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November 5, 2004

Q: "Just curious how the minds of pro players work. I find it interesting that pro players judge cards so much by speed, saying that anything with a mana cost over 4 is too expensive for a tourney deck, and then a deck like **Tooth and Nail** pops up. Why is it that **Crusade** is so much better than **Glorious Anthem**, yet a 7 mana sorcery wins games?"
-- Joseph

A: From **Matt Place**, Magic R&D:

"Hi Joseph,

"Players that say, 'anything with a mana cost over four is too expensive for a tourney deck,' are bonkers. Not only have there been lots of five, six and seven mana cards but there have also been cards like **Akroma**, **Angel of Wrath** and **Obliterate** in top level magic decks. Many players first see a card like **Tooth and Nail** and decide it is too expensive for their tournament decks, but history has proven that even the expensive cards can be very powerful when used correctly. It's just one reason why the open-minded player who is willing to take a second look tends to have a real advantage in **Magic**."

November 4, 2004

Q: "In Grand Prix coverage I often see players with asterisks next to their names... What does it mean?"
-- Davey

A: From **Scott M. Larabee**, DCI Program Manager, Organized Play:

"The asterisk is used to denote those players that have amateur status. All Grand Prix events have a \$25,000 prize payout. \$7,500 of the payout (\$5,000 at Team-format Grand Prix) is reserved for those player with zero lifetime Pro Points. The asterisks help the amateur players in the tournament see where they are in the standings in relation to each other.

"The full Grand Prix payout, information about amateur status and pro points, as well as other Premier Event information can be found in the **Magic** Premier Event Invitation Policy located in the [DCI Document Section](#) of [www.thedci.com](#)."

November 3, 2004

Q: "Are Orcs being phased out in favor of Goblins?"
-- Matt
Maine, USA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** Creative Director:

"I'm not sure how to answer your question, Matt, because the last new Orc we printed was **Orcish Settlers**, from the *Weatherlight* set. That was more than seven years ago. All the Orcs since then have been reprints in core sets (such as *Eighth Edition's Orcish Spy* and *Orcish Artillery*). So I think the phasing out of Orcs was done long ago, back when I was a lowly editor. But they'll continue to appear as core sets, and I'm sure they'll make a comeback in an expert-level expansion someday. Frankly, I'm in no hurry to bring them back. I think they're boring. Although **Magic** and the entire fantasy genre owe an awful lot to Tolkien, I don't think it's good or interesting if **Magic** features every single kind of creature that appears in *The Lord of the Rings*."

November 2, 2004



Q: "I saw a guy the other day with a deck of cards that said Berlin on the back. Where do these come from?"

--Matt M.

Huntington, West Virginia, USA

A: From **Paul Sottosanti**, **Magic** R&D:

"After each World Championships, we create commemorative versions of four of the top decks so that players around the world can see what it's like to play those matchups for themselves. The cards aren't tournament legal (if they were, values for the cards contained inside would plummet) so they have gold borders and each year has a special design for the back. In this case, the 2003 World Championships were held in Berlin, and the reprinted decks are the following:"

- [Daniel Zink - Mirari's Wake](#)
- [Dave Humphreys - Blue/Green Madness](#)
- [Wolfgang Eder - Goblin Bidding](#)
- [Peer Kroger - Reanimator](#)



November 1, 2004



Q: "Who is Jaya Ballard, and what is a task mage?"

--Gabe

Biloxi, MS

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** Creative Director:

"Jaya Ballard is the wisecracking mage featured in *Ice Age*-block flavor text and in the novels *The Eternal Ice* and *The Shattered Alliance* by Jeff Grubb. Although her story begins when she is only a skilled task mage, her path leads her to a much greater destiny. A task mage is a wizard for hire, a mercenary sorcerer."



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