

Southern Weyr's

Wingleader Handbook

Introduction

So, you're a Wingleader. Either you've been very lucky had a great Wingleader, and therefore have some idea of what you should be doing, or, you're like most of us, stuck. You have this knot ICly, but what does it mean on the game, both IC and OOC. Well, like most things the position is what you make it. None of us are perfect, but if you sit in your weyr all day, and then people say 'X wing' does nothing, you only have yourself to blame. Realistically, if you just make yourself known for RP this will improve your Wing's feelings about you tremendously.

This document should help you RPing a Wingleader, and in determining events you can hold with your wing.

In Character

Wingleaders are the Weyrleader's wing representatives, his deputies if you like. Their job is to oversee and coordinate the riders in his or her Wing so that they might fight Threadfall effectively. They are recognised by their knots: one loop under the arm, half loop over the arm, plus their lifemate's colour and are chosen for their tenacity in Threadfall, for their organisation and for their flying and fighting ability.

Wingleaders handle many things. For instance, grievances and incidents within the Wing rarely get taken to the Weyrleaders, the Wingleader and/or Wingsecond are expected to handle them efficiently on a day-to-day basis. However, if the Wingleader is not handling them, then the Weyrleader will step in. A Wingleader therefore tends to want perfection from his Wing, since that'll bring him less meetings with the Weyrleader.

Wingleaders have a lot of hidework. They must make reports on every Wing activity. From Sweeps, to Threadfall, to Search, to random weather observations, all are noted, and discussed with the Weyrleader in regular meetings. A Wingleader makes a report once a sevenday on the health and readiness of their entire Wing, generally some 30 riders.

Wingleaders are expected to fight Threadfall generally twice a sevenday, though depending on the health and state of the other Wings this might be less or more frequent. Wingleaders may lead Threadfall if the Weyrsecond or the Weyrleader are not flying.

They lead a Flight, which is comprised of three Wings of dragons. The Weyrleader determines, generally a few days before Threadfall, who will be flying it, who will be leading it, and notifies each Wing of such so that all are adequately prepared. Starflame, our blue/green Wing, is an integral part of any Threadfall where conditions will make it troublesome. They are the fast attack Wing, and if the Weyrleader predicts weather conditions that will make fighting Thread difficult, then Starflame will be assigned to these Threadfalls. If a regular, conditions normal, Threadfall is predicted, then Starflame may fight at the Weyrleader's discretion, or it may be held in reserve in case Threadfall turns worse. Starflame can fight first, middle or last in Threadfall, and will always fight below the other Wings, above Sunblaze, where it can be most effective.

Before Threadfall begins a Wingleader will ensure that their Wing is supplied with adequate Firestone, and that riders begin feeding their lifemates in time. He may make inspections of flight gear, of straps, and he may look in at the Weyrlings who will be flying resupply. At this point, if a Wingleader feels a rider is unfit to fight, they will be excluded from the Wing. Also, a reserve quotient of riders will be ground bound. The Wingleader makes the decision of which greens will fly the first half of Threadfall, and which the second. This may also extend to some of the smaller blues. There is no arguing with the Wingleader at this point. Once the dragons have been fed enough firestone, the Wingleader will give the signal to mount, and then will await the Flight leader's signal to rise: the pumping fist.

As one, the Wing will rise into the sky, and then on the second signal will pop *between* simultaneously to meet the leading edge. Generally, browns and bronzes rise to meet Thread first, and may therefore be placed at the front of the Wing. However, blues and greens are much better at getting to the pieces that the larger dragons can't, and may be interspersed in the Wing during windy conditions. Whatever the formation the Wing has been drilled to perfection, and can come in and out of *between* to an exact location. If any member is hurt during Threadfall, then the Wing will fill that gap quickly; if a green is exhausted, then another will fly in from reserves to replace her. When Threadfall passes, the Wing will hover momentarily to ensure this is so, then on the Flight leader's signal will again go *between* and back to the Weyr. At this point, the Wingleader will walk through the members of his Wing, giving feedback, sometimes encouragement, looking for injuries, strap marks, anything that he can report back to the Weyrleader on.

For the time that the Wingleader is not fighting Threadfall, he may be organizing drills or sweeps. Drills are the bane or the saviour of every rider, depending on your point of view. They begin in Weyrlinghood and continuing throughout their Threadfighting life. Every rider must constantly attend drills, if you're not fighting thread, you're practicing fighting it because your life depends on it. Drills hone or maintain a rider's skills, and help develop new skills. A Wingleader may come up with a new formation he or she would like to try. The whole Wing will then practice it: on the ground and in the air, striving to get it right. It is important to remember these can often be works in progress, and don't necessarily work each and every time.

Drills maintain a rider's fitness, they promote teamwork between Wing members, and fostering trust, allowing group flying to become second nature to the dragons and their riders. When Thread is falling, the constant drill practice enables action without the necessity to pause and think first! Drills are usually practiced in two ways: flying in formation or rope drills. The Wing practices flying different formations, giving the Wingleader several options to choose from when the exact conditions of the 'fall is known. Each pair knows their place in the various formations, and their role in the wing as a whole. The formation flying can be broken down into smaller groups, allowing exploration of different maneuvers; however, it is essential that the wing as a whole know how to work together.

From time to time, the wings will practice together. After all, Threadfall is not just flown by one Wing. These type of drills are especially important when new members join. For instance a transfer from another Wing, or another Weyr, or a recently graduated rider. Unless it's perfect by the Wingleader's standards they'll be practicing it until they're exhausted. Painted ropes can be used to simulate Threadfall during practice. Some dragons fly above the others and their riders, or passengers, toss ropes down at the wings. If a rope hits a dragon or its rider, the paint splashes them, simulating a Threadscore. Obviously, the goal is not to be hit, but it's a lot less painful than a real Threadscore, even if the embarrassment might last a day or two. The riders who are practicing avoiding the ropes, keep formation all the time. For it does no good to miss being hit by Thread and to crash into a Wingmate!

Sweep riding and Watchriding are two activities that are crucial to the Weyr and its place in the larger community of its coverage area. The purpose of Sweeps and Watchriding is to not only patrol for unscheduled Threadfall, but also to generally assist any folk in the sweep area that may need it. For example: traders could have broken a wagon wheel, and need to be conveyed to the nearest hold and back with a replacement. Or a child could be lost and a rider could assist with an aerial sweep of the grounds and surrounding area. Sweep riders watch for unusual weather patterns, for problems within the Holds. There are 8 sweeps a day, and Wings generally do two back to back, allowing four wings per day to fly sweeps. Approximately eight to ten riders fly a Sweep, but rarely under guidance of the Wingleader, since he's generally doing hidework as this time. More often that not the Wingseconds organize the Sweeps.

Watchriders convey passengers, and messages around Pern that drumming would be too slow, or not confidential enough. All Wingriders will fulfil the duties of a Watchrider at some time or another, no matter the colour of their dragon. Generally, when the assigned Watchrider is sick, the Wings will be expected to fill in. They will be expected to be courteous at all times, and complaints of behaviour not to this standard will come back down through the Wingleader, who may post the Watchrider somewhere cold, or give them the wondrous duty of taking Weyrling dung to the Holds for use as fertiliser. Watchriders are treated as Weyrlings when returning from a long stint at a Hold or Hall, and would partake of rigorous drills.

As a gold lays eggs on the sands, the whole Weyr gets put on alert for the inevitable arrival of candidates, and the Wingleader is no exclusion to this. He or she may fly their Wing out to local Crafhalls and Holds, searching for possibilities. Once searched, their name, point of origin, age, and any other details will be noted, and this information passed to the Weyrwoman for the records. Wingleaders may be responsible for smoothing ruffled feathers from arrogant searchriders, or they may simply visit the Holds and Crafts before the eggs are laid introducing themselves, and giving the areas a heads up about the impending Search.

As Weyrlings approach their final sevendays of training, and near graduation, many of the Wingleaders will start stopping in to watch drills and observe who reacts in what way, seeking the perfect fit for their Wings. They'll make their recommendations to the Weyrleader who may, or may not, assign them to that Wingleader, depending on the Wingleader's reasoning. Some Wingleaders may attempt to bribe both Weyrling and Weyrleader - something not to be encouraged!! Once the Weyrlings have graduated, the Wingleader must tap them into their Wing. Generally the phrase 'The Weyrleader has given me the honour of flying with you' is used somewhere. A Weyrling, if he knows what's good for him, never refuses! However, most are simply glad to be out of those Weyrling rules, and doing what they're supposed to be doing. A Wingleader will then train and drill his Wing like never before, making sure that the new Wingrider understands and can follow instructions, and that they know how to work as a team with the rest of the Wing.

Out of Character

The first thing to remember is this is a game. The second is also that. It's worth stressing it twice just to get the point across. If you find that you no longer have the time to hold events, to attend Threadfall, to write emits, then please, step down and give someone else the chance. Should your RL ease up, you can always apply for another Wingleader position should it come about. Rider's have RL's just as much as we, the players, do, and that's an important consideration.

Resources:

1) **Webpage:**

Does your Wing have one? If not, consider it. There are tonnes of people out there who can write html if you can't, and a webpage is a wonderful way to show off to your Wing, and the Weyr, how good you are.

2) **Logs:**

Find logs of previous Wing activities, post these to the Web, or ask Telinda if she could post them to the Southern Weyr webpage. Logs are a great way to keep people who can't spend a lot of time online, involved.

- 3) **Wingsecond:**
Who is your Wingsecond, and what times are they online? Can you meet? Can you RP? Can you brainstorm together? It is important that you set out the terms of your relationship OOCly with your Wingsecond - what you expect from them, and what you want them to do.
- 4) **Riders:**
Who's active? Who's not? Maybe find out what times of the day they're around, or why they aren't active? Generally it's either RL or another game. If another game, well, you get this area more interesting than the other game, maybe they'll play here more!
- 5) **NPCs:**
Do you have any? If not, talk to the owners of various unassigned NPCs and ask them for permission.
- 6) **Threadfall:**
Off camera falls are detailed under '+lhelp threadfall3', or 'next falls'. The schedule for which wing is responsible for writing emits is detailed under '+lhelp threadfall2' and how to submit emits is detailed under '+lhelp threadfall emits'.

OOO responsibilities:

- 1) **Threadfall:**
Each month one Wing is responsible for producing all of the emits for a Threadfall. Sometimes that means you have to come up with all 30 of them. However, generally other members of the Weyr help out, so be sure to ask. If you don't ask, you won't receive. You should mail these to Imara who organises Threadfall.
- 2) **RP** **hints:**
The month after Threadfall you are responsible for producing RP hints for the Wings. Games, things to do, places to see, anecdotes, basically anything people can RP around. You should mail these to Auralia who sends them out to all the Wingleaders.
- 3) **Communication:**
Keep your Wing members notified of what is happening in the Wings, on camera or off, and relay any OOC messages from the Weyrleaders.

OOO extraneous ideas:

- 1) **General RP:**
 - a. **With the Weyrleader:**
RP having failed at something, being nervous at something, the weather patterns for an upcoming Threadfall, flying an extra practice Threadfall at sea,

handing over hidework, reporting on hidework, something wrong at a hold/craft, discuss a grievance with them.

b. **With the Wingsecond:**

RP teaching him/her something, talk about formations you'd like to try, how Wing drills, sweeps, Threadfall have gone, talk about injuries, about being concerned over a particular riders performance, correct their hidework, have a spelling/accent difficulty with them, discuss a matter of importance in the Wing - a rider not pulling weight, feigning being sick etc.

c. **With the Wingriders:**

Chew them out, tell them off for being slobs, have a bad hair day and declare everyone must get a haircut. Treat everyone to a drink at the Dusty dog. Inspect everyone's gather clothes for a gather, or just for grins, eat dinner with them, sit in the courtyard and watch the sun go down, RP problems with sweeps, or drills, or about a rider not being well/injured, RP wanting perfection, then changing your mind. RP having problems with an accent, if someone's slipped back into it post-Weyrlihood, or that they don't say a word a certain way, i.e., the way you say it!

2) **Hidework:**

RP problems with your penship, a spelling mistake leads to an bigger problem, a hide goes missing, delivering hides to the Weyrleader, working on hides in the Weyrhall, discussing hides with the Wing, demanding the Wing learn better penship, report to the Weyrleader, demand everyone in the Wing get a physical every so often and write reports on that, have the dragonhealers inspect the dragons, and write a report on that.

3) **Threadfall:**

RP it! Inspect the Wing pre-Threadfall, denote certain greenriders as reserves (NPCs work), make sure Firestone is distributed, watch Wingriders feeding dragons, supervise that, offer assistance, tips. Make inspections of flight gear, of straps, talk to the Weyrlings about resupply, check in with the Weyrleader to let him know the readiness of your Wing, tell someone they can't fight fall (NPCs) because they're sick, tired, or injured. Give the signal to mount up, give the Wing the formation you're using. Watch the Weyrleader for the signal, follow Weyrleader into sky, get Wing into formation, which the Weyrleader notifies the Wingleader of the correct one for that Threadfall, have wing go *between*, tighten formation at the Threadfall leading edge, wait for Thread, flame it, burn it, watch for injuries, coordinate, call for resupply of the Firestone, call for green resupply, order Wing to tighten up, loosen out. As Threadfall passes, wait for signal, and return to Weyr. Once on the ground, walk through the Wing members, chat to them, compliment, tell them off, give feedback, look for injuries, strap problems, then report to the Weyrleader.

4) **Drills:**

Schedule on camera and off camera drills, come up with a new formation (it doesn't have to work) and make your Wing RP it until it works, or it doesn't. Shout at the

Wingriders, get them into position, do this on the ground, or in the air. Make sure they can go in and out of *between* in formation. Explore the realms of too much or not enough space between dragons. Have a new rider arrive, have to have extra drills to get them into fighting fitness. Use rope drills. Get residents or riders to dye ropes, then sit on your dragon and fling them down at various riders. Laugh at those with paint on them, make them wear it for a day to remind how bad they could've been scored, or, schedule more drills until it's perfect!

5) **Sweeps:**

Appoint certain people to ride sweeps, remind them of +sweeps code, set up a story of a missing 'something' and they have to find it. Assign some people extra sweeps for whatever is irritating you right now, ask riders to report on any unusual weather patterns, RP that a Hold is being silly with letting too much greenery near it's main entrance, report a problem with the grubs in an area, report old burrows, flamed burrows, go to the Holds and Crafts and RP having done sweeps and reporting to the Craftmaster or Holder.

6) **Watchriders:**

Assign people to convey passengers for on camera or off camera events, NPCs and PCs, assign someone to take a message somewhere, assign someone to a PC area as a watchrider for a couple of days (with their OOC permission of course), and have them report back to you any interesting findings.

7) **Search:**

Volunteer to be a search rider, good or bad, take the Wing to various places to search for PC and NPC clutches. A week before a PC clutch is laid RP going to the PC areas, and warning them about the possibility of search dragons. Bother candidates for important information as you search, and after if you've 'forgotten' it, like place of origin, name of parents, any bloodline. Smooth ruffled feathers of someone snatched from an area. Be on Search committee, vote!, offer to help with describing, organizing, personalities, RP, events, coordination.

8) **Weyrlings:**

Volunteer to be a mentor, RP with the Weyrlings, go dragon bathing, offer to take them out on sweeps and let them watch drills as they near graduation. Argue with Wingmembers about who should be in your Wing, and who shouldn't be, argue with Weyrleader too. Tell all the other Wingleaders to keep their paws off X. Ask X to balance on his head, do silly things, ask Weyrleader if you want a particular Weyrling in your Wing. Attend graduation, look smart (clothes and intelligence), tap them into your Wing by using unusual circumstances - have them fetch and carry a bucket of numbweed, and dab some on their nose as an initiation rite, make them tip a bucket of water over their heads, etc. Get them into your Wing, train and drill with them, personally, and with the Wing.

9) **Events:**

Attend everything you can. Clutchings, hatchings, flights (or hold flights), gathers.

Show your support, even if you turn up for 30 minutes. Hold events, offer to help hold them, think of TPs, etc.

Threadfall emits:

Each month one Wing is expected to prepare emits for a Threadfall. It is the Wingleader's responsibility to advertise in advance to their Wing the need for emits. You can do this a month, or more, in advance, to allow adequate time. Wingseconds must also assist and contribute emits, and it is up to the Wingleader to ensure this happens.

A typical Threadfall requires about 15-20 emits each in three different categories: Pre-fall, Sky, and Groundcrew, which we'll discuss later in this section. For examples see: <http://imara.iwarp.com/emits.html>. When submitting emits, please ensure the following:

- 1) All emits should be CLEARLY labelled with the category in which they belong.
- 2) For sky emits, directly targeted emits should equal NO MORE than one third of the total amount.
- 3) An equal amount of emits should be submitted for each category.
- 4) Emits should be emailed to Imara (yishenth@hotmail.com), our Threadfall coordinator.

A sample Threadfall:

Gathering in the Landing Field:

Dragons, of various colours and sizes, begin to lumber or fly in to the landing field, accompanied by their lifemates. They, along with the healers, residents, and candidates, begin to prepare for the onslaught of Pern's ancient enemy.

Checking straps and other gear:

Riders, residents, staff, and candidates rush about the field, each going about their separate duties. Dragons are spread out over the entire area with their lifemates nearby, checking gear

Making sure all dragons and riders are fit to fly:

Dragons are examined by their riders, looking for any minor strains or pulls from the day before that might hinder performance later in fall, and checking straps by tugging the bindings and buckles. The Wings then start forming up, each going to its assigned area and lining up as Wingleaders start doing their inspection of each wing.

Healers set up:

Dragonhealers and healers are the epitome of calmness in the sea of the chaos of Threadfall preparation. They go about their business, directing tubs of Numbweed

and Redwort to be stationed at different points in the landing field, double-checking supplies of bandages, needles and water.

Feeding dragons firestone:

A crunching sound is heard as the dragons start chewing firestone. Soon the dry air is filled with the pungent smell and the constant munching noise.

Last minute reports and checks:

The Wingleaders and Wingseconds pass through the ranks, giving last minute instructions and a good pep talk to their riders. A nod here, a headshake there and the leaders return to their lifemates to prepare for the final signal.

Groundcrew gathers:

The Groundcrew seems to be ready for the last part of its preparation. Groundcrew members pair up, or are paired up by crew leaders, checking the tanks and nozzles on the Agenothree canisters. At last, arms go through the straps, Groundcrew members shifting and squirming until they're as comfortable as can be.

Mounting dragons:

All throughout the field, the Wingleaders give the signal for the riders to mount up and prepare to head skyward.

Signal from the Weyrleader:

When every rider is mounted and strapped in, ready to go, the Weyrleader raises his arm. The gesture is the undeniable sign to all the wings that now is the time to rise and fight.

Dragons go aloft:

Suddenly the deep greyish sky is filled with gold, bronze, brown, blue, and green as all wings are unfurled and the Southern dragons launch themselves into the air. Bugles and trumpets can be heard as the dragons voice their defiance to the deadly enemy.

Signal from Weyrleader:

The Weyrleader gives the signal to depart, generally dropping an upraised arm, but the signal is also relayed through his bronze to the rest of the dragons.

Dragons depart:

As the signal is given, the dragons fly, if local, to the destination where Thread will be fought, or will all *between* instantaneously to the location where Thread is expected.

Dragons arrive at destination:

All the wings of dragons designated for this Fall appear in the sky from *between*. Neatly organized riders within Wings within the Flight are arranged in row upon row in battle formation. The sky is filled with a blanket of neatly ordered lines of blue,

green, bronze, and brown, and gold below. The only gray in the sky, here far to the east of Southern Weyr, is the clouds forming a storm that has not erupted as yet. A few spurs of premature fire on the behalf of one or two excited young dragons roar into the air, lighting an otherwise dimming sky. Far to the west however, sun peaks through white clouds.

Leading Edge appears:

An ominous pause filters through the ranks. Stillness, so complete that rider and dragon alike can hear the anticipatory rise of a heartbeat, holds the wings at bay. Wingleaders lean in, reaching forward as if the mere action alone will break the tension and find that which they search for. And then it begins. The faintest trail of silver can be seen slithering from the sky so far away that some must blink their eyes to assure themselves it's not the same illusion that had popped up before in anticipation of the moment. It is not. Slowly the leading edge rains forward.

Thread begins to fall:

There is a hissing sound against the silent afternoon, as the silvery sheets ripple towards shore and extinguish themselves on the waters edge. But the waiting is very short as the edge of the silvery rain ripples towards the front ranks of the Wings.

Dragons sear Thread:

An immense ball of Thread which has tangled upon itself roils across the air, jerking up and down with the eddies and air currents. A gout of flame from a brown dragon misses it, the hot air sending it flying upwards. Once the flame ends, however, the Thread quickly plummets down in the sky, its tangled mass getting tossed towards green Yishenth's wingsails.

Tired greens and blues are switched with fresh replacements:

As a handful of exhausted greens and blues disappear *between* to rest safely at the Weyr, an equal amount of energized replacements move into position. The transition is swift and nearly instantaneous; no Thread manages to get through their ranks during this switch.

More Threadfighting:

Coruscating flame bespeckles the ranks of Southern's wings as Thread is banished into dust at each heated touch. Here and there the grey strands manage to fight their way through to survival from the deadly breath of dragonflame, only to head towards Sunblaze's queens: dispatched there with daring antics by gold and flamethrower.

Two blues dive toward the same patch. A glorified descent, a stunning dive to chase that silvery trickle, a duo of simultaneous flames. As if to revel in their partnered glory, the blues spiral about one another in their ascent, rejoining their separate Wings - smugness almost palpable. A sharp mental rebuke from their Wingleading dragon sends them back into formations with some of the cockiness knocked off their wings.

Weyrlings resupply firestone:

Several Weyrlings pop out from *between*, hovering close to the riders that require more firestone. Catching the rider's eye, they toss the firestone sacks towards the riders with a practiced motion, before disappearing I once more.

Thread winds down; Trailing Edge appears:

The end of Fall is near, but not here yet. Several strands spiral lazily toward a pair from Stormfall Wing.

Thread ceases falling:

Among all the ash and spore remains, it is almost difficult to tell that the attack has thinned, and the Trailing Edge is fading. Sure enough, only remnants of the fight are left. The last flames are extinguished, sweeps are executed, and the tired dragons of Southern Weyr return home.

Sweeps to look for any remaining Thread:

At a signal, several riders from each Wing veer off from formation, heading back over the lush greenery below to check for any burrowing Thread and crop damage.

Signal from Weyrleader to go home:

The Weyrleader's arm raises, then drops once more sending the dragons home.

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