

Two-Headed Giant FAQ

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What is the Two-Headed Giant format?

Two-Headed Giant is a sanctioned, competitive format in which two teams of two players each play against one another in a single game.

How do teams sit at the table?

Each team sits together on one side of the table. Each team decides the order in which its players sit. The player seated on the right within each team is the primary player, and the player seated on the left is the secondary player.

How much life does each team start with?

Each team has a shared life total, which starts at 30 life.

How do poison counters work in Two-Headed Giant?

Poison counters are also shared within a team. If a team has 15 or more poison counters, that team loses the game.

What resources do players on a team share?

With the exception of life total and poison counters, a team's resources (cards in hand, mana, and so on) are not shared.

When a card says "you," does that refer only to the player controlling that card, or does it affect the whole team?

Any card that says "you" only refers to its controller.

Example: Angie controls two 1/1 Goblin tokens and casts a Glorious Anthem. Her teammate Barry controls a 1/1 Saproling token. When Glorious Anthem enters the battlefield, Angie's tokens will become 2/2s, but Barry's token will stay 1/1.

Can players look at each others' hands or discuss strategy during a game?

Yes. Teammates may freely review each others' hands and discuss strategy during games as long as such discussions do not slow the game down. However, teammates cannot touch or manipulate each others' cards or permanents.

If a player can legally look at cards in a hidden zone, like my library or an opponent's hand, can that player show those cards to his or her teammate?

Yes. Teammates can look at any cards that a member of the team is entitled to see.

What sorts of communication can players use to discuss strategy?

Any type of communication is acceptable with the exception of written communication. This is because written communication is difficult to distinguish from notes taken outside of the match, which are not legal under the **Magic** Tournament Rules.

How do turns work in Two-Headed Giant? Does each player take his or her own turn?

No. Instead, each team takes its own turn, and both players on the team go through the parts of the turn simultaneously. Steps and phases are shared between teammates.

How do effects that trigger at the beginning of a step or phase work in Two-Headed Giant?

Effects that trigger “at the beginning of [each/your]” step or phase will trigger once during that step or phase. Effects that trigger “at the beginning of each [player's/opponent's]” step or phase will trigger twice at the beginning of that step or phase – once for each player on the team.

Example: Verdant Force reads “At the beginning of each upkeep, put a 1/1 green Saproling creature token onto the battlefield.” Since Verdant Force says “each upkeep,” the team will receive 1 Saproling token during their upkeep and 1 Saproling token during the opposing team’s upkeep.

Example: Luminarch Ascension reads “At the beginning of each opponent's end step, if you didn't lose life this turn, you may put a quest counter on Luminarch Ascension.” Since Luminarch Ascension says “each opponent's end step,” it will trigger once for each player on the opposing team during their end step, allowing its controller to put up to two quest counters on it.

How does priority work?

Teams have priority, not individual players. Players can only cast spells, activate abilities, or take special actions when their team has priority. If both players on a team want to take an action at the same time, the primary player decides in which order the team’s actions are taken.

What happens if both teams need to make choices, take actions, or put triggers on the stack at the same time?

The Active Player, Non-active Player order rule normally used to govern such situations (Comprehensive Rules part 101.4) is modified for Two-Headed Giant play. The team whose turn it is the active team. The other team is the nonactive team. If both teams would make choices and/or take actions at the same time, first the active team makes any choices required, and then the nonactive team makes any choices required. Then the actions happen simultaneously. If both teams have triggered abilities that need to be put on the stack, the members of the active team put all triggered abilities any of them controls on the stack in any order they choose, then the members of each nonactive team in turn order do the same.

How does priority pass to the other team?

It works just like it does in a regular one-on-one game, except that teams, rather than players, pass priority back and forth. If neither player on a team wishes to do anything, that team passes. If both teams pass in succession (that is, if both teams pass without any player taking any actions in between passing), the top object on the stack resolves, then the active team receives priority. If the stack is empty when both teams pass in succession, the phase or step ends and the next one begins.

How do effects that give one of the players another turn, add a step or phase to a player's turn, or remove a step or phase from a player's turn work?

If an effect gives a player an extra turn or adds a phase or a step to that player’s turn, that player’s team takes the extra turn, phase, or step. If an effect causes a player to skip a step, phase, or turn, that player’s team does so.

How do effects that give one player control of another player work?

If an effect causes a player to control another player, the controller of that effect controls the affected

player's team.

How does combat work?

Each team's creatures attack the other team as a group. During the combat phase, the active team is the attacking team and each player on the active team is an attacking player. Likewise, the nonactive team is the defending team and each player on the nonactive team is a defending player. Some effects will refer to a single defending player; in such a case, the player controlling the effect chooses which player the effect will refer to.

Example: Alan is attacking with a Thraximundar, which says "Whenever Thraximundar attacks, defending player sacrifices a creature." When the triggered ability of Thraximundar resolves, Alan must choose a player on the defending team. The player he chooses will sacrifice a creature.

How does the "declare attackers" step work?

As the declare attackers step begins, the active team declares attackers. If a creature is unable to attack one of the defending players, that creature can't attack the defending team. The active team has one combined attack, and that set of attacking creatures must be legal as a whole.

Example: Erica controls Teferi's Moat, which says "As Teferi's Moat comes into play, choose a color. Creatures of the chosen color without flying can't attack you." Creatures of the chosen color without flying can't attack Erica's team.

How does the "declare blockers" step work?

As the declare blockers step begins, the defending team declares blockers. Creatures controlled by the defending players can block any attacking creatures. The defending team has one combined block, and that set of blocking creatures must be legal as a whole. Once blockers have been declared, for each attacking creature that's become blocked by multiple creatures, the active team announces the damage assignment order among the blocking creatures. Then, for each creature that's blocking multiple creatures, the defending team announces the damage assignment order among the attacking creatures.

Example: If an attacking creature has forestwalk and either player on the defending team controls a Forest, the creature can't be blocked.

How is combat damage assigned?

As the combat damage step begins, the active team announces how each attacking creature will assign its combat damage. If an attacking creature would assign combat damage to the defending team, the active team chooses only one of the defending players for that creature to assign its combat damage to. Then the defending team announces how each blocking creature will assign its combat damage.

Does a team lose when their life total reaches 0?

Yes. If a team's life total is 0 or less, the team loses the game the next time a team would receive priority.

If player on a team loses, does the other player keep playing?

No. Players win and lose the game only as a team, not as individuals. If either player on a team loses the game, the team loses the game. If either player on a team wins the game, the entire team wins the game. If an effect would prevent a player from winning the game, that player's team can't win the game. If an effect would prevent a player from losing the game, that player's team can't lose the game.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player controls Transcendence, which reads, in part, “You don’t lose the game for having 0 or less life.” If that player’s team’s life total is 0 or less, that team doesn’t lose the game.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player attempts to draw a card while there are no cards in that player’s library. That player loses the game, so that player’s entire team loses the game.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player controls Platinum Angel, which reads, “You can’t lose the game and your opponents can’t win the game.” Neither that player nor his or her teammate can lose the game while Platinum Angel is in play, and neither player on the opposing team can win the game.

If a player on a team concedes the game, can the other player keep playing?

No. If a player concedes, his or her team loses the game.

How does damage, loss of life, and gaining life work with the single life total for the team?

Damage, loss of life, and gaining life happens to each player individually. The result is applied to the team’s shared life total.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player plays Flame Rift, which reads, “Flame Rift deals 4 damage to each player.” Each team is dealt a total of 8 damage.

If an effect needs to know what a player’s life total is, what number do I use?

If an effect needs to know the value of an individual player’s life total, that effect uses the team’s life total.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a team is at 17 life when a player activates Heartless Hidetsugu’s ability, which reads, “Heartless Hidetsugu deals to each player damage equal to half that player’s life total, rounded down.” For the purposes of this ability, each player on that team is considered to be at 17 life. Heartless Hidetsugu deals 8 damage to each of those players, for a total of 16 damage. The team will end up at 1 life.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player controls Test of Endurance, an enchantment that reads, “At the beginning of your upkeep, if you have 50 or more life, you win the game.” If that player’s team has 50 or more life when the ability resolves, that team will win the game.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, a player controls Lurking Jackals, which reads, “When an opponent has 10 life or less, if Lurking Jackals is an enchantment, it becomes a 3/2 Hound creature.” If the opposing team has 10 life or less, Lurking Jackals will become a creature.

If an effect sets a single player’s life total to a number, what number do I set the team’s life total to?

If an effect would set a single player’s life total to a number, the player gains or loses the necessary amount of life to end up with the new total. The team’s life total is adjusted by the amount of life that player gained or lost.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, Maureen becomes the target of Magister Sphinx’s triggered ability. (Magister Sphinx says “When Magister Sphinx enters the battlefield, target player’s life total becomes 10.”) Maureen’s team’s life total is 25 before the ability resolves, so she loses 15 life, and the team ends up at 10 life.

If an effect sets a life total for each player on a team to a specific number, what number do I set the life total to?

If an effect would set the life total of each player on a team to a number, that team chooses one of its members. On that team, only that player is affected.

Example: In a Two-Headed Giant game, Ronald plays Biorhythm, which reads, “Each player’s life total becomes the number of creatures he or she controls.” Ronald and his teammate, Edward, are at 13 life. Ronald controls no creatures, and Edward controls three creatures, so their team chooses Edward to be affected by Biorhythm. Edward loses 10 life, and his team ends up at 3.

In Two-Headed Giant tournaments, are matches 2 out of 3 games?

No. In order to win a Two-Headed Giant match, a team needs only to win one game. Because teammates can consult with each other on strategy and take their turns at the same time, games take longer than games in individual play.

What about games which end in a draw due to both teams losing simultaneously?

Drawn games (games without a winner) do not result in the end of the match. As long as match time allows, teams should continue to play games until a team has won a game.

How does the Play-Draw rule work Two-Headed Giant tournaments?

A team determined at random chooses either to play first or to play second. The choice must be made before either player on that team looks at his or her hand. If either player on the team looks at his or her hand before a choice is made, their team plays first. The team that plays first skips the draw step of its first turn.

What is the pre-game procedure for Two-Headed Giant tournaments?

Teams should do the following before playing:

1. Players should be seated with the primary player to the right of his or her teammate.
2. Players shuffle their decks.
3. Players present their decks to their opponents for additional shuffling and cutting.
4. Each player draws seven cards.
5. Each player, in turn order, decides whether to mulligan.

Once all mulligans are resolved, the game can begin.

How do mulligans work in Two-Headed Giant tournaments?

First, each player on the starting team, in whatever order that team likes, declares whether or not he or she will take a mulligan. Then the players on each other team in turn order do the same. Teammates may consult while making their decisions. Then all mulligans are taken at the same time. A player may take a mulligan even after his or her teammate has decided to keep his or her opening hand. The first mulligan each player takes is “free” - that is, each player’s first mulligan results in them drawing a new hand of 7 cards, rather than 6.

What happens when time runs out at the end of a match in Two-Headed Giant tournaments?

If the match time limit is reached before a winner is determined, the active team finishes its turn and three total additional turns are played. If neither team has won the game after the 3 extra turns, the game (and match) ends in a draw.

Example, time is called on Team Y’s turn. Team Y finishes its turn. Team Z takes extra turn #1, Team Y takes extra turn #2, and Team Z takes extra turn #3.

What formats are used in Two-Headed Giant tournaments?

Available formats for Two-Headed Giant Tournaments include Standard, Extended, Block, Modern, Vintage, Legacy, Sealed Deck, and Booster Draft.

In constructed Two-Headed Giant formats, how do teams construct their decks?

Each team member's deck must contain a minimum of sixty cards and follow the Unified Deck Construction Rules.

What are the Unified Deck Construction Rules?

With the exception of basic land cards, a team's combined decks may not contain more than four of any individual card, counted by its English card title. These rules only apply in Two-Headed Giant Constructed events.

Example: If one player is using four copies of the card Umezawa's Jitte in a Two-Headed Giant Constructed event, no other player on that team may have any copies of Umezawa's Jitte in his or her deck.

How are banned and/or restricted cards handled in Two-Headed Giant Tournaments?

Any card banned or restricted in a particular format is still banned or restricted in the Two-Headed Giant version of that format. If a card is restricted in a particular format, the team may use no more than one copy of that card. No players may use cards that are banned in a particular format.

In addition, there are cards that are only banned in Constructed Two-Headed Giant Tournaments. Refer to the **Magic** Tournament Rules for the list of these cards.

How are sideboards used in Two-Headed Giant Constructed Tournaments?

Two-Headed Giant Constructed tournaments do not allow to sideboard, even after a drawn game.

In Two-Headed Giant Sealed Deck Tournaments, how many tournament packs and boosters does each team get to build decks?

It is recommended that each team receive eight booster packs. Every team must receive the same product mix. Specific recommended product mixes for the current sets can be found in the **Magic** Tournament Rules.

How do teams build decks in Two-Headed Giant Sealed Deck Tournaments?

Using the cards opened, each team must construct two decks that each contains at least 40 cards. There is no maximum deck size. Neither teams nor individuals are restricted to four of any one card in Two-Headed Giant Sealed Deck Tournaments.

How are sideboards used in Two-Headed Giant Limited Tournaments?

Two-Headed Giant Limited tournaments do not allow players to sideboard, even after a drawn game. Any cards not included in either player's deck during deck building are recorded as a single sideboard shared by both team members. Those cards are only accessible by cards or effects that refer to cards "outside the game."

Where can I find the comprehensive rules for Two-Headed Giant?

Magic: The Gathering rules that deal with Two-Headed Giant can be found in sections 805 and 810 of the Comprehensive Rules, which are accessible at

<http://www.wizards.com/Magic/TCG/Article.aspx?x=magic/rules>.

Where can I find the Magic Tournament Rules pertaining to Two-Headed Giant?

The Two-Headed Giant Tournament Rules are part of the **Magic** Tournament Rules and can be found in section 9 of that document, which is available at

http://www.wizards.com/wpn/Document.aspx?x=Magic_The_Gathering_Tournament_Rules