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City By the Bay



John Carter · Saturday School
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The 2005 **Magic** World Championships are well under way here in San Francisco, and we're nestled along the bay between the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz. I'd tell you about how pretty the night's lights look reflecting across the water, but my editor would break out in hives when he realizes what time it must be. Even teachers have due dates, so let's dive right in.

Rank	Country	Points	Rank	Country	Points	Rank	Country	Points	Rank	Country	Points
1.	Ukraine	67	6.	Belgium	66	11.	Argentina	63	16.	United States	59
2.	Japan	66	7.	Spain	65	12.	France	61	17.	Austria	58
3.	Finland	66	8.	Poland	63	13.	Germany	61	18.	Czech Republic	57
4.	South Korea	66	9.	Denmark	63	14.	Malaysia	61	19.	Croatia	57
5.	Netherlands	66	10.	China	63	15.	Philippines	60	20.	Canada	57

Lands, Basically

Q: I just started playing magic recently but was given a various amount of cards from a friend. I have come across some cards but with different forms of descriptions near the bottom of the card. My question is with a swamp card. Both cards are labeled the same as swamp land, but one has a skull at its description, and the other swamp card has "Tap: add skull to your mana pool" are these cards the same, or does the second act as two swamp? –Cloud453

A: Every card named "Swamp" does the same thing. It doesn't matter what set it comes from or whether it is the "rules text" or the "big mana symbol" style or land.

Trample, Again

Q: If I would block a creature with trample with my **Fog Bank** do I get the damage or not? -- Pauline

A: Yes, if it's power if 3 or greater. The attacking player would assign 2 to the wall and any more could be assigned to you. When *Sixth Edition* came out, all the "does not deal or receive damage" and "reduce damage to 0" creatures were reworded to use "Prevent all combat damage..." (or other similar prevention phrases).

Q: I have a **Penumbra Wurm** in play. My opponent has a **Spectral Lynx** in play (2/1 protection from green). If I attack with my Wurm and he blocks with the Lynx does the trample still reach my

opponent? –Vincent N.

A: Yes. “Protection from” includes preventing damage, but a player need only assign enough damage to be lethal (the creature's toughness minus any damage already on the creature). Any more damage could be assigned to you. Because the Wurm is green, the Lynx would not need to regenerate.

Things That Turned Out Badly

Q: The card **Devouring Strossus** requires you to sacrifice a creature on your upkeep. What happens if you are unable to do this? --Alan T.

A: **Devouring Strossus** is a creature... (yum!)

Q: I have **Worldslayer** equipped to a monster; my opponent plays a card that will remove that creature and all equipment attached to it from the game. Can I use a **Welding Jar** on the **Worldslayer** and keep it on the field? – Cory D.

A: No. **Soul Nova** will remove the creature and any attached equipment (even indestructible creatures and equipment). You can legally use the **Welding Jar**, but it will not help you.



Doesn't like to be lonely...

Q: I have a **Goblin Hero** card with a Gold star for the block symbol the pic is also different from any pic on the web sight. Do you have any info on this card? Could it be a promo? Could it be fake? --Kirkley

A: It's a misprint. The Star symbol was used for the Starter set (a set similar to Portal). The Starter **Goblin Hero** should have had a black symbol (common) but was printed with gold. Whoops.

Evil Cackling 101

Q: **Chimeric Coils**, **Salvaging Station** and **Leonin Elder**... does this mean infinite life? –Nikolai M.

A: One mana = +1 life. Activating the coils for 0 will cause the Station to trigger when state-based effects put the 0/0 Coils into the graveyard. Use the Station in response to the trigger to put the Coils back into play and then let the trigger resolve to untap the Station. Just remember that activating the Coils (ie: turning it into a creature) costs “{X}{1}” (in this scenario 0 + 1) to activate.

Q: If I enchant my **Abyssal Specter** with **Sigil of Sleep**, which ability will happen first? My question is then, is it a combo? –Pim

A: It's your choice. If you control both cards, you'll have to put both triggers on the stack. When you do that, you chose the order for stacking them, and they'll resolve in reverse order [CR 413, LIFO].

Q: If I had a **Darksteel Forge** in play and I have a **Nevinyrral's Disk** in play. Could I keep destroying all creatures, enchantments, and artifacts in play and keep my Disk and artifacts? -- Audenried

A: Yes. Unlike **Oblivion Stone**, the Disk doesn't get sacrificed. When the ability resolves you “destroy all artifacts, creatures, and enchantments.” Being indestructible, your artifacts ignore

the destruction happening around them. Next up, sharks with lasers...

Wrath Meets 'Geddon

Q: My friend and I have a disagreement over the interaction of **Sacred Ground**, lands that are creatures, and **Wrath of God**. If I control the **Sacred Ground** and my opponent plays **Wrath**, wouldn't I get any of my lands that were creatures back? I think I should since the **Wrath** is outright destroying them, not by damage or zero toughness condition. —Patrick C.

A: Your animated lands come back.

Extra If your opponent played **Wildfire**, you'd get some but not others back. **Wildfire** reads: "Each player sacrifices four lands. **Wildfire** deals 4 damage to each creature." Even though you chose which lands to sacrifice, it's your opponent's spell that causes them to be put in the graveyard. You'd get those four lands back when the **Sacred Ground** triggers resolve. If your other lands are animated (and have four toughness or less), then they'll be destroyed as a state-based effect [CR 420.5c]. Because no player controls SBEs [CR 420.2], you wouldn't get the lethally damaged lands back—**Sacred Ground** doesn't even trigger for them.

Q: If I have **Endless Whispers** out, and I play **Natural Affinity** and then **Wrath of God**. Who will get all the lands?

A: Each player will get the other player's lands.

Odds and Ends... Mostly Odds

Q: If I have a creature like **Rhox** and I attack my friend who has a 6/6 monster out and he chooses to block with it, does my **Rhox** die and I deal no damage, or does **Rhox** die but still do 5 damage to the player, or does **Rhox** attack the player for 5 and his creature does not block because I chose not to attack it? —Darth P.

A: The **Rhox** could die, but you'll be able to assign 5 damage to the blocking creature or the player. **Rhox** is especially hefty because he also regenerates. This would allow you to keep him around to pound again even though a 6/6 would normally kill a 5/5.

Q: If I have **Kavu Lair** and four **Relentless Rats** in play, and I play another **Relentless Rats**, do I get to draw a card since its power is then 4 because of the other rats —Chris M.

A: Yes. As a matter of fact, you'd only need two other **Relentless Rats** in play to make this combo work.

Extra Don't miss out on [the new rat lord](#) in *Champions of Kamigawa*.

Q: If I have a **Gemini Engine** out with 2 +1/+1 counters on him, does his attacking twin get those counters also?

A: No, but the token will have power and toughness that includes the bonus from the counters even though it has no counters of its own. The Twin token will get whatever power and toughness the Gemini has when the triggered ability resolves. Pumping (or shrinking) the Gemini in response to the trigger will generate a bigger (or smaller) token.

Q: If I attack with my **Gemini Engine** and use **Akki Coalflinger** in response to the Engine's trigger, does the Twin get the bonus?


A: No. The Twin was not an attacking creature when the ability resolved, so it doesn't get the bonus [CR 418.3b].

Q: I've got **Meddling Mage** in play. The named card is **Counterspell**. My opponent has in play **Isochron Scepter** with imprinted **Counterspell** on it. Can he play the imprinted card? —Maciej

A: No. It's not legal to play the named *card*. However, the Scepter lets him play copies of cards—not actual cards. The Scepter *does* avoid *Meddling Mage's* incessant chanting.



Q: If I have a *Fist of Suns* in play, and used five mana of any color and played *Pentad Prism*. Do I get five counters or one counter? –Zekai N.

A: *Fist of Suns* lets you spend one of all five colors, not five of any one to play spells. If you do spend  (compliments of the *Fist*) to play the *Prism*, your *Pentad Prism* will come into play with five counters.

Q: If I have a *Bringer of the White Dawn* in play and I use its ability to return *Eon Hub* from my graveyard to play at the beginning of my upkeep, what happens to the rest of my upkeep? Would it be skipped or does *Eon Hub* not work on an upkeep already in progress? –Robert K.

A: Your upkeep continues as normal. Further upkeeps will be skipped.

Q: A *Breeding Pit* produces token's called Thrull counters. Do these count as thrulls? Will a *Thrull Champion* give them +1/+1, along with the other thrulls? –Steve

Q: My friends and I have been debating and we were wondering if *Sliver Queen's* tokens count as slivers or not (if so do they receive the bonuses from the other sliver creatures) –Rob

A: Thrull tokens are named “Thrull” and have creature type “Thrull”. Sliver tokens are similar. They will be affected by things that affect Thrulls (or Slivers).

Q: If I were to use *Thought Courier* to draw a card, however I then use *Words of War*, would I still need to discard a card even though I don't draw a card? --Quentin S.

A: Yes. You are required to do as much of the effect as possible.

Extra If you have no cards in hand, you can still use the “Words of...” and a *Thought Courier* to get the Words effect. When it comes time to discard you have nothing to discard, but you'll have already gotten the Word benefit. (Not recommended with *Words of Wind*.)

Cram Session: On Target

Targeting is one of the basic concepts of **Magic: the Gathering**. Cards that predate *Sixth Edition* (and *Urza's Legacy*) are not always clear about whether they target or not. However, the [Oracle](#) wordings are always updated with the rules. If you're wondering whether a specific spell or ability is targeted, check the Oracle wording for “target”. If “target” doesn't appear in the Oracle text, the spell or ability isn't targeted. The one caveat to that is that all local enchantments (enchant creatures, enchant lands, etc.) are targeted when you play them.

When a player plays any sort of targeted spell or ability, he or she must specify what the target is (or targets are) [CR 409.1c]. Once a spell is played, players cannot arbitrarily change the target of a spell or ability even if the original target goes away or otherwise becomes illegal. In the event of a spell or ability that tries to resolve when all its targets are illegal (missing or untargetable), the spell or ability is countered [CR 413.2a]. If only some of the targets are illegal, then the spell or ability will do nothing to that target but do what it can to the other target(s).

One of the parts of having “Protection from” includes being untargetable by whatever it is you're protected from. This means that if a permanent is targeted by a spell (or ability), giving it protection from some attribute of what's targeting it will make the permanent an illegal target and likely cause the spell to be countered. Players often say that a spell countered in this way “fizzles”. Being countered by the game rules will stop even spells that can't be countered by spells and abilities (the game rules are neither).

Q: I play **Tel-Jilad Justice** on an artifact, as response my opponent sacs it. Does the scry still resolve (as single part of the spell), or is the spell countered totally, since the target becomes illegal? --Josef L.

A: The whole spell is countered. No Scrying occurs.

Q: If I have a **Defblade Elite** or a **Daru Cavalier** in play can I provoke a creature equipped by **Lightning Greaves** or does my first strike ability work? --Eric F.

A: You can't target the Greaved creature with the provoke ability, but if it blocks, first strike still works fine.

Q: When cycling **Gempalm Incinerator** the cycling rules show that X is triggered the instant cycling is declared and the ability is put on the stack. In this instance the target even if all goblins are cleared under it will deal / take damage, is this the case or is his ability basically null because of the lack of goblins in play? --Trust7

A: No goblins means no damage. Then the cycling trigger goes on the stack, you'll have to choose a target. If you decide to use the ability (not a good idea if the targeted creature is your own), then that creature will take damage based on the number of goblins in play when the trigger resolves. The number does not "lock in" like the targeting did. If there are no creatures in play when you cycle, then the trigger doesn't get to target anything and just goes away [CR 410.4].

Extra With a particular creature in play, the mere act of targeting a creature would trigger its demise even if you weren't going to deal any damage with the Gempalm effect. As a matter of fact, the Gempalm's triggered ability would be countered because of an illegal target.

Well, things are wrapping up for the night. Next week we'll have details about the goings on at the World Championships as well as a look at what's soon to be in store.

Class dismissed.

--Carter



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