

# Why you shouldn't miss it! The Top 10 Reasons to Play in the *Champions* Prerelease!

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It's that time of year again! A new set is looming and this coming weekend is your first chance to dig in and play with all your new toys! And it's not just the new set – it's the new *block*! As regular readers know I usually do a Prerelease Primer to excite people about attending Prerelease weekend. Regular readers also know that those have gotten a little...let's just call them...less than fresh. Since we are kicking off a brand new block I thought I would try a new (new for the purposes of this article series anyway) format and simply list the Top 10 reasons you should attend the *Champions of Kamigawa* Prerelease. (If you are completely new to prerelease events, you may want to read my first [Prerelease Primer](#) for some more specifics on what to expect when attending a prerelease.) Before we get to the list, let me direct you to click on [this link](#) to find the event nearest you. The tournaments take place this weekend on Saturday and Sunday (and in several cases at Midnight on Friday!). As always, tournaments on separate days are separate tournaments. In fact there are usually multiple flights--or smaller tournaments--that you can play in all day long.

## Top 10 Reasons to Attend the Champions of Kamigawa Prerelease This Weekend!

### 10 - To find out whether or not we make this stuff up!

[Mark Gottlieb](#) doesn't exactly seem all there now does he? I have known [Flores](#) for a long time and if I have learned anything about him it is that he has a tendency to outright lie. Time Stop could be an elaborate hoax. I have been assured by Scott Johns that the cards in question are the products of R&D's collective imagination as opposed to the [magicthegathering.com](#) columnists'. But since I did not actually have the opportunity to preview any of these cards I do have my suspicions about his role in the conspiracy.

Almost all kidding aside, you have been reading about these cards for three weeks and this is the first time you will get a chance to play with them. The new flip cards, bushido, the new legends rule... This is your first chance



to figure out how these things work For the next two years these cards will dominate the constructed **Magic** scene and the sooner you get a hang of them the better off you will be!

## 9 - Paperwork!

Okay. Actually paperwork is a minor drawback but it comes with a couple of upsides. All of the Prerelease tournaments are sanctioned and you need to provide your DCI number when you play in any sanctioned tournament. If you don't have a number you will need to get one, which is where the paperwork comes in. You will need to fill out a membership card but that is all you need to do and membership is free. Once you have that membership you can play in any DCI sanctioned tournament and all of your results will be tracked in the massive worldwide database and you can find out how you stack up against the rest of the players in the world, your country, your state or province, etc. You may also need to fill out a deck registration checklist but that is only to remove the worry about cheating. If everyone has registered the contents of their deck on a *Champions of Kamigawa* checklist (you can take that opportunity to confirm that all the preview cards exist--even if only in name) then you don't have to worry about anyone trading for powerful cards and adding them to their deck. By the way, if you ever suspect that something in a game is not entirely on the up and up you should call over a judge and explain your concerns.

## 8 - Meet the artists!

*Champions of Kamigawa* is one of the most beautifully illustrated sets in the game's history. The Japanese backdrop for the story and the stunning designs by Ittoku, Rob Alexander, and others seem to have inspired everyone who worked on this set to new heights. (By the way if you haven't gotten on the Ittoku bandwagon yet, you will soon. This guy's work is ridiculous.)

Some tournament organizers make arrangements for artists from the new set to appear at Prereleases. If you are lucky enough to live in Columbus or Pittsburgh, for example, you could meet Matt Covotta or Chris Moeller (two of my favorite artists) at those events. Check with your local organizer to see if there are any artists appearing so you can bring cards for them to sign.



## 7 - You will be in a room full of people who like the same stuff you like!

I don't want to represent **Magic** fans as one monolithic sub-culture. There are definitely different types of **Magic** fans but everyone you meet at the

Prerelease will have at least one thing in common--**Magic**. I know that I have made many long-lasting friendships through my involvement in the game. Prereleases are a great opportunity to meet people in your area who share some of the same interests, go to tournaments, and have cards to trade.

## **6 - Get a jump on the next two PTQ seasons!**

The main event of all the tournaments gives each player a Tournament Pack and two Boosters of *Champions of Kamigawa* to build a forty-card deck. This is the same format as the upcoming Pro Tour Qualifier season for Pro Tour Nagoya. PTQs start soon so this could be a great chance for you to get a jump on the format and learn how the cards interact and how to anticipate the cards your opponent might play and how to deal with them.

Remember this is a new format so you will probably play with seventeen or eighteen lands as opposed to the sixteen or seventeen of *Mirrodin* Block. Affinity is gone and there don't seem to be Myr and Talismans so you want to play with more mana sources that are lands. Who knows how the set will play out over time but my early impression of this set is that you want to hit all your land drops for several turns. Did you see Mark Rosewater's [preview card](#) two weeks back?

The season after PTQs for Nagoya are Team Limited PTQs for Pro Tour Atlanta. Organizers generally offer at least one team event on the weekend and it is not only practice for the PTQ season but it is a sanctioned tournament too. If you want to qualify for the Team Pro Tour on rating you should avail yourself--with your teammates--of any chance to get your rating above the necessary ratings plateau to earn an invite.

## **5 - The State of States!**

Even if you are not much of a Limited player there is still a great tournament to prepare for by playing in the event. State Championships are right on the horizon and it will be the first major tournament where *Champions of Kamigawa* will be legal in the Standard format. Not only is it a great time to brainstorm for deck ideas but you can get the jump on trading for the rares you need before anyone catches on to your deck inspiration. Don't hold your breath trying to get four Time Stops though--everyone seems to be gunning for those.

## **4 - Swag!**

Everyone participating in a sealed deck event at a Prerelease weekend gets a commemorative foil card especially produced for these events. This is the only way to get one of these and I am told that this year's is especially cool. You can't use this card in your sealed deck though. You can usually use it as trade bait for some nifty stuff during the day however.

### 3 - Turning Japanese!



This block is set against the backdrop of Japanese mythology and looks, feels, and sounds like no other set in **Magic** history. This will be your first chance to soak it all in and immerse yourself in the new race classes, storyline, and pronunciations. Don't be scared of the Japanese names by the way. They are all pronounced as they are spelled. There are not any complex and non-intuitive arrangements of letters like in English. Once you get the hang of it the pronunciations are actually pretty easy.

### 2 - Dragons!

They are big, they fly, and they do cool things when they die. Maybe you'll get to play with this baby!



*Art by Ittoku*

## **1 - You can actually leave your artifact removal in your sideboard for game one!**

With *Mirrodin* disappearing in the rear view mirror you will no longer need to bend your mana to accommodate artifact removal in your maindeck since artifacts won't be as ubiquitous as they were in the previous block. It also means you can play your splashy artifacts without having to play around every Shatter, Shaman, and Altar's Light in the book.

It is literally a whole new world. Check it out this weekend for yourself and find out why these events are so popular!