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# Second Chances and First Looks



Brian David-Marshall · *The Week That Was*  
Thursday, January 27, 2005

Apparently Akki Blizzard-Herder took his name too literally in his introduction to the Magic community.

The *Betrayers of Kamigawa* common "herded" some particularly nasty weather across the eastern half of the United States last weekend, keeping many people away from their first opportunity to play with the new cards in a tournament setting at the *Betrayers* Prerelease (and get a foil promo *Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni* to boot). If you were one of those poor souls unable to brave the cold, you will have a second chance to do so this weekend -- call it a ReRelease -- in many parts of the country. Click [here](#) for a list of *Betrayers* make-up dates and locations.

I actually gutted it out and played on Saturday in two flights at Neutral Ground until the snow looked like it was going to impede my way home. In the interests of getting everyone home on time, the tournaments were shortened to three rounds with everyone who sported a 2-1 record or better winning prizes. I went 2-1 in my first flight, losing only to Zev Gurwitz and his utterly ridiculous triple Horobi's Whisper deck. I went 2-0-1 in the second flight after splitting in the third round with my friend Mark Schmidt -- I had two copies of the Whisper that time around.

*Horobi's Whisper* is clearly one of the best common cards in the new set. It's only drawback is that it can't kill a black creature -- although that can be a problem since black seems so good in the new set. I could easily see the card becoming a fixture in Block Constructed and might even push some of the splice based decks over the top in other Constructed formats.

My second Sealed Deck featured two copies of *Ninja of the Deep Hours* and I was pretty happy with the *Ophidian*-like Ninja. My favorite play of the day came with my first deck, though it didn't involve the playing of any ninjas by yours truly. I let a creature through unblocked and my opponent attempted to ninja me out with a *Throat Slitter* -- a play that would have swung the game's momentum decidedly in his favor. Fortunately for me I was packing *Squelch* -- a card I had main-decked for just that occasion. His unblocked critter was returned to his hand, his ninja also stayed tucked away in hand, I got an advantageous block that killed another creature, his mana was tapped and he could make no other significant play that turn, AND I drew a card.

I also had a lot of fun. If you missed your chance at last weekend's fun, I hope you can make up for it this weekend. Heck, even if you had a chance to play you can still attend and double-up. I won't be able to double up since I am in Japan preparing to cover this weekend's Rochester Draft Pro Tour from Nagoya.

## News on the Horizon

There are going to be plenty announcements this weekend -- most of which I can't tell you about yet. But if you tune in to Sunday's Top 8 webcast (which starts at 7 p.m. ET Saturday night), you'll likely hear Randy Buehler discuss one of the more exciting developments regarding this year's **Magic** Invitational.

I am pretty psyched about this year's event -- and not just because I am going to be getting a week-long trip to E3 to cover the event for this very site. This year's event is the ninth tournament in the series, and as always the winner will get his likeness immortalized on a **Magic**

### Pro Tour-Nagoya is here

The 2005 season's second stop features Rochester Draft, considered by many to be the most skill-tested of all the formats. Brian David-Marshall [breaks down the expected field](#), offering some names to watch. And if you find yourself in Nagoya with some extra time, Eli Kaplan lays out [three must-see sights](#), along with a little more of the local flavor.



card of his own design. Last year's winner was Bob Maher and his card will be coming out in the next stand-alone set, *Ravnica: City of Guilds*. (The card he ultimately submitted was a 2/1 for ☞☞. During each upkeep you reveal the top card of your library and pay life equal the card's converted casting cost and put it in your hand. It will be interesting to see how it turns out once it winds its way through R&D.)

But I digress. This year's Invitational is going to feature an unprecedented level of interaction with the **Magic** community in general, and **Magicthegathering.com** readers in particular. The **Magic** community has always had a hand in the event, with popular formats such as Auction of the People, and by voting in several of the participants. This year's event will take things to a whole new level, but I have already said too much . . . you need to tune into the webcast for the broad strokes and Mark Rosewater's bonus feature article on Monday, which will fill more of the details.

There are some other pretty big announcements about the future of the Pro Tour coming this weekend. You have probably already seen the announcement about the [new prize structure that is being tested at Pro Tour Philadelphia](#) -- something akin to a Skins Game in golf, where every match will have a dollar figure on the line. Look for video features by Jon Becker from the Pro Tour Player's Lounge in Nagoya for the player's reaction to this announcement -- as well as explaining what the heck a Pro Tour Player's Lounge is!

It is going to be a pretty cool weekend -- even if you are not here in Nagoya. Players all over the world will finally get a chance to put all that Extended theorizing and playtesting to good use as the Pro Tour Qualifier for season for Philly gets under way. Thanks to the new prize structure, there is even more incentive to qualify since you win money with every single match win on that particular Pro Tour. You can win as much as \$375 with a paltry 3-3 record, and the longer you last the more money you can win.

There were no PTQs this weekend, but tune in next week for the Top 8 results from Week One of the season -- along with a whole new layer of information that will prove invaluable to PTQ players everywhere. I'm keeping things brief this week but there will be plenty to discuss once this weekend comes to a conclusion.

## Firestarter: Speaking of discussions...

The new prize structure that is being tried out at Pro Tour-Philadelphia redistributes the money from the top of the standings all the way down to players with as low as an 0-2-1 record. Will this incentivize you to qualify for the Pro Tour knowing that your chances of making money have increased significantly? What about the players on the top of the heap? They will be winning less money under this scenario. What does this mean to you? As always you can use the button marked 'Discuss' to . . . you know . . . discuss this.

And don't forget to tune in Friday (that's Thursday night in the United States) for coverage from Pro Tour-Nagoya!

### Pro Tour-Philadelphia Prize Structure

Here's a quick look at the prize structure for Pro Tour-Philadelphia. For more information, [click here](#).

Round	\$/Match
1	100
2	100
3	100
4	125
5	150
6	200
7	250
8	300
9	500
10	750
11	1000
12	1500
QF	2500
SF	5000
F	10000

Estimated Total Payout:  
**\$203,675.**



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