

SCG CON Milwaukee: Post-Conference Report

On Friday, February 20th, I hosted a judge conference at the Baird Center from 4 PM - 9 PM; this conference was attached to SCG CON Milwaukee. I started to promote this conference over my Holiday Break, around December 23rd (2 months out). This conference had a total of 23 attendees, and 14 of them were present for the entirety of the conference; 9 attendees came after their Friday AM shift. The conference was promoted and communicated in the following spaces:

- JudgeApps
- Great Lakes Regional Discord
- Azorius Senate Discord
- Judge Foundry Discord
- NRG Series Discord
- SCG Judge Discord (Specifically in Off-Topic and Magic Channels) • Southern Wisconsin Judges Group Chat (Same geographical region as Milwaukee)

My main goal of this specific conference was to rely on technology as little as possible, including presentations/workshops and engaging with the attendees. I did not want to rely on SCG providing technology, traveling with technology, and/or losing engagement/participation due to the use of technology. Therefore, this conference ran three simultaneous workshops that the attendees could rotate through every forty-five minutes to an hour.

Every group had about 3-4 attendees, and this optimized learning, reflection, and interactions. The three workshops ran were as followed: • What is it like judging Star Wars Unlimited (SWU)? (John) • MTG Deck Checks (Dan Milavitz)

- MTG IPG Scenarios and Examples (Gio Valencia & Paul Peterson)

A personal goal I had for this conference was to be available for questions or concerns. At previous conferences I have organized and hosted, I would become caught up in a specific presentation/workshop, and I would not realize



how the conference, as a whole, was functioning from a bottom-up perspective. Yes, I was still involved in the workshops by completing some deck checks with some folks and chatting about IPG policy, but I was able to analyze and reflect as the conference progressed. I was concerned that the attendees would have a difficult time staying present and engaged for almost three hours, but the small groups, interactive scenarios, 1:1 interactions, and time for reflection helped the attendees stay engaged for the entirety of the conference.

Overall, this conference was successful in terms of gathering all walks of judges and letting them engage and reflect together. I was pleased with the space Jared provided us in the event hall, I was thrilled with attendance, I was stoked about the rotating workshops plan, and I loved seeing all of the learning and question-asking occurring throughout the evening. However, I was bummed and surprised about some aspects of level advancement at this conference, and I will elaborate on them below.

This paragraph is supposed to be specific areas for improvement, and I know I could improve in one aspect of the conference; however, the other aspect is strange and thought-provoking to me. As a means to be inclusive and explore new games/judge practices with other folks, I tried to tie in SWU conversations as much as I could; I even tried collaborating with the SWU Judge Program Director. Long story very short, since this conference was not going to be an official and sponsored SWU conference, it fell off of individual's radars very quickly, and in turn, I could not find another leader to partner with John. In the future, if I want to run another judge gathering/conference that is not just MTG, I will need more support and acknowledgement from other games' leaders. If you have any specific thoughts or comments here, please feel free to DM me.

Now, let's chat about level advancement. At the conference, we had seven individuals test for level advancement (3 for L1 and 4 for L2), and zero individuals passed. All weekend, it was extremely difficult not to take these failures personally, but as I had more time to reflect and chat with other individuals who have run very similar conferences (attendance wise), this appears to be a common theme and pattern. The larger the conference = the more individuals that do not pass level advancement exams. I want to explore



and research this more because the same phenomena happens in education. For now, if I have quite a few individuals interested in level advancements at future conferences I organize, I will make those conferences more geared towards and applicable to their level advancements.

At the end of the day, I am very proud of my organizational and logistical skills when it came to planning this conference, and I was very happy to be able to provide unique and exciting learning opportunities to its attendees. If you have made it this far in the report, I am proud of you. If you need a helping hand in planning your conference or want to brainstorm some ideas, just let me know; I would love to collaborate with you. Until next time, friends, peace out!