

Battling with the best commons

Peasant Magic

Robert Baranowski, creator of Peasant Magic

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- [Robert Baranowski, creator of Peasant Magic Archive](#)

When I first started playing **Magic**, I had enough cards to fill a single (*Revised* edition) deck box. Most of my friends were the same; we played with all of the cards we owned every time we sat down because we didn't have enough cards to make more than one deck. We all bought more cards later on, of course, but everyone I knew remained a casual player, the sort who buys a few packs or starters from each new expansion to flavor their existing decks with the new and the exotic, rather than the dedicated collector who seeks to own four copies of all the cards from each expansion. As long as we played each other, each of us had an equal chance to win.

Eventually we entered tournaments, and we lost. A lot. We learned that one needs the right rare cards to win tournaments. After a while, my friends and I stopped going to tournaments because we feared them. Years passed, and I met more and more **Magic** players with collections like mine, players that never played in tournaments. Our card pools were small, accumulated through indifferent means and updated sporadically, if at all. Not the ideal material for being competitive at tournaments.

To cater to our needs, I devised Peasant Magic. Peasant Magic is a tournament format designed to appeal to the casual player with a small collection. I based it on the concept of the peasant mage, or the hedge wizard. The peasant mage is someone everyone in the village knows, whether it's the town witch who lives at the end of the lane or the kindly old shaman who appeases the winter gods every spring. They are people to whom others go when they are in need of assistance, people who have just enough magic to help their neighbors. Kings need wizards that can rearrange the geopolitical landscape with a thought; peasants need someone to bless their beer or make the cooper notice them at the next town dance.

DECKBUILDING

The peasant mage doesn't have a lot of supernatural resources at his beck and call. He makes do with petty charms, simple incantations, and hope. In Peasant Magic, the player must make decks out of predominantly common cards. On one hand, deck construction is very constrained: decks may contain no more than five uncommon cards, and rare cards are not allowed at all. If playing with a sideboard, the deck and the sideboard must both conform to these strictures, the total construct having no more than five uncommon cards and zero rares.

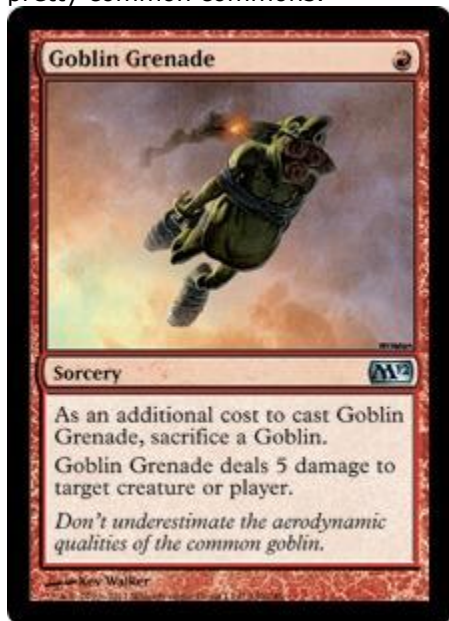
One version of Strip Mine was printed on the common sheet in Antiquities, making the uncommon Fourth Edition version legal in Peasant Magic.

On the other hand, the format is less constrained than other constructed tournament variants: cards may be drawn from any expansion that had rarity ratings, and the only constraint for the use of a card is its rarity. There are no uncommon or common cards that are banned or

restricted. Peasant decks may use four copies of [Channel](#), or four copies of [Library of Alexandria](#) ("Uncommon 1" in *Arabian Nights*). Decks may include four [Strip Mines](#) as commons because one of those cards was "Common 1" -- counted as common in Peasant Magic -- in *Antiquities*. Likewise, no expansion that has a rarity rating is banned. Players may draw cards from *Unglued*, *Portal*, and *Starter* as well as any of the other officially sanctioned expansions.

GAME PLAY

Deck construction aside, the rules are the same as standard **Magic** tournament rules with one caveat: players discovered to have rare cards in their decks are disqualified. Cards that were printed in multiple expansions use the most common rating that they were ever printed with, allowing some "rare" cards to be used in the format (such as [Hurr Jackal](#) and [Dragon Engine](#), commons in the early sets but reprinted as rares later), but by and large, decks consist of commons, and most of those are pretty common commons.



The format is surprisingly fast; most decks win in ten turns or fewer. Decks are predominantly creature-based, relying on low mana costs and multiple abilities to gain an early advantage. Decks tend to be monochromatic and able to function and win with three or fewer land cards in play. In **Magic**, common cards define what each color does well. Because common cards define the format, players need to prepare themselves with a strategy to defeat each of the color's basic strategies, for example, fast creatures and direct damage (from red), or protection from color and damage resistance coupled with small creatures (from white).

Peasant Magic is still in its infancy; with fewer than ten tournaments played worldwide, no dominate strategy or deck build has emerged. With close to 40 expansions to choose from, each sporting between 50 and 110 different common cards, the deck possibilities are nearly endless.

The top four decks from the GenCon 2001 Master of Peasant Magic tournament follow, to give you an idea of what works.

Goblin Bomb



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Desert	4 Death Spark
16 Mountain	4 Fire Whip
_____	4 Goblin Grenade
18 lands	4 Incinerate
	4 Lightning Bolt

1 Goblin Cadets	20 other spells
2 Goblin Patrol	
4 Mogg Conscripts	
4 Mogg Fanatic	
4 Mogg Flunkies	
4 Mogg Raider	
3 Raging Goblin	

22 creatures	



Pack o' Fat Rats



Main Deck

60 cards

20 Mountain	4 Chain Lightning
<hr/>	3 Fireblast
20 lands	4 Incinerate
4 Goblin Elite Infantry	4 Lightning Bolt
4 Goblin Patrol	2 Rhystic Lightning
4 Goblin Raider	3 Spellshock
4 Mogg Fanatic	<hr/>
4 Mogg Flunkies	20 other spells
<hr/>	
20 creatures	



Village Idiot



Main Deck

60 cards

10 Forest	4 Giant Growth
4 Treetop Village	1 Hurricane
_____	4 Land Grant
14 lands	4 Rancor
	3 Wild Might
4 Blastoderm	_____
2 Jolrael's Centaur	16 other spells
4 Llanowar Elves	
4 Mtenda Lion	
4 Quirion Ranger	
4 River Boa	
4 Rogue Elephant	
4 Wall of Roots	

30 creatures	



[Yes, that is our very own [Mark Gottlieb](#), **Magic** technical editor. Ah, the unsanctioned tournament... - Aaron]

Red Hate (Winner!)



Main Deck

61 cards

22 [Plains](#)

22 lands

4 [Crimson Acolyte](#)

4 [Freewind Falcon](#)

2 [Mother of Runes](#)

1 [Obsidian Acolyte](#)

4 [Order of Leitbur](#)

3 [Phyrexian War Beast](#)

3 [Soltari Foot Soldier](#)

3 [Soltari Trooper](#)

4 [Soul Warden](#)

3 [Youthful Knight](#)

31 creatures

1 [Congregate](#)

4 [Empyrial Armor](#)

3 [Swords to Plowshares](#)

8 other spells



There will be another Peasant Magic tournament held at [GenCon](#) this year. If you are interested in the format, see these additional web resources:

- Peasant Magic home page (includes rules and tournament updates): <http://www.geocities.com/peasantmagic>
- Peasant Magic email list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peasantmagic>
- Peasant Magic decklists and articles: <http://www.pojo.com/magic/PeasantMagic/index.html>
- Peasant Magic articles and deck ideas: <http://www.card-shark.com>
- Wizards of the Coast official card lists: <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=magic/products/cardsets>

Send questions, comments, etc., etc., vis-à-vis, et al, i.e., ibid to editor@wizards.com.