

San Antonio, TX: Post-Conference Report

On October 26th I had the pleasure of organizing my first Judge conference. Having attended many and presented at one in the past my goal of this conference was to get judges together and try to inspire some local players that have expressed interest in judging or were judges in the legacy program to think about taking the steps to certify with Judge Foundry.

We ended up having 9 people show up for the conference including the 4 presenters so while it was smaller than I had hoped It led to a really genuine series of discussions with lots of engagement from everyone involved. Before I get into the presentations themselves I wanna share some of my key takeaways from the organizing side of it. I think there were some things I did well and others I could have done better which I am excited to improve upon for next time.

I think the venue selection worked out very nicely and even if we had 5 times the amount of people showing up there would have been plenty of space. It being a sunday also helped that there were people coming in and out of the store but it wasn't too busy at any one point. I think the biggest points of improvement I can think of for myself are advertising WAY more and doing a test run of the presentations. I had done a check in with two of the presenters to ensure their partnered double session was coming along well and all the content sounded great but I didn't get an impression on what they'd actually be going over which led to that one running long. My pro tip is as much advertising you think you've done is sufficient...it's likely not. I had done roughly the same amount of advertising as I do for RCQs and expected similar results...but as I have learned RC invites are much better motivators than education and pizza. I should have posted more often and more personally engaged people to secure their attendance. While this was a hard lesson to learn it was an important one and whenever I attempt to host one again it will have a more comprehensive campaign. Now lets get to the good stuff, the presentations.

I took on the first presentation which was all about Judging at Regular. I went over a brief portion of the philosophy of regular REL, why it exists, why it's so

important, and what kind of tournaments are ran there. We then paused to go over the MTR and the 4 kinds of information making sure to highlight free and derived information are one in the same at regular. Now that the baseline was established we jumped into the JAR and tackled each section within, we finished it off with a handful of scenarios ripped from real events to make sure we could put some of what was just learned into good use. With regular having a lot more room for deviation to ensure the fun and educational atmosphere it was really interesting to hear in the discussion where some judges differed on following policy vs switching things up. It was a good demonstration that regular judging can have more nuance than what initially meets the eye.

Next up we had Bliss B and Blake A present a double session on competitive REL. This was a very informative breakdown of the IPG nearly going line for line and covering examples throughout. Bliss and Blake worked well together trading off on topics and chiming in to add valuable context and bits of extra info. The dual presenter aspect kept a relatively dry topic fresh and entertaining as the rapport between the two kept us engaged and the questions and examples kept us involved. We got to GPE-GRV's at the end of the first half and took our lunch break.

When we came back after lunch we tackled the rest of the IPG, this proved to be a lot more content than they had anticipated. Having done a test run and coming out with a reasonable time they didn't account for the added length questions and response would add. This half of the presentation ended up running pretty long but was a good lesson in live presentations with an audience. Always build in time for those responses if you're planning on taking any. Also be prepared for one line of questioning to branch off and take on a life of its own. Don't be afraid to cut that off to get back on track or to adapt your presentation to accommodate that lost time. We were fine here given the smaller size but at larger conferences it's important to make sure to stick within the timebound expectation given. Nevertheless it was a deeply informative presentation where I walked away being reminded of obscure policy pieces I hadn't been made to think of in a while and it was a great introduction to the judge candidates who were there.

Finally to close it out we had John W present on inclusion in Magic. The presentation really benefited from the smaller group size as we did it seminar style all sitting in a circle being able to bounce ideas off each other. John led the discussion forcing us to engage in hard questions surrounding how inclusive we should be and where do you draw that line. He did a good job making us feel as if there were no right or wrong answers in a difficult subject to tackle. In the end it was a hard and important conversation that managed differing points of views in a structured way to get his message across, that Magic is for everyone.

And that's it, thank you for taking the time to read this far and I hope you enjoyed the write up. If you want to hear more about any particular presentation feel free to reach out to me via judge apps or discord and I'll be happy to help or put you in contact with the presenter. Finally, I want to extend a big thank you to Judge Foundry for sponsoring this conference. They supported the lunch and the presenter gifts allowing me to source out of town judges to come share their knowledge.

Many Thanks,
Walker Metyko









