Card Corner: Riftbound will be the most popular TCG

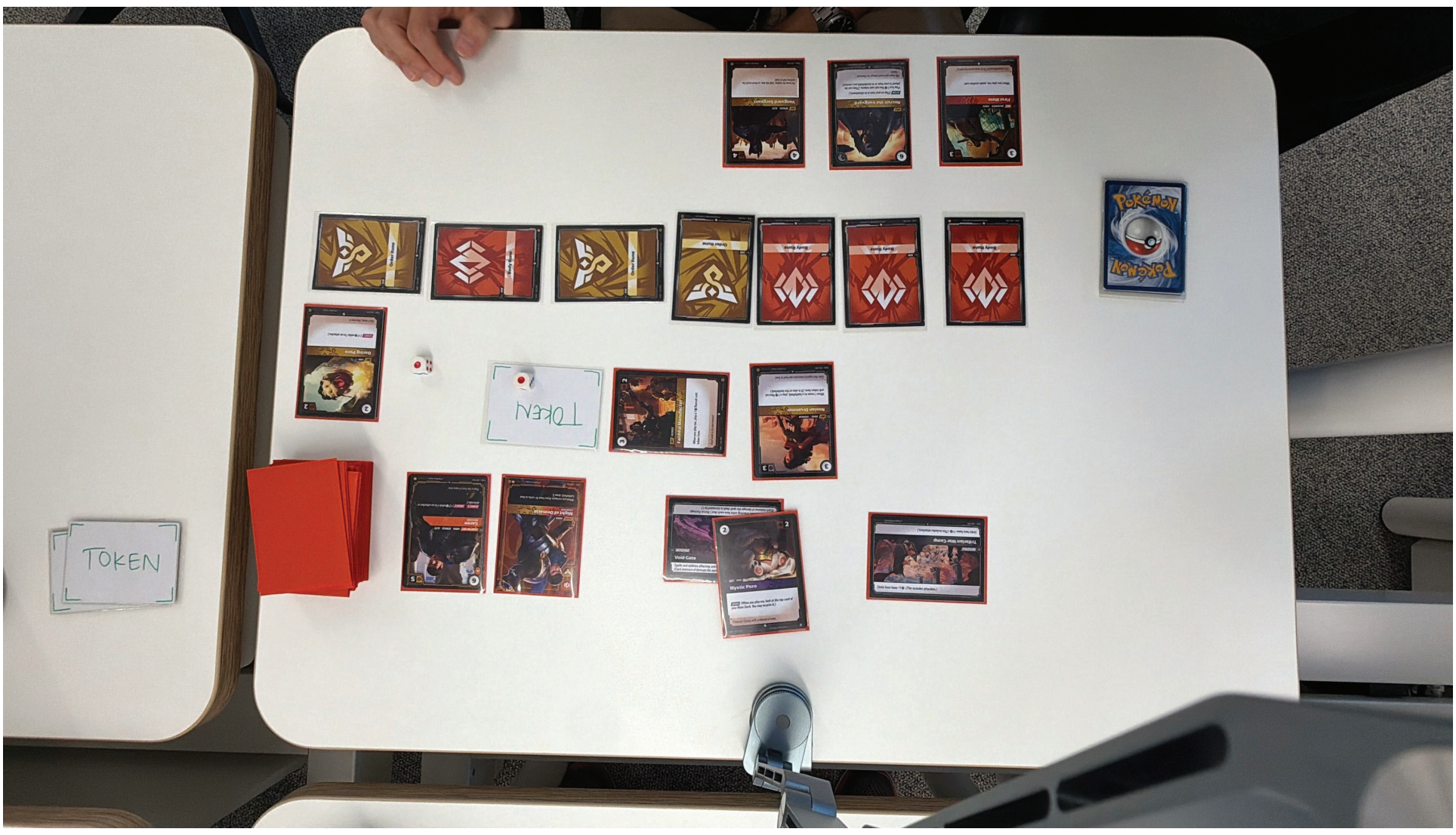


Photo of TCG Riftbound cards on a table. This game was a product of American video game developer Riot Games.

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There are dozens of mainstream trading card games (TCGs), yet one new contestant keeps making headline after headline: Riot Games' newest project Riftbound. The game is based on the "League of Legends" universe and has fans flocking to local game stores to clear the shelves of cards on release days.

The game takes much of its card art from Riot's other card game, Legends of Runterra (LOR). To clarify, LOR is not a TCG, rather an online card game Riot released back in 2020. The format of these two games is entirely different, yet LOR has given Riot a good baseline of how card games should be made and played.

Despite some early balancing issues that resulted in numerous bans and erratas to cards, the Riftbound team seems to be settling into their comfort zone with the release of their fifth set: Radiance. This new set was the one that convinced me Riftbound will one day become the most popular TCG on the planet.

The reason? Immersion.

Riot Games flourishes when it comes to making players get incredibly invested in their products. The world of League has so much depth and lore that getting immersed in it is as easy as finding a fallen leaf on a cold autumn day.

With the release of their fifth set Radiance, Riot Games has printed special rare cards that are drawn after their character's music groups.

That's right, not only does every character in the world have lore, some are also attached to a music group. This isn't just a thing that's written about in their short stories either. Riot Games has now released over 40 songs from these music groups, totaling billions of streams.

People who love the music now want the cards corresponding to their favorite artist from the song, bringing new people into the Riftbound ecosystem one song at a time.

Music isn't the only way they recruit. From "Arcane" attracting people who just threw on a Netflix show, to "League of Legends" attracting one of the largest player bases in the world, Riot has nearly infinite avenues to onboard people to their game.

Once people have been drawn into the game though, does Riftbound have what it takes to keep you there, enjoying every match you play? In my eyes, yes.

Riot recently announced a new competitive system for the game, and my gamer senses have been firing on all cylinders to try it out.

The new system brings a ranked ladder, placing you in a tier from Iron to Platinum. The more games you play and the better you do, the more you'll climb the ranks. As you reach higher and higher, you'll gain more rewards and more invites to events.

Riot is famous for making addictive games, League of Legends and Valorant being their two most famous, and Riftbound is looking to be added as a new face on their Mount Rushmore.

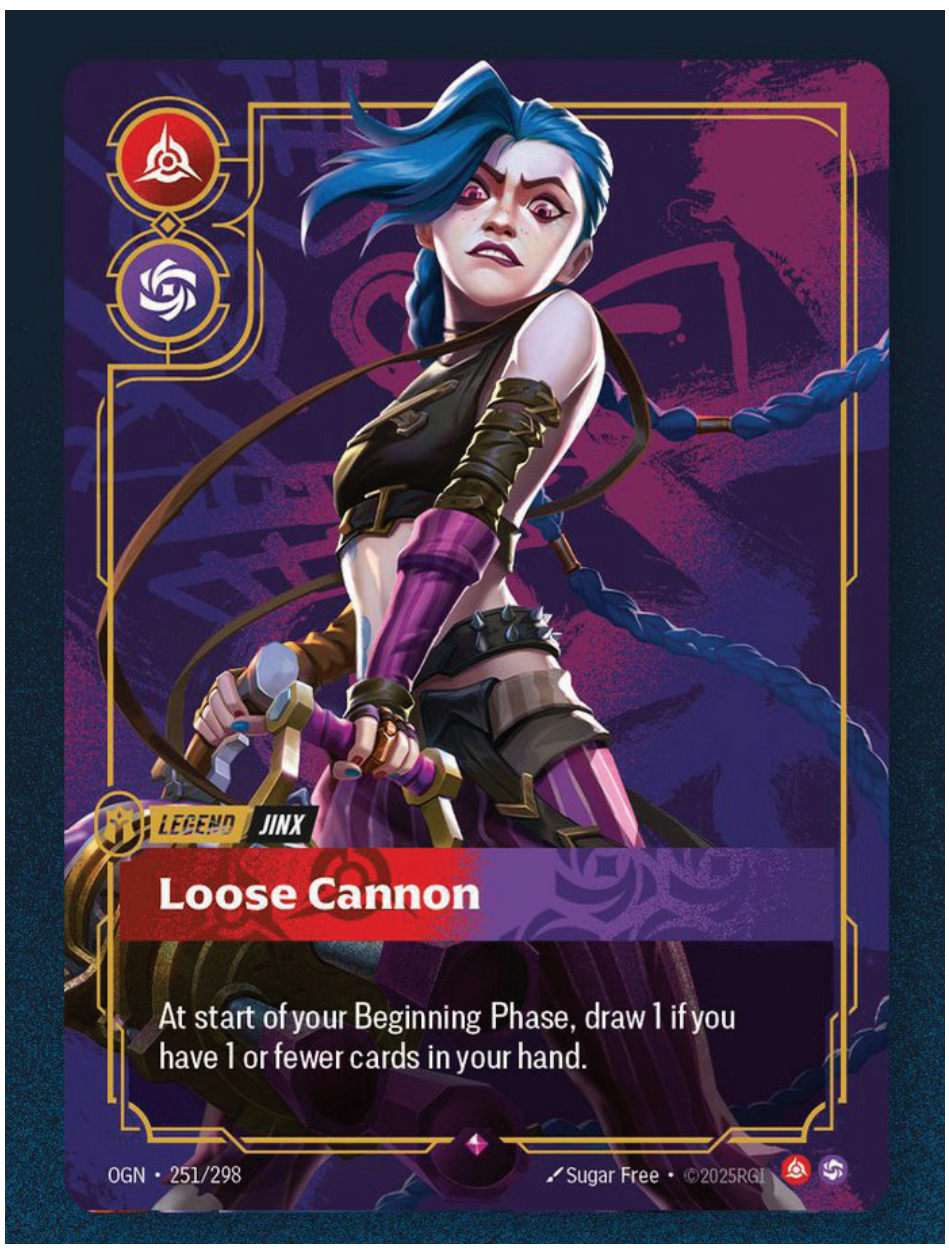
While the ranked ladder has only just been announced and not quite implemented yet, it is incredibly exciting to hear about as a fan of the game and TCGs in general. Most other TCGs function through a qualification system, allowing you to get to more events by placing in the top X at specific tournaments.

Riot's new system balances this out a bit and allows you to qualify for more events even if you're not placing in the top eight at everything you go to. With their new LP system, you're able to qualify for prizes and tournaments just by playing games often and placing near the top, not necessarily at it.

Overall, Riftbound is probably the most promising TCG I've seen in my time as a player. The creators are in constant communication with the community, admitting their faults when they're wrong, implementing bans, changes and fixes to help the state of the game and overall just making it feel like they care.

I'm excited for what the future of this game holds, and I'll be looking forward to attending the Philadelphia regional in February.

Until next time, this has been the Card Corner, and I hope you enjoyed! In the next edition we'll be looking at other TCGs and exploring what the best competitive systems look like and why they're so good. I hope you have an amazing week!



An example of a card from Riftbound that represents the character Jinx from League of Legends. They are also known for creating Valorant.

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