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German Nationals



Alex Shvartsman · Week In Review
 Thursday, May 27, 2004

Decks of the Top 8

Fifth Dawn

This weekend players were introduced to the joys of Sunburst as they got to compete in a series of *Fifth Dawn* pre-release tournaments around the globe. While the new set looks to be about average impact for constructed (of course, you may have heard such statements from would-be **Magic** pundits even about *Apocalypse*, but until I am proven otherwise...) but it looks to be an absolute blast in Limited.



Players are already often encouraged to use off-color lands in order to take advantage of the six common artifact lands available between *Mirrodin* and *Darksteel*. They will now be further rewarded with Sunburst. Brian-David Marshall has already talked up the virtues of **Pentad Prism** in [his article](#) – a card that will let you “Ritual” out a five casting cost creature on turn 3 while possibly fixing your mana in the process, it is just one of many ways in which the Limited format will change now. Unfortunately for me, I had to work this weekend and could not play in the Pre-Release myself, so I do not want to attempt discussing strategy prior to gaining actual experience, but even with this limited amount of information *Fifth Dawn* has succeeded in reinvigorating my interest in booster draft, so I should have something more to say on the subject soon enough.

In constructed, my favorite card so far is **Vedalken Shackles**. I do not claim it to be the best card in the set, but it is certainly playable in constructed. Blue control decks have been out of style for a while now – having lost essential cards like **Counterspell**, but this new re-usable **Control Magic** will surely encourage players to try out this strategy again. Of course, this single card will not allow mono-blue control to compete with powerhouses such as Affinity and Tooth and Nail. On the other hand, any time the archetype is actually viable, this card should likely make the cut.



German Nationals

There isn't as much information available yet from German Nationals as I had hoped, but I do have the Top 8 deck lists.

German Nationals Top 8

Winner: Torben Tweifel (Tooth and Nail)
 Finalist: Roland Bode (Affinity)

Top 4: Sebastian Zink (Goblins)
 Top 4: Christoph Holzl (Affinity)
 Top 8: Sascha Deinert (Elf and Nail)
 Top 8: Dirk Hein (Affinity)
 Top 8: Stephan Fries (Affinity)
 Top 8: Martin Heidemann (Goblins)

Elf and Nail by Torben Zweifel (1st)		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
1 Mountain	4 Vernal Bloom	1 Sundering Titan
4 Wooded Foothills	4 Skullclamp	1 Viridian Shaman
17 Forest	3 Tooth and Nail	1 Viridian Zealot
<hr/>		4 Oxidize
22 land	11 other spells	4 Pyroclasm
4 Birds of Paradise		3 Reap and Sow
3 Vine Trellis		1 Creeping Mold
4 Wirewood Symbiote		<hr/>
3 Wirewood Herald		15 sideboard cards
3 Viridian Shaman		
4 Wood Elves		
1 Fierce Empath		
1 Duplicant		
1 Darksteel Colossus		
1 Triskelion		
1 Sundering Titan		
1 Kamahl, Fist of Krosa		
<hr/>		
27 creatures		

Affinity by Roland Bode (2nd)		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Skullclamp	1 Darksteel Citadel
4 Great Furnace	4 Shrapnel Blast	2 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Glimmervoid	4 Thoughtcast	3 Threaten
3 Vault of Whispers	2 Welding Jar	3 Shatter
3 Darksteel Citadel	2 Chrome Mox	4 Pyroclasm
<hr/>		1 Thirst for Knowledge
18 land	2 Electrostatic Bolt	1 Welding Jar
4 Arcbound Ravager	3 Thirst for Knowledge	<hr/>
4 Frogmite	2 AEther Vial	15 sideboard cards
4 Arcbound Worker	23 other spells	
4 Disciple of the Vault		
3 Myr Enforcer		
<hr/>		
19 creatures		

Goblins by Sebastian Zink (3rd)	
Main Deck 60 cards	Sideboard

4 Wooded Foothills	4 Electrostatic Bolt	2 Gempalm Incinerator
3 City of Brass	4 Oxidize	4 Naturalize
3 Forest		3 Pulse of the Forge
13 Mountain	8 other spells	4 Skullclamp
		2 Echoing Ruin
23 land		15 sideboard cards
4 Skirk Prospector		
3 Goblin Sledder		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
4 Sparksmith		
4 Goblin Warchief		
4 Goblin Sharpshooter		
2 Gempalm Incinerator		
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
29 creatures		

Affinity by Christoph Holzl (top 4)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Skullclamp	4 Furnace Dragon
4 Glimmervoid	3 Welding Jar	3 Mana Leak
4 Great Furnace	4 Pyrite Spellbomb	4 Seething Song
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Shrapnel Blast	1 Shatter
2 Darksteel Citadel	3 Thoughtcast	3 Pyroclasm
3 Vault of Whispers	1 Mana Leak	
19 land	19 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Myr Enforcer		
4 Frogmite		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
2 Ornithopter		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
22 creatures		

Elf and Nail by Sasha Deinert (top 8)

Main Deck 61 cards		Sideboard
22 Forest	4 Skullclamp	1 Kamahl, Fist of Krosa
22 land	3 Tooth and Nail	2 Molder Slug
	4 Vernal Bloom	3 Creeping Mold
1 Darksteel Colossus	11 other spells	1 Reap and Sow
2 Triskelion		4 Oxidize
4 Wirewood Symbiote		4 Plow Under
1 Sundering Titan		15 sideboard cards
3 Vine Trellis		
4 Viridian Shaman		
4 Birds of Paradise		
1 Kamahl, Fist of Krosa		
4 Wood Elves		
1 Fierce Empath		

2 Wirewood Herald
1 Duplicant

28 creatures

Affinity by Dirk Hein (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards

4 Seat of the Synod
4 Great Furnace
3 Darksteel Citadel
3 Glimmervoid
4 Vault of Whispers

18 land

4 Arcbound Worker
4 Arcbound Ravager
4 Myr Enforcer
4 Frogmite
3 Ornithopter
4 Disciple of the Vault

23 creatures

4 Chromatic Sphere
4 Skullclamp
3 Welding Jar
4 Thoughtcast
4 Shrapnel Blast

19 other spells

Sideboard

4 Furnace Dragon
4 Seething Song
4 Pyroclasm
3 Mana Leak

15 sideboard cards

Affinity by Stephan Fries (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards

2 Glimmervoid
4 Great Furnace
2 Blinkmoth Nexus
4 Seat of the Synod
2 Darksteel Citadel
4 Vault of Whispers

18 land

4 Arcbound Worker
4 Disciple of the Vault
4 Frogmite
4 Myr Enforcer
4 Arcbound Ravager

20 creatures

4 Shrapnel Blast
4 Welding Jar
4 Pyrite Spellbomb
4 Skullclamp
4 Thoughtcast
2 Chromatic Sphere

22 other spells

Sideboard

3 Furnace Dragon
4 Pyroclasm
4 Seething Song
4 Mana Leak

15 sideboard cards

Goblins by Martin Heidemann (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards

3 Blinkmoth Nexus
17 Mountain

3 Chrome Mox
3 Skullclamp
3 Electrostatic Bolt

Sideboard

3 Dwarven Blastminer
2 Flashfires
2 Echoing Ruin
2 Molten Rain

20 land	9 other spells	4 Shatter
4 Skirk Prospector		1 Detonate
4 Goblin Sledder		1 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Sparksmith		15 sideboard cards
4 Goblin Piledriver		
4 Goblin Warchief		
4 Goblin Sharpshooter		
3 Clickslither		
4 Siege-Gang Commander		
31 creatures		

Notable is the absence of the usual suspects. Has The Phoenix Foundation's grip on the **Magic** supremacy been slipping? This is, after all, the first time in several years where Kai is most likely not going to win the Player of the Year title. Then again, there is a team Pro Tour coming up soon...

Defending A Bad Play

I received several dozen e-mails regarding last week's Bad Play of the Week. There was enough interest that I felt worthwhile to get back to the subject – and defend my decision to include it in the article.

To recap, a player was winning a game due to an overwhelming board advantage. He then played **Wall of Blood** for no reason, and lost once his opponent was able to **Mindslaver** at the last possible opportunity and paid all of the player's life to win the game via the Wall.

Many readers felt it was not a bad play at all. Writes Rick Hindman of Tucson, AZ:

*“Just a comment on the **Mindslaver/Wall of Blood bad play**. Even if his opponent hadn't played the **Wall of Blood**, he could have forced his opponent to on the mind slaved turn and done the same trick. His opponent was hosed either way. I'd say that was not a Bad Play of the Week for the opponent - but a Top-Deck of the Week for him!”*

Those of you who argue that due to the **Mindslaver** this player could not have won the game are absolutely right. He couldn't. An opponent would have simply played the Wall out of his hand and proceed to win anyway. However subtle, I still feel that playing the Wall qualifies as a bad play.

There are several very good reasons to keep the Wall in your hand as you are already winning:

- 1) Spending Resources – you are spending mana to play an irrelevant spell. Even if you have nothing to play, keeping more mana open allows you to bluff better and forces an opponent to consider more possible plays on your part.
- 2) Information – One of the golden rules of **Magic** is to never provide information to your opponent when you do not have to. In this situation, an unknown card in hand is better than a Wall in play. In a very unlikely event that an opponent would choose to play something else rather than activate a **Mindslaver** (which he KNEW at this point would win the game) it could mean a difference between winning and losing. It's a small thing, but **Magic** is a game of inches and over time these kinds of things add up.
- 3) Mass Removal – There is always a remote possibility that your opponent managed to draft whatever “**Wrath of God**” style effect exists in the current format. That is why it is never correct to over-commit when you are clearly winning anyway.

Not playing the Wall would probably only increase the likelihood of this player winning the game in question by less than one percent. Even so, it means that making a correct play over a wrong one will win you one more game out of a hundred than you would have won otherwise. This may not be the kind of flashy, grossly horrendous play that I usually feature in this column, but I am sure glad I wrote about it, which allowed me to write this follow-up and explain my reasoning.

Magic Trivia

Last week's question:

What is the name of the **Magic** expansion set due to be released after Fifth Dawn?

Champions of Kamigawa, as announced in [this recent Magic Arcana](#).

New Question:

What location hosted more **Magic** world championships than any other?

Please do not e-mail me the answer. It will be posted in next week's column.

Play Of The Week

Courtesy of Trevor Fassbinder:

"Both my opponent and I are playing with **Tooth and Nail** and there is a **Vernal Bloom** in play on my opponent's side. I have a **Mindslaver** and a **Fireball** in my hand. I play the **Mindslaver** to take control of my opponent's turn. I find out he has 2 **Vernal Blooms** in his hand so I play them, bringing the total of **Vernal Blooms** to 3. I have 5 forests in play during my turn and **Fireball** him with my 5 Forests and a Mountain for exactly 20 points of damage."



Bad Play Of The Week

Courtesy of Laurance Coxs:

"I was playing the deciding game of the round in the pre-release. I won the game and my opponent remarked on how he could have won if he drew a source of blue mana. He showed me his hand, which included a **Bringer of the Black Dawn**. I looked at the lands he had in play and told him he could get ? ♣ ♣ . He was so fixated on getting the Bringer out for the alternate casting cost that he forgot the normal casting cost!"

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@kingsgames.com.

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