SKYRIDER

Whether they serve as vanguards of armies, guards of kings, or even expensive mercenaries, skyriders are known to be a force to be reckoned with. While possessing orders and the ability to challenge their enemies similar to cavaliers, their connection to the mighty griffon sets them apart from cavaliers. As skyriders develop their abilities they become adept at striking their enemies from higher ground, attack in tandem with their griffon, and even leap from their griffon while flying to land a devastating blow on an enemy.

Role: Skyriders shine when in wide open areas, where they can mount her griffon and attack her enemies from above, when unable to do so however, both she and her griffon are also adept at ground

Alignment: Any
Hit Dice: d10
Starting Wealth: 5d6 x 10 gp (average 175gp)

CLASS SKILLS

The skyrider’s class skills are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Fly (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Swim (Str).

CLASS SKILLS

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Skyriders are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Challenge (Ex): Once per day, a skyrider can challenge a foe to combat. As a swift action, the skyrider chooses one target within sight to challenge. The skyrider’s attacks deal extra damage whenever the attacks are made against the target of her challenge. This extra damage is equal to the skyrider’s level. The skyrider can use this ability once per day at 1st level, plus one additional time per day for every three levels beyond 1st, to a maximum of seven times per day at 19th level.

Challenging a foe requires much of the skyrider’s concentration. The skyrider takes a −2 penalty to her Armor Class, except against attacks made by the target of his challenge.

The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead or unconscious or until the combat ends. Each skyrider’s challenge also includes another effect which is listed in the section describing the skyrider’s order.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Base Attack Bonus</th>
<th>Fort Save</th>
<th>Ref Save</th>
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**Order (Ex):** At 1st level, a skyrider must pledge himself to a specific order. The order grants the skyrider a number of bonuses, class skills, and special abilities. In addition, each order includes a number of edicts that the skyrider must follow. If he violates any of these edicts, he loses the benefits from his order’s challenge ability for 24 hours. The violation of an edict is subject to GM interpretation.

A skyrider cannot change his order without undertaking a lengthy process to dedicate himself to a new cause. When this choice is made, he immediately loses all of the benefits from his old order. He must then follow the edicts of his new order for one entire level without gaining any benefits from that order. Once accomplished, he gains all of the bonuses from his new order. Note that the names of these orders might vary depending upon the campaign setting or GM’s preference.

All orders a cavalier could take are available to a skyrider as well.

**High Talon (Ex):** Having studied combat techniques that would benefit sky combat, the skyrider can put the hurt on those he can attack from higher ground. Starting at 3rd level, whenever a skyrider attacks a creature from higher ground with a melee weapon he gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. These bonuses increase by +1 every three levels after 3rd. These bonuses replace the standard bonus for attacking from higher ground.

**Griffon Companion (Ex):** A skyrider gains the service of a loyal and trusty griffon to carry him into battle. This griffon companion functions as a druid’s animal companion, using the skyrider’s level - 3 as his effective druid level.

A skyrider does not take an armor check penalty on Fly or Ride checks while riding his griffon. The griffon begins play with Light Armor Proficiency as a bonus feat.
skyrider’s griffon does not gain the share spells special ability. A skyrider’s bond with her griffon is strong, with the pair learning to anticipate each other’s moods and moves.

Should a skyrider’s griffon die, the skyrider may find another griffon to serve her after 1 week of mourning. This new griffon does not gain the link, evasion, devotion, or improved evasion special abilities until the next time the skyrider gains a level.

**Mounted Evasion (Ex):** Starting at 5th level, the skyrider gains the benefits of evasion (as the rogue ability), while mounted on her griffon.

**Improved Griffon (Ex):** As the skyrider gains levels her griffon gains additional abilities besides those described in the druid’s animal companion table. At 7th level, the griffon can carry her skyrider while flying, but reduces its fly speed while doing so, in addition the skyrider may use her Fly skill instead of his Ride skill while mounted on her griffon. At 10th level, the skyrider’s effective druid level for her griffon companion now equals his full skyrider level. At 13th level, the griffon keeps its full fly speed when carrying its skyrider.

**Flying Combat Mastery (Ex):** At 9th level, the griffon gain Hover as a bonus feat, and the skyrider gains the benefits of the Flyby Attack feat while riding her griffon.

**Talons and Blades (Ex):** Accustomed to attack in unison, starting at 17th level, whenever the skyrider does a charge attack while mounted on her griffon, both she and her griffon can make a full attack against a single target. After this attack however, both the skyrider and the griffon suffer a -4 penalty to their ACs until the beginning of the skyrider’s next turn.

**Improved Mounted Evasion (Ex):** Starting at 18th level, the skyrider gains the benefits of improved evasion (as the rogue ability), while mounted on her griffon. In addition, while not mounted on her griffon the skyrider gains the benefits of the evasion feat.

**Sky Fall (Ex):** At 20th level, when charging on her griffon, the skyrider may jump of her griffon toward her target and make a single melee attack adding the bonuses for the high talon ability even if the skyrider is not on higher ground. A successful attack automatically threatens a critical hit and the target of the attack must succeed at a Fortitude save equal to 10 + the damage dealt of be instantly slain. The skyrider may also willingly fall off her griffon while flying, to use her sky fall on a creature below her that isn’t standing on the ground, after the attack the griffon safely catches the skyrider regardless of distance fallen.

A creature that successfully saves against a skyrider’s sky fall is immune to that particular skyrider’s sky fall for 24 hours.

**GRIFFON STARTING STATISTICS**

**Size** Large; **Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average; unable to carry a rider while flying); AC +4 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str 16, Dex15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8; **Languages** Common (cannot speak); **SQ** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent.

7th-Level Advancement
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average; 40 ft. while carrying the skyrider while flying); AC +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6), 2 talons (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str +2, Con +2; **Special Attacks** pounce, rake (1d6).

**SKYRIER ARCHETYPES**

**ORDER OF THE ZEPHYR**

**Edict:** A skyrider of the Order of the Zephyr must avow never to restrict the right of safe passage of any creature and protect the peaceful use of all roads and routes. Above all, a skyrider of the Order of the Zephyr respects the freedom of creatures and abhors slavery and forced marches.

**Challenge:** After issuing a challenge, the skyrider and his mount gain 10-ft enhancement bonuses to all their speeds as long as they move toward the target of that challenge. At 7th level, this bonus increases to 20-feet. At 15th level, this bonus increases to 30-feet.

**Skills:** A skyrider of the Order of the Zephyr gains Perception and Survival as class skills. If the skyrider would receive a penalty to a Perception check, that penalty is reduced by an amount equal to twice his class levels.

**Order Abilities:** A skyrider of the Order of the Zephyr gains the following abilities as he increases in level.

**Steadfast Rider (Ex):** At 2nd level, the skyrider learns to adjust his weight more efficiently. The skyrider’s weight is halved for the purpose of calculating his mount’s encumbrance. Additionally, neither he nor his mount take the penalty to AC for charging.

**Fell Swoop (Ex):** At 8th level the skyrider can steer his mount to maximize the momentum of a charge. When charging, his mount’s speed is tripled rather
doubled. Additionally, all weapons of the spear fighter weapon group deal double damage while charging on a mount, as though they were lances. This ability has no effect on lances themselves.

**Lighter than Wind (Ex):** At 15th level, the skyrider and his mount can dash across battlefields at breakneck speeds. After charging atop his mount, both the skyrider and his mount gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC and all ranged attacks aimed at him or his mount have a 50% miss chance. Additionally, while charging, the skyrider and his mount immediately deal damage equal to twice the skyrider’s class level to any obstacles in their way, and they are dealt only one quarter damage from any damaging obstacles they pass through while moving, such as a wall of fire.

**ORDER OF VENOM**

The earliest settlers of Brnddell’s deepest valleys were forced to reckon with the dreaded wyverns that dwelled there. Over many generations, a select group of Brynnyn learned to tame these creatures as mounts. The very traits that made the wyverns fearsome are now harnessed to their benefit. The wyvern-training tradition has since spread beyond Bryndell’s borders.

**Mount:** An order of venom skyrider must select a wyvern as her mount.

**Edict:** The skyrider must not only protect her homeland from attacking monsters, but seek, study, and possibly eliminate dangerous monsters before they attack.

**Challenge** When an order of venom skyrider issues a challenge, the critical threat range of attacks she or her mount make against the target of her challenge increases by 1. The threat range increases by an additional 1 for every four levels the skyrider possesses. This benefit doesn’t stack with any other effects that expand the threat range of a weapon (such as the keen edge spell or the Improved Critical feat).

**Skills:** An order of venom skyrider adds Fly (Dex) and Survival (Wis) to her list of class skills. An order of venom skyrider gains a bonus equal to her skyrider level to any Knowledge (Int) checks made to identify a creature, and can make these checks untrained.

**Order Abilities:** An order of venom skyrider gains the following abilities as she increases in level.

*Hunter’s Insight (Ex):* At 2nd level, the skyrider can use a move action to observe a creature that she has successfully identified with a Knowledge check. Doing so grants the skyrider her choice of a +1 insight bonus to attack and damage rolls or a +1 dodge bonus to AC. This bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to her skyrider level. Only one creature can be observed at a time, and once it has been observed with this ability, it cannot be observed again for 24 hours. At 6th level and every 4 levels thereafter, both bonuses increase by an additional +1.

When a skyrider is benefiting from this bonus, she can spend a swift action to grant this bonus to any allies within 30 ft., dividing the duration in 1-round intervals among allies chosen.

**Venomous Strike (Ex):** At 8th level, the skyrider can use a standard action to coat a weapon with poison from her wyvern and make a single attack with that weapon. The skyrider does not risk poisoning herself when applying this poison to a weapon. This ability can only be used while the skyrider is riding the wyvern.

**Predatory Dive (Ex):** At 15th level, the skyrider can dismount from her wyvern, fall up to 200 ft., and make a single melee attack roll against a creature at the end of her fall. If the attack roll is successful, then the skyrider takes no falling damage and instead deals that falling damage to her attack’s damage roll. If the attacked creature is not already on the ground, then the skyrider continues falling as normal after the attack.

**Wyvern Starting Statistics**

**Size** Large; **Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); **AC** +5 natural armor; **Attack** bite (2d6), 2 claw (1d6); **Ability Scores:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9; **SQ** low-light vision, scent

**7th Level Advancement**

**AC** +4 natural armor; **Attack** sting (1d6 plus poison); **Ability Scores:** Str +3, Con +2; **Special Abilities** poison

*Poison (Ex):* Sting-injury; save DC (10 + 1/2 HD + Con modifier); frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Constitution damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.
SKYRIDER
Hybrid Class

High above in the clouds, the skyrider takes the fight to her foes on the back of her majestic griffon mount. This hybrid cavalier/ranger class specializes in acrobatic aerial maneuvers that both astound and confuse her opponents, while her mount increases in both size and strength!

Contained herein:
• The Skyrider Hybrid Class—a complete 1-20 class tailored for aerial combat.
• New orders for skyriders and cavaliers.

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