



# Ready, Steady, Go!

by Jeff Tidball

*(This article first appeared in Game Trade Magazine in the summer of 2004.)*

*Great Cthulhu's tentacle mass whipped forward as his Car of Cthulhu was bumped — hard — from behind. His Crankcase of Charles Dexter Ward made a horrible grinding sound. The damnable Fungi from Indianapolis had been riding his bumper for strange aeons in his thrice accursed Unspeakable Olds.*

*Great Cthulhu muttered something unspeakable as he passed the Yellow Signpost and triggered his radio to let his pit crew know he was coming in for repairs. The Zombies in his crew were unfathomably awful mechanics, but at least they hadn't succumbed to the Black Plague like the previous crew of Tcho-tcho Grease Monkeys.*

*Great Cthulhu knew that his Sponsor That Must Not Be Named would not be pleased if he lost the race, so he prepared to make his enemy An Offer That Must Not Be Refused ...*

\* \* \*

Gentle-beings, start your engines! The **Cthulhu 500** card game puts you in the driver's seat for a frenzied race that mixes the madness of HP Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos and the insanity of motorsports. Each player controls one vehicle, and spends the race maneuvering to pass his opponents. When you pass everyone in the pack, you lap the competition and earn a lap counter, then start moving forward again from the back of the pack. Meanwhile, players use cards to power up their vehicles, hose their enemies, and advance even faster through the pack. The player with the most lap counters when the Checkered Flag is drawn wins the race — and the game — and may

celebrate victory by devouring his enemies before shuffling up for the next heat ...

## Vehicle Cards

At the bottom of this page, you'll find new vehicle cards that you can cut out and include in your own **Cthulhu 500** game: the Monster Truck and the Cthulhu in 2004 Campaign Bus. The schematic Vehicle card for each gives your scores and keeps track of the attachments on your vehicle, while the pack marker Vehicle card tracks your place in the pack order in the center of the table. Vehicle cards aren't shuffled into the play deck in **Cthulhu 500**, so it's not a problem that they're not printed on card stock. *(Note: print pages 2 & 3 double-sided for proper orientation.)*

The vehicles in **Cthulhu 500** each have slightly different statistics on their schematic Vehicle card; those with a high *Speed* are inherently faster than others, while vehicles with a low *Complexity* are easier to repair. Some, like the Monster Truck and Campaign Bus, even have special abilities. Each schematic Vehicle card also has four spaces to attach a driver Crew card, two Mod cards, and a Tires card later in the race.

## Wagering

This new, optional rule for **Cthulhu 500** allow players to wager — using play money, of course — on the likelihood of certain events occurring in the course of play.

First, create a set of wager counters. You'll need three counters — an “Advances” counter, a “Passed” counter, and a “Trashed” counter — for each vehicle being played. (So, for example, you'll have a “Monster Truck Advances” counter, a “Monster Truck Passed” counter, a “Monster Truck Trashed” counter, a “Campaign Bus Advances” counter, and so on.) You can visit [www.atlas-games.com/cthulhu500](http://www.atlas-games.com/cthulhu500) to download a set of counters in PDF format that you can print out and cut apart.

In addition to wager counters, you'll need something to represent money: chips, chits, board game money, etc. Anything that's visually distinct from the lap counters used in play will work.

The rules for wagering are simple. At the end of each player's turn, after he draws cards, the player selects

one wager counter from those available in the center of the table. By selecting one of the “Advances” counters, the player is betting that the vehicle in question will pass the vehicle in front of it soon. A “Passed” counter is a bet that the vehicle in question will *be passed* soon. Finally, the “Trashed” counter is a bet that vehicle will be damaged; if it's already damaged, the bet is that it will be damaged again.

Players hold their wager counters in front of them until the associated action comes to pass in play, no matter how long it takes. When it does, the player holding the corresponding wager counter returns that counter to the center of the table and collects three money chits from the bank. For example, when the Monster Truck passes the vehicle in front of it, the player holding the “Monster Truck Advances” counter returns the counter and collects three money chits.





Money chits can be used in two ways. First, a player can use them to purchase extra wager counters at the end of his turn. Although each player always gets one for free at the end of his turn, extra counters can also be purchased at a rate of one extra counter for one money chit. Second, a player can spend four money chits to draw an extra card during the draw phase of his turn, even in excess of his normal hand limit.

Players are free to exchange money chits with each other, purchase wager counters from each other, place side bets on anything at all, and even buy and sell cards from each other if they can settle on a price. (Players cannot buy and sell cards that are already in play, though.)

Betting adds a fun new dimension to *Cthulhu 500* — be sure to give it a try!

## Shipping to Distributors in August from Atlas Games

110 cards • 3 to 8 players  
ages 8 and up • 30 to 60 minutes

**Single Deck:** Stock No. AG1260,  
ISBN 1-58978-057-4, MSRP \$19.95 US

**Display of Five:** Stock No. AG1261,  
ISBN 1-58978-058-2, MSRP \$99.75 US

Copyright 2004 Trident, Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games.

