

A Link to the Past Any% NMG Tournament 2021

Hello, everybody. It's been almost three years since the last community Any% NMG tournament. I remember it fondly, it being my introduction both to ALTTP speedruns, and to so many of the top runners in the community. Personally, a lot of my motivation to take speedrunning seriously stemmed from that tournament.

But what is a tournament? Let's face it, there isn't much mystery to the question "who are the top ALTTP players?" A tournament isn't going to give us any answers to that question we don't already have...but what they can be is great community showcases. They keep the active community members active, they bring less-active members back to the game, and they open a door for new members to take a closer look and maybe become tomorrow's active community members.

The All Dungeons community tournament, which took place earlier this year, was pretty successful at all of these things. I personally watched a number of new runners get into the game for that event, thanks to the hardworking tournament folks who did a lot to make a less-accessible ALTTP category more accessible than its ever been. Some, if not most of those new runners are still going hard at the game all these months later, and I think it would be great for the community if we could keep some of that momentum going.

And consider the historical factor. Over the lifetime of ALTTP speedruns, there was never a time period where more Personal Bests were recorded than the month leading up to the previous Any% NMG tournament. Competition brings out the best in people, and events get people excited.

So I'd like to announce the 2021 ALTTP Any% NMG Tournament! A collection of the best runners from the community, coming together in March 2021 to save all of the frames and give us some top-notch competitive ALTTP speedruns.

Event Details:

The tentative start date for the tournament is March 1st, 2021.

The tournament will be seeded by each player's Personal Best Any% NMG time, as listed on the speedrun.com boards as of February 28th, 2021.

We'll follow all the established rules of the Any% NMG category, as well as the established rules surrounding ALTTP runs in general - acceptable hardware, run validation, etc.

Currently, the plan for the tournament is to cap participation at 64 runners. This means we will take only the 64 fastest runners, by Personal Best. ***HOWEVER!!***, given that this announcement is preceding the tournament start date by several months, if we find that community interest warrants expanding the tournament structure beyond 64 entrants, then suitable solutions can and will absolutely be implemented in the interim.

Of course, that means we need to actually gauge the community interest sooner rather than later. So please fill out the below form if you have **any interest** in participating in the tournament! This will enable us to explore all our best

options for accommodating as many people without sacrificing event quality. Filling out this form will **not** commit you to the tournament in any way, it is simply to roughly gauge overall interest.

NMG 2021 Interest Form: <https://forms.gle/jiAW7ELxykcLJiBH7>

Additionally, if you are interested in participating (or even just following along, doing restream commentary, etc.) feel free to join the tournament discord! Usage of the discord won't really ramp up until we draw much closer to the tournament start date, but it will still be the best way to stay updated on any further developments and updates as we move forward!

NMG 2021 Tournament Discord: <https://discord.gg/YjdxjCKFx7>

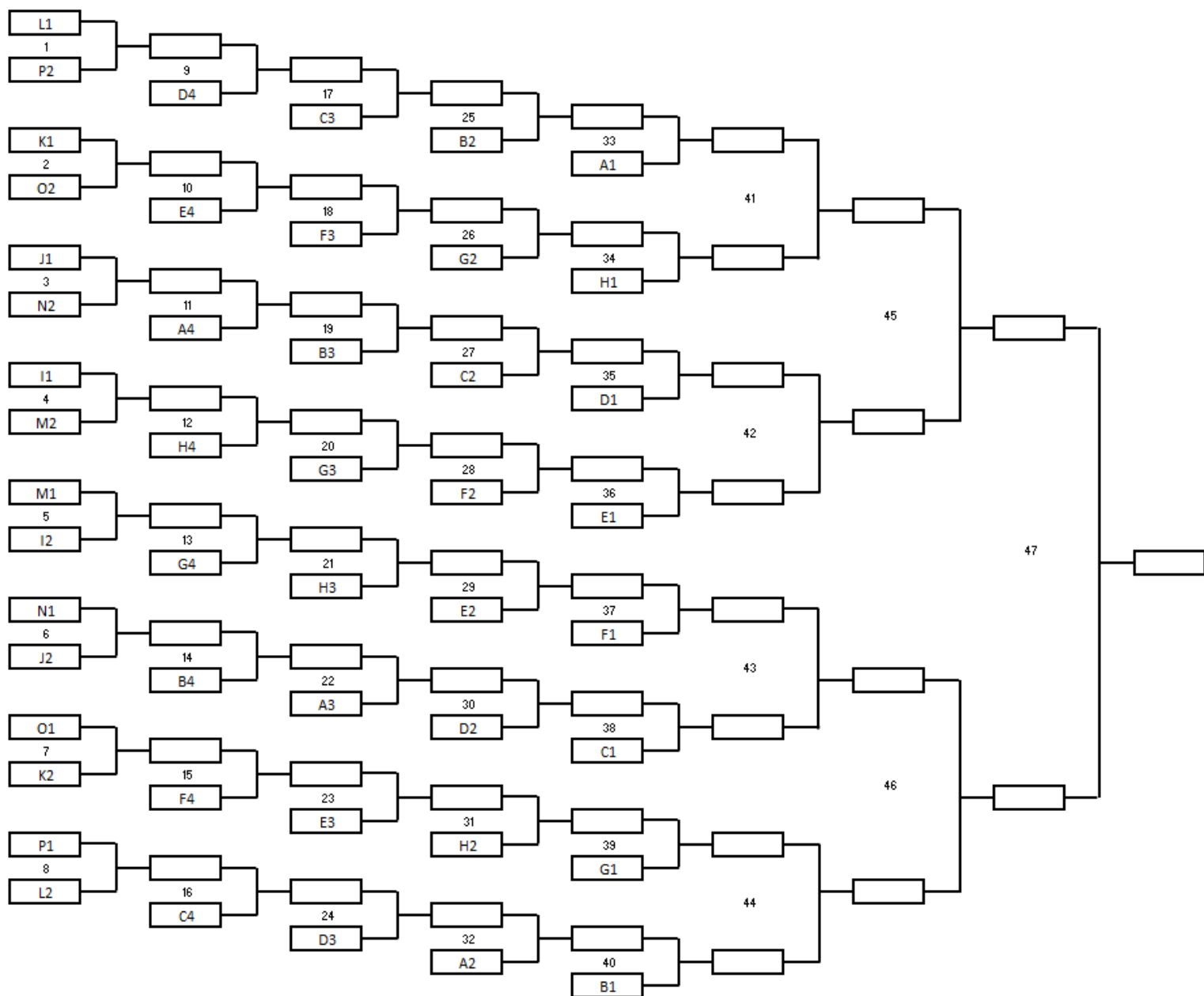
Tournament Structure:

If you're only sort-of interested so far, here's some details on the tournament format to whet your appetite. First and foremost, it will feature group play into a double-elimination bracket. Our 64 entrants will be seeded by Personal Best, and each seed will be assigned into one of sixteen groups of four, like so:

Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
#	Player	#	Player	#	Player	#	Player
1	Seed 1	1	Seed 2	1	Seed 3	1	Seed 4
2	Seed 16	2	Seed 15	2	Seed 14	2	Seed 13
3	Seed 17	3	Seed 18	3	Seed 19	3	Seed 20
4	Seed 32	4	Seed 31	4	Seed 30	4	Seed 29
Group E		Group F		Group G		Group H	
#	Player	#	Player	#	Player	#	Player
1	Seed 5	1	Seed 6	1	Seed 7	1	Seed 8
2	Seed 12	2	Seed 11	2	Seed 10	2	Seed 9
3	Seed 21	3	Seed 22	3	Seed 23	3	Seed 24
4	Seed 28	4	Seed 27	4	Seed 26	4	Seed 25
Group I		Group J		Group K		Group L	
#	Player	#	Player	#	Player	#	Player
1	Seed 33	1	Seed 34	1	Seed 35	1	Seed 36
2	Seed 48	2	Seed 47	2	Seed 46	2	Seed 45
3	Seed 49	3	Seed 50	3	Seed 51	3	Seed 52
4	Seed 64	4	Seed 63	4	Seed 62	4	Seed 61
Group M		Group N		Group O		Group P	
#	Player	#	Player	#	Player	#	Player
1	Seed 37	1	Seed 38	1	Seed 39	1	Seed 40
2	Seed 44	2	Seed 43	2	Seed 42	2	Seed 41
3	Seed 53	3	Seed 54	3	Seed 55	3	Seed 56
4	Seed 60	4	Seed 59	4	Seed 58	4	Seed 57

Notable here that seeds 1-32 are placed in groups A-H, while seeds 33-64 are placed in groups I-P.

Group play will consist of one game versus each of your groupmates. Following group play, players will be placed into the winner's bracket according to their group finish, like so:



The goals of this group & bracket setup are threefold.

First and foremost, we want to have fun, competitive races featuring reasonable matchups. If your PB is 1:32, there's not much to be gained, tournament-wise, from dropping you in a group with a 1:23 runner and a 1:27 runner. Or, if you're a 1:28 runner, you already know you don't have any reasonable path to winning the tournament, no matter what the structure is, but there is still a lot of fun to be had if you're getting the opportunity to compete against opponents who are around your own skill level.

Second, keeping the matches reasonable and competitive makes for better tournament viewing for the rest of the community. This type of structure maximizes the number of races that are going to be close and competitive around the community, even outside of the obvious big names, without making it feel somehow unfair to either player.

Third, we don't want to have the tournament immediately end for 50% of the field when brackets do get underway. With a traditional bracket setup, there's that glut of matches in the early rounds, things get wild for a week or two, and then the matches and overall interest tapers off to a slow trickle by the middle and end because most of the field was eliminated 6 weeks ago. With this setup, we've got a steady flow of matches, a slower rate of eliminations, and a more positive experience across the board.

And, of course, perhaps most importantly, this structure means if you're someone who does enter with hopes of winning the whole thing, you're not going to have to play a match every round. In fact, as you can see, most players will be getting a round or two off following group play. Despite the double-elimination format, nobody - even the eventual tournament winner - should feel overwhelmed or burnt out by the number of matches they'll need to play.

Now, in addition to the winners bracket pictured above, there is of course a loser's bracket - after all, this is a double elimination tournament. In the interest of pasting fewer giant bracket images into this document, I'll just ask you to check the following link if you'd like to see the full proposed bracket:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/129_7jZyr7UB9EU7DbgwklTn8tMu6RdJVYgNH3ufKPUs/

Asynchronous Races!

Since this tournament is going to be taking place in 20-freaking-21, I'm very excited for this event to feature asynchronous race support technology. Given the fact that we are a global community and none of us do this for a living, scheduling races between any two of us has the potential to be frustrating, or downright impossible in certain circumstances. In a tournament event, with a tournament time crunch, just having to schedule matches can be stressful in a way that no event sets out to be. To help alleviate or altogether eliminate this pain point, this tournament will feature discord bot support for running a secure asynchronous race against **any** of your opponents.

This means that any free block of time you might have to do a run can be used as your tournament race time, regardless of your opponent's availability. Only available between the hours of 03:00 and 06:00 GMT? Not a problem. Your opponent has no idea what shift they're working on a particular day until two days prior? No issue, asynchronous races are here to help you and your opponent race any time, anywhere.

More details on the usage of this feature will be available when we're closer to tournament start, but rest assured this will be a relatively simple effort on the part of you, the racer. If you're capable of sending a DM on discord, you'll be capable of participating in an asynchronous race.

Community Restreams!

Asynchronous races aside, I will still obviously encourage everyone who wants to do their races live to do so. We'll be working to allow, encourage, and support as many community-based race restreams as we can for the duration of the event, in addition to partnering with ZeldaSpeedRuns to help put a handful of our races in front of a larger audience.

Whether you'd like to make yourself available for race commentary, throw a restream together on your own channel when two of your friends are facing off, or just want to watch a multistream while post speedrun memes in chat, I'm planning to do everything I can to make this feel like a true community event, made by, and run in the interest of, the community.

Tournament Commitment:

So, with *all* of that being said, I'd truly truly love for this tournament to be completed within 10 weeks of the start date, and will do everything in my power to see that we do not eclipse that mark. Most of us have been part of, maybe even just as an observer, a video game/speedrun event that dragged on for ages. They leave the community disinterested in the event's conclusion, and/or it ends with people walking away thinking about how they'll never bother joining another one of those again.

The full double-elimination bracket features thirteen rounds worth of matches in total. This is, on the surface, a lot of rounds! But as I mentioned before, it's astronomically unlikely that anybody would play in all thirteen of those rounds. In fact, it is possible for a high seed to win the tournament playing in just five of the bracket rounds. And despite there being thirteen bracket rounds, there are only actually 110 bracket matches in all, to go with the 96 group stage matches. That's 206 matches spread across 64 entrants.

Thanks to having asynchronous race support as an option, it does not seem like it would be asking *too* much for players participating in the tournament to commit to completing their three group stage matches within two weeks, and then be able to complete two bracket stage matches *per week* (at whatever point that player would start playing their bracket stage matches, of course). I'd like to emphasize that there is no set schedule at this time - again, these are details that will be fully ironed out as we approach tournament start - but sharing this expectation now will help avoid any confusion for participants down the road.

Basically it comes down to this: if you have four hours of free time each week, then you'll be able to meet the demands of this 'accelerated' schedule. Tournament drag and scheduling stress are two of the biggest negative factors associated with events like this, and a huge percentage of the planning going towards this whole endeavor will be aimed at keeping both of them minimized for everybody.

What's next?

Join the Discord. Fill out the Interest Form. Get at me with any questions or suggestions or offers of expert assistance. Grind those PBs down. Share the tournament news with your loved ones. Survive the rest of 2020. As additional information becomes finalized, we'll keep everybody apprised. Hoping to see a lot of gaming over these next few months!