

DGS TOURNAMENT RULES v1-4

5 May 2025

(Changes from previous versions will be in magenta)

These guidelines apply to the organization and execution of a Freeblades Tournament.

Types of Tournaments.

Relaxed. Run by anyone, any format, relaxed Freeband rules. Does not produce a Freeblades Champion Challenge Coin. Does not need to abide by the rules below for leader roles or have a DGS Quester involved.

Quester. A DGS Quester or person granted equivalent privileges by DGS is present in some role and either acts as or arranges for the Tournament Organizer. Sanctioned.

Blademaster. A DGS Company Representative is present and acting as the TO and serves the same functions as a DGS Quester in the rules outlined below. Sanctioned.

Sanctioned. The tourney produces a Freeblades Champion Challenge Coin for the winner if it had at least 8 participants.

Participants.

- Leader Roles: Tournament Organizer, Tournament Judge, DGS Quester. One person may have more than one role, sometimes all three.

- Tournament Organizer: The TO announces the event, oversees event social media, recruits players, and arranges for resources: space, terrain, tables, prizes, etc. Arranges for a reserve player to help avoid bye rounds. Arranges for or acts as judge. The TO is the final authority on all tournament related decisions but may delegate final authority on rules decisions to the judge. The TO will make clear to the players each leader's role in the event.

- Tournament Judge: The TJ is knowledgeable on the rules of the game and of the tournament, answers player's rules questions and arbitrates situations the players cannot resolve.

- DGS Quester. Questers are DGS's ambassadors to our players and retail partners. They request and receive support resources from the company. They may serve as TO or TJ, both or neither. If they play, the expectation is that they may arrange for people with the requisite skills to serve in the TO and TJ roles.

- Leader participation. Under some circumstances, leaders may also be players. In a relaxed event, any leader may also be a player without restriction. In a Quester event, a leader may play at the TO's discretion but is not prize eligible and is not eligible to make any progression cut. In a Blademaster event, neither the TJ nor TO may play.

- Non-leader roles: Player, Spectator.

- A Player is a registered tournament participant who plays in the tournament and is eligible for any prizes awarded.

- A Spectator is anyone not a tournament leader or player who is observing the tournament. Spectators must not involve themselves in a game, disturb the players or provide any input or assistance to players. If a spectator believes they have witnessed a game or tournament rules issue they may bring it to the attention of a tournament leader. Players are treated as spectators with respect to games in which they are not involved.

Conduct.

- All participants are expected to always act in a respectful and gracious manner. The TO, at his or her sole discretion, may remove players or spectators from the tournament for unsporting or disruptive conduct. Examples are, but not limited to stalling a game for time, disruptive outbursts, inappropriate behavior, treating an opponent with a lack of courtesy or respect, cheating, and collusion among players to manipulate scoring.

Tournament Format

- DGS Tournaments use “Swiss rounds.” This means that after the first round, players are paired according to their current tournament ranking and everyone plays every round. In larger events, the initial part of the tournament will employ Swiss rounds and then a “progression cut” will be made. This cut determines the top number of players who will continue to play a single elimination format until a single player remains. The intent is to allow for a one-day event so that players may enjoy other games and interests.

Number of Players	Swiss Rounds	Cut to
8-15	3	No cut
16-31	3	2
32-47	3	4
48-63	4	4
64+	4	8

- For example, if a tournament had 38 players, those players would play three Swiss rounds. At the conclusion of those rounds, the TO would determine the top four ranked players. Those four players would continue to play single elimination until one player remained, in this case, two further rounds.

- End of round rules. The TO should give time remaining warnings every 30 min but must give one at the 10-minute remaining mark. After the 10-minute warning, no new turns will be started, and players will conclude any remaining unfinished games at the end of the turn in progress.

- Drops. If a player drops prior to a single elimination round, the TO may invite the next highest-ranking player to participate.

- Byes. If a bye round must be conducted, the player will be chosen randomly in the first round. In later rounds the lowest ranking player who has not received a bye will be chosen. **A Bye is worth a Minor Victory. In a single elimination round, if a bye is necessary, it will be granted to the highest ranked player.**

- Pairings. In the first Swiss round, the pairings will be random, but every effort will be made not to pair players from the same gaming groups. In subsequent rounds, pairings will be in player rank order.

In a single elimination round, players will be “seeded” according to rank. The highest-ranking player will play the lowest ranking player, the second highest the second lowest, etc. Every effort will be made to not have a player play on the same table twice.

- Single elimination. Games after any cut are single elimination and must end in a non-draw result. Players are responsible for bringing their game to a win-loss conclusion. If they do not, the TO will decide the outcome using these guidelines.

1. In a game where victory is based on accumulation of points or markers or the accomplishment of tasks, the player who is deemed by the TO to be closer to the scenario goal is the winner.

2. In a game where victory cannot be determined by partial accomplishment of the objective, the player who is closer to their break point is determined to have lost the game.

3. If none of the above produces a result, the TO may use any method they see fit, including playing an additional turn or turns with an increased break point.

- Rules Errors. DGS recognizes that no one ever plays a mistake free game and honest rules mistakes are made all the time. If a tournament judge observes a rules error in play, they will correct the mistake.

Tournament Ranking

- Tournament Ranking. Tournament ranking is determined by win-loss record. For this purpose, more wins is ranked higher than less wins. For records with the same number of wins, the record with the least losses is ranked higher. **For records with the same number of wins and losses the record with more Major Victories is ranked higher.** To break ties among players with the same win-loss record the following priority is used:

- **Head-to-head results.** If those players played each other, the winner is the higher ranked.

- **Opponent’s Tournament Points (Strength of Schedule, SoS).** Points are scored for the results of each scenario played. For a major win: 30 points, a minor win: 25, a draw: 1 and a loss: 0. The total of a player’s opponent’s tournament points serves as the second tiebreaker.

- **Victory Points.** Each scenario produces victory points or VP. Players’ total VP over all rounds played serves as the third tiebreaker.

- **TO discretion.** If after three tiebreakers, players are still tied, the TO may use any method they see fit to determine rankings.

Longshanks Tournament Software

-DGS uses Longshanks online software for tournament administration. The Freeblades game system is loaded there and the format and scoring methods listed above are already loaded for TO use.

freeblades.longshanks.org

List Submission

-TO's may require that players provide their freeband lists in advance. This will be in the tournament announcement. Longshanks has a function to permit easy list submission.

Freeband Values and Round Length.

- TOs determine the gold values and other restrictions on freeband choices. As a baseline, TOs should consider that experience has taught us that 200-275 gold freebands produce games that can easily be completed in a two-hour round. Games with 150 gold freebands can be completed in 90 minutes unless one of the players is very new to the game. Note that games of 251+ permit additional heroes and will have higher breakpoints, producing more draws if the time limit does not match.

- Based on the above, the following values and round lengths are recommended. Note that a TO will be the best judge of their local group's experience level and therefore whether more time per round might be needed or whether events should stick to lower point values until the experience level rises somewhat.

- 150-175 gold: 90 minutes.
- 200-275 gold: 120 minutes.
- 300-350 gold: 150 minutes.

Scenarios and Environment.

- The scenarios contained in the Freeblades Living Rulebook are all balanced for competitive play. Some, known as "club" scenarios, require additional resources over and above terrain and loot and objective markers (creature models, trial stones, etc.). It is recommended that most if not all scenarios for a tournament are selected from the standard scenario list. In the case where a club scenario is chosen, the TO is responsible for coordinating for any additional assets required.

- TOs may announce which scenarios will be played in advance or not at their discretion.

- We recommend that Light and Weather conditions, if used, be pre-established by round and scenario.

Model Rules.

- Proxies. Proxy models are non-DGS models being played to count as a DGS model.

- In Relaxed events, proxies are permitted at the organizer's discretion.

- In sanctioned events a proxy is permitted if:

1. It represents a model not yet available from DGS for which there are official rules.
2. It represents a model for which we make only one pose, and you have multiples of that model and at least one DGS model in your freeband. For example, you have two Haradelan Militia Spearmen in your freeband, one DGS model and one proxy.

3. Proxies comprise less than 1/3 of your freeband.
4. Any proxy is equipped in the same way as the DGS model it represents.

- The use of any proxy makes one ineligible for painting contests or any other contest involving a freeband containing a proxy model.

- Conversions. Conversions are permitted but the majority of the conversion must be DGS Games models. In addition, the result must be recognizable to the tournament organizer as to what it represents.

Prizes.

- How awarded. In a Relaxed event, prizes may be awarded in any way determined by the TO. In sanctioned events, the first-place winner will receive a Freeblades Challenge Coin. Other prizes may be awarded for as many places in the tournament as the TO wishes and resources are available. We don't think there should be too strict a guideline for prizes as every location and player group is different. But here are some ideas offered as suggestions.

- 1st – 3d place.

- Last place. We often have fun with this offering a dice set as clearly the set the awardee was using had failed them!

- Progression cut prizes. In larger events it can be fun to offer prizes to those players who make a certain cut, such as the top four or to eight.

- Everyone gets something. After place prizes are awarded, give everyone who participated something: a model, a special die, a game accessory, etc.

- Contests. It's often efficient to run contests such as best painted freeband, best terrain table, or best display board along with the event. Prizes can be awarded for these as well. At Blademaster events, DGS will award Master Crafter Coins for these contest winners. TOs can have the requirement that contest participants play in the tournament or not at their discretion. We note the latter often brings more participation. DGS publishes a set of contest rules for use in Blademaster events that TOs can use as a guideline.

- Raffles. All players like to play but not all players are competitive. For everyone to have a chance to walk away with something, TOs can hold raffles along with the tournament.

- Prize availability from DGS. DGS Questers can receive prize packs from DGS. As the events they run grow, prize support will grow with them.

Challenge Coins.

- A Freeblades Champion Challenge Coin is awarded to the winner of a sanctioned Freeblades tournament of 8 or more players. One coin possessed by a player may serve as a destiny stone in one game of a sanctioned tournament. The player possessing the most coins in a sanctioned tournament may use two as destiny stones.

Founder's Coins.

- The twelve players who participated in the very first ever Freeblades tournament were awarded Founder's Coins as a thank you for their support. A Founder's Coin may be used once as a destiny stone in any one game of a sanctioned tournament. A player may employ both a Founder's Coin and a Challenge Coin in the same way in the same event, but not in the same game.

Master Crafter Coins (MCCs).

- In addition to being a symbol of achievement, having been awarded one or more MCCs entitles the awardee to the purchase of one gear item for one less gold cost in any game of Freeblades. This includes a tournament Freeband list. One gear item, no matter how many MCC's the player possesses.

Campaign-style Options.

- Freeblades possesses a strong campaign system and TOs may want to employ some aspect of the campaign rules as an option in their events. Here are some examples:

- Allow one model in each freeband to gain one random advance after each game.
- Have players track Adventure Points (AP) in each game and advance models accordingly after each game. This can be fun but can also be unbalancing. This option requires the TO to provide time between rounds for players to track advances.
- Allow players to retain magic items acquired in those scenarios that contain them.

DGS Online Tournaments

- A DGS Sanctioned Tournament may be played out online using Tabletop Simulator or similar platforms. These events must abide by standard DGS Tournament Rules and the following additional guidelines.

1. The TO will authorize a destiny stone for use once during the event for each player who provides proof that they own the physical DGS models for the freeband they are playing virtually.
2. DGS will provide a Challenge Coin for the winner given that all other requirements are met.
3. If the event is sponsored by a retail partner, a fee may be collected by the TO from each Player in an amount determined by the TO in partnership with the sponsor. Prize support will be provided by the sponsor in the form of DGS product or gift cards/vouchers/coupon codes for DGS product commensurate with the fees collected.
4. The TO is responsible for ensuring the game rules are capable of being followed by and supported in the online application.
5. Each Quester may run a maximum of one such event per quarter.
6. A DGS Online Tournament may be played out over several days at the TO's discretion.