

THE  
LORD  
OF THE  
RINGS  
TRADING CARD GAME

**OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES**

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### ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game is supported by an organized play structure that provides a place for players of all levels to test out their decks and skills against other Lord of the Rings TCG players.

These guidelines are for any player who wishes to play in one of these organized events, such as a weekend tournament at your local Hobby or Game retailer, or even an official organized tournament event like the Territorial Open Championships or a Premier Series Qualifier.

### OTHER RESOURCES

For more information, visit Decipher's website ([decipher.com](http://decipher.com)), or the Decipher Game Management Authority website ([dgma.com](http://dgma.com)). Enjoy!

### TERMINOLOGY

DGMA = Decipher Game Management Authority

Sanctioned = An officially recognized event

TCG = Trading Card Game

Bye = The player who doesn't participate during a tournament with an odd number of players. A player may only have the Bye for one round per tournament.

### PREPARATION FOR A TOURNAMENT

In advance of the tournament, you will need to make copies of the appropriate scorecard for the number of players you anticipate will show up. Scorecards can be found at the tournament resources page on:

<http://tournaments.decipher.com>

When the players arrive, have them fill out the top portion of the scorecard with all of their personal information. This information will be used to record their scores into Decipher's ratings system.

Make sure that all players fill out the scorecard completely and legibly. Each player will need to provide their Player ID (from a tournament ticket or ID card). If a player does not provide a Player ID, you will enter them into the tournament results as a Walk-In player. A Walk-In player does not have their rating affected by the tournament results and is not eligible for prize codes or Decipher dollars resulting from the tournament. Players can find their Player ID by following these directions:

1. Go to <http://shop.decipher.com>
2. Log in to your account (or create one if you don't have one). You ALREADY have an account if you are a Tournament Director, a dAgent, Fan Club member, or have redeemed a prize code.
3. Click on the "Your Account" tab at the top of the page.
4. Click on the "Tournament Tickets" link on the left of the page.
5. If your preferences are set correctly, you should see tournament tickets. Click on the appropriate ticket to view and print them. Your Player ID is on the side of the ticket. If your preferences are not set correctly, you'll need to check the appropriate boxes in the preferences section so your tickets are displayed.

Collect the \$1 per player tournament fee. This can be collected through the retailer or tournament director and is in addition to any other entry fee the tournament may have. The owner of the tournament will be charged \$1 per player when the tournament results are uploaded.

### SUPPORTED FORMATS

Decipher currently supports two types of *The Lord of the Rings* TCG gameplay: Constructed and Sealed Deck.

#### Constructed

Players build a deck from their collection of cards before the tournament begins. Players need to bring just one *The Lord of the Rings* TCG deck with them to the tournament. They will use this deck throughout the entire tournament.

#### Sealed Deck

There are two forms of sanctioned sealed-deck tournaments: Standard and Booster Draft. All sealed-deck games are played using normal tournament rules.

##### *Standard Sealed Deck*

Players are given an equal amount of unopened product by the tournament director and they construct a deck using only these cards. Although one starter and any number of boosters will work, a suggested amount of cards for a Standard Sealed Deck tournament is one starter and three boosters. This gives participants enough cards to customize their starter decks. Each player should be randomly given a starter deck from the pool of purchased starter decks.

Deck Construction — As soon as all players have been given the appropriate amount of product for the tournament, the tournament director should announce a deck construction time period. We suggest giving players 30 minutes to construct their decks. Any unused cards should be set aside and may be used to alter the deck between rounds if desired.

##### *Booster Draft*

Block Format — All cards used in Booster Draft tournaments must correspond to the Draft Pack used. For example, if the tournament is using Fellowship Draft Pack, all booster packs must be from the Fellowship Block. (A promo or preview card that copies a card from the Fellowship Block is also legal.)

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRADING CARD GAME

## Official Tournament Guidelines

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Setup — Each player brings to the draft:

- 1 Block appropriate Ring-bearer
- 1 The One Ring card
- 1 Adventure Deck of 9 site cards

Each player needs to get at the draft:

- 1 Draft Pack
- 3 booster packs from the appropriate block

Player Distribution — Players assemble randomly into drafting circles (called groups) of roughly equal size at the discretion of the tournament organizer or head judge. Groups should have an even number of players if possible, and eight players is the best number. A tournament official then distributes three booster packs to each player in the group, according to one of the configurations listed above. Each player receives the same configuration of packs. Before drafting of booster packs begins, each player should open his Draft Pack and examine its contents. The mix of companions and minions in that pack provide a basis for the drafting of the booster packs.

Drafting Procedure — At a signal from a tournament official, each player opens the booster pack specified by the official (all players must be drafting from the same set) and counts the cards. If a player does not have the appropriate number of cards in his or her booster pack, he must immediately notify the judge, who will replace the pack. The player chooses one card from the booster pack, and then passes the remaining cards face down to the player on his left. The opened packs are passed around the drafting group with each player taking one card each before passing until all cards are drafted. Once a player has removed a card from the pack and placed it face down in front of him, that card may not be returned to the pack.

After each player's first pack is drafted, a tournament official will specify a pack and instruct players to open it and draft in the same fashion, except that the direction of drafting is reversed and now proceeds to the right. This process is repeated until all cards in all booster packs are drafted. The first and third packs are drafted clockwise (to each player's left), and the second pack is drafted counterclockwise (to each player's right).

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# THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRADING CARD GAME

## Official Tournament Guidelines

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Players may not take any notes during a draft or during deck construction. Players may not show their card selections or the contents of their current packs to other participants in the draft. Players may not send signals of any kind to other participants in the draft regarding any information about their own picks or what they would like others to pick. Players may not review the cards they have drafted or the cards in their draft packs until the drafting procedure is complete and they are building decks.

**Deck Construction** — Once drafting is complete, players have 30 minutes to build a tournament deck (including a Ring-bearer and Ring, a draw deck, and an adventure deck). Draw decks must have at least 40 cards and must have an equal number of Shadow cards and Free Peoples cards, shuffled together. If a player does not have at least 20 Shadow or 20 Free Peoples cards, then they must forfeit all games.

Players may have any number of cards of each card title in their draw deck. Players are not limited to four copies of each card title in their draw deck.

*Special Booster Draft Rule:* If at any time a player has no cards in his or her draw deck, it may be reshuffled to form a new draw deck. Players may only do this once per game.

**Tournament Procedure** — The tournament organizer or head judge determines pairings. Sanctioned booster draft tournaments consist of at least three rounds of play. Normal tournament rules and time limits apply.

### Selecting a Card Pool

In *The Lord of the Rings* TCG, there are currently five card pool formats. Each can be played constructed or sealed. When posting a tournament, you can select the format from the *Card Pool* pull-down menu.

*Standard Format* — This format will allow all non-site cards except those on the Standard Format Exclusion List (commonly called the X-list). This list can be found in the Current Rulings Document. The adventure deck will be made from the current block's sites.

*Open Format* — This format will allow all non-site cards. The adventure deck will be made from the current Block's sites

*Fellowship Block* — This format uses any card released in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *Mines of Moria*, or *Realms of the Elf-lords*.

*Tower Block* — This format uses any card released in *The Two Towers*, *Battle of Helm's Deep*, or *Ents of Fangorn*.

*King Block* — This format uses any card released in *Return of the King*, *Siege of Gondor*, or *Mount Doom*.

## TOURNAMENT PROCEDURE

In Lord of the Rings TCG tournaments, players are not eliminated; every player may play in every round.

### Pairings

**Scorecard Collection** — After you have collected all of the scorecards, shuffle them together so they are sufficiently randomized.

**Initial Pairings** — Take the top two scorecards off the pile. Pair off these two cards, writing the name of each player's opponent on his or her card. Then the third and fourth cards are paired, and so on. Continue pairing players in this way until all players are paired. If there are an odd number of players competing in the tournament, the player with the last card remaining will be assigned a Bye (See Game Results and Scoring) for this round.

**Score Reporting** — When players complete a game, they must approach the director's table together to report the results. Players should not score their own game. Mark each player's scorecard with his or her game score (see Game Results and Scoring). Update the player's cumulative score by adding the victory points for this round to his or her previous cumulative score. Each player must initial his or her own scorecard to show acceptance of the reported score for that round.

**Scorecard Stacking** — When all players have completed play and you have marked all scorecards with the results of the first round, form a pile of all the scorecards (including the Bye if there was one). Arrange the scorecards in descending order according to the player's cumulative score, with the highest score on top, second highest score beneath it, and so on until the card with the lowest score is on the bottom. Many players may have the same score. In this case, arrange them randomly within their score in the pile.

Subsequent Pairings — Pair the top two players in the stack, writing opponent's names (as with Initial Pairings). Then, pair the third and fourth players, and so on until all players have been paired. If there is an odd number of players, assign the last player the Bye for the next round. If that player has previously received a Bye in this tournament, reassign the Bye to the next highest player in the stack (who has not already received a Bye).

Players cannot be paired against the same opponent more than once. If this happens, modify the pairing. Pair the mismatched player with the next-highest-ranked player who he has not already played. Then continue with the pairings. For example, if the 5th-ranked player has already played the 6th-ranked player, he or she would instead be matched up against the 7th-ranked player (and the 6th-ranked player would be matched up against the 8th-ranked player). If the 5th-ranked player had already faced the 7th-ranked player, he or she would then be matched up with the 8th-ranked player, and so on.

## Timing and Scoring

### *Timing of Rounds*

For all formats, a round time of 45 minutes should be enforced.

When the time limit for a round has elapsed (in any format), players will continue the game until a Regroup phase has been reached. If time expires while in a Regroup phase, the game ends and all play should stop. Once a Regroup phase has been reached, the game is over and all play should stop. If the game comes to a normal conclusion (Ring-bearer is killed or corrupted, or the adventure path is completed) after the time expires, the game should be scored as a Full Win or Full Loss. Otherwise, the game is scored as a Modified Win or Modified Loss (using the appropriate tie-breakers). If any player is at the Caverns of Isengard (5 U 120) when time is called, the game is allowed to continue until Shadow players reconcile, at which point the game will resolve with a full victory and a full loss.

If the Tournament Director notices that a game is approaching the time limit, he or she should watch the conclusion of the game to make sure it is scored properly.

### *Scoring Timed Games*

Distance traveled on the adventure path determines the winner. A site is earned only after all skirmishes are resolved for that movement. The player who has traveled the farthest wins. In case of a tie, use the following tie-breakers (in this order):

- a. Ring-bearer with the most resistance remaining
- b. Fewest companions in dead pile
- c. Fewest wounds on companions
- d. Random determination

The winner of a game that goes to the time limit receives a Modified Win; the loser receives a Modified Loss. (See Game Results and Scoring.)

### *Game Results and Scoring*

Players will be given points based on their performance in every round. The tournament director should distribute points as follows:

Full Win	3 points
Modified Win	2 points
Full Loss	1 point
Modified Loss	1 point

Bye (Full Win)      3 points

### *Conceding*

At any time during a game, any player may concede. The player that conceded is given a Full Loss, and the opponent is given a Full Win.

## **End of Tournament**

After the final round, the person with the highest cumulative score is the winner. If there is a tie in cumulative score, use the following method to determine placement among the tied players:

Head to Head — If the tie exists ONLY among two players and they played each other during the tournament, the winner of that game would be placed higher in the final standings of the tournament. If there are more than two players tied, or if the two tied players did not play each other, move on to Strength of Schedule.

Strength of Schedule — Each player's Strength of Schedule is calculated by adding up all of the cumulative scores for all that player's opponents (drop the lowest). Any unplayed games on an opponent's scorecard due to the opponent dropping from the tournament should be scored as 1 point for purposes of Strength of Schedule. The player with the highest Strength of Schedule should be placed highest among the tied players, followed by the next highest, and so on. If there is a tie in Strength of Schedule, drop the next lowest score from each still-tied player's Strength of Schedule and compare those players again (if there is still a tie, continue dropping the next lowest score until placement can be determined; if all scores have been dropped and there is still a tie, determine the placement randomly). If at anytime during this process there are exactly two players tied, re-check head-to-head tie-breaker.

## After the Tournament

### *Submitting Tournament Results*

After a sanctioned tournament, the tournament director must post the tournament results to Decipher. Results must be submitted electronically through Decipher's web-based tournament results entry form (<http://tournaments.decipher.com>).

If you have any questions or problems concerning results submission, feel free to contact Decipher's Organized Play Coordinator at [tournaments@decipher.com](mailto:tournaments@decipher.com).

### *Prizes*

Decipher awards prizes codes to specific players after the tournament results are submitted. These prize codes can be redeemed for the current prize support. For a description of the current prize support for Lord of the Rings TCG, visit:

<http://tournaments.decipher.com/Resource/Default.aspx?ResourcePageID=6>

### *Player Ratings*

Decipher's player rating systems are based on player participation in sanctioned tournaments. They allow players to see how they measure in skill against other players around the world. The ratings systems are based on the "ELO" system, in which each player's rating is calculated by how well they do in each tournament and the ratings of the opponents they are playing against. The rating is a number between 0 and 3,000, with the average around 1,500. The more expert the player, the higher their rating. (This system, the universal standard for rating chess tournament players for 40 years, has proven to be objective and accurate.)

## GENERAL RULES

### Tournament Sanctioning Rules

#### *Sanctioned Tournaments*

All Decipher-sanctioned *Lord of the Rings* TCG tournaments must be played according to the most current rules as defined by the rules booklet, rules supplements, CRD (Current Rules Document), and FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) documents. Please have these documents on hand during tournament play. If the rules or FAQ do not fully answer a question or disagreement, the tournament director is the final authority. The most up-to-date versions of the CRD, FAQ, and rules supplements can always be obtained from Decipher's website.

In order for a tournament to be sanctioned, the tournament director must first post the tournament on Decipher's website tournament registry page (<http://tournaments.decipher.com>). Tournaments must be posted at least seven days before the event.

#### *Minimum number of players*

For any type/format, the minimum number of players for a sanctioned *Lord of the Rings* TCG tournament is eight.

### *Required Number of Rounds*

For all format tournaments, there is a minimum required number of three rounds.

### *Tournament Directors Playing in Their Own Events*

Tournament Directors may play in their own events as long as the following rules are observed:

- a. There are no more than 16 players in the tournament (including the Tournament Director)
- b. The Tournament Director must assign an assistant judge and a back-up judge. The assistant judge will make rulings in games where the Tournament Director is playing. The back-up judge will make rulings in games where the Tournament Director and the assistant judge are both playing.

### *Players' Belongings During a Tournament*

Players may only have recognized game elements on the table during a game.

Recognized game elements include:

- Play deck
- Site marker
- Twilight counters and wound tokens
- Timer (optional)

Any additional materials (rulebooks, FAQs, official documentation for foreign language cards, etc.) may be referenced only when a ruling issue arises and the tournament director has been notified.

## **Tournament Gameplay Rules**

### *Redrawing your hand*

After all players have drawn their starting hands (before the first turn begins), each player (in player order) may shuffle his or her hand into his or her draw deck and draw 6 cards. The cards in the original hand are not revealed to anyone. This redraw may be for any reason. Each player may redraw only once per game. A player who passes on the opportunity to redraw may not change his mind.

### *Forgotten actions – responsibility*

The owner of a card has the responsibility to perform or enforce any actions resulting from that card. Examples:

- A player has "No Stranger to the Shadows" on Aragorn. When he moves, it is his responsibility to reduce the site's Shadow number by one (thereby adding one fewer twilight token).

- A Shadow player has "Under the Watching Eye" in play. When the Free Peoples player moves, it is the Shadow player's responsibility to make sure that his opponent exerts a character. The Shadow player should remind his opponent before taking any Shadow actions.

### *Forgotten actions – taking back actions*

The rules do not allow a player to take back an action, even though many players allow their opponents to occasionally do so as a matter of courtesy. However, sometimes a player must take back an action to allow another player the opportunity to act.

Most phases in the game turn do not end until all players consecutively pass. (Each fellowship phase and Shadow phase requires only one player to pass.) However, players don't usually announce every pass action because this becomes very tedious. Sometimes another player wants to perform an action during a phase that gets skipped.

If a player performs (or begins to perform) the first action in a phase before the previous phase is ended (or skips the previous phase completely), then another player may require that action to be taken back, and the game returns to that previous phase. Example:

*A Shadow player finishes performing actions in his Shadow phase. The Free Peoples player exerts Legolas, Greenleaf to wound a minion with an archery phase action. The Shadow player notes that the maneuver phase has been skipped, and he wants to play a maneuver event. The exertion token is removed from Legolas, the wound is removed from the minion, and the game reverts to the maneuver phase. The Free Peoples player passes on the first maneuver phase opportunity, and now the Shadow player may play his maneuver event.*

A player "performs (or begins to perform) an action" when any of the following occur:

- A declaration is made (for example, "I'll exert Legolas to shoot the Sneak").
- A cost is paid (for example, twilight tokens are removed or added, a character is exerted).
- A card is played to the table.
- An event is placed in the discard pile .

The above ruling also applies to skipping phase actions by beginning to perform the required actions at the end of a phase. Example:

*Both players have passed on maneuver phase actions. The Free Peoples player announces his archery total, without giving the Shadow player an opportunity to use an archery action (such as "Bitter Hatred"). The Free Peoples player's archery total is not resolved, and the Shadow player is allowed to use any archery actions.*

## OTHER NOTES

### Championship Tournaments

Throughout the year, the DGMA sponsors many championship-level tournaments. For information on these events, visit [DGMA.com](http://DGMA.com). Retailers and dAgents may apply for Territorial Open Championship events and Premier Series Qualifiers. Applications are available on [DGMA.com](http://DGMA.com).

### Tournament Levels

There are four different levels that a Lord of the Rings tournament could be. When a tournament is at a level 2, 3, or 4, the event will be rated with a higher K-value. This will give the players an increased potential to gain (and lose) ratings points based on their performance. Also, higher level tournaments typically have special prizes and awards.

Level 1: Local tournaments, Release Weekend Events

Level 2: Premier Series Qualifiers, Territorial Open Championships, Premier Series Invitational

Level 3: Premier Series Events, Continental Championships

Level 4: World Championship, World Cup

### Special Rules – Championship-Level Tournaments

Decklists are required for all Level 2, 3 and 4 events. Please have them filled out before the scheduled event start time. The tournament director at one of these tournaments should randomly check decks throughout the tournament as often as possible. Any decklist violations should be handled as described in the DGMA Organized Play Code of Conduct.

Tournament directors may not play in a Level 2, 3, or 4 tournament that they are running, even if it has fewer than sixteen players.