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All Standard, All the Time

John Carter · Saturday School
Saturday, October 30, 2004



Send your rules questions to **Magic** Rules Manager [John Carter](#). Can't find the answer to your question somewhere else? Maybe he's already answered it! Try the [Saturday School Searchable Rules Database](#).

State, Island, Principality, Province, etc. Championships were last weekend, and there is a ton of decklists available [right here](#). Check 'em out for the latest in post-Kamigawa tech. In honor of the new hotness in Standard, this week's column is 100% Standard.

Q: If I use **Kiki-Jiki**, **Mirror Breaker** ability to make a copy of the token from **Tatsumasa, the Dragon's Fang** do I get to return Tatsumasa when the copy of the token is sacrificed? --James L.

A: No, Tatsumasa is only returned when the token created by Tatsumasa is put into a graveyard. Tokens from other effects won't have the "return Tatsumasa" clause because that's a part of the effect that made the token, not an ability of the token.



Q: My opponent animates his **Blinkmoth Nexus**. I take control of it with a **Vedalken Shackles**. At end of turn, when the Nexus stops being a creature, does my opponent get it back? - Rick

A: No, you'll hold onto the Nexus. The Shackles' ability checks for legality only twice: on announcement and on resolution. So long as the target is a "creature with power less than or equal to the number of Islands you control" at those two times, then the Shackles will grab the target. Raising the creature's power or it turning into a noncreature won't undo the holding effect.

Q: Does **Fatespinner** stack if you have more than one in play? -Doug

A: They stack, but not in the way you're probably wanting. Each one will trigger separately, but your opponent can choose to skip the same step or phase for all of them since they only apply to "this turn".

Q: If I play **Hideous Laughter** and splice **Consuming Vortex** onto it targeting my own 2/2 creature, does my creature make it to my hand while my opponent's creatures get -2/-2? Also, would it make a difference if I instead played Vortex and spliced Laughter on? --Stefano F.

A: Your creature is returned either way. In the first scenario-- Laughter with Vortex-1) your 2/2 becomes a 0/0 and then is 2) returned to your hand. After the Laughter resolves, state-based effects put the dead creatures in their graveyards. The Vortex with Laughter scenario winds up the same way, but the result is technically 1) return your guy and then 2) give everybody in play -2/-2. The key is that no matter how many things are spliced onto a spell, it still counts as one spell... and state-based effects aren't checked in the middle of resolving a spell.

Q: If I have a **Thief of Hope** and an **Ashen-Skin Zubera**, and my opponent attacks me with a **Spined Wurm**. I double block the Wurm making him discard a card to the zuber. Can I use the dead Thief's ability to Soulshift for the now dead zuber? --Kevin G.

A: Yes. Combat damage will kill both creatures at the same time, and the targets for the triggered abilities are chosen shortly after that. Both cards will be in your graveyard when it's time to choose a target for the Soulshift ability.



Q: Just like affinity can boost **Emblazoned Golem**, can it also burst sunburst creatures? --Tyson M.

A: No, affinity doesn't help sunburst. **Emblazoned Golem** works because you choose a value for X, and it then gets X counters. The fact that you're not spending mana doesn't change the value of X. By contrast, sunburst gives you a +1/+1 counter for each different color of mana you actually *spend* - if you don't spend the mana, you don't get the counters.

Q: Can the **Long-Forgotten Gohei** lower the cost of the spliced arcanes? Let's say I play **Soulless Revival** with another spliced to it and have 2 Gohei. Does the splice cost become ♠? -- Santiago C.

A: Splice costs and mana costs never change (except when choosing X while something is on the stack, of course). **Long-Forgotten Gohei** can reduce the amount you pay for a spell, though. Let's look at the **Soulless Revival** with two more Revivals spliced on in light of this and figure out the end results:

Mana cost = 1♠

Splice cost = 1♠

Gohei = -1 to all arcane spells you play

Total cost = the cost to play

The equation [CR 409.1f] is (mana cost) + (increasers) - (reducers) = (total cost)

So we get this:

(Mana cost 1♠) + (Splice increase #1 of 1♠) + (Splice increase #2 of 1♠) - (Gohei#1 reduction of 1 and Gohei#2 reduction of 1) = 1♠ + 1♠ + 1♠ - 2 = 3♠♠♠ - 2 = 1♠♠♠.

Extra Let's try **Soulless Revival** with **Blessed Breath** for comparison. The Breath costs * and splices for *.

Soulless and Gohei = 1♠ + 0 - 1 = ♠

Breath and Gohei = * + 0 - 1 = * (Subtracting a colorless doesn't affected the colored cost.)

Soulless with Breath splice = 1♠ + * - 1 = ♠*

Breath with Soulless splice = * + 1♠ - 1 = *♠

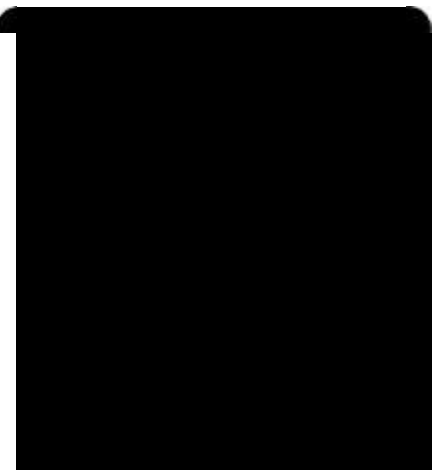
Once you remember "mana cost + increase - reduction = total cost to play", the math becomes easier.

Q: How many **Myr Servitors** do you need to get an infinite, if there is any, to combo with **Grinding Station**? -- Edward L.

A: There is no infinity in Magic nor does Servitor + **Grinding Station** generate an "arbitrarily large" combo. **Myr Servitor** triggers "At the beginning of your upkeep". Your upkeep only begins once a turn, and at that moment all the Servitors you have in play will trigger. It doesn't matter if more Servitors come into play later - their triggers have missed their chance to do anything this turn.

Extra So what's the largest number of sacrifices you get out of a **Grinding Station** using Servitors?

Suppose you have two Servitors (A and B) in play, and two more dead Servitors in your graveyard. At the



beginning of your upkeep, A and B trigger. Stack A on top of B.

- 1) Servitor A's ability resolves and brings back the two dead ones. Sacrifice them. (2 sacrifices)
- 2) Sacrifice Servitor A. (3 sacrifices)
- 3) Servitor B's ability resolves and brings back A along with the two dead ones. Sacrifice the dead ones again. (5 sacrifices.)
- 4) And you can sacrifice Servitor A again if you want (6 sacrifices), but that would mean you can't repeat this process next turn.

So - the best you can do is mill 18 cards that turn (with B still around) or 15 cards every turn. Not bad!



Q: My friend currently has **Night of Souls' Betrayal**, and I play **Myr Retriever** may I sacrifice him to **Grinding Station** or do state-based effects take care of it before I am able to do so? --Zack

A: Consider it taken care of. The **Myr Retriever** comes into play as a 0/0 creature. No sooner does he get a good look around than the state-based effects janitor comes by with his garbage truck, slaps a toe-tag on our Myr buddy, and carts him off to "the bin". But hey, once SBEs are done checking you'll have a pair of triggers to put on the stack (from **Grinding Station** and poor Mr. MR), and you'll be getting priority (being active player and all).

Q: I had a **Takeno, Samurai General**, **Sensei Golden-Tail**, and **Isamaru, Hound of Konda**. I use my Sensei to put a counter on my Isamaru when blocking. Would this mean my Isamaru gets +1/+1 and then since it's blocking it gets another +1+1? --Steven L.

A: Note that the honorable Sensei includes "Play this ability only any time you could play a sorcery."

That being said, if fox samurai could mysteriously train hounds into samurai after having blocked something then the General's bonus would apply, but the bushido would be too late to trigger. (Bonus for samurai-no bonus for post-block bushido.) But as I said, Sensei can't be used during combat. What next, **1/1 spirit tokens that don't fly**?

Q: I had a question about the Kamigawa card **Sensei's Divining Top**. Say I activate the first effect (look at the top three cards of my library, then put them back in any order) if I have more the one mana available for this effect is it possible to skim through more then the first top three with this effect? --Chris H.

A: No, sensei can't spin any deeper than three cards even if you have extra mana.

Extra The "trick" that some people try is to activate the "rearrange ability" and respond by using the Top to draw and put the Top on the library. The result is still looking at three cards, but this lets you rearrange so the Top can go anywhere in the three.

Q: What would happen if you **Tooth and Nail** for both a **Platinum Angel** and **Phage the Untouchable**? Would you lose? --Jon S.

A: No, when Phage's trigger resolves, **Platinum Angel** would keep you alive.

Of course, if bad things happen to Platty before the trigger resolves (**Oxidize** pictures somebody familiar rusting away for a reason), then the Angel might not be around to save you from the trigger.

Q: What would happen if there were two **Konda, Lord of Eiganjo** in play? He is indestructible...so how does it work? -Blaz

A: Both Konda are put into the graveyard. State-based effects stop for no man. (Ie: the Legend Rule, World Rule, and "zero or less toughness" don't "destroy", they just put things in the graveyards.) [CR 420]



Q: What happens if I have 9 creatures in play and tap **Orochi Eggwatcher**, then respond by untapping it with **Psychic Puppetry** and activate it again? Does it get flipped to **Shidako, Broodmistress**, then get flipped back to an Eggwatcher, or does it get flipped to Shidako, then not get recognized as being an Eggwatcher and not get flipped back? --John B.
A: The second "flip" does nothing since the first flip turned Orochi into Shidako. Re-flipping has no added effect-- flip cards don't "unflip".

Q: If I have a **Samurai of the Pale Curtain** equipped with an **Oathkeeper, Takeno's Daisho**. What happens if my Samurai takes lethal damage? Is it returned to play or removed from game? --Scotty
A: The samurai is removed from the game. The Pale Curtain ability causes a replacement effect [CR 419.1a]. The Oathkeeper's ability is a triggered ability [CR 404.3]. They seem similar, but the Pale Curtain ability replaces the actual "put into the graveyard" with "remove from the game". Since the graveyard part was replaced, it never occurs, and so the Oathkeeper never triggers.

Q: If I have **Uyo, Silent Prophet** in play, my opponent plays **Tooth and Nail** with entwine and I copy it, what will happen? Whose **Tooth and Nail** will resolve first? And if I search for two copies of **Keiga, the Tide Star**, what happens? Can I use both Keiga's abilities to steal the creatures my opponent gets from his **Tooth and Nail**? --D
A: You get an entwined T&N of your very own. Yours resolves first. Both Keiga are put into the graveyard as a state-based effect right after your copy of T&N resolves, and at this time your opponent's T&N is still on the stack - you'll only get to target things that are in play when the triggers go on the stack.



Q: If I choose to play **Oni Possession** on one of my opponent's creatures instead of my own, who ends up sacrificing a creature every turn? -Nicholas
A: You do because you control the Oni. The ability is on the enchantment, not given to the creature. Thus, the controller of the enchantment is the "you" in the "your upkeep".

Q: I'm confused on how **Spirit Link** would work together with **Orcish Artillery**. If I put **Spirit Link** on it, and tap it to use its ability, would I gain 2 life for the damage it does to target creature? Would I regain the 3 damage it does to me?
Why did Wizards stop using the Shadow and Banding abilities? --Layton
A: You'd gain both the 2 and the 3 life. Do note that if you're at 3 or less life, you'll be dead (state-based effects at work) before the trigger from **Spirit Link** can save you.
Banding and shadow, why they're *gurk!* Yes master Gleemax? Oh yeah, this week is "Standard Only"- perhaps another time on banding and whatnot.

Q: Can I **Soratami Seer** two lands to my hand and then use a **Budoka Gardener** in response to the Seer's ability to get the land into play before I must discard them. Also, you would draw cards equal to the number of cards in your hand after the land is Gardenered back into play, right? --Nick W.
A: Yes, you can Garden after activating the Seer but before it Seer ability resolves. This is because returning the lands is a part of the cost. And yes, when the ability resolves you discard and then draw according to the number you discarded.

Q: If I have Horobi, **Death's Wail** and I play **Otherworldly Journey** on him, would I get to remove him or would he die to his own ability? --Brian D.
A: He's dead. The wail trigger goes on the stack on top of the Journey. By the time the Journey tries to resolve, Horobi has been sacrificed, so the Journey gets countered for lack of target.

Q: I was wondering if **Gifts Ungiven** could be played if one's deck doesn't have 4 different cards left? --Jesse R.
A: Yes, your search will not find four cards, but you can do as much of the search as possible. What will happen is your opponent will choose two cards (if you even find that many) to go into your graveyard, and you'll get the leftovers. If you only have two different cards or less you'll get nothing. If you have three different cards you'll get the one card your opponent doesn't choose.



Q: Can **Autumn-Tail**, **Kitsune Sage** (the Legendary flip of **Kitsune Mystic**) move enchant creatures to a **Humble Budoka**? -Zack

A: Yes, the Sage ability targets the enchantment, not the creature, so it works fine.

Extra You cannot move enchantments onto a creature that has protection from that enchantment's color. The new home for the enchantment must be a legal permanent for the enchantment and "protection from <foo>" specifically prohibits being enchanted by <foo> things. The same goes for trying to move an "enchant creature" onto a noncreature.

You can however, use Autumn-Tail to move something like **Confiscate** (an "enchant permanent") from one creature to another since a **Confiscate** on a creature does qualify as an "enchantment enchanting a creature".

Q: During a match at States, the judge made a ruling that I thought was somewhat one-sided. Here it is: My opponent taps a land for mana, turns his **Blinkmoth Nexus** into a creature and immediately declares he is blocking my **Greater Harvester**. I play **Echoing Decay** saying, "This is in response to your turning the Nexus into a creature". Does the damage (and ability) from the Harvester hit my opponent?

Do judges really have the ability to make that kind of call? --Kevin K

A: You can legally use the Decay after the Nexus is animated but before blockers are declared. You'd have to wait until after the ability resolves first (not "in response" to the ability). If that were done and the opponent had no remaining creatures to block, then yes, the damage would conceivably go through.

As for the judge, oftentimes I hear stories about things that happen at events. Many times players and judges tell similar but different stories often with small but key differences. Judges do make the best calls that they can, and I'd bet this judge thought he understand the situation just fine. Players can appeal to the head judge though-even if only to double check. As a head judge myself I like to take those opportunities to reassure the player or to educate the judge as necessary. Does it sound like a mistake was made? Sure. Was it unfortunate? Of course. Was it intentional? No. Columns like this one and programs like Judge Certification are just two of many ways we try to do what we can to help players and judges understand this game better and enjoy it more.



Thanks to all the people who have been writing to Saturday School. I'll be at [Pro Tour Columbus](#) this weekend (talking and listening to judges and players about how to be better, of course-feel free to say hello). And next weekend will be the complement to "All Standard" in honor of PT Columbus... "All Extended" it is.

Class dismissed.

--Carter



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