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## Three Takes on *Time Spiral*

Brian David-Marshall  
The Week That Was  
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The *Time Spiral* prereleases are in the books, and hopefully everyone had a great time at their local events. If you missed out on the action, release tournaments are just one week away. The [Pro Tour Qualifier season for Geneva](#) starts off with a temporal bang on Release Tournament weekend if you are looking for some higher stakes. For those of you looking to run the vicarious release experience, Grand Prix-Sydney is one week away as well. Grand Prix-Athens follows close on the heels of Sydney and then we go straight on to Kobe for the final Pro Tour of the 2006 season before World Championships.

I caught up with two of the game's rising stars who are sure to be in the thick of the action in Kobe. You may remember Paulo Vitor Damo Da Rosa as the leader of [Pro Tour-Charleston finalist team Raaala Pumba](#). The Brazilian National team member has been rattling off money finish after money finish, making at least the top 30 in all three Pro Tours this season.



Paulo Vitor Damo Da Rosa hasn't finished lower than 30th at a PT this season.

Andre Coimbra was a [Top 8 competitor at Worlds](#) last season and has shown a real flair with 40 card decks. The Portuguese player has reached the Top 8 of the last three Limited Grand Prix events on three different continents, stretching from [Hiroshima](#) to [Malmo](#) to [Phoenix, Arizona](#).

And in a late-breaking development Friday morning, we have a third pro offering his insight. Well-regarded French deck designer Guillaume Wafo-Tapa finished 12th at [Pro Tour-Honolulu](#) with Wafo-Tapa Control, which was the obvious inspiration for Blue-white Wafo-Tapa. He also has a Grand Prix Top 8 to his name this year at [Torino](#), and he worked with Pierre Canali on his Pro Tour-winning deck from Columbus.

**BDM:** Did you attend a Prerelease for *Time Spiral*?

**Paulo:** I didn't attend because we didn't have a Prerelease in Brazil yet. It's scheduled for next week though and I'm attending.

**Andre:** I could not attend but I will play in the release events next weekend.

**Guillaume:** I would have attended two *Time Spiral* prereleases but I overslept for the second one so I just attended one. My sealed deck contained about 10 slivers in green and white (2 [Gemhide Sliver](#), 2 [Might Sliver](#), 2 [Watcher Sliver](#) and a few others). They seemed strong together and okay alone and I decided to try them. I had a few other good creatures in white and green (one of them being [Spectral Force](#), the 8/8 trampler for [3](#)) as well as two copies of [Evangelize](#). I added a black splash for two removals.



Wafo-Tapa made waves with his deck at Pro Tour-Honolulu.

**BDM:** What is your first impression of the new set for Limited play?

**Paulo:** I like it. Apart from slivers, which seem hard enough to make happen, there is nothing that might degenerate the draft like Ripple or multiples of a card in *Coldsnap*. It has many different approaches and viable strategies. It reminds me of triple *Champions of Kamigawa* draft. At first I didn't like the foils replacing commons because it might give an edge in Sealed Deck to someone who happened to open one extra rare, but maybe I'm overreacting and it's no different than opening a bomb rare.

**Andre:** The cards look very powerful, the suspend mechanic seems really good in Sealed Deck and probably good in draft. The split second mechanic is very powerful and will help define Constructed for sure.

**Guillaume:** I liked it. I had a lot of slivers and I faced a lot of players that played some too. That made for some tricky situations. I was a bit disappointed by the lack of mana fixers though (I guess that happens after having played with *Ravnica* a lot). And it seemed to me that the common suspend creatures were a bit too strong.

**BDM:** What is the impact that the timeshifted cards will have on the game?

**Paulo:** I don't think a lot is going to change. Those cards haven't been legal for a long time, so we just have to act as though they have just been released

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with the rest of the set. They are normal cards and the fact that they have been legal in the past doesn't differentiate them from the rest of *Time Spiral* in my opinion. Maybe there is going to be a higher supply of some of the cards, because people will already have them, and maybe some of them will be harder to get because they were harder to get before and are now "rarer" than rares, but I don't think that's really going to change the way the game is played.

**Andre:** I think in terms of drafting, it changes a lot. Not only does it provide more hard choices for the picks, but it also changes the information you get when you look at a booster opened by another player. In Constructed ... I don't think it will affect the current Extended much, but will matter a lot in Standard. It provides a lot of good tools to make new decks – not just updating the decks from last block.

**Guillaume:** I don't think they'll have too much of an impact on Limited play as their rarity is similar to that of a rare and there are few Limited bombs among them. Constructed is another matter entirely ... a lot of Constructed goodies here.

**BDM:** *In terms of Constructed formats, what do you think the most important timeshifted card is?*

**Paulo:** I think two cards are going to have a big impact, **Enduring Renewal** and **Tormod's Crypt**. Crypt will probably change the way Extended decks are built, and Renewal opens a lot of new possibilities in both formats, even though I'm not sure they are any good. I also think **Call of the Herd** will see a lot of play in Standard, as well as **Desert** and perhaps **Dandan** in some sideboards. Akroma will be a good win condition as it completely ignores any other creature except for maybe a Simic **Sky Swallower**. **Whispers of the Muse** might be partially responsible for a change in the way control decks work.

**Andre:** **Dragonstorm** seems quite powerful in the current Standard.

**Guillaume:** That depends of the Constructed formats. For Extended I would say **Tormod's Crypt**. For Standard, both **Gemstone Mine** and **Psionic Blast**. With all the gold cards of *Ravnica*, **Gemstone Mine** looks really good. And it goes along nicely with karoos. The blue burn will probably help some aggressive blue archetypes to emerge. I'm not sure if you want to play it in a control deck.

**BDM:** *What card from the timeshifted set do you most want to see when you open a pack for Limited?*

**Paulo:** That is a tough one. There are many cards I wouldn't be unhappy to first pick, but the ones that stand out in my opinion are **Call of the Herd** (because it's very good no matter what you do with it), **Sacred Mesa** for its ability to win the game single-handedly (even though it does depend on your deck, unlike **Call of the Herd**, and on the speed of the format); and **Stormbind**, because it's simply awesome. I think right now I'd go with **Stormbind**, even though I'm not experienced enough with the format to say how first-picking a multicolored card (or a color in this particular combination) might hurt your draft. If first-picking it proves too troublesome (which I doubt, because the set is full of mana fixing), I'd go with **Call of the Herd**, but right now **Stormbind** gets my vote.

**Andre:** **Disintegrate** is the kind of card that will most of the times see play in your deck either as a splash or part of the main color. The times you don't play it you probably have a very good two-color deck or a better splash, so you are always happy with it in your card pool.

**Guillaume:** **Psionic Blast**. Both because it's good and it's worth some money.

**BDM:** *What will be the impact of not having Time Spiral drafts on the Magic Online Beta?*

**Paulo:** That's a surprise to me – I wasn't aware there would be no drafts in Beta. That's something that makes me happy, because it will force everyone to adapt when I'm already adapted (I usually do not have MTGO Beta). I think people will have to find new ways to playtest, including a higher than usual count of real drafts, and the pros will probably gather with other pros before the PT.

**Andre:** I think that MTGO Beta drafts are overrated, as the level of play there is quite bad. You can't have a good idea of what cards come around the table back to you, what colors are underrated and even what are the archetypes that exist in the format. However, it's an interesting tool to see how the new cards interact. I would say the impact will be small, as the pros will just playtest with real boosters against other pros.

**Guillaume:** I guess no one can take advantage of **Magic Online** to prepare for Pro Tour-Kobe. I think it's good. This way, no one has an unfair advantage.

**BDM:** *How do you plan to prepare for Pro Tour-Kobe? How many drafts will you be able to do before the event?*

**Paulo:** As I don't live close to people who are going, I cannot reasonably do real drafts, so I'll probably play in Magic League like I've always done. Some days before the PT I'll travel to a friend's house and we will probably play some real



Andre Coimbra has made the GP circuit his playground this season.



drafts with prerelease packs. I think 2-3 drafts a day until some days before the Pro Tour is not unrealistic and will probably solve all my questions about the format.

**Andre:** I'm going to play in the release tournament this weekend, do some drafts at the local store, team drafts in Athens, and some drafts with Japanese and Dutch pros at Shuhei Nakamura's house.

**Guillaume:** I am planning to train during a week with some French pros (including Pierre Canali and Antoine Ruel). I'll be able to do at least 20 drafts before the PT. I hope I can do 30. And maybe I'll attend Grand Prix-Athens.

**BDM:** What impact are the *Time Spiral* cards (not the *timeshifted* cards) going to have on the Constructed formats for Worlds – especially Extended?



House party at Shuhei's!!

**Paulo:** I think they are obviously going to change Standard altogether, since they are now such a large part of the field. Not many new decks will be born in my opinion but most decks will change greatly. I think that, unlike the reprinted cards which favor aggro and aggro-control, the set is helping the control decks, so we might see a rise in their numbers. Cards like *Urza's Factory*, *Ancestral Vision* and *Think Twice* might turn the Control decks into real Control decks that actually seek to control before they win and not to win before the control slips away. *Teferi* is also a card worthy of note, mainly for control. *Sedge Sliver*, while being a sure inclusion in any Rakdos deck, might spawn a new Control archetype that's similar to the very old "Invincible Counter Troll."

I haven't played Extended for some time now, so I don't really know what the metagame is and therefore I have no clue of what is going to change. I think the cards with Split Second are good answers to the decks as they are now, such as *Sudden Shock* being good against Tog, but the decks are not going to be as they are now, so they might see play or they might not.

**Andre:** Split Second is going to change Extended, as I can see a lot of the new split second cards being played. *Sudden Shock* will be a very powerful card in Extended as it is a very cheap and uncounterable solution for some of the biggest threats in the format. Sure, people will have ways to play around those cards, with something like *Meddling Mage* or *Counterbalance*, but if they make people play around them, they are already changing the format. The suspend reprints of the powerful cards will see some play for sure as they keep a very high power level.

Worlds will be a fun tournament to playtest for. *Time Spiral* changes a lot of Standard, some Extended and provides a new draft format. That makes Worlds a very complete tournament and a good test of skill.

**Guillaume:** I believe the *Time Spiral* set will not affect Extended much. The cards' raw power seems to be under the Extended level. But there maybe some combo deck to find. Standard obviously will be greatly shaken because there's a rotation.

**BDM:** What do you think the top common cards are from the *Time Spiral* set in terms of draft?

**Paulo:** Probably *Rift Bolt*, *Strangling Soot*, *Looter il-Kor* and *Temporal Isolation*. I also really like *Spiketail Drakeling*.

**Andre:** I would say *Strangling Soot* and *Errant Ephemeron*.

**Guillaume:** I've only done one draft at the moment but I'll try to answer that with my top ten (random order):

- *Amrou Scout*
- *Gaze of Justice*
- *Temporal Isolation*
- *Spiketail Drakeling*
- *Crookclaw Transmuter*
- *Errant Ephemeron*
- *Looter il-Kor*
- *Strangling Soot*
- *Rift Bolt*
- *Terramorphic Expanse*

**BDM:** What colors do you feel will be overdrafted and which ones do you suspect will be underdrafted?

**Paulo:** I honestly have no clue, but I suspect blue might be underdrafted (as always). Black holds many of the removal cards in the set, even though it doesn't have a lot of quality elsewhere, so it might be overdrafted if everybody jumps into the removal, because the other cards don't support many drafters.

**Andre:** Usually green is underdrafted and black/red overdrafted, probably that will happen again.



**Guillaume:** If you look at my top ten cards, most of them are either blue or white. Thus I feel those two colors will probably be overdrafted. Green, usually a strong color, seems weaker to me than the rest this time.

**BDM:** *What Players Club Level are you at and what are you hoping for from the rest of the year?*

**Paulo:** I'm currently Level 4, with 30 Pro Points. I honestly hope that I make it to Level 5, and for that I need at least two top 48 finishes in Kobe and Paris, not counting the Pro Points from the Team Portion at Worlds. It might be easy for me to achieve Level 5 if they happen to lower the threshold for it to, say, 35, though, and in this case all I need is a top 128 in one of the PTs.

**Andre:** I'm Level 3 now, which was my goal for this season, maybe I can think on Level 4 after Pro Tour Kobe, but it really depends on my finish.

**Guillaume:** I'm Level 2 now but I'm at 17 Pro Points so I'll be 3 no matter what after Worlds. I hope to be at least Day Two at Kobe, then I would be Level 3 before Worlds. Level 4 by the end of the year would be nice.

**BDM:** *Any plans to attend Sydney, Athens, New Jersey, or Yamagata?*

**Paulo:** Unfortunately, no. I wanted to go to Athens, but I couldn't get my Kobe ticket to go through Europe so I'm probably not attending any of those.

**Andre:** I'm not going to Sydney, because it's too expensive and I'm trying to not miss too many classes at University as I'm on the third year of computer science and it's quite hard. I'm going to Athens, as the money difference between going from Athens to Osaka and Lisbon to Osaka is more or less the same as going from Lisbon to Athens, so I get a "free GP." New Jersey and Yamagata are some options for the future, but it really depends on my finish at Pro Tour-Kobe. The higher I get at Kobe, the better the ROI (return on investment) I get on the GPs. If I get just two Pro Tour points, I think the ROI is too low to miss classes and spend money.

**Guillaume:** Maybe Athens but nothing definitive yet.

## Friday Night Madness

October's Friday Night **Magic** foil seems perfectly in character with the release of *Time Spiral*, which reintroduced the madness mechanic. The black cards look good but have a long way to go before they can touch the slime trail of the justifiably **Arrogant Wurm** that is being given away next month.

He did get taken down a notch by the rules refinement for madness which no longer allows you to remove him from the game with madness, play a land, and then play the wurm. Nonetheless, a 4/4 trampler, for three mana at instant speed is still a powerful effect. I have little doubt that this tank will continue to roll in Extended in the near future.



## Pro Tour Participation Promotion

And speaking of card previews, here's Jake Theis, Assistant Brand Manager for **Magic**, with a special offer for 2007.

"In 2007, Wizards of the Coast will unveil several exciting new programs, promotions, and opportunities for our **Magic** players.

"One offering that I can mention now is the release of Pro Tour participation cards in 2007. And the good news is that you don't have to be playing in the Pro Tour to get it! If you attend a Pro Tour for any reason -- to play in side events, to judge, or just to hang out, you can get this exclusive promo card just for showing up and providing your name and DCI number. Cards are limited to one per person, and only available while supplies last. To get an exclusive card, just show up to a Pro Tour and check out the DCI registration booth.

"Without any further ado, the 2007 Pro Tour participation card is...



"In more exciting news, a limited offering of the 2007 Pro Tour participation card will be made available at Pro Tour-Kobe, which starts October 20. A limited batch of the cards will be available, so if you are headed to Kobe, be sure to get a card while supplies last.

"And while you are at the show, be sure to check out all the fun activities that are available. From side events to artist signings to gunslinging to just hanging out playing and trading with hundreds of other **Magic** players from around the world, there is something for everyone."

## Firestarter: Tell the Pros

Both Andre and Paulo have their first sanctioned experience with *Time Spiral* looming on the horizon. They have been nice enough to take time out to share their thoughts on the new set with us. Now we can return the favor. Go to the forums and share your experiences about building *Time Spiral* Sealed Decks from this past weekend. What color combinations worked out well for you? What color combinations fell on their face? Were there any surprising cards that performed better than expected?

*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.*



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