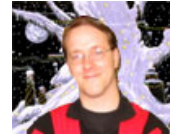


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# Saviors on the Way

John Carter  
Saturday School  
Saturday, May 28, 2005



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

Last weekend was the *Saviors of Kamigawa* prerelease-- the **Magic** equivalent of an early screening. In one week, *Saviors* hits the streets, and local stores all over the place will be holding special [Release Events](#) on "Opening Weekend", if you will. In case you haven't checked it out already, [Gatherer](#) has *Saviors* uploaded and ready for you to peruse. Enjoy!

**Q:** Looking at the wording for *Akuta, Born of Ash*, it would appear that you can choose to sacrifice a Swamp if you have more cards in your hand than your opponent, even if it's in play. --K

**A:** It would seem that way until you get to the end of the ability. The tail end part about from your graveyard tells us that the ability can only be used if *Akuta* is in your graveyard [CR 402.8].

**Q:** If I dump enough creatures in the graveyard and then use *Footsteps of the Goryo* to return *Kuon, Ogre Ascendant* to play from the graveyard, does he still become an enchantment at the end of turn? If he does, is he put back in the graveyard because of *Footsteps*? --DD

**A:** *Kuon* could become an enchantment at the end of turn depending on how you stack the flip trigger and the *Footstep* trigger. However, *Kuon* or its *Essence* will be sacrificed regardless of the stacking order-- it doesn't have to be a creature for the triggered ability to know it's affected by the *Footsteps* [CR 202.2a].

**Q:** What would I use *Footsteps of the Goryo* for? It's a sorcery and the creature doesn't have haste, so attacking, defending and tap abilities are out. *Goryo's Vengeance* was cool, but I'm having issues with where I would use this card. --Nafthali W.

**A:** My man Aaron Forsythe likes to use *Footsteps* to return *Kagemaro, First to Suffer* so he can re-blow-up the world, but mostly he would return *Kokusho, the Evening Star* and sacrifice that to *Greater Good* for card advantage and life draining fun.

**Q:** If I put *Isochron Scepter* with *Stifle* imprinted, can I still play spells next turn if I *Stifle* its epic ability? --M.

**A:** No. First off, you can't play spells, even with *Isochron Scepter*, once you resolve an epic. None. Zero. Zip (no Zap for you). Even if your opponent *Stifles* that epic trigger when your upkeep starts, you still won't be able to play spells. At all. Even next turn. Period.

**Q:** Can you place *Evermind* on an *Isochron Scepter*? --Thomas

**A:** Yes, and you could even activate the *Scepter*, and you could copy the *Evermind*, but you won't be able to actually play the *Evermind*. Ever.

**\*Extra\*:** Slap a *Glacial Ray* on the *Scepter* instead, and you'll be able to splice an *Evermind* in your hand onto the copies of *Glacial Ray* as you play them.

**Q:** Could you use the *Elder Pine of Jukai's* trigger to look at the top three cards of your library for land, then from the same spiritcraft spell, use the *Loam Dweller's* trigger to put a land I just found into play? --Aaron M.

**A:** Yes, stack the *Loam* trigger then the *Pine* trigger and you're ready to go.

**\*Extra\*:** *Descendant of Soramaro* combos nicely with these cards by using those extra lands in hand to look deeper. And when you have a spiritcraft trigger, he can maximize the effect by rearranging the top



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several cards so you hit three lands-- or lands and a card you want to get out of the way-- with the Pine trigger.

**Q:** **Choice of Damnations** and **Mindslaver**... can you make your opponent select 20? --Nathan S.

**A:** Yes, you can make a **Mindslavered** opponent choose a number that is very bad for them-- assuming you can play **Choice of Damnations** on the turn that you have him or her **Mindslavered** (Choice is a sorcery-- **Vedalken Orrery** is your friend).

**Q:** If I remove an opponent's instant card from the game (e.g. with **Assert Authority**) and I have **Kaho, Minamo Historian** in play, can I use Kaho's ability to play my opponent's removed card? --Craig

**A:** No, Kaho can play only the cards removed with his own ability.

**Q:** Do cards from **Kaho, Minamo Historian** stay removed from the game, or do they enter the graveyard? --Morgan

**A:** Cards played with Kaho's ability are put on the stack and resolve like normal spells. They'll go to the graveyard like other spells.

**Q:** If **Sakashima the Impostor** copied a flip card, would I be able to flip the copy? --Ross M.

**A:** Yes, you could. If you copy a flip card (flipped or not), then a Sakashima will come into play as an unflipped version of the flip card. The "flip status" defaults to "unflipped" unless an effect says otherwise...

**\*Extra\*** One of the oddest interactions to come out of **Saviors of Kamigawa** is the Sakashima / **Homura, Human Ascendant** /other flipper combo. Here's how it works:

Sakashima comes into play copying an unflipped Homura. The Sakashima-Homura is killed in some way, and goes to the graveyard. Copy creatures lose their copied characteristics as they leave play, but Homura's trigger actually checks the game state that existed just before Sakashima left play, so Sakashima-Homura triggers [CR 410.10d]. As that trigger puts Sakashima back into play, Sakashima's own copying ability kicks in, and you can pick a creature to copy, but notice that the S-Homura trigger says it returns to play flipped. So if you chose a **Nezumi Shortfang**, the fact that the flip/unflipped status is "flipped" means your new critter will be a Sakashima-Stabwhisker the Odious. Note that you wouldn't be able to copy a creature that has since flipped into a legendary enchantment-- the creature in them is gone. But if you choose and unflipped Ascendant, as the flipped Sakashima-who-was-Homura returns, you will get the Essence side of the Ascendant.

**Q:** Suppose I played a **Nourishing Shoal** with the alternate cost by removing a **Grizzly Bears** in my hand from the game. Would the mana cost of **Nourishing Shoal** be 2 or 4? --Orion B.

**A:** The mana cost would be  $2\text{ } \color{green}{\text{♣}}$ . The converted mana cost would be  $4$ . The Shoals let you pay their cost with a card and also let you pick what X is (which limits what you can remove).

**Q:** If I have a **Yukora the Prisoner** attacking unblocked and I ninjutsu another creature into play, will Yukora's leave play trigger kill my ninja? Is there a way I can stack them so that this will not happen? --Eric S.

**A:** You can't get the Prisoner's trigger to kill the Ninja even if you wanted it to. Returning the Prisoner is a cost, so you'll return the Prisoner on announcement of the ninjutsu ability, and the Prisoner will trigger. That trigger goes on top of the ninjutsu. Then the Prisoner sacrifice does nothing (unless you have some non-ogres laying around). And then the Ninja shows up to wield its real ultimate power.

## New Players

One of the reasons I love prereleases like last weekend's is because I always get to see old friends and meet new people. Sometimes the players are new to tournaments, and sometimes they're new to the game altogether. In any case, no one becomes a Pro Tour champion or rules guru overnight, and I remember well (though it's been a decade or so) my early days of learning **Magic**.

I love hearing from new players because new players are how the game grows. That's why I like to take a few questions each week to address questions from the beginning of a **Magic** player's career. If I can help a new player overcome the learning curve **Magic** demands and help him or her enjoy the game a little more, then I can trust that R&D will keep making intriguing sets and mechanics to keep that new player having fun for decades as well. Just in case no one's actually said it to you yet, welcome to **Magic**.



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**Q:** Some pretty simple rules questions (I'm a beginner). 1. Can more than one player/creature have threshold, at the same time? 2. A creature with the "double-strike" ability, after dealing it's initial damage in the first-strike damage step, can it then deal it's next damage (in the normal damage step) to an alternative target? Or must the two damage steps be dealt to the same target? --Patrick

**A:** Players have threshold (creatures have text based on whether the player's graveyard has seven or more cards). Multiple players can have threshold at the same time (based on their own graveyard). Double strike means the creature will deal first strike and "normal" damage. The damage itself doesn't actually target though-- an important distinction when a creature can't be targeted. The word we use for damage is "assign". If one creature blocks a double striker, and that creature dies to the first strike, then nothing happens with the normal damage (there's no one to assign it to-- having trample would let you assign the extra damage to the defending player though). However, if two creatures block a double striker, you can assign the first strike to one creature and then assign the normal damage to the other (or you could divide up both between the creatures during each assignment).

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**Q:** I'm new to playing **Magic the Gathering** card game. An experienced player told about a rule called "mass blocking" in which two or more creatures can block an attacking creature. Is there such a rule as "mass blocking"? --Jake

**A:** Essentially, yes. The Core Game comes with a short version of the rules, so some details are missed. Your question is best answered with a detailed look at the big book of rules... "The Comprehensive Rules" (a.k.a. "Comp Rules" or "CR") is what we call the full-sized version of the rulebook (too big to fit into a deck box anymore, but [available online here](#)). In the Comp Rules blocking is covered in [CR 309.2] (rules are numbered like chapter and verse). In the rules for blocking, we find "The defending player chooses zero or more creatures he or she controls, chooses one attacking creature for each one to block..." [CR 309.2a] Notice that the limit is one attacker per blocker. The reverse (one block per attacker) can't be assumed. Reading on, we'll even see in [CR 309.2f] the following, "An attacking creature with one or more creatures declared as blockers for it..." More than one blocker is quite legal (and often highly recommended). You'll also hear players casually refer to this as a "group" or "gang" block.

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## Older Cards

**Q:** What if I had **Hyalopterous Lemure** in play and my opponent could take away flying for free as many times as he wanted. Who gets the last word? --Mike

**A:** Basically, the last word goes to the opponent of the person whose turn it is (the nonactive player). In cases like this, where both players are choosing to keep a loop going, we make the active player choose a number. This is the maximum number of times he is allowed to keep the loop going; after that time, he will be forced to stop playing his ability and do something else. In effect, the nonactive player gets to choose what happens: he can stop first, or he can get the last word by keeping the loop going until the active player is forced to stop instead. [CR 421.3].

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**Q:** If I sacrifice my opponent's **Darksteel Colossus** while playing a card such as **Grab the Reins**, will it be shuffled into my library or his? When it is on its way to the graveyard, I am the "owner" so how would that work? -- Danny B.

**A:** Cards being put into a graveyard (or library or hand) go to the owner's graveyard (or library or hand) [CR 217.1a]. The "owner" never changed-- the person who started with the Colossus in his or her deck is the owner. When sacrificed, you were the Colossus' "controller".



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**Q:** Creatures that are about to leave play haven't been put in a graveyard yet and shouldn't trigger **Lifeline**. So cards like **Wrath of God** should prevent creatures from returning to play since when they hit the graveyard there are no creatures in play. Can you tell me what is the argumentation behind this and what are the rules that support it? --Liysov

**A:** Lifeline will return all creatures destroyed by **Wrath of God** assuming there were at least two in play when the Wrath resolved. **Lifeline** is an example of a leaves-play triggered ability, and the key rule in this case is [CR 410.10d]. That rule says, in part, "all the permanents in play just before the event (with continuous effects that existed at that time) are checked..." Wrath blows up several critters. The leaves-play trigger checks the game state right before the Wrath event to figure out if there was another creature in play to satisfy **Lifeline**.

**\*Extra\*:** Why do leaves-play triggers look at the game state just before the leaves-play event? They check because the game needs to figure out what to do. For example, you play an **Academy Rector**, and I steal it. If the Rector dies, the leaves-play ability will trigger. Whose trigger is it? The creature card isn't in play, so no one controls the creature. It's in the owner's (my opponent's) graveyard. But it was under my control when it left play. By looking back, the game can properly tell that I controlled the trigger's source, so I will get to stack the ability, and yes, I'll be able to remove the corpse of the Rector from your graveyard to search my own library for an enchantment.

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**Q:** What is a token creature's type if I create a token of a creature without a creature type, like **Gerrard Capashen** made with a **Soul Foundry**? --Stefan S.

**A:** A token version of **Gerrard Capashen** has the name **Gerrard Capashen**, the Legendary supertype, and no creature type, just like the (Oracle text of the) original.

**\*Extra\*** A common misconception with tokens is that the token's type is based on its name. In actuality, it's the name that's based on the type, but only if the name is not already specified [CR 216.1]. For example, a 1/1 red Goblin creature token has a type listed but no name, so it's granted the name "Goblin". But if we look at **Helm of Kaldra** we see "a legendary 4/4 colorless Avatar creature token named Kaldra." In the Kaldra case, the token is given a name, so the creature type (Avatar) doesn't get granted as the name.

**Q:** Would a **Trinisphere** slow down my friend's affinity deck? --Dean P.

**A:** Yes, **Trinisphere** applies after cost reductions, so even if your friend has four artifacts out, **Frogmite** still costs 3.

**Q:** If you use **Mageta the Lion's** ability to kill all of the creatures and discard two **Basking Rootwallas** as part of the activation, will the Rootwallas come into play before Mageta destroys all of the creatures, or will they come into play after all the creatures are destroyed? --Alex F.

**A:** Announcing Mageta's ability puts it on the stack, and paying for it causes the **Basking Rootwallas** to be discarded. Thus, you have to put the madness trigger on top of the ability, so both Rootwallas (assuming you use the madness) will be destroyed by the ability.

That wraps us up for this week. Next weekend **Saviors of Kamigawa** goes on sale, and stores all over will be having [release events](#) with their local players. Best of luck, and have fun.

Class dismissed.

--Carter

*Carter has been playing **Magic** since 1994 and has been a certified judge since 1997. He has judged at every size and type of event, and he's always interested in new ideas to make events and **Magic** better for the gaming community. Carter enjoys helping players understand the rules, even if his analogies aren't as funny as he thinks they are.*



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