

Formal Rules

There are four Stations.

At the beginning of a game, each Station is dealt a hand, face down. Each Station is controlled by a player. In some variants, multiple Stations are controlled by the same player. In some variants, that player can combine the hands of those Stations.

At the beginning of each Round, the Qualifying Level is set to a number between 1 and 8.

The Formal Rules do not define exactly how these initial conditions are set, because that is up to the game variant being played. In the standard format, a single deck is shuffled before the start of the game, and each Station is dealt 11 cards at random. The Qualifying Level begins at one for the first Round, and increases by one for each subsequent Round.

Game and First Station

A game consists of 8 Rounds.

For example, a spell could cause another Gladiator to be removed from the Arena or to alter the Level of another card and thus possibly change its Qualification. As another example, a Spell might alter the parameters of a Gladiator or Gladiators, including granting abilities that affect subsequent Phases of the round.

Because of the possibility of Qualifications changing during the Round, the determination of whether a card is Qualified take place only when that card is ready to have an effect. This applies to all Phases.

The effect(s) of a Spell last for the remainder of the Round, but have no effect on future Rounds.

Engagement Phase

In the turn order, each Gladiator that has Flying chooses whether to Engage only with Flying Gladiators, or to Engage with all Gladiators. Those are the only two choices; the Flier cannot make any more nuanced Engagement decisions.

By a coin flip, a team is chosen to go first in the first Round. In the standard format, the Station to the right within a team acts first in the first Round. The Station acting first is called the First Station.

The turn sequence begins with the First Station, and then proceeds clockwise.

After each Round, the designation of First Station moves to the next Station in the clockwise direction.

Qualifying

As explained in the Selection Phase rules to follow, there are no restrictions on what cards can be Selected for a Round. However, only cards that Qualify will actually have an effect on the Round. By default, a card is Qualified only if its Level is less than or equal to the Qualifying Level for the Round. However, some cards may alter Qualification rules for the Round.

Technically, all Flying Gladiators make an Engagement decision, even if they are not Qualified, because they could become Qualified later in the Round. However, this cannot happen using the base set of cards.

Target Phase

In the turn order, each *Qualified* Gladiator that has Target Strike may choose one legal target Gladiator – see targeting rules below. If no target is chosen, the Acting Gladiator forfeits its Target Strike. If a target is chosen, the Acting Gladiator deals damage equal to its Damage Rating to the target. All damage is cumulative, and if this damage brings the total damage taken by the target to equal or above its Defense Rating, then the target is immediately removed from the Arena.

Targeting Rules

The targeting rules for the Acting Gladiator are:

If it has Range, then it may choose to target any Gladiator in the Arena.

Gladiator Attributes

The Formal Rules do not separately define the meaning of the attributes. Their meaning is entirely specified in the rules of each Phase.

Phases of a Round

Each Round consists of 5 Phases. The Phases always occur in exactly the following order:

Selection

Spell

Engagement

Target

Battle

Some phases involve decisions. These decisions are always made by the player who controls the Station where the card is.

While a decision is being made and resolved, that card is called Acting.

Selection Phase

In the turn order, each Station Selects exactly one card and places it face-up into the

Arena. (This means that the players acting later in the turn order can see the cards that were Selected earlier in the order.)

There are no restrictions on what card can be Selected by each Station.

The four Selected cards are considered to be in the Arena.

Only the cards that are in the Arena participate in the Phases that follow. Note that a card may be removed from the Arena as a result of game play during the Round, and if so that card does not participate in any way subsequently. This is true even if it is removed in the middle of a phase and it has not yet acted in that phase. Removed Gladiators simply are not considered in further action.

Spell Phase

In the turn order, each *Qualified* Spell is resolved. The effect of a spell is defined on the card itself, and implicitly extends or supersedes the Formal Rules.

If it does not have Range, then it may choose only from the Gladiators with which it is Engaged.

It may not choose to target itself. (Technically, a Gladiator is not Engaged with itself. If it were, it would also damage itself during the Battle Phase.)

It may choose to target a Gladiator that is not Qualified

Battle Phase

Simultaneously, each *Qualified* Gladiator that does *not* have the Target Strike Only attribute, deals its Damage to each other Gladiator with which it is Engaged. Gladiators with Range ignore Engagement and deal their Damage to each other Gladiator in the Arena.

Each Gladiator that has accumulated damage equal to or exceeding its Defense Rating is removed from the Arena.

There are no decisions made in this phase.

Judgement and Point

After the Battle Phase, the remaining Gladiator or Gladiators who have the highest Damage Rating are the winner(s).

If no Gladiators remain in the Arena, there are no winners, and no point is awarded.

If all of the winning Gladiators were from Stations controlled by the same team, that team is awarded a point.

Prepare for next Round

After the round, all Selected cards, as well as any that entered the Arena by other means (such as the spell Triumphant Return) are removed from the arena, but kept in a face up pile that any player may consult at any time. Some spells, including Triumphant Return, can interact with these previously played cards.

Move the designation of First Position to the next position in clockwise order, and set the Qualifying Level for the next round.