

8:00:57 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Alrighty folks. Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. I'm Jonah. Your logistics champion joined this week by Max and Norm from Nrg. Huh, in any case? Sorry, I'm getting a little bit of an echo. We're gonna be talking about hosting a tournament series, running a tournament series and building that from the ground up. Before we get into that, I do want to talk about a couple of our other shows coming up this week. Tomorrow we have net reps and Sorry Networks and the History of Oh, Rulings with Daniel Lee, hosting Scott, Marshall and Nathan Long. And from there, we have on Wednesday, I'm opening up windows and closing them when I should not be Daniel again. With Scott Larabee talking about policy. Where do we go from here? Then making fun of tournaments, mock tournaments with Daniel Lee and myself at 5:30 AM Pacific on Thursday, and wrapping up with a judge writing workshop with Tobias Visery to PM Pacific. Now, with that out of the way, let's start with the basics. Can't get some introductions from the two of you Max and Norm. Let's start with Max. Who are you? And how did you get into magic? And how did you get into the tournament scene?

8:02:29 pm - Max Kahn:

Hi everyone. I started playing magic. I started playing magic. Hi everyone. My name is Max Kahn. I started playing magic you know and overnight camp. When I was a teenager I certified for level one became a Level One judge in 2013 and level two in 2015 I'm currently a level two serving as the tournament organizer and event manager of the Energy series.

8:02:51 pm - Jonah Kellman:

And Norm.

8:02:52 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, Norman Cohen. President of Nerdrage Gaming and the Nrg series. I actually started playing Magic with my son when he was about to 10 years old in 2008. A few years later, 2012, we started nerd rage gaming, and the NRG series officially started in Max.

8:03:21 pm - Max Kahn:

2016.

8:03:22 pm - Norman Cohen:

2016. so yeah, that's Kind of how we got here.

8:03:31 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Fantastic. So what is the nrg series? We did cover when it started 2016. Why did it start? And where is the series today?

8:03:40 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, so we'll kind of take you back to what was going on in late 2015, and as you know, you know, the biggest tournament organizer at the time that was doing an independent series with Star City games and they had made an announcement for their 2016 schedule and part of that announcement said that they were moving out of the Midwest. You know, really focusing on the East Coast events and you know, Norman and I had been running, you know, some you know, SCG IQs and those TCG player series events in the store. And we we figured that, you know, the

Midwest players in our area were based in Chicago deserve, you know, to have a tournament series. So we know we're in a falafel shop, one evening and kind of theorized, you know what, the tournament series,

8:04:22 pm - Norman Cohen:

Most most of our ideas are integrated with a meal, always almost always.

8:04:29 pm - Max Kahn:

We.

8:04:29 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Reasonable.

8:04:29 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah. I mean The we decided that, you know, the best way to serve our local player base was to start hosting competitive tournaments ourselves. We started running one case in our store, in rage gaming, you know, every month and it sort of spiraled from there.

8:04:44 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Spiral, that's a good term.

8:04:46 pm - Max Kahn:

Thank you.

8:04:48 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Norm, do you have anything to add to that?

8:04:51 pm - Norman Cohen:

Now, I mean I think I think I think Max kind of wrapped it up. I mean we had some decisions to make as a company. I think that from the very beginning of nerd rage gaming An LGS was never like my top goal, you know, the top goal was to go beyond that we had. even even early on in nerd, rage gaming, we had reached out to watsi a number of times, just trying to figure out how we could even host a GPS or any sort of larger level tournaments, because we felt that our our strong suit our, our forte was in tournament organizing And, you know, with SCG kind of giving us a little bit of space in the Midwest, we just we just felt like it was a good opportunity to try. Try to make it work.

8:05:51 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That makes sense. This is a question that I have not prepped you for it. It has come, it's something of concerned before, when you were naming nerd, range gaming, did you start with energy? And just like, because it sounds like a word on its own. Did you work from there? Did you get that? Just by peer happens to answer? I want to know.

8:06:10 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, it was definitely nerd, rage gaming? Yeah, Nrg ended up just working as part of it. Um, Yes, the nerd rage gaming. Was. Yeah, was thought up at a gen con dinner?

8:06:31 pm - Max Kahn:
Food.

8:06:32 pm - Norman Cohen:
So, what's that?

8:06:33 pm - Max Kahn:
It's all. It's all about the food, all

8:06:35 pm - Jonah Kellman:
I,

8:06:36 pm - Norman Cohen:
It. We always about the food.

8:06:36 pm - Max Kahn:
decisions.

8:06:36 pm - Norman Cohen:
Yeah. A gen con dinner. We, um, we, we had a sat We, um, we, we had a sat Yeah. It was. We, um, we, we had a sat We, um, we, we had a sat Yeah it was a gen con dinner. We we had a sat down at a restaurant And about 20 minutes into the meal. We discovered that we were in a D&D. Uh, like question and answer trivia night and had no idea that that's what was going to go on. So we we just we started and you know I mean we're all making fun of each other and we're just saying Yeah we're nerds and you know nerd rage and blah blah blah and I'm like nerd rage gaming. This is fantastic and I guess that was before it was okay to recognize that we're nerds and that's fine. And and we enjoy what we do and we're okay with that. So yeah. So it just stuck.

8:07:26 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Awesome. Well, let's get back to the questions that I have prepped you for that

8:07:30 pm - Norman Cohen:
All right.

8:07:31 pm - Jonah Kellman:
first season. What was the format? Like, How many formats did you have? Did you have a champ, like, a culminating championship, or was it just a bunch of one case? you mentioned, of course, the pricing was, it was just a series of one case, what was attendance like, for those events

8:07:48 pm - Max Kahn:
So Yes. So, you know, we mentioned these events started out in our in our lgs. At the time, we could see it about 90 players into the store. So we figured a thousand dollars was, you know, the right prize pool, they were rotate at the time standard was pretty popular. So standard modern and legacy we've got a pretty thriving legacy scene back then and even like you know at the the store in a weekly level. So we definitely wanted legacy to be a part of it and we still continue.

To do that today, our first event, we had 38 players which, you know, it's almost break even for the entry fee at the time and for our cost of the times that was, you know, a strong suit and we continued to run these events at the store level. We had a few special events that year to kind of promote the series. Like there were a few events where we kept the entry fee the same, but we threw in a case of modern masters into the prize pool, stuff like that, to try to drive up attendance. And I remember that that event. We had a player drive-in from another state and that was like, a really big deal to us that we had players traveling to this to this event. But yeah, the championship was always in the vision that first year our championship was a 2500 dollar. Invite only you know we wanted a reason for players to play multiple events. You know you can host a 1k in your store and get a good attendance and have a successful event but nobody's going to make it a priority priority to attend your events unless they've got a specific reason to do so. So the championship was part of Part of that motivation to get people to keep coming back.

8:09:16 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, I think if I recall correctly in, in the first few years, we only had one event per month. And the winner of each of those events automatically queued for the championship. So at any given time, you could spike any of those events and kind of punch your ticket to the championship. So that was, you know, that was that was part of the draw.

8:09:42 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Makes sense. So what we're in that first year? At least, what unexpected problems, did you run into? This is, of course, a huge challenge, a huge undertaking, and you planned a fair amount. But there had to have been some challenges that you would just come out of nowhere.

8:09:59 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, those first couple tournaments are always, you know, you never know what you're going to expect in terms of hiring judges. Who did we want on the staff for these things in terms of, you know, we were running this out of an lgs. So we didn't have all the infrastructure that you have, you know, at a Grand Prix. We have, we had a clock that was on a, You know, that was on a TV. But only half the room could see that because we don't have 90 players in our store for F&M. Also, you know, at that point, you worry about things, you know, specific to the venue. We were in Lgs, we had one bathroom, we have 90 players in the event. That's a little concerning. We had, you know, air conditioning or heating issues that, you know, there was always something that comes up and, you know that's kind of what prompted our decision to during the second year of the energy. Series start to find venues outside of our local game store. Once we determine that, that was probably the best course of action for the future.

8:10:48 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Norm, any unexpected challenges?

8:10:51 pm - Norman Cohen:

Um, I think just you know, when you're starting these things and your conceptualizing them you know your initially thinking that that Financially everything just going to kind of fall into place, you know. And I think, I think early on came to the realization that it was, it was it was definitely a marathon. And, and, you know, you got to be in for the long haul or you're just not gonna, you're not gonna get there. So it was, I was a labor. It's been a labor of love. It still is so yeah,

just and and honestly finding the right team. Like, Who do you surround yourself with, who can make these things happen who have the dedication? The passion, The vision that I had and, and Max and I had to to grow this thing to what it is today and hopefully beyond. And that's tough, it's really hard. It's really hard to pick those the right people and I've just been super fortunate to have been able to surround myself with some really, really quality people who who care about, you know, the success of the series.

8:12:11 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That makes a lot of sense. Now, Max you mentioned part of it was trying to figure out the judge staff for these events.

8:12:18 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah.

8:12:19 pm - Jonah Kellman:

How how did you go about selecting judges for these offense? I remember from a conversation. We've had previously that you were. You yourself were judging? Most of them at that time.

8:12:29 pm - Max Kahn:

That's true. Yeah, I am. I held the record at that time? Still, currently hold the record, but you know, a little bit different of a scale. I've had Judge, 22, and our G series trials. So all of our 2016 and 2017 season and a few in early 2018 and, you know, part of that was just out of necessity, you know, I'm already on Norm's payroll. So it wasn't anything extra that had to come out of the books. And, you know, part of that for honestly, probably contributed to some of the financial success of the event. But, you know, besides that, I would look for other judges that, you know, impress me, we would post a judge apps application back on judge apps. And at the time, you know, it was essentially, you know, a 1k in a store, I needed one or two floor judges for the 90 player events. You know, the ones that capped, I got two or three, but, you know, the real, the focus was really on, developing competitive, RL skills. It was really great. We had a few judges that we worked with regularly over the course of a few months and to see them in, you know, the same environment. The tournament logistics are the same and they really got to focus on sharpening, the rules and policy skills. So we developed quite a few level ones into Solid level twos then. And once I stopped, you know, head judging the events myself and moved into more of an event manager role. We were able to to give those judges head judge opportunities on the series. You know, Blake Smith comes to mind as a judge that was a level one, his first competitive reele event was with the energy series and then two years later, he got the hedge for us and, you know, has probably at this point been on staff for 15 or 20 trials. So, You know really cool to see things like that to the development of and growth of judges.

8:14:09 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, I think we are also kind of fortunate just in our geographical area, you know, we did have a pretty good pool of judges to choose from, which I think helped a lot. I think, I mean, it's challenging from one standpoint as far as giving people opportunities, but, you know, having having a large pool of people to choose from has been great.

8:14:32 pm - Jonah Kellman:

yeah, it's awesome to see another judge or a judge grow from somebody who's just interested in judging to First event to larger and larger roles with more and more responsibility and authority, and to have a hand in giving them those opportunities has to feel amazing.

8:14:49 pm - Max Kahn:

absolutely very, very gratifying to see, you know, even Even, you know, the event that we wrapped up yesterday, we had all the way on the spectrum from newer level ones. This is my second competitive reelement, ever to, you know, John Oliver or Grand Prix, Head Judge has judged, 300 Grand, Prix, and seeing, you know, both sides of the spectrum. I'm able to contribute to the sex of the event and to the success of their own growth. And development is is so super super gratifying to me.

8:15:16 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That's fantastic. Huh? Speaking of good memories? What are your strongest memories from that first season of the Nrg series?

8:15:24 pm - Max Kahn:

The first season, you know, it was pretty wild. typically, you know, with with where we are today on the energy series We've got 300 players at some of these events. There's not a lot of people that, you know, I don't know, everybody on the floor of the events. And that first year, the energy series, we were running these tournaments out of our out of our lgs, almost all of the players I knew by name. So we were able to, you know, have fun, see each other. It'd be the same crew of people these events. So there was a lot of friendly competition that was going on the leaderboard race was Super, Super Cool. And seeing you know, a lot of familiar names the championship which was you know basically basically a store championship at that point 13 of the 16, people were regulars at F&m. So seeing that level of competition kind of develop was was really cool to me.

8:16:17 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, yeah.

8:16:17 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Awesome.

8:16:18 pm - Norman Cohen:

I remember I remember basically doing dinners with, you know a third of our, a third of our player base, you know, after each of these events and and like Max said, I mean we're we're friends with most of these guys and friendly and and you know we've been real fortunate as far as nerd rage gaming as an lgs we've definitely We definitely have a competitive environment in the store even at our f&m. So we do get a lot of high caliber players that come in to play and to see them just continue to grow and grow their confidence from playing in these one case to going, you know, to to larger SCG or GP events. And even seeing success there has been great. It's been a lot of fun.

8:17:11 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That's awesome. So moving forward from there, from that first couple of years, how did you change things through the season? How did the series develop and grow? What did you have? Let's start with just the magic formats themselves. Have you adapted those?

8:17:27 pm - Max Kahn:

Well, for the first couple of years, we didn't change the formats. It was just standard modern and legacy, but I'm sure as Norm would be happy to speak to the number one thing that changed in the first couple of years, was the prize pool, it doubled the two K's and then it doubled again to 5K weekends on both events. And then this year, we're at 15K weekend. So, you know, the thing that's really, you know, grown over the years, obviously attendance has grown to, to support this. But is the prize money.

8:17:58 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah. Yeah, well, everything I mean, first of all, everything has changed and

8:18:02 pm - Max Kahn:

Well.

8:18:03 pm - Norman Cohen:

there's not one thing that is the same.

8:18:07 pm - Jonah Kellman:

They're still playing magic. I hope.

8:18:08 pm - Norman Cohen:

If okay, fair, they're still playing magic. That, that is true. Um, you know, but but honestly, I think, I think that that being able to adapt to the changes has been a real critical point in allowing us to be successful, the the pioneer event

8:18:32 pm - Max Kahn:

Right.

8:18:33 pm - Norman Cohen:

The Pioneer event.

8:18:34 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Sounds like there's a story.

8:18:36 pm - Norman Cohen:

Comes to mind. Go ahead. You're better

8:18:38 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah.

8:18:38 pm - Norman Cohen:
You're better at than I

8:18:39 pm - Max Kahn:

So we had an event that was scheduled to be standard. I don't remember exactly which event it was roughly fall of 2019 and it was like four days before this event. I think we had two people registered for a 5K and we were down in the dumps. Pioneer was announced a few days before that. And we basically put it out to Twitter and to Facebook into social media and we said, Look, unless we get all these people to register for standard in the next couple days, this event isn't happening. Do you all want to just switch the format to pioneer four days advance? And we just you know exploded in terms of our reach and our growth being willing to to adapt to that you know, Obviously we have internal discussions about whether or not that's the right call. I will be the first to admit that I was on the side of. We can't change the format of the event, four days beforehand.

8:19:29 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Yeah, that seems like a choice.

8:19:31 pm - Max Kahn:

I was I was overruled but the event was, you know, wildly successful. I think we had 200 people that managed to scrape together. Pioneer decks in four days and thousands of people watching on twitch, you know, is the first major pioneer event ever. So getting to be a part of that. What was wild for sure.

8:19:52 pm - Jonah Kellman:
That's amazing.

8:19:52 pm - Norman Cohen:

yeah, it was fun, it was fun, but no I mean you know, we we have to we have to kind of ebb and flow with with popularity of formats, I think it I think it's critical and I think I've been a very strong proponent that a series needs at least three formats healthy formats to be successful. And and you know I'm not gonna lie that that's been a struggle. That's been a struggle at times. So I mean even this year you know adding in limited because initially at the beginning you know at the tail end of covid and moving in here, Pioneer really hadn't been talked about a whole lot. Modern legacy are obviously a staple or obviously staples. standard I don't think is seeing a whole lot of playing paper right now and, and maybe that'll change, but I don't think that's changing any time in the near future, but at the same time, Pioneer has has been, you know, been getting talked about quite a bit and so we're adding it in for season two so we kind of have to be able to transition as you know, things change within the community and the meta game and what's going on

8:21:15 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That makes a lot of sense. I have to say that the Legacy Modern sealed, team trios format, that y'all have put on a couple times. Now I believe is an absolute blast.

8:21:23 pm - Norman Cohen:
Yes.

8:21:26 pm - Jonah Kellman:
It's a very different dynamic from Legacy, Modern Standard or legacy modern pioneer. And it's cool to see you

8:21:32 pm - Max Kahn:
Yeah.

8:21:34 pm - Jonah Kellman:
experimenting a little bit with that.

8:21:37 pm - Max Kahn:
Yeah, we had a lot of fun. Putting that event on. It was it was cool to, you know, take some time beforehand and figure out logistically. How are we going to even run event? That's half limited and half constructed. You know, How are we gonna, you know, allow for communication? Like are we gonna allow the players to deck? Build the teams to deck, build? What about the top eight draft? Who's are the teams drafting together, stuff like that.

8:21:59 pm - Norman Cohen:
Well, even to have a top a draft, right? I mean if

8:22:01 pm - Max Kahn:
Right.

8:22:03 pm - Norman Cohen:
if I'm if I if I'm correct prior to

8:22:06 pm - Max Kahn:
Yeah.

8:22:06 pm - Norman Cohen:
our event team events always cut the top four. Right.

8:22:10 pm - Max Kahn:
Right.

8:22:10 pm - Norman Cohen:
Yeah.

8:22:11 pm - Max Kahn:
For the most part. So you know that that's that's a cool factor and part of it was you know, players have been asking for sealed on the energy series for such a long time for some level of limited play and especially with the You know, Grand Prix, have an existed for about six months. Now, there has not been any competitive reel sealed outside of the lgs level in a few

years. So, you know, at first we weren't committed to doing an individual sealed event, We figured the best way to introduce seal to the Energy series was to do it through the team event. And we got really good feedback about it, especially, you know, we we were very confident modern legacy. We didn't really have a good confidence level in a third constructed format. So it seemed to fit right in and we've run the event twice now and and players seem to really enjoy that.

8:22:58 pm - Jonah Kellman:

At that flexibility, as you mentioned is key. Now, for the tournament format itself in the series format, how has that changed? More rounds? More days? How have you changed the leaderboard? What has caused those changes? Big question, I know,

8:23:12 pm - Max Kahn:

Norm, you want

8:23:12 pm - Norman Cohen:

I, I can try.

8:23:12 pm - Max Kahn:

You want this You want this one? Or you want me to do it?

8:23:18 pm - Norman Cohen:

so, you know, obviously, you know, I have a very close internal team and, and we talk Probably way more often than they want to talk to me and and

8:23:33 pm - Max Kahn:

That's true.

8:23:34 pm - Norman Cohen:

You know these guys at the end of the day know a heck of a lot more about magic than I do and and they're innovative and and that's and that that's really really important. So as I had mentioned initially, it was one event per month. The winner of each event qualified for the championship. We got to a point where we wanted to expand beyond that and we decided to go to, you know, more of a point structure. I mean we've always had a leaderboard because there were always some players that qualified through points. But I think we got to a point where it was like we want to host more than 12 events a year. We can't qualify everybody for winning. So we had to work through a different structure. So we went to more of a point system with things like This year. Now we have three seasons that all culminate in a showdown weekend, which is a \$25,000 prize pool. And the showdown event is the only event that you can auto-q for the championship with. So it's just it honestly, it's a work in progress. We, you know, we continue to talk about different options. We talk to players all the time. What I? What I leave out Max. What did I miss?

8:25:02 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah. I mean that's part of it, you know, trying to figure out qualification methods for the championship split seasonal, leaderboards versus an overall yearly leaderboard. We've gone back

and forth about which one you know is a better model for player engagement. Do players want to compete in you know eight events throughout the year to qualify affliator board or do they want you know all four events you know in a four month span and short sprints versus long marathons, you know, different players like different things. Part of the motivation. Also, for removing a lot of the auto invites to the championship was you know, to keep the the championship exclusive. If we had 35, 40 people playing in the championship, it would, it would feel like less of an accomplishment. So we've been pretty cool or We've been pretty, you know, agree. All in agreement that we want to keep the championship 16 players, we did 24 for two years, but that's the absolute maximum. We wouldn't want to go any further than that. We've actually reduced it back down to 16 players this year to, you know, give people something to strive for. If you make the championship and you get the cool jacket and the backpack and all the the swag and the merch that these players get, we want it to be a VIP experience. You know, at the championship we always catering lunch for the players. We have, you know, dedicated judges and You know, part of of You know, our strategy is, we want those players that that play in the championship to have an experience that they go home and tell their friends. They're like, I got to play in the championship, it was the coolest magic tournament I've ever played in. You should try to get there and you know, part of Part of doing that is is making sure that championship feels exclusive and special.

8:26:37 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That makes a lot of sense and that brings us to the present. Now, we've talked a little bit about where the energy series is. Today, we've talked about the larger prize pool, we've talked about the larger tournaments, what has changed the most in terms of scale of change. Since those first days,

8:26:56 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, well, we actually talked about this a few days ago, the first couple tournaments that we used to do, we would pack up, you know, our computer and some extra printer paper into the back of Norm's truck and, you know, drive to wherever the event was, if we weren't hosting in our store. Now, you know, we have a lot more infrastructure. We've got a whole streaming set up that needs to be transported booth stuff. We, you know, we have a trailer, a truck that drives around with us To make sure we get where we're trying to go in addition to, you know, not hosting events in Chicago anymore. Now, we've got, you know, season two will bring us to brand new places. We've never been on the energies series before the Michigan. The Saint Louis to Minneapolis. So just, you know, trying to adapt to those, you know, larger scale in terms of infrastructure, larger scale in terms of geography, obviously larger scale in terms of prizes, you know, part of what makes this exciting personally for me and fulfilling is that we're always trying to get to that next level. We're always striving for bigger and better and You know whether or not we we meet the goals that I set for myself is is a side but you know we're always working to get there and that's you know what's cool for me about it.

8:28:10 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Norm anything down to that.

8:28:10 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah. No. I mean, like Max said, I mean, we were as, as we were, you know, doing last

weekend's event, you know? You know, we just, I just started laughing, you know, it was just, like, literally everything fit in the trunk of my car on, you know, let's go. And now now it's like, you know, six by 12 trailer that's packed to the gills, plus everything, you know, packed into the trunk of my car. And but yeah, it it's, you know, it scaled well, I think like I said, I've just been really, really fortunate to surround myself with some really, really good people who have kept me in check and allowed us to scale in a way that things didn't get away from us. So it's not that, you know, we we've made a ton of mistakes. One of the things that we do is literally debrief after every event and, and literally just say, Hey, How do we make it better? How do we make it smoother? How we know, How do we make the judge judges' lives? Better Lord knows the streaming side. We work at that really hard and that's changed drastically from, you know, from one computer and one camera to, you know, a rack system with, you know, five monitors and four cameras and, you know, all kinds of stuff. So I think you just it it's it's a slow go and you just got a, you got to work for you, you know, you have to have an end goal in mind and just continue to work slowly towards it.

8:29:56 pm - Max Kahn:

And that's one thing I want to bring up. I know sorry I'm kind of jumping the gun on one of your future questions here, Jonah.

8:30:00 pm - Jonah Kellman:

No, it's good.

8:30:01 pm - Max Kahn:

But for Jonah.

8:30:01 pm - Jonah Kellman:

It's good.

8:30:02 pm - Max Kahn:

But for future that are looking to do something like this part of what. I think the success of what we've built is being able to do this over time. We're not all the sudden starting out of the gates running 10ks and running this professional production set up and you know hiring a staff of 12 judges, we had to grow to get here and part of that was learning what works and what doesn't and being able to scale slowly, I don't think there, I don't think there's any lgs out there that can all the sudden, you know, Host 25,000 weekend. Like we're going to be doing in a few weeks and find immediate success. And there's always going to be logistical hurdles and you know, you can do a lot of research and you can how your people that know these things. But until you've done it yourself, and you've gotten the reps in yourself, it's always better to go slow and steady. As nor mentioned at the beginning, we look at the energy series as a marathon. It's something that's a long-term goal of ours. You know. Eventually we'd like to get to the point, you know, maybe hosting thousand player events and and traveling outside the country, you know, as a very lofty goal. But You know, right now we've really just focused on perfecting what we do at a small level. Getting to know the Midwest scene, getting to know the Midwest player base, and as we feel like we've done that. We've continued to expand and grow into new things. We've grown the prize pool. We're growing into new areas geographically, and I think it's all about that. Slow instead of growth is really what's led to a lot of the success.

8:31:25 pm - Jonah Kellman:

now, speaking of steady growth, what has changed the most often just changing frequently like every season every show, As there been something that you just feel, you can always do better and you are always making better.

8:31:42 pm - Max Kahn:

Coverage.

8:31:42 pm - Norman Cohen:

The broadcast coverage.

8:31:43 pm - Max Kahn:

Absolutely.

8:31:46 pm - Norman Cohen:

Absolutely holy cow. Yeah, that is a project. I'm gonna tell. That is a. Um, yeah, there's always something. There's always something computers are amazing, until they're not and And when you, you know, there's a lot of things that we can control. and there are a lot of things in a stream that you can't, and that Can become extremely, extremely frustrating and just trying to continue to work through those and make it cleaner. Make it better. And I mean, it's it, it it's a project, it's a project.

8:32:37 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah.

8:32:37 pm - Norman Cohen:

And I I would say that that by far The coverage team in general is what changes, or if it's not equipment, it's, it's who's commentating. It's, it's overlays, it's, it's this, it's that it's audio, it's video. It's something's always changing from event, to event with coverage.

8:32:56 pm - Max Kahn:

And yeah, I got two things to jump off there. I mean, the things we've done for coverage, the first streams of our events. You know, we had a webcam mounted in the ceiling of the LGS and we choose a feature match each round that evolved into you know, we had two commentators for the first time but they were still running obs. You know, the broadcasting software themselves that evolved into, you know, a separate director role and then we got a backup feature match and then, you know, Covid hit and we had to learn how to do remote. Commentary have commentators, not be inside of the event for our arena events and now for the paper events, we've got commentators from all over the world. That we worked with and now now that we're back to running paper events. Now we're trying. All right, one commentator in person, one commentator in remote and now we've got, you know, team trios that adds a third camera, third challenge with a team trios event. We don't have a backup feature match. So how are we gonna, You know, work on that things Like Time shifted matches. There's so many different factors that go into the broadcast but the second thing I wanted to bring up is like, Why is the broadcast even important? Why do we think that it is important to have a broadcast as part of a tournament series and we've been pretty adamant that we're going to get coverage at as many events as

possible. Honestly, you know, one of them is because we think it's really fun, part of the player experiences are. Oh, I want to be on a feature match. I want to go to camera, I want to meet the commentators. I want to hear what they have to say, about the way that I play magic. And the other part of it is, that's been a very valuable marketing tool for us. A lot of people, you know, way more people watch our broadcast, then attend these events in person. And, you know, with other organizers deciding that coverage isn't worth the cost to them. We've kind of taken on a lot of the burden of You know, being being the, the next, the next step up in what magic commentary means and trying to, you know, both restore magic coverage to what it was before and continue to innovate there. We think it's really important for marketing. We've got, you know, a lot of work to do to get to the level of of some of those other broadcasts. But you know, it's been a. One of the things we found a lot of success in and we are committed to and are going to continue to do.

8:35:06 pm - Jonah Kellman:

It sounds like you've had coverage since pretty much day one.

8:35:11 pm - Norman Cohen:

Pretty close, I think.

8:35:12 pm - Max Kahn:

I don't know who was actual event one, but it was certainly within the first year.

8:35:15 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah.

8:35:16 pm - Jonah Kellman:

What else have you wish that you've been? Would have been doing since that first season? Like What are you doing

8:35:29 pm - Max Kahn:

You know, honestly, I can't think of anything immediately normally. Do you have something?

8:35:35 pm - Norman Cohen:

I'm sure having a high speed printer for the judges rather than inkjet has helped a lot.

8:35:41 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Oh, I like that.

8:35:47 pm - Norman Cohen:

Now I really can't. I mean, I feel like, you know, we like I said, I think, I think we put A lot of thought into what we were doing, even from the very beginning. You know, did we have the best equipment in place then? No but I think we've just kind of upgraded what we've had. I'm not I can't really think of anything that we've really added. That I think while we should have had that day one. so,

8:36:19 pm - Jonah Kellman:
That's a good sign.

8:36:20 pm - Norman Cohen:
Yeah.

8:36:24 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Now you've also both mentioned at this point, of course, the ongoing pandemic. What changes have you made to the tournament series? How have the change has been received? It's a challenge certainly to

8:36:34 pm - Max Kahn:
Yeah.

8:36:37 pm - Jonah Kellman:
with this going on. So

8:36:41 pm - Max Kahn:
Sure. So when yeah, when covid hit in the

8:36:42 pm - Jonah Kellman:
how have you dressed up?

8:36:45 pm - Max Kahn:
middle of March, we had an event scheduled for late. March that event obviously, was immediately canceled and we were very proud that we were one of the first tournament organizers to, you know, officially address that and go ahead and postpone the events. From there, we very, very quickly, pivoted to online events, by the end of March, we had already run two online events, broadcasted them fully on twitch figured out. You know, all the things we need to do there and we started running events on Mtg. Melee, This is a great time to shout out Mtg melee ever since, you know covid hit, we were in conversations with them before Covid. But, you know, really when when Covid hit, we dug deep and they've been a great partner to us, we've run all of our events for the last year and a half on Mtg melee. And even, you know, our tabletop events. They've been they've been a really good partner there. We did the NRG series online in the fall of 2020, which was sort of an abbreviated energy series that partnered with wizards of the coast to give out set championship invites. And, you know, once we were able to come up with a timeline for a return to paper magic, our first event, back was October of 2021 obviously, measures in Place Master required. We were the first tournament organizer to require vaccines or negative tests. And we're really glad to see that other tournament organizers followed suit. And you know, really just continuing to evaluate the situation on a day-to-day basis to determine what's best for our players. You know, the omicron wave, hit the United States in January of 2022 and forced us to postpone the event, which was unfortunate. But you know, we always have player safety first in first in our minds, you know, even though for example last weekend and our event was in Illinois, Illinois had removed. Its mass mandate, We're still requiring masks at our events even you know our April events going to be in Fort Wayne Indiana. Indiana doesn't have a mass mandate right now. We're going to continue that through at

least through at least our April event, you know, obviously as we get more data and recommendations change, we're going to continue to Update those policies and procedures and determine what's best. But, you know, right now, we really want to make sure that these events are safe to attend. We the worst thing I want to hear personally, not speaking as the organization speaking personally, for me, if I hear that somebody got sick from one of my events that would That would be a big blow to me because we've really done everything we can to make sure that these events are really safe.

8:39:10 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, from a health standpoint Max pretty much covered it but I will tell you that Covid. In some ways has really made what I think the series even better. It challenged us to think outside the box and to do some things that we had never even considered before. And now, you know, our, our anchor commentator is, is Joe Lisa. And, and I think everybody knows that, but the ability to have People literally from all over the world. Sit next to him is is because of coping that that was nothing that we had ever approached before. And I think it has done a lot to improve the stream being able to bring in really format specialists to to you know, commentate with him and again it had we not been forced to kind of think out of the box and and bring these arena events in and do things like that. It's probably something we want to have done and and I think it's been a real A real positive to our, to the, to the stream, into our coverage team.

8:40:34 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That's good to hear on both fronts. Both the accountability and the growth that's come of Overcoming the challenges that have

8:40:42 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah.

8:40:43 pm - Jonah Kellman:

accompanying the pandemic. Now, part of why we're having this talk, is because running a series like this is An aspiration that many, many people have. I know that when I was working at a local game stores like Yeah, I want to run a tournament series and so I talk to the other local game stores in my area and we ran like I think a three or four month series that culminated in an invite using a little bit of a leaderboard and similar tech. And then after that one series all the stores were like We're never doing that. Again, that's way too much work. And one of the reasons I brought the two of you on is because of your success and Asking questions that people don't have the opportunity to consider because they're not in the place where they're running, 300 player tournaments. So, Let's, Let's just start talking about judges and judge staff. Now, I know Max, you are often in the role of figuring out who to hire. How do you determine how many judges you're gonna need for an event and of What distribution of experience and levels.

8:41:44 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah I mean it's it's really hard Obviously the tournament tournament organizing is really hard as you mentioned, you know, a lot of tournament organizers stop doing tournaments because it's hard and they're not willing to put in the work, but I like to think that I do like to put in the work, you know? And part of that is is inspired by, you know, my my willingness to to be a mentor and a leader and try to find slots for judges. In these events. So typically you know the way that we

staff events will put out a solicitation, any many months in advance for head judges and scorekeepers. And then as we get a little closer to the event floor judges, typically we try to staff at a ratio of about 30 judges, the 30 players per judge or for yeah, 30 players per judge. So, based on our projected attendance, some ratio like that, you know, add in, you know, we don't count the hedge in the scorekeeper to those roles only counting floor judges. So there's additional staff that needs to be hired as well, coverage. Spotters registration folks Stand by Judges is also a tool that we use that. If you're starting a series I would highly recommend, you know, just giving you know, a player judge if you're, you know, both of those personas given the opportunity to say, Hey, I want you to be at the event if we need you to judge. We'd love to have you there. If not, we will definitely give you free entry in the event. Just as a convenience for being there. I think that's an awesome tool to use at the disposal. And then, How do you make those decisions? That's that's, you know, really hard. I try to find a good balance between judges that are looking for growth and judges that I can think act as mentors and anchors for that growth. And that's, you know, on multiple levels for floor judges, especially if you're a level one or a new newer level two. That's looking to get more competitive. RL experience pairing you with a team lead that, you know, has that experience is willing to, you know, show you the rope so to speak. But that also works, you know, I'm higher levels. Working with people who've never been a team lead before, pairing them with a co-team leader. A head judge to get that experience, and even one step up, people that have never been a head judged before. So, like right now we're in a really, really cool opportunity where we've got a 10K on Saturday and a 5K on Sunday. So I'm looking for, you know, rocks and anchors to be the head judge of those 10ks. We've had a bunch of really experience, level threes and level two judges. I'm doing those and then we've kind of given the opportunity for less experienced judges that I believe are ready for the head Judge role to kind of take on that Sunday head Judge role. You know they've got a really experience judge at their side that they can use and utilize And to do that. So really all about finding opportunities for growth at the level from floor, judge all the way up to team lead all the way up to head Judge. And you know balancing those with the needs of the event with format experience. I want my rules. People there for the legacy events. You know, because legacy gets weird Sometimes I want my logistics people there for the limited events and the team events because there's always quirks there. So there's a lot of factors that go into staffing. That I know this three minute explanation didn't provide but

8:44:47 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Now, do you have anything to add

8:44:47 pm - Norman Cohen:
For sure.

8:44:49 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Norm?

8:44:50 pm - Norman Cohen:
Not about judges. No, not

8:44:53 pm - Jonah Kellman:

So on Friday we're gonna have Toby Visary on talking about writing including writing cover letters. What do you look for in an application?

8:45:04 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, so cover letters are something that I absolutely read. You know, there's a few major things that I'm looking for in a cover letter. The first thing is, you know why, why this event specifically, you know, people Yeah. that I absolutely read. absolutely read. You know, there's a few major things that I'm looking for in a cover letter. The first thing is, you know why why this event specifically, you know, people are like Oh I'm looking to cut my teeth, You know, judging a competitive Ariel. That's great. There's You know, post-covid a few fewer opportunities to get your teeth the competitive RL, but you know, it's great. You want to do it a competitive rail but why the energy series is there a specific reason is it? Because you know whether that's a geographically accessible to you or whether it's you know something you or a judge you know, has had a good experience on That's part of it. The second thing is What do you bring to the event? What is something that What is the reason that I should hire you? You know, This is an awesome opportunity to list special skills. We've got judges that I hire to make sure that are certified in first aid. I've got judges that know how to speak sign language. I got judges that are bilingual Those are all really cool things. If you're a rules expert, a policy expert, tournament logistics expert was the kinds of things I want to hear about and then third is, you know, a mentor. If there's been a judge that you've been working closely with whether that's, you know, you're a level one. You've been working closely with this level, two as your mentor, I want to know who that is. If there's, you know, positive recommendations other judges that you can say that can speak to You know, whatever you're speaking about in your application, I want to know those. I very very often, you know if you're any any you know experienced L2 or L3 in the in the US I've probably reached out to you at one point or another to ask about Oh this judge mentioned you application. Do you have thoughts about that? So I don't I do a lot of work. Just trying to figure out who these applicants are So that I know what kind of slot they would fit into my team and how to get, you know, a well-rounded staff.

8:46:49 pm - Norman Cohen:

i I do want to say one thing about about this to people who have aspirations about hosting Larger events. This is a primary primary thing that they need to really really focus on. Because at the end of the day, your judge staff is is ultimately what makes your event successful when your players are walking out of the room? You know. Most of the time they're talking about, did did the rounds turn over timely? You know, were things handled and processed professionally and that's all judge staff. That is nothing to do with me as a tournament. Organizer specifically, you know what? What what I do is a tournament organizer is usually done months, and months, and months, and months before that event ever happens. But once that event is going on and you want to try to create that player experience it. I mean, a very, very large percentage of that falls on the shoulders of your judge staff. So, making sure that you have the right people in place is really critical to a to a successful day.

8:48:07 pm - Jonah Kellman:

So how do you get them to show up and how do you get them to keep coming back? What do you do to get those? Because you have some judges who are absolute energy fanatics, you

mentioned Blake Smith earlier in there. A couple of folks. Who I see in the chat who are here because it's the two of you and it's Nrg, what do you do to?

8:48:22 pm - Max Kahn:
Yeah.

8:48:25 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Hold on to good judges.

8:48:27 pm - Max Kahn:
You know, there's a few things we've done. One of the things that first point out is compensation, You know, our compensation model has changed. I think four times in the six years, the energy series always about, you know, making sure that judges are seeing the value financially in what they're doing we've raised comp Oh, many times, we went at one point, we were level-based comp, we went to role-based compensation just just you know following the industry standards in terms of that making sure that you know, judges feel that that their work is financially valued. Is important to me. One of the other things that I think we've done in the start of 2017. We started our nerve Age Gaming Judge Rewards program, so judges got points for judging in our events. And you know, the the pinnacle, the, the thing you redeem after, after 50 points is, you know, a nerve age gaming, Judge, Polo with your name on it. It's embroidered. It's got your title. And I think that's a cool thing to strive for, you know, judges work in the event. We'll see somebody with the cool and our g series orange and black polo. And, and think. Wow, that's cool. I want that one day and they're like, all right, well, I need to work four more events, to get it or whatever it may be. And we've got, you know, some judges that have racked up enough points to earn themselves three polos at this point and it's really cool to, you know, see Both. Judges are. interested enough in attending our events for compensation, you know purposes like I think we pay, you know, a fair wage but also that they want to do it because they want to represent our brand they want to Have that merchandise, they want to. To rep, You know, the autism organization. I think that's really cool.

8:50:09 pm - Jonah Kellman:
And Norm. What do you bring to the table? Max is brought a lot.

8:50:13 pm - Norman Cohen:
Oh, for just.

8:50:14 pm - Jonah Kellman:
Yeah.

8:50:14 pm - Norman Cohen:
He's at all. What When you're talking about our judge staff, if it weren't for Max, I would be making very bad calls at these events, so, no, no Max is. Max has 100% control over of over our judge team. And He knocks it out of the park month in and month out and it's hands down. It's all him.

8:50:44 pm - Jonah Kellman:

I think I'm gonna disagree with that, the handful of events that I've worked for Nrg. You have been there in person and you have talked with many of the judges, you get out there and thank people personally. And I think that that personal touch from both you and Max who are at every show, pretty much does lend a lot to it. So don't tell yourself short, of

8:51:06 pm - Norman Cohen:

Thank you.

8:51:07 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Of course don't oversell backs. That's the other half of that equation.

8:51:12 pm - Norman Cohen:

His head has to still fit in all those hats. I understand.

8:51:15 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Exactly, exactly. Now. Over the years, we talked you talked a little bit about the shift to mtg melee how has the tournament software changed? Where did you start and are you now wholly on the mtg, melee train or

8:51:34 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, Norm, do you want to? You want to speak to that?

8:51:36 pm - Norman Cohen:

Sure. Yes, we are. We are 100% on melee and and honestly I think Melee's done an amazing job. They have allowed us to work very closely with them to point out what we need to run a successful event. And at the end of the day, right now, we just don't feel that event link is in a place for us to be successful. and, and we have to our our priority has to be What happens at the actual events in the player experience? And some of the tools that we feel we need just aren't available on event link, we've shared our concerns with watsi. We'll see, you know, whether they're dressed or not but at the end of the day melee was not only willing to address the concerns, they were able to really address some quickly and and make some modifications, you know, based on our input. And and it's been great. I mean, I'm not sitting there in the scorekeeper role but from everything, I can see things. So, it's been a good transition. It really has Would you agree that Max?

8:53:07 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Now.

8:53:08 pm - Max Kahn:

yeah, certainly

8:53:10 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah.

8:53:10 pm - Jonah Kellman:

We're starting to run a little short on time so I'm gonna skip forward a couple of questions. What is an element of the NRG series that the two of you think that you've perfected? Something that isn't gonna change. And even if you have to go, is

8:53:22 pm - Max Kahn:
yeah.

8:53:23 pm - Jonah Kellman:

fundamental as people fundamental as people playing magic in a room. What I want to know, what you think is something that you have come up with that is key to this.

8:53:33 pm - Max Kahn:

that this answer is, you know, going to be a little cheesy and obvious but

8:53:35 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Of course.

8:53:36 pm - Max Kahn:

but the answer is absolutely nothing. You know, even the example you gave people playing magic in a room. When covid happened that wasn't an option. People, didn't play magic in a room. So there is no part of the energy series that we think we've perfected. Because, you know, we're always room to grow. Well, one of our four pillars of energy is innovation, you know, we're always here to try to find. What is the next thing the players want? What? What is an experience that we can give them? They haven't had before. There has been nothing that we've ever done that has been set in stone because there's always ways that we can improve the process and I find it hard to believe. I can't see the future, but I find it hard to believe that there will ever be anything that we've perfected.

8:54:19 pm - Norman Cohen:

No. And honestly, I think that I think that's a consistent mindset. That we've had from the very, very beginning and and probably one of the the biggest things that have that has allowed us to be successful, is we've never ever walked into a room or left an event feeling like we just nailed it, like everything just went our way. There's always a way to get something done more efficiently, better experience for us, better experience for our players. So no, we're, we're constantly looking to what what didn't go as well as it should have.

8:55:00 pm - Max Kahn:

Right. Yeah like even even on our best events ever. In our debrief meeting we spend five minutes talking about what's great and 55 minutes about what we can do. Better next time, you know, even even when I give an event a nine out of 10 stars, we spend the time focusing on, you know what, we can improve. And that's You know, sometimes a little pessimistic sometimes to focus on the negatives. But you know that that's what really we believe is successful as long as we're not making the same mistake over and over and over again, you know, as long as we're learning from our mistakes, and improving our processes and and making the player experience better, that's what really counts for us.

8:55:36 pm - Jonah Kellman:

To tied into that attitude of constant improvement. What is something that you've know that you can do better, but just haven't figured out. So tied into that attitude of constant improvement. What is something that you've know that you can do better, but just haven't figured out. How to make it better.

8:55:47 pm - Norman Cohen:

Coverage.

8:55:48 pm - Jonah Kellman:

I'm shocked, I'm shocked. I mean you have made it better, right?

8:55:54 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah. No, we absolutely. I, I hope that we've made it better.

8:55:57 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Steps and steps.

8:55:58 pm - Norman Cohen:

Absolutely no. But like I said that that man, that is the moving target for us right now. That is a rough one. like I said, I mean, It's I I think that I, I think that, that is where we've definitely made huge shrides in the right direction, but it still feels like the biggest moving target for us. At least, for me.

8:56:26 pm - Max Kahn:

And from the tournament, you know, organizer side. Right. Now the biggest hurdle that we're currently facing you know as great as melee is it is a new tool for a lot of players and especially for a lot of judges and trying to find workarounds for these things. We don't have matched slips anymore so trying to find ways to enter penalties digitally. How are we going to record time extensions and let players be aware of those time? Extensions, What happens if the Internet isn't working in the venue, you know, previously you could run something like We're on offline mode, you know, there's a lot of factors in play about a transition to a digital. First player experience that, you know, frankly magic, the last 10 years has been on the back seat or a paper card game in 2022, right? And so, the digital player experience is really important to us. So that's definitely something on the tournament organizing side that We're looking to improve for sure.

8:57:21 pm - Norman Cohen:

yeah and and I mean one of the challenges from a tournament order and just strictly on the tournament organizing side at least for us is The the financial balance. I know players. See 15,000. Prize pools. \$25,000. Prize pools. And you know, they you see them break out their calculator and they're like, Oh, they got a hundred players and that's, you know, Titan, you know. What what they don't see is is the you know, 10,000 plus dollars in cost for venues and judge staff and travel and and everything else. And and just Trying to find. I mean, In season 2, we we desperately want to go to Indianapolis. You know, um, but financially just wasn't viable. It just wasn't viable to end up in Indianapolis. So we ended up in Fort Wayne. So, you know, we want

to continue to grow but we have to do in a manner that's cost-effective so that we can continue providing, you know, competitive play for the players.

8:58:32 pm - Jonah Kellman:

That we just have a couple minutes left and Max, you skipped ahead to this question earlier so you can just repeat what you said but

8:58:39 pm - Max Kahn:

Sure.

8:58:39 pm - Jonah Kellman:

But But from the lessons that you've learned, what if somebody else is gonna be starting their own gonna be starting their own tournament series, repeat what you said. learned, what if somebody else is going to be starting their own gonna be starting their own tournament series, what is the What is the biggest lesson that the two of you have learned in this two of you have learned in this process?

8:58:49 pm - Max Kahn:

Yeah, my biggest takeaway I think you've got to be willing to put in the work, you know. As you mentioned there's a lot of things that go into running a successful tournament that are not done the day of the event. Obviously, the day of the event, you want things go smoothly. You want your judges to be answering calls, you want to turn over the rounds quickly? Those are the basics. But, you know, the other things that go in making sure that, you know, the marketing is done properly. Making sure that After the event, you're still doing marketing posting the leaderboard, posting the deck list posting pictures, you know, those are keys to to getting people invested into your experience. And, you know, speaking of experience, keeping the player experience at the forefront of your mind, making sure that players while they're there. Having good time are telling their friends. Hey, you know, I really liked my experience at, you know, the store I think they did a really good job running the event and, you know, trying to find ways to You know, spread knowledge about that is definitely something that you should be primarily focusing on. Because if players have a negative or neutral experience at your event, they won't tell their friends about it or they will tell their friends about it and tell them how bad it was. So definitely, you know, keeping player experience in the forefront and, and being willing to put in the work or my big two.

9:00:06 pm - Norman Cohen:

Yeah, yeah. And I would say, you know, that one you if you, if you're going into this thinking that you're going to immediately be successful, you're not going to be, it is absolutely. A marathon. It is a long haul. Um, and and you just, you have to be. If you're gonna, if you're if you want to produce something special, it's gonna take time and you just got to be willing to do that. You got to be able to put in that work. Like Max said, I mean, we're planning things months, and months, and months in advance and and that takes a discipline. I mean, you, you know, not everyone is cut out to be a tournament organizer. So it, it's Just be prepared, we'll leave it at that.

9:01:02 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Now, this is clearly been a labor of For the two of you for the past seven plus years. So I want to

end with one final question in your experience, with the NRG series. What are you most proud of or most excited about? And I just want one answer for each of you because we are short on time at this point. Let's start with you Norm because it seems like you're deep in thought right now.

9:01:27 pm - Norman Cohen:

Oh yeah. Wow, you know what? I'm I when, when I get personal I'm I when when I get personal who I've become friends with Oh yeah. Wow. I'm I when, when I get personal I'm I when, when I get personal messages from people on the series who I've become friends with through the series and we can enjoy their successes together, that's, that's amazing, you know, because magic is great, but we all kind of joke about it. But it is about the gathering, you know, it really is. And and to see these people get out there and just have in really make wonderful memories for themselves, whether it be winning, or just travel or dinners, you know, with the group and then for these people to kind of loot me in on some of this stuff because they care enough to tell me is pretty amazing.

9:02:26 pm - Max Kahn:

Now I think that the energy series is kind of been the crowning achievement of what I've done in the magic community so far. Think it's what people. You know, if they don't associate me with being a judge, is what they associate me. The most for being involved with, like I mentioned like me and Norm. We're sitting at a falafel shop one night talking about how cool it would be. If we started running a tournament series and now, you know, seven years later. We're still here. We're still doing it. We're giving out a quarter of a million dollars. of professional magic in the United Mundelein, Illinois is the epicenter States. It's you know, just become such a wild experience, that's surreal and every time every time I see a tweet that like uses our hashtag or every time, you know, somebody reaches out to me and they're like, Hey, I'm really excited to come to the Nrg next month. It it makes me feel like something that that we've built here is very special and it's it's extremely rewarding to me.

9:03:18 pm - Jonah Kellman:

Awesome. Well, I want to thank both of you Max and Norm for coming out and chatting with me for a little bit, over an hour about the Nrg series. So, thanks for joining

9:03:28 pm - Max Kahn:

Thanks Jonah.

9:03:29 pm - Norman Cohen:

Thank you so much for having us.

9:03:31 pm - Jonah Kellman:

We'll be back tomorrow with Daniel Lee hosting Scott Marshall Nathan Long, the net reps and the history of official rulings. Thanks for watching.