

## The Main Step and Timing Conflicts - Dice Anon Strategy



Dice Masters, Game Play Steps, Rules,  
Strategy, Tutorials

# The Main Step and Passing Priority

# Proficiently – Timing Conflicts Part 1

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There has been a topic which recently generated a lot of discussion on Facebook and a few other venues. It deals with playing the steps of a turn appropriately, more specifically the Main Step (and sometimes the Attack Step though we'll go into that more in Part 2). Previously when I first created the site, I wrote this. While still a good reference, it's hugely outdated with

the introduction of the PXG and so many other new Globals. With that being stated, it would be beneficial for the Main Step to be broken down a little more thoroughly.

## The Rules:

The rule book explains the sub-steps of the Main Step in very simple terms on the last page shown as a Recap:

### **Main Step**

Field characters by paying energy equal to their fielding cost.

Use action dice. Place them in your used pile when finished.

Purchase dice by paying energy equal to the cost. Place them in your used pile.

Both player can use global abilities.

At the end of this step, move unfielded characters to the used pile.

This is the most rudimentary guideline for this step. Breaking it down further shows there is a lot more to understand. The rules first start by stating these actions (or sub-steps of the Main Step) can be mixed up in any order preferred:

During this step, you may purchase dice, activate global abilities, field characters, and use action dice. You can do these multiple times and in any order; for example, you could purchase a die, use an action, field a character, and then purchase another die.

## Casual vs. Tournament Play

### **TOURNAMENT RULES**

Once you've mastered the basics, this section provides details and additional rules.

Now for Casual Play, the rules do not break down enough of the what-if's. For Tournament Play however, the rules become a little more strict and seem to give a bit more information when dealing with ambiguity.

### ★ Timing Conflicts

If there is a conflict of timing (e.g., both players want to use an ability simultaneously), the person whose turn it is always resolves their effects first. If simultaneous effects are controlled by the same player, that player chooses the order of those effects.

This rule will avoid the situation where two people reach zero life simultaneously.

Once activated, an effect is always resolved entirely before the next effect begins. You cannot use an effect after your opponent starts an effect but before it resolves. The only exception to this is when an effect redirects or prevents damage, but those situations are clearly spelled out in the card text.

In cases where both players may wish to use global abilities at the same time (e.g., one player is trying to use a global ability to knock out a character, and the other wants to boost the character's defense), the active player always takes precedence. While it is fine to play fast and loose in casual play, tournament play requires a stricter procedure.

In tournament play, the active player takes as many sequential actions as desired (from zero to all possible actions) before pausing and indicating that the inactive player can take an action. The inactive player can then either perform an action or decline the opportunity. Then the active player can take more actions.

If the inactive player passes, and then the active player passes, no more actions can be taken that step (except for reactions to damage, as usual).

This structure is only used for initiating a game effect. Players are allowed to use global abilities that react to events at the appropriate time (for example, a global ability that allows you to redirect damage when one of your characters takes damage).

There are a few items of note. By more closely examining the paragraph starting “In tournament play, the active player...” we start to dissect the Main Step a little more thoroughly. I will borrow this from a thread on BGG in which Crambaza explains priority passing. I’ve changed a few words slightly:

1. The **active player** takes as few or as many and all actions they want.
2. The **active player** must then pass priority to the **inactive player**.
3. The **inactive player** can

“either perform **an** action or [pass]” (singular).

4. If the **inactive player** performed an action, return to number 1,
5. If the **inactive player** passed, then the **active player** can either choose to return to step 1, or pass themselves. If the **active player** passes, then the Main Step is over.

Numbers 1-4 are repeated as many times as necessary until #5 is actually performed.

So how have many of us been

playing? For the most part I have heard a lot of this going on. I've been an offender myself:

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*“I am ending my main step if you want to do anything...”*

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While still appropriate, there is a whole level of strategy being missed.

There might be times where we need to see what our opponent will do, if anything, before making a move.



Now they can still have their own strategy also, by calling our bluff, but this allows for some fun interactions.

### **Example A:**

The active player has multiple characters to field, a Wolverine – Canucklehead and a Professor X - Powerful Telepath among them, but does not have enough energy to field them both. Their opponent has 3 masks in Reserve and enough sidekicks in Used to pay for 3x PXG. The opponent may want to save a mask to use the Distraction Global

they brought. The active player should pass priority without fielding any characters here and do one of three equally viable moves depending on what their opponent does.

1. If the opponent passes priority right back, wanting to see which character the active player will field, the active player should consider doing nothing and end the turn.

Missing a turn of PXG use in the late game is very damaging. This option is possible if we assume the energy the active player has available to field with is mask energy which

could be used for PXG or Distraction instead.

2. If the opponent uses all 3 masks on PXG and passes priority back, the active player would field Canucklehead instead of Powerful Telepath. It would likely take at least 3 turns before Powerful Telepath can deal the same damage as a Canucklehead.

3. If the opponent uses only 2 masks on PXG and passes priority back, the active player would field Powerful Telepath. Canucklehead would simply be targetted by a Distraction

Global should they choose to field him (forcing Distractions is viable in some cases though). Once Powerful Telepath is fielded, your opponent must decide whether or not the 3rd PXG use is worth 2 life.

### **Example B:**

The active player has just rolled multiple characters and not much energy. Their opponent has 3 masks. PXG and Distraction are available. If the active player passes priority to the inactive player with so much unused dice in his Reserve Pool, the inactive player should call his bluff.

The inactive player should use a single PXG before passing priority back because they only needed a maximum of 2x PXG to stay safe and they don't want the active player just ending the turn by not doing anything.

### **Example C:**

The active player is just short of lethal damage because the opponent has 3 masks with which to use Distraction. Their opponent needs to use all 3 masks on Distraction to not die to an all out attack. The active player passes priority and

promptly has it passed back to them. Attacking with all of his characters and failing to win the game puts him at risk of losing the game himself. He can safely attack with just two Tsarina dice for easy damage though. This would seem smart, but in reality would be the incorrect move. If the active player does this, the opponent will be able to safely use all 3 masks on PXG. Being able to roll an extra 6 dice the next turn greatly increases the opponent's chance of pulling the game from behind. The active player should end the turn. Once again, that lost PXG ramp is game changing in the late

game.

## Real Game Play

In reality, no one needs to be so formal the game is stale and cumbersome. However, rules are rules. Executing the rules to your advantage should be a standard.

## When does the Main Step [finally] end?

The biggest thing to keep in mind is the Main Step is never over until the active player says it's over *and only* after they've given the inactive

player the opportunity to take an action *and* they passed.

## **Am I a Jerk for calling it early?**

That's really dependent about how you go about doing it!

This back and forth might go on for a few times, or simply once. It depends on what the inactive player does, but it might behoove the active player to cut it all short if the inactive player simply passes prematurely. If the inactive player is holding on to multiple Masks for



PXG or the Distraction Global, and the active player gives them priority and they do nothing, the active player might really want to weigh the option of just cutting the turn short. This eliminates the inactive player's option of playing PXG, or any other Globals for that matter.

***We at Diceanon encourage you to exploit strategic mistakes, not rules ignorance.*** If your opponent has no logical reason for passing priority back to you instead of using PXG, it's simply good form to double check if they know the rules. If they don't, please take time to explain to

explain how doing so would waste the masks they saved. If they didn't know the rules, you should be able to outplay them anyways. We don't want our opponents walking away angry at the game's rules. Making sure your opponent knows the tools you both have available to you does not mean they will be able to figure out how to leverage it in time. We sincerely hope our articles help people learn how to leverage turn sequence well enough they can win games fairly, and in good form.

## **Part 2:**

We'll discuss the Attack Step and priority passing/timing conflicts in [part 2](#). We'll go into a bit more detail with actual examples I've had from personal game play.

Until then, Merry Christmas, and may the rolls be ever in your favor!

If you're looking for a great read not necessarily about priority, but simply about the Attack Step broken down in general, head over to [Dicemastersrules](#), this one is a doozy!

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# About Mathew Tucker

**58 articles and counting.  
Follow Mathew on social  
media:**

I've played MtG for many  
a decade. I love board

games such as Risk, Axis and Allies, and Game of Thrones TBG. I used to be heavy into RPG's and the such on consoles and PC/Mac, but as time goes by and the family supersedes the gaming part of me, I stick to more casual games I can play in 15-20 minutes.

### **All posts by Mathew**

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## 10 comments:



**JBWx** says:

December 27, 2014 at 9:05 AM

Well done sir! Every new player should see this. I'm working up an Attack Step attempt myself. Using Hulk Green Goliath... frightening I know.

**Reply**

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**Mathew Tucker** says:

December 28, 2014 at 9:41 PM

Yeah, i don't even want to get into Hulk GG yet. I think we're going to focus on getting new players up and running first.

**Reply**



**Tom** says:

June 28, 2015 at 5:39 PM

So i am reading over and over the DC Rulebook and this Sentence makes no sense to me. "The active player should end the turn. Once again, that lost PXG ramp is game changing in the late game."

Because in the attack step after Blockers are declared and i used maybe an action die, both players can using Globals with me first in priority for Timing Conflicts. So i dont understand this “shut down your mainstep if possible”? Can someone help me to understand that, or was it at this time just like that for the rules and nowadays this strategic element is not worth to mention anymore?

Greetings and thanks in advance

Tom

**Reply**



**Mathew Tucker** says:



June 30, 2015 at 8:17 AM

Tom, basically I'm referring to a scenario where you end the turn after the main step and you do not attack. If there is no attack, there is no attack step. So if you are someone holding on to masks, and they don't use them all in your main step, you have the option of simply ending your turn. This stops an attack step from happening and they lose out on the opportunity to play any more globals because there is no attack step at that point.

**Reply**



**Tom** says:

July 7, 2015 at 10:02 AM

Thanks Mathew, yeah i was reading it some days later on my own and than i fully understand that.

Thanks to you guys i did win a 1 Lifepoint game changer like you at the Worlds.

I asked my opponent if he wanted to do something in his Main step, he said “no” and passed to me. I used the Iceman Too Cool for Words Global, took away my Sidekicks for Magic Missile and KOd his Ant-mans and Punisher. And next round i attacked with Nova The Human Rocket and burned him to defeat.

**Reply**

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**jazrock** says:

August 4, 2015 at 1:56 PM

What happens in this situation:

Main step.

-Player A is the active player. He fields a character and passes the priority to Player B.

-Player B has 3 masks and decides to PXG only once because he feels the threat of an incoming attack and passes priority back to Player A.

-Player A decides to do nothing.

Does Player A still need to pass the priority back to Player B? or can he end the step here?

The steps above assume that if the

conditions of step 4 is met, it goes back to step 1 where the active player does something. But what if Player A does nothing?

**Reply**



**Mathew Tucker** says:

August 5, 2015 at 1:47 PM

Because Player B did *something*, Player A can't just end the step. Player A has to pass back again. If Player B does nothing and passes back, Player A can then end the step.

**Reply**



**jazrock** says:

August 6, 2015 at 5:49 AM

Thanks for the reply! I just had one more question though.. When the active players passes priority to the inactive player, can the inactive player perform a *series* of global abilities before passing back priority or just one? I noticed in the steps listed, it says the inactive player can perform *an* action.

**Reply**



**Mathew Tucker** says:

August 7, 2015 at 12:20 AM

This was actually debated heavily at worlds. They basically

ruled it this way, if they want to perform multiple and the active player doesn't care to stop them, they can play them all. But the active player can stop them to do anything they want at any point in between. It's honestly very rarely a worry.

**Reply**



**jazrock** says:

August 6, 2015 at 5:56 AM

Sorry, ignore my reply. It IS singular, so it should only be one global. This is actually the part where we have been doing things wrong.. lol.. But thanks Mat! Everything is clear now



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