

Author's Notes:

For your reference and verification, I've been using the data from this document:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JTEoNtUB0mYmajaXldsOkzY8tlqCvNiwb6PLAzDyUuc/edit?usp=sharing>

To view the original document you can here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D4Pgb1Ak5oa0CzlcxNQVV7kyLT703WfdtmF6OCDWRcA/edit?usp=sharing>

If you come across any errors in the spreadsheet, kindly inform me, as I've been consistently updating it throughout the year. If you believe there's another tournament that warrants inclusion, please reach out to me through comments or direct messages, presenting your reasoning for its addition. I'm more than willing to invest the time to individually search names on Start GG, just as I've been doing all year, if the case is compelling. It's worth noting that, in case you choose not to peruse the attached spreadsheet, I've based my analysis on the data from the 2022 rankings, which provides a broader dataset. Now, with these points addressed, let's dive into the content.

Background (Inspiration from Reddit)

Recently, I've noticed a recurring topic of discussion regarding the definition of a "major" in competitive gaming circles. My motivation to create this article stems from a Reddit post I came across: https://www.reddit.com/r/SSBM/comments/1606vum/ssbmraking_vs_points_system/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3.

The post highlighted a key point: "Point systems are useless until the community can agree on what constitutes a Super Major." This observation prompted me to delve deeper into the ongoing debates on defining tournament tiers.

In the Reddit exchange, participants engaged in heated arguments about what qualifies as a Super Major, but interestingly, none of them actually provided a concrete definition for this term. The original poster even acknowledged the need for clear classifications of majors, Super Majors, and other tournaments, with corresponding points assigned to each. This clarity, the author suggested, would enable players to make informed decisions about their participation based on well-defined rankings. This line of thinking led me to wonder, "Why not attempt to establish these definitions myself?"

One commenter proposed that defining a Super Major shouldn't be overly complicated. Their suggestion was to examine the attending players and determine what percentage of the top 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, or any other threshold, would sufficiently categorize the tournament as a Major or Super Major. This remark resonated with me, and I realized that I had already been monitoring this year's tournaments, noting the presence of last year's top-ranked players. This tracking was initially for use in my scripts for other projects (which, by the way, you can explore here: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLRPlk2yY1Gtx4i5Aifu_4B8RP47G4J7n&si=Juhou-7_cxKm4_mJ).

Key Arguments

Upon analyzing various tournaments, several key insights emerged:

1. **There will likely only be two Super Majors this year: Bighouse and Genesis.**
2. **Majors require a minimum of 4 out of the top 10 players to participate.**
3. **Overall player count does not always correlate with tournament prestige, as evident from events like Battle of BC and Collision.**
4. **A clear hierarchy exists among pseudo-majors, super-regionals, and how player attendance influences their respective rankings.**
5. **To attain "super regional/pseudo-major" status, a tournament must have some amalgamation of the following criteria:**
 - a. **Have one or more players from the top 10**
 - b. **Include two or more players from the top 20**
 - c. **Feature four or more players from the top 50**
 - d. **Host ten or more players from the top 100**

Starting from the top,

My analysis suggests that **there are likely only two Super Majors this year: Bighouse and Genesis.** Among the nine tournaments I classify as "majors," Genesis stands out for various reasons:

- a. Genesis garnered more than 900 entrants (specifically 1253), with Smash Con trailing at 860.
- b. It hosted over 30 of the top 50 players (G9 had 39), with GOML coming next with 25.
- c. A remarkable 50 of the top 100 players participated (G9 had 69), while Collision, for instance, fell short with only 39.

So, why consider Bighouse as well? Looking at historical data starting from Bighouse 5, it consistently ranks as the second-largest tournament every year (excluding Evo from 2015-2018). In terms of player count and attendance by top-tier talent, Bighouse has consistently been a standout. Last year, while Genesis featured 36 of the top 50 Summer rankings, Bighouse boasted 34. When comparing the top 30, Genesis had 25 players while Bighouse had 24. This trend suggests that if any other tournament could potentially qualify as a "super major," Bighouse would be that contender.

Setting the Boundary: Fete's Role and EU Bias

The rationale behind setting the threshold at 4 top 10 players is anchored in the significant impact of tournaments like Fete. Fete's lineup, comprising Zain, Amsa, Jmook, and Hbox—each ranking within the top 10—serves as a compelling reason for this criterion. Furthermore, all of these top players competed with their primary characters, reinforcing their competitive presence.

Delving deeper, Fete appears to emerge as a potential boundary between major and super-regional classifications. If classified as a super regional, Fete would stand alone, boasting more than 3 top 10 players and exceeding 5 top 20 players. By comparison, Wavedash featured 3 (or 2.5 considering don't test me) top 10 players and 7 (or 6.5) top 20 players. Notably, all

attending top 10 and 20 players at Fete played their main characters, accentuating its unique position. But if you feel like this may be EU bias than lend me your ear

Exploring EU Bias

To address the concept of EU bias, it's crucial to clarify its meaning. In this context, EU bias refers to the potential influence of favoring European tournaments due to unranked talent, arising from challenges related to qualifying for rankings.

However, Fete's lack of depth compared to other majors, with only 11 of the top 50 and 12 of the top 100 players in attendance, differentiates it. This scenario might position Fete more in the super-regional category. However, no other super regional this year had 4 of the top 10 players. Wavedash and CEO each featured 3 of the top 10 players.

From a perspective emphasizing depth, it appears sensible to consider Fete as a potential major candidate for Europe—a region with notable unranked talent in major part due to ranking qualification barriers. Fete's larger attendance, surpassing other European tournaments, and other super regionals, by nearly 200 attendees, highlights its prominence in the regional and super-regional landscape.

In summary, the boundary-setting process incorporates Fete's exceptional composition of the top 10 players and its potential classification in the context of the EU melee scene. This thorough evaluation aims to ensure the accurate classification of tournaments and their significance within the competitive framework. Therefore I would like to assume that we can all agree that fete is less of an outlier when considered as a major rather than a super regional.

Player Count vs. Notoriety: Battle of BC and Collision

Battle of BC and Collision illustrates that overall player count doesn't always directly correlate with tournament notoriety. Battle of BC hosted an impressive 8 of the top 10, 15 of the top 20, but only 20 of the top 100 players. Collision, despite featuring 25 of the top 50 and 39 of the top 100 players, only accommodated 6 of the top 10 and 10 of the top 20. In comparison, Genesis had 9 of the top 10, 16 of the top 20, 39 of the top 50, and 69 of the top 100 players attending.

Interestingly, despite Battle of BC and Collision's substantial-top player attendance, both tournaments fell short in terms of entrants. Collision drew in 493 attendees, while Battle of BC tied with Fete at 409 attendees. Notably, the second-largest event, SSC, featured 860 attendees and had 38 of the top 100 players, 22 of the top 50, 12 of the top 20, and 7 of the top 10.

Similarities in Regional and Super Regional Tournaments

Even in the realm of regionals and super regionals, the dynamics of player attendance and notoriety reveal intriguing insights. Take the example of Combo Breaker, which boasted an

impressive 255-player count. However, it only attracted 1 top 20 player, 6 of the top 50, and 11 of the top 100 players. In contrast, Wavedash, with 234 attendees, featured 3 top 10 players, 7 of the top 20, 21 of the top 100, and 7 of the top 50. Shield Drop, with just 137 attendees, matched Combo Breaker in top 100 attendees but had significantly fewer entrants. These examples highlight how the interplay of factors can create disparities in tournament rankings.

Hierarchical Classification of Super Regionals

The hierarchy of super regionals becomes evident when we assess the specific metrics associated with each tournament. To delve into the detailed table I'm referencing, please refer to the original Google Docs link at the beginning of this article, as Reddit's formatting limitations hinder the representation.

Tourney	Total Players	# of top 10	# of top 20	# of top 50	# top 100 (101)	Winner
Wavedash	234	3	7	13	21	Jmook
CEO 2023	212	3	4	4	9	Plup
DH San Diego	199	2	4	7	11	Amsa
Smash Camp	188	1	3	7	10	Axe
Low tide City	174	1	2	7	10	Salt
The come up	120	1	4	5	6	Moky
Lvl Up Expo	89	2	3	3	6	Amsa

Differentiating Super Regionals with Depth

The two tiers of super regionals, one characterized by depth and the other without it, become distinct when considering the attendance of top players. Wavedash leads the pack among tournaments that prioritize top players alongside depth boasting an impressive, closely followed by DH San Diego, Smash Camp, and Low Tide. These tournaments all stand in a three-way tie for boasting top talent, featuring 3 to 4 top 20 players and 7 of the top 50.

Alternatively, by shifting our focus from depth to exclusively highlighting the top attendees, we can place tournaments like The Come Up, LVL UP Expo, and CEO in this tier. Despite each of them featuring 4 of the top 20 players, they fall short of surpassing the threshold when considering the broader context of the total top 50 and 100 players. LVL UP Expo struggles, showcasing only 6 players from the top 100 and 3 from the top 50. On the other hand, The Come Up boasts an additional 2 top 50 players, yet its total count for the top 100 matches that of LVL UP Expo. Meanwhile, CEO had only 4 top 50 players in attendance, but an impressive 9 players from the total top 100 participated.

Of the aforementioned tournaments, I can further identify two additional tiers:

Tournaments Won by Non-Top 10 Players (Salt and Axe): This tier showcases tournaments where players outside the top 10 claimed victory, specifically Salt and Axe.

Tournaments Won by Top 10 Players (Moky, Amsa, Plup, and Jmook): These tournaments, conversely, were won by players within the top 10 rankings, highlighting their dominance in those events.

As for the selection of these tournaments over others, it's worth noting that the tournaments I've highlighted stood out due to their distinct features. While there were numerous other tournaments available for consideration, most of them featured only 1 or 2 players from the top 20 of 2022. Although some of these tournaments might have rivaled or even exceeded the highlighted ones in terms of the overall depth of talent, it's important to mention a few in particular:

1. Combo Breaker
2. Trail Invitational 3
3. Shield Drop
4. Out of the Blue
5. Wisdom Melee

Tourney	Total Players	# of top 10	# of top 20	# of top 50	# top 100 (101)	Winner
Combo Breaker	255	0	1	6	11	Magi
Trail Inv 3	100	1	1	7	11	Amsa
Shield Drop	137	0	0	3	11	Smash Papi
Out of the Blue	150	0	0	6	10	Ginger
Wisdom melee	119	1	2	5	9	Cody

I hold the belief that a balanced combination of top talent and depth is essential for a tournament to earn the distinction of a "super-regional" or "pseudo major." The metrics I propose—requiring at least 2 of the top 20 players alongside some sort of depth—serve to ensure a challenging competition where top players are not only tested against each other but are also challenged by the broader pool of top 50/100 players. This ties into the next argument:

To qualify as a super-regional or pseudo-major, a tournament must have some combination of the following criteria:

- A. Feature 1 or more of the top 10 players.**
- B. Include 2 or more of the top 20 players, not counting the 1 or 2 top 10 players.**
- C. Encompass 4 or more of the top 50 players, not counting the 3 top 20 players.**
- D. Accommodate 10 or more of the top 100 players, not counting the 7 top 50 players.**

Why these metrics? They ensure a balanced mix of top talent and depth, resulting in more challenging brackets and eliminating the scenario of tournaments being defined by "who can

lose to (insert x top player[s]) the least." Instead, the focus shifts to determining who can conquer the top 50 players and which of the minimum two top players emerges victorious.

The inclusion of at least 2 of these criteria is crucial. It bridges the gap between tournaments that might lack peak skill but possess depth (Low Tide City and Smash Camp) and those that excel in peak skill but have lesser depth (LVL Up Expo and The Come Up).

Considering these criteria and insights, if I were to rank the "super-regionals," my assessment would be as follows:

1. Wavedash: A clear leader with both top talent and depth.
2. Dreamhack SD: As explained earlier, it excels in-depth and top talent.
3. Smash Camp & LTC: Despite reservations due to "fun" associations in regards to smash camp, if you are going to count it towards rankings it would fall here as both of these tournaments are strong contenders due to their talent depth.
4. CEO: Though not as deep, having 4 of the top 50 and 3 of the top 10 players places it higher than the others within its previously stated tier.
5. The Come-Up: With 1 top 10 player and 3 more top 20 players, it's peak pushes it above LVL up.
6. LVL Up Expo: Featuring 2 top 10 players and 1 more top 20 player, it claims the final spot as it only boasts 3 more top 100 players in total.

Among the regional tournaments that could potentially make a case for inclusion in the super-regional category, Wisdom Melee emerges as a noteworthy contender due to its unique attributes. While several factors contribute to its regional-level status, it's worth exploring why Wisdom Melee stands apart and why it doesn't qualify as a super-regional event.

Wisdom Melee gains distinction primarily for attracting notable players Cody and Kodorin, along with three other top 50 players. Additionally, the tournament saw the participation of four more players within the top 100 rankings. The standout feature that elevates Wisdom Melee is the presence of two top 20 players, setting it apart from its peers.

However, the tournament's classification as a regional event hinges on the overall density of top 100 players attending. While Wisdom Melee's roster may be strong, its total count of the top 100 participants falls short compared to events like Out of the Blue, Shield Drop, Trail Invitational 3, and Combo Breaker. This factor plays a crucial role in determining Wisdom Melee's placement within the regional tier.

Ultimately, the balance between having top-tier players and a substantial representation of top 100 competitors is what separates Wisdom Melee from the super-regional category. While it showcases elements that could push it toward a higher tier, the criteria for super-regionals necessitate a more comprehensive presence of top 100 players. Thus, Wisdom Melee remains a prime example of a strong regional event that is just shy of crossing the threshold into the super-regional tier.

This ranking embodies the intricate interplay between top players and depth, serving as an insightful guide to understanding the competitive landscape of super-regionals/pseudo-majors and how they differ from regionals.

The Complexity of Invitationals in Tournament Classification

While not a traditional "argument," it's important to highlight the complexity that arises when trying to categorize invitationals within the broader context of Melee tournaments. This complexity is evident when examining the three major invitationals that have taken place this year.

Tourney	Total Players	# of top 10	# of top 20	# of top 50	# top 100 (101)	Winner	Notes
LACS	128	7	12	22	30	Leffen	116 LCQ and 12 invitees
BEMI	16	0	0	3	5	Salt	
Redemption Rumble	228	2	7	13	15	Aklo	206 Online LCQ 12 invitees

Firstly, let's consider LACS, which can be confidently placed within the "major" category due to its LCQ and the considerable number of top players it hosted. With 7 of the top 10, 12 of the top 20, 22 of the top 50, and 30 of the top 100 players in attendance, LACS stands as a strong contender for a mid-tier major status. However, its unique format, featuring a Swiss-style group stage, sets it apart from traditional double-elimination majors. This distinction could lead to arguments for placing it in its own category or alongside the other invitationals.

Similarly, Bemi employed a group stage format that provided an abundance of matches for spectators but posed challenges when trying to rank it within the Melee hierarchy. With only 3 top 50 and 5 top 100 players participating, it could easily be categorized as a regional tournament due to its lower concentration of top talent.

The most perplexing case is Redemption Rumble, marked by round-robin group stages, top players experimenting with secondaries, and an inconsistent dataset. Despite these complexities, it managed to attract 2 top 10 players, 7 top 20 players, 13 top 50 players, and 15 top 100 players. Even if we exclude the entries from Cody and Zain(as Cody was drinking and Zain opted to go Roy during some exhibitions), the tournament remains competitive with 5 top 20, 11 top 50, and 13 top 100 players. This places it above the majority of regional tournaments held thus far. However, due to its deviation from the conventional double-elimination structure, some might argue for a separate category for these unique invitationals.

In conclusion, the challenge of categorizing invitationals within the Melee tournament landscape arises due to their varying formats and distinctive features. While they could be classified as

majors or super-regionals, their deviations from the norm in terms of tournament structure might warrant their own distinct category. The nuanced nature of these events adds to the ongoing discussions and complexities within the competitive Melee community.

Major Tier: Rankings and Analysis

Now, let's delve into the tier of major tournaments, examining their standings within the competitive landscape based on the established boundary criteria.

Tourney	Total Players	# of top 10	# of top 20	# of top 50	# top 100 (101)	Winner
Genesis	1253	9	16	39	69	Jmook
GOML	764	7	13	25	34	Zain
SSC	860	7	12	22	38	Zain
Collision	493	6	10	21	39	Jmook
Shine	684	6	10	20	37	TBD
Tipped off	343	6	11	20	25	Zain
Battle of Bc 5	409	8	15	19	20	Cody
Major upset	384	5	7	15	19	Cody
Fete (EU Major)	409	4	7	11	12	Zain

Fete: Occupying the last position due to its relatively low attendance, Fete ranks lowest among major tournaments.

Major Upset: With comparatively lower notoriety among major tournaments, Major Upset lags behind. It managed to host 5 top 10 players but only 7 additional top 100 players compared to Fete, making its total of top 100 players 19. Every other major listed has at least 19 top 50 players but both Major upset and Fete fail to surpass 16.

Moving on, the following four tournaments—Tipped Off, Battle of BC, Collision, and Shine—can be categorized within the same tier.

Tipped Off: Ranked at the lowest in this tier, Tipped Off featured 6 top 10 players and 11 top 20 players. However, its overall count of 25 top 100 players places it on par with Battle of BC and Shine but I am unable to make the case that it surpasses either of these tournaments.

Battle of BC & Shine: Grouping these two tournaments together due to the pending information about potential disqualifications at Shine. Battle of BC boasts a significant concentration of top players, with 8 of the top 10 in attendance. However, its lack of depth becomes apparent with only 20 top 100 players present.

Collision: Positioned similarly to Battle of BC, Collision offers a middle-heavy approach, boasting 21 of the top 50 and an impressive 39 of the top 100 players. Yet, its top talent count falls short with 6 of the top 10 and 10 of the top 20 players.

GOML & Smash Con: These two tournaments share similarities, both hosting 7 top 10 players. GOML holds a slight edge with more top 20 and 50 players, but lags behind in terms of top 100 attendees with 34 compared to Smash Con's 38.

Genesis: Echoing the analysis provided for super majors, Genesis, with its larger attendance, top talent, and depth, stands as a defining example of a super-major tournament.

By meticulously applying the established criteria, I hope this provides an insightful perspective into the hierarchy and competitive significance of major tournaments within the competitive melee landscape.

TLDR: A Comprehensive Analysis of Tournament Categories

Amid ongoing debates on Reddit about how to classify tournaments into categories such as regional, super-regional/pseudo-major, major, and super-major, I conducted a thorough examination of our current tournament landscape. This resulting analysis provides a comprehensive overview that sets clear and distinctive boundaries among these various tournament types. The primary goal of this analysis is to foster a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to each category's definition and demarcation.

Through this examination, it becomes apparent that several tournaments, namely Wavedash, Dreamhack SD, Smash Camp, LTC, CEO, The Comeup, and LvlUp Expo, align well with the criteria for being categorized as "super-regional" events. Meanwhile, tournaments such as Wisdom Melee, Combo Breaker, Trail Invitational, Out of the Blue, and Shield Drop teeter on the edge of this distinction, and their classification could be subject to different viewpoints based on various factors.

Moving forward, a distinct boundary emerges with Fete being recognized as the smallest tournament to be classified as a major. Alongside Fete, Major Upset, Tipped Off, Battle of BC, Shine, Collision, GOML, and Smash Con all firmly fall within the category of major tournaments.

Lastly, within the realm of super-majors, Genesis stands out as a clear exemplar, surpassing the thresholds set for this highest tier. There's the more than likely possibility that the Bighouse tournament could also achieve "super-major" status in the near future.

In essence, this analysis offers a comprehensive and organized understanding of the classification of tournaments, encompassing a spectrum from regional to super-major events. It strives to provide a platform for informed discussions and thoughtful categorizations within the vibrant competitive gaming community.

