

MIDDLE-EARTH: THE BALROG™

This is an expansion set of over 100 cards for the Middle-earth Collectible Card Game. While it is fully compatible with both *Middle-earth: The Wizards* and *Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye*, *Middle-earth: The Balrog* focuses on a player using resources from *The Lidless Eye*.

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INTRODUCTION

The Balrog is supremely confident of his own immense personal power. After all, just like Sauron, he was one of Morgoth's chief lieutenants. The Balrog tends to rely on brute force and direct confrontation rather than more subtle approaches often used by Ringwraiths and Wizards. His goals are basic and simple: accumulate power and destroy his enemies. If he can do this, he can become a dominant power in Middle-earth, a factor to which both the Dark Lord and the Free Peoples will be forced react.

Note: *Middle-earth: The Balrog* introduces a new classification of creatures called "Spawn". These monstrous creatures were created by Morgoth or other fallen spirits. Like the Balrog, a few Spawn survived the War of the Wrath and hid deep underground.

A BALROG PLAYER

A Balrog player acts as a Ringwraith player. Any card and rules text applying to a Ringwraith also applies to The Balrog (e.g., if a card refers to a Ringwraith, it now applies to "a Ringwraith or The Balrog").

However, instead of using the special rules listed on page 59 of the MELE rules (or wherever else these rules may appear), a Balrog player uses the following special rules:

- Any ring in The Balrog's company at the beginning of the end-of-turn phase is automatically tested. Any ring test in The Balrog's company has a modification of -2.
- The Balrog may carry items (including rings) but may not use them (i.e., an item has no effect on The Balrog's company or on his attributes and abilities).
- The Balrog never makes corruption checks and corruption cards may not be played on The Balrog.
- Normally, The Balrog may not use starter and region movement (as stated on his card). However, the play of certain resources can expand his movement capabilities.
- The Balrog's company is always overt.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

As a Balrog player, you may win in the same way a MELE Ringwraith wins: your opponent is eliminated or you recover *The One Ring* or you have the most marshalling points at the Audience with Sauron. The following exceptions apply:

- In order to win by recovering The One Ring, at least one *Challenge the Power* card must be played and the conditions outlined on that card must be met.
- The Audience with Sauron is handled normally, and victory is determined in the standard way by comparing marshalling points. However, to you (The Balrog) it is called your Day of Decision and your marshalling points reflect how far you have progressed towards taking your true place in Middle-earth. You must play *Sudden Call* to call your Day of Decision.

GETTING READY TO PLAY

A Balrog player prepares for play just as a Ringwraith player does, with the following exceptions:

Declaring that You are a Balrog Player

If you include The Balrog card (the character card with the special reddish background) in your deck or sideboard, you are a "Balrog player". In this case, you must tell your opponent before choosing starting companies.

Note: You and your opponent may both be Balrog players, but winner will probably be the first player to get his Balrog into play.

Your Location Deck and Sites

Your location deck may include one copy of each of the minion site cards with the following exceptions: Instead of the normal minion site cards use the Balrog-specific site cards for:

- *Moria, Carn Dûm, Dol Guldur, Minas Morgul*
- All Under-deeps site cards
- All Dark-holds (*Barad-dûr, Cirith Ungol, Cirith Gorgor*)
- Since they are your only Darkhavens, *The Under-gates* and *Moria* are the only site cards that you may include multiple copies of in your location deck.
- *Geann a-Lisch* is a Ruins & Lairs with no Darkhaven effects.

Your Starting Company, Play Deck, and Sideboard

Your starting company and play deck (and your sideboard) may be constructed like any other Ringwraith's-with the following exceptions:

- “Balrog specific” cards may be included. Such cards may only be included in a Balrog player’s deck. “Balrog specific” cards do not require that The Balrog be in play, only that you are a Balrog player.
- Only Orc and Troll minion characters can be included.
- Only Orc, Troll, Dragon, Wolf, and Animal factions may be included.
- Unless they are “Balrog specific” characters, only minion characters with a mind less than 9 can be included.
- Agents count as hazards, not as characters.
- A Balrog player may not include any of the following cards: *Above the Abyss, The Lidless Eye, Bade to Rule , Morgul-blade, The Balrog (Ally), News of the Shire, The Black Council, Open to the Summons, Black Horse, Orders From Lugbúrz, Black Rider, Padding Feet, By the Ringwraith’s Word, The Ring Leaves its Mark, Creature of an Older World, Ringwraith cards, Fell Rider, Sauron, The Fiery Blade, They Ride Together, Helm of Fear, Use Your Legs, Heralded Lord, While the Yellow Face Sleeps, Durin’s Bane, Balrog of Moria, Kill All But NOT the Halflings*

Starting Site

You may have up to two starting companies-they may begin play at *Moria* and/or *The Under-gates*.

Characters and Companies

- The Balrog must come into play at *The Under-gates* (i.e., he may not come into play at *Moria*).
- Characters with a home site of “Any Dark-hold” have a home site of “Any non-Dark-hold Under-deeps site” instead.
- During his organization phase, a Balrog player may bring into play (and/or remove from play) up to two characters-one of these characters must be non-unique. The normal requirements for bringing into play (or removing from play) a character must still be met.
- When a Balrog player brings into play a non-unique character with a mind of 3 or less, that character may come from his hand, his discard pile, or his sideboard.
- Agents may not be played as characters.

MOVEMENT

There are three types of movement in MECCG: starter movement, region movement, and Under-deeps movement.

- Balrog companies can never use starter movement.
- When one of your Balrog companies moves to a site, you and your opponent draw cards based upon the site being moved to. This applies even if moving to one of your Darkhavens.

MISCELLANEOUS

- If you are a Balrog player, your opponent may not play any of the following cards: *The Balrog (Ally)*, *The Black Council*, *Durin's Bane*, *Balrog of Moria*, *Reluctant Final Parting*. However, if at any time your opponent has one of these cards in his hand, he may remove it from play and bring one card from his sideboard into his play deck.
- Rings are not automatically tested for a Balrog player at *Barad-dûr*.
- A Balrog player may not store anything at Barad-dûr.
- *Shelob*, *Spider of Mrlat*, and *Balrog of Moria* are Spawn.
- A non-Balrog player cannot use Balrog sites. However, for the purposes of playing certain hazards, a non-Balrog player's location deck may include one copy each of: *Ancient Deep-hold*, *The Wind-deeps*, *The Drowning Deeps*, *The Rusted-deeps*, and *Remains of Thangorodrim* (i.e., the Balrog sites for which there is no corresponding hero or minion site).
- If The Balrog is in play or has been defeated, ignore all Balrog automatic-attacks (i.e., at *The Under-gates*).

CLARIFICATIONS

Defeating a Permanent-event

Certain hazard permanent-events indicate that they give "kill" marshalling points (e.g., Dragon "At Hunt" and "At Home" cards, the "Spawn" hazards from *Middle-Earth: The Balrog*, etc.). Each of these cards has an attack associated with it. If such an attack is defeated, treat the associated card as a defeated creature.

Placement of Cards Clarification

"Off to the side"

Certain cards and effects require other cards be placed "off to the side" (e.g., *Sack Over the Head*). Cards placed off to the side are placed on the playing surface, usually off to the side of the normal area of play. Such cards are kept with their host permanent-event that caused this effect. Any card placed off to the side absolutely cannot be targeted or otherwise affected by the game except by cards that specifically affect cards placed "off to the side."

Cards placed off to the side are in play for the purposes of uniqueness. Unless stated otherwise, when a host permanent-event is removed from the playing surface, any cards placed off to the side under it are discarded. Usually the host card will state some mechanic that affects the cards placed off to the side with it. Unless stated otherwise on its host card, a card placed off to the side will give its marshalling points to its owner. As a major exception, "taking prisoners" cards (primarily from *Middle-earth: Dark Minions*) yield negative marshalling points for characters taken prisoner.

Cards With Multiple Actions

If a card specifies that more than one action occurs when the card is itself resolved in a chain of effects, all of these actions are to be resolved in the card's chain of effects uninterrupted and in the order listed on the card. No actions may be declared to occur between these multiple actions. The actions listed on the card are considered to have been declared in the reverse order as they are printed. As an exception, in one of the effects of a card is an attack, cards may be played that cancel the attack, cancel one of the strikes, or that otherwise are playable during the strike sequence.

Discarding Cards

When a card leaves active play (discarded, eliminated, returned to owner's hand, etc.), discard all cards played on it.

TOURNAMENT RULES

- Spawn hazard permanent-events count as half a creature for the Council of Lórien 12-creature minimum.
- A Balrog player has an extra +5 general influence that cannot be used to control characters.

THE UNDER-DEEPS

Note: Created by streams of molten rock and expanded by geothermal eruptions of super-hot gas, the Under-deeps are a result of a combination of natural and supernatural forces. The hand of Morgoth joined what was once a collection of countless, sundered cavern complexes. His greater servants used this maze of tunnels and chambers to travel surreptitiously throughout Endor.

Although Endor changed during the Elder Days, the core of the Under-deeps survive. Though travel between the underground sites is now difficult, if not impossible, for all but the greatest (and luckiest) explorers. Blocked or twisting away from their original course, the Under-deeps seem broken. Junctions and strongholds seem lost. Many appear as simple caves or side passages, no longer resembling their past grandeur. Others lie hidden behind veils of rock. Nearly all are still there, though, awaiting discovery-as is their creator.

An Under-deeps site card has “Under-deeps” in the section that normally gives a site’s region, and its name contains “...-deeps” or “Under-...” An Under-deeps site is just like any other site with the following exceptions:

- Unlike other sites, each Under-deeps site is **not** considered to be in a region-instead it is located below another site, called the Under-deeps site’s *surface site*.
- Instead of a nearest Haven, each Under-deeps site lists all of its “Adjacent Sites.” Each Under-deeps site is adjacent to its one surface site and a number of other Under-deeps sites. The first adjacent site listed is always the Under-deeps site’s surface site.
- *Eagle-mounts* and *Gwaihir* cannot be used to move to or from an Under-deeps site.
- A company moving to and/or from an Under-deeps site has no site path. So, hazards may only be played keyed to the company’s new site.
- An environment card that changes site type (e.g., *Choking Shadows*, *Quiet Lands*, etc.) cannot be used to change the site type of an Under-deeps site.
- Unless you are a Balrog player, you may not consider marshalling points associated with a company at an Under-deeps site for the purposes of calling the Free Council or the Audience with Sauron.
- Normally, when you successfully play an item, faction, ally, or information at a site, the site card is tapped and one additional character may tap to play a minor item. At an Under-deeps site, you can play any item playable at the site instead of this minor item.

Example: Asternak taps and plays *High Helm* (a major item) at The Under-grottos and the site taps. At this point, Dorelas could only tap to play a minor item at a non-Under-deeps site. But The Under-grottos is an Under-deeps site, so Dorelas can tap to play anything playable at The Under-grottos: a minor item, a major item, or a gold ring. He taps and plays a *Gold Ring That Sauron Fancies*.

Under-deep Site Movement

One of your companies that begins its turn at the surface site of an Under-deeps site can move normally *or* it can move to its adjacent Under-deeps site (i.e., the company moves to an Under-deeps site from its surface site). One of your companies that begins its turn at an Under-deeps site may only move to one of the adjacent sites listed on the Under-deeps site card.

Each adjacent site is followed by a number in parentheses-this number indicates how difficult it is to move from the Under-deeps site to the adjacent site. When an adjacent site is revealed by one of your companies whose site of origin is an Under-deeps site, you must make a roll (2D6). If the result is greater than or equal to the number in parentheses following the adjacent site as listed on its site of origin, the movement/hazard phase proceeds normally. Otherwise, the company returns to its site of origin (no cards are drawn)and the movement/hazard phase proceeds as if the company had not moved.

Note: A company moving from a surface site to its Under-deeps site does not need to make a roll. As an exception to this, a Balrog company moving between the Blue Mountain Dwarf-hold and the The Drowning-deeps (or between the Iron Hill Dwarf-hold and the The Rusted-deeps) must roll the number given on the Under-deeps site, which is normally 13 and impossible to roll.

Note: Movement between an Under-deeps site and its surface site is not affected by modifications that affect movement between two Under-deeps sites.

Example: A Balrog company that starts at Carn Dûm can move normally or it can move to The Iron-deeps-The Iron-deeps lists Carn Dûm as an adjacent site. Similarly, a minion company that starts at The Iron-deeps may attempt to move to any adjacent site listed: Carn Dûm (0), The Under-leas (6), or The Under-vaults (7). However, after committing to movement, the moving player must roll a 6 or better to successfully move to The Under-leas or a 7 or better to successfully move to The Under-vaults.

Example: A company is moving from The Under-grottos to Goblin-gate with Long Winter in play. Long Winter's effect of returning a company to the site of origin has no effect, since it depends on the company's site path, and the company has no site path. Long Winter's effect of tapping a site will work, since that effect depends on the site's site path, which still exists. Finally, creatures can only be played keyed to the Shadow-hold of Goblin-gate.

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