

Middle-earth Boxed-game Rules

by Joe Bisz

I have been developing something for the past year that I call the Middle Earth "Boxed Game." If you have enough cards to make the Boxed Game (about 300 resources and 300 hazards would be good) you can play Middle earth for the rest of your life without making a deck and without needing more cards. Best of all you don't have to use any rares!!

The way this works is that there is one draw pile common to all players, and the game proceeds with as little as two or as many as five (perhaps more, if you duplicate wizards) players playing at the same time. Standard Middle-earth rules apply, except for what I wrote below. I have tried this with my playgroup and it worked well, three people taking 2.5 hours for a game, which is good by METW standards. I would welcome feedback and discussion on these rules. Now that they are mostly finished, I hope you can all enjoy them.

Middle-earth Boxed-game Rules

This is a great and challenging way to play MECCG without actually having to make a deck, or even a sealed deck!

Game Setup

- One common "MP deck" (non-character cards worth Marshalling Points).
- One common "Play deck" (resources and hazards) and discard pile.
- One common "Roving Character deck."
- Each player gets 1 random Wizard, as well as a 5 card MP hand and 8 card Play hand. Effects that affect "hands" may affect either the Play hand or the MP hand but not both. For each player, place 8 random characters and 3 random minor items (legally startable) in draft pool. Roll dice; highest roller may choose to draft first or play first. Alternate turns drafting the character(s) and minor item(s) you want from the pool, until neither player wishes to draft any more.
- A map and a list of site names with item playability and other text is useful.

Game Rules

- If you bring into play or discard an MP card, draw another one immediately.
- During the end-of-turn phase you may discard 2 cards from your Play hand or MP hand.
- Company limit of 3.
- No sideboarding.
- Any player may bring into play minor items from the discard pile as if in hand.
- If you are at a Haven, Free-hold, or Border-hold during any ~~site phase time~~ **You are not the active player or the hazard player**, you may "free trade" an equal amount of ~~resource~~ cards in your Play hand or MP hand with any player at Haven, Free-hold, or Border-hold.
- During your organization phase, 1 character appears at random from the Roving Character Deck, and may be brought into play by any player as if in hand. The character is discarded at the end of your next organization phase.
- As a hazard player, you only draw cards based on movement of player to your left. If you draw cards, you have first action of playing hazards; this action then moves to the hazard player on the right, who either plays or "passes" (with a minus 1 penalty to the hazard limit for each pass), upon which the action moves to next player, etc., until the hazard limit is used up or no more players wish to play hazards.
- If you have 20 MPs you may call the Council with no deck exhaust necessary. Each other player gets 1 more turn.

Card Errata

- Gandalf: If he taps to test a ring, the roll is at +1. CC from spells is +1.
- Radagast: The extra wilderness draw is limited to 1.

- Saruman: Any character in his company may "use" a Palantir. He may tap at any time to take a spell from the discard pile.

Additional/modified rules for Minion boxed game

- As a minion player You can choose whether You will discard Your Ringwrath or keep it. If You discard Your Ringwrath then You are still a minion player but You can't use the special Ringwrath cards (like unleashed cards) but still "normal" Ringwrath cards like Bade to Rule or While the yellow faces sleep. But You can't use Your Ringwrath abilities or cards playable only on a Ringwrath (like Black Horse or Fell-Rider)
- To call the council/Audience to Sauron You don't need a Sudden Call because it may be hard to find and the other players could collect all of this or discard this card
- If you are at a Dark-Haven, Dark-hold, or Shadow-hold during any ~~site phase~~ **time You are not the active player or the hazard player**, you may "free trade" an equal amount of ~~resource~~ cards in your Play hand or MP hand with any player at Dark-Haven, Dark-hold, or Shadow-hold.