

CZ0521: RULES COMMANDER PLAYERS GET WRONG

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CLAP AND SLATE

- 1) INTRO MURPH & Rachel

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We've all been at a Commander table where something happens and none of the players in the pod know how to resolve it. What usually happens is the players agree on a way they think it works, and go with that. While this is a perfectly acceptable solution, it isn't always correct. Today, we've brought in our resident rules expert Murph to talk about the rules Commander players often get wrong.

You're Magic players, you're going to buy...

****CARD KINGDOM** **ULTRAPRO #1** **PATREON: SAMANTHA BURBANK****

2) MAIN TOPIC: **RULES COMMANDER PLAYERS GET WRONG**

Commander is a casual format and many Magic rules get glossed over, shortcut, or simply incorrectly resolved. We've gathered up some of the most common mistakes Commander players make at their table. This is based on confusion in the comments of Extra Turns or Game Knights videos, personal play experience, and stuff we've gotten wrong.

MULLIGANS

- Turn order should be determined before mulligans
- Determine what kind of mulligan you're going to do before anyone draws hands
 - Traditional London with a free mulligan
 - Lenient London where you can't go down past 5 or 6
 - All free mulligans all the time
- Then, you determine mulligans—one hand at a time—in turn order starting with the player who goes first
- This may seem nitpicky in a casual format, but certain cards are better or worse depending on your seat.
 - Gemstone Caverns
 - *Catch-up ramp*: Land Tax; Knight of the White Orchid
 - Exotic Orchard

TEFERI'S PROTECTION

- Your life total cannot change
 - No damage, no life loss, no life gain
- You gain protection from everything.
 - DEBT (*D*amaged, *E*nchanted/equipped, *B*locked, *T*argeted)
 - You can't be targeted or damaged.
 - As long as spells and abilities don't target, you can still be milled, chosen, made to discard. Your graveyard can still be exiled or reanimated from.
- All permanents you control phase out.
 - You still have a hand, library and graveyard.

PHASING

- Phasing is powerful, but tricky.
 - Phased out permanents don't leave or enter the battlefield
 - Permanents phase in before untap and cannot be responded to
 - Teferi's Protection phases everything out, but what happens when only some things phase out.
- Clever Concealment; March of Swirling Mist
 - Attached equipment and auras phase out also. They stay equipped
 - You cannot move them.

APNAP!

THE BASICS

- Pancake stack

SCENARIO 1

- Living Death often creates moments where the players have to turn to APNAP because lots of creatures enter the battlefield at the same time.
 - All of the creatures see each other enter
 - All ETBs now get put on the stack starting with the active player. They declare their targets and pass priority to the next player, the next and the next.
 - The ETBs resolve in reverse order.

SCENARIO 2

- Let's say you—Player A—have an It That Betrays. And your opponent—Player C—has a copy of your It That Betrays. If Player B cracks a fetch land. Who gets the land?
 - The answer is, it depends on who's turn it is.
 - If it's Player A's turn, Player C gets the land
 - If it's Player B's turn, Player A gets the land
 - If it's Player C's turn, Player A gets the land
 - If it's Player D's turn, Player C gets the land

STEPS & PHASES

Steps and phases are another point where Commander players get tripped up. There's something a little confusing about each one of the beginning phases.

UNTAP STEP

- No players get to do anything in the Untap step

UPKEEP STEP

- You cannot cast spells or activate abilities before upkeep triggers hit the stack
 - If you're trying to avoid a scary upkeep trigger like Phyrexian Arena (when you're at 1 life) from happening, it must be removed the turn before that upkeep.

DRAW STEP

- Draw Step
 - Let's talk about Sylvan Library for a second.
 - When do you think you draw the extra cards?
 - Phases always start with their thing and end with emptying the mana pool.

SCENARIO

- What happens if there's a Sylvan Library & Anvil of Bogardan like in the Warhammer episode of Extra Turns? APNAP!
 - If an opponent controls the Anvil
 - Draw, Draw, Discard, DrawDraw, Put Back
 - If you control the Anvil, they trigger at the same time and you decide:
 - Draw, DrawDraw, Put Back, Draw, Discard
 - Draw, Draw, Discard, DrawDraw, Put Back

MIDROLL POINT

PRIORITY

THE BASICS

- Priority is the ability to do something.
- It's basically a system for asking each player: Does anyone have anything they want to do before this happens?
 - No, I pass priority.
 - Yes, I'd like to do something right now.
- We can't go into all the details about priority in this episode but if you have more questions check out: The Power of Priority (and The Stack)

NO INTERRUPTING

- Can't interrupt abilities resolving (Ezuri's Predation for GK Live)

DECLARE TARGETS

- Have to declare all targets when putting multiple things onto the stack at once or resolving a spell with multiple targets.
 - Mizzix's Mastery
 - Decimate
 - Once targets are declared, priority is passed

HOLDING PRIORITY

- Holding priority means doing a number of things in a row before priority gets passed around.

- If I cast a Blasphemous Act but want to give my creatures indestructible with Boros Charm before it resolves, I have to hold priority and cast them both at the same time or risk them all passing priority and the board wipe resolving before I get priority back.
 - Could assume one of my opponents will respond to give me something to respond to, but a risk.

MANA ABILITIES

- Mana abilities do not use the stack so priority is not passed
 - Tapping or playing lands
 - Phyrexian Altar/Ashnod's Altar can be particularly confusing
 - If an opponent sacrifices a creature with an Ashnod's Altar to create mana to sacrifice a clue, you cannot destroy the clue in response because Ashnod's Altar is a mana ability.
 - If I have a Blood Artist and an Ashnod's Altar, and my opponent Krosan Grips my Altar, I can still sacrifice in response because it doesn't use the stack.
 - In that same scenario, if I had a Goblin Bombardment, this isn't true.

COMMANDER DAMAGE

NONCOMBAT DAMAGE

- "If a player has been dealt 21 points of **combat damage** by a particular Commander during the game, that player loses a game." - RC

STOLEN

- What if your Commander is stolen?
- Combat damage from another player - Yes. Commanders deal combat damage regardless of the controller or owner.
- Combat damage from your own Commander - Yes. You can lose to your own Commander damage.

MODIFIED

- What if your Commander is elked by Oko, Thief of Crowns or enchanted with Darksteel Mutation?
 - Yes. It is still your commander and still does Commander damage

COPIES

- What if your Commander is copied? - No. Commander damage is attached to the physical card of the Commander. Copies and clones are not your Commander. They're copies.

COPYING

- Copies are complicated though!

COPYABLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Copyable characteristics and cloning
 - Player A plays Giant Growth on a Grizzly Bear during Player B's turn. Player B then plays a Clone making a copy of the Grizzly Bear. Is the cloned Grizzly Bear a 5/5 or a 2/2?
 - It's a 2/2. Clones copy whatever was originally printed on the card.

- Let's get even more confusing. Player A plays a Phyrexian Metamorph cloning a Grizzly Bear. Player B then plays a Clone and wants to copy the Phyrexian Metamorph. Can Player B then use that clone to copy a Sol Ring?
 - No
- Copy a token that Feldon made, do you have to sacrifice it at the end of the turn?
 - No
- Copy a token that Nalfeshnee made, do you have to sacrifice it at the end of turn?
 - Yes

SPELLS & TOKENS

- Copying a permanent spell isn't creating a token (for things like Doubling Season)
 - Double Major vs. Irenicus's Vile Duplication
 - Reflections of Littjara; Volo, Guide to Monsters - You're casting a copy that becomes a token
 - Helm of the Host; Kiki-Jiki, Mirrorbreaker

2-SIDED CARDS

- Copying Transforming Cards
 - Let's say you clone a Hollowhenge Huntmaster and it switches to day. Does it transform into Avabruck Caretaker?
 - No. She doesn't have another side. She will remain on the one face she has.
 - Let's say you clone a Jace, Vryn's Prodigy which exiles and comes in on the other side. Does your Jace transform?
 - No. He will go into exile and never return.

MODAL SPELLS

- Copying modal spells and wanting to choose new modes
 - Let's say an opponent casts Cryptic Command choosing, Tap all creatures and Return target permanent to hand. You have a Reverberate. You cannot use Reverberate to copy that Cryptic Command choosing Counter target spell and draw a card. You must choose the same modes that were chosen in the modal spell.

PLAYER ELIMINATION

- In Commander, one player is often knocked out before the game has ended, what happens to their stuff?
 - Stuff they own is exiled.
 - Treachery or Animate Dead is exiled - if they are on a creature that player doesn't own, they return to their owner or owner's graveyard respectively
 - Stuff they've stolen is given back - Gain control
 - Mass Manipulation, Agent of Treachery
 - Everything else is exiled - creatures they've reanimated from other graveyards etc
 - Bribery, Reanimate, Rise of the Dark Realms
 - What about Gather Specimens? Aethersnatch?
 1. A creature gotten from Gather Specimens will be exiled

2. A creature gotten from Aethersnatch will be returned to its owner's control.
3. Look for the words **GAIN CONTROL**
 - The rest of their turn continues through all the phases

3) **TO THE LISTENERS**

What rules do you frequently struggle with? Has your playgroup been getting any of these rules wrong?

****CARD KINGDOM #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) **THE END STEP**

Something cool outside the world of Magic

5) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Craig Blanchette, Damen Lenz; Arthur Meadowcroft; Ladee Danger; Manson Leung; Jake Boss; Jordan Pridgen; Sam Waldow; Gaurav Gulati; Jamie Block; Mitch Trafford; Evan Limberger; Gabriel Pozos; Megan Yip; Eric Lem; Josh Lee Kwai; and Jimmy Wong.**