

SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER®



## PLAYER'S GUIDE

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# PATHFINDER

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The powerful sorcerer Hao Jin has returned to the Material Plane to preside as grand judge over her world-famous fighting competition, the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. Contenders from around Golarion flock to the tournament to compete for a prize from Hao Jin's legendary treasure vault. Does your team have what it takes to become this year's Ruby Phoenix Champions?



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Welcome one, welcome all, to the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path!

As a player in this official campaign for Pathfinder Second Edition, you'll get to compete in the famous Ruby Phoenix Tournament for the chance at winning the grand prize: a priceless treasure from the sorcerer Hao Jin's magnificent vault of wonders. Starting with 11th-level characters and progressing all the way to 20th level, you and your friends will prove your prowess in an exciting competition on a jungle island before fighting in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament in Goka in front of an audience of thousands.

## THE RUBY PHOENIX TOURNAMENT

The city of Goka has hosted the Ruby Phoenix Tournament for centuries. The tradition stems from the living will of the legendary sorcerer Hao Jin, also known as the Ruby Phoenix for her extraordinary powers of self-resurrection. When Hao Jin mysteriously disappeared over 300 years ago, the executors of her estate presumed her dead in accordance with her will. Her will further stipulated that Hao Jin's countless treasures, all held in a massive vault beneath the Grand Bank of Abadar in Goka, be given away, one per decade, to whomever could claim the title of champion in a grand fighting tournament. The executors fulfilled Hao Jin's wishes, establishing the Ruby Phoenix Tournament in her honor. Since then, teams of talented martial artists, spellcasters, and adventurers have flocked to the metropolis of Goka every 10 years, all vying for the title of Ruby Phoenix Champions.

This decade's Ruby Phoenix Tournament follows a structure similar to that of other popular fighting tournaments. Contenders can compete either as individuals or as members of a team. Although there is no maximum number of contenders allowed on a single team, most teams include about four fighters. (A winning team must split their prize, which discourages large teams.) Teams face one another in bouts in an arena, and most of the time teams won't know who they're facing until the day of the fight. A team wins when they've knocked out all the fighters on the opposing team. Fighters can use any weapons or tactics they like—fists, blades, magic, stealth, and so on—to win their match, though showy and unique skills tend to excite the crowd and judges. There are a few additional rules, too; these are summarized on the sidebar on page 10.

## THE HAO JIN TAPESTRY

The Ruby Phoenix Tournament held 10 years ago, in 7211 IC (Imperial Calendar, Tian Xia's official calendar; equivalent to 4711 AR), proved especially exciting. Pathfinder Society members competing in the tournament managed to defeat a team of cheating contenders funded by the Golden League, Goka's most infamous crime syndicate, and also went on to win the grand prize. As their reward, the Pathfinders chose an artifact called the *Hao Jin Tapestry*. This tapestry was, in fact, an entire magical museum world. Hao Jin created it to save and store people, places, and things that she literally plucked from the Material Plane and wove into the extraplanar fabric of the tapestry. The Pathfinders' studies on the tapestry eventually caused it to fray, and ultimately, with Hao Jin's help, the tapestry was disassembled and the occupants of the demiplane were released to their original locations across Tian Xia.

## HAO JIN'S RETURN

This year's competition is even more exciting than usual, because Hao Jin has returned to the Material Plane after hundreds of years in exile on the plane of Axis, the Eternal City. Rather than dismantle her tournament, Hao Jin has chosen to continue the supremely popular event. More than that, she has even asked to serve as the Ruby Phoenix Tournament's grand judge. In this role, she will preside over every match in the grand arena of Goka.

## ADVENTURING IN THE DRAGON EMPIRES

Since its founding, the Ruby Phoenix Tournament has been held in or near Hao Jin's home city of Goka, the largest city on the continent of Tian Xia. This continent of diverse countries and regions is located on the opposite side of the world from Avistan and Garund. Yet for a land so distant from the Inner Sea region, Tian Xia shares a number of similarities with its global counterparts. Like the Inner Sea region, Tian Xia is made up of vast swaths of monster-riddled wilderness, a patchwork collection of mostly human nations of various political persuasions, and countless ruins, monuments, and treasure troves of bygone empires and long-lost civilizations.

Of course, Tian Xia is a whole continent, with its own unique multitude of histories, ecosystems, and cultural norms. Depending on where you are, humans might rub shoulders with kitsune and tengus, complex



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rituals might be used to summon powerful forces from the natural world or from one's own soul, and any stone or bush at the side of the road could potentially hide a fiercely protective guardian spirit. Perhaps one of the greatest differences between Tian Xia and the rest of the world is that in Tian Xia, the primordial coiling creatures known as dragons are not only widely known, but interact with the people of the land on a regular basis. In some cases, dragons govern whole nations, leading many to use a common appellation for the continent overseas: the Dragon Empires.

An exhaustive account of Tian Xia is beyond the scope of this Player's Guide. For more information about Tian Xia and its inhabitants, refer to the *Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide* and *Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide*. For the purpose of playing the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path, it's a great idea to familiarize yourself with two specific regions within the Dragon Empires: Minata and Goka.

### MINATA, THE WANDERING ISLES

This year, the Ruby Phoenix Tournament's organizers have chosen to host a first-of-its-kind prequalifying event for the tournament proper in Goka. This prequalifier will take place on a remote island called Bonmu—which the organizers have playfully dubbed "Danger Island" for just this event—where 32 teams will vie for 8 spots to take part in the tournament proper. Bonmu is just one small isle in a vast archipelago called Minata in eastern Tian Xia.

Like many of the surrounding islands, Bonmu was once part of a sprawling civilization called Taumata, a society where religion and communion with nature played prominent roles in everyday life. Although most vestiges of the fallen empire have been lost to the sands of time—and no one is sure exactly what caused Taumata to collapse—ruined Taumatan shrines and temples still dot certain areas on the island.

Competing teams aren't the only danger on Bonmu; the remote tropical island is an ever-looming threat in its own right. Hostile flora and fauna—from poisonous plants to giant insects and even dinosaurs—combine with the natural elements to pose a challenge for even the hardest outdoors enthusiasts. Although precise details are scarce in the lead-up to the prequalifier, it's fair to expect that exploration, survival, and endurance will all play a prominent role in this stage of the tournament.

### GOKA, CITY OF WONDERS

For over 300 years, the Ruby Phoenix Tournament has been held in or around the bustling metropolis of Goka, the home city of Hao Jin and the most densely populated settlement in all of Tian Xia. Goka is not only the largest city in Tian Xia, but one of the largest cities in Golarion.

The City of Wonders more than lives up to its name as a vital trade hub and a cultural mixing pot for people from around the globe. It is also a storied locale in its own right, with a 4,000-year-long history rich with legends and folk stories, a legacy of self-governance that survived the oppressive but now-defunct rule of Imperial Lung Wa, and a unique culture of risk-taking, gambling, and self-improvement. In Goka, anyone can start anew or cement their legacy, find their calling or get lost forever, and make their fortunes or meet their demise. The city offers a variety of breathtaking wonders for people of all ages. In the Neverending Market, visitors can purchase several kinds of goods or sample a variety of foods. At the Icefang Aerie, crowds gather to watch drake coursers race overhead. Spellcasters often perfect their experiments at the Five Pillars Academy in areas accessible to the public, and various performers deliver unparalleled operas in the Floating Lotus district.

Perhaps no spectacle draws more attention to Goka than the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, held once per decade. This year, with Hao Jin personally judging the competition, the grand arena will be situated near the Ruby Phoenix's own personal home in Goka's decadently appointed Cliffside Court district. The grand judge has gotten spectators, gamblers, and contestants more fired up than ever, leading to an unprecedented turnout for what is sure to be a tournament for the ages.

## YOUR PLAYER CHARACTER

Fists of the Ruby Phoenix is unusual for a Pathfinder Adventure Path because player characters are expected to start the adventure at 11th level rather than 1st. Because of this, you can use either an existing 11th-level character or create a new character of 11th level. Either way, you'll probably have more fun if you play as a character with a reason to take part in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. The following pages can help you create such a character.

### USING AN EXISTING CHARACTER

The Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path is Paizo's first Pathfinder Adventure Path to start with



# Tian Xia

1,000 miles





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high-level heroes rather than brand-new 1st-level characters. The Adventure Path's three volumes takes player characters from 11th to 20th level, beginning with the first adventure, "Despair on Danger Island." This makes it a perfect campaign for existing parties, such as groups who have already played through a number of their own stories or who have just finished the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path. By 11th level, many parties have made quite a name for themselves in their local communities and are ready to take on greater challenges within their region or maybe even throughout Golarion.

If your Game Master gives you permission to use an existing character, ask to what extent you can retrain character options. You can use the suggestions throughout the following pages to decide what facets of your character, if any, might warrant tweaking in order to make sure your character can most ably compete in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament.

### CREATING A NEW CHARACTER

It's entirely possible to start the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path with a newly created 11th-level character. In this case, follow the standard steps for creating a 1st-level Pathfinder character from pages 24–29 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* (see below for new character background options). After you've made your 1st-level character, use the guidelines on page 31 of the *Core Rulebook* to increase your character's level, 1 level at a time, to 11th level.

Next, equip your character with items appropriate for 11th level. You can do this one of two ways.

The first way to choose your gear is the easiest: simply select two 7th-level items, one 8th-level item, two 9th-level items, and one 10th-level item from any of the common items listed in Chapters 6 and 11 of the *Core Rulebook* or in other Pathfinder sourcebooks. You also start with 500 gp, which you can use to either buy additional common items such as consumables or which you can keep as currency to use during the game.

The second way to choose your gear is more free-form but takes more time. Start with a budget of 3,200 gp and select however many common items you like, paying the full item Price for each item. In this case, item level doesn't matter—you just can't exceed your budget. Your character keeps any leftover gp as loose currency.

Before deciding which way you'd like to choose your new character's gear, check to see if your Game Master has a preference. In either case, refer to Treasure for New Characters and Table 10–10: Character Wealth on pages

510 and 511 of the *Core Rulebook*, respectively, for more details. When discussing equipment with your GM, you might also consider selecting items specific to the region such as those outlined on pages 75–76 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #166: Despair on Danger Island*.

### New Character Backgrounds

When creating your player character, consider selecting one of the following new character backgrounds, each of which was designed specifically for this Adventure Path. Instead of encapsulating your life before you became an adventurer, these backgrounds represent your character at 11th level and your motivation for entering the tournament.

#### ABADAR'S AVENGER

#### BACKGROUND

Hao Jin really has some nerve for a supposed disciple of Abadar. First, she dares to start a collection of trinkets in hopes of emulating the great Abadar's unsurpassable First Vault. As if that weren't enough, she also sets up a contest to give away her most powerful treasures to anyone who can throw a punch! Abadar hasn't directly told you as much, per se, but surely this kind of hubris can't sit well with your beloved deity, regardless of Hao Jin's own supposed ties to the Master of the First Vault. At the very least, someone's got to check out this shoddy imitation of the First Vault and write a report for the church of Abadar—and you've decided that someone is you.

With or without the blessing of an actual priest of Abadar, you've taken it upon yourself to investigate Hao Jin's "wondrous" vault by winning her Ruby Phoenix Tournament. You read a few flyers about the tournament's home city and joined the first team that could handle your righteous zealotry, but any more preparation would be a waste of time. You clearly have the divine will of Abadar on your side (but again, no actual proof of this), which is all you'll need to win this tournament and dispel any notions of Hao Jin's ties to your patron deity.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Religion and the Goka Lore skill. You gain the Assurance skill feat with Religion.

#### ATTENTION ADDICT

#### BACKGROUND

A roaring crowd chanting your name. Your face plastered all over the city. Fawning fans begging for your autograph. Jealous rivals. Endless fame. The promise of all this and more is what drove you to enter this year's Ruby Phoenix Tournament, and with your prodigious star power it's no wonder why they selected you for the prequalifier on Danger



Island. You've got champion stamped all over you. Obviously, the organizers knew a winner when they saw one.

It's already clear that you'll be named Ruby Phoenix Champion—the challenges leading up to your prize ceremony are mere formalities, but you're happy to indulge the impassioned masses. After all, the people want a show, and what kind of celebrity would you be if you denied them? You might even deign to compete in some fights, too, as long as your hair doesn't get mussed.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Performance and the Gladiatorial Lore skill. You gain the Impressive Performance skill feat.

## NEWCOMER IN NEED

## BACKGROUND

You're a Gokan native in a bad spot, and you're going to need a miracle to get you out of your current fix. Miracles are in short supply, but the title of Ruby Phoenix Champion might just do the trick.

Maybe you need the prize money to pay for a relative's expensive operation or to free your family from debt to Golden League gangsters. Or maybe there's a particular prize in Hao Jin's vault that could literally save your life—an amulet you can use to flee to the farthest corners of the multiverse or even an artifact that could resurrect you if you die, just like the Ruby Phoenix.

The tough circumstances of your upbringing in one of Goka's more downtrodden neighborhoods—such as industrial Oldtown, the slums of the Scales district, or even the crime-ridden undercity—taught you lessons of self-reliance and how to quickly make friends in unlikely circumstances. You've scraped together an entry into the Ruby Phoenix Tournament's prequalifier with a team you can trust. Now all that's left is to pull off the impossible and win this thing once and for all.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Society and the Goka Lore skill. You gain the Streetwise skill feat.

## RUBY PHOENIX FANATIC

## BACKGROUND

**RARE**

Have you heard of the peerless sorcerer Hao Jin, also known as the Ruby Phoenix? Of course you have! You're her biggest fan! She's got amazing powers of self-resurrection, her hair is as red and fiery as a phoenix, and she has a huge vault full of the most incredible treasures in the multiverse. Now she's finally back from a mysterious 300-year quest on the plane of Axis so she can host this year's Ruby Phoenix Tournament—and you can't wait to meet her!

In order to get as close to Hao Jin as possible, you've researched everything there is to know about the Ruby Phoenix's home, her planar escapades, and her competition. You've also trained your body to prove yourself a worthy champion. When Hao Jin's committee invited you and some friends to take part in the tournament's prequalifier, you just about fainted from excitement. Is your dream of meeting the Ruby Phoenix about to come true? As long as you win enough matches to get into the actual tournament, it just might! Just try not to act too star-struck when you finally get a chance to talk to her, okay?

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Axis Lore, Gladiatorial Lore, and Goka Lore skills. You gain the Dubious Knowledge skill feat.

## SECOND CHANCE CHAMPION

## BACKGROUND

**UNCOMMON**

You competed in the last Ruby Phoenix Tournament 10 years ago, though you didn't make it to the end. One wrong step, one mistimed punch, one blocked spell—whatever it was, that was all it took for your opponent to get the upper hand and knock you out of the tournament. Well, maybe it was a simple mistake or maybe you just weren't up to snuff, and you're too headstrong to admit it.

Now, after training for a decade to ensure you don't repeat any of your prior mistakes, you've joined forces with a team of fellow fighters in order to maximize your odds of making it all the way to the finals. Whatever happened before, you've vowed to return to the ring in Goka for an epic rematch, and this time you're not walking out until you've been named Ruby Phoenix Champion.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Strength, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Acrobatics and the Gladiatorial Lore skill. You gain the Cat Fall skill feat.

## UNDERCOVER CONTENDER

## BACKGROUND

Gangsters and cheats seem as drawn to the Ruby Phoenix Tournament as piranhas to a bloody hippo, and you're dead set on making sure this tournament is as scandal-free as possible. Your reasons are your own—maybe a high-ranking official in Goka has tasked you with the case, or maybe foul play led to losing someone dear to you in the last tournament. Maybe you just hate to see fair fighters get knocked out by crooked contenders. Whatever your motives, you've promised to be in the ring in case anyone tries to derail the contest. The Golden League crime syndicate is the most obvious suspect, what with their meddling in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament a decade ago, but maybe there will



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be others—unscrupulous contenders trying to pull one over on Hao Jin, perhaps, or an entirely new devious conspiracy hoping to hijack the event for their own evil purposes. In any case, you'll be around to deliver the hammer of justice.

You've told a small squad of your closest confidants about your mission, and you've managed to secure a spot in the tournament's prequalifier along with them. You and your team have to win fights to stay in the competition long enough to make sure things go smoothly. If that means you end up being the Ruby Phoenix Champions, all the better.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Deception and the Underworld Lore skill. You gain the Lengthy Diversion skill feat.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTER OPTIONS

Whether you're building a new character from scratch or you're retraining an existing character with this Adventure Path in mind, the following notes might come in handy.

#### Alignments

Fists of the Ruby Phoenix makes no assumptions about your character's alignment, and for the most part your character's moral leanings aren't crucial for the purposes of the story. Aspiring Ruby Phoenix Champions come to the tournament with all kinds of reputations, agendas, and social attitudes, some benevolent, some malignant. As long as teams don't break the tournament's rules (page 10), the means by which they overcome their rivals can run the gamut between honorable and chivalrous to underhanded and dastardly. Even chaotic, unrepentantly evil contestants might find a way to put aside their predilections long enough to cooperate with a team for a shot at the championship's grand prize. Perhaps the unpredictable and violent nature of the fights is enough of a release valve for such competitors. Outside of the ring—such as while exploring Danger Island or taking in the sights of Goka—a character's alignment matters even less since competitors are beholden to fewer tournament strictures during their off-time.

#### Ancestries

The Ruby Phoenix Tournament attracts people of all ancestries and from all places, and there are no restrictions for entering the contest. No one particular ancestry would have a distinct advantage or disadvantage in the competition, as long as they can survive in daylight and are capable of communicating

forfeiture. Because of this year's addition of a pre-qualifying tournament in Minata, an archipelago located in almost the exact opposite corner of Tian Xia from Goka, the diversity of entrants is even greater than usual. Any Pathfinder ancestry option will fit in just fine. That said, certain creatures are still more common than others at the event, and so selecting a character of one of these ancestries could give you one more element in common with some of the non-player characters you might encounter.

Perhaps unsurprisingly since the contest is held in the largest city in Tian Xia, humans of Tian heritage—particularly people of Tian-Shu ethnicity, who predominate most of Tian Xia thanks to the expansionist efforts of the now-defunct Lung Wa Empire—represent most of the entrants to the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. Humanoids of other ancestries more common in Tian Xia, such as kitsune and tengus, also make up a fair share of the competition's entrants. This pattern is largely due to proximity and convenience; it's simply easier for fighters from Tian countries to secure travel to Goka. Likewise, stories of worthy Tian fighters have a greater chance of reaching the ears of the tournament's organizers, which also impacts who receives an invitation to the event. Since the prequalifier this year is being held in Minata, Tian-Sing people, who have called the Minatan isles home for countless generations, are also strongly represented.

Of the various player character ancestries, the following options may offer you some interesting roleplaying opportunities. For your convenience, this list also includes the sourcebook and page number where you can find the full rules for each ancestry.

- Catfolk (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 8)
- Hobgoblin (*Lost Omens Character Guide* 48)
- Kitsune (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 120)
- Ratfolk (*Advanced Player's Guide* 20)
- Tengu (*Advanced Player's Guide* 24)

#### Classes

The Ruby Phoenix Tournament draws contenders from all walks of life, from spell-slinging magic practitioners to sword-wielding knights errant to mercenary-minded scoundrels. That said, some classes of competitor are seen in the ring more often than others.

Chief among the most common tournament entrants are, perhaps unsurprisingly, fighters. Monks, barbarians, and swashbucklers are also typical entrants. All of these martial masters practice



close-range mortal combat as a way of life and are expertly suited to fights in the arena. The tournament's team-on-team format also favors rangers and rogues, who boast numerous talents and specialties that create openings for their teammates or otherwise exploit the chaos typical to the fighting ring.

Among the magic-wielding classes, wizards, witches, and other spellcasters who prepare their spells daily (as opposed to tapping into some innate power) have an advantage here. Because of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament's predictable schedule and frequent opportunities to rest (often an entire night) between bouts, these spellcasters can change their spell repertoire frequently and zero in on just the right selection of spells for the arena. Of course, the sheer variety of the other teams competing in the tournament—not to mention the unpredictable arenas of the intermittent exhibition matches—means that it can hardly be taken for granted that a wizard or witch will excel where a sorcerer will not. Indeed, sorcerers—as well as alchemists and druids—have many other abilities at their disposal besides spellcasting that make them more than formidable in the ring.

As always, bards, clerics, and paladins make for excellent teammates. To say nothing of their healing magic in the midst of bouts, characters of these classes are also great mascots, promoters, and cheerleaders for their teams both within and outside of the ring. Although divine casters might not find much use for fiend-slaying powers during the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, rumor has it that Danger Island is home to a fair number of undead, and, as usual, there is no shortage of powerful evildoers vying for the tournament's grand prize.

Of all the classes, investigators and oracles are perhaps the most unlikely adventurers to be found entering the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. Although the events and challenges of the tournament are far from predictable, the structure of the competition

is formalized enough that there are few riddles to solve or mysteries to unravel. That said, for all its structure and attention to detail, nothing ever goes exactly as planned at the worldwide event, and enigma-seeking or





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### TOURNAMENT RULES

All teams in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament must adhere to some basic rules. If anyone willfully breaks any of these rules, their team is disqualified.

As explained on page 4, this decade's tournament is divided into a prequalifier on the island of Bonmu and the competition proper in Goka, and each has its own set of rules. Your Game Master will provide more details and clarify these rules during your adventures; they are reprinted here mainly for ease of reference.

### BONMU PREQUALIFIER

- The emissary and his agents are to be obeyed at all times. The emissary's word is final. None shall take violent action against the emissary or his agents.
- The emissary employs enforcers around Bonmu who have the authority to declare unique challenges.
- To qualify for the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, a team must collect a total of 10 silver feathers. A team can attempt to earn feathers by challenging another team to a match and wagering feathers.
- All teams must be able to readily present their *phoenix necklace* and at least 1 silver feather to the emissary or his enforcers.
- No contestant may leave Bonmu, for any reason, until the conclusion of the qualifying round, unless they are disqualified or lose all of their silver feathers.
- The qualifying round lasts 3 days. On the third day, any team with 10 silver feathers can visit Mount Haminabu to confirm entry into the tournament by presenting their necklace and feathers. Once eight teams have done so, the prequalifier is over.

### RUBY PHOENIX TOURNAMENT

- Grand Judge Hao Jin's orders must be followed and her rulings are final. Contestants shall not purposefully attack Hao Jin or any of her emissaries.
- Contestants shall not leave the boundaries of Goka until the end of the tournament.
- Once a round begins, contestants shall not accept aid from anyone who is not participating as a contestant in that round.
- A contestant who yields or fails to act for a count of three (3 rounds) shall be removed from the field of battle and is no longer a contestant in that match.
- Contestants shall not loot fallen opponents.
- There are no ties. Hao Jin shall rule in cases when the winner is not obvious.

case-busting adventurers might just discover that there is more going on behind the scenes than anyone suspects...

### Languages

As opposed to the Inner Sea region, where the predominant language spoken and written by humans is Taldane, the continent of Tian Xia has its own common tongue, called Tien. Because many Pathfinder adventures take place around the Inner Sea, if you're playing a preexisting character in this Adventure Path then it's possible your character doesn't speak Tien. Depending on your group's preferences, this might have a considerable effect on how your character interacts with other people throughout the events of the campaign. Many of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament's organizers and participants are fluent in both Taldane and Tien, but certain non-player characters might speak only one or the other (or, in rare cases, neither—contestants come from all around Golarion, after all.) To mitigate any advantages this might bestow on native speakers, the tournament's organizers freely offer each team of entrants an interpreter who can deftly translate official tournament information to the team.

If your fellow players and your Game Master don't want to deal with the implications and confusion that might arise from potential mistranslations or reliance on interpreters, then you can all simply ignore any language disparities and roleplay as if all the player characters and non-player characters shared a common tongue—the tournament's near-unlimited magical resources provides an easy in-world reason for how the language barrier might be explained away. While the Ruby Phoenix Tournament is a global event that unites people from many cultures, cross-language communication is not intended to be a major theme of this Adventure Path, so you won't be missing out on anything by foregoing such details.

On the other hand, some groups might enjoy the occasional social challenge of encountering a formidable rival, potential ally, or other important figure who doesn't share a language with one or more members of the party. In this case, everyone should be onboard with this idea since it can have a considerable effect on roleplaying encounters, and all the players should take special care to remember which languages their characters can and cannot understand. Your Game Master, in particular, will have to take on a considerable amount of work to keep track of which non-player characters speak which languages. One of the players might be able to keep track of this information to alleviate some of the Game Master's load, but either way, if your Game Master is not



interested in running this type of game then you should graciously respect their decision.

Be sure mindful as well of how you portray the speech of these characters at the table. The Ruby Phoenix Tournament brings together fighters from all over Golarion, many of whom will have different first languages than the player characters. While giving a character an accent can be a useful tool to build them out and enrich your roleplaying, keep in mind that it can be easy for an accent to become stereotypical, and that stereotypical portrayals can be harmful or hurtful. Everyone has an accent, even when speaking in their first language, and so a character's accent should always be treated with respect, never simply played for laughs.

**Other Human Languages:** Naturally, Tien isn't the only language spoken by the many different humans of Tian Xia. People from Minkai often speak Minkaian, Minata natives tend to speak one or more forms of Minatan, and so on. Just as is the case with many of the other human languages in Avistan and the northern half of Garund, however, these specific regional languages are typically spoken in the presence of those from the same culture or in remote locales where Tien hasn't taken root. This Adventure Path won't take you to such places—nearly everyone you encounter will speak at least either Tien or Taldane—but still, there are few better ways to quickly make a strong impression on a stranger than by revealing that you share another language.

**Non-Human Languages:** Finally, there are the countless languages spoken by Tian Xia's non-human inhabitants. Some of these languages might be familiar to Inner Sea region natives, such as Aklo, Aquan, Draconic, and Jotun—not to mention the usual planar languages like Celestial and Terran—and the similarities in dialects are similar enough to permit easy communication. Of these, Draconic is perhaps the most useful, as might befit a place sometimes called the Dragon Empires. Also present are the languages specific to particular ancestries, some of which are less known on the other side of the globe; these include Nagaji, Samsaran, Tengu, and Wayang, each of which is typically spoken by people of these same-named ancestries. Finally, there is Senzar, the language of Tian Xia's most ancient spirits; Senzar is often spoken by oni, kami, and other beings of the natural order found primarily in Tian Xia.

## Skills and Feats

Martial arts fascinated the rulers of long-fallen Yixing, the empire that forged what we now call Tian Xia, and so studies of strength and agility play a large role in

cultures all across the continent. Goka, and thus many entrants to the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, are no exception to this trend. So, while anyone can enter the tournament, regardless of strength, intellect, and social standing, many contenders have honed their bodies at least to some extent. Those who abstain from physical training make up for this by mastering a variety of magical traditions. Although a silver tongue will get you far in Goka and can provide valuable motivation for allies in the arena, all the wit and guile in the world won't save you from an expertly placed kick or punch.

How does this translate into character skills and feats? For starters, training in Acrobatics and Athletics provide essential foundations upon which you can expand your character's abilities. Feats that help with grappling foes or escaping tight situations in some of the tournament's unusual arenas—like Cat Fall, Kip Up, Titan Wrestler, and Wall Jump—might prove invaluable. For magic, any skills and feats that enable to you to fling spells fast and furiously are useful, as is a feat like Quick Recognition, which can give a spellcaster the decisive edge in fights against fellow magic wielders. From a social standpoint, Deception, Intimidation, and Performance are all viable routes for feinting opponents, striking fear into a rival's heart, and exciting the audience watching the fight. The Medicine skill, particularly when combined with Battle Medicine and other Medicine skill feats, can be a great boon for contenders patching up wounds between fights. As usual, a character who studies a relevant Lore skill (such as Goka Lore and Gladiatorial Lore) and info-gathering skills like Diplomacy and Society can gain access to a wealth of interesting and useful knowledge throughout their adventures. On the flipside, opportunities to use skills like Crafting, Stealth, Survival, and Thievery, while not nonexistent, aren't typical during the fast-paced tournament.

Although many Ruby Phoenix Tournament teams specialize in one particular form of combat or another, a well-rounded team with a variety of skills and feats generally stands a much better chance of making it all the way to the end of the tournament. While a team of arcane-focused wizards or pugilistic fighters can make for an exciting campaign full of camaraderie and roleplaying (and you should absolutely create such a party if that sounds compelling to everyone at the table), you might discover some glaring gaps in your defenses if you end up fighting against opponents whose specialties counter or negate your own. Of course, if your fellow players and Game Master are up for this possibility, then it will no doubt be a fight to remember!

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### FORMING A FIGHTING TEAM

Although competence within the ring is important for a worldwide fighting tournament, so too is the ability to promote oneself outside of it. Many of the most beloved teams who compete in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament—or at least the most memorable—focus on their team “image” or brand almost as much as honing their muscles and minds.

Fighting teams typically consist of individuals who share commonalities either in upbringing, motivation, or tactics. You and your fellow players can use the following lists to hand-pick your team’s theme, fighting styles, quirks, and so on. Alternatively, your party can use a d6, d8, or d20 as appropriate to randomly determine such aspects. These lists are not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, use them to generate ideas and come up with fun thematic connections.

#### TEAM THEME

This is your team’s thematic niche, specialty, or motif.

**TABLE 1: TEAM THEMES**

d8	You and your teammates are all...
1	...worshippers of a particular faith or philosophy.
2	...patriots from a particular nation or region.
3	...spellcasters or characters with a shared appreciation of a certain type of magic.
4	...originally part of a group or organization, like a squad of former soldiers or members of a local merchants’ guild.
5	...from a traditionally underrepresented group of people, such as goblins or kitsune.
6	...retired companions or old friends who have come together for a reunion tour.
7	...mercenaries or treasure hunters who have joined together solely for this tournament.
8	...criminals or former criminals, together either for one last heist or to form a new legacy.

#### MOTIVATION

This is your team’s reason for entering the Ruby Phoenix Tournament in the first place.

**TABLE 2: MOTIVATIONS**

d8	Your team has joined the tournament to...
1	...confront a longtime rival or team of rivals in the arena.
2	...seek the glory that comes with winning.
3	...test your skills and improve your techniques.
4	...fight for the sheer thrill of mortal combat.

5	...win riches and possibly a specific treasure from Hao Jin’s vault.
6	...look for someone or a group, believing you might find the person or people at the arena.
7	...witness firsthand the other contenders’ variety of combat styles and techniques.
8	...see the world, using the tournament mostly as an excuse to experience a new and interesting part of Golarion.

#### PERSONALITY

This is a shared personality type or general disposition you and your allies have in common.

**TABLE 3: PERSONALITIES**

d8	You and your teammates are all generally...
1	...particularly competitive, stubborn, or maybe even sore losers.
2	...especially pleasant and polite.
3	...quiet, aloof, and mysterious.
4	... self-absorbed, narcissistic, or otherwise inclined to divert attention to yourselves.
5	...animated and thrilled to be part of a tournament filled with so many new and exciting people.
6	...cold, merciless, and particularly harsh or even cruel in combat.
7	...inquisitive, curious, and prone to asking questions about techniques or other combatants.
8	...supportive, even of your rivals, and always willing (sometimes to an aggravating degree) to offer advice or pointers for future fights.

#### SPONSOR

This is your team’s general source of income, which covered the travel expenses for the prequalifier on Bonmu and the tournament on Goka.

**TABLE 4: SPONSORS**

d6	Your team’s sponsorship money comes from...
1	...the sweat of your own brow.
2	...illicitly gained funds, perhaps even stolen money or funds from a criminal element.
3	...the backing of a noble or monarch, possibly a relative or an aristocrat with ulterior motives.
4	...the support of a government, such as military funding or an arts and culture endowment.
5	...the coffers of a particular church, faith group, or philosophical society.
6	...a mysterious benefactor unknown to some or all of you.



## ORIGIN

This is your team's shared homeland, place of origin, or region where you all met.

**TABLE 5: ORIGINS**

d8	You and your teammates all met in or share some affinity with...
1	...Arcadia, such as a nation like Innazpa or Razatlan or a large city like Gujaraldi or Segada.
2	...Avistan, such as Andoran, Cheliah, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, or Taldor.
3	...Casmaron, such as regions like Iblydos or Vudra.
4	...the Crown of the World, such as Cape Almhult or the Hasanaliat region.
5	...the Darklands, such as one of the many settlements scattered throughout Nar-Voth.
6	...Garund, such as regions or countries like Jalmeray, the Mwangi Expanse, or Osirion.
7	...Tian Xia, such as the city of Goka, the islands of Minata, or a nation like Minkai or Quain.
8	...parts unknown, such as the continent of Sarusan, another planet, or even another plane of existence.

## STRENGTH

This is your team's specialty in combat—your time-proven strategy, default tactics, or modus operandi.

**TABLE 6: STRENGTHS**

d8	You and your teammates all...
1	...boast incredible strength and can withstand many attacks that would topple or outright kill others.
2	...wield magic, perhaps focusing on a particular tradition like occultism or a school of magic such as evocation.
3	...specialize in complex combat maneuvers like grappling, tripping, or disarming.
4	...fight from a distance, using long-range weapons like bows or ranged spells and abilities.
5	...practice the art of stealth, slipping around opponents to set up ambushes and sneak attacks.
6	...dedicate your practice to one particular type of weapon, such as katanas, slings, or hammers.
7	...use incredible speed to constantly move around the battlefield and gain the terrain advantage.
8	...focus on raw force rather than speed or grace, delivering powerful—but usually slow or inaccurate—blows.

## WEAKNESS

This is your team's flaw or shortcoming in combat, which perceptive opponents might use against you.

**TABLE 7: WEAKNESSES**

d8	Your team has...
1	...such a poor understanding of magic that even simple cantrips pose a bewildering threat.
2	...trained only to fight other humanoids and have little experience against animal companions or summoned monsters.
3	...a very uncommon phobia, such as a fear of the color green or a fear of people who wear capes.
4	...trained with only a single type of weapon or technique that makes your strategy predictable.
5	...a code of honor that prevents you from attacking a foe whose back is turned.
6	...poor melee tactics or equipment and crumbles in close-quarters combat.
7	...impatient tendencies, rushing into the fight with little to no forethought.
8	...a significant vulnerability to a particular element like electricity or fire.

## QUIRK

This is your team's memorable (but almost entirely inconsequential) tic, idiosyncrasy, or unusual habit.

**TABLE 8: QUIRKS**

d20	You and your teammates...
1	...hired a musician or band to follow you and play exciting music during your matches.
2	...always announce your attacks or maneuvers, most of which have outlandish names like "Stinging Dance of the Night" or "Ultra Megaquake Punch."
3	...performs a specific ritual before each match, such as the application of body paint or the recitation of a unique cheer.
4	...wear memorable matching outfits or coordinated hairstyles.
5	...fret about appearances and get upset if an opponent tousles your hair or soils your clothes.
6	...eat heartily and often, even during combat.
7	...compliment, congratulate, or fawn over one another, even when no praise is warranted.
8	...mispronounce everyday words or botch common expressions in your native tongue.
9	...call out to a dozen different ancestors or gods for aid throughout the course of a single match.



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- 10 ...carry curious, offputting trophies from previous matches, such as an opponent's tooth or a scoop of bloody earth.
- 11 ...regularly shift the focus of your attacks, never attacking the same opponent twice in a row.
- 12 ...consistently decry that all your opponents are fighting unfairly or cheating somehow.
- 13 ...casually talk throughout entire fights, either with each other or with your opponents.
- 14 ...constantly reveal new techniques or abilities that you always insist to be your strongest or most ingenious move yet.
- 15 ...compulsively gamble and bet not only on matches, but also minor events, such as slapping an opponent's face three times without getting struck back.
- 16 ...simultaneously yell or chant a particular motto or phrase at seemingly random intervals.
- 17 ...consult dice, cards, or other divination tools to guide your actions, sometimes even mid-combat.
- 18 ...have a particular pet peeve that drives all of you into a rage, such as getting kicked with bare feet or the sound of whispers.
- 19 ...react to particular innocuous comments or actions with outsized emotional responses or maudlin outbursts.
- 20 ...narrate your actions and refer to yourselves in the third person, sometimes using titles or names other than your own.



## PLAYER'S GUIDE

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