

### NOVA OPEN 40K GT – GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE



TABLETOP WARGAMING CONVENTION

Is it your first time attending the NOVA Open's legacy Warhammer 40,000 tournament? Let me share a few insights and pro-tips that should help you along:

#### **The Missions**

The NOVA Open innovated the Progressive Primary / Selectable Secondary mission format espoused by the ITC, and we continue to revise and refine these missions on an annual basis. In addition to your guidebook package, you'll receive cool Playing Card decks that give you all the information needed to play the missions, select your Secondaries, etc. Nevertheless, make sure you play a few times through the missions prior to attending the event. Since we aren't leveraging our missions over a massive circuit, we tend to be more willing to make tweaks and improvements in an agile fashion. They'll be very familiar if you've only played ITC so far, but not entirely duplicative.

#### **The Format**

After Round 5 this year, we will break the event down into 21 brackets of 16 players each, whereupon your records are, in a sense, reset. Each bracket will have a winner of its own after the final 4 Rounds. Moreover, these brackets will be populated by players who have the same record as you at the end of Round 5. Think of it as two tournaments in one: a big GT with a massive field that "finishes" after 5 Rounds - and then a more focused event populated entirely by your competitive peers. This is pretty awesome, because it means you get the feel of a massive grand event, but you're guaranteed to finish out the final 4 rounds against players who are more or less your competitive "equals." This tends to ensure you need not bring the meanest army possible to enjoy NOVA Open on both competitive and narrative fronts. Since you can focus on just enjoying it and getting a feel for the missions during Rounds 1-5, you can then have a really exciting finish in Rounds 6-9. Finally, we pair based upon what we call "Win Path." This will ensure players face those with a similar or same record, but - more importantly - that they face people going through the same experiences they are.

Here's an example: A player who loses in Round 1 tends to lower their expectations and "relax" a little bit going into the remaining rounds. On the other hand, a player who takes their first loss in Round 4 tends to be a little more frustrated that their opening series of 3 straight wins just came to a crashing halt. If our first player in this example were to win their final 3 games, BOTH players are indeed sitting at 3-1, but BOTH players are in very different emotional places: one is coming off 3 straight wins with lowered expectations about winning the whole GT, and the other just had their GT dreams shattered with a loss.

"Win Path" pairing makes certain that these two players do NOT face each other; instead, the player who JUST lost will face another unfortunate with whom to commiserate, and the player who lost in Round 1 will face someone else on a hot streak and in high spirits. Based on many years and thousands of survey responses, we have found this simple pairing process (which supports competitive fairness) contributes to a huge improvement in the overall sportsmanship experienced at the NOVA Open 40K GT.

## **The Schedule**

Unlike some GTs, we decide "Best Overall" based only on scores from Rounds 1-6. We do this for a couple reasons: (1) Not all players want to get into 9 full games of 40K in a single weekend, and; (2) 6 is about the "upper limit" for a more traditional / retro Grand Tournament with heavy soft score components. By using only Rounds 1-6 for the competitive part of our Best Overall (50% soft scores and 50% competitive), we allow players with gorgeous armies who want a shot at Best Overall to do so within the framework of a more manageable 6-game experience. That said, our Bracket Winners for Brackets 1-21 are not determined until the bitter end of Round 9.

So, once you've finished Round 6, a favor: If you won Round 6 and are in the "Elite 8" for your bracket, come on back on Sunday morning and see if you can't take home the Bracket Gold. If you lost, weigh your options. You're in Washington, DC, one of the coolest cities in the world. The NOVA Open is a massive convention with TONS of activities to get into on Sundays. Remember, too, that there are also 3 more awesome games of 40K on radical tables to be played - and you get to choose! If you have a beautiful army and you want to win an award for painting or best overall, you've already gotten all the points you need. If you want to play more games, you can. The brackets are NOT single elimination. You get to self-select.

## **Important Notes**

Please don't drop BEFORE Round 6. It makes life really hard on the organizers!

Check the schedule for the convention events OTHER THAN the Grand Tournament. There is everything from seminars, to vending, to crazy side events, a board game room, and live music in the Foundation Lounge. The Grand Tournament is Grand, not just because it's very large, but because it is a very big and exciting socially energizing event. There is also a ton to do, great people in a wonderful community to meet, and all kinds of fun to be enjoyed. Get some rest before you make the trip, pop a few extra cups of coffee or red bulls, and really suck the marrow out of the experience - you won't regret it!