

# The transformation of the Magic Invitational When You Wish Upon an All-Star

Mark Rosewater

Monday, January 31, 2005

- 
- 



• [M](#)  
[ark](#)  
[Rosewa](#)  
[ter](#)  
[Archive](#)

On May 18-20, 2005 in Los Angeles at E3 (the Electronic Entertainment Expo), the Wizards of the Coast booth will host the Ninth Annual **Magic** Invitational. It will still be an invitation-only sixteen person round robin all-star game using five different formats. The winner will still get the opportunity to make their very own **Magic** card (complete with their image in the art). And the event will still be held on **Magic Online**. But a number of things about the Invitational are about to change.

## Invite Club

The largest change to this year's Invitational is the invite policy. For those unfamiliar with the policy, here is how last year's invitees were invited:

**Slot 1) Last Year's Magic Invitational Winner**

**Slot 2) World Champion**

**Slot 3) Top Ranked DCI Member (Composite Rating)**

**Slot 4) Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 5) 2nd Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 6) 3rd Highest Rated Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 7) 4th Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 8) 5th Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 9) Top Ranked North American Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 10) Top Rated Latin American Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 11) Top Rated European Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 12) Top Rated APAC Player, Pro Points**

**Slot 13) Highest Ranked, Fan Ballot**

**Slot 14) 2nd Highest Ranked, Fan Ballot**

**Slot 15) 3rd Highest Ranked, Fan Ballot**

**Slot 16) 4th Highest Ranked, Fan Ballot**

The vast majority of the slots were locked slots (meaning there was no voting) that went to players based on their performance (reflected by accumulated pro points). The remaining four invites were fan votes. This year's set of criteria does two things differently. First, while valuing play skill it also values other attributes of the pro players. Second, it allows the public much more say in picking the invitees (this is the most spectator-friendly event we run after all).

Here, with some explanation, is the 2005 **Magic** Invitational invite criteria: (note that these are not in the order that they will be voted on.)

**Slot 1) Last Year's Magic Invitational Winner (Locked Slot)**

Okay, not every slot is changing. Winning the Invitational really comes with two prizes. One, getting your own card made. And two, getting the only guarantee of being invited back the next year. In addition, every tournament gives the previous champion a chance to repeat. Why not the Invitational?



*Bob Maher, Winner  
[Magic Invitational 2004](#)*

**Slot 2) World Champion (Locked Slot)**

There are two titles in **Magic** so important that it seems an insult not to invite them. World Champion is one of those titles.

**Slot 3) Pro Player of the Year (Locked Slot)**

And Pro Player of the Year is the other. This is really the third repeat from last year's list (last year we called it 1st Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points).

#### **Slot 4) European Region (Fan Vote)**

#### **Slot 5) Latin American Region (Fan Vote)**

#### **Slot 6) North American Region (Fan Vote)**

#### **Slot 7) APAC (Asia PACific) Region (Fan Vote)**

This year's Invitational will have a total of nine fan votes, including four based on region. For each fan vote, **magicthegathering.com** will present a small list of qualified candidates from which all of you will have the chance to select your favorite. Be aware that the criteria for making the list will be about more than simply who had the highest finishes (although that will still be an integral part). Little trivia note: the European region covers Africa as well as Europe, and the APAC region is composed of Asia and Australia. The four regional slots are the same regions as last year. The difference is that this year will allow the fans to vote on regional players rather than being based solely on finishing highest in pro points.

#### **Slot 8) Rising Star (Fan Vote)**

This slot rewards the up and coming player. This is the fifth fan vote.

#### **Slot 9) Resident Genius (Fan Vote)**

In the quest to focus on other aspects of the Pro Tour, this category is looking for players that separate themselves from the pack by their intellect. Who revolutionized an environment? Who thought to do something that no other player thought of? Who changed some aspect of the game with an idea? This is the sixth fan vote.

#### **Slot 10) Road Warrior (Fan Vote)**

This fan vote rewards the pro player who has put in the time *and* the miles. They've traveled around the world to play **Magic**. This is the seventh fan vote.

#### **Slot 11) Fan Favorite #1 (Fan Vote)**

Here's another chance to pick who *you* want to see. The only criteria? That enough of you want him there.

#### **Slot 12) Fan Favorite #2 (Fan Vote)**

Why stop at one slot?

### **Slot 13) Judge's Pick (Group Vote)**

Besides adding more fan votes, we've adding a new type of vote, the group vote. A group vote is a vote given to a specific group that we feel adds value to the game. Each group vote will have a theme that ties into the group voting on it. The first group vote is the Judge Vote. The judges will be selecting a player that they feel exemplifies good sportsmanship.



### **Slot 14) Pro Player Pick (Group Vote)**

The next group vote is given to the Pro Players. The pros will choose a player that they feel best represents the Pro Players.

### **Slot 15) Internet Writer Vote (Group Vote)**

The third group to get a group vote is the Internet writers. They will be selecting the player that they feel adds the most entertainment value to the Pro Tour.

### **Slot 16) R&D Vote (Group Vote)**

The last group vote is left to the people who make the game. R&D will be deciding who we feel adds the most to **Magic** as a game.

Three locked votes, nine fan votes and four group votes. Add them up and we get this year's sixteen invitees. So how is the voting going to work? There will be a different fan vote each week for eight consecutive weeks (the two fan favorite votes will be held as a single vote with the top two vote getters snagging invites). During those eight weeks, we will also be filling you in on the results of the group votes and be introducing you to this year's invitees. The first vote, by the way, starts this Thursday (February 3rd).

### **But Wait There's More**

Is nine votes not enough? Well, we've got one more cool vote for you. Every year, the sixteen invitees present the card they want to make if they win. And every year, many spectators root for one of the players because their card is so cool. Unfortunately, often "the guy with the cool card" doesn't win. This year we're going to fix that problem. During this year's Invitational, once we have all the players' proposed cards, we're going to let all of you pick the card you most want to see printed. The highest finisher (whose creator doesn't win the Invitational) will also get made (although not with its creator's picture – you have to win the event to get that). Sort of a new twist on [You Make the Card](#), and one more way that you'll have a great chance to get involved with the Invitational and the new **Magic** cards that come out of the event.

## **More To Come**

Unfortunately, I can't tell you everything today. Stay tuned to **[magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com)** for more info on this year's Invitational such as this year's formats and deck challenge. And remember, the first fan vote starts this week (beginning Thursday, February 3rd)!

Mark Rosewater