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Radiant and Dire Advantages

You probably don't feel it on a game by game basis, but playing on Radiant or playing on Dire can significantly alter how you play your match. Everyone knows the obvious differences, like Dire's Roshan advantage or Radiant's triple pull ability, but there are plenty of other small differences that are worth paying attention to depending on what side of the map you're on.

Mid Lane

While Dire gets the most famous advantage with Roshan, being on the Radiant side has a lot of perks. **Many players prefer playing mid on the Radiant side than the Dire side.** This is for three major reasons. The first is that people generally consider the Radiant mid lane easier to creep block than the Dire mid lane. Mainly because **it's much easier to perform blocking movements on Radiant since you can actually see what direction the creeps are twitching towards.** When you're blocking on Dire, it's harder to see behind Invoker's big ass cape sashaying around while an overzealous melee creep sprints by you. **The other reason is that the Radiant mid gets easy access to their ancients.** A lot of teams will only consider picking a hero like Tinker on Radiant and not on Dire solely for this reason. If the lane is pushed and the rune is gone and you've got nothing better to do, stacking ancients can help compensate for a poverty early game. **Lastly, the Radiant mid also has a quick route to the medium jungle camp.**

Back in the day when this was a small camp, this made life far easier for heroes like Shadow Fiend to pick up some quick experience and last hits. That's not so important now that there's a medium camp there (which can spawn Mud Golems), but it's still useful to have if you're getting zoned hardcore.

The Dire mid doesn't really have much to compensate. The only redeeming factor is that the **Dire mid has relatively easy access to their secret shop by cutting down a tree or by going into Rosh's pit.** There are probably some more subtle differences between the two, but these are the major variations in the geography of the mid lane.



The secret shop's back entrance

Side Lanes

Bottom Lane

It's difficult to discuss the lanes in the context of Dire versus Radiant, since the advantages and disadvantages are shared between who's in the hard lane and who's in the easy lane. **For the 'easy lane' of Radiant (bot lane) the major perk is the one I stated earlier, which is the ability to pull a creep wave into three different jungle camps.** I said triple pull because *technically* you can double pull on both sides of the map. Buuuut, if we're being realistic, it's hard as hell to finagle an uncontested double pull on Dire and it's equally unlikely to pull a triple pull off on Radiant. **However, double pulling on Radiant is super easy and is a godsend for Radiant supports for quick experience.**



The poets spoke of the mythical triple pull

Since this is also the Dire's 'hard lane,' there are some advantages worth mentioning. One is that **the typical ward used for Dire offlaners also provides rune vision**. This is useful since you can use one ward to block the camp and one ward to provide safety from ganks and still get vision of the rune for your mid. The flip side is that this ward is instantly countered in like 90% of high level games. **Dire can also ward the magic bush, which blocks two camps with one ward**. Again, this ward is countered pretty frequently once a support realizes that their hard camp isn't spawning, but it works well against lazy supports.



The rune ward and 'magic bush' ward

The most typically observed advantage, though, is that the Dire hard lane gets the same advantage as the Radiant mid lane – an all-expenses paid trip to the ancient camp. It's far more likely that an offlaner will get zoned hardcore than in any other lane, so it's almost

expected in many games that the offlaner will spend their time either stacking ancients, or slowly whittling them down to get experience. Heroes like Beastmaster will frequently get picked on Dire just because he's so good at taking ancients in the offlane.



Stacks on stacks

A final bonus is that Dire offlaners can easily gain safe access to the top of the side shop if they're sneaky and have a tango or quelling blade.



Side shop tree

Top Lane

The top lane has its own share of weird nuances, but they're not nearly as numerous. **The major interaction is the ability to pull the hard camp.** Both teams can take advantage of this, but it nearly always gets contested. It can be useful to disrupt creep equilibrium, but it's hardly reliable. But this hard camp comes in handy towards the mid game, since the Dire safe lane carry can retreat and get some hard jungle creep experience and gold without having to walk very far from the lane. This also makes Midas usage far easier for Dire safe laners.

The other aspect is also exploitable by both teams. People don't appreciate it, but it is way easier to camp the top lane side shop than the bottom lane side shop. The bottom lane is way... fatter... than the top lane, **so setting up a gank in the side shop in the top lane usually has a higher success rate than ganking out of the bottom lane side shop.** There is less ground to cover before heroes get in range of your spells and there is less time for them to react in the top lane.



In retrospect, I should have switched these two images around.

Jungle

Pretty much everyone concedes that the Dire jungle is superior to the Radiant jungle for jungle heroes. It's safer since it's further from lanes and it's quicker to get from camp to camp. Really the only prominent downside of the Dire jungle is that the top rune cliff ward gives vision into a Dire medium jungle camp, making it possible for squishy supports to know when it's safe to come harass Dire junglers.



Radiant versus Dire jungle layouts

The Radiant jungle does offer easier pulls for supports, but for heroes who exclusively jungle, a lot of time is wasted migrating from camp to camp, especially since the two medium camps are sandwiched between two hard camps. Whereas on Dire, you have quick access to both medium camps, which is far more useful early on.

Late Game

Once the laning phase is over, the differences aren't so dramatic. The advantage really depends on what heroes are in the game. Generally speaking, **Dire heroes are arguably easier to gank in the late game because their early game strength of clustered jungle camps becomes a late game weakness because it's so easy to get spotted.** Plus the typical ward locations put in the Dire jungle give a lot more critical vision than Radiant jungle wards. Though, of course, **Dire has the notorious Roshan advantage, which makes it significantly easier for them to take Rosh quickly and/or uncontested in the late game.**

There are a ton more weird hero-specific and team-specific interactions, like [Rubick's Radiant Telekinesis pull](#), or [Earthshaker's Radiant Fissure embargo](#), but in 99% of your games, they won't be relevant. However, stuff like juking out of the side shop or triple pulling camps will always be useful to know. Take advantage of the perks offered by your side of the map!

*Images taken from Dota 2 and [Critwhale's Interactive Dota 2 Map](#).
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