Composite Skill Challenge System, Version 1.2
by Iron Sky

I've been using Stalker0's Obsidian Skill Challenge system since I discovered it a year or more ago. I've enjoyed it, but I wanted the PCs results to have an impact on future rounds - if they do well early on, it makes it easier later. If they do poorly early on, they'll have to work harder later. I also wanted each roll to be more than pass/fail so individual check results also matter.

I borrowed Stalker0's base DCs. Its assumed the PCs can use any skill that seems justifiable according to the challenge at hand. Each PC rolls once per round and compares their result to the **Individual Skill Roll** table to see what effect their roll has on the group's success that round and what effect it will have on their roll next round.

Once everyone has rolled, the group will have a group total that they compare to the **Round Totals** table that earns them Victory Points and applies cumulative bonuses or penalties to everyone's checks in future rounds. At the end of the set number of rounds, the PCs compare their Victory Point total to the **Victory Point Totals** table that will determine the end result of the skill challenge - how well they succeeded at the objective.

I've run 3 of these in the L4W game I'm running at the moment, tweaking the system a bit as I go. It seems to work well for PbP. If you want to see how they worked in play they are here, here, and here.

I have yet to try one in a RL game, but if/when I do, I'll let you know how it went.

Bare-bones Example
A group of 5 level 1 PCs enter a skill challenge.

Rounds: 3

Individuals' Skill Rolls(1st level)
12-: **0 points**, -2 on next round's skill check
13-17: **1 point**, -1 on next round's skill check
18-22: **2 points**, +1 on next round's skill check
23+: **3 points**, +2 on next round's skill check
Natural 1: **-1 point**, lose a healing surge
Natural 20: **+1 point**, gain a healing surge/AP/treasure parcel as appropriate

Round Totals(5 PCs)
0-4 points: **0 Victory Points** and **Disaster**: -2 cumulative penalty to all future skill checks
5-9 points: **1 Victory Points** and **Complication**: -1 cumulative penalty to all future skill checks
10-14 points: **2 Victory Points** and **Advantage**: +1 cumulative bonus to all future skill checks
15+ points: **3 Victory Points** and **Miracle**: +2 cumulative bonus to all future skill checks

Final Victory Points(3 Rounds)
0-2 total points: **Disaster**, appropriate consequences, 250xp
3-5 total points: **Complication**, appropriate result and consequence, 375xp
6-8 total points: **Advantage**, appropriate result and benefit, 375xp

9+ total points: **Miracle**, appropriate benefits, 500xp

System Breakdown

Base DC is taken from Stalker0's Obsidian system.

Individuals' Skill DCs
Base DC -6 or less: **0 points**, -2 to next round's skill check
Base DC -5 to -1: **1 point**, -1 to next round's skill check
Base DC +0 to +4: **2 points**, +1 to next round's skill check
Base DC +5 or more: **3 points**, +2 to next round's skill check
Natural 1: **-1 points**, lose a healing surge
Natural 20: **+1 point**, gain a healing surge/AP/treasure parcel as appropriate

Each PC rolls and the points are totaled for the group to get the final results for the round, based on the # of PCs in the group represented by **P**.

Group Point Totals*Less than P*: **0 Victory Points** and **Disaster**, *-2 cumulative penalty to all PCs skill checks*
P* to *2P-1: **1 Victory Points** and **Disadvantage**, *-1 cumulative penalty to all PCs skill checks*
2P* to *3P-1: **2 Victory Points** and **Advantage**, *+1 cumulative penalty to all PCs skill checks*
3P+: **3 Victory Points** and **Miracle**, *+2 cumulative penalty to all PCs skill checks*

At the end of the number of rounds set by the DM(3 is a good baseline) the PCs compare their Victory Point total to the Victory Point chart, based on the number of rounds represented by **R**. Round down.

Victory Point Totals
Less than R: **Disaster**, the PCs fail spectacularly at whatever they were doing. Heap woe upon them.
R* to *2R-1: **Disadvantage**, the PCs succeed at the challenge, but barely and are not in a desirable situation at the end.
2R* to *3R-1: **Advantage**, the PCs succeed at the challenge, leaving them in an advantageous position
3R+: **Miracle**, the PCs succeed at the challenge in an epic fashion, doing better than anyone could have thought possible.

Individual Actions

Repeating Skills
Repeating a skill two or more rounds in a row results in a cumulative -2 penalty to the skill roll.

Action Points
Action Points may be spent to roll an additional skill roll for the round. It must be different from the skill already used.

Aid Another
PCs may take -3 on a roll to gran an ally a reroll this round.

Heroic Effort

A PC may decide to expend a healing surge to gain +3 to a check before it is rolled or to apply +1 to a check after it is rolled or both for two surges.

Experience Rewards
The base experience value successful completion of a Composite Skill Challenge is equal to a minion of the challenge's level per PC that participated per round of the challenge (**Minion XP** x **# PCs** x **# rounds**).

Modifying the Challenges

DMs are encouraged to add additional bonuses/penalties to results.

For example, if the group gets the **Disaster** result during a round, PCs might have to make an additional skill next round that doesn't apply to the challenge, they might have a combat interrupt the challenge, they might lose something valuable, etc. A **Miracle** result might let them find treasure, an NPC ally that grants them a reroll, grant bonuses to certain skills, etc.

Also, you might have required roles each round.
Scout: Make two rolls(say, Stealth and Perception), apply one to the challenge, the other determines how close the enemy is to finding the group.
Map-maker: If no one gets at least a 2 Point Dungeoneering/Nature/Arcana/History check this round (as appropriate to the challenge), add 1 round to the challenge and -2 penalty to the group's rolls in future rounds.
Required Checks: Each player must make a required check(Stealth to avoid the enemy, Endurance to resist the cold/heat, etc). Depending on the result, their roll for the round has a bonus or penalty.

Long term challenges
The skill challenge might be traveling across a nation, fighting a campaign, talking a council of nobles into joining a cause, fleeing from a merciless band of hunters, etc.

In these cases, you might have one round of the skill challenge a week, one at each noble's court the group arrives at, in between combats, etc. In these situations, it could be useful to come up with non-skill challenge results for the group's round results (I.E. face two combats instead of one on **Disadvantage**, avoid the enemy entirely until the next city on **Advantage**, etc).

In Combat
I haven't tried it yet, but it could be theoretically possible to have one of these challenges occur during combat. If that is the case, it's recommended that skill checks for the challenge by Minor Actions, to allow the skill challenge to mesh with the combat more smoothly.

Tables

Individual Skill Roll Results

Level	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
1	12-	13-17	18-22	23+
2-3	13-	14-18	19-23	24+
4-5	14-	15-19	20-24	25+
6-7	15-	16-20	21-25	26+
8-9	16-	17-21	22-26	27+
10-11	17-	18-22	23-27	28+
12-13	18-	19-23	24-28	29+
14-15	19-	20-24	25-29	30+
16-17	20-	21-25	26-30	31+
18-19	21-	22-26	27-31	32+
20	22-	23-27	28-32	33+
21	23-	24-28	29-33	34+
22-23	24-	25-29	30-34	35+
24-25	25-	26-30	31-35	36+
26-27	26-	27-31	32-36	37+
28-29	27-	28-32	33-37	38+
30	28-	29-33	34-38	39+

Group Round Totals

PCs	Disaster	Disadvantage	Advantage	Miracle
1	0	1	2	3+
2	0-1	2-3	4-5	6+
3	0-2	3-5	6-8	9+
4	0-3	4-7	8-11	12+
5	0-4	5-9	10-14	15+
6	0-5	6-11	12-17	18+
7	0-6	7-13	14-20	21+

Final Victory Point Totals

PCs	Disaster	Disadvantage	Advantage	Miracle
1	0	1	2	3
2	0-1	2-3	4-5	6
3	0-2	3-5	6-8	9
4	0-3	4-7	8-11	12
5	0-4	5-9	10-14	15
6	0-5	6-11	12-17	18
7	0-6	7-13	14-20	21

XP totals

Rounds	Multiplier
1	x1
2	x2
3	x3
4	x4
5	x5
6	x6
7	x7
Disaster	-1
Miracle	+1