

# Summoner Wars Tournament Guide

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Inside this tournament organizer's guide you will find information and resources for running a successful event for the expandable card/board game Summoner Wars. From organization to rules to promotion, this guide will equip you for a fun and well-run competition.

## About Summoner Wars

Summoner Wars is a two-player fantasy battle game. Each player brings an army of units from a particular Faction, with each unit represented by a card in the player's 34-card deck. Each deck contains one powerful Summoner which starts on the board. A player's Summoner is analogous to a king in chess; destroy your opponent's Summoner and you win. You can visit [PlaidHatGames.com](http://PlaidHatGames.com) to read the complete rules. Summoner Wars is an ideal live tournament game:

- **Summoner Wars is streamlined.** It can be taught in 5 minutes and has a low-complexity rule set which contrasts its deep strategic elements. Most games finish in around 30 minutes, so it's ideal for a 4- or 5-round tournament format.
- **Summoner Wars is expandable.** There are 16 factions in Summoner Wars, each with their own thematic flavor and strategic bent. Each Faction has one or two releases which include a complete, tournament-legal deck, and one other release which includes alternate Champion and Common unit cards to switch in and out of decks for that Faction.
- **Summoner Wars is approachable.** Despite the variability described above, a player can buy just one Starter Set or Faction Deck and will have a



competitive deck with no need for deck building. There is no power creep in Summoner Wars and no cards have been phased out. In fact, many skilled Summoner Wars players have never modified their base decks. Summoner Wars' balance is one of its most outstanding qualities.



## Summoner Wars Products

As of Summer 2013, there are over 20 total Summoner Wars game products. There is no card overlap between releases; every product is distinct and there are no random buys. The releases, all currently in print, can be broken down as follows:

- **2 Starter Sets:** These two sets, *Phoenix Elves vs. Tundra Orcs* and *Guild Dwarves vs. Cave Goblins*, each feature a rulebook, wound markers, dice and a board (all the elements needed to play Summoner Wars) as well as two complete, tournament-ready Faction decks. They each retail for **\$24.95**.
- **1 Master Set:** This set contains a rulebook, wound markers, dice and a board as well, but has SIX complete (and unique) tournament-ready Faction decks at a retail price of just **\$49.95**.
- **6 Standalone Faction Decks:** These 6 unique, tournament-ready faction decks retail for **\$9.95** each and round out the stable of 16 total Factions in the game.
- **8 Reinforcement Packs:** Each of these 8 packs retails for **\$9.95** and contains alternate Common and Champion units to switch in and out with the basic tournament-ready decks listed above. Each pack contains units for use with two different Factions as well as two Mercenary units. (Mercenary units can be used in any faction; see Appendix I for complete deck building rules.)
- **Second Summoner Faction Decks:** The newest releases are Second Summoner Faction Decks. Each contains a tournament-ready deck for one of the 16 Factions, but with all new Summoner, Event, Champion and Common cards. These packs retail for **\$9.95** and the Champion and Common units in these decks can be switched in and out with Champion and Commons units released previously for their Faction.



See Appendix III at the back of this document for an overview of the 16 factions.



## Organizing Your First Tournament

1. **Choose a location:**
  - a. The ideal host is a **Plaid Hat Games Retailer**. These are stores registered with PlaidHatGames.com. They are already familiar with Plaid Hat Games, carry Summoner Wars products, and have some tournament resources. Visit <http://www.plaidhatgames.com/flgs> to find a store near you and contact them about holding an event.
  - b. If there is no PHG Retailer suitable for your event, but you have **another local game store** you'd like to host at, suggest to them to register as a Plaid Hat Games Retailer. They'll get free resources, promotion, and a listing on PlaidHatGames.com. Store representatives can go to <http://www.plaidhatgames.com/flgs/register> to register.
  - c. If no local game store is available, reserve another **public space** willing to host you, like a coffee shop, a church, or a reserved library room.
2. **Register the event online:** Go to <http://www.plaidhatgames.com/events> and register your event officially on our site. This helps potential attendees find the event, provides the event organizer with resources, and it's a platform for event organizers to reach PHG fans and post updates leading up to the event.
3. **Promote the event.** Besides posting updates on your event's page on our site and in the PlaidHatGames.com forums, promote your event around town. There are customizable Plaid Hat Games flyers you can access from your registered event's page on PlaidHatGames.com.
4. **Gather supplies:** Have the following ready to go the day of the event (on your event's online page, you can ask attendees to bring some of these):
  - a. **Enough boards, wound markers and dice** so that everyone can play at once. (Unless many of the players will be beginners, you can count on the attendees to provide these themselves.)
  - b. **Tournament ranking sheets.** These can be downloaded from your event's page at PlaidHatGames.com. Print out one for each player.
  - c. **Prizes.** This is optional, but even a small prize like a \$10 gift card to the store where your event is held shows appreciation both to your attendees and your host. A \$2-5 entry fee where appropriate can help ensure a worthwhile prize.
  - d. **Chess clocks.** We recommend chess clocks to keep the tournament moving. We suggest each clock have 25 minutes on it per player per match, with no time added for each turn. There are free chess clock apps for most mobile devices, for example iGameClock for iOS.
  - e. **Official rules and the Summoner Wars FAQ.** These are effective tools for settling rule disputes. Find them at PlaidHatGames.com.
5. **Have fun and thank everyone.** A good host is a gracious host. Do whatever is needed to help everyone have a good time, and thank everyone, especially your host store, afterward. Post the results of your event online from your event's page on PlaidHatGames.com.

## Tournament Structure: Swiss-Style

We recommend a **Swiss-style tournament** for your event's structure. This means that every player plays a match every round, with the tournament going 4 rounds for 10 or less participants and 5 rounds for 12 or more. The winner is the player with the best record at the end of the last round, with ties going to the player with the best strength of schedule out of those tied.

**How a Swiss-Style Tournament Works:** During the first round, all players are matched up randomly. Each subsequent round, players with similar records are matched up as evenly as possible.

*(This means all 1-0 players play against each other for round two and all 0-1 players match up against each other for round two, with one random 1-0 player matching up with a random 0-1 player if necessary. In round 3, match up all 2-0, 1-1, and 0-2 players to players with the same record as much as possible, and so on, for each round.)*

Match up players against opponents they have not yet played in a previous round, if possible while staying within the bounds of having similar records. If there is an odd number of players, one person will have to sit out each round. To help keep track of player records, download and print out the Ranking Sheets from your registered event's page on our Web site.

## Tournament Formats

The following are suggested formats for your Swiss-style Summoner Wars tournaments:

- **Standard Deck:** Each player brings one "straight out of the box" Faction deck from the Faction of their choice without reinforcing it with alternate champions or commons, and plays with that deck every round. This format is best if there are a lot of new players.
- **One Deck to Rule Them All:** Each player prepares one customized (optionally), legal deck from the Faction of their choice and plays with that deck every round.
- **Five For Fighting:** In this popular format, each player writes down five *different* customized Summoners he/she plans to use, one for each round of the tournament, and uses those decks in that order.
  - **The KC Twist:** This standard rule for multi-deck formats states that between your five decks, *no two draw piles may share the same unit.*
- **Pick Your Poison:** For this format, each player brings two customized decks from two different Factions and announces the two Factions and Summoners to their opponent before the matchup. Then both players simultaneously reveal the Faction of their opponent that they choose to face. The KC Twist is standard for this format as well.



## Appendices

### Appendix I: Official Deck Building Rules

Faction Decks from Starter Sets, the Master Set, or individual Faction Decks are built for you and are ready to play. However, you can also custom build a deck that fits your personal play style.

#### **Mercenaries**

Mercenary cards are gray and don't have a faction symbol. Mercenary cards can be included in ANY deck, up to a maximum of 6 Mercenary cards in a single deck. Note: Mercenaries will have a different color of card back than the rest of the cards in your deck. This means that players will be able to tell when you have a Mercenary card on top of your Draw Pile or in your hand, unless you use opaque card sleeves.

#### **How to Build a Custom Deck**

- To custom build a Summoner Wars Deck you must start by choosing a Summoner. Collect that Summoner's Unit Card and Reference Card.
- On your Summoner's Reference Card is a list of Event Cards. You must include in your deck each of the Event Cards listed and no more.
- Also found on your Summoner's Reference Card is a 'Starting Set-Up'. A Summoner's Starting Set-Up is used to determine which cards will start the game on the Battlefield, and where on the Battlefield they will be placed when playing with that Summoner. You must include in your deck each of the cards that will be used in your Summoner's Starting Set-Up.
- Next add 2 Wall Cards to your deck.
- Finally, add enough Unit Cards to your deck so that you have a total of 18 Common Units and 3 Champion Units in your deck. All of the Units in your deck must belong to the same faction as your Summoner, with the exception of Mercenary Unit Cards. You can never have more than 1 copy of a specific Champion Unit in your deck and you can never have more than 10 copies of a specific Common Unit in your deck.

This means your custom deck will have a total of 1 Summoner, 9 Event Cards, 3 Wall Cards, 18 Common Units, and 3 Champion Units in it.

Some Factions have special deck building rules, such as the Filth and the Mercenary Summoner Rallul. Follow the rules included with those Faction Decks and note the rule differences for them.

These deck building rules, as well as the rest of the rule book and the Summoner Wars FAQ can be found at [PlaidHatGames.com](http://PlaidHatGames.com).

## Appendix II: Tournament FAQs

Note: These questions relate directly to running or participating in a tournament. For questions regarding Summoner Wars rules, check out the Summoner Wars FAQ on our Web site.

**Q. Do cards need to be sleeved for tournaments? Are opaque-backed sleeves allowed?**

A. Both clear and opaque sleeves are allowed and strongly encouraged, especially to help distinguish your cards from your opponent's in the case of an intra-Faction battle or in the case of Mercenaries.

Note that using clear sleeves or no sleeves will have a gameplay effect of alerting you and your opponent to when you have a Mercenary card on top of your draw pile or in your hand. If you are using no sleeves or clear sleeves and have Mercenaries in your deck, you must allow your opponent one cut of your deck after any time you shuffle your deck.

**Q. Can I look through my opponent's deck before the game?**

A. This is up to the tournament organizer, but generally deck lists are secret going into a match. You can always ask to look through your opponent's deck afterward to ensure that it was legal. And of course in a multi-round single-deck tournament, you can always scout out your opponent by asking past opponents what to expect.

**Q. Can I build my deck or switch in certain cards after seeing what Faction or opponent I'm up against?**

A. No, ideally all decks are built and locked in before attending the tournament, or at least before you know who and what you are facing in the upcoming round.

## Appendix III: Overview of The Factions



**Benders:** A Bender player isn't interested in fighting on their opponent's terms. Instead they will seek to control their opponent's actions, their opponent's units, and their opponent's hopes of victory.

Available In: *Master Set, Piclo's Magic Reinforcement Pack*



**Cave Goblins:** The Cave Goblins are battle-crazed lunatics. They come at their enemies in hordes. Cave Goblin Players like to summon units into battle freely, overwhelming their opponents with bursts of speed and power.

Available In: *Guild Dwarves vs. Cave Goblins Starter Set, Grungor's Charge Reinforcement Pack, Cave Goblins Second Summoner Faction Deck*



**Cloaks:** The Cloaks rely on stealth and espionage to win their battles. Cloaks players know how to find the weaknesses in their opponent's defenses and exploit them, cheating opponents of their best cards. Thieves force opponents to discard cards, and spies and assassinations keep enemy factions from using cards at ideal times.

Available In: *Cloaks Faction Deck, Hawk's Strike Reinforcement Pack*



**Deep Dwarves:** A Deep Dwarf player is a meticulous accountant. He's aware of every magic card he has spent, every magic card he has gained, and every point of magic he may gain. Proper management is a Deep Dwarf player's path to victory, and they revel in setting complex chains of attack bonuses.

Available In: *Master Set, Piclo's Magic Reinforcement Pack*



**Filth:** A Filth player values versatility. The Filth can mutate their flesh to better suit the task at hand. A Filth player is constantly evaluating what mutations they have at their disposal and when and where is the best place to use them.

Available In: *Filth Faction Deck, Saella's Precision Reinforcement Pack*



**Fallen Kingdom:** Fallen Kingdom players know that victory does not come without sacrifice. They make the right sacrifices at the right time to gain the strength necessary for victory. Woe unto the summoner who underestimates the power of an enemy who can raise the dead!

Available In: *Fallen Kingdom Faction Deck, Goodwin's Blade Reinforcement Pack*



**Guild Dwarves:** The Guild Dwarves are sturdy defenders and are experts at taking down walls. Guild Dwarf Players seek to hold out against oncoming attacks, while closing off their opponents' source of reinforcements.

Available In: *Guild Dwarves vs. Cave Goblins Starter Set, Grungor's Charge Reinforcement Pack, Guild Dwarves Second Summoner Faction Deck*



**Jungle Elves:** Jungle Elf players like to act with decisiveness. They like to move fast, hit hard, and keep their opponent off balance. A Jungle Elf deck relies on momentum to drive it forward, their own weaknesses hidden by keeping their enemy off guard.

Available In: *Jungle Elves Faction Deck, Hawk's Strike Reinforcement Pack*



**Mercenaries:** A player who commands a Mercenary army plays the game outside the game, manipulating his hand to his liking, using the power and destruction of walls against his opponent, and harnessing surprise and versatility, having more units available to him than any other Faction.

Available In: *Mercenaries Faction Deck, every Reinforcement Pack (especially Saella's Precision), and as promo cards.*



**Mountain Vargath:** A Mountain Vargath player is fearless. A Mountain Vargath player gets their Summoner involved in the battle, operates in enemy territory, and owns the board. Playing the Mountain Vargath is all about building a rolling tide of goatmen that out-muscles the enemy at every turn.

Available In: *Master Set, Bellor's Retribution Reinforcement Pack*



**Phoenix Elves:** The Phoenix Elves forge their own fate. They are precise and deadly. Phoenix Elf Players like to deal in direct damage, forming strategies that do not trust the outcome of a die roll.

Available In: *Phoenix Elves vs. Tundra Orcs Starter Set, Ruker's Power Reinforcement Pack, Phoenix Elves Second Summoner Faction Deck*



**Shadow Elves:** A Shadow Elf player likes to keep their opponent guessing, with units showing up in unexpected places. A Shadow Elf player reacts to their opponent's actions and strikes with suddenness.

Available In: *Master Set, Taliya's Spirit Reinforcement Pack*





**Sand Goblins:** The Sand Goblins are survivalists. A Sand Goblin player knows how to wriggle out of a tight spot. Sand Goblins are much hardier than most opponents would expect, and a good Sand Goblin player knows how to use that to their advantage. Like any goblins, Sand Goblins enjoy surrounding and ganging up on their foes, but unlike other goblins, the Sand Goblins do this with their high life values instead of superior numbers.

Available In: *Master Set, Taliya's Spirit Reinforcement Pack*



**Swamp Orcs:** A Swamp Orc player will seek to grow their board position, growing their unit's effectiveness in enemy territory as they do. A Swamp Orc player will choke their opponents out of the game, giving them no ground with which to regroup.

Available In: *Master Set, Bellor's Retribution Reinforcement Pack*



**Tundra Orcs:** The Tundra Orcs are savage and reckless. They rely on brute physical strength to overcome the obstacles in their way. Tundra Orc Players are gamblers, foiling the well laid plans of their opponents with a string of lucky dice rolls.

Available In: *Phoenix Elves vs. Tundra Orcs Starter Set, Rukar's Power Reinforcement Pack*



**Vanguards:** Vanguards players hate to see a unit fall in battle. Life is precious and they protect it. They keep their summoned units on the battlefield, holding off those who would seek to destroy their summoner. They outlast their foe's strongest offensives and decisively finish off what remains.

Available In: *Vanguards Faction Pack, Goodwin's Blade Reinforcement Pack*