

Finding Your Way to the Championships

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State Championships have always been one of my favorite tournaments. Taking place in early November, the Championships are always the first major tournament featuring the fresh Standard rotation, giving ambitious players a chance to go down in history as the creator of an archetype. The Championships have premiered powerful decks like Academy, Control Green and Rebels, while giving players a chance to compete against the best players in their areas.

In the last two years, American State Championships have evolved from a purely American tournament series into a more international one. Last year, Canadian Provincial Championships were added. This year, Australian players will be competing in Territorial Championships and players from New Zealand will have access to Island Championships. These tournaments are the first step in a metagame that will develop through Friday Night **Magic** and play a crucial role in Pro Tour Chicago, which will be the first Standard Pro Tour since Pro Tour Dallas, in 1996.

This year, the Championships are the first major Standard tournament featuring *Invasion*. Because *Invasion* is rotating in, the Artifacts Cycle (*Urza's Saga*, *Legacy* and *Destiny*) is leaving Standard. This is a massive change, as the powerful Saga Block has been dominating the Standard metagame for two years. For the first time in awhile, players are forced to build in a format that is not ruled by the all-powerful Morphling and Masticore. The powerful cards of the Masques Block, like Parallax Wave and Chimeric Idol, will see significant play, as players find themselves in an environment much more conducive to creature battles - and much more susceptible to global mana denial. Pro players worldwide are anticipating the Championships, as they will shed some light on this new field, with less than a month until they will be playing Standard for \$200,000.

This year's prizes include championship plaques for each champion and playmats for top 8 competitors. All Championship events will be held on either November 4th or 5th.

A big question on most players' minds is what to play at the Championships, because it is such an



undefined format. The Sideboard will bring you some of the hottest tech and scouting information, from some of the best **Magic** writers in the world, along with some exclusive info from a non-sanctioned November Standard tournament, this weekend at the Wizards of the Coast Gamecenter, in Seattle, Wa.

For information about a Championship near you, [click here](#).