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Revisiting Type 2



GP Sendai and the Michinoku Open

Alex Shvartsman · Week In Review
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Grand Prix: Sendai

The Grand Prix circuit returned to the Tohoku region of Japan for the third time last weekend with [GP Sendai](#), this time testing the players' skills at *Mirrodin-Darksteel* sealed and draft play. Over 500 players attended, with most of the top Japanese pros present at the event. Only the Ruel brothers and Sam Gomersall showed up from outside of the region – all three spent nearly a month hanging out in Asia.



GP Sendai Champion, Ichiro Shimura

After eight rounds of sealed deck play, two competitors emerged undefeated. Yasutomi Hiroto piloted a red-white deck that contained many Myr to help bring *Megatog* or *Pristine Angel* into play more quickly. Shimada Masake achieved an 8-0 record with a Red-Blue-White deck featuring *Arc-Slogger*, *Spikeshot Goblin*, and *Duplicant*.

Despite their strong starts, neither player held up in the draft portion of the tournament well enough to advance into the top 8. The top 8 featured the likes of Worlds finalist Jin Okamoto, team PS2's Masashiko Morita and Antoine Ruel. In the end it was Ichiro Shimura who took home the top prize. Shimura has played on several Pro Tours, but this is his first major success. Shimura's winning deck featured *Spikeshot Goblin*, *Grab the Reins*, and *Loxodon Warhammer*.

Michinoku Open

While top 64 players were battling it out for the Grand Prix champion title, other players had an opportunity to compete in a Standard tournament titled the Michinoku Open. Keita Mori was kind enough to translate and type up the deck lists from that tournament for us, and I am happy to be able to share them in this column.

A total of 76 players competed in the swiss-style event. When the dust cleared, Abe Masashi was the winner, piloting his Goblin deck to a first place finish:

Abe Masashi	
Michinoku Open Touney 1st	
Main Deck	Sideboard

60 cards		
2 Goblin Burrows	4 Electrostatic Bolt	4 Echoing Ruin
18 Mountain	2 Chrome Mox	4 Sulfuric Vortex
<hr/>		
20 land	6 other spells	4 Goblin Charbelcher
		3 Stabilizer
		<hr/>
4 Goblin Sledder		15 sideboard cards
4 Skirk Prospector		
3 Sparksmith		
4 Slith Firewalker		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
3 Goblin Sharpshooter		
4 Goblin Warchief		
4 Goblin Goon		
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
<hr/>		
34 creatures		

A very standard Goblin build except for a pair of **Chrome Mox** that Masashi used to speed up his deck, the real surprise is the complete lack of today's much-lauded **Skullclamps** – a card that seems like a perfect fit for this archetype. In the finals, Masashi defeated Takamatsu Hiroomi, who brought a mono-white control deck to the table:

Takamatsu Hiroomi		
Michinoku Open Touney 2nd		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
14 Plains	4 Damping Matrix	4 Purge
4 Secluded Steppe	2 Renewed Faith	1 Myr Matrix
2 Stalking Stones	4 Pulse of the Fields	1 Darksteel Reactor
2 Temple of the False God	4 Wrath of God	4 Circle of Protection: Red
4 Cloudpost	4 Decree of Justice	3 Sacred Ground
<hr/>		
26 land	4 Akroma's Vengeance	2 Gilded Light
	22 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Silver Knight		
4 Exalted Angel		
4 Eternal Dragon		
<hr/>		
12 creatures		

Pulse of the Fields and **Renewed Faith** are the cards that seem to allow this deck to pursue its slow, deliberate strategy against an aggressive field. With four **Eternal Dragons**, this deck is willing to play fewer **Plains** to make room for lands like **Cloudpost** and **Temple of the False God**, as it needs to generate massive amounts of mana to win via **Decree of Justice**. It is a reasonably simple build that can do very well against creature strategies but will fall short against other control decks, since so many of its cards are dedicated to defeating the more aggressive opponents. Note the four main-deck **Damping Matrix** - Hiroomi was prepared for a heavily Affinity-weighted metagame.

Michinoku Open Touney 3rd		
Harada Satoshi		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Great Furnace	4 Skullclamp	4 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Seat of the Synod	3 Genesis Chamber	4 Detonate

4 Vault of Whispers	4 Thoughtcast	4 Mana Leak
2 City of Brass	4 Shrapnel Blast	3 Terror
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	15 other spells	15 sideboard cards
2 Darksteel Citadel		
20 land		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
3 Ornithopter		
3 Myr Retriever		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
3 Arcbound Worker		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
25 creatures		

Speaking of Affinity, that is the archetype third place finisher Satoshi Harada utilized in this tournament. His entire deck consists of Block cards except City of Brass in the main and Mana Leak in the sideboard. With **Genesis Chamber** and **Skullclamp** already in the deck, it is highly surprising that Harada elected to avoid the **Auriok Steelshaper** / Brain Freeze combo. Adding five cards to his deck would have made it far stronger, and he could easily sacrifice **Shrapnel Blasts** and one of the Enforcers to squeeze these in. Without this combo, I am not convinced **Genesis Chamber** belongs in the main deck.

Hiraki Kazuhiro		
Michinoku Open Touney 4th		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards	15 sideboard cards	
3 Flooded Strand	4 Mana Leak	1 Concentrate
4 Coastal Tower	2 Annul	1 March of the Machines
1 Stalking Stones	2 Concentrate	3 Stifle
7 Island	3 Rewind	3 Mindslaver
7 Plains	4 Wrath of God	2 Sacred Ground
3 Temple of the False God	3 Akroma's Vengeance	3 Duplicant
25 land	3 Damping Matrix	2 Annul
3 Eternal Dragon	4 Decree of Justice	
3 Exalted Angel	2 Pulse of the Fields	
6 creatures	2 Oblivion Stone	
	29 other spells	

Hiraki's deck is exactly the kind of strategy that would give major problems to the finalist. He pursues a similar strategy, choosing to sacrifice some of the consistency in favor of being able to defeat non-creature based decks more consistently. Blue-White Control emerged as probably the most powerful archetype in Standard prior to Darksteel, and Hiraki shows that it remains highly viable now. **Damping Matrix** makes an appearance in his main deck as well.

Se Atsuo		
Michinoku Open Touney 5th		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards	15 sideboard cards	
4 Bloodstained Mire	4 Skullclamp	1 Shatter
3 City of Brass	3 Shatter	3 Oversold Cemetery
	3 Patriarch's Bidding	3 Distorting Lens

3 Swamp	10 other spells	1 Goblin Sharpshooter
13 Mountain		3 Terror
		4 Electrostatic Bolt
23 land		15 sideboard cards
4 Goblin Sledder		
4 Skirk Prospector		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
4 Sparksmith		
4 Goblin Warchief		
3 Goblin Sharpshooter		
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
27 creatures		

Japanese players love their Goblin Bidding decks and this one is a solid example of the archetype. Se does not neglect to take advantage of **Skullclamp**. Also note the main-deck **Shatters** – once again, it seems many of the successful players in this tournament took extra steps to deal with Affinity decks along the way. Oversold Cemetery in the sideboard is an interesting touch – an extra problem card for the control decks.

Mochizuki Takahito		
Michinoku Open Touney 6th		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
6 Forest	4 Fireball	3 Oxidize
1 Plains	4 Reap and Sow	2 Duplicant
1 Mountain	3 Sylvan Scrying	2 Slice and Dice
2 Shivan Oasis	3 Oblivion Stone	2 Sacred Ground
1 Elfhome Palace	2 Mindslaver	2 Circle of Protection: Red
4 Urza's Tower	2 Tooth and Nail	2 Plow Under
4 Urza's Mine		2 Trinisphere
4 Urza's Power Plant	18 other spells	15 sideboard cards
3 Mirrodin's Core		
26 land		
4 Ravenous Baloth		
4 Vine Trellis		
2 Solemn Simulacrum		
2 Krosan Tusker		
1 Akroma, Angel of Wrath		
1 Rorix Bladewing		
1 Leonin Abunas		
1 Darksteel Colossus		
16 creatures		

We've seen this archetype perform well at the Last Chance qualifier at Pro Tour: Kobe, and then at Pro Tour: Kobe itself, as played by the French. Another top 8 finish further proves its merit, even if at a first glance this deck looks more like something belonging at the casual play tables.

For those of you not familiar with this archetype, its goal is to quickly generate mana (often using **Sylvan Scrying** and/or **Reap and Sow** to find the missing Urza land) to cast **Tooth and Nail** with entwine, putting some ridiculously large creatures like Akroma and **Darksteel Colossus** into play quickly.

Kataoka Asami		
Michinoku Open Touney 7th		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
12 Mountain	4 Skullclamp	2 Sword of Fire and Ice
4 Bloodstained Mire	3 Patriarch's Bidding	4 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Swamp	7 other spells	2 Shatter
3 City of Brass		1 Goblin Sharpshooter
23 land		4 Jinxed Choker
4 Skirk Prospector		2 Flashfires
4 Gempalm Incinerator		15 sideboard cards
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
4 Goblin Warchief		
4 Goblin Sledder		
3 Sparksmith		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
3 Goblin Sharpshooter		
30 creatures		

Michinoku Open Touney 8th		
Main Deck 61 cards		Sideboard
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Skullclamp	4 Stabilizer
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Thoughtcast	4 Smother
3 Glimmervoid	4 Welding Jar	3 Mana Leak
4 Darksteel Citadel	3 Tooth of Chiss-Goria	3 Genesis Chamber
1 Blinkmoth Nexus	2 Scale of Chiss-Goria	14 sideboard cards
16 land	3 Echoing Truth	
4 Frogmite	1 Echoing Truth	
4 Myr Enforcer	21 other spells	
4 Ornithopter		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
24 creatures		

And lastly, another Goblin Bidding and Affinity. While most players were gunning for artifacts, Kataoka prepared for the mirror match by adding Goblin Incinerators to his Bidding variant. This Affinity deck relied on speed more so than most, with **Welding Jars**, Teeth and Scales in addition to **Ornithopters** to make for extremely explosive opening turns.

Represented by three decks in the top 8 including the winner, Goblin strategies certainly proved strongest in this tournament. Affinity and White Control are a close second at two decks each (if you bundle up mono-white with blue-white), and an oddball Urzatron deck joins the mix. There should be plenty of food for thought for your upcoming Standard events.

Over the last month we've seen a number of Standard decks out of Asia. It would be interesting to see what kind of technologies players from Europe and North America are coming up with at the same time. If you ran or participated in a large-scale Standard tournament, please e-mail me the deck lists and I will strive to include the information in future columns.

Magic Trivia

Last week's Question:

What cards were printed in Beta, but not in Alpha?

Circle of Protection: Black and Volcanic Island were both missing from the Alpha print run. There were also only two versions of each basic land printed in Alpha. A third version was added in Beta, making a total of seven new cards added.

New question:

What card's name is an anagram for Magic's creator?

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



Play of the Week

Courtesy of Mark Reid:

"This is an old one from way back at JSS '00. My match ends quickly and I head over to the sidelines to watch Anthony Vennucci as he starts game 3. Anthony led on the play with Ritual-Negator against his opponent's accelerated U/W control deck. His opponent played a land and passed it back. Anthony swung for 5 and played a **Flesh Reaver**. His opponent played a **Grim Monolith**. Anthony played a **Twisted Experiment** on his Reaver and attacked for 12. His opponent untapped and cast Treachery on the Negator.

It looked like Anthony had it in the bag. His opponent had the choice of either dying, or blocking the Reaver and sacking his board. Anthony attacked and his opponent blocked, impatiently asking if the 7 damage to the Negator was on the stack. Anthony confirmed, and his opponent Disenchanted the Treachery, pushing the Negator to the other side of the table. Anthony thought for a long while, took 7, scooped up his permanents, and went home shortly after."



Bad Play of the Week

Courtesy of Merijn de Boer:

"Last Friday I was playing Friday Night **Magic** with my WW Equip deck. I won the first round and proceeded to face a guy with a Mono Black Control deck. Well, it was a cool game and it stood at 1-1 when everything looked like I was going to win the match. He was at 3 life, but had a 6/6 token made by **Promise of Power** in play. I had a **White Knight** in play which was so equipped that it could deal 9 damage. He had a full hand of 7 cards. I was at 13 life so he couldn't kill me on his turn. Instead, he played a **Visara** and passed the turn to me... As you can guess, I finished him. Then, someone standing next to him looks at the player's hand and sees this card:





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