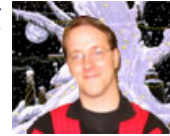


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One Week to Regionals

John Carter
Saturday School
Saturday, June 18, 2005



Send your rules questions to Level Four Judge [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](#).

[Regionals](#) is almost upon us! Rather than cut into your deck tech testing time, let's hit the questions right away.



Q: If I sacrifice my [Kami of Ancient Law](#) targeting my own [Promise of Bunrei](#), would I get the Spirit tokens before the Kami's ability resolves? --Jake A.

A: Yes, sacrificing the Kami would trigger the Promise. The Promise ability would resolve before the Kami ability, so you would sacrifice the Promise for Spirits. Then the Kami ability would be countered for lack of target.

Q: If I play [Otherworldly Journey](#) on [Kataki, War's Wage](#) during my upkeep, do I still have to pay the cost? --Francis

A: You won't have an opportunity to play the [Otherworldly Journey](#) until after stacking triggered abilities for the upkeep—including ones caused by [Kataki's](#) ability. Sending [Kataki](#) on a trip at that point won't save your artifacts from paying the wages of war.

Q: [Sakashima](#) says that you can return this card to your hand at the end of turn but if it goes to the graveyard before the end of turn does it go to your hand or stay in the graveyard? --John

A: If [Sakashima](#) dies before the ability returns it, then it stays dead.

Q: If I have a [Brothers Yamazaki](#) in play, and I play [Sakashima the Impostor](#) copying the Brother, what happens? --S. L.

A: [Sakashima](#) will give the real Brother +2/+2 and haste, but the Impostor won't get any bonus itself since its name didn't change.

***Extra*:** If you play another Brother, with [Sakashima](#) around, the two Brothers will be getting +2/+2 and haste twice (the extra haste is redundant). Since there are only two permanents actually named [Brothers Yamazaki](#), their Legend-rule-escape clause still works fine.

Q: If I use [Curtain of Light](#) to block a creature with trample, does it stop all of the damage or none of it? --Darque W.

A: None. Trample allows a player to assign excess damage (more than the blocker's toughness) directly to the defending player. If there's no creature there to absorb any damage, all of it is excess.

Q: My opponent attacks with a 2/2, can I say that I can block his creature with a [Sakura-Tribe Elder](#) then sacrifice the [Sakura-Tribe Elder](#) to search for a basic land? My opponent says that his creature will do damage to me because I took it out of combat. --David

A: The creature is still blocked, so you won't take any damage-- assuming the creature the Elder blocked doesn't have trample. If it does have trample, you can wait until after damage has been assigned (saving yourself from one point of damage).

Q: If I have [Infernal Kirin](#) in play and play [Swallowing Plague](#) using four mana (x=2) does my opponent discard cards with converted mana cost 4 or 2? --Lukas Z.



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Ravnica Cycle, Book III
by Cory Herndon

A: The Plague's converted mana cost when played with X =2 is four. Anywhere but on the stack the X would be treated like 0, but Kirin look for the converted mana cost of spells (and the stack is where spells live).

***Extra*:** Don't forget that converted mana cost may not be the same as what it costs to play a spell. For example, the converted mana cost of a **Blaze** played using **Fist of Suns**'s effect is only 1 even though you spent **♣♣♣♣**. A pitch card such as **Force of Will** still has converted mana cost of 5 even if you removed a blue card and paid a life to play it. The **Betrayers of Kamigawa** pitch cards are slightly different in that they allow you to pick a value for X (unlike **Fist of Suns**) and then you have to pitch a card of the right color with converted mana cost equal to X. With those cards, the X is included even though playing the spell cost you no mana. For example, removing a **Cranial Extraction** (**♣♣**) from the game to pay for a **Sickening Shoal** (**♣♣♣♣**) would make a **Cloudhoof Kirin** mill for 6 (**♣♣♣♣** converts into 4 for the Shoal, then **♣♣♣♣** converts into 6 for the Kirin).



Q: For **Pain's Reward**, do you bid in turn order or does that mean all the bidding occurs on your turn? --Thomas H.

A: "Turn order" is the order players normally take their turns-- clockwise (left) around the table. The way **Pain's Reward** works is the person who played it will bid a number, and then you'll go left around the table to see if anyone wants to outbid the high bid. You'll keep going around the table until one person has bid and everyone else has passed (the bid stands). Then the high bidder loses that much life and draws four cards. This all happens as **Pain's Reward** is resolving, and then the game moves on as normal.

Q: Would the Epic spell trait negate **Kaho, Minamo Historian**'s ability to play spells removed from the game? Or would it be allowed, as it is activating a creature ability? --Michael

A: Activating the ability is what would allow you to play the card removed from the game (so that much you can do regardless of epic). However, when you'd try and use the card you'd find you're trying to play a spell, and epic would stop you. Basically, epic ends your ability to play spells regardless of how you'd like to be playing or where it's coming from.

Q: My opponent plays **Cranial Extraction** naming **Twincast**, and in response, I play a **Twincast** copying his **Cranial Extraction** and naming **Cranial Extraction**. Are any of the spells played removed from the game, or just the ones in hand, library, etc.? --Jose L.

A: One quick note-- you don't name the card until **Cranial Extraction** resolves, so when you played the **Twincast**, you wouldn't actually know what he was after unless he spoke too soon. For now, let's assume we're slightly psychic...
The **Twincast** copy would removal all his **Cranial Extractions** from his graveyard, hand and library. The one on the stack would be untouched. Then his **Cranial** would resolve, and the **Twincast** you just played (which is in the graveyard by this time) would be removed along with others in your graveyard, hand and library. Then his **Cranial** would finish resolving and go to the graveyard. **Twincasts:** 0, **Cranial Extractions:** 1.

Q: My friend had a **Molting Skin** in play. I play a **Terashi's Grasp** on it, and he responded by picking the card back to his hand, although there were no valid targets for the ability. He said he could activate it and just simply let the ability fizzle. I want to know, can he really do that? --Pandu

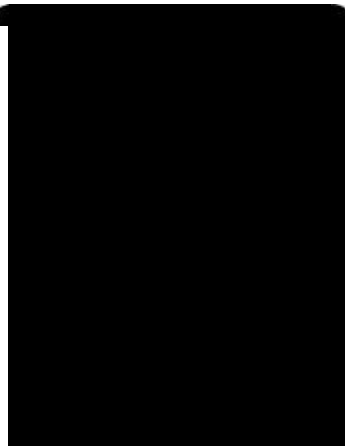
A: No, there does need to be a targetable creature in play for him to use the Skin. It can be his creature or yours. The regeneration ability isn't something you get because the Skin was returned-- returning the Skin is what you do when you pay for the ability.

***Extra*:** Fans of **Tempest** or Battle Royale might recognize **Molting Skin**. It's functionally identical to **Broken Fall**. It just so happens that the cost of returning something in play fits very well with **Saviors of Kamigawa**'s hand-size theme.

Q: If I have **Maga, Traitor to Mortals** in play and I play a second, will the come into play ability be put on the stack before both are destroyed due to SBE? --APS

A: A little of both. Technically, the Maga are put into their graveyards (not destroyed) just after the ability triggered but before triggered abilities are put on the stack. However, once you're done with state-based effects, you put triggers onto the stack. So even though the Maga are in the graveyard, the comes into play trigger will be put on the stack and resolve based on the number of counters the Maga had.

Q: I read the note on **Patron of the Orochi** that says the ability can only be played once per turn even if the controller changes. But what if the card returns from the graveyard or is replayed after having already been activated? --Chris G.



A: A Patron of the Orochi that has left play and returned isn't the same Patron as the one that left play and will be able to be tapped that turn (assuming you can get around the summoning sickness). Only phasing retains any memory about what a permanent's former existence was like.

Q: If I have **Konda's Banner** attached to **Takeno, Samurai General** do all my other "nonlegendary" Samurai get +2/+2 due to the fact that they share the same color and they have the same creature type? --Charlton C.

A: Being nonlegendary doesn't matter when it comes to who gets the Banner bonuses. And not all Samurai are white. Your white Samurai-- legendary or not-- will get +1/+1 twice over from the Banner attached to Takeno.

Q: I have been playing the same game of MTG for 3 days. My opponent played **Kami of Old Stone** and then **Pariah** on his Kami. I played **Treacherous Link** on **Kami of Old Stone** then attacked with my **Nightmare**. How does that work out? --Armadox L.

A: Ultimately **Pariah** and **Treacherous Link** cancel each other out. What happens is the damage that would hit the player is **Pariah**ed to the creature, and then that **Treacherous Link** sends it back to the player. At this point the **Pariah** realizes it's already handled that damage, so it doesn't try to reapply. If you hit the creature first, the opposite would happen. In both cases that damage winds up where it started.

Q: If I have a **Greater Harvester** and a **Skull Collector** out, at my upkeep could I put the Harvester trigger on the stack targeting the Collector, then put the Collector's trigger on the stack targeting itself, and not to sacrifice anything for the Harvester once it all resolves? --Justin H.

A: Neither **Greater Harvester** nor **Skull Collector** target. Thus, you won't decide what to sacrifice or return until each ability resolves. If you sacrifice **Skull Collector**, you'll have to return the Harvester (or vice versa).

Q: If someone entwines **Grab the Reins** targeting my creature and myself which I respond to with **Gilded Light**, he gets control of my creature, but does he still have to sacrifice? --Darryl G.

A: Yes, the damage to you won't happen because you're no longer legal, but the rest of the spell will resolve on as normal.

Q: How does **Sway of the Stars** interact with cards that are phased out? --Adam B

A: It doesn't. Specifically, **Sway of the Stars** doesn't do anything with things that are phased out, so each player shuffles their graveyard, hand, and things in play (permanents) into his or her library, draws seven, has seven life, and the phased things wait around to phase in like normal. Let loose the **Taniwha**.

Q: I would like to know if I activate my **Blinkmoth Nexus** and then put a **Sculpting Steel** into play copying the Nexus, how much is copied? --Scott S.

A: Your **Sculpting Steel** will come into play as a regular, unanimated **Blinkmoth Nexus**. It'll act in all ways like a **Blinkmoth Nexus** and can be animated just like a normal one.

Q: My opponent has a **Damping Matrix** in play and I want to use the ninjutsu. Does it work? Is ninjutsu an activated ability of a card or of a creature? --Mario K.

A: A Ninja isn't a creature until it's in play-- long after you've ninjutsued. **Damping Matrix** won't stop ninjutsu, but **Pithing Needle** can because **Pithing Needle** cares only if a card is a card (in play or in the hand makes no difference to the fact it's a card).

***Extra*:** "Card" by itself can refer to many zones, but "creature card" (or similar "[type] card") is used only for zones other than in play.

Q: I put out my **Beast of Burden** after playing another creature. So the **Beast of Burden** got 1 counter on it. The next turn I brought out another creature and started to put another counter on the **Beast of Burden** when my opponent said that it only gets the amount of counters that it gets when it comes out into play. Is he right? --Chris

A: You're both off on this one. **Beast of Burden** doesn't use counters. You might put something on it to remind yourself of his size, but that's just a reminder. **Beast of Burden** is actually regularly updating itself with a new power and toughness. If creatures leave, it gets smaller. If creatures arrive, it gets bigger. Anytime a creature comes or goes, BoB will adjust his power and toughness automatically.



Q: How exactly does the stack work? --Justin B.

A: The stack handles three things: spells, (activated and triggered) abilities, and combat damage. When a player is about to get priority, the game checks state-based effects to make sure everything is kosher. Then the active player (the one whose turn it is) puts any triggers on the stack and whatever order he or she wants followed by the non-active player. Then the active player can play a spell or ability. That player can keep doing things until he or she gives priority to the other player. The other player does the same. Once they have both passed without doing anything the very last item on the stack (the top) resolves. Players can add more to the stack in between things as well. For example, you can let the third thing resolve, and play a fourth before letting the second resolve, if you want. Once the whole stack is empty and both players pass, then that step or phase ends. There are a few things that don't use the stack-- they happen right away. A quick list includes playing a land, using a mana ability, and turning a morph face-up.

Q: Is **Chaos Orb** banned or restricted? --Thomas

A: **Chaos Orb** is banned in all sanctioned formats. You can find the banned and restricted lists [on this page](#). The non-sanctioned casual format known as **5-Color** allows **Chaos Orb**, but it's restricted in that format. The Orb lives up to its name a little too well.



Q: I was wondering why the rules say that you must have at least 60 cards in your deck but in the 2005 Grand Prix Bologna everyone had decks of 40 cards. I was wondering why that was, or if I was just crazy. -- Daniel

A: I'm not going to be able to comment on your sanity, but GP Bologna was a limited format event, and limited events have a 40-card minimum instead of the 60-card minimum constructed formats use. Limited uses 40 cards as the minimum because players build decks out of only what they open for sealed deck or pick from packs for booster draft.

This time next weekend players all over the world will be battling for a chance to represent their region in some of the largest open events around. In the US, the number of Regionals has been increased to make the event more accessible to as many people as possible, so be sure to check the [Regionals info page](#) for the location that suits you best. And good luck!

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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