ALTERNATIVE FORMATS GUIDE

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The Alternative Formats Guide (AFG) represents a set of rules and guidelines for alternative game formats Ghost Galaxy and its partners may utilize at KeyForge events. The document is meant to be utilized in conjunction with the following documents:

KeyForge Tournament Rules and Guidlines (TRG): Defines the roles for all event participants, the code of conduct, and specific rules for official events. Located at: www.keyforging.com/trg

KeyForge Master Rule Book (MRB): Official game rules for KeyForge. It includes a glossary, frequently asked questions, and card-specific errata. Located at: www.keyforging.com/mrb

CHANGE SUMMARY

This document will be updated over time. New updates to this document will appear in red.

- Defined Set Restriction in General Definitions
- Added Survival to Tournament Methods
- Various spelling and typographical updates

INTRODUCTION

This document provides a standardized reference of alternative formats that players may experience in side event activities at Ghost Galaxy events. This allows players the ability to prepare for these activities and understand the framework in which they will be played.

Alternative rulesets as outlined in this guide are not meant to serve as substitutes for the official formats used in the main tournaments at official events. Information may be added or removed from the document as needed. Event organizers are welcome to use this guide, but are not required to adhere strictly to it for non-official events or side event activities.

Many of the forms of gameplay featured in this document originated from the broader KeyForge community and have been included to highlight the innovative ways players have devised to engage with KeyForge.

DEFINITIONS

Please find below definitions of the various terms used in the ***Alternative Formats Guide*** (AFG).

Additonal definitions may be found in the ***Tournament Rules & Guidlines*** (TRG) or the ***KeyForge Master Rulebook*** (MRB).

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

TOURNAMENT TYPE

A tournament type defines the rules by which a player obtains their deck(s), constructs/selects a deck, and how their decklists are handled. Sealed, Archon, Alliance, and Draft are types.

TOURNAMENT METHOD

A tournament method defines the rules by which games are setup, played, and/or won. See **Tournament Methods** for a description of different tournament methods.

STANDARD

Standard is a tournament method which adheres strictly to the ***KeyForge Master Rule Book***, all other tournament methods adjust one or more of the rules of the game.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

A set of rules by which a tournament is governed. A tournament format is a combination of the tournament type and tournament method.

Example: *An organizer wishes to run a draft tournament while playing KeyForge as close to the official game as posslble. The tournament type would be Draft, while tournament method would be Standard. The format would be Draft Standard.*

KEY CHEAT

For the purposes of the rules of this document, a "Key Cheat" is any card that allows a player to forge a key outside of the "Forge a Key" step of a turn. Players should check with a judge if they are unsure if a card falls under this definition.

SET RESTRICTION

Set restriction is an additional rule restricting which KeyForge sets may be used in a tournament. Set restrictions are determined by the event organizer and may include or exclude any KeyForge set. Tournaments without defined set restrictions are assumed to allow all sets under **Legal Sets** in the **Tournament Legality** section of the TRG.

DRAFT SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

DRAFT

A draft or card draft is a process by which players select cards from a limited common pool to assemble a deck. A draft format tournament consists of a two round draft phase, then a tournament using a specified tournament method for gameplay.

DRAFT PHASE

The draft phase of a draft tournament is a tournament setup phase where players are assembled into draft groups to procure the cards they will use to create their decks. A draft phase has two rounds.

DRAFT ROUND

A draft round is a period in which players select cards from draft sets and pass the unselected cards to the next player in the group until are cards in the draft sets are selected.

DRAFT GROUP

A group of players assigned together by the event organizer for the drafting portion of a draft type tournament. Ideally, each draft group consists of an even number of players across all groups if within a larger tournament.

DRAFT SET

Draft sets are a collection of 30 cards created by a group's draft facilitator at the start of each draft round. These sets consist of cards from house packs brought by the participating players in a draft group.

DRAFT FACILITATOR

Draft facilitators are judges, organizers, event staff, or players chosen to facilitate the creation of the draft sets from the house packs during the draft phase. Each group should have one draft facilitator, if possible.

CARD POOL

During a draft, a player will create a pile of face down cards from their draft set selections. This is their card pool. A player may review their card pool at any point, but must keep cards hidden from other players.

HOUSE PACK

A house pack is a curated 15-card pack of cards from a single KeyForge house from a single KeyForge set.

ENHANCE

Enhance is a keyword that appears on several KeyForge cards. These cards provide bonus icons that are assigned during deck generation of a KeyForge Archon deck.

In the Draft tournament type, this keyword imparts bonus icons to be utilized for deck construction.

TOURNAMENT TYPES

A tournanamet type defines the rules by which a player obtains their deck(s), constructs/selects a deck, and how their decklists are handled.

Organizers are free to use unspecified tournament types for non-official tournaments. Official tournaments are sanctioned by Ghost Galaxy and only use the formats specified in the TRG.

SEALED

Each Player Uses: A number of sealed KeyForge decks from any KeyForge set. A sealed deck is one that is unopened and in its original packaging. Each player must bring the appropriate number of sealed decks, or obtain their sealed decks from the event organizer if the decks are being provided.

Decklists: Decklists are kept hidden from the opposing player during a match, but each player must make their available houses known to their opponent at all times. Players may choose to make their decklists public but are not required to do so. Players must show their decklists to event staff whenever requested.

VARIANTS

Sealed type tournaments may be one of two distinct variants that alter the rules regarding deck selection, deck modification, and the quantity of decks to be opened. The variants are as follows:

SEALED ALLIANCE

Players open a number of sealed decks, up to a maximum set by the event organizer. A player may choose to use fewer sealed decks than the maximum. They will construct one deck to use.

Deck Creation: Players simultaneously open their sealed decks. Each player constructs a single Sealed deck by selecting three different house pods from amongst all house pods provided by their sealed decks. Each selected house pod must be from a different house. Deck construction is a timed 30 minute period.

Deck Calibration: Between each round of the tournament, before being seated with their next opponents, players may calibrate their decks by substituting one or more house pods with one or more of their unused house pods from the decks they opened at the beginning of the tournament. After calibration, a deck must consist of three house pods from different houses.

SEALED ARCHON

Players open a number of sealed decks, up to a maximum set by the event organizer. A player may choose to use fewer sealed decks than the maximum. They will select one deck to use.

Deck Selection: Players simultaneously open their sealed decks. They are given 3-5 minutes to review their decks and select one deck to use. All decks must remain complete, unmodified, and match their original Archon identity cards.

Deck Calibration: Between each round of the tournament, before being seated with their next opponents, players may change their deck selection to one of the decks they opened at the beginning of the tournament.

ARCHON

Each Player Uses: One KeyForge deck. The deck must be complete, unmodified, and presented with its original Archon identity card.

Decklists: Decklists are open information. Players must allow their opponent time to review their decklist prior to the start of the match, and at any time during the match if requested.

ALLIANCE

Each Player Uses: One Alliance deck consisting of three house pods from up to three different KeyForge decks in the same KeyForge set. Alternatively, a player may bring one unmodified KeyForge deck. All decks utilized must be presented with their original Archon identity card(s).

Decklists: Decklists are open information. Players must allow their opponent time to review their decklist(s) prior to the start of the match, and at any time during then match if requested.

DRAFT

Each Player Uses: A quantity of cards outlined by the variant selected by the event organzer. Each player must also bring enough sleeves to sleeve a legal KeyForge deck. Stickers are provided by the event organizer.

Decklists: Because of the nature of Draft, fixed decklists do not exist. Event organizers may require a player to submit a written decklist after the draft phase. In this case, decklists are kept hidden. Each player must make their available houses known to their opponent at all times.

VARIANTS

Draft type tournaments may be one of two distinct variants that alter the rules regarding card acquisition. The variants are as follows:

PACK DRAFT

Players bring or are provided four house packs from KeyForge sets allowed by the event organizer. Draft sets will be created from all of the house packs that are brought by all players. See ***Conducting a Pack Draft*** for detailed rules of this variant.

CUBE DRAFT

Players draft cards from a currated slate of cards provided by the tournament organizer. Cube drafts may have their own unique ways to create the sets of cards players draft from.

TOURNAMENT METHODS

A tournament method defines additional gameplay rules and is used in conjunction with a type to establish the overall rules of a format. The following is a non-exhaustive list gameplay rules that could be modified through a method:

- How a players set up a game.
- Alternative victory conditions.
- Modifications to a tournament's match structure.
- Conditions for elimination from a tournament.

Each method presented in this guide specifies the types that Ghost Galaxy recommends for that method. Organizers are free to use unspecified tournament methods, or create their own for non-official tournaments.

STANDARD

Standard is the typical way to play KeyForge, introducing no modifications to the gameplay defined in the *Master Rule Book*.

Suggested Tournament Types: Sealed (All Variants), Archon, Alliance, Draft (All Variants)

ADAPTIVE

Adaptive tests a player's ability to quickly assess a deck's strengths and weaknesses in the context of a match up with another deck. Adaptive allows players to bid chains to for the right to play either of the decks brought to the match.

Suggested Tournament Types: Sealed (All Variants), Archon, Alliance

GAMEPLAY RULES

SETUP PROCEDURE

Adaptive has an alternative setup procedure from Standard tournaments. These procedures may be performed before time in a match has startedare performed in order as follows:

1. Randomly determine which deck (not which player) will take the first turn.
2. Reveal decklists. Both players will take 3-5 minutes to assess the decklists.
3. Both players secretly select which deck they would like to play for the match, then reveal their choices to each other simultaneously.
4. If both players chose a different deck, the match begins with the deck that was determined to take the first turn. If both players chose the same deck, they must start bidding.

BIDDING PROCEDURE

Bidding only occurs when both players chose to play the same deck. During this step players are bidding a number of chains they will start the game with to win the right to play the deck. The maximum bid is 24 chains. Bidding is performed as follows:

1. Bidding opens with the owner of the deck, and their starting bid is set at 0 chains.
2. The opposing player may raise the bid by bidding a higher number of chains than the previous bid. Bids may not exceed 24 chains.
3. Alternate the bidding until a player declines to increase the bid. The player who bid highest wins the bid.

STARTING WITH CHAINS

If chains were bid, the player who won the bid begins the game with a number of chains equal to their winning bid. These starting chains affect the size of that player's opening hand. One chain will be shed after the opening hand is drawn.

If the player takes a mulligan, they do not shed a chain from the mulligan, but do draw one fewer card than they had before the mulligan as per the normal mulligan rules.

OUBLIETTE

Oubliette allows a player to ban a house, ensuring they will never have to play against a deck utilizing the house. Players register with two decks and a banned house. This challenges players to find the best combination of six houses or push their luck with a narrower set of selections.

Suggested Tournament Types: Sealed (All Variants), Archon, Alliance

Suggested Additional Rule: Set Restriction

Event organizers should pair Oubliette with a restricted selection of KeyForge sets or even a limitation to a single set to increase the impact of banned houses and force strategic choices.

GAMEPLAY RULES

REGISTRATION

Players register with exactly two decks at the beginning of the tournament. If the tournament is Sealed, players must continue to use the registered decks for the entire tournament even if they opened more than two decks.

Players will specify during registration which house they have chosen to ban. This selection cannot be modified and will remain the same throughout the tournament.

SETUP PROCEDURE

Oubliette has an alternative setup procedure from Standard tournaments. These procedures are performed in order as follows:

1. Both players simultaneously reveal which houses they have chosen to ban. Decks that contain a house banned by either player may not be played.
2. Both players secretly select which of their decks they would like to play for the match, then reveal their choices to each other simultaneously.
3. If a single player cannot select a deck because both of their decks contain a banned house, that player immediatly forfeits the match and their opponent receives a win.
4. If both players cannot select a deck because both of their decks contain a banned house, both players receive a loss for the round.

SURVIVAL

Survival challenges a player to build a roster of decks to survive the tournament (roster size is set by the tournament organizer). Losing decks are eliminated. Players without remaining decks are eliminated from the tournament.

Suggested Tournament Types: Sealed (All Variants), Archon

Suggested Additional Rule: Set Restriction

GAMEPLAY RULES

REGISTRATION

Players receive a match slip during reigstration to write the names of their decks on. This match slip must be presented to event staff any time it is requested.

SETUP PROCEDURE

Survival has an alternative setup procedure from Standard tournaments. These procedures are performed in order as follows:

1. Both players present each other with their match slips. Players review the slips to determine which deck(s) their opponent is allowed to use.
2. Both players secretly select which of their remaing decks they would like to play for the match, then reveal their choices to each other simultaneously.

DECK ELIMINATION

Decks that lose a match are eliminated from the tournament and may not be used in subsequent matches. Losing players must mark the losing deck on their match slip and have their opponent initial next to it for verification.

PLAYER ELIMINATION

Players are eliminated from the tournament once they have no remaining decks. They must visit Tournament HQ to turn in their match slip and process a tournament drop.

QUICKFORGE

QuickForge is a fast-paced style of gameplay that challenges players to bring decks that can consistently forge the first key the fastest.

Suggested Tournament Types: Alliance, Archon, Draft

GAMEPLAY RULES

KEY CHEATS

When a player plays or uses a key cheat, the card does not cause the player to forge a key and no keys are considered to be forged for purposes of game effects. All other effects occur according the the "Resolve as Much as You Can" rule.

MATCH STRUCTURE

QuickForge matches are played as a best-of-five game series. In other words, for the match to be resolved, players continue to play games until one player has won three games. That player is declared the winner of the match.

WIN CONDITION

The first player to forge a single key wins the game.

CONDUCTING A PACK DRAFT

In a pack draft tournament, players will draft cards from a single KeyForge set over two rounds. After drafting is complete, players use the cards they have drafted to assemble a KeyForge deck consisting of 36 cards from three different houses, using exactly 12 cards per house.

Pack drafting supports either a group tournament with 4-8 players per group, or a larger Swiss-style tournament where players are paired in a more traditional tournament structure after the drafting phase.

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

Pack draft tournaments proceed as follows:

1. Draft Group Assignment (5 minutes)
2. Draft Setup (5 minutes)
3. Draft Phase (50 minutes)
4. Deck Construction (10 minutes)
5. Tournament Matches (45 minutes per round)
6. Tournament Top Cut (if applicable, 45 minutes per round)

Details of steps 1-4 are draft specific and provided in the following rules explanation.

DRAFT GROUP ASSIGNMENT

A draft group is used to facilitate orderly card drafting and not overload players with too many options. Players are seated in a circle or rectangle with each player having a distinct person to their left and right.

Event staff begin the draft by assigning players to groups. This stage of the tournament is untimed, but should ideally be completed in 5 minutes. Groups maintain the following criteria:

- Players are distributed as evenly as possible across all groups.
- Groups have a maximum of **eight** players.
- Groups have a minimum of **four** players.
- If the tournament is to be played only within the draft group, the draft group should be an even number of players.
- If the tournament is to be played within a larger Swiss-style tournament, draft groups do not need to be an even number of players.

Example: *If there are 28 players, an event organizer should create two groups of eight and two groups of six rather than three groups of eight and one of four. This balances the groups so that one of the groups is not excessively small.*

DRAFT SETUP

Either designated event staff, a person nominated by the group, or a person hand-selected by event staff will become the draft facilitator. The draft facilitator will be responsible for making the 30-card draft sets that will be utilized during each draft round during the draft phase. If the draft facilitator is a player, they must not look at the cards used during setup. The following procedure is used to create draft sets:

1. Each player will announce which four houses they selected for their house packs.
2. After each player has announced their houses, the facilitator will tally the total number of each house and store this information for the **Draft Phase**.
3. Each player will select two of their four house packs without looking at the cards and pass them to the facilitator.
4. The facilitator creates draft sets by dealing one card at a time (face down) from the first house pack into a series of sets equal to the number of players in the group (*i.e., four sets for four players, or eight sets for eight players).*
5. Once a house pack is fully dealt into draft sets, the facilitator will move on to the next house pack, continuing where they left off in the dealing sequence for the sets.
6. Once all house packs have been distributed into draft sets, the facilitator will count each draft set to ensure there are 30 cards in each draft set.
7. If a discrepancy occurs, the draft facilitator will adjust the cards as needed to make 30 card packs. Any remedy should attempt to maintain proper pack distribution. If any player has an issues with a discrepancy, they may call a judge.
8. The facilitator will create draft sets for the second round of draft by repeating steps 3-7.
9. After the draft sets are complete, the facilitator will give one draft set to each player and the draft phase will commence.

DRAFT PHASE

Players will select and take cards from draft sets during the draft phase. This is a 50-minute timed phase consisting of two rounds that begins when the facilitator has handed out the first draft sets. Once the draft phase begins, drafting is performed as follows:

1. All players look at the cards in the draft set assigned to them and select three cards from the set. These cards go face down on the table and become part of their card pool.
2. Players pass the remaining cards in the draft set to the player on their left (Round 1), or on the right (Round 2).
3. Players continue to select three cards from each subsequent draft set, passing the remainder in the specified direction.
4. Once the last three cards in the set have been drafted, the round is over.
5. If players have only completed Round 1, the facilitator hands out draft sets for Round 2. Repeat steps 1-4.
6. If the players have completed Round 2, the draft phase is complete and all players may move to deck construction.
7. A judge should be called if the group was unable to complete all draft selections in the allotted time. Additional time may be allotted, or the judge may elect to randomly deal all remaining cards to players.

ADDITIONAL DRAFT PHASE RULES

Players must follow these additional rules during the draft phase.

- Players must count the remaining cards in a draft set before passing it to ensure it contains the correct number of remaining cards.
- Once a player selects a cards from a draft set, the card cannot be returned to the draft set if it has touched the cards in the player's card pool. In progress selections should be cleanly separated.
- Once a player passes a draft set, they cannot take it back or make changes to their drafted cards, even of the cards are still cleanly separated from their card pool.
- Players may look at cards they have drafted into their card pool at any time during the draft phase, but in doing so must not mix cards from the draft set and their card pool.
- Incorrectly separating cards, returning cards to draft sets, or mixing draft sets and cardpools are all considered forms of cheating and may lead to tournament disqualification.
- Table talk must remain at a minimum and not reveal any information about draft sets or drafted cards. Players should only table talk to reference the current draft state or fix errors in the draft.
- Each player should have no more than a single draft set waiting for them beyond the current set they are considering selections from. If a player has already passed one set to the next player and is ready to pass again, they must hold their current set until the player picks up the waiting set.
- Draft selections are untimed, but players must make selections at a reasonable pace. Anyone in the group may call a judge to assess slow-play if a player is consistently delaying the entire group.

DECK CONSTRUCTION

After the draft phase is complete, any remaining time may be used to construct the player's deck. An additional 10 minutes will be allotted specifically for the deck construction phase.

Each player will use the 60 cards they have drafted to create a 36-card KeyForge deck. This deck may only contain three houses with a maximum of 12 cards in each house. After a player's deck is constructed the remaining drafted cards are returned to the event organizer or removed from the tournament in a manner specified.

Players are required to sleeve their decks after construction in opaque card sleeves. All sleeves within a single deck must be identical in size, color, texture, and condition.

DRAFT SPECIFIC GAMEPLAY RULES

The following gameplay rules apply to a draft type tournament regardless of the tournament method utilized.

BLANK HOUSE CARDS

Players that were unable to draft a full pod of 12 cards for a house will receive a blank house card with the house indicated in the top left. They will receive one blank house card for each card they are short in the house *(**For example:** if the Mars house in a player's deck only has 10 cards in it, that player will receive two blank Mars cards that must be added to their deck).* These cards are considered to be an action card of the house indicated and rules text that states "You cannot play this card." Blank cards may be discarded if they match the active house or by the resolution of discard effects.

ENHANCE

If a card with an **Enhance** keyword is included in the final deck created by a player, that player will receive special sleeves with a sticker that matches each bonus icons provided by that card.

A player must show desginated event staff the cards in their deck which provide the bonus icons. That event staff will count out the needed sleeves and provide them to the player.

Each sleeve cannot have more than one bonus icon sticker on it unless the player has drafted enough Enhance cards to have more than 36 bonus icons to assign. In this case, event staff will provide additional stickers for the remaining bonus icons.

Players will choose which cards will receive which bonus icons by putting cards in the appropriate sleeves. The player may place additional bonus icon stickers (if any) on sleeves as needed, adding no more than one additional sticker per sleeve.

If a deck is found to have additional bonus icon sleeves or stickers the player is not entitled to, the player should receive a penalty for a rules infraction up to and and including tournament disqualification, at the discretion of the event organizer. If the player is not disqualfied, they must replace the offending sleeve(s) with basic, unstickered sleeves of the same type and condition.

KEY CHEATS

No more than one key cheat card may be included in a final draft deck, although a player is free to draft as many as they like during the draft phase.

If a deck is discovered with multiple key cheat cards, the player should receive a penalty for a rules infraction up to and including tournameent disqualification, at the discretion of the event organizer. If the player is not disqualified, they must replace the offending card(s) with blank house card(s) as necessary.