

# BENELUX BULLETIN #10

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## INTRODUCTION

Alex de Bruijne

Welcome to this epic BeNeLux Bulletin!

The past gave us legends. With the return to Dominaria we'll build new stories of our own. As of yet unknown heroes will be introduced inside these pages and sagas of histories past will be recounted.

These sagas have had some impact on the rules of our wonderful game, however. But fret not, we've got you covered with a bite-sized article on these changes.

Players will undoubtedly enjoy the return to our beloved past, and we are here to guide them through the tournaments. Prereleases are the best-attended tournaments worldwide and should be a joyful experience for everyone. Cécile wrote a very nice article as to what we as judges can do to make the prereleases the best experience for all players.

Enjoy this Benelux Bulletin, and we hope to see you at a judge weekend in the near future!



# PRERELEASE GUIDE

by Cécile Denaux

Dear Judge, I'm very happy to be back for a new soft skills article, and this time I would like to share with you my insights about prereleases.

In my opinion, prereleases are mostly about customer service. They are often the first sanctioned event for new players, also the very first point of interaction between judges and non "shop-regular" players.

New players are very important for the community, they are the next champions, the next judges, and the future friends and they keep the game alive and that's probably a very good reason to make sure they have a positive first experience.

From another perspective, prereleases are also the window of your local game store. So having a well organized and friendly event will encourage players to come back and comfort the TO to organize more tournaments.

They may also be the first tournament you'll be judging alone. It's a great learning opportunity for LO candidates and fresh L1s. Moreover, it can be your first step in mentoring or sharing skills.

So here are my pieces of advice to make this event as good for your beloved players as for your judging experience.

## 1. ANTICIPATION & LOGISTICS

Mastering customer service isn't that easy because there are a lot of things to think of, so I hope this can help you with your first tournament and eventually help you improve both the players' experience and yours.

If you're an active judge in your shop, you can already prepare prereleases by addressing to new players – for instance at game days, at FNM's, or just when you encounter them for the first time. This way you can introduce them the schedule of a prerelease, give them early tips such as coming in advance in order to prepare their new DCI number, explaining them the new mechanics of the prereleased set, or even telling them some basics for building a sealed deck, etc.

I have the chance to judge in a big shop where I have mostly everything I need, but it's not the case in every shop. Here are the basic things that you'll need for organizing prereleases. Check them with your TO:

Furniture and supplies: chairs, tables, tables numbers, new DCI numbers, Basic lands, sleeves, garbage bags, prerelease packs, prize support, and visible time keeper device (AKA a clock)

Judge station: a laptop with WER installed, a reliable printer, ink, sheets of paper, pens, a smartphone with the "MTG: Judge Core App" application installed, a battery charger, and the last release notes (on screen or printed)

Knowledge: announcement ready, knowledge of the new mechanics and the last changes in the comprehensive rules

Extras: decoration, cosplay, mascots and judge shirt

## 2. HANDLING NEW PLAYERS AT A PRERELEASE

A bad experience at a prerelease can have awful consequences, let's do anything we can to guide new players through their first tournament.

As an active judge, it's easy for me to spot new players. As I register them, I make sure they played a prerelease before. If not, I take a moment to explain them the mechanics of the set and a quick "how to sealed deck" information (40 cards, 17 lands, creatures (13-17) and non-creature spells) and I tell them that I can even help them build their deck if they want to.

The announcement may be the first time they will hear the rules of the store. So be careful and clear, but don't overdo it because the attention time of a player who just wants to crack fresh new boosters is really not that long.

The construction time is a key point to your prerelease, especially for new players. So I try to seat them nearby, particularly if I'm judging alone – It will be easier for them, and for me, to help them all if they're not scattered all over the place.

Something I also learned over time is that players are always going to tell you that everything is fine but in the last five minutes they will realise they don't have a playable deck and will panic.

You absolutely want to avoid them just putting a pile of cards together and letting them play with something unplayable. They will be frustrated and they will not have fun at your prerelease.

Here's my technique to help them build a fine deck without much effort from the judge:

0 – 15 min : Discovery of the cards  
When I collect the trash, I'll take a look carefully at what players opened as I don't want them to feel ashamed to ask for help. Showing interest is a good thing to put them at ease.

Then I suggest them to sort the cards by colors. This will help them identify which colors they like the most. I do that at every table, then I go back to the first one who needs help.

15 to 35 min: construction  
I ask them if they found something they liked and I give it a quick look, sometimes I even help them to choose the right colors combination. Then I ask them to sort their cards by converted mana cost, which is a really great introduction to the curve principle that will be useful for any of their future events.

35 to 45 min: final touch  
I help them to make the last cuts and I give them some advices for a decent mana base.

Extra-option: In a well-educated community, players help each other – it can also be that another judges are playing the prerelease and can give you a hand if they are done building their deck.

This technique has multiple advantages, it will help you manage your time, it will help new players to develop a way to build a deck, and allow you to have an eye on the whole room. It will also allow you to build relationships between experienced and new players through you.

Going through tables will also enable you to check on less experienced, but also on regular ones, they also deserve a part of your attention and it's a good way to notice unusual pools and reassures players about possible cheating.





3. TIME MATTERS: AVOIDING TIME FRUSTRATION AND ADDRESSING SLOW PLAY

I truly believe that preventing slow play can be done by all the things related in this article. For instance: explaining new mechanics will raise card awareness and help them not re-read the keyword explanation several times, and building a playable deck will help to have smoother and therefore slightly faster game.

From what I witnessed, players are often hesitating to call judges for slow play in regular events, but it's not a reason to do nothing about it. During the first round of the pre-release, I will pay extra attention to new players, and if I notice some players going a bit slower than average, I will try to talk to them in between rounds to expose them the concept of sharing time and respect towards their opponent. I mean, that taking most of the round time for themselves isn't fair, and that every player (including themselves) is allowed to some time to take game decisions. I think it's very important to include them in the explanation to avoid a brutal "you're doing something wrong" to a more inclusive "everybody deserves time, so share it equally."

In conclusion, many of the problems that can be encountered with new players during a prerelease can be avoided simply by being aware of their needs. Good anticipation and involvement in the event is usually enough to make it enjoyable for everyone. It's a source of learnings for both parties, you and the players.

This article was inspired by the mini seminar I presented at the last Brussels' judge dinner (Dominaria). Its bigger vision stands for a future complete checklist with a leaflet to prepare prereleases and a tool to help new mentor guiding their candidates.



Don't forget to apply on JudgeApps if you want to judge a PPTQ, RPTQ or a GP!  
Stay connected: judges find each other on **JudgeApps** or **Facebook**.

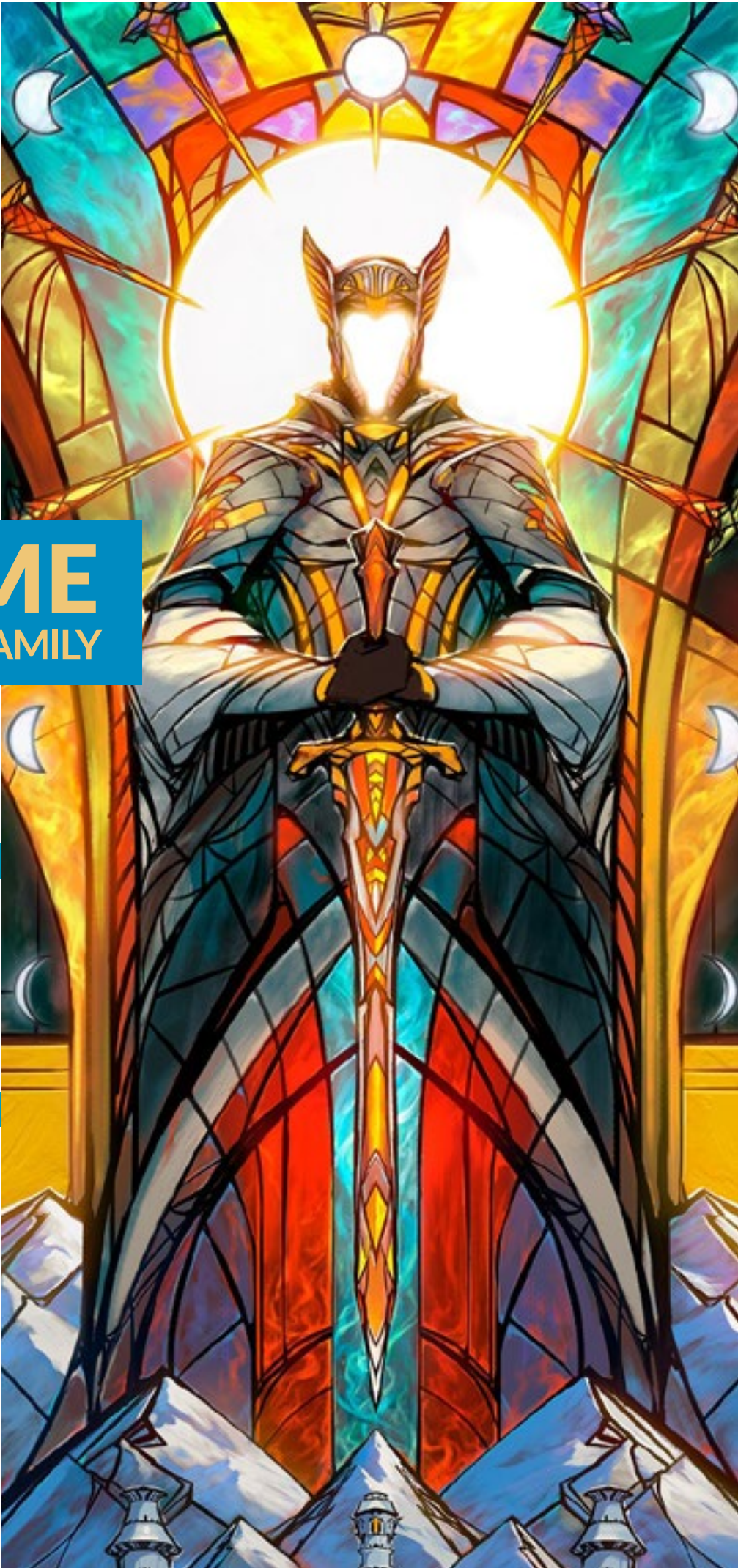
WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

WELCOME TO OUR NEW LEVEL 1 HEROES!

- Alexander Van den Bon - Ghent - Belgium
- Emiel De Paepe - Kortrijk - Belgium
- Leon Wichman - Deventer - Netherlands
- Mika van Tricht - Bergen op Zoom - Netherlands
- Niels Kok - Amersfoort - Netherlands
- Paul Ganzevoort - Amsterdam - Netherlands
- Robin Massart - Bruges - Belgium

CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING LEVEL 2

- Rory Tans - Boxtel - Netherlands





# CHANGES IN THE DOCUMENTS

by **Floris de Baerdemaeker**



“There is no mile as long the final one that leads back home.”

- Katherine Marsh, *Jepp, Who Defied the Stars*

Strap on your seatbelts and bring some extra sleeves for protection: we are heading home! After many, many years, Magic is returning to Dominaria, the plane where it all began. But a few things have changed! There are new ground rules. So, let's take out our travel guides and dig in!

We have quite a number of changes, so let's start with the big ones!

## THE BIG CHANGES

306.7 Goodbye, planeswalker redirection rule! Yes, we can now target planeswalkers directly! No longer can you hide behind misdirection and mad poker face bluff skills, where only upon resolution you had to declare that, yes, you did in fact want Jace to die. Now, you must look Jace in the eye and say: “You! I am targeting you!” Incidentally, this means that you can now target planeswalkers ‘through’ a Leyline of Sanctity. 114.4 Target can now be a noun and not just an adjective. Effects that refer to ‘a target’, ‘any target’, ‘two targets’... can target creatures, players and/or planeswalkers.

Sagas! How do they work? Quite straightforward, really. As it enters, you put a lore counter on the saga. At the beginning of your postcombat main phase (after any archenemy scheme shenanigans) you put a lore counter on each saga you control. This is a turn based action and doesn't use the stack.

When you put a lore counter on a saga, it triggers the chapter ability with the same number as the number of counters on it. (This also works if you put more counters on the saga with some kind of doubling effect.)

And finally, if the amount of lore counters on a saga is equal to or higher than its highest chapter number, and its ability has left the stack, sacrifice it. (This is a state-based action). 714 for more details.

In Two-Headed Giant games we once again talk about an attacking team and a defending team. There are several implications to this, with effects like propaganda, effects that refer to defending player and so on. Maybe a topic for a seminar. Toby?

## CLARIFICATIONS

We also have several edits that don't really change the rules, but just make them a bit clearer, or make sure the rules now work as intended. 106.3 has been rewritten to ‘bind together’ all the different terms used in Magic's past for creating mana, adding mana and so on.

106.4 about losing mana and mana emptying from your mana pool, has also been slightly reworded in this spirit. The subrule, which says that players must announce how much mana they have left after paying for a cost; or passing priority has also been reworded, but will functionally remain the same.

106.11b has been added, and works similarly to 106.11a, but for replacement effects. Apparently the rules never really worked for them and we are figuring that out now. It simply says that if a replacement effect applies to an ability that produces mana, the replacement effect modifies that mana production event. Go figure.

106.12 (or, Drain Power's personal rule) has also been reworded, together with all the mana rewordings. The card's Oracle text has also been updated. Functionally it still does the same thing.

601.2c, the rule that talks about choosing targets when putting a spell on the stack, has been slightly reworded to make sure that Fight with Fire actually works within the rules. I am sure many of you were worried about that!

601.3b and 601.3c make it clear now that if a spell has flash under certain conditions, or when certain costs are paid, you may actually start casting that spell as though it had flash, if those conditions are met, or when the choices you make while casting that spell could cause it to gain flash. Functionally, no change, but now there's actually rules support for that!

608.2b has been rewritten so that spells that fizzle because they have no legal targets upon resolution aren't countered. Anything that refers to spells being countered does not care about spells fizzling.

701.9 We have a new keyword action: double! We already had that action, really, and it works the way you think it does, now there's rules support for it. It also works on negative numbers. 701.10d has been slightly clarified, so that you can swap zones even if one of the zones is empty. I am sure this will come up a lot. \*Cough\* Morality Shift \*cough\*



107.1b has been updated so we can now double a creature's power and/or toughness with negative numbers! Hurrah! The entire rule has also been reworked to not repeat so many phrases. 112.6c has been changed so that spells with an alternative cost can only be paid while it's on the stack as a spell. So, if I cast Back from the Brink to make a token of Delraich, I have to pay the mana cost, I can't choose to sacrifice three black creatures for the alternative cost. 117.12b and 701.18g now make it very clear that the ‘if you do, shuffle your library’ part of search cards only refers to searching your library. It doesn't care if you find a card or not. You can't say: “I fail to find, so I don't have to shuffle.”

701.12c now says that if a creature fights itself, it deals damage to itself equal to twice its power. Because you know, it's both the fighter and the fightee. But the damage happens in one big damage event.

702.25m Objects cannot be stuck in phased out limbo forever in a multiplayer game when their owner leaves the game.

Storm and Gravestorm have been updated to use the modern language for copying spells. Okay! Those were a lot of clarifications. But we are almost done!



## MINOR UPDATES

If you are already bored with Dominaria and you decide to play with a planar deck; the following is for you! The plane you start the game on is now your starting plane, even if you encountered a phenomenon first.

107.15 has been added to define chapter symbols to make it clear they represent keyword abilities.

205.3h Saga is an enchantment subtype. Yay!  
205.3j Jaya is a planeswalker subtype! Awesome!

205.4e Legendary sorceries now get their own rule in the section on supertypes.

700.6 Historic refers to objects with the Legendary supertype, artifact card type or the Saga subtype.

702.6 Equip has gained some subrules to discuss the equip (quality) creature. It works, surprisingly, like you would expect it to.

702.11 Hexproof gained subrules to clarify the hexproof from (quality) thing.

And that's it! Those are all the new rules! All in all, not that many complicated rules changes, but more a very valiant attempt to make the rules clearer and less confusing.

## POLICY CHANGES

### IPG

I am rather excited about this first change: throughout the document, "he or she" has been replaced by the gender-neutral "they".

Next up we have some changes to deck problem: If the deck or sideboard is discovered to be incorrect during the presentation time, the penalty is now a game loss. This used to only apply to the deck.

In the same category: if an incorrect card is discovered by a judge, and if it happens during a deck check, or if the card becomes visible to an opponent, or if the judge is called with an effect or spell on the stack that would reveal the card, only then is the penalty a game loss, otherwise it is a warning.

And briefly on marked cards: if a player needs to replace a marked card with a basic land, they cannot use a Wastes.

Since we are on the topic of replacing cards: if a player is discovered to have morphed a card without that ability, if no previously unknown cards were added to that player's hand, and the player has a card with the morph ability in hand, they can just swap out those cards. The upgrade only applies if unknown cards have been added to the hand.

CPV! It might actually be CPV this time! The infraction now covers all of section 4 of the MTR, which we'll get into below. However, the infraction only applies if the opponent has acted on incorrect information. Judges are encouraged to point confusing game states out to players, before actually having to hand out warnings.

And finally, for multi-day events, penalties will now reset between cuts: this means between the cut to day 2 and the cut to top 8.

That's it for the IPG, some language changes have been made and some wordings modified, but no other meaningful changes.

## MTR

Right, let's start with the big one. Section 4. All this has to do with CPV, potentially. Is it weird that I am strangely excited about the prospect of finally being able to rule this elusive infraction correctly? This section now covers everything from player communication, to tournament shortcuts, to out of order sequencing, to team communication, game layout and triggers; though I am not sure what a trigger CPV would look like.

Most of these rules haven't changed; they have just been put in this fancy new section. The big change is status! That's right: we have a new type of information! Status governs life totals, counters that players have attached to them like, energy and poison, and continuous effects with no defined expiration that apply to players like Monarch and City's Blessing.

Status changes must be announced and visibly tracked by the affected player.

While we celebrate a new section, we are also filled with terrible sadness as we say goodbye to section 6.7. The rules for block constructed are gone! Gone! Oh, the injustice! It is no longer a sanctionable format! Ah, now we will never be able to sanction all those... hmmm... well, I remember at least, although... come to think of it, did anyone ever actually play this format?

The rules for on camera play now apply to everyone in the tournament. You can find the detailed version in section 4.6 of the Magic Tournament Rules, but let me try to break them down for you here already.

Play with your lands close to you! No, your elf is not hiding behind a Forest. Non-creature permanents that really can only make mana, may be put with the lands if that is clear. Creatures that can make mana go in the nonland portion of the

board. This includes Dryad Arbor, an activated Treetop Village, and so on.

Each card should be clearly associated with cards attached to it. Enchantments should touch that which they are enchanting.

A player's library, graveyard and exile zone, should be kept either all to the left or all to the right of the battlefield.

The graveyard and exile zone must be adjacent to the library, but clearly distinct.

If a card is still by a permanent and that permanent may still do something with it, it is recommended to make the association between those two cards clear by keeping the cards together.

Untapped permanents should face their controller.

And a few more minor updates:

Banned and restricted announcements can now happen outside of the scheduled announcements. They will always come with four weeks' notice.

Members of the coverage team may now pause a match at professional REL before calling a judge. In rare cases where a foil card has become warped and therefore marked, and there is no non-foil version of the card printed, the HJ may issue a proxy for that card.

It has now been clarified that you do not have to sideboard cards on a one-for-one basis.

Buy-A-Box promos are legal in Standard!

If a player drops or is disqualified from a team tournament, that entire team is dropped. The section about not having enough members to continue has been removed.

And that's it! These are the policy changes! Welcome home, everybody!





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# NEWSLETTER

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