

# The Red Book of Westmarch: The Official Council of Elrond Newsletter

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For the *Middle-earth  
Collectible Card  
Game* Community



## The FELLOWSHIP: COMMENTS FROM THE COE The Judge Certification Program by Mark Alfano, Chair CoE

This month, I'd like to take a little time to discuss the Judge Certification Program (JCP). Last year, CoE launched this program, which had two goals: "(1) to improve community-wide rules knowledge by creating helpful tutorials on the game and (2) to establish a hierarchy of rules wizards who can act as judges during tournaments." We hope some day to combine all the extant rules and rulings into one master document: the Universal Rulesbook. Although there was a flood of applicants during the initial sign-up, progress has been more of the slow-and-steady variety. Dave Barton and Kris Van Beurden attained level 1 judge-ship within a year of the charter of the program, then there

was a slight lull.

This month, however, marks the return of the JCP, with fully five people being certified as Level 1 Judges: Brian Min, Joe Bisz, Jonathan Yost, Manuel Cabezali, and Kuba Krchak! In this article, I hope to highlight their work and thank them for their dedication.

Joe Bisz is the author of the Play and Examples File, available here. He has put in literally years of work compiling nuanced examples of legal and illegal play. Unlike the CRF, Joe's document not only tells you in general what you can do, but also illustrates how best to do it. The file

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## PLAY OF THE MONTH

An Alternative Ending to The Two Towers – Procrastination at Entmoot!  
by Jamie Pollock

I'd been trying for several games to get my Ent-raising Fallen Radagast deck more fluid and tuned without much success. The general idea is to rouse some Ents using a small company and Friend of Secret Things, acquire a regiment of crows and go pound on some hapless heroes in the neighbourhood. So my latest incarnation was directed against b\_took (Ben Sorenson) late one night on GCCG.

It just so happened that Ben opted for Fallen Saruman, his most beloved avatar. So there's me thinking this setting is quite thematic – we have Saruman, fallen from his grand mission to save Middle-earth and instead looking to further his own desires for power, and Radagast, distracted from his mission by the pleasures of nature and using it to further his own dark agenda. So, the basic plan was to raise the Ents and pay the "Sorryman" and his entourage of ne'er-







## CONDUCT AND hobbitshIP

### Counter-argument to Jon Yost’s “Sportsmanship and Take-backs”

By Brian “Bitter Sauron” Min

In the last issue of the Council of Elrond letter Jonathan Yost wrote an article about sportsmanship. I’m here to play a bit of devil’s advocate. This is a card game. This is a game of mental prowess. One’s physical abilities have no bearing in this game. A person has to rely on their brain and some luck from the dice. In the defining tournaments of our game, nationals and worlds, I would expect people to play exactly by the rule set defined.

The idea of a take-back to me shows a sign of having no pride. If I screw up during a game I eat my mistake, and -- yes this has cost me a game or two -- but I know it was my own fault and no one else’s. This game requires tremendous amounts of mental thinking. A person who practices and keeps themselves sharp should get an advantage over those who do not; just like an athlete who trains more than his competitors, some people will have an advantage over those who don’t. The idea of a take-back is to give a handicap or crutch to those who don’t stay sharp.

To play at the top echelon of this game you are required to know the rules and have the mental abilities and endurance to go with that. There are so many variables in this game that are unforeseen; how can anyone figure out if a take-back will have an unknown consequence or not?

Let’s take Jonathan’s example from his article: “For example, someone forgets to roll to remove a hazard card during their organization phase and asks to go back and do it just after drawing for another company’s movement/hazard phase.”

First it’s not my job to remind you to attempt to remove the corruption card. If you forgot to remove this during your organization phase, I should get an advantage from it. Again this is a game of mental prowess. I have no idea what you have drawn, maybe it’s Vilya and the corruption card is on Elrond, maybe it was something else. The fact is I don’t know. To ask for a take-back at this point is firstly not supported by any of the rules and secondly takes away from the tournament, where players should expect to play by the rules defined.

Let’s consider another example. Player A places a card on-guard and then says wait I put the wrong card on guard and replaces it with a different card. Player B has Withdrawn to

Mordor in his hand. Does he use it against the on-guard card, or does he use it against an agent that may or may not be revealed? Was Player A bluffing? This opens a whole new host of problems.

A single take-back can mean the entire difference in a tournament. I can give an example from the North American Championships this year. Mark Alfano was playing against Alicia Zaret. Alicia was able to lower the hazard limit to stop Mark’s hazards and dunk. She used Many Turns and Doublings which requires Gates of Morning. He had a twilight in his hand and could have asked for a take-back to fizzle the Many Turns. However he screwed up, it was his mental mistake and Alicia benefited from it and won the tournament. Should someone allow a take-back at this point? It could cost you the tournament and it was not your fault the opponent screwed up.

I believe in Nationals and Worlds players should not allow take-backs and should play by the rule set defined. To allow take-backs doesn’t help a player improve his skills and takes away from the big tournaments.







## CONDUCT AND hobbitshIP

What is Cheeze?  
By Mark Alfano

This is the first in what we at CoE hope will be a series of articles on cheeze in ME:CCG. I believe that my own definition is quite narrow in scope, and so I will explain it here and await replies (either as letters to the editor or as full-fledged articles).

I divide cheeze into two types: benign and malignant. This distinction is one of scale. Whereas benign cheeze only rises to the level of minor cheezy plays within an overarching non-cheezy deck, malignant cheeze constitutes the heart of its deck, and can be game-killing. Before I go any further with this idea, however, I should give my definition.

### Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

A certain use of cards is cheezy if, and only if, it

- (1) is non-thematic,
- (2) is non-counterable,
- (3) is not the intended use of card(s),
- (4) probably would have been errata'd if ICE were still around, and
- (5) can be used in a very powerful deck.

### Examples

To my mind, the play of Pallando and Cirdan squatting at the Grey Havens and scoring the Elves of Lindon, while perhaps lame, is far from cheezy. It is thematic: that's why they have that home site. It is counterable: Stormcrow / Doors of Night. It is the intended use of the cards. It was possible during ICE's tenure, and they never attempted to errata it in any way. The only criterion it actually meets is (5), since it obviously can be used in a very powerful deck. If you like, we could say the P/C/E is only 20% cheezy.

At the opposite extreme is the Balrog's ability to play 3-mind characters directly from his sideboard with We Have Come to Kill. I would call this the cheeziest play in the game. It is not thematic, since in most cases the character then proceeds to play a War-Wolf (he should fight in cvcc). It is not really counterable, since the only counter is to run 3x Shut Yer Mouth, which against almost any other deck type is quite weak. It is not the intended use of the 3-mind rule, since (at least in my opinion) that rule was meant to give the balrog player 2 hill trolls his first turn before leaving Moria or the Under-Gates. I expect that ICE would therefore have issued some kind of erratum against it. And the

results of Worlds 2006, at which 3 of 4 finalists used this trick, is strong evidence that it can be used in very powerful decks. WHCTK from the sideboard is 100% cheezy.

There are, of course, many plays in-between these two extremes. Some players seem to consider all hazard-limit reduction abilities as cheezy. I would beg to differ. Such play is always thematic. On the hero side, it is easily counterable with a Doors of Night Strategy, or even the well-timed play of Twilight. On the minion side, corruption cards can be devastating to magic users. The cards clearly have No Better/Other Use, so they fail to activate criterion (3). ICE had plenty of time to errata them, and didn't. But of course they can be used in very powerful decks. Again, only 20% cheezy at most.

### Cheeze and the UEPs

You can see a number of attempts to eliminate cheeze through the Unofficial Errata Proposals here. I disagree with most of these, because I see them limiting strong deck types rather than adding to their ranks.

I cannot see how River stands in need of being nerfed, as the ability to cancel all rivers with a single ranger would do. River is thematic, counterable, never errata'd by ICE even though it was in the Wizards set, clearly the intended use of the card, and not necessary for a powerful deck. In my view, it is at most 20% cheezy.

Similarly, I don't see any need to change Sneakin'. Although there is no counter to the ability to add characters to a company after Sneakin' has been played, the trick is so hard to use that it doesn't really activate criterion (5). Sneakin' is perhaps 60% cheezy.

Finally, I don't think the Elf-Lord needs a nerf. There are a huge number of counters to him as he already exists. The lack of Doors of Night is quite thematic (he's bold after all - doesn't need to the encouragement of GoM, only the lack of discouragement from DoN). I doubt ICE would have issued an errata against him, especially with so many players clamoring against the omnipotence of minion decks. He's being used for his intended purpose in such a deck as well. Perhaps the Elf-chump is 20% cheezy, but that's a very low level to motivate nerfing.

### Cheeze and Being a Nice Guy

I would never play the Carambor Infinite-Move Deck against someone who wasn't in a joking mood (or at World Finals ). It's between 80% and 100% cheezy. I've heard, however, numerous complaints about the use of 20% to 60% cheezy tricks. In a tournament setting, I would always respond to such grumbling with a "Tough luck, buddy." During a tournament one is not expected to be a nice guy. In casual play, by contrast, or when teaching someone the ropes, it's generally advisable to avoid even the faintest scent of cheezy plays. In such a context, I would recommend playing a hero deck that moves every turn and does not attempt to cancel all hazards played on it. I would also advise against influence attempts and cvcc against your opponent. To the poor neophyte, these high-octane resource-as-hazard plays can be devastating and depressing. Perhaps the best way to go is simply to play a challenge deck.

In other words, benign cheeze (20-60%) only needs to be skipped against newby opponents. Malignant cheeze should be saved for tournaments. It's really quite Aristotelean: the right play, at the right time, for the right purpose, and the right audience....



### Counter-argument to Mark Alfano By Jamie Pollock



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I was asked if I would provide a direct reply to Mark's "What is Cheeze?" article since because I am a big proponent of UEPs it was thought I would have an opposing view. Having read over Mark's article I'm not sure my view on Cheeze is necessarily that opposing, but what it may be instead is just a little less narrow in scope. Anyway, I thought I'd write this article off-the-cuff and see where I end up.

To begin with, I think each player out there probably has slightly differing views of what constitutes Cheeze and therefore there probably isn't just one definition. Personally, I believe Cheeze is a style of play to which each player has a varying tendency towards. I'd argue that we could split the Cheeze aspect of someone's play into resource Cheeze and hazard Cheeze, with some having a tendency towards the former, some the latter, and some ultimately towards both.

So, what makes a hazard / resource card or strategy Cheezy? For hazards I think it's mainly due to certain non-unique cards that are easy to play and yet extremely powerful – these I'll call the "no-brainer" type. Enter the staple no-brainers like River, Beorning Skin-Changers (vs. hero only) and Unabated in Malice. You can put these into any hazard deck without much thought and know they'll cause most opponents hassle. You don't need a combo, although combos can be quite devastating with these cards (e.g. Tidings of Bold Spies). You can play them readily (River and Skin-changers can be dumped even if they're not going to do damage) and therefore they don't clog the hand, which is major plus. The reason I haven't included uniques is because of just that – they're unique and therefore potentially unreliable.

For resources, cards that exploit loopholes (e.g. Sneakin' and Paths of the Dead) or strategies that are known for giving high reward for little danger are generally more likely to be regarded as Cheezier than others. For example, the Balrog 3-mind rule and squatter decks like Pallando, Cirdan and Elves of Lindon, Fallen Radagast at Rhosgobel, Balrog with Orcs of Moria and Stinker and the minion Aiglos/Dragonhelm.

In terms of Mark's "necessary and sufficient conditions" -

“A certain use of cards is cheezy if, and only if, it

- (1) is non-thematic,
- (2) is non-counterable,
- (3) is not the intended use of card(s),
- (4) probably would have been errata'd if ICE were still around, and
- (5) can be used in a very powerful deck.”

I'd pretty much agree with 1, 3 and 5, sit on the fence with 4 and remain unconvinced with 2.

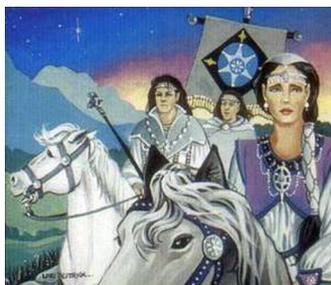
“Non-counterable” for me is too vague a statement. Many cards and plays in MECCG have varying levels of counterability - some are easily countered, some require very specific cards in very specific situations, and some counters are themselves extremely easy to counter! Simply stating “non-counterable” therefore isn't sufficient. If a certain play has only one counter and the card in question is otherwise useless against any other deck type, then is it reasonable to even list it as a valid counter? I've seen a few hazard suggestions to tackle extremely strong decks, but they tend to be extremely specialised. Are we to head down the route of designing hazard portions that target specific deck types?

“Probably would have been errata'd if ICE were still around,” is a tough one because Cheeze is clearly a subjective issue. One man's Cheeze is another man's style. Is it just lazy, boring, or exploitative play, or is it playing strategies that are perceived to be overpowered or imbalanced, or is it a mix of the two? The reality is that we simply don't know what ICE would have done if they were still around. There are so many new tricks and strategies, which have been honed and toned since ICE's demise, that it's almost impossible to judge one way or another. I guess the Balrog set is the only set of which we could make the judgement that ICE never had time to revisit, since ICE went boom pretty soon afterwards.

From a personal point of view, under the title of “what constitutes Cheeze?”, I'd also include another criterion in the conditions:

- (6) is bad for the meta-game.

This is a subjective category and could be seen as the “lame” category for Cheeze and for that reason alone I imagine it will raise the most eyebrows with the readers. It's also probably the biggest difference between Mark's and my opinion on what constitutes Cheeze, as I actually label “lame” as Cheeze. So how does this additional category impact on the examples Mark included in his article:



- 1. Pallando and Cirdan with the Elves of Lindon.
- 2. Balrog's ability to play 3-mind characters.
- 3. Hazard limit reducers.

1. Is Pallando with Cirdan and the Elves Cheezy? Well, based on Mark's categories and reasoning it's easy to see why it wouldn't be considered so, however, throw in my extra category to the mix and all of a sudden it might be a bit more so. I reckon about 50% of hero decks I experience on GCCG use this combination nowadays. Why? Well let's see - it gives you 2 extra cards in hand, it gives you 3 easy Character Points and almost certainly 2 easy Faction Points. Not only that but for a small trip out to Old Forest one can notch up 3 easy Ally Points. So, with relative ease and efficiency it covers 3 of the 4 essential MP groups. Is it able to be countered? According to Mark - relatively easily with Stormcrow and DoN - and he's right, it can. However, these are two cards that are themselves extremely easy to counter and in hero vs hero Stormcrow is unlikely to make an appearance, and this brings me back to the grey area that is this “non-counterable” category. It's too broad and sometimes counters labelled as valid for a certain strategy are just too easily countered themselves. In all the times I've played using this specific combo or observed it in action I've never seen this counter work. The squatting combo is extremely common, very powerful, hard to effectively counter and also dull to play against, which to me makes it fall under the “bad for the meta-game” category. So it's not surprising some might view this as Cheezy play.

However I think it's unfair to list just the Pallando/Cirdan combo. There is also the Balrog raising 3 Faction Points and 2 Ally Points all at the Moria haven and Fallen Radagast raising a number of easy Ally Points and the Girdle at Rhosgobel. Both do it with relative impunity and in fact it could be argued that these are actually bigger offenders of Cheeze - do we ever see Balrog without Stinker and the Orcs of Moria? It's as predictable as they come. If ICE had remained afloat then I seriously believe they'd have designed one or more hazard cards to tackle excessive squatting.

- 2. Balrog's ability to play 3-mind characters. Well, I'm in agreement with Mark here, so there's no difference in opinion here. This also falls heavily under my additional category.

- 3. Hazard limit reducers. Again, I'm in agreement with Mark. There's a wealth of counters to this strategy. Enter the hazard limit increasers, enter Twilight/DoN for heroes and corruption for minions. Bad for the meta-game? Not for me. Some like to play with big companies, some with small; the hazard limit reducing strategy doesn't render playing other strategies any less good.

4. Cards tackled by UEPs. The main Cheezemongers here are Sneakin' and the loophole in playing Army of the Dead without necessarily having to use the special movement through The Paths of the Dead.

The others listed by Mark tend to fall mainly under my category. River forces companies to be made up of rangers, and not just one ranger, usually many rangers. The threat of it is omnipotent and it's just the fact the card exists that it causes company composition to be dominated by rangers, ad nauseum. It's thematic only up to a point. After all, how many rangers do we need to negotiate the rivers of Middle-earth? Would the high Elves and Gandalf have had problems negotiating the rivers of Middle-earth?

Even myself, when I'm trying to be creative with the hazard portion with things like No Escape with My Magic, Enchanted Stream or Chance of Being Lost, I find the devil sitting on my shoulder constantly muttering "What's the point? You know 3 Rivers is always a much better alternative." And that's just it, it's the easy choice, the no-brainer. Much like Unabated in Malice, its ease of use and power affects people's creativity in the hazard portion. When you tie that in with the other hazards that are deemed essential, it doesn't leave much room for creativity in the hazard side. Every time I play on GCCG, and the Rivers and Unabated in Malices come out in force, I just think to myself "here we go again."

I think it's a shame that it tends to be just the resource section of tournament-winning decks that get posted for all to see. Much might be revealed on the meta-game as a whole if the hazard portions were also revealed! Maybe people should be encouraged more to reveal their entire deck list, hazards and sideboard included. An interesting survey might be to find out how many decks at tournaments don't contain river by default, or actually contain interesting or novel hazard sides?

My only beef with the Elf-lord is that it can target minion companies leaving Minas Morgul on the first turn. Imagine Itangast could target any hero company leaving Rivendell? Is it logical that one of the most powerful creatures is actually one of the most playable? Thematically speaking how many times did Elf-lords reveal themselves in wrath? In effect, any minion player up against Elf lords and attempting a Minas Morgul based deck is relying heavily on the luck of the draw just to make it past turn one. The nerf proposed in the Elf lord UEP simply aimed to lessen the possibility of this first turn annihilation whilst not removing the threat completely.

In conclusion, why do I believe this other cate-



gory is important in defining Cheeze? Well, I'd argue that being exposed to excessive Cheezy play can adversely affect people's desire to play the game, particularly if it's during casual play. We're a smallish community with a stagnant card set. A healthy player base is therefore critical to the game's continued survival. I am in agreement with Mark in that anything goes in serious tournament play. By going to a tournament one should be prepared for "malignant" cheeze in all its heinous guises. If you are a proponent of excessive Cheeze you certainly won't win many style points however, and worse still you might find willing opponents for casual play become increasingly harder to come by...

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Karsten had played Lure of the Senses on him. I tried to remove the Lure several times, even with Glamour of Surpassing Excellence, but to no avail. At council I rolled five, and Halbarad ran like he has never run before. I still had enough points to win though, 4-2 not to break the trend.

I got second place with my deck, and I was pleased with it since there wasn't much more I could have done. Next were the sealed tournaments, but I didn't play since both had an even number of players, and I was starting to feel very tired by now. So I ran Minion sealed instead, while Martin and Wim took care of the Hero Crap sealed. I had time to watch the games, and I remember Eero having Saruman alone at Isengard, playing Burglary and getting some item. I guess even the great wizards can forget their keys on the table. By the time all games were over and we got to our hotel, it was nearly 2 am. We got some sleep, had a nice breakfast, and headed for the gaming location one more time at 10 o'clock Sunday morning.

**Sunday, bloody Sunday**

Now it was time for Highlander 2-deck General Opponent and we were down to ten players. In this tournament I played a FW Pallando coastal/Eriador deck. I was allowed to have only one wizard in my deck, but with Saw Further and Deeper and Truths of Doom that wasn't a problem.

The first round I faced Teemu Drews. He was playing Hero dwarves in Eriador/north. He managed to outdraw me a bit, playing Glamdring and Tom just before I was going to play them. My deck was solid though, and I nearly had double MPs, but was forced to settle with a 5-1 win. Not a bad start.

On the second round I got to play against Kris, the winner of the main event. He had won his first game 6-0, and I don't think he was prepared for what was about to happen. He was playing Hero dwarves in the east. Thráin, Gimli and Glóin managed to get Men of Dorwinion. Meanwhile I was fighting his orcs/trolls/men succesfully and racking up points as well. Then Kris went to Lonely Mountain, as I had expected. I played Unabated and Tidings. Gimli got wounded. Mouth of Sauron and Tidings got Glóin killed. The following turn he went to Lórien, and Gimli got killed on the way there by a Cave-drake. He played Thranduil and moved with him in one company and Thráin in another. Thráin faced a Cave Worm and that was the end of him. His entire starting company had been wiped out! Gandalf popped up and went to some Dragon's Lair. I played a Rain-drake, Kris wanted to Flatter it away but I responded with Many Sorrows Befall, forcing Gandalf to fight. Sadly Gandalf did win that one, and met Balin at the site. On his last turn Kris moved Gandalf to Iron Hill Dwarf-hold, hoping to get some extra points from his Alliance of Free Peoples, but I stopped him with a River. This was my best game at Nordic

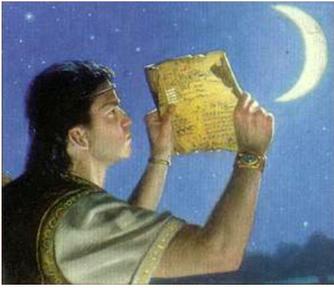


Cup, and my first 6-0 win.

In the last round I faced a Swedish player, Henrik Klippström. He had just defeated Martin's FW Pallando 5-1, so I was very interested to see what he could do against me. He played Hero with Glorfindel, Beorn and Beretar in his starting company. They moved to Mt Gundabad and Beretar played Wormsbane. I revealed an on-guard Lure of Expedience, and sure enough he rolled four, solving his GI problem. I couldn't draw anything to play for the first two turns. Meanwhile he got Gollum and went to Thranduil's Halls. I managed to keep them at bay for two turns with Adûnaphel and Mouth of Sauron, and his Gandalf got Rivered on the way to Beorn's House. Henrik's hazards didn't really affect me that much, so once I drew something to play it was a relatively easy 6-0 for me.

I won the Highlander tournament with an impressive record, giving away only one tournament point. After the tournament we went to eat and everyone seemed pleased with the event. All in all Nordic Cup was very much fun, and I'm already looking forward to organizing it next year. A big thanks to all who attended, and of course to Martin for organizing such a great event.





## TEST OF LORE: TOURNAMENT-LEVEL AND FUN DECKS

A Review of Manuel Cabezali’s deck “The Dwarves are Making MPs!”

By Mark Alfano

Author: Manuel Cabezali  
 Deck Title: The Dwarves are Making MPs!  
 Alignment: Hero  
 Type: Speed-MP

Manuel Cabezali recently made a contribution to the “complete” resource strategy taxonomy with his deck “The Dwarves are Making MPs!” This is an Eriador-based hero deck that relies on shuttling a number of small but strong companies around in localized portion of the map to draw tons of cards (using A Short Rest and Radagast’s special ability) and play several easy MP-cards per turn (e.g. Tom Bombadil, Blue Mountain Dwarves, Durin’s Axe) with the help of A Chance Meeting in the wizard’s company (like other Eriador-churners).

Decks like this have become very popular recently. I played a version that uses Strider at North American Championships, and Kris van Beurden played one that exploits Pallando’s hand size boost to play Gates of Morning combos. The choice amongst Manuel’s, Kris’s, and my versions of the deck is difficult, and largely a matter of taste, I think. In any case, each of them is very strong, and in this article I’d like to examine why.

I call decks of this sort ‘hero versions of minion decks’. The reason for this appellation is that minion decks were the first (and perhaps the best) to use character-playing ability in the site phase to (1) strengthen a company, (2) guarantee an untapped character during the site phase, and (3) gain points. They often do so by playing smaller characters under the direct influence of one of the Lieutenants, or by boosting general influence with Bade to Rule, Lidless Eye, Sauron, or Great Shadow. The Balrog has perfected this tactic with the play of 3-mind characters directly from the sideboard with We Have Come to Kill. Well, recent history shows us that hero decks can perform this trick admirably as well. A wizard with 10 direct influence is the perfect character to bring into play two 5-mind characters with A Chance Meeting, assuring two easy site phase actions and 4 marshalling points.

Manuel’s deck, for example, can score 12 character points with ease, and still have 6 general influence to spare against Call of Home, Muster Disperses, and the influence attempts of his opponent. If the median number of character points for

a hero MP-deck is 8.5 (which I would estimate it is), Manuel can score 3 fewer non-character points than the typical opponent and still win. Fail that influence attempt against the Blue Mountain Dwarves? No problem – Gloin and Balin will make up for it!

Another virtue of Manuel’s deck is its extreme speed. If he has a decent draw and is able to play Radagast and a couple of Short Rests early, he can exhaust in 4 or even 3 turns. But beware the minion manifestation of the Arkenstone which gives all dwarves +1 mind. This is the best counter to Thrain’s 5 direct influence and Gloin & Balin’s 3 direct influence against followers.

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# THOUGHTS ON THE PLAYING FIELD

## Sealed Deck Strategies

By Charles Jenkins

To me, one of the most enjoyable types of meccg play is sealed deck. In sealed deck, there is always a sense of anticipation as to the sealed deck and booster contents. Plus, the sealed deck play can only loosely be construed as “constructed” allowing a more casual and carefree play atmosphere. However, the name of the game is winning (or trying one’s best to win) so a number of strategies and suggestions come to mind for both heroes and minions.

### Characters, Starting Companies and Items

The fixed portion of the sealed starter deck contains a character with a homesite matching one of the fixed portion factions. Such a character is a good candidate for a starting company. In general, one should choose stout characters with the warrior and ranger skills, especially characters that have a chance of standing untapped versus automatic attacks. Obviously, resource cards can further dictate choices such as the need for scouts to play scout cards, etc. Think carefully before adding all of your best characters to the starting company. Other considerations include the need to play a strong companion in the wizard’s company or the desire to pop up a character at his homesite if the wizard is not in play. Most sealed decks do not have many hazards keyable to free holds and borderholds so one can usually bring a good influencer like Imrahil into play at his homesite in utter safety. Such a strategy also brings into play another factor—the ability to free up General Influence at the beginning of the game. Easy examples are using Glorfindel or Thranduil (big guys that can take a strike untapped) to control a lower mind character. Low mind disposable characters can come in handy as a way to make up for a lack of prowess enhancers and cancellers. One mind characters such as Bombur and Barliman can easily fit into a company and provide cannon fodder. Back-up characters added to the play deck should be minimized and focus should be placed on two, maybe three quality characters with useful skills that are worth marshalling points. Since most sealed decks will not have much in the way of permanent event removal, corruption can quickly pile up. Also, many times a player will not have access to many prowess enhancers or attack cancellers. That is why disposable corruption in the form of Cram and Healing Herbs are arguably the best starting minor items in sealed deck play. The simple example of Gloin holding an Iron Bound Shield of Ash scoring a Sword of Gondolin (3 corruption points total) or Durin’s Axe (4 cp) suffices to demonstrate the hazard of hanging on to minor

items. Other good choices: Potion of Prowess and Miruvor.

### Marshalling Point Sources

Unless one gets lucky with greater items or a big faction, available marshalling point sources will be in the two to three marshalling point range. One should focus on ease and speed of play. Cards like Dreams of Lore, Rescue Prisoners and the minion cards like That’s Been Heard Before are too slow to be of much use. Rings are also slow, although a well-timed ring test can bring out a Dwarven Ring. Remember that successful ring play involves play of a ring, successful test of a ring and subsequent play of a ring. Rather burdensome for sealed deck play. An exception to the slow play are the minion rings Bright Gold Ring, Gleaming Gold Ring and Perfect Gold Ring which allow searching of the play deck and discard pile for the Lesser Ring. Even then, one is sacrificing speed to exchange a 2 MP, 4 CP ring for a 2 MP, 1 CP lesser ring. The best hero items are cards such as Hauberk of Bright Mail (low corruption, non-unique), Glamdring (big prowess boost, low corruption) and Torque of Hues (cancel any attack). Hoard items should generally be avoided due to playability restrictions and the threat of big drakes and ahunts from The Dragons set. Any allies are highly recommended. Sealed decks are notoriously slim on allies, but many sealed deck formats allow the addition of one site, so if one draws a good ally like Gollum, Quickbeam or Tom and lacks the site, add it! As for factions, always include at least the fixed portion factions. Remember, attacks that can key to Free and Border Holds are few and such sites have no automatic attacks (but the characters must survive the trip)...

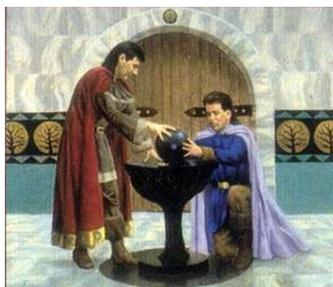
### Resource Events

Many cards are real no-brainers in sealed deck, such as Risky Blow, Dark Quarrels, Dodge and Concealment. But everyone has gotten hit with a sealed deck that just doesn’t seem to have much in the way of useful resource events like these. What to do? Take a hard look at some cards not normally played. Ford can stop the play of wilderness keyed attacks. Sounds useful. Fast Asleep aids a burglary attempt, which is not so useful, but the alternate effect of lowering an automatic attack prowess by 2 can be the difference between entering a site untapped and getting wounded. If one has access to sages, Hey Come Merry Dol can prevent the play of deep wilderness creatures such as cave drakes, true fire-drakes, giants and giant spiders. Master of Wood, Water and

Hill can similarly change a site path to fizzle certain hazards. A key example would be changing a borderland to a wilderness on the way to Isengard to fizzle a Slayer. Not all considerations are combat based. Cards like A Friend or Three fit into any sealed deck as they allow bonuses to influence attempts and corruption checks. Pledge of Conduct is a great card for sealed deck play (provided the company contains a diplomat) allowing the automatic transfer of an item. Useful indeed. Withdrawn to Mordor works well in sealed deck as one can discard an onguard creature or corruption card, destroying a carefully laid trap. A Short Rest and Washed and Refreshed can both be used to great effect, allowing the draw of multiple cards or the untapping of multiple characters. Probably the least used category of resource events is Spells and that's a shame. Where else but in the limited arena of sealed deck can a Wizard come out and dominate with his innate abilities? The ability to stay untapped or to untap is the prime consideration. And Forth He Hastened and Vanishment are powerful in sealed deck and the corruption checks are manageable; but so are lesser-used cards like Wizard's Flame which lowers the prowess of all attacks by 2 for the rest of the turn. Since many players run close to the GI limit in sealed play, an untapped Wizard tapping to influence away an MP source is quite devastating to the opponent. Last but not least is A Chance Meeting. This card can allow the play of a character (which will be worth MP's) and allow the play of a marshalling point source by an otherwise tapped out company. On the minion side of things, a mode card can be just the ticket to allow the Ringwraith to move and score some points. The last category of resource are permanent events that are of dubious value but can clear the hand of cards such as Armory.

### Creatures

Ah, now the fun starts. Creatures are the backbone of sealed deck hazard play. Typically, there just won't be enough effective hazard events. Most sealed deck formats require a 25 resource/25 hazard deck containing at least 10 creatures (sometimes 12). The more good creatures, the better. Cave Drakes are obvious choices. Wargs are a great sealed deck creature, hitting borderland, single wilderness and shadowland with a not-to-be underestimated 2 strikes at 9 prowess. Ahunt dragons, if available, are also great choices. They speed game play and can slam a company stumbling into dragon land. Creatures with multiple strikes are also desirable. One must be wise in sealed deck and set up the hazards properly. Examples include play of a multiple strike weak creature to tap the weaker characters. The creature will probably be defeated for an opponent MP. Next, hit with a stronger creature to tap the remaining strong characters, possibly losing yet another MP. Then, sweep with a big gun like Giant, Cave Worm or a Troll Brother. Expect to lose some creature MPs with the ultimate goal of tapping and wounding. A one deck sealed game is over



very quickly and a wounded company is fatal to the opponent. One not need be quite so wise in Lidless Eye sealed deck. Since most creatures do not yield points to minions, throw in as many creatures as possible and hammer away!

### Hazard Events

As always, focus on maximum effect and playability. All Rivers drawn (up to three of course) should go into the hazard portion. Any corruption cards are also prime candidates. However, don't just throw limited corruption cards on the field. Hit Target-Boy with a Lure of Nature while he's carrying a Sword of Gondolin, not on turn 1 when he has nothing. Call of Home is highly playable. The final hard hitter in sealed deck is Foolish Words. Played on guard this card will make most faction attempts into a luck-sack competition.

### Gameplay

If possible restrict movement to single region types so that some of the opponent's creatures cannot be played. An example is travelling to the Ruined Signal Tower from Rivendell (wwwR) to score a major item rather than travelling to Isengard or the Glittering Caves (wwwbR). Not only can a Slayer hit the latter site path, but so can the big, bad, ugly Cave Worm (yikes!). Staying away from shadowlands and shadow/dark holds can also limit the opponent's creature play. Right off the bat, the stronger orcs and undead are nullified. The scatter and run strategy can be effective, using low hazard limits, generating card draw and allowing at least one company to score points. Just remember that the opponent will also be able to draw lots of cards, play his highly playable creatures and set up his hand for his turn. With everything else being equal, it usually makes sense to go after an in-hand faction rather than an item. Sealed decks don't have many factions, so make the first attempt as early as possible, especially before the influencer can be wounded or die (or get Foolish Words). An often-overlooked factor is knowing one's deck. Many players approach sealed deck games like every turn is a surprise, from a hazard and a resource perspective. Companies move around haphazardly and that one Lure of Nature is played early in the game on a character with no other corruption sources. Know what has already been played and what is likely to come up soon!

### Conclusion

Former World Champion Brian Wong advised me long ago that there is no substitute for big and fast (and smart). Try to adhere to that advice as much as possible. Sooner or later, the dice will come into play so try to minimize the impact of the dice. Above all, have fun! Hey, it's sealed deck, so players don't have to take responsibility for a lousy deck and can even derive some enjoyment from watching their own guys get squished.



## SECRETS OF THEIR GATHERING: The CARDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH

The Typical Meccg Collector; or, Awakening the Gollum in You

By Wolfgang Penetsdorfer

The typical MECCG player is not only enjoying the game but is also a collector of the wonderful cards. Thanks to the great artwork its really a wonderful feeling sitting at home in front of a fireplace, taking the binder and looking at Cirdan thinking “Ah, yes! That’s exactly how an old and wise Elf should look like.” Of course the passionate collector has to make a decision first: Should I take the finnish or the italian binder today, or maybe the japanese? Am I in the mood of some shabby unlimited cards (after a bad day at work maybe)? Or should I have a look at my collection of Promocards, especially the very rare spanish and japanese ones? Maybe it is even time again to reassure myself, that this japanese Fury of the Iron Crown is real! (“Aaahh yes, it is ...”)

Now the collectors among us know that it is a long way to finally complete a set. With special thanks to Chris Cable’s fantastic trading centre, trading is not that tiresome, most of the time even a pleasure, since it offers the chance to get in touch with many cool MECCG folk. Many of us wouldn’t have even known each other but for some email contact from trading business.

Now when I started with MECCG collecting the cards became important very soon. As a fan of Tolkien’s stories I loved it to finally get a face to some of the characters. Of course I also hated some of those faces!! (Was Elrond an Indian? Maybe Michael Jackson is Glorfindel III?)

Naturally I wanted to have one of every card. As a player, from the beginning I was aiming at a player’s collection very soon, meaning I needed three of all non-unique cards. And since I was playing with my wife, we needed 2 complete player’s collections (one in english and one in german). After having completed this, my need for collecting was satisfied for a while.

For a very short while! After I became a very passionate trader, I couldn’t simply stop. So I decided to collect MECCG in all languages, that is: english, spanish (TW-WH), german (TW-AS), french (TW-LE), japanese (TW-DM), italian (TW), dutch (TW) and finnish (TW). Many years of still being among the collector’s community were guaranteed!

But after all I also finished this task (just a few months ago)!

The card that filled the final slot in my collection was a common: Friendship (japanese) – which was overlooked all those years. Another chapter closed, so what to collect next?

The first that came to my mind: a complete set of signed cards! Some time ago I already contacted many artists, and most of them they have been very friendly and I got my cards signed by them. Soon I had to find out, that a complete collection is a thing of impossibility. Too bad...

But I found out something else: there are many cool items connected with MECCG. And the Gollum in me soon convinced me: we mussst have all of thissss preciousssss ...

Most of the stuff is commonly known, such as the different card boxes (english and german), all the player guides and rules books (for TW also in german, spanish and japanese). I should also mention the MERP books The Northern Waste and Hands of a Healer, which contains scenarios for MECCG, as well as A Long Expected Party.

Of course there are dice and maps in different variations. Then there are some still not very hard to find items like the german MP counter, the dutch card binders with artwork from John Howe or the hobbit tokens from the english beginner set. ICE also gave away pins with the images of all the avatars. The winner of US Nationals was awarded with a Council of Lorien coin (there are gold and silver ones existing). Lidless Eye T-shirts are very sought after nowadays. Hardly anyone knows, that there also exists a cap with the Lidless Eye (the proof is at my home Wink. I have heard about Burning Eye temporary tatooes. Maybe one of the biggest curiosities are the Warlord-backed MECCG cards. Of course a misprint mixture of two different CCGs, still giving the collector who owns a few big pleasure. Finally there are also playtesting cards with a blank front side.

And why not also collecting the jigsaw puzzles from ICE, since all 7 of them contain artwork from the CCG. And of course there is the promo jigsaw Gandalf’s Mark!

Chasing after all of these items may take a very long time. And even if you think you have got them all, the collector is never spared the feeling, that there is still something out there. So it happened to me, that an american ex-player offered me some Lidless Eye stickers. In addition he sent me

some postcard-sized advertising cards with images of the backs of our cards. Very nice indeed!!

One might think it's difficult enough to collect all of these things. Actually there is MECCG folk out there, that even started to create their own stuff!! And I would never consider my collection completed without Mark Alfano's pins or Mikko Vihtemaki's stickers nor Nigel Buckle's pendants, and all of what is still to come to make my collectors life a neverending story – which is exactly what I am looking for!

At the COE we have been thinking of making a comprehensive list of all the official items, that have something to do with MECCG. You will find it at the COE homepage. If any of you knows of something, that is mentioned in this article yet, please contact me at [thorondor@gmx.at](mailto:thorondor@gmx.at).

In case the Gollum in many of you has just been awakened, the author of this article is not to be blamed of course.



## SECRETS OF THEIR GATHERING THE CARDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH

### The Japanese Middle-Earth Community, Japanese Cards, and Promos by Steven Dajic



Hello to everyone out there. I shall be writing about the cards that were released in Japanese for Middle Earth: The Collectible Card Game and how it is possible to obtain them as I am sure many of the collectors out there are wanting to know.

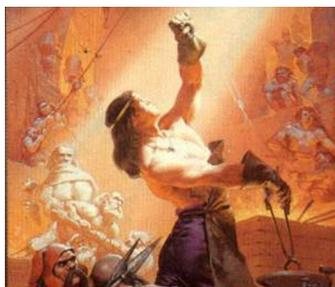
First of all I would like to explain about how the Japanese sets came into being. This may help those of you out there who don't exactly know much about the Japanese sets. It started shortly after ME:CCG's English version was printed. I doubt they were simultaneously released as I looked at one of my unlimited starter deck boxes and found the copyright date to be 1997. Thus I would guess that the limited Japanese version of ME:CCG The Wizards came out in 1996 in Japan. The distribution rights were given to the company Yanoman which it seems from stories of friends of mine here in Japan, was quite active in prize support and promotion for the game. They would often at tournaments give out T-Shirts and the like. Yet, the prized promo cards (I'm sure you all know but I will list them anyways) Fury of the Iron Crown, The Iron Crown, Neeker-Breekers, Fatty Bolger and The Black Arrow, were not given out as prize support. As written on [meccg.net](http://meccg.net): the Japanese version of Fatty Bolger could be obtained by purchasing the Japanese ME:CCG Players guide, The Iron Crown and Neeker-Breekers could be obtained by sending in 10 site or region cards to Yanoman and specifying which one you wanted, Black-Arrow was attainable through a promotion involving Middle Earth figurines. Unfortunately I do not know much more than this on the topic so I hope that this will do for all of you for now. Oh yes, there is the matter of if it is still possible to attain these Japanese promos nowadays. And that question leads me to my next topic: Yanoman and the sets of Middle Earth that were printed in Japanese.

In total, there are only three sets of Middle Earth that were printed in Japanese: The Wizards, Dragons, and Dark-Minions. This is partly because of the late release in Japan and because of financial reasons. Yanoman had financial problems and filed for bankruptcy a little time after Dark Minions came out in Japan (my guess is 1999 but shortly before I.C.E. filed for bankruptcy). So how does this tie in with the promos? I would like to say because there were many people who played Middle Earth in Japan and that

there are a lot of the promos and cards still floating around. However that is not the case. The game did not take off very well as the CCG industry is quite competitive. Therefore the amount of promo cards that were distributed was very low. I was in Japan once before in 2002-2003 and at that time the number of Middle Earth players and collectors in Eastern Japan was, as far as we knew, a grand total of 9 people including myself. Since then everyone who is left that plays the game is either in their late 20s or early 30s and is too busy, has no time and cannot arrange a day in which everyone or anyone can meet on. That includes me as well (my last Middle Earth game I have played in Japan was in March). As well, I would like to note that the held every year Japan Nationals was not held last year nor will it probably not be held this year due to this phenomenon.

I am sure most or all collectors out there are aware of the extreme rarity of Japanese Fury of the Iron Crown (and now we know why). I myself have seen them in person as one of the players I used to meet and play with back in 2002/2003 had a fair number of them (as well as Iron Crowns, Neeker-Breakers, etc. By the way this collector/player was not Akira Komachi). Therefore the only way to complete a set of Japanese promos is to get in contact with these Japanese players/collectors who have these cards or make ridiculous trades with someone you know who has one. I am aware that Akira Komachi has often helped many collectors complete their sets but I do not know his present status as I have not been in contact with him for well over a year. I, for the last 6-7 months have contacted one of players I know numerous times but have failed to make any sort of arrangement for gaming or meeting. Having said that, I am sure that things won't stay like this forever. Concerning the promo cards, all I can say is hold on tight for now. When I am able to make contact with the Japanese players and collectors again, I will be sure to let you all know!

Now that I am done explaining about the promos I would like to go on to explain about the sets of Middle Earth that were released in Japan. Going back to when I was in Japan in 2002/2003, I by accident stumbled upon.... not a ring but a stash of Japanese middle earth and in of all places: a department store. They were selling booster packs of the three sets: Wizards (unlimited only), Dragons and Dark minions for 100 yen per booster (That is approximately .85 USD, .67 EUR, .45 GBP and .95 CDN). I told my Japanese friends about this and they were so surprised and enthralled to hear about this one of them went to all of the company's department stores in the Greater Tokyo Area and bought out most of the middle earth he could find (Apparently, the Japanese middle earth community couldn't find Japanese middle earth for quite some time up until my discovery). Since then, it has been very difficult to find middle earth in anywhere in the Greater Tokyo Area. However, recently I



searched for Japanese middle earth through Japanese websites on the internet. The only thing I was able to find after an exhaustive search was on Yahoo Auctions Japan there are two stores in western Japan that sell Japanese unlimited Wizards, Dragons and Dark Minions booster boxes, and for quite cheap. I myself was able to buy a box of Japanese unlimited wizards and dark minions for a combined price of 5000 yen (approximately 42 USD, 33 EUR, 22 GBP and 47 CDN). One of the stores does carry limited Japanese booster boxes and starters displays but the prices are insanely high usually having a reserve set around 25,000 yen (approximately 211 USD, 167 EUR, 113 GBP and 237 CDN). For those of you who are reading this and are thinking "great! I can finally get Japanese cards!", I have to give you some bad news. Even though you may be able to buy Japanese middle earth from Yahoo Auctions Japan, all of the sellers only ship within Japan. Also the site is only in Japanese with no translations into other languages. I know that is the last thing many of you wanted to hear but there is not much else I can say. Except that I am willing to help those of you out who are in great need of finishing off your Japanese sets of Middle Earth (so long you don't need promos or fixed cards!). Please send me an email to the email address at the end of the article and I will tell you how you can obtain Japanese cards from Yahoo Auctions (as it would be quite troublesome to post the explanation here).

I hope I was able to shed a little light on the Japanese sets of Middle Earth and the conditions of acquiring them. Until the Japanese middle earth community becomes active and functions regularly once again there may be many turns and doublings in your pursuits. In the meanwhile I will keep you all posted!



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# WIZARD'S VOICE: THE COUNCIL OF ELROND RULES DIGEST RULES DIGEST #106



*A note from the Red Book Editor: After serving seven years as the Official NetRep, Chad Martin is stepping down from his position. The MECCG Community is greatly indebted to his tireless performane all these years. Without his help many players would have given up on our great but complicated game. The Red Book would like to welcome the new NetRep, Mark Alfano!*



The COE Rules Digests are the official rulings of the COE NetRep and are arrived at with great deliberation (and sometimes debate). In this column you will find the latest COE Rules Digest as of publication. You can find all Rules Digests at the Meccg.net forums under Rules Questions.



This shall be my first digest as the new NetRep. I hope I don't screw up too many answers!

(1) The interaction of Wizard's River-Horses, In the Name of Mordor, and Praise to Elbereth on the one hand and Nazgul events (permanent, long, and short) on the other hand has been brought into question.

Regarding Wizard's River-Horses (WRH), In the Name of Mordor (ItNoM), and Praise to Elbereth (PtE): Since the tapping of a nazgul permanent event turns it into a short (or long) event, the short (or long) event is never considered "played". Therefore, if a nazgul event is in play (as a short event, long event, or permanent event) then it will be canceled by WRH, ItNoM, or PtE when they resolve.

There are some subtleties in the exact mechanism of each card due to timing and a certain CRF entry:

WRH: Here we must distinguish between two different chains. If a nazgul event is tapped in response to the play of WRH, then it will resolve before WRH and thus be unaffected by WRH. If, by contrast, WRH is played in response to the tapping of the nazgul event, then WRH will resolve first, and discard (and thereby cancel, since it has not resolved yet) the event.

ItNoM: The timing issues for this card are identical to those of WRH.

PtE: According to the CRF ruling by card title on Praise to Elbereth, Nazgul events may not be tapped in response to the play of PtE. Therefore, there is only one chain possible for this card (PtE in response to the tapping of the nazgul), and so this card is 100% effective.

One final note: tapping a nazgul to access one's sideboard does not turn the nazgul into a short (or long) event; instead, tapping and discarding the nazgul are active conditions of using it in this way. Therefore, if a nazgul is tapped for this purpose, it cannot be targetted and cancelled by WRH, ItNoM, or PtE (in the same way that one cannot target Daelomin at Home with Marvels Told in response to his use, or target Baduila with Withdrawn to Mordor in response to his discarding).

(2) The relevant modifications to the roll for Treason the Greatest Foe have been brought into question.

The roll made for Treason the Greatest Foe is not an influence check. Therefore, it is unaffected by cards that modify the results of influence checks (e.g. bonuses in a character's text, Foolish Words, Honey on the Tongue). The roll is, however, modified by effects that modify a character's direct influence as such (e.g., High Helm, Shut Yer Mouth, The Iron Crown).

(3) The playability of Ready to his Will has been brought into question.

Tapping a character is an active condition of the play of Ready to his Will. Therefore, it is not possible to play this card if there are no untapped characters in the company. Furthermore, it is not possible to play this card and refuse to tap a character in the hopes that all the attacks will be canceled and that no ally will be created.

(4) The interaction between Sacrifice of Form and cards like Magical Harp has been brought into question.

Discarding your wizard is an active condition of playing Sacrifice of Form. Therefore, if there are any effects in play which would keep the wizard from being discarded, Sacrifice of Form cannot be played.

(5) There have been a number of discussions and questions about mind rings and their interaction with Rumor of the One.

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 Since Mind Rings are not sources of Marshalling Points (rather than being sources of 0 Marshalling Points, cf. TW Rules: Free Council), Rumor of the One only affects them insofar as it makes them worth an additional corruption point.

(6) Ben Sorensen asked “Would it be possible for you to clarify the CRF under Command Cards? Right now, as it reads, a command card causes all other command cards by the same name in play to be returned to the player’s hand.”

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 With pleasure. Each of the command cards (I’ll Report You, I’ll be at You Heels, and Smart and Secret) contains the following text: “Return all other command cards on target leader to your hand when this card is played.” The CRF entry by term ‘Command Cards’ says: “Command cards return other command cards of the same name to your hand.” This is a clarification of the text on each of the command cards. The question had previously arisen whether a player could stack multiple command cards of the same name on a given leader; this seemed to be a possible, if perverse, reading of the text of the command cards (in particular, of the word ‘other’). The entry in the CRF indicates that ‘other’ is to be taken in the token-sense, not the type-sense, as the perverse query had hoped. Thus, if a player puts I’ll Report You on a leader, and then attempts to play another copy of I’ll Report You on the same leader, the first copy will be returned to his hand. But if he plays the second copy on a different leader, both copies will stay in play.

(7) Two questions regarding fallen wizard decks have arisen:

(a) When is a fallen wizard player’s character considered hero, minion, or other?

(b) When is a fallen wizard player’s company considered hero, minion, covert, overt, or other?

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 Characters can be:

(a) for a hero player

(i) hero

(b) for a minion player

(i) minion

(c) for a fw player

(i) hero (non-orcs non-trolls)

(ii) minion (orcs including half-orcs, trolls)

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 Companies can be:

(a) for a hero player

(i) hero

(b) for a minion player

(i) covert minion

(ii) overt minion



(c) for a fw player

(i) covert hero (companies with nothing making them overt)

(ii) overt

(1) non-minion (due to overt-making non-orc non-troll ally, Freeze the Flesh, or Cast from the Order)

(2) minion (due to presence of an orc, a troll, or a half-orc with other characters than only half-orcs and men)

(8) The question has arisen about what happens to a company that may do nothing during its site phase (due to the effects of River, Lost in Free Domains, etc.) when it is faced with certain cards like Siege and Near to Hear a Whisper.

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 It was ruled previously that the company may do nothing whatsoever. This is not 100% correct. The company does not have a site phase and cannot enter the site. So the resource player may not play resources, unless in response to an attack, in which case these must be resources that affect the attack.

(9) The question has arisen whether there is such a thing as a ‘tie’ when it comes to corruption checks. In particular, the question has arisen whether a hobbit playing Cracks of Doom and Tookish Blood can roll the equivalent of his corruption point total and thereby fail to destroy the one ring.

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 According to the CRF Ruling by Term “Corruption”: “If an effect is in play that prevents a character from being discarded, the character is not considered to fail his corruption check if a result is achieved that would discard him.”

(10) The question has arisen as to exactly when one must discard Eagle-Mounts to counteract the site phase restriction on Fifteen Birds in Five Fir Trees.

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 Since it is possible not to discard Eagle-Mounts at all, such a discard is not an active condition of the play of Fifteen Birds in Five Fir Trees (FBiFFT). Therefore, by parity with reasoning with the argument for tapping a ranger to cross a River, the player has until the very beginning of the site phase to discard Eagle-Mounts.

(11) Joe Bisz asked: If I just played Sacrifice of Form on a Dragon-at-home at a Dragon’s Lair and killed the dragon during the site phase, may I: A) play King Under the

Mountain first, then two items using Legendary Hoard, and B) after the second item taps the site, play a Thor’s Map from Armory, and C) use the Map to untap the site? I know that hoard status is maintained until the end of the turn, but Thor’s Map requires “a site with a Dragon automatic-attack”, and technically the hoard ruling says nothing about the auto-attack staying around.”

- A) Yes.
- B) Yes.
- C) No, for the very reason you pointed out.

(12) Joe Bisz asked: Armory says: "If you have at least three minor items under Armory, gain 1 marshalling point." If I have 3 copies of Armory on table and one of those copies has 3 minor items, do I gain 3 marshalling points? What if I have 9 minor items under one copy of Armory, and three copies of Armory on table?

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 You get the MP from a given token-Armory if and only if you have at least three minor items under that token. Ignore type-identity.

(13) Joe Bisz asked: Are cards that give a negative bonus, like a killed Frodo, worth 1 mp for FWs, or have their negative ignored?

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 According to CoE Digest 93: Cards that are worth negative marshalling points are worth 1 MP for Fallen Wizards, unless stage or Fallen Wizard cards modify this value. (e.g. Great Patron)

(14) Joe Bisz asked: Balrog rules on revealing onguard cards say onguard creature must be revealed "before an automatic attack is resolved", which leaves room to suggest that an onguard creature need not be revealed until strike resolution of the auto attack (as opposed to immediately upon entering the site). Is this correct?

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 The resolution of the automatic attack happens before strikes are assigned (after all, you can't assign strikes from an attack that hasn't resolved). Therefore, you need to reveal the creature before strikes are assigned.

(15) Joe Bisz asked: The CRF says: "If your opponent is playing the same Fallen-wizard as you, and he reveals that Fallen-wizard first, discard any Fallen-wizard specific stage resources that you have in play." Wim mentioned in the forums that "You may continue to play Fallen-wizard specific stage resources afterwards." Is this correct?

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 Yes.

(16) Joe Bisz asked: Is it true that the attack created by Troll-Purse is considered to be an automatic-attack?

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 No.

(17) Joe Bisz asked: I've heard that "immediately" means "in the very next chain of effects." Because you may play things in response to other things, you could effectively play several cards "immediately." For example: Dark



Numbers says "Playable on an untapped scout immediately after facing an Orc, Troll, or Man attack." If you just faced an Orc attack, before strike assignment you could tap Arwen and play Dark Numbers, then respond to that by tapping Aragorn and playing a second Dark Numbers, then respond to that by tapping Ioreth and playing Marvels Told on something. Everything would resolve in reverse order like this:

Marvels Told resolves, and cancels something  
 Dark Numbers resolves, and is played on Aragorn  
 Dark Numbers resolves, and is played on Arwen

-----  
 I do not feel comfortable giving a pat interpretation of the word "immediately". In any case, the example is not right. In particular, the following is impossible: "If you just faced an Orc attack, before strike assignment..." If strikes have not been assigned and faced and all body checks etc. made, then the attack has not yet been faced. Ioreth could tap in response to the attack to play Marvels Told, but neither copy of Dark Numbers is playable until after the attack.

(18) Jamie Pollack asked: "Can I check whether playing a 'normal' character in the org phase then playing They Ride Together to play RW followers is legal or illegal? If this was done vice versa (i.e. TRT first then normal character) would this also be legal or illegal?"

-----  
 They Ride Together is an exception to the one-character-per-turn limit, so any RW-followers played through it do not count against that limit. In other words: yes, you may play an additional character (regardless of order).

(19) The following questions have arisen: What kind of MPs do Neither so Ancient Nor so Potent, Returned Beyond All Hope, and Will Shaken give?

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 Neither So Ancient nor so Potent gives Kill MPs (I know, it's weird, but that's the way the rules work). Returned Beyond All Hope gives Kill MPs. Will Shaken gives (negative) Misc. MPs.

(20) One further thing: Please do not take everything I said in the past as the official word of the NetRep. Only pronouncements made in digests count as official.

Best,

Mark Alfano  
 mark.alfano@gmail.com

Official Council of Elrond Netrep  
 \*Prepared in collaboration with Mikko Vihtemäki and Nigel Buckle (NetRep Team), and Chad Martin, Wim Heemskerk, and Brian Min (NetRep Advisors).





# THE HORN OF ANOR: CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR PROJECTS

by the Editor

*Will you answer the call??*

(And for missions!)

Dear MECCG Player: in case you haven't noticed, the Middle-earth community is growing.

That's right! And it's all because of talent--the talent of key, core players who are committed to keeping the game alive.

But the core players can't do it by themselves. In this column the COE will blow its bugle and call for volunteers for projects. There are some calls that require only reading some posts and contributing your input! We hope that you will find a project that meets your creative interest so that you will help us and your game to grow.

Finally, if you are already working on a project, and you'd like to advertise your project here and scout for helpers, please email the Editor and we'll do our best to muster up some beefy orcs (or at least hobbits) to put to work for you!

### Call for: Judge Certification

COE Chair Mark Alfano is running the "Judge Certification Program" where players work on a rules-related project, like a sealed deck tutorial, and are then given a quiz by a high-ranking Rules Judge. If the player passes, the player can move up to the next level of Rules Judge starting with Level 1. The main goal (hopefully not a "mission impossible") is to someday create a Unified Rulesbook. Interested? Contact: Mark Alfano (mark.alfano@gmail.com) so that he can allow you access to the Judge Certification Forum and you can see what projects have been done.

### Call for: Red Book Assistant Editor

The Editor of the Red Book Newsletter, Joe Bisz, is desperately looking for an Assistant Editor to help him. Responsibilities are flexible, but will probably include serving as a contact person on the forums for people who have questions about the newsletter; also gather MS-Word versions of the articles submitted; doing simple formatting of articles in MS-Word. He can even teach you QuarkXPress if you're interested (it's not that hard!). If the Assistant was eager enough, he or she could even take over some of the issues of the newsletter per year. At present the newsletter is published about every two months. Contact: Joe Bisz (joebisz@verizon.net)

### Call for: Worlds 2007

Worlds 2007 is coming up, and North America will be making a bid! That means the Americans will need help from other Americans to organize this grand event and make it as wonderful as possible. Some work will include gathering prizes, making t-shirts, putting together welcome packages for the non-Americans including hotel info, etc. Contact: Mark Alfano (mark.alfano@gmail.com) or Joe Bisz (joebisz@verizon.net).

### Call for: Web Designers

Anyone who can contribute a little artistic sense would be welcome to help the COE with its website and also with the upcoming Worlds 2007 (North America) website. Contact: Mark Alfano (mark.alfano@gmail.com)

### Call for: Virtual Cards

There are three calls related to this:  
**INDIVIDUAL:** First, we need anyone who is good with design and thinks they could create card templates for the Virtual cards (templates are everything on the card except the image, although all we need is the bottom half).  
**INDIVIDUAL:** Second, we need someone who knows XML (or at least how to edit XML) and/or has an idea how we can get the Virtual Card text information up on GCCG. It was already explained to us how to do it with XML, but we need someone with time to do this. It is our hopes that this will greatly assist in the playtesting process so that people can easily see what the new card texts do.  
**THE COMMUNITY:** Lastly, we need people to playtest the Virtual Cards! We have had a good amount of people weighing in on the Virtual Card Discussion forum, but we need more comments that are based on actual game play data. This project will never see the light of real tournament play unless we get hard, empirical data on how effective these cards are. We realize that at present the cards are difficult to implement into GCCG. We are working on a solution to this, but hope that in the meanwhile people will still be willing to try certain "mission" decks that don't require virtualization of too many cards (and therefore make it easy to keep track of the next text—just email it to your opponent before the game!). Contact: Visit the Virtual Card forum (Meccg.net forums, Dream Cards and Scenarios, Virtual Card Discussion) and start playtesting. You can also send comments to Joe Bisz (joebisz@verizon.net)



## RIDDLING TALK



## LETTERS TO ELBERETH OR, THE EDITOR

### LET THE RIDDLE GAMES BEGIN

Riddle #1 by Mark Alfano  
mark.alfano@gmail.com

Name all cards that have a representation of Sauron in them! Winner gets a copy of The Lidless Eye (from me) and a pin made from the card Riddling Talk.

Riddle #2 by Joe Bisz  
joebisz@verizon.net

The header and footer of the newsletter contains a secret message written in the Cirith Erebor tongue. If you can decode this message and tell me what it means in English, you will receive a pair of miniature gold “riddle dice” and a pin made from the card Riddling Talk.

### RULES FOR THE RIDDLE GAMES

Do you think you know what we got in our pocketsses? When answering a riddle, be sure to email the author of the riddle (the person whose name is next to the riddle) at the email address indicated and to refer to the riddle by number. The first person who emails the author with a correct guess wins!

At the end of each year’s worth of newsletter issues, we will calculate who has won the most amount of Riddle Games, and that person will be delclared the Riddle Game Champion (“Luckwinner”) and receive a special prize!

Would you like to submit a riddle? Please do! Send one to the editor at joebisz@verizon.net. We’ll provide a Riddling Talk pin prize. If you can provide an additional prize, we’d appreciate it.

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F I R S T L E T T E R

I have just read the CoE newsletter and I was enthralled to read it! To have a newsletter like this to make a stronger bond between the international MECCG community is great! The articles and tips and rules that were explained were all a great help and very entertaining! Please continue with this amazing newsletter and my hat off to you and all those who helped with its creation!

Stephen Dajic  
Japan

∞∞∞

∞∞∞

S E C O N D L E T T E R

Just wanted to say that I really enjoyed reading the first edition of the Newsletter. Glad to see that there will again be a regular newsletter for fans of MECCG to read and enjoy. Keep up the great work.

Cheers,

Tom Grozinger  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



## The Shire Season: TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

November							December						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4						1	2
5	6	<b>7</b>	8	9	10	<b>11</b>	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	<b>23</b>	24	25	17	18	19	20	<b>21</b>	22	23
26	27	28	29	30			24	<b>25</b>	26	27	28	29	30
							<b>31</b>						

### November

☼ The **Austrian National Championship** took place on October 21st 2006.

☼ Manuel will be hosting **Spanish Nationals** in Madrid on 17, 18 and 19th of November 2006 (<http://www.councilofelrond.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=40>).

### December

☼ There are no events planned for December.

### Upcoming (Registration Open)

☼ The Lure of MECCG VII will take place in Castle Stahleck (in the middle of Germany) on the 23rd to 25th of February 2007. Come meet more than 130 players from all over the world! (<http://www.lureofmeccg.org/>)

The Red Book of Westmarch  
 Issue 2 November-December 2006  
 Editor: Joe Bisz  
[www.councilofelrond.org/forum](http://www.councilofelrond.org/forum)



That's all folks! But The Red Book is always looking for more articles about MECCG or Tolkien. We try to fit articles into already existing columns, such as our ethics (Conduct and Hobbitship) column and Thoughts on the Playing Field column, and you don't have to be a Council member to submit. Submission is not a guarantee of publication. All submissions, letters, and correspondence to The Red Book may be edited and published unless the piece says otherwise. We also welcome letters to the editor! To see our Submission Guidelines, which include detailed descriptions of our columns and the kinds of pieces we're looking for, please go online to <http://www.councilofelrond.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=39>. Email the editor: [joebisz@verizon.net](mailto:joebisz@verizon.net).