



MAGICTHEGATHERING.COM

ARTICLES

TOURNAMENTS

MAGIC ONLINE

Article Search ▾ ➔



# Ask@Wizards.com

Do you have a question about **Magic: The Gathering** or *Wizards of the Coast*? Send it, along with your full name and location, to [ask@wizards.com](mailto:ask@wizards.com). We'll post a new question and answer each day.

 Search Ask Wizards

## February 28, 2003

**Q:** "How did the terms Standard, Extended, and Rochester Draft come about?"  
--Matt Nguyen, Irvine, CA

**A:** From **Skaff Elias**, Senior VP of R&D:

"Rochester Draft was named first. The name came about because in the early days of magic, we invented a draft format, and first showed it off at a convention in Rochester, NY, in late 1993 or early 1994. We had many different draft formats floating around at the time, and after saying repeatedly, "Let's run a draft like we did in Rochester," we skipped a step and began to call it Rochester Draft.

"The format we currently call 'Standard' was originally called Type 2 (Type 1 was our name for the current 'Classic' format). These tournaments were called Type 1 and Type 2 because they were the first and second formats we officially named and sanctioned in Constructed play. These names aren't very interesting or informative, especially for newcomers. We decided to go with more descriptive names which were media-friendly as well, and so adopted the current terminology of Standard, Extended, and Classic, for obvious reasons. Standard is the 'normal' tournament format that we expect to be played the most, Extended is Standard with cards from a few extra years, and Classic is the format where cards, no matter how old, can be played."

## February 27, 2003

**Q:** "Will *Scourge* have the new *Eighth Edition* card face?"  
--Robert Ivanov

**A:** From **Aaron Forsythe**, Content Manager:

"Nope. The new *Eighth Edition* card face will debut in - you got it - *Eighth Edition*, which will be coming out in the summer, after *Scourge*. *Scourge* will be the last set produced with the old card face.

"All sets after *Eighth*, including *Mirrodin*, will have the new face."

## February 26, 2003



**Q:** "Why does black have super-speed mana and blue comes lumberin' along behind it?"  
--Matthew Dyck, a.k.a. Avatar

**A:** From **Elaine Chase**, Research & Development:

"Part of what keeps **Magic** balanced is that each color has its own strengths and weaknesses. If one color could do everything, there would be no reason to play anything else. For instance, red is very good at doing direct damage to both players and creatures. It can also blow up artifacts and destroy lands, but it has almost no way

to deal with enchantments. That one simple weakness helps keep burn decks in check because just one **Circle of Protection: Red** will shut them down.

"Blue's strengths include counterspelling, drawing cards, and manipulating the rules of the game. Part of the inherent weakness of blue's strategies is that a fast deck can slide cards onto the table before you can gear up enough mana to consistently stop everything they play or before you can get whatever combo you have off the ground. Blue had fast mana for a short while back in 1998 in the form of **Tolarian Academy**. It was very quickly banned because of how dominating combo decks became when given access to such fast mana.

"In the past black has gotten some very good fast mana, such as **Dark Ritual**. If you look closely, though, you'll see that black was never very good at keeping a mana boost around. All of black's mana gain have been one-shot effects that make you sacrifice resources (anything from a card to a creature) for a temporary boost. On the surface, sacrificing resources for short term gain seems very black. But after discussing the issue for a while, we realized that the idea of 'give me what I want now and damn the consequences' was much more red. You can see the results of this shift in recent cards such as **Brightstone Ritual**, **Skirk Prospector**, and **Goblin Clearcutter**.

"Even with red pulling ahead as the second-place color for mana boosts, black will still hang in there at third with white and blue trailing the pack. And who is in first? Green is the undisputed king of fast mana. It has tons of cards of every type to help increase your mana base as quickly (and as permanently) as possible."

### February 25, 2003

**Q:** "Why did the three expansions of the *Mercadian Masques* Block have nothing to do with each other? Why did you jump from Mercadia to Rath to Jamuraa? Was it because you didn't have enough ideas for one country?"

--Chris Hocker, Pennsylvania

**A:** From **Brandon Bozzi**, Magic Creative Coordinator:

"Actually Chris, the *Masques* Block expansions did have some things in common. First, they were all occurring at the same time. We see Gerrard and company turn Mercadia upside down, while Crovax is coming into power in Rath. Meanwhile, back on Dominaria, Barrin helps lead Jamuraa's defense against the invading Keldon army. Three different planes, three different groups of characters, everything happening simultaneously.

"Second, a large portion of what was happening on all three planes was due to the manipulation of Urza and Yawgmoth: two very powerful characters moving all their pieces into place in preparation for the coming invasion."

### February 24, 2003

**Q:** "Why were Akroma and Phage commissioned as one piece of art? Is there a poster or something?"

--Max Rabin

**A:** From **Jeremy Cranford**, Magic Art Director:

"Akroma and Phage are both big Legend cards and we thought it would be cool to show one battle scene where Akroma and Phage faced off for the ultimate battle. This is why we had Ron Spears paint both cards in one painting. You can see the full 'uncropped' piece of art in the center spread of the next issue of *Sideboard* Magazine (#45), which will be hitting newsstands around March 1."

### February 21, 2003



**Q:** "Why do you put so many good blue cards on the Restricted List? If you look at the Restricted List, blue has in comparison the most cards on that list. White and red have two cards on that list while blue has fifteen cards. Why does the DCI always put down blue?"

--Reinier Bakker, Utrecht, The Netherlands

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:

"You've opened up an issue that we don't talk about much here at Wizards--the ongoing battle between R&D and Organized Play. You see, R&D loves blue. Loves, loves loves it. (Yeah, we're currently holding blue down, but we all know that can't last

long.) Organized Play, on the other, hand hates blue with a passion. So, R&D keeps trying to help blue by giving yet another overpowered card and then Organized Play slaps it down by banning or restricting R&D's latest gift. This battle has been raging for ten years now, but I think we have the upper hand. Hmm, perhaps an all-blue set? They can't ban all the cards. Bwah ha ha ha ha."

### February 20, 2003

**Q:** "What is a sideboard?"  
--Dodio, Pomona, CA

**A:** From **Thomas Pannell**, Editor, *Sideboard Magazine* and Sideboard Online:  
"Each round of a tournament consists of a best 2-out-of-3 games match. Between the first and second game and the second and third game you can swap cards in your main deck for cards in your sideboard. For game 1 of each match you must return your main deck to its original configuration.

"In Constructed tournaments your sideboard must consist of exactly 15 cards. Usually players dedicate a few cards in their sideboards to each deck type they expect to face during a tournament. **Engineered Plague** against a Goblin deck or **Coffin Purge** against a reanimator deck are very common sideboard cards. Your sideboard can let you tune your deck to better face each deck you play.

"In Limited tournaments (draft or sealed formats) the sideboard is any cards that you drafted or opened that you didn't opt to play in your main deck. One-for-one swaps are also not required in limited.

"For more information on tournaments, tournament strategy, and tournament coverage visit [sideboard.com](http://sideboard.com)."

### February 19, 2003

**Q:** "Several times when discussing the Pit Fighter Legends of *Onslaught* in articles on this site, it has been mentioned that they originally cost 5 mana of each color and were useless outside of monocolour but obscenely powerful in mono-color. Just out of curiosity, what exactly did they do in their 5-of-one-color forms?"  
--Nick Azer, Northridge, California

**A:** From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:  
"They were pretty much the same cards that we wound up printing for 3CCC. The numbers got tweaked a bit both in their CCCC form and their 3CCC form, but none of them changed very much (other than their mana cost, of course)."

### February 18, 2003



**Q:** "I noticed on the artwork for **Wingbeat Warrior** the sun creates a 'lens flare' effect. To create a lens flare, there must be both a lens and film to record the image. Could this artwork be suggesting that there are cameras in Otaria?"  
--Gabe Shultz, Columbus, Ohio

**A:** From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:  
"Thanks for your question, Gabe. Yes, there are 35mm cameras all over Otaria. Photography is a favorite hobby there. Seriously, though, **Magic** illustrations are often fairly photorealistic, and in the case of **Wingbeat Warrior**, the artist added a lens-flare effect just to add coolness to the fact that the sun was shining over the Aven's shoulder. We weren't concerned about the implausibility of that addition -- if we were concerned about implausibility, the **Magic** game would look very different overall."

### February 17, 2003

**Q:** "What does it mean when a card is broken?"  
--David Logsdon, Culver, IN

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:  
"According to Webster's, *broken* is defined as follows:

"**bro·ken** \bah-ro-ken\ adj. [from the William Jockusch *Mirage* development rant, 1996]  
1: A **Magic** card which disrupts the tournament scene to the point where R&D and Organized Play have to contemplate banning and/or restricting the card  
2: A card

grossly undercosted to the point where it forces the metagame to shift around it 3:  
(*colloquial*) A card your opponent just used to win the game"

February 14, 2003



**Q:** "White Knight is in the *Legions* set. Why is Black Knight not?"  
--Antonio A. Mochi Jr., Brazil

**A:** From **Brian Schneider**, Research & Development:  
Black Knight isn't in *Legions* primarily because we've decided to do fewer black creatures with first strike and protection abilities. We considered putting Black Knight into *Legions* during the development process, but it didn't quite fit into Magic's current color wheel. Plus, white is supposed to be the best weenie color, with black way behind. In short, it's out of flavor."

February 13, 2003



**Q:** "Today I purchased an [Elvish Rage](#) deck, but to my surprise it contained Snarling Undorak instead of Taunting Elf, is this an odd mistake?"  
--Alfons Couscheir, Nijmegen Netherlands

**A:** From **Randy Buehler**, Director of Magic R&D:  
"We messed up. The deck was supposed to include a Taunting Elf, but the film sheet that we sent to the printer had a Snarling Undorak in its place, accidentally. The reason this error happened is kind of interesting -- the guy who put that deck together looked up Taunting Elf in our database and then wrote down the code number for it without realizing that he was looking at the *Urza's Destiny* version of it. He wrote down "green common #3" because that's what Taunting Elf was back in *Destiny*, but green common #3 from *Onslaught* was Snarling Undorak. Oops. Since that event happened we have changed our internal processes to include a built-in double-check and we don't think we'll make this kind of mistake again in the future. Meanwhile, if you bought the deck and you really need a Taunting Elf, you can contact [Customer Service](#). Finally, if you buy the deck in *Magic Online*, you will get the correct deck (with the Elf and not the Undorak)."

February 12, 2003



**Q:** "Why have most of the white Soldiers in *Legions* lost their mouths?"  
--Ryan Well, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**A:** From **Brady Dommermuth**, Magic creative director:  
"Thanks for asking, Ryan. Here's the deal with all the 'mutations' in the *Legions* set: Deep in the Krosan Forest, the Mirari lies buried in the ground, still attached to the sword Kamahl used to slay Laquatus. The Mirari's twisted magic is emanating from Krosa like radiation, causing everything on Otaria to become an amplified, exaggerated version of itself. Wizards begin to liquefy, Goblins grow feral and hunched, Clerics emanate light, and Soldiers become huge, speechless battle-tanks. And the freakification isn't over; wait until you see the next step of magical evolution in the upcoming *Scourge* set."

February 11, 2003



**Q:** "Recently I have been wondering about the color white, the regeneration mechanic, and how they go together. White is about the preservation of life, and it would seem that regeneration would go hand-in-hand with damage prevention and life gain for this reason. I am aware that white has delved into regeneration a little in the past ([Death Ward](#), [Spectral Lynx](#)). With the color wheel balancing, can we expect to see more cards like [Daru Mender](#) in the future?"  
--Nick Picone, Clinton, Wisconsin

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:  
"Ah, regeneration. Here's how the color pie splits up the ability: Green and black get to have the ability on their creatures. The flavor in black is reanimation (the Skeleton just keeps coming back to life). This ties into black's ability to return creatures from the graveyard to play. The flavor in green is fast healing (the Troll heals so quickly that it bounces back from injury). This plays into green's theme of growth as well as its mechanical ability to save its creatures ([Giant Growth](#) falls in the same category). White as part of its healing flavor gets the ability to regenerate other things."

Sometimes this is a spell (such as **Death Ward**). Other times this a creature that regenerates others (such as **Vigilant Martyr**). Historically, this has not been a well-explored aspect of the color, but as part of R&D's ongoing examination of the color pie distribution, this is one area we've been looking at for possible expansion."

**February 10, 2003**



**Q:** "I was wondering if the name '**Hakim, Loreweaver**' (a *Mirage* Legend) is a reference to 'Hakiem, the storyteller' in the *Thieves' World* books?"

--Gijsbert Hoogendijk, Utrecht, Netherlands

**A:** From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** creative director:

"The resemblance is purely coincidental, Gijsbert, although any writer will admit to accidental, subconscious inspiration from other works. In this case, no one had Asprin's work in mind when creating that character."

**February 7, 2003**

**Q:** "Why was Rebecca Guay not used in *Legions*? Did WotC fire her?"

--Paul Martin, Edmonds, WA

**A:** From **Jeremy Cranford, Magic** Art Director:

"To clear up some of the confusion, Rebecca Guay was not fired by Wizards of the Coast; she is a freelance artist who works with us from time to time. In fact, Rebecca is currently working with WotC on other projects in our **Dungeons and Dragons** line.

"In the *Legions* set, the creative team had to think of a way to show what happened to Otaria after **Kamahl** destroyed the **Mirari**. We decided we would show the effect of this magic by making really intense exaggerated versions of all of the creatures. We would have 'super versions' and 'hyper versions' of Soldiers, Clerics, Wizards, Zombies, Goblins, Elves, etc. Even the land would evolve over the course of *Onslaught* block. When selecting artists, the creative team selected artists that we felt would fit precisely within this vision of what Otaria was becoming.

"Even though Rebecca was not selected for work in the *Legions* set, Rebecca continues to be a highly valued part of our art team. Rebecca and I have discussed this and I have assured her that her art will appear in future **Magic** expansions.

"This decision for the *Legions* set does not mean that I personally do not like watercolor. You should see the beautiful watercolor mural that Rob Alexander did for the recent special Arena promo land cards. It doesn't mean I favor gauche, oil, acrylic or mixed media. What it does mean is that I use my best judgment to select the best artist for the job of helping to create the truly unique 'Mage-Punk' fantasy settings that can only exist within the universe of **Magic: The Gathering**.

"Anything else is pure speculation and is also incorrect."

**February 6, 2003**

**Q:** "There's a good amount of flying in *Onslaught*, a good amount of first strike and trample and other abilities, but regeneration is next to impossible to come by on any creature in any way! In fact, only four cards in the entire set present the possibility for regeneration. Is this a coincidence, or was it planned this way?"

--Aaron Swersky, Dallas, TX

**A:** From **Brian Tinsman**, R&D game designer:

"One of the problems we ran into early on with the creature-heavy *Onslaught* block was the tendency for games to lock up in stalemates. Especially in limited formats, the relative scarcity of spells made it more difficult for either side to achieve a winning breakthrough, so huge numbers of creatures often stood staring at each other unable to attack. As time went on the development team made a number of subtle fixes to this problem, such as a larger-than-average number of breakthrough-enabling instants and sorceries in *Onslaught*, and reducing the number of stalemate-enabling regenerators. The fixes worked, and thus the paucity of regenerators throughout the block."

**February 5, 2003**

**Q:** "How I can get a DCI number?"

--Matias Pirovano, Buenos Aires, Argentina

**A:** From **Jeff Donais**, DCI Manager:  
"You can get a DCI number by attending any DCI sanctioned tournament. Every tournament organizer has the ability to give you a DCI card if you don't already have a DCI number. In fact, it's required to play in DCI sanctioned tournaments. If you don't want to play in a tournament, but want a DCI number for some reason, you can ask a local DCI tournament organizer to fill out a card and register you with the DCI. This might be useful to supply a DCI number for Arena League or to request to be added to a list for those rare DCI promotional mailings. DCI membership is free."

February 4, 2003



**Q:** "Why is it that every color has some decent form of artifact and--heaven forbid--enchantment removal except for black? Why does black always get overlooked when ideas for cards like **Naturalize** come about? I mean, didn't **Creeping Mold** already exist?"

--Joe Murray, Lakeland, FL

**A:** From **Henry Stern**, Research & Development:  
"Colors are defined both by what they can do, and more importantly, by what they cannot do. These tensions help to define each color, and give each color an identity. If black were able to easily destroy enchantments and/or artifacts, why would anyone play anything other than mono-black decks? Designers and developers like to see a wide variety of deck types be viable for constructed play. When colors have strengths *and* weaknesses, diversity is promoted."

February 3, 2003



**Q:** "Every color has an enchantment that helps with cycling; red has **Lighting Rift**, black has **Withering Hex**, and white, of course, has **Astral Slide**. Even green has one (**Invigorating Boon**) yet blue doesn't have one even though it has some cards with cycling. Is there a reason as to why blue lacks a cycling enchantment? Was it a mistake or was it left out on purpose?"

--Michael Scipione, San Diego, CA

**A:** From **Mike Elliott**, R&D senior designer:  
"Things are not always what they seem, and cycles are not always cut out the same way every time. In the past, we have done some very bizarre and loosely connected 'cycles,' such as the *Urza's Saga* lands--**Gaea's Cradle**, **Tolarian Academy**, **Shivan Gorge**, **Phyrexian Tower**, and **Serra's Sanctum**. To the casual untrained eye, that cycle may look like three cards that act the same way and two other random cards, but it is actually a cycle. We are often 'clever' that way.

"Sometimes we decide one color will be very good at something and it will not get access to something that might normally be made into a cycle. For instance, in *Odyssey*, a conscious decision (Yes, we do make those occasionally) was made to not put any threshold cards into blue. However, we gave blue the majority of the threshold helper cards to compensate for leaving it out of a major block mechanic under the theory that this would promote blue as a support color, since we often worry that blue is not getting played enough. So back to *Onslaught*. While blue is often considered the card-manipulation color because of various effects like **Catalog** and **Cephalid Looter**, we did not make any decision for blue to be the heavy cycling color. What happened here is the cycle is not enchantments that had an effect when something was cycled, the cycle was just five uncommon cards that have an effect when cards were cycled. It just happened to work out that four of them ended up being enchantments. Blue's entry to the cycle, you ask? Why, **Fleeting Aven**, of course."

[Ask Wizards Archive](#)

**Interact**  
Rant, rave and share



[Respond to](#) via email

**Continue**  
Other recent articles



Yesterday

[Math, Q&A, and Our First Field Trip](#) Questions from the readers and GP NJ.  
*John Carter*



[Un-Believable](#) The tall tale of Unglued development  
*Aaron Forsythe*

2 days  
ago



**[Spikeshot's Cap](#)** Combining Spikeshot Goblin with Cranial Plating  
*Nate Heiss*

2 days  
ago



**[Crazy Unglue](#)** Whatever you do... don't say "Ow"  
*Mark Gottlieb*

3 days  
ago



**[Some Kid](#)** Jeff Garza is on a tear!  
*Brian David-Marshall*

3 days  
ago

- [More recent articles](#)
- [Return to Magicthegathering.com](#)

[WHAT'S NEW](#) [CORPORATE INFO](#) [WHERE TO BUY](#) [INTERNATIONAL](#) [SUPPORT](#) [SITEMAP](#) [PRODUCTS](#)

[© 1995-2004 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.](#)  
[Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.](#)  
[PRIVACY STATEMENT](#)