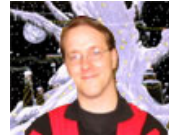


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# Regionals Weekend

John Carter  
 Saturday School  
 Saturday, May 20, 2006



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](#).

This Saturday is Regionals weekend. While some Regionals fall on other days, the bulk of them happen on May 20th. This is especially important since May 20th is the very first day that *Dissension* is legal in Constructed events. The confluence of a change in the format mixed with invitations to represent your region at the National level is bound to produce so big contenders and some offbeat rogues for the Standard environment we'll see this summer.

**Q:** If I have [Grand Arbiter Augustin IV](#) in play, can I play a [Pride of the Clouds](#) for a total mana cost of 0? --Tobias

**A:** No, Augustin's ability only reduces generic mana costs. The colored portion of the spell remains untouched.

**Q:** I was wondering how [Disrupting Shoal](#) works with the [Grand Arbiter Augustin IV](#). Can I counter spell with converted mana cost 3 by paying 2 blue? Can I remove a blue card with converted mana cost 2 instead of 3? --David S.

**A:** First, figure out the converted mana cost of the spell you want to target. Then you decide if you'll pay the alternate cost or if you're paying with mana like normal. Augustin won't change the alternate cost, so you'll have to remove a blue card with the spell's converted mana cost. But if you're paying with mana like normal, then Augustin gives you the 1 reduction.

**\*Extra\*:** If there's an effect that's adding to the cost, Augustin could apply to that. For example, if you wanted to counter a spell that with converted mana cost 2, but there was a [Sphere of Resistance](#) in play, you could pitch a [Remand](#) to cover the mana cost portion of [Disrupting Shoal](#) and let Augustin's ability reduce away the added cost imposed by the Sphere. Remember the total cost equation: Mana Cost + Additional Costs - Cost Reductions = Total Cost. 2 blue paid by the alternate cost + 1 from the Sphere - 1 from Augustin.



**Q:** With [Ocular Halo](#), could you pay \* and then draw a card without tapping the creature? --Shaggy

**A:** Vigilance only applies to attacking. The card drawing ability from [Ocular Halo](#) requires tapping and won't be affected by Vigilance.

**\*Extra\*:** You could, however, give the creature Vigilance, attack with it, and then after it's attacking use the card draw. The creature would tap for the draw, but it'd still be in combat and attacking.

**Q:** If you have a [Dovescape](#) and [Boseiju, Who Shelters All](#) in play, how would [Isochron Scepter](#) react if you used it? --Camilo C.

**A:** Spending mana from Boseiju to activate the Scepter doesn't stop [Dovescape](#). The Scepter copy will trigger [Dovescape](#), and a Bird or Birds will appear when the spell is countered.

**Q:** What happens if I have both [Psychic Possession](#) and [Words of Waste](#) in play and during the upkeep of my opponent I activate the [Words of Waste](#)? --Alexandra

**A:** Your opponent's draw step draw would trigger the [Psychic Possession](#). When that trigger resolves, the Words replacement would make your opponent discard a card.

**\*Extra\*:** If you opponent is holding an instant, he or she could respond to the Psychic trigger by playing it before the discard kicks in. Otherwise, he or she will discard before moving into the main phase.

**Q:** Can an [Azorius Guildmage](#) counter a [Frenzied Goblin's](#) ability? --Paul T.

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**A:** **Frenzied Goblin** has a triggered ability, not an activated one. Even though it might require spending mana, an ability that starts with "when," "whenever," or "at" is triggered. Activated abilities, like the ones **Azorius Guildmage** can counter, all have a colon (:) in them.

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**Q:** If my attacking **Kill-Suit Cultist** deals damage to a blocking creature, will I be able to sacrifice my **Kill-Suit Cultist** to destroy that creature? --Vaan

**A:** Careful there - the Cultist's ability replaces damage with destroy. In order for the replacement to work, it has to be set up *before* the damage actually occurs, not after. Rather than wait for the Cultist's damage to resolve, stack the damage, and then respond by sacrificing the Cultist. When the damage you stacked would hit the creature, the creature is destroyed by the ability.

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**Q:** When exactly do I flip the coin for **Odds // Ends**? My opponent told me that he was going to wait until I flipped the coin to see if he was going to counter it. --Benjamin D.

**A:** You don't flip coins until the spell is resolving; this is well after the chance to counter it was elapsed. (All coin flip effects work this way - you don't flip until it's already resolving.)

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**Q:** If I have a **Leyline of Singularity** in play, what happens if I **Cytoshape** a creature? --Tom K.

**A:** You're going to have some difficulty choosing a nonlegendary creature given that all the nonland permanents are legendary. The **Cytoshape** will likely look at the target, look around for a nonlegendary creature to copy, find none, do nothing, and go to the graveyard.

**\*Extra\*:** If you happen to have an animated land in play, you can choose that; assuming it's not legendary for some other reason.

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**Q:** If I were to **Cytoshape** on one of my opponent's creatures and choose my **Bronze Bombshell**, would my opponent have to sacrifice his creature? --Colin S.

**A:** Probably not. As long as he owned the target you turned into a Bombshell, it won't explode. If your opponent stole a creature of yours, and you made it into a Bombshell, then it would explode.

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**Q:** If **Shirei, Shizo's Caretaker** is in play when a grafter moves its last counter to another creature and goes to the grave, does it get more graft counters when it returns from the graveyard to play? --B. C.

**A:** Removing the last counter from a grafter would cause state-based effects to put the now 0/0 creature into the graveyard (as you might recall last week when we talked about **Proper Burial**). Shirei sees that its power was 1 or less, and will return it to play at end of turn. It will come back with its normal load of counters.

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**Q:** The hellbent ability was not added to the Comp Rules where it should have taken the 502.55 position. Why not? --Leo

**A:** Hellbent is an ability word, not a keyword. Ability words, like hellbent, channel and radiance, don't have individual entries in the Comprehensive Rules. Ability words could be taken off the cards and have the card function the same. A keyword is a shorthand for a section of rules, and unless you understand what the keyword means, you can't understand the card on its own (reminder text helps though).

**\*Extra\*:** A simple way to tell the difference is to look at the card. If the word before the em-dash (—, named such because it's a dash the length of the letter m) is in italics, then it's an ability word. If the word is in normal font, then it's a keyword. Compare forecast with hellbent to see the difference.

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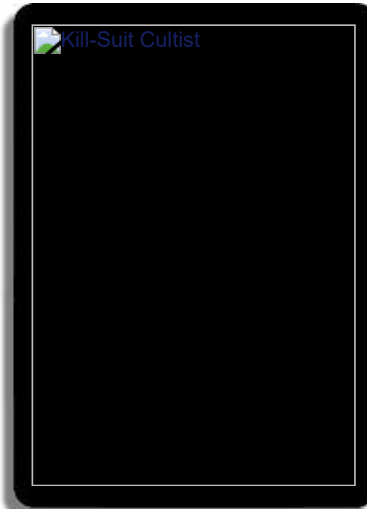
**Q:** I control an **Arcbound Worker** (with a +1/+1 counter) equipped with a **Heartseeker**. I also control an **Experiment Kraj**. Does the Kraj gain the ability granted by the **Heartseeker**? How does the ability work, considering I have to unequip an equipment that isn't equipped to the Kraj itself? --Kris

**A:** **Heartseeker** grants the ability to the Worker. The Experiment, complements of the +1/+1 counter, sees the ability. If you activate the Kraj, the **Heartseeker** will be unequipped from the Worker. **Heartseeker** doesn't say, "unattach from this creature," so it doesn't care what creature it's unattaching from.

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**Q:** I have two **Llanowar Elves** in play. One is enchanted with **Beastmaster's Magemark**, and the other is enchanted with **Fencer's Magemark**. What are their powers and toughnesses? --Mike

**A:** Each Magemark gives the controller's enchant creatures +1/+1. Since each Elf is enchanted, it gets +1/+1 twice. They're both 3/3.



**Q:** When I activate **Terrarion**, I sacrifice it, and the trigger triggers. Do I have to choose which colors of mana I want at the activation, or when it resolves? --Ture E.

**A:** While the triggered ability uses the stack, the mana ability that often causes that trigger doesn't use the stack. Since mana abilities resolve immediately, you'll announce that you're using the ability, you'll pay the costs, you'll specify what colors you just got, and then you'll put the trigger on the stack.

**\*Extra\*:** **Terrarion** will trigger even if something other than its mana ability put it from in play into the graveyard.

**Q:** If I animate a **Cloudpost** with **Mishra's Groundbreaker**, then enchant it with **Followed Footsteps**, what exactly happens? What kind of token do I get? --L. D.

**A:** At the beginning of each of your turns you'll get an unanimated **Cloudpost** token land. It will come into play tapped, and it does increase the number of Locus (Loci?) you have in play.



**Q:** Player A is at 15 life, and Player B attacks with 20 points of damage. Player A plays **Simulacrum** on his **Wall of Souls** after taking the 20 damage. Will Player A die, or will the damage be directed to the **Wall of Souls**, and Player B takes the damage? --Jaren

**A:** **Simulacrum** doesn't actually redirect damage (checking the Oracle wording on older cards is always a good idea - advice that even I forget). **Simulacrum** makes you gain life, and it deals damage. Thus, **Wall of Souls** won't trigger from **Simulacrum**. Sadly, Player A won't even be able to play **Simulacrum** because he or she was too dead to play spells or abilities after the lethal damage resolved.

**\*Extra\*:** **Pariah** or **Pariah's Shield** would happily redirect that 20 damage to the **Wall of Souls** though. Redirected damage is otherwise unchanged, so that damage would still be combat damage and would trigger the Wall.

**Q:** I have **Night of Souls' Betrayal**, **Tainted Aether**, and **Forbidden Orchard** in play. If I tap the Orchard for mana, what happens? --Russ

**A:** A 0/0 Spirit token creature would come into play. This would trigger **Tainted Aether**, and state-based effects would put the token into the graveyard (then the token would cease to exist). The Tainted trigger would go on the stack. When the trigger resolves, your opponent would sacrifice a creature or land. Oh, and this whole time you'd have one mana of any color just waiting to burn you if you didn't use it.

**Q:** My opponent is at 8 life, I'm at 1. He attacks me with a 10/10. Can I remove an **Autochthon Wurm** to play **Shining Shoal** even though only 10 damage is headed for me? --Gabriel S.

**A:** Yes, you can. **Autochthon Wurm** is a white (and green) card, so it can fuel the white (or the green) Shoal. It doesn't matter how much damage is headed right for you - extra redirection would be a waste, but it's better than getting wasted.

**Q:** If it's my turn and I want to play **Gallantry** to draw a card, does there need to be a legal target? --Sam

**A:** Any targeted spell requires legal targets. However, you can play **Gallantry** even while attacking if your opponent is nice enough to provide a blocker. For example, if you're attacking with a 1/1, and a 2/2 is blocking, does it matter if the opponent's 2/2 becomes a 6/6? Not really, but you'll get to draw a card. If you have a 1/2 blocking your 1/2, wait for damage to go on the stack (or anytime before leaving combat), and then play **Gallantry**. Making that blocker huge won't hurt your attacker if damage has been stacked, and you'll have a target for your **Gallantry**.



**Q:** I was thinking of getting into **Magic**, and I am considering starting with a preconstructed deck. I would like to study them and decide which one is my style. Is there any way to know the contents before actually buying one since it's not random? --Stephane B.

**A:** Officially those decks are called "theme decks," but they were originally known as preconstructed decks or precon. These are rebuilt sixty-card decks designed by the guys in R&D to give you a feel for the set in question. If you visit the [Magic products page](#), you'll see all the various sets from **Magic's** history. Under each set there will be a listing of the relevant theme (or precon) decks. Theme decks started with the four decks built with the release of **Tempest**. The three sets of the **Ravnica** block had a total of ten theme decks to coincide with the ten guilds. Core Sets since **Seventh Edition** have also had their own forty-card theme decks.

That's all for this week. Be sure to check back with [magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com) for plenty of post-Regionals coverage and always the latest from atop the ivory tower.

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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