



Block Building

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Swimming With Sharks
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Last week I briefly touched upon [Mirrodin Block Constructed](#). This week we will move up to full contact as we look at the top decks of each major archetype from Pro Tour Kobe. While *Fifth Dawn* will enable some brand new archetypes (*Cough*[Ironworks](#)*cough*) it will also enhance the existing decks that were proven in three days of battle during the last constructed Pro Tour event.

The top deck to emerge in Japan was a Big Red deck that was wielded by Masashiro Kuroda. Kuroda's victory was one of the feel good stories of the year as he was the first Japanese player to win a Pro Tour. The fact that he did so in front of a hometown crowd with his wife watching on the rails only made it sweeter. It was that victory and the high finish of several other red decks and [Tooth and Nail](#) decks-which likely forestalled the banning of [Skullclamp](#).

In his last installment of [Latest Developments](#), where he explained the [Skullclamp](#) banning, Aaron Forsythe described the results from Kobe as "...weird, and oddly uplifting." There were only two Affinity decks with [Skullclamps](#) in the Top 8 and the underperformance of the Clamp may have saved it from an emergency ban before it could go on to dominate Regionals and every other Standard tournament since then.



Masashiro Kuroda - Anan Go Deck		
1st Place Pro Tour Kobe		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Barbed Lightning	4 Echoing Ruin
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Damping Matrix	3 Furnace Dragon
16 Mountain	4 Detonate	4 Molten Rain
24 lands	4 Electrostatic Bolt	2 Talisman of Impulse
	4 Fireball	2 Talisman of Indulgence
4 Arc-Slogger	4 Pulse of the Forge	
4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Shrapnel Blast	
8 creatures	28 other spells	15 sideboard cards

The fact that there were maindeck [Damping Matrixes](#) in the winning deck at Kobe should have probably been a clue to the meta-game warping power of [Skullclamp](#). But that is what this deck was - a meta-game deck. It was designed to beat up on what was expected to be the best deck. Affinity is not going anywhere though and you shouldn't expect this deck to go away as a consequence. [Damping Matrix](#) may no longer be the card it was for Kuroda though.

The [Damping Matrix](#) served to shut down both [Skullclamp](#) and [Ravager](#). It will still be effective against the [Ravager](#) (although you can probably expect most Affinity decks to follow in the footsteps of Kai Budde and sport green for [Oxidize](#)) and if [Cranial Plating](#) becomes the ubiquitous replacement for [Skullclamp](#) it deals with that as well. The problem is that it does almost nothing against [Ironworks](#) decks.

The ability of the [Krark-Clan Ironworks](#) is of the mana variety and although the [Damping Matrix](#) will lock down the deck's use of [Myr Incubator](#) and [Goblin Charbelcher](#) it won't stop a twenty-plus [Fireball](#) on turn four or five. [Granulate](#) would be perfect if it took out lands but it seems like it will be too slow to stop an [Ironworks](#) since the ironworker should be able to just win the turn they play their key artifact.



[Beacon of Destruction](#) is an alluring burn spell that hits creature and player alike but at five mana you are probably better off sticking with the high upside of [Fireball](#). The only other cards from *Fifth Dawn* that I could almost see making its way into the deck are [Razormane Masticore](#), which seems strictly inferior to [Arc-Slogger](#), and [Magma Jet](#), which seems similarly inferior compared to the other burn spells available.

My build of this deck for the upcoming PTQs would see a move of the **Furnace Dragons** into the main deck along with some **Great Furnaces** and Talismans. You could easily move the **Damping Matrix** to the board and have the **Barbed Lightnings** become Talismans. Between Bolts and **Detonates** you should be able to slow both flavors of artifact decks enough to shut them down with a **Furnace Dragon**.

The second place deck from Kobe was a **Tooth and Nail** deck that was dubbed TwelvePost. It was clearly one of the most popular decks to emerge from the tournament. It spawned endless threads on most **Magic** forums and has been translated successfully into Standard with Urza lands and **Vernal Bloom** varieties both doing very well.

The deck exploits the ample supplies of mana fixing and artifact destruction that are available in green. It ramps up to enough mana to cast an entwined **Tooth and Nail**. It can play out anything from the **Leonin Abunas/Platinum Angel** combo, a pair of **Viridian Shamans**, or a **Duplicant** and **Darksteel Colossus**. This deck clearly gains the most from **Fifth Dawn** with plenty of splashy creatures trying to elbow their way into the deck.

Gabriel Nassif - TwelvePost		
2nd Place Pro Tour Kobe		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
1 Blinkmoth Nexus	2 Mindslaver	4 Chalice of the Void
4 Cloudpost	4 Oblivion Stone	1 Duplicant
16 Forest	4 Oxidize	1 Mindslaver
3 Stalking Stones	4 Reap and Sow	1 Platinum Angel
24 lands	4 Sylvan Scrying	4 Pulse of the Tangle
	2 Talisman of Unity	4 Tel-Jilad Chosen
	4 Tooth and Nail	15 sideboard cards
	24 other spells	
1 Darksteel Colossus		
1 Duplicant		
1 Leonin Abunas		
1 Platinum Angel		
4 Solemn Simulacrum		
4 Viridian Shaman		
12 creatures		

The **Mephidross Vampire/Triskelion** combo is a natural fit for this deck. With both creatures in play they are a one-sided **Wrath of God**. Since the Vampire does not feature the dreaded word tandem of 'combat damage' it means that each trike counter replaces itself with another when shooting down critters. Short of protection from artifact creatures and that pesky **Darksteel Colossus** your opponent's army will fall in short order after you cast **Tooth and Nail**.

The other card that looks like a nice fit for this deck is half of another popular combo. While all of the Bringers can be attractive candidates it is the **Bringer of the White Dawn** that offers the hard lock. With a **Bringer of the White Dawn** in play and **Mindslaver** in your graveyard your opponent is going to have exactly one turn to dispatch your Bringer before they become your unwilling and self-destructive puppet for the remainder of the game.

The deck also gains additional options for artifact destruction with **Tel-Jilad Justice** and the ability to exploit **Eternal Witness** but I think the two combos listed above are going to be the two significant changes to the deck. I would put the **Duplicant** and two **Oblivion Stones** in the sideboard for one of each of the cards mentioned above.




The deck everyone feared going into Kobe was Ravager-Affinity and it certainly showed up in force. Dedicated artifact hate in the maindeck of every non-Affinity Day Two deck (and even some of the Affinity decks) should give you an idea of the gauntlet that Jelger Wiegiersma and Ben Stark had to run to emerge as the only two Affinity players in the Top 8. The fact that any Affinity players made the Top 8 at all is a testament to the deck's speed, consistency, and power.

Jelger Wiegiersma - Affinity		
4th Place Pro Tour Kobe		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 AEther Vial	4 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Darksteel Citadel	2 Chromatic Sphere	1 Furnace Dragon
1 Glimmervoid	4 Skullclamp	3 Genesis Chamber
2 Great Furnace		2 Glimmervoid

4 Seat of the Synod	1 Talisman of Dominance	1 Great Furnace
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Thoughtcast	1 Myr Retriever
19 lands	15 other spells	3 Terror
4 Arcbound Ravager		15 sideboard cards
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
3 Myr Retriever		
3 Ornithopter		
26 creatures		

With **Skullclamp** out of the picture Affinity is going to have to look in another direction. It has been suggested that the deck will simply replace four lands with **Chrome Mox** and four **Skullclamps** with **Thirst for Knowledge** but I think the changes will go beyond that. **Myr Retrievers** and **Arcbound Workers** are less attractive now that they are not targets for **Skullclamp**.

One thing that has certainly changed is the deck's reliance on **Furnace Dragon** and **Seething Song** out of the sideboard for the mirror match. **Seething Song** could be replaced by **Pentad Prism**. It brings you to triple red the same as **Seething Song** since you need to have one red in play to cast **Seething Song** in the first place. Unlike **Seething Song** the Prism is an additional artifact for your affinity and can be painlessly sacrificed to **Shrapnel Blast** an opponent once it has been used up.

 That is for the sideboard though. The maindeck is going to be an almost entirely new deck. While the Ravager Affinity combo remains intact the deck will likely take an aggressive turn with **Cranial Plating** and flying creatures. **Qumulox** is an interesting replacement for **Broodstar**. It is always a 5/4 and it sticks around after a **Furnace Dragon** does its dirty work. **Somber Hoverguard** is also a viable candidate-perhaps more viable than the double blue flying beast.

Shrapnel Blast is also a must in newer versions. Without **Skullclamp** you need as many ways to deal damage as you can cram into the deck for maximum redundancy. With the **Clamp** you would inevitably get to your Disciple/Ravager combo but you need more damage combos to ensure you can get twenty points across as quickly as possible.

Newfinity		
Post Fifth Dawn Block Constructed		
Main Deck 60 cards		
3 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Arcbound Ravager	4 Chromatic Sphere
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Disciple of the Vault	4 Cranial Plating
4 Great Furnace	4 Frogmite	4 Shrapnel Blast
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Myr Enforcer	4 Thoughtcast
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Ornithopter	16 other spells
19 lands	1 Qumulox	
	4 Somber Hoverguard	
	25 creatures	

This is just a first pass at the deck but I think it bears more than a passing resemblance to the Affinity decks you will have to face in a few short weeks when the Block constructed PTQ season gets underway. I don't know yet what deck I will be playing in the PTQs but I think the early stages of this new format will look something like what I have outlined above.

In addition to these decks there is also the mono-green darkhorse that I mentioned last week. I mistakenly implied that Sylvain Lauriol's build was the highest finishing version at sixteenth. The best finish by a mono-green was actually in the hands of Eugene Sanchez three notches up in thirteenth. As I mentioned last week the deck could easily abuse the **Eternal Witness**. Here is Eugene's version-I would trade the Glissas for **Eternal Witnesses** but that is about it.

Eugene Sanchez - Green Deck Wins		
13th Place Pro Tour Kobe		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Oxidize	2 Bloodscent
21 Forest	4 Pulse of the Tangle	4 Deconstruct
25 lands	8 other spells	4 Karstoderm
		2 Sword of Light and Shadow
		3 Trinisphere

4 Fangren Firstborn	15 sideboard cards
3 Glissa Sunseeker	
4 Molder Slug	
4 Tel-Jilad Chosen	
4 Troll Ascetic	
4 Viridian Shaman	
4 Viridian Zealot	
27 creatures	

Next week: I am off to Kansas City for [Magic Weekend](#) to cover [US Nationals](#) and [the JSS Championships](#) for this very website. Although the main tournament attractions of the weekend will be played with [Skullclamp](#) and without *Fifth Dawn* the side events from Saturday onward will give us our first real look at the new formats and their decks. I will do my best to scavenge as many winning decklists as I can shove in my laptop case and report back to you in seven days with the results!

*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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