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# Welcome to the Block

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Swimming With Sharks  
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Last week I managed to snag the decklists from a Grand Prix Trial that was held during US Nationals weekend. It was the first glimpse inside the new block constructed format that was born from the introduction of *Fifth Dawn* and the banning of *Skullclamp*. It was sort of a spring training for the PTQ season that got underway this past weekend. Not only was there a Grand Prix that was held in [Zurich](#) but there were PTQs and Grand Prix Trials held as well. I happened to be at Origins this past weekend, which was the site of two PTQs and I managed to grab the Top 8 decklists from both events. These lists and the Top 8 from Zurich should give you a good idea of what to expect at your local PTQs and Trials.



Marco Cirigliano, 2nd place GP Zurich '04

The most interesting development over the weekend was the second place deck from Grand Prix Zurich—a blue-green concoction with some countermagic and *Crystal Shard*. The deck plays like a block version of the green-white slide deck from Standard. It can cast Shaman every turn, Witness up anything at will, dig out all the land in the deck with *Solemn Simulacrum*, and ping with *Triskelion* all the live long day.

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RULES

Matteo Cirigliano		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		<b>Sideboard</b>
12 Forest	3 Annul	1 Annul
12 Island	4 Condescend	2 Duplicant
24 lands	3 Crystal Shard	4 Last Word
4 Eternal Witness	4 Echoing Truth	4 Tel-Jilad Justice
4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Oxidize	4 Troll Astetic
2 Triskelion	4 Thirst for Knowledge	15 sideboard cards
4 Viridian Shaman	22 other spells	
14 creatures		



My first thought when I saw this list was to try and build a new version that used *Vedalken Mastermind* instead of the *Crystal Shard*. With everyone running green for artifact destruction it seemed like the Mastermind would be harder to kill. He presents several problems though. He costs double blue, you can't use him the turn he comes into play, and he has no interactions with your opponent's board. Even if you only get one or two uses out of your *Crystal Shard* it should be a huge game swing in your favor; whether you are hitting two artifacts with one Shaman or returning some *Tooth and Nail* cards to an opponent's hand.

*Tooth and Nail* was the winner of the event but the blue-green list was all anyone could talk about as we followed the coverage this weekend. The deck looks like the best team sealed deck you could ever hope to build but after this weekend *Crystal Shard* will finally have to get some respect as a constructed card. It should not be that surprising since its more expensive predecessor—*Erratic Portal*—saw some constructed play.

Blue and green were the big colors this weekend with many players taking advantage of the new counterspell *Condescend* and the previously underused *Annul*. In addition to Matteo's deck there was also a blue-red March of the Machines deck that made the Top 8 with *Annul* and *Condescend*. There were also two Affinity decks with *Cranial Plating* as well as two mono-Green Beacon decks. The final deck was almost mono-green but it touched blue for *Thirst for*

Knowledge and the startlingly potent Echoing Truth. All in all a much more varied metagame than was originally anticipated. Note that there was not a single Ironworks deck in the Top 8—a theme that continues through the two PTQ Top 8s that follow. (One quick note, a few of the decks I'll be covering today are still missing a card or two. Even as I feel those lists are still well worth including, but I'm hopeful we can still complete the lists.)

**Adam Fronsee**  
GFC Freshmaker - PTQ Columbus 6/25/04 (top 2)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
12 Forest	2 Creeping Mold	2 Creeping Mold
12 Mountain	3 Electrostatic Bolt	3 Detonate
24 lands	4 Fireball	4 Karstoderm
4 Arc Slogger	4 Molten Rain	3 Pulse of the Forge
4 Eternal Witness	4 Oxidize	3 Shunt
4 Solemn Simulacrum	3 Tel-Jilad Justice	15 sideboard cards
4 Viridian Shaman	20 other spells	
16 creatures		

**JD House**  
Mono-Green - PTQ Columbus 6/25/04 (top 2)

Main Deck 61 cards		Sideboard
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Oxidize	4 Karstoderm
22 Forest	4 Predator's Strike	2 Ouphe Vandals
26 lands	8 other spells	3 Sculpting Steel
3 Eternal Witness		2 Sword of Fire and Ice
4 Fangren Firstborn		2 Sword of Light and Shadow
1 Glissa Sunseeker		2 Unknown
4 Molder Slug		15 sideboard cards
4 Tel-Jilad Chosen		
4 Troll Ascetic		
4 Viridian Shaman		
3 Viridian Zealot		
27 creatures		

**Greg Kelly**  
Affinity - PTQ Columbus 6/25/04 (top 4)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Chromatic Sphere	3 Annul
3 Glimmervoid	2 Night's Whisper	3 Blinkmoth Nexus
4 Great Furnace	3 Shrapnel Blast	4 Furnace Dragon
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Thoughtcast	4 Seething Song
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Welding Jar	1 Shrapnel Blast
19 lands	17 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
4 Somber Hoverguard		
24 creatures		

**Kyle Smith**  
U/W Control - PTQ Columbus 6/25/04 (top 4)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
16 Island	3 Annul	1 Annul
6 Plains	4 Condescend	3 Hallow
<hr/>		1 Last Word
22 lands	3 Echoing Truth	1 Leonin Abunas
3 Leonin Abunas	4 March of the Machines	1 Pristine Angel
3 Pristine Angel	3 Talisman of Progress	4 Purge
4 Solemn Simulacrum	3 Thirst for Knowledge	1 Thirst for Knowledge
<hr/>		1 Unknown
10 creatures	4 Vedalken Shackles	2 Vex
	4 Wayfarer's Bauble	
	28 other spells	15 sideboard cards

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
13 Forest	3 Electrostatic Bolt	4 Creeping Mold
11 Mountain	3 Fireball	4 Magma Jet
<hr/>		4 Shunt
24 lands	4 Molten Rain	3 Tel-Jilad Justice
4 Arc-Slogger	4 Oxidize	
4 Eternal Witness	2 Pulse of the Forge	15 sideboard cards
4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Talisman of Impulse	
4 Viridian Shaman	20 other spells	
16 creatures		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
12 Forest	2 Creeping Mold	2 Creeping Mold
13 Mountain	4 Electrostatic Bolt	3 Detonate
<hr/>		4 Karstoderm
25 lands	4 Fireball	3 Pulse of the Forge
4 Arc-Slogger	4 Molten Rain	3 Shunt
4 Eternal Witness	4 Oxidize	
4 Solemn Simulacrum	1 Tel-Jilad Justice	15 sideboard cards
4 Viridian Shaman	19 other spells	
16 creatures		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Barter in Blood	2 Grim Reminder
22 Swamp	4 Death Cloud	1 Island
<hr/>		4 March of the Machines
24 lands	4 Echoing Decay	4 Shattered Dreams
4 Greater Harvester	4 Guardian Idol	4 Terror
4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Night's Whisper	
8 creatures	4 Talisman of Dominance	15 sideboard cards
	4 Wayfarer's Bauble	
	28 other spells	

Main Deck		Sideboard
<b>Tom LaPille</b>		
Affinity - PTQ Columbus 6/25/04 (top 8)		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Chromatic Sphere	4 Annul
3 Glimmervoid	2 Night's Whisper	3 Blinkmoth Nexus
4 Great Furnace	3 Shrapnel Blast	4 Detonate
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Thoughtcast	3 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Welding Jar	1 Shrapnel Blast
19 lands	17 other spells	15 sideboard cards
<hr/>		
4 Arcbound Ravager		
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
4 Myr Enforcer		
4 Somber Hoverguard		
24 creatures		

There were a couple of things that really excited me in this Top 8. The most dominant deck was a green-red deck that the players named the GFC Freshmaker. It took three of the Top 8 spots and it seems like a very solid deck to be playing in a field full of Affinity and Ironworks—although that is likely to change as the metagame shifts with the results from Zurich and these PTQs.

Kyle Smith's Top 4 deck is very intriguing to me. There are only a handful of ways to deal with a **Pristine Angel** in this format and you can probably sit back and counter them all. **Barter in Blood** and **Death Cloud** should be susceptible to condescension and **Oblivion Stones** can be **Annul**. (I have not seen anyone playing **Solar Tide**... yet.) The other exciting card in the deck is **Vedalken Shackles**. Mike Flores wrote a column this week about trying to abuse this card. It seems that Kyle has the right idea with maindeck **Leonin Abunas** to protect his **Control Magic** on a stick. The deck went on to win the PTQ on the following day.

Mono-green continued to perform well in this format and there was one such deck in the Top 2. (I am not sure if this was a two-slot qualifier or who won the finals.) It is curious to me that this deck chose to run **Predator's Strike** over **Echoing Courage**. The **Darksteel** growth effect is utterly ridiculous with **Beacon of Creation** and if I were going to play JD's deck I would certainly change the **Predator's Strikes** without hesitation.

The other card that has intrigued me is **Grim Reminder** from the sideboard of Ervin Tormos' mono-black deck. He had it in his sideboard for the mono-black mirror no doubt but it really seems like it would shine in a green on green match. Green is far and away the most commonly played color and has redundant cards from list to list—**Eternal Witness**, **Viridian Shaman**, **Beacon of Creation**, all the artifact destruction spells, etc.—so a black-green list with **Grim Reminder** might be a possibility. In fact, there was one deck in the Top 4 of the next PTQ that was green-black with four **Grim Reminders** in the board so we may already be seeing this take shape.



Somehow, despite every deck hating—loathing even—artifacts, Affinity continued to place multiple decks in the Top 8. None of these decks chose to play **Cranial Plating**, with **Night's Whisper** taking up those four spots. It is really a testament to the raw power of the Affinity decks that they continue to do well with all the obstacles that are thrown in their path. It also took multiple spots in the second PTQ of the weekend and picked up the moniker Hatless Affinity for the lack of **Cranial Platings**. It finished second to blue-white and a deck with **Plating** also top 8'd.

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
14 Island	3 Annul	1 Annul
8 Plains	4 Condescend	2 Echoing Truth
2 Stalking Stones	3 March of the Machines	3 Last Word
24 lands	2 Pulse of the Fields	1 Leonin Abunas
	4 Talisman of Progress	1 March of the Machines
	3 Thirst for Knowledge	3 Platinum Angel
	4 Vedalken Shackles	4 Purge
	3 Wayfarer's Bauble	15 sideboard cards
3 Leonin Abunas	26 other spells	
3 Pristine Angel		
4 Solemn Simulacrum		
10 creatures		

## Greg Kelly

Capless Affinity - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (2nd place)



### Main Deck

60 cards

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

20 lands

4 Arcbound Ravager  
4 Arcbound Worker  
4 Disciple of the Vault  
4 Frogmite  
4 Sombre Hoverguard

20 creatures

4 Chromatic Sphere  
4 Night's Whisper  
4 Shrapnel Blast  
4 Thoughtcast  
4 Welding Jar

20 other spells

### Sideboard

4 Damping Matrix  
4 Electrostatic Bolt  
2 Island  
3 Qumulox  
2 Terror

15 sideboard cards

## Craig Frost

Green-Black - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 4)



### Main Deck

62 cards

4 Blinkmoth Nexus  
8 Forest  
4 Mirrodin's Core  
8 Swamp

24 lands

4 Eternal Witness  
4 Solemn Simulacrum  
4 Sylvok Explorer  
4 Troll Ascetic  
4 Viridian Shaman

20 creatures

4 Death Cloud  
4 Echoing Decay  
4 Night's Whisper  
1 Oxidize  
1 Tel-Jilad Justice  
4 Wayfarer's Bauble

18 other spells

### Sideboard

1 Creeping Mold  
4 Grim Reminder  
3 Oxidize  
4 Shattered Dreams  
3 Tel-Jilad Justice

15 sideboard cards

## Dylan Austin

Mono-Green - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 4)



### Main Deck

60 cards

4 Blinkmoth Nexus  
20 Forest

24 lands

4 Eternal Witness  
4 Fangren Firstborn  
4 Molder Slug  
4 Sylvok Explorer  
4 Troll Ascetic  
4 Viridian Shaman  
4 Viridian Zealot

28 creatures

4 Beacon of Creation  
4 Echoing Courage

8 other spells

### Sideboard

1 Bloodscent  
3 Creeping Mold  
3 Karstoderm  
4 Oxidize  
4 Tel-Jilad Justice

15 sideboard cards

## Ervin Tormos

Reminder doesn't wreck me.dec - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 8)



### Main Deck

60 cards

4 Blinkmoth Nexus  
21 Forest

4 Beacon of Creation  
4 Oxidize

### Sideboard

4 Karstoderm  
3 Nourish

25 lands	3 Predator's Strike	1 Predator's Strike
4 Eternal Witness	11 other spells	3 Sword of Fire and Ice
4 Fangren Firstborn		4 Tel-Jilad Justice
4 Molder Slug		15 sideboard cards
4 Tel-Jilad Chosen		
4 Troll Ascetic		
4 Viridian Shaman		
24 creatures		

### Tony Chopcinski

Affinity - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
3 Darksteel Citadel	4 Chromatic Sphere	4 Electrostatic Bolt
3 Glimmervoid	4 Cranial Plating	3 Genesis Chamber
4 Great Furnace	3 Paradise Mantle	2 Grab the Reins
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Thoughtcast	1 Molder Slug
4 Vault of Whispers	15 other spells	1 Myr Enforcer
18 lands		4 Shrapnel Blast
4 Arcbound Ravager		15 sideboard cards
4 Arcbound Worker		
4 Disciple of the Vault		
4 Frogmite		
3 Myr Enforcer		
4 Ornithopter		
4 Somber Hoverguard		
27 creatures		

### Peter Rollenhagen

Green-Red - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
12 Forest	4 Electrostatic Bolt	3 Creeping Mold
13 Mountain	4 Fireball	4 Karstoderm
25 lands	4 Molten Rain	4 Magma Jet
4 Arc-Slogger	4 Oxidize	4 Troll Ascetic
4 Eternal Witness	3 Pulse of the Forge	15 sideboard cards
4 Solemn Simulacrum	19 other spells	
4 Viridian Shaman		
16 creatures		

### Eric Taylor

Tooth and Nail - PTQ Columbus 6/26/04 (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Cloudpost	3 Fireball	4 Damping Matrix
13 Forest	4 Oxidize	3 Duplicant
4 Mountain	4 Reap and Sow	2 Grab the Reins
1 Stalking Stones	4 Sylvan Scrying	1 Mephidross Vampire
22 lands	3 Talisman of Impulse	2 Mindslaver
2 Darksteel Colossus	4 Tooth and Nail	2 Shatter
4 Eternal Witness	22 other spells	1 Triskelion
1 Leonin Abunas		15 sideboard cards
1 Platinum Angel		

4 Solemn Simulacrum  
4 Viridian Shaman

16 creatures

The Affinity deck that featured **Cranial Plating** also featured **Paradise Mantle** as an additional zero casting cost artifact and mana fixer. As I mentioned earlier, I was especially intrigued by Craig Frost's green-black Top 4 deck with the **Grim Reminders** in the sideboard. It seems like it could be a very exciting metagame deck if you moved some number of them into the maindeck as burn against all the green decks that seem to be flying about. I would also make sure to include **Echoing Decay** to deal with those pesky Beacon tokens.

Eric Taylor made the Top 8 of this PTQ with a Tooth and Nail deck with **Mephidross Vampire** in the board---similar to Manuel Bucher's winning deck from Zurich. I don't know that I could resist including that combo in my maindeck. Especially with so much green and affinity in the Top 8 of all these events.

As you can see there are quite a few decks and strategies to choose from for this PTQ season and it is only a week old. Do with these lists what you will. Those that prefer not to compete with decklists from the net should still have ample lists to use a playtest gauntlet and offer inspiration for your own creations.



Bonus Standard decklists: Top 8 from Amateur Championships at Origins

*Has it found its place?*

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
10 Forest	2 Mindslaver	1 Bringer of the White Dawn
4 Urza's Mine	4 Reap and Sow	1 Duplicant
4 Urza's Power Plant	3 Sylvan Scrying	1 Mindslaver
4 Urza's Tower	4 Tooth and Nail	2 Oblivion Stone
22 lands	3 Wayfarer's Bauble	3 Oxidize
	16 other spells	2 Plow Under
2 Darksteel Colossus		1 Ravenous Baloth
1 Duplicant		1 Sundering Titan
4 Eternal Witness		3 Xantid Swarm
1 Mephidross Vampire		15 sideboard cards
3 Ravenous Baloth		
3 Solemn Simulacrum		
1 Triskelion		
3 Vine Trellis		
4 Viridian Shaman		
22 creatures		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
6 Forest	2 Akroma's Vengeance	3 Altar's Light
5 Plains	4 Astral Slide	2 Damping Matrix
4 Secluded Steppe	4 Decree of Justice	3 Gilded Light
2 Temple of the False God	3 Plow Under	3 Sacred Ground
4 Tranquil Thicket	3 Rampant Growth	1 Viridian Shaman
4 Windwept Heath	4 Renewed Faith	3 Xantid Swarm
25 lands	4 Wrath of God	15 sideboard cards
	24 other spells	
2 Eternal Dragon		
4 Eternal Witness		
3 Krosan Tusker		
2 Viridian Shaman		
11 creatures		

## Joseph Hartline

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (Top 4)



### Main Deck 60 cards

11 Forest  
11 Swamp

22 lands

4 Chittering Rats  
4 Eternal Witness  
4 Ravenous Baloth  
3 Solemn Simulacrum  
4 Viridian Shaman

19 creatures

2 Beacon of Unrest  
3 Death Cloud  
3 Echoing Decay  
4 Night's Whisper  
4 Pentad Prism  
3 Plow Under

19 other spells

### Sideboard

3 Infest  
3 Naturalize  
3 Oxidize  
3 Persecute  
3 Withered Wretch

15 sideboard cards

## Dylan Gribble

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (Top 4)



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Cloudpost  
4 Flooded Strand  
3 Island  
7 Plains  
1 Temple of the False God

19 lands

3 Eternal Dragon  
4 Solemn Simulacrum  
3 Weathered Wayfarer

10 creatures

3 Akroma's Vengeance  
1 Beacon of Immortality  
4 Decree of Justice  
2 Mana Leak  
4 Mindslaver  
2 Pulse of the Fields  
2 Renewed Faith  
3 Rewind  
1 Talisman of Progress  
3 Thirst for Knowledge  
2 Unknown  
4 Wrath of God

31 other spells

### Sideboard

3 Altar's Light  
1 Annul  
4 Chastise  
2 Echoing Truth  
1 Sacred Ground  
2 Sanctimony  
2 Stifle

15 sideboard cards

## Michael Day

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (Top 8)



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Forest  
2 Forgotten Cave  
2 Mountain  
5 Plains  
3 Secluded Steppe  
3 Tranquil Thicket  
2 Windswept Heath  
3 Wooded Foothills

24 lands

4 Eternal Dragon  
4 Eternal Witness  
2 Krosan Tusker  
3 Viridian Shaman

13 creatures

2 Akroma's Vengeance  
4 Astral Slide  
2 Gilded Light  
4 Lightning Rift  
3 Renewed Faith  
3 Spark Spray  
1 Unknown  
4 Wrath of God

23 other spells

### Sideboard

2 Gempalm Incinerator  
3 Lay Waste  
4 Oxidize  
2 Plow Under  
3 Scrabbling Claws  
1 Viridian Shaman

15 sideboard cards

## Michael McGuire

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (top 8)



### Main Deck 60 cards

### Sideboard

3 Blinkmoth Nexus 4 Great Furnace 14 Mountain	3 Chrome Mox 4 Magma Jet 3 Shrapnel Blast	4 Electrostatic Bolt 4 Molten Rain 4 Shatter 3 Stone Rain
21 lands	10 other spells	15 sideboard cards
3 Clickslither 4 Goblin Piledriver 4 Goblin Sharpshooter 4 Goblin Sledder 4 Goblin Warchief 4 Siege-Gang Commander 4 Skirk Prospector 2 Sparksmith		
29 creatures		

### Matt Vernon

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Forgotten Cave	2 Akroma's Vengeance	1 Akroma's Vengeance
7 Mountain	3 Astral Slide	4 Altar's Light
9 Plains	4 Gilded Light	4 Dwarven Blastminer
4 Secluded Steppe	4 Lightning Rift	1 Mindslaver
2 Temple of the False God	2 Mindslaver	2 Pulse of the Fields
26 lands	3 Slice and Dice	3 Shatter
4 Eternal Dragon	4 Spark Spray	15 sideboard cards
3 Exalted Angel	3 Wrath of God	
2 Solemn Simulacrum	25 other spells	
9 creatures		

### Clair Bigelow

Amateur Championships 6/25/04 (Top 8)

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
7 Forest	2 Akroma's Vengeance	3 Altar's Light
7 Plains	4 Astral Slide	3 Damping Matrix
4 Secluded Steppe	3 Decree of Justice	3 Gilded Light
2 Temple of the False God	3 Plow Under	3 Sacred Ground
4 Tranquil Thicket	4 Rampant Growth	3 Xantid Swarm
24 lands	4 Renewed Faith	15 sideboard cards
2 Eternal Dragon	4 Wrath of God	
4 Eternal Witness	24 other spells	
3 Krosan Tusker		
3 Viridian Shaman		
12 creatures		

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](http://Top8Magic.com), the publishing house that is releasing Michael J. Flores: Deckade.



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