

Matthew Vienneau
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Editor's note: Regular columnist Scott Wills is taking a three-week break for his wedding and honeymoon. In the interim, Matthew Vienneau will be filling in on Limited Information.

It's my third and final week here at Limited Information and it's been a lot of work but also a lot of fun. The many forum posts and emails were very interesting and I wish I had a couple of more weeks just to write some follow-up columns on what I've been learning from all the readers. But the draft picks and qualifier Top 8s take precedence, so my collected wisdom will just have to wait until the next time Mr. Wills decides to get married.

The Qualifiers

Before we start chatting about the draft choice from last week, let's take a look at the recent Pro Tour London qualifiers.

Here's a summary of what colour combinations are winning when you don't count splashes:

Primary Colours Winners Played Winning Percentage

UR	5	14	35.7%
GR	3	18	16.7%
BG	3	19	15.8%
BR	3	20	15.0%
UW	2	17	11.8%
BU	1	11	9.1%
GW	1	12	8.3%
BW	1	15	6.7%
RW	0	10	0%
UG	0	7	0%
Mostly W	0	3	0%
BGR	0	2	0%
Mostly G	0	2	0%
Mostly B	0	1	0%
BUG	0	1	0%
BRW	0	1	0%
UGW	0	1	0%
URW	0	1	0%

And let's also take a look at how successful each colour is individually:

	Primary Won	Draft As	Winning	Splashed	Total Winning
	Colour	Primary Colour	Percentage		Percentage
Red	65	11	16.9%	12	14.3%
Blue	52	8	15.4%	4	14.3%
Green	61	7	11.5%	3	10.9%
Black	70	8	11.4%	7	10.4%
White	60	4	6.7%	10	5.7%

Three weeks into the season, it's possible to come to some fairly startling and not-so-startling conclusions:

1) Blue-red is king.

By just putting at least five Mountains and five Islands in your deck, you've given yourself at least a one-in-three chance of winning the draft. That is a very compelling statistic. You are more than twice as likely to win with blue-red than anything else. Perhaps this is because only the best players try to draft blue-red, but from the looks of the winning decks, it appears that almost any combination of reasonable blue and red cards will get you to the finals. Having recently won a Grand Prix trial with what I thought was a horrible assortment of blue-red cards, I can only nod my head at their power.

2) White sucks.

Think twice about drafting this guy.

Despite the common sentiment online that everyone is drafting white, they're apparently having a horrible time winning with it. The winners aren't even splashing it (though way too many other people are). The three mono-white decks support the belief that white is very deep but it is apparently very over-drafted. Until this changes, you should be passing the Moths and Blademasters for Moonfolk and burn spells.

3) You need removal to win.

The top four decks all have black or red, while blue-green and green-white have just one victorious deck out of 20. And even James Fulgium's victorious green-white Oklahoma City deck had both Shuriken and Nine-Ringed Bo, so creatures were getting still getting killed outside the red zone. Blue-green is so hated that not one of the 61 players in week three played them together (not counting splashes and three-colour decks). If your first colour isn't black or red, you'll want to make it your second or there's an 85 percent chance you'll be reading the Pro Tour coverage instead of generating it.

4) Aggressive red-white is dead.

This is a bit surprising as red-white was considered a very powerful colour combination in *Champions-* only but now can't win a draft. I suspect the weakening of Samurai and more defensive nature of white in *Betrayers*, along with the overall slowdown of the format, has crippled the aggressive red-white archetype especially when combined with white being over-drafted.

5) Play two colours.

There were six decks that played three even colours, including the much-dreaded 6/6/6 mana ratio used by a competitor in San Diego. The final results for these six players? Except for a surprising third-place finish by Peter Csampai's green-blue-white deck in Las Vegas, three-colour decks placed sixth, seventh, seventh, eighth and eighth. Let that be a lesson to you.

Three decks played a dominant main colour (white or green) and evenly splashed two other colours (red and black in two of them, red and white in the third). While green decks can handle this with all their colour-fixers, in other colours it's worse than two main colours with a splash. It's much riskier to have two secondary colours as you can very easily end up with two or three unplayable cards in your hand if you don't draw the right lands. With a small splash you're not likely to go many turns before drawing both of your main colours, and at most you can strand only one or two cards in your hand.

There was also a monowhite and near-monowhite deck. Bret Farrell's monowhite deck from Miami is quite good but he was only able to pull that off because he was one of just two white drafters at the table, an excellent situation to be in. Jason Watkins' Columbus deck that splashed black for Shirei had

a bit more trouble, especially with a white drafter on either side of him. As a result he was forced to play some sub-standard cards such as Harsh Deceiver and Silverstorm Samurai.

6) Red is very strong but only as a primary colour.

Despite getting splashed by a dozen people, only one player won a tournament while splashing red -- and Michael Chaulk's choice of Initiate of Blood as his one off-colour card in Chicago is, uh, unexpected. Players that committed to red, however, were rewarded with the highest chance of victory. And if you managed to avoid white as your second colour, your odds of winning increased to one in five -- very good for an eight-man draft, especially when so many people around you are cherry-picking your best cards. Red is deeper than people think.

7) People are splashing too much.

Three out of 19 winning decks splashed a third colour (15.8 percent) (red, black and green) while 34 of 155 total decks splashed at least one colour (22 percent). This would seem to indicate that almost 30 percent of the people splashing a third colour shouldn't be doing so. This statistic may be more indicative of poor drafting than conscious decision, as some of these decks appear to be forced to splash a third colour to meet the 40-card minimum. No matter how you look at it, be careful when choosing to pass a playable card in your colour for a slightly better splash.

8) Green is a tricky colour to splash.

Two weeks ago I indicated that you didn't want to splash early creatures or mana fixers. You generally want removal or spells that are equally good at any point in the game, along with late-game creatures that will make a difference if played on turn ten or twelve. Unfortunately for green, it's the colour that specializes in creatures and early mana. The late-game green creatures tend to just be big ground-pounders in a format where every colour has many options in the five- and six-casting cost range but not enough space to fit them into the deck. As such, I wasn't surprised to see only three decks splashing green. But in a surprising turn of events, one of them won the draft!

William Moreno's winning blue-white deck in San Antonio splashed green for Kodama's Might and Vital Surge. That's right, Vital Surge, the life-gain splice card. As William also included Walker of Secret Ways with no other ninjas (not to mention two Floodbringers), I suspect he was forced to splash these cards due to a lack of blue or white cards, as opposed to specific strategic intent. With only four non-green arcane cards to splice his green spells to, one can only presume that he frequently drew his three Reach Through Mists and found Yosei most games. I don't suggest attempting this at home.

9) I'm not lying to you.

If you compare the qualifier top eights to the 10 "Mana Maxims" I gave two weeks ago, you should notice that almost all of the winning decks pretty much follow the rules relating to deck construction. Only Michael Day's winning Columbus deck had more than 40 cards and I suspect may have been better off without Sift Through Sands. Splashes were generally restrained to just a few cards and lands, although Richard Phillips did slip in a Orochi Leafcaller as a fourth black source in Colchester, perhaps because he didn't have many better options in his sideboard (I might have chosen Traproot Kami myself). Despite what you may think, I'm not just making all of this stuff up!

It will be interesting to see if things change significantly through the season as people figure out the draft metagame. Will a blue-red deck win Grand Prix-Detroit or will people have adjusted enough to give the white decks a chance? We'll have to see!

The Draft

Like the previous week, much to my delight, the draft selection provoked much commentary in the forums and my inbox. I've found them both an absolutely fascinating insight into how other **Magic** players think and it isn't at all what I expected. As I mentioned earlier, I could write another half-dozen columns on popular misconceptions about various aspects of the game but if I gave away all my secrets, how would I maintain my barely adequate online ranking?

Two weeks ago we had foolishly begun a late-night online draft while not at our mental best and were faced with a pack with some incredible black and white cards, as well as a bunch of green cards and almost no red or blue cards. Out of that pack we decided that any of the following five were reasonable picks:

- Kabuto Moth
- Nezumi Cutthroat
- Reciprocate
- Kashi-Tribe Reaver
- He Who Hungers

Having made our difficult decision, we were then shocked to be passed a pack with at least three fantastic first picks:





Foolishly, I gave everyone five options based on what their original pick was, which will rapidly turn this into a novel if I give a full analysis of every option. So we're going to go with a bit of a condensed version this week, and my apologies ahead of time if I miss anything – feel free to ask questions in the forums!

Let's break down the cards like last week:

Never Playable – *Jukai Messenger, Distress*

Jukai Messenger should never see play, even against green decks. Some people were pondering using this card as a signal and let me put a stop to that right now. It's too small, the ability is not useful, and it's a Human Monk so it has no synergy with any of the legends. I challenge readers to show me a pack where this should be picked earlier than 12th.

Distress is another card that was getting a bit too much attention. Distress is like a Counterspell except that it doesn't always work. And when it does work, you don't even gain tempo as it costs

your opponent nothing to discard it. I understand that it can be amazing when you draw it early with two Swamps available (not always likely) but that isn't enough for me – I'd much rather have a Wicked Akuba in this situation. It's a valuable sideboard tool against control decks, splice decks, and when you're desperate for answers to bombs that will destroy you, but as a sideboard card it shouldn't be getting picked in the first five (or 10) cards of a pack.

Occasionally Playable – *Soul of Magma, Ember-Fist Zubera, Hisoka's Defiance, Kami of the Painted Road, Jade Idol*

Soul of Magma and Ember-Fist Zubera were covered last week so I won't go into them again.

Hisoka's Defiance is also a Counterspell that doesn't always work, so why put it here instead of with Distress? Mostly because it's easier to play and has a bit more surprise factor while also aiding tempo if used early. The Defiance can occasionally become a two-for-one trade if you counter a combat trick, and it can win you the game when it stops Devouring Greed. I'm not happy to be starting a Defiance but it's not the end of the world and it's a valuable sideboard tool against many decks.

Kami of the Painted Road is slightly overpriced in an environment with lots of choices in the higher casting costs. Incredibly inferior to Nagao (also 3/3), it also falls short of the similarly costed Innocence and Hundred-Talon Kamis. The ability can occasionally be very powerful, especially when the deck is arcane/spirit-oriented, but you almost always have better cards to play than this, uh, "guy" (well, it appears to be an eyeball attached to a walking hand, but it's a masculine-looking hand).

Jade Idol is a card that I've never managed to fit into my deck, though I'm sure it has many supporters out there. I've also never lost to it. Presuming you can activate it 50 percent of the time (requiring that an unreasonable 20 of your 40 cards be spirits or arcane), you've essentially spent four mana for a 2/2 creature that can't often can't block. While it does add questions to blocking and racing, especially if you have mana open, and is difficult to destroy with sorcery-speed creature removal, I don't find the card compelling.

Always Playable (Late Picks) – *Kami of Ancient Law, Wicked Akuba, Humble Budoka, Kami of the Palace Fields*

The first three are all 2/2 creatures for two mana that should make the cut in almost every deck in an environment this fast. While the first two have significant abilities, the Budoka suffers unduly from rumours early in the season that being untargetable is bad. As many people who have faced Waxmane Bakus and Teller of Tales can attest, having a guy that must be battled is often a pleasure. It means he's a seemingly aggressive creature that's stronger on defence than offence, but I prefer to think of that as a subtle design feature than a flaw.

Kami of the Palace Fields is a creature that you would really prefer cost five mana as it doesn't dominate enough for six, but it's still too good to leave to the side. While much better than the various six-mana samurai in the block, it's no dragon or Patron of the Orochi and is worse than the cheaper Hikari and maybe even Innocence Kami. But I still always find room to put it in the deck!

Always Playable (Early Picks) – *Uyo, Hideous Laughter, Glacial Ray*

These are the cards that make your jaw drop, especially if you get them fourth (as someone in our sample draft will). Uyo is a dominant creature, especially when you get her early enough to build a deck around her abilities. A 4/4 flier for six mana would also be an early pick and I'd still like it if it were a 2/3 with the ability to copy spells. With a reasonable activation cost as well as the ability to copy opponent's spells and copy spells multiple times, Uyo is a dominant presence whenever she hits play.

There is little new to be said about Glacial Ray – it’s fast, it’s splashable and it has a cheap splice cost that potentially gives it game-dominating powers. While not as good as Uyo as a first pick, it’s much more flexible and easier to fit into a deck that you’ve already started building. Ironically, both Uyo and Glacial Ray are best in blue-red decks and work very well together, but in this pack we don’t have that option and may end up fighting with a neighbour for many of the same cards.

Hideous Laughter is an interesting card in this block. As I mentioned in my feature article on tempo a few months ago, Hideous Laughter kills every non-rare black creature in *Champions* except the difficult-to-use demons. *Betrayers* adds Takenuma Bleeder and has another big demon (I try to ignore Pus Kami) but it’s still difficult to break the parity of the Laughter as so many of your creatures won’t survive the joke. But mass kill is mass kill and this early on you may be able to aim for a second colour (such as green, with high-toughness creatures that can survive). Of course, if you picked the Cutthroat in pack one, you’re facing a bit of a quandary.

Selecting a Second Pick

If you thought figuring out signaling made the first pick tough, the second pick has at least three times as much to consider. Not only are we concerned with letting the person on our left know what we’re up to (without sacrificing too much card quality), we’re also trying to figure out what the person on our right is telling us. In addition we need to plan for a second colour and building a synergistic deck, as opposed to just a pile of good cards that may not work well together.

Since our first pack didn’t have any good blue or red cards, picking either Glacial Ray or Uyo sends a strong signal that blue or red is not available especially with so many cards in other colours to choose from. It is almost never wrong to take a first pick card in a colour that no one around you is drafting. With this in mind, let’s go through each of the scenarios and see whether this holds true:

Poll: If you picked Kabuto Moth in pack one, what would be your next pick?

Glacial Ray	2492	41.20%
Uyo, Silent Prophet	1270	21.00%
Kami of Ancient Law	1000	16.50%
Kami of the Palace Fields	374	6.20%
Hideous Laughter	307	5.10%
Jade Idol	244	4.00%
Kami of the Painted Road	132	2.20%
Wicked Akuba	104	1.70%
Humble Budoka	55	0.90%
Jukai Messenger	19	0.30%
Hisoka's Defiance	19	0.30%
Distress	17	0.30%
Ember-Fist Zubera	13	0.20%
Soul of Magma	7	0.10%
Total	6053	100%

It’s good to see that not too many people want to suddenly jump into black after passing three playable black cards. You would more than likely end up in the same black-white combination as two of the three players to your left, and that means you wouldn’t get any good cards in the second pack unless you were prepared to drop white and just splash the Moth.

Taking a white card means we're sacrificing an early playable pick to get a late playable just to stay in colour. And since we'd still be passing a playable white card, this doesn't send a particularly strong signal considering our previous pass of Reciprocate and Mothrider Samurai. But if we let the two Kamis go we're further sending non-white signals that will definitely cause us trouble later on. There is no happy solution to this conundrum and it is the price you pay for taking a white card in the first pack. It's interesting to note the preference for Kami of Ancient Law – rarely has a grizzly bear been so popular!

Readers resoundingly preferred Glacial Ray to Uyo with the intent of building a fast red-white deck. Given what we've just learned about those kinds of decks, that may be a mistake. But as one reader pointed out to me in an email, there are actually very few main-deck white sorceries and instants that benefit from Uyo's ability, making blue-white perhaps the weakest combination for the Silent Prophet.

I'd have to agree with the crowd, the Ray is the best card.

Poll: If you picked Reciprocate in pack one, what would be your next pick?

Glacial Ray	1512	35.50%
Uyo, Silent Prophet	1257	29.50%
Kami of Ancient Law	600	14.10%
Hideous Laughter	255	6.00%
Kami of the Palace Fields	201	4.70%
Kami of the Painted Road	124	2.90%
Humble Budoka	79	1.90%
Jade Idol	75	1.80%
Wicked Akuba	66	1.60%
Hisoka's Defiance	33	0.80%
Distress	27	0.60%
Jukai Messenger	10	0.20%
Ember-Fist Zuberu	8	0.20%
Soul of Magma	7	0.20%
Total	4254	100%

Reciprocate uses virtually identical logic as the Kabuto Moth pick though the subtle differences in card preferences by the readers is interesting. Uyo was a lot more popular as readers wanted the synergy with the first-pick instant or perhaps because blue-white is more viable once you already have some removal.

Hideous Laughter moved up a slot presumably because a first-pick Moth is vulnerable to the Laughter while Reciprocate isn't, though that doesn't make a whole lot of sense as the Moth can save itself so the two actually work well together.

Poll: If you picked Nezumi Cutthroat in pack one, what would be your next pick?

Hideous Laughter	1469	30.50%
Glacial Ray	1300	27.00%
Wicked Akuba	1220	25.30%
Uyo, Silent Prophet	381	7.90%
Distress	313	6.50%

Humble Budoka	35	0.70%
Jade Idol	23	0.50%
Kami of Ancient Law	19	0.40%
Hisoka's Defiance	17	0.40%
Ember-Fist Zuberá	11	0.20%
Kami of the Palace Fields	10	0.20%
Kami of the Painted Road	9	0.20%
Jukai Messenger	7	0.10%
Soul of Magma	6	0.10%
Total	4820	100%

This is a tricky pick for players who took a black card first, another example of why it's best to avoid bad signals and fights with your neighbours. All three of the black cards made the short list and it's a bit distressing (pun intended) to see how many players would grab an unplayable card over two much better picks in the same colour.

While the Ray tempted many, the majority went with the in-colour Hideous Laughter despite the apparent lack of synergy with the first pick 2/1 that convinced a quarter of our readers to take the Akuba and push for a fast weenie deck. I think the Laughter is the correct choice. While the Ray is potentially a better card, it's more important to solidify our first colour as sending a first-pick card in our colour clearly signals that we're not playing black and we would see nothing in pack two. The Akuba, while initially tempting, should not be taken. Even though Laughter will wipe out all your black creatures, and with *Betrayers* everyone else has out tougher creatures than before, it's still mass kill and one of the few cards that can totally reverse a slow start or a game you are losing very badly. Akuba is good because tempo decks are good. Tempo decks are good because there is little mass kill. If you have the mass kill, you can beat tempo decks.

Poll: If you picked He Who Hungers in pack one, what would be your next pick?

Hideous Laughter	1593	36.40%
Wicked Akuba	989	22.60%
Glacial Ray	847	19.40%
Uyo, Silent Prophet	382	8.70%
Distress	213	4.90%
Ember-Fist Zuberá	135	3.10%
Jade Idol	112	2.60%
Kami of the Palace Fields	37	0.80%
Kami of Ancient Law	25	0.60%
Humble Budoka	12	0.30%
Soul of Magma	11	0.30%
Hisoka's Defiance	8	0.20%
Jukai Messenger	6	0.10%
Kami of the Painted Road	4	0.10%
Total	4374	100%

Readers are much keener on the Hideous Laughter when their first pick is the more controlling He Who Hungers. I suspect this is due to the synergy of sacrificing all your spirits to the legendary spirit and then clearing your opponent's creatures with the Laughter.

While the Akuba drops only slightly in popularity as a result (likely because it's a spirit and people are keen on their synergies), Glacial Ray actually falls one spot as people decide the second colour isn't worth the bad signals and giving up the synergy.

The differences between this choice and the Cutthroat are minor and the Laughter remains the best pick.

Poll: If you picked Kashi-Tribe Reaver in pack one, what would be your next pick?

Glacial Ray	2281	50.50%
Humble Budoka	985	21.80%
Uyo, Silent Prophet	673	14.90%
Hideous Laughter	283	6.30%
Jukai Messenger	72	1.60%
Jade Idol	67	1.50%
Wicked Akuba	60	1.30%
Kami of Ancient Law	22	0.50%
Distress	22	0.50%
Kami of the Palace Fields	19	0.40%
Hisoka's Defiance	15	0.30%
Ember-Fist Zubera	7	0.20%
Soul of Magma	7	0.20%
Kami of the Painted Road	4	0.10%
Total	4517	100%

This is where things get a bit crazy as Humble Budoka should not be selected by this many people. Neither of the next two players will take the Budoka over the remaining first-pick cards, so there's no need to worry about signaling as we've already cut off green. And don't get me started on Jukai Messenger!

On the other hand, it's good to see that few people selected Hideous Laughter. While the Laughter works very well in a black-green deck, we've already passed two great black cards. If there weren't two amazing picks in open colours, the Laughter makes sense as it's a good enough card to fight with your neighbours for black. But since we have fantastic picks available to us in unchallenged colours, the Laughter should be passed as additional incentive to the next player to stay out of either blue or red.

That leaves us with Uyo and the Ray. Both are fantastic picks and we should be delighted that we have two great options for a second colour while knowing that no one around us is going to be competing for cards. From our research on Top 8 decks, we know that green-red is much more successful than green-blue and we definitely want to play red or black for the removal, so the nod goes to the Glacial Ray. If you're going to do blue-green you could definitely do worse than Uyo and Reaver as opening picks, but Reaver and Ray give you better odds.

In a brilliant defence of democracy, the readers seem to have gotten all the picks correct – 10,000 people aren't often wrong!

Bonus Question – *What card did the person to our right pick first?*

The first thing to realize is that it's a common card missing. Every pack has one rare, three uncommons and eleven commons and online boosters are never incorrect, so we're definitely missing

a common.

The second thing to do is figure out what commons are better than Glacial Ray, Uyo and Hideous Laughter. This is a very short list, as only Kabuto Moth is generally considered equal in value and even that is disputable. Theories were given that Teller of Tales was picked as some may consider it better than Uyo. It doesn't seem very likely though, as why take one of two good blue cards and fight for blue when you can take a great black or red card and get your neighbours squabbling?

Some people attempted to determine the colour of the missing common by looking at what colours were missing from the pack. This wasn't very helpful as there are two or three cards of every colour. It's very rare to see a *Kamigawa* pack that's missing an entire colour or that even has only one card in a colour, but with at least two in each this method won't get us anywhere. Even if the player has a strong distaste for a colour, with so many options that shouldn't be a factor.

Others attempted to read the signals to determine what was missing. Since amazing blue, black and red cards were still present, they theorized the person on their right might have taken a green or white card such as the Moth or perhaps Sakura-Tribe Elder, Moss Kami or Kami of the Hunt (opinions on green cards apparently vary quite widely). While possible, it seems very unlikely that anyone would take a green common over these three cards because the "rumours" are true – green just isn't as good as the other colours when it comes to top-end cards (which is why people tend to avoid playing it). The Moth is looking likely again, however.

An important aspect to the missing card that got by most people is that it might be a premium card. Premium cards can actually duplicate existing cards in the pack. A couple of astute readers came to the conclusion that the missing card must be a foil Glacial Ray, as that would be the only common better than a regular Glacial Ray. This was my first guess as well, though passing a non-foil Ray sends weird signals. This finally led one reader to conclude (after 122 other people guessed) that it was a foil Kabuto Moth because that doesn't send a weird signal, and while Moth isn't always selected over Glacial Ray, perhaps because it was shiny it was picked higher.

The correct answer? Unfortunately it's a bit of a disappointment -- the player to the right of me was disconnected and ended up with a Field of Reality as a random pick. But for those first few seconds before I glanced down to the chat box I was very confused. Having a disconnected player to your right is very good in the first few packs but you tend to pay for it later on when the player returns as they often jump into whatever colours are available and that's generally the same colours you're playing. But for a second pack like this one, I'll risk it!

What Actually Happened?

What did I do in the actual draft? Well, many years ago I wrote an article on how to get two picks out of the same pack. With so many good black and white cards I figure it would just be a mess to the left of me and I didn't want any part of it (and I think I've been underrating the Moth). And with so many better cards available, it was very likely that at least one of the Burr Grafter or Kami of the Hunt would come back to me. The opportunity to get lots of green in the second pack, along with two quality cards out of this pack, had me selecting the Reaver and aiming for green-red since there was no red in the first pack.

As you can imagine, I was surprised and delighted by the second pack. By passing all the troublesome black and white I also made my second pick much easier because I didn't have to worry about messing up signals and could keep shipping the black and white cards. I underestimated Uyo but still think my second-pick selection of Glacial Ray was the correct one (as shown above), and I prefer a faster deck especially as I expected a four-mana Burr Grafter to come back to me. It was also late and green-red tends to have much simpler decisions than green-blue.

Did it work? Yes. The Burr Grafter came back. But so did the Nezumi Cutthroat and Gibbering Kami! Unfortunately this is where my tired state came into play as it led me to believe that black was significantly under-drafted, so I took the Cutthroat over the Grafter. This turned out to be a mistake and I ended up putting the Cutthroat and a Rend Flesh into the sideboard when a Burr Grafter would have been much appreciated. Had I been thinking clearly, I would have realized that at least one of the two players to my left were likely playing black after passing the Laughter and even if they weren't, a 10th-pick Gibbering Kami is a pretty strong signal from a pack that was likely very memorable. I definitely didn't see any black cards in the second pack!

Later the player to my right re-connected and stopped taking random cards, but not before I picked up a second Glacial Ray, two Kodama's Might and a Hanabi Blast. Despite this I was barely able to make it through the first round and was defeated in the second. I blame poor draws, an amazing card pool and not being at my mental best due to the late hour. Unfortunately my frustration at losing kept me from making a record of what happened, although I suspect it involved an Opal-Eye, Konda's Yojimbo -- the bane of red-green decks everywhere.

Conclusion

If there's one thing I learned from writing these three columns, it's that signaling is risky as everyone interprets and values things differently. In all the polls, only one had more than 50 percent of the people taking the same card. That means no matter how skilled you are at sending and receiving signals, most people around you will not do what you expect and confusion will reign. While these results are no doubt exaggerated by the complicated choices, a brief read through the forums will quickly show the wide variety of opinions people hold regarding signaling and card selection. It looks like a lot of work needs to be done to get everyone on the same page -- it's definitely troubling.

Thanks for reading and hopefully I'll see you this weekend in Detroit!

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