

MIDDLE-EARTH CHALLENGE DECKSTM

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *MECCG Challenge Decks*.™ This box contains everything you need, except for a pair of dice, to challenge any opponent to a fun and competitive match of the *Middle-earth Collectible Card Game*™ (*MECCG*™).

The deck is preconstructed with cards available from the following sets of *MECCG: Middle-earth: The Wizards*,™ *Middle-earth: The Dragons*,™ *Middle-earth: Dark Minions*,™ *Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye*,™ *Middle-earth: Against the Shadow*,™ and *Middle-earth: The White Hand*.™ Also, some promotional cards printed through *The White Hand* were used. The cards were all originally printed as common or uncommon except for 3 rares per deck. The cards were chosen to complement each other in order to achieve maximum success in play, yet be rewarding as the story of the deck unfolds. *Challenge Deck* cards reflect published card errata and clarifications.

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Middle-earth Challenge Decks are made for ICE in Belgium by Carta Mundi.

The deck is tournament-ready for the two-deck game. This is the game format presented in the Rules Summary. It observes the following Council of Lórien tournament rules: (a) 12-creature minimum; (b) 30-card resource/hazard minimum; (c) up to three Wizards/Ringwraiths allowed in the play deck; (d) Ringwraith players having +5 general influence that cannot control characters; and (e) Ringwraiths and their starting companies beginning play at Minas Morgul or Dol Guldur. If your Wizard or Ringwraith is eliminated, you do not lose the game, but rather lose five marshalling points off your final total and continue playing.

The Council of Lórien is the sanctioning body of official *MECCG* tournament play in the United States and Canada. For more information on the Council and coordinating a sanctioned *MECCG* tournament, contact ICE Promotions at 1 (800) 325-0479.

The deck has 30 resources and 30 hazards, a complete complement of characters and sites for carrying out the resource strategy, and a 20 card sideboard. As per the tournament rules update in *The White Hand*, the sideboard is allowed to contain up to 30 cards. You should consider adding 10 cards to the sideboard when using this deck in a two-deck tournament, as this is certainly legal and adds to your deck's ability to react to an opponent.

After becoming familiar with your challenge deck, you may want to modify it. You can bring in more powerful cards, or you may want to vary its predictability for playing against familiar opponents. You may want to make the deck even more competitive in a two-deck tournament. For example, the following hazards can benefit almost any *Challenge Deck*: *Mouth of Sauron*, *Úvatha the Horseman*, *Adûnaphel*, *Daelomin at Home*, *My Precious*, *Lure of Power*, and *Durin's Bane*. Ringwraith players should consider if Dragon factions would fit into their existing resource mix. There are 9 Dragon factions all told, each worth from 3 to 6 faction marshalling points. Some excellent resources almost any Wizard deck can integrate are: the ally *Tom Bombadil*, the faction *Woses of Old Pûkel-land*, and the item *The Mithril-coat*.

• PART I • BEFORE YOU PLAY

This rules summary assumes you are playing the 2-deck game with the standard rules. When this summary, or a hazard card, refers to a Haven/Darkhaven, read it as Haven if you are playing a Wizard and Darkhaven if you are playing a Ringwraith.

1 · OVERVIEW

In *MECCG* you play one of the Wizards or Ringwraiths, trying to influence The Free Peoples or Sauron into letting you lead their armies.

You control one or more companies, which are groups of characters. These companies move around Middle-earth from site to site. At the sites they can gain resources, which provide you with marshalling points (MPs). The marshalling points for a card are in the upper left-hand corner of the card. The accumulation of marshalling points is the primary way of winning the game.

During the game you may "reveal" yourself. To do this you play a Ringwraith or Wizard card. That card represents you in the game. If that card is eliminated, through combat or corruption, then you lose the game.

While your opponent is moving, you get to play hazards on his companies. These hazards represent the creatures and events your opponent must deal with while traveling in Middle-earth.

2 · VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game ends when one of the following occurs during play:

- 1) If your Wizard or Ringwraith is "eliminated." In this case your opponent automatically wins. As an exception in tournament play, the game continues. However, the player whose Wizard or Ringwraith is eliminated loses five MPs off his final total, and cannot reveal a new Wizard or Ringwraith.

2) A Wizard player calls the Free Council. The Free Council may be called either:

- When each play deck has been exhausted twice, the council starts at the end of the current turn.
- After you have exhausted your play deck for the second time, you may choose to call the council. The council starts at the end of your opponent's next turn. This gives your opponent one last turn to catch up to you.
- After you have exhausted your play deck for the first time, you may choose to call the council if you have accumulated at least 25 marshalling points. The council starts at the end of your opponent's next turn.

3) A Ringwraith player calls the Audience with Sauron. The audience may be called either:

- When each play deck has been exhausted twice, the audience starts at the end of the current turn.
- After you have exhausted your play deck twice you may choose to play *Sudden Call* as a resource. If you do so, the audience starts at the end of your opponent's next turn.
- After you have exhausted your play deck for the first time, you may choose to play *Sudden Call* as a resource, if you have at least 25 marshalling points. If you do so, the audience starts at the end of your opponent's next turn.
- After your opponent has exhausted his deck twice you may play *Sudden Call* as a hazard. If you do so, the audience is called after your next turn.
- After your opponent has exhausted his play deck once, if he has at least 25 marshalling points, you may play *Sudden Call* as a hazard. If you do so, the audience is called after your next turn.

If your opponent has no marshalling points in a category (besides kill and miscellaneous), you may double your points in that category. No more than half of your marshalling points may come from one category.

3 · THE DIFFERENT CARDS

There are four different types of cards in *MECCG*: sites, characters, hazards and resources. Images of the various card types are shown on the color inserts in the center of the book.

Site cards have a map image on the card back, and a white or gray parchment background. The site type is indicated by a symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the card. A key to these symbols is on the back of this booklet. Havens for Wizard players, and Darkhavens for Ringwraith players, are special sites with a star icon in the upper left corner.

Character cards have a blue background for Wizard decks, and a rusted purplish iron background for Ringwraith decks. Characters in Wizard decks are called heroes, and characters in Ringwraith decks are called minions.

Hazards have a dark gray metal background. These cards represent the obstacles that your companies will face.

Resources have a copper background in Wizard decks, and a grey-blue steel background in Ringwraith decks. These cards are your main source of MPs, and they help you overcome hazards.

4 · GETTING READY TO PLAY

Before you play the game, you must separate your cards into the appropriate decks. You also need a pair of six-sided dice.

First, take all of the site cards (with the map card back) and set them aside as your location deck. Then check the Play Tips (p. 27) to see what cards belong in your starting company. Put your starting company in play in front of you, with the site card Rivendell (for a Wizard deck) from your location deck or Minas Morgul or Dol Guldur (for a Ringwraith deck). Set your sideboard off to the side for the moment. These are the 20 cards with the white letter of the deck on a black circle.

Shuffle together all of the remaining cards. These cards are your play deck. Let your opponent cut your deck, and draw eight cards for your starting hand.

Once both players have separated their decks, shuffled their play decks, and drawn their opening hand, each player should roll two dice. The player with the higher roll must go first.

During the course of play, certain cards will be eliminated, particularly characters. These cards are removed from active play and placed in an *out-of-play pile*. Certain cards you play for MPs will be placed in a *marshalling point pile*.

• PART II • TURN SEQUENCE

Player's alternate taking turns, following the sequence outlined below. You may play resources any time during your turn, unless card text states otherwise. You may play hazards only during your opponent's movement/hazard phase. If both players wish to play cards at the same time, see p. 25.

1 • UNTAP PHASE

During play, you will have to tap cards, usually to indicate that they have been used this turn. To tap a card, rotate it 90°, so that it is sideways on the table.

During combat (p. 14) character may become wounded. To wound a character, rotate his card 180°, so that it is upside down on the table.

Perform the following steps, in this order:

- 1) Untap your tapped character cards.
- 2) Heal any wounded characters you have at a Haven/Darkhaven.
These characters move from wounded to tapped.
- 3) Untap your non-character, non-site cards. Sites do not untap.

2 · ORGANIZATION PHASE

Your organization phase is when you assign your characters into companies, and plan your movement for the next turn. During your organization phase, you may perform the following steps in any order:

- Bring a new character into play at a Haven/Darkhaven or their home site, **or** reveal your Wizard or Ringwraith. A Wizard may be revealed at Rivendell or his home site. A Ringwraith may be revealed at Minas Morgul, Dol Guldur, or his home site.
- Reorganize your characters and companies, including changing followers and company composition.
- Transfer and store items.
- Play a new site card for each company that you want to move.

Note: All company composition changes, including reorganizing companies and bring characters into play, must all be done at the same time during the organization phase. No other actions may be taken while you are making company composition changes.

BRINGING A CHARACTER INTO PLAY

To bring a character into play you must have enough influence to control him. Each player has a pool of 20 general influence with which to control characters. Each point of general influence can be used to control one point of mind. A character's mind is shown in the white head symbol on the left side of the character card. A character with eight mind would use eight points of general influence.

Some characters also have direct influence, shown in the black hand under their mind. Characters may use direct influence to control other characters. Characters must be fully controlled by either general influence or one character's direct influence. A character controlled by direct influence is called a follower. Followers may not control other characters.

Each deck has a Wizard or Ringwraith in it. You may play this character without using influence to control him, as the card represents you in the game. Once your Wizard or Ringwraith is in play, you may not play other characters unless either your Wizard/Ringwraith is at the site where you play the character, or you bring the character into play with direct influence. If playing a Ringwraith, see p. 23.

REORGANIZING COMPANIES

Characters are organized into companies, and each company moves together as a unit. A company's *size* is equal to the number of characters in it. When calculating company size, Hobbits and Orc scouts count as half a character (round up). A company's *hazard limit* is equal to two or the company's size, whichever is greater. The hazard limit is the number of hazards that may be played on a company each turn, and is set at the end of the organization phase.

Any time two of your companies move to the same non-Haven/non-Darkhaven site, they will combine. Any company may split into multiple companies during the organization phase. However, if they are not at a Haven/Darkhaven, then only one company may stay at the site, and all other companies must try to move to different sites that turn.

TRANSFERRING/STORING ITEMS

During the organization phase, you may transfer items from one character to another character. Both characters must be in the same company, and the character with the item must make a corruption check (p. 22). If the character does not fail the corruption check, the item may be moved to another character.

An item may also be stored at a Haven/Darkhaven. The character must still make a corruption check, and if he does not fail, then the item is placed in your marshalling point pile. Stored items may not be retrieved.

Some resource events may also be stored, as indicated in their card text. No corruption check is required, unless otherwise specified on the card.

PLAYING A NEW SITE CARD

You must choose where each company is moving during the organization phase, by placing a new site card with each company. A company does not have to move. If you want to move a company, place the new site card representing their destination face down next to the site card representing their current site. You may look through your location deck and pick this card, you do not have to draw it randomly.

If you wish to move a company to a site that is face down on the table, tell your opponent which site the company is moving to. If you wish to move a company to a site that is face up on the table (because another company is also moving there), tell your opponent the company is moving to a face up site.

The new site you choose must meet certain criteria. You may reach a site by either starter movement, or by region movement. Ringwraiths may only use starter movement.

Starter Movement

If you are at a Haven/Darkhaven, the new site may be a site that lists your current site as its nearest Haven/Darkhaven. The new site may also be another Haven/Darkhaven that lists a site path to your current Haven/Darkhaven.

If you are not at a Haven/Darkhaven, the new site must be the nearest Haven/Darkhaven as listed on the site card.

Region Movement

If you are using region movement, the new site must be within four regions of the current site. This includes the regions containing the new site and the current site, as listed on the site cards. In the middle of these rules is a color map showing the regions of Middle-earth, showing which regions are adjacent to each other. A series of regions connects two sites if:

- The first region contains the current site, and
- The second region is adjacent to the first region on the map (two regions are adjacent if they are separated by one red line edge), and

- The third region is adjacent to the second region, and
- The fourth region is adjacent to the third region, and contains the new site.
- If the first, second, or third region contains the new site, do not worry about the other regions. Only consider the regions containing the two sites, and any intervening regions.

Site Paths

A *site path* is the sequence of regions between a site and its nearest Haven/Darkhaven. Each region in the sequence is indicated by its type, not by its name. For starter movement a company's site path is listed on the left side of the non-Haven/non-Darkhaven card they are moving to or from, or in the text box of the Haven/Darkhaven if moving between Havens/Darkhavens. For region movement, a company's site path is determined by the regions moved through.

Site paths are mostly used to determine if an opponent can play a particular creature on a company. Some hazards refer to the site's site path, which is always the one listed on the site card. Havens/Darkhavens have no site path.

3 • LONG-EVENT PHASE

During the long-event phase do the following in this order:

- 1) Discard all of your resource long-events.
- 2) Discard all of your opponent's hazard long-events.
- 3) If you have any resource long-events in your hand, you may play them at this time.

Resource long-events may only be played during this phase. You play hazard long-events during your opponent's movement/hazard phase.

4 · MOVEMENT/HAZARD PHASE

The movement/hazard phase is when your companies move from site to site, and is also when your opponent has a chance to play hazards on your companies. Each of your companies has a movement/hazard phase, even if it does not move. You choose the order to resolve your companies' movement/hazard phases. For each company, follow these steps in order:

- 1) If the company has a face down site card, turn it over. This is your company's *new site*, and their current site becomes their *site of origin*. If there is no new site, no cards are drawn. If the new site is a Haven/Darkhaven, each player *may* draw the number of cards indicated on the site of origin. Otherwise, each player *may* draw the number of cards indicated on the new site. Each player must draw at least one card.
- 2) Your opponent plays hazards on the company (see below). A number of hazards equal to the company's hazard limit (p. 9) may be played. Hazards may not be played that target another company, or an entity associated with another company. If any hazard requires the company to return to its site of origin, return the new site card to the location deck (discard it if it is tapped) and proceed to step 4 (the site of origin becomes its current site). No additional hazards may be played on a company once it returns to its site of origin.
- 3) Remove the company's site of origin. Discard the site card if it is tapped and not a Haven/Darkhaven. Otherwise, return it to the location deck.
- 4) You must discard any cards in excess of eight in your hand; your opponent does the same for his hand. If you have fewer than eight cards, you must draw cards until your hand has eight cards; your opponent does the same for his hand.

Once all of your companies have resolved their movement/hazard phases, any two of your companies at the same site combine. Your companies are now considered to be at their new site (that is, the new site becomes its current site).

PLAYING HAZARDS

When your opponent moves his companies, you may play hazards on them. Hazard events may be played on any company, unless otherwise specified on the card. The creature hazards you can play depend on how the company is moving.

Creature hazards must be keyed to a company's site path or site. This means you must match one of the symbols along the left side of the creature to one of the symbols in the company's site path, or the symbol representing their site type. You only have to match two of the symbols if a symbol is repeated on the creature card. In this case there must be two of that particular symbol in the company's site path in order to key that creature to that symbol. Matching symbols like this is called keying a creature by type. Some creatures may be "played in" certain regions by name, or sites in those regions. Matching names like this is called keying a creature by name.

If the company is not moving, you may only key creatures to their current site, by name or type.

If the company is moving, you may key creatures to their new site, by name or type. You may key creatures by type to the regions of their site path. If the company is using starter movement, you may key creatures by name to the regions containing the site of origin and the new site. If the company is using region movement, you may key creatures by name to any regions the company passes through.

Placing Cards On-Guard

During your opponent's movement/hazard phase, you may place one card *on-guard* for each of your opponent's companies. This card is placed face down next to the company's new site (current site if they did not move). Any card can be placed on-guard, even a resource, but placing a card on-guard counts against the hazard limit.

The card will remain on the site until either:

- *The company decides to face the site's automatic-attack.* If the on-guard card is a hazard creature keyed to the site **or** a hazard that can modify the automatic-attack, then it may be revealed before the automatic-attack is resolved. Revealed hazard creatures attack after the automatic-attack.

- *The company plays a card that potentially would tap an untapped site.* If the on-guard card is a non-creature hazard, it may be revealed if it is a hazard that affects the company or a character in the company that site phase.
- *The site phase ends.* Return the card to your hand.

If the card is revealed, treat it as if it had been played during the movement/hazard phase. This means whatever it is played on must have existed during the movement/hazard phase.

An on-guard card cannot be revealed that:

- returns a company to its site of origin;
- taps a company's site;
- potentially removes a character from a company, other than through combat or corruption;
- Forces a company to do nothing during the site phase; or
- directly taps a character.

COMBAT

Combat consists of one or more *attacks* that must be resolved one at a time. An attack consists of one or more *strikes*. Characters and attacks have prowess (the number before the slash in the lower left of the card), which is used to determine the outcome of strikes.

Strikes are assigned in the following manner:

- 1) The defending player may assign one strike each to any untapped characters he wants.
- 2) The attacking player may assign strikes to any characters that are not already assigned strikes.
- 3) If the attack has more strikes than there are characters in the company, each character is assigned one strike, and the excess strikes are assigned as -1 modifications to the prowesses of whichever characters the attacker chooses.

Once the strikes are assigned, the defending player resolves the strikes in any order he chooses.

Resolving Strikes

For each strike, follow the sequence below:

- 1) The attacker may play hazard cards that affect the strike. These count toward the hazard limit
- 2) The attacker may decide to use any or all of his remaining -1 modifications from extra strikes
- 3) If an untapped character is facing the strike, he must tap **or** take a -3 modification to prowess. An already tapped character gets -1 to prowess, and a wounded character gets -2 to prowess.
- 4) An untapped defending character that is not himself the target of a strike may tap to give +1 to the prowess of a defending character.
- 5) The defending player may play resource cards that affect the strike, but only one that requires skill.

Next, the defender makes a roll, and adds his modified prowess:

- If the result is greater than the strike's prowess, the strike *fails*. Such a strike is defeated if it fails a body check (see below).
- If the result is equal to the strike's prowess, the strike was *ineffectual*. Nothing happens.
- Otherwise, the strike was *successful*. The target character is wounded and must make a body check. If the attack was detainment (p. 16), the character is tapped, not wounded, and makes no body check.

Body Checks

If a non-detainment strike against a character is successful, the character must make a *body check*. To make a body check, the **attacker** makes a roll; if this value is greater than the character's body, he is eliminated.

If a non-detainment strike fails against a character, it is automatically defeated if its body is “-” **or** if the **defender** makes a roll and the result is higher than the attack's body.

Detainment Attacks

Detainment attacks tap rather than wound characters. An attack is considered detainment in the following situations:

- If it states the attack is detainment on the card.
- All Nazgûl attacks against minion companies
- Any attack keyed against a minion company, to a Dark-domain, Shadow-hold, or Dark-hold.
- Any Orc, Troll, Undead, or Man attack keyed to Shadow-land.

The above parameters apply even if the attack is keyed to a region or site by name which has the appropriate type.

Defeating an Attack

An attack by a hazard creature is defeated if it is not detainment, **and** all of its strikes are defeated (strikes assigned as -1 modifiers need not be defeated). When a hazard creature is defeated, the card is placed in the defender's MP pile.

If a hazard creature has multiple attacks, each **must** be defeated in order for the defender to receive MPs.

If one of the strikes was canceled or ineffectual, the attack is **not** defeated. If the attack was canceled, it is **not** defeated.

A Ringwraith player may only receive MPs from creatures with a * next to the MPs. A Wizard player may only receive MPs from creatures without a * next to the MPs.

If an Orc or Troll character faces a strike from an attack from an opponent's card that was defeated, you may place the creature's card under his control as a *trophy*. Trophies are considered minor items with zero corruption points. Trophies may not be transferred or stored. Discarded trophies that are worth marshalling points to you are placed in your marshalling point pile, otherwise, they are placed in your opponent's out-of-play pile.

Trophies give the following bonuses based on the MP value printed on the card, with or without a *:

- 1 MP worth of trophies gives +1 direct influence.
- 2 MPs worth of trophies gives +1 direct influence and +1 prowess (to a maximum of 9)
- 3 MPs worth of trophies gives +2 direct influence and +1 prowess (to a maximum of 9)
- 4+ MPs worth of trophies gives +2 direct influence and +2 prowess (to a maximum of 9)

5 · SITE PHASE

Each of your companies has a site phase, and you may resolve them in any order you wish. In order to do **anything** during the site phase, you must first enter the site and then face any and all automatic-attacks listed on the site card (a character at his home site may tap to cancel one automatic-attack at his home site). See Combat, p. 14.

Once you have entered the site, you may:

- Play an item, faction, ally, or any resource playable at the site. Items, factions, and allies can only be played at an untapped site unless specifically allowed at a tapped sites on their card.
- Influence your opponent's resources at the site.
- Attack your opponent's company at the site.

PLAYING AN ITEM

To play an item, the item must either state it is playable at the site, or the site must state that items of that type are playable at the site. You may tap an untapped character in a company at an untapped site and place the item with that character. This taps the site.

PLAYING AN ALLY

Playing an ally is similar to an item. Tap an untapped character at an untapped site and place the ally with the character. This taps the site. Allies do not count as characters, except for combat and playing skill cards. They do not count for company size.

PLAYING A FACTION

To play a faction, tap one character in the company to make an influence attempt. Roll the dice, add the character's unused direct influence, any standard modifications for the character's race (heroes) or other factions in play (minions), and any other modifications from other cards. If the result is higher than the number listed on the faction, put the faction in your MP pile, and tap the site. The site does not tap otherwise.

PLAYING MINOR ITEMS

After playing a resource that taps the site, you may tap another character in the company to play a minor item. This may be done even if minor items are not normally playable at the site.

INFLUENCING AN OPPONENT'S RESOURCES

If you are at the same site as an opponent's resource or character, you may tap a character and attempt to influence his card. If successful, the resource or character is discarded. You may reveal an identical card and play it.

You may make one influence attempt against your opponent per turn, you may not make one on the first turn, and your Wizard or Ringwraith may not make one on the turn he is revealed. You may not make an influence attempt against your opponent:

- if you have declared company vs. company combat this turn;
- against his Ringwraith or Wizard;
- against an item, ally, or follower controlled by his Ringwraith or Wizard.

Influencing Characters

To attempt to influence a character, make a roll and:

- Add the influencing character's unused direct influence.
- Subtract your opponent's unused general influence.
- If the target character is a follower, subtract his controlling character's unused direct influence.

- Subtract the result of a roll by your opponent.
- Add any other modifications from special abilities and cards played before the roll.
- If you are a Ringwraith and your opponent is a Wizard, or vice versa, subtract five.

If the modified result is greater than the target's mind, the target character and all of his non-follower cards are discarded.

If you reveal an identical character card from your hand before making the roll, the target's mind is treated as if it were zero. If the attempt is unsuccessful, you must discard the character card you revealed. If the attempt is successful, in addition to discarding the target, you may immediately play your card at that site, regardless of his home site. You must have enough influence to control the character in order to play him.

Influencing a Faction

To influence a faction, you must be at the site where the faction is playable. Make an influence check as for a character, except:

- Instead of mind, the result must be greater than the number normally required to play the faction.
- Apply any relevant standard modifications.
- Revealing an identical faction reduces the number to bring the faction into play to zero, and allows you to play that faction if the attempt is successful.

Influencing an Ally

To influence an ally, make an influence attempt as for a character, except:

- Use the ally's mind instead of the character's.
- Subtract the unused direct influence of the character controlling the ally.
- Revealing an identical ally card reduces the ally's mind to zero and allows you to immediately play the ally with the influencing character if the influence check is successful.

Influencing an Item

To influence an opponent's item, make an influence attempt as for a character, except:

- The mind of the controlling character is used.
- Subtract the unused direct influence of the item's controlling character.
- You *must* reveal an identical item card in order to make an influence attempt. If the influence attempt is successful, you may play your card with the influencing character.

COMPANY VS. COMPANY COMBAT

If you are at the same site as an opponent's company, and have not made an influence attempt against him this turn, you may engage that company in company vs. company combat. This attack is declared and enacted following all other actions your company takes during the site phase. Company vs. company combat must be Ringwraith vs. Wizard or vice versa.

Company vs. company combat is treated like an attack with a number of strikes equal to the number of characters in the attacking company. Each strike has a prowess equal to the attacking character corresponding to the strike.

Cards that Affect Company Combat

Either player may play resources that affect the combat. However, only the defender may play cards that affect the attack as a whole. Hazards may not be played, and have no effect during company vs. company combat.

The attack may be canceled like an ordinary attack. However, cards that cancel attacks from specific race types only work if each character in the attacking company has one of the races listed on the card.

Assigning Strikes

- For company vs. company combat, assign strikes as follows:
- 1) The defender chooses which of his *untapped* characters will be the targets of given strikes.
 - 2) The attacker choose which other defending characters not yet assigned a strike will be the target of any remaining unassigned strikes corresponding to his *untapped* characters.
 - 3) The defender assigns any remaining strikes to his characters that have not been assigned strikes.

If there are more strikes than defending characters, the attacker may assign excess strikes as -1 modifiers to prowess, during the strike sequence outlined below.

The Strike Sequence

Strikes are resolved one at a time in the order chosen by the defending player. For each strike, follow the sequence below:

- 1) The attacking player may play resource cards that affect the strike (up to one card that requires skill).
- 2) The attacker may decide to use any or all of his remaining -1 modifications from extra strikes.
- 3) An attacking untapped character may take a -3 modification to prowess so that he will not automatically tap. An already tapped character gets -1 to prowess, and a wounded character gets -2 to prowess
- 4) A defending untapped character may take a -3 modification so that he will not automatically tap. An already tapped character gets -1 to prowess, and a wounded character gets -2 to prowess
- 5) An untapped defending character that is not himself the target of a strike may tap to give +1 to the prowess of a defending character.
- 6) The defending player may play resource cards that affect the strike (up to one card that requires skill).

Next, the attacker makes a roll and adds his modified prowess to get the strike's *final prowess*.

Then, the defender makes a roll and adds his modified prowess:

- If this result is greater than the strike's final prowess, the strike *fails*. The character corresponding to the strike is wounded and must make a body check (p. 15).
- If this result is equal to the strike's final prowess, the strike was *ineffectual*. Nothing happens.
- Otherwise, the strike was *successful*. The target character is wounded and must make a body check.

If a character is defeated in company vs. company combat, the opposing player receives kill marshalling points as indicated on the character's card.

• PART III • SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Certain situations occur at multiple points in the turn sequence, and are covered here.

1 · CORRUPTION CHECKS

Each character has a corruption point total. This starts at zero, but certain cards will change this total during play. Only one corruption hazard may be played on a given character each turn.

CORRUPTION CHECKS

When a card or other effect indicates that one of your characters must make a corruption check, you must make a roll and add any appropriate modifications:

Nothing Happens—If the modified result is greater than the character's corruption point total, nothing happens.

The Character is Discarded or Tapped—If the modified result is equal to the character's corruption point total **or** one less than the total, a hero character *fails* the corruption check and you must discard him along with any non-follower cards he controls. If the character is a minion, he is not considered to have failed the check, and is tapped if not already tapped.

The Character is Eliminated—If the modified result is less than the character's corruption point total by two or more, the character *fails* the corruption check and is eliminated. Discard any non-follower cards he controls.

If a Wizard fails a corruption check, he is immediately eliminated. Ringwraiths never make corruption checks.

2 • RINGWRAITHS

Ringwraiths have many special effects, which are summarized below:

- A Ringwraith may only be in a company with non-Ringwraith characters if he is at a Darkhaven.
- Any ring in the Ringwraith's company at the beginning of the end-of-turn phase is automatically tested. Any test in a Ringwraith's company has a modification of -2
- A Ringwraith may carry items, but such items have no effect.
- Ringwraiths never make corruption checks, and corruption hazards may not be played on Ringwraiths.
- A Ringwraith may not use a site path that contains Coastal Sea regions.
- A Ringwraith's company may not use region movement.
- If a body check against a Ringwraith is exactly equal to 7 or 8, then Ringwraith is returned to your hand. You do not lose the game if your Ringwraith is removed in this fashion—you may bring such a Ringwraith back into play the same way you revealed him.

3 • RING ITEMS

Ring special items are more complicated to play than normal items. First, you must play a gold ring item at an appropriate site. Then you must have a card or effect that *tests* the gold ring. When you test a gold ring, make a roll. On the gold ring item will be a list of results, and what ring special items you can play. If you have one of the indicated special ring items in your hand, you may replace the gold ring item with the special ring item. In any case, discard the gold ring item when it is tested.

4 • SIDEBOARDS

Your sideboard allows you to make minor modifications to your deck during play.

Using Your Sideboard When You Exhaust Your Deck

Whenever you exhaust your play deck, you may exchange (before reshuffling) up to 5 cards between your sideboard and discard pile. Each card taken from your sideboard must be replaced by a card from your discard pile.

Using Your Sideboard When You Tap Your Ringwraith or Wizard

During your organization phase, you may tap your Ringwraith or Wizard to bring up to 5 resource and/or character cards from your sideboard into your discard pile.

Alternatively, if your play deck has at least 5 cards, you may tap your Ringwraith or Wizard to bring one resource or character card from your sideboard into your play deck (reshuffle).

Using Your Sideboard When Your Opponent's Wizard or Ringwraith is in Play

At the end of your opponent's untap phase, if your opponent's Ringwraith or Wizard is in play, you may at this point bring up to five hazard cards from your sideboard to your discard pile; **or**, if your play deck has at least 5 cards, you may bring one hazard card from your sideboard into your play deck (reshuffle).

If you move cards from your sideboard in this fashion, the hazard limit for each of your opponent's companies is reduced to half of normal for the rest of the turn (round up).

5 · TIMING

You and your opponent may both want to perform actions at the same time or actions that are sequenced with respect to other actions. Such actions often include playing a card, tapping a character already in play, and revealing an on-guard card.

Your opponent may always declare an action in response before your action is resolved. You may respond to each other's actions until neither player can, or wants to, perform an action.

You must give your opponent a chance to respond to every action, and vice versa. If you perform an action and move on to another action without giving your opponent a chance to respond, you must "back-up" if he wants to respond.

A series of declared actions is called a chain of effects. You always have the option of declaring the first action in a chain of effects during your turn. The actions in a chain of effects are resolved one at a time from last declared to first declared. That is, the last declared action is resolved first, and the first declared action is resolved last. This is called last in first out, or LIFO, order of resolution.

An action in a chain of effects is negated if the conditions required to perform it are negated by another action that is resolved before it in the chain of effects.

Creature hazards may not be played in response to other actions. They must always start a chain of effects.

6 · UNIQUE, CANNOT BE DUPLICATED & MANIFESTATIONS

If a card states that it is “unique” or that it “cannot be duplicated,” only one such card (or its effects) may be in play at a time. Cards in the marshalling point and out-of-play piles are in play for this purpose. The first card played takes precedence (influence checks may change this). This restriction applies to all cards in play (both yours and your opponent’s).

Some cards may not be duplicated on a specific target. Multiple copies of such a card can be in play, so long as each applies to a different target. A card that cannot be duplicated may be played when a copy is already in play only if the copy in play is currently being targeted by an effect that will discard it.

Certain entities have several different *manifestations*, each represented by a different card. If one manifestation of such an entity is in play, you may *not* play another manifestation of the same entity. If one manifestation of such an entity is in the out-of-play or marshalling point piles, you may not play any further manifestations of that entity.

Certain hero resources and minion resources have the same name. These resources are considered manifestations of each other.

7 · EXHAUSTING YOUR PLAY DECK

You exhaust your deck when you draw the final card from it. Discard any cards that are discarded when a deck is exhausted, and make any exchanges with the sideboard (p. 24). Then shuffle your discard pile. This becomes your new play deck. Place all of your discarded sites back into your location deck.

• PART IV • PLAY TIPS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Play Tips is to give practical advice and direction for playing your *Challenge Deck*. Most of these decks have a few cards whose successful play depends directly on the play of another card. Often, when just picking a deck up for the first time, these combination dependent cards are not obvious. Please read the Play Tips for your deck to make certain you have as much information as possible to enjoy it to its fullest.

As mentioned in the Rules Summary, a listing of Starting Companies are included in the Play Tips. In official *Challenge Deck* tournament play, you must start with your designated starting company—the characters of each have been chosen to not conflict with those of the other *Challenge Decks*.

A particularly useful section of a deck's Play Tips is *Suggested Sites for Resources*. These have been specially selected to minimize conflicts between available sites. For example, Moria is a greater item site. However, it is the only site where *Book of Mazarbul* is playable. For the two decks with *Book of Mazarbul*, the *Suggested Sites* do not list Moria as an option for those decks' greater items. In general, if multiple sites are listed for a particular resource, try to use the first one, everything else being equal. Site options listed later tend to also be useful for other resources in the deck. Be aware that certain resources, especially those from the sideboard, can be played during your second deck cycle. When you exhaust your deck, all of your discarded sites become available again for the following cycle.

A – STEWARDS OF GONDOR

SARUMAN'S CHALLENGE DECK

With Saruman's deck, Glorfindel and a group of Hobbits travel into the civilized confines of Gondor, south of the White Mountains, to rally mannish factions against Sauron's hosts. The deck relies heavily on attack avoidance. The hazards mix is a pure Orc/Troll strategy.

Starting Companies (2)

- Glorfindel II controls Anborn.
- Fatty, Sam, and Adrazar form the second company.
Fatty has *Cram* and Adrazar has *Horn of Anor*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Glamdring—Glittering Caves, Isle of the Ulond, Moria, or Tolfalas

Hauberk of Bright Mail (x2)—

Glittering Caves, Isle of the Ulond, Moria, or Tolfalas

Knights of Dol Amroth—Dol Amroth

Men of Anfalas—Long Galen

Men of Anórien—Minas Tirith

Men of Lebennin—Pelargir

Palantír of Orthanc—Isengard

Rangers of Ithilien—Henneth Annûn

Sapling of the White Tree—

Glittering Caves, Isle of the Ulond, Moria, or Tolfalas

Scroll of Isildur—Tolfalas or Moria

Treebeard—Wellinghall

Riders of Rohan (sideboard)—Edoras

The White Tree (sideboard)—Minas Tirith

Resource Play

As quickly as possible, Adrazar and the Hobbits need find themselves in Gondor so that Adrazar can recruit factions. Stopping at the Glittering Caves along the way to pick up a major item is ideal. Glorfindel and Anborn can pick up other resources as needed.

Saruman

During the first free organization phase after bringing Saruman into play, tap him to bring *Vanishment*, *Wizard's Laughter*, and *Wizard Uncloaked* from the sideboard to the discard pile. He can then tap to take one of these spells to your hand as needed.

Consider bringing Saruman into play at Isengard. This allows him to play the *Palantír of Orthanc*, and to use it, without moving. When using the Palantír, Saruman needs other characters in his company to support his corruption checks. You may consider moving Saruman to Wellinghall—as it is safer—if he wishes to use the Palantír every turn.

In general, Saruman has plenty of tasks that require him to tap. If you lose key characters and need Saruman's presence in the field, give the Palantír to another character and bring *Align Palantír* in from the sideboard. A Hobbit is always a good choice to use an aligned Palantír.

Hazard Play

A major aspect of an Orc/Troll strategy is forcing so many combat rolls on your opponent that statistically some strikes are bound to be successful, even if the prowesses seem weak. The creatures in this deck have a high frequency of play, so it is usually a safe gambit to build them up in your hand waiting for a *Minions Stir* or *Two or Three Tribes Present*.

Sideboard

After playing *Sapling of the White Tree*, tap Saruman to bring in *The White Tree* from your sideboard. After playing *Palantír of Orthanc*, you probably want *Align Palantír*. On the hazard end of things, your sideboard has the potential of destroying a Wizard opponent's general influence. This makes your opponent vulnerable to *Muster Disperses* and to your influence attempts against his marshalling point sources. If you recognize early in the game that your opponent is playing many factions, you may want to dedicate *An Unexpected Outposts* to bringing these hazards into your play deck. Use *An Unexpected Outposts* to recycle *Minions Stirs* and *Doors of Night* otherwise.

B – RELEASE THE PRISONERS

ALATAR'S CHALLENGE DECK

Elrond leads Alatar's companies into the Orc-holds of the mountains surrounding Rivendell. Their errand is to rescue Free People captives and recover stolen items. *Gates of Morning* and strong warriors see them through. The hazards feature a classic mix of corruption with Undead.

Starting Company

- Elrond controls Elladan. Erkenbrand controls Orophin. Elrond has *Cram* and Erkenbrand has *Shield of Iron-bound Ash*. If you have multiple site-tapping resources in your initial draw, consider starting them as 2 companies: Elrond and Elladan, Erkenbrand and Orophin.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Book of Mazarbul—Moria [storing it at the Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold]

Goldberry—Old Forest

Gollum—Goblin-gate

Orcrist—Carn Dûm or Mount Gundabad

Rangers of the North—Bree

Rescue Prisoners (x3)—tapped Carn Dûm, Mount Gram,
Goblin-gate, Moria, or Mount Gundabad

Scroll of Isildur—Carn Dûm or Mount Gundabad

Sword of Gondolin—Barrow-downs or Zarak Dûm

The Windlord Found Me—Mount Gram

Blue Mountain Dwarves (sideboard)—Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold

Great-shield of Rohan (sideboard)—Zarak Dûm or Barrow-downs

Resource Play

Alatar's deck makes active use of *Gates of Morning*. Its most powerful tactic is to cancel and discard the final hazard played against a company with *Many Turns and Doublings* if *Gates of Morning* is in play. *Gates of Morning* provides a natural defense against some of the more powerful hazards that require or benefit from *Doors of Night*.

A patient player can elegantly rise to the threat of most hazards. Take the time to move Elrond to Rivendell to play *Vilya*. Store a *Rescue Prisoners* as soon as you can to get its character untapped. Do not forget you can do this at Bree, Old Forest, and the Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold in addition to at a Haven. You will face strong creatures in the mountains, but always consider tapping your characters to face strikes and waiting another turn to play that resource. You should receive many kill marshalling points.

Alatar

Alatar works well being active and traveling with his characters. If his company is at a Haven, move it last to give him the option of "teleporting" to another company facing an attack. He has enough direct influence alone to bring any faction into play, but look to give him followers to free general influence in your defense. This deck is vulnerable to *Muster Disperses*.

Hazard Play

Play corruption cards as soon as you can. As an exception, consider placing *Lure of Expedience* on-guard if you feel fairly certain a company will play an item. Then reveal it and place it on the character playing the item. He must make a dangerous corruption check.

The Undead are fairly effortless to play. You can increase the threat of the corruption cards by playing *Corpse-candle* and *Barrow-wight* on corruption-laden companies. Hold off playing *Chill Douser* until you can follow it up with another Undead. If an opponent is moving to a site with an Undead automatic-attack, *Chill Douser* during the movement/hazard phase should make him think twice about entering the site. Consider this with *The Moon Is Dead* in play. Amassing bonuses to Undead prowesses and strikes during a turn gives its own reward.

Sideboard

After playing the *Book of Mazarbul*, tap Alatar to bring in the *Blue Mountain Dwarves*. Try to both store the item and recruit the faction with one trip to the Dwarf-hold. Of course, storing this item before the Free Council begins is the most important thing.

C – DWARVEN QUEST

PALLANDO'S CHALLENGE DECK

With the prompting of Pallando, Thorin II leads a company of Dwarves into the Dragon lairs and Shadow-holds east of the Misty Mountains in a quest for their people. The Dwarves operate with a good mix of fighting enhancement and attack avoidance. The hazards are Animals and Wolves.

Starting Company

- Thorin controls Kíli and Dori. Glóin controls Óin.
Thorin and Óin have the *Crams*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Bow of Dragon-horn—Ovir Hollow or with *Bounty of the Hoard*

Book of Mazarbul—Moria [storing it at the Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold]

Durin's Axe—Sarn Goriwing or Buhr Widu

Enruned Shield—Caves of Úlund or The Lonely Mountain

Gollum—Goblin-gate

Hauberk of Bright Mail—Sarn Goriwing or Buhr Widu

Iron Hill Dwarves—Iron Hill Dwarf-hold

Magical Harp—Ovir Hollow or with *Bounty of the Hoard*

Men of Dorwinion—Shrel-Kain

Quickbeam—Wellinghall

Wormsbane—Dead Marshes, Caves of Úlund, or The Lonely Mountain

Blue Mountain Dwarves (sideboard)—Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold

Resource Play

This deck is loaded with items giving strong tactical advantages in play. Corruption is a natural danger when playing a large number of items, so take the time to play both *Fellowships*.

In a deck using one large company, resources that allow multiple marshalling point sources to be played in one turn are needed for

speed. This deck has three: *Bounty of the Hoard*, *Lucky Search*, and *Thrór's Map*. Take special care to use these to their full advantage. *Thrór's Map* is the most powerful of the bunch, so never discard it. Note that *Lucky Search* can only be played at Dead Marshes, Goblingate, Moria, or Sarn Gorwing—not at a Dragon's Lair.

This deck can fight creatures for marshalling points or cancel the overwhelming threats. After the first few risky turns, the Dwarven company should be in a comfortable position when attacked.

Pallando

Pallando should move to Lórien and form a company there from the play deck. This company is responsible for playing the two allies and the *Book of Mazarbul*—if not played with the Dwarves on an early turn. Otherwise, Pallando should not move unless you can properly protect him with tactical options from your hand. After playing *Quickbeam*, relocate Pallando's company to Rivendell. Tap Pallando to bring the *Blue Mountain Dwarves* into the play deck. His company should be in a convenient position to move to the Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold to store the *Book of Mazarbul* and play this faction.

Hazard Play

The hazards attempt to swarm an opponent with high frequency of play creatures. Do not underestimate the role of *Neeker-breakers*. The greatest threats are the spiders and *Watchers in the Water* enhanced with *Full of Froth and Rage* and *Wake of War*. The hazards also have a roadblock sub theme that fills out its blind spots in the dark areas against Ringwraith opponents.

Sideboard

The sideboarding for this deck is not as important as with other Challenge Decks. The most important play is bringing in the *Blue Mountain Dwarves* after playing the *Book of Mazarbul*. If you believe your opponent has any sort of Dragon or Drake creatures, bring in *The Old Thrush*.

D – BARGAIN BETWEEN FRIENDS

RADAGAST'S CHALLENGE DECK

Along with Beorn, Gimli and Legolas, an unlikely duo of Dwarf and Elf, carry out missions of diplomacy in the hostile territories north of Mordor. Potent combat abilities with some subtle attack avoidance characterizes these heroes of Radagast. The hazards feature ranks of roguish Men.

Starting Companies (2)

- Beorn, Gimli, and Legolas form one company. Beorn has *Black Arrow* and Legolas has *Cram*.
- Halbarad starts by himself and should stay in Rivendell.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Beornings—Beorn's House

Bow of the Galadhrim—Buhr Widu, Raider-hold, or Gobel Mírlond

Easterlings—Easterling Camp

Iron Hill Dwarves—Iron Hill Dwarf-hold

Men of Dorwinion—Shrel-Kain

Noble Hound (x2)—tapped Easterling Camp, Dale,
Gobel Mírlond, Raider-hold, or Shrel-Kain

Noble Steed (x3)—tapped Buhr Widu, Easterling Camp,
Gobel Mírlond, Raider-hold, or Shrel-Kain

Orcrist—Dead Marshes or Moria

Torque of Hues—Buhr Widu, Raider-hold, or Gobel Mírlond

Wood-elves—Thranduil's Halls

Great-shield of Rohan (sideboard)—
Buhr Widu, Raider-hold, or Gobel Mírlond

Men of Dale (sideboard)—Dale

Wain-easterlings (sideboard)—Easterling Camp (during 2nd deck cycle)

Resource Play

The diplomat skill rises to the forefront in Radagast's deck. You should only begrudgingly discard *New Friendships*. This card helps with corruption checks, influence attempts, and *Flatter a Foe*, which can devastate a well planned turn of hazards.

Try to play *Forewarned Is Forearmed* only in response to the play of a creature or automatic-attack it affects. You do not want an opponent to have an easy shot at killing your *Assassin*.

Radagast

Radagast must play an active role for this deck to succeed. He certainly should move through Wilderness to draw extra cards, but do not feel you should maximize the Wildernesses in his site path or draw all the cards he has coming. You can always draw cards one at a time and determine the potential of each before choosing to burden your hand with more. If Radagast does not keep the card drawing in check, you will draw more marshalling point sources than you can play in one turn. This forces you to discard hazards or resource tactical options while you wait to play the marshalling points. If you discard the marshalling points instead, you may not be able to accumulate enough when later turns arrive.

Radagast's direct influence should be used to control characters as soon as possible in order to free general influence. Until this happens, the deck is vulnerable to *Muster Disperses* and influence attempts by an opponent. The fact that he and a follower or two form a second strong company allows you to play more resources from your hand. His special ability then allows you to draw the next round of marshalling points—or a good complement of hazards—more regularly.

Hazard Play

This deck has what is possibly the best creature in the game, *Assassin*. If the option is available, use *Thrice Outnumbered* to recycle *Assassin* (unless you know your opponent is not going near its keyable sites).

Sideboard

Against a corruption strategy, tap Radagast to bring in *Glamours of Surpassing Excellence* as soon as possible. This card is more affective against corruption than meets the eye.

The Dragon Ahunt cards offer a nice opportunity against opponents who travel consistently in their affected regions, so quickly bring these in once you recognize you are playing the right opponent.

E – RETURN OF THE KING

GANDALF'S CHALLENGE DECK

Gandalf sends Aragorn and Arwen into the lands along the Anduin River to find lost icons of Gondor. Their efforts also take the pair to Minas Tirith to be crowned King and Queen. The deck relies primarily on attack avoidance. The hazards contain a heavy mix of good general creatures.

Starting Companies (x2)

- Aragorn controls Arwen. Arwen starts with *Star-glass*.
- Faramir controls Annalena. Faramir starts with *Elf-stone*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Beautiful Gold Ring (x3)—

Bandit Lair, Gladden Fields, Isengard, or Moria

Glamdring—Haudh-in-Gwanûr, Buhr Widu, Moria, or Isengard

Hauberk of Bright Mail—

Haudh-in-Gwanûr, Buhr Widu, Moria, or Isengard

Narsil—Dead Marshes

Noble Steed (x2)—tapped Buhr Widu, Haudh-in-Gwanûr, or Edoras

Quickbeam—Wellinghall

Rangers of Ithilien—Henneth Annûn

Return of the King—Minas Tirith

Sword of Gondolin—Haudh-in-Gwanûr, Buhr Widu, Moria, or Isengard

Tower Guard of Minas Tirith—Minas Tirith

Knights of Dol Amroth (sideboard)—Dol Amroth

Riders of Rohan (sideboard)—Edoras

Resource Play

Untapped scouts can play a crucial part in the success of Gandalf's deck. They provide your main means of attack avoidance by using *Concealments* and *Stealths*. There are enough weapons in your deck to make Aragorn and a couple other warriors from the play deck into formidable fighters, so expect to receive a few marshaling points from creature kills.

Ultimately, you want to give Arwen a *Lesser Ring*. This provides her with enough direct influence to control Aragorn. These two form a powerful 2-character company who require only 3 general influence. With *Return of the King* on Aragorn, he can recruit any faction in the deck virtually automatically. If you play *Tower Guard of Minas Tirith* before *Return of the King*, be sure to leave a character at Minas Tirith so that the site is still available to play *Return of the King*. *Return of the King* does not require the site to tap, nor is its play limited to the site phase.

Gandalf

One of Gandalf's primary tasks is testing the 3 *Beautiful Gold Rings* with his special ability. This means Gandalf must be untapped and must have joined the company bearing the ring. It should not strain your hand too much to hold the *Magic Ring of Stealth* and *Lesser Rings* waiting for the gold rings and Gandalf's test. Otherwise, in a company with other characters, Gandalf should feel free to move around gathering resources.

Hazard Play

The hazards offer a wide variety of creatures with good attacks in a complete range of regions and sites. Except for *Searching Eye*, each hazard is playable on its own, without directly benefiting from another. This means the hazards do not require you to hold cards in hand waiting for an optimal complementary hazard before playing them. If you must discard and have a creature in hand you are not certain you can play soon, discard it and do not look back. The resource strategy needs all the tactical supporting cards it can get, so freely sacrifice hazards to make room.

Sideboard

Tap Gandalf to bring in the 2 factions after playing *Return of the King*. Otherwise the resources in the sideboard offer general options to defend against specific opponents. This quality of generality holds even more for with the sideboard hazards.

F – SPIES AND TRAITORS

ADÙNAPHEL'S CHALLENGE DECK

Adûnaphel sends traitorous bands bent upon thievery and espionage into the untainted domains of the Free Peoples. Her inherent knowledge of these areas provides some cover, but her missions are extremely difficult to carry out. The hazards feature a potent offering of Drakes.

Starting Companies (2) at Dol Guldur

- Ciryaher controls Ostisen. Ostisen starts with *Foul-smelling Paste*.
- Asternak, Dôgrib, Mîonid, and Luitprand form another company.
Asternak controls Dôgrib and starts with *Blazon of the Eye*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

The Least of Gold Rings (x2)—

Bandit Lair, Beorn's House, Edoras, Moria, or Thranduil's Halls

Red Book of Westmarch—Bag End [storing it at Barad-dûr]

Secrets of Their Forging (x2)—

Dimrill Dale, The Worthy Hills, Eagle's Eyrie, or Thranduil's Halls

Stinker—Goblin-gate

That's Been Heard Before Tonight (x2)—

Eagle's Eyrie, Thranduil's Halls, or Bag End

To Satisfy the Questioner (x2)—

Eagles' Eyrie, Beorn's House, Edoras, or Thranduil's Halls

Woses of the Eryn Vorn—The Worthy Hills

Goblins of Goblin-gate (sideboard)—Goblin-gate (2nd deck cycle)

Orcs of Moria (sideboard)—Moria

Regiment of Black Crows (sideboard)—

The Worthy Hills, Dimrill Dale, or Bandit Lair

Resource Play

Adûnaphel's deck has many resources that need one or more extra turns of preparation before awarding marshalling points. This makes the deck slow and requires holding cards in hand for a long time. What is more, unlucky dice rolling can devastate this deck. The only consolation is that your marshalling point sources are generous,

and that successfully playing this deck can be very rewarding. Amassing marshalling points from characters is key, so consider seriously the play of sources of extra influence.

It is not necessary to play both Dwarven Rings. In fact, they appear in duplicate to ease the plight of playing one. Make a reasonable effort to play both, but not at the expense of attack avoidance or easier marshalling point sources. Give the first Dwarven Ring to Asternak. He should try to influence the Wose faction with either the Dwarven Ring or *Join With that Power*.

Note that *Deeper Shadow* cancels and discards the second hazard against a moving 2-character company containing Ciryaher.

Adûnaphel

Adûnaphel's role is simple. She sits in Dol Guldur and cancels one attack a turn. However, you have many attack avoidance cards. During organization phases when you have 3 or more such cards in hand (include *Deeper Shadow*), she should tap to bring a resource in from the sideboard. Evaluate your opponent's hazards or your own marshalling point needs to make this choice. Recognizing when you do not need her attack cancellation is critical to this deck's success.

Hazard Play

To complement your difficult resource strategy is a deadly mix of Drake hazards. Key to successfully using them is knowing both what and how to recycle with *From the Pits of Angband*. Sending a drake back to your hand with *Doors of Night* is not always best, especially with a resource strategy requiring a lot of cards in hand. Do not hesitate to place a drake with *Summons from Long Sleep* to get it out of your hand. You do sacrifice its surprise value this way, but you also may cause an opponent to overestimate the threat against him and adjust his movement accordingly.

Sideboard

During your opponent's first untap phase when you have few hazards in hand, half his hazard limit. Then bring *Itangast Ahunt*, *Sand-drake*, and *True Cold-drake* to your discard pile. These cards will be available options when *From the Pits of Angband* hits the table.

G – MARAUDING BROOD OF UGLIES

DWAR'S CHALLENGE DECK

Dwar's deck sends the Lieutenant of Morgul and a detachment of Orc warriors to Dragon country and to burn a couple Border-holds down. Dwar has unwavering faith in the philosophy of might, and seeks large factions of Orcs to serve his ends. The hazards use *Doors of Night* to unleash packs of Wolves.

Starting Company at Dol Guldur

- Lieutenant of Morgul, Muzgash, Lagduf, Radbug, and Tros Hesnef form the starting company. The Lieutenant controls Muzgash and Lagduf. Lagduf and Radbug each start with *Foul-smelling Paste*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

The Arkenstone—The Lonely Mountain, Moria, Caves of Úlund, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, or Irerock

Black Mace (x3)—The Lonely Mountain, Moria, Caves of Úlund, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, or Irerock

Burning Rick, Cot, and Tree (x2)—tapped Raider-hold or Dale

Gleaming Gold Ring—Dale

Grey Mountain Goblins—Gondmaeglon

High Helm—Raider-hold

Ice-orcs—Caves of Úlund, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, or Irerock

Orcs of Gundabad—Mount Gundabad

Regiment of Black Crows (x2)—tapped Caves of Úlund, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, Gondmaeglon, Irerock, or The Lonely Mountain

Orcs of Moria (sideboard)—Moria (during second deck cycle)

Regiment of Black Crows (sideboard)—tapped Caves of Úlund, Irerock, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, Gondmaeglon, or The Lonely Mountain

Sable Shield (sideboard)—The Lonely Mountain, Caves of Úlund, Dancing Spire, Gold Hill, or Irerock

Resource Play

Dwar's deck is primed for a couple delights only Ringwraith players enjoy: trophies and the Troll trio of Bûrat, Tûma, and Wûluag. If at all possible, place trophies with the Lieutenant of Morgul. In fact, take any opportunity to increase his direct influence. He has multiple uses

for it, such as *I'll Report You*, controlling followers, and recruiting factions. Particularly, you want to maximize the chance of successfully recruiting the *Ice-orcs*. Shagrath has almost the same potential as the Lieutenant in all these respects.

Sacrifice almost any other card to keep members of the Orc trio in hand until playable. In a company together, their benefits are remarkable for the influence they require. The trio in tandem effectively have only a -1 penalty to prowess when not tapping to face a strike. Consider this scenario. Bûrat and Tûma each face a strike from an attack. Bûrat goes first and taps—with his prowess, the strike likely fails. Tûma faces his strike next, but first taps to untap Bûrat. Tûma's has -1 prowess against the strike for being tapped, but Bûrat became untapped.

For the 2 Border-holds there are 2 site-tapping resources: *Gleaming Gold Ring* and *High Helm*. In order to play the 2 *Burning Rick, Cot, and Trees*, you must use these resources at their designated Border-holds and not leave the sites before burning them down. It is well worth it to discard a few hazards to keep components of the Border-hold combination in hand.

Dwar

Dwar does not move from Dol Guldur. During the earlier turns, he should tap to give the combat bonuses to his fledgling companies. On later turns, when the prowess of these characters increase, Dwar can freely tap to bring resources in from the sideboard. Do not forget to bring in *Sudden Call* during the first deck cycle.

Hazard Play

Nothing tricky here. Wolves and Animals do not hit as hard as other creatures, but they have a high frequency of play.

Sideboard

Use Dwar to bring the *Minor Ring* to the discard pile at his first safe opportunity. It is then available when *Gleaming Gold Ring* is brought to him for testing. *Orders from Luggúrz* is good for getting the Lieutenant and Shagrath into one monster company.

Against a Wizard opponent, consider bringing the *Rebel-talks* in from the sideboard and recycling *Stay Her Appetite*. You may remove all your opponent's allies in this way and double the marshalling points from your allies.

H – STEALTHY TRIBE

HOARMŪRATH'S CHALLENGE DECK

Hoarmûrath directs a band of Morgul scouts into the fringe Shadow areas of the Misty Mountains to steal technologies and win over independent Orc tribes. His minions rely on stealth and minimal movement in the open, though they can fight in a pinch. The hazards are solid Undead.

Starting Companies (2) at Dol Guldur

- Gorbag, Grishnákh, Ufthak, and Lugdush form the main company.
Gorbag controls Grishnákh and starts with *Blazon of the Eye*. Ufthak starts with *Strange Rations*.
- Ill-favoured Fellow starts by himself at Dol Guldur and waits for more characters to join his company.

Suggested Sites for Resources

The Arkenstone—Moria or Caves of Úlund

Blasting Fire (x3)—tapped Shadow-hold

Great Lord of Goblin-gate—Goblin-gate

High Helm—Mount Gundabad or Sarn Goriwing

Orcs of Moria—Moria

Sable Shield—Mount Gundabad or Sarn Goriwing

Scroll of Isildur—Moria or Caves of Úlund [storing it at Barad-dûr]

Snaga-hai (x2)—tapped Shadow-hold

Stinker—Goblin-gate

Vile Fumes (x3)—tapped Shadow-hold

War-wolf (x3)—

tapped Shadow-hold (except Dead Marshes and Mount Gram)

Black Mace (x2) (sideboard)—Moria or Caves of Úlund (2nd deck cycle)

Orcs of Mirkwood (sideboard)—Sarn Goriwing

Resource Play

The trickiest aspect of this deck is playing multiple site-tapping resources at a small number of Shadow-holds. The 3 *Records Unread* are key to pulling this off. This minor item untaps Goblin-gate for the

2 allies playable there and Moria for its faction and one greater item. The nature of this deck is for the company of Orc scouts to move very little, thereby decreasing the number of creatures that attack them. Once a Shadow-hold is tapped, the deck provides a great number of playable 1 marshalling point resources including factions, allies, and items. A company should not move to an untapped Moria or Goblingate unless it has one of the resources specific to that site in hand.

Hoarmûrath

Hoarmûrath taps every organization phase to bring a resource to the play deck from the sideboard. The only exception is when you have *Voices of Malice* in your hand—Hoarmûrath is your only sage. He does not move from Dol Guldur in any case, increasing your hand size by one. It may be useful to bring in *Fell Rider* near the end of the first deck cycle. In this way, you have the option of moving Hoarmûrath for the second cycle.

Hazard Play

Woe be the opponent who wanders into this hazard mix unprepared! Practicing a little patience, you can unload a vicious mix of Undead attacks. The key is to turn them into monsters with bonuses from *The Moon Is Dead*, *Plague of Wights*, and *Chill Dousers*. For example, you can reasonably create a *Ghouls* attack of 14 strikes at 10 prowess. You should generally look to discard hazards in favor of keeping your numerous marshalling point sources in hand, however.

Sideboard

Many resources in the sideboard will undoubtedly be useful against any opponent: *Orc Quarrels*, *Black Maces*, *Sudden Call*, etc. In fact, with Hoarmûrath tapping most turns to bring a resource into the play deck, you effectively increase the number of resources in the play deck without increasing the number of hazards.

There is nothing tricky about the sideboard hazards. Use *An Unexpected Outposts* to recycle your best Undead creatures or enhancers if you are making good use of them. Otherwise bring in hazards from the sideboard to hit the elusive opponent in new ways.

I – MORGUL RALLYING CRY

THE WITCH-KING'S CHALLENGE DECK

The Witch-king's mission is to solidify Sauron's forces in Mordor. His minions do best when not moving from the safety of this evil domain. They have very little to help them tactically, but in Mordor they should not need much. The hazards can create a devastating environment of roadblock.

Starting Companies (3) at Minas Morgul

- One Orc Captain controls Ill-favoured Fellow. This company travels to Mount Doom to sit for most of the game.
- Horseman in the Night controls Orc Veteran. Horseman in the Night starts with *Blazon of the Eye*. This company travels to Nûrniag Camp to sit for most of the game.
- The other Orc Captain and Orc Brawler form the third company. This Orc Captain starts with *Blazon of the Eye*, and the company travels to Cirith Gorgor to sit for most of the game.

Suggested Sites for Resources

Asdriags—Nûrniag Camp

Blasting Fire (x3)—tapped Shadow-hold or Dark-hold

Great Bats (x3)—tapped Shadow-hold

Helm of Fear—Barad-dûr

Nûrniags—Nûrniag Camp

Orcs of Ash Mountains—Cirith Gorgor

Orcs of Údun—Cirith Gorgor

Palantir of Minas Tirith—Minas Tirith

That Ain't No Secret (x3)—Mount Doom

Uruk-hai—Cirith Gorgor

Vile Fumes (x3)—tapped Shadow-hold or Dark-hold

Black Trolls (sideboard)—Cirith Gorgor

Last Child of Ungoliant (sideboard)—Shelob's Lair

Resource Play

Play the *Awaiting the Calls* on the 2 Orc Captains to free enough general influence to bring in more characters. This means you should play *That Ain't No Secret* on the Ill-favoured Fellow since the

Orc Captain at Mount Doom ideally should not move to store this event. The lesser mind characters will “shuttle” between sites, storing resources, delivering *Records Unread* to Nûrniag Camp, etc. Note that the lower mind characters from the deck can come into play under direct influence at the Dark-holds.

The Witch-king

The Witch-king moves with *Fell Rider* to Minas Tirith to play the Palantír, and to Barad-dûr to play *Helm of Fear*. Playing these items requires him to tap twice. Otherwise, the Witch-king, as the deck’s only sage, should be untapped to play *Voices of Malice* to discard *Foolish Words* or other debilitating hazard permanent-events. *Foolish Words* can be revealed as an on-guard card in response to an attempt to play a faction. During the site phase, with *Voices of Malice* in hand, the Witch-king should wait for all faction attempts before himself playing an item. He can always wait another turn to play his item.

Hazard Play

This deck has an unusual hazard strategy that often causes great frustration for an opponent—the “Roadblock Strategy.” Its goal is to prevent an opponent from reaching his new site or to tap his new site prematurely to prevent the play of resources. An opponent who recognizes this strategy should forget all other sideboarding needs and bring in his anti-roadblock resources. These include *Gates of Morning*, *Skies of Fire*, *Promptings of Wisdom*, and *Piercing All Shadows*. As for your play, the key is your *An Unexpected Outposts*. You must choose your cards to recycle from *Long Winters*, *Snowstorm*, *Doors of Night*, another *An Unexpected Outpost*, and *Twilight*.

Sideboard

If *Voices of Malice* is not in hand, or if you will not try to influence a faction, tap the Witch-king to bring in a resource from the sideboard. *Above the Abyss* against a Wizard opponent is invaluable. When a company of 3 or more Orcs forms at Minas Morgul, bring in *Last Child of Ungoliant*. You should play her near the end of the first deck cycle. Of course, you will need *Sudden Call* towards the end of the first cycle. Hazard-wise, bringing in *Foul Fumes* against certain Wizard opponents can be important.

J – SEDUCING NATIONS OF MEN

INDÛR'S CHALLENGE DECK

Indûr enlists The Mouth to seduce nations of mannish factions in the less civilized lands surrounding Mordor. Adept in the dark arts of magic, Indûr sends along a master of sorcery, Hador, to protect these efforts. The hazards feature corruption with a mix of general creatures.

Starting Company at Dol Guldur

- The Mouth controls Horseman in the Night. Hador controls Odoacer. The Mouth starts with *Strange Rations* and Horseman in the Night starts with *Blazon of the Eye*.

Suggested Sites for Resources

The Arkenstone—Caves of Úlund or Moria

Balchoth—Raider-hold

Corsairs of Rhûn—Raider-hold

Easterlings—Easterling Camp

Haradrim—Southron Oasis

High Helm—The Wind Throne

Palantîr of Orthanc—Isengard

Scroll of Isildur—Caves of Úlund or Moria [storing it at Barad-dûr]

Southrons—Southron Oasis

Stinker—Goblin-gate

Wain-easterlings—Easterling Camp

Great Bats (sideboard)—tapped Goblin-gate, Moria, or Mount Gundabad

Grey Mountain Goblins (sideboard)—Gondmaeglon

Orcs of Gundabad (sideboard)—Mount Gundabad

Resource Play

Your goal should be to play 5 of the 6 man factions at the 3 Border-holds surrounding Mordor. Essential to playing two at one site is the minor item, *Secret Book*. It may become a chore moving a character to a Border-hold just to untap it with this item, but it is often necessary.

High Helm can help The Mouth or Horseman in the Night with their influence attempts. Pay close attention to the Standard Modifications factions in play give. You may receive more bonuses here than anticipated.

Hador plays a very important part in the success of this deck. He casts a powerful attack avoidance sorcery, *Tormented Earth*. When not needed otherwise, tap another character to help Hador with the corruption check from this spell. Note that Hador can play *Tormented Earth* even if tapped or wounded. *Slayers* are a real threat, so save *Ready to His Will* to make this creature an ally and stop its attacks.

One or more companies of Orcs should form at Dol Guldur. These are responsible for playing most of the non-faction resources. Never hesitate to sacrifice an Orc to a large attack for the greater good of Sauron.

Indûr

Indûr does not move. He uses his special ability to bring discarded *Tormented Earths* back to your hand. If enough attack avoidance is otherwise in hand, Indûr can tap during his organization phase to bring a resource to the play deck. *Poisonous Despair* works best if taken to the discard pile first. Indûr can bring this to your hand if your opponent becomes a threat to influence your mar shalling points away.

Hazard Play

The hazards have a high frequency of play so that the *Secret Books* cycle into your hand quickly. The creatures will not consistently threaten your opponent, but your corruption should have a profound effect. A prudent opponent will slow down his movement to take time removing the corruption cards; a careless opponent will take costly losses from failed corruption checks.

Sideboard

The sideboard contains an additional 8 mar shalling points of resources. They work well coming into the deck for the second deck cycle. If your companies are in good shape tactically, tap Indûr to bring some of them in sooner.

SYMBOL KEY

Region Type	Symbol	Site Type	Symbol
Coastal Seas	●	Havens	★
Free-domains	○	Free-holds	□
Border-lands	◑	Border-holds	■
Wilderness	▲	Ruins & Lairs.....	↳
Shadow-lands	▢	Shadow-holds	▢
Dark-domains	◐	Dark-holds	▀
Other	Symbol		
Mind.....	○		
Direct Influence	█		

COMBAT MODIFICATIONS

Condition	Modification to Target's Prowess
Unwounded, tapped character	-1
Wounded character	-2
For each unused strike allocated	-1
Untapped character decides not to tap	-3
For each character tapped to support	+1
Up to 1 resource card requiring skill	varies
Other resource cards	varies
Hazard cards	varies