

Chase Game rules

Link to Home Base volunteers scheduling and contact details document [link removed]

Link to document of instructions for Home Base volunteers [link removed]

Link to Home Base schedule spreadsheet [link removed]

Link to document of Instructions for Amrit & [Climbing Programmer] [link removed]

Link to Materials for Home Base Only [link removed]

Link to Amrit's travel and expenses spreadsheet [link removed]

Link to [Climbing Programmer]'s travel and expenses spreadsheet [link removed]

Basic premise

This is a game for two players, playable either in real life, or as a text-based role-playing game. The players are the Runner and the Seeker; the Runner's goal is not to be caught, the Seeker's is to catch them. The game is played in a country-sized area (currently Great Britain), and the Runner must at all times carry a GPS tracker to which the Seeker has access. There will also be a third party involved, as a neutral Home Base (whose functions will be carried out by the Games Master – henceforth GM – in the role-play version).

These rules will primarily be focussed on the real-life version of the game. A discussion of how the game is adapted for role play is below.

Rules

Note that of course, a lot of the exact details are rather arbitrary, and definitely open to changing either during playtesting, or simply for, e.g., a longer or shorter, or cheaper or more expensive, game.

During gameplay, it is the current Home Base's job to adjudicate on any unclear point in the rules.

The tracker

The GPS tracker works thus: it will report the Runner's location at fixed intervals to a server by means of the mobile telephone network, to which the Home Base and the Seeker have access via the internet. The tracker also has a function of being able to send and receive short text-only messages via satellite when outside mobile coverage, as well as being able to call the emergency

services. (This is a realistic device, such things are available, but it is permissible to achieve these functions by combining different devices.)

- When the Seeker does not have internet access, they may request the Runner's location, as reported to last, from the Home Base, at any time.

The frequency of location reports is a matter to be decided through playtests, I think, but for the first go I see no harm in it being every few minutes.

Period and area of play

The game will run for about two and a half days, starting at 9am on, e.g., Saturday, and ending at 6pm on Monday. The Runner gets a 4-hour headstart, at which point the Seeker may leave.

The play area shall be Great Britain and its outlying smaller islands that are formally a part of England, Wales, or Scotland. (So yes, Hebrides, Isle of Wight, Shetland and Orkney, but not Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands.)

Equipment, resources, and preparation

Each player will begin with the same equipment and resources:

- Money. For now, let's say £300.
- A rucksack
- Their personal items – clothes, toiletries, entertainment. Clothing should be practical and outdoorsy!
- A smartphone (and portable charger with several days' charge)
- A walker's GPS device with full GB Explorer-level mapping loaded onto it.
- (Alternatively or additionally, the smartphone to be loaded with the OS Maps app and a subscription to OS Maps, which allows access to maps of the whole of the UK, and downloading maps for offline use)
- The GPS tracker, functionality described above.
- Technically only the Runner would need a tracker, but the Seeker needs to receive information outside phone coverage areas, plus it's a safety precaution for travelling alone in the wilderness. Only the Home Base would be able to access the Seeker's tracker.
- A one-person tent, lightweight emergency food, sleeping bag and mat, and so on.
- General other camping stuff ideally sufficient for wild-camping, like penknife, headtorch, a stove and gas.
- Emergency things like a small first aid kit, maybe one of those emergency sleep in a bag outside packet things
- A railcard, if both players have one.
- (Optional, but for both players or none: a car, which has to start at the starting point, unless as part of a player's preparations it has been moved, in which case the cost of that must come out of the player's budget.

All transport and accommodation costs must come out of the budget. Food need not.

- An exception: transport and accommodation costs may be spent outside the budget, but only where this extra money serves only to allow the player to do something they could absolutely certainly have done anyway, just in greater luxury. This is up to the discretion of the Home Base, and each such case must be checked in advance.
 - For example, staying in a better room in a hotel would be okay, or in a hotel when there is a campsite just down the road that also has availability and you have a tent with you, or getting, say, a first-class train ticket for the same train.
 - You couldn't argue that a taxi is a luxury over a bus because it can go anywhere and isn't limited to the timetable.

Players may additionally spend some of their budget before the trip begins, on preparations. All such expenditures must be declared to the Home Base, of course.

- For example, a player could choose to buy some travel tickets in advance, or to spend the petrol (and public transport to return them) to transport their car to elsewhere in the country.

Players may choose to bring extra items on the trip. They must report such items to the Home Base, who must decide whether to allow or disallow them, at their discretion and based on these factors:

- Items are allowed that merely increase the player's comfort to no other advantage.
- Items are allowed that represent only a small ingenuity on the part of the player, rather than a major unfair advantage, as long as the other player could reasonably have brought them, at small or zero cost, if they had thought of it. For example, a physical compass, or a pair of binoculars if it is known that the other player owns one, or a paper map.
- Particularly expensive items are not allowed if they grant an advantage, unless their cost is taken out of the budget, regardless of whether the player actually had to buy them, again unless it is known that the other player also owns one already.

Movement

- The players may move using any means they like, within the constraints of their budget, excepting that they should not do anything illegal.
- So, as a non-exhaustive list, players can walk, drive or be driven, cycle, hire a car, or take buses, trains, trams, ferries, taxis, boats or aeroplanes.
- They thus should not travel over open country away from public rights of way or Access Land when in England and Wales. They should not trespass or unduly intrude on others' privacy.
 - Trespassing (which is illegal, but only under civil law, not generally a criminal offence) is discouraged, but a short stint of trespass will not in itself be grounds for disqualification.
- Calling in favours from friends is allowed, such as for lifts or accommodation. However, costs to friends for their transport expenses *must* either be paid in full (e.g. their petrol costs for a lift or so on), or must be deducted from the budget as if they were paid, and, for getting lifts, *cannot be arranged before the start of the play period*.

Victory conditions

The Seeker wins if they manage to catch the Runner before play ends. To “catch” the Runner, the Seeker must BOTH:

- Be able to see the Runner.
- Be within 100m of them.
- Have no significant barriers between them that could not easily, safely and legally be passed quickly on foot
 - E.g. it doesn't count if one party is on a moving bus and the other on the pavement, or one party on a bridge and the other under it.

If the Runner calls out to or otherwise contacts the Seeker when this close by and clearly knows where exactly the Seeker is, the Seeker, upon hearing the call, must respond, stop moving, exit from any obstructions or hiding places, and has lost the game.

The Runner wins if the Seeker does not find them before play ends.

Rules for during play

Both players must constantly report how they are travelling, where they are staying, and their intended short-term destinations to the Home Base. For example, they must report:

- Every time they begin travelling by a new mode of transport, get on a new bus or train etc., including their intended immediate destination.
- When they stop for the night
- Every time they spend money out of the accommodation & transport budget, including the information of how much.

Players may not travel between the hours of 10pm and 8am. Exceptions to this are that:

- Players may move around during these hours in the vicinity of the place where they are staying for the purpose of using services and so on – for example to go to a shop to buy food. However they should always depart in the morning (after 8am) from precisely the point where they stayed the night, which should also be where they ended play (before 10pm)
- Players must always make a reasonable and significant effort to find somewhere to stay the night by 10pm, such that the only way that they could end up not having somewhere to stay is if something goes wrong, e.g. if they miss a train or bus that they reasonably thought they'd be able to catch, if there's a transport delay, if a hostel they thought had spaces actually doesn't.
 - If something like this does go wrong, then they are permitted to move after 10pm to find somewhere else close by to stay – this should be one of the closest handful of possible places. This movement must be reasonable, and in good faith not intended to transport them further in the direction of their goals. Furthermore, any such delay in finding a place to stay will be penalised with an identical delay after 8am in how soon they can depart in the morning.

- Players may travel overnight if on a single bus or train that is clearly an overnight service:
 - Such a service must depart before midnight and not arrive until after 4am, and must take at least five hours.
 - If it arrives before 8am you may not leave the area around its destination station (say 200m) until 8am. If it leaves after 10pm you must arrive at its departure stop by 10pm and not leave the area (200m radius) until you get on it.
 - If the Runner does this, they must report to the Home Base the exact overnight service that they intend to get on, and where and when they intend to get off, by 10pm, and this information must be passed to the Seeker. (Services running on the last night of play are subject to the rules for the end of play below.)
 - If such a plan goes wrong at any point, e.g. a cancellation or missed service, the player may choose to:
 - stay where they are or as nearby as is reasonably practical for the rest of the night.
 - Continue their journey on other services during the night, but only in order to reach their original intended destination by a logical and sensible route. They may not do any other kind of travelling until after 8am.

If the Seeker enters areas of private property that are not publicly accessible, for example by having the permission of the owner, or by paying for a hotel room or hostel bed, they must exit into publicly accessible areas at least once per half-hour, except between 8pm and 9am.

- Similarly players who lock themselves into any closed area or building must exit just as frequently during the same hours
- They should similarly occasionally exit closed-off areas of railway stations if waiting between trains, wherever possible.

Players may not move around on foot outside built-up areas during the hours of darkness except on roads accessible to private cars, and even then, only for short distances (e.g. to get from a public transport stop to a nearby hostel, not to walk 3 miles to the next village).

If the Runner takes a scheduled flight requiring electronic equipment to be switched off, they must report to the Home Base when they are about to switch off their equipment, telling them their flight's expected arrival time and destination. In this special case, the Seeker should be told this non-GPS information, as immediately as possible.

- Similarly, the Runner should only take underground railways if they report their intended route and destination to the Home Base to be passed on, as GPS will not have signal underground. Underground railways may be used only on logical routes between two locations, at the end of which the Runner must exit above ground for long enough for a GPS fix before getting back on the trains.
- The Runner should also avoid going underground generally, excepting tunnels on overground rail and road routes.

Special conditions for towards the end of play

The Runner may not travel by any means other than on foot during the last hour of play, and may not move during the last 10 minutes.

The Runner may not (ever) travel by any scheduled public transport if there will be no further scheduled services to that destination (or combinations of services that do not require the use of public transport of a fundamentally more expensive kind) from their current location within the period of play, which could reasonably be booked and got onto at least half an hour from the Runner's moment of departure, and which will arrive at their destination at least an hour from the end of play.

- e.g. you can't take the last bus that will get to your intended destination before the end of the game period, or a bus if the last such bus is within half an hour, unless there is a combination of bus changes the Seeker could do, leaving in at least half an hour, that would still get them to your intended destination from where you are now, before an hour before play ends. As you are on a bus, it isn't acceptable if they'd have to get a train, but if you were on a train, a bus would be okay.
- Proving that such an option exists to the Home Base is the Runner's responsibility.
- Don't get a plane unless you think that, if the Seeker arrived at the airport half an hour after your flight *leaves*, they could book and get on a service that would get to your destination at least an hour before the end of play, without travelling in the forbidden hours of 10pm-8am. (Or get to the same place on buses or trains.)

Similarly, the Runner may not travel by non-scheduled transport in the last three hours if such transport is very scarce

- e.g.. don't take the only taxi within 60 miles with two hours to go, or don't hire someone to transport you in a boat with only two hours to go unless there are a lot of boats around that can be so hired.

The Runner must spend the last 2 hours of play entirely in publicly accessible, unlocked, open areas, except for periods of ten minutes or less (basically, toilet or buying food breaks if necessary), which may not happen in the final ten minutes. An exception is that you may stay in your tent if it is raining or the weather is otherwise adverse, but the Seeker must in that case know what your tent looks like, and if they stand by the tent knowing you're in there, the game's up.

Optional alterations

The Home Base can be allowed, by prior agreement of all participants, to look up things for the players, so long as the same services are offered to both.

Each of the two players could have their own Contact who looks things up for them, directs them, has access to the same information as them, in addition to the Home Base existing.

There could be more than one Seeker and/or more than one Runner, so long as they travel together. In this case the kit could be shared when appropriate and the budget multiplied as necessary.

The Role-Play version

For the role-play version of the game, there is a Games Master (henceforth GM), who runs the world as well as taking on the usual functions of Home Base. The game takes place in real-time.

The players play the game for a few days by sitting at home and telling the GM what they do. For example:

- “I get this train”
- “I walk in this direction across open country”
- “I call this taxi company”
- “I stay at this hostel”.

The GM regularly reports the Runner's “position” to the Seeker.

The players would, I imagine, spend a good amount of time on the game during the period of play, probably in total an hour or two per day, but otherwise could get on with their lives, during time when their character is just sitting on a plane or walking or whatever.

The players have to defend to the GM that their actions are possible, and if the GM thinks something might not work they must be realistic about probabilities. The mechanic for this is that a GM must, whenever chance is involved, think up their best estimates of reasonable possibilities and probabilities, and tell the player before they make the relevant choice what the chances are. The chance can then be resolved by rolling dice, probably percentage dice. For example:

- “No, you can't do that, that train doesn't run on Wednesdays”
- “There's, I'd guess, a 10% chance of that connection being too tight for you to catch, so if you go ahead with it I'll roll a d%, and on a 0–9 you'll miss it.”

To simulate players being out of contact when they're in remote areas, a choice must be made. The players may either play as if each of them has a Contact at home looking up things for them – in which case they can look up whatever they want their characters to know – or the players must realistically limit themselves to resources they would have at hand – not using internet unless they would have it.

Although the game is real-time, the players can certainly declare their action to the GM in advance, although if the GM determines that anything goes wrong with their planning, then that will, of course, need to be dealt with. In fact, since the Runner's actions can't depend on the Seeker's at all (as the Runner doesn't know the Seeker's location), the Runner could in principle determine their plan days ahead. At the GM's discretion, fairly applied, some leeway could also be allowed to say “I actually did that twenty minutes ago, sorry, I was in a lecture”.

Thoughts on gameplay

Both players have the job of achieving their target while not going outside their resources. For the Runner, the challenge is to try to guess where the Seeker might be by now, and try yourself to be unpredictable, or to do the opposite of what you think the Seeker would expect. The Seeker, the job is to try, from the GPS trace, to decide what you think the Runner is going to do next – are they staying put, so it's worth you going to them now, or are they only going to move off soon anyway? Is there any point getting on a plane to Scotland if the Seeker just did, or do you think they're just doing that to get you to waste your resources, and they're going to get another one to Wales in a few hours?

To deal with

Movement but come back to same point during off period