

THE ROSRIJDERS

OVERVIEW

Rosrijders can be found anywhere in Perrenland that you find horses, and indeed almost anywhere in Flanaess where horses and fighting are to be found. Outgoing, passionate about their horses, and generally free spirited, Rosrijders as a whole do not take well to towns and cities, but prefer the outdoor life and wide open spaces.

Rosrijder stadts (village-like horse stud farms) can be found spread over most of the Feronwold, from the northern reaches of Krestible in the south, throughout rural Schwartzenuin and the plains of Nederboden, up to the edge of the Mounds of Dawn. The stadts are generally the home of several extended families or septs (sub clans), and in size more resemble a small village than a farm or ranch. This is due to the numbers required to look after their extensive horse studs, riding the boundaries in summer, breaking and training young horses, keeping an eye out that only the best stallions cover mares in breeding season, and rounding up the herds to bring them in to the stadts for winter.

Due to the severe nature of winter on the Feronwold the Rosrijders have developed a distinctive type of architecture, with their houses, store houses, workshops, feed sheds, and huge barns half buried in the ground, solidly walled with thick wood, roofed with turf, and with thickets of blackberry bushes planted on top. The eaves come right to the ground, and the space under the eaves is used as extra storage space for the wood and dried horse dung that is so essential to keep the fires burning during winter. All the buildings in a stadt are linked with covered half buried tunnels so that it is only necessary to go outside during times of great need during the snows of winter. This is not to say the Rosrijders spend all winter underground. Rather they take any opportunity during this season to get out, to play in the snow, to visit other stadts, or to go shopping in the cities.

Their precious herds are kept outside as much as possible, even during winter, but when storms threaten the horses are gathered into huge barns, each capable of stabling over 100 horses, with separate pens for the breeding stallions, to keep them away from each other, and the from the mares and working geldings. Most of the time the only stallions on a stadt will be the studs, with young colts still being broken and trained, but the colts are generally sold off as three year olds. It takes about three years to train a warhorse to the point that it can be sold to its eventual owner for final training. The mares are worked as little as possible, although some are used as riding animals, and most of the working horses are geldings. Generally these are cut at about two or three, when it is decided that they are too mild mannered to be warhorses.

Houses on the stadts are rambling warrens, with new rooms and corridors being added whenever they are needed. Some of the older stadts have over one hundred rooms and a quarter of a mile of corridors. Of course, it can be difficult to work out just where a given house ends and another building starts, but a fair bet is that if you pass down a corridor with doors only at the ends you have moved from one building to the next.

The centre of life on the stadt is the great room of the main house, generally capable of holding all the stadt's residents at a tight squeeze. This is usually where the elder residents can be found, chatting, working at small projects, and keeping an eye on the younger children; those too young to be working with the horses or learning a trade. When a great storm hits most of the stadt's residents, and any visitors, gather here to pass the time telling stories old and new, singing, courting, and politicking. A stadt generally consists of three to five houses, but may be as small as one for a newly established holding, or up to eight or nine, with over two hundred residents.

In addition to the houses, barns and winter feed sheds, a stadt will also have a smithy and forge, a saddlery, an armoury, a cooper's, a butchers', often a small grain mill, a carpenter's, a tannery, and a leather worker's shop.

The interiors of the Rosrijder houses are richly and brightly decorated with tapestries, paintings, and leather work, and finely furnished with elaborately carved and decorated furniture (you have to do something locked up inside during winter). When out on the range the Rosrijders favour neutral colours, generally dun or brown for their riding gear, but when they dress for parties their clothes are anything but neutral. They like bright primary colours, decorated with fringing, ribbons, and bells, the louder and more flamboyant the better.

Rosrijder music and dance is based around the rhythm of a galloping horse, and is known as Hoefslag. The basic rhythm is set by the Trommel slager (drummer), and the melody is intertwined around this by dondelzakblazers (bagpipers), groefs (flutes), luits (lutes), and pijps (pipes). All these instruments are easy to carry on horse back and produce the wild, swirling music the Rosrijders prefer.

They have two main party seasons. One is during the winters months, where the games are often long and elaborate, and young men and women travel from stadt to stadt, looking for prospective mates, catching up with friends, and courting, and the other is when the foaling is finished, in mid spring. This is the Feestelijk Voorjaar (Festival of Spring) dedicated to Atróa, the Oeridian goddess of Spring, the East Wind, and Renewal, and Keph the Untiring (Allitur's Steed), the Golden Stallion, the Patron of Horses, Plains, Weather, and Valiant Riders.

The Rosrijders are followers of the Old Church, but also worship Atróa, and pay homage to Telchur to keep on his good side, but they reserve their main worship for Keph.

Being horsemen first, last, and always, Rosrijders prefer to fight from horseback, and their preferred weapons are composite bows, long swords, hand axes, javelins, and light lances. Preferring speed and agility over heavy armour, Rosrijders rarely wear heavier than medium armour, and rarely put barding on their horses. They tend to be mounted scouts and trackers, horse archers, or medium cavalry. The concept of sitting on a massive plonker of a heavy warhorse, trussed up in plate, and riding stirrup to stirrup is abhorrent to your average Rosrijder. They much prefer having room to manoeuvre in a fight.

Many adventuring Rosrijders are mounted rangers or rogue scouts, but the clan produces a wide range of tough outdoors adventurers.

As a whole the clan is Neutral to Chaotic Good, but obviously there will be exceptions.

ORGANISATION

The Clan

The Rosrijder Clan consists of eight major and nine minor septs. These are the

Major: Staalrijder, Goudenpaard, Vlaktezwerfen, Hoefjager, Groenboum, Rondhuis, Wolfzanger, and Wyndansen,

Minor (and the major clan they originated from): Witstaf (Hoefjager), Zwartwolf (Wolfzanger), Hoogstaart (Staalrijder), Losregering (Staalrijder), Kleinkuil (Hoefjager), Vlugzwaard (Groenboum), Roemstaart (Wyndansen), Zonwandelaar (Groenboum), and Groethoefs (Staalrijder).

Additionally there are several families that are in the long slow process of becoming separate septs. One of these, the Ostdroom, is established across Lake Quag in Traft. Of the major septs the Goudenpaard are mainly in Nederboden, and the Groenboum are almost all in the great stadt of Havikdal in the north of Krestible. Due to the spread out nature of the stadts, and the fact that they are spread over five Cantons, the Rosrijders give their loyalty to their stadts and Cantons, not specifically to the Clan. This is not to say they are not proud to be Rosrijders, the reverse in fact. They are intensely proud of their heritage and their horses, but insulting the Rosrijders as a whole is not liable to get you into a fight. Insulting a Rosrijder's stadt, mother, or horse will get you into a fight, and very quickly. Several of the major septs are also known particularly for the colours of the horses they breed.

The Clan's symbol is a Golden Stallion, Keph, at full gallop upon a field of spring green, and their battle standards are brightly dyed horse tails, a different colour for each sub clan. These are not often seen nowadays, as the Rosrijders tend to go into formal battles riding with their Cantons or mercenary units, but often a Rosrijder will have his clan tail as his own battle pennon.

Inheritance and descent of the Rosrijders is matrilineal, and many Rosrijders never formally marry. This is not to say that the Clan is a matriarchy, as positions within the Clan are earned on merit and the preference of the individual. Although many Rosrijders follow traditional male and female roles, this is more due to the fact that life on the plains can be hard on pregnant women, leading to miscarriages and even death during birthing. If a female Rosrijder wants to follow a traditionally male career path there are no real obstacles in her path.

Each sept elects its leader, or Opperhoofd, from amongst the eligible adults of the sept, for life. This is not a straight election, as the old Opperhoofd will nominate a chosen successor, who is usually elected, but the sept Ontmoeting can reject this choice and appoint who they want. There is no set criteria for the position, other than being an eligible and competent adult of the sept, but if the Opperhoofd is not a warrior then an Orlogpaard (war chief) is selected.

The Opperhoofd of the Staalrijders, the oldest, largest, and richest of the septs, is also the Voorstammann of the entire Clan. Voorstammann (lit. foremost tribes man) is an old Flan term, which in dealing outside the Clan is replaced by the more modern term Pfalzgraf, although as it is not an hereditary position the Rosrijders avoid using it as much as possible, as they do the terms Obergraf (equivalent to the Opperhoofd of one of their major septs) and Graf (Opperhoofd of a minor sept). Thus the Opperhoofds take their positions in the House of Grafs, even though they are not technically nobles. The Rosrijders do not have clan nobility as such, but the members of the major septs have more prestige and often more influence politically as they have greater access to the Opperhoofds, and in the case of Staalrijders, to the Voorstammann.

None of the Opperhoofds are eligible to be elected by the Clan to the Voormann's position, nor is the Opperhoofd of the Groenboum eligible to be elected Voorstadmann of Krestible. This is because the Rosrijders feel that the duties of an Opperhoofd take up enough time and effort to make it impossible to fulfil the requirements of two positions. Thus the Clan as a whole, will nominate their best possible candidate for the Voormann's position, chosen for their ability alone. If this happens to be one of the Opperhoofds they must step down from their position, and another is appointed. However this is exceptionally rare, as they then may not return to the position of Opperhoofd until the new incumbent dies or retires. The same applies to the Voorstadmann's position in Krestible. This does not mean that the Rosrijders are not active in Canton and Perrenland politics. On the contrary they are extremely active, and very vocal and blunt about it.

The roles of the Voorstammann and Opperhoofds are not as important as they once were, but they still play a very active part in Clan affairs, and of course, are the Clans representatives to the House of Grafs.

The Voorstammann adjudicates on any clashes or infringements that cross sept boundaries according to traditional clan law. They usually set the political agenda and stance of the clan entire, but individual Rosrijders are quite free to express their own points of view, and even act on them if they do not transgress the law. They have a right of veto on the appointment of any Opperhoofd, but must be able to justify it in Groot Ontmoeting. This involves the meeting of every possible adult of the clan, and is not something that has happened in living memory. They also officiate at major Clan functions and occasions, such as the inauguration of a new Opperhoofd or Orlogpaard, and even at some weddings and funerals, etc. It is their duty to represent the Clan to the best of their ability in Council, and it is from them that the call to arms to the entire Clan comes when summoned to war.

The Opperhoofds have similar duties within their own septs, and additionally have the right to veto the Staalrijders' appointment of their own Opperhoofd. This requires a unanimous vote of the Opperhoofds gathered in Ontmoeting.

In time of war the Opperhoofds, including the Voorstammann, will nominate one of the Orlogpaards as Bevelheber Generaal, and although it will usually be the Orlogpaard of the Staalrijders, it is not limited to members of the Staalrijders, but rather goes to the best commander in the Clan, it may go to one of the other Orlogpaards, the Bevelheber of the Staal Jager, or even to a Rosrijder mercenary recalled from external service to take up the position.

Clan Law

Within the Clan and stadts Rosrijders follow simple and pragmatic laws, and practice collective responsibility. If you are wronged by a Rosrijder redress will come from their sept, for the actions of one reflect upon the whole. However, if you wrong a Rosrijder, be prepared to take on their entire family, for they believe it works both ways. Their laws are based on blood price and restitution. Theft or damage will be paid for or replaced, as will the death or maiming of stock. If there is a killing in a fight the deceased family will be paid blood price, often in the form of horses, but murder is punished by the Clan by declaring the offender nietgezin (not family), exiling them and removing all rights to family protection and aid.

They practice the hospitality of Home and Hearth to travellers, especially during winter, and even if you are an enemy of the Clan you will be granted shelter until you can leave safely. This is not a guarantee that they will let you live, but they will give you half a day head start before coming after you. If you can get off their stadt before they catch you, they stop chasing.

The Stadts

Stadts are built in dips in the plains, and centre around two or three wells, one of which will be inside the barns, one in the central huis and one outside to water the stadt's other stock. Apart from horses the stadts also raise a number of other animals. They keep some cattle, mainly dairy, flocks of chickens and geese (the geese are both watch animals and a source of meat, eggs, and feathers for fletchings), pigs, and long haired goats, for wool, cheese and milk. Rosrijders are not overly fond of dogs, either as working animals or pets, and think they are laughable as riding beasts. If you are too small to ride a horse, at least ride a pony. The stadts are not actually fortified, as the Rosrijders prefer to do all their fighting from horseback in the open, but by the very nature of their construction if enemies reach them they are difficult to break into or burn.

The stadt sites are all heavily treed, with carefully planted low growing hardy trees to provide shelter and shade in summer and wind breaks in winter. Additionally many dips and small vales across the Feronwold have also been carefully planted with trees to provide the same for the horse herds and herdsmen and women. These plantings always have a well or a soak spring in them to provide water on the often dry plain. During summer you will often find a small camp in one of these, although it may not have any one in it. Treat it with respect and do not foul the water, for the herders who built it may be back at any time. Many of these summer camp sites are also the locations of huidkuils (lit: hidey holes) dug into the side of the dips. They are stocked during summer with dried meat, vegetables, grain, and rounds of cheese, generally enough to last five people and horses for two weeks. They are winter shelters for Rosrijders caught on the plains by winter storms, and are absolutely sacrosanct and places of complete neutrality. Travellers trapped by a storm will usually find something to do in the huidkuils, as the Clan has a habit of also stocking them with a small armoury of shorts spears and arrows, and the bits and pieces for making more. Travellers making use of the huidkuils are expected to put in a bit of work on producing more spears and completed arrows, and when they leave the huid to clean it out, set any horse dung to dry for next winter, and if they can, leave some supplies for the next people through. They are also required to notify the nearest stadt that they have used the huidkuil so that it can be restocked. The huidkuil are well hidden

(DC20 to any non Rosrijder on a Search check, DC30 if it is covered in winter snow), but all Rosrijders are taught as young children to be able to find them from subtle markings on the trees in the camps where they are located.

Rosrijder Types

The Rosrijders are a total amalgam of Flan and Oeridian tribesmen, with a small intermingling of Baklunish. They grew out of small bands of rebels who retreated onto the hostile plains of the Feronwold during the Aerdi occupation, from whence they raided against occupying garrisons and tax collectors. These bands came to be known as rood rijders, and the eight major septs, plus the extinct Kraiaas (wiped out by Iggwilv one hundred years ago), grew out of these bands, and the collective name was adopted by them in corrupted form when they solidified as a Clan after the Battle of Heldplaat, a great victory over the Ravening Horde.

The original bands were semi-nomadic, but began to settle down and build their stadts in the early years of Perren the Great's time as Voormann. The first stadtt built was at Heldplaat, followed shortly there after by the occupation of Wyndplaat, and the settling of Diepval.

They speak a heavily Flan influenced dialect of Common, and many of them also speak Flan, and it is this Flan influence that leads to the Rosrijder unique titles they use.

Rosrijders tend to be small and nuggety, but tall and slender, bulky, or wiry individuals are not unknown. Most Rosrijders at a stadtt will be plain folk, but they will always be multi classed with at least one level of Warrior with the Feats Mounted Combat and Mounted Archery due to the nature of life on the stadtt and the need to protect their wide ranging herds. Most stadts will often have Expert blacksmiths, farriers, armourers, bowyers and fletchers, saddlers and leather workers. Needless to say there will always be several Expert horse trainers and breeders.

Very few Rosrijders become Druids, mainly because of their strong devotion to Keph, but you will find Fighters, many Rangers, Bards, Clerics, Wizards, Rogues, and Sorcerers amongst their number, and even the occasional Paladin.

Due to their tendencies towards neutral and chaotic good, however, Paladins are rare. Their role amongst the Rosrijders is taken by two groups, the Sturm Ruiters, and the Voorstammann's elite guard, the Staal Jager .

Due to the stadts being widely spread (often 30-40 miles apart) over a large area most of the Rosrijder Rangers have a tendency to work from home, basing themselves out of their family stadtt, and riding the boundaries in ones and twos for about a week at a time before returning for a couple of days to restock. This is a role also undertaken by Rogue scouts.

There are few demi-humans amongst the Rosrijders, mostly half-elves, whose mothers are members of the Clan. This is not due to any dislike of demi-humans, but because few demi-humans are as horse minded and capable as the Rosrijders.

The Stadts and People

Voorstammann: Gerte Staalrijder (See below)

Capital: Heldplaatz (See below)

Standard: A Golden Stallion Galloping on a Green Field

War Cry: In Koelen Bloed (In Cold Blood) (When the Clan goes to war as a whole it is after careful determination, and with a very specific end in mind.)

Numbers: Approximately 30,000. 99% Human, 1% Half Elf, 16 Half Orcs (they are so rare every one in the Clan knows exactly who they are)

The Major Septs

Staalrijder

Main Stadt: Heldplaatz - 45 miles north west of Schwarzenbruin

Population: 1,100

Sept Numbers: 4,700

Number of Stadts: 9

Seat of Rosrijder Voorstammann and Staalrijder Opperhoofd

Banner: Silver horse tail

War Cry: Degenenhoef (Sword and Hoof)

Voorstammann and Opperhoofd - Gerte Staalrijder (8th lvl Bard, CG, f, 53)

Gerte has been Voorstammann and Opperhoofd for three years. A cheery exterior hides an inner strength that can be likened to the fine steel of the clan's name. A polished diplomat, she wandered far and wide in her youth, and has a good understanding of world affairs and politics. An implacable opponent of the neutrality stance of the Voorstadmann, she has infused many of her clans' folk with her opinion.

Orlogpaard (War Horse) - Danik Staalrijder (11th lvl Fighter,CG, m, 41)

Danik was appointed Orlogpaard at the same time as Gerte took up her position. Before that he had been the Eerstdegen (First Sword) of the Staaljager for two years. The Staaljager are the Voorstammann's Grafgardt and the heavy core of the Rosrijders' clan forces.

Heldplaatz is the oldest, largest classic style, and richest of the Rosrijder stadts. There are three main reasons for this, and its age and size are but one of them. Additional to this is its proximity to Schwarzenbruin and its markets, and finally because it is the site of the annual Feestelijk Voorjaar (Festival of Spring) of Atroa and Keph.

The Feestelijk Voorjaar draws Rosrijders from all over the Feronwold and as many of the clan who live or work elsewhere who can make it. It is a time of celebration and thanks for the return of spring and the end of the foaling that brings wealth to the clan. All the sub clans attend and bring their three year olds for sale. This sale attracts buyers from all over Flanaess, come to purchase prime Rosrijder light warhorses and riding horses.

The Rosrijder breeders and trainers show off their colts and geldings, and a very few fillies, in a five day celebration of horsemanship, speed, agility, and endurance. There are displays and competitions of trick riding,

races (both sprint and cross country), tent pegging, horse archery, and the final of the Clan's seemingly never ending wevenstok (lacrosse on horse back) tournament. Each sept and stadt strives to excel and show up the others. It's also at the Spring Festival that the septs trade stud and breeding rights for their stallions and mares.

The Staalrijders breed spectacular steel grey horses with black manes, tails and hocks. Their stadts are all in the east of the Feronwold, generally within a a day and a half ride from the shores of Lake Quag. They trade extensively with the Vestmeer clansfolk, and are on extremely good terms with them.

Goudenpaard

Main Stadt: Diepval - plains of Nederboden

Population: 620

Sept Numbers: 2,400

Number of Stadts: 7

Seat of Opperhoofd and main centre for Storm Riders

Banner: Golden horse tail

War Cry: De Kopnemen (Take the Lead)

Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard - Ingvik Goudenpaard (11th lvl Ra, CG, f, 41)

Ingvik is the newest of the Opperhoofd, having taken up the position only last year. She has spent her entire life working out of Diepval, patrolling the foothills of the Yatils to prevent any incursions onto the Feronwold. Dour and quietly spoken, she is a master horsewoman, and has started to work closely with the Goudenpaard herd masters to increase the agility of their palominos to enable them to work more effectively up into the Yatils. She is not particularly interested in international politics unless the directly impinge upon the interests of Diepval and Nederboden. Ingvik leads her clan warriors into battle when necessary, and is a strong supporter of the Sturm Ruiters who are based here.

Diepval is the holiest site for Keph's worshippers, for it was here that Keph gifted his sons to a small stadt of Rosrijders in the earliest days of the Clan's formation. Since then the Goudenpaards have become famous for their palominos and every generation sees a few colts born that are truly the sons of Keph. These colts become the mounts of the Sturm Ruiters, and live as long as their riders, up to 60 or 70 years in some cases. Diepval gets its name from the depth of the vale in which it is built. The valley is deep and steep sided, and travellers to the vale are guided to it only by the smoke from the stadt's fires. You cannot see any of the vale until you get to the very lip of its surrounding land, and suddenly the vista opens up before you.

All six smaller Goudenpaard stadts cluster around Diepval, forming quite a high population density on the Feronwold, as none are more than thirty miles from the main stadt.

Groenboum

Main Stadt: Havikdal - northwest of Krestible, at the edge of the Yatils

Seat of Opperhoofd

Population: 1,700

Sept Numbers: 1,850

Number of Stadts: 1

Banner: Green horse tail

War Cry: Verwoesting (Havoc)

Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard - Jost Groenboum (15th lvl C(Keph), CG, m, 64)

Jost has been Opperhoofd for almost as long as any one cares to remember, he ascended to the position young and has ruled Havikdal with a benevolent despotism ever since. Jovial and hospitable for the most part, he has an iron will and a core of steel, and is not a man to be crossed for no reason. Jost has taken an active part in Krestible and Perren politics through out his life and is a well known stirrer. He was an implacable opponent of the neutrality deal, and sent many of his youngsters out of Perrenland to fight against luz, either in Perrender mercenary units, or to provide cavalry for other nations armies. Whilst he is not eligible to become mayor of Krestible it is an open secret that any Groenboum mayor answers directly to Jost whilst in the position. He still rides at the head of the clan forces, and it seems he will continue to do so forever.

Havikdal is unusual for a Rosrijder stadt in that it is spread over a much wider area than normal, virtually filling the valley that it is in, and almost all Groenboums live in the stadt. It is not only the main stadt for the sept, it is the only one. The large number of trees in the valley give the sept their name, and it is through the coppicing of these that most of the Rosrijder arrows are produced. Whilst bows are made throughout Rosrijder lands, the very best arrows come from here in Havikdal, and the best of these are fletched with the feathers of the red hawks that abound around the valley (*masterwork arrows*).

The Groenboums bred a spectacular variety of spotted horse, with a cream coat and red mane and tail, with red spots scattered in profusion over the rest of the coat. They are a nimble and quick breed, better suited to the hilly Krestible country than the majority of Rosrijder horses. The Groenboums maintain an intense rivalry with the Weisspeer over the quality of their horses and horsemanship. It rarely leads to violence, but spectacular competitions and races are common to prove superiority.

Wolfzanger

Main Stadt: Kleinstadt, on the road from Krestible to Schwartzenuin

Seat of Opperhoofd

Population: 850

Sept Numbers: 4,100

Number of Stadts: 8

Banner: Black horse tail

War Cry: Bijtens het Wolf (the Wolf Bites)

Opperhoofd - Karl Wolfzanger (9th lvl Expert, CG, m, 49)

Karl is a horse breeder and trainer who has shown a knack for dealing with people as well as he deals with horses. He has been Opperhoofd of the Wolfzanger for six years, and has greatly increased their wealth through his dealing in the horse markets. He is a close political ally of both Gerte Staalrijder and Jost Groenboum, and often acts as spokesman for the anti neutrality party in clan council. He prefers to get out and work with his horses as much as possible, and it is not uncommon to find him conducting sept business at the same time as he

is breaking a yearling or training a two or three year old. At least once he has passed judgement on a dispute whilst in the midst of supervising a difficult birth, one arm to the shoulder inside a mare whilst signing the decision with the other.

Orlogpaard - Greta Wolfzanger (8th/6th F/S, CG, f, 42)

A veteran of the Greyhawk Wars, Greta came home to take up the position of Orlogpaard at the request of Karl when her older brother Henke died in a boating accident on Lake Quag. She served for many years in the army of Furyondy, leading the scouts, and many Rosrijders who served with her still respect her as their old commander. She is seen by some as a possible successor to Danik Staalrijder as Orlogpaard of the entire Clan, as this position is not one reserved for any particular sept. Boisterous and convivial, Greta is definitely no beauty, her face heavily scarred from an encounter with a troll many years ago, but her inner strength shines through and her troops would follow her any where.

The Wolfzanger's herds produce mainly black horses, but occasionally they also produce ones with a blanket of white spots across the withers and rump. Try as they might the sept's herd masters have not been able to fix this beautiful colouring to a more common birth rate, but they continue to try.

The Wolfzanger stadts are spread across the south of the Feronwold, from virtually the shores of Lake Quag in the east to Goudenpaard lands at the base of the Yatils in the west. Kleinstadt is a busy caravan stop, situated four days north of Krestible on the road to Schwartzenbruin, and is almost certainly the most cosmopolitan of all the Rosrijder stadts, Heldplaatz notwithstanding.

Wyndanzen

Main Stadt: Wyndplaatz, just south of the Mounds of Dawn

Seat of Opperhoofd

Population: 920

Sept Numbers: 3,400

Number of Stadts: 8

Banner: Sky blue horse tail

War Cry: Rijden den Wind (Ride the Wind)

Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard - Mika Wyndansen (14th lvl W, NG, m, 51)

Mika has been Opperhoofd of the Wyndanzen for a decade, and Orlogpaard for the last three years. He was the only Rosrijder Opperhoofd to support the neutrality decision, but he had his reasons. Facing the monsters of the Hugelrote since time immemorial the Wyndanzen were more interested in having peace so they could protect the herds, rather than have all the sept's warriors called away to fight a war elsewhere. Mika despises luz as much as anyone, it is just that he has other things on his plate most of the time.

Wyndplaatz is unique amongst Rosrijder stadts in that it is not tucked in to a dip or valley in the Wold, but rather carved out of a hill, the southernmost outlier of the Mounds of Dawn. From their watch tower on top of the hill the Wyndanzen lookouts keep a watch day and night over the southern edge of the Mounds, always alert for any incursion onto the plains of Hugelrote's monsters. Wyndplaatz is old Ur-Flanne site, fully fortified, with a rammed earth and stone wall circling the base of the hill, and a dry, steep, and deep, ditch outside this. The only

access to the stad is across a bridge over the ditch and through a fortified gate house. Wyndplaat acts as a bulwark for the rest of the Wyndanzen stadts, which fan out to the south behind it, and is the centre of an efficient network of warning beacons which link all the stadts and summer campsites. If Wyndplaat lights its beacon the Wyndanzen down tools and come fast, to turn back any threat before it gets out onto the Wold.

Vlaktezwerfen

Main Stadt: Woldhart, middle of the Feronwold

Seat of the Opperhoofd

Population: 780

Sept Numbers: About 4,000, its hard to tell when they are scattered all over the world

Number of Stadts: 9

Banner: Bright Red

War Cry: Stilleven (Still Standing)

Opperhoofd - Janik Vlaktezwerfen (10th lvl Bard, CG, m, 57)

Janik is a tall, spare, man, which makes him stand out even more amongst the short, compact Rosrijders. He has been Opperhoofd for nine years, and before that he acted as regent to his predecessor when Gildas was struck down by a wasting illness for the last three years of her life. Immensely popular amongst his people, he is a master of the art of saying much whilst revealing little. Probably the best political animal amongst the Opperhoofd, he thinks long and hard before taking a stand on any issue, and ranks the issues as to what is best for Perrenland, the Canton, the Clan, and then the Vlaktezwerfen. Strangely, although his people are aware of this, they still love and respect him.

Orlogpaard - Danik Vlaktezwerfen (7th lvl F, CG, m, 32)

Danik is Janik's true son, and has only just become Orlogpaard. As such he is the youngest, least experienced, and lowest ranked of all the Rosrijder Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard. A hard riding lancer, Danik served for several years in mercenary companies before returning to Perrenland to take up his current position. A known tactician and charismatic leader of men, Danik is very definitely anti neutrality, and has stated publicly that he would quite happily lead the Vlaktezwerfen riders out of Perrenland to face luz's forces.

The Vlaktezwerfen lands lie in the heart of the Feronwold, and were the last settled of the eight major sub clans. They consist of Woldhart and nine smaller stadts scattered about 40 miles apart. The Vlaktezwerfen were the last of the Rosrijders to give up their initial semi-nomadic life style and settle down, and this is still shown in their extensive travels whilst young. Vlaktezwerfen, as a whole, travel much more extensively than even other mobile Rosrijders, and if you run across a Rosrijder a very long way from home, they are almost certainly a Vlaktezwerfen.

They are also known for the spectacular roans that their herds throw out on a regular basis, although in general a Vlaktezwerfen bred horse will be a brown or a chestnut.

Rondhuis

Main Stadt: Rondhuis, north east corner of Nederboden, about twenty miles from the western shore of lake Quag

Seat of the Opperhoofd

Population: 660

Sept Numbers: 3,600

Number of Stadts: 7

Banner: Dark blue and white horse tail

War Cry: Meoilikheden (Get Around)

Opperhoofd - Lika Rondhuis (12th lvl C (of Atroa), CG, f, 51)

Lika is the second longest serving Opperhoofd, having held her position since she was only 29. She is a large and open faced woman who laughs easily, and treats the entire sept as her children (they all call her Mother, or even Little Mother, in return). The Rondhuis tend to look more towards the north than the Feronwold, but are true Rosrijders in that the plains are their home, and their horses are their life. Their focus on the north is more for the threats that can come down from the Nomad territories and the Mounds of Dawn. The Rondhuis are unusual in that they do not have an Orlogpaard, and generally when they go to war the blue and white banners of the sept ride with one of the others, most often the Staalrijders or the Wyndanzen.

The sept gets its name for its other peculiarity. Unlike the other Rosrijders, whose dug in buildings are rectangular, those of the Rondhuis are round. The reasons for this are lost in the mists of time, but it has always been so with the sept.

Hoefjager

Main Stadt: None (the home of whomever is currently Opperhoofd)

Sept Numbers: 2,800

Number of Stadts: 11 (all 200 to 300)

Banner: Purple horse tail

War Cry: Moed Vajten (Take Courage)

Opperhoofd - Eudlf Hoefjager (15th lvl Expert, TN, m, 54)

The Hoefjager are traditionally the least war-like of the Rosrijder septs. Rather they are the craft masters of the Rosrijders and generally pick their Opperhoofd from their master craftsmen, rather than from their more adventurous types. Eudlf is typical of this, he is a master bowmaker, the finest amongst the entire clan. Due to the nature of the Hoefjager his duties as Opperhoofd do not interfere too greatly with his work. He lives in the stadt of Drukhuys, only fifteen miles south west of Heldplaatz.

Eudlf is politically and philosophically neutral, but he is adamantly opposed to any dealings on any level with luz whatsoever. Since becoming Opperhoofd of the Hoefjager during the Greyhawk Wars he has persistently argued this position in clan council. Whatever Perrenland does in its international dealings to advance its position or defend itself, negotiating with luz is not the way to do it. "He's a treacherous son of a bitch, and as soon as an opportunity presents itself any treaty is not going to be worth the parchment it is inscribed upon."

The Hoefjager, unlike the rest of the septs, do not have a contiguous territory, but rather their stadts are scattered across the entirety of the Feronwold. Of all the Rosrijder septs they are by far the most individualistic,

and produce a very high number of rangers, sorcerers, and Storm Riders from amongst their ranks.

Due to the individualistic nature of the Hoefjager stadts they, like the Rondhuis, do not have an Orlogpaard, but rather their warriors ride with those of the nearest of the other septs'. However, because of this, every Hoefjager carries their purple horse tail into battle, affixed either to a lance or their helmet.

The minor septs have their stadts scattered all over the Feronwold, and represent about another 3,000 population. None of their stadts have more than 250 people, and most of them have specialised in one particular field. For example, the Losregering specialise in healers and veterinarians, the Kleinkuil are primarily interested in the dyeing of leather and high quality leather goods, and the Zonwandelaar turn out a high number of Bards and legalists, and produce many masterwork musical instruments.

The Ostdroom

Main Stadt: Ostdroom - North east of Traft, near the edge of the Sepia Uplands

Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard - Katerina Ostdroom (6th lvl Ro, CG, f, 38)

Population: 120

Gezin Numbers: 120

Number of Stadts: 1

The Ostdroom are regarded as strange by the rest of the Rosrijders. Whilst they are recognised as Rosrijders, the rest of the Clan cannot fathom why they choose to live in the constrained lands east of Lake Quag, and why they are ruining perfectly good breeding lines by crossing them with heavier horses.

The Ostdroom, on the other hand, can't see what the problem is. They began three generations ago as a mix of Hoefjager, Vlaktezwerven, and Wolfzanger who had spent many years out of Perrenland as mercenaries, acting as scouts and mounted archers across Flanaess. During that time they crossed several of their stallions with the heavier mares of the east, and found that on occasions they produced a heavy horse with almost the speed, endurance, and agility of a Perren light horse. This wasn't consistent, but it happened often enough for them to be willing to see if they could fix the traits in a line. When they returned to Perrenland they realised that the heavy mares they wanted to breed wouldn't cope with Feronwold winters, so they acquired land outside Traft, and named their project the Ostdroom. Gradually they are getting closer to their goal, with more of the foals showing the traits they want, but too many still throw back to either light or heavy horse, or worse, produce the speed of a heavy with the strength of a light.

Katerina served with the armies of Furyondy, under Greta Wolfzanger, and has seen the activities of Iuz and his forces at first hand, including a short stint as a prisoner until rescued by Greta. She is a close ally of the Wolfzanger Orlogpaard.

Rosrijder Nominee for Voormann:

Nikki Wolfzanger (12th lvl B, CG, m, 41)

Nikki Wolfzanger has travelled extensively throughout Flanaess, served with a variety of mercenary units

and national armies as a Herald, and for the past three years has been travelling on behalf of Gerte Staalrijder, visiting all the Rosrijder stadts and speaking to the Opperhoofds and Orlogpaards, as well as to as many of the Clan as he can find. During this time he has also been out of Perrenland to visit as many of the Perren mercenary units he could get, especially those with Rosrijders serving in them. His mission has been to sound out the Clan on the subjects of luz, neutrality, and what they want from the Voormann. Until recently he had no idea that Gerte was going to nominate him for the Voormann's position, but he is better prepared for this than any other Rosrijder.

He has reached the view that the only way Perrenland can guarantee its current level of freedom, a freedom gained after a long and hard fight, is to have strong ties of friendship and alliance with those nations immediately to its south and east that are fighting luz. As silver tongued as all Bards, he can speak plainly and bluntly when needs be, and above all he has a vision that encompasses more than just Perrenland and its internal needs.

Rosrijder Clan Forces: In times of great need the Rosrijders can put almost all their active adult population, male and female, into the field, which represents almost half their total numbers. This makes available to the Auszug some 13,000 mounted warriors, fighters, rangers, rogues, clerics, wizards and sorcerers, armed with composite bows, lances and longswords. Additionally, each major sept has groups of around twenty full time, well equipped and trained fighters and rangers permanently available at their main stadt or with their Opperhoofd. These, with the Staal Jager and Sturm Ruiters, provide about 360 full time professional elite light/medium cavalry, most of whom know each other, and have trained with each other over the years.

CLAN PECULIARITIES

All Rosrijders are proficient with dagger, light mace, shortspear, handle, light lance, longsword, and composite short and long bows, and with light armour and shields, regardless of class.

All NPC Rosrijders may have the following skills as class skills, regardless of what class they are:

Animal Empathy - Limited - horses only,

Handle Animal - Limited - horses only, and

Ride - Limited - horses only.

The Staaljager

The Staaljager are both the Rosrijder Voorstamman's Grafgardt and the collective name of all the Rosrijder Grafgardts. Entry is by application and is conditional on not only meeting the requirements below, but passing a test of both riding and combat skills.

The Sept gardt units are named as follows:

Wolfzanger - Wolfshart

Goudenpaard - Keph's Eigen

Wyndanzen - Wyndmuur

Vlaktezwerven - Standvastig

Hoefjager - Paardjager

Groenbaum - Paardpijl

Rondhuis - Berweginghek

and minor Sept gardts are all known as Degengardts. The entire Staaljager comes together 6 times a year, where they train together as a regiment. The rest of the year their primary duty is protection of their Septs and stadts. New members apply, are tested and inducted at the Feestelijk Voorjar.

They originated in the war bands of the rebel groups that became the Rosrijder Septs during the time of the Aerdi occupation and the Nomad invasions, and originally included every member of the group who could be accounted a front line fighter. As the groups grew into tribes and then the Septs the war bands became their striking force. After the establishment of Perrenland and the formalisation of the new nation's structure they became the Staaljager.

Each unit is commanded either by the Sept's Orlogpaard, or if the Opperhoofd and Orlogpaard are the same person, by the Eerstdegen (First Sword). They are a hard riding, hard hitting force, and are more heavily armoured and armed than most clansmen, even to the use of barding on their horses in combat. The Staaljager include a significant proportion of fighting Clerics among their ranks, although they accept members of all classes, even though the majority of members are Fighters or Rangers.

Requirements:

Be a Rosrijder

Ride - 5+ ranks

Handle Animal - 5+ ranks

Feats: Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, and Combat Casting **or** Alertness

Grants access to the Prestige Classes Staaljager (as per Windrider) and Staalpriester (as per War Priest)

Grants access to the feats Dirty Fighting, Sharpshooting, and Reach Spell, plus feats available through the PrCs.

Requires 10 TUs

Benefits:

Diplomacy as a class skill

Free accomodation at any Rosrijder stad (0 lifestyle cost)

Can purchase Rosrijder light warhorses, langzaddles, and accesories.

Oath: I dedicate my life, my horse, and my bow to the service of the Clan, until I am discharged, or my life shall end. I pledge this by the Untiring Stallion and the Maiden of Spring.

Eerstdegen - Lothar Roemstaart (5th/3rd Ftr/Staaljager, H, CG, M, 34)

Banner: The Golden Stallion of the Rosrijders, with coloured horsetails representing each of the septs, and an empty attachment for the Kraiaas.

War Cry: Heterdaad (Red Handed)

The Gentle Art of Wevenstok, or How Rosrijders Express Political Displeasure Without Taking Heads (Anymore)

Wevenstok, a game of horse, stick, and kopf (head sized ball) played by the Rosrijders, has its origins in antiquity. Used to train young warhorses and to keep their riders in training, it still displays touches of the Rosrijder attitude to enemies of old.

It is played on a roughly square piece of ground, traditionally a bow shot by a bow shot, and given the distances achievable by a proficient user of the composite long bow fired from horse back, you can see that it is played over a large area. The rules are basically simple.

Two teams of twenty riders attempt to move a kopf down the field and and fling into the opposition goal. The goals are set fifty yards in from the end of the field, and take the form of a conical yurt with its door open. To do this the riders are equipped with a loosely woven rawhide net, its mouth held open by a ring of wattle, attached to the end of a blunt lance.

The players wear light leather armour and helmets, and bucklers. It is allowable to attempt to sweep an opponent from the saddle with the lance, but not to thrust or charge with it, and it is not allowable to strike directly at a horse, although shouldering an opponents horse aside with your own is allowed.

The game is started with the ball placed in roughly the middle of the field, and the two teams lined up along side each other on the side line. At he signal to start there is a general charge for the ball, which is scooped up by the first rider to reach it in his or her net. It is then passed to a team mate by flinging it, generally using a two handed technique that requires standing in the stirrups, but occasionally a very good or strong proponent may do this one handed. The ball then progresses down the field towards the team's goal. At least four passes are required from the time a team acquires the ball before a shot on goal is allowed. Games are usually played the first to three, but occasionally the target may be set higher.

As previously stated, the ball is head shaped, and indeed, in the past it was played with a real enemy's head (hence the Rosrijder comment, "You broke it, you get a new one"). These days it is made of a rawhide bag the size of a head, stuffed with rags, and has a face painted on it, and is commonly named. A sure sign that you have attracted the opprobrium of the Rosrijders is to achieve the honour of having the ball named after you. In recent years a favourite name on the ball has been that of the Voormann, Karenin, and before that it was almost exclusively that of his predecessor, Franz. Other favourite names are luz, and occasionally Iggwilv. Interestingly, during the run up to this election the name Karl seems to be popping up, particularly amongst the southern stadt games.

The game has its origins in the method by which the ancestors of the Rosrijders expressed their

contempt for Aerdi tax collectors. A head would be taken, and then a mad ride past an Aerdi garrison would end with the head being flung over the walls. On these rides as little killing as possible was done, but as much mayhem and havoc as could be achieved was carried out.

Springtime, after the the Feronwold has dried out from the snow melt, is the time of most of the games, and they are usually played on two or three year olds, and culminate in the great tournament at the Feestelijk Voorjaar, with every stadt striving to get at least one team entered. The big stadts such as Heldplaatz, Havikdal, Wyndplaatz, and Kleinstadt, often have as many as twenty teams competeing at the Festival. However, the Rosrijders continue to play through summer and autumn, for fun and training, and an interesting and useful side effect of this is that when the Clan goes to war the teams ride together and fight together as very cohesive and well co-ordinated units.

The constant cut and thrust of the game is an excellent training tool both for warhorses and riders, as it accustoms the horses to the push and shove and noise of a battle, and the riders to working together. The Gods help a ball carrier who gets isolated from his team mates, for he will almost certainly find himself in the dirt very quickly, for while he may fend off or dodge one or two sweeps, it is the rare player who can survive three or four.