

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



National Treasures

Brian David-Marshall
The Week That Was
Friday, July 29, 2005



Lost in the hubbub surrounding [Grand Prix-Niigata](#) was the start of an exciting time for all Constructed deck fans around the world. [Italian Nationals](#) marked the beginning of Nationals season – the midway point between Regionals and World Championships on the Road to Yokohama.

Nationals has always been an exciting time where new decks surface from unexpected places. While you do see the big-name Pros from around the world, you also see up-and-coming regional players receive an opportunity ply their deck-construction skills on the National level. The addition of these players into the competitor pool means Nationals often has fresh-faced Constructed talent approaching the game with an innovative and non-jaded approach that has produced some memorable decks. These decks don't always have a legacy beyond that specific tournament – they are often metagame-specific decks that benefited from the element of surprise.

With that in mind, here are some of my favorite Nationals decks to shake up the scene:

Turbo Stasis

Last week I talked about Matt Place's interview with Mark Rosewater during U.S. Nationals in 1996. The deck that Matt and several other players were using was Turbo Stasis. If you look back now, that may not seem so revolutionary but Turbo Stasis was to prison decks what *The Godfather* was to gangster films.

Before Nationals in 1996, **Stasis** was not a deck archetype; it was simply a bad rare that occasionally tempted some designers but without success. It was not very different from the way [Zur's Weiriding](#) is regarded today. When Matt Place and company descended upon Nationals with their **Stasis**, **Howling Mines**, and **Lim-Dul's Vaults** in tow, it came completely from left field and caught the **Magic** community with their collective pants down.

At the time of U.S. Nationals, the best deck – hands down – was **Necropotence** a la Graham Tatomer and Leon Lindback from Pro Tour-New York, which relied heavily on pump knights and big **Drain Lives** for the bulk of its offense. **Stasis** decks not only locked up the mana that Necro decks relied on to recoup their lost life, but locked down the pump knights after a quick trip to the then-as-of-yet-unnamed red zone.

The deck's dominance was short-lived – as Matt predicted in his interview with Mark – as players were soon sporting answers in the form of enchantment removal or, even worse, **Serra Angel**. The **Stasis** lock – **Stasis**, **Stasis** in hand, **Kismet** in play, **Despotic Scepter** in play -- never seemed to fully engage except against the proverbial goldfish and the game would always teeter precariously for the **Stasis** player.



PRODUCTS

MAGIC ONLINE

MAGIC The Gathering ONLINE

MESSAGE BOARDS

Magic General Forum
magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES

Matt Place - Turbo Stasis	
Top 4 U.S. Nationals 1996	
Main Deck	Sideboard
60 cards	
4 Adarkar Wastes	4 Arcane Denial
4 City of Brass	4 Boomerang
13 Island	3 Despotic Scepter
4 Underground River	1 Feldon's Cane
25 lands	4 Force of Will
	4 Howling Mine
	1 Ivory Tower
	2 Kismet
0 creatures	1 Land Tax
	4 Lim-Dul's Vault
	2 Recall
	4 Stasis
	1 Zuran Orb
	35 other spells
	1 Black Vise
	2 Blue Elemental Blast
	2 Disenchant
	2 Hydroblast
	1 Kismet
	1 Lodestone Bauble
	3 Mana Short
	1 Swords to Plowshares
	2 Wall of Air
	15 sideboard cards

Angry Hermit



Forsythe with Angry Hermit in action.

[Regionals.](#)

Aaron Forsythe's deck from U.S. Nationals 2000 was almost as exciting as Jon Finkel's Napster-driven triumph. The deck, created by his brother Neil for States, combined elements from two different popular mana denial strategies – Ponza and Trinity – to create a totally unexpected deck in a field full of Rebels, [Thieving Magpies](#), and [Skittering Horrors](#).

It was the first time Aaron would pop on the **Magic** community's radar, and he made quite an impression since. Not only did he make the National team with a "rogue" deck that sported the generally scoffed at [Arc Lightning](#), but he chronicled his experience with one of the greatest tournament reports of all time.

The deck has gone on to inspire countless players to build green-red control decks, from my Angry Slug deck a season ago to the various Hostile Witness lists from [this year's](#)

Aaron Forsythe - Angry Hermit		
Top 4 U.S. Nationals 2000		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
11 Forest	4 Arc Lightning	2 Ancient Hydra
2 Gaea's Cradle	4 Plow Under	4 Blastoderm
4 Karplusan Forest	8 other spells	2 Boil
2 Mountain		1 Masticore
4 Rishadan Port		1 Splinter
2 Treetop Village		3 Thran Foundry
25 lands		2 Uktabi Orangutan
4 Avalanche Riders		15 sideboard cards
4 Birds of Paradise		
4 Deranged Hermit		
4 Llanowar Elves		
3 Masticore		
2 Rofellos, Llanowar Emissary		
3 Skyshroud Poacher		
3 Yavimaya Elder		
27 creatures		

Topdeck Goblins


Tsuyoshi Fujita began to earn his Resident Genius status when he stormed the [Grand Prix-Bangkok](#) Top 8 with Goblin Bidding just weeks before World Championships in 2003. But what most people don't realize was that weeks before that event, there was an earlier incarnation at [European Championships](#) piloted by Wolfgang Eder to a Top 16 finish called Topdeck Goblins.

The deck did not cause much of stir at the time of the event but it caught the eye of Fujita and ended up becoming one of the most dominant decks for the next year or so. Like Angry Hermit, Topdeck Goblins was created by a family member – in this case, Wolfgang's uncle. The deck started out as a casual deck designed to exploit [Oversold Cemetery](#), but even for casual play it was deemed to slow and they experimented with adding [Patriarch's Bidding](#). The rest is history.



Wolfgang Eder's Goblins took him far at Worlds.

Eder would revisit the deck and reached the Top 8 of the [2003 World Championships](#) with the newly renamed and retooled Goblin Bidding as his weapon of choice.

Eder Wolfgang - Topdeck Goblins		
13th Place 2003 European Championships		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		

60 cards		
4 Bloodstained Mire	4 Patriarch's Bidding	4 Duress
9 Mountain	4 other spells	2 Engineered Plague
2 Shadowblood Ridge		2 Goblin Sharpshooter
4 Sulfurous Springs		2 Smother
3 Swamp		4 Sulfuric Vortex
		1 Threaten
22 lands		15 sideboard cards
4 Gempalm Incinerator		
2 Goblin Goon		
4 Goblin Grappler		
4 Goblin Piledriver		
3 Goblin Sledder		
4 Goblin Taskmaster		
4 Goblin Warchief		
1 Raging Goblin		
1 Siege-Gang Commander		
3 Skirk Marauder		
4 Sparksmith		
34 creatures		

White Lightning



Talk about your short-lived decks. White Weenie was not even in most players test gantlets coming into Nationals that year but it still ended up putting two players through to the Top 8, including U.S. National champion Kyle Rose. Kyle was not even planning on playing the deck but changed his mind during the Limited portion of play on Day One.

Waylay was a little piece of tech discovered by Wisconsin's Waiken Soo. He found out that if you timed your **Waylay** right by playing after "at end of turn" effects, you could keep the three tokens for the start of your next turn. This effectively created a white **Ball Lightning** – six points of power for three mana – that pushed weenie strategies over the top.

While most players had no idea about the "**Waylay** trick" coming into the event, Mike Flores – as legend has it – got wind of the timing through his friendship with Adrian Sullivan and drafted a **Waylay** very high during the draft portion on Day One. He swept his first pod 3-0 and drew a flurry of attention with his use of **Waylay** at the end of his opponent's turns. When it became apparent that this was how the card worked, many players – including the eventual champion – audibled into White Weenie decks that were suddenly capable of "burning out" their opponent.

The card was soon issued errata that only allowed the card to be played during combat, turning it back into the defensive combat trick it was always intended to be.

Kyle Rose - White Lightning		
U.S. National Champion 1999		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
20 Plains	4 Crusade	2 Allay
20 lands	4 Disenchant	1 Armageddon
	2 Glorious Anthem	1 Erase
	4 Waylay	3 Field Surgeon
	14 other spells	3 Humility
4 Longbow Archer		1 Plains
2 Masticore		2 Worship
4 Mother of Runes		2 Wrath of God
4 Soltari Foot Soldier		15 sideboard cards
4 Soltari Priest		
4 Soul Warden		
4 Warrior en-Kor		
26 creatures		

Deadguy Red

One of my lasting memories of David Price is from Regionals in 1997. Dave was sitting quietly in a corner repeatedly taking a card from his hand

and putting it on the table as if he were playing it. He would then turn the card sideways with a flourish to indicate an attack. He would then pick the card up and repeat the process. I remembered it at the time because it had a very Rain Man-type affect to it but later it became apparent that this was the start of Dave's love affair with the color red.

The card he was obsessing over? **Lava Hounds**. Dave redefined the way people would play red decks with his 6-0 Standard performance at Nationals that year, piloting **Lava Hounds** and company on the good ship Deadguy Red. Prior to the debut of this deck at Nationals, most red decks tried to be agro control decks that would clear the way for creatures with **Orcish Artillery**. Dave's version was 100 percent undistilled aggression and it has set the standard for all red decks since.



David Price - Deadguy Red		
6-0 Standard Portion - U.S. Nationals 1997		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Dwarven Ruins	4 Fireblast	4 Anarchy
18 Mountain	4 Hammer of Bogardan	4 Detonate
22 lands	4 Incinerate	3 Pyrokinesis
	3 Kaervek's Torch	4 Straw Golem
	15 other spells	15 sideboard cards
4 Ball Lightning		
2 Dwarven Soldier		
3 Goblin Digging Team		
4 Goblin Vandal		
4 Ironclaw Orcs		
4 Lava Hounds		
2 Viashino Sandstalker		
23 creatures		

Keep your browser pointed at the Tournament Center as results pour in each week from Nationals around the world. The Standard format will get shaken up in a few weeks when *Ninth Edition* rotates out staple cards like **Plow Under** and **Birds of Paradise**. Canadian Nationals and Japanese Nationals will be of particular interest as they will occur after the rotation.

Firestarter: Top of the Ninth

Quick and simple question this week. What effect will the *Ninth Edition* rotation have on the Standard format? Are any of your favorite decks affected? Do any new decks get powered up by the set's release? Use the forums to chime in and share your opinions, rants, and deck recipes with the rest of us!

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](#)

