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# On Tour, Part 2



Mark Rosewater · Making Magic  
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When [last we left the Pro Tour](#), we had just finished the fifth season. The time is September, 2000.

## SEASON SIX ('00/'01)

**Pro Tour-New York (September 28 – October 1, 2000)**

**FORMAT: Mercadian Masques Block Team Sealed (Mercadian Masques, Nemesis, Prophecy) – first day, Mercadian Masques Block Team Rochester Draft (Mercadian Masques, Nemesis, Prophecy) – last two days**

- 1) Potato Nation [Scott Johns (United States) – **5TH FINAL DAY**, Gary Wise (Canada) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Michael Turian(United States)]
- 2) Car Acrobatic Team [Andrew Johnson (United States), Aaron Forsythe (United States), Andrew Cuneo (United States)]
- 3) Rolled-up Aces [Thomas Keller (United States), Shawn Keller (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Dan Clegg (United States)]
- 4) Draften Und Spielen [Patrick Mello (Germany), Christian Lührs (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, Stephan Valkyser (United States)]



The second team Pro Tour proved that this format was one of the most skill testing formats at the Pro Tour (a claim that would later be cemented by a certain German team). The top four teams had all spent a great deal of time practicing and the work paid off. In the end, the group of three long-time Pros took home the trophy.

Scott Johns would be the fourth player to join the Five Final Day club. The final match came down to his game. Johns had never won a match in a finals before always bowing out in the quarter-finals. In one of the more emotional Pro Tour finals, Johns finally proved he was capable of becoming a Pro Tour winner.

This is also the first Top Eight for another future R&D member, Aaron Forstye.

**Pro Tour-Chicago (November 30 – December 3, 2000)**

**FORMAT: Standard**

- 1) Kai Budde (Germany) – **2nd FINAL DAY, 2nd PRO TOUR WIN**
- 2) Kamiel Cornelissen (The Netherlands)
- 3) Brian Kibler (United States)
- 4) Robert Dougherty (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Jon Finkel (United States) – **8th FINAL DAY**
- 6) Michael Pustilnik (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Zvi Mowshowitz (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 8) Jay Elarar (Canada)

And so begins one of the most amazing runs in Pro Tour history. Even with this win though, no one was yet willing to pass the crown from Finkel to Budde. After all, Finkel was now the first player to

have eight Final Day appearances. Budde did become the third player to win two Pro Tours (after Hovi and Finkel). This Top Eight is another contender for one of the best Top Eights of all time (a current total of 38 Final Day appearances).

**Pro Tour-Los Angeles  
(February 2-4, 2001)  
FORMAT: Invasion Block  
Rochester Draft (Invasion)**

- 1) Michael Pustilnik (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Kamiel Cornelissen (The Netherlands) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 3) Benedikt Klauser (Austria) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 4) Jon Finkel (United States) – **9th FINAL DAY**
- 5) Kyle Rose (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**
- 6) Michael Gurney (United States)
- 7) Erno Ekebom (Finland)
- 8) Lawrence Creech (United States)



Finkel racked up Final Day #9 as he, Michael Pustilnik and Kamiel Corenillsen all made back-to-back Top Eights. (Cornelissen was the most impressive as he became the first person to have back-to-back Top Two finishes.) In the end, Los Angeles proved the ground for yet another popular old-timer to win.

More than anything else, this Pro Tour was the last time “on the boat”. All of the Los Angeles Pro Tours had been held on the Queen Mary and it had become a sentimental favorite to many of the staff and players. In the end, the Pro Tour grew too large for the boat and the Southern California Pro Tours has since moved south to San Diego.

**Pro Tour-Tokyo (March 16-18, 2001)  
FORMAT: Invasion Block Constructed (Invasion, Planeshift)**

- 1) Zvi Mowshowitz (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Tsuyoshi Fujita (Japan)
- 3) Lucas Hager (United States)
- 4) Chris Benafel (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Ryan Fuller (Canada) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 6) Philip Freneau (United States)
- 7) Dave Williams (United States)
- 8) Frederico Bastos (Portugal)

This Pro Tour had several interesting factoids. First Canadian Ryan Fuller became the first person to sweep the Swiss rounds going 14-0. Second, it was the first time that four players played the exact same deck in the finals (there had been Pro Tours with similar deck types, but this was the first where all four played almost card-for-card the exact same decks). Zvi Mowshowitz, a popular Internet writer and long time “gravytrainer” (slang for someone able to constantly stays eligible based on their Pro Tour performance), proved that winning a constructed event was all about knowing the field. Mowshowitz’s deck was designed to specifically defeat the decks he expected to see at the event. Obviously, he correctly predicted the field.

The other big story was Tsuyoshi Fujita. The Japanese, while around since the early days of the pro Tour, had never managed to place someone in the Top Eight. Fujita not only accomplished this task but he made it all the way to second place. And in Tokyo. It was the most crowded Pro Tour final I remember.

**Pro Tour-Barcelona (May 4-6, 2001)  
FORMAT: Invasion Booster Draft (Invasion, Planeshift)**

- 1) Kai Budde (Germany) – **3rd FINAL DAY, 3rd PRO TOUR WIN**
- 2) Alan Comer (United States) – **5th FINAL DAY**
- 3) Daniel Clegg (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 4) Patrick Mello (Germany) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Brad Swan (United States)

- 6) Albertus Law (Singapore)
- 7) Yuri Kolomeyko (Ukraine)
- 8) Chad Ellis (United States)

Kai Budde becomes the first person to ever win three Pro Tours. But still he was not universally considered the top player. With a strong season (even if he didn't have any wins), Finkel was still thought of as number one.

Alan Comer became the fifth person to reach the Five Final Day mark. Comer would later go on to join Wizards as the lead card programmer for *Magic Online*. (My pick for best player to never have a Pro Tour win is a tie between Comer and Justice.)

### **2001 World Championships – Toronto, Canada (August 8-12, 2001)**

**FORMATS: Invasion Block Rochester Draft (*Invasion*, *Planeshift*, *Apocalypse*), Standard, Extended**

#### **Individuals**

- 1) Tom van de Logt (Netherlands)
- 2) Alex Borteh (USA)
- 3) Antoine Ruel (France)
- 4) Andrea Santin (Italy)
- 5) Michael Turian (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 6) Jan Tomcani (Slovak Republic)
- 7) Tommi Hovi (Finland) – **4th FINAL DAY**
- 8) John Ormerod (England) – **2nd FINAL DAY**

#### **Team**

- 1) United States (Trevor Blackwell, Brian Hegstad, Eugene Harvey)
- 2) Norway (Nicolai Herzog, Oyvind Odegaard, Jan Pieter Groenhof)

This top eight was noticeable for several things. First, while The Netherlands had proven to be a powerhouse, it had never before won a Pro Tour. Second, it showed that old time players could return to the game as Tommi Hovi posted his fourth Final Day appearance after a multi-year absence. And third, it showed the diversity on the Pro Tour as seven different countries showed up in the Top Eight.

That total was almost six though. The other big story of the event was the first time a player was DQ'ed from a Top Eight (since Mill's ejection at the second PT LA). The Head Judge ruled that United States player Dave Williams was playing with marked cards and was DQ'ed from the tournament. This gives Englishman John Ormerod the footnote of being one of only five players to make a Top Eight and not play on the Final Day (the other four being the fifth through eighth place at PT Columbus – where time forced a cut to Top Four).

Finally, the US dominated yet again in the team tournament (now reduced to three player teams to link up with the Team Rochester Draft format) this time defeating Team Norway. That made America's Worlds Team record 4-1.

Oh, and Kai Budde wins his second Pro Player of the Year title.

## **SEASON SEVEN ('01/'02)**

### **Pro Tour-New York (September 7-9, 2001)**

- 1) Phoenix Foundation [Kai Budde (Germany) – **4th FINAL DAY**, **4th PRO TOUR WIN**, Dirk Baberowski (Germany) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, **2nd PRO TOUR WIN**, Marco Blume (Germany)]
- 2) Les Plus Class [Amiel Tenenbaum (France), Nicolas Olivieri (France), Gabriel Nassif (France)]
- 3) Illuminati [Justin Gary (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Alex Shvartsman (United States), Zvi Mowshowitz (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**]
- 4) Car Acrobatic Team [Andrew Johnson (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Aaron Forsythe (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Andrew Cuneo (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**] – **2nd FINAL DAY FOR TEAM**





And so continues the dominance of Kai Budde. Together with fellow countrymen Dirk Baberowski and Marco Blume, Budde created what is almost surely the most dominant team in Pro Tour history. Phoenix Foundation managed to win the tournament *without losing a match*. This made Budde the first person (and thus far only person) to win four Pro Tours and Dirk Baberowski the fourth to win two.

The other interesting story was the repeat of Car Acrobatic Team (a "Speed Racer" reference for those that might not be familiar with the show). No team had ever made two team finals, let alone

back-to-back.

But even with four wins to Budde's record, there were still some that held out Finkel's spot as number one. As the story goes, a player asks Randy Buehler if Kai Budde was the best player in the world. Buehler replied, "Well, if he wins New Orleans, I guess he is."

### **Pro Tour-New Orleans (November 2-4 2001)**

**FORMAT: Extended**

- 1) Kai Budde (Germany) – **5th FINAL DAY**
- 2) Tomi Walamies (Finland)
- 3) Jelger Wiegersma (The Netherlands)
- 4) David Humpherys (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Anton Jonsson (Sweden)
- 6) Raphael Gennari (Switzerland)
- 7) Darwin Kastle (United States) – **6th FINAL DAY**
- 8) Benedikt Klauser (Austria) – **4th FINAL DAY**

If the Pro Tour were a movie, we'd cut from Randy's comment to a shot of Budde collecting his fifth trophy. At this point, no one could deny it. Finkel's era had passed and Budde's had begun.

The most memorable part of this Pro Tour was the final match between Budde and Finn Tomi Walamies. Budde. The entire match came down to a moment in Game 5 where Budde had to topdeck a **Morphling** in order to win. And he did. He is Kai Budde after all.

But not everyone had such faith in Budde. Before the tournament began, Eric Taylor, an old-time pro regular, claimed that if Budde won New Orleans, he'd eat his trademark hat.



### **Pro Tour-San Diego (January 10-13, 2002)**

**FORMAT: *Odyssey* Rochester Draft (*Odyssey*)**

- 1) Farid Meraghni (France)
- 2) Jens Thoren (Sweden)
- 3) Don Gallitz (United States)
- 4) Andrew Wolf (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Jeff Cunningham (Canada)
- 6) Frederico Bastos (Portugal) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Neil Reeves (United States)
- 8) Eric Froehlich (United States)

There was a long running joke on the Pro Tour that the French always came in second. The first three large **Magic** events (Worlds '94, Worlds '95 and the first Pro Tour in New York), for example, all had Frenchman coming in second. Over the years the second place finishes kept adding up. Until PT San Diego, where relative unknown Frenchman Fard Meraghni finally ended the curse.

And in the back of the room, with the aid of some ketchup, [Eric Taylor ate his hat](#).



**Pro Tour-Osaka (March 15-17, 2002)**  
**FORMAT: *Odyssey Block Constructed (Odyssey)***

- 1) Ken Ho (United States)
- 2) Olivier Ruel (France)
- 3) Rob Dougherty (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**
- 4) Jens Thoren (Sweden) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Sylvain Lauriol (France)
- 6) Nicolas Olivieri (France)
- 7) Osyp Lebedowicz (United States)
- 8) Christophe Haim (France)

Speaking of curses, this tournament was the end of another favorite curse. Each year sixteen players are invited to play in the **Magic** Invitational, **Magic's** all-star game. For three years in a row, the player that finished last at the event, went on to win a Pro Tour the following year. (Steve O'Mahoney Schwart was last in Kuala Lumpur and then won LA; Gary Wise was last in Sydney and went on to win the team tournament in NY; and Zvi Mowshowitz turned his last place finish in Capetwon into a win in Tokyo.) This was

known as the "Invitational Curse".

This year the last place finisher was Olivier Ruel. The joke at the time was that it was the end of the curse. But then Ruel found himself in the finals up 2-0 against American Ken Ho. But the curse was not to be and Ruel had to settle for second. (Some speculated that the French curse overrode the Invitational one.)



The other story of the event was the dominance of the French. With the exception of the Americans, no country had ever put four countrymen into a Top Eight.

**Pro Tour-Nice (May 3-5, 2002)**  
**FORMAT: *Odyssey Block Booster Draft (Odyssey, Torment)***

- 1) Eivind Nitter (Norway)
- 2) Bram Snepvangers (The Netherlands)
- 3) Svend Geertsen (Denmark) – **4th FINAL DAY**
- 4) Brian Davis (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Kai Budde (Germany) – **6th FINAL DAY**
- 6) Anton Jonsson (Sweden) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Gary Talim (United States)
- 8) Benjamin Niedrig (Switzerland)

The story of this tournament was what didn't happen. Budde made the final day and didn't win. No one thought it was possible. (Bram Snepvangers was the one to take him down for any history buffs out there.) Eivind Nitter's win helped remind the world that Norway had become a **Magic** force to deal with.

**2002 World Championships – Sydney, Australia (August 14-18, 2002)**  
**FORMATS: *Odyssey Block Booster Draft (Odyssey, Torment, Judgment), Odyssey Block Constructed (Odyssey, Torment, Judgment), Standard***

### Individuals

- 1) Carlos Eduardo Romao (Brazil)
- 2) Mark Ziegner (Germany)
- 3) Diego Ostrovich (Argentina)
- 4) Dave Humpherys (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**
- 5) Sim Han How (Malaysia)
- 6) John Larkin (Ireland) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Tuomas Kotiranta (Finland)
- 8) Ken Krouner (United States)

### Teams

- 1) Germany (Kai Budde, Mark Ziegner, Felix Schneiders)
- 2) United States (Eugene Harvey, Andrew Ranks, Eric Franz)



The 2002 Worlds was known for several things. First was the arrival of the South Americans as a force to be reckoned with. South America had been sending players to the Pro Tour for years, but this was the first time that a South American made it into a Top Eight. To have two in the Top Four (who played each other) one of which won Worlds was a major accomplishment. Also, reflecting **Magic's** growing international appeal, this was the first Pro Tour with four different continents represented in the Top Eight.

The other big story of the tournament was the Team Event. Having won 80% of all the Worlds team events, the US Team found the world rooting against them. And things looked bad (well, for the Americans anyway) going into the team day. The US Team was almost eliminated. To make the final day, the team had to win every match and have several other matches go their way.

It all came down to the final round. The German team (headed by Kai Budde) were already a lock for the final day. The US Team was tied with Denmark and trailed Argentina. If Argentina won, the US could not make it. And then the pairings went up. The US was playing Germany and Denmark was playing Argentina. The US Team's only chance was to defeat Germany and have Denmark defeat Argentina. If this happened, the US and Denmark would have to have a playoff (an even that had never happened in Worlds team history).



The US team was hoping that Germany might concede to them to make things easier, but Budde and the Germans would not hear of that. The Germans didn't want the Americans to win yet again. In the end, the US defeated Germany and Denmark took down Argentina. The US beat Denmark in the playoff. But this is where the Cinderella story ends. Germany defeated the US in the finals to become the second non-US team and the first European team to win the Worlds Team title.

Oh, and Kai wins his third Pro Player of the Year title.

## SEASON EIGHT ('02/'03)

### Pro Tour-Boston (September 27-29, 2002)

- 1) Phoenix Foundation [Kai Budde (Germany) – **7th FINAL DAY, 6th PRO TOUR WIN**, Dirk Baberowski (Germany) – **4th FINAL DAY, 3rd PRO TOUR WIN**, Marco Blume (Germany) – **2nd FINAL DAY, 2nd PRO TOUR WIN**] – **FIRST REPEAT TEAM WINNER, 2nd FINAL DAY FOR TEAM**
- 2) 2020 [Steven Wolfman (Canada), David Rood (Canada), Elijah Pollock (Canada)]

3) Courtney's Boys [Gary Wise (Canada) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, Bob Maher (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**, Neil Reeves (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**]

4) Slay Pillage Gerard [Jonathan Sonne (United States), Gerard Fabiano (United States), Scott McCord (United States)]

Phoenix Foundation proves that they are king of the team format by winning the team event two years in a row. This makes Kai Budde the first player to win six Pro Tours, Dirk Baberowski the second to win three, and Marco Blume the fifth to win two (and become the only multiple winner to have never won an individual Pro Tour). Gary Wise became the first person to make the final day at the team event on two different teams.



### **Pro Tour-Houston (November 8-10, 2002)**

**FORMAT: EXTENDED**

- 1) Justin Gary (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Robert Dougherty (United States) – **5th FINAL DAY**
- 3) Darwin Kastle (United States) – **7th FINAL DAY**
- 4) John Larkin (Ireland) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Peter Myrvig (Denmark)
- 6) Mattias Jorstedt (Sweden)
- 7) Bob Maher (United States) – **5th FINAL DAY**
- 8) Jeroen Remie (The Netherlands)

Following Phoenix Foundation's dominance in the team format, Pro Tour Houston showed a different type of team dominance. Team Your Move Games managed to clinch the number one, two and three slots. What was even more impressive is that each of them was playing a different deck.

Two different players joined the Fifth Final Day club, Bob Maher and Rob Dougherty.

### **Pro Tour-Chicago (January 17-19, 2003)**

**FORMAT: Onslaught Rochester Draft (Onslaught)**

- 1) Kai Budde (Germany) – **8th FINAL DAY**
- 2) Nicolai Herzog (Norway) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 3) Jon Finkel (United States) – **10th FINAL DAY**
- 4) Dustin Stern (United States)
- 5) Eugene Harvey (United States)
- 6) Fabio Reinhardt (Germany)
- 7) Bram Snepvangers (The Netherlands)
- 8) William Jensen (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**



This Pro Tour will be remembered for several things.

Kai Budde won Pro Tour Chicago, again. Making him the first player to win seven Pro Tours. Even more impressive, this win was in yet another format, meaning Kai Budde has won a Pro Tour in every major format supported by the Pro Tour except Block Constructed (Booster Draft, Rochester Draft, Standard, Extended, and Team Rochester).

Jon Finkel became the first (and thus far only) player to reach the Ten Final Days plateau. And most importantly, this is the first Pro Tour where Finkel and Budde played against one another. They had both been in the Top Eight at Pro Tour Chicago a year earlier, but Finkel lost in the quarter-finals before he met up with Budde. The match-up happened in the semi-finals, but is still considered one of the all-time finals classics.

### **Pro Tour-Venice (March 21-23, 2003)**

**FORMAT: Onslaught Block Constructed (Onslaught, Legions)**

- 1) Osyp Lebedowicz (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Tomi Walamies (Finland) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 3) Jordan Berkowitz (United States)
- 4) William Jensen (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Gabriel Nassif (France) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 6) Darwin Kastle (United States) – **8th FINAL DAY**
- 7) Akihiro Kashima (Japan)
- 8) Mattias Jorstedt (Sweden) – **2nd FINAL DAY**

This event was all about big creatures. The Onslaught block was all about creatures and R&D had tried to allow some bigger creatures than normal to seep into tournament play. Mission accomplished! This top eight had the largest number of big creatures ever seen in a pro Tour final day. Osyp Lebedowicz was another fan favorite (he wrote a very popular humor column on the internet) to finally win a Pro Tour.



### **Pro Tour-Yokohama (May 9-11, 2003)**

**FORMAT: Onslaught Booster Draft (Onslaught, Legions)**

- 1) Mattias Jorstedt (Sweden) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Masashi Ooiso (Japan)
- 3) Tsuyoshi Ikeda (Japan)
- 4) Jon Finkel (United States) – **11th FINAL DAY**
- 5) Benjamin Caumes (France)
- 6) Jose Barbero (Argentina)
- 7) Ben Seck (Australia)
- 8) Richard Hoaen (Canada)



Due to a sick child, this was my second missed Pro Tour. And I missed quite a Top Eight. For the first time, two Japanese players made the final day. Jon Finkel made his eleventh final day. And fan favorite Australian Ben Seck, “TBS”, finally made a Top Eight.

In the end, it was Swede Mattias Jorstedt who was most determined to win. This was his third Final Day this season.

### **World Championships – Berlin, Germany (August 6-10, 2003)**

**FORMATS: Onslaught Rochester Draft (Onslaught, Legions, Scourge), Extended, Standard**

#### **Individuals**

- 1) Daniel Zink (Germany)
- 2) Jin Okamoto (Japan)
- 3) Tuomo Nieminen (Finland)
- 4) David Humpherys (United States) – **5th FINAL DAY**
- 5) Jeroen Remie (The Netherlands) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 6) Peer Kröger (Germany) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Wolfgang Eder (Germany)
- 8) Gabe Walls (United States)

## Team

- 1) United States (Justin Gary, Gabe Walls, Josh Wagener)
- 2) Finland (Tomi Walamies, Tuomo Nieminen, Arho Toikka)

The Japanese had been in a finals before but never in a World Championships. Jin Okamoto tried hard to bring home the trophy for Japan, but he was defeated by local favorite Daniel Zink. Germany had a particularly good finish putting three countrymen in the Top Eight. (Maybe home field advantage is important.)

David Humpherys joined the Fifth Final Day club.

Oh, and Kai Budde won his fourth Pro Player of the Year title.



## SEASON NINE ('03/'04)

### 2003 Pro Tour-Boston (September 12-14, 2003)

**FORMAT: *Onslaught* Team Sealed (*Onslaught*, *Legions*, *Scourge*) – first day, *Onslaught* Team Rochester Draft (*Onslaught*, *Legions*, *Scourge*) – last two days**

- 1) The Brockafellars [Brock Parker (United States), William Jensen (United States) – **4th FINAL DAY**, Matt Linde (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**]
- 2) Original Slackers [Lovre Crnobori (Norway), Jake Smith (Norway), Rickard Osterberg (Norway)]
- 3) Zabutan Nemonaut [Michael Turian (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, Gary Wise (Canada) – **4th FINAL DAY**, Eugene Harvey (United States) – **2nd FINAL DAY**]
- 4) Phoenix Foundation [Kai Budde (Germany) – **9th FINAL DAY**, Dirk Baberowski (Germany) – **5th FINAL DAY**, Marco Blume (Germany) – **3rd FINAL DAY**]

Phoenix Foundation proved it was vulnerable. First, the team had to struggle to make Day Two. And then, they lost in the first round of the finals. Kai Budde did manage to snag his ninth Final Day. (Final Day totals is the only major stat that Budde has not yet passed Finkel on.)

The tournament ended up being won by another collection of popular, old-time gravytrainers – Brock Parker, Billy “Baby Huey” Jensen and Matt Linde.



### Pro Tour-New Orleans (October 31 - November 2, 2003)

**FORMAT: Extended**

- 1) Rickard Österberg (Norway) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 2) Gabriel Nassif (France) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 3) Yann Hamon (France)
- 4) Masashi Ooiso (Japan) – **2nd FINAL DAY**
- 5) Hans Joachim Höh (Germany)
- 6) Eugene Harvey (United States) – **3rd FINAL DAY**
- 7) Tomohiro Yokosuka (Japan)
- 8) Nicolas Labarre (France) – **4th FINAL DAY**

The power level for this Pro Tour's format was eclipsed only by Rome. *Mirrodin* had just been released and it proved a little on the powerful side. One card in particular, *Mindslaver*, seemed to be defining games, thanks to the presence of *Tinker* and an abundance of speedy mana. So much so, that *Mindslaver* stories (what players did when they took over their opponent's turn) were flowing like water.

The tournament was won by Norwegian Rickard Österberg who had just come in second with his team at the previous event.



**Pro Tour-Amsterdam (January 16-18, 2004)**  
**FORMAT: *Mirrodin* Block Rochester Draft (*Mirrodin*)**

- 1) Nicolai Herzog (Norway) – 3rd FINAL DAY
- 2) Osamu Fujita (Japan)
- 3) Anton Jonsson (Sweden) – 3rd FINAL DAY
- 4) Olivier Ruel (France) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 5) Kamiel Cornelissen (The Netherlands) – 3rd FINAL DAY
- 6) Aeo Paquette (Canada)
- 7) Farid Meraghni (France) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 8) Michael Turian (United States) – 4th FINAL DAY

As my twins were born on the first day of the event, this was my third Pro Tour absence. Japan made a third Top Two. And Norway won back-to-back Pro Tours.

**Pro Tour-Kobe (February 27-29, 2004)**  
**FORMAT: *Mirrodin* Block Constructed (*Mirrodin*, *Darksteel*)**

- 1) Masashiro Kuroda (Japan)
- 2) Gabriel Nassif (France) – 4th FINAL DAY
- 3) Alexandre Peset (France)
- 4) Jelger Wiegersma (The Netherlands) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 5) Luigi Sbrozzi (Italy)
- 6) Raffaele Lo Moro (Italy) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 7) Ben Stark (United States)
- 8) Stefano Fiori (Italy)

In my final Pro Tour absence, I missed Japan finally taking a Pro Tour. Gabriel Nassif came in second for the second time this season, and Italy made a surprising showing by placing three people in the Top Eight.

And not only did a Japanese player win the title, he won it in Japan.

**Pro Tour-San Diego (May 14-16, 2004)**  
**FORMAT: *Mirrodin* Block Booster Draft (*Mirrodin*, *Darksteel*)**

- 1) Nicolai Herzog (Norway) – 4th FINAL DAY
- 2) Antoine Ruel (France) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 3) Michael Turian (United States) – 5th FINAL DAY
- 4) Anton Jonsson (United States) – 4th FINAL DAY
- 5) Mark Heberholz (United States)
- 6) Ben Stark (United States) – 2nd FINAL DAY
- 7) Angel Perez del Pozo (Spain)
- 8) Masashi Ooiso (Japan) – 3rd FINAL DAY



Nicolai Herzog wins his second Pro Tour of the season (winning the two different *Mirrodin* draft Pro Tours) taking home Norway's third Pro Tour of the Year. This is a feat that had only been accomplished by the United States and Budde, I mean Germany. Another sign that *Mirrodin* limited might be more skill testing than first thought is the fact that three and half people made the Final Day in *both* *Mirrodin* draft Pro Tours – Herzog, Swede Anton Jonsson and American Mike Turian (who also joined the Fifth Final Day club). The half is for Antoine Ruel whose brother Olivier Ruel had Top EIGHTED the previous Draft Pro Tour.

While Budde has had a good year, there are a number of players starting to make a play to pass

Budde. For the first time in five years it looks like Budde is not going to win the Pro Player of the year. Frontrunners are Herzog, Nassif and Osterberg.

### Pro Tour Seattle (July 9-11, 2004)

- 1) Von Dutch [Jeroen Remie (The Netherlands) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, Jelger Wiegersma (The Netherlands) – **3rd FINAL DAY**, Kamiel Cornelissen (The Netherlands) – **4th FINAL DAY**]
- 2) www.shop-fireBall.com2 [Itaru Ishida (Japan), Tsuyoshi Ikeda (Japan) – **2nd FINAL DAY**, Jin Okamoto (Japan) – **2nd FINAL DAY**]
- 3) S.A.I. [Ichirou Shimura (Japan), Masami Ibamoto (Japan), Ryuuichi Arita (Japan)]
- 4) Pocket Rockets [Paul Russell (Canada), Joseph Derro (Canada), Matthew Wood (Canada)]

And that brings us to the fiftieth Pro Tour. Whew, how time flies. This tournament summed up the recent shift in **Magic**. Two of the currently hottest countries, The Netherlands and Japan, faced off in the finals. The match came down to the third game of the third match but Kamiel Cornelissen finally put his streak of second places to an end, winning the tournament for Von Dutch.



The most interesting back story of the event was the almost Top Eight by Chris Pikula, an old, old fan favorite that decided to pop his head in for a visit. He had come to Seattle with his wife who expected him to not make the Day Two cut and go sightseeing with her. When his team somehow did well Day One, she was livid. And when it looked like his team might make Sunday, she stormed off. In the end, Chris Pikula had the win on the table but didn't see it until a moment too late.

## Fifty and Counting

And that, my friends, is the Pro Tour history in a giant, giant nutshell. Hopefully this has given you a little insight into the deep richness of Pro Tour history. If you are interested in knowing more, [go hereto](#) see individual coverage of many of the Pro Tours.

The next Pro Tour is the [2004 World Championships in San Francisco](#) September 1-5. If you're in the area, please swing by. If not, definitely check out the excellent coverage right here at [magicthegathering.com](#) at our [Tournament Center](#) (complete with streaming coverage of the finals with commentary).

Join me next week when I take a look at the funny side of life (**Magically** speaking that is).

Until then, may you take a little peek at the [Tournaments Section](#).

Mark Rosewater



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