

Orders from Barad-dûr



by Michael Reynolds

With the release of Middle-earth: Against the Shadow, one thing becomes obvious—overt companies are all about Orders from Lugalbúrz. This minion resource permanent-event allows a company to have a Troll leader, in addition to another leader. Also, all followers of Troll leaders receive +1 to their corruption checks. The ability to play Orders from Lugalbúrz with a starting company, makes its strategic versatility truly amazing. Here are three, sample starting companies—all employing Orders from Lugalbúrz—and a short discussion on opportunities that each offers its player. By the way, Lugalbúrz is Black Speech for Barad-dûr.

POWER DUO

Orders from Lugalbúrz, Lieutenant of Angmar, Lieutenant of Morgul w/ Strange Rations

The Power Duo starting company uses Orders from Lugalbúrz to combine two extremely potent combatants of 8 prowess apiece. In addition, you have plenty of room to play an I'll Report You on each, raising their prowesses to 10. With only two characters, the hazard limit is two, making it rather difficult for your opponent to slow the company down. Any hazard creature with no body, that they face, rates to become a trophy, especially with a few

warrior tactical cards in the deck. Thong of Fire on one of these guys makes them very strong! As if this were not enough, either of these two Troll leaders is ready-made to recruit Orc factions. The Witch-king or Khamûl, and some Fell Rider cards, make a nice, second company complement because they can make use of the warrior tactical cards. This deck has little need of the standard array of cards for avoidance, faction recruiting, direct influence enhancement, etc., so you have more room for marshalling point cards and Forced Marches (which work nicely with your Fell Riding Ringwraith).

RING BEARERS

Orders from Lugalbúrz, Troll-chief and Grishnákh, Troll-chief w/ Whip and Lagdûf, Odoacer, Uchel

The corruption and forced corruption checks of gold ring items scare most Ringwraiths away from a ring strategy. Orders from Lugalbúrz, however, can provide the perfect solution. With I'll Be at Your Heels on each of the two Troll-chiefs, Grishnákh and Lagdûf, as followers, receive +3 to their corruption checks. This makes them as good as any Hobbit to bear high corruption rings (or any item) because minions have an additional effective +2 to corruption checks. Note that you will need another Whip, No More Nonsense, etc., before playing the second I'll Be at Your Heels. A liberal ring strategy naturally lends itself to Magic Rings, allowing the use of sorcery, spirit-magic, or shadow-magic. It also lends itself to minor rings, which do not tax your hand if played with certain gold ring items. Try to play many

rings, including mind rings played as minor items, so that Rumor of the One will yield a huge reward. Catch an Elusive Scent and Come By Night Upon Them fit naturally with a liberal ring strategy and this starting company.

MASS UPON MASS

Troll-chief w/ Whip and 2 Orc Veterans and Orc, Brawler, Orc Chieftain and Orc Tracker

Orders from Lugalbúrz's extra leader allows an overt company strategy to capitalize on what is already plentiful: Cheap, direct, influence enhancement and low mind warriors. The Mass upon Mass starting company uses 10 points of general influence and has six characters of prowesses 6, 4, 4, 4, 3, and 3. This means that an entirely separate, viable company can be brought into play, even covert! Note: That for tournament play you have 5 points of free general influence (cannot be used to control characters) in addition to your normal 20. Swarm of Bats, Orc-mounts, Motionless Among the Slain, Hail of Darts, Where There's a Whip, and

Diversion, provide good combat options and take advantage of the fact that Orcs are plentiful and expendable. An Orc mass strategy relies on the theory that two or more viable companies gain marshalling points quicker than one. These companies are not burdened to the extent that small hero companies are—from Alone and Unadvised, characters being tapped out, and Enchanted Stream. When enough direct influence becomes available on your leaders, consider Smart and Secret to help keep your characters around at body-check time.

