

THE BOTTLENECK

AT FIRST, the rats were a blessing; they made for good hunting, but after a week the numerous vermin went from food source to menace. Finally, by the week's end, all the gangs had discovered the bottleneck where the rats came from. The Conduit in this region consisted of little but ruins and collapsed tunnels. Only one small section of the Conduit, barely a hundred yards wide, was large enough to allow further passage. Unfortunately, this section of the Conduit was teeming with the rodent vermin. The first few gangs who attempted to pass were driven back by giant rats. The mass exodus halted and rumors began to pass through the various groups. Some said that the rats were led by a crazed half-rat half-man mutant. Others spoke of traps, swarming rats and strange sounds. Soon, however, the various gang leaders decided to hold a truce-talk. At first nothing was accomplished, but once the initial posturing and insulting had passed, the talk became constructive. Too much time had already been wasted and, for all they knew, the Tyranid hordes could even now be closing in behind them. Therefore, it was decided: The gangs would unite to brave the gauntlet and smash their way through the bottleneck. Once through, however, then things would be different...

This scenario is ideal for three to four gangs, but by making the setup larger can accommodate as many as six (although that would certainly be a tight fit). Ideally, the arbitrator should have the gangs split themselves into teams of three to four gangs

and then run the scenario for each of them in succession. This means that the arbitrator should be running the scenario 1-3 times (or even more for larger campaigns). Since a gang must have its members pass through the bottleneck on the opposite side of the table in this scenario to continue in the campaign, gangs who are forced to withdraw may have to make the attempt again, perhaps joining the next wave of gangs attempting the run.

Setting Up: The Bottleneck is played on a full-size table which needs to be at least 6' by 4'. The table should be filled with as much terrain as possible. The arbitrator should select four 'booty' chits or some other suitable marker to represent rat warrens and place them across the board at ground level. In addition, a section measuring 24" should be clearly marked in the middle of one side of the longer table edges. This is the 'bottleneck' and is the only place a model may leave the table on this side. All participating gang members must set up within 6" of the opposite table edge, in any manner mutually agreeable to the participating players.

The Objective: The objective of this scenario is for a gang to have more than half of its members leave the opposite table edge via the Bottleneck. Gangs are not supposed to compete against one another in this scenario and should not purposefully attack rival gang members for it will be hard enough as it is (although firing dangerously close to 'allies' or unfortunately catching

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these allies in the radius of area-affect weapons is allowed and even encouraged!). Gangs needn't make Bottle Tests although they may Bottle by choice (unless half of their members have already made it through the Bottleneck). Gangs that chose to Bottle must make an attempt to pass through the Bottleneck again until they succeed in order to continue the campaign. The gangs move first, beginning with the gang with the highest Gang Rating and then continuing in descending order (this will remain the turn sequence) followed by the arbitrator.

Treacherous Condition: This ruined section of the Conduit is very dangerous and the following Treacherous Conditions are in affect across the table: *Sludgy Surface* (12) and *Rats* (55).

In addition, the arbitrator controls six Necromundan Giant Rats for each gang participating in this scenario. These rats should be broken up into groups of three and placed in hiding anywhere on the board the arbitrator chooses, but at least 18" from the nearest gang member). Note: if the gangs are exceptionally weak in your campaign by this point, you may wish to limit the rats to 3 or 4 per gang. Naturally, these rats are hostile, and the arbitrator uses them to attempt to destroy the gangs and prevent them from passing through the Bottleneck (see below).

Giant Rats

<u>M</u>	<u>WS</u>	<u>BS</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Ld</u>
6	4	0	3	2	1	3	1	4

Dodge: 4+ unmodified save which counts against all attacks apart from those that don't allow any armor saving throw.

Reinforcements: This section of the Conduit is swarming with rats and, therefore, each time three or more rats are put out of action, the arbitrator is entitled to roll a D6 at the start of his turn. On a roll of 1-4, three more giant rats appear from one of the warrens (the arbitrator chooses which), but they may not move this turn. Simply destroying the rats is not enough, the gangs must actively move towards the Bottleneck or lose to attrition.

Carrying Fallen Comrades: Due to the nature of this scenario, a gang member may find himself in a situation where he wishes to keep moving forward, but he doesn't want to leave a wounded comrade behind. The following rules cover such a situation:

A ganger can carry one *downed* comrade (or even a *downed* 'ally') slung over his shoulder by ending his turn in base-to-base contact with them. On the ganger's following turn, he may pick up the fallen ganger and move normally, except for the following penalties:

1. He may not run or charge farther than his base movement rate.
2. He may not shoot with anything other than a pistol.
3. All ballistic attacks are made at -1 to hit while carrying another ganger.
4. When participating in hand-to-hand combat, the ganger may not use more than one single handed weapon unless he has more than

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two arms (one arm must be used to steady the extra burden).

5. Those with only one good arm carrying a ganger may not participate in hand-to-hand combat or fire a weapon at all.
6. A fighter may choose to drop his burden at any time by simply tossing him onto the ground, but must spend the next turn as normal to pick him up again.

Ending the Game: The game ends once all of the gangs have either Bottled out or have passed through the Bottleneck. Gangs who had at least half of their members pass through the Bottleneck are considered successful in their attempt to continue and all wounded members who survive or are captured (treat as 'Full Recovery') are allowed through as well. Gangs who fail in their attempt to pass through the Bottleneck must continue to make attempts until successful or retire from the campaign.

Experience

- +2D6** Survive battle (even if wounded).
- +5** For taking one of the arbitrator's models down and out.
- +5** For carrying a fallen ganger off of the table edge and through the Bottleneck.
- +10** To the Gang Leader whose gang first succeeds in getting half its members through the Bottleneck.

Suggestions: This scenario can be very challenging for the players, but the harrowing nature is sure to keep the players thrilled.

Desperate gangs battling their way through swarms of Giants Rats, never taking their eyes off of their so called 'allies' - this is the stuff of legend. The arbitrator should encourage the players to develop a strategy and work together (at least initially) in their attempts to run this gauntlet, after all, it will make for an even richer storyline once they are beyond the Bottleneck and at one another's throats again. Imagine a ganger who encounters an opponent prone in a future battle who once carried him past a swarm of ravenous rats to freedom. Will he be able to bring himself to take advantage of the man while he's down? Or will he slink off into the shadows, pretending that the encounter never happened?