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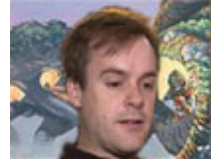
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Big Parties



Premier Events and the MTGO birthday party

Chad Ellis · Online and Enjoying It
Tuesday, June 22, 2004

It's getting harder to keep thinking of article titles that reflect this week's content but which don't let Zinger and the rest of the forum junkies guess what I'm writing about!

This time we're talking about two parties -- or events worthy of a party.

A week and a half ago, MTGO celebrated the return of premier events with a "Welcome Back" celebration full of events with extra prizes and special avatars. Over 7,000 players entered these events between 9am on Friday June 11th and midnight Sunday the 13th...pretty convincing evidence that the MTGO player base/community has come of age and that we like premier events.

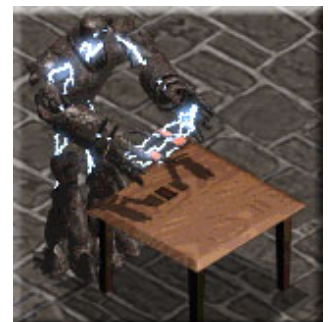


So what are Premier events (PE's), and where are they going?

PE's are the top of the line for MTGO tournaments. You find them in the "Sanctioned Tournaments" area of MTGO, along with constructed and draft events. MTGO can't support big-money events like the Pro Tour because of judging constraints (e.g. how could you know whether you were playing scrubby Chad Ellis or Chad Ellis with Darwin Kastle and Rob Dougherty giving advice?), but it can and does offer serious competition with special prizes.

MTGO currently supports PE's in sealed deck, booster draft, Rochester draft and constructed formats. The entrance fees are comparable to normal events, with higher prizes but a larger group of people competing for them. For example, to enter a regular draft you "pay" three boosters and two event tickets, and eight people compete for a total of eleven packs, paid out to first through fourth place in 4-3-2-2 amounts. In a premier draft you pay an additional ten event tickets -- but for this you get a second draft after the third round. Since you keep what you draft, this is equivalent to buying and using a second draft set for ten tickets. You then play against around a hundred people for 41 packs (if it's a "1X" prize event), paid out among the top 8 in 12-9-6-6-2-2-2-2 amounts.

During the Welcome Back event, PE's paid out at 3x their normal prize levels, and players who finished in the top 16 were awarded **Arcbound Overseer** avatars to show off with.



At the moment, all PE's are open to anyone who wants to enter, but Justin Ziran and the MTGO team have plans to keep building on the concept. "Now that PE's are back," Justin explains, "we will be running a variety of special events like a monthly Championship series. In addition we will have 'special' events like the 5th Dawn release event that will feature qualifier PE's for a 5th Dawn Championship. Beyond that, we are brainstorming ideas and will announce new PE's as we solidify plans." Those Championship events will be like MTGO Pro Tours in that you can only play if you've qualified in an earlier event, so you know if you make it you'll be facing some tough competition.

And competition seems to be one of the main draws of the PE's. Travis (Darkest End) played in four sealed deck PE's during the Welcome Back event, finally snagging a top-16 and the Overseer avatar. "I like to play for the competition," Travis said. "It would have been nice to win prizes for top 8, but the main thing is in the Premier Events you play more people and the level of competition is higher." Travis nagged me a bit about his Overseer arriving, but it's coming soon! :)

The downside to Premier Events is that they take several hours to complete. For some of us, that's an almost impossible hurdle -- try spending 7 or 8 hours in a tournament when you've got a three-month-old baby girl and are launching your own game company! Fortunately, we won't be left out of the second party, which celebrates MTGO's second birthday!

On June 24, MTGO turns two. To a new parent that sounds a bit scary, but I'm told that "terrible twos" only refers to human babies, not online games. In any case, to celebrate Wizards is making all Limited events free to enter on the 24th from midnight to midnight, Pacific time. You still have to bust packs, but you don't have to pay any tickets and prizes will be unchanged.

In a perfect world, Constructed events would be free, too. Unfortunately, with no cost to enter and prizes on the line, there's too much scope for abuse. Anyone who took part in early beta testing when you could draft as much as you wanted for free but couldn't open unlimited packs remembers the frustration of having half the people in a draft drop out as soon as the draft was finished so they could enter a new one. That wouldn't quite work in a free constructed event, but the potential for abuse is huge.

All in all, MTGO's Birthday celebration should be great fun for drafters and sealed deck players, as well as anyone who likes special goodies. MTGO will add a new background to the system for its birthday, and everyone who logs on during the birthday party (even if you don't play in an event!) will receive a special avatar.

We don't know what the [special avatar](#) will be yet. You'll just have to come and find out with me.

And when I smash you in MMD draft, just remember you didn't have to pay any tickets to enter! :)

See you in the forums...let us know what you think of the current Premier Events and whether I can expect to see you at the Birthday party!

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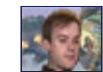
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