THE DISCIPLINED JUNGLER SERIES

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

EVERY FIGHT HAS A PRICE. START CHECKING IT.

When to Fight, Who Goes First, and What Your Life Is Worth



By Vambient #twv #yt

VAMBIENT

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By vanbient#twtv #yt

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INTRODUCTION

The Scoreboard Lies

A lot of players judge a fight by whether their team got a kill. That mindset is completely wrong. The kill feed rewards you for fights that were costing you the game the whole time, and it will never tell you that a fight was bad to take.

Here's the version of that mistake nobody notices. Your fed mid laner, sitting on 15,000 gold of items and also a high shutdown value, walks into a fight and gets one-shotted before casting a single ability. The scoreboard says your team went 3 for 2 there at the end of the fight. Fine trade? A third of your team's entire gold just dissipated without pressing a button, and the three kills you bought with it were worth maybe a thousand. You won the kill feed, but the game got worse.

This book is about the fighting half of the system. The economics of them: what a fight costs, what it pays, who should enter first, what your own life is worth at each stage of the game, and how to leave with the win. Every rule in here came out of Challenger games with the commentary running.

"You don't win fights by fighting well. You win them by only buying the ones that were on sale."

Fair warning before Chapter 8: some of this is going to sound controversial. It works anyway. It is what it is.

By Vanguard Analyst

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PART I

THE PRICE OF A FIGHT

By Vambient#twtv #yt

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CHAPTER ONE · THE PRICE OF A FIGHT

Think Value

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CORE RULE: Judge every fight by value gained against resources
spent. The kill feed is not a ledger. Your damage, their
cooldowns, and the map are.
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If you remember nothing else about this guide, just remember this. You need to get the maximum value out of your champion at every encounter with anything on the map. That's the philosophy in one go. Maximum damage, on priority targets, timed so your team is dealing theirs at the same moment. Every fight, every skirmish, every casual trade in the river gets graded the same way. How much did you do? What did you force out of them? Did your strongest teammate actually get to play the fight, or did he play the teamfight getting stunned, walking back, or dying before his first ability cast?

Value explains fights the scoreboard can't. A carry who baits three abilities, saves Flash, and walks out at 100 HP got more from that fight than the assassin who picked up a kill and gave one back. One of them converted their life into enemy cooldowns and effort, and the other one just swapped gold at even odds. When I watch a teamfight back, I barely look at who died. I look at who got value out of their existence.

> *"The players who climb hardest are the ones who produce the most value from the least resources."*

Give your kills to laners. You can farm camps for income, and they can't. A jungler who takes the kill gold is paying himself out of the team's carry budget, though it feels productive in the moment. Provide the value, hand off the payout, and stay rich in the camps only you can farm.

It's by default. It isn't a hard rule. When you're the win condition, on a carry jungler with a real lead, take the gold. A 12-kill Kha'Zix converting into objectives is the team's best bet. And a big shutdown sometimes

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belongs to whoever can secure it. The rule is about the reflex: don't take kills just because you started the play. Most games, the laner spends that gold better than you will.

By Vambient#twtv #yt

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CHAPTER TWO · THE PRICE OF A FIGHT

The Reassessment Question

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CORE RULE: Before any fight you choose: Will we lose the game
entirely if this play fails? If yes, it is not a play. It is a
coin flip with your LP on the line.
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Starting in the mid game to late game, your macro gets a lot stronger the moment you learn when not to engage. Again, before the fight, while walking away, is still free: Will we lose the game entirely if this fails? Make sure you can understand that some fights are not worth taking.

Most fights, the honest answer is no. You lose some tempo on the map. Maybe a wave, maybe a camp cycle, and the game continues after the fight is over. Take those fights whenever the conditions are correct. But some fights carry the whole game in them, and those are the ones that players queue up for the most eagerly. This is also the worst way to play.

The 50/50 flip at Baron while your carries hold the only real damage on the team. Sometimes the correct play is giving up Dragon Soul, or Baron, or even Elder, because you weren't winning the 5v5 fight at the pit and the right choice is to wait for an out-numbered fight where you can catch them off guard the next time.

> *"If losing the fight loses the game, the fight has to be already won before you take it."*

Wait for better conditions. Catch someone beforehand. Make it a 5v4, and the game losing fight stops being able to lose the game. The question isn't there to make you passive, it's there to make the big fights happen on your terms only.

By Vambo Gaming Ayt

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CHAPTER THREE · THE PRICE OF A FIGHT

“1v9” Does Not Exist

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CORE RULE: Whenever you hear 1v9, think scam.
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You are not going to 1v9 the game. You're not going to run in and kill four people while your teammates play against you. That's not a game plan. That's a highlight reel of somebody else's smurf account. The 1v9 idea gets a decent amount of love from the community because it sometimes feels like games are set up this way.

It's still a scam.

What actually happens in the games that look like a 1v9: a player provides value in twenty small, boring installments. His team gets ahead.

The games that get called 1v9 afterward were 5v5 the whole time. Somebody just did the boring parts well enough that the ending looked really good for that one player who got fed.

This matters for viewer engagement because the “1v9” believer fights like he's owed the win already. He engages into three people, expecting his gold lead to win the fight. Sometimes it even works, but this is not the right way to play. Your lead gives you a bigger share of a five-person fight. It does not make it correct for you to pick every fight. The moment you feel like the exception, reread this rule.

By Van Nguyen #twowyt

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CHAPTER FOUR · THE PRICE OF A FIGHT

Stop All-Inning

> CORE RULE: No all-ins without information. Full commitment has no exit plan, so the engage has to justify it.

An all-in is any play you can't walk out of unless the enemy is dead. The tower dive, the flash engage, the fight taken deep in enemy jungle. These plays win games when they're right, and they end games when they're wrong. The defining feature is that you don't get to change your mind halfway through and some of the time, your teammates also barrel in with you.

So the standard for taking one is higher, and that standard is information. Where's the enemy jungler? Whose summoners are down? What's the wave doing behind the fight? What are all waves doing? Do we kill fast enough to reset before their respawning players walk back? If you're missing answers, you're gambling. And gambling with a play you can't get out of is how thirty great well played minutes disappear into one Defeat screen at the end.

"The all-in question isn't whether you can win the fight. It's whether you know enough to be certain you're allowed to."

There's a tell for a bad all-in. “Probably fine”. Probably fine means that it was a coinflip you've decided not to look at in detail. Go look at it in the VOD review. If the information wasn’t quite there, the play you should have done is poke, trade, the pick attempt with an exit, anything you can still walk away from. Save the full commitment for fights that are very obvious wins. You will get better at telling which fights are obvious wins the more you play.

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PART II

WHO GOES FIRST

By Vambient#twtv #yt

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CHAPTER FIVE · WHO GOES FIRST

Outnumber Them

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CORE RULE: Fight with more. Numbers advantage is the one cheat
code the game naturally hands out for free.
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Strip fighting down to its most boring and obvious truth: five people hit harder than four people, and four people hit harder than three people. Three people hit harder than two people and two people hit harder than one person. Everything else in a teamfight, the mechanics, the matchups, the item diffs, is fighting over the margins of that arithmetic. Most players spend their energy on the margins. The disciplined ones spend it on the count of players in the fight.

Outnumbering them is a created condition. A pick before the objective makes the next fight 5v4; that's Chapter Two's question answered for free. A laner caught rotating, a support who face-checked, a jungler showing on the wrong side of the map. Every one of those is an invitation to fight at better odds. You count, you commit, then you take the objective after the fight.

> *"You don't need to win a fair fight. You need to stop taking fair fights."*

The inverse rule is the one that saves games: when they have the numbers, you don't owe anyone a fight. Back off, trade elsewhere, let the map pay you back on the other side. Your teammates will question mark ping you for standing down. The enemy team would have thanked you for coming to the fight. Ping back and hold strong.

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CHAPTER SIX · WHO GOES FIRST

You Do Not Go First (usually)

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CORE RULE: Do not enter the fight first unless the tank
engagement role is your assigned job. For most junglers, most
team compositions, you can throw engage-like poke, then back off,
then engage again.
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Season 16 changed who should open a teamfight, and most junglers didn't get the memo. Top laners carry quest resources now; supports engage with short death timers and shorter cooldowns. Both roles are built to be first. You aren't. Junglers got nothing.

If you're the first one to all in, you're the first one focused, and the fight starts with your team down its most map-relevant, objective-securing member.

So the order usually goes: top lane teleports in first, support commits the engage, and the jungler arrives second with smite, follow-up, and a decision. Watch high elo junglers before a fight breaks out. They're either pinging the play seconds before it happens or hovering just behind their frontline, waiting to convert someone else's entry. There's a Leona game in the commentary series on the Tuber where she takes up her spot at the forefront and everything works exactly as designed. My whole contribution to the opening was a ping and some patience.

If you locked in Sejuani or Jarvan, your comp assigned you the frontline job and this chapter mostly isn't about you; you're the “support” in the entry order now. The rule is for the majority of the roster, the Rek'Sais and Kha'Zixes and Viegos, whose job in the teamfight starts after the fight begins.

Note that if someone is actually caught out though, just one-shot them and be good with getting out afterwards. This is only a rule for 5v5 teamfights.

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CHAPTER SEVEN · WHO GOES FIRST

Stop Engaging Alone

> CORE RULE: An engage your team can't follow is a donation to the enemy team with a short flashy windup animation.

The lonely engage has a loyal fanbase at every rank. The knock-up lands, the follow-up doesn't exist, and the scoreboard adds one more death that felt like teamwork on the way in. If your team can't arrive inside the duration of your crowd control, you didn't engage; you volunteered to make your team lose first.

Before you commit, this check takes one second and two questions. Can they reach the fight in time? And are they willing? Distance answers the first. For the second, you can check the mini-map: teammates shoving a wave away from you aren't following your engage, and no amount of pinging changes what they are doing. Engage for the team you can see, not for the teammate you wish you had.

Stop using your crowd control abilities before people get there. This is a massive issue in lower elo play where supports end up engaging so far away from their teammates that by the time their teammates get close enough to answer the engage, the enemy team is already out of the crowd control ability duration. If you notice your support frequently doing this, let him die alone. Gauge the teamfight on your own terms rather than blindly follow into a doomed fight.

And also, when the follow-up genuinely isn't coming all game long, the answer to this isn't tilting into braver solo engages. It's Chapter Eight.

By Vanessa Wright

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CHAPTER EIGHT · WHO GOES FIRST

Why I Bait My Teammates

> CORE RULE: Let support and top lane teammates absorb the enemy's abilities first. You are the constant in every one of your games, protect yourself first and foremost.

This one's going to sound controversial. We are okay with this.

In fights, I am very often not the one going in first. I let a teammate go in, let the enemy burn their key abilities on him, and then I follow up and clean the fight with everything I have. Call it baiting your teammates.

Here's the reasoning. The more you stay alive, the more game you get to play. Dead players generate zero value while staring at a gray screen, and the game keeps happening without them. There were Worlds games years ago where Faker finished the game without dying once. That's a player who understood alive player's advantages compound. Dead players disadvantages compound. Farming, pressuring, deciding, while the dead one just... waits. And across all your games there's exactly one player guaranteed to be in every single one. You. Your teammates rotate out every thirty to forty minutes. You're the constant, so play the best game you can with as few deaths as you can.

"Early on, your life is the expensive one. Late game it flips: die for your ADC or APC with pride. But early? Bait."

To be precise about what the system is: You're essentially assigning the enemy's opening cooldowns to whoever's death costs the team the least right now in this moment. Early game that's almost never you; you're the tempo engine that needs to kill camps, and engines are expensive.

By Vamp on Twitch

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Sometimes it IS correctly yourself, and this system says go die usefully: Late game, sacrificing yourself to save the ADC is often correct, because by then the team's value lives in the ADC's damage and not your jungle camp tempo. You'll know it's late game when your team has four items or more, including boots.

By Vambient#twtv #ad

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PART III

INSIDE THE FIGHT

By Vambient#twtv #yt

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CHAPTER NINE · INSIDE THE FIGHT

The Backline Rule

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CORE RULE: Stand where your champion needs to be.
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Positioning is the part of teamfighting that requires zero mechanics and pays like it required all of them. The default: unless your team comp assigned you the frontline or a flank, you start outside the enemy's clean reach. Standing wrong is a gift to the enemy team. Every inch too far forward converts some of their worst options into good ones. The assassin who had no angle suddenly has one, the hook that had no target finds you, and your team fights the rest of the 5v4 wondering what you were doing up there.

Pro tip: You're usually playing too far forward. Reign it in as a default. Nobody types about positioning errors the way they type about missed smites, though positioning loses more fights than a missed smite ever will.

> *"You don't have to outplay anyone from the right position. From the wrong one, you have to outplay everyone."*

Drift forward as your abilities come off cooldown, and you're threatening something together with your team; sink back while the abilities recharge and you're just a target dummy with a gold bounty. This leads us nicely into Chapter Ten.

By Vamben#NA1 #yt

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CHAPTER TEN · INSIDE THE FIGHT

The Weave

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CORE RULE: Use your abilities, deal your damage, and immediately
retreat. Repeat until the fight is over.
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Fights aren't entered once; they're entered over and over, in pulses. The Weave is that rhythm.

Step in when your damage is ready, do your damage, step out while it isn't, and let the fight go on without you until it's ready for you again. Go in, attack, go out. The players who die most in teamfights are the ones who treat entering as a one-time decision and then stand there, tanking free damage and forcing teammates into a worse position.

The weave works because true threat range doesn't need your presence. It only needs the possibility of presence. While you're slightly out of range with cooldowns ticking, the enemy still has to respect the version of you that's three seconds away. Do not stand in the middle of the enemy team with nothing up.

> *"Be in the fight exactly as long as your damage is. Not one second longer."*

Discipline is key. Everything in your monkey brain says stay when the fight is fun and abilities are being thrown. The Weave says your next entrance is worth more than your current presence. Trust the Weave, ignore your inner ape. The fight will still be there in two seconds, and so will you if you didn't tank unnecessary damage and die instantly.

By Vimeient Strykt

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CHAPTER ELEVEN · INSIDE THE FIGHT

Front to Back, Never Alone

> CORE RULE: Focus whatever your whole team can hit together. The correct target is the target that everyone can focus at the same time.

Target selection sounds like it should be complicated. Do you engage on their ADC? Do you try to hit the flanker? How about one-shotting the support real quick so that they don't have support abilities in the fight? How about going on their backline mage and using crowd control abilities to make it so that they can't crowd control you?

Stop making it complicated. It's actually surprisingly simple most of the time. Hit what your team can hit with you. Front to back, through the tank if that's what's reachable, onto the carry only when the path to him is real. The damage you give up by hitting the reachable target comes back several times over when five players' worth of damage lands on one health bar.

The mistake for Junglers is the solo flank onto their backline. It feels like target selection because you selected a target. What it usually selects is a 1v2 behind their team composition while your side fights a 4v3 they didn't agree to. Their team can just focus you down real fast and then your team is fighting a 4v5 in an overextended position. At best, it is you giving your team a 4v4 because you traded one out in the back line and your team is still fighting in an overextended position, trying to follow you up into the play, mispositioning themselves in the process.

There are champions and moments where the flank is the play, and they share one requirement: your team's damage arrives at the same tick as yours. Front to back also has an additional meaning that nobody picks up on. Focus fire is visible; your team can feel a health bar melting, and a team that feels progress fights better for it.

Sync up with your team, and you will win more games.

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CHAPTER TWELVE · INSIDE THE FIGHT

Track the Summoners

> CORE RULE: Ping every burned flash, heal, and ignite for the next fight. Start tracking.

Every fight you take changes the next one. Check your allied summoners and enemy summoners every single fight. Until those summoners come back, those players are worth more to attack and less able to leave, especially flash, and the fight that just ended handed you that information. Please use it.

Most players watch a fight end and check the kill feed only. Hold tab open, ping the cooldowns, get the timers. Type it in chat too if you don't know how to do this. That's where the next fight already got decided. Also, make sure to toggle timestamps on in your settings so you can get accurate timers.

Honestly, this habit costs nothing: when a summoner burns, say it, ping it, note it. If no pings went out and nothing showed, assume it's up for the enemy team. Certainty you didn't earn is how Chapter Four's all-ins go wrong. And on the other side of the ledger, guard your own summoners like they're items, because they are. A flash baited out of you hands the enemy the same situation until it returns, and the good players on the enemy team's side are all tracking.

This is a small chapter because it's a small habit. It's also the difference between junglers who take good fights on purpose and junglers who take them by coincidence. The full accounting system lives in The Perceptive Jungler, but the summoner Flash count alone will win you fights this week.

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PART IV

LEAVING ALIVE

By Vambien #twtv #yt

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN · LEAVING ALIVE

Peel Back After One

> CORE RULE: After you get one kill, peel back and reassess. The second kill is the most common throw in the game.

You got the kill. The fight paid you 300 gold. Everything in your body says keep going; there's another kill right there, he's low and running away!

This exact moment, the second after a successful play, is where more won fights get donated back than anywhere else in League. The chase after the first kill is the most common throw in the game, and it doesn't feel like a throw while it's happening. It feels like momentum.

Start spamming danger pings after the one kill. You can always spam all in pings afterwards if your cooldowns are back up. Your team is most in danger after getting a kill, because the math turned the moment the kill landed. You spent cooldowns getting it. The enemy respawn clocks started counting. Every step of the chase takes you further from your exit, deeper into their vision, closer to whoever is rotating to avenge the kill you already banked.

So this rule is mechanical in nature. Get one, peel back, run the reassessment question again with the new picture. Count what they burned, check the timers, take the objective the kill unlocked. Cleanup is real; if the second target is CC'd, low, and alone while your cooldowns are up and they also can not counterplay you afterwards, take that kill. Generally speaking, late game with massive amounts of damage online you can take this bet free of charge after snowballing a kill or two.

All other times, it almost never is.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN · LEAVING ALIVE

Be Alive for What Comes After

> CORE RULE: Try your best to stay alive. Until Grandmasters-Challenger, dying is generally optional and not correct.

A won fight with your team dead on the map converts into nothing; a won fight with three of you alive converts into whatever you guys can take on the map. Staying alive is what makes the win secure. If you're about to die for at a tower dive at minute twelve, stop and consider your life.

Junglers who master engagement aren't the ones with the highlight engages. They're the ones who are mysteriously always alive when the objective spawns, always second into the fight and last one out of it, and always rich in the boring numbers like CS. The fights in their games look uneventful and pre-decided.

But they always climb.

By Vambient Hyt

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APPENDIX

The 30 Engagement Rules

Print this page. Read it before every session.

PILLAR I · THE PRICE

1. Judge fights by value gained per resource spent.
2. Maximum damage, on priority targets, timed with your team's damage.
3. Give kills to laners by default. Take them when you're the one carrying.
4. A fed teammate who dies without casting lost your team his whole bank.
5. Before any chosen fight: will we lose the game entirely if this fails?
6. If losing the fight loses the game, only take it pre-won.
7. Sometimes the correct play is giving up Dragon Soul, Baron, or even Elder. Wait for better conditions.

PILLAR II · THE ENTRY

8. “1v9” does not exist. Whenever you hear “1v9”, think scam.
9. No all-ins without information. "Probably fine" means go look at the VOD review.
10. Fight with more players. Create the numbers, then fight.
11. When they have more, don’t fight.
12. Engage tanks open the fight. Everyone else arrives second on purpose.
13. Don't go in too far ahead of your team, though.
14. An engage your team can't follow is a donation to the enemy team with a flashy windup animation.
15. Crowd control duration is key. Chain damage onto crowd control if possible.
16. Let teammates absorb key abilities first. You are the constant in your games. Protect yourself.

By Vambient#twitch #yt

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PILLAR III · INSIDE

17. Stand where your job says. No assigned frontline or flank means backline.

18. Every meter too far forward turns their bad options into good ones.

19. The Weave: use your abilities, deal your damage, retreat.

20. Be in the fight exactly as long as your damage allows.

21. Focus what your whole team can hit together. Front to back.

22. A solo flank without synced damage is trolling (usually).

23. Count summoners. Every burned flash reshapes the next fight.

24. Guard your own summoners like items. They are.

PILLAR IV · THE EXIT

25. After one kill, peel back and reassess. The chase is the throw.

26. True cleanup is collecting on very free kills.

27. Win fights alive or you didn't win them at all.

28. Early game your life is expensive: bait, Weave, leave first and alive.

29. Late game the price flips: die for your AD or AP carry with pride.

30. The best fights in your games should look uneventful. So will the climbing.

The Pre-Fight Checklist

Five seconds, before every chosen fight:

– Numbers: Is it even, up, or down?

– The question: If this fails, is the game over?

– Information: Enemy jungler seen? Summoners counted?

– Order: Whose job is the entry? Is it actually mine?

– Follow-up: Can my team arrive inside my CC?

– Exit: Where do I leave through, and what does the win unlock?

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CONCLUSION

The whole book runs on one idea: fights have prices to them, and most players never check them. Ask the question before you commit. Send the right player in first. Spend exactly your damage and not one second more. Take the first kill, reassess instead of chasing, and be standing there, boringly alive, when the objective spawns.

None of it needs better hands than you have today; it needs about five seconds of basic math before each fight and some discipline and humility.

The rest is repetition. The fights come back every few minutes forever, which is more practice than any other skill in the game will ever offer you.

Now go climb.

By Vambient#tw/ #ot

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Edition corrections

October 7, 2026 | Rules Of Engagement

Jungle quest correction

The statement that junglers received nothing in Season 16 is incorrect and withdrawn. Riot added stronger Smite and post-completion jungle movement speed, gold and experience benefits.

Engagement and death timers

Support is not assigned a special shortest death timer by role. Read the displayed timer. Let the champion with the right initiation tools and supported opening go first. A damage jungler often follows; an engage tank jungler may need to initiate. Check kits, health, cooldowns and follow-up. These are coaching defaults rather than game mechanics.

Edition scope

These dated notes qualify the original wording while retaining the original pages and page numbering. Read the corrected HTML edition at disciplinedjungler.com/read/rules-of-engagement/. Other builds, champion details and priorities remain patch-sensitive coaching material.

Sources

Riot 26.1 notes

Current patch: Riot 26.20