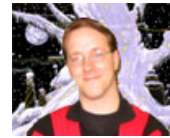


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City For Sale

John Carter
Saturday School
Saturday, October 8, 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](#).

Yesterday, October 7th, *Ravnica* went on sale to the public. If you're lucky, your local shop might have a [release event](#) running this weekend so you and your friends can get in some action with the new set and pick up one of those incredible promo [Dimir Guildmages shown in Thursday's Magic Arcana](#). As homage to *Ravnica's* impact, Saturday School this week will be exclusively devoted to the City of Guilds.

With the release of each set, the [Comprehensive Rules](#) [CR] gets an update. There were a few noteworthy addendums slipped in with the normal updates, highlighted here for your review.

Q: What is "substance"?

A: "Substance" is a new keyword added when the Comp Rules were updated for *Ravnica*. [CR 502.49] Substance isn't much—it's basically a placeholder. In order to figure out why substance exists, you have to look at the Oracle's most recent revisions. There you'll see *Mirage* block enchantments that you could play at any time that would blow up if you played them at odd times. These instant-ments give themselves substance until end of turn and then are sacrificed when the substance wears off. The key is that the card loses substance at the same time as damage wears off, and then losing substance causes it to be sacrificed. "At end of turn" would sacrifice the enchantment before damage wears off—a bad thing when *Armor of Thorns* is the only thing keeping your creature alive.

***Extra*:** Why bother with tweaking cards from nine years ago that haven't been reprinted since? Because *Mirage* is scheduled for release on *Magic Online* later this year, and now is the perfect time to brush off some of the dust and debris while the set gets prepared for its cyber debut.



Q: How did the layering system change when *Ravnica* was released?

A: Let's start with what the layering system is.

Q: Ok, what's the layering system, and how did it change when *Ravnica* was released?

A: The layering system is how the game figures out the end product of continuous effects (like *Crusade* or *Overrun*). First, you start with the printed characteristics. Then the system puts different kinds of effects into a particular order so that the results are consistent.

The layers handle different effects in this order:

- (1) Copy effects—*Dimir Doppelganger*, *Clone*
- (2) Control-changing effects—*Control Magic*, *Threaten*
- (3) Text-changing effects—*Swirl the Mists*, *Artificial Evolution*
- (4) Type-, subtype-, and supertype-changing effects—*Dream Thrush*, *Neurok Transmuter*
- (5) All other continuous effects, except those that change power and/or toughness—*Shifting Sky*, *Darkest Hour*
- (6) Power- and/or toughness-changing effects—*Sorceress Queen*, *Blanchwood Armor*

With each layer, you handle characteristic-setting abilities (*Crimson Kobolds*) first. [CR 418.5a] Then you handle things in timestamp order (generally the order things entered play) unless a dependency (which we'll cover another time) forces an adjustment. [CR 418.5b-g]

There are several minor tweaks in how the layering system works. One simple one is that if something applies in multiple layers, you apply each part in the respective layer (such as *Wild Mongrel's* color change in #5 and +1/+1 in #6). Effects for layer #4 used to have a special exemption that no longer applies.

The big change is that layer #6 has been remodeled. We now have sublayers in layer #6...

- (6a) Effects from characteristic-setting abilities—just like other layers
- (6b) All other effects not specifically applied in 6c, 6d, or 6e—your generic "other" P/T effects
- (6c) Changes from counters—*Dragon Blood*, modular creatures
- (6d) Effects from static abilities that modify P/T but don't set P/T to a specific amount—*Blanchwood Armor* and *Night of Soul's Betrayal*
- (6e) Effects that switch a creature's power and toughness—*Aquamoeba*, *Dwarven Thaumaturgist*

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NOVELS

Dissension
Ravnica Cycle, Book III
by Cory Herndon

Compared to before, only #6a remains unmoved. Counters used to be processed before normal continuous effects, so they'd disappear under a **Sorceress Queen's** stare. Now, a **Sorceress Queen** would turn your 1/1 **Arcbound Worker** into a (0/0 base > 0/2 other > +1/+1 counter) 1/3 **Arcbound Worker**. Once you get through the first four sublayers, then you switch the P/T if applicable rather than switching somewhere in the middle.

Let's mix **Maro** (three cards in hand), **Sorceress Queen**, **Dragon Blood**, **Unholy Strength**, and **Mannichi, the Fevered Dream** all together.

Base = */*. Then characteristic-setting ability = 3/3. Then **Sorceress Queen's** "other" P/T = 0/2. Then **Dragon Blood** counter = 1/3. Then **Unholy Strength** modification = 3/4. Then **Mannichi** switch = 4/3.

If we take out the Queen's effect, **Maro's** sublayering would look like this: */*, 3/3, 4/4, 6/5, and finally 5/6.

And Now, *Ravnica*

Q: Does **Doubling Season** interact with cumulative upkeep's Age counters? --Vince

A: Yes, cumulative upkeep putting counters on a permanent is an effect of the ability. **Doubling Season** will make the upkeep accumulate twice as fast.

Q: Does **Doubling Season** double the amount of counters **Maga, Traitor to Mortals** comes into play with? What if there are two **Doubling Seasons**? --Aaron B.

A: Yes, **Maga** will come into play with twice as many counters as the {X} you paid. Players will lose life equal to that doubled number of counters. If there are two **Doubling Seasons**, one Season will double the number, and then the second Season will double the already doubled number—quadruple counters! Double the result again for each additional Season.

Q: My opponent had **Gleancrawler** and a **Kormus Bell**. I played **Rout** when he attacked. He said that his swamps returned to his hand because the Bell made them creatures. I said this was impossible because when the trigger went off it checked and the Bell no longer had any effect on the swamps because they weren't in play. Who is right? --Ryan C.

A: The **Gleancrawler** wasn't in play when the end of turn step started, so it never triggered. Even if your opponent played another **Gleancrawler** after combat, the swamps aren't creature cards—they're land cards—so the **Crawler's** trigger wouldn't apply.

***Extra*:** If someone had **Lifeline** in play, then the swamps would return to play because **Lifeline** looks for creatures going to the grave and doesn't care what kind of card they actually are.

Q: If I play **Early Harvest**, could my opponent counter it before **Eye of the Storm** would remove it from the game? --Gregory E.

A: Yes, they could respond to the Eye's trigger by countering the spell. It will be put into the graveyard before the Eye can remove it from the game.

***Extra*:** If the counter is a spell, they'll have to let the Eye remove the counter and then use the Eye copy to counter your Harvest. If you have another instant, you could wait for the player to play the Eye-counter, and then play your other instant. This would get Eyed also, but then you could make a copy of the removed counter and use it to counter their own Eye-counter.

Q: **Leonin Den-Guard** gains an ability that is everything like vigilance when it is equipped. Could it have the real keyword ability and give vigilance to all of my creatures with **Concerted Effort**? --Simon

A: Consider it done. **Concerted Effort** will give vigilance to all your creatures if you control an equipped Den-Guard as the Effort trigger resolves. gatherer.wizards.com has all the official Oracle wordings for cards readily available—including the Den-Guard's updated text.

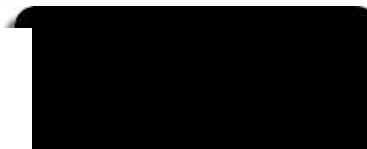
Q: Would **Excruciator** still do damage if my opponent taps his **Maze of Ith** to untap my **Excruciator**? --Francois B.

A: Yes, the Maze would untap **Excruciator** but the prevent effect wouldn't prevent the damage. [CR 103.2]


***Extra*:** **Excruciator's** damage won't be prevented by "protection from" or Circles of Protection either. Basically, Ex's damage laughs in the face of prevention—quite an accomplishment with a mouth like that.



Q: If your opponent uses a tutor (ie **Tinker**) could you respond to that spell or ability with **Shadow of Doubt**, thus rendering their search useless? --Lucian T.

A: Yes. If the effect says "search," the Shadow can stop it. This is especially cruel with **Tinker** since the player will have already sacrificed



the artifact to play the **Tinker**.

Q: Friends of mine think you can attack with **Frenzied Goblin** and pay as much  as you want.
--Conrad C.

A: The **Frenzied Goblin** attacked once, so there's only one trigger that they can spend one  on. Compare **Frenzied Goblin** to **Crimson Hellkite** for some idea of how spending multiple  would look.

Q: I am playing against an opponent who is attacking with a creature equipped with the **Umezawa's Jitte** (I know he's a toolbag, but he's my friend) and I block with **Razia**. If I redirect the damage with **Razia, Boros Archangel's** ability, does the Jitte get a counter? --Mitchell H.

A: Yes, the toolbag's Jitte will still get counters—the damage still happens even if it happens somewhere else. That is, unless you redirect it to a source with protection (assuming **Excruciator** isn't wearing the Jitte).

***Extra*:** If you block a 2/2 double striker and use Razia's ability, two of the double strike and one of the normal combat damage will be dealt to the redirected target—if that target survived the first two damage.



Q: In the Detroit Prerelease, I had a **Pariah's Shield**. I was holding onto a **Coalhauler Swine** as well, but was skittish about equipping the Swine with the Shield. What would have happened, had I done this and blocked an attacking creature with the Swine? --Bill S.

A: The Swine would take damage and trigger. Then the Swine would deal damage to each player, but your damage would go back to the Swine because of the Shield. This would trigger the Swine again. If the Swine dies before your opponent, then you'd eventually take damage. For example, you block a 2/2. The Swine takes two and triggers. Your opponent and the Swine (thanks to the Shield) take two. Swine triggers. Swine dies. The Shield isn't equipped, anymore, so your opponent takes another two, and you take two.

Q: Can I stack multiple Dredge effects from a single card to mill my Library away? --James C.

A: Dredge doesn't stack. If you're about to draw, you choose one card you want to dredge, and your draw is replaced with once instance of milling the appropriate number of cards. You can't repeat this process with one dredge card, and with multiple dredges you'd need multiple draws to use them all.

Q: I have a **Plague Boiler** in play with two counters on it. My opponent has a creature enchanted with **Flickerform**. In response to the **Plague Boiler** triggering off the third counter, my opponent uses **Flickerform's** ability. Can I add and remove counters to destroy my opponent's creature in response to his last activation of **Flickerform**? --Luas A.

A: No, **Plague Boiler's** boiling point is a state-triggered ability (it looks for the state of having three plague counters on the Boiler). Once triggered, a state-trigger won't retrigger until the original trigger resolves or is countered. [CR 410.11] Adding or removing counters won't let you stop or reschedule the Boiler's destruction once it begins to boil.

***Extra*:** The "if you do" clause does mean that if you can destroy the Boiler before the ability resolves, then the Plague won't be unleashed. A timely **Naturalize** can wipe up the Boiler before it explodes and render its controller unable to sacrifice it for the destruction of nonland permanents.

Q: I have **Circu, Dimir Lobotomist** in play and play **Rend Flesh** splicing **Evermind** onto it. How many cards does my opponent remove from the game? --Evan L.

A: Only one card is removed because the spell you played is now blue. [CR 409.1i]

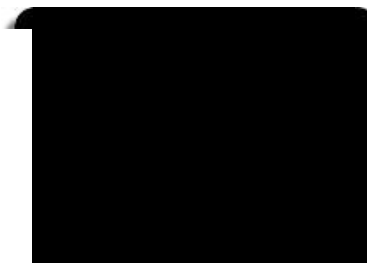
***Extra*:** You can use **Evermind** to turn any Arcane spell blue before **Circu** looks at the color.

Q: If my opponent plays **Char** targeting me and I play **Shining Shoal** removing a four mana white card and targeting him, will my opponent still take two damage? --Justin P.

A: Your opponent will take the two they were expecting along with the four sent their way by the **Shining Shoal**.

Q: Why does **Hex** have to have six separate targets when **Seeds of Strength** can have one, two, or three? -- Scott Johns, on behalf of untold numbers of "Ask Wizards" submitters.

A: Targets are separated either by the instances of the word target or by restrictions on targets. **Seeds of Strength** has "target" three times, so you pick what it's targeting for each instance of the word target. If "another" was used, you couldn't pick the same target twice, but that's not the case with the Seeds. The ability to spread the Seeds around in different ways is why this spell is so flexible. Functionally it's much like **Bounty of the Hunt's**



Oracle text but with a much cleaner wording. Meanwhile, **Hex** just says, "six target creatures." The word target appears only once, so you have to pick six separate targets. If **Hex** said "up to six," then you could pick any number of targets from zero to six, but this isn't the case. Finding six separate targets is part of the drawback for having a spell that can wipe out so many creatures at once.

Q: I play **Hunted Phantasm** and place the five Goblin tokens into play under my opponent's control. Then, I play **Brand**. My friend says that possession is nine-tenths of the law. Who gets the tokens?
--Jeff

A: You do. The other one-tenth of the law is covered in [CR 200.4a].

A few quick reminders—*Ravnica* is now legal for limited (draft and sealed deck) play. On October 20th *Ravnica* is legal in constructed. This means *Ravnica* will replace *Mirrodin*, *Darksteel*, and *Fifth Dawn* in Standard. Extended's rotation kicks in this year meaning only cards in *Seventh* through *Ninth Edition* and *Invasion* block through *Ravnica* are Extended legal come October 20th. In Canada and the United States, the [State / Province Championships](#) are slated for October 22nd. That's mere hours after *Ravnica* shakes up Standard—the format for that Championship series. That's all for this week.

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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