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Game Day That Was

Brian David-Marshall
The Week That Was
Friday, July 20, 2007



Aside from a few unrelated tangents that always seem to crop up on forums, the **Magic** Game Day thread on the front page of this site seems to indicate that the event was a rousing success. Players all over the world—and at more than 1200 stores in North America alone—got their first taste of life with Tenth Edition. You can take a [look at the thread for yourself](#), but I wanted to highlight some of the different ways people were able to enjoy their Game Day experience in the week's column to remind us all just how many ways there are to have fun with this game. (Editor's note: Posts have been edited for capitalization and typographical errors.)

Obviously one of the goals of the event was to provide a jumping on point for players new to the game as well as players new to the tournament experience.

*inky13112: I had a great time, and for my first tournament ever, and essentially my first limited event (I've drafted with 3 other friends once) I did pretty well. It was the biggest turnout the store has ever gotten, with 54(!) people showing up, and my draws easily paid for themselves, with such cash cows as **Pithing Needle**, **Hypnotic Specter** and a foil (shiny!) **Beacon of Immortality***

*I'd love to do something like this again, as I had a blast, and played **Magic** from 5:00 PM to 2:00 AM.*

Another element of the event was to provide a social experience that rewarded more behavior than just tournament attendance. Collectors were encouraged to show off their treasures in a scavenger hunt and plenty of cool swag was given away for people looking to max out on **Magic** gear.

Jyalt: I actually turned out for Game Day, and won the scavenger hunt with 26 points (out of 30 possible). We had 20 people participating, and the format was 3 round swiss with a cut to Top 8 single elimination.

*My deck ended up being white/blue with a splash for black (**Deathmark** was sided in a bunch). I enjoyed maximizing **Rootwater Matriarch**. I stole creatures with **Serra's Embrace**, **Spirit Link**, and totally hosed the guy who had **Persuasion**.*

*In the end, I took away promo **Reya**, a **Magic** pen, an X **Magic** deck box, a Tenth Edition life counter, a backpack, and two booster packs. I traded away nearly everything I had in the main event plus the unopened boosters for a **Godless Shrine** and **River of Tears**.*

I did have a good time.

Personally, I thought the opportunity to localize the prerelease experience was an exciting opportunity not only to make the game more accessible to more people, but to provide literally thousands more opportunities around the globe to get a taste of victory (if you are into that sort of thing).

*jazzman20: This was the first sealed event I've ever outright won! I ran a black/green deck that featured **Citanul Flute** (foil!), **Mantle Engine**, **Troll Ascetic**, and two each of **Llanowar Sentinel**, **Afflict**, **Assassinate**, and **Essence Drain**.*

*At the end of the day I had won a Kamahl deck box (with dividers), a **Magic: the Gathering** bookbag, a Kamahl life counter, and \$22.50 in store credit.*

Also, one of my packs had 2 rares in it! (One foil and the other not). I'm very happy they made that change permanent.

Different locations all did different things to enhance and personalize their Game Day events (just read ahead to my Neutral Ground experience at Game Day), but I'm certain that LoneWolfRaven's event was the only one to feature "competitive eating" on the tournament schedule.

*LoneWolfRaven: My Game Day was awesome, boasting a good 126 people in attendance, my draft wasn't the worst I've seen allowing me to run u/w control thanks to the **Wrath**, 2 **Condemns** and the few counters I managed to pull out. I placed 3rd overall so I didn't walk away empty handed. I'd have to say though the highlight*



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of the day was when one of our regulars had to eat a *Damnation* after losing a bet concerning whether WoG was going to be reprinted like it always is or not.

As someone who loves to play **Magic**, I was excited about the opportunities to show off the game to newer players. More importantly I saw it as a chance to show that **Magic** players are not a monolithic sneering cutthroat bunch that would mana screw their own mother for an extra prize pack. I am not saying those players don't exist, but there are plenty of players who will take the time to walk newer players through the game. Often the more experienced player will have enough confidence in their card choices and play skill that they don't feel a need to win via an opponent's misunderstanding of the rules and will take the time—and potential risk of losing—to explain how the game works at a lower-stakes event like Game Day. One of the things that really stuck with me from this thread was that so many of the experienced players who attended "got it."

danmckay1: I enjoyed Game Day at my local store. We had over 40 people in our Sealed tourney. There were at least a few new players there that I know of and a few who were not that experienced. During the day and especially during the tourney I tried to help the newer players out as much as possible by explaining rules, how the tourney worked, how and when to sideboard etc. I also looked through some of their decks either after matches with them or after the tourney and gave them my advice and thoughts. Overall I just sort of tried to foster the game that I love so much by trying to help the new players out to help build up players in the game.

*As far as my performance went, I won the tourney. I split the first and second prizes with the other guy in the finals with me, however, so instead of walking with a box and he getting a half a box we just both took 27 packs. Not a bad haul considering I also got the foil *Reya* and a second foil *Reya* as a door prize and the Tenth Edition life counter.*

I had a decent pool of cards to choose from with red, green and white being my strongest colors and black having a strong pull as well. In the end I went with red/green because it gave me the best mana curve and removal spells combined with good evasion. The only games I lost were in the second round to my buddy that I came with (I went mana flood first game then mana screw second game). To redeem myself we played three more games for the heck of it (we had a lot of time left in the round) and of course I smoked him three straight games. What are ya gonna do, that's the way the game goes.

*As far as my impression of Tenth so far. I like a lot of what they brought in. But I must say there are a few changes I DON'T agree with, like taking out *Stone Rain*, *Mana Leak*, *Flashfires*, *Boiling Seas*, *Ivory Mask*, *Persecute* and replacing *Wood Elves* with *Civic Wayfinder*. Other than those cards not being in the set, I really do like it.*

How amazing is it that **Magic** has been around long enough for players to be sharing the experience with their young children. Don't get me wrong, I love this story but it makes my bones ache.

pbowen: Had a wonderful day! Took two of my kids (ages 11 and 15) and we were there from 10 in the morning to 10 at night, with a couple of food breaks in between! My boy, the 11-year-old, had a ton of fun playing, lost most of the games, as did I, and had the time of his life. The store even gave him an MTG backpack for being the youngest player there. My daughter came in fourth, got five boosters and a deck box. She tried to give my son and I each a booster, but we told her "No!", she'd won them, she should keep them (we bought a few packs for us on the way out the door...hehehe).

For myself, I got some really nice cards, like *Platinum Angel*, *Quirion Dryad*, and *Glorious Anthem*, but the best part was watching my kids, and seeing the smiles on their faces, and hearing things like "This is the best day of my life!".

That to me is the best reason for playing **Magic**.

Powerful cards are nice, money's good (if you're good enough to win tournaments), but those memories of taking my kids to **Magic** Game Day will last a lifetime.

Thanks Wizards.



I have been to plenty of tournaments that ended at a Denny's, but I have never been to one that started there. While most of the Game Day events were held in stores, there were a smattering of events held by smaller local

tournament organizers who use church basements, school cafeterias, and—yes—chain diners to host their tournaments.

motherofjade: We had a great time. 28 players for the flights and 24 for the sealed deck. Our Game Day was held at Denny's Restaurant here in Conway, AR. We use the banquet room for large gatherings.

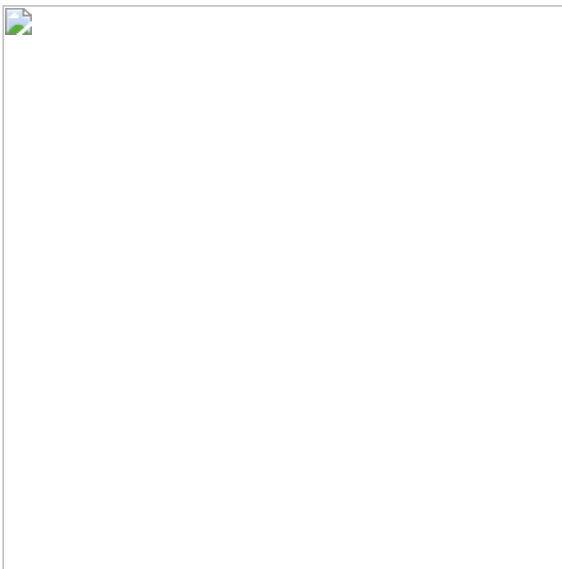
One of my favorite aspects of this game is its capacity to provide something for everyone. **Magic** supports its players, writers, organizers, collectors, casual players, and the people in the striped shirts who make sure it all played on the up and up. Here is one story of Game Day told from the bird's eye perspective of a first-time head Judge.

*WrathOfGod594 (Level 1 Judge): I had a slightly different experience as I got to head judge **Magic** Game Day. I was very excited as this was my first HJ opportunity. We ended up with 42 players, nearly double what we expected. The tournament went pretty well, with very few rules questions despite many new players. This is probably because the environment was so friendly, I saw one player show his opponent how to beat him! I did have to disqualify two players, unfortunate at such an entry-level event, but the lesson for everyone is don't play someone else's game pretending to be them. Mini-master flights filled up very quickly but unfortunately we only had enough Tenth packs left over from the main event to run two eight-man flights. For my efforts I was given four free FNM drafts and two2 packs of Tenth (the only two left!). I pulled *Dreamborn Muse* and *Righteousness*.*

I attended Game Day at Neutral Ground in New York City on Saturday. Tony Rodriguez and Damon Samuel—the current brain trust at my old store—cooked up an amazing weekend that started Thursday at midnight and went non-stop throughout the weekend. The highlight of the weekend schedule was Saturday when they broke out the grill, provided everyone with cake to celebrate the event, and offered gunslinging with Neutral Ground's most famous players and Pro Tour winners Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz, Zvi Mowshowitz, and Jon Finkel.

I ended up getting there after the start of the main flight and could only stay for a couple of hours due to plans with my wife in the evening. That was fine though because it was the perfect amount of time to get into an 8-person *Tenth Edition* Booster Draft. I sat down with the intention of drafting blue—like I usually do—but was open to green thanks to the mana fixing provided by *Civic Wayfinder*, *Rampant Growth*, and *Sylvan Scrying*.

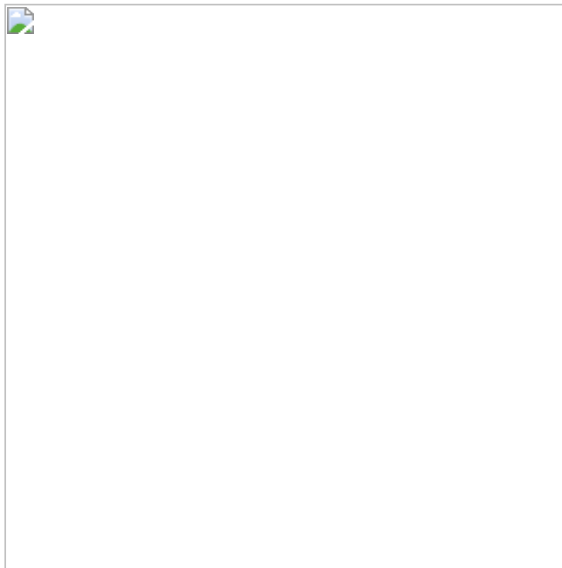
Treetop Village was the sauciest card in my first pack and I could hear Jon Becker imploring me to take The Little Village That Could, but I could not pass up on the first chance to play with *Civic Wayfinder* in a long bubble of time. I was rewarded with the greedy *Stampeding Wildebeests* a couple of picks later and I never looked back. Blue came to me surprisingly late in the form of good common fliers and I was able to support a three-card red splash off of one *Mountain* due to an ample array of the aforementioned mana fixing. Here is the deck I ended up with...



SteveO, Finkel, and Zvi (back to camera) added to Neutral Ground's Game Day excitement.

Brian David-Marshall		
Magic Game Day, Tenth Edition Booster Draft		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
40 cards		
1 Faerie Conclave	1 Dehydration	1 Afflict
9 Forest	1 Deluge	2 Anaba Bodyguard
6 Island	1 Incinerate	1 Bandage
1 Mountain	1 Rampant Growth	1 Composite Golem
17 lands	2 Remove Soul	1 Goblin Elite Infantry
	1 Shock	1 Raging Goblin
	7 other spells	1 Reviving Dose
1 Arcanis the Omnipotent		1 Sage Owl
1 Aven Fisher		1 Smash
2 Canopy Spider		1 Soul Feast
2 Civic Wayfinder		
1 Cloud Elemental		11 sideboard cards
1 Flamewave Invoker		
1 Kavu Climber		
1 Llanowar Elves		
1 Might Weaver		
1 Sea Monster		
1 Spined Wurm		
1 Stampeding Wildebeests		
1 Thieving Magpie		
1 Viridian Shaman		

I ended up winning all three rounds of my draft, facing off against Matt Ferrando in the finals. Matt is a local player who came to **Magic** from one of those other card games and has come remarkably far in the short amount of time he has been playing. He recently made the Top 8 of our Regionals and is constantly in the hunt for a Top 8 berth at the area PTQs. As someone who has always been deeply involved in the N.Y. **Magic** community, it was extremely gratifying to me to come to Game Day and see that it could support the likes of Jon Finkel and Steve OMS (still playing the game almost 13 years after they first stepped through the doors of Neutral Ground), Matt Ferrando (who has only been playing for a short time), and all the players in the room who were getting their first taste of organized **Magic** play.



Summer of Magic: Five Questions with Elaine Chase

I opened Neutral Ground in 1995 after running a handful of **Magic** tournaments, at which I witnessed how players were looking for some place to congregate to play more often than once every six weeks, which was the major tournament schedule. I had a flashback to that moment when talking with a handful of players getting their first taste of organized play this past weekend.

Magic and cake? This might be paradise.

"You mean Neutral Ground runs **Magic** tournaments all the time?" asked one incredulous young woman who had only played with friends at school in the past.

Yes, Virginia there is a **Magic** tournament. In fact there is a whole program in place to build on the success of Game Day and provide additional outlets for play all summer long. I caught up with **Magic** Brand Manager Elaine Chase—and former N.Y. area Level 3 judge—and subjected her to Five Questions about the [Summer of Magic](#).

1. What exactly is Summer of **Magic** and why do I want to play in it?

Elaine: World-wide Magic Game Day was only the beginning of this summer's **Magic** festivities. Between July 21 and September 22, organizers across the world will be holding more *Tenth Edition* Limited events (both Sealed Deck and Draft). Go to your local store, hang out with other **Magic** players, play some games, have fun, get cool prizes (prizes vary by country). The perfect way to spend your summer!

2. What is the goal of more user-friendly programs like Game Day and Summer of **Magic**?

Elaine: At its most basic level, **Magic** is a fun game. Sure, we have the industry's most competitive (and rewarding!) professional circuit in the Pro Tour, but the vast majority of players are in it to just hang back with friends and have a good time. With the release of *Tenth Edition*, Wizards wanted to do everything we could to foster a play environment that cared more about fun than winning, where players of all skill levels were welcome, and where it was easy for players to find places to play with like-minded people. Toss in cool prizes and an amazing new set to play with and you've got a summer-long celebration of everything that makes **Magic** magical. So if you tried Game Day and liked it (or if you missed Game Day but are kicking yourself now that everyone is talking about how great it was), stop back in for Summer of **Magic** events and keep the good feelings going.

3. Where can I find a Summer of **Magic** location?

Elaine: You can find a location near you on our website [here](#).

4. Can I play in Summer of **Magic** if I am not a PTQ level player?

Elaine: Absolutely! Summer of **Magic** events are meant to be low-pressure, fun events.

5. How can I keep playing in events like this after the summer?



Here's one good reason to go to a Summer of Magic event.

Elaine: There are many events run at local stores throughout the year. Two great programs to check out are Release Events and Friday Night **Magic**.

- **Release Events:** For every set, the first weekend it is on sale, stores across the world run special release events. Come play Sealed Deck with the new set, get an exclusive promo card, take a shot at getting some cool prizes, and have fun! The next release event is for Lorwyn the weekend of October 13-14. Check back to magicthegathering.com when we get closer to the release date to find a location near you!
- **Friday Night Magic:** While release events and special days like Game Day shouldn't be missed, you don't have to limit your **Magic**-playing fix to just a few times a year. Every Friday night across the world, **Magic** players turn out in droves to play games at local stores. How they play varies by location, but include our most popular formats, including both Constructed (bring your deck with you) and Limited (build your deck there with sealed product provided). You can take a shot at winning an exclusive promo card, and even more importantly, have fun hanging out and playing with players from your local community. Don't be afraid of being an outsider when you show up for the first time—every single one of the players at your local Friday Night **Magic** event had to walk through the door as the new guy (or gal) themselves. Pretty soon, you'll be one of the regulars who have a group of like-minded people to hang out with every weekend. Find a location near you [here](#).



Here's another.

Road to Worlds Update: French Nationals

[French Nationals](#) is in the books and the journey down the Road to Worlds—which arrives in New York City this winter—has begun. One hundred ninety-two players descended on the Centre de Congres Vinci for the Championnat de France 2007 with the Top 8 determined after six rounds of Standard and six rounds of Time Spiral Booster Draft.

According to coverage reporter Emilie Goldberg, the Top 8 was pretty representative of the field which she described as very control oriented.

"Slow multicolor control decks were everywhere," recalled Emilie. "There were also a lot of Korfash blue-black or black-green splashing red like Wilfried Ranque's deck which was designed by Sylvain Lauriol. The most popular card seemed to be **Aeon Chronicler**."

I asked Emilie for a little background on the new French National squad. You probably don't recall the name of National Champion Guillaume Matignon unless you read an old interview I did with Pierre Canali after his win at Pro Tour—Columbus, when he thanked a pair of Guillaume's for his successful take on Affinity.

"He's a good player when he remains focused," said Emilie of Matignon. "If he had more time to playtest he could probably get to a really good level on the international scene. He usually plays and practices with the now-famous Guillaume Wafo-Tapa."



The 2007 French National team: Guillaume Matignon, Jerome Renevier, Nicolas Boistard, Wilfried Ranque.

Wilfried is easily the most accomplished of the quartet with a Grand Prix trophy from Amsterdam when he teamed with Carlos Ramao and Jose Barbero to form the impossibly named Rankko Bongo Wheshiwheshi.

"Wilfried is steady but quiet with good results in several PTs but no win," was Emilie's assessment. "He has been around for many years thanks to stable results."

Nicolas Boistard and Jerome Renevier were the wild cards but despite their lack of high-level experience, Emilie would not take them—especially Jerome—too lightly: "They're usually casual players. They were both gladly surprised to be in the Top 8. You should note that Jerome is the actual deck builder of the deck that led himself and Matignon to the Top 8."

If you were following the standings all weekend there was a period of time where it looked like the French National team was going to be comprised of a murderer's row of Pro Tour winners and past and future Hall of Famers. As will often happen in those situations, the big-name stars collided and imploded in the final rounds against each other.

"Olivier Ruel started 7-0 was probably a bit overconfident and lost three rounds in a row," said Emilie, recounting the events in the closing rounds. "Antoine started poorly with two losses in the first three rounds. He made a nice come back but being in sudden death for nine rounds was a bit too much. Before losing though, Antoine beat Raphael Levy."

The French National teams over the past few years have seen some mighty teams with much more experience than this one and I was curious how the coverage reporter felt her countrymen would fare in this year's World Championships.

"The team worlds are going to be played in a convivial format which is ideal for convivial players," he said, referring to the new plan to have four-player teams and the use of the 2HG Limited format in place of Team Rochester. "I don't know if they're gonna win, but they'll have lot of fun."

Speaking of Worlds formats, I got the inside scoop on what just went up on the [Worlds info page this week](#) over breakfast with Aaron Forsythe and Scott Larabee...but you'll have to wait until next week for that.

2007 Invitational: European Ballot

Tomoharu Saito has defeated Shuhei Nakamura for the [APAC berth](#) at the 2007 Magic Invitational in Essen, Germany. Who joins him from this week's [European ballot](#) is up to you. Head to Invitational page and cast your mark for Tiago Chan, Marijn Lybaert, Olivier Ruel, Sebastian Thaler, or Quentin Martin.



Firestarter: Summer of Magic Foil Fight

Players in the Summer of **Magic** can walk with foil promotional copies of [Treetop Village](#) and [Faerie Conclave](#). Which of these two cards will see the most tournament-level Constructed play in the coming year. Share your arguments in support of the land that becomes a green ape creature with trample or the one that becomes a flying faerie—when did they gain creature types?—in the forums!

*Brian David-Marshall has been involved in **Magic** since 1994 when he was violently shaken by someone searching for the game. He has organized tournaments, run a store, and is currently the Pro Tour Historian. His latest venture is [Top8Magic.com](#), the publishing house that is releasing Michael J. Flores: Deckade.*



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