

MTG_GEN_RUL_ATTA

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COLLABORATORS

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Chapter 1

MTG_GEN_RUL_ATT

1.1 Attack Phase Rules and Rulings

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Step 1: Declare Attackers

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1.2 Declare intention to attack

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Attack Phase - Step 0: Declare intention to attack

This step is actually done as an action during the Main Phase.
[Mirage Page 48]

Your opponent can respond with fast effects. If they do so, the attack is cancelled. You can try again when the effects are all resolved. If no one announces any fast effects, continue on to step 1.
[Mirage Page 48]

A player may only attack once per turn and only during their own main phase.
[Mirage Page 48] This can be changed by card effects to allow zero or more than one attack

It is similar to any phase change in that you cannot go on to declare attackers until your opponent is done doing actions in your main phase. See the I'm Done entry for more information.

You are not required to say which player in a multiplayer game you are attacking. You just need to say you want to attack. [D'Angelo 01/23/95]

Any mana in mana pool when going to the next step causes mana burn.
[Mirage Page 48]

Check for player death before going to the next Step. [Mirage Page 48]

1.3 Beginning of Attack

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Attack Phase - Step 1/2: Beginning of Attack

Anything that happens at the beginning of the attack, such as Goblin Flotilla, gets dealt with here. This works like a normal "beginning of phase" time. Deal with these prior to declaring attackers.
[D'Angelo 11/06/96]

1.4 Declare Attackers

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Attack Phase - Step 1: Declare Attackers

This step can be charted out like follows: [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97]

- a. Chance to use specialized abilities usable during attack declaration.
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- b. Declaration of attackers. This is considered simultaneous.
- c. Triggered abilities from declaration of attackers.
- d. Chance to use specialized abilities usable during attack declaration.

No instants are allowed during this step by either player. If you want to play spells or abilities prior to declaring attackers, they must be done during the main phase. [Mirage Page 48] Mana sources and specialized abilities are the only effects usable during this step.

A creature can be declared as an attacker if it is untapped, does not have summoning sickness, is not a Wall, and does not have any other effect preventing it from attacking. [Mirage Page 49]

Creatures tap when declared as an attacker. [Mirage Page 49] This is not a creature ability. It's a side effect of being declared.

Creatures which have the ability to not tap when attacking, must still be untapped during this step in order to be declared as an attacker. [Mirage Page 49]

All attackers are declared at once. This action is simultaneous. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97] (REVERSAL)

You cannot make an illegal attack declaration. An attack is illegal if any subset of the creatures that were required to attack but were left out could have been added to the current set of attackers. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97] It is also illegal if any creatures are in the attack which cannot attack with the current selection of attackers.

You are not required to maximize the number of attackers or to attack with all "must attack" creatures if those creatures are unable to attack given the choice of attackers you make. So, you can attack with a single creature with Errantry and leave other creatures behind. But if you have an Orcish Conscripts that is required to attack and at least two other creatures attack, it is illegal for the Conscripts to not be included. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97]

You may attack with zero creatures. Such an attack is called a "NULL attack", and it does count as your one attack during your turn. [Mirage Page 49] The Mirage Rulebook erroneously says "one or more attackers" early on page 49 but is correct later on the page. [Duelist Magazine #15, Page 28]

Once an attacker is declared, untapping the attacker will not remove it from the attack. [Duelist Magazine #5, Page 35] Note that regenerating a creature, losing control of a creature, or having a creature stop being a creature will remove it from the attack as well.

Similarly, tapping a creature which did not tap to attack does not remove it from the attack. [D'Angelo 10/18/97]

Creatures with zero power may attack. [Mirage Page 49]

Creatures cannot attack (or be tapped for their own special ability) unless that card or token has been in play on your side since the beginning of your turn. See the "Summoning Sickness" entry for more information.

Banding of attackers must be declared at this time and cannot be changed later. [Mirage Page 19]

You only check if the creature is allowed to attack (such as can only attack if opponent has Islands) during this step. If any attack enablers are removed or attack inhibitors are introduced later, it does not make a difference. The creature is still attacking. [D'Angelo 02/01/95]

Brainwash and Jade Statue are examples of specialized abilities used during this step. [WotC Rules Team 06/15/95]

Any abilities that trigger during this step are dealt with at that time. [WotC Rules Team 07/03/97] (REVERSAL) They used to save up until the end of the step.

Most penalties and bonuses due to attacking or not attacking are considered as triggered abilities. For example, damage from attacking with the Hasran Ogress. [D'Angelo 10/01/96]

Triggered abilities that trigger on being declared are retroactively undone if the creature is removed from the attack by False Orders or some other reason. This also applies to Mijae Djinn's coin flip. [Aahz 08/18/97]

Triggered abilities which have already been resolved are not undone if a creature is retroactively removed from combat. [Aahz 09/09/97]

Triggered abilities that trigger on being declared which have not yet resolved are cancelled if the creature is removed from the attack by False Orders or some other effect which retroactively removes the creature from combat. This also applies to Mijae Djinn's coin flip because the Djinn retroactively removes itself from the combat. [Aahz 08/18/97]

You always attack your opponent and not your opponent's creatures. [Mirage Page 48]

You cannot attack yourself or your own creatures. [Mirage Page 48]

1.5 Fast Effects before Blocking

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Attack Phase - Step 2: Fast Effects before Blocking

You are not limited to a single stack of spells and abilities. [Mirage Page 50]

This is the ideal time for the defender to eliminate attackers they do not want to deal with (using Royal Assassin or Lightning Bolt, for example), or to enhance potential blockers (with Jump or such) to allow

them to be used for defense.

Remove from the combat any attackers and blockers which were killed (even if they regenerated).

1.6 Declare Blockers

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Attack Phase - Step 3: Declare Blockers

This step can be charted out like follows: [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97]

- a. Chance to use specialized abilities.
- b. Declaration of blockers. This is considered simultaneous.
- c. Triggered abilities from declaration of blockers.
- d. Chance to use specialized abilities.

No fast effects are allowed during this step by either player.

[Mirage Page 50] Mana sources and specialized abilities are the only effects usable during this step.

Only untapped creatures can block. [Mirage Page 50]

A blocker can only block one attacker unless otherwise stated on a card. [Mirage Page 50] You do not declare to block a band, you block a member of a band and thereby become a blocker to all creatures in the band. This means that if any member of a banded group of attackers can be blocked by your creature, the entire band can be blocked.

More than one blocker can be declared on a single attacker. [Mirage Page 50] This is true even without banding ability.

There is no summoning sickness for declaring blockers. You can use any untapped creature you have. [Duelist Magazine #5, Page 36]

All blockers are declared at once. This action is simultaneous. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97] (REVERSAL)

You cannot make an illegal blocking declaration. A block is illegal if you try to end the declaration with any "must block" creatures left out when they can be added to the current selection of blockers, or if any creatures are in the block which cannot block with the current selection of blockers. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97]

You cannot make an illegal blocking declaration. A block is illegal if any subset of the creatures that were required to block but were left out could have been added to the current set of blockers. [WotC Rules Team 08/05/97] It is also illegal if any creatures are in the block which cannot block with the current selection of blockers.

If a creature is required to block more creatures than it can legally block,

then the defender chooses which creature(s) to block, but must choose to block as many as possible. [Mirage Page 50]

Once blockers are declared against a creature, it is blocked. It remains blocked even if the blocking creature is killed or the block is made "illegal" by some action. [Mirage Page 50] This means that if you cast Jump (for example) on your attacking creature after blockers are declared, that you do not get around the blocker or even avoid damage. [Mirage Page 51]

Defenders do not band or group. They can just decide to choose the same creature to block. Defensive banding only helps during damage dealing. [Mirage Page 20] See the "Banding" entry for more information.

This is the only time that you check if the creature is allowed to block. If any evasion abilities or blocking inhibitors are introduced or removed later, it does not make a difference. The creature either can or cannot block at this time. [Mirage Page 51]

To block, the creature must be able to get around all of the attacking creature's evasion abilities. For example, a Flying creature with Fear can only be blocked if the blocking creature has Flying (to satisfy the Flying evasion ability) and if it is Black and/or Artifact (to satisfy the Fear evasion ability). [Mirage Page 51]

An attacking creature with an evasion ability (flying, xxxwalk, etc.) may not "turn off" the ability and choose to be blockable. [PPG Page 79]

Defending creatures do NOT tap. This is one of the oldest myths of the game.

Any abilities that trigger during this step are dealt with at that time. [WotC Rules Team 07/03/97] (REVERSAL) They used to save up until the end of the step.

Most penalties and bonuses due to blocking or not blocking are considered as triggered abilities. For example, blocking a or blocking with a Thicket Basilisk triggers its delayed destruction effect. [D'Angelo 10/01/96] The "is not blocked" abilities (usually) trigger if the creature is not blocked when blockers are declared. [Aahz 08/18/97]

FALSE Orders is played as a specialized effect after blocking assignments are made. False Orders can result in a new blocking assignment or retroactive removal of an assignment. [Duelist Magazine #8, Page 47]

Triggered abilities that trigger on being declared are retroactively undone if the creature is removed from the block by False Orders or some other reason. This also applies to Ydwen Efreet's coin flip. [Aahz 08/18/97]

Triggered abilities which have already been resolved are not undone if a creature is retroactively removed from combat. [Aahz 09/09/97]

Triggered abilities that trigger on being declared which have not yet resolved are cancelled if the creature is removed from the attack by False Orders or some other effect which retroactively removes the creature from combat. This also applies to Ydwen Efreet's coin flip

because the Efreeth retroactively removes itself from the combat.
[Aahz 08/18/97]

For some other important rulings on blocking, see the "Blocking" entry.

1.7 Fast Effects after Blocking

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Attack Phase - Step 4: Fast Effects after Blocking

You are not limited to a single stack of spells and effects.
[Mirage Page 51]

This is the ideal time for the attacker to surprise the defender by using fast effects to make the creatures more powerful. Howl from Beyond, Berserk, and built in creature abilities are good examples.

Any "if is not blocked" abilities of creatures are declared and resolved at this time. [Duelist Magazine #5, Page 36] See the Is Not Blocked entry for more information.

Remove from the combat any attackers and defenders which were killed (even if they regenerated).

Remember that killing or otherwise removing the blockers from an attacking creature does not unblock the attacking creature. [Mirage Page 51]

This is the last chance to use fast effects before the main phase resumes after the end of combat. [Mirage Page 51]

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Attack Phase - Step 5 6: First Strike and non-First Strike Damage Dealing

In Step 5, all creatures with First Strike deal damage simultaneously. In Step 6, all creatures without First Strike deal damage simultaneously. Otherwise, the two steps follow the same rules. [Mirage Page 51]

At the start of Step 5, creatures are divided up depending on whether or not they have First Strike. This determines if the creatures deal damage in Step 5 or Step 6. It also means that if a creature gains or loses

First Strike during these steps, it does not change which step the creature actually deals damage in. [Duelist Magazine #18, Page 28]

If the order of assignment makes a difference, the current player assigns damage first.

Unblocked attackers deal damage to the defending player. Blocked attackers deal damage to their blockers (if any). [Mirage Page 51] If a Trampling attacker has no blocker that can legally take the attacker's damage, then the damage is directly dealt to the player. [Aahz 05/23/95]

Blocking creatures deal damage to the attacker(s) they blocked only if they are still untapped at this time. [Mirage Page 51]

There is one damage prevention at the end of each step, followed by putting dead creatures into the graveyard. [Mirage Page 52]

If more than one blocker is declared for an attacker, the attacking player decides how the attacker's damage is divided among the blockers. If one of the blockers has Banding, then the defending player decides. (See the Banding entry for more information)

If more than one attacker is blocked by a single blocker, the defending player decides how the blocker's damage is divided among the attackers. If the attackers are part of a Band, then the attacking player decides. (See the Banding entry for more information)

Each member of a Band of attackers is a separate source of damage. Also, Banding does not make the attackers or blockers act like one creature or share abilities. Banding just allows a group to be blocked or let through as a whole, and for the ability to distribute damage. [bethmo]

1.9 End of Combat

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Attack Phase – Step 7: End of Combat

Deal with all effects that happen "at end of combat". Follow the normal rules for "end of phase" effects.

Any mana in mana pool after dealing with "at end of combat" effects causes mana burn. [Mirage Page 52]

Check for player death before returning to the main phase. [Mirage Page 52]

1.10 Other Attack Phase Rulings

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Attack Phase - Other Attack Phase Rulings

Creatures involved in combat are either "attacking creatures" or "blocking creatures", and during the attack is the only time when spells which target such creatures can be played. [Mirage Page 49]

Creatures which are removed from combat stop being an attacking or blocking creature. They do not untap. They will not deal or receive combat damage later in the combat. [Mirage Page 49]

A creature which regenerates is removed from combat. [Mirage Page 49]

A creature which stops being a creature is removed from combat. [Mirage Page 49] If it becomes a creature again, it does not rejoin the combat. [D'Angelo 10/01/96]

A creature which changes controllers is removed from combat. It will not rejoin even if it switches back to its original controller. If the control change happened prior to declaration of blockers, it is possible for the creature to be declared as a blocker. [Aahz 03/09/95]

Tapping or untapping a creature does not remove the creature from combat. [Mirage Page 49]

The terms "combat damage" or "damage in combat" only apply to damage dealt by creatures during the damage dealing steps. Spells and effects which do damage during the attack phase are not considered "combat damage" or "damage in combat". [Mirage Page 48] Once damage is redirected, it stops being "combat damage" [WotC Rules Team 12/03/96]

If a creature is removed from the combat, all "at end of combat" effects that would affect that creature will still work. If the creature is retroactively removed from the combat, however, such "at end of combat" effects are removed. [Aahz 09/24/96] "Retroactive" only covers cases where it is as if the creature never attacked, such as with False Orders removing the creature from the attack.

If a creature gains or loses First Strike between damage dealing steps, it will not change when it deals damage. [WotC Rules Team 12/03/96]
