

DuelCircle PAX South 2020 Panel Proposal:

How to successfully run a children's card game tourney: 101

How does Wizard101's PvP work?

- Schools of Magic (Classes)
 - Fire: Damage over time
 - Ice: high base health, damage mitigation
 - Storm: Strong but inconsistent burst damage
 - Death: Lifedrain
 - Myth: Minions and buff removal
 - Life: healing
 - Balance: jack of all trades
- Learning off-school spells is possible by using training points, a limited resource acquired through some quests and levelling up

Combat

- In the context of PvP, Wizard101 is a deckbuilding dueling game with a heavy emphasis on reading your opponent's next move.
- At the start of combat, a team is randomly selected to go first. In PvP, players going second are awarded an extra pip.
 - Pips are a consumable resource used to cast spells. You get one per turn for free, with a chance to gain a power pip depending on your gear stats. Power pips count as two pips for spells that match your school.
 - As a general rule, more powerful spells cost more pips.
- At the start of your turn, draw 7 cards from your deck. You may discard as many cards as you want. For each card you discard, you may randomly draw one treasure card, which are consumable spells that exist in a separate deck.
- Spells resolve in the order players are lined up, starting with the team that goes first.
- You win when all opponent's health bars are reduced to zero.

Anatomy of a Spell



- Many different types of spells to support a wide variety of playstyles, examples:
 - Guardian Spirit revives you after death
 - Beguile turns an enemy into an ally, redirecting any AoE effects they do

A Brief History of PvP

- PvP was added to Wizard101 in January 2009 after multiple player requests.
- Matches are played in teams of 1-4 players.
- Types of PvP include:
 - Practice: choose your opponent in a no stakes match. No rewards.
 - Ranked: enter a queue and be randomly matched with an opponent around your level and skill. Winner gets PvP Rank points and tickets, which can be used to buy exclusive items.
 - Automated Tournaments: Hourly tournaments with various team sizes and rules.

- Christmas Clash History
 - 2015: The PvP meta is shifting to a much more aggressive game. Matches end faster and there's less mind games involved.
 - Also 2015: Hearthstone introduces the Tavern Brawl feature, augmenting the game's normal rules into ridiculous limited-time gamemodes
 - Bass loves to watch PvP and misses the slower matches, so he partners with Shadowfishy (not present today) to fuse Hearthstone's Tavern Brawls with a modified ruleset to bring back the slower meta
 - The first Christmas Clash had over 300 entries and a prize pool valued at ~\$235, entirely contributed by the community.
 - DuelCircle was formed in 2016 as a fansite to manage the tournament for years to come
 - Went onto become an annual event sponsored directly by Kingsisle
- 1v1 Luau History
 - Christmas Clash's success inspired a lot of copycat tournaments
 - 1v1 Luau was an attempt to create another major seasonal tournament with a different team
 - The tournament was thrown into disarray when one of the lead organizers stole all of the prizes
 - Mike takes over the tournament, obtains new prizes, and successfully runs the tournament.
 - Luau merged with DuelCircle in 2018, now part of our seasonal event rotation.

Tournament Logistics

- Running a tournament requires teamwork, organization, and communication. Our tournaments typically span over 2 days with 2-3 rounds each day with 32-64 randomly chosen diverse competitors participating.
- DuelCircle hosts 2 semi-annual tournaments in Summer (Luau) and Winter (Clash) respectively. DuelCircle has hosted 9 tournaments since inception.
- Our tournaments require 20 volunteer gameday referees. These referees work directly with participants to troubleshoot any issues prior to, and during the match. These referees follow strict guidelines to ensure match integrity and are the “nucleus” behind our tournaments. Matches are held in Wizard101’s housing PvP system where participants can compete privately among one-another.
- As aforementioned, our tournaments follow strict competitive guidelines (e.g., general rules) in order to conduct a fair and balanced match environment to the best of our ability. During the tournament, we also introduce round specific gamemodes to alter and test the deck building skills, and use of certain gear obtained from the game, rather than overall skill in PvP. This is accomplished by restricting certain cards, changing the battle environment, or adding other staff members to cast spells at certain points during the match. Participants typically have 30 minutes to prepare between matches for gamemodes in play.
 - Our tournaments are single-elimination until the semi-finals (top 4) where matches become best-of-three. Matches typically have a 30 minute time limit, if

the time limit is reached, referees will deliberate to determine a winner based on gameplay.

- Tournament applications open approximately 4-6 weeks prior to the start of the tournament for both participants and volunteer referees. Tournament applications typically close 1 week prior to the start of the tournament (usually a Friday) with acceptance announcements and the bracket's public release the following Monday.
 - Participants who are accepted must join our participant specific Discord server 48 hours prior to the start of the tournament. In our participant specific Discord server, DuelCircle has a channel for bracket assignments where participants are linked to Match #'s. In that channel, participants can find a modified spreadsheet with participant school and level information as well as contact information for their designated referee.
 - The server is primarily used on gameday for immediate communication between all participants. Participants will be the first to find out gamemode information, round start times, and more directly in the server. The server is also used as a means of communication between our Lead Referee and DuelCircle's tournament organizational staff if issues arise.
- At the end of the tournament, participants receive prizing through the email they provided through their application. We primarily use email only for acceptance emails and prizing only while the majority of mass communication is held in Discord.

Being a Match Referee

- Referees are the most numerous in position, but also some of the most vital during day-of performance.
- Referees are required to have a thorough knowledge of the game's PvP state, available spells and their effects for all possible classes, and the rules of each game mode.
- On top of this knowledge, they also need to behave in accordance with all company policies and behavior etiquettes and should set an example for both participants, staff and viewers alike.
- To balance all these responsibilities, referees are trained through meetings discussing any topic from current state of PvP affairs, to behavior and etiquette, general tournament planning and structure and of course discussing and practicing game modes themselves.
- Many referees opt to give input regarding specific rules for the tournament in general and for each game mode such as "How many of X spell should be allowed per match?" and "Should this spell be permitted to be cast twice in a row?" etc.
- The most difficult part about being a referee is a mixture of the commitment time-wise in having to actively attend meetings and discussions about game affairs, but also having to act as an exemplar to all in reference to their behavior. Some participants may grieve or get angry, and sometimes referees must make certain official calls that participants may not think are completely just. Being a referee is often compared to customer service in this regard as each referee must react pleasantly, calmly and within the expectations of game and company policy, while also remaining firm and clear in their verdicts.

Broadcasting/Shoutcasting matches

- During each tournament, DuelCircle reaches out to community content creators, PvP analysts, and typically English/Communication majors to fill out our on-air team.
- Each tournament requires 2-3 different broadcasters with 1-2 separate commentators on each stream (aka “shoutcasters”) to elevate our production experience for the general public by creating a similar experience to esports broadcasts such as the League of Legends Championship Series or Overwatch League.
- Our broadcasts require storyboarding and pre-prep in order to create storylines about specific players, discuss trends with the current tournament meta and predict any potential meta shifts that may happen in the tournament due to gamemodes.
- Prior to a broadcast, our on-air team conducts rehearsals to make sure that our broadcasters are well equipped externally and that our shoutcasters can eloquently commentate matches for a long period of time.
 - One of the activities our shoutcasters typically do as a “warm-up” is by saying tongue twisters such as [Hilaire Belloc’s 1929 “Tarantella”](#) which is a vocal exercise to assist with stuttering and enunciation.
 - Another activity our shoutcasters partake in is an improv game called “Mind Meld”, where you and a partner each take turns saying a word and hearing the word. Then both of you try to think of a word between those 2 previously said words, and say it at the same time. If both of you say the same word, then you “meld”. This activity is used primarily to create cohesion between shoutcasters.

- For example: Let's say you and your partner say “T-shirt” and the word “Rainbow”. If both of you say the same word that correlates between the two, then you will “Meld”. Some words that you and/or your partner may say could be “Pride” or “Tie-Dye”.
- On gameday, the broadcast itself typically lasts 5 hours with the “planning period” between rounds used as a “pre/post match analysis” segment where each broadcaster/shoutcaster group fills time by discussing storylines, meta discussion, gamemode explanation, as well as direct audience/broadcast conversation.
 - During this time, broadcasters may also entice viewers by holding giveaways for certain in game items as a promotion tool for the broadcast and the event at-large, through programs such as Moobot or Nightbot in the livestream chat.

Questions from the audience