

Worth Wollpert, Wizards R&D/Former Pro Tour Player

Editor's note: Over the course of the voting, we will occasionally be posting ballots of voters who wish to make their choices public, along with any additional analysis they used to come to their decisions. If other Selection Committee members wish to provide analysis and explanation of their votes for publication, click [here](#).



Jon Finkel

There's not much left to say that hasn't already been said. It would be a shame to see people gaming the system, ending up in Jon not being elected unanimously. Like Randy mentioned in his article, if I had to pick anyone from **Magic** history in their prime to play a game where my life was on the line, it would be Jon, no question. On top of all this, Jon is a great guy and a good friend. I can't imagine anyone who has played or WILL play who is more deserving of leading the inaugural class into the Hall of Fame.

Chris Pikula

What happens when you get 10 gamers, many of them world-class poker players, in a town where the WSOP is going on? They end up in a huge suite at the Venetian in the middle of the day playing *Champions* Block Sealed Decks against *Onslaught* Sealed Decks. A big part of the community feel of the Pro Tour was built by people like Chris. I realized (again) after last weekend in Las Vegas why I used to like the Pro Tour so much. Not to be sacrilegious, but it really wasn't even about **Magic** itself. It was the times, hands down.

I fully believe that if it wasn't **Magic**, I would have found something else with a thriving community to be a part of, but these types of guys made it easy to pick **Magic**. Strictly going on accomplishments, I'm sure I could have found five people more qualified, but you have to wonder if anyone would even be around to CARE about accomplishments if it weren't for people like Chris, Truc, Hacker, Daddy Yoo, Igor, Tsang, Huey, Linde, Maher, the Speds, and countless others sitting around on Sunday at 2 a.m. drafting, long after the PT was over.

I'm more than a little conflicted about voting for such a good friend, but in the end he still deserves it, regardless of our relationship. Regardless of what happened during the games (and there were some doozies, ask Chris about he and I drafting Jason Gordon and David Bachmann at Nationals the year the lights went out and the hall went pitch black ... of course he tells the story better than me), I always had fun when Chris was around, and I felt very lucky to find such a stand-up group of guys who turned out to be as good a bunch of friends as anyone could ask for in the Deadguys.

Alan Comer

Probably the nicest human on the planet, next to the guy who flies to various continents saving children from hunger or small marine mammals from oil slicks. One story stands out for me, at Grand Prix-Indianapolis umpteen years ago, I made a VERY stupid attack (turns out I'm really not that good at **Magic**, apparently) and Alan just looked over at me, smiled and said something to the effect of, "You want to take that back? That was pretty silly." I was floored. He let me back up, I ended up winning the game (and match) and went on to Top 8.

Combine all this nicety with a genius of a deckbuilding mind and far above average results, and you have a first-ballot Hall of Famer. To paraphrase Randy again, Alan is just as happy losing to something interesting and innovative as he is beating you with the same. If you think some of his decks were wacky with printed cards, you guys should see some of the stuff he comes up with for FFL...

Tommi Hovi

There is an old saying that goes, "Those who can, do. Those who cannot, teach." Well, Tommi proved that one wrong, because he did both. In a shining example of what it means to be really good at **Magic**, in Worlds 1997 I played Tommi where I learned the first of more than a few useful lessons from this Finn. At some point with my BAD white-green geddon deck (chronicled in all its glory in a great tournament report that's still up on classicdojo by, ironically, Chris Pikula) I attacked Tommi with a Whirling Dervish. He took the damage, we both changed the life totals, and I put a counter on my creature. Tommi then politely took this opportunity to inform me that I was done with my turn and thanked me.

Well, I clearly wasn't done with my turn, as most players obviously attack and then cast spells, but by putting the counter on my Dervish I did myself in. It wasn't that he baited me into it or anything like that...I think the thing that impressed me most was the expedience of how he said what he did. It was SO clear to me at that point that he was a level (or three) above pretty much everyone else as far as technical knowledge, and I remember feeling quite impressed. I also remember silently thanking him when a few rounds later I got hit with a Ball Lightning that got put into the graveyard immediately after combat and I visited this stinger of a lesson onto a poor soul from Poland.

Those stories though pale with the results Tommi has posted in his 30 Pro Tours. A full HALF of those he finished in the top 32, and he was the first player ever to win two. Pretty astounding stuff.

Darwin Kastle

There is a story I like to tell in R&D when people espouse the virtues of Darwin and his career. At the same GP-Indy that Alan let me off the hook, Darwin confided in a mutual friend after the Top 8 draft that he was passing me the three-mana 3/1 shadow guys (Dauthi Marauder) so that he could scoop up the Stronghold Taskmasters (2♣♣, 4/3, all other black creatures get -1/-1) in the last pack.

Now, obviously, this makes no sense to me (and many others). The crazy thing is, he obviously knew what he was doing at least MOST of the time, considering his tremendous track record in major events. I'd like to think I'm a big enough man to admit when I'm wrong, or maybe when I just don't know what I'm talking about, so I'm raising my hand on this one. Darwin, I have zero clue HOW you did it, but given my love for sports and statistics (baseball especially), I just cannot ignore the truly awesome totals you've posted over the last 10 years. Congrats, you deserve it.

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