**What’s What with Mechanist Savant**

Let’s face it, Mechanist Savant can be hard to understand, and the best way to utilize it is not immediately obvious. I shall go through the track and explain what these abilities do, and offer some tips on how to leverage them effectively.

General overview: The track allows you to create an area known as the assemblage. The assemblage has hit points, which your allies can use to protect themselves from damage. You will be placing automatons of various kinds which will replenish these hit points in various ways.

Circle 1- Front-Line Assemblage: First, we have the Hub, a spread emanating from you constantly, which is the core of your assemblage. The hub has a radius of 10ft per character level.

Your assemblage contains scrap points, which are basically extra hit points for the party. You start with 3x your TAM at the beginning of the encounter,providing a general cushion. When somebody in your assemblage takes damage, they can instead choose to apply some of the damage to the scrap points instead of their hit points.

There is some confusing wording here, but its basically defining how the assemblages of multiple mechanist savants interact. if you are in the assemblage of either savant, you have access to the scrap points of either savant. However, if you apply damage to one of them, you cannot apply it to the other until the next round.

Most people seem to want to use this as the first line of defense; the first time people get hit, they dump the damage into the assemblage. This is not effective. If you use it as the last line of defense, you can maximize its usefulness. If you only pull from it in matters of life or death, you can be sure that the hit points actually mattered. If I pull 10 hit points from it early, then get killed by 20 hit points more than I had, the extra 10 hit points didn’t matter and were wasted. However, if you leave the assemblage alone until last, it can build its scrap points, so it is more likely to have enough to matter, and you can use them effectively. if I have 11 hit points and take a 15 point hit, I can take 5 from the assemblage, and end up at 1 hit point, still up and ready to fight. if there aren’t enough to keep me alive, I can leave them for an ally who may have them matter. Additionally, taking initial damage means you can be healed, benefit from your feast healing, etc, which are potential hit points that go to waste if you used the scrap points.

There are some exceptions to this general rule. Namely, if you don’t think you will be in the assemblage when you get killed, you are better off blocking some of the damage while you can.

Circle 2 - the littlest automatons: This circle is defining another core ability of the track. you can place automatons on the battlefield to boost your assemblage. You start with 1+⅙ your level automatons, and spend them to create “spreads”. These spreads are basically the automatons in action, and you will have different types. As part of a move action, you deploy one of your automatons onto the field.

You start with the generator spreads. they effect 10ft radius area, and extend your assemblage as long as their center is in your hub(or the hub of an ally). Note that they have to be within the hub, not just the assemblage, so you can’t chain them together. This can be used to extend your assemblage, but their main purpose is to generate scrap points.at the end of your turn, you get your TAM + the number of other generator spreads active in scrap points. So, 1 generator will get your TAM points per round, 2 will get you 2\*(TAM +1) points, 3 will get you 3\*(TAM+2) points, etc. So, you want to place them as soon as possible, and the more you place the better they work. However, since they need to be in your hub, your mobility will be limited if you want to keep them active. Fortunely, you can move them. As a free action, you can essentially pick up one of your automatons, allowing you to place it somewhere else (using the normal action), or reuse the automaton for a different type of spread. In general, you don’t want to remove automatons until you are ready to place them again, as they could become relevant again if the battle shifts to where they were, and a automaton you haven’t placed is not accomplishing anything,

It also defines how hunger spreads work, but since you can’t place them yet I’ll explain it when you can

Circle 3-trust in steam: This ability is simple, you get tremorsense to your entire assemblage. You can therefore use a swift action to image the entire area, as normal for tremorsense.

Circle 4- consuming spark: This ability has 2 parts, which work together to define how hunger spreads work.

You create a hunger spread in the same way as a generator spread. as part of a move action, you place a spread. The hunger spreads are much larger, with a 35ft radius. They can be activated by generator spreads, but do not actually extend your assemblage. Instead, they will damage enemies within them for 2\*TAM at the end of your turn, making them an effective damage boost, if you can get enemies within their area. If they manage to damage an enemy, they will generate TAM scrap points. However, it doesn’t matter how many of them damage the enemy or how many enemies were damaged. So, they are useful for offense, but generators are more effective and more reliable at generating scrap points. I would recommend using 1 hunger spread, as it will give you the damage without slowing down your scrap points by too much. If you have too many, your assemblage won’t have many scrap points, though you can get some good damage out of it.

Additionally, you can now place your automations with swift actions. This is most effective when you use a partial move and your swift(s) to place as many automatons as you can at the beginning of combat, so they can be active as soon as possible.

circle 5- giants in iron: This one can be confusing. It basically allows you and your allies to blowup your automatons to deal damage and dispel things. its done as an immediate action, so you can do it when its not your turn. You remove one of your hunger or generator automatons, and gain a new one in your pool, just as if you removed it normally. They then get to create a 45 ft radius spread that deals your level in damage and dispells something from creatures in it. This spread has to be within [medium] range of the automaton you blew up to do this.

This is useful when you have placed all of your automatons for the encounter. You or an ally can blow up some of the automatons, deal damage and dispel enemies, then you can replace the automatons when your turn comes around. since they trigger at the end of your turn, you won’t even notice their absence (other than generator spreads increasing your assemblage, but that is minor). This replacement also allows you to adapt to the battlefield- for instance, blow up and replace a hunger spread so it will be on top of enemies, allowing it to deal damage and generate its scrap points.

bear in mind that these immediate action abilities conflict with your swift action automaton placement, so unless you get extra swift actions, you have to balance your actions between the two. I suggest spending your early actions in combat placing as many automatons as possible, before switching over to the decimation spreads.

Circle 6- scrapheap hero:This does a few neat things.

The first is that it increases our armors AC by 2. This is very nice, as its free AC, so long as you are actually using armor (utter brutes and demons being the main things that wouldn’t).

The second is that you get a free generator or hunger spread originating from you. you choose this at the beginning of each encounter. Choose a generator spread, and you will gain more scrap points and increase the efficiency of other generator spreads. Choose a hunger spread, and you will deal damage to those near you. Either way, free automaton for no action cost, very useful.

the third is that you can create decimation spreads without blowing up your automatons. This will allow you to utilize decimation without having to spend actions replacing automatons (unless you want to replace it, in which case you can still do so and save the free action, because why not). Also handy if allies will be blowing up automatons that you need to replace, while you also get free ones for more decimation.

Circle 7 - To Bend Steel: This is giving upgrades to nearly every ability you have.

The first is that generators are more effective. rather than TAM+ # others, its TAM+#others+4. So, TAM+4, 2\*(TAM+5), 3\*(TAM+6), etc.

The second is that your hunger spreads are now mobile. you can move all of your hunger spreads by your movement speed at the beginning of your turn, allowing you to chase down enemies with them without replacing them.

The third is that opponents leaving your hunger spreads take 2\*TAM damage and give you TAM scrap points. Essentially they trigger the hunger spread by leaving it, not just having your turn end while they are in it. You (or better yet an ally) can use forced movement to knock enemies out of your spreads to provoke this.

the fourth is that allies destroying your automatons for decimation spreads can do 2 at once.

the fifth is that when you create your free decimation spread, you can do it twice, effectively being an area 2\*level damage with 2 dispels as an immediate action. Though technically, this is a separate ability, so if you had 2 immediates you could create 3 decimation spreads.

Hopefully this makes it easier to understand what this track is doing and how to leverage it effectively.