Battlefields – Should Ashes Reborn Rotate?

Originally posted at **https://theshufflebus.com/battlefields-should-ashes-reborn-rotate/** by **Jarod Leupold** and **ShuffleBusNeil**; archived Jan. 9, 2023.

What is Battlefields?

Battlefields is a new written series where Jarod and Neil discuss hot topics surrounding the Ashes community. The intent is for both authors to collectively voice their opinion in a more conversational style of writing. The goal is to help you the reader understand the complexities of various issues surrounding the Ashes Reborn community.

Should Ashes Rotate After the Time Cycle?

Jarod

Yes

I love lcgs. I played A Game of Thrones for all five years of its lcg cycle, the full run of Warhammer: Invasion, and most recently the Legend of the Five Rings. Heck, even as a game store owner I championed LCGs as an easy-to-stock, consistent revenue stream. And do you know what the hardest selling point was? The entry price point.

Neil

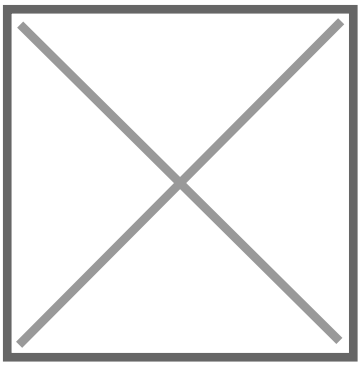
No

For card players familiar with ccgs, rotation is a staple of almost every game. And a necessary one for games with a long history. For instance, Magic the Gathering has roughly 18,000 unique cards.

It would be absolute nonsense for any modern card player to consider playing a format composed of all available cards. Now while these formats do exist they have an extremely high barrier of entry to play both in skill and especially in cost. That’s why a game like Magic needs to have set rotation to continue to thrive as a business and remain exciting for the newer player. So how does this translate to Ashes Reborn? Should there be a rotation? Absolutely…. at some point in the future.

Jarod

It takes a couple of expansions for an lcg to really find it’s legs and by that time you are asking new players to drop north of five hundreds of dollars to collect competitive decks. While the preconstructed decks are a nice thought some of them are down right unplayable. Can you imagine NEW preconstructed decks with the knowledge Plaid Hat has reaped since the relaunch? The future of any game relies on new players. Let’s begin sooner rather than flailing later!



Neil

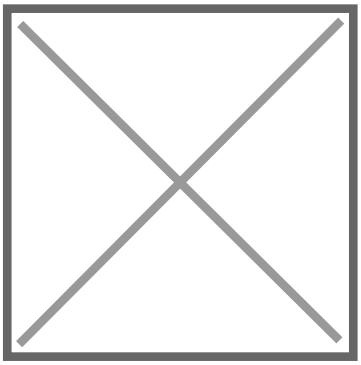
Let’s begin with the easy math: money. If we are talking solely about cost as a barrier of entry then LCGs like Ashes have a value advantage over the CCGs due to the fixed versus random packs business model. The current of a full playset of Ashes will run about $500 and can be extrapolated to roughly $600 after the remaining Time packs are printed. A complete set (single copy of every card, not a playset) for the current Standard format of Magic range between $180 and $250. There are currently eight sets in that format. The $600 price tag on Ashes seems like quite a discount by comparison. Obviously the full set only applies to collectors. If you are only interested in playing, the average cost of a Standard Magic deck was $247 in 2021. Pokemon and YuGiOh were a little cheaper at between $100 and $200. Though they have the added incentive of different rarities of the same cards that can make those same decks cost upwards of $500 if you like the bling factor. So you could get into Standard for half the price of Ashes if you only want to play that one deck and then your biggest enemy becomes the rotation. As Standard rotates set out, you will need to reinvest into the format again if you plan to continue to play. You don’t have to do that very many times to make your investment into Ashes look pretty good. That’s why I think we are a long way

from Ashes needing a rotation to reduce cost as a barrier of entry.

Jarod

A central component to Ashes is the idea of the Ready Spell. Something that is designed to be used every turn. So far we have 34 Summon Ready Spells and 39 Ready Spells for a total of 73. The impact of a Ready Spell combined with first fives means there is less variance AND it removes the need of multiple reiterations of cards that do similar things. I present the idea that one Ready Spell is just as impactful as one card in EACH set if not more. So 73 times 6 is 438.

Bringing the grand total down to 362 individual cards. For a game that sells millions. Has dozens of designers. And countless playtesters. All of a sudden, rotating at 270 cards doesn’t look too bad does it?



Neil

The other, and more important factor in rotation is the gameplay of the current format. Is that gameplay fun and fresh? And is there anything going on that is warping the game? Starting from the top, fun is probably too subjective to actually define. Let’s be honest, you wouldn’t be reading this if you didn’t find the game fun. I think fresh is a much better identifier of when we need to start thinking about rotation. We have been running competitive events regularly for over a year now and we are only recently starting to see recurring archetypes in the top cuts of both ShuffleBus and AIL tournaments. It took two full seasons of ShuffleBus before people started to narrow down the card evaluations for the Orrick and Lulu expansions. If that trend continues, we should see new decks in the format until at least three months after the last two time expansions are released. But I believe that there will be a much longer life of interesting decks beyond that time with the 40 new cards in the pool. We lived off just the base set for a long time before Jericho was released. The last consideration is format warping cards or combinations. The current chained list is the tool of choice to solve these issues and I see no reason that rotation would be needed instead of or alongside chaining.

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