



Year of the Open Road



**PATHFINDER
SOCIETY**

TARNBREAKER'S TRAIL

By Steven Hammond

PATHFINDER SOCIETY

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How to Play

Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-10: Tarnbreaker's Trail is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- through 4th-level characters (Tier 1-4; Subtiers 1-2 and 3-4). As a scenario, this adventure is designed to take about 4 hours to play. It is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Pathfinder Society campaign, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at PathfinderSociety.club.

GM Resources

Tarnbreaker's Trail makes use of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*. This adventure assumes the GM has access to these sourcebooks. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at paizo.com/prd, and the creature stat blocks from the Bestiaries are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

Scenario Tags

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. For more information on scenario tags, see the *Pathfinder Society Guide to Play* at <http://www.organizedplayfoundation.org/paizo/guides/>. This scenario has the repeatable tag.



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GM SYNOPSIS

This adventure includes numerous skill challenges as the PCs participate in an overland racing competition with various events. Combat is infrequent and many of the encounters encourage frequent roleplay opportunities with numerous NPCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, the Ulfen known as Balgird Bluetongue set out from Kalsgard, traveling deep into the forbidding tundra and muskeg of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings in search of fortune, honor, and the head of a linnorm. For two months, Balgird braved the elements, crossing craggy glaciers, defending himself against monstrous trolls, fording frozen rivers, and foraging for the barest meals until he found, tracked, and slew a mighty tarn linnorm and returned with its twin heads in tow.

Though Bluetongue himself was slain in Irrisen protecting the Djurstor Confederacy against Baba Yaga in 3313 AR, his body was not properly buried until it was recovered by Ulfen raiders two centuries later. Laid to rest in Kalsgard, the city held an overland race to commemorate the deeds of their fallen hero; and so, the Balgirdtrek was born.

The race has been held annually, drawing brave teams from Ulfen communities across the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. To win the Balgirdtrek is particularly noteworthy, but simply completing the race is considered a tremendous accomplishment. Traditionally, the race has begun in Icemark at Frostgarten, the site where Balgird allegedly spotted the tarn linnorm, heading west over the rough terrain and ending in Kalsgard. The journey from “untamed” lands back to civilization has left a sour taste in the mouths of Varki people, who make their homes in Icemark and feel that this race has fed into some Ulfen’s dismissal of Varki as “less civilized.”

Times have begun to change however, especially in light of the deeds of Nankou, a Varki ranger who slew his own linnorm and claimed the title of Linnorm King. In recognition of this act helping to slowly unite Varki and Ulfen lands, the Balgirdtrek is being held in reverse this year, beginning in Kalsgard and ending in Frostgarten. Nankou has also hand-picked a team of Varki to compete in the race.

The opening of the event has excited members of the Pathfinder Society as well. Venture-Captain Bjersig Torrsten has secured the approval of the race’s organizers and called for a hardy group of Pathfinders to compete as a team in the event. The opportunity to improve the reputation and boost awareness of the Pathfinder Society in the Saga Lands is a rare one, as is the ability to document the race

WHERE ON GOLARION?

Tarnbreaker's Trail takes place in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and stretches from Kalsgard to central Icemark. More information on the region can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lands of the Linnorm Kings*, available in hobby and game stores, and online at paizo.com.



from the perspective of an active participant. Concerned that Society “outsiders” who do not understand the solemnity and history behind the Balgirdtrek will tarnish their timeless tradition, some of the Ulfen competitors prefer the Pathfinders stay out of the running.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs gather in the town of Iceferry at the behest of Venture-Captain Bjersig Torrsten, who informs them that they have been assembled to compete in an historic overland race known as the Balgirdtrek. He explains that the event, traditionally exclusive to Ulfen participants, has recently been opened to a broader array of competitors, providing the Pathfinder Society a unique opportunity to learn more about the event as well as gain more information about Ulfen and Varki culture. Such knowledge has become both more available and important as the two peoples draw closer toward a new era of peace and cooperation between them. Torrsten provides the PCs with background on the event, its history, and their competitors, as well as securing them transport by sleigh with the other teams, taking them across the river to Kalsgard. He instructs them to be courteous and honorable during the race, as the reputation of the Pathfinder Society is carried with them.

On the sleighs to the event, the PCs meet the other teams including a group of Varki hand-picked by Nankou, the

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Varki Linnorm King, and a less-than-friendly group of Ulfen who see the inclusion of the Pathfinder Society as a sign of the decline of their proud tradition. While most of the racers prod or make light jokes about the PCs' inexperience, these Ulfen bad actors see the PCs' presence as a threat and aim to act on it in a distinctly dangerous fashion.

Once in Kalsgard, the PCs have time to gather supplies and intelligence on their competition before the race

begins. During this time, the various vendors, officials, and other competitors work to gather similar intel on the PCs, gauging their knowledge of the Saga Lands, ability to survive in frigid conditions, and their racing ability. The PCs are also subjected to scrutiny and minor ridicule from the bad actors of the competition before beginning their long trek across the tundra.

Over the course of the race the PCs encounter trials at each of the checkpoints as they race to stay ahead of the other teams. The four trials serve to test the PCs with feats of strength, dexterity, and guile but provide the PCs space to interact with the other competitors and officials. At some of these checkpoints the PCs find their tasks made more difficult due to sabotage on the part of the bad actors. As they move ahead, the PCs attempt to befriend or expose the troublemakers.

Along the way, the PCs also learn of a dangerous beast stalking and attacking the race participants. The creature attacks some of the teams, taking them out of the race, and tends to strike quickly before disappearing into the landscape. None of the racers are safe from the beast and fear of it spreads quickly among the officials and competitors.

Nearing the end of the race, the PCs come into direct conflict with the beast, and depending on their actions up to this point, may also be forced to confront the bad actors as they struggle to reach the finish line in Frostgarten.

RUNNING THIS SCENARIO

This scenario is designed to allow replayability. Variable elements include the weather during each of the four days of the race, which trial appears at each checkpoint, and the previous year's winning team. When preparing this scenario, you can choose each of these elements or determine them randomly using the tables in each section. Alternatively, you could determine the elements of the scenario on the fly by rolling for each during play.

The scenario contains four natural stopping places for possible NPC encounters and interactions and a fifth combat encounter with the beast as well as overland travel. If playing this in a four-hour slot, leave time for introductions and the conclusion, aiming for 30 minutes for each encounter.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs arrive at the lodge in Iceferry where they are met by Venture Captain Bjersig Torrsen, his friendly dog Mahki, and the gnomish Pathfinder Lirall.

Bjersig Torrsen greets the PCs, offering them a place by the fire as he removes his thick gloves. Lirall sits beside Bjersig as Mahki turns happily through the group before



BJERSIG TORRSEN

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settling in front of the hearth, ears still perked and tail wagging across the rug.

Bjersig is a self-assured half-orc, dressed in a thick wool tunic, hide pants and furred boots. He speaks occasionally but primarily signs, punctuating some words with particular expression in his face and emphasis with his hands. Lirall, the gnome, steps in to interpret the signs for the PCs. Bjersig has worked exhaustively to develop a variant of Pathfinder sign language that communicates more information than the basic commands of the existing system and has incorporated a number of new signs, as well as a distinct grammatical structure and syntax borrowed from a lingua franca spoken between some early Varki and Ulfen traders, creating a sort of pidgin. Bjersig prefers this method of communication and has helped some of his neighbors learn the particulars of it, but Lirall remains on hand for those unfamiliar with it.

As the PCs find their seats around the fire, read the following aloud:

Venture-Captain Bjersig Torrsen sits upright in his chair, waiting until he is certain he has the attention of everyone in attendance. "Thank you all for coming," he signs, his words interpreted as necessary through Lirall, the gnome sitting beside him. "I expect your travel to Iceferry was safe, if a bit cold. I am very excited to have you all here for the upcoming event. I expect that you will find it an excellent test of your capabilities, and not one many Pathfinders will be able to boast of."

Bjersig draws a small bundle of scrolls and a journal from his bag and lays them on the table, allowing the contents to unfurl and spread across the tabletop. "This handful of documents is all the information the Society has collected on the Balgirdtrek up to this point. I doubt it's something you've heard of unless you're from the area. It is an overland race some 200 miles long, from Frostgarten in Icemark to Kalsgard, just over the river. It is performed each year, honoring the deeds of Balgird Bluetongue when he slew a tarn linnorm centuries ago, but this year's race promises to be quite unique."

"As you may know, the Varki have been the source of quite the commotion among the Ulfen lately, largely in positive ways. Their ranger, Nankou, slew a linnorm some time ago and has been officially recognized as a linnorm king. A new linnorm king is always newsworthy, but a Varki linnorm king is unprecedented. In recognition of Nankou and his diplomatic efforts between the Ulfen and Varki peoples, the officials have decided that the Balgirdtrek will be held in reverse this year. The Varki have always bristled a bit at some of the ideas inherent in the Balgirdtrek. Ulfen have often discussed it as a race from the 'savage wilderness' back into the arms of civilization, not something that has promoted constructive

relationships between the two. It's good that the officials seem to have broadened their horizons."

"What's more, there are two new teams joining the race this year. First, Nankou has hand-picked a group of Varki to compete. This is the first time Varki have competed in the race and from what I've heard, the Ulfen participants are excited to see what they bring to the competition. If you haven't guessed by now, you all are the second new team. I've managed to secure your entry with the approval of the race officials. You can thank me later." Bjersig smiles broadly.

He stands and places a sealed envelope and a small purse on the table. "There you'll find your entry letter accompanied by my letter of introduction for you. The purse contains a few coins to help you purchase some gear. Once the race is over, you'll also be compensated by the Society for your efforts. Expect a hefty bonus if you actually manage to win! There is a sleigh carrying the other teams to the starting area. It will stop here in Iceferry to pick you up in an hour, don't be late. To be allowed to compete is a great honor, so please remember that you represent the best qualities of the Pathfinder Society at all times. Take notes, learn whatever you can from the other teams. The Balgirdtrek is supposed to be a friendly competition after all. If you have any questions, make them quick, otherwise good luck to you all. I don't expect you to win, but I hope you'll at least make a good show of it."

At this point, the PCs are welcome to ask any questions they have for Bjersig, keeping in mind that staying too long could mean they miss the sleighs coming to transport them to the gathering area for the race.

If the PCs have questions for Bjersig about the Balgirdtrek and their role in the competition, he answers to the best of his knowledge, trying to keep his answers brief and reminding the PCs of their appointment across town. Below are Bjersig's answers to some of the more likely questions:

Are the other teams hostile? "The Balgirdtrek is competitive, but this is a race, not a blood sport. It isn't unusual for some of the teams to rib one another and there is some history of minor brawls between rivals, but that is not activity befitting the Society's first team and I expect you to remain above such behavior. Evidently there are some that objected to our entrance into the race this year, though I'm not sure if there is any reason for it beyond misplaced pride."

What sort of trials are we likely to encounter? "The trials vary from year to year, but there are some favorites that return frequently. You'll have to cross the Whitegold River about halfway through the race. That task in and of itself has long been used as one of the trials. In general, the trials will test your strength, wits or will in some way related to the journey of Balgird.

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The only advice I can offer from what I know is that the officials are open to creative solutions so long as they do not put anyone in undue danger.”

What dangers might we face on the trail?

“The weather will be the greatest foe you should face along the way. In winter, temperatures can change quickly, and storms are not infrequent occurrences. Aside from that, the trail should be clear of any dangerous wildlife. Be wary nonetheless. With the trail cut to accommodate the new route, there may be a few more animals on the trek than usual.”

Is there a prize for the winner?

“The winner gains the honor of having competed and bested their opponents, a place at the head of the post-trek feast table, and a token from the officials. The token is particularly special. Most winners redeem their token with their king in place of land taxes for the year, but it entitles the winner to a number of things such as preferential rooms at inns across the Saga Lands and preferential treatment at Ulfen trading posts. It would be a nice thing for a Pathfinder agent to have, but our real goal here is to observe and document the Balgirdtrek.”

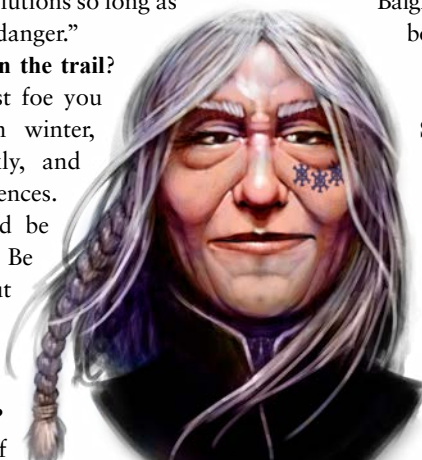
What are the rules of the Balgirdtrek? “You must complete the course within four days. If you’re any later than that, the officials will send out parties to retrieve you and you’ll be officially disqualified. Please do your best to avoid getting lost out there. Don’t do anything to injure your competitors, though this should of course go without saying. Don’t try to bypass any of the checkpoints, they are there not only for the trials, but to make sure that you and your team are well enough to continue on.

You’re welcome to advance as far as you can in a day, but the officials don’t want anyone traveling after dark. If you find yourself at a checkpoint near sunset, they may ask you to stay. I’d heed their advice. It’s easy enough for some of the more dangerous things that stalk the tundra to slip by the rangers patrolling the trails under the cover of darkness.”

RECALL KNOWLEDGE (SOCIETY OR ULFEN LORE)

A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Recall Knowledge Society or Lore Ulfen check (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4) might know more about the Balgirdtrek and its history. Checks such as these should be made in secret.

Critical Success: The PC recalls the name and deeds of two of the previous year’s competing teams (see **Table 1: Balgirdtrek Winners** on page 7) as well as significant



FAERGIM AXEBINDER

details of the race’s history and its relation to its namesake, Balgird Bluetongue, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus while interacting with members of those teams, which typically will come up when the PCs take the checkpoint trials (page 11).

Success: The PC recalls the name of one of the returning teams from the previous year’s competition, including their characteristics and racing style.

Failure: The PC can recall nothing about the race or its history.

Critical Failure: The PC remembers the name of one of the returning teams but misremembers how they placed in the previous year, taking a –2 circumstance penalty to interactions with members of that team.

GM Instructions: Give the PCs an opportunity to prepare for the race however they see fit, slot

their boons for the adventure if they have not already done so, and remind them that they each have 1 Hero Point available. If any of the PCs have the boon Legacy of the Gorget from *Pathfinder Society Quest #3: Grehunde’s Gorget*, they are encouraged to slot this boon, as it has a special benefit in this adventure.

SLEIGH RIDE

Once the PCs have asked Bjersig any questions they have they can head to the sleighs and meet up with the other competitors. There are five other teams competing in the Balgirdtrek. These teams are split between two sleighs with room for the PCs to fit in the trailing sleigh.

Most teams competing in the Balgirdtrek choose a name for their team that bears some mention of either Balgird or the Linnorm king they serve. Each team is unique and competes in ways that make the most of their talents. The competing teams are detailed below.

Bluetongue’s Brawlers: This team is made up of four burly Ulfen—**Jori** (NG female human warrior), **Sigurd** (CG male human warrior), **Sigrun** (CG female human warrior), and **Baltus** (LG male human warrior)—whose plan for the trials involves sheer brute force, not because they lack any particular wit or cunning, but simply to see if their physiques can handle the punishment of the course. This members of this team start out friendly toward the PCs.

Fangs of the Remorhaz: The Varki team chosen by Nankou to compete. The team consists of twin hunters **Marbin Slickhide** (CG male human hunter) and **Ylva Tunnelwalker** (NG female human hunter), **Runa Frostleaf** (N agender human druid), and **Olin Tuskbinder**

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(LG male half-orc ranger). They are friendly toward the PCs, well prepared, and excited to be a part of the race, but apprehensive of the Ulfen teams.

Two Houses: This team is made up of two Ulfen couples; **Steen** (CN male human lockbreaker) and his wife **Unn** (CN female human apothecary), and **Leif** (N male human tracker) and his husband **Oluf** (NE male human bounty hunter). The two couples undertake the Balgirdtrek each year as a joint anniversary celebration. This is their fifth year competing, and the team spends most of its time talking each other up while reliving their triumphs on the course from years previous. The two couples are indifferent to the PCs unless one of the PCs has slotted the Legacy of the Gorget boon from *Pathfinder Society Quest #3: Grehunde's Gorget*. If a PC has the boon, Leif reveals that he is a descendent of Hlavard and is excited to see the PCs. The whole group is instead friendly towards the party and willingly shares their knowledge of the trials if they encounter the PCs at any of the checkpoints.

Without Trace or Fail: This group of three Ulfen rangers and their cleric companion has joined the competition in hopes to find themselves in the direct service of a linnorm king. The rangers are **Ostog Oakfeller** (N male human ranger), a powerfully built man in his early fifties, his adult son **Hjeldr** (CN male human ranger), and Ostog's adopted daughter **Signe** (N female human ranger), who all come from a long line of Ulfen sharpshooters and are proud to list their family's various achievements. The cleric, **Gruen Storval** (CN male human cleric), boasts that his family is known for having a large number of its members "blessed" with lycanthropy (specifically that a werebear exists in his family tree), but states that he was not so fortunate.

The members of Without Trace or Fail have trained relentlessly for the race ahead, adopting a strict diet of mostly foraged hard grasses and berries, dried fish, and a lightly fermented mead and are quick to talk about the benefits of it for their stamina and mental fortitude. They are unfriendly toward the PCs, fearing that the storied tradition of the race is threatened by the presence of outsiders. They see the PCs' participation as a sign that the noble days of the Balgirdtrek are gone and fear that it may become nothing more than a curiosity to entice visitors.

Wyrding Wayfinders: The aging but well-known champion, **Faergim Axebinder** (CG female human champion of Cayden Cailean), has arrived at the Balgirdtrek with her two squires. The squires, **Thosse** (N female halfling scribe) and **Rikkun** (N male warrior), are also accompanied by **Sassa Ringbreaker** (LN female human bard), a famed skald currently writing an epic about the life and deeds of Faergim. Faergim plans to surmount most of the trials herself, relying on support

from her squires only in the most dire situations. This team is indifferent to the PCs. They have no association with the Pathfinder Society, despite what their team's name suggests. If asked about *wayfinders*, Faergim responds confidently, "You think those little things are the only way to find where you are going? Pah!"

REIGNING CHAMPIONS

One of these teams, with the exception of the PCs and the Varki team, are the previous year's winners. Select one of the remaining teams or roll 1d4 on **Table 1** to randomly select the previous year's winner. Included in the table is a mention of a notable achievement that members of the team are particularly proud of.

Table 1: Balgirdtrek Winners

| 1d4 | Team | Notable Achievement |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Bluetongue's Brawlers | The Brawlers competed the first day of the race in the nude, and afterward all members were treated for frostbite. |
| 2 | Two Houses | The two couples crossed the finish line in the early hours of the third day, slept at a local inn, had breakfast later that morning, and walked back to the finish line before notifying officials that they had crossed. |
| 3 | Without Trace or Fail | While lost in a storm, the team rescued a race official who had also been trapped in the storm and managed to navigate to the next checkpoint despite near total whiteout conditions and plummeting temperatures. |
| 4 | Wyrding Wayfinders | Faergim crossed the finish line on skis carrying Thosse under her arm and towing the skald and Rikkun in a sled behind her. |

There is room for the PCs in the trailing cart, occupied by the members of Without Trace or Fail and the winners of the previous year. If Without Trace or Fail are the previous year's winners, then select or roll on the table for one other team to occupy the sleigh.

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The trip to the race area is fairly short, and the PCs attendance in the sleigh is more for the sake of tradition than convenience. Once the PCs make their way to the sleighs, read or paraphrase the following:

Two bright, open-topped sleighs wait along the side of the street, adorned with ribbons and cedar boughs. The driver of the second sleigh hops down, waving the group over. He instructs the team to move to the rear of the cart and assists with boarding. Inside, two groups sit, anxious for the sleighs to get moving. At the far end of the cart, several Ulfen rangers and a cleric glower, sighing before mumbling to one another.

The glowering participants at the end of the cart are members of Without Trace or Fail, the traditionalist team. They do not wish to speak to the PCs at any length but do answer questions tersely. They try to probe the PCs for knowledge of the Balgirdtrek, Ulfen traditions in general, or even the conditions of the terrain if the PCs boast at all of their ability. They latch on to any perception of weakness or ignorance from the PCs as evidence to support their suspicions and fears. If the PCs attempt to reason with or befriend any members of Without Trace or Fail at this point in the scenario, they find the team unwilling to listen or participate in reasonable discourse.

Arriving for the Race

The starting area cleared for the Balgirdtrek in Kalsgard is bustling with activity. Merchants and traders hoping to support the race have set up stalls and carts to sell supplies and equipment to the teams. If the PCs arrived via the sleighs, they and the other competitors are greeted by cheers and applause as the sleighs pull up to the starting area. As each team disembarks from the sleigh, they are introduced to the crowd by the drivers of the sleighs. The driver of the PCs' sleigh asks them for the name of their team. If indecisive, the driver chooses a name for them from the following list: Pathfinder Pups, Freezing Fools, Second to Last, Odds Meeting Ends, and Tooth-Chatter Society.

If the PCs did not arrive with the sleighs, they must present their documents to the officials at the gate and find that one of the names from the list above has already been chosen for them. In this case, the PCs have a –2 circumstance penalty to any skill or ability checks for the purposes of negotiating prices for supplies and equipment.

Regardless of their method of arrival, the PCs receive a race pack containing three *minor healing potions*, a single climbing kit, vouchers for lodging in Frostgarten, flint and steel, a signal whistle, and a list of supplies they should procure before the race begins. Once the PCs receive their pack, give them **Handout 1: Recommended Supplies**.

The supplies on the list are mostly optional, but the

officials stress to any PC asking about the importance of these supplies they would be wise to have at least the first three items before the race begins.

The PCs have three hours of downtime to gather supplies, secure services, and interact with the other teams before they must report to the starting line for the beginning of the race. The merchants and traders are considered to be friendly for the purposes of determining prices and willingness to haggle with the PCs about prices for gear but take any opportunity to rib the PCs about their perceived chances of winning (or even finishing) the race. This kind of deprecating humor is part of the traditions of the Balgirdtrek, and should be presented as an attempt on the part of the merchants and officials to make the PCs feel included.

During this time, a race official approaches the PCs to confirm that they know the race's rules. Unless the PCs provide an accurate accounting of the rules, she briefs them on the details. Use the information from Bjersig's briefing on page 6.

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION)

A PC who spends 1 hour speaking to the merchants and race officials about advice for the race ahead can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Gather Information (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4), with the following results.

Critical Success: The PC learns what the first trial is as well as the significant terrain for the first leg of the race, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made for overland travel between Kalsgard and the first Checkpoint and a +1 circumstance bonus on checks made to complete the first trial.

Success: The PC learns some of the notable features and terrain of the first leg of the race, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made for overland travel between Kalsgard and the first checkpoint.

Failure: The PC learns an amusing but useless story about a former team of lycanthropes that almost won the Balgirdtrek many years ago, but miscalculated the phases of the moon and had to be rescued after stumbling through the forest in the middle of the night without any torches.

Critical Failure: The PC is advised that when camping at night, it is best to store one's food in a shallow hole beneath their bedroll, as storing it anywhere else is sure to attract animals that will steal it away.

Other Teams: The other teams are also gathering supplies during this time and the PCs are encouraged to interact with them. While preparing, a PC may have an encounter with one of the other teams. Choose or roll 1d10 for one of the following encounters from **Table 2: Race Prep Encounters**.

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Table 2: Race Prep Encounters

| 1d10 | Team Encountered | Activity/Recommendation |
|------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Bluetongue's Brawlers | Show the PCs a series of stretches they should do in the morning to loosen up after a night in the cold. |
| 2 | Bluetongue's Brawlers | Joke with the PCs that they should join both teams together and offer to carry the PCs on their shoulders. |
| 3 | Fangs of the Remorhaz | Runa offers to trade some of their rations in exchange for some of the PCs' other supplies, and wishes them luck on the course ahead. |
| 4 | Fangs of the Remorhaz | Marbin and Ylva check the PCs over to make sure their gear and clothes are fastened properly. |
| 5 | Two Houses | Steen and Unn are overheard discussing the best places for them to stay once they reach Frostgarten. |
| 6 | Two Houses | Lief and Oluf exchange pleasantries with the PCs and recommend they take time to enjoy the scenery. |
| 7 | Without Trace or Fail | Signe helps the PCs choose the gear they wish to purchase, always recommending shoddy equipment. |
| 8 | Without Trace or Fail | Ostog gives the PCs a shovel as a gift, saying they will likely need it. |
| 9 | Wyrding Wayfinders | Faergim offers to sign their logbooks and suggests they wax their skis regularly to improve their speed along the course. |
| 10 | Wyrding Wayfinders | Sassa remarks that the PCs are certainly very brave to undertake the challenge of the race considering what they have chosen to wear. |

BALGIRD TREK BLUES

"The heads of the tarn linnorm are their own creatures. If one is stubborn, the beast becomes indecisive and will likely die. Those tarns that survive are those that work together."

—Balgird Bluetongue

Race Mechanics

The race is divided into sections of overland travel and trials. Each day of the race begins with a determination of the weather, followed by skill checks from the PCs to determine their success on the trail ahead, ending with the arrival and attempt at defeating the next trial. Each member of the team can attempt one overland travel skill check per day.

If the PCs wish to push on toward another obstacle after completing their current checkpoint trial, they can, provided that they are not significantly exhausted and the officials at the checkpoint clear the PCs after examining them for injuries sustained while on the trail. Race officials may also detain teams at checkpoints in the event of particularly bad weather. The challenges that the PCs face are organized by the day they are expected to reach them. If the PCs are detained, they may reach some challenges on a later day than listed in the scenario. To give players the chance to experience the entire scenario, be sure that the PCs face all of the challenges by the end of Day 4.

The team that finishes the race in the fastest time with the fewest penalties is declared the winner. Determining position throughout the race is done by accumulating Progress Points, which can be secured through skillful navigation of the trail, swiftly completing the trials and navigating potential hazards and sabotage. The team with the most Progress Points leads the race, the team with the next most is in second, and so on through the remaining teams. PCs can be penalized for actions in violations of the race's rules; these violations are noted by race officials and once the PCs complete the race, they have an hour deducted per violation, meaning that even a team who finishes later than another might be declared the official winner.

WEATHER

At the outset of each day of the race, roll 1d4 on **Table 3: Weather** to determine the weather for the coming day. The weather applies a circumstance bonus to the DC of checks made while traveling overland; don't worry about applying additional effects due to weather when making overland travel skill checks as those modifiers are abstracted into these adjustments. The standard DC for skills used during overland travel is 13 (15 for Subtier 3–4).

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A NOTE ON MOUNTS AND ANIMAL COMPANIONS

As a general rule, mounts are not allowed to be ridden as part of the Balgirdtrek, as the race is intended to be completed on foot. If a PC has a mount that they intend to bring with them along the course, it must be used only to carry equipment. Race officials regularly patrol the course and spot any PC who attempts to bypass the "no mounts" rule. First-time violators are given a gentle warning, though subsequent warnings are accompanied by citations from the race officials that require the PCs to undergo a review and potential temporary detainment at the next checkpoint; each warning after the first reduces the PCs current Progress Point total by 1.

Table 3: Weather

| 1d4 | Weather | Change to Skill DC | Temperature Outside of Checkpoints |
|-----|---------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Snow | +2 | Severe Cold |
| 2 | Fog | +1 | Mild Cold |
| 3 | Clear | +0 | Mild Cold |
| 4 | Storm | +3 | Severe Cold |

OVERLAND TRAVEL

While traveling between checkpoints, the PCs should make use of their skills to aid them on their trek. Use the information provided in **Table 3: Weather** to determine how difficult overland travel is for the PCs during that leg of the race. Each PC should choose a skill appropriate to their method of travel for the day. Relevant skills might be Athletics, Nature, and Survival, but you should allow PCs using other methods of travel to roll other types of skill checks as appropriate. As the GM, use your judgement for cases when a PC may want to use another skill to assist the progress of the group. Each critical success counts as two successes toward the PCs' Progress Point total for that day of travel, while a critical failure reduces their total number of successes by 1.

To determine the number of Progress Points the PCs accumulate from overland travel based on their number of successes, see **Table 4: Overland Travel Progress Points**, below. If the PCs usually gain enough successes to earn 1 Progress Point, they keep pace with the middle of the pack. If they usually earn 2 Progress Points, they are on pace for victory, and if they usually earn 3 Progress Points, they can afford to make significant missteps and still win the race.

Table 4: Overland Travel Progress Points

| Party Size | Successes for 0 PP | Successes for 1 PP | Successes for 2 PP | Successes for 3 PP |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 4 | 0 | 1 | 2-3 | 4+ |
| 5 | 0 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5+ |
| 6+ | 0-1 | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6+ |

Table 5: Race Progress at the End of Each Day (4 Players) indicates the number of Progress Points that each team has at the end of each of the four days of the race at a four-player table. For each player beyond 4, add 3 to the number of Progress Points that the opposing teams have. Team B on this table is always Without Trace or Fail; which team holds which of the other places in the race is up to the GM. Use **GM Handout: GM Race Tracker** to record each team's Progress Point total, including the PCs'.

Table 5: Race Progress at the End of Each Day (4 Players)

| | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Team A | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 |
| Team B | 4 | 8 | 13 | 17 |
| Team C | 3 | 6 | 10 | 15 |
| Team D | 2 | 5 | 8 | 12 |
| Team E | 2 | 4 | 6 | 7 |

THE BEAST

There is an animal along the course that begins to stalk the teams sometime on the second day. This animal is a giant short-faced bear, a massive, 15-foot-tall ursine with unusually long legs, well equipped to move through deep snow and over ice with surprising speed. The bear's home territory was disturbed by the new trail cut for this year's Balgirdtrek and it has been following some of the officials of the race since, looking for whatever food it can find. The bear grows more aggressive and emboldened as the race wears on, stalking race officials on day two of the race and eventually attacking one of the race teams between the last checkpoint trial and the finish line in Frostgarten (page 22).

SABOTAGE

The members of Without Trace or Fail are willing to go to great lengths to interfere with the PCs' journey. In addition to the sabotages available at each checkpoint, Without Trace or Fail may also attempt to sabotage the PCs' overland travel on the first day. The types of sabotage the PCs can encounter along the way are shown in **Table 6: Checkpoint**

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Trials (page 11). The specific rules for the sabotages in the Overland Trial are detailed in Overland Travel Sabotage (page 12), and the rules for each other type of sabotage appear in the section for the corresponding checkpoint.

The Without Trace or Fail team is cautious about using sabotage to slow the PCs, since being caught could lead to their expulsion from the Balgirdtrek, or impose a stiff enough penalty to guarantee they lose any opportunity to claim first place. As such, they are careful not to act too openly or aggressively. No more than one sabotage is performed per day of the race, and no more than three sabotages are performed during the entirety of the race.

It is possible that the PCs can spot a sabotage before they encounter it. A PC who wants to check for signs of sabotage can attempt a DC 15 Perception check (DC 18 for Subtier 3–4). It should be noted that to expose Without Trace or Fail, the PCs must secure evidence of their misdeeds. The officials might show concern for the PCs, but don't report on word alone. After spotting sabotage, a PC can Investigate the area for evidence of who could have done it. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 (18 for Subtier 3–4) Recall Knowledge check discovers something linking a member of Without Trace or Fail to the sabotage, such as flecks of food particular to their strict diet or a scrap of fabric from their gear. To expose Without Trace or Fail, the PCs must acquire evidence of at least two sabotages.

CHECKPOINTS

Arriving at Checkpoints: As the PCs arrive at each checkpoint trial, check how many Progress Points the other teams have to identify their position. Each checkpoint provides the PCs an opportunity to interact with the other teams, improve the attitude of the other teams, and learn more about the Balgirdtrek and the trail ahead of them. While at a checkpoint with the other teams, the PCs may observe one of the other teams or their members attempt a trial or speak with a team that has just attempted the trial.

To determine which teams the PCs meet at each checkpoint, compare the team's listed Progress Points at the end of the day from **Table 5** to the PCs' progress points when they arrive at the checkpoint. If their total is within 5 of the PCs' total, the PCs meet with the other team; otherwise, the other team is too far ahead or too far behind to interact with. If Without Trace or Fail is too far behind the PCs, they cannot set up sabotage at that checkpoint.

Each checkpoint provides the PCs an opportunity to interact with the other teams, improve the attitude of the other teams, and learn more about the Balgirdtrek and the trail ahead of them. Keep track of which teams arrived ahead of the PCs, as those teams might have moved on past the checkpoint by the time the PCs arrive. While at a checkpoint with the other teams, the PCs can observe

one of the other teams or their members attempt a trial or speak with a team that has just attempted the trial. Once the PCs have successfully completed the checkpoint trial, they are examined by the race official for serious injuries. If any of the PCs are below half of their maximum Hit Points, the official holds the team back, forcing them to rest and reducing their Progress Points by 1.

PCs wishing to move past a checkpoint and rest along the course should be aware of the dangers of staying out in the elements. As indicated on **Table 3: Weather**, the temperature outside of the checkpoints can be dangerous to any person or creature caught outside unprepared.

Table 6: Checkpoint Trials

| Checkpoint Trial | Trial Description | Sabotage |
|------------------|--|---|
| Overland trial | Moving along the course between checkpoints. | Bribed official, disassembled equipment |
| Caribou field | A herd of Caribou stand in a frozen field. Some of the caribou have had bells fastened to their antlers, one of which must be retrieved without causing a stampede. | Fox on the field, silenced bells |
| Ice walk | Within a frozen clearing, teams must navigate across a treacherous ice floe without falling through thin and unstable portions and recover a ribbon frozen in the ice. | Deceptive drifts, polished surface |
| Tree climb | A small, egg-shaped trinket rests atop a slender pole and must be retrieved without breaking either the trinket or the pole. | Stuck egg, weakened wood |
| Whitegold River | The Whitegold River is still flowing, despite the closing cold of winter. The river must be crossed. | Loosened plates, treacherous ice |

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Determining Order of Checkpoints: The Checkpoints are presented in this scenario in the suggested order to provide increasing challenge to the PCs. However, the GM can place the checkpoints in almost any order, with the exception of the Whitegold River, which is always the third checkpoint as it marks the halfway point in the race. **Table 6: Checkpoint Trials** lists the checkpoints along with the trials associated with them and the potential sabotages the PCs may encounter at each one.

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION)

While at any checkpoint, the PCs are encouraged to interact with any NPCs they find there. A PC who spends 1 hour speaking to race officials at the current checkpoint about the next leg of the race can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Gather Information (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4), with the following results.

Critical Success: The official is more than happy to share details about the trail ahead and the upcoming trial with the PC, who gains a +1 circumstance bonus on checks made for overland travel between the current checkpoint and next checkpoint and a +1 circumstance bonus on checks made to complete the next checkpoint trial.

Success: The official shares some details of the terrain with the PCs, pointing out a useful shortcut. The party gains a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made for overland travel between the first and second checkpoint.

Failure: The official doesn't feel it would be right to tell the PCs anything, claiming that it goes against the spirit of facing the unknown that the Balgirdtrek is so known for.

Critical Failure: The official gives the PCs intentionally vague instructions that can be easily misinterpreted by the PC, who takes a –1 circumstance penalty to checks made for overland travel between the current checkpoint and next checkpoint and a –1 circumstance penalty to checks made to complete the next checkpoint trial.

DIPLOMACY (MAKE AN IMPRESSION)

A PC who spends 1 hour speaking to a nearby team about advice for the race ahead can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4), with the following results. Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression with members of Without Trace or Fail take a –2 circumstance penalty due to the team's prejudices against the PCs and the Pathfinder Society.

Critical Success: The PC makes an excellent impression on the other team. That team's attitude toward the PCs goes up by one step.

Success: The PC is able to slightly influence the other team's attitude. For every 2 successful Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression, improve the team's attitude by one step.

Failure: The PC fails to influence the other team's attitude toward them.

Critical Failure: The PC says or does something that upsets the other team. That team's attitude toward the PCs decreases by one step (such as friendly to indifferent, or indifferent to unfriendly, for example.)

Awarding Progress Points for Trials: The Progress Points awarded to teams that successfully complete each Trial are detailed in the section for each checkpoint.

DAY 1

Once the PCs have purchased gear and conversed with the other teams, you may begin the race itself. The teams are asked to gather at the starting line, a thick-braided rope with wooden handholds at either end carved in the shape of a linnorm head. The officials wait until the previous year's winner signals that all teams are ready before dropping the rope.

Overland Travel Sabotage

On the first day, the members of Without Trace or Fail use one of the following tactics to attempt to sabotage the PCs.

Bribed Official: If this sabotage is active, the PCs find the official at their current checkpoint to be particularly concerned about the health and well-being of the team. After completing the checkpoint trial, the official forces the PCs to rest if any member of the party has lost even a single Hit Point, reducing their Progress Point total by 1 unless one of the PCs succeeds at a DC 16 (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) Legal Lore or Medicine check to convince the other officials to overturn the ruling.

Disassembled Equipment: If this sabotage is active, the PCs find that some part of their equipment has been disabled or disassembled, requiring them to spend extra time and effort to reassemble and pack the gear before moving on, reducing their Progress Point total by 1 unless one of the PCs succeeds at a DC 16 (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) Engineering Lore or Thievery check to reassemble the equipment more quickly.

A. Tree Climb

As the PCs arrive at the tree climb checkpoint, read or paraphrase the following:

The tall pines ahead are heavy with snow, and the forest is quiet. Ahead, officials for the Balgirdtrek stand around a roaring fire. Several campsites have been cleared nearby as clerics stand ready to examine and treat any injured racers. Beyond the fire and campsites, in a small, raised clearing, is a tall, thin pole carved with the intertwining necks of a Tarn Linnorm. Atop the pole rests is a small platform, an oval shape resting within it.

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The pole is in fact a small tree, and though the tree itself is dead, it is still flexible and strongly rooted in the ground. The object at the top of the pole is an egg which each team must retrieve without breaking. The officials at the trial explain to each team that this trial harkens back to Balgird's time in the wilderness. While searching for a Linnorm in the frozen reaches of the Saga Lands, Balgird Bluetongue survived by living off the land itself. In particular, Balgird was known to have scaled a great tree and retrieved the egg of a massive bird. He did this so swiftly and carefully that the tree did not bend, and the bird did not notice its egg go missing.

A1. CAMPSITE

This area has been cleared for use by any teams wishing to rest for the evening. The ground has been cleared of brush, excess snow has been removed and a large fire burns toward the back of the campsite.

A2. TREE CLIMB TRIAL

The tree stands 20 feet tall. The base of the tree is 8 inches in diameter, tapering down to 3 inches in diameter at the top. The small platform holding the egg has a short lip along the edge to prevent the egg from being blown out of the tree by the wind or nudged out by an errant creature.

Any PC attempting to climb the tree finds that it is very flexible and bends as they shift their weight and climb higher. Climbing to the top of the tree without knocking down the egg from the top requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4 where the cold weather has also made the branches dangerously brittle) to Climb or a DC 15 (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) Acrobatics Check to Balance with the following results.

Success: The egg is retrieved from the top of the tree, and the team is awarded 1 Progress Point.

Failure: The tree bends too much, and the PC loses grip, or the egg is out of reach. Another PC may make an attempt.

Critical Failure: The egg falls from the platform and breaks on the ground. The team is awarded 0 Progress Points and must move on.

While only one PC is required to attempt the trial, other PCs can make their own attempts to or Aid an attempting PC (though not both, as the race officials remind the PCs before they begin their attempts). Also note that while climbing the tree is the most obvious course of action, the PCs should be allowed to approach the trial in less conventional ways so long as they maintain the rules of the trial by not damaging or destroying either the egg or the tree in which it rests.

TREE CLIMB SABOTAGE

There are two tactics the members of Without Trace or Fail can use to sabotage the tree climb trial.

Stuck Egg: If this sabotage is active, the egg has been adhered to the platform using a sticky tree sap. Any PC attempting to retrieve the egg using non-magical means takes a –2 circumstance penalty to their check.

Weakened Wood: If this sabotage is active, the wood of the tree has been compromised, making it more prone to bending while weight is on it. Any PC attempting to climb the tree must succeed at a DC 12 (14 for Subtier 3–4) Reflex save or fall 10 feet.

Completing the Trial: Once the PCs have completed the Trial, they are free to spend time at the campsite in area A1, rest for the evening, or move on to their examination and potentially move further down the course.

DAY 2

The second day of the race sees the introduction of “the beast,” a giant short-faced bear, to the competitors and officials (more information can be found on page 10). While the bear has, up to this point, largely been giving the Balgirdtrek a wider berth, the smell of food and continued aggravation of other creatures in its territory have brought it closer. As it grows more curious and aggressive, some NPCs might mention having caught site of a shape in the forest at night or heard something lumbering near their camp. The PCs can also happen upon large tracks in the snow.

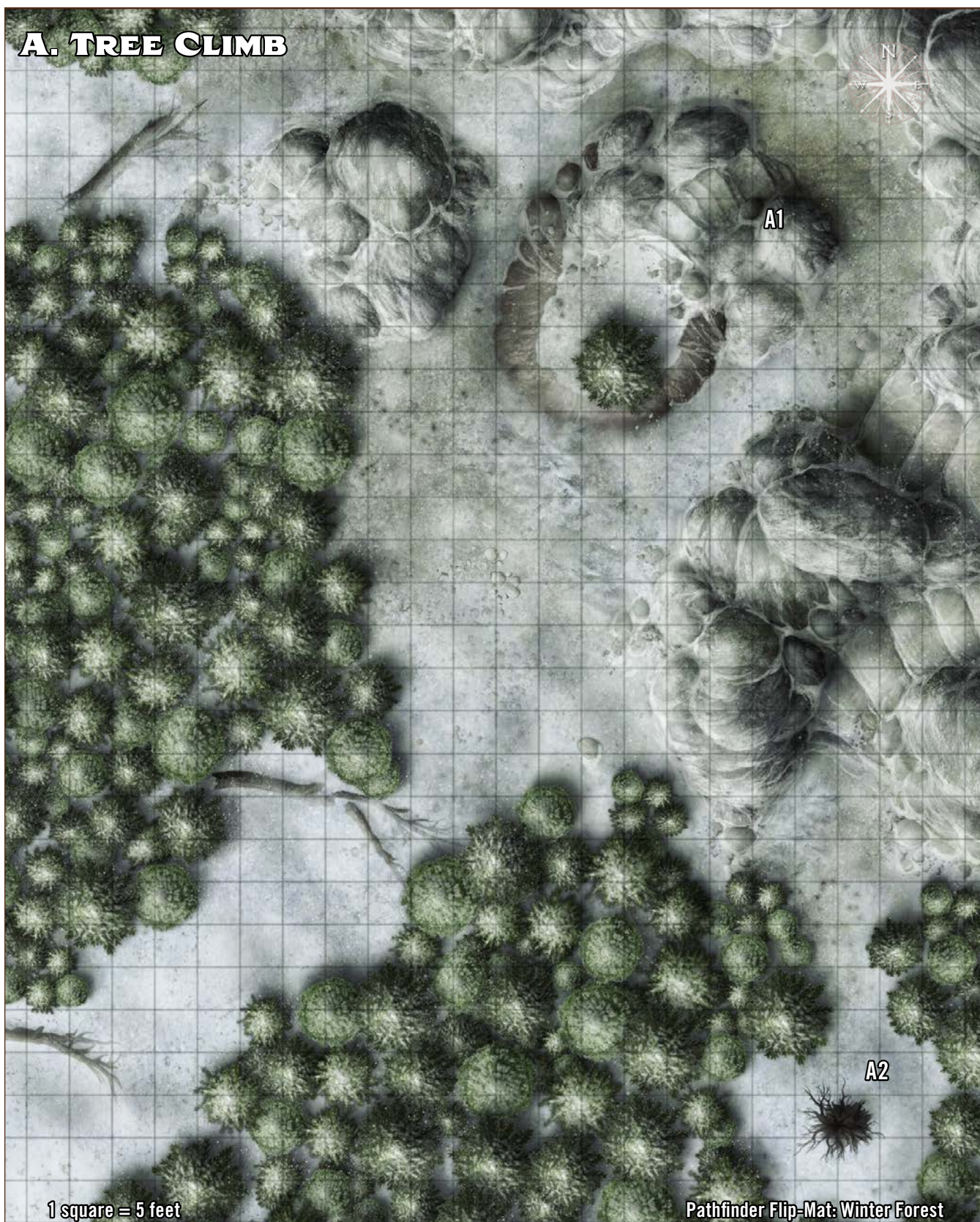
B. Caribou Field

This checkpoint consists of a large clearing formed over a frozen pond. As the PCs arrive at the caribou field checkpoint trial, read or paraphrase the following.

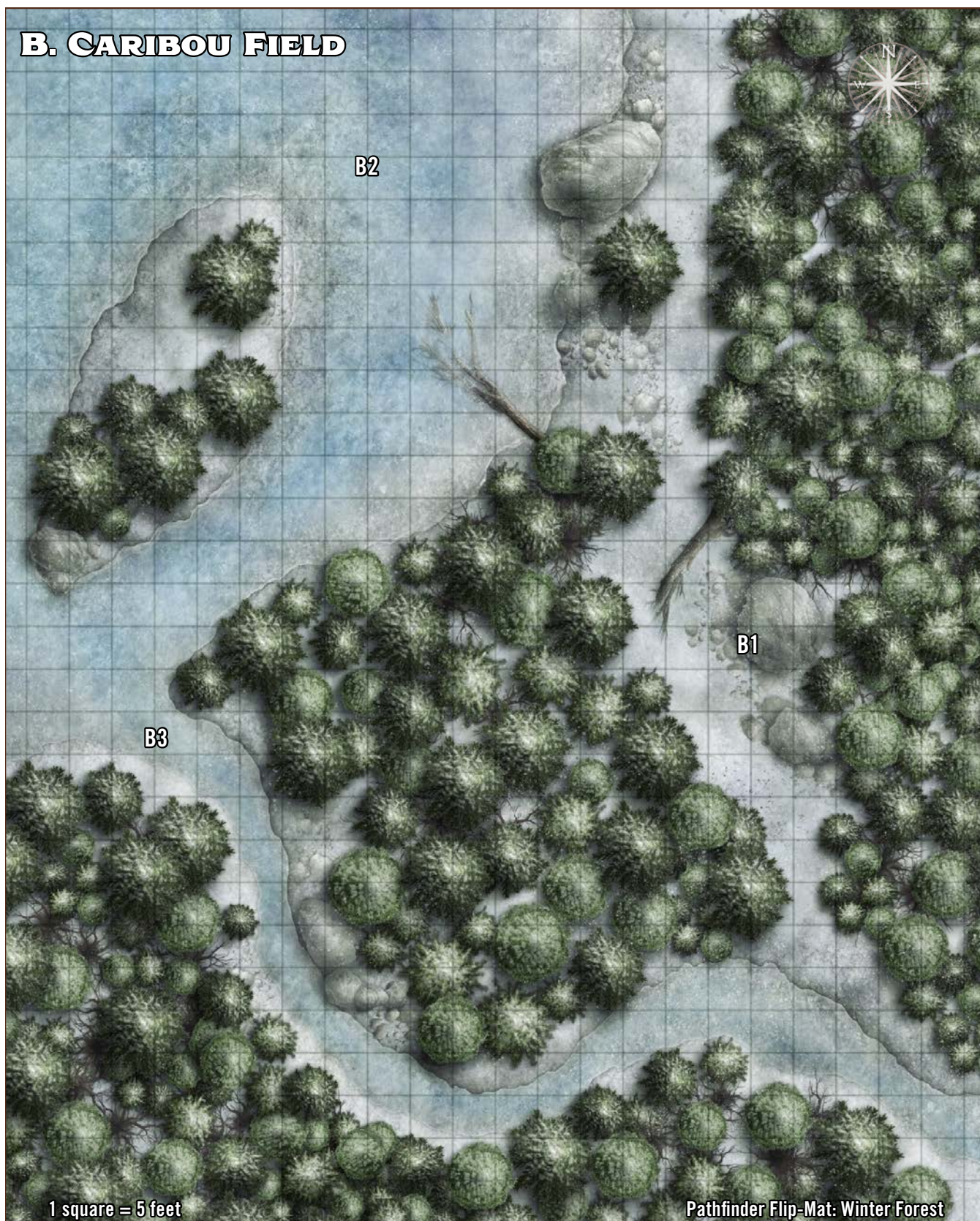
A small, frigid stream runs between the dense pines, opening onto a frozen pond. To the east, a few small columns of smoke rise above the trees from several small campfires. To the north, a dozen caribou walk along the surface of the ice, snuffling and pawing at the thin grasses poking up from the snowy shoreline. As a race official watches over the small herd, the wind carries the gentle sound of bells.

The official announces to the PCs that this trial is meant to recreate the events surrounding the loss of Balgird's beloved pack horse. When the steed was lost in a terrible blizzard, Balgird tracked a herd of caribou across the tundra, and watched their behavior from a distance, looking for one that he might be able to tame. The legendary Ulfen spent more than a week trying to get close to the herd, and narrowly escaped death by hundreds of stampeding hooves before he finally managed to sling

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his saddle bags over the animal's back and lead his new companion out of the herd and into the taiga.

B1. CAMPSITE

This area has been cleared for use by any teams wishing to rest for the evening. The camp area runs along the eastern side of the streambed, tucked into the trees and larger rocks.

B2. CARIBOU HERD

A race official patrols this area, watching over the restless herd of taiga caribou (a skittish breed of Medium deer) that has been gathered here as a part of the trial. Four of the caribou have had small bells tied into their antlers (choose any four of the caribou, but avoid grouping the caribou with bells adjacent to each other). The goal of the trial is to retrieve a set of the bells without disturbing the caribou. There are a total of 12 caribou currently on the ice, spread out enough to have room to walk between them, but not far enough apart that any of them would be isolated from the group.

The caribou might seem docile, but they run if startled. The PCs must retrieve at least one of the bells from the caribou's antlers without harming any of the animals to pass the trial. The frozen pond the caribou walk on is ice, making it both uneven ground (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 476) and difficult terrain.

Retrieving one of the bells from one of the four caribous requires several steps. First, the PCs must find one of the bells by making a successful DC 12 (DC 15 for Subtier 3–4) Perception check; PCs who fail this check suffer a –1 circumstance penalty on the following Stealth or Nature check due to needing to adjust their approach when they realize they've selected the wrong target. Once they have found an appropriate target, the PC must attempt to retrieve the bell from its antlers with a successful DC 16 Stealth check (DC 19 for Subtier 3–4) to Sneak or a DC 15 Nature check (DC 18 for Subtier 3–4) with the following results.

Critical Success: The PC catches the interest of the lead caribou and the pack follows the PCs around for a brief time. The team gains 1 Progress Point and the DC for additional PCs to attempt this trial is reduced by 2.

Success: The caribou remain still and unafraid of the PC and as they retrieve the bell from the herd. The PCs team earns 1 Progress Point and can move on.

Failure: The caribou are skittish, and the PC fails to retrieve a set of bells. Another PC can make an attempt.

Critical Failure: The caribou are startled and begin to run. Any PC among the herd must succeed at a DC 18 (DC 20 for Subtier 3–4) Reflex save or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage (5d6 in Subtier 3–4) and be

knocked prone. The team gains no further Progress Points and must move on.

While only one PC is required to attempt the trial, other PCs can make their own attempts to or Aid an attempting PC (though not both, as the race officials remind the PCs before they begin their attempts). The PCs should be allowed to approach the trial in less conventional ways so long as they maintain the rules of the trial by not harming any of the caribou on the ice.

CARIBOU HERD SABOTAGE

If the members of Without Trace or Fail are indifferent or worse toward the PCs and have not yet attempted to sabotage the party on this day, the nefarious team places one of the following sabotages on the trial.

Fox on the Field: One member of Without Trace or Fail snared a fox and has released it onto the field. The caribou are more on edge due to its presence. Any PC attempting to retrieve a bell takes a –2 circumstance penalty to their Nature and Stealth checks to retrieve one of the bells. PCs can attempt a DC 14 Nature check to lure the fox away from the area and calm the caribou to negate this penalty.

Silenced Bells: Several of the bells have been stuffed with bits of wool and fur from Without Trace or Fail's gear and do not ring. PCs making a Perception check to find a bell take a –2 circumstance penalty to their check.

B3. SLAUGHTERED CARIBOU

In this area, the bear that threatens the race's competitors has killed and eaten from a caribou. The body is mutilated and nearly frozen in the cold air. A PC may notice the animal if they enter the area. A PC who examines the body and succeeds at a DC 15 Nature or Medicine check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) reveals that the large claw marks came from an animal of immense size and strength. Characters can also begin using Survival to Track the Beast with a DC 16 check (DC 19 in Subtier 3–4); characters who succeed at the check to track continue to find evidence of the bear along the trail in regular enough intervals that they can continue finding evidence of it from day to day, but the bear's enormous speed and endurance are such that the party is unlikely to be able to catch up to it until they reach area E. Note that this an excellent opportunity for rangers who have been successfully tracking the bear and chosen it as the target of their Hunt Prey ability, or other characters with similar options, can use these opportunities to track the bear as a means of keeping their Hunt Prey ability active for the final encounter.

Hero Point: By now you should have completed the first hour or more of gameplay. Award a Hero Point to

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one of the PCs if you have not already done so. This could be the PC who was most successful in navigating the caribou herd, or the PC who lures away the fox if the Fox on the Field sabotage is in play (see above). If none of the PCs match these requirements, give a Hero Point to a random PC of your choice.

DAY 3

The third day of the Balgirdtrek begins as many of the competitors approach the Whitegold River. The competitors are now very close to the Beast's territory and it has become increasingly aggressive. The officials at the next checkpoint the PCs arrive at are visibly shaken and tell the PCs that one of their patrols was attacked in the night and they barely escaped with their lives.

The other teams have likely seen signs of the Beast at this point, and may be positing their own ideas as to what it could be. The giant short-faced bear is rare to see and not well known, even among the Ulfen.

Race officials warn all teams that resting outside of the checkpoints may expose them attack by "the beast" and recommend that all teams stay close, but do not stop anyone wishing to push on past a checkpoint so long as the weather allows. If the PCs rest outside of the checkpoints, they may awake to signs of the Beast having come into their camp; missing rations, damaged gear or tracks between their tents.

C. Whitegold River Crossing

The Whitegold River is potentially the most hazardous trial in the Balgirdtrek. The wide river flows quickly as winter draws close, chunks of ice occasionally drift and crash among the rocks from further upstream. As the PCs near the Whitegold River Crossing, read or paraphrase the following.

Steam and spray from the Whitegold River hangs in the air as the checkpoint draws near. The wet air carries a cold sting. The snow on the trees drips, plopping heavily to the ground and the snow and frost seem to be clinging only in shadowed nooks and slick patches, despite the frigid air. Race officials prepare fish caught from the banks of the river near the camp. South of the campsite, another official stands near the riverbank. Several long poles lean against a mossy rock. Across the river, the course stretches away from the river and through the thinning trees into the snow-dusted hills beyond.

The officials tell the PCs that this trial is particularly important to the Balgirdtrek. After spotting the tarn linnorm, Balgird gave chase to the beast. The linnorm slipped through the trees and made its way across the

Whitegold River to evade Balgird. The rushing river was frigid and cold, and as Balgird approached he could see the tarn linnorm lurking in the trees on the other side, waiting to pluck his exhausted body from the shore if he swam across. Balgird felled a tall sapling from the riverside and vaulted across the river with as much of his gear as he could carry, foiling the linnorm and chasing it further into the wild.

C1. CAMPSITE

The campsite in this area is settled among the standing stones. These stones recall the deeds of Balgird Bluetongue and his heroic deeds. If the Wyrding Wayfinders are nearby when the PCs arrive, Sassa Ringbreaker sings the skaldic poem inscribed on the center stone as the team prepares for the crossing. Characters who understand Skald recognize the poem as an epic penned by Balgird himself describing his crossing of the river in pursuit of the tarn linnorm he would eventually slay.

C2. BEAST SIGHTING

The bear lingers here at night, watching anyone at the campsite. If the PCs rest for the night at the campsite, any of them near the water can attempt a DC 12 Perception check (DC 15 in Subtier 3–4) to notice the animal. Once spotted, the bear flees into the forest. Any PC who sees the bear can attempt a DC 18 Nature check (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4) to Recall Knowledge and identify it.

C3. RIVER CROSSING TRIAL

The Whitegold River is a formidable obstacle and has signaled the end of the Balgirdtrek for many teams in the past. The water is incredibly cold and surges rapidly. While it is possible to swim across, any PC who is submerged in the water must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save (DC 18 for Subtier 3–4) when they first enter the water and at the beginning of each round they remain in the river, with the following results.

Critical Success: The PC is unaffected by the river's chill.

Success: The PC takes 1d6 cold damage from the icy water of the river.

Failure: The PC takes 2d6 cold damage and is fatigued.

Critical Failure: The PC takes 2d6 cold damage, is fatigued, and is drained 1.

The Whitegold River is 15 feet deep at most points and flows from north to south with 20-foot currents. Creatures that fall into the river are swept 20 feet downstream starting at the end of their next turn and each subsequent turn thereafter. Creatures being swept down the river can attempt DC 15 Athletics checks to Swim on their turn (see *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* page 243) to swim to shore, though the frost-slick banks

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require the creature to succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save to Grab an Edge; otherwise they continue to be moved downstream by the current.

Creatures that critically fail a Swim check sink to the river bottom and must hold their breath or begin drowning (see *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* page 478). Once a creature has sunk to the bottom, they are still swept downstream 20 feet at the end of each turn they remain in the river, though they can attempt to walk along the river bottom toward shore, treating each square as greater difficult terrain. A creature that is swept over the cascade at the southern end of the river takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d6 cold damage from the fall (3d6 bludgeoning damage and 3d6 cold damage in Subtier 5–6 due to the chunks of floating ice at the bottom of the cascade). Once a creature has been swept over the cascade, race officials intervene and pull the creature from the water, though they force the entire team to stay and rest that evening, reducing the party's Progress Points by 2.

The preferred method for crossing the river is to use the large poles on hand for the trial. Each fifteen-foot long pole has a small plate affixed to the base, just below the tip to prevent the pole from simply sinking into the mud of the river. The goal of the trial is for each member of the party to cross the river, preferably using the poles to vault across to the other side. A PC attempting to cross the river can attempt a DC 15 (18 for Subtier 3–4) Acrobatics or Athletics check to vault the river with the following results;

Critical Success: The PC makes it across the river and sets a new record for distance, gaining 2 Progress Points.

Success: The PC makes it across the river to the other side without coming in contact with the water and gains 1 Progress Point.

Failure: The PC attempts to make the gap, but is unable to swing across, instead coming back down on the same side.

Critical Failure: The PC falls off the pole and into the river.

The PCs must make their initial attempt to cross the river at area C3. Any attempt to circumvent this results in officials telling them to go back and attempt the crossing again; PCs who ignore this request have a sanction placed against the team and lose 1 Progress Point per warning issued (though no more than 1 per PC).

Each PC must complete this trial, as the Whitegold River bisects the course. Also note that while using the poles is the standard approach to completing the trial, the PCs should be allowed to approach the trial in less conventional ways.

RIVER CROSSING SABOTAGE

If the members of Without Trace or Fail are indifferent or worse toward the PCs and have not yet attempted to sabotage the party on this day, the nefarious team may have sabotaged the trial in one of the following ways.

Loosened Plates: The plates on the bottom of the poles used for crossing have been loosened. When the pole is plunged into the soft mud of the river, it sinks deep and can become stuck in the upright position. PCs can notice this sabotage with a DC 18 Perception check (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4) and either request a new pole from the race officials or repair their pole with a DC 12 Crafting check. A PC attempting to vault across with a loosened plate must make an additional DC 15 Athletics or Acrobatics check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to complete their vault before the pole sinks into the water. Failing this check causes the PC to fall into the river.

Treacherous Ice: Without Trace or Fail have broken up a great deal of ice up-stream from the crossing, causing large chunks to drift through the crossing. Any PC attempting to vault the river takes a –2 circumstance penalty to their checks and any PC attempting to swim across the river takes an additional 1d4 slashing damage and 1 cold damage from the sharp chunks of ice.

DAY 4

If they find themselves behind the third checkpoint by Day 4, they should be informed by officials that the Balgirdtrek is nearly over and encouraged to “pick up the pace”. If they are lagging behind the competition, they may see signs of their position in the standings through observable changes in the environment, such as seeing some officials start to break down the camps at the last two checkpoints.

D. Ice Walk

This trial takes place on the open ice in a valley between stands of trees. As the PCs approach the ice walk trial, read or paraphrase the following;

Among the tall drifts and dunes of snow and ice, a small hollow reveals signs of life. A large fire pit is encircled by tents and snow shelters as officials stand near the warmth of the blazing fire. Beyond the camp, a large sheet of exposed ice is marked by race banners. In the middle of the ice, a delicate ribbon lies partially frozen in the sheet.

The officials tell the teams that this trial recounts the tale of Balgird's brave survival on the open ice. While camping in the tundra, Balgird lost some precious equipment to the wind in the night. The following morning, he followed a trail of gear to discover one of

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his scrolls frozen in the ice. With great care, he moved across the thin sheet to where his scroll lay trapped. Balgird created a lens from a piece of the ice itself, focusing the sunlight on the ice to slowly melt it away from his scroll until he was able to free it.

D1. CAMPSITE

The campsite here is cold, but comfortable enough that the competitors can rest with relative ease.

D2. ICE FLOE

The goal of this trial is to make it across the ice to the center and free the ribbon from the ice without damaging it. The water beneath the ice is 3 feet deep and does not pose a drowning risk but is treacherous nonetheless. The challenge here is twofold as the ice itself is just thick enough to support the weight of a PC on it, but any violent or vigorous action while on it could cause a PC to fall through. While on the ice, a PC must attempt a DC 14 (16 for Subtier 3–4) Acrobatics check to Balance. If the PC falls, the ice within 5 feet of the PC cracks. If the PC falls on a square of cracked ice, they fall through the ice, taking 3d6 cold damage (4d6 in Subtier 3–4) and must start over. If a PC falls through the ice more than once, race officials require the entire team to rest and warm up for at least 6 hours, costing the PCs 1 Progress Point. A PC that attempts to crawl across the ice is not required to make an Acrobatics check to Balance.

Once a PC has made it to the center of the ice without breaking through the surface, they must free the ribbon from the ice without damaging it. The delicate ribbon is torn by any weapon strikes to the ice, and most spells that could melt the ice would also ignite the ribbon itself. The trial can still be accomplished a number of ways but is commonly done by carefully melting the ice from around the ribbon with a carefully applied torch or candle. A PC attempting to free the ribbon can attempt a DC 15 (DC 18 for Subtier 3–4) Thievery or Nature check to free the ribbon from the ice with the following results.

Critical Success: The PC completes the challenge with record-setting speed and gains 2 Progress Points.

Success: The PC is able to remove the ribbon intact from the ice and gains 1 Progress Point.

Failure: The ribbon remains stuck in the ice. Another PC may attempt the trial.

Critical Failure: The ribbon is damaged while trying to remove it. The officials repair the ribbon with mending and the PCs may not attempt the trial again.

If a PC frees the ribbon from the ice successfully, the team is awarded 1 Progress Point and can move on, though additional PCs may attempt the challenge as well to try and gain additional Progress Points. The

PCs should be allowed to approach the trial in less conventional ways so long as they maintain the rules of the trial by not damaging the ribbon. For example, a PC carrying salt or high-proof alcohol can attempt to use it to melt the ice around the ribbon.

ICE FLOE SABOTAGE

If members of Without Trace or Fail are indifferent or worse toward the PCs and have not yet used a sabotage on this day, one of the following sabotages has been used on the trial.

Deceptive Drifts: Extra snow was heaped along the edge of the ice sheet. Blown by the wind, it now covers some portions of the ice, hiding thin sections and making the ground uneven. Any PC attempting to move across the ice must now treat it as uneven terrain and takes a –1 circumstance penalty on checks to Balance on the ice and a –1 circumstance penalty on checks to free the ribbon. PCs can take extra time to clear the ice; this negates the uneven terrain and the penalties to their checks, but costs them 1 Progress Point due to lost time.

Polished Surface: A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check notices that water has recently been cast over the ice, polishing the surface to a smooth, glossy finish. Any PC attempting to move across the ice takes a –2 circumstance penalty to checks made to Balance on the ice. Using a rope and pitons or some similar method to increase the PCs traction and stability can negate this penalty.

Hero Points: If you have not awarded a Hero Point to a player since area **B3**, award one to a player now. This could be the player whose PC either was most successful in navigating this skill challenge, or a player whose PC thwarted the sabotage attempt (if any). If neither of these conditions matches a player at the table, award a Hero Point to a single player of your choice (this should be a different player than the one awarded a Hero Point following Event 1, if applicable).

E. The Beast Attacks

Severe

This encounter takes place after the overland travel check following the PCs completion of the final checkpoint trial. After leaving the final checkpoint, the PCs may be in high spirits, but the bear has been tracking the teams across the course. As they near its den, it has become bold enough to attack the race participants directly. Total the Progress Points earned after the overland travel check is made. If the PCs are in the lead, the bear ambushes them directly in area **E1**, grabbing one of the PCs and attempting to drag them across the ice toward its lair in area **E4**.

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If the PCs are not in the lead, the team directly ahead of them is attacked instead and the PCs come upon the scene. If the PCs decide not to stop, they can make their final overland travel check to cross the finish line, but their failure to assist a team in need leads to a decision by the race officials to dock their team 2 Progress Points.

Provided the PCs stop to investigate the attack, they begin in area **E1**.

As the PCs come upon the scene of the attack, read or paraphrase the following.

A broken sled lies in the snow at the edge of the path beside an old bridge. Fresh blood marks are clearly visible against the white snow as large, crimson swaths. Equipment is scattered across the snow and onto the frozen surface of the lake.

Cloth and bits of a banner bearing the mark of one of the other racing teams hang from branches of the trees to the east of the bridge.

E1. SIGNS OF STRUGGLE

At this site lies a broken sled and signs of a fight as described above. A brief search of the area points the PCs toward area **E2**. Among the scattered supplies are two *minor healing potions*.

E2. BROKEN SUPPLIES/ SKIS

When the beast attacked the team, one of its members fled the attack across the bridge, only to be caught by the Beast here. The competitor's weapons and broken skis lie in a snow bank here at the far side of the island. Any PC who enters this area can attempt a DC 12 Perception check (DC 15 in Subtier 3–4) to spot more blood leading over the ice and the collapsed form of the wounded team member in area **E3**.

E3. WOUNDED TEAM MEMBER

Members of the attacked team saw most of the fighting here at the small spit of ground. The ice is soaked with blood and one of the attacked team members lies here, conscious yet badly wounded. The wounded NPC warns the PCs that “the beast attacked” and points to area **E4**, telling the party that their teammates were dragged into the creature's lair after being incapacitated.

The bear attacks the PCs after they cross to the North side of the small island, charging across the ice while covered in the blood of its previous victims. The beast fights to the death, protecting its territory violently, but retreats to area **E4** once reduced to half its maximum Hit Points.

E4. BEAST'S LAIR

If the Beast attacked another team, it brought most of them here. The members of the attacked team lay here, dying. When the PCs arrive in area **E1**, the team members in this area are dying 1 (each member of a competing team is considered to be of a level equivalent to the average level of the PCs and has a number of Hit Points equal to 10 × their level). Competitors who are stabilized and healed leave to find race officials and request help; they can carry one of their injured teammates with them.

SUBTIER 1–2

LESSER GIANT SHORT-FACED BEAR **CREATURE 4**

Page 25; art on page 29

Initiative Perception +11

SUBTIER 3–4

GIANT SHORT-FACED BEAR **CREATURE 6**

Page 26; art on page 29

Initiative Perception +14

Slaying the Beast: The Beast is a deadly threat to competitors in the Balgirdtrek and earns the PCs the gratitude of the race officials. The officials reward the PCs with a scroll of *snowball* (*Lost Omens World Guide* 112) on their Chronicle sheet. If the PCs fail to defeat the beast, cross the scroll off of their Chronicle sheet.

FINISHING THE RACE

Once the PCs cross the finish line, Progress Points accrued throughout the trials and overland travel are totaled. If the PCs have more points than any other team, they are the winners of the Balgirdtrek. If they have the same number of points as the next best team, they win the race only if they did not receive any sanctions from race officials during the event. As the PCs cross the finish line, read or paraphrase the following.

Two tall, wooden linnorm statues mark the finish line to the harrowing Balgirdtrek. Crossing the line, the gathered crowd of spectators and participants cheers and applauds. Racers are met with blankets, soup, and medical supplies almost as soon as they are within the village of Frostgarten, where spectators are gathered to celebrate the competition and those who completed it.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of their finishing position, race officials congratulate the PCs for completing the Balgirdtrek.

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So long as the PCs completed the race honorably and did not attempt to cheat any trials or harm their fellow competitors, they are invited to return again next year. As one last formality, the winning team is tasked with helping to prepare the feast and medical supplies for the remaining racers. Once the last of the teams cross the finish line, the festivities begin.

A massive feast is prepared, and the winning team is given a place of honor at the banquet table. If the PCs managed to expose the sabotage attempts performed by the members of Without Trace or Fail, the team is forbidden from participating in the celebration and banned from any future competition in the Balgirdtrek. If Without Trace or Fail's attitude toward the PCs was improved to friendly or helpful, the team apologizes to the PCs for their actions and turns themselves into the race officials.

Primary Objective

If the PCs complete the Balgirdtrek without being caught cheating or interfering with the other teams progress they complete the primary objective of this scenario. Doing so earns each PC 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with their currently slotted faction boon.

Secondary Objectives

Winning the Balgirdtrek grants the PCs the Tarnbreaker Champions boon on their Chronicle sheet and earns each PC 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with their currently slotted faction boon.

Reporting Notes

If the PCs won the Balgirdtrek, check Box A. If another team won the race, check Box B.

Tarnbreaker's Trail

APPENDIX 1: SUBTIER 1-2 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario, including any variations described in the text.

Encounter E4: The Beast's Lair

Creature: As long as the bear has more than one visible enemy, it uses Mauling Throw whenever it can, seeking to hurl enemies away and force them to move back through its deadly reach. The bear uses Rush to charge enemies who attempt to attack it with ranged weapons or spells. The bear never attacks an unconscious opponent unless there are no other opponents in sight.

LESSER GIANT SHORT-FACED BEAR CREATURE 4

N **LARGE** **ANIMAL**

Perception +11; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +12, Survival +9

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2

AC 20, **Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

HP 60

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 45 feet

Melee ⬥ jaws +12, **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing

Melee ⬥ claw +12 (agile, reach), **Damage** 1d12+4 slashing plus Grab

Mauling Throw ⬥ (attack) **Requirement** The giant short-faced bear has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The giant short-faced bear throws its grabbed target up to 20 feet in any direction and deals its claw damage to the target.

Rush ⬥⬥ The giant short-faced bear Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. During the Stride, the giant short-faced bear gains a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed.

SCALING ENCOUNTER E4: THE BEAST'S LAIR

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following challenge point adjustments.

10-15 Challenge Points: Increase the giant short-faced bear's Hit Points by 10 for every 2 Challenge Points above 9 the party is worth, and increase its AC and saving throws by 1 for every 3 Challenge Points above 9 the party is worth.

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APPENDIX 2: SUBTIER 3-4 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario, including any variations described in the text.

Encounter E4: The Beast's Lair

Creature: As long as the bear has more than one visible enemy, it uses Mauling Throw whenever it can, seeking to hurl enemies away and force them to move back through its deadly reach. The bear uses Rush to charge enemies who attempt to attack it with ranged weapons or spells. The bear never attacks an unconscious opponent unless there are no other opponents in sight.

GIANT SHORT-FACED BEAR

CREATURE 6

N **LARGE** **ANIMAL**

Perception +14; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +15, Survival +12

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

AC 23, **Fort** +16, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

HP 96

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 45 feet

Melee ⤵ jaws +15, **Damage** 2d6+7 piercing

Melee ⤵ claw +15 (agile, reach), **Damage** 1d12+7 slashing plus Grab

Mauling Throw ⤵ (attack) **Requirement** The giant short-faced bear has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The giant short-faced bear throws its grabbed target up to 20 feet in any direction and deals its claw damage to the target.

Rush ⤵⤵ The giant short-faced bear Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. During the Stride, the giant short-faced bear gains a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed.

SCALING ENCOUNTER E4: THE BEAST'S LAIR

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following challenge point adjustments.

17+ Challenge Points: Increase the giant short-faced bear's Hit Points by 10 for every 3 Challenge Points above 16 the party is worth, and increase its AC and saving throws by 1 for every 6 Challenge Points above 16 the party is worth.

Tarnbreaker's Trail

APPENDIX 3: ART



BJERSIG TORRSEN

Tarnbreaker's Trail



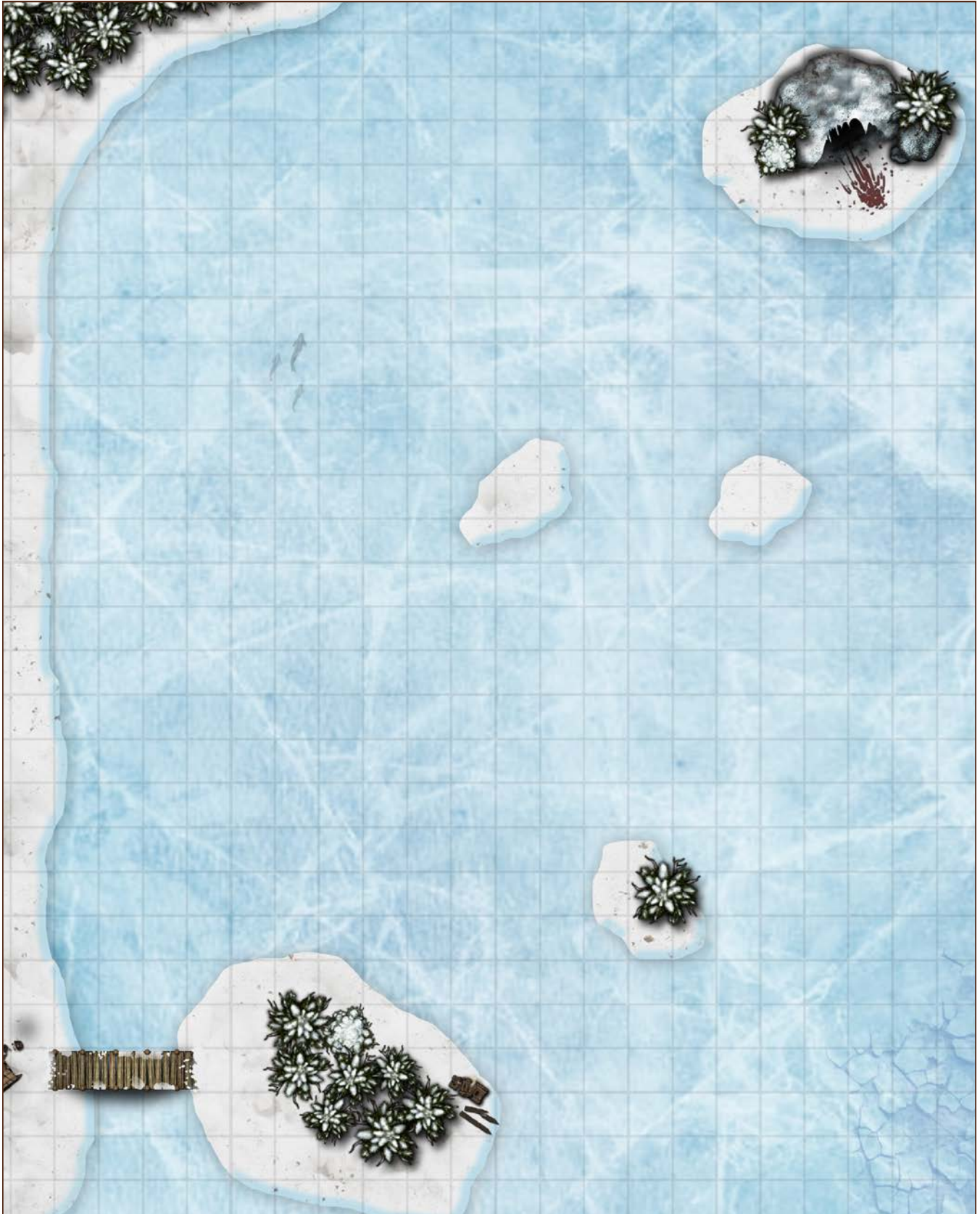
FAERGIM AXEBINDER

Tarnbreaker's Trail



GIANT SHORT-FACED BEAR

Tarnbreaker's Trail



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Player Handout 1: Recommended Supply List

winter clothes, tent, hatchet, rations, healer's kit, 100 feet of hemp rope, repair kit

GM Handout: Race Tracker

| Team | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bluetongue's Brawlers | | | | |
| Fangs of the Remorhaz | | | | |
| Two Houses | | | | |
| Without Trace or Fail | | | | |
| Wyrding Wayfinders | | | | |
| Pathfinder Team | | | | |

Tarnbreaker's Trail

GM REFERENCES

TREASURE TABLE

| Level | Treasure Bundle |
|-------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1.4 gp |
| 2 | 2.2 gp |
| 3 | 3.8 gp |
| 4 | 6.4 gp |

Chronicle Sheet

PCs who win the Balgirdtrek gain the Tarnbreaker Champions boon on their Chronicle sheet.

TREASURE BUNDLES:

The PCs earn 1 Treasure Bundles for every 2 Progress Point they have earned by the time they complete this adventure (for a maximum 10 Treasure Bundles if they earn at least 20 Progress Points).



Event Reporting Form

Date _____ Event Code: _____
Location _____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| GM Org Play #: | GM Name: | GM Faction: |
| Adventure #: | Adventure Name: | |
| Reporting Codes: (check when instructed, line through all if no conditions to report) | | <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D |
| Bonus Faction Goal Achieved: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Scenario-based Infamy earned? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Fame Earned: | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|--|---|
| Faction: | | | |
| Player Name: | Class | <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive <input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance <input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track | |
| Character Name: | Org Play #: | Level | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath <input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters <input type="checkbox"/> Dead |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal <input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel <input type="checkbox"/> Infamy |

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| Character Name: | Org Play #: | Level | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath <input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters <input type="checkbox"/> Dead |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal <input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel <input type="checkbox"/> Infamy |

Tarnbreaker's Trail

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-10: Tarnbreaker's Trail

Character Chronicle #

Herolab Code

U3Y5

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| A.K.A. | | - 2 | |
| Player Name | Character Name | Organized Play # | Character # |
| Faction | | Reputation | |
| Faction | | Reputation | |
| Faction | | Reputation | |

Adventure Summary

You participated in the historic Balgirdtrek and became a part of history in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, while meeting a variety of the region's most famous athletes and one particularly ferocious bear.

Boons

Tarnbreaker Champions (General): You are a champion of the Balgirdtrek, which earns you special privileges throughout the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. While playing in an adventure that takes place primarily in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, you can stay for free at any Ulfen or Varki inn or similar establishment, and you gain a 10% on all non-magical goods bought in Ulfen or Varki settlements (this does not stack with any other discount or reduction in price). In addition, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy checks to Make A Request while playing in an adventure that takes place primarily in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.

Items

Purchases

scroll of snowball (Lost Omens World Guide 112; level 1; 4 gp)

Items Sold / Conditions Gained

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TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD

Add 1/2 this value to the "Items Sold" Box

scroll of snowball (Lost Omens World Guide 112; level 1; 4 gp)

Items Bought / Conditions Cleared

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TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT

Notes

Downtime

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| | |

Starting XP

XP Gained

Final XP

Starting GP

GP Gained

Earn Income

Items Sold

GP Spent

Total GP

Starting Fame

Fame Earned

Total Fame

FOR GM ONLY

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Organized Play #