

CraigCon VII, Battle Royal(e) 2008: Out With the Old, In With the New

Welcome to the 2008 Battle Royal(e) at CraigCon VII! This is the 6th annual BR (even though last year's BR got listed as the 6th annual, which is in error since there was no BR at CraigCon I). Thank you all who have participated in BRs past. Before we get started, let us remember our past winners:

CraigCon II, BR 2003: Dave Yeager, “Man in the Box” (runner up Gary Dollahan, even with Rob's 9-20 threat range and 3.0 vorpal sword, and Jeff's human-hating ranger and Ring of Nine Lives)

CraigCon III, BR 2004: Team Philly (sort of) (Dave Yeager, Dan Ford, Craig Hatler, Clay Wheatley) (runners-up Team Jersey, even with Rob and Abdul's pile of spell buffs)

CraigCon IV, BR 2005: Andy Bradbury and Evaristo “The Chuck” Garcia (runners-up Jeff and Craig, even with Jeff and Craig's slick Cobra ninja team)

CraigCon V, BR 2006: Andy Bradbury, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards (runner-up Todd V. Ehrenfels, even with Mike Dunn's “creative” conversion of the Vultivorr)

CraigCon VI, BR 2007: Andy Bradbury, Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie (runner-up Todd V. Ehrenfels, even with Thom's “broken” warlock that only had one level of binder)

Format: As with the last few years, this BR will be a head-to-head, bracket-style of tournament (in the style of college basketball or football); each team will be grouped randomly, battle it out, and then the winners of those matches will be paired up, so on and so forth until a single team is declared the victor. This year, however, the contest will be broken up into two phases: the Qualifying Phase, and the Final Phase. The Qualifying Phase will follow the bracket style as we have used in years past, and four (4) teams will be come out of that phase as the winner. In the Final Phase, all four teams will enter one arena, and fight it out down to the last winning team. Only one teammate needs to remain alive, and defeat all of his other opponents, for a team to win the entire contest! (Note: depending on the number of participants, the Qualifying Phase might be foregone in favor of one every-team-for-itself match.)

Prizes and Contribution: For CraigCon II, the 1st annual BR, we gave the winner a set of the 3.5 Edition core rule books (Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, Monster Manual). Since this year is the release of 4th Edition D&D, I would like to do the same: award the winner with a set of 4th Edition D&D core rule books (PH, DMG, MM), with all other runners-up to each receive a copy of the 4th Edition D&D Player's Handbook. However, if everyone is going to have an equal chance of winning, and I'm going to have the resources to pull this off, then I think it only fair that everyone contribute to the cost of the prizes. With that in mind, I am going to ask for a buy-in for the tournament this year, based on the number of participants in the contest. The cost of two 4th Edition Core Rulebook Boxed Sets will be divided among all those who participate. (The more participants, the lesser the buy-in cost!)

Arena: The Battle Royal(e) will take place on a flat battle space, with no terrain obstructions, measuring 100 ft. x 100 ft. (20 squares x 20 squares). The field of play will have a ceiling 100 ft. (20 squares) off the ground, with walls extending on all four sides of the field from the ground to the ceiling. The surface of both the walls and the ceiling will be “a surface with adequate handholds and footholds (natural or artificial), such as a very rough natural rock surface”, requiring a Climb check (DC 15) in order to traverse.

Adjudication: I will be the lead DM in the contest (and thus be the final point of adjudication when a judgment call is needed), but in order to ensure a smooth process I may ask for line judges to assist me depending on the amount of contestants involved. Feel free to volunteer for this task—it will not keep you from building a character. (Depending on the number of participants in the contest, beware—for I may participate as well!)

Character Creation: First and foremost, this is a DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS Battle Royal(e). The only products that are legal are those that have the Dungeons and Dragons logo on the cover of the product, published by Wizards of the Coast. That being said, all of the following products are legal for character creation:

- Player's Handbook (PH)
- Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG)
- Monster Manual (MM)
- Expanded Psionics Handbook (ExPsiH)
- Spell Compendium
- Magic Item Compendium
- Rules Compendium
- Two “Complete” books of your choosing (If you're not sure which ones this means, we're talking about Complete Warrior, Divine, Arcane, Adventurer, Psionic, Mage, Scoundrel, and Champion).

Content from products not expressly mentioned above, in particular all products published prior to July 2003, **are banned. These are the only books you can use to make your characters!**

SRD: The Revised d20 System Reference Document,

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20/article/srd35>

is considered legal content for use in character creation for the contest, with this one caveat: if there is any content in the SRD that originated in a banned product (those individual products listed and anything published before July 2003), then its respective content within the SRD is equally banned. In effect, this means that every document in the SRD that has the word 'Epic' in it or 'Divine' in it (with the exception of the Divine Domains and Spells document, less the *genesis* spell or power) is banned as well. What does that mean? Epic Level Handbook content and Deities and Demigods content is banned, even though it's in the SRD. (No paragon creature template!) The order of priority of rules is (1 being of highest priority):

1. Errata from the D&D Website dated **after** the printing of the Rules Compendium
2. Rules Compendium
3. "Complete" Books
4. SRD (PH/DMG/MM/ExPsiH)

The D&D FAQ may contain rules clarifications and or highlights, but shouldn't have any new or revised rules outside of the Errata. I believe that this should be the priority that the various rules sources should be taken (for example, a rule introduced in Complete Arcane, if that rule is printed in Rules Compendium, trumps the wording of the rule in Complete Arcane). This not only goes for rules, but printings of spells in the Spell Compendium, and magic items in the Magic Item Compendium as well: the printing of a spell or magic item in the Spell or Magic Item Compendium trumps the printing of the spell or magic item in another product.

Content from D&D Website: Spells on the Wizards' website that are not in the Spell Compendium are banned for the tournament. If it's not a spell you're wondering about (like a PrC for example), then I'll rule it on a case-by-case basis—but if you have something in mind, don't wait until character review time before I know about it for the first time. All material from Dragon Magazine is banned, whether it be spell, magic item, feat or PrC—anything. From the Wizards' website, the Psychic Rogue base class and the Psychic Theurge prestige class are legal for character creation for the Battle Royal:

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/psm/20040723b>

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/psm/20040925b>

Errata: Make sure you incorporate all errata (posted on Wizards' website for D&D) when building your character:
<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/er/20040125a>

Alignment: While your character's alignment must be in keeping with the requirements of any base or prestige class your character has levels in, the requirements of any class features your character has, or the requirements of any item your character possesses and wishes to use, your character's alignment **MAY NOT** be Neutral (also referred to as True Neutral). Neutral may be on one axis of your alignment (Neutral Good, Chaotic Neutral), but one axis must be **EITHER** Lawful or Chaotic, or Good or Evil.

ECL: Total number of base class levels, prestige class levels, level adjustment and/or racial hit dice should not exceed 16. Character level 16, ECL 16, so on and so forth (120,000 XP).

Ability score generation: You have 84 points to distribute amongst your 6 ability scores (what you would have if you had a 14 in each ability score). **No ability score** may be **less than 3 or greater than 18** at 1 HD; you may then apply racial ability score adjustments and bonus points earned at 4th, 8th, and 12th Hit Die. (This rule does not apply to creature types that change a creature's ability score or ability scores to –, meaning that creatures or templates that change a creature in such a way are still legal for the contest).

Starting gold pieces: You will have 75,000 gp to purchase the weapons, armor, and magic items that you will begin the contest with.

Beginning of play: Characters in a match-up will begin play wearing any armor listed on their character sheet, and carrying any weapons and items they have listed as well. Characters will have one free (1) round in which neither opponent may initiate an offensive action (such as a melee attack, ranged attack, or offensive spell) against each other. During this "free round", characters may equip a weapon, use an item that requires no more than one round to activate, activate a special ability that requires no more time than one round to activate, cast a spell that requires no more than one round of casting time, or perform any other type of action that requires no more than one round to perform. Once this round is complete, then both opponents will determine Initiative, and combat will commence.

Victory conditions: The first team, or character from a team, to drop **all of their opponents** conclusively to negative-ten (-10) hit points (meaning that, at -10 hit points, the character has no means of being healed above 0 hit points), or conclusively reduce their opponent's Constitution score to zero (0) (meaning that, upon having their Constitution score reduced to 0, the character has no means of raising it above 0), is the victor.

Progressing to the next round: When you progress to the next round, your character will be restored to full hit points (all hit point damage will be cured up to your maximum); your ability scores will be restored to their maximums; all class features that rely on number of times per day will be treated as if it is one day later; spellcasters will be restored to their full allotment of spells per day. If one of your items is destroyed in the course of a contest, however, it is destroyed for the duration of the entire tournament unless you have a means of repairing it to full capacity.

If a teammate dies in one round of the contest during the Qualifying Phase, then that teammate does **not** move to the next round of the Qualifying Phase with the other team member who survived, if that team member was able to emerge victorious from the round. However, if the team with one living member does manage to emerge from the Qualifying Phase, then his or her fallen teammate will earn the benefit of a *true resurrection* (bringing the character back to full hit points, full spells per day, full uses of any base or prestige class features, feats and/or special abilities) being cast upon them; if any of the fallen teammate's items were destroyed, then those items are returned to them, completely restored, as if by divine edict (read: the DM says so).

Hit points: A character's hit point total is equal to the maximum possible number of hit points the character can have by virtue of Hit Dice, Constitution modifier, and any feat, base or prestige class feature, special ability (spell-like, supernatural or extraordinary), or magic item that grants additional hit points that the character may have (such as the Toughness or Improved Toughness feats).

Planar travel: All contests take place entirely on the Material plane. Any spell, base or prestige class feature, feat, special ability (spell-like, supernatural or extraordinary) or magic item that allows for the transport of a spellcaster's entire physical body, mental presence, or soul to another plane (such as *ethereal jaunt*, *etherealness*, *shadow walk*, *plane shift* or *gate*), is banned. Spells, base or prestige class features, special abilities (spell-like, supernatural or extraordinary), feats or magic items that skirt or otherwise only temporarily bring the character to another plane, for example as to facilitate travel on the Material plane (such as *blink*, *teleport*, *greater teleport*, *dimension door*, and the shadowdancer's Shadow Jump class feature) are not affected. Spells, abilities or magic items whose effects are unclear will be judged on a case-by-case basis. As this affects only the travel of a spellcaster to another plane or dimension, the summoning of creatures into the contest is allowed normally.

Leadership: The Leadership feat is **banned**.

Magic Items: As was stated above, you have 75,000 gp to spend on your character's starting gear (such as weapons, armor, and magic items). **Item creation feats are banned.** The “**commissioning**” of custom-crafted magic items (meaning the complete creation of a magic item from scratch, either one isn't listed in one of the legal products, or one that is listed but has been created with price reduction to suit a character's particular alignment or skill requirements as mentioned in the Magic Item Creation section of the DMG) **is banned**. If you wish to purchase magic items, they must be from a legal product, at the price that is listed for the item in the product.

The only exception to this is (a) spells that originate from the Spell Compendium, or (b) spells that originate from one of the Complete books that have not been trumped by a version in the Spell Compendium (this would include Complete Scoundrel, Complete Mage, and Complete Champion). You are allowed to purchase spell completion and/or spell trigger items (such as wands, staves and scrolls) that are based off spells that meet these criteria, created with the base ability score necessary in order to cast the spell, and at the base caster level necessary in order to cast the spell. You may choose the spellcaster that was involved in the creation of the item, in the cases of spells that have different levels depending on the class of the caster, but this must be clearly defined in the creation process and before the contest takes place.

Spell components: The cost of spell components, arcane and/or divine foci equaling 1 gp or more, if any, must be purchased as part of your starting gear and included in your gear inventory. If you wish to cast spells that involve an XP cost, you will have to reduce your ECL to 15, but cannot reduce you below ECL 15 (meaning essentially you cannot cast spells throughout the entirety of the contest that have a combined XP cost of 15,000 or more).

Spells or abilities that rely on *polymorph*: If anyone is planning on doing anything regarding spells or abilities that used to draw off of *polymorph*, keep in mind that there has been a significant shift in how these sideline abilities and spells now work. The announcement came in February 2006 along with corresponding errata to these spells and abilities:

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/dd/20060216a>

Polymorph itself was not changed, only spells or abilities related to it. The link above is to the announcement, and within the announcement page is a link to the errata. Most of the errata/revision is incorporated into the errata for the Player's Handbook:

<http://www.wizards.com/dnd/files/PHBErrata02062006.zip>

Entry into the contest: All characters will be reviewed to ensure legality before the contest begins (11:00 AM-12:00 PM). If your character is not ready for review at the time that it is called for, or if there is an issue with your build upon review, then at the DM's discretion the degree of issue may delay or prohibit your entry into the contest.