

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



Cold Front Hits Standard

Brian David-Marshall
The Week That Was
Friday, August 25, 2006



Greetings from Tokyo. I am in town to cover Japanese Nationals, which [kicked off a few hours before you started reading this](#). If you're interested in Standard at all, it's a tournament you'll want to follow because this weekend's National Championship will be the first such tournament to feature Coldsnap in the Constructed portion of the event. The newest set became tournament legal last Sunday, but since the various Nationals started on Friday it was not allowed to be used on Sunday – the players had no choice but to play their suddenly old-fashioned Standard decks for one more day.

One of the guys in the Neutral Ground draft gaggle is Luis Neiman. Luis currently lives in New York City, but was once an Argentinean player of some renown. He went back to his old stomping grounds last weekend to cover the 2006 Nationals and sent me back the following update:

Hey Brian,

I figured I'd send you a quick blurb about the Top 8 of Argentine Nats, in case you wanted to mention it in your article. The final positions were as follows:

- 1st - Leonardo Calcagno (Solar Flare)
- 2nd - Gonzalo Spampinato (Solar Flare)
- 3rd - Pedro de Diego (Blue-red Tron)
- 4th - Agustín Seratti (Black-white Hand in Hand)
- 5th - Joaquín Álvarez Rivera (Flores-style Boros Deck Wins)
- 6th - Adrián Saredo (Heartbeat)
- 7th - Matías Bollati (Blue-white-red Firemane Control)
- 8th - Santiago Guzzetti (Solar Flare)

The elimination rounds were as follows:

Quarters

- Spampinato (Flare) defeated Saredo (Heartbeat) 3-2
- De Diego (U/R Tron) defeated Bollati (Firemane Control) 3-1
- Seratti (Hand in Hand) defeated Álvarez Rivera (Boros) 3-0
- Calcagno (Flare) defeated Guzzetti (Flare) 3-2

Semis

- Spampinato (Flare) defeated De Diego (Tron) 3-0
- Calcagno (Flare) defeated Seratti (Hand in Hand) 3-2

Third place

- De Diego (Tron) defeated Seratti (Hand in Hand)

Final

- Calcagno (Flare) defeated Spampinato (Flare) 3-0

You can check the [Day Two blog coverage here](#), and [Day One here](#).

The Top 8 decklists are linked on the main blog page on the right side, and are shown as "Mazos del Top 8". Decklists show card names in Spanish and in English. The most played decks in Standard were Solar Flare, Vore and black-white variants, followed by Heartbeat and Boros. The complete Standard metagame can be [seen here](#).

Thanks Luis! Hopefully I will see you on Tuesday for some drafting.

Not too long after I got my email from Luis, I had a messenger window pop up from my friend Michael Potter in Singapore. For his country's nationals, they have a series of qualifiers as opposed to one weekend of Regional Championships. Mike has been plugging away for the past couple of events with varying degrees of success. This past weekend represented Mike's last chance to qualify for the championship but it was his first chance to play with Coldsnap in Standard.

It turned out that last qualifier was scheduled for Sunday and therefore the doors were swung wide open for Coldsnap. If Standard wasn't hard enough to figure out already suddenly another 100-plus cards were being thrown into the mix. Michael had been itching to play with snow as well as with the *Ohran Viper* and updated the popular Snakes deck accordingly. How did it all work out?



PRODUCTS

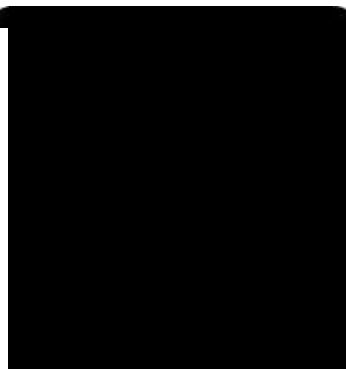
MAGIC ONLINE

MESSAGE BOARDS

MAGIC General Forum

magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES



"I went 4-1-1," announced the triumphant Potter who earned a berth at this weekend's Singaporean Nationals. "I lost to a blue-green deck that ran bigger creatures and some elves."



| Michael Potter | | |
|---|--|--|
| Qualified – Snakes, Singapore Nationals Qualifier | | |
| Main Deck 60 cards | | Sideboard |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Breeding Pool 1 Novijen, Heart of Progress 1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers 1 Scrying Sheets 4 Simic Growth Chamber 5 Snow-Covered Forest 2 Snow-Covered Island 4 Yavimaya Coast <hr/> 22 lands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Coat of Arms 3 Mana Leak 3 Remand 4 Sosuke's Summons 3 Umezawa's Jitte <hr/> 16 other spells | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Ghost Quarter 3 Gifts Ungiven 1 Life from the Loam 3 Pithing Needle 3 Spell Snare 2 Threads of Disloyalty 1 Trygon Predator <hr/> 15 sideboard cards |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Coiling Oracle 1 Indrik Stomphowler 3 Ohran Viper 3 Patagia Viper 4 Sakura-Tribe Elder 4 Sakura-Tribe Scout 2 Seshiro the Anointed 2 Unknown Cards <hr/> 22 creatures | | |

While *Coldsnap* cards were legal for the qualifier, there were some issues with the card availability and many players chose to stick with archetypal lists without much *Coldsnap* update. "Snakes were running Viper if available and I'm the only one that tried *Scrying Sheets*," Mike explained. "I saw a few Valkyrie being played, but not at the top tables."



With a full week for players to suss out the format both in real life and on *Magic Online*, I am sure we will be seeing quite a bit more *Coldsnap* in 60-card decks come Round One of Japanese Nationals. I have a wager with Mike Flores that, by turn two of round one, Japan's preeminent control player – and frontrunner in the Player of the Year race – Shota Yasooka's board will consist of two Snow-covered Islands, *Sensei's Divining Top*, and *Counterbalance*. Mike argues that it won't happen until turn three.


If you read [last weekend's Hiroshima coverage](#) you may recall Andrew Stokinger's misfortune. He is actually has been hanging out in Japan all week and was at the tournament site early Thursday afternoon when I swung by to catch some of the Grinder results. According to him, the two big *Coldsnap*-inspired decks we should expect to see this weekend both feature the *Rimefeather Owl*.

The first version is a SnowTron deck that accelerates out the Owl with the Urza lands and converts them to snow assets. The second deck is a more traditional control deck that opts for the mana consistency/card advantage that *Scrying Sheets* offers. Andrew suggested that the local Pros were debating between the two different habitats for the Owl, but you should expect to see many of them in captivity this weekend.

I did see Yasooka hovering over one match where one side of the table was playing Top, **Counterbalance**, **Jushi Apprentice**, **Scrying Sheets**, AND **Dark Confidant** – perhaps the greediest array of card advantage ever assembled on one side of the board. You can expect to see **Rewind** getting a little more love now that **Counterbalance** is kicking around – mostly because it is a 'four' you can float on top of your deck should you tap out for a blue legend and not want to worry about **Wrath of God** on the other side of the table.

I also noticed that many players were testing out **Phyrexian Ironfoot** for Saturday's action. Despite all the experimentation for the main event there was very little innovation in the decks that emerged from the two completed grinders when I stopped by. Each tournament propelled the top two players into Nationals and of the four winning decks included three Solar Flare and one Vore. Vore did run some snow lands to support **Stalking Yeti** out of the sideboard.

| Watanabe Kazuki | |  |
|--|---|---|
| Top 2 – Solar Flare, Japanese Nationals Grinder #1, Deck Name: 5CM/5 | | |
| Main Deck 60 cards | Sideboard | |
| 1 Adarkar Wastes 2 Azorius Chancery 2 Caves of Koilos 1 Eiganjo Castle 3 Godless Shrine 1 Hallowed Fountain 1 Island 1 Mikokoro, Center of the Sea 1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge 1 Miren, the Moaning Well 2 Orzhov Basilica 1 Plains 1 Shizo, Death's Storehouse 1 Swamp 2 Tendo Ice Bridge 2 Watery Grave <hr/> 23 lands <hr/> 3 Angel of Despair 4 Court Hussar 1 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni 3 Kokusho, the Evening Star <hr/> 11 creatures | 4 Azorius Signet 4 Compulsive Research 3 Condemn 2 Dimir Signet 2 Persecute 4 Remand 4 Wrath of God 3 Zombify <hr/> 26 other spells | 4 Castigate 1 Condemn 2 Cranial Extraction 1 Debtors' Knell 3 Descendant of Kiyomaro 1 Meloku the Clouded Mirror 2 Mortify 1 Persecute <hr/> 15 sideboard cards |

| Hirotoshi Ito | |  |
|--|---|--|
| Top 2 – Solar Flare, Japanese Nationals Grinder #1 | | |
| Main Deck 60 cards | Sideboard | |
| 3 Azorius Chancery 3 Caves of Koilos 2 Godless Shrine 1 Island 1 Mikokoro, Center of the Sea 1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge 1 Miren, the Moaning Well 1 Orzhov Basilica 3 Plains 1 Shizo, Death's Storehouse 2 Swamp 2 Tendo Ice Bridge 2 Watery Grave <hr/> 23 lands <hr/> 2 Angel of Despair 4 Court Hussar 1 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni 2 Kokusho, the Evening Star 2 Yosei, the Morning Star <hr/> 11 creatures | 4 Azorius Signet 4 Compulsive Research 2 Dimir Signet 3 Mortify 2 Persecute 4 Remand 1 Unknown Card 4 Wrath of God 2 Zombify <hr/> 26 other spells | 4 Condemn 2 Cranial Extraction 4 Descendant of Kiyomaro 2 Mimeofacture 1 Overwhelming Intellect 1 Persecute 1 Plagiarize <hr/> 15 sideboard cards |

Takayuki Rita

Top 2 – Solar Flare, Japanese Nationals Grinder #2, Deck Name: Sun Field



Main Deck 60 cards

2 Azorius Chancery
2 Caves of Koilos
2 Godless Shrine
2 Island
1 Mikokoro, Center of the Sea
1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge
1 Miren, the Moaning Well
2 Orzhov Basilica
3 Plains
1 Shizo, Death's Storehouse
1 Swamp
2 Tendo Ice Bridge
1 Underground River
2 Watery Grave

23 lands

3 Angel of Despair
3 Court Hussar
1 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni
2 Kokusho, the Evening Star
1 Meloku the Clouded Mirror
2 Yosei, the Morning Star

12 creatures

4 Azorius Signet
4 Compulsive Research
1 Dimir Signet
3 Mortify
2 Persecute
4 Remand
4 Wrath of God
3 Zombify

25 other spells

Sideboard

1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All
4 Condemn
2 Cranial Extraction
4 Descendant of Kiyomaro
4 Mana Leak

15 sideboard cards

Sho Yamauchi

Top 2 – Vore, Japanese Nationals Grinder #2



Main Deck 60 cards

3 Island
2 Izzet Boilerworks
1 Mikokoro, Center of the Sea
1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge
1 Mountain
1 Oboro, Palace in the Clouds
1 Shinka, the Bloodsoaked Keep
4 Shivan Reef
3 Snow-Covered Island
2 Snow-Covered Mountain
4 Steam Vents

23 lands

3 **Magnivore**

3 creatures

3 Boomerang
4 Compulsive Research
1 Counsel of the Soratami
1 Demolish
4 Eye of Nowhere
4 Mana Leak
3 Pyroclasm
1 Shattering Spree
4 Sleight of Hand
1 Sowing Salt
4 Stone Rain
1 Tidings
3 Wildfire

34 other spells

Sideboard

2 Meloku the Clouded Mirror
1 Mimeofacture
1 Psychic Possession
1 Pyroclasm
1 Shattering Spree
3 Spell Snare
3 Stalking Yeti
3 Steamcore Weird

15 sideboard cards

I will bring you the remaining decklists when I get to the tournament site on Friday morning, which through the wonders of modern time travel will actually be before many of you are reading this article.

New Answer Man

Raphaël Lévy has joined the Wizards of the Coast writing staff as the new resident answer man for the [Ask the Pro](#) feature. There may not be a man alive who can tell you more about the in's and out's of Pro Tour life – he's been to 51 out of a possible 61 Pro Tours, including 47 in a row dating all the way back to Worlds '98. That lengthy career puts him seventh on the all-time Pro Points list with 276.

Send your questions, along with your name and location, via this [email form](#). Answers will be posted every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. His first answers will show up the week of September 4.

ONE MAN'S BALLOT

There's less than a week left in the 2006 [Magic Pro Tour Hall of Fame](#) voting. All ballots must be received by August 31 at midnight PT. Two more members of the Selection Committee have shared their ballots:

- [Darwin Kastle, 2005 Hall of Famer](#)
- [Worth Wollpert, Wizards R&D/Former Pro Tour player](#)

Firestarter: Point / Counterpointbalance

Over at my Top8Magic.com podcasts, Mike Flores and I have been really excited/terrified about the possibilities for [Sensei's Divining Top](#) and [Counterbalance](#) in this weird limbo Standard format that exists until *Time Spiral* makes the combo Extended's problem. When this weekend's tournaments are over, will we be savvy predictors of the metagame or chickens who cried wolf? How good is this combo and will it be a defining card interaction for the remainder of this Standard season? You know how to use the forums, just pretend I said something nice about Mike Long and head over there right now.

*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](#)

