Three Rivers Pinball Association

Stewart's Guide to *Tales from the Crypt*

Version as of January 7, 1993

Courtesy Dave Stewart <dstewart@cmu.edu>

Disclaimer: This sheet is based only from my limited experiences with one machine that I played when I was home for the holidays, and the comments of the contributors listed at the end. I don't even have access to this machine locally. Any additional information, comments, or corrections are welcome, and should be sent to me, <dstewart@cmu.edu>.

1. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Here is a list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this rules sheet. Most are standard *rec.games.pinball* A&A's.

CF	Creature Feature
DE	Data East
EB	Extra Ball
IJ	Indiana Jones
JP	Jurassic Park
K	Thousand points
LAH	Last Action Hero
M	Million points
TAF	The Addams Family
TFTC	Tales from the Crypt
TZ	Twilight Zone
VUK	Vertical Up-kicker

2. General Description

Tales from the Crypt (Commonly abbreviated *TFTC* in USENET posts) is a Data East machine, released late in 1993. IMHO it is one of the best DE games. It is based on the HBO T.V. series of the same name, which I haven't seen, so I can't give you any details on how well the theme has been used.

The pin is of standard (24") width. Its playfield has two ramps, with the right one being a 'vertical loopback'. It has the standard triangular slingshots above each flipper, one inlane and one outlane on each side, and a dot-matrix display. It has 3 flippers: The two standard ones, and an upper right flipper positioned similarly to the one on Whirlwind.

There are no easy shots in this game, so I suspect that advanced players may like this game more than novices (is that a change for DE machines?) The rule set is very well developed, and scoring is rather well balanced. It is a mode-based game, and modes can run concurrently as in JP, TAF, and TZ. Unlike JP, modes DO continue to run even if you start multiball; but they do run during the opening multiball animations, and therefore you lose some time on them.

I don't know what ROM-level I played, but in comparing my notes with those of Kevin, I would suspect that it was around 2.x, and Kevin's machines was 3.01. There does seem to have been several changes in scoring between the versions. In this rules sheet, I refer to 2.x and earlier as 'older ROMs', and 3.x and later as 'newer ROMs'.

3. Playfield Layout

The game has standard inlane/outlane format, with a kickback on the left side. The kickback is lit at the beginning of each ball.

Going from left to right, beginning at the flippers:

Left inlane: Lights drop targets for a random door prize of 1M to 3M.

Left outlane: has a kickback, called the 'crypt kicker'. When lit, the ball is kicked back into play; the kickback flashes for about 2 seconds, so if the ball returns there during that time it is also kicked back. The ball should kick to the upper right spinner for a shot from the upper flipper, but on the machine I played it rarely did that. The first time each ball the kicker is relit by hitting an unlit KEEPER target; subsequent times that ball you must completely spell KEEPER. Note that if you do whatever you have to do to relight the kickback while it's still flashing its grace period, it doesn't relight. The "Super Crypt Kicker" creature feature (abbreviated CF, which are the modes of the game, like the doors in TZ or mansion in TAF, and are described in more detail later) causes the kickback to remain lit for the rest of the ball.

K-E-E targets to form the first half of the word KEEPER. The P-E-R targets are on the opposide side of the playfield. These are eyeball targets as on LAH. They usually require a direct hit to register. Hitting a target lights it. Getting all of them advances the bonus multiplier (from 2x to 4x to 6x to a max of 8x), or 1M each time after bonus multiplier has reached 8x, and relights the kickback. Note that the first time each ball that the kickback needs to be relit, you only need to hit one unlit target to relight it. These targets are also used in the "Super Keeper Targets" CF.

Captive ball: the captive ball only needs to travel a short distance to hit its target (like the lower left on LAH), but on the machine I played it only seemed to register with a very hard hit. This ball is used to add a ball during multiball and in the "Skull Cracking" CF. When neither of those are in effect, multiple hits of the ball results in points or EB: 5 hits for 5M, 10 hits for EB or 10M, 20 hits for 20M, 30 hits for 30M, etc. [I personally think that you need way too many hits to score; why would you want to shoot the captive ball 30 times?]

Left spinner: this is a left semi-orbit shot with a spinner at the entrance. A succesful shot through the orbit directs the ball to the pop bumpers at the top of the playfield. The spinner can be lit to relight the center scoop to start a new CF, and changes the current selected CF if it is not locked in (more later). The spinner advances the value of the single-jackpot during multiball. The spinner is also used in the "Frightmare" and "Werewolf" CFs, and can be a significant point-getter when you shoot them during one of the frenzy modes.

Left ramp: A steep ramp which feeds the ball via habitrails to the right inlane. It has four lights: Rats, Goblins, Ghosts, and Bats, but I'm not sure why. From the display, they should be "bat 1", "bat 2", "bat 3", and "bat 4". To start, Rats is flashing; shooting the ramp awards a bat, and makes it lit. Shooting the ramp again lights the next one (Goblins), and the subsequent ramp awards the second bat. Repeat this until you've collected 4 bats (i.e. every alternate ramp shot awards a bat), which advances or lights the right ramp (more later). I don't know the exact scoring, but a ramp shot which awards a bat is worth about 2M or 3M on older ROMs, and 5M on newer ROMs, while the other ramp shots scores only a few thousand points. The ramp scores the jackpot during multiball. It is also used in the "Thunder Storm" CF.

Electric Chair (or Center scoop; well, actually it's the only scoop). The orientation of the scoop is towards the area above the right slingshot, and not the lower right flipper, making it a difficult shot from the lower right flipper. It is an easier shot from the upper right flipper, as the scoop is opened at both the front and right side. When lit, this scoop starts the "Creature Feature", which are the games modes. More about the CFs is given later. The scoop is also used in the "Electric Chair" CF.

Tombstone and Crypt. A tombstone (which is a huge target the size of the greed target in TAF) blocks the Crypt. Each hit of the target spots the next letter in C-R-Y-P-T. When all letters have been spotted, the tombstone lowers into the playfield making it possible to shoot the Crypt, which starts multiball. I don't know if this was unique to the machine I played or not, but although the tomstone is large, hits to it often did not register, even with what seemed to be a good hit. The tombstone is partially blocked by the Electric Chair when shooting it from the lower right flipper, making it a tough shot. It is an easier shot from the upper right flipper. The Crypt must be shot from the upper right flipper, or requires a deflection off a post in order to shoot it directly from one of the lower flippers. The Crypt is an eject hold with a VUK. It sends the ball into another eject hole with VUK behind the center spinner, which in turn feeds the upper right flipper. The Tombstone and Crypt are also used during multiball and during the "Robbing the Crypt" CF.

Pop Bumpers: this is a standard triangle configuration of 3 pop bumpers. They are behind the drop targets, but you can shoot into them with a shot between the tombstone and drop targets. Balls in the pop bumpers often come out this way. The pop bumpers can also be shot via the left spinner or a soft shot from the right spinner. Each pop is typically worth 100K a shot. Super pops can be lit from the right inlane; it's a fairly long timer, and hitting a pop bumper resets half of it. I haven't figured out the exact timings yet, but they're quite liberal. The pop bumpers are also used in the "Psycho Pops" CF.

Guillotine Targets: these 3 drop targets form a bank in front of the pop bumpers. Completing the three targets advances the end-of-ball bonus multiplier (by 2x each time, up to 8x), or 1M a shot after the multiplier has reached 8x. A ball which passes through the left inlane lights the targets for a short time period (about 5 seconds) to give a random award between 1M and 3M if they are hit within that time period. When they are lit, the lights '1', '2', and '3' on the playfield are flashing. The targets are also used in the "Super Guillotine Targets" CF.

Center spinner: a shot through this spinner sends the ball into a VUK which feeds the upper right flipper by dropping the ball about an inch above the flipper. You collect the extra ball at this VUK, and you can start the first multiball here too. The spinner is also used in the "Frightmare" CF.

Right ramp: This ramp does a vertical U-turn to send the ball back to the left inlane. A shot that only makes it up partially lands onto the habitrail coming from the right ramp, and awards you a 5M 'trick shot' as well as a successful right ramp shot. The ramp is used to start frenzy modes. The modes are 'Living Dead', 'Chainsaw Mode', 'Grave Digger', and 'Play the Organ' (which are lit in that order). If a frenzy mode is flashing, then the frenzy begins. The frenzy lasts 15 seconds, and every target hit gives you points. For the Living Dead, it is 250K per hit; for Chainsaw Mode it is 500K per hit; Grave Digger is 750K per hit; and "Play the Organ" is 1M per hit. The bonus from your frenzy is awarded with your end-of-ball bonus, and is called the "Fast Goring" (pun on Fast Scoring) bonus. If a frenzy mode is not flashing, then a right ramp shot lights the next one. Also, if you get 4 bats on the right ramp, then it lights the next frenzy. If a frenzy is already lit, then it makes that light solid (as though it was awarded, but doesn't actually award it) and makes the next one flashing (which is a good thing, since the next one is a higher valued frenzy). Note that frenzys (or is that frenzies :-)) can be started anytime, even during multiball. The Double Jackpot is scored on the right ramp during multiball. The ramp is also used during the "Thunder Storm" CF.

Right spinner: this is a right orbit shot with a spinner at the entrance, which generally feeds all the way around back through the left orbit, so that repeated orbit shots can be made. The first orbit is worth 500K, the next consecutive orbit is 1M, followed by 1.5M, 2M, and a max of 2.5M. (On older ROMs it's 500K, 1M, 2M, 4M ...) If you hit any other targets other than the spinners on the orbit, then you go back to the 500K value. There is a diverter in this lane which sends the ball into the VUK of the center spinner, which in turn returns the ball to the upper right flipper (note, however, that if the extra ball is lit here, it is *not* awarded, you must send the ball to this hold via the center spinner to collect an EB). The diverter is active during Multiball Ready, Multiball Restart, Electric Chair CF, Robbing The Crypt CF, and Crypt Jam. As with the left spinner, it can be used to relight the electric chair when lit, or to alternate the selected CF. The spinner advances the value of the Double Jackpot during multiball when that jackpot is lit. It is also used in the "Frightmare" CF.

P-E-R targets of KEEPER. Like the K-E-E targets; see above for description.

Right Outlane: scores 3M points.

Right Inlane: lights Chop Pops (i.e. super pops).

Plunger: this game has an auto-plunger. The button is in the form of a fancy door handle with the Cryptkeeper's head. Press the door handle as if you wanted to open the door, and that launches the ball. There is a skill shot; see Section 5.

4. Creature Features

The Creature Features (abbreviated CF) are the modes of this game. Instead of a mansion (as in TAF) or door (as in TZ) on the playfield, you get a well! It's made up to look like a well, but because it just happens to have twelve values it looks like a clock. So because it looks like a clock, I'll call it that! Each hour of the clock is a different CF.

A CF is started by shooting the electric chair (center scoop) when lit. After starting a CF, the scoop can be relit by a shot to the lit spinner (either left or right, and alternates with each slingshot hit). Note that in general shooting the right spinner brings the ball back down the left orbit, and hence scores both spinners and relights the CF.

Most CF's can run concurrently. The only exceptions are the "Electric Chair" and "Skull Cracking" CFs, which are multiball CFs. The CF relite sometimes messes up during the Skull Cracking CF on some ROMs.

The CF that is awarded is the one that is flashing. Shooting any of the spinners changes which one is flashing, unless that CF is 'locked in'. You can lock-in a CF by pressing the door handle (which you use to launch the ball). You can also unlock the feature by pressing the door handle again.

The CFs, in order on the clock, are as follows (the number in brackets is the clock position on the playfield).

I think that most of the modes have been very well thought out; much better than IJ where many of the modes make use of the same shots (ramps & orbits). Each mode concentrates on a different target or set of targets.

[1] *Thunder Storm*: Hit the ramps; doesn't matter if it's left or right ramp. First ramp is 1M, and each subsequent ramp is 3M more (i.e. 1M, 4M, 7M, 10M, 13M and a max of 15M.). The mode lasts for 20 seconds.

[2] *Lite Skull Cracking*: You have 20 seconds to hit the captive ball for 5M and add-a-ball. You can add up to five balls this way. Once you have 2 balls in play, then each captive ball hit is 5M per hit with 2 balls in play, 10M for 3 balls in play, 15M for 4, and 20M for 5 _or_ 6 balls in play.

[3] *Door Prize Select*: This is the only video mode in the game. You are given three doors: left, center, and right. Use the flippers to select which door, then press the door handle (which you also use to launch a ball) to open it. Behind it is either 5M, 10M on older ROMs, or 5M, 10M, 15M or 20M on newer ROMs, or the picture of a person being hung. If you get the points, you get another set of 3 doors. Supposedly there could also be an extra ball or special behind a door, but I haven't seen that yet. If you get the door with the person being hung, then the video mode is over. Older ROMs had a pattern, but newer ROMs (3.01 and later) have a random sequence. The farthest I've gotten (on older ROMs) is to level 6. In the newer ROMs, Special seems to be awarded if you make it through three levels; but the random sequence makes it harder and harder to get.

[4] *Frightmare*: Shoot 25 spinners in 25 seconds to score 25M. Note that a hard shot through a spinner can score as many as 10 spins, so you can usually score the points with 3 spinner shots. (Hint: shoot the right spinner, as the ball loops around and comes through the left spinner giving you even more spins for your shot!)

[5] *Psycho Pops*: Get 25 pop bumper hits in 25 seconds for 25M. As with the similar mode in JP where you try to save Tommy, in the older ROMs, this mode is hardly worth shooting for. I shot the pop bumpers 6 times in one game during this mode, and still only managed 19 pop-bumper hits. In the newer ROMs, hitting any pop bumper resets the counter to a minimum of 9 seconds.

[6] *Robbing the Crypt*: The tombstone is lowered; shoot the crypt to score points. Each shot scores 10M and spots the next letter in CRYPT. Completing the last letter T scores 25M instead of 10M, and ends the round. The timer resets to 4 seconds on each successful hit, giving you long enough (hopefully) to loop the shot continuously.

[7] *Lite Extra Ball*: Quite Obvious. Collect the EB by shooting the center spinner. You can only light one EB at a time; if you light it more than once, only one is awarded (i.e. they do not stack like in IJ or TZ). Any EB collected after the max/game (default is 3, Kevin thinks :-)) is worth 50M.

[8] *Super Guillotine Targets*: You have 25 seconds to shoot the drop targets as often as you can. Initially each drop target is worth 3M. If you hit the target, you are awarded that value, and the value for that target only increases to 4M. The value of each target is shown on the dot-matrix display. If you hit 2 targets at once, then you are awarded the value for both targets, and the value of both those targets is increased by 1M. The targets reset immediately each time you hit any one of them. The maximum value of any one target is 7M. I've been able to average 20M to 30M in this mode.

[9] *Lite Werewolf Countdown*: This is a hurry-up shot to the left spinner. The value begins at 30M and counts down (quickly enough). Shooting the left spinner once awards the value.

[10] *Lite Super Crypt Kicker*: Lights the left kickback for the remainder of the ball. Even if a ball drains down the left and the kickback is activated, the kickback remains lit, and therefore you don't have relight it. This is a great thing to have lit during multiball!

[11] *Electric Chair*: This is a 6-ball multiball mode, where you aim for the electric chair (i.e. center scoop). Each ball to the scoop scores 1M*balls_in_play. The mode ends when you have only 1 ball left. Since the center scoop is tough to hit from the lower flippers, I haven't been able to score very high on this mode. I think it should have been 2M*balls_in_play like on IJ.

[12] *Super Keeper Targets*: This mode is similar to the super guillotine targets, except that you shoot the eyeball KEEPER targets instead. Each target starts at 2M, and increases by 1M for each hit. Since it is really difficult to hit more than one target at once, I haven't found this mode to

be very worthwhile, rarely getting scores about 10M or 15M. Each target maxes out at 5M. If you make all six then you get a 99M bonus.

[all] *Crypt Jam*: This is the award after completing all Creature Features. It is a 6-ball multiball with the ball-saver active for 25 seconds. Every switch is worth 1M for as long as you have 2 or more balls in play. Check out the Music in this mode!

5. Crypt Multiball

CRYPT multiball is started by shooting the Crypt, which can only be done after the tombstone in front of it has been lowered. Each hit of the tombstone spots the next letter in CRYPT. The 'C' is spotted at the beginning of the game, and two letters are spotted before the start of each ball until the first multiball has been obtained.

After getting CRYPT the first time, both the Crypt and center spinner are lit; shoot either one to start multiball. For subsequent multiballs, only the Crypt is lit to start it.

When you start multiball, two balls are automatically launched, and the third one is ejected to the upper right flipper for a shot to the Crypt. The Crypt scores 1M*balls-in-play and adds that value to the base Jackpot value as well.

During multiball, hit the left ramp to score the Jackpot, which has an initial base value of 25M (20M in older ROMs), and increases with shots to the left spinner (130K per spin) and Crypt (1M*balls_in_play).

Once that Jackpot is collected, shoot the right ramp for a Double Jackpot, which has a base value of double the value of the right-ramp Jackpot you collected (thus minimum of 50M, or 40M in older ROMs) and increases with the right spinner (260K per spin) and Crypt (2M*balls_in_play).

Note that getting the Double Jackpot may also start a frenzy mode if the next frenzy mode is flashing; this is a great time to get frenzy.

After collecting the Double Jackpot, the tombstone raises. You must hit the Tombstone 5 times to spell C-R-Y-P-T, at which time the Monster Jackpot is lit. Each letter adds a ball but isn't worth any points. The Monster Jackpot is 50M plus the Double Jackpot value when it was collected, for a minimum of 100M. Subsequent Monster Jackpots are each 50M more (you must spell CRYPT again each time), increasing without limit.

When you hit the Tombstone to spell CRYPT and it's adding a ball (the first time through and you don't already have all six balls), you have to wait until that ball is in play before hitting it again will count. Also, hitting the Tombstone will in that case reset the drop targets.

After collecting the Monster Jackpot, the Tombstone comes back up and you spell CRYPT again, but it no longer adds balls into play.

Until the point where you collect the Double Jackpot, Hitting the captive ball during multiball adds another ball to your play.

Multiball Restart: If you fail to collect the jackpot, the center spinner and Crypt are lit for 12 seconds to restart Multiball.

6. Miscellaneous

Here are a bunch of miscellaneous items which did not really fit into the sections above.

- As with most DE games, Death saves are possible. The game awards you 3M for each Death Save.
- There is no smart missile equivalent in this game.
- Skill shot: The 3 guillotine drop targets light up in order (similar to LAH). The ball is launched into that drop target bank (and on our machine always hit the center target). You simply time your shot so that it hits the target when it is lit. The speed of the rotating light does not change from ball to ball, so it is quite easy to hit every time. You score 2M for a successful skill shot on ball 1, 3M on ball 2, etc.
- Ball Saver: This game has the standard DE couple of seconds ball saver. If the ball drains immediately on the skill shot, the ball will be relaunched. If it drains again, then it will be launched again. But if it drains again, you are doomed, since the ball saver is activated a maximum of twice. If you are having trouble with Insta-Drain(tm), hold up the upper right flipper. The autoplunged ball will hit the tip of it and bounce down to the lower right flipper without hitting the drop targets at all. [Since the ball saver is activated to start, first go for the skill shot, let the ball drain, and hold up the flipper only when the ball is relaunched.]
- End-of-ball bonus is a function of ball time (actually number of switches to be precise), and maxes out at 5M. With an 8x multiplier, that can give you up to 40M. The Fast Goring bonus obtained from the frenzies is also added to the end-of-ball bonus, but that value is not multiplied by the bonus multiplier.
- Extra-ball buy-in. Like many recent games, this game has an EB buy-in. It works like the Williams/Bally buy-in on games like TZ and IJ, and not like the previous DE buy-in on JP, where you start a new game, but continuing with your modes from the previous games. The buy-in button is below the start button.
- HINTS, TIPS, and STRATEGIES
- Based on which shots you can hit consistently and which you cannot, some CFs are easier to score with than others (e.g. for me it is much easier to score 25M in Frightmare than in Psycho Pops, and Guillotine Targets generally score much higher than KEEPER targets). If one of the CFs that is high scoring for you is flashing, then lock it in with the door handle.
- If you haven't yet collected the EB, and your arcade doesn't have too many wizards playing the machine, then the Lite EB CF will be flashing at the start of each ball after the first ball. About a second after you launch the ball, hit the door handle to lock-in that CF before you hit any spinner, making it rather easy to get at least one EB during the game.
- During any multiball, shoot the right ramp to start frenzies. You can easily double or triple your frenzy value by having 2 or 3 balls going.
- Hit the captive ball during multiball to get extra balls, before all but one ball drains. It will give you longer multiballs.
- Shoot the spinners during frenzies; they generally score better than the pop bumpers. Note that the entrance to ramps are also switches, so a failed ramp shot scores 2 switches.
- The Crypt Jam can be a big scorer, so it is worth going for all the CFs.

7. Quote

Quotes and Horrible Puns: (courtesy Kevin Martin) Here's a list of the horrible puns used in the game quotes... things in () are only said sometimes. Some of them are pretty awful...

- *Holy deadlock!*
- *I've got good NOOSE for you!*
- *Pleasant SCREAMS!*
- *Time to assume the position! (If you know what I mean)*
- *How about some no-VAULT insurance?*
- *What a revolting development!*
- *Here today, leftovers tomorrow!*
- *Wanna join my FANG club?*
- *You must be CHOKING!*
- *BURY good!*
- *You made a KILLING!*
- *You got another BALL!*
- *Two DEADS are better than one!*
- *No pay'em, no GAME!*
- *EnGORE!*
- *AXE-tra, read all about it!*
- *Bon Appetit!*
- *GORE one for you!*
- *CHOP of the morning to ya!*
- *If at first you don't succeed, DIE DIE again!*
- *(If you liked that) How about a TOMB with a view?*
- *I GRAVE at the office.*
- *The MORGUE, the merrier!*

8. Contributors

Kevin Martin (of course :-)).

I haven't gotten comments from anyone else, so either nobody else has seen the machine yet, or this rules sheet is perfect :-).