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# GP Madrid in the Books



## GP Madrid breaks the attendance record!

Alex Shvartsman · Week In Review  
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### Grand Prix: Madrid

In [last week's column](#) I predicted that Grand Prix: Madrid was going to have a healthy attendance, breaking the 700 mark. Boy, did it ever! Nearly twice that many competitors arrived in Madrid, totaling 1353!

That makes GP Madrid the largest Grand Prix tournament ever. In August of 2001, Grand Prix: Kobe had a total of 1348 players. Now Madrid steals its thunder, with just five more competitors.

First and foremost my hat goes out to the judges or organizers. It would be hard to run a tournament this size under any circumstances, but given its sealed deck format it must have been an awesome task. First, they must have scrounged to provide enough sealed product for everyone. Then the judges had to run twice the number of draft tables on day 2. Normally only top 64 players advance to play on the second day of a Grand Prix tournament, but with such a huge attendance, day 2 invitations extended down to 128th place. Players competed in nine grueling rounds and had to be back early the following morning, allowing for barely more than five hours of sleep for most of them.

It is only appropriate that the largest tournament is won by the best player. Kai Budde had to fight for the chance to compete in day 2 in the final round on Saturday. He swept his opponent, entering Sunday at 91st place with a 7-1 record. Once in his drafting element, Kai went undefeated through day 2 and the single elimination rounds, losing only a single game in the top 8.



Kai Budde vs. Bernardo Cabral in the GP Madrid 2004 finals

In the final round Kai drafted a red-white deck, splashing black for **Murderous Spoils**. Although he was forced to use a number of sub-par creatures like **Wizard Replica** and a pair of **Loxodon Mystics**, he also had a few bombs like **Leonin Abunas** and **Grab the Reins**. His deck featured only three pieces of Equipment, but the ones he had fit the beatdown theme of the deck well, plus he had the ability to fetch one with a **Taj-Nar Swordsmith**. Here are the two decks that battled it out in the finals of this historic event:

**Kai Budde**

40 cards

7 Mountain	1 Leonin Abunas	1 Raise the Alarm
8 Plains	1 Leonin Elder	1 Razor Barrier
2 Swamp	1 Skyhunter Patrol	1 Grab the Reins
1 Ancient Den	1 Taj-Nar Swordsmith	1 Shatter
18 land	1 Krark-Clan Grunt	1 Fireshrieker
	1 Hematite Golem	1 Leonin Scimitar
	1 Soldier Replica	1 Pyrite Spellbomb
	1 Wizard Replica	1 Murderous Spoils
	2 Loxodon Mystic	1 Barbed Lightning
	1 Pteron Ghost	1 Vulshok Morningstar
	1 Oxidda Golem	10 other spells
	12 creatures	

Bernardo da Costa Cabral		
40 cards		
7 Island	1 Neurok Familiar	1 Talon of Pain
7 Swamp	1 Somber Hoverguard	1 Skullclamp
1 Seat of Synod	2 Disciple of the Vault	1 Vulshok Gauntlets
1 Vault of Whispers	1 Goblin Dirigible	1 Oblivion Stone
16 land	1 Pewter Golem	1 Skeleton Shard
	1 Silver Myr	1 Crystal Shard
	1 Steel Wall	1 Barter in Blood
	1 Goblin War Wagon	1 Irradiate
	1 Yotian Soldier	1 Fabricate
	1 Quicksilver Behemoth	9 other spells
	1 Hoverguard Overseer	
	1 Vedalken Engineer	
	1 Gridclaw Bats	
	1 Spire Golem	
	15 creatures	

## Coming Up: Pro Tour Kobe

By the time you read this article, I will have joined over 300 Magic players from around the world in Kobe, Japan. A 20 hour trip from the U.S. East Coast, it's worth it to attend what promises to be one of the more interesting Block Constructed format tournaments ever. While I cannot talk about the specific decks you are going to see at this tournament, it is obvious that various forms of Affinity and green-based anti-artifact control are going to be widely present. Make sure to check the [magicthegathering.com tournament center](http://magicthegathering.com/tournament-center) starting Friday for full-blown event coverage. [Magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com) will also be providing live streaming video of the top 8 playoffs featuring commentary by R&D member Randy Buehler, as well as several other cool features. Don't miss it!

## Outsider Trading: *Darksteel*

I have worn many hats in **Magic**, but most consistently my role is that of a shop owner and card dealer. For years I've used my knowledge of the card market to write a column about card values and trading. Originally it appeared in *Duelist* magazine, then in the printed version of *The Sideboard*. I thought it would make a very good fit as an occasional part of Week In Review. This week, I'd like to give you a heads-up on what is hot in *Darksteel*.

Whenever a new set is released, there are some cards which are in extreme demand at the pre-release. More often than not, these same cards lose most of their value in the months following their release, as players get to know the set better. At the *Darksteel* pre-release, *Darksteel Colossus* was such a card. Its value quickly shot up to, if not above, \$15. The indestructible

ability has resonated well with casual players, and apparently they were not too phased with its casting cost. Although it is still one of – if not the – most expensive cards in the set, Colossus' value is currently at \$10 and will continue to slowly climb down. Trade these away now and if you still want them in a month or two you should be able to pick them up at a fraction of the cost.



The second most popular card at the pre-release is more likely to maintain its value. **Pristine Angel** may never become a tournament staple, but it is the kind of card that is equally sought after by collectors and casual players. Like **Iridescent Angel** it will remain desirable, though not difficult to trade for at higher-level tournaments like a Pro Tour Qualifier.

Having had a chance to examine the set somewhat, competitive players are now coming up with a list of cards they want to add to their collections. **Arcbound Ravager** was a sleeper hit – like **Tradewind Rider** or **Abeyance**, you could pick this one up dirt cheap at a pre-release but its value shot up 2 to 3 times in the weeks since. Currently it is selling as high as \$10 each. Ravager's future value will definitely depend upon whether it finds a home in tournament-level

decks. If it does, it should remain in the \$8-15 range. If not, it will be back down to \$4-6 within a month.

**Blinkmoth Nexus** is another popular card at the moment, trading at around \$8. Once again, its success hinges upon just how viable this card will prove itself to be in tournament play.

Most players will agree that the best card in *Darksteel* is an uncommon. **Skullclamp** is extremely popular and is already finding its way into many decks. Think **Isochron Scepter**, but with far more actual tournament play applications. Scepter continues to sell at \$3-5 and **Skullclamp** is already steadily selling at \$3. I would not be surprised if that number goes even higher, but it should stabilize at around three since it comes from a smaller set than *Mirrodin*, therefore more of them should become available quickly as players open more packs.

## Magic Trivia

Last week's question:

*What was the first pre-release ever held?*

There are really two answers to this question. First, here was an *Ice Age* pre-release held in Toronto. However, this was not really an official pre-release the likes of which you attend today. The first "official" pre-release was held in New York City. It was called "The Gathering 1" and was a pre-release for the mighty *Homelands* expansion. Wizards of the Coast rented two floors of a prominent New York hotel and created a really special event with artists, gunslinging, and a *Homelands* pre-release tournament.

New question:

*Who was the first pro player to be hired by Wizards of the Coast?*

(Please do not e-mail me the answers. Correct answer will be posted in next week's column.)

## Play of the Week

(Courtesy of Daryl)

"I was playing a game with my friend today. He was playing a modular deck while I was running a variant of Oshawa Stompy. I had him down to 1 life because of my **River Boa** and he would be dead next turn if he couldn't do anything. He had 1 **Arcbound Ravager**, 1 **Arcbound Crusher**, 3 **Genesis Chambers**, 4 Myrs from the Chambers in play plus a bunch of other artifacts. I had a **Winter Orb** in play which slowed him down considerably plus 3 **Arrogant Wurms**, 1 **Wild Mongrel**, 2 **River Boas**, 1 **Basking Rootwalla**, 3 **Quirion Rangers** and 3 Myrs from the **Genesis Chamber**. I was also at a healthy 15 life.

He attacked with all of his creatures. I knew I was in deep manure at and would definitely lose but I carried on anyway to see how much damage he would actually deal. I used one of the Myrs I had to block his Ravager while the rest of my creatures would chump block the Crusher. With no damage on the stack yet he sacrificed all his 1/1 Myrs and **Skullclamps** to his Ravager to make it grow. After that he sacrificed his HUGE Ravager to itself to put ALL the +1/+1 counters on the Crusher. At that point the Crusher was a gargantuan 28/28 but it wasn't enough to kill me as he needed it to be a 39/39 at least to trample over for the kill. To my dismay he played Second Sunrise to return ALL of his sacrificed artifacts to play. He repeated the process once again but this time he sacrificed all his artifact lands and even more Myrs from the Chamber to finally make the Crusher a 40plus/40plus (It might have even hit 50/50 or so but things were getting confusing by then already) TITAN which trampled in for the kill.

Alex I really think you'd definitely have to award this play of the week because not only did my friend create a titan (in every sense of the word), he also did it with 1 life remaining. Really lends weight to the mantra that the first 19 life points are inconsequential."

## Bad Play of the Week

(Courtesy of Pascal den Hartog)

"I was losing a FNM Draft match when my opponent attacked for 6 (I was at 2 life). I played **Sunfire Balm** 'for the heck of it' to prevent 4 on me. Even though I'd still die, he decided to counter it (also 'for the heck of it') with Vex. And I drew... **Awe Strike!** I Awe Struck his biggest attacker (4 power) and lived. To make it worse for him, I used **Reaping the Graves** to return 4 (!) creatures from my graveyard. On my turn I played three creatures, and later I gained more life with **Stir the Pride**. In the end I defeated him."

Please e-mail me any **Magic** news, stories, tournament results, or anything else you think should appear in this column. You can contact me by sending an e-mail to ashv at kingsgames dot com.

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