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# Under Construction

Brian David-Marshall  
 The Week That Was  
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It has been a slow couple of weeks for those of us in the weekly recap business. The next wave of Grand Prix events are still a week off, and the Limited PTQ season does not provide the same depth of material to masticate each week that a Constructed season offers.

The past couple of weeks have provided insights into the minds of players qualified for the upcoming Pro Tour and Invitational. Two weeks ago, we [dropped in on Jeroen Remie](#) and learned about the international cartel of players attempting to put an end to Japanese dominance on the Pro Tour. Last week, we [visited Dan O'Mahoney-Schwartz](#) to learn about the differences between then and now for the semi-retired Pro as he was preparing for Philadelphia.

Dan is just one of hundreds of the qualified players in the world who are huddled around the 450-odd cards that make up the *Kamigawa* block, trying to cull them down to the roughly 20 cards they want to use at Pro Tour-Philadelphia. After the Last Rochester Draft in Nagoya and three-person teams in Atlanta, Constructed **Magic** is returning to the Pro Tour in just a few more weeks.

No one is happier than Pierre Canali, who has not followed up his [Pro Tour-Columbus win](#) with strong showings in either of the two Limited events. The French salsa instructor is looking forward to Philadelphia and anxious to quiet the never-ending questions about those Pro Tour finishes -- questions that come from everyone ranging from anonymous MTGO players to some of the highest-profile Pros.



Canali is eager to get back to Constructed play.

"Maybe Limited and Constructed are as different games as Poker and Taro are?" Pierre pondered when asked about how his success in Columbus contrasted with his subsequent Pro Tour showings with 40-card decks. "I think the reason is that I don't take training seriously. Since I began playing **Magic** I consider -- Limited *and* Constructed -- it to be a game. When I play I laugh, think about new salsa moves, think about eating something. But before a Constructed tournament I search, think about new decks, about the metagame, and how to break it.

"I'm not a good player, but I know how to choose my deck. If you have the best deck that nobody has prepared against -- like Affinity in Columbus; or Temporary Solution in [\[Grand Prix\] Eindhoven](#) -- even if you make some little misplay you can still win. That is not the case in Limited...you have to prepare and know all the situations."

Canali explained that he has not been able to get in much more than a few unsatisfying MTGO matches thus far -- due to a spotty collection of cards online -- but the serious business of testing is going to start this week.

"I had a lot of work between all the salsa classes I give and my salsa troupe, but next week I will work on it with the same playtest team as Columbus: my roommates and friends Cedric Marchet and Guillaume Vignessoulle," he said. "I will go to Paris and see the Ruel brothers and I will talk with Nassif too."



Canali faced Olivier Ruel twice in Columbus.

He will be seeing quite a bit of the Ruel brothers over the coming weeks, although not as much as one might expect. With the [Magic Invitational](#) in Los Angeles coming a week after Pro Tour-Philadelphia, it seems likely that the globetrotting Ruels will spend the ensuing time traipsing about the United States as they wind their way from one coast to the other. But not Canali, who also earned an invite to Los Angeles as the [Rising Star](#). "I'll fly home in between. I have too much work!"

Asked if he would be working with the Ruels for the Invitational or if the extremely small field would force them into opposing camps, Canali had a refreshing response.

"The picture I have in my head of the Invitational is of friendship, happiness... like Little House on the Prairie!" he said. "I think and hope you can't work against someone for

this kind of event. Plus, I don't know how to train for it and I don't know if I have time to."

Like all of the Invitationalists, Canali is thrilled with his opportunity to play the game on such a high-profile stage with so many great players. In much the same fashion that Remie described a couple of weeks ago, Canali

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fantasized about what kind of card he would design and also revealed some of the more macabre fantasies he entertains while traveling to events.

"I can't believe it!! It's like a child's dream!!!" exclaimed Canali. "I remember a few years ago, when I heard about this tournament, thinking to myself: 'What an amazing tournament with the best ever... and I will never go.' Now I will get to go in few weeks -- incredible, amazing! My plane can crash when I come back...just not on the way there."

Canali also let us in on an exclusive as he revealed the card he is going to turn in at E3. It features a very powerful and thought provoking mechanic that calls to mind **Mystic Snake**, **Misdirection**, and **Voidmage Prodigy** in one crazy combination.

### **Pedro, Crazy Salsa Master**

Dancer, Wizard

2/2

2/2

You can play Pedro, Crazy Salsa Master whenever you could play an instant.

When Pedro, Crazy Salsa Master comes in to play, you can put all the cards on the stack in any order you choose.

*Osyp, come on and learn!*



*Pierre can teach you, Osyp.*

Pedro is Pierre's nickname, and his flavor text relates to both Pierre's actual expertise as a salsa dancer and Osyp's fictional expertise in the same field. It also stems from Pierre's bruised feelings over Osyp's comments during the live broadcast from Columbus in regard to how Pierre played in the Top 8. "I like Osyp and his style, but he spit on me during the Columbus Top 8 so I am just giving him back a little for fun."

For Canali, **Magic** remains the same thing it was for him before the Pro Tour that put him on the Rising Star ballot. He enjoys it and will take advantage of opportunities to meet new people and see far-off places, but it first and foremost remains a game for him. He has already turned one passion into a career and is not looking to do the same with **Magic**.

"My work will be the real priority in my life," he explained. "Everybody looks at me now and I don't like it very much -- especially when they look at my Limited performance! The day I won Columbus I said to everyone, 'Don't look at me in Limited!!!'"

Don't be surprised if the modest Canali puts up another strong performance in Philadelphia. Overlooked among his much-ballyhooed misplays in the Top 8 was his unique approach to building Affinity for Extended and the fact that he played extremely well throughout the Swiss (including several wins where he was locked under sideboarded-in **Energy Flux**). In Eindhoven, he came within one match of making the Top 8 with Temporary Solution. Also look for the long-anticipated salsa dance-off between him and arch-nemesis Osyp Lebedowicz to take place at E3.

## **Firststarter: You break the card!**

Pierre Canali has revealed his stack-altering card proposal for this year's Invitational. What do you think will happen if he wins -- or failing that, if you nominate it as the second card from this year's event to get made? How can you see this card being used? This is your opportunity to become a forum-dwelling Adrian Sullivan showcasing how Crazy Pedro might be used in Constructed decks. Would this card see play in tournament-level constructed formats? What about in multiplayer and other casual formats? Chime in on the message boards and share your thoughts on the first of 16 designs to be revealed.

*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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