

Vox Borealis

Supplemental Newsletter
for the Kingdom of Caldormere

All Things List Field
presents:

Just the Basics
Double Elimination:

the

Gold Standard
of Tournaments!

February 2026



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QUARTERLY BOARD MEETINGS <https://www.sca.org/board-meetings/>

•Mid Quarter Conference calls: November 18, 2025 & December 16, 2025

•Quarterly Meeting Schedule: Jan 25, 2026; April 25, 2026 (hybrid) location TBA; July 19, 2026; October 17, 2026 (hybrid) location TBA

[Click here to register to attend the meeting virtually via Zoom.](#)

All meetings start at 10:00 am unless otherwise noted. Attendees are asked wear modern clothing to Board meetings. Agenda submissions by the first of the month of meeting.

SCA
Homepage





From the Kingdom Chronicler

Greetings to all who enjoy Tournaments!

This Vox is the first in a series of “Tournament Basics”. Just the bare minimum you need to run a list at any event.

This issue features The Gold Standard of Tournaments: Double Elimination! Whip out a list tree and Let the Tournament Begin!

There are also appendixes with extra information to make your tournament run smoother. If you would like to delve deeper into the world of List Trees, check out my “All Things List Field” series in the Documents section of the Kingdom Website.

Duchess Kaylah

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Tournament Sign Up

	Auth. Card	Inspection		Auth. Card	Inspection
1.			22.		
2.			23.		
3.			24.		
4.			25.		
5.			26.		
6.			27.		
7.			28.		
8.			29.		
9.			30.		
10.			31.		
11.			32.		
12.			33.		
13.			34.		
14.			35.		
15.			36.		
16.			37.		
17.			38.		
18.			39.		
19.			40.		
20.			41.		
21.			42.		

Accessibility

The list field is a busy place. Participants are eager to know what is going on with the tournament. The more the fighter knows about how the tournament is proceeding, the more smoothly it will go.

Visual Accessibility:

When possible, use a **black Sharpie Marker** to fill in the trees, grids and scorecards.

The larger you can neatly print, the better!

Fighters are not wearing their reading glasses!

Hearing Accessibility:

Always announce the “Called to the Lists” in the traditional order.

Always announce the “Salutes” in the traditional order.

Avoid speaking and spinning at the same time. Limit your words to only what is necessary.

When possible, the field herald should face the participants and speak directly to the participants who are up next.

Fighters are not wearing their hearing aides, the hall is noisy, the helmet is well padded with foam.

Parallax by Duchess Kaylah the Cheerful



Heralding & Running the Tournament

The field herald is vital to keep a tournament running smoothly. The actual fight itself often takes less time than it took for the fighters to enter the field in the first place. A field herald can expedite the situation by making sure that the fighters are ready and prepared to enter the list immediately upon the completion of the previous fight.

Calling the List : A good field herald isn't just the fellow with the loudest voice.

A really good field herald knows some or all of the participants. They orient towards the participants who are up next, face directly at them, and then call their names. Sometimes this results in the field herald spinning around in the center of the field. Please don't call while spinning.

In some situations, it is also effective for the field herald to quietly walk up to each group of participants and speak to them face to face to let them know who is fighting next.

The field herald will call three sets of names. The standard formula for calling the list is as follows:

1. **“Called to the List”**: Names are entering the list right now
2. **“On Deck”**: Names standing ready because they are up next
3. **“Preparing to Arm”**: Names will be up soon so get ready

Reporting the Results

When the fight is over, the herald calls the victor for the audience's pleasure: "The victor, Sir Bob". The field herald then arranges the victor's name card on top of the defeated card and returns that pair to the list table. The list table is a busy place, but they can clearly see the winner's card on top.

Moving the Tourney Along

After reporting the results, the list table gives the field herald a fresh pair of cards. The Herald places the new cards under the current cards, and calls the names again, with every pair moving up a place in the ritual. Those who were "On Deck" are now "Called to the List", those who were "Preparing to Arm" are now "On Deck" and the new pair of cards are "Preparing to Arm".

Now, if the fighters are on the ball, they will already be entering the list, having entered as soon as the previous pair vacated the list field, having finished their fight.

The field herald can change the call to "Now Entering the List: Master Fred and Sir Invincible", or just let the tournament proceed and go straight to calling "on deck" and "preparing to arm".

Making Salutes

The field herald is usually the person who calls the salutes in the first round as well as the semi-final and final rounds as it lend more formality, pomp and circumstance to those glorious rounds.

The marshal may say "Make what salutes you may" in the middle rounds of tourneys.

The ritual salutes are as follows:

1. Please salute **the Crown of Ealdormere**.
2. Please salute **the one who inspires you today**.
3. Please salute **your most noble opponent**.

After the salutes, the marshal will may ask if the fighters bear any offensive steel.

Then the marshal will call "On your guards, lay on".

*The field herald does Not call the "lay on", that is the marshal's responsibility.

Double Elimination Tournaments

The formal double elimination tree is the “Gold Standard” of tournaments.

Pomp and circumstance, heraldry and pageantry in a professionally organized format! Grab your copy of the list and follow along as the combatants battle it out, inspired by their loved ones.

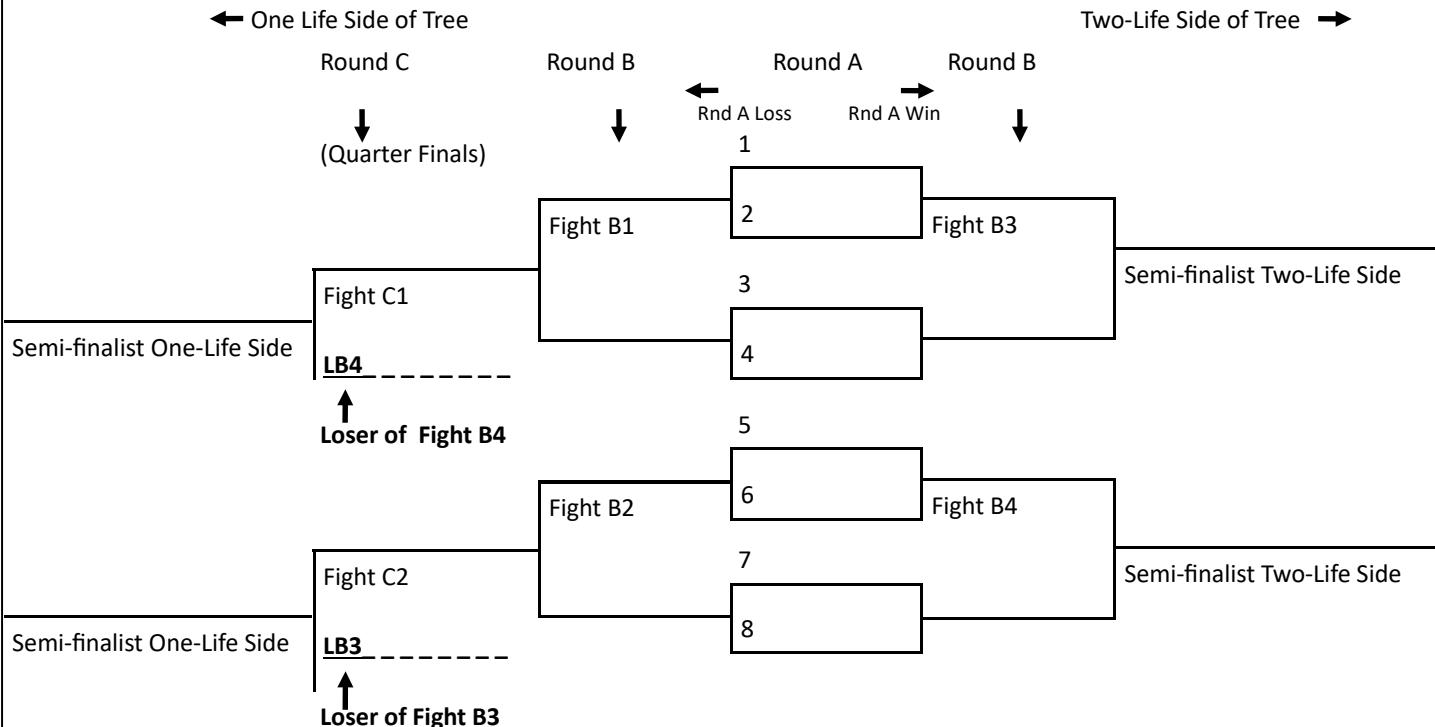
Double Elimination Trees are wonderfully free from match manipulation:

- The initial random draw is placed on the tree.
- The tournament progresses in an orderly predetermined fashion.
- Fighting the same person twice is minimized
- Combatants can predict when their turn in the list is coming which speeds the entire tournament moving forward at reasonable pace.

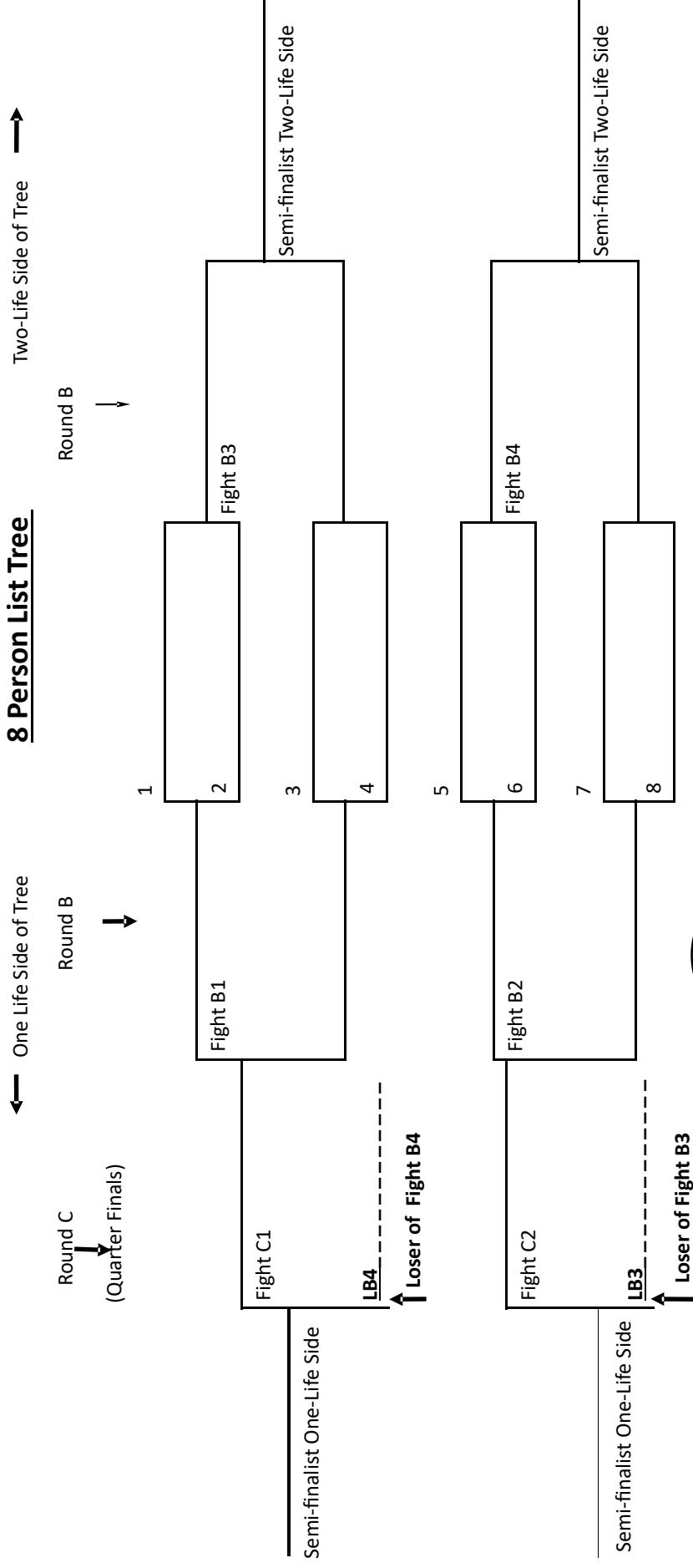
How to Run A Double Elimination Tournament

1. Place the Byes on the Tree: Don't randomly draw the Byes! Start by placing them on the 4's, and if necessary continue placing on even numbers.
2. Random Draw: Write the names of the participants on index cards. These are drawn randomly by a person of high rank and placed onto the tree. This is an excellent opportunity for the list person to pass the buck upward! No one can complain about their draw when the Queen did it!
3. Set the conditions for the Semi Finals & Finals : It is very important that everyone know how the Semis and Finals will proceed. Will the tree be fought down to two winners on each side, or just one? Will the crossover be randomly determined, or will every attempt be made to avoid duplicate fights? Will the person with only one life left have to win twice to cancel out their opponent's two lives? Will the finals by best of 3? Matched weapons forms or own choice?
4. Follow the Tree! : Start at Round A, and follow the tree round by round to the end. Fight round A, then begin round B with “fight B1”, continue to “fight B2” etc., then begin round C.

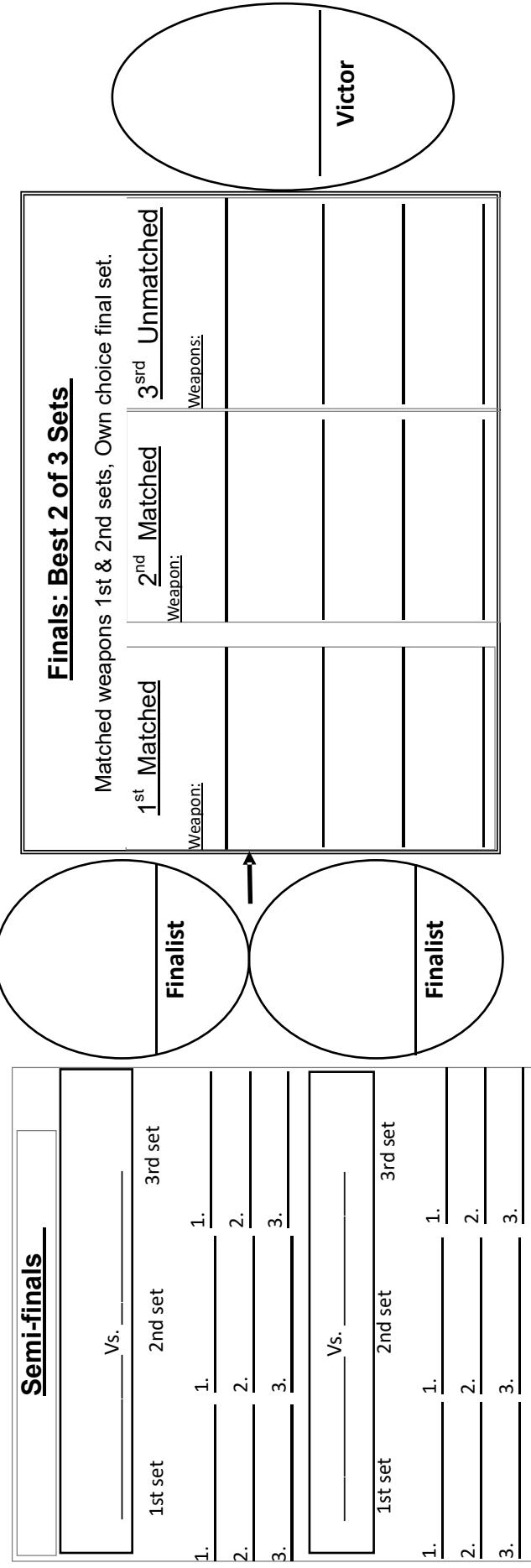
8 Person List Tree

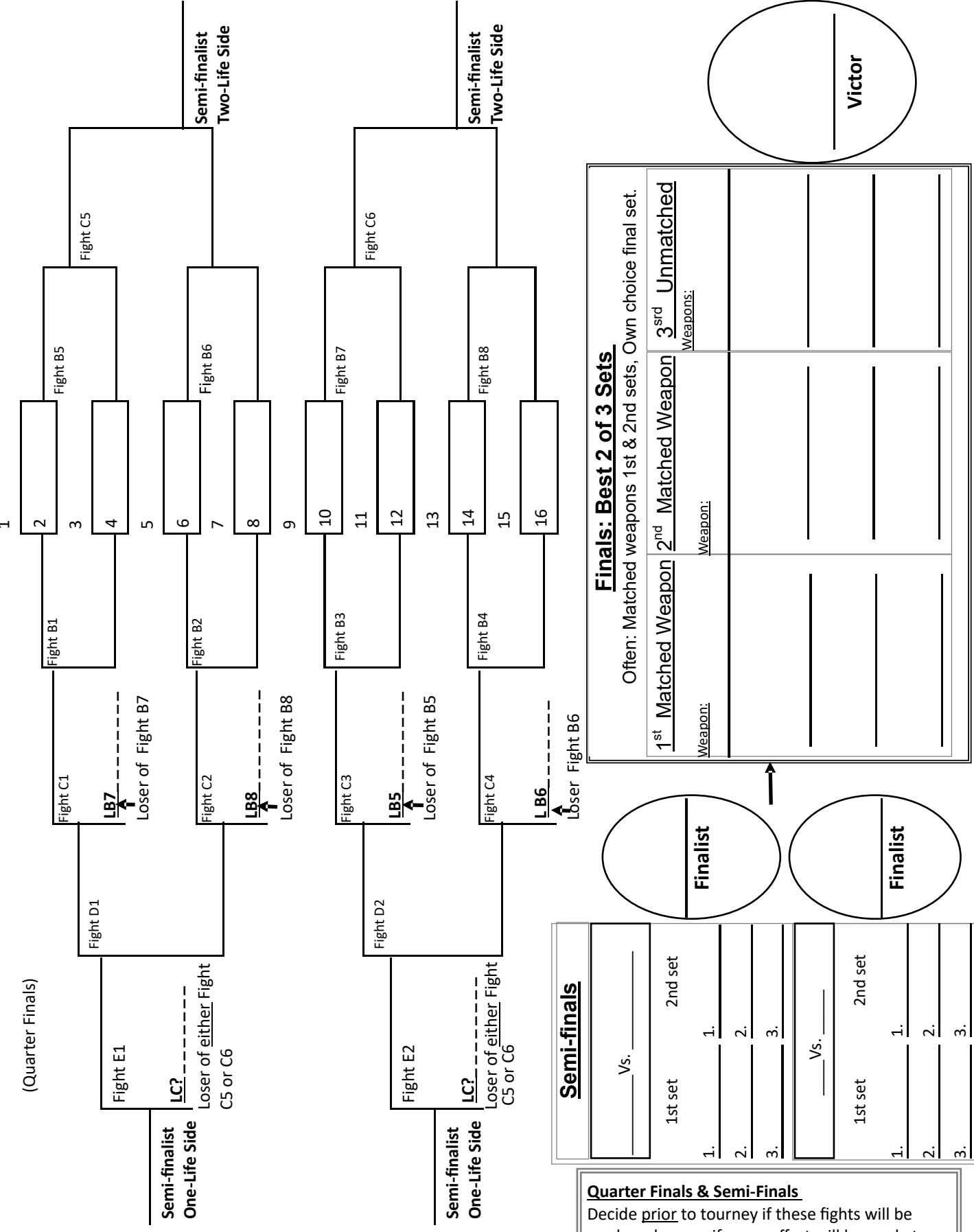


8 Person List Tree



Finals: Best 2 of 3 Sets



12 - 16 Person List Tree

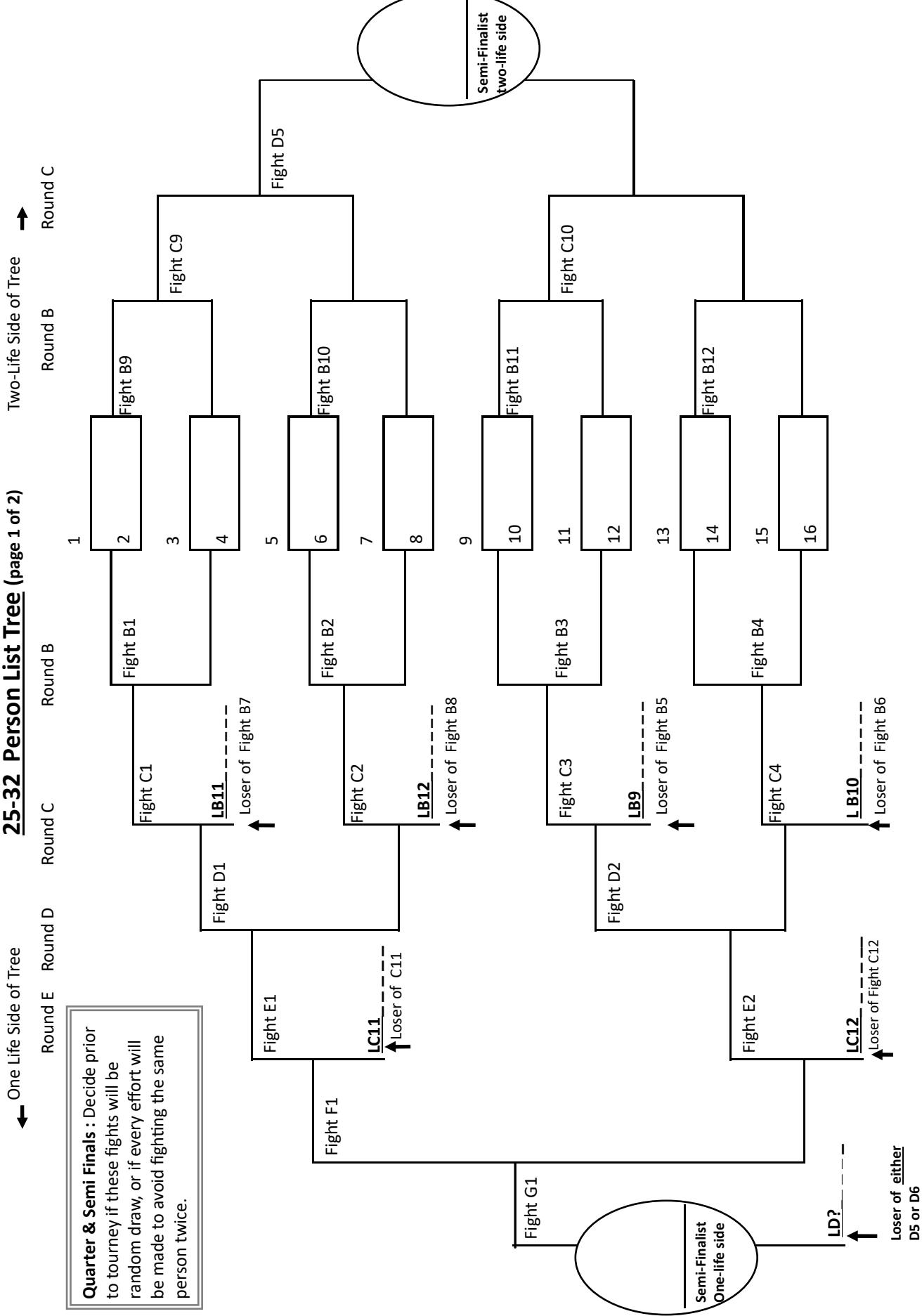
25-32 Person List Tree (page 1 of 2)

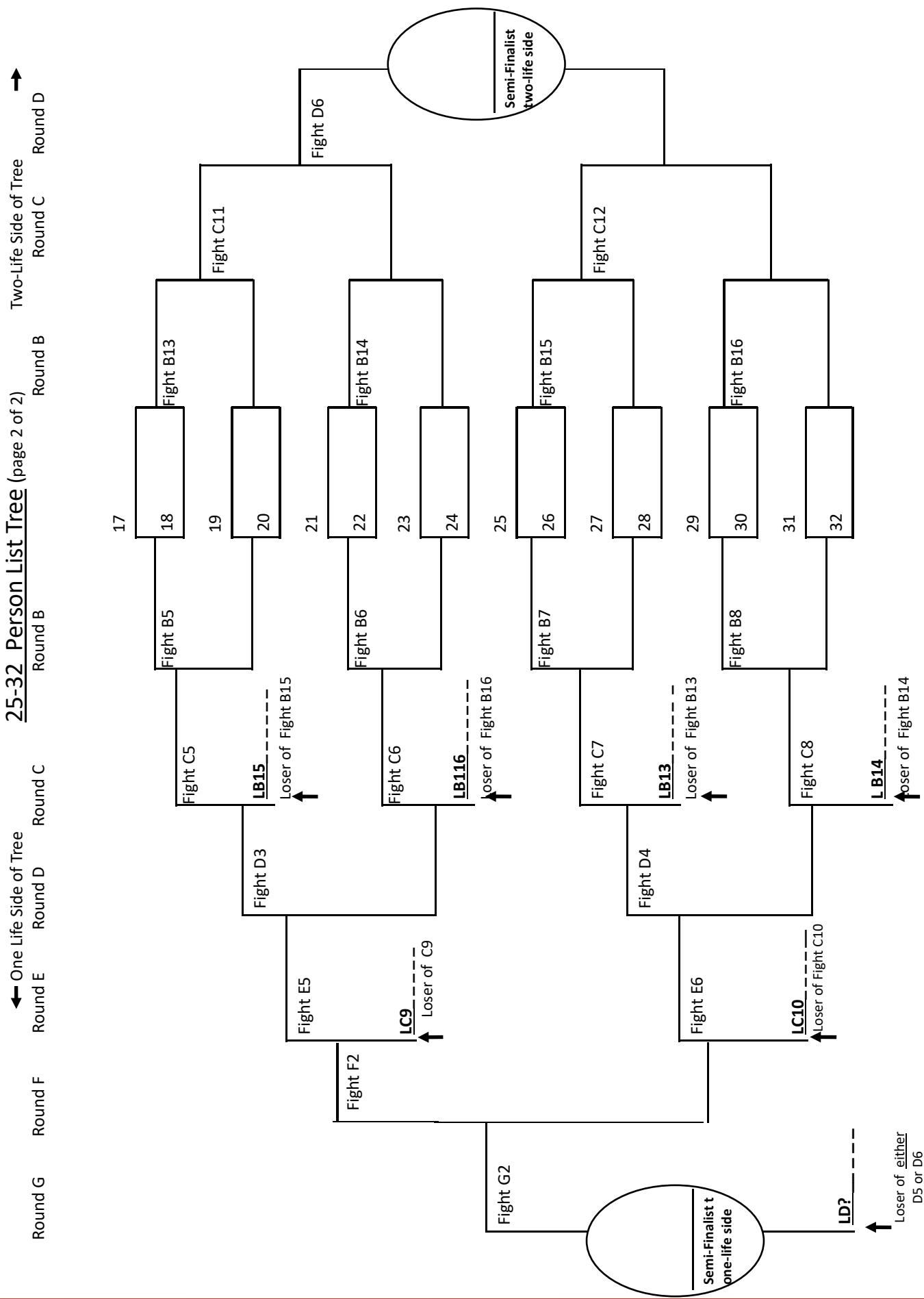
Two-Life Side of Tree

Round C

Round B

Round A





Semi-Finals & Finals: Best 2 of 3 Sets

All fights are best 2 of 3.

Semi-Finals: The undefeated fighter must win one full set of 2 of 3 fights to advance to the finals.

The fighter with only one life, must win 2 full sets 2 full sets to advance to the finals.

Sometimes, TRM will decide on the possible weapon forms, *example* below:

1st weapons form: the lower ranked fighter chooses the weapons, 2nd set chosen by higher rank, individual choice for 3rd set if required, not matched. Weapons may be: Sword & Shield, Mass Weapon & Shield, Pole Arm, Great Sword, Two weapon (a combination of two weapons), 6' Spear. TRM may decide if weapon forms can or cannot be repeated.

Semi-finals:			Vs.		
1 st Weapons:	2 nd Weapons:	3 rd Weapons	1 st Weapons:	2 nd Weapons:	3 rd Weapons
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

Victor of First set

Victor of 2nd set

Semi-finals:			Vs.		
1 st Weapons:	2 nd Weapons:	3 rd Weapons	1 st Weapons:	2 nd Weapons:	3 rd Weapons
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

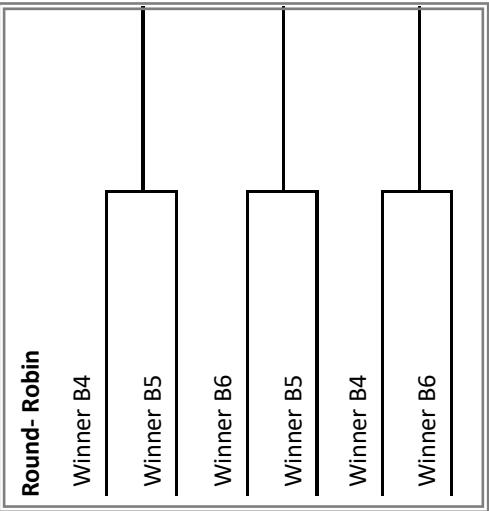
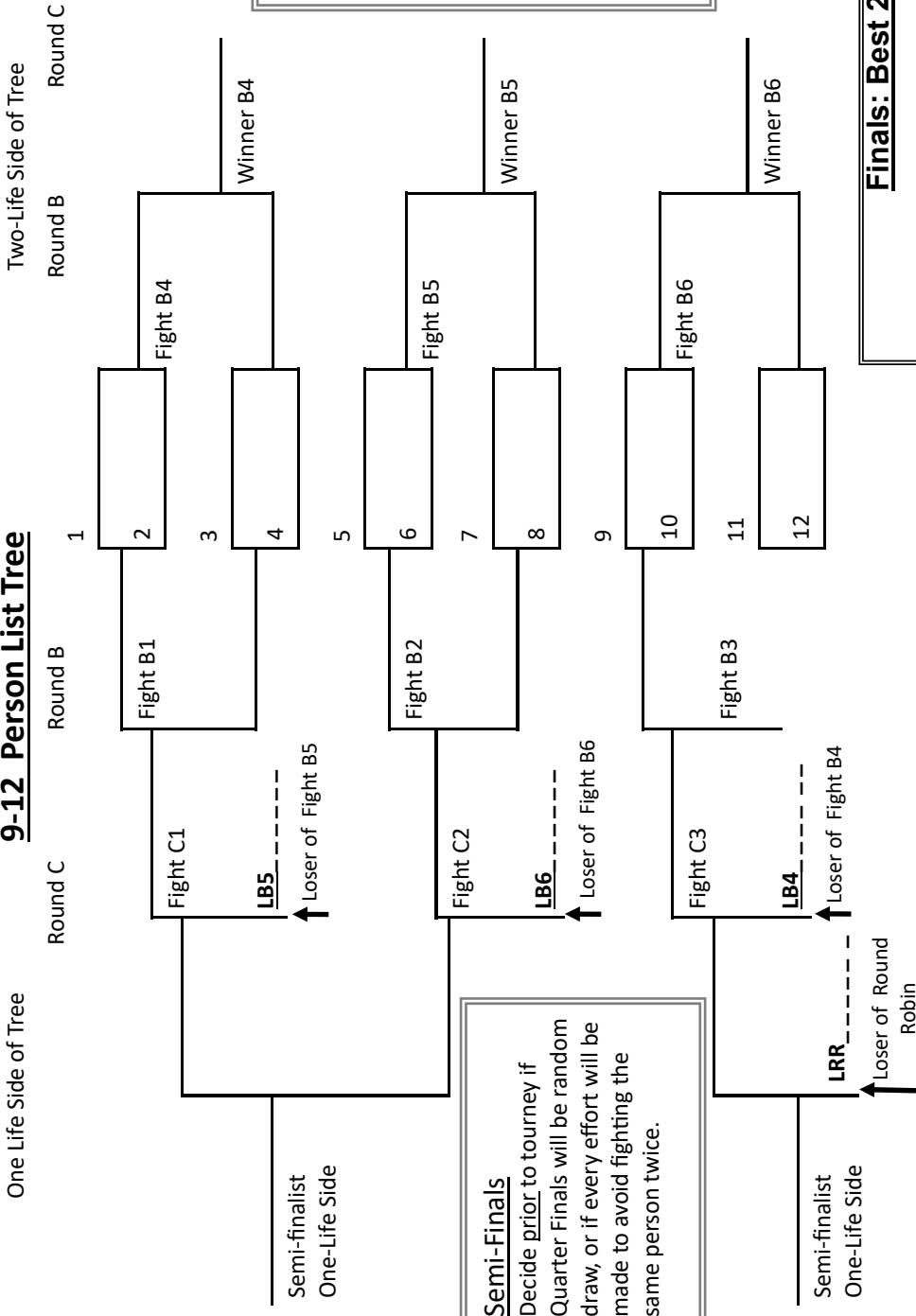
Victor of First set

Victor of 2nd set

Finals: Best 2 of 3 Sets		
Vs.		
1 st Weapons	2 nd Weapons	3 rd Weapons
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Tournament Victor

9-12 Person List Tree



Finals: Best 2 of 3 Sets

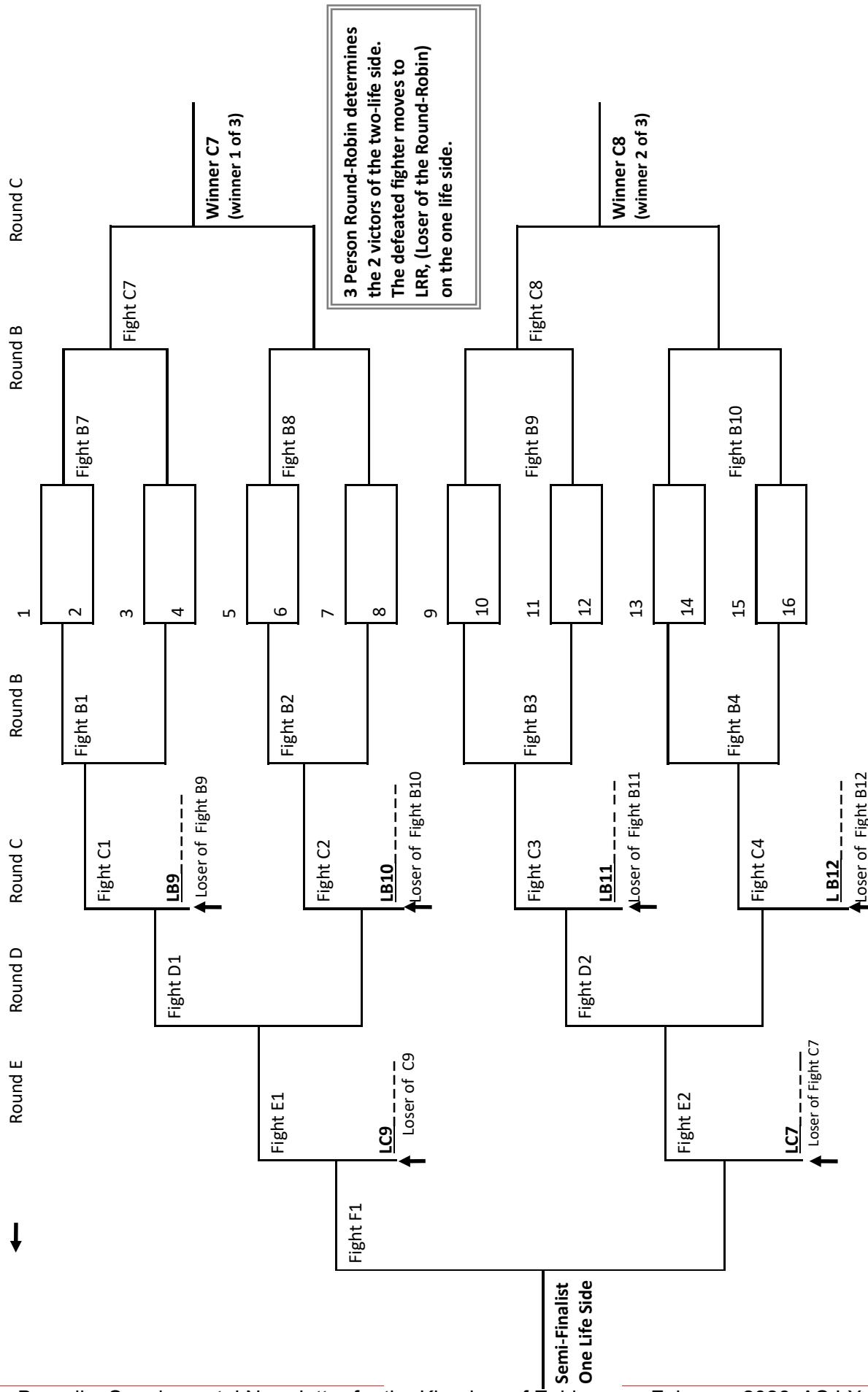
Conditions:

1st Weapons	2nd Weapons:	3rd Weapons	Victor
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.

Semi-finals

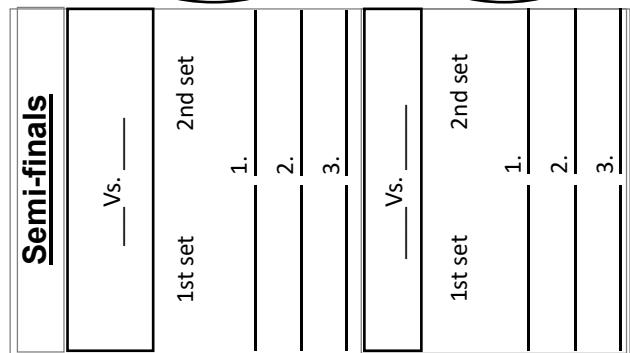
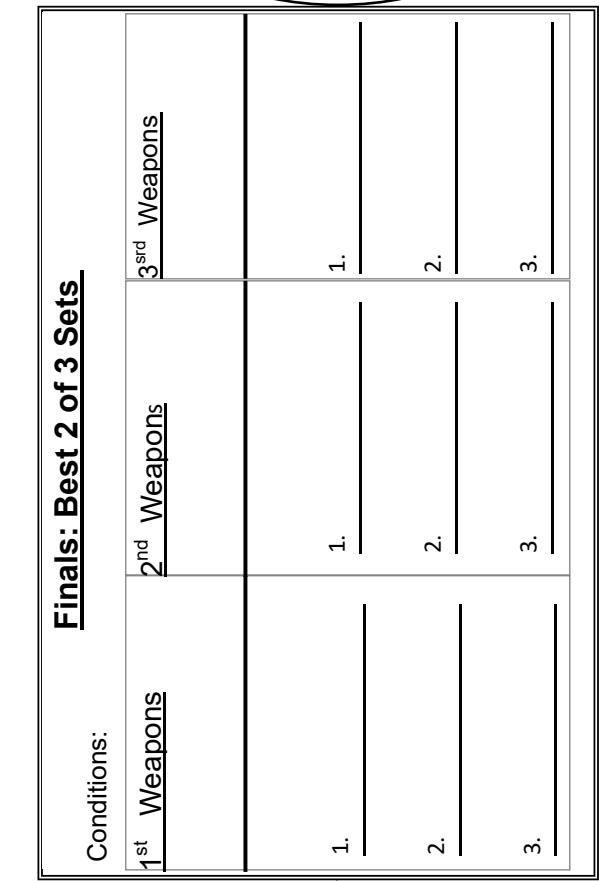
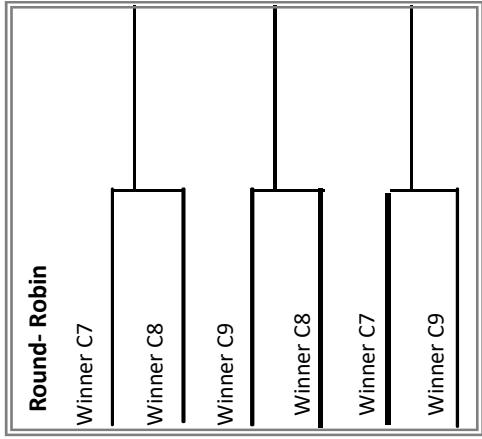
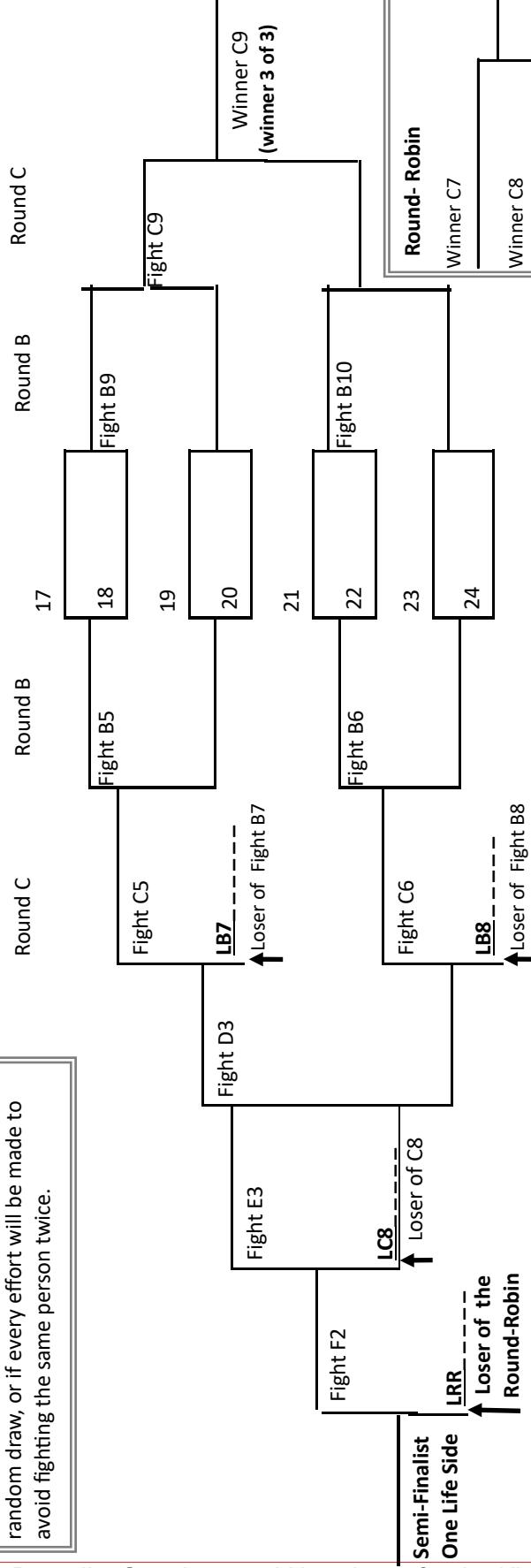
1st set	2nd set	3rd set	1st set	2nd set	3rd set
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

17-24 Person List Tree (page 1 of 2)



Quarter Finals & Semi-Finals
 Decide prior to tourney if these fights will be random draw, or if every effort will be made to avoid fighting the same person twice.

17-24 Person List Tree (Page 2 of 2)



Speed Tourney : Double Elimination without a List Tree

How to Run a Speed Tournament

The basic premise is that everyone starts with two-lives. The line folds randomly, and folks fight the person across from them. This creates two groups: 2-life and 1-life. The 1's fight each other, and folks with no lives left are eliminated. Then the 2's fight each other, which sends folks over to the 1-life side of the field,

Alternate these rounds until there is only a few fighters left, and enact a finals.

Example: 13 fighters with a 2vs.2 Crossover Finals

All the fighters start with 2 lives (green).

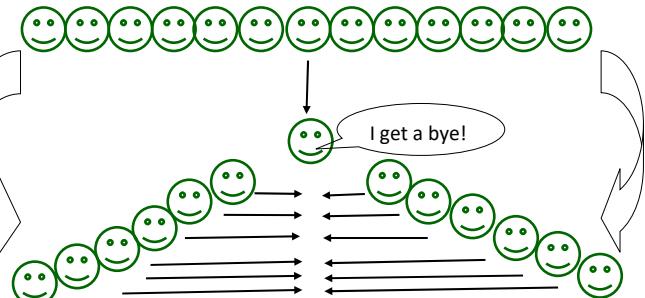
The marshal has chosen a fold to start the tourney.

The fighters at the end of the line walk out and forward to meet their partner.

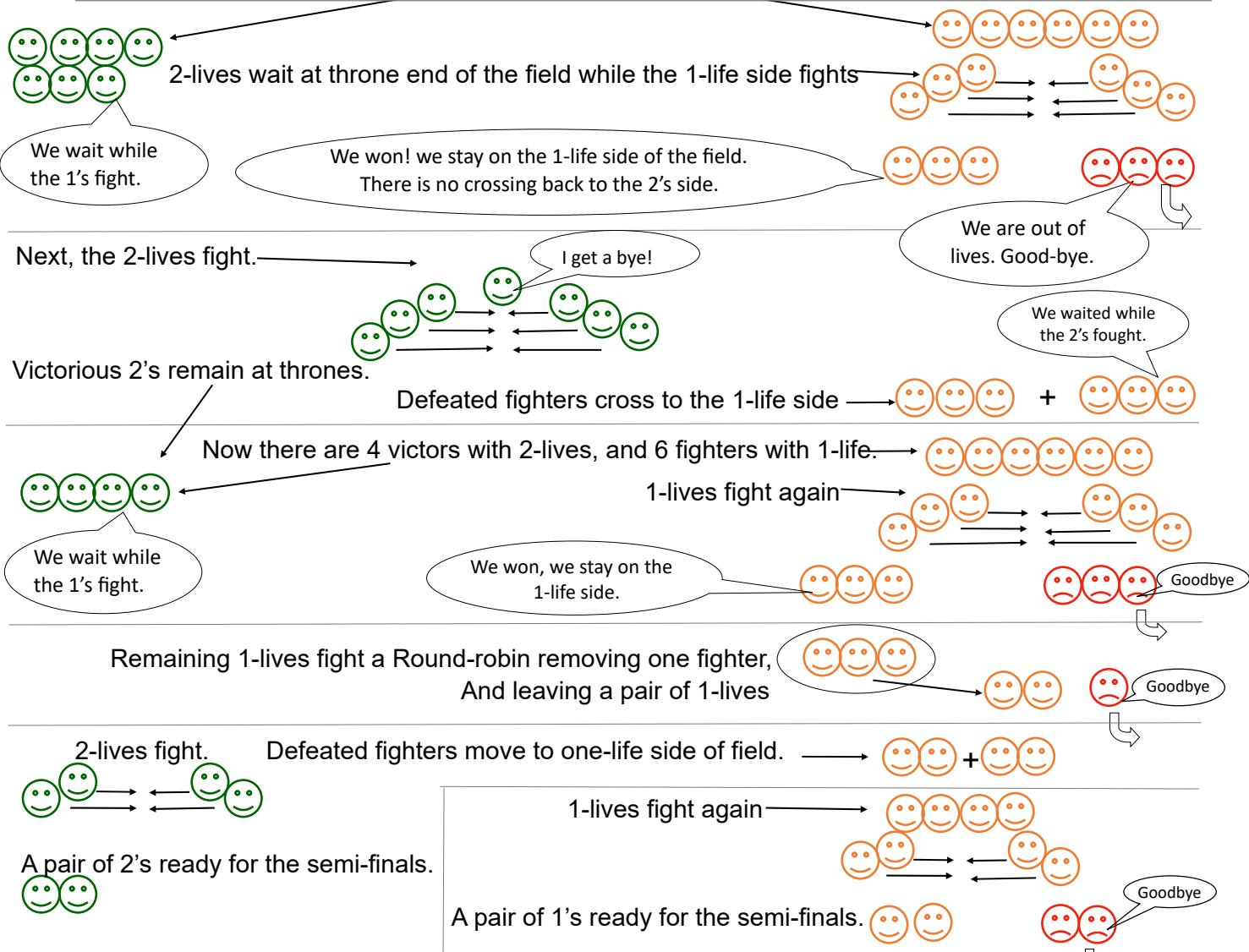
Partners fight, all at the same time if the field has space.

The odd man out gets a bye and moves immediately to the end of the field nearest the thrones.

This will be the 2-life side for the rest of the tourney.



After the first round there are 7 victors with 2-lives, and 6 fighters with 1-life, (yellow).



What is a Bye?

A "Bye" is a placeholder on a tournament tree. With the use of "bye" fights, a 16-man tree can be used for less than a full compliment of fighters. Simply replace the missing names with "bye".

Who Wins a Bye?

Those participants who are placed in a "bye" position are automatically advanced to the next round. A fighter cannot lose a "bye".

Why Fight the Byes, Can We Just Skip Them?

A "Bye" is more than just a convenience for the list table. By actually fighting the "bye" fights, the participants assigned to a "bye" still get their fair share of exercise. In our physical sport, this equalizes the energy expenditure so that each participant has completed the same number of fights. When exhaustion looms near the end of a tournament, this can become an important factor in the tournament outcome.

However, if you are really really pressed for time, the "bye" fights can be skipped. Just be aware that those fighters who fought their way all the way up the tree without a "bye" are now at a disadvantage. They are more tired than their opponents. Those who had a "bye" are more fresh, having effectively skipped a tournament round.

In a large round-robin, skipping the "byes" is advisable. Large round-robins are time consuming. Not acting out the "byes" saves time. Additionally, in a round-robin every participant gets the same opportunity for a rest round, or "bye".

Placing Byes on the Tree

Never draw the "byes" randomly with the fighter names. Place the "byes" on the tree in a spaced out fashion. This avoids the awkward situation of a "bye" fighting a "bye".

Who Should Be the Bye Fighter?

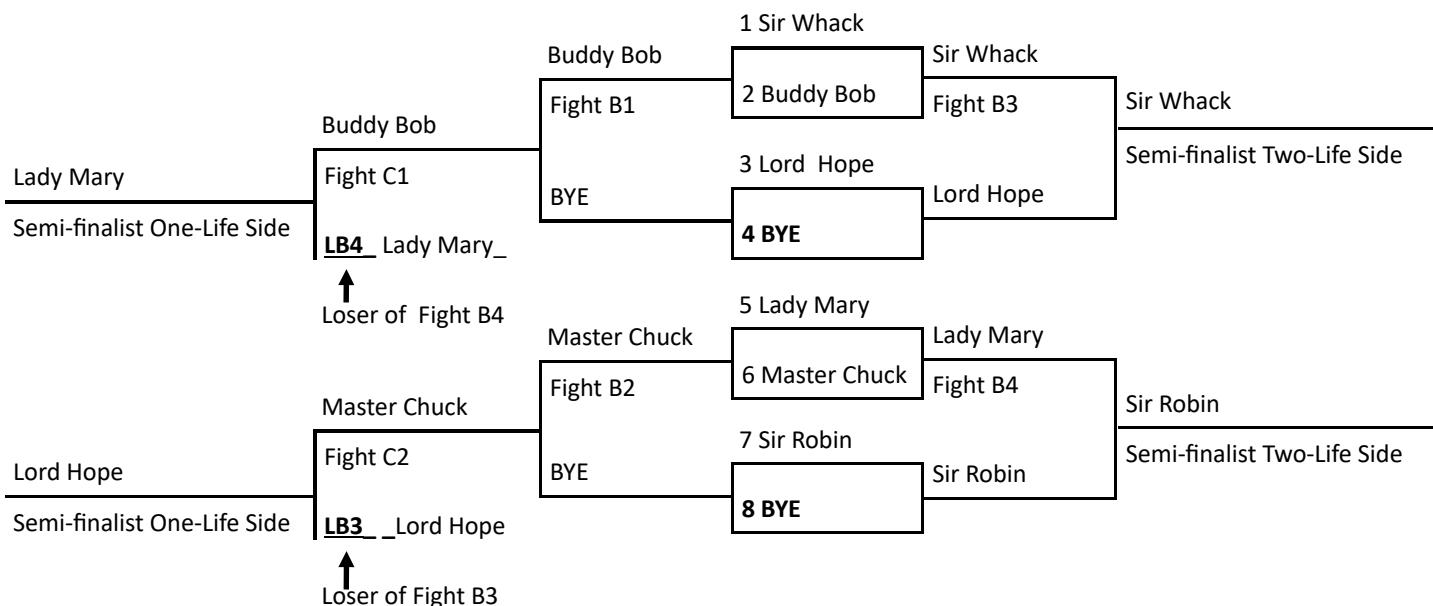
It is always preferable to have a designated "bye" fighter. Someone who is not in the tournament. No one wants to waste their best concentration and moves on an opponent who they will later encounter in the lists.

Example: Using an 8 Man List with 6 Fighters

The "Byes" are spaced out, one in each half of the tree. If there were more "byes", place one in each quarter. Notice that only fighters 1vs2 and 5vs6 have real fights. The winners of those matches will also have real fights for the whole of the tourney.

The losers of the two real first fights automatically get "Byes".

By the finals, only two fighters will have had real fights all the way through, Sir Whack and Lady Mary. They will be more physically and emotionally tired. By requiring the other participants to fight out the "byes" the physical exertion is equalized among all the fighters.



Help! I Have One Too Many Participants!

Eight is a magical number for double elimination tournaments. Unfortunately, participation does not always occur in multiples of 8. If there are too few participants, it is easy enough to add in some BYE fights. But what happens when you have One Too Many! This overabundance of participants is a real puzzler.

If you try to put 9 fighters onto a 16-man double-elim tree, there will be a ridiculous number of BYES, such that at some point BYE fights BYE.

(see example on the next page for this cornucopia of BYES)

One option for 9 fighters is to use the 12-man double-elim tree.

Or if you have 17 fighters, use the 24-man double-elim tree.

Yes, those trees end in a round-robin on the winner's side (due to basic math: three groups of 8). While not popular, they flow nicely.

However, sometimes it is your job to get those 9 fighters onto an 8-man tree, or those 17 fighters onto an 16-man tree.

Options for Accommodating Awkward Numbers

Round Robin: A great option if you have lots of time and energy.

Meets the double elim criteria for Crown, esp. if each fight is best two of three.

Everyone fights everyone else. Lots of fighting for everyone!

The person with the most losses does not continue onto the tree.

In the event of a tie, the fighters with the same number of losses fight it out.

Sudden Victory Round : A good option if time is limited.

Gives everyone a more than fair chance to enter the tree. The eliminated fighter will have had more than two fights against more than two opponents, so this meets the double elimination requirements for Crown Tournament.

1. Randomly draw and pair all participants.
2. The winners move into the random draw pile for the list tree.
3. Repeat until there is only a single fighter left.

This fighter is eliminated. They had at least 3 fighting attempts to gain entrance onto the tree, which satisfies most fighters who entered a double-elim and had the prospect of only two fights. Meets the double elim criteria for Crown, esp. if each fight is best two of three.

Blank trees for "Sudden Victory" are in the next few pages.

Challenging In:

The extra fighters with the lowest rank **challenge in on any fighter in round A**. If they win the fight, they are on the tree. If not, they try again on the one-life side of round B. If the challenger wins the fight, the person who was bumped out challenges in on the one-life side of round B. Everyone has had 2 lives, the double elimination concept is intact.

Formal tourney: Random draw challenge-in. If you are really pressed for time, this option is possible. However the tournament flow is less than ideal. Not recommended. Do Sudden Victory instead.

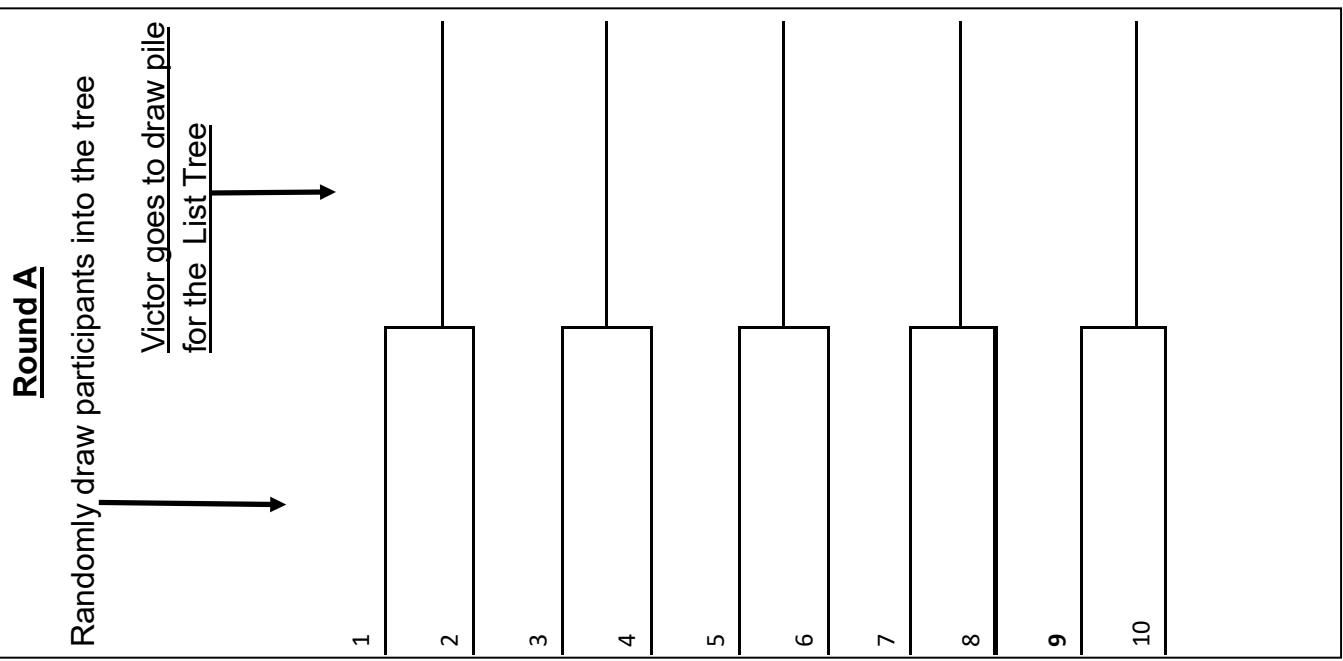
1. To begin Round A, two names are drawn to fight for inclusion in a single list slot on the tree. The winner goes onto the tree. The loser goes to the Round B 1-life side.

2. To begin Round B, two 1-life names are randomly drawn to fight for inclusion into a single list slot on the 1-life side of the tree (the loser from Round A is not included in this random draw). The winner goes onto the tree. The loser is eliminated, having lost twice.

Blank trees for a formal "Challenging In" are in the next few pages.

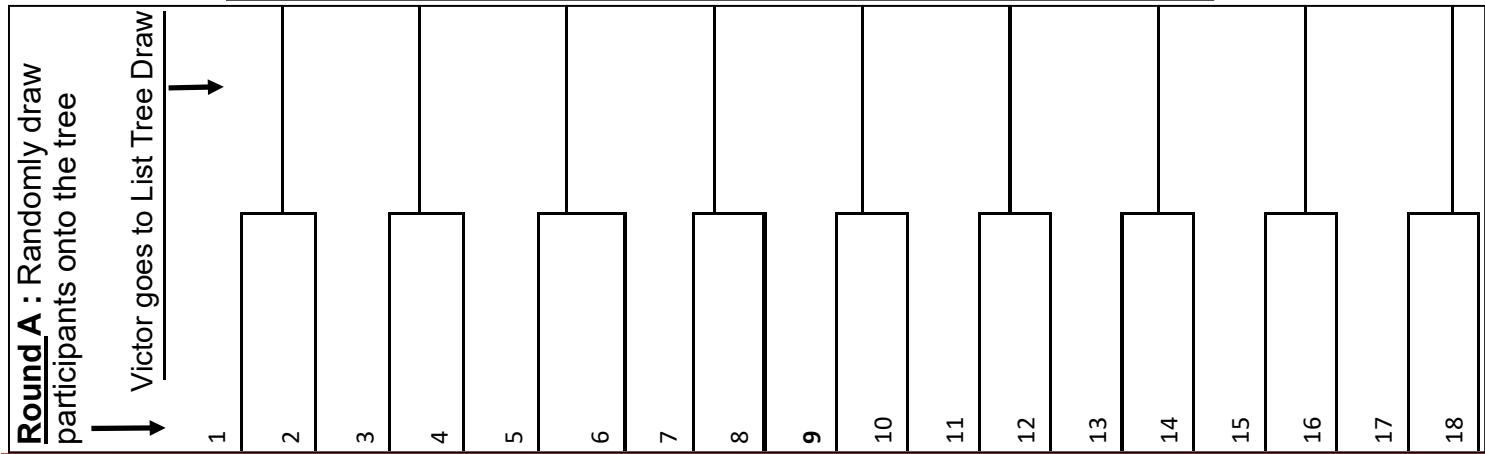
9-10 Person Sudden Victory Tree

Each fighter has Multiple Attempts to earn a Victory onto the next List Tree



17-18 Person Sudden Victory Tree

Each fighter has Multiple Attempts to earn a Victory onto the next List Tree.
Upon victory, their card goes into the draw pile for the list Tree.



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The Vox Borealis Supplemental Newsletter For the Kingdom of Ealdormere



Boilerplate: A few things we're required to say...

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