

# THE LAST BAND

Post  
Apocalyptic!

**RACING**

**EXPLOSIONS!**

Kyle Willey

**The Last Band is a game about post-apocalyptic criminals riding sentient motorcycles duking it out in musical battles at The Lantern, the last concert venue on Earth!**

**Excerpted from Luke Stillman's Journal, 2059:**

## The Lantern

The Lantern used to be a giant stadium where teams of people would compete in gladiatorial matches (the forefathers are shaky on this point), but one thing's clear; it got hit hard when the bombs fell. Between its lights and the gentle glow of radiation, it is called the Lantern because when there's a show it illuminates half of town!

Every once in a while we get some criminals in town, and make them do a battle in there.

## Battlebikes

Papa says to stay away from the Battlebikes, but here's what I know about them; they're smart bicycles that go really fast and people can ride them. They're a lot like horses, but more dangerous. Or so he says. They're what we make criminals fight on when we disband them.

## Disbanding

When we make criminals fight to the death, we call it "disbanding". It's a you-fee-something. Either way, it's one heck of a show; there's music, Battlebikes, and explosions! My papa doesn't like me watching Disbandings, but sometimes I sneak in anyway. There's this whole scoring system based on their music and it's great, then everything ends with a boom!

**Sometimes, it's just too hard to get people to atone for their crimes. When this happens, we call a Disbanding. We give the criminals a Battlebike each and put them in the Lantern, and let them fight until their bikes run out of fuel or they begin bleeding from the radiation. Either way, nobody leaves, but we made it a little more crazy. We make everyone play music as well (usually badly), and we've rigged the Battlebikes so that they respond to what the music does. When a Battlebike runs out of fuel, it triggers bombs in its saddlebags that blow the passenger clear out of The Lantern. Not sure why they called it "Disbanding", though. Tradition dates back to Elder Mark, who got rid of a particularly nasty gang that way. Plus, he liked puns.**

**The Last Band is best played with a group of players, three six-sided dice, dead trees or a digital equivalent, and a bunch of imagination.**

## The Rules:

**Each player fields a "band" of four mostly disreputable individuals and Battlebikes, and participates in a Disbanding, a musical spectacular complete with racing around the track and explosions. Nobody leaves alive, but it's 2059 and there's not much to live for, so may as well go out with a bang (and a new track record)!**

## Band Creation:

**Each player must make a band in order to play; they should record their band either on scratch paper or using the handy [The Last Band character sheet](#).**

**Players determine the specific benefits of each rider and their Battlebike by selecting two adjectives; one for each, until they wind up with four riders and bikes.**

## Rider Adjectives:

Light- 10% more points from surviving rounds.

Inventive- No penalty dice when improvising.

Loony- Every three rounds this character gets 2 dice whether or not the lines they are singing make sense and their player is actually singing.

Raider- If this character rolls multiple dice and gets a targeting word aiming at themselves and an ally and a negative effect they may apply the effect to a target of their choice.

Stingy- This character always hits themselves or an ally should they roll a positive effect.

## Battlebike Adjectives:

Industrial- This Battlebike suffers half round survival score loss for terrain.

Flashy- This Battlebike can take Fuel loss instead of another Battlebike in its Band.

Expanded- This Battlebike holds an extra four Fuel, but only gets half round survival score until it loses its first four points.

Mean- This Battlebike will siphon one Fuel from an opponent hit by its rider with multiple different detrimental effects, but loses any points it would normally earn.

Impervious- This Battlebike resists two detrimental effects before losing Fuel.

Once these adjectives are chosen, mark out forty bubbles (this is why the character sheet is handy) for Fuel for each individual Battlebike in a band, and ten bubbles for Doses for each rider in a band, give or take any modified by their adjectives.

The finished record should look as follows:

Rider:	<u>Adjective</u>	
Battlebike:	<u>Adjective</u>	
Fuel:	00000	00000
	00000	00000
	00000	00000
	00000	00000
Doses:	00000	00000

Now all you need is a song. This can be done in any way, but there are some considerations. Every song must start out with a theme; an Effect Phrase that is always present. Songs must also have lyrics that make sense. Technically, you can just sing gibberish and lose a die, but that's a bad idea, and you have to sing something to get The Lantern's bonus and penalty assessors to work. Finally, if you sing along you get an extra die, regardless of how bad your singing is. Consider this when choosing lyrics, especially if you are in respectable company. You can always take a song someone else has made, or you can make up your own. Once you have your song, choose up to five "Power Phrases" from each line or couple of lines (be consistent) to use for effects; these must fit in with the song's style. The Effect Phrase and each Power Phrase is assigned a die result. If there is no effect or target attached to a number, the player will get no effect from any roll of that number, and may not re-roll. Effect Phrases and Power Phrases may not be reused in the same line or result set. Multiple effects or targets may be applied. If a group is targeted, either the effect is split equally (losing four Fuel takes one from each Battlebike), or applied to one target only (regain one Rad only works on one chosen member of the group). Should you roll the same result twice you double its effects, or if you roll multiple target phrases you may choose your favorite.

Here is a generic song style with some Power Phrases to get you started:

Targets:

Group: "They", "Them", "Those People", and the like for other groups of riders and bikers; "Us", "We", etc. For singer's own group.

Individual: "I", "Me" and so forth for oneself, "He", "she", "it", "That Guy" and the like for others

#### Effects:

Threatening or insulting lyrics ("burn in a fire", "I never liked you") cause the loss of four Fuel.

Lyrics that are inspiring or the like ("we can do it", "it's going to be okay!") restore one Rad.

Lyrics that imply movement ("Get up!", "the way you dance") add a 40% bonus to round survival for the target.

Singing about something nostalgic or safe ("Just like back home", "Finally home") protects the target from up to 4 points of Fuel loss due to The Lantern or hostile lyrics.

**Note: You can add the "Assumed I" or "Assumed You" and give a target of yourself or an enemy (or related groups) to a song; this works in lieu of other targeting phrases and allows you to use effects without rolling a target. You may not switch between assumed targets during a song. You may skip lines of a song by "improvising", but this loses a die to determine Power and Effect Phrases.**

**If your song ends you must start another song; you may not repeat songs unless you have played two other songs since you last played it, so it is recommended to have three songs ready. Should you be forced to repeat a song before two other songs have passed you will suffer a one die penalty to all rolls.**

Example: I just rolled a 5, 3, and a 2 while singing a song. The lines I sang were:

Leave me! I'm not your friend!

It doesn't take a leap of faith to determine that the song has an "Assumed You" and that its tone is hostile (loss of four Fuel). If I chose for the Effect Phrase to be used on a roll of 6 and the Power Phrases to be rolled on 1-3 in order of

appearance, I've rolled "I'm" and "not your friend", which since I included the whole phrase and not just the you applies as the hostile effect of losing four Fuel. I lose four Fuel (because of my effect) because I rolled for the "I'm" and "not your friend!", but I don't factor in other elements that didn't come up.

**There's no hard rules on what makes a song in The Last Band, so don't worry too hard about it. If it has lyrics and it has music it's fine.**

**You also don't have to worry too much if parts of your band blow up quicker than others—the Battlebikes can carry a tune and to be honest your guitarist probably wasn't anything stellar to begin with. The Lantern responds to all music, regardless of how bad it is.**

**Of course, half of the danger of a Disbanding comes not from the other performers, but from The Lantern's own trials; each time all bands finish singing (the effects of which are undertaken simultaneously), The Lantern unleashes a challenge for each of the riders and their Battlebikes.**

**When a challenge is called, someone must roll two six sided dice and add up the results. The following effects happen:**

- 2- Everyone gains two Doses as The Lantern belches radioactive waste**
- 3- The terrain becomes rough and score for surviving the next round is decreased 50 percent**
- 4- One rider in each band becomes irradiated, gaining a Dose.**
- 5- All Battlebikes have a little fuel siphoned by The Lantern's remote control, losing 1 Fuel**
- 6- Nothing happens.**
- 7- Nothing happens.**
- 8- The terrain becomes smooth; the score bonus for surviving the next round is increased 50 percent**
- 9- The Lantern releases radiation, giving one rider in each band a Dose**
- 10- The Lantern doesn't hear the next line of music**
- 11- The Lantern doubles the effects of the next line of music**
- 12- One rider from each band explodes**

**Where normally the band choosing an effect decides the target in the case where an individual in another band is affected, the player of a certain band chooses which rider or Battlebike suffers the effects of individual-specific**

**effects stemming from The Lantern.**

**Of course, a Disbanding is a competition, and as such it has certain rules—none of the competitors are allowed to harm each other except through sound (and are placed at intervals around the track that try to reinforce this)—and an empirical method of scoring. Scoring is based on a per-rider approach and a per-band approach; bands gain points for each of their riders and riders gain points simply for their own actions.**

**All actions are undertaken by the rider who would receive any "I-something" effects (determined before singing a line), and scoring is based on that.**

Scoring Rules Table:

- 50 points— survive a line
- 10 points— gain a single Dose
- 5 points— lose a single Fuel
- 10 points— remove a single Fuel from an opponent
- 10 points— remove a dose from an ally
- 15 points— land multiple effects
- 10 points— cause an opponent to explode
- 10 points— cause an ally to explode
- 100 points— complete a song without improvising

**Of course, there's another note—if a Battlebike runs out of Fuel or a rider takes too many Doses they are removed from play and stop gaining survival score (or any other sort). Should all your riders be removed, your band's done for.**

**So, now that you know all about the Disbanding, are you ready to rumble?**

**For more information about The Last Band, supplements, an interactive character sheet, and more, visit the author:**

**<https://sites.google.com/site/kylesideas/projects/the-last-band>**

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**Font:**

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**The Last Band was made for Game Chef 2012, with the theme "Last Chance". I used the ingredient "Lantern" for the inspiration of the arena, and I received the following random threads:**

**[Thread # 1684](#) (Made up each player's "band" as a concept, not quite motorcycle jousting but close)**

**[Thread # 4057](#) (Fuel as a way of extending character life; I left out the voluntary part of the equation, though I tried to model the protection effect based on this concept)**

**[Thread # 2681](#) (went unused)**

**[Thread # 6142](#) (Songwriting system; made the game use music)**