

FRIDAY, february 27th

Day of arrival: since I'm among the first comers, I give a hand setting tables and chairs in the main room, then it's time for Wolfgang's welcome speech, and for saying hello with the others.

I play Arda in the afternoon with Mark, Luigi and Wanja.

A very nice game, we have a lot of fun. Maybe Wanja has a little bit less, since I keep on drawing roadblock hazs (long winters and foul fumes) which tap his sites because I have DoN in play. Luigi harasses me with creatures but my rolls are pretty good so I accumulate tons of kill points (actually they'll be my main source of MPs at the end of the game) and I'm able to gather a few items and allies nevertheless. At the end I'm the winner after a very bastard move in the last turn: Pallando's company goes from Ovir Hollow to Rivendell, with the intention to play a Bridge and then play Lobelia in Bag End, but I draw a second Bridge, and I notice that Beorn (controlled by Mark under GI) is one of the roving characters on table, then I reach Mark's main company in Wellinghall via Lorien and try to influence away Beorn with Brand, discarding Necklace of Silver and Pearls and boosting the IC with Old Friendship for a total +10 vs +7 unused GI. My roll is higher and Beorn gets discarded, then I call the council and at the end I'm the winner, though with an edge of just a few MPs on Luigi (who gets 2nd) and the others.

Hero Challenge Deck tourney in the evening

round 1 vs Luigi (Gandalf vs Radagast)

Pretty balanced and nice game. In the end I lose 2-4 due to Faramir dying in a desperate movement in the last turn with the sole purpose of drawing cards, and due to a ring test which failed to yield a Magic Ring (no Lesser Ring in my hand at the moment of testing). A couple of turns before Faramir was wounded by Brigands by rolling 3 (wtf!?!): very dishonorable performance by the ranger of the Ithilien...

round 2 vs Lorenzo (Gandalf vs Pallando)

Italy vs Italy again! This time things go much better for me, partly because my opponent has unlucky rolls and some of his key characters get wounded, partly due to a couple of tactical mistakes of him, which are common by brand new players with almost no gaming experience. He fights bravely anyway and in the end it's 5-1 for me with an alive (but wounded) Faramir.

round 3 vs Nicolas (Gandalf vs Alatar)

This game is balanced and nothing special happens until the very last turn. Aragorn survives a lot of nasty corruption checks (including a couple of checks against 5 CPs triggered by Alone and Unadvised when he's moving to Edoras under Arwen's DI), but the last turn in Moria is fatal for Gandalf's company: they enter the site and the wizard gets wounded by rolling 3 when facing the automatic attack untapped, Nicolas rolls 10 on the body check and there's no mercy for Gandy. Then an onguard Barrow-wight attacks with The Moon is Dead in play. Boromir gets wounded by the strike with prowess 13 and dies, Thranduil (who is already wounded) gets wounded as well and is killed after the body check: a 9-points loss which (negatively) overcompensates the 6 points scored in the same turn with the factions successfully played by Aragorn and Faramir (who finally does something useful). On Nicolas' last turn Ala's company enters Carn Dum to play the Scroll of Isildur. Elrond survives the cc5 triggered by my onguard Lure of Expedience, but at the final cc in the council Elrond rolls 3 and is eliminated. My opponent has negative character points, then I double mine and win 5-1.

At the end of the tourney I'm second with 12 Tps: same as Binger (whom I didn't face), but my opponents have scored less TPs altogether than his... :(

A nice tourney, though some difficulty of communication from time to time with the opponents, due to the guys shouting out loud while playing drinking game and covering our voices. :)

It's more or less 2 AM, and the Rittersaal (the big chamber where most of the events take place) is getting empty: most people are moving to their rooms to get some sleep. There's still time for some chatting and trading, then I guess it's time for me to crawl into my bed too: I can't see any of my roommates around, then they must be already back into our room.

The room's door is closed, then they must all be already sleeping. I'm sorry to wake them up, but I have no choice but knocking at the door.

No answer.

I try knocking harder, and still no answer.

I try knocking harder until I can barely feel my hand, and still nobody wakes up to open up the door.

I desperately keep on banging at the door with hands, head, feet, thinking "how come nobody there wakes up and opens this damn door?" and starting to fear that I'll have to sleep on the ground in the corridor.

I'm about to search for a lighter to trigger the fire alarm (this should wake up anyone!) when Holger passes by and tells me that my roommates are all downstairs in the small room (whose existence I even ignore... does that room even have a name btw?) playing Dreamcards tourney...

I don't know if this chance meeting saved the people in the other rooms from a horrible night or saved me from their anger. Probably the second option is the most likely.

Btw is the pitch-and-feathers still practiced as form of public shameful punishment in Bacharach? I heard that people in small towns tend to stick very much to traditions in Germany...

My bad: I should have expected the typical Lure-day to be much much longer than an ordinary everyday life's day...

I'm sorry for those who were annoyed by the episode. Now you know who was to blame for that irritating endless banging. (I have a feeling like I'd better have omitted this episode from my report, but I guess it's too late now)

I come over to the small room to meet the other guys. We just hang around there, chatting and kidding (and Wanja making fun of some of Nico's dreamcards), until we notice that it's almost 5 AM and it would be actually time to get some sleep...

SATURDAY, february 28th

Today it's the big event's day: the general opponent!

I brought two completely different hero decks: I have a deck vs hero/fallen with Bilbo, Sam and two sages wandering in the north-east and riddling away attacks to raise the free-hold factions, play a couple of greater/major items in the dragon's lairs and in Buhr Widu, and play some steeds.

Radagast is the main wiz (x2) and Pallando is the backup wiz (x1). The deck vs minion has Strider, Eowyn, Galdor, Annalena, Anborn going to Dol Guldur via underdeep (Under-Gates, then Sulfur-Deeps), playing awesome special items (Aiglos, Dragon Helm) and lucky searching greater items on their way, trying to pass the doors and meet the Windlord there, while Alatar gets sacrificed asap and meets them in Dol Guldur (together with Elrond or Thranduil) starting from Lorien (in order to play Great Road in the organization phase and save one turn). After having stored everything, last turn rush to the Easterling camp to play Easterlings and allies.

Unfortunately I've been so dumb that I didn't prepare the decks the day before because I thought "no

problem, I can do it tomorrow", but I didn't imagine that I'd have only slept 3 hours and a half, and I'd have stepped into the Rittersaal while the tourney was just about to begin. Then I have to build the deck as quickly as possible, and I even don't have time to assemble the sideboard: I have to check on the lists I printed at home which cards are in my sideboard and pick them directly from my playing cards' box... The thing I'm most sorry about is delaying the game's start. Luckily all my opponents show comprehension and accept my apologies. At least I to repair as much as possible by playing faster in order to recover time...

1st round vs Michel

My first game is vs hero. I can't remember much, but the game must've been pretty balanced since it ends 4-2 for me. I can only remember Radagast facing 2 assassins on his way to the Thranduil's Halls (alone) and surviving 5 body checks, then being wounded again when moving with Thrain to the Iron Hill Dwarf Hold, but surviving again. I failed a lot of influence checks against the factions, but I guess I can't complain in the end...

2nd round vs Paul

Sam gets bounced in the draft, so I have to change my plans for the starting company: Thranduil controls Fatty (instead of Cirdan controlling Sam) while Bilbo controls Annalena with Elf-Stone as planned. In the first turns I have a really hard time against his drake hazard strategy: I hoped dropping the hazard limit below zero was enough to be safe, but it turns out to be useless as far as he can play drakes without them counting for the hazard limit, using Two or Three Tribes Present. Anyway, my companies manage to get past his hazs in relative safety and score points pretty fast, while I sideboard as soon as I can some killer hazards for his companies: Aragorn gets removed by Alone and unadvised while moving alone with Arwen, his hobbits get skinchanged, then Sam gets pilfered back to his hand. The final result is 6-0 for me.

3rd round vs Bert

He's playing a Goblin-Gate squat deck. I'm lucky since I draw Baduila in the first turn and I'm able to bounce back to Rivendell his company of dwarves plus Ioreth. In the following turn Balin and a lesser dwarf get killed by sellswords (or by a cave-drake, I can't remember), then I'm able to make him lose a turn by skin-changing back Ioreth (who tried to move back alone to Rivendell to get healed) to Goblin-Gate. His strategy is pretty predictable then I'm able to successfully riddle his hazard creatures even when I don't have Secret News in my hand. In the last turn Thorin (who bears the Enruned Shield and is in charge with the lucky searches) gets corrupted on a cc4 after I've played Lure then tapped Ren, and in the end it's a 6-0 for me, after Bilbo survived 2 or 3 body checks from Itangast Ahunt (unlike the poor Annalena, who didn't make it). Pretty lucky again...

4th turn vs Enrique

Game between the first and the second in the provisional standings: I'd never expected to play such a game. First game vs a minion, too. I already know his deck since I've already seen it playing online, then I know I gotta hurry up, since he's playing a Sauron deck with a lieutenant sitting in Dol Guldur with Orc Captain playing the orc faction (and then long grievous sieging the Woodmen Town) while Shagrat with two Orc Sniffers goes underdeep playing tech stuff, Aiglos and Dragon Helm. Unfortunately he plays my best items (Aiglos and Dragon Helm) in one turn, before I can even drop underdeep. This forces me to change my strategy, sideboarding greater items to be played in Moria. Bane of the Ithil Stone keeps me from lucky searching for several turns, too, and 3 rivers on Alatar and Elrond in the last turn condemn me to finishing the game with either no faction nor ally points. My hazards are pretty ineffective: I can only influence away one of his Ill flavoured fellows using Golodhros, and in the end it's 4-2 for him.

Dinner break. I sit at the table with Wouter and Alfons, and we chat a little about how our tournament's gone so far.

Then back to the Rittersaal and... surprise! My opponent for the last round is...

5th round vs Alfons

Well, I'm glad I didn't get too much into details while chatting during the dinner..

This time I play vs a fallen Gandalf deck (with Saw Further and Deeper and latecomer avatar).

Unfortunately my opponent plays with rivers: the hazard which can hurt my deck most, since my main company only has one ranger. Unfortunately I decided to play again with Thranduil controlling Fatty: if I played with Cirdan controlling Sam I could've sideboarded Halfling Strengths to untap Sam and be able to handle more than 1 river per turn. My hazards hurt him very hard in the last turn: Arwen (with Choice of Luthien, worth 2 pts because of Give Welcome to the Unexpected) gets killed by an assassin, his 2 characters company in Old Forest is tapped by Heedless Revelry and is unable to play Tom Bombadil. Nevertheless in the end it's 4-2 for him since my companies got slowed down by ahunt dragons and rivers.

I finish the general opponent in the 6th place with 20 TPs, which is far more than I could've have expected in the beginning, since I had brought a couple of fun decks without any ambitions, and I never thought of playing for the top positions. I have to admit that I've been pretty lucky with the dices, since all the crucial rolls were in my favour (especially the body checks!!).

The general opponent is over, it's about 21.00 o'clock. Time to kick back playing "Diplomacy". I never played Diplomacy before, but I really enjoyed it: there are just a few rules and the game is so straightforward that you quickly get into it. Since there's no dices and no randomness (the whole game is all about alliances, coordination of your armies with those of your allies... and loyalty!), it is highly recommendable as the ideal game to chill out after hours and hours of playing meccg, especially if you were unlucky with dices and you had enough with rolling (which wasn't my case btw). ;)

I really enjoyed the game, too bad we didn't have the time to finish it: the all-italian-alliance between me, Lorenzo and Luigi was getting a good edge and if we played a few more turns there could've been probably some interesting coup de théâtre (i.e. betrayal) which would've changed the course of the game.

It's getting late, and I come over to the small room to meet Nico, Dominic, Martin, Karsten, Mario, Holger and all the other guys who are finishing to play a Dreamcards tourney.

After the tourney's over me and Martin, Dominic and Nico spend some time chatting in the Rittersaal. I should be tired to death for the whole day spent playing and for the lack of sleep, but curiously I don't feel like sleeping... until I take a look at my watch and notice it's 5.30 AM!

Well, 6 hours sleep over the whole Lure weekend: I can't say I didn't make the most of my time. :D

SUNDAY, march 1st

I need some rest! No tourney for me today, just a lot of trading and chatting in the Rittersaal, where the cool play tourney and some other tourney take place. I'd like to take a stroll in the town but I'm actually too tired. Maybe next year...

The only game I play is a cool play game against Luigi (who got the bye on the last round of the cool play tourney) in the early afternoon. I'm using a pre-constructed hero deck without avatar and with only female characters ("women power"), while he plays a dwarven deck: hot ladies vs horny dwarves, that's potentially a very explosive match-up... Since my deck has Vygavril, I get the

chance to play with the “special version” made by Luigi for that character card, with alternative artwork. Much better than the original, I have to say... :) Too bad she gets immediately killed by Uvatha in the turn she comes into play :(

The game is really relaxed and enjoyable. Actually every game with Luigi is always very pleasant, and the cool play perfectly suits his playing attitude, too: he's a natural born cool player. I can't remember who won, but it doesn't matter: I never played cool play before, and I have to say that I'm really enthusiast of it. The game format encourages plays that you'd never see in an ordinary meccg game, and it also fosters unusual and original hazard strategies instead of the trite grab bag / rolled down / unabated / river, since the cheeziest and meanest plays are considered uncool and therefore they cost penalties to the player resorting to them. I'm definitely going to build a coolplay deck and take part to the tourney next time. Hopefully at the next worlds! I also already have found my own natural cool play scenario (those who are familiar with minion cool play scenarios should be able to guess which one, after reading this report...)

Time's running out: it's time to say goodbye, jump in Holger's car with Alex and Nicole, and leave Bacharach. I was so happy to meet people so far only met online like Martin, Bernd (too bad we didn't have the chance to talk some more, hopefully we'll get the chance next time) and Enrique, get to know a lot of cool people like Holger, Alex, Nicole, David, Lorenzo, Wanja, and meet once again several people I had the chance to know last summer at Worlds08 in Antwerpen. The list is long, but you all know who you are! ;)

I hope to meet everyone again very soon. This was my first experience at Lure but definitely it won't be the last!!

I've been in zombie-mode for the following 3 days and I needed 36 hours sleep to restore my normal biorhythms, but it was definitely worth it! It's great to see so many people sharing the same passion gathering every year and giving life to this amazing event. I strongly recommend everybody who never came to Lure (and has the chance to) to seriously consider attending it next year, since it's a unique experience for any meccg fan. And next year will be the 10th anniversary too. Do I need to add anything? ;)

Yes: I need to add some closing remarks. I'd like to express my congratulations and deepest admiration to Wolfgang for setting up all this amazing event.

See you all next year! :D

Bruno