

Winning and Waning in Fire Tower

Fire Tower is one of the few fairly lightweight, quick to learn and play elimination games where all players remain playing IN the game till the end (even after "eliminated"). Yes, you can WIN after you are eliminated. Some might say it is even easier to win then as the player out front's favor wanes! And with the expansion a 3 player game went from ho hum to fantastic and includes a "Sudden Death Mode" (as per the developer!!) Let's look at playing the game with two, three, four or five players!

TWO PLAYERS (two ways to play)

Head to Head: each player starts in a corner diagonally opposite of the other. Burn down the opponent's tower: **Win!**

Double Tower, Double Trouble: each player controls two side by side towers with one hand of 6 cards, one **firehawk** and one **bucket**! There is no partial **Firestorm** when a tower burns down and the hand limit does not go up. The last tower standing **wins!**

THREE PLAYERS (two ways to play)

With three players, **Sudden Death Mode** can kick in (not possible in any other player count). All three players start with their corner tower, a hand of 6 cards, a **firehawk** and a bucket. The player with the first tower that burns down can choose to be a **Ghost** (good choice) or a **Shadow** (which gets a bonus turn after burning down the next tower, so, yeah, good too). Remember their cards go to the player who burned down their tower (who then discards down to a new hand limit of 7) and do a partial Firestorm!

1) If they choose to be a **Ghost**, they take over the empty tower and get a new hand of 7 cards (but have no bucket or firehawks - all players draw up to 7 card hands). To win both other towers must burn down. The player from the next tower to burn down becomes a **Shadow** with no cards and no tower. To win they must burn down the other active player **and** the **Ghost** by rolling the **Shadow die** on their turn (they do **NOT** place a **fire gem** at the start of their turn like other players). After burning down one of them there is a partial **Firestorm** and they get a free bonus turn and roll the **Shadow die** again! If they burn down the other tower in that free bonus turn, they **win!** If not, the player whose tower they didn't burn down **wins!**

2) However, if the player with the first tower burned down chooses to be a **Shadow**, then they must burn both other towers to win (all in one turn). After burning the next tower down, there is a partial **Firestorm**. Then they get a free bonus turn to roll the **Shadow die** again. If they burn down the other tower during that free bonus turn, they **win!** If not, the final active player **wins!**

FOUR PLAYERS (with Shadow mode)

The first player whose tower burns down becomes a **Shadow** with no cards and no tower (their cards go to the player who

burned down their tower who discards down to the new hand limit of 7 - other players also draw up to hand limit of 7). There is a partial **Firestorm**. The **Shadow** is still in the game and plays on their turn, however they do not place a **fire gem** at the start of their turn. Instead they roll the **Shadow die** which determines their action. The next player whose tower burns joins the Shadow Team (their cards go to the player who burned their tower down) and there is a partial **Firestorm**.

Now, for the **Shadow Team** to **win**, they must burn down both other remaining towers in one sequential turn. The **Shadow** burning down the first of the remaining two gets a free bonus turn (to roll the **Shadow die** again). If they do, the **Shadow Team wins**. If not, the OTHER **Shadow** must burn down that remaining tower on their turn for the **Shadow Team** to **win!** If the remaining player with an active tower has their turn before the second **Shadow** player and their tower is still standing on their turn, they **win** (**Shadow Team** loses). If the other Shadow player has their turn before the remaining active tower player, that Shadow must burn down that tower on their turn to **win**. If not, the remaining active player **wins!**

FIVE PLAYERS (see the rulebook pgs 13-14)

The fifth player will control Four Oak Tree tiles. They start with a hand of 6 cards, 2 **firehawks** (placed anywhere on the board) but no bucket. If a **fire gem** reaches one of the top two squares of a tree tile it burns down. If two tree tiles remain when all four towers are burned down, they win. If 3 trees burn down, they become a **Shadow** (part of the **Shadow Team**).

Shadow Die results summary:

The player who is a **Shadow** has no cards and no tower. On their turn they do **NOT** start by placing a **fire gem**. Instead they roll the **Shadow die** and that determines their action! The D6 die has icons, but the rules identify them via 6 numbers too:

1. Choose to remove 1 **purple firebreak token** from board **OR** choose to remove one **firehawk** from the board and take one **fire gem** from anywhere on the board (other than in a tower area) and place it anywhere else on the board (adjacent to another **fire gem**).
2. Place 1 **fire gem** anywhere adjacent to another **fire gem**. Then roll the **Shadow die** again.
3. Draw 3 cards. Immediately **play up to 2** of them (discard those not played).
4. Place 1 **fire gem** adjacent to another **fire gem** on the side of the wind direction
5. Place 1 **fire gem** on the **Shadow** card. Now you choose to roll the **Shadow die** again or not. If you roll 1, 2, 3, 4 place another **fire gem** on the card (and choose again). If you choose to not roll again, place all **fire gems** on the card adjacent to any other **fire gem** on the board (can be adjacent to each other).
6. Place 3 **fire gems** on the board adjacent to another fire gem (but not adjacent to each other)