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Brian David-Marshall
Swimming With Sharks
Wednesday, July 14, 2004



There was an interesting new development on the PTQ scene this past weekend—a couple in fact. I was at [Pro Tour Seattle](#) providing some [blog-based coverage](#), confessing to murder on foreign soil, and—most importantly—collecting PTQ decklists. There were two PTQs, one on Friday and another on Saturday with 84 and 91 players respectively. I posted the Top 2 lists from the Friday event in my blog. Even before the results from Saturday came in I wrote myself a note reminding me to talk about Phil Freneau's list that finished somewhere in the middle of the pack of the first event.

When the Saturday event results came in I was able to crumple up that note since he won the tournament with it. Not only did he win, he didn't lose a match throughout the tournament. He went 7-0 in the Swiss and swept through the Top 8 in similar fashion. His deck? Blue-green Tooth and Nail or Counter-Tooth.

The deck features a much narrower suite of creatures than most Tooth and Nail decks and runs four [Condescend](#), [Serum Visions](#), and [Wayfarer's Baubles](#). It also has access to [March of the Machines](#) from the sidebar. I'll get to his actual decklist a little bit later in the article, but first I want to discuss some of the other developments that might be invisible if you only look at Top 8 decklists. Over the past couple of weeks I have noticed two cards drifting into decks. The first is [Rude Awakening](#). Anyone who knows me should realize that I love this card. I have always liked attacking with my lands—from [Thelonite Druid](#) to [Natural Affinity](#).

While I have often been alone in my love for land animation spells it seems that the whole PTQ circuit is coming to a [Rude Awakening](#). Two different Top 8 lists from Sunday were sporting one or two copies, one in Mono-Green Beats and the other in a Blue-Green Crystal Witness deck. It was sprinkled throughout the tournament in almost any type of deck that was running green mana. As long as you have eight lands it provides you with sixteen extra points of power to attack with—think of it as a green [Fireball](#).

The other card that has started to appear on decklists is [Thought Courier](#). It should come as no surprise since the card is functionally the same as [Merfolk Looter](#) and [Cephalid Looter](#)—two cards that have seen play in multiple constructed formats. It does not appear in any of the Top 8 decklists but this was the first week I have even seen it on a decklist—other than my black-blue Beacon of Unrest deck—and I can't imagine it not seeing more and more play.

Another interesting development was the fact that the elimination rounds on Saturday were all green, all the time. Every deck in the Top 8 was running Forests—Tooth and Nail, Mono-Green, Blue-Green, and Green-Red. There was no Big Red, no Affinity, no Blue-White Angel Control, or anything else that does not feature Forests. If you wanted to find any of those decks you had to look below the Top 8 and that got me to thinking.

For the past few weeks this column has examined the Top 8 decklists from a number of different events around North America. I decided that this week we would look at the final standings from an event and replace people's names with the type of deck they played. I will present decklists from the highest finishing deck from each deck type. Hopefully this will give you a good idea of what to expect at your local PTQs, inspire you to hone some new deck ideas that might be a card or two short of the cut, and show off the diversity of the [Mirrodin Block Constructed](#) format.

Final Standings after seven rounds

QT Columbus 7/11/04

Rank	Decktype	Points
1	Blue-Green Tooth	21
2	Tooth and Nail	18
3	Mono-Green	18
4	Crystal Witness	16
5	Tooth and Nail	16
6	Tooth and Nail	16
7	Crystal Witness	16
8	Green-Red	16
9	Big Red	16
10	Affinity	15

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11	Affinity	15
12	Affinity	15
13	Crystal Witness	15
14	Green-Red	15
15	Affinity	15
16	Angel Control	15
17	Tooth and Nail	13
18	Blue-Red March	13
19	Tooth and Nail	12
20	Big Red	12
21	Affinity	12
22	Affinity	12
23	Big Red	12
24	Affinity	12
25	Tooth and Nail	12
26	Mono-Green	12
27	Big Red	12
28	Crystal Witness	12
29	Tooth and Nail	10
30	Affinity	9
31	Crystal Witness	9
32	Crystal Witness	9
33	Big Red	9
34	Tooth and Nail	9
35	Angel Control	9
36	Ironworks	9
37	Big Red	9
38	Green-Red	9
39	Affinity	9
40	Death Cloud	9
41	Crystal Witness	9
42	Angel Control	7
43	Tooth and Nail	7
44	Affinity	6
45	Big Red	6
46	Big Red	6
47	Mono-Green	6
48	Crystal Witness	6
49	Crystal Witness	6
50	Crystal Witness	6
51	Blue-Red March	6
52	Blue-Green Tooth	6
53	Green-Red	6
54	Tooth and Nail	6
55	Green-Red	6
56	Blue-Red March	6
57	Angel Control	6
58	WW Equipment	6
59	Blue-Red March	4
60	Crystal Witness	4
61	Mono-Green	3
62	Affinity	3
63	Affinity	3
64	Affinity	3
65	Crystal Witness	3
66	Affinity	3
67	Death Cloud	3
68	Affinity	3
69	Affinity	3
70	Affinity	3
71	Angel Control	3
72	Affinity	3
73	Crystal Witness	3

74	Crystal Witness	3
75	Tooth and Nail	3
76	Affinity	3
77	Tooth and Nail	3
78	Angel Control	1
79	Crystal Witness	0
80	Big Red	0
81	Angel Control	0
82	Mono-Green	0
83	Big Red	0
84	Crystal Witness	0
85	Mass Hysteria	0
86	Blue-Green Tooth	0
87	Tooth and Nail	0
88	Affinity	0
89	Green-Red	0
90	Green-Red	0
91	Blue-Green Tooth	0

On to the decklists! I am going to list the top finishing decklist from each archetype on the list as opposed to the more traditional Top 8 listings.

Phil Freneau

Counter Tooth - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 1st after Swiss/Winner

Main Deck <i>60 cards</i>		Sideboard
4 Cloudpost 11 Forest 7 Island <hr/> 22 lands 1 Darksteel Colossus 1 Duplicant 4 Eternal Witness 1 Leonin Abunas 1 Platinum Angel 4 Viridian Shaman <hr/> 12 creatures	4 Condescend 4 Oxidize 2 Reap and Sow 4 Serum Visions 4 Sylvan Scrying 4 Tooth and Nail 4 Wayfarer's Bauble <hr/> 26 other spells	3 Echoing Truth 1 Hoverguard Sweepers 3 Last Word 4 March of the Machines 1 Reap and Sow 3 Tel-Jilad Justice <hr/> 15 sideboard cards

Wenzel Krautman

Tooth and Nail - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 2nd after Swiss/Quarterfinalist

Main Deck <i>60 cards</i>		Sideboard
4 Cloudpost 19 Forest <hr/> 23 lands 1 Bringer of the Black Dawn 1 Bringer of the White Dawn 1 Duplicant 4 Eternal Witness 1 Leonin Abunas 1 Platinum Angel 4 Solemn Simulacrum <hr/> 13 creatures	4 Mindslaver 4 Oblivion Stone 4 Oxidize 4 Reap and Sow 4 Sylvan Scrying 4 Tooth and Nail <hr/> 24 other spells	4 Creeping Mold 4 Deconstruct 4 Tel-Jilad Justice 1 Triskelion 2 Viridian Shaman <hr/> 15 sideboard cards

Hannu Vallin

Mono-Green - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 3rd after Swiss/Semifinalist

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
25 Forest	4 Beacon of Creation	2 Duplicant
25 lands	2 Echoing Courage	3 Eternal Witness
	4 Oxidize	3 Oblivion Stone
4 Fangren Firstborn	1 Rude Awakening	1 Rude
4 Molder Slug	11 other spells	Awakening
4 Sylvok Explorer		2 Sword of Fire and Ice
4 Tel-Jilad Chosen		4 Tel-Jilad Justice
4 Troll Ascetic		15 sideboard cards
4 Viridian Shaman		
24 creatures		

Tim Bulger

Crystal Witness - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 4th after Swiss/Semifinalist



Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
11 Forest	3 Annul	1 Annul
12 Island	4 Condescend	2 Last Word
23 lands	2 Crystal Shard	4 March of the Machines
	4 Echoing Truth	1 Rude
4 Eternal Witness	2 Last Word	Awakening
4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Oxidize	3 Scrambling Claws
4 Viridian Shaman	2 Rude Awakening	4 Troll Ascetic
12 creatures	4 Serum Visions	15 sideboard cards
	25 other spells	

Grant Struck

Green-Red - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 8th after Swiss/Quarterfinalist



Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
12 Forest	2 Creeping Mold	2 Creeping Mold
2 Mirrodin's Core	4 Electrostatic Bolt	2 Detonate
11 Mountain	3 Fireball	1 Fireball
25 lands	4 Molten Rain	4 Karstoderm
	4 Oxidize	2 Magma Giant
4 Arc-Slogger	17 other spells	4 Tel-Jilad Justice
4 Eternal Witness		15 sideboard cards
3 Sylvok Explorer		
3 Troll Ascetic		
4 Viridian Shaman		
18 creatures		

Jason Adams

Big Red - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 9th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
3 Blinkmoth Nexus	2 Beacon of Destruction	4 Electrostatic Bolt
4 Darksteel Citadel	2 Detonate	3 Grab the Reins
4 Great Furnace	3 Flamebreak	4 Molten Rain
14 Mountain	2 Pulse of the Forge	4 Shatter
25 lands	3 Seething Song	15 sideboard cards
	4 Shrapnel Blast	

- 4 Arc-Slogger
- 3 Furnace Dragon
- 4 Slith Firewalker
- 4 Solemn Simulacrum

15 creatures

- 2 Talisman of Impulse
- 2 Talisman of Indulgence

20 other spells

James Davis

Affinity - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 10th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards

- 3 Blinkmoth Nexus
- 4 Darksteel Citadel
- 2 Glimmervoid
- 3 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
- 3 Myr Enforcer
- 2 Myr Retriever
- 4 Somber Hoverguard

25 creatures

- 3 Aether Vial
- 4 Chromatic Sphere
- 4 Cranial Plating
- 4 Thoughtcast

15 other spells

Sideboard

- 4 Furnace Dragon
- 2 Moriok Rigger
- 2 Myr Retriever
- 4 Seething Song
- 3 Thought Courier

15 sideboard cards

Jonathan Job

Angel Control - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 16th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards

- 13 Island
- 9 Plains

22 lands

- 3 Leonin Abunas
- 3 Pristine Angel
- 3 Solemn Simulacrum

9 creatures

- 2 Annul
- 4 Condescend
- 2 March of the Machines
- 3 Pulse of the Fields
- 4 Serum Visions
- 4 Talisman of Progress
- 3 Thirst for Knowledge
- 4 Vedalken Shackles
- 3 Wayfarer's Bauble

29 other spells

Sideboard

- 3 Acquire
- 2 Annul
- 4 Last Word
- 2 March of the Machines
- 1 Pristine Angel
- 3 Thought Courier

15 sideboard cards

Justin Ling

Blue-Red March - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 18th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards

- 8 Island
- 13 Mountain
- 2 Stalking Stones

23 lands

- 4 Arc-Slogger
- 3 Solemn Simulacrum
- 4 Thought Courier

11 creatures

- 2 Annul
- 4 Condescend
- 3 Echoing Truth
- 4 Electrostatic Bolt
- 2 Grab the Reins
- 3 March of the Machines
- 4 Pulse of the Forge
- 4 Wayfarer's Bauble

26 other spells

Sideboard

- 2 Detonate
- 1 Grab the Reins
- 1 March of the Machines
- 3 Oblivion Stone
- 4 Shatter
- 4 Slith Firewalker

15 sideboard cards

Anthony Avitollo

Ironworks - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 36th after Swiss/Winner



Main Deck 60 cards

1 Ancient Den
4 Darksteel Citadel
4 Great Furnace
4 Seat of the Synod
1 Tree of Tales
1 Vault of Whispers

15 lands

0 creatures

2 Chromatic Sphere
4 Chrome Mox
3 Condescend
3 Fabricate
2 Fireball
1 Goblin Charbelcher
4 Krark-Clan Ironworks
4 Myr Incubator
4 Pentad Prism
4 Serum Visions
3 Talisman of Dominance
3 Talisman of Progress
4 Thirst for Knowledge
4 Thoughtcast

45 other spells

Sideboard

4 Annul
2 Bringer of the Black Dawn
1 Bringer of the Green Dawn
4 Thought Courier
4 Welding Jar

15 sideboard cards

Bryan McGraw

Mono-Black Cloud - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 40th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards

2 Blinkmoth Nexus
22 Swamp

24 lands

3 Solemn Simulacrum

3 creatures

3 Barter in Blood
4 Consume Spirit
4 Death Cloud
4 Echoing Decay
4 Guardian Idol
3 Night's Whisper
4 Oblivion Stone
3 Promise of Power
4 Shattered Dreams

33 other spells

Sideboard

1 Barter in Blood
3 Devour in Shadow
3 Dross Golem
4 Fill with Fright
4 Lose Hope

15 sideboard cards

Dennison Adkins

White Weenie-equip - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 58th after Swiss



Main Deck 60 cards

4 Ancient Den
15 Plains

19 lands

4 Auriok Steelshaper
3 Emissary of Hope
3 Leonin Elder
4 Leonin Shikari
4 Leonin Skyhunter
3 Razor Golem
3 Skyhunter Prowler
3 Skyhunter Skirmisher

27 creatures

3 Bonesplitter
3 Lightning Greaves
3 Mask of Memory
3 Raise the Alarm
2 Sword of Fire and Ice

14 other spells

Sideboard

3 Altar's Light
2 Leonin Abunas
3 Purge
2 Scrabbling Claws
3 Stasis Cocoon
2 Sword of Fire and Ice

15 sideboard cards

Brian Coghlan

Inquest Mass Hysteria - PTQ Columbus (7/11/04, Mirrodin Block Constructed) - 85th after Swiss/Winner



Main Deck

Sideboard

60 cards		
11 Mountain	4 Chrome Mox	4 Detonate
7 Swamp	4 Electrostatic Bolt	1 Dismantle
18 lands	2 Lightning Greaves	1 Engineered Explosives
4 Cosmic Larva	4 Mass Hysteria	1 Lightning Greaves
4 Desecration Elemental	4 Pentad Prism	4 Shatter
4 Eater of Days	4 Plunge into Darkness	4 Terror
12 creatures	4 Shrapnel Blast	15 sideboard cards
	4 Talisman of Indulgence	
	30 other spells	

So there you have it... The top decks from each archetype. Lest anyone think I am poking fun by including the last couple of decklists, the last place deck in the tournament was Counter Tooth. It was almost identical to the deck that finished in first place.

So what can we draw from this data? For starters, Green is good. Between the artifact destruction and graveyard recursion along with reasonably costed creatures that also do the two aforementioned tasks—green is too good to not be played. Whether it is in Tooth and Nail, Crystal Witness, Red-Green, or just mono-green the color formed a wedge to keep Big Red, Affinity, and Angel Control out of the Top 8.

So what can we do about it? Well, Phil Freneau decided to add blue to his Tooth and Nail deck in order to have counter-magic and sideboarded **March of the Machines**. You could also run **Scrabbling Claws**—something that popped up in more than a couple of the lists this weekend—to slow down **Eternal Witness**. There is still plenty of room for innovation and improvement in the format. Death Cloud has yet to make its presence felt and as people soften up their main decks to deal with non-Affinity decks, you will probably find a window where Affinity and possibly even Ironworks will do well.

As for what to play this weekend? I am still up in the air. I know that there is already quite a bit of buzz about the Counter Tooth deck so even if you choose not to play that deck you should expect to see it—lots of it. I think that between Crystal Witness and Counter Tooth more than 25% of the field will be blue and green. Both decks seem like they would benefit from the addition of **Thought Courier** in the color mirror. Neither deck can deal with Looter in the early game and since both decks feature **Eternal Witness** a card in the bin is as good as one in play and that card back in your hand—or something like that.

Next week: I am actually home for the weekend and will have a chance to play in a PTQ at Neutral Ground. I'll let you know how it goes but I will mostly be looking back at successful decks from the past for next week's article...

*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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