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From the Regionals Scrapheap

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Swimming With Sharks
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So I didn't play at Regionals. One of the dangers of writing about Magic is that you relate to the game more from behind a laptop than across from an opponent. I ended up covering the waning rounds of the event for the Neutral Ground website instead of playing in them. I tried to dodge losing to **Arcbound Ravager** and **Skullclamp** by playing in side drafts during the early part of the day. Inevitably, I was knocked out of one of my drafts by those very cards with a **Loxodon Warhammer** to boot!

I actually put in quite a bit of work for the tournament. I worked with a group of players that included Mike Flores, Seth Burn, Steve Sadin, Mike Clair, Jon Becker, and Josh Ravitz (I am certainly forgetting people and I apologize). The first deck that we built for the event was a collaboration between Steve Sadin and I that was inspired by the Anti-Affinity Affinity deck from the Hong Kong Regionals.



Christopher Tong
Anti-Affinity Affinity - 3rd Place Hong Kong Regionals

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Pyrite Spellbomb	4 Flamebreak
4 Great Furnace	4 Shatter	1 Gempalm Incinerator
12 Mountain	4 Shrapnel Blast	4 Slith Firewalker
20 lands	4 Skullclamp	3 Sulfuric Vortex
	16 other spells	3 Threaten
		15 sideboard cards
3 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Stinger		
4 Arcbound Worker		
1 Atog		
4 Frogmite		
4 Furnace Dragon		
4 Myr Enforcer		
24 creatures		



Actually the deck was inspired by that deck and an old *Mirage* Block Constructed deck that was among my favorite silly decks of all time. *Diamonds and Dragons* was a deck that featured twenty land, twenty of the mana-producing *Diamonds*, and twenty dragons. It was a fun five color deck that was surprisingly powerful for a fun deck. With pleasant memories of that deck in mind I started work on a Regionals deck with Steve Sadin. The first thing we cobbled together had four **Furnace Dragon** and four **Rorix Bladewing** and accelerated to them with **Talismans**, **Chrome Mox**, and **Seething Song**.



Talismans and Dragons
Anti-Affinity Affinity - 3rd Place Hong Kong Regionals


Main Deck 60 cards		
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Furnace Dragon	4 Chrome Mox
4 Great Furnace	4 Rorix Bladewing	4 Electrostatic Bolt
12 Mountain	8 creatures	4 Flamebreak
20 lands		4 Pyrite Spellbomb
		4 Seething Song
		4 Shrapnel Blast
		4 Starstorm
		4 Talisman of Impulse
		32 other spells




The deck was a lot of fun—especially on the rare occasions that it managed a second-turn Rorix—but it was not quite consistent enough to warrant too much attention past the initial days of testing. What it did do was set the wheels of playtesting in motion and began the discussions that would eventually shape everyone's deck choices. It also left us receptive to the idea of **Seething Song** and **Furnace Dragon** in the same deck. More on that later.

Everyone settled into pet decks during testing. Mike Flores hammered away at green-white decks the entire time. He started with a green-white worship deck that included **Troll Ascetic** and **Silver Knight**. He eventually settled in on a nearly mono-white deck that touched green for **Oxidize** and a transformative **Tooth and Nail** sideboard.


There should never have been any doubt that Seth would play **Goblin Bidding**. I am somewhat dubious about his claims of having "invented" the deck. I am pretty sure it was created by Wolfgang Eder's uncle and eventually it wound its way from Wolfgang to Tsuyoshi Fujita to Seth Burn. Possession is nine-tenths of the law and Seth has definitely staked his claim to the deck having played it longer and harder than anyone else. He appeared set to play Ravager Affinity but at the last minute reverted to form and played a Goblin Bidding deck with three **Skullclamps**. After losing the first of eleven rounds Seth went on a nine round winning spree and was able to draw the last round to secure one of the eight spots—a job very well done.

Goblin Bidding		
Northeast Regionals - Sixth Place - Seth Burn		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Bloodstained Mire	3 Patriarch's Bidding	2 Dwarven Blastminer
4 City of Brass	3 Skullclamp	3 Echoing Ruin
12 Mountain		4 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Swamp	6 other spells	1 Gempalm Incinerator
24 lands		4 Molten Rain
		1 Sparksmith
		15 sideboard cards
3 Gempalm Incinerator		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
4 Goblin Sharpshooter		
4 Goblin Sledder		
4 Goblin Warchief		
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
4 Skirk Prospector		
3 Sparksmith		
30 creatures		

One of Seth's opponents was playing an interesting deck that took me and Seth by surprise when I was covering their match for the Neutral Ground site. Randy Booz looked to playing affinity after a game one where he only played two lands—a pair of **Darksteel Citadels**. He revealed late in game two that he was actually playing a mono-blue combo deck with **Retract** and **Brian Freeze**. He ended up going 8-3 on the day but the deck was still interesting enough to present here.

RetractoFreeze		
Randy Booz		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Darksteel Citadel	3 Frogmite	4 Brain Freeze
7 Island	4 Ornithopter	4 Chromatic Sphere
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Vedalken Archmage	4 Chrome Mox
15 lands	11 creatures	2 Machinate
		4 Retract
		3 Scale of Chiss-Goria
		2 Spellbook
		3 Thirst for Knowledge
		4 Thoughtcast
		4 Welding Jar
		34 other spells


Mike Clair was testing **Tooth and Nail** throughout our group's correspondence. He made the move to **Ravager Affinity** after my column went up the Wednesday before Regionals. I took some heat from the players (mostly from Seth) on the list for not hiding the Japanese tech of Hirata Tatsuya Regionals-winning deck and preserving it for our group.

Ravager Affinity		
Hirata Tatsuya - 2nd 2004 Kanto Regionals - Champion		
Main Deck	Sideboard	

60 cards

4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Shrapnel Blast	3 Furnace Dragon
4 Glimmervoid	4 Skullclamp	4 Mana Leak
4 Great Furnace	4 Thoughtcast	4 Pyroclasm
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Tooth of Chiss-Goria	4 Seething Song
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Welding Jar	15 sideboard cards
<hr/>		
20 lands	20 other spells	
<hr/>		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
<hr/>		
20 creatures		

Here is the deck Mike ended up playing to a fifth place finish at the tournament. Like Seth he took a first round loss and gutted it out through nine rounds before being able to lock up a Nationals invitation with a draw in the last round of the tournament.

Ravager Affinity 


Michael Clair - Northeast Regionals - Fifth Place

Main Deck <i>60 cards</i>		Sideboard
2 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Chromatic Sphere	3 Furnace Dragon
1 Darksteel Citadel	4 Electrostatic Bolt	4 Mana Leak
3 Glimmervoid	4 Shrapnel Blast	3 Pyroclasm
4 Great Furnace	4 Skullclamp	4 Seething Song
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Thoughtcast	1 Shatter
4 Vault of Whispers	2 Welding Jar	15 sideboard cards
<hr/>		
18 lands	22 other spells	
<hr/>		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
<hr/>		
20 creatures		

In the few days that we were testing this build we actually toyed with changing the **Seething Songs** to **Blood Moons**. **Seething Song** is mostly there as a mana fixer as opposed to an accelerant since the **Seething Song** is pretty hard to reach reliably. Despite making your lands into Mountains, **Blood Moon** does not stop them from also being artifact lands. **Blood Moon** would not only “fix” your mana but it would not affect your affinity. It would also let you have additional cards to bring in against decks with Urza lands and **Cloudposts**. In the end we decided it was a little too cutsey and opted for the version that kept testing so consistently well in the mirror.

Mike had tested so much **Tooth and Nail** that he was overly concerned with the deck going into the tournament. He had **Electrostatic Bolts** for **Platinum Angel** with **Shrapnel Blast** for the Abunas where **Pyrite Spellbombs** should have been. That ended up being his only complaint about the deck. The Bolts—while good—affected his affinity draws. He would also have changed the **Blinkmoth Nexus** to additional Citadels for the same reason. Mike breezed through countless mirror matches thanks to his ability to “ritual” out a **Furnace Dragon** and devastate the other side of the table.

The deck I was testing the whole time was a black-white variant of Ravager Affinity that combated what I thought would be a heavy mono-white field with **Second Sunrise** and had **Leonin Elder** for the mirror. The deck ended up being a little clunky with seven non artifact lands and just not as powerful as the straight-up Ravager deck with the **Furnace Dragon** sideboard.

Black-White Affinity 

Main Deck <i>60 cards</i>		
4 Ancient Den	4 Arcbound Ravager	4 Pyrite Spellbomb
3 City of Brass	4 Arcbound Worker	3 Second Sunrise
4 Glimmervoid	4 Disciple of the Vault	4 Skullclamp
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Frogmite	3 Talisman of Progress
4 Vault of Whispers	3 Leonin Elder	4 Thoughtcast
<hr/>		
19 lands	4 Myr Enforcer	18 other spells

There were a number of different versions. Some featured **Leonin Abunas** and others had **Smother** and at least one had both. One of my favorite tricks with the deck involved holding multiple **Second Sunrise** in hand with at least two white sources of artifact mana in play. You could sacrifice everything to a Ravager and Sunrise them back into play effectively untapping your mana to repeat the whole process. I still have a version of this built and I may give it a try at a NAC Qualifier or Friday Night **Magic** just to actually play it once under actual battle situations before *Fifth Dawn* dramatically alters the constructed landscape. Which brings me to...

Next week: We dig two cards deeper into the mysteries of *Fifth Dawn* even though I only preview one card!

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*Brian David-Marshall has been involved in **Magic** since 1994 when he was violently shaken by someone searching for the game. He has organized tournaments, run a store, and is currently the Pro Tour Historian. His latest venture is Top8Magic.com, the publishing house that is releasing Michael J. Flores: Deckade.*



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