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THE NEW, IMPROVED KAI

Posted in **Feature** on October 25, 2002

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First, I want to follow up on an article I wrote a few weeks ago about the impending release of *Onslaught* on *Magic Online*. The Invitational helped us find three tiny bugs in *Onslaught* cards, which we'll have no trouble fixing in the next week and everything will be ready to go on November 1st. *Onslaught* product will go on sale in the company store on Friday, November 1st and will be immediately legal in the casual play rooms.

For those of you interested in *Magic Online* tournament play with *Onslaught*, we're going to have special "release events" in the Premier Events room starting Sunday, November 3rd at noon Pacific time (3pm Eastern). These will be sealed deck tournaments and a new one will start up every three hours until Monday night. We will also turn on the 8-man draft queues at noon Pacific on Sunday the 3rd.

With most State and Provincial championships scheduled for Saturday, November 2nd, that should make for a pretty cool weekend of *Magic: Play States* on Saturday and then play with *Onslaught* online on Sunday.



In other news, I took the result of [last week's poll](#) and showed them around the company:

What do you think of Voidmage Prodigy (mechanically)?

Awful

414

What do you think of Voidmage Prodigy's art?

6.8%

Awful

2884

42.2%

Mediocre

What do you think of Voidmage Prodigy's art?

1014

16.7%

Mediocre

1824

26.7%

Good

What do you think of Voidmage Prodigy's art?

2652

43.8%

Good

1542

22.6%

Great

What do you think of Voidmage Prodigy's art?

1979

32.7%

Great

577

8.5%

Total**6059****What do you think of
Voidmage Prodigy's art?****100.0%****Total****6827****100.0%**

Part of the reason I asked the questions that way is that I'm pretty happy with how the card turned out from an R&D point of view -- it's interesting and powerful and fits the block well, but all without being overpowered. On the other hand, I can see why Kai himself (and many others on Kai's behalf) are upset with the art. I'm told that the original piece was better, but it didn't look very much like Kai, so a new face was painted on top of the original. The original face apparently had an expression that made a bit more sense in context, but none of that explains the giant "cowcatcher" he's wearing. I'm glad to see that you guys agreed with me about both the card and the art.

In any case, I was thinking that maybe we should do alternate art for Kai's card. Several people inside Wizards had also suggested this idea and with the results of this poll in hand I was able to argue that the real question wasn't whether we should do an alt-art [Voidmage Prodigy](#), but rather: How should we distribute it?

It was at about this time that I talked to DCI Tournament Manager Jeff Donais. He was trying to pick a new card to give away as part of the DCI's *Magic* Player Rewards Program. The *Magic* Player Rewards Program has been pretty successful since it launched -- basically, it's a frequent flier program for tournament players. For every five DCI-sanctioned tournaments you play in, you get a free token card. (Two new tokens are introduced with each new *Magic* set.) For every 20 tournaments you play it, you get mailed some even cooler card, which in 2002 was a premium foil [Wasteland](#) (with real-world flavor text).



I suggested to Jeff that the Player Rewards program might be a perfect excuse to give away an alternate art [Voidmage Prodigy](#). He loved the idea. He completely agreed that the game's biggest star should have gotten better art than what we wound up with in *Onslaught*. Plus, the Player Rewards program seemed like a perfect fit -- what better card to give away to our most frequent tournament players than the card of the best tournament player in the world?

We took the idea to our marketing guys and our brand manager. It's a bit weird to be giving away a card that is still for sale in packs, but we convinced them that we had really good reasons to do it and it's not like we're giving away a foil version. Besides, anyone who has played in 20 tournaments is clearly a valuable customer and deserves to get a little something special.

In the end, we convinced them -- and by "we" I mean me and those of you who voted in last week's poll. Wizards is always looking for ways that we can make the game a better overall experience for our customers and here was an opportunity where we could. It isn't always going to be this easy, but when it is, we'll always try to.

So come January or February, some of you will be getting a little present from the DCI in the mail. *Magic* Art Director Jeremy Cranford assures us that he knows what we want and that the new art will turn out much better. I believe him. (Jeremy wasn't involved in the process a year ago when the original [Voidmage Prodigy](#) was being commissioned, by the way, and the art director who was has since been laid off.)

Hmm. Green Week, eh? But I had all this other stuff to talk about...

Randy may be reached at latestdevelopments@wizards.com.

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