

Tournament of the Jade Viper

A martial arts LARP
by Jack Rosetree

Once every 200 years, a martial arts tournament determines who will inherit the crown of the Jade Viper. The recipient of the crown will rule the most powerful martial arts force in the known universe. Will they be a benevolent and kind ruler or a blight on all worlds?

What You Need: A stopwatch, sticky notes (for tracking health), and a tournament bracket organizer (a mobile app, sheet of paper, or someone with the right brain for it will do).

Player Count & Brackets

Tournament of the Jade Viper is played as a modified *Rock-Paper-Scissors* tournament. How matches are resolved depends a bit on time available and player count. A single-elimination bracket handled one fight at a time is suggested for player counts below 10. For games with more time and seeking more drama, double-elimination brackets may suffice.

Character Creation

Each player chooses a motivation and a style (at the end of this document). Motivation determines why they are participating in the tournament. Style affords them some mechanical advantage in the tournament. Players should use these two aspects to inspire how they act during the tournament.

Playing Matches

Matches represent martial arts fights between two players. In addition to the two players, there is a judge with a stopwatch and the crowd (at least one other player).

Matches are played over a number of rounds. A match ends when either player runs out of health. Players begin a match with 5 health. Health can be tracked with sticky notes on each player's arm or leg.

Playing a Round

Each round one player will act as the aggressor and one as the defender. During the following round, the roles reverse. Unless another effect determines the first aggressor, the judge chooses a player to be the aggressor in the first round of a match.

A round is completed in 4 steps.

1. The defender secretly signals rock, paper, or scissors behind them such that the crowd (at least one player not in the match) can see it.
2. The aggressor throws rock, paper, or scissors openly so that the defender and the judge can see it.
3. The defender calls what they threw behind them (rock, paper, or scissors), but they may lie about it.

4. The judge immediately begins the stopwatch and calls time at 4 seconds. By that time, the aggressor must yell or grunt some variation of “hyah!” to accept the defender's call or say something dramatic (anything with words) to call the defender's bluff.
 - **If the aggressor accepted the defender's claim**, the round is resolved according to what the defender claimed (regardless of what they secretly threw). The judge declares damage accordingly.
 - **If the aggressor called the defender's bluff**, the defender reveals their secret signal. If the defender was lying, the aggressor lands a critical hit. If the defender was truthful, the defender lands a critical hit.
 - **If time runs out without the aggressor calling out something**, the round is resolved according to what the defender claimed and the defender regains a health.

Dealing Damage

After the round has been resolved, damage is dealt according to the outcome. This can be represented by removing sticky notes from the players arm or leg or simply calling out how much health they have left.

- In the event of a tie, both players take one damage. This damage cannot remove a player's last remaining health.
- A player that wins scores a hit. This deals one damage to the opposing player.
- A player that scores a critical hit deals 3 damage to the opposing player.

A player with no health has been defeated. Whether that means leaving the tournament in disgrace, waking up later in a medical tent, or final and complete death is up to the tournament organizers.

Audience Participation

Like most tournament-oriented games, the audience can have a real influence on events. They might give signals to their allies and attempt to mislead their enemies. There are no rules in the Tournament of the Jade Viper to punish such actions. However, after each round, the losing player (if there was one) may either rotate their facing off with their opponent or send one audience member from behind them to behind their opponent. The defender must always have at least one audience member behind them to confirm that they haven't changed their hidden signal.

Downtime

Players can and should communicate in character between matches. At the discretion of the tournament organizers, there may even be a specific amount of time between matches for socializing. Players that do particularly well getting into character may be rewarded with the ability to give another character a single health before a match begins, a single use of the bomb (described below), or a single bonus damage to a future hit.

Motivations

Players may make up their own motivations if they like. A player's motivation is purely cosmetic and has no direct impact on the mechanics of the game.

Bloodline: You are the progeny of the current Jade Viper. It is your belief only you deserve to be the new Jade Viper.

Vengeance: You wish to use the Jade Viper's forces to destroy Golem City, a metropolis of thieves and cutthroats.

Egotism: You are certain that you are the very best... this is the easiest way to prove it.

Heroism: A family member currently resides in the dungeons of the current Jade Viper. You hope to release them and others after winning the crown.

Celebrity: You are a famous martial arts celebrity of stage and screen. Winning this tournament will really keep up your public profile.

Accidental: You're not really sure how you got here... but it seems the martial arts gods have a plan for you.

Hunter: You're a bounty hunter, officer of the law, or private detective. You followed your mark here and you intend to bring them back with you.

Heritage: You were born into a family that has known about the tournament for centuries. They trained you for this and only this.

Mercenary: You're being paid very well to participate in this tournament. It doesn't matter to you all that much why.

Protector: You know and care for someone else that is also in the tournament. It is your hope to protect them from harm.

Styles

Certain players will find certain styles more useful than others. Styles may be handed out randomly or chosen by players. This is at the discretion of the tournament organizers.

Stance of the Mountain: You have 6 health every match (instead of 5).

Sightless Vision: You have 8 seconds to call a bluff (instead of 4).

Rare Form: You may remove any number of people from your side of the audience (to a minimum of 1 audience member).

Forbidden Technique: Your critical hits deal 5 damage (instead of 3).

Fists of Iron: All your hits deal 2 damage (instead of 1 or 3).

Fleet of Feet: You decide who goes first in your matches.

Soul Stealer: You gain 1 health when you critically hit.

Hidden Daggers: Your opponent must close their eyes for the first two turns of your match.

Heart of Stone: You take 2 damage from critical hits (instead of 3 or 5).

1000 Fists: If you land 3 standard hits in a row or tie 3 times in a row, you automatically win the match.

Flaming Knuckle: The player may throw bomb (thumbs up) instead of rock, paper, or scissors once during each of their matches. The bomb beats rock and paper but loses to scissors. Any player may claim to have thrown bomb.

Grapple Master: You do not take damage from ties.

The 13th Warrior: You get the first bye in the tournament if there is one. Only one player may take this style.

Probably Unnecessary Gameplay Example

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr is facing off against Z. The two stand face-to-face with a judge to their side and all other players surrounding them to bear witness to this epic clash.

They also have 5 sticky notes each on their arms. These represent their health.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr was born into a family that believed their line would one day win the Jade Viper's crown. Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr has trained every day of his life for this and nothing else... forsaking all other things. Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr is a bit awkward in social situations and doesn't know how to talk about anything that isn't their destiny.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr looks Z dead in the eyes and sternly states "I will be the Jade Viper!"

Z was born on a distant planet of warriors and was sent away shortly before Z's planet was destroyed for posing a threat to the current Jade Viper's dynasty. Z has trained most weekends and occasional holidays for this very moment.

Z responds casually, "You take this too seriously."

The judge would like to see Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr win, and knows that Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr is better on the offensive. The judge chooses to make Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr the first aggressor.

Z secretly holds their hand out flat to signal paper and their play. The crowd sees the signal, but watch quietly without giving it away. Neither combatant has made many allies before now.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr throws rock in front of Z.

Z smirks and says "Paper." The judge immediately begins a timer.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr thinks this is a ruse. There's no way Burning Fist Shining

Star Omniguru Jr could be losing the first round already.

"BURNING FIST CHALLENGE!!!!" Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr yells.

Z in, classic Z style, casual reveals the paper signal on the other hand and gives an "oh no!" look to Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr.

The judge shouts, "Round 1 victory! Z!" and proceeds to pull 3 sticky notes from Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr's arm.

"ARG!" utters Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr. The crowd erupts in excitement.

The judge regains control with a hand in the air. "Z! You are now the aggressor! Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr! Prepare yourself!"

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr takes a deep breath... concerned for the honor of their family. Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr throws a rock behind their back with a harsh grunt.

Z casually throws rock.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr sighs and says "Rock" frustrated that they didn't win, but concerned they can't bluff Z. Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr is clearly rattled.

The judge starts the times.

Behind Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr, Dr. Fist shakes their head to signal 'no' to Z... hoping to trick Z into calling a bluff. Dr. Fist doesn't like Z, but Z might not know that.

Z has little time to decide, but they ignore the signal and accept Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr rock by saying "he-hoo-ya!"

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr reveals the sign. The judge declares the tie and takes one sticky note from each.

Burning Fist Shining Star Omniguru Jr is down to one health... Z has 4. How will he ever survive!?