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# 2004: The Year That Was, Part II

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The Week That Was  
Thursday, January 6, 2005



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Happy New Year!

Welcome to the second half of my Year in Review. To read the first part, point that little mouse right [here](#) and click. If you make it through to the end, you may even find some relevant Extended and Standard decklists waiting for you. So where were we...?

## July

[Canadian Nationals](#) took place over the first weekend. Affinity continued to dominate with multiple players earning Top 8 berths with the deck. Also telling of its dominance was that two decks designed to specifically hose Affinity made the Top 8 and earned both players a spot on the Canadian National team. Michael Thicke and eventual champion Jingpang Zheng piloted blue-red Obliterate decks with [March of the Machines](#).

Murray "The Mauler" Evans still managed to take the third seat on the team with an Affinity build despite Police Chief Brody's best attempts to keep Amity Island safe (if you don't get the reference, read right [Part I](#) again). The shark was still out there, with no end in sight to the pile of bodies left in its wake.



Zheng's win at Canadian Nationals got him more than just a trophy.

Canadian Nationals came complete with a feel-good ending. Zheng had come to Canada from China and had not seen any of his friends from his homeland since he made the journey. His invite to Worlds guaranteed that he would be able to go to San Francisco and [catch up with some of those friends](#) who would be attending the event as part of the Chinese National team.

The next event on the docket was the penultimate Pro Tour stop of the season before the World Championships. [Pro Tour-Seattle](#) was Team Sealed, the same format as the opening event of the season in Boston (although this time with a complete *Mirrodin* block). Pro Tour-Boston was the last time an American player had to cope with fitting an oversized check into the overhead bins on the flight home. Over the remainder of the season the decline of American play was made even more evident by the rise of the Japanese, French, and Dutch contingents.

Pro Tour-Seattle was the 50th Pro Tour event -- and the first one where an American failed to make the final day of play. A couple of teams came close. The Max Fischer Players (Chris Pikula, Josh Ravitz, and Igor Frayman) came within one [Inflame](#) of making it into Day Three while the up-and-coming :B (Tim Aten, Gadiel Szeleifer, and John Pelcak) fell one match short as well.

Instead the Top 4 included two Japanese teams, one Dutch squad, and one Canadian team. The presence of two different Japanese teams hopefully put to rest once and for all the myth that the Japanese can't play Limited -- a myth that even many Japanese teams bought into for this event since there were only five Japanese teams out of 107 in the whole tournament.



Jin Okamoto bows in defeat to Kamiel Cornelissen.

The finals came down to a battle of emerging powers with Von Dutch (Jeroen Remie, Kamiel Cornelissen, and Jelger Wiegiersma) squaring off with [www.shop-fireball.2](#) (Itaru Ishida, Jin Okamoto, and Tsuyoshi Ikeda). The decisive match came down to Kamiel vs. Jin in a bridesmaid face-off. Both players had multiple second-place Pro Tour finishes, but the monkey could only come off one player's back. That happened to be Kamiel, who shared his first Pro Tour victory with fellow first-timers Jeroen and Jelger.

This was also the fifth straight Pro Tour to feature a Japanese player on Day 3. The last time a Japanese player failed to make a Sunday appearance was the season-opener in Boston. Before that, you have to go back to Pro Tour-Chicago from the previous season.

The last of the big National Championships came to pass in July as well with [Australia](#), [Spain](#), and [France](#) writing the last chapter of Standard before World Championships. The French put up a powerhouse team with Player-of-the-Year

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contender Gabriel Nassif, Rookie-of-the-Year contender Alexandre Peset, and Comeback Player of the Year Olivier Ruel. As soon as the results from that tournament were posted, the French National team was penciled in as the favorite to win the team competition at Worlds. But that's why the play the game, right?

July was jam-packed and closed out with a pair of Grand Prix events. [Kuala Lumpur](#) was a Standard affair while [Orlando](#) was Block Constructed. Osyp Lebedowicz rocked the block with the Frank Karsten-Vial Affinity deck from Zurich. The event opened with plenty of debate about what direction to take the Affinity deck with Mantle Affinity, Vial Affinity, and even versions sporting [Qumulox](#) showing up. Although William Jensen made the Top 8 with one of the Mantle versions, Osyp's decisive victory made Vial Affinity the deck to beat in Block Constructed. Lost in the hubbub was a brief Top 8 appearance by JSS Champion Jeff Garza as he embarked on his Pro career.



*Osyp shows the world his GP-Orlando trophy.*

Meanwhile, on the other side of the planet . . . Grand Prix–Kuala Lumpur was won by Masahiko Morita also playing Affinity, although the format for this event was Standard. The big news to come out of this event was the success of green-white Astral Slide decks, with two of them making the Top 8. Tsuyoshi Fujita conceded to his friend Morita in the semis despite an excellent matchup because he wanted to see his friend win his first major event. Fujita was running four copies of [Relic Barrier](#) in his sideboard, the first time the sideboard staple saw high-level tournament play. The green-white deck and the [Relic Barriers](#) would send out ripples that would reach the shores of San Francisco for the World Championships.

Grand Prix–Kuala Lumpur also marked the debut of [blog-based coverage](#) for Grand Prix events. One of the features of blog coverage is that it allows the reporter to tell other stories besides round-by-round coverage of the matches. One such story was [a deck called Thai Breakfast](#) that emerged from the event despite not performing particularly well. It would be heard from again, and despite never quite pushing through it is definitely my favorite deck from the past year.

## August

August was quiet when contrasted with the very hectic month that preceded it. Things kicked off in the virtual world with the [MTGO World Championship Qualifier](#), won by Japanese student Toshinori Shigehara. Toshi piloted Tooth and Nail with the Mephidross Vampire/Triskelion combo to earn a berth at Worlds. He also won airfare and accommodations and was the first person to be featured in my new column The Week That Was. Also featured in that week's column was The Ben Seck, who narrowly missed the Top 8 of that event with a modified version of Thai Breakfast.



*Add GP champion to Jeff Garza's young resume.*

The following weekend saw the Grand Prix circuit stop in my backyard with [Grand Prix–New Jersey](#). (Although where I live is considerably nicer than \*shudder\* Elizabeth, N.J.) The event shattered North American attendance records with more than 900 players showing up with Block Constructed decks. Making the event just a little more crowded than usual was the addition of many European players who took an extended trip to the States, beginning their cross-country trip with San Francisco and the World Championships as the final destination.

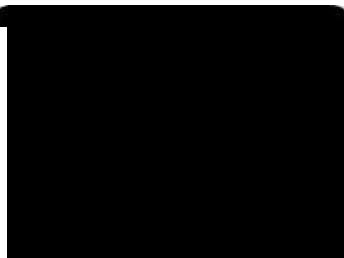
The Top 8 featured some heavy-duty talent, including Eugene Harvey, Brian Kibler, Alexandre Peset, and Jeroen Remie. However, it was rising star Jeff Garza who hoisted the trophy hot on the heels of his JSS victory and Grand Prix–Orlando Top 8 finish. There has never been a more seamless transition from the JSS ranks to the Pro environment that I

can recall. Even Gadiel Szeifer took a few events to get up to his current speed.

Jeff was playing a Tooth and Nail deck that sported Electrostatic Bolt at the suggestion of Gabriel Nassif. The introduction of Nassif and Garza was brokered by Hall of Famer William Jensen, a mutual friend. Jeff made his way through a talented gantlet of Adam Horvath, Jeroen Remie, and Brian Kibler to lift the trophy and perhaps some hope for the future of the competitive American **Magic** scene.

The last event of the 2003-2004 season before World Championships was [Grand Prix–Nagoya](#). The tournament was Standard format and it had the potential to send shockwaves through the metagame. The previous season in Bangkok saw Tsuyoshi Fujita skewer the metagame with Goblin Bidding only weeks before Worlds.

The Japanese Pros were all left with a bad taste in their mouths after this event, which they were treating as a Worlds tune-up. Top 8 mainstays Osamu Fujita, Tsuyoshi Fujita, Itaru Ishida, Masashi Oiso, Masahiko Morita, and many other of the big Japanese names were not playing by the time the elimination rounds rolled around. Only Masami Ibamoto, who was last in the Top 4 of Pro Tour Seattle, as a member of S.A.I. pushed though to represent the Pro Point crowd and he was playing with a “fun” Deathcloud deck after loaning his good decks to his friend and girlfriend.



Affinity took up four of the Top 8 berths, although it fell to red-green Goblins in the finals mirroring the results from Japanese Nationals. Tatsunori Kishi, a 29-year old pharmacist, won the event with Goblins thanks in large part to his main deck **Oxidizes**.

The Standard format a week before Worlds looked to be made up of Affinity, red-green goblins, and green-white Astral Slide. Tooth and Nail fared poorly in Nagoya and -- at least among the Japanese players I talked to -- fell out of favor as a choice for Worlds. The deck that seemed to attract a lot of attention was Tomohauru Saitou's blue-white control deck that was sporting maindeck **Relic Barriers** but there was no new deck that took Worlds competitors by storm like Goblin Bidding did the year before.

## September



*Nicolai Herzog took home two Pro Tour titles in 2003-04.*

The [2003-2004 Magic: The Gathering World Championships](#) came

with all kinds of stories begging to be told. There were the Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year races to be determined. Kai Budde had won the Player of the Year race for three years running but was almost certainly going to be unseated this year. Nicolai Herzog had won two Pro Tours and came into Worlds as the frontrunner, but he could not put enough distance between himself and Nassif or Rickard Osterberg to lock it up prior to Worlds.

At the previous Pro Tour stop there was nary an American to be seen when the Sunday spotlight illuminated the Day 3 competitors. Would America be shut out of a second Pro Tour? Plus, an unproven American team had their work cut out for them if they were to follow up on the past success of

American teams in this competition.

And what of the Japanese? The confidence that they had built up over the previous year seemed profoundly shaken by the past weekend's events when the top players from that country were almost shut out of the Top 8 despite playing the decks they planned to use at Worlds.

At the end of Day 1, all three of the Player of the Year contenders posted 4-2 or better records, but on Day 2 Nicolai Herzog stumbled -- in the Limited format, no less -- to a 6-6 record and no longer controlled his own destiny. Nassif ended up making the Top 8 of the event with blue-white control and **Blasting Station/Beacon** in Block. Couple that with his eighth-place finish in the team portion of the event for three more sneaky Pro Points and he was able to edge Nicolai out of the top spot despite not winning any of the Pro Tours he managed to Top 8 over the season.



*Gabriel Nassif accepts the Player-of-the-Year trophy from Dr. Richard Garfield.*

As for the Rookie of the Year, it looked like Alexandre Peset had the award in his back pocket until a curly-haired 15-year-old shocked the world with green-white Astral Slide. Julien Nuijten -- who suggested Aether Vial to Frank Karsten for Zurich -- also placed fourth with the Dutch National team and won more money over the course of a single weekend than any other player in **Magic** history. Between Worlds, the Team Championship, and the End-of-Year payout, Julien won more than \$50,000 in one fell swoop.

Once again there were no American players in the Top 8 -- a disappointing way for the former **Magic** powerhouse to close out a Pro Tour season. The American National team could only manage a hollow victory in what I dubbed the North American Championship by finishing ahead of Mexico and Canada. The U.S. came in 21st, below traditionally weaker **Magic** nations Israel, South Korea, and Croatia among many, many others.

The Japanese continued their streak as Ryou Ogura -- sporting Jin Okamoto's tiger shirt from Worlds in Berlin -- took third in the event. France also continued to dominate with Gabriel Nassif and old-schooler Manuel Bevand both playing on Sunday. Bevand got there with Ironworks in Standard and Cogs in Block, making him a champion for rogue deckbuilders everywhere. With Nuijten and Kamiel Cornelissen representing the Dutch, it reaffirmed that France, Japan, and the Netherlands are the current strongholds of **Magic**.

Two Canadians pushed through to Sunday -- Murray Evans and Aeo Paquette. For Aeo it was his second Pro Tour Top 8 in two tries. If the self-proclaimed slacker shows up for another Pro Tour, anything less than a win will be considered a disappointment. The Top 8 was rounded out by Terry Soh of Malaysia. Terry has always done well on the Grand Prix circuit but this was his best finish at a Pro Tour.



Terry may be Malaysian, but he seemed to represent the Online Nation. There was a time when players came to Worlds and if they saw an opponent who came from a part of the world not associated with high-level play than they would chalk it up as a bye.

Israeli? No problem.

South Korean? I'll be done quickly.

Malaysian? This will be a --

The emergence of **Magic Online** as a tool for playtesting has leveled the playing field and throughout the weekend seasoned **Magic** veterans would walk up with a stunned look on their face that said they had been outdrafted by an Israeli, outsideboarded by a South Korean, or that a quiet kid from Malaysia had taken their Top 8 berth.

Just as the Pro Tour season ended, the next one began one weekend later with **Grand Prix--Rimini**. With five Affinity decks to dance past, Domingo Ottati took his blue-green deck all the way through the finals to kick off the new season with four maindeck **March of the Machines**.

While **Mirrodin** Block Constructed was still in full swing, Limited players looked forward to a new set at the end of the month with **Champions of Kamigawa** and Constructed minds began to work on decks for Champs.

## October



Grand Prix events in Vienna and Austin, Texas, kicked off the Limited PTQ season and marked the first high-profile events to use **Champions**. In **Austin**, every undefeated player from the Sealed Deck rounds had **Nagao, Bound by Honor** in his deck. In the finals, Jon Sonne finally won a major event and also showcased the power of red-white with four **Cage of Hands** in his Rochester Draft deck.

Nikolaus Eigner showed off the power of spirit craft in **Vienna** when he forced a third game against Antoine Ruel thanks to a timely **Devouring Greed** off the top. In game 3, Kodama showed Antoine why he rules the southside and Eigner was victorious.

The first tournament featuring **Champions of Kamigawa** in a Constructed setting was Champs -- a series of Standard tournaments on a State, Provincial, and Territorial level all over the world. While Affinity continued to rule the roost, there were many surprising decks that emerged including black-green spirits, white weenie, red-white samurai, Kiki-Jiki control, and many more.

Perhaps the most exciting element of **Champs** weekend was the fact that almost every Top 8 deck from around the globe was submitted within days of the event, providing a wide-angle lens snapshot of the new Standard

metagame right from the start. The decks are still available (via the Champs link above) and can be easily uploaded to MTGO for playtesting.

**Magic Online** played a significant role at Worlds but it would not offer much assistance to players preparing for the **Extended Pro Tour in Columbus**. Until the next Extended rotation there will continue to be cards that are simply unavailable for players to use in their testing. No one knew what to expect coming in and the only major event to be played out since the major bannings was Grand Prix--Okayama which kicked off 2004. Those decks would have a significant impact but not the most significant.

Did you ever see Jaws: The Revenge?

Convinced that her family is going to be consumed by sharks, the Brody matriarch takes the whole family to the Bahamas in order to get away from the maneaters that plague her family. (One guess who finds his way from off the coast of Amity Island to the Bahamas.)

Players expecting to get away from the metaphorical shark of Affinity in the warm waters of Extended were in for a similarly implausible plot twist as French Salsa instructor Pierre Canali burst onto the Pro scene with his unusual-looking Vial Affinity build, complete with maindeck **Meddling Mage**. His more seasoned countryman, Olivier Ruel, followed up his successful 2003-2004 campaign with another Top 8 for his lengthy resume. His deck choice was Goblins.

The Top 8 was extremely diverse with eight distinctly different decks making it through to Sunday. Three different Japanese players made the Top 8 with Shuhei Nakamura piloting Red Deck Wins all the way through



Julien Nuijten took home the World Championship trophy and a giant check.



to the finals against Canali. Masashi Oiso proved that he may be the next dominant player in the game, following in the footsteps of Gabriel Nassif, with yet another Sunday showing -- this time with *Mind's Desire*. Ryuchi Arita rounded out the trio with the unlikely infinite life combo last seen Okayama.

The French and Japanese continued to dominate the Top 8 of every Pro Tour but the Dutch fell short for the inaugural event of the current season. Belgian Geoffrey Siron followed up his second-place finish in the Worlds team competition by roaring into the Top 8 with blue-green Madness. Englishman Nicolas West fared well in his first Pro Tour with Scepter Chant.



*Pierre Canali's victory in Columbus was his first Pro Tour appearance.*



Gadiel Szeleifer ended the Sunday drought for American players with a Reanimator deck that was modified from the list that made the Top 8 in Okayama. Interestingly there were three American players in the Top 16 of this event and all of them were playing in the JSS as recently as two years ago. Kyle Goodman finished 10th and Jeff Garza followed up his strong year with a 16th place finish in his first Pro Tour appearance.

## November

November saw five Limited Grand Prix events dotting Europe and Asia. [Grand Prix-Helsinki](#) was yet one more notch in Olivier Ruel's belt as he overcame very long odds to make the Top 8, and then after an unusual draft managed to duck the only other name in the draft, Anton Jonsson, for the win.

The next stop on the Grand Prix world tour was [Brisbane](#), where Will Copeman took down 221 other competitors. Masami Ibamoto, who had just dispatched Jarrod Bright in the quarters, had the highest profile of anyone in the Top 8 but he fell to Copeman in the semis.



*Kazuki Katou hoists the GP-Yokohama trophy.*

[Grand Prix-Yokohama](#) saw a repeat of sorts for Kazuki Katou, who also won last year's Rochester Grand Prix in Shizuoka with triple *Mirrodin*. Triple *Champions* provided him with the same result despite a tough opponent every round along the way, starting with Masahiko Morita. This was the first high-profile appearance of the now ubiquitous Dampen Thoughts deck, with Morita playing only three creatures in his red-blue concoction.

Katou dropped the first game but sided in Shell of the Last Kappa and dominated the final two games with the seldom-used rare. From there he had to face off against legendary deck builder Akira Asahara in the semis and in the finals dispatch last season's Rookie of the Year contender Tomohiro Kaji.

In Brazil, Jose Barbero added a win at [Grand Prix-Porto Alegre](#) to a list of accomplishments that already included a Top 8 at PT Yokohama and a win at GP Amsterdam.

Prior to [Grand Prix-Paris](#), the title of best name for a **Magic** Player clearly belonged to Jim Bob Sixkiller, but Wilco Pinkster won two titles when he hoisted the trophy for winning the largest **Magic** tournament ever. Weighing in at just under 1600 players, the event was more marathon than tournament. Raphael Levy was the biggest name in the Top 8 and he fell to Wilco in the semis.

## December

December was mostly quiet with only one Grand Prix for the Pro level of competition as the Team PTQ season got underway. [Grand Prix-Chicago](#) was won by :B (Tim Aten, Gadiel Szeleifer, and John Pelcak) who built on their near-miss from Pro Tour-Seattle. Joining them in the Top 4 was the other American team that just missed earning a Sunday spot in Seattle. The Max Fischer Players (Josh Ravitz, Chris Pikula, and Igor Frayman) fell to a Charles Gindy-led team of Adam Chambers and Zack Parker. This was remarkable because it was the third time Gindy has made the finals of a Team Grand Prix -- each time with a different team.



John Pelcak, Tim Aten and Gadiel Szeleifer showed they're a team to watch.

I thought my Year in Review would end here, but I have a reward for those of you who managed to stick it out to the end. Each year in Japan there is a Year-end Championship that is open to the Top 50 Japanese players based on rating and some number of players who win qualifiers. It is basically a Japanese All-Star Game for **Magic**.

It was the 10th anniversary of the tournament that is simply

called The Finals. There were 94 players this year, and they played five rounds of Standard followed by five rounds of Extended. Thanks to Japanese Sideboard reporter extraordinaire Keitia Mori, I have the results of that event complete with the Top 8 decks, Top 8 Extended decks, and the undefeated Standard decks from Day 1.

The event was won by Akira Asahara, who was playing a blue-green control deck in Standard that was almost mono-green but touched blue for, among other things, **Meluko**, **the Clouded Mirror**. Interestingly the deck was from a deck doctor column Akira writes for the Japanese magazine Manaburn Vol. 2. A reader sent in a snake deck and the resulting deck that Akira built for the correspondent intrigued him such that he played it in the Standard portion of the event. Asahara faced off against Jin Okamoto in the finals and although he lost to Jin's Ironworks in game 1, he was able to take the final two games (thanks in large part to a 12 card anti-artifact sideboard).

- 25 Affinity
- 13 Red Green
- 11 Death Cloud
- 9 Mono Green
- 7 Urza Tron
- 6 Green Blue
- 6 Ironworks
- 6 Ponza
- 3 Green White
- 2 Mono Red
- 2 Blue Black
- 1 Mono Blue
- 1 Mono Black
- 1 Blue Red
- 1 Black Red



Akira Asahara bested the best of Japan at The Finals.

## Undefeated Standard decks from Day 1

Masashi Oiso (see Top 8 Decklists)

Shintaro Iwamura (see Top 8 Decklists)

Hiroataka Hata		
Mono Blue Control		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		<b>Sideboard</b>
20 Island	2 Bribery	2 Time Stop
1 Stalking Stones	4 Vedalken Shackles	1 Temporal Adept
1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge	4 Mana Leak	4 March of the Machines
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Hinder	4 Annul
26 land	4 Echoing Truth	4 Relic Barrier
2 Keiga, the Tide Star	4 Rewind	
2 Meloku the Clouded Mirror	3 Condescend	15 sideboard cards
4 Thieving Magpie	25 other spells	
1 Temporal Adept		
9 creatures		

## Top 8 decks

Shintaro Iwamura / The Finals 2004		
Top 8: Death Cloud (Undefeated Day 1)		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		<b>Sideboard</b>
1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers	3 Rampant Growth	1 Molder Slug
1 Shizo, Death's Storehouse	2 Chrome Mox	1 Greater Harvester
10 Forest	2 Echoing Decay	2 Rend Flesh
9 Swamp	4 Night's Whisper	3 Hideous Laughter
	4 Plow Under	3 Oxidize

21 land	4 Death Cloud	2 Creeping Mold
4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	2 Befoul	1 Befoul
4 Eternal Witness	21 other spells	1 Viridian Shaman
2 Greater Harvester		1 Persecute
2 Molder Slug		15 sideboard cards
3 Viridian Shaman		
3 Solemn Simulacrum		
18 creatures		

Jin Okamoto / The Finals 2004		
Finalist: Ironworks		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Vault of Whispers	4 Serum Visions	4 Relic Barrier
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Myr Incubator	4 Night's Whisper
2 Ancient Den	4 Sensei's Divining Top	2 Welding Jar
3 Great Furnace	4 Mana Leak	4 Annul
2 Tree of Tales	4 Talisman of Progress	1 Darksteel Colossus
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Talisman of Dominance	15 sideboard cards
19 land	4 Fabricate	
0 creatures	4 Krark-Clan Ironworks	
	4 Thoughtcast	
	1 Goblin Cannon	
	4 Chrome Mox	
	41 other spells	

Tomoharu Saito / The Finals 2004		
Top 4: GBU "STOMPY"		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
20 Forest	4 Kodama's Reach	4 March of the Machines
1 Island	4 Plow Under	4 Cranial Extraction
1 Swamp	3 Beacon of Creation	2 Viridian Shaman
22 land	4 Creeping Mold	2 Meloku the Clouded Mirror
	4 Oxidize	3 Tel-Jilad Justice
2 Kodama of the North Tree	19 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Sakura-Tribe Elder		
2 Viridian Shaman		
4 Eternal Witness		
4 Birds of Paradise		
3 Triskelion		
19 creatures		

Tomoaki Omori / The Finals 2004		
Top 8: Ironworks		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
3 Vault of Whispers	3 Serum Visions	4 Leonin Elder
4 Seat of the Synod	2 Pentad Prism	3 Welding Jar
4 Ancient Den	4 Myr Incubator	3 Mana Leak
4 Great Furnace	4 Sensei's Divining Top	2 Annul
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Talisman of Progress	3 Relic Barrier
19 land	4 Talisman of Dominance	15 sideboard cards
0 creatures	4 Fabricate	
	4 Krark-Clan Ironworks	
	4 Thoughtcast	
	1 Goblin Cannon	
	4 Chrome Mox	
	3 Condescend	
	41 other spells	

## Makihito Mihara / The Finals 2004

Top 4: Urza-Tron



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Urza's Mine  
4 Urza's Tower  
4 Urza's Power Plant  
1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers  
1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All  
9 Forest

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4 Tooth and Nail  
4 Sylvan Scrying  
2 Oxidize  
4 Reap and Sow  
4 Mindslaver  
4 Sensei's Divining Top  
2 Oblivion Stone  
3 Talisman of Impulse

23 land

1 Sundering Titan  
1 Triskelion  
1 Darksteel Colossus  
1 Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker  
2 Eternal Witness  
4 Sakura-Tribe Elder

10 creatures

27 other spells

### Sideboard

2 Creeping Mold  
1 Duplicant  
1 Sundering Titan  
1 Eternal Witness  
1 Triskelion  
1 Mephidross Vampire  
2 Crucible of Worlds  
2 Oxidize  
4 Relic Barrier

15 sideboard cards

## Wataru Okada / The Finals 2004

Top 8: Affinity



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Vault of Whispers  
4 Seat of the Synod  
2 Glimmervoid  
3 Tree of Tales  
3 Blinkmoth Nexus  
4 Great Furnace

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3 Cranial Plating  
4 Thoughtcast  
4 Chromatic Sphere  
4 AEther Vial  
3 Shrapnel Blast

20 land

3 Atog  
4 Arcbound Worker  
4 Disciple of the Vault  
4 Frogmite  
3 Myr Enforcer  
4 Arcbound Ravager

22 creatures

18 other spells

### Sideboard

3 Oxidize  
3 Viridian Shaman  
4 Electrostatic Bolt  
2 Terror  
3 Moriok Rigger

15 sideboard cards

## Akira Asahara / The Finals 2004

Champion: GU Control



### Main Deck 60 cards

3 Blinkmoth Nexus  
17 Forest  
1 Island

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3 Sensei's Divining Top  
4 Beacon of Creation  
4 Plow Under  
4 Kodama's Reach  
3 Sword of Fire and Ice  
2 Rude Awakening

21 land

4 Sakura-Tribe Elder  
4 Eternal Witness  
2 Wood Elves  
4 Birds of Paradise  
4 Viridian Shaman  
1 Meloku the Clouded Mirror

19 creatures

20 other spells

### Sideboard

4 Oxidize  
4 Tel-Jilad Justice  
4 Creeping Mold  
2 Duplicant  
1 Kodama of the North Tree

15 sideboard cards

## Masashi Oiso / The Finals 2004

Top 8: March of the Machines / (Undefeated Day 1)



### Main Deck 60 cards

2 Mirrodin's Core	4 Electrostatic Bolt
1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge	4 Pyroclasm
9 Mountain	4 Thirst for Knowledge
12 Island	4 March of the Machines
24 land	4 Darksteel Ingot
2 Meloku the Clouded Mirror	3 Condescend
2 creatures	3 Serum Visions
	3 Mana Leak
	2 Sensei's Divining Top
	2 Annul
	1 Bribery
	34 other spells

### Sideboard

3 Shatter
3 Hinder
3 Cranial Extraction
2 Annul
2 Damping Matrix
1 Bribery
1 Condescend
15 sideboard cards

## Extended Top 8

## Makihito Mihara / The Finals 2004

Extended 1st Place / Scepter Chant



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Flooded Strand	3 Orim's Chant
4 Shivan Reef	4 Isochron Scepter
2 Battlefield Forge	4 Brainstorm
3 Reflecting Pool	3 Force Spike
5 Island	1 Daze
2 Mountain	1 Mana Leak
2 Plains	4 Counterspell
22 land	4 Fire/Ice
0 creatures	4 Accumulated Knowledge
	3 Intuition
	3 Cunning Wish
	1 Decree of Justice
	3 Chrome Mox
	38 other spells

### Sideboard

4 Exalted Angel
2 Powder Keg
1 Decree of Justice
1 Orim's Chant
1 Disenchant
1 Pulse of the Fields
1 Starstorm
1 Boomerang
1 Echoing Truth
1 Submerge
1 Stroke of Genius
15 sideboard cards

## Daiki Yamada / The Finals 2004

Extended 2nd Place: Red Deck Wins



### Main Deck 60 cards

4 Rishadan Port	4 Seal of Fire
4 Wasteland	4 Pillage
4 Wooded Foothills	4 Cursed Scroll
4 Bloodstained Mire	4 Firebolt
8 Mountain	4 Magma Jet
24 land	20 other spells

### Sideboard

3 Flametongue Kavu
3 Fledgling Dragon
3 Blood Oath
3 Overload
3 Meltdown
15 sideboard cards

4 Mogg Fanatic
4 Jackal Pup
4 Blistering Firecat
4 Grim Lavamancer
16 creatures

## Hiroshi Tanaka / The Finals 2004

Extended 3rd Place: Scepter Chant



Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Flooded Strand	4 Isochron Scepter	4 Chill
4 Adarkar Wastes	3 Orim's Chant	1 Orim's Chant
5 Plains	3 Fire/Ice	1 Stifle
8 Island	4 Mana Leak	1 Pulse of the Fields
21 land	4 Counterspell	1 Echoing Truth
2 Exalted Angel	2 Force Spike	2 Energy Flux
2 creatures	4 Brainstorm	1 Intuition
	3 Cunning Wish	1 Wrath of God
	4 Accumulated Knowledge	1 Fire/Ice
	4 Chrome Mox	1 Enlightened Tutor
	2 Wrath of God	1 Brain Freeze
	37 other spells	15 sideboard cards

Kei'ichi Kitagawa / The Finals 2004 Extended 4th Place: Life		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Forest	1 Seal of Cleansing	1 Starlit Sanctum
6 Plains	1 Test of Endurance	4 Orim's Chant
4 Brushland	1 Animal Boneyard	1 Daru Spiritualist
4 City of Brass	1 Parallax Wave	1 Ensnaing Bridge
4 Windswept Heath	4 Living Wish	1 Isochron Scepter
3 Starlit Sanctum	4 Eladamri's Call	1 Engineered Plague
23 land	3 Enlightened Tutor	1 Energy Flux
1 Academy Rector	4 Worthy Cause	1 Seal of Cleansing
1 Eternal Witness	2 Chrome Mox	1 Genesis
3 Daru Spiritualist	21 other spells	1 Academy Rector
4 Shaman en-Kor		1 Nomads en-Kor
4 Task Force		1 Eternal Witness
3 Nomads en-Kor		15 sideboard cards
16 creatures		

Toshiya Shibata / The Finals 2004 Extended 5th Place: Life		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Forest	1 Seal of Cleansing	1 Starlit Sanctum
6 Plains	1 Test of Endurance	4 Orim's Chant
4 Brushland	1 Animal Boneyard	1 Daru Spiritualist
4 City of Brass	1 Parallax Wave	1 Ensnaing Bridge
4 Windswept Heath	4 Living Wish	1 Isochron Scepter
3 Starlit Sanctum	4 Eladamri's Call	1 Engineered Plague
23 land	3 Enlightened Tutor	1 Energy Flux
1 Academy Rector	4 Worthy Cause	1 Seal of Cleansing
1 Eternal Witness	2 Chrome Mox	1 Genesis
3 Daru Spiritualist	21 other spells	1 Academy Rector
4 Shaman en-Kor		1 Nomads en-Kor
4 Task Force		1 Eternal Witness
3 Nomads en-Kor		15 sideboard cards
16 creatures		

Shuhehi Nakamura / The Finals 2004 Extended 6th Place: Red Deck Wins		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Rishadan Port	4 Seal of Fire	4 Ensnaing Bridge

4 Wasteland	4 Pillage	3 Fledgling Dragon
4 Wooded Foothills	4 Cursed Scroll	1 Gamble
4 Bloodstained Mire	4 Firebolt	1 Pyrostatic Pillar
8 Mountain	4 Magma Jet	3 Sulfuric Vortex
24 land	20 other spells	3 Shard Phoenix
4 Mogg Fanatic		15 sideboard cards
4 Jackal Pup		
4 Blistering Firecat		
4 Grim Lavamancer		
16 creatures		

Atsushi Ito / The Finals 2004		
Extended 7th Place: Red Deck Wins		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Rishadan Port	4 Seal of Fire	4 Ensnaring Bridge
4 Wasteland	4 Tangle Wire	4 Fledgling Dragon
4 Wooded Foothills	4 Cursed Scroll	4 Sulfuric Vortex
4 Bloodstained Mire	4 Firebolt	3 Meltdown
8 Mountain	4 Magma Jet	15 sideboard cards
24 land	20 other spells	
4 Mogg Fanatic		
4 Jackal Pup		
4 Blistering Firecat		
4 Grim Lavamancer		
16 creatures		

Jin Okamoto / The Finals 2004		
Extended 8th Place: Reanimator		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
6 Swamp	4 Reanimate	2 Gilded Drake
2 Island	4 Exhume	4 Phyrexian Negator
4 Underground River	4 Duress	4 Smother
4 Polluted Delta	4 Cabal Therapy	2 Echoing Truth
16 land	4 Chrome Mox	1 Arcane Laboratory
4 Putrid Imp	4 Brainstorm	1 Energy Flux
4 Akroma, Angel of Wrath	4 Careful Study	1 Engineered Plague
3 Rorix Bladewing	1 Show and Tell	15 sideboard cards
11 creatures	4 Vampiric Tutor	
	33 other spells	

Jin's extended deck borrowed heavily from Gadiel's version in Columbus. In the same issue of Manaburn where Asahara wrote about his green-blue deck, Jin explained why Gadiel's deck was the right choice for the upcoming Extended season.

"My reanimator was THE LOSER, and he said SZLEIFER's design is the WINNER," explained Jin to his readers. He also commended the Negator sideboard and the use of Rorix over *Phantom Nishoba* -- the major differences between Gadiel's build and the one Itaru Ishida used to Top 8 Okayama. The same list that served as inspiration for Gadiel's Columbus build.

Next week: We ask the experts for their opinions on the upcoming Extended qualifier season.

## Qualifier/JSS Results

In addition to the normal Pro Tour Qualifier results, we're adding JSS results to our weekly rundown.

Event City	Event Date	Event TO	Team Attendance
St. Louis (PT Qualifier)	1/1/2005	Barratt Moy	17
Finish: 1. The Rhinettes (Matt Schmaltz, Conrad Duncker, Sean Mangner); 2. Panda Exterminators (Paul Bondi, Aaron Hauptmann, Josh Smith)			

Event City	Event Date	Event TO	Attendance
Exton, Pa. (JSS Challenge)	1/2/2005	Dorian Redburn	41
Finish: 1. Matt Murphy; 2. James Kandeho			
Austin, Texas (JSS Challenge)	1/2/2005	Pat Johnson	25
Finish: 1. Deborah Cohen; 2. Sam B. Trejo			

## Firestarter: Resolutions

As we embark on the New Year, what are your New Year's **Magic** resolutions? Get into the discussion by clicking on the discuss link below.

*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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