high engagement level. Our Facebook group is vital for this process. We were having fun but wanted the opportunity to draw people in and give them a higher level of involvement. The strategy became that we would use our Facebook group to communicate with our community members. It gave everyone a place to share their love of the game—to talk about werewolf strategies, memories, and memes. Remember your group feed will be very busy. If you post about events or anything else important, be sure to mark it as an announcement and pin it to the top of the page so people can easily find it. The page could also be utilized for more official things like creating public event invites, updates, new events, projects, polls, and thanking gaming companies/communities for their support. It was a way we could post more official and public posts. The group was directly used for communicating and facilitating comments within our growing group.

Highlighting our community and the amount of fun we have was our primary strategy for growth. Thus, anytime we had a public event we made sure to capture it via video and photos. This was most often done in our monthly meetup: Second Saturday. As we posted pictures/videos of events we noticed that engagement within the group start to increase. People started commenting under pictures about the fun they had or how they would have loved to be there. Most people like a reminder of a fun *Ultimate Werewolf* moment and this makes them feel they are part of the community. Through publicly announcing events via our group, we were able to grow and harvest a sense of “this is our community, and everyone is invited and welcomed.” People started to share their favorite memories and moments. Additionally, we created inside commentary for community members. An example was starting to refer to our group as a wolf-pack. This really helped foster a sense of community and family. People felt connected and engaged and truly like a pack. Before social media and engagement, our monthly events drew an average of about 15-20 players. Once we started utilizing our Facebook page and group, we quickly grew that number to 50+ people per event. Additionally, we noticed an increase in convention attendance as people used our social media to track events we were hosting.

FACEBOOK PAGES

While our community had a great outlet for sharing and engaging, we used our Facebook page to promote and thank the different gaming companies who were supporting us. As we were growing as a community and gaining exposure, different gaming companies would offer to send us copies of their game to play or give away. They saw it as mutually beneficial to have people trying out their game. Sharing on social media was free marketing to them, and we used the game giveaways to draw people to our events. As our group became more well-known, we started getting offers to run *Ultimate Werewolf* for other conventions in Georgia. When people saw discussions of *Ultimate Werewolf* and events, they would tag and recommend us for the event. Slowly, we started adding more and more events on our calendar. The more events we ran, the more pictures, videos, and posts we shared. Along with that came

offers to run even more events. We now run *Ultimate Werewolf* for every major convention in Georgia and even a few outside of our state. We have gone from hosting monthly events to weekly events to convention events, and we continue to expand.

With an increasing number of events, we saw new opportunities to engage our players and sponsors alike. We would host play-to-win events where a group could sign up to play a game, and the winner would take the game home with them. Any excess games we had were given away at events. We took pictures and videos of the excitement of these moments to share them on our page. Make sure to thank and tag any company who supports your group. They really love and appreciate seeing the happiness that their product brings to gamers. Also during these events, we would check-in on attendees to make sure they were having fun and make sure they knew how much we appreciated having them come play with us. During these announcements, we would let players know our social media information so they could follow us to hear about future events. This little check-in is brief, but it did a lot for finding new members for our regular events.

INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, AND TWITTER

Instagram and Twitter are more limited in their use, but they still definitely play a role in organizing a gaming group. Instagram is a forum to share pictures, essentially a virtual photo album. This was another great way to engage people and show how fun events were using photographed moments. One of the main limitations of Instagram is the inability to share links in the captions of your posts. For example, if I am posting about an event we are having, I can share an image and details but not a link to the event invite itself. A way around this is to post your image and details followed by “link in bio.” When you create your Instagram profile, you will notice that you are able to change your name and details. One of the details you can edit in your profile is the website field. Anytime I post about an event, I add a link to direct people to the Facebook event invite itself, so they can see more details about the event. During other times, the bio can direct people to your group’s default page. One of the strengths of Instagram is the use of hashtags. Hashtags make sure that people who look up related hashtags are able to

view our posts. For this reason, it is important to keep your account public so anyone can view it. Through the use of relevant hashtags about gamers, gaming, events, Atlanta, and free events, I was able to reach an audience I normally wouldn't have had. We started getting gamers, streamers, gaming companies, and online personalities from all around the world following and engaging with our Instagram. For this reason, one of my favorite hashtags to use is #GamersUnite.

Twitter can be used to reach a wide audience by using relevant hashtags in 280 characters or less. This presents a slight challenge if you are trying to include as many details as you can. Twitter is a great way to engage people with fun posts. Asking your audience for quick blurbs can create a long and entertaining thread. For instance, we asked our Twitter followers which *Ultimate Werewolf* character they are feeling like. Some replied they felt fierce like a Werewolf or tired like the Old Hag. It made for a very creative thread that was both fun to read and join in. You can also gather data using polls to learn about favorite games or playing styles. There are times where messages must be 280 characters or less. Using images can help with this. When sharing things to Twitter about events, I often use screenshots of the same post I've used elsewhere and add links to the event and relevant hashtags. This ensures all the details are there but it's still tweetable. Remember, one of the main functions of Twitter is retweeting so you want to make fun, relevant, humorous posts that will make people want to retweet it with their answer. Each time you are retweeted, you are now exposed to that person's Twitter audience as well. This can create high rates of engagement, multiple threads, and a lot of exposure you would not otherwise have.

Although Werewolf ATL does not have its own Snapchat account, we do utilize the app during events. Geo filters on Snapchat are a fun way to touch base with our audience and convention goers. Geo filters are usually limited to covering the event of the area and its immediate surroundings. You will be able to set and determine this in the designing phase. Snapchat will charge you based off the square footage and days/times your filter is available. Players can snap pics or videos of their own personal memories to their snap stories or friends. Their audience can see where/what the event is if the geo filter is in use making it easier to find the event and participate.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Facebook's profile picture frames and filters are also another fun way to draw attention and buzz to your event or group. Before major events, I use our logo and name to create fun frames people can add to their Facebook profile picture. This lets people share they're participating and are excited about our event. We have created picture frames using fun things like claw marks and or the outline of a Werewolf card. It was surprising to see how many people love this feature. Often, people who cannot make it to an event will still use the filter to show their support and enthusiasm. It helps to create hype and gives the user an opportunity to talk about the event to others curious about the filter. Since frames are used for profile pictures, you can tap into the audience of the filter user. They can engage their own friends and perhaps find that they know someone who is also interested in the event or game they love. We also take new pictures using the frame/filters. People are enthusiastic about this and look forward to seeing what we come up with.

Do not be afraid to create videos to get people excited or communicate to your gaming group. People are a lot more likely to engage with posts that have pictures and videos. Seeing someone recognizable is likely to make them want to watch a video. What is this person saying? I have made videos to announce contests, tournaments, or showing people what was currently happening at an event. As I record these things, I make sure to treat my camera as another person. Imagine you are giving someone a tour or showing them what is going on. Talk them through it so they can get excited. A lot of our tournaments are available to watch in real time on Facebook live. With live tournaments, I act more as a silent bystander. This way the audience can hear what is going on at the table as if they were there watching it in person. I record what is going on from different angles and generally have a great mix of serious competitive moments and fun footage, like the moderators dancing in between rounds. I find that people love to comment on and share posts that have people they recognize. Make the videos fun, silly, or whatever your gaming group will respond to.

As your organization grows, you will have opportunities to expand your social media content. When you are engaging people and they feel like they are a part of something, it is easier to bring them together and participate. Fostering an active community will become easier if you are getting help. Once we saw all that social media could offer us, we saw that our community wanted to participate even more. We've had a lot of talented people in our community who were willing and able to create some amazing things for us. Over the years, we have been able to tap into the talents of the players around us to do things like design an app to keep track of your games during conventions, mods creating teaser trailers for their special *Ultimate Werewolf* games, artists in our community volunteer to create artwork for posters, t-shirts, and other merchandise we use. Photographers stepped up to take pictures during events and edit them to look amazing and share to our social media. Graphic designers created fun holiday alternatives to our logo. We became a community that knew how to use our talents to show what a great community we were. Being creative, open to new ideas, and letting others bring their ideas to life is a must for keeping your content fresh and relevant.

Over the years, we have come up with fun and different ways to keep our posts appealing. I have created slideshows to show off our convention season and made corny Christmas posts wishing people happy howl-days. Others have created memes about our group, we've had countdown clocks to fun events, canned food drives to help our community, and charity events to raise money for great organizations and to help members of our own community in times of need. The possibilities are endless if people feel united and have a dedicated outlet where they feel engaged and valued.

Social media, now more than ever, is a powerful tool for communication and engagement. When the pandemic hit and we made the decision to cancel in-person events, we knew that we couldn't just stand still. We had a community full of people who now looked at Werewolf ATL and gaming as a major part of their lives. We had played werewolf on Zoom before so we decided to once again use social media and Zoom to take our gaming group virtual. Now more than ever, we rely on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to keep in touch. We let the players know we are still here and having fun.

We see messages of support, love, and missing each other pouring in. Running games virtually, while having changed many aspects of the game, has also opened many doors for us. We were able to connect with players from around the world and bring together werewolf communities. One of our most notable events was a virtual event hosted with San Francisco players. The two largest *Ultimate Werewolf* groups in the world came together for a memorable night! We have also been able to use this time with peak social media usage to bring together several social deception communities for benefit events to raise money for great causes. Since we had a strong social media presence established already, our group was able to continue functioning by switching to virtual events while other communities stood still. I am very proud of that fact. It shows just what a powerful tool social media presence can be.

Social media and branding have let us create one of the biggest, strongest, and most diverse werewolf groups in the world. When you're ready to take this step, we advise asking someone to be a social media coordinator for your group and expand it into a team as your needs grow. We have added three additional members to our social media team. Each member has a different set of skills that make our content great. As a social media coordinator, being in the right place at the right time is very important, but you can't be everywhere at once. Break up your tasks and utilize your team during bigger events to make sure you are getting adequate content. When we have multiple tournaments or events, I assign a team member to each event and ask them to take pictures and videos. I also ask our mods to photograph anything funny, amazing, or interesting that unfolds. Encourage your entire staff to utilize your social media. Ask players to share pictures with your hashtags. Social media should be used by everyone for maximum results. This will also make your content more interesting. You will get a better mix from multiple people and points of view. Hosting social media contests is a great way to create content as well. We did this during Decepta Con one year and asked people to show us their favorite *Ultimate Werewolf* moment using the hashtag #DeceptaContest. We had a flood of awesome entries. Remember you are using social media to manage and organize a group, so the more participation you have, the better

the energy. If you can engage people, then your job will be much easier, and you will be much more successful in cultivating a sense of community and experiencing growth.

Some people may think that using social media may take away any sense of a personal touch or caring. One of the things you must remember when creating social media content is that at the other end is another person—a person you have probably met and played with. You are not just talking to a camera or a screen but the people. When I see someone asking about an event and saying they are a new player, I make sure to welcome them, get to know them some, and let them know I look forward to seeing them in person. When you have engaged people warmly and they recognize you, they tend to feel more comfortable in the group. *Ultimate Werewolf* can sometimes be an aggressive game by nature, so it is important to engage with your gaming group outside of games to establish a sense of welcome and warmth. Make sure that as you are engaging people online, you are also maintaining that connection with them in person as well. When I see a new player(s) at an event I go and introduce myself to them. I ask how they found us, how long they have been playing *Ultimate Werewolf*, and if they live around the area. If I have spoken to them via our social media, I let them know it was me they were talking to. Being remembered and knowing that they matter is important. Even a simple gesture like asking someone's name before you nominate them can go a long way in making people feel comfortable. After all, if you don't have members, then you don't have a group. Let people know they matter and are welcome. Sometimes, people ask me why I seemingly know everyone in our community, and I tell them because really, I do. Take the time to learn people's names, who they are, if they know others that would like to play, and general details about them. After you are eliminated in a game, you have time until the next game. Use that time to engage people, because when it comes to your gaming group, the more the merrier.

I would encourage all gaming groups, whether they are already established or are looking to start up, to utilize social media. It can open new doors for your group, gain you exposure, and keep your group organized with a central location for all relevant and related information. You can draw in new players and show the world what you are up to. Be creative and let social media work for you by establishing an audience base. Be

open-minded and try new and creative ways to keep your posts interesting and not repetitive. Werewolf ATL would not be the group it is today without social media. We look forward to any doors it might open for us in the future as we continue to grow.

THE BENEFITS OF ORGANIZATION

This section was an examination of organizing, engagement, and promotion of a positive group culture. In my experience, many times these issues are the core decider in the successful development of a community. In this section, we reviewed the struggle of finding space, showing several different models and how to engage in each of those. The biggest priority should always be organization and professional engagement as they guarantee the highest level of success. Next, we reviewed the idea of positive culture. It is always important that as an organizer, your primary focus and responsibility be maintaining the safety and enjoyment of your players. All decisions about the development of the group should promote this ideal. In addition, having a group of “leaders” creates a pool of talents that will allow you to expand your realm of influence. Additionally, it often falls on the organizer to help mitigate toxic or negative commentary and promote a strong message of inclusion as the group develops. Finally, we discussed social media and how it can be used to engage players in a fast and efficient manner. This is, arguably, one of the most important aspects of leading a community as technology has a pervasive impact in today’s world.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

While this strategy guide is full of great information on playing Ultimate Werewolf, strategies are always evolving and changing. There are many places online that contain a wealth of info on the game and playing it, including the Werewolf ATL and Werewolf Players of SF Bay Area meetup groups (both have strong presences on Facebook).

Finally, you can also see the latest in Ultimate Werewolf by visiting the beziergames.com page, where you can get copies of games and expansions, as well as a lot of great accessories for your gaming group!