

Intro

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Mike Fouchet; HS battletag is Magnechu. I have played HS since base set and have been as high as Rank 2 legend in constructed. I played Masters Tour Vegas last year, but haven't been very involved in the competitive scene past that. I have played the Pokemon Trading Card Game for a long time and have played in the World Championships for that game many times.

I have been playing Battlegrounds a lot since it went into open beta and am currently around 10k MMR. Never playing an autobattler game before, I went from 4k to 6k pretty easily and then got stuck for awhile. Once I got to 7k, I cruised to 9k without too much difficulty. 9k - 10k was hard as well.

I used to write articles for Pokemon quite often and felt like getting my thoughts down for this since I put so much time into it and it doesn't seem like there is a lot of written content for Battlegrounds. So, without further adieu...

Key:

- T# = turn #. I also refer to turns sometimes by the amount of gold you have.
- HP = Hero Power

Basic, not necessarily obvious, things to know:

- The player with the most minions attacks first. If you are equal, it is random.
- There is a shared pool of minions for everyone. That means if one of your opponents has a Mecharoo for example, there is one less Mecharoo for everyone else to get. There is a predetermined amount of each minion based on their tier level.
 - **Tier 1:** 18 copies
 - **Tier 2:** 15 copies
 - **Tier 3:** 13 copies
 - **Tier 4:** 11 copies
 - **Tier 5:** 9 copies
 - **Tier 6:** 6 copies
- If you have a triple, it counts as 3 copies until you sell it back to the tavern.
- The player you play against is completely random, but you cannot play the same person twice (unless it is the finals).
- You can get a lot of info by looking at the sidebar of other players:
 - The indented hero is the one you will play next round
 - You can see their tier level and if you pay attention during recruitment, you can see if they leveled that turn. This is extremely useful information, because if they level then it is safer for you to level that turn as well.
 - The next icon is how many tripled up minions that player has gotten this game.

- The fire icon is how many wins they have in a row.
- Finally, you can see their last three fights.
- These are all indicators of how strong your opponent is, so they are good to keep an eye on throughout the game.
- In particular, if you are against a dead opponent, you are more open to do some riskier plays, such as level up or use your gold to roll for specific minions.

General turn-by-turn strategy

There are exceptions to these, but look at the hero section for more details on individual heroes and their exceptions.

- Turn 1
 - Buy the best minion to not take damage on T1 and T2
 - In order: Murloc Tidehunter, Alleycat, Rockpool Hunter, Voidwalker, Mecharoo, Righteous Protector, Vulgar Homunculus, Dire Wolf, Micro Machine, Murloc Tidecaller, Selfless Hero, Wrath Weaver
 - I got some questions on Homunculus: I thought it was great when I first started, but now I don't buy it as often. The reason is you usually just want a minion on T1 that will trade with tokens, as that is what almost everyone is going for. This ensures you don't take damage and can then sell the minion for two more things on T3. Homunculus essentially reads "lose a battle on T1/2 immediately." Then, depending on your matchup, you might even lose again! (Yogg, Rafaam, Curator, Bartendotron can often beat you). It then feels bad to sell the 2/4 to get two minions, so you usually just buy one. He is better to pick with something like Rafaam or Bartendotron, as they won't need to sell the body early on. I don't hate picking it otherwise, but don't love it as much as I used to. Feel free to pick it over Mecharoo, Protector, Voidwalker, but definitely the other 3 are better.
- Turn 2
 - Level up. There are very few reasons to not level up on T2 with most heroes. Not leveling up on T2 means you can fall pretty far behind in leveling, as on T3 you cannot buy and level unless you sell a minion...which kind of defeats the point of wanting to not level on T2.
 - Notable exceptions (note this is not exhaustive):
 - Rafaam always stays on Tier 1 for a bit; discussed further in his hero section
 - Double Wrath Weaver on the first roll or Weaver + a Demon is considerable to keep and buy on T2.
 - Bartendotron is pretty solid to not level up, since on T3 you can level up and buy another minion and his HP makes it so that you don't actually fall behind in leveling.
 - Yogg can grab a token on T1 or T2 and then sell a token to use the HP. Then T3 you can level + HP.
- Turn 3
 - Sell your T1 minion and buy the best two minions

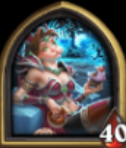
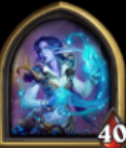
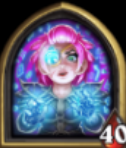
- If all the minions suck (or even if only one good), it's fine to roll once or twice to find a better minion and hopefully find a board to freeze for next turn. This is especially true if you took something like Homunculus or Rockpool, as they have decent stats. If you have a hero with a 1 gold HP, you can use it sometimes.
- Turn 4
 - Buy the best two minions. Sometimes the minions suck and you want to roll and sell something to get two minions on the next roll, but this is quite rare, as you want to maximize your gold usage and not fall too far behind on your board.
- Turn 5
 - Almost always level and buy the best minion or roll once and then buy the best minion (only possible usually if you have a token ready to sell)
 - If you took a lot of damage turns 1-4 you may want to just buy two more minions. A late game hero like George or Nefarian may also want to consider this more highly as you want to ensure you get to the late game.
 - The more I play the more I find myself deviating from this a higher percentage of the time. I still probably level this turn about 60-70% of the time, but 30-40% is significant so I wanted to update this thought.
 - Notable exceptions:
 - Bartendotron, Lic, and Rafaam can buy two minions and catch up on leveling since they get extra value to level through their HP as the game progresses
 - Edwin can buy two minions and use his HP for +2/2
 - AFK is behind on leveling and may or may not want to catch up leveling here; depends on their rolls and their board from the past two turns
- Turn 6
 - Usually buying the best two tier minions and using the extra two gold to roll for good stuff. Sometimes you can leverage the two gold and sell a minion and just buy three things, but usually you don't see three minions worth buying right off the bat.
 - If you didn't level last turn, you'll almost always want to level this turn, otherwise you'll fall pretty far behind in leveling.
 - If you are far ahead (often with Yogg), you can actually level to 4 on this turn.
- Turn 7
 - Ideally you want to buy a minion and level to Tier 4, but this is often where strategies start to diverge. If you're behind or even in the middle of the pack you want to spend another turn or two building up your board so you don't take too much damage.
 - This is the most important turn to see if your opponent is leveling or not, as if you level and they do not you could easily take around 10 damage.
 - The most powerful thing you can do is get a triple and level up so you see a Tier 5 minion. This either gives you immediate direction or at the very least a strong minion if you are weak.
- Turns 8 - 12

- This is the midgame where you want to start deciding on a direction if you haven't yet.
- I tend to stay on Tier 4 for a long time and look for triples to get Tier 5 minions. Brann, Baron, Lightfang, and to a lesser extent Godrin and King Bagurgle can give you a direction to go.
- I'll level to Tier 5 only if I feel comfortable with my board and the battle that I have, that I will win or at least not take too much damage.
- It's easy to transition into Mechs or Beasts during this time even if you have none of them. A single Cobalt is often worth transitioning to Mechs for.
- Demons and Murlocs are usually too late to get into at this stage.
- Common end game comps to look for:
 - Brann + anything
 - Mechs with double Cobalts
 - Mechs without Cobalts can work as well
 - Deathrattle w/ Baron
 - Mechs are most common
 - "Menagerie" works here - some Bombs, Mechano Egg, with other strong minions like Hydra
 - Beasts with Godrin
 - Lightfang Menagerie
 - Big Demons
 - Soul Juggler Demons
 - Mama Bear/Hyena Beasts
 - Murlocs
- The rest of the game
 - Look for buffs on your minions
 - Look for triples
 - Don't be afraid to spend some of your late turns just continually rolling, as just getting other minions usually doesn't advance your comp that much in the late game. Tripling up is really where you gain a lot of value, especially on minions with Deathrattles or effects. They also get you the Tier 6 minions which are strong and a board of a few of them plus other strong things can often compete with a more synergistic comp just because of how powerful they are.
 - Leveling to Tier 6 is something I don't do most games, but does happen sometimes when your board is already very strong and you aren't looking for much. Murlocs and Deathrattle comps have a larger incentive to push for Tier 6, since they can get Megasaur or the powerful Deathrattle minions.

General/Random Tips

- Don't commit too hard to any single strategy early. The early game is all about getting the most stats on the field and keeping your life total high enough to make it to the mid and late game. Transitions to different strategies can take a few turns, and you do need to identify where you're going at some point, but even just a random assortment of powerful minions can get you pretty far.
- Microbots are really strong to break ties. There are lots of fights where it comes down to the last two minions fighting and if one has microbots, then you win and get to deal damage. This is especially true in the late game.
- That said, don't worry about damaging your opponent as much as not dying yourself.
- Leveling is all about minimizing damage to yourself. I consider it a huge win if I don't take damage on the turn that I level. Don't force leveling if you are weak, especially when going for the level up to Tier 4 or 5.
- Annoy-o-Module is one of the most important minions in the game to get for a lot of comps. Anything except pure Demons/Beasts/Murlocs will want some big Divine Shield minion, so Annoy-o-Module lets you make anything into a big Divine Shield boy. Some of my most common targets are Piloted Sky Golem, Mechano Egg, and Kaboom Bot. When I triple up early and get a Tier 4 minion, I almost always pick Annoy-o-Module, even if I don't have a great target immediately. Also remember as Deryl you can dance onto this and make a current weak minion very strong.
- Current meta thoughts:
 - I think Mechs are the most consistent way to make it to Top 4, as Cobalt Guardian is very strong and there are lots of copies since it is Tier 3. In general, there are a lot of strong Mechs, making it easy for multiple players to go for them. Mechs also synergize with Deathrattle very well compared to other tribes, and Baron got much stronger with the shifting Tier 5 minions.
 - Murlocs got much, much weaker with the move of Coldlight Seer to Tier 3, as you see it less often and your early game is much weaker. Murlocs are still the strongest endgame comp if you can get there, but I haven't had much success with them recently.
 - Demons are strong, but there are so many less Demons than other tribes that if more than two people are going for Demons, it will be hard to get the things you want.
 - Beasts are fairly good, but a bit inconsistent. Finding Godrin or Mama Bear is very important. You can usually do well in the early game with Rat Pack + Hyena + Pack Leader, but the midgame can be difficult until you find your big minions.

Tier List

S								
A								
B								
C								
D								

12/29 updated thoughts: Rafam maybe bottom of Tier S. Could rearrange things to be more spread out: Curator, AFK, Secret Guy, Bartendotron, Lich King all feel around the same power level to me at Tier A. George, Elise, Rat King, Sindra, Lic, Patchwerk would be the new Tier B. Tier C would look like Shudderwock, Rag, Toki, and maybe Sylv and Jaraxxus. Tier D would be the rest.

Tips on the Heroes

Tier S heroes

You should be expecting to make Top 4 or win with any of these heroes. When I don't I consider myself unlucky and of course look for things I could've done differently, because there are a lot of decision points with these heroes.

- **Deryl**

- Hardest hero to play. Wouldn't recommend playing him much differently from a normal hero until you get the hang of the game. He's also the best hero because you can turn any minion into a good minion and therefore you are less reliant on getting lucky rolls.
- Freeze a minion you want, buy other minions. Next turn buy all the other minions and "dance" on the minion you want. Can do this multiple turns to make it really big, but often run out of time to do it too big.
- Generally you want to target things with Divine Shield, Cobalt Guardian, or Cave Hydra.
- I tend to get to Tier 4 and stay there. Other people like to stay at Tier 3, but I don't think the Tier 3 minions are strong enough on average. You get Annoy-o-Module and Cave Hydra at Tier 4, which are two of the strongest things to dance on.

- **Yogg**

- Use your hero power a lot early game:
 - Always on T1: use it if 2/3 of the options are good; reroll then use it if not
 - Always on T3: HP first and then buy the 2nd best minion
 - Often on T4 you will use your HP and get a reroll. You don't get to choose the minion, but the extra stats that early are nice if your odds of getting a decent minion are good.
- After T4 you use it sometimes turns 5 - 8 if you don't care too much about which minion you get and just want extra stats.
- After T8 you usually won't HP much unless you just have extra 2 mana left and it makes sense to just grab a minion and use it for the gold later rather than 2 rerolls.
- An alternate line of play on T2: if you see a token minion, you can buy it, sell the token, and use your HP. Then level + HP on T3.

- **Nefarian**

- Nefarian has one goal: stay alive. If you stay alive you are heavily favored in the late game, pretty much regardless of your comp. Your opponent's comp matters

more: your HP is great vs Murlocs and Mechs and random Divine Shields, but not great vs Beasts or Demons.

- As you're in the midgame, remember to save a gold for your HP instead of an extra reroll. Especially in the midgame, a lot of people have Divine Shields to help them get through, regardless of what comp they ultimately aim for. Nefarian takes advantage of this and you can win battles you would get crushed otherwise.
- One important thing to note is that with the rise of big demons as a formidable comp, Nefarian gets a bit worse, as your HP does nothing against them.

- **Edwin**

- Probably my favorite hero to play, Edwin plays a lot like Deryl, just toned down a bit. You have more control of your targets and you need to spend a gold, so similarly to Nefarian make sure you save a gold in the midgame (but don't feel pressured to use it every turn if you need to use all your gold to buy good minions).
- Early game you can make use of your HP sometimes, but not all that often. A good example is if you bought a token minion on T1 you can trade it more easily for +2/2 on T3 or T4 if you get a good minion to target, like Rat Pack or something with Divine Shield. This can carry you through some early fights.
- In the mid-late game you almost always hold a gold to use the HP on something. Cave Hydra or Divine Shield minions are generally your best targets, but something like Baron can be great so it's more likely to stay alive throughout a battle.
- Many of my comps with Edwin just involve a big Hydra and then a bunch of other solid minions and this is enough to get to Top 4.

Tier A heroes

These are all solid picks, and would recommend them over the Tier B heroes, but they can easily not make Top 4 because they are more random than the S heroes.

- **Rafaam**

- Rafaam is one of the more unique heroes to play. He can be kind of high roll depending on what you get from your opponent and he is also better at lower ranks, as weaker players tend to play around him less/worse. Getting triples of minions like Kaboom Bot and Spawn of N'Zoth can be pretty easy depending on who you play against and what you roll yourself.
- Generally you want to buy a minion on T1 and then buy another minion and HP on T2. T3 is dependent on what you get, but you can either level + buy + sell + HP (or not sell and not HP); or just level + HP + reroll. After T3 the game starts opening up a bit more, but you usually have a gold to use the HP and it's pretty

useful until around 10 gold. As the game progresses past that it gets increasingly less useful, so don't feel the need to spam it too much.

- **AFK**

- AFK is also a unique hero. One obvious tip is freezing a token minion on T1 and T2 if you see it, so you can buy it and sell the token to level up (or buy another minion, but usually level up).
- Ideally you hit some good pairs of things in your two cards, but it's very luck-based. Cobalt is the best thing you can hit by a lot, ideally with another mech. Double Floating Watcher is pretty great as well.
- Not too much more to say. After the first couple of turns you play normally. Don't worry too much about making your comp revolve around the first two minions you get from your boxes, just use them to have more stats than other people for T3-6.

- **The Curator**

- Curator got a lot of hype when Amalgam got deleted as the best hero in the game, but I don't think he's as good as people think. He might even be B tier with the next group. The extra 1/1 is good in the first few turns, but it's hard to buff the Amalgam enough until much later in the game. And other peoples' HP can carry them a lot more than you in the early and midgame.
- Rockpool is the best minion to pick T1 usually, as you make your Amalgam a threat in the early game. I still usually pick Tidecaller over Rockpool, but Rockpool over Alleycat.
- Generally you want to play normally and eventually get your Amalgam to have Divine Shield + Poisonous, regardless of your comp. Remember that the Amalgam will give buffs to things like Scavenging Hyena.

Tier B Heroes

These are all pretty good heroes but their HPs are just a little bit weaker than S/A. They can easily win and Top 4, but generally need to get a little bit luckier throughout a game. I'm never too sad to pick any of these, but always pick the above heroes before them (except Curator recently). But they are WAY better than the D heroes.

- **George**
 - George is best used with a tribe that can't get Divine Shield naturally, namely Beasts and Demons. But don't be afraid to go Mechs if you have George, better to go with the flow than force value out of your HP. In general, using 4 mana to make a Divine Shield is expensive but can be worth doing in the midgame on a minion you think you'll keep around for awhile. This can also be more powerful than just rerolling and looking for a particular minion.
- **Lich Baz'hial**
 - Generally I'll tap until I'm around 20-25 health. Use your extra gold to fill your board faster and out-tempo your opponents - do not use it to rapidly level up. You'll be able to catch up once your board is bigger and you can safely level without getting hit hard.
 - Alternatively, you just play normally and use your HP occasionally to fill out a good turn. T3 would be a good example, where you can keep your initial minion(s) and still buy two minions. I kind of like this strategy more, as it kills you less while still leveraging the HP at key times.
 - Obviously she is strong with Floating Watcher, but don't force it.
- **Bartendotron**
 - Similar to Lic, your HP is great because you can spend extra turns building a bigger board and still catch up with leveling later on. I generally don't level to 3 on T4 and instead buy two minions. Then on 8 gold you can level and buy two or three minions.
 - Another way I have seen people play Bartendotron recently is to level up to tier 3 very quickly (on 6 gold) and get a crack at the tier 3 minions early. This seems fine, but I haven't tried it.
- **Secret Guy**
 - Making a secret on 5 gold is usually fine if you don't have two minions you want to buy or you have something the 2/4 demon that is pretty well-statted already.
 - You want to start making a secret every turn once you get a few turns past 10 gold to ensure you have an Ice Block up and then Splitting Image/Autodefense Matrix are pretty strong to add to your board as the game progresses.
- **Elise**
 - Elise is cool because she is a consistency hero. If you don't see two good minions on T3 you can use the Map to give yourself a good thing. If you're going to do this, use the Map first so you can find something synergistic with what you

are naturally offered. On T5 you can level to 3 and immediately grab a tier 3 minion, which can be great to find a Cobalt or Floating Watcher. Otherwise you kind of just use them when you want to find a triple or have been rolling for something and have 3 mana and want to find something decent.

- **Lich King**

- Pretty obvious, but Deathrattles are the best with Lich King. Putting Reborn on a Baron is a good way to ensure you get value off of it. Divine Shield Taunts like Psychotron are pretty strong in the midgame as well. Note that if you put Reborn on something with a Deathrattle and your board is full when it dies, you won't get the Reborn minion back, so you usually want to not Taunt your Reborn minion.

- **Sindragosa**

- Buy a minion on T1 and freeze. Level up and freeze. Buy the frozen minions. Sometimes you freeze again if you want the other things that are there, sometimes you don't. After that, you're never looking to get value out of your HP. You'll obviously freeze things you want to save, but the +1/1 is just a nice addition from there on out.

- **Rat King**

- The old Rat King was way better - the loss of +1 Health is a big deal. Nothing too special here - buy minions that are good with your HP that turn. Unless they suck in general - don't force your HP.

Tier C heroes

These two are just a little worse than the B heroes.

- **Patchwerk**

- I'm actually not sure if Patchwerk is worse than the bottom half of Tier B - he might be better than Rat King and Sindragosa in particular. Obviously much worse than the old +20 health he had, but an extra 10 health can still be pretty relevant in ensuring you stay alive long enough to get Top 4. Just don't try to play differently - play normal and just have the extra buffer.

- **Shudderwock**

- I don't really like Shudderwock, but his HP is better than all the D heroes without a doubt. If you can get a bunch of early Pogoes, I like the strategy of staying at Tier 2 for awhile and getting some big bunny boys. You don't get this all that often though, so just play normally and get value when you can. You can use the HP early to get a triple with the tokens if you want.

Tier D heroes

I'm not going to talk about these because they suck and you shouldn't have to play them very often, especially if you can pick between three heroes. Rag is definitely the best one; Toki and Manastorm are okay, Sylvanas can be okay. Jaraxxus, Finley, and Togwaggle are truly the worst.

(Potential) Future Updates / Works in Progress

- Positioning Advice / dealing with opponent's strategies
 - Early Game
 - Positioning doesn't matter too much in the early game, but if you know stuff about what your opponent has, you should use that knowledge to your advantage. For example, something that comes up often is you know someone has Homunculus by looking at their history and seeing they haven't taken damage from other people but are at 38 health. Especially on T3/4, you can use this to know that you should put a 4 attack minion (if you have it) first, so you can trade cleanly into it.
 - Generally, you want to order your minions with the highest attack all the way on the left and then put them in decreasing order from there.
 - Mid Game
 - The biggest thing to think about is what their Taunt minions look like - how many do they have and how big they are. It's easy to take a lot more damage than you need to if you don't account for this.
 -
 - Late Game
 - If you're in the finals and play more than one round against your opponent, you probably want to change your positioning in some way, even if it was favorable for you the first time around. Your opponent will want to change their positioning, so you should try and predict what they will do and act accordingly. A simple example is to move around where your Cleave minion - if you had it first before, now move it to second or third.
 - Vs specific heroes

- **Nefarian** - Account for his HP. Most importantly, if you are a Cobalt Guardian comp, you put the Cobalts back instead of up front: this allows your Divine Shields to reactive.
 - **Rafaam** - Try not to give him the good stuff. I've seen Rafaams get Branns and Lightfangs and it's usually bad news. Sometimes you can't help and it is RNG, but do your best. Early game try not to put Spawn of N'Zoths first. Spawn and Kaboom Bots are often easy triples for Rafaam if the other players aren't paying attention.
 - **Deryl** - Be prepared for big Divine Shields at any stage of the game and plan accordingly.
 - **AFK** - On T3 if you play AFK (I know, FeelsBadMan), put something to pop a Divine Shield if they pulled Psychotron.
- Tier list of comps
 - **Murlocs**, if you can get there, is still the strongest comp. With Coldlight Seer at Tier 3, though, it is much riskier and harder to pull off consistently. The best way I've found is actually to transition to it later by grabbing Brann and the Discover a Murloc. If your board is solid enough (with Deryl for example), you can buy enough Murloc things to have a big transition turn.
 - **Mechs** are the most consistent to get, as they have the most minions in the pool. They have varying strategies, many of which overlap with some of the strong, direction cards (Brann, Baron).
 - **Demons** have been on the rise and are quite strong. They don't suffer from Cleave or Nefarian's HP that much, so it makes them different to counter than most other comps. The trouble with Demons is twofold: 1) You can't get into them too late, because their strength comes with being snowbally for as long as possible. The latest I've gone into Demons is on the 8 gold turn. 2) If you take too much damage in the early game, you have a hard cap on how big your Wrath Weaver/Floating Watchers can get, as you literally can't take more damage.
 - **Beasts** are fairly strong throughout the game, but the tricky part is transitioning from the early/mid game to the late game, as your comps in each look quite different. Early game you want to focus on Rat Pack/Scavenging Hyena/Pack Leader to help you win early fights. As the game progresses you want to start getting Godrin, Baron, and Mama Bear. The Rat Pack/Hyena/Pack Leader all become quite weak later on, even if they are golden. Cave Hydra becomes very important usually.
 - **Baron** comps take the form of Beasts, as described above, or a lot of other forms
- Tier D hero descriptions
- When to delay a triple
- Transitioning in/out of comps
 - This is a tough concept to quantify, because it's so fluid and changes from game to game. There are some games where you don't even end up on a "traditional" or "cohesive" comp and just go for big things

- Example: I had a game where I had Hyena and tripled up my Alleycat into a Godrin. I was like 'okay, we're going Beasts.' But then next turn I rolled 4 times and didn't see a single beast or the 3/3 buff beast guy, but I ran into a Cobalt+Leper (and I had a Harvest Golem on field from early game). So I bought those and within the next turn had transitioned into Mechs, selling the all of the beasts within two turns. I ended up getting 2nd. I think if I had just kept rolling for beasts I would have lost earlier.