

## INTRODUCTION TO COMMANDER DUELING (1-on-1)

### The Format

Commander (also known as Elder Dragon Highlander or EDH) is the fastest-growing format in Magic, and among the most popular. In its original form, Commander is a multiplayer format. What, then, is the purpose of 1-on-1 play? Multiplayer Commander is universally acknowledged to be a “casual” format where an emphasis is placed on fun and social interactions. Dueling gives players an outlet for competitive play while preserving the unique deckbuilding elements of Commander (namely the 100-card singleton format, and the commander itself). Since dueling lacks the social and political elements which are integral to multiplayer Commander, the rules must be adjusted to ensure competitive balance in a two-player environment.

### Adjusted Rules for Life Total, Mulligans, and Sideboard

Matches are a standard two-games-out-of-three format. In 1-on-1 Commander, each player’s starting life total is 30 instead of 40. This helps to preserve the viability of aggro decks when one doesn’t have two other players to whittle down opponents’ life totals. 1-on-1 Commander also does not allow for a “free” mulligan (a first mull to seven), nor is the unique mulligan style outlined in the official Commander rules allowed (selectively removing cards in hand from the game and then drawing that many minus one); mulligans work the same way as they would in any other two-player constructed format. 1-on-1 Commander does not allow the “Optional Sideboard Rule.” Instead, each player may use a pre-constructed 10-card sideboard, which may be accessed before the second and (if necessary) third games of each match.

### Banned Cards

In addition to all cards on the official Commander banned list (found at <http://www.dragonhighlander.net/rules.php>), the following cards are banned for 1-on-1 play:

- Back to Basics
- Bitterblossom
- Crucible of Worlds
- Hermit Druid
- Imperial Seal
- Intuition
- Mana Crypt
- Mana Drain

- Mana Vault
- Mindslaver
- Mind Twist
- Mishra's Workshop
- Necropotence
- Sensei's Divining Top
- Serra Ascendant
- Shahrazad
- Sol Ring
- Strip Mine
- The Tabernacle at Pendrell Vale
- Vampiric Tutor

- Please note that, although they are not listed, all ante cards and manual dexterity cards are banned.

### A Few Things to Remember

In two-player Commander, it is important to make choices in deckbuilding and in play that reflect the lack of a multiplayer environment.

- Interaction with the opponent in early turns is essential to success. Cards like Thoughtseize, almost useless in a four-player game, are all-stars in a two-player game. In a four-player game, it's often fine to ignore your mana curve and just play more expensive bomb-y cards. This strategy is a death sentence in 1-on-1 play.
- The banned list tends to encourage exploiting the natural strengths of colours (for example, without Mana Crypt, Sol Ring, and Mana Vault, Green's mana acceleration is much more valuable).
- Redundancy is more important, as you will generally have fewer turns to find your important cards, and will have much more pressure put on you by your opponent.
- Single-target removal spells are much more important. At the same time, packing your deck with wrath effects is not necessarily as effective in 1-on-1 play.
- Counter magic is more effective. Even a card like Mana Leak, which would be laughed off the table in a multiplayer game, is often an excellent inclusion in a 1-on-1 deck.