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Table of Contents

[0. Overview](#)

[0.1 Contact](#)

[1. Schedule](#)

[1.1 Qualifier](#)

[1.2 Main Event](#)

[2. Match Settings](#)

[Qualifier](#)

[2.1 Best of 5](#)

[2.2.2 Best of 7](#)

[3. Maps](#)

[5. Tournament Rules](#)

[5.1 Participation & Seeding](#)

[5.2 Game & Patch](#)

[5.3 Respect, Cooperation & Punctuality](#)

[5.4 Civilizations](#)

[5.5 Game Rules](#)

[6. Lobby Settings](#)

[6.1 Pre-Lobby Settings](#)

[6.2 Lobby Settings](#)

[7. Prize Pool](#)

[8. Event Coverage - All Coverage](#)

[8.1. Players](#)

[8.2. Casters](#)

[9. Assets](#)

[10. Changelog](#)

0. Overview

All participants, players or broadcasters, must join the [Discord here](#) to participate in the event.

Hidden Cup is back with the 5th Edition coming January - March 2024!

The quarterfinalists from [Hidden Cup IV](#) are invited back once again, all but BacT have accepted their invites, and will be joined by 9 players advancing from the qualifier.

The qualifiers will be a 96-player single elimination bracket leading to 6 qualified players, with a 2nd chance round for the 6 losing players from the Round of 12, to determine the final 3 qualified players.

0.1 Contact

For any questions or inquiries regarding the event, please read the handbook and ask in [Discord](#). If you cannot find an answer please reach out.

Main Admin: JBR

- Discord: jbr1989
- Steam: https://steamcommunity.com/id/jbr_aoe/

Main Admin: robo

- Discord: robo_boro
- Steam: https://steamcommunity.com/id/robo_boro/

1. Schedule

1.1 Qualifier

Sign-Ups Close: January 20th 23:59GMT

Round of 96: Jan 21st - Jan 26th

Round of 48: Jan 27th - Jan 31st

Round of 24: Feb 01st - Feb 05th

Round of 12: Feb 06th - Feb 10th

Round of 6: Feb 11th

Ro12 & Ro6 Matches will be broadcast on Friday - Sunday but may be played privately ahead of time.

1.2 Main Event

Round of 16: Feb 21st 14GMT

Quarterfinals: Feb 23rd 14GMT

Semifinals: March 02nd

Final & 3rd place: March 03rd

1.3 Broadcast Schedule

1.3.1 Qualifier

Round of 96: Jan 21st - Jan 26th

Round of 48: Jan 27th - Jan 31st

Round of 24: Feb 01st - Feb 05th

Round of 12: Feb 09th - Feb 10th

Round of 6: Feb 11th

Games start each day at 14GMT for the Ro12 & Ro6

1.3.2 Main Event

Ro16: Feb 25th - Feb 28th

Quarterfinals: Feb 29th - Mar 01st

Semifinals: Mar 02nd

Final & 3rd place: Mar 03rd

Broadcast starts each day at 15GMT

2. Match Settings

2.1 Qualifier

2.1.1 Best of 3

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The higher seeded player may decide if they wish to be A or B in the draft. They must be the same for both drafts.

Map Draft:

A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, Remaining map

Civ Draft:

A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

2.1.2 Best of 5

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 4: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 5: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The higher seeded player may decide if they wish to be A or B in the draft. They must be the same for both drafts.

Map Draft:

A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, Remaining map

Civ Draft:

A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

2.1.3 Best of 7

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 4: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 5: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 6: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 7: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The higher seeded player may decide if they wish to be A or B in the draft. They must be the same for both drafts.

Map Draft:

A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, Remaining map

Civ Draft:

A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

2.2 Main Event

Round of 16 - Bo7

Quarterfinals - Bo7

Semifinals - Bo7

3rd Place - Bo5

Grand Final - Bo7

2.2.1 Best of 5

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 4: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 5: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The top player in the bracket will be A (host) in both drafts.

Map Draft: A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**,
Remaining map

Civ Draft: A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban** Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

2.2.2 Best of 7

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 4: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 5: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 6: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 7: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The top player in the bracket will be A (host) in both drafts.

Map Draft: A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**,
Remaining map

Civ Draft: A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban** Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

2.2.3 Best of 9 (no longer used)

Game 1: Remaining map after the draft

Game 2: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 3: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 4: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

Game 5: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map
Game 6: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map
Game 7: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map
Game 8: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map
Game 9: Loser of previous game picks any remaining home map

The top player in the bracket will be A (host) in both drafts.

Map Draft: A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**,
Remaining map

Civ Draft: A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban**, B **Ban**, A **Ban**, A **Ban**, B **Ban** Hidden **Pick** each, B **Pick**, A **Pick**, A **Pick**, B **Pick**, etc.

3. Map Pool

The official selection of maps to be used for the event. The map pack can be acquired by subscribing to the map mod using this link or by searching for “Hidden Cup 5 Maps” in the in-game mod workshop.

The map pack is edited and maintained by T-West.

3.1 Qualifier Maps

Arabia

Cross

Gold Rush

Islands

Mudflow - *By Chrazini*

Quarry - *By HenkDeSuperNerd*

Slopes - *By AlgernonR*

3.2 Main Event Maps

Bay - *By AlgernonR*

Bypass - *By Chrazini*

Cup - *by HenkDeSuperNerd*

Evacuation - *By HenkDeSuperNerd*

Hidden Forts - *By YoungPanda*

High Tides - *By AlgernonR*

In addition to the existing Qualifier Maps.

4. Tournament Rules

- A. The tournament administration reserves the right to amend, remove or otherwise change the rules at any time.
 - a. Any modifications or additions will be listed on the last page of the handbook.
 - b. The tournament administration reserves the right to judge and act on cases not explicitly covered by the handbook.

5.1 Participation & Seeding

- A. All players must sign up [here](#) and join the [Discord here](#) to participate in Hidden Cup V. All communication will be conducted there.
 - a. Participants accept all rules and settings stated in this handbook by participating in the tournament.
- B. Players must play with a nickname that is pronounceable in English and that is not offensive for the duration of the tournament.
- C. Participants are allowed to utilise an operator throughout the event.
 - a. The operator will be responsible for communicating on behalf of the player, and the operator must be available at all times when the player is expected to be.
- D. For the qualifiers, the first 48 spots will go to the 48 highest players on the [ATP](#) rankings who sign up. They will be seeded according to ATP order. The remaining 48 will be seeded using an average of their current and highest in-game Elo.
- E. The main event will be random seeding.

5.2 Game & Patch

- A. Participants must own a copy of Age of Empires II:Definitive Edition, and it is recommended to own all currently released expansions.
- B. For the main event, players will be giving accounts to use that will have all of the expansions. Players MUST use these accounts only for the tournament sets.
- C. If there is a game patch during the event a decision will be made whether to remain on the old patch or switch to the new one.

5.3 Respect, Cooperation & Punctuality

- A. All participants, broadcasters & administrators are expected to show good sportsmanship and be respectful of all other parties at all times. Poor behaviour including but not limited to insults, racism or sexism will not be tolerated.
- B. Players must use the account they registered with to play their games.
- C. All qualifier participants are expected to communicate via the prescribed channels on Discord in a timely fashion - including using @ to tag your opponent in regards to important information.
- D. Players should contact their opponents at their earliest convenience and suggest times and days when they are available (not just asking "When can you play?"). These times should be specific.
- E. All players are expected to schedule their matches during the prescribed timeframes to the best of their ability.
 - a. Should players believe they are unable to do so, they must request an exception as soon as possible.
 - b. Players must provide at least 24 hours notice of when their match will be played.

- F. Players are expected to have completed the map & civ drafts and begun the first game within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time.
 - a. Players will receive a warning after 15 minutes.
 - b. Players will receive an admin loss for the set if they have not arrived after 30 minutes.
 - c. Receiving multiple warnings may result in disqualification from the event.
- G. All information pertaining to the match must be posted in the Discord scheduling channel. That includes map & civ drafts, lobby codes, notification if there are any delays & recorded games after the match.

5.4 Civilizations

- A. Players may not repeat any of their drafted civilizations.
 - a. Should a player start a game with a civ that they do not have access to, their opponent may choose which of their remaining civs they play as.

5.5 Game Rules

- A. Players may only restart a game if there is some issue with the game, a map bug, an incorrect civ is chosen, or at an Admin's direction. There are no restarts for bad maps or starts.
- B. Players are permitted to do any laming that the game allows, including, but not limited to, walling in resources, blocking or killing villagers and killing enemy herdable or wild animals.
- C. Players must only pause a game if they, or their opponents, are experiencing severe issues that are directly affecting the game and their ability to play.
 - a. Using a pause to take a break, visiting the toilet, smoking or anything else nontechnical is strictly forbidden.
 - b. An administrator can order a pause at any time for any reason.
 - c. Unless paused by the administration, players must immediately inform an administrator of the situation and issues they face.
- D. Intentionally utilising any bugs, glitches or errors in the game is not allowed.
 - a. In instances where bugs are utilised, the administration will decide whether the match should be restarted or not.
 - b. Contact the tournament administration for any uncertainty about whether something is considered an exploit.

5.6 Hidden Aspect

- A. In the main event, all players will play the Round of 16 & Quarterfinal matches at the same time, on Wednesday 21st & Friday 23rd February.
 - a. Players who are eliminated in the Ro16 must not be online/streaming/visible on the spectator dashboard during the Quarterfinal playtime to avoid revealing who is not playing.
- B. Players must not reveal to anyone which hidden account they are using and must not reveal if/when they are eliminated from the tournament.

6. Lobby Settings

Both players are equally responsible for making sure the lobby settings are correct.
Wrong settings may result in a game being replayed.

6.1 Pre-Lobby Settings

- Lobby Name: HC5 Qualifier [Player vs Player]
- Lobby Type: Unranked
- Visibility: Public (Private for recorded games)
- Players: 3+ (to allow admins to join if necessary)
- Set Password: [Optional]
- Allow Spectators: [☒] Yes
- Hide Civilizations: [☒] Yes
- Spectator Delay: 2 Minutes
- Server: To be Decided
- Data Mod: Definitive Set

Main Event games will be played privately unless otherwise specified.

6.2 Lobby Settings

- Data mod: Definitive set
- Game mode: Random map
- Map style: Custom
- Location: [map name]
- Map size: Tiny (2 player)
- AI Difficulty: Standard
- Resources: Standard
- Population: 200
- Game Speed: Normal
- Reveal Map: Normal
- Starting Age: Standard
- Ending Age: Standard
- Victory Condition: Conquest

- **Team Settings**

- Lock Teams: [☒] Yes
- Team Together: [☒] Yes
- Team Positions: [☐] No
- Shared Exploration: [☐] No
- Handicap: [☐] No

- **Advanced Settings**

- Lock Speed: [☒] Yes
- Allow Cheats: [☐] No
- All Techs: [☐] No
- Turbo Mode: [☐] No
- Full Tech Tree: [☐] No
- Empire Wars Mode: [☐] No
- Sudden Death Mode: [☐] No
- Regicide Mode: [☐] No
- Record Game: [☒] Yes

7. Prize Pool

To be eligible for prize payouts players must complete all of the following.

- A. All games must be completed within the prescribed schedule.
- B. All recorded games & drafts must have been shared in the discord channel.
- C. Players must complete an invoice within one (1) month of the end of the tournament.
Details will be shared at the appropriate time.

Total prize pool is \$59,999 USD (50% of all donations to T90Official during HC5 will go to the prizepool)

Main Event - \$50,000

1st = \$10,025
2nd = \$6,625
3rd = \$4,625
4th = \$3,625
5-8th = \$2,625
9-16th = \$1,825

Qualifier - \$9,999

1-9th = Qualified
10-12th = \$633
13-24th = \$375
25-48th = \$150

8. Event Coverage - All Coverage

- A. All broadcasters (including players) must [register here](#) their intention to stream any games so that they can be given access to the appropriate Discord channels.
- B. All broadcasting must include the tournament banner/logo before, after and in between tournament games. It's found in the #broadcaster-resources channel on Discord.
- C. The tournament logo must be visible at all times while in-game.
- D. All broadcasters must add a custom chat command mentioning the sponsor, & linking to the hosts stream & the announcement post or Liquipedia.
 - a. Example text: !HC5 = Hidden Cup 5 is hosted by T90Official (twitch.tv/T90Official) & sponsored by Microsoft. You can read more about it here - https://liquipedia.net/ageofempires/Hidden_Cup/5 .
- E. Qualifiers will be broadcast as they are scheduled. If there are overlaps spoiler free recorded games will be provided in the discord.

- a. The Ro12 & Ro6 qualifying matches will be spaced out so that there are no overlaps, using recorded games as necessary.
- F. The Main Event will be broadcast from Feb 25th - Mar 03rd primarily with recorded games except for the 1st semifinal, the Grand Final & 3rd place matches.
- G. Content creators are free to upload videos to video-sharing platforms at their convenience. Games will be either available live or released alongside the main stream where they are being played in advance.
 - a. When uploading gameplay from this event to other video sharing platforms, it must be clear, by using the title or description, who the tournament's host is and what event it comes from.
 - b. There must always be a direct clickable link to the official YouTube channel of the host (<https://www.youtube.com/c/T90Official>) in the description.
 - c. YouTube uploads or live streams of the Semifinals & Final matches may not include the names or likenesses of the involved players in the title or thumbnail until 2 weeks after the match was played.

8.1. Players

- A. Qualifier players will be given a large degree of flexibility over scheduling for most rounds.
 - a. If Ro12 & Ro6 matches are unable to be played in an available slot, they may play private games, with no pov streaming allowed and the recorded games will be broadcast at another time.
- B. Players must use a two-minute stream delay. .
 - a. The spectator delay MUST match the stream delay.
- C. Players must not have access to any information which could give an unfair advantage at any stage.
 - a. Players are not allowed to be in Discord calls of any type whilst playing a set. Players found doing this may risk disqualification.
 - b. Players streaming their games via Twitch/Facebook/YouTube/Douyu etc need to disable text-to-speech alerts and ensure that they cannot see their chat during their matches. Players gaining an advantage from this may risk disqualification.
- D. Main Event player coverage
 - a. Players may watch along with T90s stream for the Round of 16 and Quarterfinal matches to reduce the chance that there are any spoilers.
 - b. The Semifinals, Final & 3rd place match should not be broadcast to avoid revealing who has already been eliminated.

8.2. Casters

- A. If multiple qualifier matches are being played at the same time, best efforts will be made to provide casters with recorded games that are spoiler-free.
 - a. The [primary brackets](#) will not be updated live with results from matches that are not being cast live to reflect this, but Liquipedia may contain spoilers.

9. Assets

Check Discord

10. Changelog

- 07th January - v1.0 - Handbook published
- 11th February - v1.1 - Main Event Map & Civ drafts added, maps list updated with new maps
- 21st February - v1.2 - Prizepool increased to \$50,000, Grand Final reduced to a Bo7