

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns

# Que Siron Siron

Brian David-Marshall  
The Week That Was  
Friday, July 15, 2005



Last weekend during [Pro Tour-London](#), I had the opportunity to join Randy Buehler in the webcast booth and cover Masashi Oiso's Top 8 draft. Oiso was one of the front-runners all weekend and only lost a single match during the Swiss rounds.



Oiso came into the draft seemingly not wanting to draft any permutation of black-X. He took a first pick **Rend Flesh**, despite his misgivings, and never seemed comfortable the rest of the way. Despite sending strong signals to his left that it was safe to be either green or black, Oiso ended up in those colors and could not be budged out of them.

Randy and I both agreed that Oiso had dropped the ball by not switching to black-red somewhere along the way; if not sooner in pack one then certainly by the time he passed **Cunning Bandit** in the second pack. We could only follow one player's draft live, but it was obvious that the red was drifting around the

table waiting for someone to claim it. We mused about where all those **Kami of Fire's Roars**, **Barrel-Down Sokenzans**, and the aforementioned **Cunning Bandit** ended up.

Almost as soon as Randy and I faded away for the break during deck construction, Scott Johns burst into the coverage booth and urged us to come and look at Geoffrey Siron's deck.

"He is nearly playing mono-red and all but two red cards being played in the entire Top 8 are in his deck," Johns hurriedly told us.

When I went over to look at Siron's deck, the normally placid Belgian player erupted in a smile – the corners of which threatened to meet in the back of his head. There was nothing else that needed to be said. Siron had drafted what is arguably one of the most potent draft decks in the history of Limited Tours. He then went on the win nine straight games in what has to be the most dominating individual performance in Pro Tour history. While Zvi Mowshowitz and Nicolai Herzog have both reeled off 9-1 Sunday records, no one had ever thrown a perfect game before Siron's Sunday masterpiece.

I managed to steal a little time with the newly crowned champion in between pats on the back from fellow competitors, trophy shots with Craig Gibson, and the crew beginning to break down the Pro Tour set.

"It's amazing!" beamed Siron. "The draft went perfectly. It is probably the best deck I have ever drafted in this format. It was like playing a Constructed deck against Limited decks. I was really lucky, I think."

This was the 14th Pro Tour for the young Belgian player. He first popped up on people's radar three years ago at [Pro Tour-Osaka](#) when he finished ninth with an aggro alternative to the control black decks that most pros were favoring.



After seeing Siron's deck, playing the matches was almost a formality.

"I played a kind of Pirates deck," he said. "It was aggro black and really good. It actually beat the mono-black that was one of the top decks. It had Braids and **Rancid Earth** – all the stuff to disrupt the control decks."

PRODUCTS

MAGIC ONLINE

MESSAGE BOARDS

MAGIC General Forum

magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES

Geoffrey Siron - Pirates		
9th Place – Pro Tour-Osaka, Odyssey Block Constructed, (Prior to release of Judgment)		
Main Deck		Sideboard
59 cards		
2 Cabal Coffers	4 Chainer's Edict	2 Ichorid
23 Swamp	2 Innocent Blood	2 Innocent Blood
	3 Malevolent Awakening	2 Mind Sludge
	4 Rancid Earth	1 Mindslicer

25 lands	13 other spells	2 <b>Morbid Hunger</b>
4 <b>Braids, Cabal Minion</b>		1 <b>Shambling Swarm</b>
4 <b>Faceless Butcher</b>		2 <b>Skeletal Scrying</b>
4 <b>Mesmeric Fiend</b>		3 <b>Slithery Stalker</b>
3 <b>Mindslicer</b>		15 sideboard cards
4 <b>Nantuko Shade</b>		
2 <b>Shambling Swarm</b>		
21 creatures		

Despite an early taste of success, Siron did not post another money finish on the Pro Tour until last year's [World Championships](#). I asked him to explain his early success and why it took so long for him to get back into the money.

"I think I was probably pretty lucky in my first PT. I still needed to get better and progress – and that is what I did," he said.

What is the secret to Siron's success?

"Very simple. I sleep with **Magic** in mind. I wake up with **Magic** in mind. I play **Magic** all day. I am having a lot of fun. Well, especially when I am winning. I am actually a bad loser. I think being a bad loser might be a good quality in **Magic** because it gives you the drive to be better – it makes you want to win."

Geoffrey gets together with the other top Belgian players every Wednesday to draft and test Constructed. When there is a Constructed Pro Tour on the horizon, they usually join forces with top French player, such as Gabriel Nassif.

"Our test group is quite good for Constructed deck," Siron said. "The Tooth and Nail deck was partially a result of the Belgian team working on it. We usually play the same deck as the French. I was actually playing the same deck as Olivier Ruel in Philadelphia but like I did not see my Divining Top very often. When you play control without Divining Top, you do not play control actually. It is more like out-of-control."



Siron, right, teamed with Dilson Ramos Da Fonseca, left, Vincent Lemoine to finish second in the Worlds team competition.

Siron's trip back to the Pro Tour money started with his National Championships last year. "I was second at Belgian Nationals – Vincent Lemoine beat me. We ended up with a good team. We actually did well in San Francisco. Vincent and me finished Top 32 in the Swiss rounds and we finished second in the team event."

After closing out the season on a high note, Siron picked up where he left off with his Top 8 finish in [Columbus](#) at the start of this long season.

"Columbus was really special. We tested a lot of decks – almost every deck – and only the day before chose what we each really wanted to play. It is always this way with me. The day before I choose the deck I want to play depending on how comfortable I feel with the deck. That is actually why I chose Blue-green Madness. I think it is better to play the deck you like – the deck you feel good with – instead of the best deck in the format."

Siron's team lost in the last round of Day One in Atlanta and missed the cut to Rochester Draft. He won two rounds in Philadelphia but was watching from along the rail by round six. And then came London. While Geoffrey normally relied on testing with his friends every Wednesday for Limited, he tried something significantly different this time around.

"I started drafting on **Magic Online** for one month straight something like four drafts a day," Siron said. "It was really interesting because MTGO gives you so much – sometimes you think you know all the tricks and rulings. On MTGO you really visualize how all the cards work, how the stack works. It made me go to a really higher level."

It was a difficult hurdle for him to clear since so much of his enjoyment of **Magic** is derived from the social interaction but the boost it gave to his technical play was too significant to ignore.

"I actually hate **Magic Online**," admitted Siron. "I like to have cards in my hand and an opponent in front of me. **Magic Online** is very boring for me but it is probably the best tool for testing that you can possibly use. Especially living in Belgium where it might be hard to get a draft with eight players. If you draft in real life no one is necessarily going to tell you if you are doing things wrong. It is so clear on **Magic Online**. That is why it is so good. You really visualize the stack and it makes it easier to use in real life. If you make a mistake you can see it while you might miss it in real life."

With London's Top 8 draft generating so much discussion, I asked him to walk through his opening picks. (You can see his entire draft by checking out the new [Draft Viewer](#).)

#### HALL OF FAME UPDATE

With Selection Committee ballots due July 22, we're heading down the home stretch to decide the first four inductees to the [Magic Pro Tour Hall of Fame](#). Complete results will be announced August 1, but for now you can check out two more voters' ballots.

- [Elaine Chase](#), Wizards Brand Manager, Level 3 Judge
- [Ron Foster](#), Wizards Organized Play Manager, Japan

"I started the draft and I sat at the table and told myself, 'Now I have to focus. I have to focus on my draft and not mess it up.' I opened a good card in the first pack – **Honden of Infinite Rage** – which was actually really lucky because it gave me the way to go. Then I got the second-pick **Yamabushi's Flame**. My plan was to try to draft white-blue, blue-red, or green-red – or green-blue. Those are the archetypes I like."

It was not his intention to draft red-white – and he certainly was not entertaining thoughts of mono-red.

"I actually took a **Callous Deceiver** over **Otherworldly Journey**. That was my first non-red card but I wanted to draft the archetype I had in my mind. Then came the white Honden that showed me the way. [It came really late, really late](#). The guy just after me opened it and it made it all the way around the table. With the red Honden it could be so abusive."

It is not unusual for players to push red cards in the first two packs of CBS draft because red is weaker than the other colors. With two strong early picks, there was not a question that Siron would be red. But did he know that he was the only one at the table drafting red?

"I realized that in the middle of the second pack," Siron said. "People don't really like to draft red-white so if they are already playing white they might prefer to take a blue card that is a little bit worse to get the good archetype. That's why I got stuff like the **Kami of Fire's Roar** from my opening pack back. When I got the **Cunning Bandit** I knew that the deck was going to be almost mono-red."



Siron started the 2005 season with a Top 8 in Columbus.

The **Cunning Bandit** represented a key decision for Masashi Oiso on the other side of the table. When he saw the card for his third pick, he could have still switched successfully into red but instead chose a **Gnarled Mass**. Siron was not surprised by the pick.

"I can understand Oiso's decision. In the last pack drafting green is so good. If you get just a little but lucky you get Elder Pine, Shinen, +x/+x, and the **Okina Nightwatch**. Then your deck just becomes really, really good. **Saviors** has really changed the way people draft because green is really good. At the beginning of this Pro Tour my plan was to – for every draft – just draft blue-green. Blue-green is so synergistic. You have the fliers, the monsters to keep the ground, you have the bounce. When you start with Elder Pine and Shinen this is just crazy. You need the good cards but when you get them it is really, really good."



Fujita's pass of a **Yamabushi's Flame** led to Siron cementing his red draft.

The pick that really surprised Siron did not come from the Japanese player across the table but from the one passing to him in the first and third packs.

"I actually checked on the Internet and saw that Fujita, who was choosing before me, took the **Soratami Mirror-Guard** over **Yamabushi's Flame**. That's why my draft went so well. I think that most players would have taken the Flame. He just tried to take his favorite colors again."

Siron's one regret regarding the Top 8 was his match with Oiso, who stumbled on his mana in each game.

"It was a little disgusting to win against Oiso like this because three times he had mana problems. I would have liked to have just played my game and beat him fair and square."

Mana was not a problem that Siron faced throughout the Top 8 – just one more thing that fell into place for him during his perfect afternoon. "During the complete Top 8 I always drew a good amount of land and spells. In **Magic**, when you draw a good amount of land and spells the game of **Magic** is easy. When that happens and the quality of your deck is good, you cannot lose."

## Ninth Edition Takeoff

Scott Johns has been counting down to the release of *Ninth Edition* with a series of tantalizing teasers featuring the stunning new artwork for the set, as well as a look at some old favorites that are being reprinted for the first time. (I for one will be very disappointed to have my precious **Groundskeeper** back without **Trade Routes**, **Squirrel Wrangler**, or **Seismic Assault**. One of them had better be there.)

At the end of this month, the countdown finally reaches zero as there will be [release celebration tournaments](#) all over the world. The tournaments will be Limited and players will either build 40-card minimum Sealed Decks (using five packs of *Ninth Edition*) or 40-card minimum decks via Booster Draft (using three packs). The top three players at each tournament will win special Serra Angel life counters as prizes and the first 32 players to sign up at each location will receive a foil promo card.

I've always been a big proponent of getting new people into the tournament scene. These tournaments feature a special door prize for the first five people bringing a new player to the tournament – each will receive a free Serra Angel deck box.

To all of you who are foaming at the mouth at the prospect of playing against new players; please remember when back you were a new player. It is fine to beat them but be polite and if you have a couple of minutes, give a new player some tips on how they can improve. Talk to them about their deck, look at other ways they could have approached it, and maybe point out – constructively – some of the mistakes they made during their match.

## Firestarter: Are you on board with Magic Online?

I found Geoffrey Siron's comments about *Magic Online* to be especially interesting. He credited the automation of *Magic Online* with making him a more technically competent player – the opposite of what many of the platform's critics claimed would happen. *Magic Online*, they claimed, would lead to sloppy play and forgetful players who had grown reliant on the hand of *Magic Online* to get them through all their upkeep and endsteps.

What about you? Has *Magic Online* made you a better player offline as well? Or has it softened your game to the point where your *Acridians* die the upkeep after they are cast and does your *Blood Speaker* languish in your graveyard after you cast Yukora?

It certainly seemed to pay off for Mr. Siron. Use the 'discuss' button below to be whisked away to the world Mark Rosewater knows as hell but you and I call the forums, and chime in.



*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.*



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Brian David-Marshall](#) archive

---

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

---

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

