



Official Tournament Guidelines

Version 1.1

October 25, 2005

Introduction

Welcome to *The Nightmare Before Christmas* TCG Tournament Program! NECA is proud to sponsor events geared toward the enjoyment of its games, and to help players and retailers forge the future of this exciting new TCG.

This document presents the first phase of NECA's new Tournament Program, which is designed to evolve according to the needs of the tournament community. During this first phase, NECA is introducing two types of tournaments: **Sealed Deck Tournaments** and **Constructed Deck Tournaments**. **Beginner Tournaments** are a type of Sealed Deck Tournament designed to teach new players how to play the game. Both of these tournament types are designed for 2-player face-to-face matches. Future tournament types will include **Draft Tournaments** and **Multiplayer Formats**. We will also be creating lots of unusual formats from time to time to keep the tournament environment fresh and exciting. In fact, if players have any ideas for unique tournament formats of their own, they should feel free to share them on our Haunted Forums so that other players can try them as well!

Beginner Tournaments

Beginner Tournaments are suitable for 4 or more players. These are unrated tournaments that are designed to teach new players how to play the game, and to help experienced players find friends to play the game with. In a Beginner Tournament, each player purchases one random Starter Deck from the retail store hosting the event (or from the person running the event if played at a convention or gaming club), and then plays in several rounds to determine an overall winner.

Each Beginner Tournament begins with a "learning phase" where the Tournament Director instructs the players on how to play the game and then answers general rules questions. The Tournament Director will then be available to answer rules questions throughout the tournament.

Constructed Deck Tournaments

Constructed Deck Tournaments allow players to bring their own constructed decks and compete for prizes and ratings. Constructed Deck Tournaments require 4 or more players. Each player constructs a deck prior to the tournament according to the Deck Construction rules available in the latest version of the Rulebook, or as prescribed by the particular tournament format. The players then compete to determine an overall winner. The Tournament Director is on hand to see the process forward, to answer rules questions, and to resolve any issues that may arise during the course of the tournament.

Tournament Directors

Each tournament must be run by a **Tournament Director** (TD). The TD may be a store employee, or a volunteer who enjoys the game and wishes to promote it at one or more retail venues. TD's must be well versed in the latest version of the Rulebook, as well as the most recent FAQ document (both of these can be downloaded at NECA's website at <http://www.necaonline.com/nbctcg/index.html>). The TD facilitates the event and makes sure everything is set up and runs smoothly. TD's also answer rules questions and provide rulings in cases where players do not agree on the interpretation of the rules. In this case, the TD's ruling is final. TD's who run successful tournaments will be rewarded periodically with free product and other prizes from NECA.

TD's are allowed to play in the tournaments they run as long as there are 16 or fewer players in the tournament. If they do so, they must assign two Assistant TD's (if possible) before the tournament begins to resolve any rules issues that may arise in a match that the TD is playing in.

Tournament Preparation

Tournament Directors are required to post any official tournaments at NECA's website at least 10 days prior to the event. This is especially important if the tournament is to be rated, or if there are prizes awarded from NECA. TD's who wish to schedule weekly events are encouraged to do so, and are welcome to post several tournaments at the same time. Tournament Directors must send an email to NECA's Game Director, Paul Gerardi, or to the webmaster of NECA's *Nightmare Before Christmas* TCG website to register their tournaments. For now, the default email address is **webmaster@njkingdom.com** (although this will likely change within the next few weeks).

Once a tournament is registered, NECA will send materials to the Tournament Director including the latest version of the Tournament Guidelines, a poster to advertise the tournament, and Player Score Cards. These materials are also available for download at NECA's website. NECA will also send prize support based upon its current tournament programs (see NECA's website for more details).

Once the materials are received, the TD should immediately display the poster at the store where the tournament is being held to advertise the event. The TD should then send an email to all past attendees of his or her events to let them know about the upcoming tournament.

The TD should bring all other materials to the tournament itself, and arrive at least 30 minutes early. The TD should bring extra pencils for players to fill out their Score Cards, and a digital stop watch to keep track of time during each Round.

Tournament Set-up

Each player fills out a Score Card and hands it to the Tournament Director prior to the start of the Tournament. TD's should encourage players to include their email addresses so that they can be contacted for future tournaments and special events.

The TD should outline the rules of the tournament if there are first-time tournament participants, and spend a few minutes fielding rules questions prior to the tournament beginning. Afterwards, the TD should shuffle up the Score Cards and randomly create pairings for the first round (see below).

Tournament Structure

Nightmare Before Christmas TCG tournaments can be played in many different formats, including Swiss, Single Elimination, Double Elimination, and Swiss paired down to 8 players who then compete in Single Elimination. NECA will define ways to play each of these different formats over the course of the next several weeks. In the meantime, for the early Beginner Tournaments being held in Fall 2005, feel free to use a "pure Swiss" format like the one described below.

Swiss Format

A Swiss pairing system can be used so that all players can participate in every round of the tournament (except for the final round in special events). The TD should announce the total number of rounds prior to the tournament beginning. Most pure Swiss tournaments run from 3 - 6 rounds.

Round One: During the first Round, the TD randomly pairs individual players together by shuffling the Score Cards and placing them down two at a time where the players should sit facing each other during the first match. If there is an odd number of players, then the last player is assigned a Bye; that player does not participate in the first Round, but receives a Tournament Score of 3 for that Round (see *Scoring the Round* below). The TD writes the name of each player's opponent on that player's Score Card on the line for Round One. Thus, if a player named "Jack" is playing against a player named "Sally" in Round One, then the TD writes Sally's name on the "Round 1" line of Jack's Score Card, and writes Jack's name on the "Round 1" line of Sally's Score Card.

Starting the Round: Once the players are seated and have their decks ready, each pair should randomly determine who their game's first Pumpkin King will be. Once the players have decided this, the Round begins. Each Round has a time limit of 45 minutes. The TD should give the players periodic warnings to let them know that time is nearly up. If time runs out, then the players complete the current Day (allowing the player who is not the current Pumpkin King to complete his or her turn during that Day), and then score the game as normal.

Scoring the Round: At the end of the Round, each player receives a Tournament Score based upon his or her success in the Round. Both players should initial their opponents' Score Cards in order to verify their accuracy. As per the Rulebook, the player with the higher Scare Total in each match is declared the game's winner. If there is a tie for the highest Scare Total in any game, use the tie-breakers outlined in the Rulebook (i.e., most Active Locales, then highest Scare Thresholds on Active Locales). If there is still a tie after using both tie-breakers, then the players are each assigned a "Tie" for that Round.

Each player receives a **Tournament Score** as detailed below based upon their success in the Round.

Win: 3 points
Bye: 3 points
Tie: 1 point
Loss: 0 points

Note that players whose games run out of time score their games in the same manner as the other players.

In addition to their Tournament Scores, each player who *wins* a game receives a separate **Scare Bonus** equal to the difference between the two players' Scare Totals during that match (with a maximum Scare Bonus of 10 per player per match). Thus, if Sally ends the game with a Scare Total of 40, and Jack ends the game with a Scare Total of 35, then Sally receives a Scare Bonus of 5. This Scare Bonus is *not* added to the player's Tournament Score, but is recorded separately on the Score Card to help distinguish players who have the same Tournament Score.

NOTE: Players who receive a Bye, a Tie, or a Loss do *not* receive a Scare Bonus. Please note as well that players who receive a Loss do *not* receive a negative Scare Bonus.

Subsequent Rounds: The TD begins each subsequent Round by pairing players together based on their success in the tournament so far. First, the Score Cards are sorted by their Tournament Scores, and stacked from highest to lowest. Next, players with the same Tournament Score are sorted by their Scare Bonuses, and stacked from highest to lowest within the same group of Tournament Scores. Finally, players with the same Tournament Score *and* the same Scare Bonus are sorted randomly within the same group of those who share that Tournament Score and Scare Bonus.

Once the stack of Score Cards has been arranged from highest to lowest in this manner, the TD places the Score Cards onto the tables two at a time (starting at the top of the stack) to set up the matches for that Round. Each player's opponent's name is then recorded on the appropriate space for that Round on the Score Cards. If there is an odd number of players, then the player at the bottom of the stack (i.e., the player who, among those with the lowest Tournament Score, also has the lowest Scare Bonus) receives the Bye for that Round. No player ever receives the Bye more than once during the same tournament. If the chosen player has already received a Bye, then assign the Bye to the next highest player in the Stack who has not yet received a Bye.

When matching up players, if two players have already faced each other during the tournament, the TD takes the next Score Card from the remaining stack to compete against the higher of the two players. If this new player has also played against the higher of the original two players, then the TD continues to draw Score Cards until a player is found who has not yet played against the higher of the original two players. Once a player is matched against the higher of the original two players, the other Score Cards are returned to the stack in their original order, and the next match is determined. If no other players remain in the stack who have not played against the higher of the original two players, then the original two players must play against each other again. Note that this process only goes through the remaining Score Cards (i.e., those with a lower Score). The higher Score Cards are not affected by this process. Thus, if the last two players in the Stack have already faced each other, they must simply play against each other again.

Scoring Subsequent Rounds: When Scoring subsequent Rounds, each player's Tournament Score is added to his or her previous Tournament Score, and each player's Scare Bonus is added to his or her previous Scare Bonus. Therefore, a player who wins his first two games has a total Tournament Score of 6 (3 points for each Round). If the player received a Scare Bonus of 5 for the first Round, and a Scare Bonus of 8 for the second Round, then that player's total Scare Bonus is now 13. Note that players' Tournament Scores are *never* added to the players' Scare Bonuses, or vice versa.

Winning the Swiss Tournament: At the end of the prescribed number of Rounds, the player with the highest Tournament Score wins the tournament. If there is a tie, then the player (among those tied) with the highest Scare Bonus wins the tournament. If there is still a tie, then those players can opt to play a Final Round to determine the winner, or to split the prizes which are available.

Prize Support

The TD distributes the available prize support among the players based on how well they did during the tournament. Where possible, it is advisable to make sure each player receives a prize for participating in the event.

Submitting the Tournament Results

After the Tournament, the TD mails the Score Cards to NECA at the address below. TD's are encouraged to make photocopies of the Score Cards for their own records before mailing them to NECA.

NECA
603 Sweetland Ave.
Hillside, NJ 07205
Att: Paul Gerardi

NECA will also have a form-based Tournament Report added to its website in the near future. This will allow TD's to retain the original Score Cards and post the results online for ratings updates. Please note that NECA's Ratings System will not commence until December 2005.

Tournament Etiquette

TD's who notice that a card has been misplayed, or who notice that a particular mandatory card effect was not enforced during a game, are permitted and encouraged to correct the discrepancy, as long as the TD corrects the incident immediately. Note that this is for mandatory card effects only. TD's are not permitted to coach a player to perform or receive the benefits of an optional card effect during the game.

TD's are also able to reverse a play if called over to a table to settle a dispute, as long as the TD is called over immediately. Other players or bystanders are *not* permitted to speak to players participating in a game under any circumstances.

When playing a game, a player is allowed to reverse the last action which he performed, as long as 1) the action did not involve drawing cards from any player's Main Deck; 2) the action did not reveal information which would otherwise have remained hidden (such as the use of *Mr. Hyde* or *Mystic Cauldron*); and 3) no player has taken an action after the original action was performed.

Future Tournament Programs

NECA plans to launch its full Tournament Program in December, with alternate formats for running events, a Ratings system for players, and exclusive *Nightmare Before Christmas* TCG cards given out to players who participate in tournaments and demonstrations. Stay tuned to our website for more details about these upcoming programs!

For more information, please contact us at (732) 560-3689 or by email at webmaster@njkingdom.com