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GP Washington and GP Bochum



Two GPs, two Japanese Regionals

*Alex Shvartsman · Week In Review
 Thursday, April 22, 2004*

Grand Prix: Washington DC

Close to 600 gamers returned to the region where the Team Pro Tour began all these years ago. Three-person teams had to build two sealed deck sets over the course of eight rounds, then the top 20 teams would draft three times on day two, finally cutting to the top 4.



"Thaaaat's Me" (Bill Stead, Chris Fennel, and Charles Gindy)

Many of the usual suspects were in attendance, but it was also a tournament that brought out many of the faces that have not been seen on the tournament circuit in years. Chris Pikula was there, teaming up with Igor Frayman and Chris Manning. Steve and Dan O'Mahoney-Schwartz played with Joe "Mouth" Kambourakis, and Donnie Gallitz came out of retirement to play in this one. This was also the first GP I played in this year.

Notoriously missing was my own Team Illuminati – having won and came in second in the U.S. team GPs over the last two years, we were unable to attend and defend our title. Instead, I teamed up with Darwin Kastle and Rob Dougherty as their teammate Dave Humpherys could not be there for the weekend from all the way out in California.

There is a fun story about the origins of team Illuminati. Zvi Mowshowitz, Justin Gary and I played in our first team Pro Tour together as "My Team, Part 17" – an in-joke poking fun at the extra-long series of articles Zvi wrote about the Fires of Yavimaya archetype. When we were locked in for top 4, Jeff Donais suggested that we change the name to something more serious. We thought it would be fun to have Illuminati appear out of nowhere at the top of the standings, so we chose it as our name.

This weekend, history kind of repeated itself. Your Move Games went undefeated through day one and at the beginning of day 2 we were informed that we should change our name, since we are not playing with the original YMG roster. No problem – we changed it to YMG / Illuminati, thereby giving credit to both teams and once again allowing the Illuminati to appear as if from nowhere at the top of the standings!

YMG / Illuminati arrived in the top 4 as first seed, followed by Re-Elect Gore (Jon Finkel, Brian Kibler and Eric Froelich) and Thaaat's Me (Chris Fennel, Bill Stead, Charles Gindy). Re-Elect Gore hardly needs an introduction, while Thaaat's Me is



“Re-elect Gore” (Eric Froehlich, Jon Finkel, Brian Kibler)

spearheaded by Charles Gindy – who also made the finals of last year’s team GP with a different team roster.

Making it into fourth place and overcoming their two-year history of finishing fifth are TOGIT’s team Shenanigans (Osyp Lebedowicz, Patrick Sullivan, Adam Horvath). Shenanigans defeated YMG/Illuminati decisively while Thaaat’s Me squeezed out a very close victory over Re-Elect Gore. Although Thaaat’ Me may have been a clear underdog in this top 4, they managed to defeat Shenanigans and claim the champion title!

I’ve got a lot of e-mails asking about our draft strategy for this tournament. Truth be told, we did not playtest at all, so the strategy we utilized might not be any good. But if you want to know, our plan was to draft a base-Black deck in the A seat, Affinity Blue in the middle, and base White deck on the left. I would usually end up playing Green-White against either green-white or green-red decks. Our initial plan was to ship all the green to our opponents if the draft allowed it, but that never seemed to work out in the four drafts we played.

I’ve got a lot of e-mails asking about our draft strategy for this tournament. Truth be

Grand Prix: Bochum

With slightly over 200 teams in attendance, GP Bochum in Germany was the only other Team GP this year and it took place on the same weekend. Perhaps the biggest news of this tournament was that Phoenix Foundation did not win. In fact, they were unfortunate enough to lose their last three matches and miss out on day 2 altogether. Although I cannot be sure, it seems like that this is the first time Phoenix Foundation had to sit out day 2 in a team event.



The Unusual Suspects

There were plenty of other high profile teams in day 2 however. In Bochum they played one more round (as they had more players) and even so no team with two losses had a shot at top 4. The only German team to make it to the single elimination rounds was The Unusual Suspects, featuring Dirk Heim, David Brucker and Reinhard Blech.

The best-known players in the top 4 were certainly on team Burkas. It featured one player each from Europe’s northernmost countries – Finland’s Tuomo Nieminen, Sweden’s Anton Jonsson and Norway’s Nicolai Herzog. A force to be reckoned with, it was no wonder this team made it to the

finals.

The French team of Alexander Peset, Sylvan Lehoux and Loic Degrou played as NPC All Stars. They took a chance in the final round, opting for an intentional draw even though it meant a win by the wrong team in another match would lock them out of the top 4. The gamble paid off this time.

Last but not least are the champions – team Shietkoe from The Netherlands. Spearheaded by former World Champion Tom van de Logt, it also features Jesse and Stijn Cornelissen. Their team name means “Shooting Cow” in Dutch, which is a reference to **Anaba Shaman**. (The Cornelissen brothers always use a Minotaur related name for their teams.) Their brother Kamiel has been the most successful **Magic**

player of the three so far, but this weekend it was their time to shine as the team took their strategy of drafting Green in the A seat, White-Red in B, and Affinity in C all the way to the finals.

All the abovementioned teams and players are looking forward to Seattle – where they will get their next chance to play the Team Limited format whether in these configurations or with other teams.



Stijn Cornelissen, Jesse Cornelissen, and Tom van de Logt

Regionals in Japan

While players in North America and Europe concentrated on team Limited, Japanese players were competing in some of their country's more important Regionals – Tokyo and Osaka.

Due to its sheer size, Tokyo Regional was split in two and played out over both days of the weekend. As is, there were 244 and 300 players at each of the two Regionals. The first one was won by Yuhi Kubota's Affinity deck:

Yuhi Kubota		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Seat of the Synod	3 Welding Jar	3 Stabilizer
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Skullclamp	2 Echoing Decay
4 Great Furnace	3 Shatter	1 Talisman of Indulgence
4 Glimmervoid	3 Shrapnel Blast	4 Electrostatic Bolt
3 Darksteel Citadel	4 Mana Leak	1 Welding Jar
19 land	4 Thoughtcast	4 Pyroclasm
4 Myr Enforcer	21 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
20 creatures		

Second place was also taken by Affinity while third place went to a mono-red Furnace Dragon deck. The rest of the top 8 featured three Tooth and Nail decks and two more Affinity decks.

The other Tokyo Regional was also won by an Affinity deck, navigated by Tatsuya Hirata.

Tatsuya Hirata		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Glimmervoid	4 Thoughtcast	4 Mana Leak
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Shrapnel Blast	4 Pyroclasm
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Welding Jar	4 Seething Song
4 Great Furnace	4 Skullclamp	3 Furnace Dragon
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Tooth of Chiss-Goria	15 sideboard cards
	20 other spells	

20 land
4 Disciple of the Vault
4 Frogmite
4 Myr Enforcer
4 Arcbound Ravager
4 Arcbound Worker
20 creatures

The rest of the top 8 were Goblin Bidding, Affinity, Red-Black Control, Red-Green Land Destruction, Goblins and two Tooth and Nail decks in that order.

In Osaka, the tournament was also won by – surprise! – Affinity. It was followed in the standings by Tooth and Nail, Blue-White Control, two more Affinity decks, Tooth and Nail, Zombies and Goblins.

Magic Trivia

Last week's question:

*What R&D member once showed up to a **Magic** prerelease dressed as a giant chicken?*

Few would be surprised to find out that it was Mark Rosewater. *Unglued* premiered at GenCon and Mark showed up to the pre-release in a giant chicken suit. It was a fun event and a fond memory for those in attendance.

New question:

What was GP DC winner Bill Stead's top individual finish?

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



Mark Rosewater, GenCon '98

Play of the Week

This is really a double play of the week and it happened in the same match. Nicholas Neary was playing against me in the final round of day one at GP Washington DC as part of team Aquamoebas Anonymous (who ended up placing in the top 10). The winning team would enter day 2 as the only undefeated team in the field.

In the first game he led off with **Leonin Boa** and followed it up with a turn two **Lightning Greaves**. I played out some creatures and kept attacking as Nicholas would do nothing but play land after land. He had six lands in play and still not a single creature! I attacked, bringing him down to five life, and used one of the two **Consume Spirits** I was holding to burn him down to three – ready to either attack for the win or burn him to death if I drew another land on the next turn.

On turn seven Neary tapped out and cast... **Platinum Angel!** He then equipped it with **Lightning Greaves** and proceeded to bash me for many turns. My mono-black deck had only one answer to an untargetable Angel – **Barter In Blood** – and I failed to draw it in

time.

Keeping a Greaves/Angel hand may have been somewhat risky, but it certainly made for a flashy win.

An even better play comes in game three. It was very close and I had him down to just six life points when he took control of the board by killing my creatures and started to attack me. I drew another and triumphantly slapped down a **Consume Spirit** on the table to end the game... only to have him cast **Shunt!**



Having seen a ton of removal spells in my mono-black deck, he boarded in the red rare and used it extremely well. Neary went on to win the game, though my teammates came through and won the other two matches.

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