

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



Last-Minute Thoughts

Brian David-Marshall
The Week That Was
Friday, June 8, 2007



This is such an exciting time to be playing **Magic** right now. There are just so many questions that need answering. And what better way is there to find those answers than to play **Magic**? That's just what happened last Saturday at Neutral Ground in New York. I can't remember the last time I saw so many **Magic** players playing so many different formats that were all relevant to upcoming events. Here is a sampling of what was going on.



There was a Grand Prix Montreal Trial with close to 30 players participating. The format was *Time Spiral* Block Constructed and for many of the players it was their first opportunity to test out the new cards *Future Sight* thrown into the equation. Despite the success of Mark Herberholz and Guillaume Wafo-Tapa with *Mystical Teachings*-fueled control decks, the vast majority of the field opted for green-red, green-blue, or some combination of them both. Yet when the dust settled, the only player in the tournament playing a *Teachings* deck was the only player left standing.

PRODUCTS

MAGIC ONLINE
V3 BETA
Thursday 10/11
4pm - 7pm PST
Draft for Free!

MAGIC ONLINE

MAGIC ONLINE

Chris Whitman's TeachingsControl

Grand Prix Montreal Trial First Place

Main Deck
60 cards

- 2 Tolaria West
- 2 Calciform Pools
- 1 Urza's Factory
- 1 Swamp
- 1 Plains
- 4 Urborg, Tomb of Yawgmoth
- 4 Dreadship Reef
- 4 Terramorphic Expanse
- 7 Island
- 26 lands
- 2 Draining Whelk
- 1 Teferi, Mage of Zhalfir
- 2 Aeon Chronicler
- 5 creatures

Sideboard

- 4 Foresee
- 4 Prismatic Lens
- 4 Mystical Teachings
- 1 Sudden Death
- 1 Pull from Eternity
- 1 Snapback
- 1 Haunting Hymn
- 1 Extirpate
- 1 Temporal Isolation
- 4 Cancel
- 3 Damnation
- 4 Tendrils of Corruption
- 29 other spells

MESSAGE BOARDS

Magic General Forum

magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES

RULES

There were also multiple eight-person drafts firing off as people looked to explore the still-new full block draft experience, played in *Invasion* drafts, and even drafted RGD. On top of that there were four full teams of qualified players preparing for Pro Tour—San Diego. I don't know what conclusions people arrived at regarding pick orders for Two-Headed Giant, but the debate over whether to play or draw has resumed now that the team leading off no longer draws one extra card.

At Grand Prix—Amsterdam and in Massachusetts, the B player got to draw a card at the start of the game. That led teams to feel that the outcome of matches was completely dependant on winning the coin flip. That was remedied with a change to the floor rules and now that there was no longer an eighth card to be had for the team playing first, it was assumed that teams would want to draw. I can tell you that there is no consensus on that opinion among the top players in this area. How teams approach that decision is sure to be an ongoing storyline throughout the upcoming Pro Tour.

Despite all of that action...30 players with block decks, two dozen players in various drafts, and eight Pro Tour-bound players in training, there were still easily another dozen players scattered throughout the gaming area preparing for this weekend's Northeast Regional Championships. Neutral Ground had gotten the jump on the new Standard format the weekend before when Christian Calcano and Patrick Albergo squared off in the finals of the New York City Champs. The matchup was Calcano with Pickles and Albergo with the much anticipated/dreaded **Redge** deck—and Albergo emerged victorious.

I did not have the opportunity to speak with him about his experience but I did talk to a semi-regular guest of TWTW, Sean Vandover, about his victory in the Baltimore City Champs. Vandover is a 30-something retail manager who has been playing **Magic** since *Revised* and competitively since the release of *Judgment*. Sean is a two-time

CITY CHAMPIONS

Winners of the [2007 Beta season of City Championships](#). Note that due to high participation numbers, Cleveland, Denver, Montreal, and Vancouver awarded two slots to Nationals.

Maryland Standard State Champion, Q'd for Nationals last year, and has been to four Pro Tours (with a 65th-place finish at Pro Tour–Kobe his best showing).

"I also once started Grand Prix–Detroit at 9-0," added Vandover, who cites Johnny Chapman's Pirates! deck as his foray into competitive **Magic**. "And I am a lifetime 10-0 in Friday Night **Magic**."

On to the Q&A!!

BDM: *Can you tell me how often you played in City Champs and how dedicated you were to qualifying for the Top 8 in your area?*

Sean: I started out with plans to play as often as possible at the two stores nearest to me, with the idea that if I couldn't earn enough points at those two stores I would travel farther out to go to one of the other four stores participating in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area. My biggest obstacle was the fact that usually there were tournaments on both Saturday and Sunday of each weekend, and I could not attend both due to work obligations. This restricted me to one weekend tournament a week, as well as any weeknight tournaments I cared to travel to. After about the first month it became apparent that I was going to be able to qualify for the Top 8 pretty easily just going to the two closest stores, so that is all I ended up doing. I ended up playing in 15 tournaments, making the finals of almost half of them and winning three.

BDM: *What formats/decks were you playing in the "Swiss"?*

Sean: I played mostly Limited, focusing on Booster Drafts. My strategy in these was simple—always open **Firemaw Kavu** and play as many colors as possible. For the Constructed tournaments I played in, I played **Elf/Opposition** in Extended, and in Standard I played the whole range of decks: **TriscuitTron**, **Gruul**, **Mono-black Rack**, **blue-red 'Tron**, and **Beach House**. Interestingly, my three worst finishes were all in Standard, going 0-2 drop twice and 2-2 once.

BDM: *Once you got to the Final 8 that would determine the City Championship, what deck did you play and why?*

Sean: I played a Sea Stompy variant designed by Phil Tolson, a local player who had just used it to win a MSS event. I had a slight advantage in that I had judged the event, so I got to see first hand a representative metagame for Standard. Phil's deck stood out to me, as I watched him roll over almost everybody in the event, even refusing to ID in the late Swiss rounds of the tournament. His only loss came to a blue-black 'Tron build, and even that was in three games and the 'Tron player had to play Tendrils three turns running in both Games 2 and 3 just to survive. Knowing everyone in the Top 8 of City Champs also helped inform my decision, as I was pretty sure I knew what decks everyone would be playing, so I got to metagame nicely, especially with my sideboard.

BDM: *Were you relieved to find yourself qualified for Nationals or disappointed you could not play in Regionals?*

Sean: Relieved. Really relieved. UNBELIEVABLY RELIEVED.

BDM: *What do you think your local metagame will be like for Regionals? Do you think it will be different than the broader global metagame?*

Sean: I think locally it will be the same as globally—a plurality of **Gruul**, **Dragonstorm**, and **Teferi** with tons of other known and rogue decks thrown in.

BDM: *Who will you be working with in preparation for Nationals?*

Sean: In preparation for Nats I will be working with a lot of the pros from my area—Brad Taulbee, Alex Majlaton, John Moore, Michael Patnik—as well as a few who haven't yet (but will!) qualify for Nats like Tommy Ashton, Allen Jackson, and Tyler Kreitz.

BDM: *How much impact will the rotation from Ninth to Tenth have on the metagame for Nationals?*

Sean: I'm not sure, since I don't know a lot of what will be in *Tenth*. I think **Troll Ascetic** and **Incinerate** are two of the cards that will have the biggest impact, and hope to play a deck with both in it at Nats. I don't think things will get shaken up too much however, unless Wizards brings back a big splashy rare that a deck can be built around, like **Dragonstorm**. Maybe they'll reprint **Corrupt** so I can play MBC again? We can only dream.

BDM: *Turning our attention back to the current metagame...do you care to share your Sea Stompy deck for players who might want to audible into it for this weekend?*

Name	City
Ross Labny	Atlanta
Duncan Cheney	Augusta
James Clarke	Austin/San Antonio
Sean Vandover	Baltimore/D.C.
Yakov Shapiro	Boston
Josh Boyle	Buffalo/Rochester
Clayton Mooney	Cedar Rapids
Wade Lacey	Chicago
Jeff Blystone	Cleveland
Mike White	Cleveland
Dean Spencer	Columbus
Kinny Fain	Dallas
Michael King	Denver
Tien Pham	Denver
Daniel Overbeek	Detroit
Newt Cole	Grand Rapids
Tom Phelon	Hartford
Christopher Odorizzi	Houston
Charles Colglazier	Indianapolis
Ryan Messick	Kansas City
Jonathan Job	Las Vegas/Phoenix
Daniel Neeley	Lexington/Louisville
Tom Thai	Los Angeles/San Diego
Stephen Neal	Madison/Milwaukee
Chris Gosselin	Manchester
Trevor Jones	Minneapolis
Tim Kincaid	Nashville
Patrick Albergo	New York
Jonathan Vick	Oklahoma City
Alexander Winston	Omaha/Lincoln
Alex Oliveros	Orlando
Brian Terwilliger	Pensacola
Michael McGee	Philadelphia
David Weitz	Pittsburgh
Thomas Huteson	Portland/Eugene
Andrew Polyniak	Raleigh
Dylan Pascual	Sacramento
Jonas Randall	Salt Lake City
Rafael Solari	San Francisco
Chris Eng	Seattle
Brian Beemer	St. Louis
Julian Delossantos	Tampa
Thomas Leveille	Virginia Beach
Sean Hetherington	Calgary
Greg Dolan	Edmonton
Matthew Macmullin	Halifax
Dylan Miller	Kensington
David Trepanier	Kitchner/Waterloo
Michael Di Piano	Montreal
Ronald Raphael	Montreal
Ben Moir	Ottawa
David Maltais	Quebec City
Justin Tao	Toronto
Tom Beith	Vancouver
Ryan Perez	Vancouver
Jason Simard	Winnipeg

Tommy Ashton, Allen Jackson, and Tyler Kreitz.

Sean: Sure. Here it goes, although I imagine many players will cringe when they see the numbers of two- and three-ofs. I think they are important to the deck's success because they allow the deck to easily play whatever role is appropriate for the matchup—beatdown, control, or a mixture. The sideboard I used was heavily metagamed towards the decks that would be present at the Top 8, a better sideboard for a larger tournament would be this one.

Sean Vandover's Sea(n) Stompy		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Stomping Ground	3 Rift Bolt	2 Krosan Grip
4 Steam Vents	4 Call of the Herd	2 Fortune Thief
4 Breeding Pool	4 Remand	3 Tin Street Hooligan
3 Forest	3 Mana Leak	2 Giant Solifuge
3 Karplusan Forest	2 Char	3 Tormod's Crypt
3 Gemstone Mine	2 Stonewood Invocation	3 Trickbind
21 lands	18 other spells	15 sideboard cards
2 Plaxmanta		
4 Llanowar Elves		
3 Kird Ape		
3 Scab-Clan Mauler		
3 Burning-Tree Shaman		
4 Sulfur Elemental		
2 Giant Solifuge		
21 creatures		

Congratulations to Sean, Patrick, and everyone who won their City Champs. You can find a full list of the winners in the sidebar to this article. Great job everyone and good luck at Nationals!

For the rest of us stiffs who need to grind out an invite this weekend at our Regionals, I have some more last-minute decks for you to try out/test against. These are from a Japanese Nationals Qualifier in the Nagano Prefecture that had 65 players.

Takeshi Miyasaka's UR Urzatron		
2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Winner		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Island	2 Dimir Signet	3 Annex
4 Shivan Reef	4 Izzet Signet	1 Teferi, Mage of Zhalfir
4 Urza's Mine	4 Compulsive Research	3 Willbender
4 Urza's Power Plant	2 Demonfire	4 Volcanic Hammer
4 Urza's Tower	2 Foresee	3 Wildfire
4 Steam Vents	4 Mana Leak	1 Repeal
1 Urza's Factory	4 Remand	15 sideboard cards
23 lands	3 Electrolyze	
	3 Repeal	
	1 Mystical Teachings	
	1 Spell Burst	
3 Bogardan Hellkite	30 other spells	
3 Sulfur Elemental		
1 Venser, Shaper Savant		
7 creatures		

Hironobu Sugaya's WRB Sliver		
2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Winner		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Plains	3 Seal of Fire	3 Giant Solifuge
4 Battlefield Forge	4 Griffin Guide	3 Essence Sliver
1 Sulfurous Springs	4 Rift Bolt	4 Temporal Isolation
4 Sacred Foundry	3 Char	1 Char
4 Godless Shrine	4 Lightning Helix	4 Hide // Seek
		15 sideboard cards

4 Blood Crypt
1 Urborg, Tomb of Yawgmoth

18 other spells

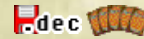
22 lands

4 Savannah Lions
4 Dark Confidant
4 Sedge Sliver
4 Cautery Sliver
4 Sinew Sliver

20 creatures

Hiroyuki Kaga's WUR Control Deck Lovely KATWOO

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Semifinalist



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Island
1 Mountain
3 Plains
1 Boros Garrison
2 Sacred Foundry
1 Izzet Boilerworks
4 Steam Vents
2 Hallowed Fountain
1 Ghost Quarter
4 Flagstones of Trokair
1 Urza's Factory
1 Tolaria West

23 lands

4 Court Hussar
4 Lightning Angel
3 Aeon Chronicler
1 Numot, the Devastator

12 creatures

1 Boros Signet
2 Izzet Signet
3 Azorius Signet
4 Wrath of God
4 Compulsive Research
4 Boom // Bust
3 Remand
4 Lightning Helix

25 other spells

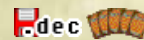
Sideboard

2 Vesuvan Shapeshifter
2 Detritivore
4 Faith's Fetters
2 Pyroclasm
2 Pull from Eternity
3 Disenchant

15 sideboard cards

Hiroyuki Ogawa's UR Dragonstorm

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Semifinalist



Main Deck

60 cards

4 Island
4 Mountain
4 Shivan Reef
4 Steam Vents
2 Calciform Pools
2 Dreadship Reef
2 Gemstone Mine

22 lands

2 Hunted Dragon
4 Bogardan Hellkite

6 creatures

4 Lotus Bloom
4 Sleight of Hand
4 Rite of Flame
4 Dragonstorm
4 Seething Song
4 Remand
3 Telling Time
3 Gigadrowse
2 Truth or Tale

32 other spells

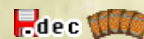
Sideboard

2 Riptide Pilferer
2 Pyroclasm
3 Empty the Warrens
1 Gigadrowse
3 Repeal
3 Ignorant Bliss
1 Trickbind

15 sideboard cards

Hiroki Ootsuka's BGU Dredge

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Quarterfinalist



Main Deck

60 cards

1 Snow-Covered Forest
1 Snow-Covered Island
1 Snow-Covered Swamp
3 Yavimaya Coast

4 Bridge from Below
3 Life from the Loam
4 Delirium Skeins

Sideboard

1 Ghost Quarter
4 Gulgari Brownscale
1 Akroma, Angel of Wrath
4 Leyline of the Void

- 1 Golgari Rot Farm
- 1 Overgrown Tomb
- 2 Svogthos, the Restless Tomb
- 1 Watery Grave
- 4 Breeding Pool
- 1 Ghost Quarter
- 1 Simic Growth Chamber
- 1 Urborg, Tomb of Yawgmoth
- 1 Dakmor Salvage
- 1 Dryad Arbor
- 1 Horizon Canopy

21 lands

- 2 Flame-Kin Zealot
- 4 Golgari Grave-Troll
- 4 Stinkweed Imp
- 2 Greenseeker
- 4 Magus of the Bazaar
- 4 Llanowar Mentor
- 4 Narcomoeba

24 creatures

- 3 Dread Return
- 1 Traitor's Clutch

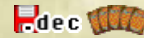
15 other spells

- 1 Nightmare Void
- 1 Ancient Grudge
- 3 Krosan Grip

15 sideboard cards

Yuuichi Saijou's GW Beatdown Deck

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Quarterfinalist



Main Deck 60 cards

- 6 Forest
- 3 Plains
- 4 Brushland
- 3 Selesnya Sanctuary
- 4 Temple Garden
- 3 Vitu-Ghazi, the City-Tree

23 lands

- 4 Loxodon Hierarch
- 4 Llanowar Elves
- 4 Birds of Paradise
- 3 Selesnya Guildmage
- 3 Saffi Eriksdotter
- 2 Spectral Force
- 3 Thelonite Hermit
- 3 Yavimaya Dryad

26 creatures

- 2 Loxodon Warhammer
- 3 Glare of Subdual
- 2 Gaea's Anthem
- 4 Call of the Herd

11 other spells

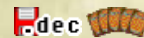
Sideboard

- 4 Giant Solifuge
- 1 Indrik Stomphowler
- 1 Saffi Eriksdotter
- 2 Tormod's Crypt
- 2 Wrath of God
- 3 Sunlance
- 2 Krosan Grip

15 sideboard cards

Tomonori Tanaka's Mono-G Beatdown Deck

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Quarterfinalist



Main Deck 60 cards

- 18 Snow-Covered Forest
- 2 Pendelhaven

20 lands

- 4 Llanowar Elves
- 3 Boreal Druid
- 2 Boreal Centaur
- 4 Dryad Sophisticate
- 3 Giant Solifuge
- 4 Silhana Ledgewalker
- 3 Skarrgan Pit-Skulk

23 creatures

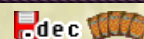
- 4 Moldervine Cloak
- 4 Call of the Herd
- 1 Might of Oaks
- 3 Might of Old Krosa
- 4 Stonewood Invocation
- 1 Squall Line

17 other spells

Sideboard

- 1 Loxodon Warhammer
- 1 Giant Solifuge
- 3 Groundbreaker
- 4 Leyline of Liferforce
- 3 Gaea's Anthem
- 3 Krosan Grip

15 sideboard cards



Jun'ichirou Bandou's UWR Control Deck

2007 Japan Regional Championship Nagano Prefecture Quarterfinalist

Main Deck 60 cards

4 Snow-Covered Island
4 Snow-Covered Plains
4 Shivan Reef
1 Mouth of Ronom
3 Sacred Foundry
3 Hallowed Fountain
2 Flagstones of Trokair
1 Urza's Factory

22 lands

3 Aeon Chronicler
3 Detritivore
2 Numot, the Devastator

8 creatures

4 Annex
2 Izzet Signet
4 Azorius Signet
3 Coalition Relic
4 Wrath of God
3 Wildfire
4 Compulsive Research
3 Remand
3 Lightning Helix

30 other spells

Sideboard

1 Lightning Helix
1 Detritivore
3 Magus of the Tabernacle
3 Faith's Fetters
1 Hide // Seek
3 Trickbind
2 Disenchant
1 Pact of Negation

15 sideboard cards

Firestarter: The Polls are Open!!!!

The voting for the 2007 **Magic** Invitational is under way and you can find the main page [here](#). There are 11 weeks of voting, with a new ballot posted each Friday right here in my column. This year's ballots are trimmed to only five players apiece and no player can appear on more than three different ballots—which should make things pretty spicy. Mark Rosewater addressed a few more Invitational issues in [his column on Monday](#) if you missed it. So vote early (but not often) for your favorite Road Warrior candidate. After you're done, head back to my forums and tell us who you voted for and why, along with who you think will be on future ballots.



*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](#)

