

Dungeon player strategy

One of Hero IK's particularities is the large gameplay difference between the adventurer player and dungeon player.

The adventurer player's gameplay is rather simple - the most important thing is knowing how to manage your mana properly. Like a good friend of mine says: "no mana, no goodies!". The rest is nothing more than a question of choice and combos between the player's adventurers and their equipment cards.

For the dungeon player, things are a bit harder. Generally, I'd say that four or five games are required as the dungeon player to start grasping the finesse required and the difficulties of the role.

The goal of this little strategy guide is to help you understand these aspects as quickly as possible. To start, there's the most important thing: the construction phase!

The construction phase is very important. It's the cornerstone of the dungeon's defense. At first, it'll seem underwhelming, perhaps even useless, but without a good management of this phase, the dungeon player cannot win.

What to do during the construction phase?

During this phase, you will have to look at the cards on the top of each of the dungeon's pile and will get to switch two of these piles. And so, the first thing to do is to look at the visible (or hidden) monsters that the adventurers can face and guess at which one of them they will attack. You will need to anticipate the adventurer's movements to make the most of the next monster to show up. Being able to read the adventurers' intentions properly and strategically choosing which monster you use to protect yourself should give you a head start on your way to victory!

It is therefore very important to know the powers of the adventurers facing you, as this can also influence your construction phase.

A few things to do:

Always plan ahead to give a valid target to a "bodyguard" monster. Meaning, always be sure that there's a visible monster next to it, or even better, a Fierce monster! For instance, a visible bodyguard monster flanked by a greenskin and a trap would be an ideal target for the adventurers, since the Tenacity token is useless on a greenskin (since battles with them is resolved through a Rock-Paper-Scissors match)... And traps can't benefit from Tenacity tokens.

Delay the arrival of a psi monster if the adventurers have little or no mana. There are few psi monsters - use them well and they will enable you to win many games.

Do a "lock-out" once in a while, when the adventurers are low on mana but still have a large amount of courage tokens. To do a "lock-out", bring out three monsters with a value higher than the adventurers can reach in a battle unless they use mana at the same time. In some dungeons, most notably the Den of Dementia, the lock-out can happen quite often.

Think about the bonuses! Always make the right monsters benefit from the right bonuses. And the greenskins are rather good at that.

Here's an example of a possible situation in the Lair of the Lich dungeon:

There are two greenskins visible. The first one grants a +1 to Undead, the second gives +1 to Nemesis. Cinders (Undead Nemesis) shows up on top of a pile and the adventurer player has been avoiding greenskins for the past few turns as he's running low on courage tokens. You could say he now fears greenskins. Place Cinders on the pile where the greenskins aren't, and whaddaya know, he gets a +2 bonus just for showing up. Furthermore, the best thing to do in this example would be to make Cinders face-down in order to for the adventurers to take the bluff and end up in a very difficult combat.

Lack or surplus of mana! The adventurers are in good shape, overflowing with mana? Now's the time to give them as much as possible - they'll surely leave a small mana-giving monster (I call those "walking potions") for later, and that's perfect. Put behind it a monster without mana and flood the other corridors with mana monsters. Don't forget that 50% of the dungeon cards give mana - if they waste too many when they don't need any, they'll run out by the end.

And inversely, if the adventurers have little or no mana left, again, out-think them by anticipating their next battle and put a mana monster behind a mana-less dungeon card.

Lack of a dungeon card type: imagine a group of three adventurers who are lacking two blue dungeon cards to call upon an Ultimate power. Well, it's up to you to place those blue cards behind a dangerous monster, to bring them out face down, to put a Tenacity token on them, etc... You can delay the use of an ultimate power with proper management of the construction phase – always keep an eye on how many cards the adventurers need to call upon their Ultimate power.

Being able to anticipate the adventurers' moves is, as you can see, very important for the dungeon player!

But don't forget you can bluff, too...

And to bluff, nothing beats the ambush! When a new dungeon card is placed in front of the adventurer player (after the elimination of the last one), the dungeon master can choose to put it in play face-down by spending 1 Fear token. Although usable only during the combat phase, this power is very versatile.

At first glance, one could think that the idea is to hide all the powerful monsters in order to trap the adventurers. But that doesn't work all that often, and the adventurers can often be wary of such a trick... On the other hand, there are many pleasant ways of using this power.

A group of weakened adventurers will hesitate against facing a hidden monster, on the off chance that they'd have to face an overly powerful monster, so take advantage of that to hide a weak mana-giving monster.

Also, hide greenskins once in a while, when adventurers are low on courage and it could be a fatal encounter for them.

But most importantly, when you hide a card - it is automatically immune to all powers which may target a face-up, visible, dungeon card, as in the case of Nem Akh's Ultimate power.

The management of fear tokens is important: you don't have a lot of them and you need to make every one of them count. Wait for your Fierce monsters, hide your monsters when the destructive ultimate powers are about to be called, force the adventurers to reroll a combat die which could cost them a lot.

Gameplay for the dungeon player is a lot of anticipation, a bit of bluff and having nerves of steel.

Don't take combat against greenskins lightly, as they're indeed the only fights in which adventurers can't interfere using their mana or their Skills (with the exception of one very precise case). And so, by the end of the dungeon, you should often see weakened adventurers take on a strong dragon as a preferred target over a poor little goblin!

And so this short list of tips ends, but not without a quick reminder: anticipate, anticipate, anticipate and never forget the construction phase.

Good luck!